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An Axiological Analysis of Yoruba Education

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AN AXIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF YORUBA EDUCATION

by

Tony Idowu Aladejana

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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VITA

The author, Tony Idowu Aladejana, is one of the twenty one children of Faturoti Aladejana. He was born around 1946. (Exact documented date of birth has been inadvertently misplaced).

His elementary education was obtained in the parochial schools of Ondo State, Western Nigeria, and secondary education at the St. Theresa's Catholic Junior Seminary, Oke-Are, Ibadan, Nigeria, where he graduated in 1964.

In January, 1965, he entered the St. Peter and Paul Major Seminary where he studied Philosophy and Theology, and received his degree of Bachelor of Divinity in 1972.

In the fall of 1973 he was admitted to the Loyola University of Chicago, where he received his degree of Masters of Education majoring in Philosophy of Education in June 1975.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study will describe, analyze, and criticize the system of values involved in Yoruba education. Yoruba education will also be discussed as well as what reasons and in what order these educational values are pursued.

The Yoruba people considered in this study, unless it is otherwise stated, are those of Southwestern Nigeria. There the largest, concentrated, and original population of this tribe is presently located. Other areas of the world where people of Yoruba origin have settled in fairly large numbers include Dahomey in West Africa; Haiti; Brazil; and Cuba.

The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria represent a high level of cultural achievement. They are a people with complex and elaborate economic, political and social structures. Their religious and moral values are also complex. But above all, the complex system of traditional education of the Yoruba people—which is the focus of this study—is one of the oldest in sub-Saharan Africa.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the rich Yoruba oral literature: proverbs (owe), riddles (alo), and folklore (alo-alapagbe) will be employed. Proverbs, riddles, and folklore have played significant roles in the oral traditional education of the Yoruba people. Yoruba traditional education took place without reliance on
written skills, but oral skills were highly developed. It should be noted, however, that in the combat of oral versus written skills, neither is intrinsically superior or better than the other. Each has its own purposes, its strengths and weaknesses.

Certain Yoruba words saturated with axiological and educational interpretations will provide avenues for the proposed analysis in this study. Such words include: 'IWA' (character) and 'EKO' (roughly translated, education).

The core of this study is the Yoruba traditional education and the values involved in the traditional education processes. These Yoruba educational processes are practical since Yoruba children are born into a large extended family where they are considered as belonging to everyone rather than just to their parents. It is the task of everyone therefore to see to the traditional education of the children.

Yoruba traditional education is not only practical; it is also gradual. For example, Yoruba children at ages three to six are expected to participate in the household chores and farm works. Also, at about this age, a strong sense of family and kinship identification is developed in the children. From this time onward, emphasis is laid on compliance, respect, unity, and cooperation.

Throughout this study, by traditional education, I mean the exposing of necessary social values to the Yoruba children by their family and kin. This knowledge is of
great importance for adult life in the traditional setting. It will be noticed in the above stipulated meaning, that, in contrast to the Western concept of education, education in the Yoruba traditional setting is preparation for adult living, whereas, in the Western setting, education is living. For the Yoruba it is the preparation for adult living that everyone, the family, and the kin engage in.

Yoruba traditional education can also be stipulated to be "cultural transmission," in the sense that the Yoruba society aims at the preservation of its traditional heritage. The Yoruba children are raised to respect the traditional values of the society. Sometimes, the children are threatened by warning them that if they failed to respect the traditions of the land, they would incur the curse of the gods. These threats are introduced in the form of taboos.

Although the study specifically deals with the Yoruba traditional education and the values involved, it is based on an awareness that Yoruba traditional educational enterprises are confronted with modernization. This study will not make any attempts to reconcile the issue since the purpose of this study is to describe, analyze, and criticize the system of values involved in Yoruba education. However, the missionaries' educational activities and their efforts to preserve the Yoruba traditional values will be discussed.

In this study, some Yoruba proverbs, riddles, and folklore will be cited in the Yoruba language; however,
In fairness to my non-Yoruba readers, an approximate English language rendition of the Yoruba phrases, sentences, and words will be furnished.

Briefly, this introduction has spelled out the purposes and the ramifications of this study, that is, to describe, analyze, and criticize the system of values involved in Yoruba education.

There are seven chapters in this dissertation: I. Introduction; II. The Description of the Yoruba Education and its Values; III. Analysis of Yoruba Educational Values; IV. Early Missionary and Government Educational Enterprises in Yorubaland; V. Recommendations for Improvement; VI. Consequential Utilitarianism: An Attempt to justify the Yoruba axiology, and VII. Conclusion.

There are two appendices in the dissertation:
CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE YORUBA EDUCATION AND ITS VALUES

This chapter will review, briefly, the geographical situation and the historical origin of the Yoruba people in an attempt to reveal their traditional education and its values. The chapter will also discuss traditional education in Black Africa¹ as a preamble to the particulars of the Yoruba education. In the treatment of the Yoruba education, the role of the family will be analyzed. The importance of initiations into adult life will be discussed, also.

Oral literature: riddles, folklore, proverbs, and idioms have played significant roles in transmitting the Yoruba traditional and cultural values. They, also, will be examined. Since expressive arts: art, drama and theatre are also important means of transmitting the Yoruba educational values, they will be discussed, also. In addition to the oral literature and expressive arts, the Yoruba novelists and playwrights have contributed immensely to the development of the Yoruba educational values and their contributions will be examined, too.

Finally, the chapter will conclude with an examination

¹The Arab countries of North Africa do not allude to themselves as Black Africans. But some of them have strong diplomatic ties, with other Black African nations.
of the values the Yoruba see as following from or see as influencing their educational endeavors.
THE GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION AND THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE YORUBA PEOPLE

The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, of whom there are probably more than 13 million, is the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Professor Afolabi Ojo, in his *Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis*, describes the geographical situation of the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria:

Yorubaland is located within the tropics, much nearer to the equator than to the Tropic of Cancer. The roughly east-west coastline is on the average about 6° 22' N. of the equator; where the coastline swings southwards towards the delta, the southern

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2I wish the reader to bear in mind that a substantially tangible number of the Yoruba people have settled in different geographical locations on the globe, (See citation 3) this study will concentrate on the central area where the vast majority of the people speak the Yoruba language.

most point is about 9° 5' N. ... The extreme longitudinal references are roughly 2° 40' E., and 6° 0' E. in the north-east. 4

The name, 'Yoruba' is said to have been "originally given to the Oyo Yoruba by the Fulani or the Hausa," 5 and it is claimed to mean "cunning" and the usage in the early mission schools has resulted in its general acceptance. 6

Samuel Johnson contends that due to the early unwritten history of the Yoruba people, their origin "is involved in obscurity." 7 His justifying claim is that:

4 Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis (London: University of London Press, 1966), p.22. Professor Ojo analyzes further the three discernable "topographical delimitations" of the Yorubaland, (1) the narrow lowland running east-west, generally below 1,000 ft. above sea level, characterized by creeks, lagoons, swamps, etc; (2) a zone of dissected margins and heights of about 1,300 ft. above sea level; and (3) two-thirds of the Yorubaland varying from 1,000 ft. to over 3,000 ft. above sea level. For further and detailed geographical analysis of the Yorubaland, see pp. 23-32.

5 Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, p.5.: It is worth pointing out that the preponderant number of the Yoruba will not nod their heads in approval of this meaning.

6 Bascom is quick to mention that "in 1864, Koelle argued that the missionaries were erring in applying the name to the Yoruba as a whole because the Yoruba had never used it this way, because it would confuse the Oyo with the larger Yoruba cultural and linguistic group, and because the Yoruba themselves would never accept it." p.5. Due to the Yoruba-Dahomey wars of 1698-1892 and the internal wars of 1817-1893, it can be historically surmised that there was no agreement on a commonly acceptable name for the Yoruba as a whole. People referred to themselves by the names of their sub-groups. For historical details of the Yoruba wars, see Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, pp.12-17; see also Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, pp.188-444.

7 Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, p.3.
Like the early history of most nations the commonly received accounts are for the most part purely legendary. The people being unlettered, and the language unwritten, all that is known is from the traditions carefully handed down.⁸

Although, much has been written about the search for the origin of the Yoruba⁹ by knowledgeable experts in various modern scientific disciplines, no agreements have been reached. And what are available are regarded as legends.¹⁰

Samuel Johnson however believes that:

That the Yorubas came originally from the East there cannot be the slightest doubt; as their habits, manners and customs, etc, all go to prove. With them the East is Mecca and Mecca is the East. Having strong affinities with the East, and Mecca in the East looming so lovely in their imagination, every thing that comes from the East, with them comes from Mecca, and hence it is natural to represent themselves as having hailed originally from the city.¹¹

Yoruba historians will be in the best position to criticize Johnson's claim. Although he substantiated his claim, his book is considered to have been based, in large part, on verbal traditions. These traditions, in turn, are

---

⁸Ibid., p. 3.


¹¹Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, p. 5. Johnson substantiates his claim from three sources; (I) The written record of Sultan Bello of Sokoto, the founder of the city and (II) Major Denham and Capt. Clapperton's Narratives of Travels and Discoveries, 1826; and (III) A Tropical Dependency by Flora L. Shaw (Lady Lugard), 1905, pp. 227-228.
based on first hand observation; for they are written from the point of view of the people of Oyo who are mostly Muslims.12

Johnson's claim seems to have been supported by anthropologists who propounded the "Hamitic theory" suggesting that the "Negro population of Africa" must have been defeated at some period by a "white people" supposedly, the Hamites, who imposed their superior cultures.13 This theory has been exposed to devastating criticisms in recent times and is no longer acceptable.14

However, the Yoruba have their own version of their origin. This version is based on a cycle of myths and legend. These purport to describe the creation of the world, its people and Ile-Ife, "the world's centre." It is a charmingly ethnocentric version. It is an origin myth wide-

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12 Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, p.117.

13 Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba, p.12.


Certain prominent Yoruba scholars supported this Hamites theory; e.g. Archdeacon J. Olumide Lucas attempted to prove that the Yoruba derive from Egypt, "using unsound linguistic evidence," Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, p.7; Dr. Saburi O. Biobaku saw the ancient kingdoms of Meroe in the Eastern Sudan as the source of the Yoruba; see Saburi O. Biobaku, The Origin of the Yoruba, (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1971); also his Origin of the Yorubas: The Lugard Lectures, (Lagos: Federal Information Service, 1955).
ly known and recorded in many different variants. It is said to have been "referred to briefly by Richard and John Lander on their May 15th, 1830 expedition to discover the source of the Niger, and thirteen years later, 1843, was published in a fuller version by Samuel Crowther." One of these variants attributes the creation of the earth to Olodumare (God Almighty), who sent Oduduwa, generally believed to be the ancestor of the Yoruba, with sixteen proficient assistant chiefs to perform the task of building up land within the already existing water surface. Oduduwa was given a receptacle, shaped like a snail's shell, containing particles of sand. He was also given a special giant bird which will help in giving the last touches to the tasks. Under the supervision of Oduduwa, an assistant chief poured the sand on the water below. The mighty bird descended on the sand and used its huge claws to spread out the sand. Where the claws dug deep, valleys were formed; hills, uplands and mountains were left within the interstices of the claws. General irregularities prevailed in the disposition of the land and water surfaces, resulting in various shapes. Moreover the depths of the sea floor and the relief of the land were far from being uniformly level because of the nature of the bird's claws and the haphazard way they were applied. Following this, Oduduwa portioned out the land surface among himself and the sixteen assistants, giving the centre, Ile-Ife to himself, and the area around this

15 Since the purpose of this study is not to give a comprehensive account of the origin of the Yoruba, it will limit itself to a brief exposition of one legendary account of the origin of the Yoruba. Other sources abound, however, Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, pp.9-11; Smith, The Kingdoms of the Yoruba, pp.12-14; Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, pp.3-14; E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1962), pp.11-28.

divided into sixteen equal parts, to the assistants. 17

This account of the creation of the earth according to the Yoruba mythological legendary has not been presented here to serve as a solution to the nagging enigma surrounding the origin of the Yoruba. But it offers certain observations:

(a) The Yoruba are rational, clear, and systematic as far as the knowledge of their local origin, and even that of mankind is concerned.

(b) The validation of their mythological origin sustains many of their beliefs and customs.

(c) The myth provides a charter for the unity and a common origin for the Yoruba, because all Yoruba people claim, and they are naturally proud of it, an ultimate descent from Oduduwa (Omo Oduduwa).

(d) Yoruba kings and even chiefs authenticate their right to rule by claiming lineal descent from Oduduwa through one of his sixteen sons.

(e) Politically, Action Group, a political party established in 1951, was organized by founding the Society of the Children of Oduduwa (Egbe Omo Oduduwa).

These conclusions are open to criticisms, but whatever these are it should be observed that, though these

17 Ojo, Yoruba Culture: A Geographical Analysis, p.194. See Appendix I of this study for another Yoruba myth of creation.
traditions vary considerably in detail, they remain recognizably the same basically. In fact their incoherence may be viewed as one of the marks of their authenticity. It is however recognized that "the best hope of throwing light upon the earliest times of the Yoruba seems to lie now with archaeology."18

Before summarizing this (highly speculative) discussion on the origin of the Yoruba, it is worth pointing out that the Yoruba whose economy is based on farming, trading, and handicrafts have a highly remarkable index of urbanization. It is disturbing to read some authors who attempt to credit the Portuguese explorers with the "discovery" of the Yoruba cities and kingdoms in the 15th Century. The acceptance of the longevity of the occupation of their present city sites are reluctantly agreed.19

Bascom however sounds more reasonable:

Yoruba cities are large, and even the traditional ones are dense. Their permanence can be documented by earlier census reports and estimates going back to 1825 when Yoruba territory was first penetrated by the expedition of Clapperton and Lander. One Yoruba city, Ijebu Ode, which had a population of 28,000 in 1952 is mentioned repeatedly from 1507-1508 onward and first appears on a Portuguese map of about 1500. Even earlier, before Columbus discovered America, when Portuguese explorers first reached Benin in 1485, they learned of a great king who is almost certainly the Oni

18Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba, p.12.

of Ife. Archaeological excavations at Ife and old Oyo suggest the size and confirm the antiquity of these cities.20

The Yoruba language belongs to the Niger-Congo branch of the great Congo-Kordofanian language family which includes most West African languages. This Congo-Kordofanian language family is called Kwa. It is difficult to provide a generalized profile of the Kwa languages. A stereotype would be that the words are mostly short and the nouns begin with vowels, e.g. "Iwe" (book). Proper names often appear to be quite long, however, because they are compounds or phrases made up of several words, e.g. ALADEJANA, (my family name). The name is made up of two words with a prefix, thus: AL-ADE-JANA. The prefix AL results from the ellision of the vowel i from Ali, which means owner of crown (ADE), crosses the road (JANA).21

In summary, this section of the study has attempted to delineate the origin of the Yoruba people, and the various theories behind the attempts to solve the enigma. But the battle is not over:

Meanwhile new material on the subsequent history of the Yoruba is being uncovered, and as more is established about what may be called their "Middle Ages," this should

20 Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, pp.4-5.

21 It should be pointed out that the Yoruba language places a lot of attention on tone accents. Words can significantly alter their meaning if accents are wrongly placed. For further analysis on Yoruba languages and grammar, see Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, pp. xxiii-iv.
in turn shed light on earlier times.  
... Early Yoruba history now awaits, not over-hopefully upon archaeology and its ancillary sciences.\textsuperscript{22}

Another contributing factor toward the solution of this problem may be serology, the compilations and interpretations of the distribution of blood groups among the population, including those of the other areas of West Africa and the Americas with Yoruba population. Although this suggestion may sound strange, it may turn out to be profitable.

Also, more investigations may be attempted on the relations based upon the analysis of the Kwa language. The origin of the Yoruba people in particular may be gleaned from these investigations. However it is possible that the separation of these languages occurred a very long time ago. This time factor admittedly, may mar the investigation especially since there are no early writings of these peoples.

\textsuperscript{22}Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba, p.14.

\textsuperscript{23}Abdou Moumouri, Education in Africa (Washington: Frederick N. Praeger, 1968), p.3.
TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN BLACK AFRICA - A PREAMBLE

One of the criticisms all categories of writers—anthropologists, economists, political scientists—levy against the seemingly lack of unity and development in Black Africa is that there is so much great ethnic diversity among the populations of Black Africa. True enough, for there are at least 6,000 ethnic groups in Black Africa.

But despite that, one finds in the educational domain a certain number of common traits:

(a) The great importance which is attached to education and its collective and social nature.

(b) Its intimate tie with social life, both in a material and spiritual sense.

(c) Its multivalent character, both in terms of its goals and the means employed.

(d) Its gradual and progressive achievement, in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child.23

The importance of education in traditional pre-colonial Africa cannot be over stressed. The parents, the family, and the community have great responsibilities towards the child in traditional educational matters. In African society, one marries to have children or

divorces to remarry and have children. The childless woman is looked down on, and she makes every conceivable effort, through traditional means, through consultations, and through treatments to bear children. There are few countries where such priority is placed on bearing children. Thus, when children are born, everything is done to educate them.

Infants are cared for by the mothers. They feed them, carry them on their backs -- because they are an integral part of their body -- breast feed them for a long time, make a great fuss over them and put them to sleep. Until he attains the age of six to eight, the child remains in the constant care of the mother. She is the protector and provider. And this visible provision and protection are the first education the black child receives.

The mother if the child is a girl, or the father if a boy, formally assumes and remains the main educational provider when the children attain the age of six to eight. Like the Hebrews, the parents assume the responsible role of first teachers, teachers of the law of God, the regulations and taboos of the societal community. The child is educated to respect and love others. The child is educated through observance and examples to become a man or a woman.

When the child is old enough, ages 9 and up, to leave his home, his or her education is the business of everyone. Unlike some of the Western cultures, he or she is not assigned to any particular teacher for specific
educational training.

When the child is at the age (3-7) of running errands, any adult in the community can ask a child to run an errand for him or her, and as long as the child is disposed, he or she runs the errand. Respect for the elders is of supreme importance in the Black African community. It is very natural to be corrected, advised, consoled, scolded, punished or rewarded by an adult. These actions are a part of the task and responsibility of the community of adult educators.

A Black African proverb explains this role of the communal educational involvement, it states that an elder cannot be present in the market and let the head of a young baby - on its mother's back - turn uncomfortably to one side.24

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24It is a common practice in Black Africa for mothers to carry their babies on their back; occasionally, when a baby is thus carried, its head swings to one side without the mother's knowledge. It is the duty of an elder around to call the attention of the mother to it, or offer to help it in proper position. Thus the proverb "Agba kii wa loja ki ori omo titun wo." It should be pointed out that this is not a strict prerogative of the elders alone. But it points out their important role in the society.

An elder in the Yoruba society is:
(a) Anyone who is recognized as a foundation member, thus the elders of the town "Agba Ilu" or the elders of the church "Agba Ijo."
(b) Anyone recognized for his age and wisdom, e.g. a teacher or a wise and courageous leader.
(c) The elite of the society.
(d) A senior, that is a person born before another person. This categorization is far from exhaustive.
Later, his initiation will be under the direction of the members of the community known for their knowledge, wisdom, and experience. He continues this education by listening to stories, legends, and riddles as related by the adults. These are the beginnings of his emotional and intellectual development. As he grows, he participates in these activities proving that he is absorbing what the adults are transmitting to him.

Another communal educational role in the development of the children is the provision for playing games. Most of those games involve the imitation of adults in their roles as fishermen, hunters, basket weavers, leather workers, shopkeepers, housewives, etc.

As in many Western countries, pre-industrial African education responds to the economic, social and political conditions of the society. The Greeks and the Romans, for example, responded to these conditions in their educational evolution. Traditional African education, therefore, seeks to satisfy the children's needs, as members of the society, to be introduced into a life worth living.

Also traditional education like that in most Western countries embraces character building, as well as the development of physical aptitudes, the acquisition of those moral qualities felt to be an integral part of manhood, and the acquisition of the knowledge and techniques needed by all men if they are to take an active part in social life. Again, the objectives of African traditional education do not differ
from those of education in other societies in other parts of the world.

The effectiveness of this education is possible because of its very close relationship with life. It was through the social acts and social relationships of family life and group activities that the education of the children or the adolescents took place.

African children are communally educated. In other cultures, for example the Greek and the Roman, children are handed over to specialists to be trained for specific goals. African children were truly in the school of life, in the most concrete and real sense. The pedagogy of traditional education reveals a profound knowledge of the physiology of the children and adolescents. The methods employed here show striking evidence of adapting to the physical and psychological potentials of the children. For adaptation necessarily requires knowledge and understanding of the chief characteristics of the individual at each different stage of his evolution.

YORUBA EDUCATION - A DESCRIPTION

Long urban settlement and contact with various ethnic groups along the coast have contributed to the Yoruba's liberal educational development. No wonder:

The mental endowment of the Yorubas is a fund of invaluable information for the scientist. They are so immeasurably above the apathy peculiar to the denizens of West Africa in general so vivacious and so alert, so skilful
in the management of life that they may very well be called the nation of practical philosophers of dusky Africa, people who are as ready with an apt illustration of whatever may be under discussion as the thoughtful peasant of Europe. The Yoruba knows the full import of his children's education can explain the reason of his every action and shed the light of its actual consequences on every step taken in life.25

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Let us proceed to describe childhood education among the Yoruba. "Play" is the key educational word at this period. The Yoruba children at the age of five or so begin to attempt to imitate and emulate the activities of their parents. Such occupational activities and chores as cooking, sweeping the floor, marketing, and carpentry are imitated. Generally, the children are not prevented from playing unless they are destructive or hurting themselves.

Although play has been characterized as non-serious26 the Yoruba children's imitative involvement is an important matter, and they take it very seriously. This observation does not contradict the non-serious characteristic of play. It merely stresses the mentality of children: their egocen-

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25Quoted in Nigeria Magazine by Leo Frobenius from J.A. Majasan's, "Yoruba Education, its principles, practice and relevence to current educational development." (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1967); p.37.

tric nature makes their play serious and important to them (the children).

Thus the Yoruba mother is responsible for teaching her daughter her trade, so that she too may in later years earn her own means of livelihood. Likewise, a father apprentices the boy in his occupation.

Briefly then, Yoruba childhood education stresses economic and psychological but not social independence, a concept foreign to the culture largely because of the uniqueness and strength of the role of the extended family tradition. The children learn to respect the bonds of kinship, to perform economic activities, to watch out for their own interests, and to make decisions for themselves. From the start of imitative play, there is a gradual transition to the adult activities which the children will perform throughout the rest of their lives. However, European contact has significantly altered this; almost all school children in Yorubaland have been placed or will be placed in an artificial environment and assigned tasks which may never be related to what they will encounter in later years. For example, the Western education to which the children are introduced places very little emphasis on occupational activities and chores.

REACHING ADULTHOOD-EDUCATIONAL INITIATION

Reaching adulthood through initiation is a form of education among the traditional Yoruba. By the everyday life of their family, their village, by the precepts, and
the occasional remarks of elders, the Yoruba children reaching adolescence should have already assimilated the essential part of their social heritage. However, before being admitted to adult status, they must undergo initiation.

Traditional initiation has three important ends. It is a test of courage, it is educational, and it is a social exercise. Initiation is painful and it seems it is made so, not for sadistic ends but as a test of courage. Initiation becomes very painful when it includes such surgical operations, as circumcision for boys; for girls, excision. It may even include tribal markings. These measures are meant to help the would-be adult to prepare for the anticipated pains of later life:

To enjoy the rights of adulthood one must be worthy of them and show that one will be able to endure the physical and mental wounds inflicted by life, the pains of childbirth and the risks of war.

Traditionally, elders speak of the "schools" of initiation, because preparation for the initiations may take a long period of time. During this period girls are assigned

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to experienced women and the boys, to wise men. These instructors endeavor to transmit and explain the maxims that may later help in solving problems.

When everybody knows everybody else and cannot avoid cooperating with any other member of the group, mutual adjustment is easy and it is deliberately sought. Education by initiation is directed to this end.29

Lastly, initiation is geared toward social ends. Initiation becomes useful in a society stratified into age classes. This newly created or initiated group must fulfill certain social functions. It could be their turn to sweep the market place or weed the path leading to the king's farm, etc. The supreme aim behind such categorizing of persons according to age and sex and allotting to them social tasks is "neither a tendency to anarchy or even liberalism, but a strong tendency toward planning."30

Initiation rites are now seldom practised in the traditional way. These have been replaced by ordinarily recognizing children born during the same period of time (Age grouping). This is akin to the western recognition of zodiacic celebrations.

29 Maquet, Africanity: The Cultural Unity of Black Africa, p.66. To the traditional Yoruba, initiation rite is a substitute for the written examinations as they are presently practised in Western Education.

30 Ibid., p.67.
YORUBA EDUCATION AND VERBAL ART

This section of the dissertation will discuss the educational implications of Yoruba oral literature; that is, of folk-tales, riddles, and proverbs. The Yoruba verbal art provides us with the rich educational traditions of the Yoruba. It must be admitted, they are complex. It has been pointed out above that the Yoruba are unlettered and depend to a very large extent on their traditions. Some foreign writers on the Yoruba people have contended that although the Yoruba depend on their traditions, "little reliance can be placed upon the traditions of nations who are unacquainted with the art of writing."31 A prominent Yoruba scholar, Professor A. Fajana, remonstrates that:

The fact that Yoruba philosophy is unwritten is enough to tempt anyone to feel that the people "thought" little. But when we remember that books are only an aid to memory or a way of communicating ideas, it will be appreciated that writing is not really essential to fruitful thinking. The use of myths and pictures by the Yoruba helps to bridge the gap between thinkers and the ordinary men.32


32A. Fajana, "Some Aspects of Yoruba Traditional Education." Odu 3 (July 1966): p.17. For other discussions of this topic, see Adesanya Adebayo, "Yoruba Metaphysical Thinking," Odu 5 (1958): 36-41; see also, Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, pp.125-126. Johnson refused to discuss the point, but states it bluntly that the Yoruba learning consists chiefly in oral traditions. "The Historians are the King's cymballists and ballad singers, the chief of whom is called the Ologbo or Arokin. They may be compared to the rhapsodists of the Homeric age, as they perform almost precisely similar functions. They chant to the King the story of the nation, and history of former reigns, for his information and instruction." (idem, p.125).
RIDDLES AND FOLKLORE

Riddles and folklore are both generally told after dark. On cool evenings during the dry season, when people sit about a fire to warm themselves against the December cold weather, and on moonlit nights when they stay up late. Riddles or folklore may bring about a sort of social cohesion, at this time.

But especially, "alo" (riddles), are recognized as acuminating the wits and training the memory of children. They also impart knowledge and wisdom. Children learn, through what Fajana called "Ifiye" (instruction), social behavior from the older members of the society. This may take the form either of moral instruction or formal teaching. The manners, conventions, superstitions and laws are taught. For example children learn that a commoner may not eat with the king, touch his head or pass through his palace without greeting him. Through the riddles the "ewo" (taboos)\(^{33}\) of the land are transmitted to the young ones. Riddles are considered to be for children, while other verbal arts like proverbs are the concern of adults. Riddles are however

\(^{33}\)"Ewo" are the taboos of the land. Children are taught to keep them. The adults who transmit these adhere to them very strictly not only for the moral training but because of the ingrained beliefs that if one contravenes them so-and-so will happen. For example, it is forbidden to sit on the grinding stone, for one may develop boils; it is forbidden to gather rain water with your hands, it will attract lightning. Children inquisitively question the rationale of these taboos, as it is evident that these reasons do not seem committed enough. However these taboos have kept the Yoruba from dirty contagious habits.
metaphorical.

Concerning the forms and contents of Yoruba riddles: "They are usually phrased as declarative sentences, rather than as questions, and the implicit 'question' to be answered may not be readily apparent to an outsider; for example, "It bears fruit, we cannot pick it; the fruit falls, we cannot gather it." Answer: "Dew."34

Only one riddle is commented upon below for its educational and axiological significance.

Huh (Guess that).

Answer: Understanding of your belly, "iye inu re," or "Odi" (dumb mute).

This riddle is one of the most unusual of all the Yoruba riddles, as it may leave the listener or the one to answer the riddle unawares that a riddle has even been propounded. In the case of an unsuspected listener, the riddler may add, guess that, to arouse the challenge. The sound "huh" or "hun" is a sigh, coming from "the deep in the chest" made by a person in a hard thinking mood. It also resembles the noises made by a dumb mute.

The educational implications of this riddle are encyclopedic. Axiologically, it reminds one of the biblical passage on clean and unclean, "Listen, and understand. What

goes into the mouth does not make a man unclean; it is what comes out of the mouth that makes him unclean." It is presumed that the understanding of 'one's belly' is synonymous with the interiorization of the sanction against moral impurity. Proverbially, Yoruba will comment: When one has black blood in him, he should not spit out white.

Educationally and pedagogically, this proverb calls for alertness especially because it leaves the listener unaware that a riddle has been posed. Also, it anticipates that the human mind is precious and should not be wasted in unprofitable wishful activities. But sound education does not rely on guessing which seems characteristic of the riddles. Folk tales are predominantly axiological in intent. They are usually preceded by riddles. Kubik writing in the Journal of African Music Society notes:

Alo is a story containing a short song --- the one who knows a story shouts: Aloo...! And the community answers: Alo (with a low tone). The story teller starts narrating. Whenever the little song in the tale comes, everybody joins in singing and clapping. Usually the sole accompaniment is clapping in a steady pulse. At the end of the story the story teller explains the moral.36

When the first story teller has finished, another commences. The Yoruba have professional experts in this art.

35 Matthew 15:11 (Quote from the Jerusalem Bible) All subsequent Biblical quotes in this study will be from the Jerusalem Bible translation.

Most older people are very proficient in story telling, and they can actually captivate the attention of their audience. Small children may be given a chance during the evening sessions. At school, though, they have the floor. Usually they retell the stories they have heard from others, mostly adults.

The Yoruba professional story teller must not be confused with the Arokin or narrators of national traditions, sometimes attached to Palaces and chiefs. The Arokin are the depositories of the ancient chronicles.

Here is an example of a Yoruba folk tale. It is about a tortoise who sets out to gather all the wisdom of the world:

The story teller starts with a riddle: "What are two tiny birds that jump over a hundred trees?"
All the children try to guess. "Two eyes" shouts one of the boys, rolling over on his back with laughter. Then the story teller is ready to begin.

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37See citation 32.

38For more analysis of the structure and changes in form of the palaces of the Yoruba kings, see, G.J. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Palaces (London: University of London Press, 1966).

39Tortoise and snail play prominent roles in the Yoruba folktales. The tortoise in particular is regarded as a trickster, greedy, and crafty. See, Adeboya Solomon Babalola, "The Snail and the Tortoise in Yoruba Folklore." African Notes 96 (March/May 1968): 38-40. Babalola feels that the tortoise has been unduly promoted in the accounts of Yoruba folktales. He supported his position with a proverb "Ogbon ti Ahun gbon, ehin l'o nto Igbin" (Clever as Tortoise is, he is but a runner-up to Snail).
One morning a long time ago, Tortoise woke up. He wondered what to do that day. He sat in the sun and thought about it.

"Aha!" he said at last. "I shall gather up all the wisdom in the world. No one shall be so wise as I."

Off he went looking for wisdom. Whenever he found some, he put it in a big clay pot. It took him a whole week to find all the wisdom in the world. He pushed it all into the big clay pot.

"Where shall I hide all this wisdom?" Tortoise asked himself. He sat in the sun and thought about it.

"Aha!" he said at last. "I shall hide it at the top of the tallest oil-palm tree."

Off he went to the forest. Soon he came to a great tall tree. Tortoise held the jar against his chest and tied it with a rope to his neck.

He began to climb the tree, but the jar kept getting in his way, and down he fell. He tried again, and fell again.

Soon a man came along the path and watched Tortoise trying to climb the tree. At last the man laughed and said, "If you had any wisdom you would hang the pot on your back. Then you could climb the tree."

Tortoise sat in the shade of the tree and thought about it. He tied the pot to his back and off he went up the tree. But as he climbed, he thought and thought.

When he was almost to the top, he angrily threw the pot to the ground. He was in a terrible temper!

The pot broke, and all the wisdom rolled away. Since then, wisdom has been shared by everyone who finds it.40

The educational import of Yoruba folk tales is apparent, for example, the story above exhibits the social nature of knowledge; that knowledge should be shared rather than to be hidden for personal or individual use only. This fits

perfectly the Yoruba traditional communal life. However the brief generalization below may not be very apparent from the story of the tortoise above. Generally, Yoruba folk tales provide an inner education. By means of symbols the stories demonstrate how one can cope with the powers of one's own mind. These powers are personified and imaged in the stories. The "moral" of the story shows what is acceptable to the society. They also help in the developments of rhetorical and philological sciences.

PROVERBS

Proverbs are another form of verbal arts; they convey tremendous educational ideas and values. The Yoruba have an extraordinary number of these. Adults, who are regarded as the embodiments of knowledge and wisdom, have the privilege of using proverbs, while boys must ask permission before quoting a proverb in the presence of adults. Like folk tales, proverbs express Yoruba morals and ethics. They are convenient standards for appraising behavior. They are used to express social approval and disapproval. They are conveniently applied to express praise, criticism, ridicule, warning, defiance, derision of an enemy or rival, advice, and counsel. For example, to the Yoruba, "A counsellor who understands proverbs soon sets matters right." But more significantly a Yoruba saying states that, "A proverb is the horse (backbone) of conversation. When the conversation

41 Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, p.98.
droops, a proverb revives it." That is the core of its value.

Yoruba proverbs have five categories which are educationally applicable. There are proverbs of:

a) "Imoran" (Advice): "Ogbon ologbon ni a nfi sogbon, imoran eni kan ko jo boro."

(It is through other peoples wisdom that we learn wisdom; a single person's understanding does not amount to anything).

This proverb cautions disparagement of advice given by others; for by listening to them, one may find the weaknesses in one's own ideas. Education, as defined by P.R. Hirst and R.S. Peters has a relationship to this proverb, especially the phrase "which teachers regard as desirable."

In this sense, students are encouraged to pay attention to the pedagogical advice of teachers (elders) because their instructions are regarded as desirable.

b) "Alaye" (Comment) "Akoni ko ni ki a sika bi a ko nika ninu; tani nko 'ni ki a to se rere?" (A teacher will not teach us to do evil if we have no evil inside us;

42 W.P. Krolikowski, S.J., "Education," An Alphabetical Companion to Educational Foundations 420, Philosophy of Education (Chicago: Loyola University, Oct. 1974). The entire definition runs thus: "Peters defines education as a family of processes whose principle of unity is the striving to initiate others into a form of life which teachers regard as desirable, and in which knowledge and understanding play an important part" Fr. Krolikowski offers a valuable analytical comment on this definition. cf. Hirst and Peters, The Logic of Education, pp.19-20.
after all no one gives us instructions which may lead us to do good).

This satirical comment alaye has much to do with misunderstanding of a teacher's instructions by students who later on excuse themselves - for doing, for example, a wrong assignment - by saying that it was due to the teacher's instructions.

c) "Ibawi" (Reproach) "Bi omode ni aso to baba re, ko ni akisa to o." (If a child has as many clothes as his father, he has not as many rags) -- The father, being older, has worn out far more clothes.

This reproach cautions young people not to look down on their elders but to have regard for their years of experience. A classroom situation helps to explain this proverb. At times, in some of our classrooms, despite the teacher's efforts to answer a student's question, a dissatisfied student may comment, "he (teacher) does not know what he is talking about." A normal Yoruba student will not make such a sharp remark. It is insulting.

d) "Ikilo" (Warning) "Ekan ni ejo nyan ni." (The snake bites a man only once).

This warning proverb is particularly apropos for students who for one reason or the other flunk their tests. If they care about their education, necessary precautions will be taken the next time to see that they do not fail.

e) "Isiri" (Encouragement) "Pipe ni yio pe
akololo yio pe baba." (It may take a long
time but the stammerer will call baba
(father)). The word "ba," which is the
first syllable in Yoruba language is also
the first effort by children learning to
speak. It is also the first effort by the
dumb and the stammerer.

The educational implications of this proverb are
obvious. The educational achievements arrive gradually and
to be educationally successful a person must exercise
patience. With patience, effort, and dedication, the goal
will ultimately be achieved.43

Proverbs are highly regarded due to the wisdom they
express. It is significant that, although sacred myths have
been questioned and rejected since the coming of foreigners,
educated Yoruba have retained and respected their proverbs.

IDIOMS

There is another kind of Yoruba verbal art - Idioms.
Idioms are accepted phrases, constructions or expressions
contrary to the usual patterns of the language or having
meanings different from the literal. Like riddles, folk-
tales, and proverbs, idioms are educational and rewarding.
Their usage and meaning vary from one ethnic group to another

43For other valuable Yoruba proverbs, their meaning
and usage see Isaac O. Delano, Owe L'esin Oro, Yoruba Pro-
verbs - Their meaning and Usage (Ibadan: Oxford University
Press, 1972), pp.1-152; see also Ellis, The Yoruba Speaking
Peoples, pp.219-242.
among the Yoruba. The greatest difficulty about the idioms is that there is no one formula to assimilate them. But as the Yoruba proverb goes "Eni ti o ba mo 'wo 'we yio ba agba je (onje)." (He who is able to wash his hands will dine with the elders). Since the elders are the depositories of wisdom, acquaintance with them allows one to share in their wealth of wisdom.

Two idioms are presented here to verify the above characteristics.

a) "Be ejo lori" - (sever the head of the snake). That is, solve a problem in a single stroke of thought or action.

b) "Be ile wo" - (watch the ground or watch out). That is, use clever means to find out certain things in a place we do not know much about.

Their brevity reflects their usage. They are interjected into complete thoughts since most of them do not make complete thoughts. Educationally, idioms challenge one to think.

Briefly, this section has exposed the verbal arts of the Yoruba educational implications. Riddles, folk tales, proverbs, and idioms reflect Yoruba culture. These cultural oral literatures being part of the Yoruba esthetics, the Yoruba have benefited immensely from their education.

YORUBA ART, DRAMA, WRITTEN LITERATURE, AND THEATRE EDUCATION

This section of the dissertation will examine the educational values involved in Yoruba art, drama, written
literature, and theatre. Their educational values can be understood from the fact that Yoruba art, drama, written literature and theatre are essential transmitters of the Yoruba cultural tradition.

In this section, also, (though the dissertation is dealing with the Yoruba traditional values) the works of certain modern Yoruba novelists, for example, Amos Tutuola, and playwrights, for example, Wole Soyinka, will be discussed. Their works assist in reminding the Yoruba people of their traditional values which modern civilization seems to prevent them (the Yoruba) from practising.

ART

The educational values of the Yoruba arts, drama, and theatre and the Yoruba written literature can be appreciated through the understanding of their characteristics. They are rich in overtones of allusions, echoing the world view of the community. Tremendous values are attached to them. They are also educationally entertaining.

For these reasons foreigners find it difficult to understand them. While the importance of studying Yoruba arts as an integrated whole is now recognized, relatively little has been accomplished in the field to discover the values accruing from them. An investigator for example,

44 The writer is being particular here, for the observation is applicable to the whole of African arts form. Several Yoruba artists are alluded to here by name; these allusions reflect the writer's reminiscences.
may inadvertently lead his informant to produce answers simply to please him. Moreover, the investigator seeks out the person he judges most knowledgeable in the community, whose views and interpretations may not truly represent those of the community. But meanwhile, the investigator supposes that what he has learned reflects the insight of the entire community. Due to the investigator's narrow understanding, he makes a generalized conclusion on the Yoruba art form, oblivious of the fact that each Yoruba community has its own artistic style.

These complications may last for a very long time. Yoruba artists, though artists are the best sources of critical information of their society, usually refuse to judge their own work and are unwilling to assess that of others.

Folk arts in recent years have produced a striking educational influence. Artists without formal training have been offered the opportunity through workshops in Oshogbo (an important art center in Yorubaland) to express themselves in both traditional and Western media. Oshogbo artists such as Adebisi Akanji, sculptor in cement, and Timo Buraimo, graphic artist, have been recognized and even found patrons in their community. Many visual artists of Oshogbo have been inspired by the writings of Amos Tutuola, who himself can be regarded as a folk artist. His book, The Palmwine Drinkard, originally written in English, has been translated to Yoruba, and adapted to the stage by
Kola Ogunmola. It is one of the most successful items in the repertory of popular theatre in Western Nigeria.

DRAMA

Another form of art which has gained the attention of traditional art lovers is the Folk Opera. It has been associated with the name of Duro Ladipo. Duro and his group employed traditional music to tell traditional stories in an overall form of presentation that seems essentially Western. Duro Ladipo made use of the richness of Yoruba traditional poetry; with it, he created a trilogy about the history of the kingdom of Oyo-Oba Ko So (The King did not Hang); Oba Moro (The King of Ghosts); and Oba Waja (The King is Dead) which were published in 1964 as Three Yoruba Plays. Duro's Works are serene and powerful - like the ancient Greek tragedies.

yoruba written literature

Yoruba written literature is believed to have originated with Igbo Olodumare (The Forest of God) in 1947. It was the first of a series of fantastic novels by Chief D. O. Fagunwa. Needless to mention, it gained immense popularity among the Yoruba. By 1970, the total reprints of Fagunwa'a five novels have escalated to hundreds of thousands.

Fagunwa's novels are highly constructed adventurous tales containing many folklore elements; spirits, gods, magic, witchcraft, transformation flights, and monsters. Fagunwa's style is lively; and he exhibits humor typical of the Yoruba. His language makes good use of visual images:
a sad man is described as hanging his face like a banana leaf; a liar is proverbially alluded to as having black blood in his belly but spits white saliva; and a quarrel sticks in the throat like a fishbone.

Fagunwa created a vogue for novel literary ambitions among the Yoruba. He probably influenced Amos Tutuola whose literary skill exhibits almost the same genre. Along with others I. O. Delano tried to break away from that tradition. His Aiye d'aiye Oyibo (It is a White Man's World), was the first of a series of realistic novels.

THEATRE EDUCATION

The first professional Yoruba theatrical company which exposed modern Yoruba literature to the theatres is Hubert Ogunde and His Theatre Party. His party founded in the 1940's has its origin in the morality and biblical plays. His plays blend elements of music hall with astute political satire. His famous "Yoruba Ronu" (Yoruba Think), performed in 1964, shook the political foundations of the government of Western Nigeria. His party was banned from Western Nigeria, the first instance of literary censorship in Nigeria theatrical history. Ogunde's plays are commercially successful.

As pointed out above, Kola Ogunmola has also become successful through his refinement of Ogunde's techniques, replacing, for example, saxophones with Yoruba drums and presenting more gentle social and political satires without passing judgements on follies and weaknesses.
Wole Soyinka is probably the most famous playwright in Africa. By the early 1970's he had published nine plays. All are set firmly in contemporary West Africa. In his lighter mood he makes fun of pompous village teachers, as in *The Lion and the Jewel* (first performed in Ibadan, 1959; published 1963), or of the cunning "prophets" of the upstart dissident African churches as in *The Trials of Brother Jero* (1962). More important, however, are his serious plays, revealing skepticism and disillusionment. In *A Dance of the Forests* (published 1963), written and performed to celebrate Nigerian independence in October, Soyinka rejected the Negritude concept that the revival of African culture must be inspired by the African cultural heritage alone. *Kongi's Harvest*, which opened the World Festival of Negro Arts (Dakar, Senegal, April 1966), is a brilliant satire on African dictatorship. Though he seemed to borrow many of its "hero" traits from the Ghanaian political leader Kwame Nkrumah, Soyinka has made it clear that he had no one person in mind but was attacking the new trend in African nationalist politics.

Soyinka's tragic view of life is most fully expressed in his play *The Road* (published 1965), first performed at the 1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival, and in his novel *The Interpreters* (1965). The publication in 1967 of *Idanre*, his first collection of poems, established him as a poet of distinction. Here, too, he explored his tragic sense of the difficulties and cost of human progress. He has always
played an active part in public life, forming two theatre companies, Masks and the Orisum players, and lecturing successively at Ife, Lagos, and Ibadan, where he headed the Drama School.

The development of Yoruba literature owed much to:

(1) the establishment of the Mbari Club, in 1961 at Ibadan, which is a meeting place for new writers and artists; it is also their publication centre.

(2) the Universities of Ibadan, Ife, and Lagos, where many of the artists studied, and some later taught. These higher institutions helped in reducing the dichotomy between Western educational cultures and the traditional cultures.

Yoruba is perhaps the first, if not the only, African language to produce a magazine devoted to contemporary writing. Olokun, published biannually at Ibadan University features the work of such modern poets as S. A. Babalola and A. Faleti.45

As pointed out in Chapter one, the purpose of this dissertation is to describe, analyze, and criticize the system of values involved in Yoruba education. In pursuance of this, the dissertation will discuss what Yoruba education values and for what purpose. This section of the work will attempt to discuss what Yoruba education values and for what purpose. Also, this section will exhibit the role of adults in Yoruba society. But, firstly, it is expedient to describe what axiology is.

Axiology or value theory attempts to prescribe what is good and right behavior. Axiology has ethics and aesthetics as subdivisions. Ethics is concerned with the philosophical values of morality and conduct; aesthetics is concerned with value systems in the realms of beauty and art.

The Yoruba have always found themselves in a world of clashing values. Experts of all nationalities in various educational disciplines have written volumes attempting to clarify the value dilemma. The clashing values are


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classically identified as those of objective versus subjective values. Objective values theorists contend that what is good is at the heart of the universe and applicable everywhere and for all time. On the contrary, the subjectivists argue that what is good depends on group or personal prerogatives, which have to do with circumstances, times, and places.

Yoruba education has always been concerned with the formation of values in the young, and these young people are encouraged to prefer certain values.

Although the simple Yoruba have not attained the level of academic distinction expected in a preceding paragraph, their cultural and traditional upbringing, very closely intermingled with "the fear of the Lord," orientates them to believe that: good character is the adornment of humanity, as white teeth is the adornment of smile; one's good character goes with one into the grave, as a girl's luck accompanies her to her husband's house; good character is religion; good character is a god, and as we behave, so we are blessed.47 The next chapter will be concerned with these values.

The core of the axiological implications of Yoruba education is enriched by the proverb: "Our concern is that

47These are Yoruba proverbs paraphrased. Their Yoruba translation make philosophic reading: "Iwa re re l'eso enia; ehin funfun l'eso erin;" "Iwa eni ni ba ni de sare, ori eni nii ba ni de le oko;" "Iwa l'esin; Iwa l'orisa, bi a ba ti hu u si ni i fi gbe ni si."
our stupid child shall not die, but what greater cause of death is there than stupidity?" (A bimo ko gbon, a ni ko sa maku; Kini o npa enia bi aigbon?) In other words, not to endeavor to improve the child's intellect is to expose it to the danger of death. The questions to be tackled at this point are, what does Yoruba education value? for what purpose? and what order?

The answers to these questions are not simplistic. The Yoruba educational philosophy, like all educational philosophies is constantly building on common sense. One attempt to answer these questions may depend on what meaning is ascribed to value.

John Dewey, the American Educator and Philosopher, in his Democracy and Education states that:

The term "value" has two quite different meanings. On the one hand, it denotes the attitude of prizing a thing, finding it worth while, for its own sake or intrinsically. This is a name for a full or complete experience. To value in this sense is to appreciate. But to value also means a distinctly intellectual act - an operation of comparing and judging - to evaluate. This occurs when direct full experience is lacking, and the question arises which of the various possibilities of a situation is to be preferred in order to reach a full realization, or vital experience.48

These two different meanings of value according to

Dewey assist me in attempting to answer the questions, what values do Yoruba education reflect? A Yoruba education, though complex, is regarded as the cornerstone for success in life. As a cornerstone, it reflects values that can be regarded as educational values, such as mental discipline or power, utility, culture, information, preparation for social efficiency and so on. These values expose one to the philosophy of what Yoruba education values. In other words, the Yoruba send their children to school to develop their mental power to be useful citizens and preserve the cultural heritage of the Yoruba people.

The Yoruba word "Eko" which has been inaccurately translated into English as "education" encompasses all departments of life: politics, religion, training, etiquette, handcraft, and so on.

For the aims (of "Eko") are to discipline all the faculties of the individual to bring out the best human qualities in the child and to help the individual at different stages, to become a useful member of the society. To fail to achieve these aims is to fail woefully.

The regard for education is manifested in various ways. It is patent in marriage. Beautiful but uneducated young ladies are described as "Oju lari, eso ko de inu" (We see the pleasing surface but the inside is shallow). Thus

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beauty is not a criterion for finding a husband. Lack of education marks one out for criticism, rejection, and disfavor.

Also, without a good education, one's chances for a position of leadership are greatly reduced. In such a circumstance, wealth cannot procure the opening. To Yoruba educational philosophers like Chief J. F. Odunjo, education is an investment.

Just as good food sustains life, so education is the child's heritage. A person who neglects his child's education but concentrates on amassing wealth and property, will some day discover to his sorrow that an uneducated child is bound to ruin his parent's wealth and dispose of the carefully acquired property.51

The principle of seniority is another value originating from Yoruba traditional education. Apart from its value it also simplifies the pedagogical involvements of education. According to the principle of seniority, an elder has an obligation to teach, correct and if necessary punish dignly the younger ones. Age is a respected phenomenon in Yoruba society. Under normal circumstances, the younger ones listen to what the adults have to teach:

Deference to seniority is carried to such an extent that the advice of a senior man is listened to with respect even though it may be disagreeable. Should any one show disrespect to him the younger folks champion his case and defend him. In fact when he insults a junior man, for no just reason, the junior man does not answer back at once; he allows for age and

does not answer back until it has been repeated three times. Those present at the scene must be satisfied that the senior man has actually abused his privilege before they can justify any action the junior may later take. 52

This sounds like a non-violent philosophy of awakening moral shame in an opponent as a means of redeeming and reconciling him. (In addition to that, it is the axiology of Yoruba education):

Subscribing to the orderly influence of the mature mind on the immature mind, through the systematic development and discipline of all the powers of the individual, namely: physical, social, intellectual, moral, aesthetic and spiritual, according to their right or proper order, so that he may fulfill legitimate purposes on earth and attain eternal salvation. 53

Hard work is another value very much recognised in Yoruba educational endeavors. To the Yoruba, having a lazy child is synonymous to having none. A lot of "misfortunes" occurs to him, for example, due to his laziness, a common saying reinforces this; when a lazy man's fiancee is old enough for marriage, she is snatched away by a rich—hard working—man. 54

There are two factors for a Yoruba child's laziness; either his parents failed to educate him and give him the


54The Yoruba say proverbially, "Eni bi olo, ko ri omo bi;" also the Yoruba say "Bi iyawo olo ba dagba, olowo ni yio gbee."
necessary attention and supervision at the formative stage of development, or he was indulged. Thus the Yoruba say "Akeju ba omo olowo je." (Indulgence spoils the child of the rich man). Some of the ways the rich man's child may be considered spoiled include, giving very little work to do when he has to work, and also, he is allowed to sleep late unduly.55

It could be as a result of the child's personal lack of response to education and training - an irresponsible child. He is called "Ako igba" (One who does not respond to training).

Briefly, this section of the study has attempted to answer the questions: What does Yoruba education value? and for what purpose?

The role of adults in the Yoruba society has reduced the toughness of these questions. The elder, or the adult or the senior member of the society sees to it that the rigorous preparation for adult life is pursued in the traditional order:

The Yoruba youth is subjected to rigorous discipline and a very demanding mental exercise to acquire all that is required of him in religion, art, communalism, morality, diligence, cultivation of intelligence, diplomacy and factual knowledge before he can be ready for adulthood.56

55 In the metropolitan area of Lagos these categories of children are termed "Omo aje butta" (The child who eats butter) an overstatement of indulgence.

Some of the ideas exposed here seem to have undergone essential changes in the past 100 years; however, the unique value placed on education has not altered; it has grown to an appreciative level. What has changed is the character. Next, attention will be focused on the analysis of the Yoruba educational values.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE YORUBA EDUCATIONAL VALUES

This chapter will discuss the Yoruba word "Iwa," meaning character, in order to facilitate the understanding of the Yoruba educational values. The chapter will also list and discuss ten moral principles by which a Yoruba person may be judged as possessing or not possessing good character. The chapter will argue that although the Yoruba people do not claim an exclusive possession of the moral values, they have "Yorubalized" them. Finally, the chapter will point out that these moral values are teachable.

The Yoruba word "Iwa" is significant in the analysis of Yoruba educational values. "Iwa" means character, and the aim of Yoruba education has been to foster good character "Iwa Rere." The Yoruba believe that if good character is made the central theme of training, every other virtue will automatically be added to it. A person's education is profoundly linked to this all embracing phrase of "good character." The attention placed on character training is prominent because:

To a Yoruba, character is the beauty of a person; it is like a gem that adorns the crown. No one thinks much of a man's achievements or his station in life, if he does not possess good character. He is not better
than a wooden doll.¹

Professor E. Bolaji Idowu of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Ibadan, is perhaps the most articulate analyst of Yoruba ethics. According to Idowu, because the Yoruba are in all things, religious, they have developed the essential moral attitudes which they exemplify in their "Iwa":

Therefore, morality is summed up in Yoruba by the word "Iwa" which can be translated by the English word "character." "Iwa," according to the Yoruba, is the very stuff

¹A. Fajana, "Some Aspects of Yoruba Traditional Education," Odu 3 (July 1966): 25. For further analysis on the comparison of a person's character to a wooden doll see Denrele Obasa, Awon Akawi (Yoruba Philosophy), Iwe Keji (Ibadan: Egbe Agba O'tan, 1933), pp.91-92.

Obasa likens a person without good character to a wooden doll:

Omo t'o dara ti ko n'iwa
Omo-langidi ni i
Iwa rere l'eso enia
Bi o birin dara bi Egbara
Bi ko n'iwa
Omo langidi ni i
B'okunrin suwon, suwon,
Bi eja inu omi
Bi ko n'iwa rere
Omo langidi ni i.

A child who is beautiful without character is a wooden doll
Good character is the adornment of humanity
If a lady is exquisitely beautiful
Without character
She is a wooden doll.
If a man is so handsomely rare
Like (rare) fish in the river
(If) he does not possess good character
He is a wooden doll.
which makes life a joy because it is pleasing to God.2

A person of good character among the Yoruba is spoken of as "omoluwabi" (one who behaves as a well born), and the antithesis of that is "Enia-k'enia" (a mere caricature of a person).3

The importance attached to the development of good character goes back to Yoruba mythology. The main source of the acquisition of this tradition is the Odu4 corpus. According to this corpus, Orunmila sought the means of success in life and he was counselled that one of the sure means was to marry "Iwa" (character). He did and was successful. Following Orunmila's success in life, it was taught that the only requisite to success in life is "Iwa":

Character is all that is requisite.
Character is all that is requisite.
There is no destiny to be called unhappy in Ife city.
Character is all that is requisite.5


3Other such expressions are: "O s'enia" (He acts the person) and "Ki 's'enia; nse lo fi aso enia bora," (He is not a person, he merely assumes the skin of a person).

4The Odu corpus is a body of traditional recitals which are intricately related to the system of divination of the cult of Orunmila, who is regarded as the deputy of Olo­ dumare—God Almighty—in matters pertaining to His omni­science and wisdom.

5"Iwa nikan l'o soro;
Iwa nikan l'o soro;
Ori kan ki buru l'otu Ife
Iwa nikan l'o soro o."
Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, p. 155.
Good character among the Yoruba has several qualities. Gentle character is one of these qualities, and it is highly recommended by the Yoruba people because:

Gentle character it is which enables the rope of life
To stay unbroken in one's hand
So declares the oracle to Orunmila
Who by means of gentle character
Was going to win the rope of life from the four hundred and one divinities.6

As a consequence of the exhibition of a good character, which is expected of everyone for the good of the whole community, a person is socially acceptable. Thus an individual could be ostracized from the society if his character is unbearably unbecoming; for example, in the old days wicked people were exiled. And in recent times, "one who seduced the wife of another must turn and go another way if the offended person walked along the road towards him."7

Good character, the result of profitable traditional education, involves the following: (a) that kindness is a highly desirable virtue; (b) that wickedness is repulsive to God and man; (c) that truth and rectitude are highly exalted virtues; (d) that stealing is forbidden; (e) that women

6This recommendation is from the Odu Corpus of Ireti-Idi:

Iwa pele l'okun aiye
Fi 'ro peti l'owo eni
0 da fun Orunmila
Ti o nlo fi iwa pele
Gbe okun aiye l'owo okan-le'ni
'tinwo imale.

7Idowu, Oludumare: God in Yoruba Belief, p.157.
should be protected because they are considered the weaker sex; (f) that honor and respect should be accorded a senior person; (g) that chastity before marriage on the part of a woman is essential; (h) that to be hospitable is highly desirable; (i) that one should love his neighbor as himself; (j) that Covenant-breaking is abhorred.

These are some of the moral values a Yoruba is committed to. It is believed that adhering to any or all of these is regarded as possessing good character. One's educational background makes the fulfillment and implementation of these moral virtues fecundatingly feasible.

Let us proceed to discuss the above criteria of good character.

(a) that kindness is a highly desirable virtue:
The kind person is a generous person among the Yoruba. He is considered blessed abundantly by Olodumare - God Almighty. Also, he is considered to be in no want, since Olodumare will constantly reward him for his acts of kindness. The Yoruba say that:

The calabash of the kind breaks not,
The dish of the kind splits not,
\textbf{It is both money and children that flow into the house of the kind}.\footnote{Igba olore ki fo
Awo olore ki faya
T'owo at'omo ni ya ile olore.}

(b) that wickedness is repulsive to both God and man:
The person who practices "lex talionis" (the law of retaliation) is considered wicked. The Yoruba believe that anyone
who perpetrates wickedness does it, not only at his own expense, but also that of his children. 9

A story my mother told me which I consider classical brings out the evil of retaliation: A man lent his next door neighbor an earthenware pot which had lost its bottom. This neighbor then used it to protect his orange plant from destruction by domestic animals. The orange plant grew to a full orange tree. But unfortunately, the owner of the bottomless pot asked for it undamaged after the orange tree had grown to the point that there was no way to remove it without either breaking the bottomless pot or cutting down the orange tree.

Neighbors begged and tried to convince the owner of the bottomless pot that it was unfair to make such an uncompromising request. But it was to no avail. Lastly, the bottomless pot was restored; of course, the orange tree was destroyed.

An opportunity arose, at which this same neighbor who had lent out a bottomless pot had a baby and borrowed a neckring from the same neighbor to whom he had acted badly. The neighbors who had pleaded with him not to be so unfair took this as an occasion to teach him a lesson. The child was allowed to grow to an age when the ring could not possibly be removed without either decapitating the child or damaging the roundness of the ring. Like the pot, the child's head was severed in order to return the ring.

9"Eniti o ba gbin ebu ika, ori omo re ní yío hu le."
This story is told to point out that retaliation is evil and should be discouraged. One of the most imperfect aspects of this story is that, by making the same unfair demand, the neighbor wanted to teach the owner of the bottomless pot a lesson, but teaching the lesson involves the evil of retaliation itself. "Do good to those who hate you" is the biblical injunction.10

(c) that truth and rectitude are highly exalted virtues: The Yoruba believe that the divinities are on the side of the truthful person. The Yoruba say, tell the truth and let the devil be put to shame.11 In ancient times, just as thieves' hands were severed, so the lips of liars were carved out by way of punishment and warning to others.

(d) that Yoruba ethics forbids stealing: Because God sees and knows everything, the Yoruba are firm in their faith and conviction that even if one steals under concealment, Olodumare sees him, although the earthly ruler may not.12 It is a common belief that a thief will be judged by Olodumare.

In those days there was no anxiety that articles would be stolen. Farmers and other small scale business persons

10 Matthew, 5:43.
11 The Yoruba contend that rectitude prevents one from dying. "Otito siso nikan ni ki i mu ni ku."
12 'A fi okun jale, ti oba aiye ko ri e, ti orun nwo o.'
left such edible items of banana and oranges on the road side for sale. The owner merely indicated the prices by counts of pebble. Travellers helped themselves and left the money on the stall. Nothing was stolen. Truly hungry people however who have no money to buy were permitted to take what was reasonably sufficient to satisfy their hunger (without paying), provided they ate whatever they have taken at the spot. Unfortunately, greediness, insatiability, and insensibility have overtaken this uncommon practice.

(e) that women should be protected because they are considered the weaker sex: In any (incident of) imbroglio, the woman should be protected and allowed to escape, first, if felicitous. It is ignobly, immorally, and outrageously unbecoming to launch an attack on a defenseless woman.

(f) that honor and respect should be accorded a senior person: This virtue is required and essential in the Yoruba society. The elders must be respected because of their riper, richer, more valuable experience, and wisdom from which the young is hopefully expected to benefit:

Young ones, do obeisance to the elders;
It is the elders who come to the rescue;
The day one has plenty to eat,
It is the elders who come to the rescue;
The day one has nought to eat,
It is the elders who come to the rescue.13

13Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, p.165:
Omode, e wo le f'agba;
Agba ni 'gba ni;
N'ijo a ri je.
Agba ni 'gba ni;
N'ijo airi je,
Agba ni 'gba ni.
The elders are helpful at difficult times; through their wisdom they help the young ones to profit from the difficulties of life:

That was a day of days
When I went out to pluck "isin,"14
I stood upright all I could, my hands did not reach the "isin,"
I stooped down all I could, my hands did not reach the "isin,"
Some veritable elder
It was who came and taught me to lean sideways;
It was when I leant sideways
That "isin" in countless numbers dropped their juice in my mouth.15

The elders must assist the young, and the young are expected to cooperate. As the Yoruba have learnt that the hand of the young does not reach the high shelf, so, also they have learnt that that of the elder does not penetrate into the gourd. What is needed is mutual co-operation and respect.

It should be pointed out that an elder may be disrespected if he fails to fulfill the expected role of an elder, or if he goes to excess. For example, if he insults the younger one thrice consecutively he will be flagellated

14 In Yoruba dictionary, the biological entry terminology is Sapindaceae: It is a fleshy, juicy, and edible fruit.

15 Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, pp.165-166.
with such acrid remarks as (agba iya), 'an elder for nothing.'

(g) that chastity on the part of a woman before marriage is essential: A woman is expected to be chaste before and after marriage. In the traditional days, if the husband discovers the lady has lost her virginity before their marriage, she could be sent back to her family and made to restore whatever dowry has been paid on her account. Although, the virtue of chastity seems loose as far as the man is concerned, he is expected to bear the consequences if he seduces another man's wife.

It is commonly accepted that love and conjugal faithfulness are the basis of marital felicity. This principle is even applicable in polygamous family situations.

(h) that to be hospitable is highly desirable: The Yoruba, realizing the import of this virtue, have earned the reputation of being hospitable particularly to strangers. They are the type who will entertain a stranger not cognizing that he (stranger) is an angel. It is behooving to be hospitable, because no one knows when he will be a stranger in a foreign land. Before the present widespread individualism and effrontery of refusing to help the other person, the Yoruba traveller had nothing to fear about being benighted in a strange place. He would be welcomed anywhere at night. Some Yoruba still risk this sort of hospitality.

(i) that one should love his neighbor as himself: The Yoruba are very much opposed to selfish behavior. For
selfish behavior destroys the close bonds of society based on kinship. Opposition to selfish behavior is a part and parcel of the Yoruba social ethics. It is clearly exemplified in relationship of an elder with a young person; if an elder eats all his meal without any left over -- even one morsel -- for the young person or persons present, the elder must be ready to bear the consequences of his selfishness. He may find himself being openly disrespected. Thus the Yoruba saying: "An elder who eats his food without thinking of others (supposedly the younger ones) will bear his load home himself." 16

E. Bolaji Idowu articulates how once:

Orunmila was given to selfishness in consequence of which he became contemptible to his neighbors. It happened that one day as he was going about in the bush, he fell into a deep pit out of which he could not pull himself. ... By the middle of the day, he heard some foot falls and recognized them as those of the people of Are. Expecting that they would readily come to his rescue, he shouted to them for help. But in reply, they told him that he should remain where he was and keep "enjoying" the consequence of his selfishness: 17

He (Orunmila) shouted:

Okunrin Are;
Obirin Are;

16"Agba ti o je aje 'wehin, aru eru re d'le."
But in the Yorubaland, when a young person sees an elder carrying a load, it is a sign of respect to help bear the load even to his home. This happens generally on the road from the farm, or the market place.

17Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, p.158.
Men of Are;
Women of Are;
It has been all day today
It has been since yesterday,
It is now practically the third day,
The crowned one has been in the pit,
Rolling about

When you were feeding on dog's arms,
Whom did you invite?

When you were eating ram's breast,
Whom did you call?

When you were having corn porridge with a he-goat's arm,
Who saw you?
Now "Men of Are!"
Women of Are!
It has been all day today,
It has been since yesterday
It is now practically the third day,
Let the crowned one remain in the pit,
Rolling about.

This seems to be the like the "lex talionis"
mentioned above, but it is the Yoruba attempt to emphasize
how strongly they abhor selfish practices, because a selfish
person is held in abject contempt. Notice that Orunmila called himself 'the crowned one;' but the people of Are due to his earlier selfish attitude despised him and his crown; "Let the crowned one remain in the pit. Rolling about." Also, the selfish person does not deserve any help in time of his desperation.

However, it is unfathomable that the Yoruba of today would resort to such retaliation. Without any apologetic intentions they are a deeply religious people who carry their religion everywhere.19

(j) that covenant breaking is abhorred: One who breaks a covenant is considered good for nothing and calls down upon himself the wrath of the gods.20

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19 For a valuable discussion on traditional religious philosophy of the Africans, see Mbiti African Religions and Philosophy pp.1-8.

20 In the Yoruba traditional society, there were covenants between persons and the gods, and these covenants were the basis of interpersonal relationships. The covenant between person and person was usually reciprocally and bilaterally obliging.

Emmanuel Bolaji Idowu describes clearly an original Yoruba covenant; thus the term (Drinking the earth together) Imule. The ritual is as follows: A shallow hole is dug in the ground; water is poured into it, and a kola-nut split and cast into the water. The two people who are entering into the covenant kneel face to face with the hole in between them. Then one says, "O Earth...come and preside as we make this covenant: if I should break the covenant, may I be carried away by the Earth (May I disappear from the face of the earth). Then he stoops down and sips some water from the hole, at the same time picking up and eating a piece of the kola-nut. The second person does exactly the same and the covenant is thus concluded." Idowu, Oludumare: God in Yoruba Belief, p.50.
It is likely that these Yoruba ethical components are far from exhaustive. The ones presented here deserve to be commented upon. Certain crucial questions need to be asked. Some of the simple questions may include; what are the aims of these moral values? and are they orderly? But the complex questions are the ones that directly deal with moral philosophy. Do the Yoruba have the monopoly of these ethical values? After all these moral components or principles sound like either the Decalogue or Beatitudes.

In the attempt to answer these and other related incomplete queries, it may be beneficial to observe that all the Yoruba who have attained the age of reason have some knowledge of these ethical values. However, is knowledge power? The nature of the power for discussion here is moral power, "potens" which enables one to know the truth and voice that truth. In other words, it is not the mere knowledge of these ethical principles that makes the Yoruba what they are. The hood does not make a monk. The Yoruba have their inner propensities to battle with, and these, according to St. Paul make people do things that are unbecoming or unnatural.21 What then will authenticate the Yoruba to choose to act one way rather than another? Below are only five suggestions which do not exhaust the subject:

(a) Proverbially, the Yoruba themselves say "The Agemo dancer said that he had done all he could for his child;

21Romans 7:22-23.
if he does not know how to dance, that will be his fault."\(^{22}\)

The Yoruba must constantly realize that some way has been paved by their forefathers by establishing these moral principles; it will be their fault if they fail to live up to their (forefathers) expectations.

(b) The Yoruba will have to interiorize these value principles.

"Morality is not so much a question of doing good as being good."\(^{23}\)

(c) The Yoruba must continuously realize that persons are of intricate value; they must emphasize the uniqueness of the brotherhood and sisterhood of all peoples.

(d) Realizing that these Yoruba moral values are complex and subject to several interpretations and criticisms, the moral principles are meant to distinguish what the Yoruba hold as ideal.

(e) But the Yoruba know that they do not monopolize these principles. Their adherence to them is Yorubalized,

\(^{22}\)Delano, Owe l'eshin Oro (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp.5-6. Alagemo ni on bi omo on na, aimoju ku s'owo re. "Alagemo" is a god which dances with a mat wrapped round it. The handling of the mat makes the dance difficult and requires considerable training and practice. 'Agemo' trains his child to dance from an early age (little Agemos are common, and if after training and practice from youth for several years, an adult 'Agemo' does not know how to dance, the father Agemo says, in this proverb, that it will be his responsibility. As part of the ritual, a small Agemo appears as if born-from under the mat of the adult 'Agemo' and then proceeds to dance on his own.

taking recognizance of their culture, tradition, and environment. Thus the Yoruba must continue to offer pragmatic arguments to support their values, because it will seem like integumentation if the Yoruba society merely classify moral values without suggesting motives for their implementation.

With these suggestions, it is now appropriate to answer the questions, what is the purpose of Yoruba ethical values and are they orderly? They aim at the improving of life. The Yoruba realize that there are several forms of life, human life and its continuity are supreme in the ethical values of the Yoruba. But in order not to seem oblivious to the existence and worth of other forms of life and the globality of the universe, the Yoruba wonder about what significance other forms of life have within themselves. Are the Yoruba values orderly? This is a tough question because people do not ordinarily deal with moral matters in a mathematical fashion. But despite that, Yoruba values are orderly in the sense that they are interconnected. In other words, the Yoruba values follow from each other one way or the other. For example, that kindness is a highly desirable virtue is related to the fact that wickedness is repulsive to both God and man.

Briefly then, "it is in caring about others that we become what we ought to be." 24 The Yoruba value system is

geared toward the end.

Having analyzed the values involved in the Yoruba education, a moral question on value education must be asked. Should morality be taught? Notice, the question is not simply can it be taught, a question which seems lenient and tolerable. It even seems to beg the problem in the sense that can, although a moral word, may be translated "is it possible?" But "should," is an emphatic moral word. In other words, morality should be taught because there is a strong relationship between character development and intellectual development. The Yoruba people subscribe to the fact that intellectual and moral development are necessary for a good life.

Concerning the relationship between intelligence and character development, John Dewey remonstrates that this relationship is being underestimated:

Morality is often thought to be an affair with which ordinary knowledge has nothing to do. Moral knowledge is thought to be a thing apart, and conscience is thought of as something radically different from consciousness. Moral education in school is practically hopeless when we set up the development of character as a supreme end, and at the same time treat the acquiring of knowledge and the development of understanding, which of necessity occupy the chief part of school time, as having

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A distinction should be made between "educational value" and "value education." "Educational value" connotes, the worth, the desirability issuing from the impact of educational endeavors. "Value education" refers to those educational exercises pertaining to their axiological deductions; it is another word for moral education.
nothing to do with character."

Because ethical principles deal with "fluctuating subject matter, not only from person to person but also culture to culture" they must be taught. This teaching may either be formal or informal. This teaching of course includes the ineluctable demonstration of good character by the elders.

Ethical rules envisage actions; thus they must be taught:

Morality, furthermore, must be taught in so far as appropriate actions are artificial rather than natural, by which I mean that they arise out of decisions culturally arrived at. To which I would add that morality must be taught since children must become habituated to good actions before they can reason to correct actions. And this habituation requires a mover outside the child.

In summary, this chapter has taken up the Yoruba word "Iwa," meaning character, in order to facilitate the understanding of Yoruba educational values. The Yoruba people believe that the development of good character is the consequence of a good educational background.

The chapter also listed and discussed ten moral principles by which a Yoruba person may be judged as possessing or not possessing good character. Anyone therefore who does not exhibit good character, after having received good ed-


28 Krolikowski, "Ethics" An Alphabetical Companion; See also Dearden, The philosophy of Primary Education, pp. 153-181.
Education is referred to as 'ako igba,' (one who does not respond to training or education). Sometimes, such people may be ostracized from the society.

Finally, the chapter argued that the Yoruba people do not claim exclusive possession of such moral principles. Five suggestions were proffered to Yorubalize them. Arguments were also presented for the teachability of these moral values.

The next chapter will discuss the educational roles of the early missionaries, particularly in the Yorubaland. The chapter will also discuss the role of the government of Western Nigeria and its performance in the assumption of the educational management in Western Nigeria.
CHAPTER IV

EARLY MISSIONARY AND GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISES IN YORUBALAND

In the last chapter, we discussed the Yoruba word "Iwa," meaning character, in order to facilitate our understanding of the Yoruba educational values. We also discussed ten moral principles by which a Yoruba person may be judged as either possessing or not possessing good character. Lastly, five suggestions were offered to Yoruba- lize these ten moral principles since the Yoruba people do not claim exclusive possession of these principles.

This chapter however will make an analytical appraisal of the roles of the early missionary educators in the Yorubaland, and also the roles of the government of Western Nigeria. The purpose of the appraisal is to evaluate the credit apportioned to the Yoruba tradition and culture when compared with the missionaries' educational endeavors. It will attempt to reexamine the value placed on Yoruba traditional education since it seems that the Yoruba traditional and cultural values were hardly recognizable in the educa-

1There are two parts to this chapter; (i) the role of the early missionary educators in the Yorubaland, and (ii) the role of the government of Western Nigeria. The second section will discuss particularly the Western Nigeria Education Bill of 1954. While the bill itself will be summarized, in the dissertation, the entire debate of the bill will be included in the appendix. (Appendix II).
tional system of the missionaries.

The appraisal is not however an attempt to discredit the gigantic educational strides made by the voluntary agencies in Nigeria as a whole, and in the Yorubaland in particular. In fact, Christian missionaries made the period 1842-1882 important in the educational history of Nigeria. Up till 1882 when the government began to exhibit interest and consequently intervened, the Christian missionaries had the privilege of controlling and dictating all policies that regulated formal educational initiation.

Like most pioneers, the missionaries made mistakes by not paying closer attention to the values inherent in the Yoruba society. The missionaries were later criticized for being merely informative in their educational endeavors, without developing the mind of the people and without relating their educational practices to the moral and spiritual life of the people.


Building of roads, filling up swamps, staking, and supporting the rivers banks properly to prevent their being washed away, etc, etc, seemed more pressing to the government.

See Lewis, Society, Schools, and Progress in Nigeria, PP. 119-131; See citation 16.
But an appreciative overview of the positive attempts by the missionaries to adjust to the environment of the Yoruba people revealed that the missionaries set out with the belief that their task was to create Christian societies. And while attempting to create Christian societies the missionaries waited patiently for the traditional social institutions of polygamy, "fetish" or "pagan" cults, and other attributes of the African traditional ways of life to disappear. By "praying" for the gradual disappearance of the traditional social institutions of the people the missionaries contributed to the establishment of a new way of life for the people.

An analysis of the main features of missionary education in the Yorubaland show:  

(a) that the missionaries concentrated on literary education, beginning with the children; that is, the missionaries were preoccupied with the literary education of the children since children were readily available as the elders paid more attention to their farms and other pressing duties.  

(b) that since many adults were difficult to convert, they were left alone, and consequently remained illiterate.

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6 Some adults today who had not been fortunate to be formally educated, attend Adult Education Programs at their spare times.
(c) that the object of the anticipated literary was religious: to win people from "paganism." The missionaries' educational aim centered on the Bible. Thus through the knowledge of the Bible, the Yoruba people were expected to renounce their traditional gods.

(d) that the missionaries made education an "Economic Baba." 'Financial gain' (Baba is Yoruba word meaning father). As a result of the new skills learnt from these schools, considerable number of youngsters moved into the cities. Their educational background afforded them better living conditions compared with their less fortunate friends. Parents were behind the missionaries in their educational pursuits.

(e) that the church and school became inseparable since children could be evangelized more easily through their religious instruction lessons.

(f) that character training and the punishment of anyone who refused to learn as a result of the training was part and parcel of the missionaries' educational efforts:

I am very sorry to mention that I have just dismissed one of the students this night who was found to steal a dollar belonging to one of his fellow students. The name of the thief is Amos Harvey. As I will travel early in the

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7This term was first employed by Richard Marvin in an article entitled: "Economic Baba! Is this a Satisfactory Explanation of Why African Parents Value Schooling?" The Journal of Modern African Studies 3 (1975): 429-445. Marvin's conclusion, according to the special study he made in Busoga, in Eastern Uganda was that an affirmation of economic gain or expectation of a gain is relative.
morning to Ibadan, I think I should write to tell you.  

(g) that industrial or manual work was made part of their curriculum.

The above features represent some of the apparent observable praiseworthy activities of the missionaries. How then did they neglect the value system if Rev. W. Allen could "dismiss a student for stealing one dollar?"

Firstly, many of the moral values advocated by the missionaries were alien to and different from the traditional society. For example, polygamy was denounced everywhere by the missionaries. Dancing too, was rejected by the missionaries since it would pollute the morality of the Yoruba people. This prohibition is strange because the slaves brought from West Africa in the 17th century were encouraged to dance by the slave masters.  

Secondly, the Yoruba vernacular was only very reluctantly allowed in the schools:

"Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools for the West African Colonies appointed in 1882, held the view that the medium of instructions in schools should be English, a view which was embodied in the 1882 Education ordinance.  

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Thirdly, the missionaries did not believe in the training of indigenous teachers to enhance the improvement of education. The missionaries' concentration on evangelization prevented any interest in the training of teachers.\textsuperscript{11}

The missionaries faced the problem of adaptation, and like all rational beings, they were aware of it but what could they do in the circumstances? They were consciously convinced that what they were perpetrating was absolutely right.\textsuperscript{12} Let us elaborate on the problem of adaptation as far as the missionaries were concerned.

The very nature of the type of education introduced to the eager Yoruba Nigerians searching for knowledge was foreign, for its lack of initial adaptation to the local environment, and the condemnation of their cultural and traditional pride as mere superstitions. It seems the imperial masters, after forty years of educational estrangement, 1842-1882, wanted to find out what particular features, observed in their own educational systems might be profitably adapted in (Nigeria) the Yorubaland.

The tribal set up of the country was such that it was almost impossible to satisfy every tradition of the 200 ethnic groups. But a recognition of the existence of the Yoruba traditions would have been a starting point to begin the education of the masses.

In these circumstances, outside 'educators' can do

\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{11} Fajana, "Missionary Educational Policy in Nigeria: 1842-1882," p.103
\textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.103.
very little to satisfy the necessary cultural and tribal educational requirements. This need resulted in the emergence of various Yoruba political tribal representatives who expended all their might to do something for their own people. That was the 'beginning' of political corruption in the Yorubaland. Whenever a leader could not achieve certain programs for his people, a kick-back might be given to the leader to use his influence to favor certain areas of the Yorubaland. This was their interpretation of the saying 'charity begins at home.'

Favoritism influenced the influx of the youngsters from the villages into the cities where almost all the industries were located, since the cities had more influentially powerful political representatives.

In order to prevent such misuse of political powers by political leaders emphasis must be placed on the fact that being members of a particular tribe must not be a license for securing certain rights. Thus the need for social justice and consideration for others must preoccupy the minds of the political leaders. It will be necessary to encourage a sense of social responsibility by the political leaders and to create an awareness of moral obligation towards others as a consequence of holding responsible positions. The charge I am making here is that the Yoruba values were unsuccessfully transmitted and put into practice. Since the missionaries paid little or no attention to the traditional and cultural values of the Yoruba in
their (missionaries) educational enterprises the logical question is, what changes were made after 1882?\textsuperscript{13} by the Imperial government which took over the task of formal education in the Yorubaland. Nothing substantial was effected. But because the voluntary agencies lacked cohesion in organization and shared financial difficulties, the government restored cohesion and aided the schools financially. But what is financial regeneration at the risk of denying a peoples' morality and fostering their moral degeneration?

There were however some developments in educational reform. This period ushered in the establishments of more elementary, secondary, vocational, and adult educational programs. This period\textsuperscript{14} also was characterized by projections, of committee and commissions such as: Phelps-Stokes Commission (1922),\textsuperscript{15} Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies (1925). Thus the educational policies enunciated at this time were based on principles articulated in these memoranda. It was clear that something was amiss, since these commissions expected

\textsuperscript{13}Realizing that this work is not an historical analysis, however, this section of the dissertation will not make much sense without some historical overtones.

\textsuperscript{14}The period at stake here is 1926-1954. The years 1882-1925 may be referred to as "take over years," that is the voluntary agencies ceasing absolute control of education and later it handed over to the Imperial government, 1954-1960's, free primary education in Western Nigeria; lastly the 1960's to the present, Federal government's role culminating in the present Universal, Free, and Compulsory System.

\textsuperscript{15}See citation 16.
a strong reliance on the traditional and cultural values of the people and their educational development. In 1922, Dr. Thomas Jones epitomized the report of Phelps-Stokes commission, *Education in Africa*:

Though educational facilities ... are largely credited to missions, and really a great service has been rendered by them to the Native People, many of the missions have yet to realize the significance of education in the development of the people. The defects in the educational programs, so far as they exist, have usually been due to their conception of education. Some have thought of education merely as the imparting of information, or, at most, as the development of the mind without relation to moral and spiritual life. Others have thought of education merely as necessary chiefly to enable the Natives to read the Bible and to understand the Spirit of Christianity. This group has been content with education in books. For the masses they have provided the three R's ... In this limiting education to classroom instruction in books, missionaries were following the ideals prevailing in their home country, ... the missions have failed to see how their success depends on the native welfare, and have therefore been strongly indifferent to the economic value of agriculture, and little concerned with the health and morals of the people.16

The missionaries had no choice other than to follow the educational pattern with which they were experientially familiar.

But as more and more Nigerians or Africans were becoming nationally aware of the 'uneducational' content and methodology of what was being offered them, they petitioned the missionary educational authorities for education that

could be adapted to local conditions which in turn would conserve all sound elements in local, social, and traditional organizations. The conjecture was that these would foster evolutionary or dynamic progress.

Thus in various parts of the country - in Akure, for example, the mission schools started to offer courses like farming, health and hygiene, first-aid, carpentry, crafts, and building as a way of adjusting and meeting the educational needs of the native people. In some places, the missionaries set up training centers for girls to prepare them for marriage and for the sharing of community leadership with their husbands.

However, some of these preparatory projects created conflicts. For example, the white man's way of life of one man, one wife did not (and will probably never) make any sense to a native or traditional African (Yoruba). The Christian conception of the theology of marriage is un-African (unYoruba). Christianity and its missionary institutions have made the Africans (Yoruba) feel guilty for living their traditional and cultural ways of life. To my mind, the missionaries ought to have contributed whatever they could to assist in the continuous enrichment of the Yoruba values instead of condemning and rejecting them.

17 Lewis, Society, Schools & Progress in Nigeria, pp. 68-69.

18 Ibid., p.70.
One of the outstanding reasons for the lack of initial adaptation of the school syllabus to the needs of the people was because the content of the syllabus was prescribed by examination requirements of the Cambridge Junior and Senior Local Examinations and the Matriculation Examinations of the University of London, which did not at any time provide special papers based upon local material.\(^\text{19}\) Of course, how could it, since the courses were hardly relevant to the local environment?

Adverse criticism was made by Nigerian educators against the contents of the syllabuses, in particular, the Study of British History and Geography. The students were made to learn by rote the names of the Kings of England, names of rivers, mountains and their heights while they hardly knew the names of their local chiefs and the seasonal variations of their native country.

The reaction to the study of the English language was mixed. It permeated so deeply in some Nigerians that the ability to render English language fluently was a mark of a cultured person.\(^\text{20}\) Others were moderate in their reactions; thus they assume the via media. These are the people who dilute the Yoruba words and phrases with English words and phrases in their dialogues. Another reaction is the

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 107.

substitution of former Western names, regarded as foreign, for traditional Yoruba names. It is interesting to note that the Catholic Church in Nigeria has subscribed to these native names only in the last ten years.\(^{21}\) Probably, they are not to blame; orders for rubrical alterations are issued directly from the Vatican and she has her own bureaucratic and ramificative delays.

The lackadaisical attention paid to the Yoruba traditional educational ethical values by the missions showed:
(a) that too much emphasis was placed on book education at the expense of the traditional ethical values.
(b) that the introduction of missionaries' values was exotic.
(c) that misunderstanding and confusion resulted from the teaching of the English language as a superior mode of communication and expression.
(d) that there was a minimization of the respect due to biblical knowledge.
(e) that the stupendous undertaking of their educational strides were grudgingly appreciated.\(^{22}\)

With the above unbiased reactions, a question remains to be asked to complete this chapter. Since 1954,\(^{23}\) what

\(^{21}\) Many Anglican denominations in the Yorubaland have been christening with native or cultural names a long time ago.


\(^{23}\) This date has been chosen because it marked the eve of the planning of the introduction of Free Primary Education in Western Nigeria.
improvements have been made in the axiological educational arena in the Yorubaland? Political gazettes and publication of government deals made the governmental take over all embracing; because several promises were made but never fulfilled however, since those who formulate the principles are elders, according to the Yoruba tradition, they could retort with something like: If a man says that his father's masquerader will dance, and he fails to do so, no harm is done. Some government public statements are politically motivated and as such are promises which may never be fulfilled.

It was evident from the inception what the missionary propensities were, and the Yorubas adhered to them. On the other hand, the Western government's educational bills of the 1950's may forever be gazetted but their applicability was thwarted for political exigency. Below, the Education Bill-2K of the Western House of Assembly Debates of December 21, 1954 is summarized.

One of the strong supporters of the Education Bill of 1954 was Chief J. A. Ola Odebiyi. Chief Odebiyi made a lengthy speech in support of the bill in the Western House of Assembly in 1954. In his speech, the Chief called the Education Bill "an educational reform of the greatest magnitude." According to Chief Odebiyi, the aim of education is to benefit all, and the education bill aims at the benefit of all through the individual who is a representative and member of the society. Chief Odebiyi outlined six essential features of the educational bill:
(1) that the bill adapts to the potentiality of each child.

(2) that the local education councils will be brought to "closer association" with the Regional Education authorities to foster greater educational success.

(3) that provision will be made for the religious and moral training of the children while the religious freedom of parents and children will be protected.

(4) that each educational community will be represented in the institutions in order to facilitate community involvement in the management and governance of the institutions.

(5) that the education bill lays a foundation for the progress of the teaching profession since "the terms and conditions of service of teachers are in progressive review."

(6) that the schools will be maintained and inspected and "independent and objective reports by His Excellency's Inspectors in regard to the duties of teachers in educational institutions throughout the Region" will be made regularly. 24

The education bill makes excellent reading. Like most political debates, it is exoteric. How much of this debate can be understood by the general public? Several questions, comments, and conclusions can emerge from this debate.

24 Western Region of Nigeria, 1954, Western House of Assembly Debates, Official Report, Second Session. Ibadan, Nigeria: pp.123-125. The complete text of this debate is appended to this study (Appendix II)
Education was viewed as a panacea, but it was eventually realized that the Yoruba educational problems needed more adequate preparation and specification in order for such a gigantic task to be successful. For example, there were not enough trained teachers to handle the situation. In fact, the bill only referred to the elevation of the teaching profession. The roles of the parents were not stated. There were not enough guidelines for the production of the much emphasized character development.

In 1962 some specific goals began to emerge. At that time a Syllabus Committee set up to produce a revised outline syllabus suggested civics as a main avenue of character development. Other subjects to be taught in all schools as suggested by the Syllabus Committee include: Religion, English, Vernacular, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Nature Study, Gardening, Health, Crafts, Needle Work (for girls), Art, Music, and Physical Education.25

However the Syllabus Committee reiterated the findings of the Cambridge Conference on African Education:

The development of sound standards of individual conduct and behaviour;

An understanding of the community and of what is of value for its development, and of the contribution which the individual can make to the community;

The development of a lively curiosity leading to

a desire for knowledge about the immediate environment and the world outside; permanent literacy;

The acquisition of some skill of hand and the recognition of the value of manual work.²⁶

Briefly, the problem of educational adaptation in Nigeria as a whole and the Yorubaland in particular is a complex one with no easy solution, even if all the foreign priests quit, and even with the universal primary education of 1977-78 school year. As long as there are 200 tribes with different cultural and traditional values, we shall have to continue to search for adequate means of an endemic educational philosophy.

Further critical inquiry needs to be directed towards the efforts of the missionaries and the government to further the education of the Yoruba. It is clear from the foregoing that although ethical principles can be taught, neither the missionaries nor the government has succeeded in their attempts to any appreciable degree. However, endorsable exhibitions and documentations of axiological principles have been presented. Moral judgements are of such character that they cannot be systematically extracted from one another. They do not necessarily and sufficiently follow from one another to qualify them to be scientifically logical. And educational enterprises are in large part logical. Moral judgements' peculiar moral quality would be

²⁶Ibid., p.5.
choked if forced into logical queues because they deal with norms, values, ideals, and what ought to be, which spring from spiritual and cultural aspirations.

The Yoruba traditional education has never been logical as such, rather it is immediate and intuitive, and largely out of conscious reflections. Since they are such, the ethical judgemental principles of the Yoruba have never been considered conclusive, and this strongly suggests the semi-apparent lack of intellectual or logical success. But they can be taught, elucidated, and demonstrated. The success of these is subject to further research and recommendation.
CRITICISM OF THE YORUBA EDUCATIONAL VALUES

Since this study has discussed the role of the missionaries in their attempt to introduce Western education to the Yoruba people, it seems appropriate now to criticize the Yoruba educational values. I feel rather reluctant to be engaged in the criticism of the Yoruba educational values. The mention of criticism suggests to most people the impression of finding faults. What faults will I be looking for in the Yoruba educational values? To be finding faults with my own tradition is like biting the fingers that feed me. By this I am not implying that the Yoruba educational values are perfect. After all, the Yoruba traditional education may be said to be limited in scope, in the sense that the education was confined to the accredited students of a particular subject. As Professor Afolabi Ojo of the University of Ife, Nigeria, remarked in one of his several letters to me, "...more often than not, the subject matter of any particular discipline was cloaked in secret which could be unravelled alone by the certified students of the subject."

There is another reason for my being reluctant to criticize the Yoruba educational values. The Yoruba educational values have been unreasonably criticized and even rejected by the missionaries who felt that their Western educational values were superior. I pointed out in chapter
three of this dissertation that the Yoruba people do not claim exclusive possession of the analyzed moral principles. The written comment of Professor Paul S. Breidenbach—one of the committee members of this dissertation—on the statement is worth quoting. "This, to me is a distinguishing characteristic of African Religious Philosophy and ethics... TOLERANCE. The Opposite is largely true of missionary Christianity which stressed CONVERSION TO A ONE AND ONLY POSSIBLE religious truth. The Christians did claim possession of absolute true moral principles. I find the Yoruba view much more humanistic than at least the 19th century Victorian version of Christian truth."

In this section I set out to criticize the Yoruba educational values as I promised in the introduction of this dissertation. In order to achieve my aim, I wish to ask a question which I will attempt to answer. Are Yoruba values consistent with each other? As long as the word "consistent" implies "holding to the same principles or practice," Yoruba values are consistent with each other. The principle of unity here is life. In other words, though only ten of the Yoruba ethical values were analyzed in chapter three, each of them is intricately connected with the other in aiming at the improvement of the life of the people. Yoruba education was and is pragmatic aiming at the improvement of the life of the people here and now. The point I wish to emphasize here is that the Yoruba society is a highly cohesive society, and the ethical values of the society concentrate on streng-
thening the closeness of the bonds of a society based on kinship.

Probably the most obvious critique of the Yoruba educational values is based on the fact the Yoruba education was formalized too slowly. An apparent reason for the unconscious attempt to formalize it may be due to the fact that the education strived to resolve the issues of the moment. However, it will not just be wanting to offer an excuse to say that the Yoruba educational values yielded acceptable results within their cultural and social environment.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the roles of the early missionary educators; the pros and cons of their educational contributions. Emphasis was however laid on the missionaries' failure to adapt their educational endeavors to the cultural traditions of the Yoruba people. The chapter also examined the role of the Imperial Government and its financial and organizational contributions.

Lastly, the chapter summarized the 1954 Education Bill of Western Nigeria. The Bill was criticized for failing to mention the role of parents in its educational philosophy. The chapter also criticized the Yoruba educational values.

The next chapter takes up the task of making recommendations for a more conscious adaptation of Yoruba culture to formal Western education in order to preserve the cultural traditions of the Yoruba people.
CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In the last chapter, the early missionary and the Government of Western Nigeria were criticized for disapproving of the cultural traditions of the Yoruba people in their attempts to introduce Western literary education. With the recognition of this lack of understanding, this chapter will make additional recommendations. These recommendations are intended to take into account Yoruba cultural traditions, so that these recommendations might be integrated with the literary educational endeavors as introduced by Western educators. In other words, the Yoruba were prepared for Western education, but the education ought to have been built on the acknowledgement and the utilization of the Yoruba cultural traditions. The actual implementation of this educational endeavor may be difficult, yet if the educational enterprises of the "white" man are to yield any interest in Yorubaland, in particular, the traditional ways of the

1Several suggestions have been made by Yoruba educators. See Adeniji Adaralegbe, ed., A Philosophy for Nigerian Education: Proceedings of the Nigeria National Curriculum Conference, 8-12 Sept. 1969. (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria Ltd.)

2This claim to recognize the Yoruba people's traditional ways in order for Western education to be whole-heartedly acceptable may be applicable to other parts of Black Africa. For further discussions on this topic, see Craig J. Calhoun and Francis A.J. Ianni, editors, The Anthropological Study of Education (Chicago: Mouton Publishers, 1976), pp. 43-59.
people must be recognized.

Before I make my recommendations for the improvement of this situation, I want to say three things, each pertaining to specifics of Yoruba traditional education.

First, the purpose of the Yoruba traditional education is life, life lived in accordance with Yoruba culture and tradition. Essentially integrated with this stress on life are the axiological philosophies of ethics and aesthetics. The aim or the purpose at issue here is the kind that is unimposed from without, and it is in continuous process, that is, continuous clarifications. Proposals for improvement contribute substantially to the understanding of these axiological philosophies of ethics and aesthetics.

Second, much rhetoric has been utilized, in an attempt to formulate a philosophy of education for the Yorubaland. Attempts should be made to arrive at a specific program worth trying out which will take into accounts that the Yoruba education cannot be realistically evaluated without reference to the Yoruba society.

Third, Yoruba language is regarded as the language of the family, of the farm, and the market place. It is also the language of traditional religion which is being abandoned by many educated Yoruba. The number of the Yoruba speaking people (about 28 to 29 million) will likely dwindle noticeably with the spread of formal educational programs

\[3\text{See citation 1.}\]
unless the language is taught explicitly to the younger generation of the Yoruba population.

Fourteen suggestions⁴ are being offered in this chapter which will contribute to the perpetuation of the Yoruba cultural traditions since the introduction of Western literary culture.

(1) Academic development of Yoruba studies needs to be promoted.⁵ Up till recently, most Yoruba people sought extra credit for being able to speak the English language fluently, while they could not care less for not being equally fluent in their own Yoruba language.⁶ An academic development of Yoruba studies will foster the awareness of the richness of the Yoruba culture. These studies will also initiate further research into Yoruba culture. The second section of these suggestions give concrete recommendations regarding how these studies can be implemented.

(2) Another recommendation is that teachers should

⁴These 14 suggestions are divided into two sections. The first four suggestions have emerged as a result of my research for this study, that is they are not mine, but I agree with them. However their interpretations are mine. The other ten are strictly mine.


⁶See citation 20 of chapter IV. See also Kerr, "The Future of Yoruba Literary Culture: An Outsider's View," p. 188.
be trained to teach the Yoruba language. The role of trained teachers in the perpetuation of the Yoruba language cannot be over stressed. Teachers are needed in order to implement the best and easiest methods to be used in learning the language. Stress should be placed not only on the oral form of the language, but also in its written form. Trained teachers are needed to interpret the complex Yoruba poems, folklore, written and oral literatures, proverbs, and idioms.

(3) Yoruba language lacks vocabularies for scientific, technological, business, and philosophical terminologies, these must be developed. This development will disprove the false assumption that Yoruba is more difficult than the English language. After all, the Arabic, the Japanese, and the Chinese have evolved terminologies in these disciplines. And they are more complex than the Yoruba language. Of course, any excuse such as that the Yoruba was begun to be written in the 18th century should be dismissed. When it was not written, was it spoken?

(4) The last of the first four agencies of reform

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8 See J. Ade Ajayi, "How Yoruba was reduced to Writing," Odu 8 (1960): 49-58.

9 These trained teachers must be natives of the Yoruba-land. I have heard some non-Yorubas alluding to themselves as authorities in the Yoruba language. It is difficult for me to recognize them as experts in the Yoruba language.
pertains to the business and government sectors. These should experiment in the possibility of creating a congenial atmosphere allowing the use of the Yoruba language in economic and political enterprises. This experiment will create an avenue for the development of industrial, economic, diplomatic, political, and social terminologies in the Yoruba language.

In the specific area of formal education, several suggestions have been outlined\textsuperscript{10} in order to build upon the ethical sophistication of the Yoruba, other suggestions can be put forth.

(5) Schools in the Yorubaland should not only serve as a museum for the preservation and exhibitions of the Yoruba culture, which is dynamic, like any other culture but they should also build on it.

(6) Parents are prime educators in all the spheres of life: they should be made to realize that their influence is indispensable.

(7) Teachers as elders in the Yoruba culture must contribute generously by their example and lifestyle to the continuation and development of the ethical values.

(8) Oral literature, riddles, proverbs, epigrams and folklore, etc, should be taken more seriously in the curriculum, especially in the primary schools, in order to generate new ones.

\textsuperscript{10}See citation 1.
Each secondary school in Yorubaland should develop a series of required courses of studies centering on the cultural heritage of the Yoruba people. This must be a prerequisite for graduation. A suggested course title, "Indigenous Education: An Introduction," seems appropriate.

The school atmosphere should be both secular and religious. Secular-religious distinctions need not be stressed as the students will be able to cultivate the sentiments associated with cultural and the sacred distinctions intuitively.

The school should foster moral regeneration, by creating a new moral order. Teachers and parents should be the living examples of this new moral order.

Since there is a distinct subjective level of sophistication in the practice of ethical principles, respect for others' principles should be highly encouraged.

Well-meaning people desire that urgent consideration be given to adopting Yoruba language as a medium of instruction in the primary schools. In the secondary and university institutions, the required course suggested above should provide suitable means for the execution of this proposal.

Briefly, this chapter has made suggestions which promote and encourage the continuous study and appreciation of Yoruba cultural traditions.
CHAPTER VI

CONSEQUENTIAL UTILITARIANISM: AN ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THE YORUBA AXIOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to justify philosophically my claims to the Yoruba ethical values.¹

The approach I wish to employ to justify my claims is to attempt to answer the theoretical objection, by what standard do I reject, for example, a Christian standard over the Yoruba standard? Why should I place one over the other? It does not seem morally acceptable to reject one standard to justify another without adequate justification. It is the task of this chapter to attempt to offer the ethical philosophy of consequential utilitarianism to justify my claims for the Yoruba ethical values.

But before I engage in this justification, I want to make a few remarks about the theoretical objection—by what standard do I reject a Christian standard over the Yoruba standard?

¹I wish my native Yoruba readers to understand that I am not denying or disparaging our traditional ethical values but like classical utilitarians we have taken (our ethical values) for granted. Anthony Quinton in his Utilitarian Ethics expresses the view that even though moral judgements are genuine statements, it is wrong to stick to such "statements of empirical fact...a leading theme of moral philosophy in this century has been that any such naturalistic account of moral convictions and affirmations which treat them as statements of empirical fact, must be mistaken."
My comment in chapter four which states that "the Christian conception of the theology of marriage is unAfrican (unYoruba)" has provided an avenue for this theoretical objection. My point is clear, no matter how strong Christian theological values become in the Yorubaland, polygamous way of life of the Yorubas will never be obliterated. One of the reasons for this assertion is that polygamy is a way of life which is deeply rooted in the traditional way of life of the Yorubas. Another reason is, as long as the traditional kingship institution thrives in the Yorubaland, polygamous way of life will survive.²

Objections like why should I place one standard over another are not trivial and are not easy to react to; different cultural value systems conflict. There is a conflict here and I do not wish to pretend that there is an easy solution. As pointed out above, the Yorubas have always taken their moral judgements for granted. And it is tough to justify these moral judgements. Up till very recently, for example, my personal approach has been to use what the Yorubas call "Ogboju." (bold face or defensiveness) to ward off anyone persisting to want me to justify in any way my moral judgements which have always been based on my tradi-

²Chiefs and kings in the Yorubaland enjoy the traditional privilege of accumulating several wives. This does not mean however that all Yoruba people are or will be polygamous. Some cannot even now afford one wife! But the institution seems to have come to stay in our society.
tional ethical values. I have been mistaken. The point I wish to stress is, though the Yorubas can historically explain their ethical claims from their (Yoruba) traditional point of view, their explanations may not be wholeheartedly acceptable to others who were brought up in another culture or even their own culture. Some Yorubas naturally react also to other people's cultures the same way. And my purpose here is, since the Yoruba have entered the world's academic main stream, their ethical judgements need to be philosophically justifiable for cataloguing. This is a challenge that all Yorubas must be prepared to face, squarely. It is my own cross here to face that challenge, directly.

Briefly, what seems like a rejection of one standard in favor of another is really not so. What I maintain is that, the Yoruba values have been trampled upon and that this should not be so. In fact, it is the missionaries who reject the Yoruba standard in favor of their own. And their justification is based on the Christian ethics which can be culturally interpreted or adapted. Now, I am ready to employ utilitarian ethics to justify my claims to the Yoruba axiology.

Utilitarian ethics as a moral philosophy is the philosophy I wish to employ here to justify the traditional ethics of the Yorubas. But utilitarian ethics has two major subheadings.

The two major types of the utilitarian principle include (a) the consequentialist principle which states that
the rightness, or wrongness, of an action is determined by the goodness or badness of the results that flow from it. (b) the hedonist principle, which stipulates that the only thing that is bad is pain.³

The consequentialist theory of utilitarianism, to my thinking, can be explained, to justify or standardize the Yoruba ethical judgements. And that is precisely what I intend to accomplish in this chapter.

**DEFINITION OF THE CONSEQUENTIALIST THEORY**

Consequential utilitarian ethics is defined as an ethical principle which states that "the rightness, or wrongness, of an action is determined by the goodness or badness of the results that flow from it."⁴ Hastings Rashdall is perhaps one of the chief proponents of Consequential Utilitarianism. According to Rashdall, for example, an act is morally wrong if it leads to pain or diminishing pleasure. But according to Rashdall's axiom of equity, "the consequences considered good need not be restricted to pleasure," though the absence of pain includes the good which is pleasurable.⁵ The consequence of a right act leads to the greatest amount of good


upon the whole. It means that consequential ethics is teleological. Consequential utilitarianism therefore plausibly promotes moral rules, which are expected to be for the general good and these rules ought to be obeyed if there should be the greatest general balance of good over evil. According to the Consequential Utilitarians, the right action is that which endeavors to promote the greatest amount of good upon the whole.

There are two pertinent categories of Utilitarian ethics worthy of mention to facilitate my attempted justification of the Yoruba ethical values. Utilitarians distinguish between Act-Utilitarianism and Rule-Utilitarianism. Act-Utilitarianism endeavors to answer the question, what effect will my performing this act in this particular circumstance have on the general balance of good over evil? A Yoruba person in the situation of performing an act, according to the Act-Utilitarians, should be able to justify his action as to what effects the action will have on the general good of the society. Let us for a moment take, for instance, that a Yoruba person away from home is faced with the dilemma of respecting an elder who has been rude to him. According to Act-Utilitarianism, since respecting an elder has been ethically acceptable in the Yorubaland as a way of life, the question to be faced here is, is respecting this elder, in this case, for the general good or not? Ethicians like

6Frankena, Ethics, p.31.
J. Bentham, G.E. Moore, J.J.C. Smart, John S. Mill and Joseph Fletcher among others offer an ethical solution to that kind of dilemma. Joseph Fletcher alone terms it "situation ethics."\(^7\) But according to William K. Frankena, "It should be observed that, for Act-Utilitarianism, one must include among the effects of an action any influence it may have, by way of setting an example or otherwise, on the actions or practices of others or on their obedience to prevailing rules."\(^8\)

Rule-Utilitarianism, on the other hand, has a rather different view of behavior; instead of debating what action is to be taken in a particular situation (Act-Utilitarianism) Rule-Utilitarianism emphasizes the centrality of rules in morality. But here, something is different. If, according to Rule-Utilitarianism, one, say a Yoruba person, is confronted with several rules, he should be able to determine which rules will enhance the greatest general good for everyone. Briefly, while Act-Utilitarianism deals with the question which action? Rule-Utilitarianism concentrates its energy on which rule?

I have brought in Act and Rule Utilitarianisms to facilitate my attempt to justify Yoruba ethical values as they assist me to understand Consequential Utilitarianism which as I will explain below fit perfectly my justification

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 36.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 36.
of the Yoruba ethical values.

APPLICATIONS

One of the chief tasks I face here is that of determining a moral criterion, a criterion capable of indicating whether an act is immoral or moral. According to the consequentialist theory the right act (which is obeying the traditional ethical values of the Yorubas) yield the best consequences for all. In other words, if a Yoruba person obeys the laws of the land, the consequences of his obedience is rewarding when all the consequences affecting all the persons are taken into account. Also the disobedience or lack of faithfulness to the traditional laws of the land will yield discomfort for all, when all the consequences affecting all the persons are also taken into account. For the Yorubas therefore, ethics is teleological. Hastings Rashdall summarizes this teleological concept:

9 The taboos of the Yorubas justify these situations. Taboos meaning "things forbidden" are unseparably connected with the Yorubas' morality and religion, but chiefly connected with the breach of the Yorubas' ritual laws. For example, the Yorubas believe that all divinities frown at sexual intercourse immediately before worship because to the divinities, the greatest obstacle to efficacious worship is impurity of hearts, which is synonymous with sexual intercourse before worship.

However according to Bolaji Idowu, "the Yorubas know the distinction between ritual errors which are calculated to be offences against the divinities, derelictions of filial duties which may arouse the anger of the aggrieved ancestors, and the breach of the Deity's behests which is purely a moral issue."

For further reading on the taboos of the Yorubas, see Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1962), pp. 146 ff.
"The right action is always that which (so far as the agent has the means of knowing) will produce the greatest amount of good upon the whole...."10

The point to be stressed here is that the good determines the right act. Habitual dispositions have a prominent role to play in determining the right conduct because these dispositions contribute to general or social good such as honesty, industry, family affection, and courage.

A question may be asked here, what is the connection of consequential utilitarianism to habitual dispositions? So long as honesty, courage, and so on remain highly recommended moral values and determine good conduct which in turn yield happiness, such habitual dispositions are intrinsically related to consequential utilitarianism. A subtle remark should be made here. I am not claiming that, for example, the polygamous way of life of the Yorubas is a virtue and therefore connected to consequential utilitarianism. Our polygamous way of life remains a way of life, and as pointed out in citation two of this chapter, some may not even be able to afford one wife! But the moral values of honesty, family affection, and so on have consequences. And these consequences determine the survival of the Yoruba society, ethically and culturally speaking. William S. Sahakian contends that such things designated as good, such as morality and pleasure are constituent aspects of an

ideally good life, a life which becomes the duty of each to preserve for the good of all.\textsuperscript{11}

Continuing the application of consequential utilitarianism to the Yoruba ethical values, according to the consequentialists, actions are right or wrong according as they preserve or promote for mankind an ideal or good end. Due to the teleological orientation of our society, the survival of the Yoruba society depends on the Yorubas' obedience or allegiance to their traditional values.

For example, let us take the value of respect for the elders in the Yoruba society. I strongly conjecture that the Yoruba society may not attain the desired good life if the Yorubas fail to pay attention to that virtue. Respect for an elder has become part and parcel of our society. I am not writing as a prophet of doom, but I am affirming that respect for the elders in the Yoruba society is consequential. The issue of placing one value standard over the other is difficult to resolve. Also value systems of different cultures conflict. Thus the ten moral principles analyzed in chapter three of this dissertation, though not exclusive possession of the Yorubas, point out what the Yoruba people value and the goodness or the badness of their lives depends on how fastidious they adhere to these principles.

\textsuperscript{11}William S. Sahakian, \textit{Ethics}, p.40.
Finally, anyone disapproving with the principles on ethical grounds must be prepared to justify his position just as I have attempted to justify that only through the Yorubas' allegiance to these principles, can the goodness or the badness of their lives be experienced.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This final chapter has a synthetic purpose. In my attempt to accomplish this synthesis, I will recall my major hypotheses:

(1) that Yoruba people value education.

(2) that the system of value involved in the Yoruba education is an accurate reflection of Yoruba culture and tradition.

(3) that the Yoruba ethical values are not innate; they are transmitted. Thus they must be continuously taught, elucidated and demonstrated.

(4) that theatre, music drama, and oral literature -- proverbs, riddles, and folklore are important educational transmitters of Yoruba culture and tradition.

These four hypotheses have not been outlined to correspond with the chapters of the dissertation. They have been outlined, however, to correspond with the general aim of the study. Their explanations in reference to each chapter as the case may be, are expected to shed further light on the meaning of this study.

That the Yoruba people value education as a statement of fact may be picayune or irrelevant to mention. But it is true. This truism is reflected in their hearty welcome of the missionaries who introduced an exotic kind of education
through which the missionaries trampled on the Yoruba people's cultural heritage. However, the missionaries propagated some ethical morality but on the whole the moral values advocated by them were quite different from what the people knew and practised before this time. But a discussion can ensue, by asking whether the Yoruba people value their own traditional education? There are several approaches to lead this discussion. I want to approach it as a typical Yoruba person; using a proverb.¹ The proverb that helps me to react to the question of whether the Yoruba value their traditional education is "Teteregun ti l'omi tele ki ojo to de" which means that the sugarcane-like plant has its own juice before the rain falls. In other words, the Yoruba people were already enjoying the advantages of their traditional education before the arrival of the missionary educators. What I am reiterating here is that, the Yoruba value their traditional education and they are prepared to be introduced to the Western literary education but not by finding faults and condemning their traditional background which ought to be the stepping stone for the introduction of the Western literary education.

Another conclusion intended for discussion is that the system of value involved in Yoruba Education is an

¹The Yorubas acknowledge that proverbs are the backbone (horses) for searching for the truth; when the truth is missing proverbs are used by the Yorubas to discover it.
accurate reflection of Yoruba culture and tradition. There are quite a substantial number of variables conjoinable to deduce what Yoruba cultural tradition is composed of. For the purpose of this study, oral tradition: proverbs, cono-drums, riddles, folklore, and epigrams have been pinpointed as tools for transmitting Yoruba educational and cultural heritage. Theatre, music, drama, and art have also been projected as important educational transmitters of Yoruba culture and tradition. The chapter on the description of Yoruba education and its values exposed the traditional educational implication of the proverbs, riddles, theatre, art, and their traditional import.

The hypotheses stating that the Yoruba ethical values are not innate, rather they are transmitted is fully discussed in the last section of chapter three -- Analysis of Yoruba Educational Values.

The third hypothesis is that Yoruba ethical values are not innate: they are transmitted. Chapter three dwelt on the Yoruba word "Iwa" (character). It is the core word in the analysis of Yoruba ethical values. Ten moral values by which a person may be judged to possess or not possess good character traits were reviewed for discussion.

The chapter however points out that the ten ethical values are not exclusive possession of the Yorubas. But suggestions were made to Yorubalize them. Also the chapter argued to the effect that these ethical values could be taught, elucidated and demonstrated.
Chapter five is devoted to proposing suggestions to assure the continuity of the Yoruba cultural traditions in the wake of the introduction of Western literary education.

Chapter six attempts to justify the Yoruba ethical values by employing consequential utilitarian philosophy.

I will like to conclude this study by enumerating what has "created" the Yoruba people: the Yoruba's situational environment, the longanimity of their historical events, their georgic economically based means of survival, their social urban setting, their traditional educational development, and their pervading metaphysical and theological practices have "created" the Yoruba.

Dr. I. A. Akinjogbin has painted a picture of a Yoruba man for the outside world to evaluate. For him:

He is as complex as the circumstances which produced him. He knows his own dignity and worth and never pushes himself forward or shouts about his own achievements. He is liberal almost to a fault, particularly to outsiders, but he is most critical of his own kith and kin. He is self-assured and yet extremely shy. He is physically energetic and mentally alert but will only use these qualities for causes he has adjudged worthy after long and careful observation. Innately conservative, yet he is eclectic. He is, in short, a complete matured, civilized man. 

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APPENDIX I

THE DESCENT FROM THE SKY - YORUBA MYTH - CREATION ACCOUNT

In ancient days, at the beginning of time, there was no solid land here where people now dwell. There was only outer space and the sky, and, far below, an endless stretch of water and wild marshes. Supreme in the domain of the sky was the orisha, or god, called Olorun, also known as Olo-dumare and designated by many praise names. Also living in that place were numerous other orishas, each having attributes of his own, but none of whom had knowledge or powers equal to those of Olorun. Among them was Orunmila, also called Ifa, the eldest son of Olorun. To this orisha Olorun had given the power to read the future, to understand the secret of existence and to divine the processes of fate. There was the orisha Obatala, King of the White Cloth, whom Olorun trusted as though he also were a son. There was the orisha Eshu, whose character was neither good nor bad. He was compounded out of the elements of chance and accident, and his nature was unpredictability. He understood the principles of speech and language, and because of this gift he was Olorun's linguist. These and the other orishas living in the domain of the sky acknowledged Olorun as the owner of everything and as the highest authority in all matters. Also living there was Agemo, the chameleon, who served Olorun as a trusted servant.
Down below, it was the female deity Olokun who ruled over the vast expanses of water and wild marshes, a grey region with no living things in it, either creatures of the bush or vegetation. This is the way it was, Olorun's living sky above and Olokun's domain of water below. Neither kingdom troubled the other. They were separate and apart. The orishas of the sky lived on, hardly noticing what lay below them.

All except Obatala, King of the White Cloth. He alone looked down on the domain of Olokun and pondered on it, saying to himself, "Everything down there is a great wet monotony. It does not have the mark of any inspiration or living thing." And at last he went to Olorun and said, "The place ruled by Olokun is nothing but sea, marsh and mist. If there were solid land in that domain, fields and forests, hills and valleys, surely it could be populated by orishas and other living things."

Olorun answered, "Yes, it would be a good thing to cover the water with land. But it is an ambitious enterprise. Who is to do the work? And how should it be done?"

Obatala said, "I will undertake it. I will do whatever is required."

He left Olorun and went to the house of Orunmila, who understood the secrets of existence, and said to him, "Your father has instructed me to go down below and make land where now there is nothing but marsh and sea, so that living beings will have a place to build their towns and grow their
crops. You, Orunmila, who can divine the meanings of all things, instruct me further. How may this work be begun?"

Orunmila brought out his divining tray and cast sixteen palm nuts on it. He read their meanings by the way they fell. He gathered them up and cast again, again reading their meanings. And when he had cast many times he added meanings to meanings, and said, "These are the things you must do; Descend to the watery wastes on a chain of gold, taking with you a snail shell full of sand, a white hen to disperse the sand, a black cat to be your companion, and a palm nut. That is what the divining figures tell us."

Obatala went next to the goldsmith and asked for a chain of gold long enough to reach from the sky to the surface of the water.

The goldsmith asked, "Is there enough gold in the sky to make such a chain?"

Obatala answered, "Yes, begin your work. I will gather the gold." Departing from the forge of the goldsmith, Obatala went then to Orunmila, Eshu and the other orishas, asking each of them for gold. They gave him whatever they had. Some gave gold dust, some gave rings, bracelets or pendants. Obatala collected gold from everywhere and took it to the goldsmith.

The goldsmith said, "More gold is needed."

So Obatala continued seeking gold, and after that he again returned to the goldsmith, saying, "Here is more metal for your chain."
The goldsmith said, "Still more is needed."

Obatala said, "There is no more gold in the sky."

The goldsmith said, "The chain will not reach to the water."

Obatala answered, "Nevertheless, make the chain. We shall see."

The goldsmith went to work. When the chain was finished he took it to Obatala. Obatala said, "It must have a hook at the end."

"There is no gold remaining," the goldsmith said.

Obatala replied, "Take some of the links and melt them down."

The goldsmith removed some of the links, and out of them he fashioned a hook for the chain. It was finished. He took the chain to Obatala.

Obatala said, "Now I am ready. He fastened the hook on the edge of the sky and lowered the chain. Orunmila gave him the things that were needed — a snail shell of sand, a white hen, a black cat, and a palm nut. Then Obatala gripped the chain with his hands and feet and began the descent. The chain was very long. When he had descended only half its length Obatala saw that he was leaving the realm of light and entering the region of greyness. A time came when he heard the wash of waves and felt the damp mists rising from Olokun's domain. He reached the end of the golden chain, but he was not yet at the bottom, and he clung there, thinking, "If I let go I will fall into the sea."
While he remained at the chain's end thinking such things, he heard Orunmila's voice from above, saying, "The sand."

So Obatala took the snail shell from the knapsack at his side and poured out the sand.

Again he heard Orunmila call to him, saying this time, "The hen."

Obatala dropped the hen where he had poured the sand. The hen began at once to scratch at the sand and scatter it in all directions. Wherever the sand was scattered it became dry land. Because it was scattered unevenly the sand formed hills and valleys. When this was accomplished, Obatala let go of the chain and came down and walked on the solid earth that had been created. The land extended in all directions, but still it was barren of life.

Obatala named the place where he had come down Ife. He built a house there. He planted his palm nut and a palm tree sprang out of the earth. It matured and dropped its palm seeds. More palm trees came into being. Thus there was vegetation at Ife. Obatala lived on, with only his black cat as a companion.

After some time had passed, Olorun the Sky God wanted to know how Obatala's expedition was progressing. He instructed Agemo the chameleon to descend the golden chain. Agemo went down. He found Obatala living in his house at Ife. He said, "Olorun instructed me this way: He said, 'Go down, discover for me how things are with Obatala.' That
is why I am here."

Obatala answered, "As you can see, the land has been created, and palm groves are plentiful. But there is too much greyness. The land should be illuminated."

Agemo returned to the sky and reported to Olorun what he had seen and heard. Olorun agreed that there should be light down below. So he made the sun and set it moving. After that there was warmth and light in what had once been Olokun's exclusive domain.

Obatala lived on, with only his black cat for a companion. He thought, "Surely it would be better if many people were living here." He decided to create people. He dug clay from the ground, and out of the clay he shaped human figures which he then laid out to dry in the sun. He worked without resting. He became tired and thirsty. He said to himself, "There should be palm wine in this place to help a person go on working." So he put aside the making of humans and went to the palm trees to draw their inner fluid, out of which he made palm wine. When it was fermented he drank. He drank for a long while. When he felt everything around him softening he put aside his gourd cup and went back to modeling human figures. But because Obatala had drunk so much wine his fingers grew clumsy, and some of the figures were misshapen. Some had crooked backs or crooked fingers, some were bent instead of being straight. Because of the palm wine inside him, Obatala did not notice these
things. And when he had made enough figures to begin the populating of Ife he called out to Olorun the Sky God, saying, "I have made human beings to live with me here in Ife, but only you can give them the breath of life." Olorun heard Obatala's request, and he put breath in the clay figures. They were no longer clay, but people of blood, sinews and flesh. They arose and began to do the things that humans do. They built houses for themselves near Obatala's house, and in this way the place Obatala named Ife became the city of Ife.

But when the effects of the palm wine had worn off Obatala saw that some of the humans he had made were misshapen, and remorse filled his heart. He said, "Never again will I drink palm wine. From this time on I will be the special protector of all humans who have deformed limbs or who have otherwise been created imperfectly." Because of Obatala's pledge, humans who later came to serve him also avoided palm wine, and the lame, the blind and those who had no pigment in their skin invoked his help when they were in need.

Now that humans were living on the earth, Obatala gave people the tools they needed to perform their work. As yet there was no iron in the world, and so each man received a wooden hoe and a copper bush knife. The people planted and began the growing of millet and yams, and, like the palm tree, they procreated. Ife became a growing city and Obatala rules as its Oba or Paramount Chief. But a time came
when Obatala grew lonesome for the sky. He ascended by the golden chain, and there was a festival on the occasion of his return. The orishas heard him describe the land that had been created below, and many of them decided to go down and live among the newly created human beings. Thus many orishas departed from the sky, but not before Olorun instructed them on their obligations. "When you settle on the earth," he said, "never forget your duties to humans. Whenever you are supplicated for help, listen to what is being asked of you. You are the protectors of the human race. Obatala, who first descended the chain and dried up the waters, he is my deputy in earthly affairs. But each of you will have a special responsibility to fulfill down below."

As for Obatala, he rested in the sky for some time. After that, whenever he wanted to know how things were going at Ife, he returned for a visit. The city of Ife lived on.

But Olokun, the orisha of the sea on whose domain land had been created, was angry and humiliated. And so one time when Obatala was resting in the sky Olokun decided to destroy the land and replace it again with water. She sent great waves rushing against the shores and flooded the low ground everywhere, causing marshes to reappear on every side. She inundated the fields where humans were growing their crops and drowned many of the people of Ife. All that Obatala had created was disappearing, and mankind was suffering. The people called for help from Obatala, but he did not hear them. So they went to the orisha Eshu, who now lived on
earth, and begged him to carry to Obatala word of the dis-
aster that was overwhelming them.

Eshu said to them, "Where is the sacrifice that should
accompany the message?"

They brought a goat and sacrificed it, saying, "This
is the food for Obatala."

But Eshu did not move. He said, "Where is the rest?"

The people said, "We do not understand you. Have we
not brought a sacrifice for Obatala?"

Eshu answered, "You ask me to make a great journey.
You ask me to be your linguist. Does not a person make a
gift to the lowliest of messengers? Give me my part, then
I will go."

So the people gave a sacrifice to Eshu, after which
he left them and went up to the sky to tell Obatala what was
happening to the land and the people over which he ruled.

Obatala was troubled. He was not certain how to deal
with Olokun. He went to the orisha Orunmila to ask for
advice. Orunmila consulted his divining nuts, and at last
he said to Obatala, "Wait here in the sky. Rest yourself.
I will go down this time. I will turn back the water and
make the land rise again." So it was Orunmila instead of
Obatala who went down to Ife. As Orunmila was the oldest
son of Olorun, he had the knowledge of medicine, and he had
many other powers as well. He used his powers in Ife, caus-
ing Olokun's waves to weaken and the marshes to dry up. The
waters of the sea were turned back, and at last Olokun's
attempt to reclaim her territory came to an end.

Having accomplished all this, Orunmila prepared to return to the sky. But the people came to him and asked him to stay because of his knowledge. Orunmila did not wish to stay in Ife forever. So he taught certain orishas and men the arts of controlling unseen forces, and he also taught others the art of divining the future, which is to say the knowledge of how to ascertain the wishes and intentions of the Sky God, Olorun. Some men he taught to divine through the casting of palm nuts. Others he taught to foretell the future by the casting of cowry shells or sand or chains. Afterwards, Orunmila went back to the sky and, like Obatala, he frequently made visits to the earth to see how things were going among human beings. What Orunmila taught men about divining was never lost. It was passed on by one generation of babalawos, or diviners, to another.

Earthly order - the understanding of relationships between people and the physical world, and between people and the orishas - was beginning to take shape. But all was not yet settled between Olokun, the orisha of the sea, and the supreme orisha Olorun. Olokun considered ways in which she might humiliate or outwit the Sky God. The powers of the sky deities had proved to be greater than her own. But Olokun had the knowledge of weaving and dying cloth, and she had clothes of delicate textures and brilliant colors. She believed that in this respect she excelled all other orishas, including Olorun himself. So one day she sent a message to
Olorun, challenging him to a contest to show which had the greatest knowledge of clothmaking.

Olorun received the challenge. He thought, "Olokun seeks to humiliate me. Nevertheless, she has unequaled knowledge about the making of cloth. Yet, how can I ignore the challenge?" He thought about the matter. Then he sent for Agemo, the chameleon. He instructed Agemo to carry a message to Olokun. Agemo went down from the sky to the place where Olokun lived. Agemo said to Olokun, "The Owner of the Sky, Olorun, greets you. He says that if your cloth is as magnificent as you claim, he will enter the contest. Therefore he asks that you show me some of your most radiant weaving so that I may report to him on the matter."

Because Olokun was vain she could not refrain from showing her cloths to Agemo. She put on a skirt cloth of brilliant green and displayed it to the chameleon. As Agemo looked at it his skin turned the exact color of the skirt. Olokun then put on an orange-hued cloth, and Agemo's skin turned orange. When Olokun brought out a red skirt cloth Agemo's skin turned red. Olokun was perturbed. She tried a cloth of several colors and saw the chameleon's skin reproduce it perfectly. Olokun thought, "This person is only a messenger, nothing more. Yet in an instant he can duplicate the exact color of my finest cloth. What, then can the great Olorun do?"

Seeing the futility of competing with Olorun, the orisha of the sea said to Agemo, "Give my greetings to the
Owner of the Sky. Tell him that Olokun acknowledges his greatness."

Thus Olokun withdrew her challenge to the Sky God, and Olorun remained supreme in all things.
Chief J. A. Ola. Odebiyi. — Mr. Speaker, this Education Bill is an educational reform of the greatest magnitude. The philosophy of an educational reform requires that it should be centred on the individual, in the sense that it must aim to bring out the best in the individual child. If done, it will benefit and enrich not only the individual but his relationships with other individuals and society as a whole, and the purpose of education is to equip us to use our leisure intelligently. By making provisions for all these, this Law has therefore become the greatest landmark in the annals of the history of education in this country. For the first time in our history primary education shall be free and universal and it shall be so broadly based that all shall have a say in the management of primary schools.

What are the essential features of this Bill and in what way do they satisfy the objectives of early educational administrators of this country and the demand for self-determination? The aims of the Law are six, namely:

(1) Provision of free and universal primary education varied in content and adapted to the capability of each child.
(2) Participation of local government councils as local education authorities so that they can be brought into closed association with the Regional Government in the provision of education according to the statutory system outlined in the Bill.

(3) Provision for the religious and moral upbringing of children while according religious freedom to all and recognizing the rights and duties of parents towards their children in the provision of such training as will lead to the development of good citizenship.

(4) Association of the community through their representatives with the management and governance of educational institutions so that the institutions may reflect the public will in evolution.

(5) Laying the foundations of a contented teaching profession by ensuring that the terms and conditions of service of teachers are in progressive review so as to bring contentment within the profession whilst safeguarding the highest code of professional integrity and conduct.

(6) Necessity for the maintenance of a satis-
factory educational standard through inspection, and independent and objective reports by His Excellency's Inspectors in regard to the duties of teachers in educational institutions throughout the Region.

The need for free and universal education has for a long time been the objective of Her Majesty's Government. For as far back as 1945 a new attitude to education in tropical areas was conceived in Great Britain. A large number of factors were responsible for this. They were:

(1) Growth of humanitarian spirit which always grows after wars.

(2) Growth of new forces in the colonial areas themselves. These were nationalism and the desire for independence.

(3) International forces like the United Nations Organization; post-war years violent Russian attacks on the Western democracies which have always professed advancement of colonies to independence. This was a very great force which influenced the tempo of Colonial Development, hence the £120,000,000 (pounds) given from the British Exchequer as Colonial Development Welfare grants to be spent for ten years.

(4) Economic factors which substituted partnership for trusteeship system of education, since trusteeship was not only a unilateral situation but the assumption of self-imposed responsibility for another.
All these brought changes in the educational policy of the governing power. The British Government accepted as a democratic ideal, democratic self-government and universal primary education as a co-ordinate factor. If self-government was going a desirable goal the mass of the people were not to be left in utter ignorance, since even in the exercising of votes, there was need for an intelligent appraisal of the policies of the different political parties canvassing for votes. It was therefore felt that the end in view was universal education.

First by making primary education free and universal we are securing for children a happier childhood and a better start in life; ensuring a fuller measure of education and opportunity for young people and providing means for all of developing the various talents with which they are endowed and so enriching the inheritance of the Region whose citizens they are. To be able to achieve this, the fullest development of individual abilities and aptitudes are necessary. This cannot be done without a variety of educational opportunity. Diversity demands that the state shall have no monopoly of education. It is thus that education can be a democratic ideal. With regard to participation by local government councils, it has long been felt that if education was to be universal and the community were to be proud of their local schools, some measure of financial responsibility ought to be conferred upon them. Besides, the excessive demand for more and more schools could not
only be successfully controlled if the local community had to pay part of the running cost. This was good training in self-government and financial responsibility which was so vital in a developing country like Nigeria.

Secondly, the provision for the religious and moral upbringing of children is laying the foundation of character-training. It is a recognized fact that fundamental human values find their origin and their meaning only in a religious faith, and it is well that character training should be closely linked with religious instruction. The exercise of character involves the ability to see the variety of action that is possible in a given concrete situation, the moral sensitivity to assess the nature of the consequences of each line of action, and the will to choose that which will best subserve the good. Character-training cannot therefore be accomplished in one step or in a short time. The establishment of rules of behaviour at the early stage to cover concrete situations is an inescapable stage in education. If the process stopped there, however, a man might have a good character in the sense that he had no crime or indiscretion recorded against him, but he would hardly be a man of character. Sooner or later he would fail to do right either because he found himself in a situation not covered by the rules or because the sanction of the rules themselves had grown weak. It is at the stage at which an adequate foundation in good behaviour has been established that character-building must begin. Two important
elements in the exercise of character are discernment and judgment, and these are gifts which can be developed only by facing the actual circumstances of life in particular situations. Unless the child has frequent opportunities to exercise freedom of thought and action he will have no opportunity to learn the things that can be learnt in no other way. Character is trained in the exercise of responsibility. Herein lies the greatest difficulty of the educationist. The measure of freedom and responsibility that should be given to a child in any particular situation or at any stage in his development involves the nicest judgement that the educationist is called upon to make. Give too little and development is thwarted; give too much and the result may well be anxiety, bewilderment and cruelty. It is, however, in the will to do right that those who contend that character must be rooted in religious faith will find their chief argument.

Thirdly, it is necessary that the community should be actively engaged in the management of local schools because they will develop a sense of pride in giving service to their own people by serving on management committees. It is only then that local traditions and culture can be passed on to the next generation without any clash.

With regard to the teaching profession, I should like to say that there is no more hardworking, no more self-sacrificing a body of men and women than these. Society has not always remembered this. Through ignorance and fear,
society destroyed the greatest teacher of antiquity, and
the greatest teacher of all. Through carelessness and mean-
ness society can in our own day destroy the esteem and stand-
ards of the teaching profession. It is gratifying to note
that provision is now made for seeing to it that the regards
of that great profession are such as will continue to attract
men and women of high quality and that special capacity and
attainment are given their full recognition. This done,
there will be no justifiable reason for laxity in profession-
al integrity and good conduct.

The duties of His Excellency's Inspectors have been
so well defined that they need no further clarification.

Finally, Sir, what then are the fundamental things
which we want our children to be taught? First, not wishing
them to be less learned than the pigeon, we want them to
have a good grinding in the three R's. Secondly, holding
with the Greeks the importance of gymnastics, we want them
to know how to respect their bodies and to keep them clean,
healthy and strong. Thirdly, we want them to be made to
love and feel proud of the school to which we send them,
knowing that out of such localised loyalties will best grow
the wider loyalties to the country, its institutions and its
way of life. Fourthly, we want them to be taught to feel
that when they leave school their education is not ending
but just beginning. We do not want examination fodder. We
want right character. This is the purpose of the daily
service and worship and religious instruction which have
been included in this Bill. Lastly, we want our children to be taught that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This alone can give education real meaning and life itself a real purpose. When we have achieved this, we can consider ourselves as having done our duty to the coming generations. Into this great task we are entering today and God grant that we do not fail.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to support the Education Bill.
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

My review of the related literature has three objectives:

(1) To answer the question, has anyone conducted an investigation similar to this one I am undertaking?

(2) To list some of the material I have used and to make brief personal comments on each of them especially to point out their usefulness to my investigation.

(3) To mention that the complete bibliography of this work is appended to the dissertation.

Although much has been written both on the Yoruba education and the moral values of the Yoruba people, no one as far as I am aware, has directly undertaken to investigate the axiology of Yoruba education. Several factors are responsible for this negligence. Value theory or axiology is a relatively recent philosophical development, being largely a result of certain 19th and 20th century movements. Another factor for this omission leans on the fact that the Yoruba people, like the classical utilitarians take these values for granted. (See Chapter VI - Utilitarianism: An attempt to justify Yoruba Axiology). They have always been a tangible appurtenance of the Yoruba life.

Some of the most useful works or material I have consulted in researching and writing this dissertation in-
1Since all the books referred to here will appear again in the bibliography, properly documented I have not taken the trouble to include neither their places of publication, the publisher's names, nor the dates of publication. In the case of periodicals or journals, the journal or the periodical is mentioned but not neither the volumes, the dates nor the page reference.

dissertation together, as proverbs are employed here and there throughout the dissertation, especially in chapter two - Description of the Yoruba Education and its Values.

The History of the Yorubas by Samuel Johnson, which reads like an eye witness account of the historical development of the Yorubas—since it has no documentations—is however an account of the successive kings of Oyo, based on verbal traditions. It is also an account of the Yoruba wars of the 19th century, based on first hand observation. Johnson's book was very valuable to me, especially in the writing of chapter two of this dissertation.


As pointed out in that chapter, my recommendations are additions to what Adaralegbe and others had proposed. However we are aiming at the same goal—the improvement of the educational standard of the Nigerians in general and the Yoruba people in particular.

Some of the articles which were immensely useful in the researching and writing of this dissertation include:

"Some Aspects of Yoruba Traditional Education," by A. Fajana. In this article Fajana describes certain values inherent in Yoruba Traditional education. His article makes good reading.

"Alo: Yoruba Story Songs," by J. Kubik is a fascina-
ting article on how the Yorubas socialize and educate through their "alo" (riddles).

"Missionary Educational Policy in Nigeria: 1842-1882" by A. Fajana is an excellent historical article. It helped me in the chapter on "Early Missionary and Government Educational Enterprises in Yorubaland."

As pointed out above, all the valuable works which have helped me in the researching and writing of this dissertation are appended to this work.
APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Tony Idowu Aladejana has been read and approved by the following committee:

Rev. Walter P. Krolikowski, S.J., Director
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Dr. Gerald L. Gutek
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Dr. John M. Wozniak
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Professor, Anthropology, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

November 20, 1978
Date

W. P. Krolikowski
Director's Signature