

Yorùbá Literary Writers on Youths and Parenthood

Olufadekemi Adagbada

Olatunde Adeleye Adeyemo

Ejitooyosi O. Salami

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages

Ọlabisi Ọnabanjo University

Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

olufadekemiadagbada@gmail.com

Abstract

The youths of any nation are the bedrock of her development, through viable socio-political and economic contributions. They are the indispensable agents of change that can turn the table round for better, especially in developing nations. The natural psycho-biological development of youths and young adults, living in a nation going through socio-political economic and security challenges, coupled with their being nurtured in some cases through faulty parenting, have manifested in the typology of Nigerian youths. The nation now has a high number of misguided youths who portray demeaning image about Nigeria. This study, hinged on Elkind's (1967) constructionists' perspective of adolescents' cognitive development and womanists' theory as opined by Hudson-Weems (1993) and Kolawole (1997), to the effect that the desire of the agitating African women is complementarity with men in all aspects of life. With these views; exemplified with excerpts from randomly selected Yoruba dramatic, prosaic, and poetic texts, this essay submits that improper parenting, peer group pressure, excessive drive for material wealth, unemployment, poverty, inaccessibility to social and financial aids as experienced by the youths, are some of the reasons why the future appears bleak for Nigeria. The study recommends collective responsibility by parents, to become positive role models for their children by spending undivided and qualitative time with them, thus creating a good and safe environment for their children to be free to express themselves. Corporate organisations and

religious bodies should pay back to the society by organising workshops and low-capital focused entrepreneurial seminars for the youths. Government should as a matter of urgency, put massive employment generation on priority list, ensure a drastic reduction in the years of working experience required before youths' employment and ensure desirable remuneration for employed youths by individual and corporate bodies.

Keywords: Youths, Egocentrism, Parenting, Participatory positive behaviour, social expectation

Introduction

Nigeria, since her independence from British colonists, is presently going through an unprecedented political, economic, social, religious and security challenges, among other threatening issues. Her citizens are in constant fear about the looming danger that pervades virtually every aspect of human existence. Many of the atrocities being committed in the society are more often than not traced to the youths who are supposedly the future leaders. However, no society where youths are deeply involved in gangsterism, examination malpractices, gambling, night crawling, cybercrimes, ritual killing, raping, murder, drug taking and trafficking and money laundering, can be proud, and certain of a peaceful and progressive future. Young adults and the youths in any nation, are the ones who should positively champion the decisions-leading them and their society, into the future. Jega (2017, 3) quoting Dweigart (2012), is right therefore to have said:

Surging youth activism and leadership has the potential to change the world... Young people are indispensable change agents for sustainable development and the source of democratic dividend. (3)

As things are in Nigeria today, the future appears very bleak. This is expressed by Adejumo (2002, 3–5) thus:

*Ohun tó n̄ şelè l̄as̄uwàdà yìi j̄oni l̄ójú
Ó j̄oni l̄ójú, ó t̄un şeni ní k̄àyééf̄i...
Orilè yìi làá ti í sùn
Tàà gbòdò piyè*

What is happening in our own society amazes us
It amazes us and make us wonder
It is in this nation that one sleeps
But must be mentally awake

In all of these, the questions that any concerned citizen should ask are: What are the roles of parents on the general welfare of their children and wards? Are the youths prepared to meet the societal expectations? Why did things degenerate to this level in Nigeria?

This paper is pivoted around the constructivists' perspective that adolescents' cognitive improvement is sudden and drastic as opined by Elkind 1967, and Womanist as opined by Hudson-Weems 1993 and Kolawole 1997; to the effect that in the pursuit of female agitation for recognition of self-worth, the African woman's desire is complementarity. The essay examines the works of Yoruba literary writers on the roles of parents in bringing up their children and wards in the light of preparing them to meet socio-cultural expectations as future leaders and law-abiding citizens, in a society aspiring advancement in all the ramifications of the word.

Parenting: The Yoruba Culture

Among the Yoruba, parenting is conceived as the primary functional status in the life cycle. It is an everyday job that starts during or before pregnancy and goes on throughout the life span (Bornstein, 2001, 1-11).

Procreation is the basic reason for marriage among the Yorùbá. Hence, the maxim *olómọ ló lókọ* (It is she who gives birth to children that has a right to the husband). The Yorùbá put this much premium on having offspring because the cultural belief is as aptly put by Olúyosóla who is awaiting the blessings of the womb in *Ení Bímọ Ọ ràn* thus:

*Bí a bá lówó láyè bí i ti ẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀
Bí a sì n lúwẹ̀ é nínú alagbalúgbú olá
Bí àkùkọ bá kọ lẹ̀ yìn tìba tiye lójó alé
Ta ni n jogún ẹni bí ò ẹ̀mọ rere?* (Ajéwólé 1980, 2)

If one is as rich as a rattle gourd
Even if one is swimming in the ocean of wealth
When the cock crows in the morning and one's parent are gone
Who also inherits one's estate if not a well nurtured child?)

Inheriting parents' estate is not the only reason for holding procreation important among the Yorùbá. Ọlátúnjí (1982, 32) gives another reason to the effect of having offspring as (chief) mourners at a parent's funeral ceremony thus:

Nijó taa bá sùn láipàhàdà...

*Tómi n bọ lójú...
 Tọmọ n sunkún nítorí wa...
 Níjọ ọmọ bá sin wá la bímọ ẹni.*

On a day that we slumber to wake no more...
 When the tears flow...
 When our child mourns us...
 It is when our children bury us that we have truly sired children.

Parenthood is the state of being a parent; with all the responsibility involved therein. It provides the opportunity to guide, teach and pass on the socio-cultural values to the next generation. Parenthood is that which give children the sense of ‘family’. Parenting therefore implies raising and educating a child from birth to adulthood. It requires interpersonal skills, and make emotional demands (Amos, 2013). Parenting takes years of hard work, testing you on every level; emotionally, physically, financially and even spiritually (Glover, 2016)

This implies essentially, that it is possible for parents not to be alive to their responsibilities as attached to parenthood, and that a non-biological father/mother – figure may take up the job of parenting a child, to fit in properly into the society. This is why the Yorùbá say ‘*ònbíni kò tó ònwóni*’ (literally, they who give birth to one, are not as important as they who nurtured one to adulthood). Responsible parenting can therefore be seen as the will and ability to take care of the physical, psychological, emotional and sociological needs and aspirations of children and wards (and the family as a whole), in accordance with their capacity.

Euro-centric parenting styles have been identified as; Authoritarian/Disciplinarian, Permissive/Indulgent, Uninvolved/Detached and Authoritative (Baumrind, 1967; Davis, 2016). Parenting styles differ because of factors like culture, personality, parental background, educational level, socio-economic status, family size and religion (Cherry, 2012). However, no matter where people may live in the world, they share some common human traits (O’Neil, 2006). Among the Yorùbá, children are brought up to live a communal life style by imbibing the cultural values of their ethnic group, in order to become *ọmọlúwàbí* (responsible, cultured and co-operating citizens).

In the traditional Yorùbá society, the *mọlẹbí* (extended family relationship) is more pronounced than the (Western) nuclear family type. The extended family include living in an *agboolé* (family compound) or very close to one another. The extended family system determines the social and moral norms apart from safe guarding both material and spiritual customs, as well

as providing a variety of role models, while preparing a child for adulthood (Adagbada, 2018; Degbey 2012).

Adeoye (1980, 260) in his discussion on the communal nature of the Yorùbá extended family says:

Kì í ẹ̀ ọ̀kọ, iyàwó àti àwọn ọmọ wọn nìkan ni à n pè ní mòlẹ̀bí, bí kò ẹ̀ gbogbo àwọn tí alájọbí ẹ̀ sílẹ̀, tí wọ̀n jọ wà pọ̀ láti máa gbé agbo-ilẹ̀ babańlá wọn, àti láti máa pín ẹ̀rù ilẹ̀ rù.

(It is not only the husband, wife/wives and their children that is recognised as a family, rather, it is all the descendants of a forebear, who are living together in their forebears' compound and who all share in the responsibilities of running the family.)

The high dominance of the elderly and the aged members of an extended family promotes a high level of social control on the children and the youths in the family. Therefore, the responsibility of rearing a child does not fall on who sired a child alone, rather, it is shared by all the members of the (extended) family (Adinlofu, 2009). This is why the Yorùbá use the maxim '*ojú méjì ló n bímọ, igba ojú ló n wò ó'* (literally, it is just four eyes that give birth to children, but two hundred eyes see to their nurturing – it takes a village to raise a child). This is what Ola (2018, 50) refer to as “collective parenting”. In the case of the demise of a member of the extended family, the offspring and wife/wives of the deceased will have (many) other mothers/fathers/husbands to parent or re-marry them. This is why the Yorùbá will say '*baba kú, babá kù'* (literally, if one father dies, other members of the family can step in to play the role of the father). This is exactly what happens after the demise of Sẹgilọlá's father in *Ìtàn Ìgbésí Ayé Èmi Sẹgilọlá Eléyinjú Egé Elégbèrún Oko Láyé* (henceforth *Ìtàn Sẹgilọlá*). In the story, Abíólá, Sẹgilọlá's uncle, takes up the role of her father.

Unlike in the West wherein a youth may leave home at about eighteen years old, among the Yorùbá, the youths stay at home under the guidance of the family, until they are ready for marriage (Adeoye, 1980, 266; Amos, 2013; Ola, 2018, 17) and are allowed, if males, to erect personal adjoining buildings within the family compound or somewhere nearby. Even when married and living away from the homestead, the Yorùbá believe that '*ọmọ kì í dàgbà ju òbí rẹ̀ lọ'* (literally, children are never older than their parents) and, as such, the parent and other relations continue to offer advice and guidance as a result of their wider and richer life experiences (Gyekye, 1996). This implies that (Yorùbá) parents love and train children on family norms, values, and standards because the family is taken as the basic agent of socialization, and

during the process of socialization, children and youths learn the cultural values of their society, including child-rearing practices (Emmanuel et al, 2012).

Parenting among the Yorùbá ensures proper nurturing for children as it sets high and clear expectations on the children and wards, allows communication (to a reasonable extent) from the children and youths and gives room for them to have in-put in positive goal setting. Parents in Yorùbá land adopt what looks like the combination of what Baumrind, 1966 and Davis, 2013 categorize as “Authoritative” and “Authoritarian” parenting styles. The mode includes children observing their parents with respect as models, and parents sitting their children down to talk to them about good behavior and providing guidance. Parents also administer corporal punishments like knocks on the head, slapping on the face, spanking or using cane to beat on the buttocks or denial of food; especially for rudeness, laziness, greed or stealing. In Africa generally, there was no (official) stringent rules about Children Advocacy until recently. This is very unlike what obtains in the West, where children and youths can make official report if beaten by their parent.

Globally, there is gender specifications on task and chores within a family and Yoruba (traditional) society is not in exception to this. The husband is expected to handle or see to hard tasks like commercial farming, erection of buildings, environmental maintenance and providing basic (raw) food items for all the members of the family, while the wife/wives take physical care of the children, prepare food, do the laundry, keep the rooms tidy and sometimes have gardens or engage in backyard farming for fruits and vegetables’ consumption at the family level.

It is worthy of note that being basically a patriarchal society wherein culture is slanted, such that men are valued more and women less, women are virtually related to as a specimen of human beings whose purpose of existence is to work, bear children (Akintan, 2002), warm their husbands beds and must see to the nurturing and training of the children, so as to become citizens of the community, who must make their fathers proud and fulfilled. Though single-parenthood is frowned at especially for women, if peradventure a child does not turn out well, such is referred to as *omọ iyá rẹ* (a child who belongs to just the mother). This is because in the (traditional) Yorùbá family set up, polygyny is not only permissible, it is expected of them. The reason for this is that until recent past, the size of a Yorùbá man’s harem and the number of his children, are the yardstick by which his wealth is measured. Having more than one wife therefore presupposes that a man will own many children. As a father, he is actually *bàbá gbogbo ayé* (a father for all), and each of the wives have to put in (competitively) all her efforts, so that her own children will make their father proud and be willing to identify with such successful children, because *omọ tí ó bá dára ni ti bàbá rẹ, èyí tí kò bá dára, ti*

iyá rẹ̀ ni (literally, a well brought up child belongs to the father, the one that is ill-mannered is the burden of the mother).

Most women are known to be ready to go to any length to make their children become great in life:

Ọ̀ pò iyá a talé tọ̀ nà
Nítorí àtífowó tọ̀ mọ
Bàbá ùkọ́? Ti gbogbo ayé; (Adejumo, 2009, 52)

Many mothers sell their houses or landed property
 To be able to educate their children
 What about the father; a father for all;

In a case wherein an *abiagba* (derogatorily meaning ‘a carefree mother’) neglects her responsibilities over her child/children and such child/children turn out to be ill-mannered, uncultured and unsuccessful, the father is not usually considered to have shirked his responsibilities by not ascertaining his position as the *baálé* (head of his home), in putting down his feet on the desired way of rearing his offspring, it will be said of such children; *òwú tí iyá gbò n lomo ñ ran* (literally, it is the wool that a mother yarns that her child spins). This is the exact statement made by Adébáyò to Adéníkẹ́ his wife, over the misconduct of Wálé, their son, in *Gbẹ̀gẹ̀ Gbiná*:

Ọ̀ rọ̀ omo rẹ̀ ni mo pè ọ̀ sí.

I invite you for the purpose of discussing
 about your son's behavior.

The Preacher (Àlúfà), too, in *Jé Ng Lògbà Tèmi* blames *Màrà Éésítà* (Esther's mother) for neglecting her responsibilities over the girl; giving room to her carrying an unwanted pregnancy. He says: *Màrà Éésítà ló sì f'àyè gba omo rẹ̀ tí gbogbo èyí fì délẹ̀* (Esther's mother is the one that tolerated her daughter's excesses for this to have happened (Ladele, 1971, 55) as if Esther's mother is a single-parent. The preacher, with all his enlightenment through Western education and Christianity; with its ideal of one-man-one-wife, does not blame *Máíkẹ̀ èlì* (Michael); Esther's father, for his daughter's misconduct.

The Youth

Among the Yorùbá, while a neonate is known as *ẹ̀jẹ̀ ọ̀run/ọ̀mọ tuntun jòjòlò* (fresh blood from heaven/a fresh creation), a growing baby is known as *ọ̀mọ ọ̀wọ̀* (a child that has grown enough to be carried in arms rather than being strapped to the back like a neonate). *Ọ̀mọ ọ̀rìnṣẹ̀* is the toddler, who can walk around the house on his own. *Màjẹ̀ sín* is a young lad of about five to fifteen years while an *ọ̀dọ̀/ọ̀dọ̀ langba/agùnbánirò/agùnbágirò* (youth/active youth/who-are-as-tall-as-to-be-likened-to-an-adult or they-who-are-as-tall-as-to-easily-reach-for-a-tree). To the Yorùbá, an *ọ̀dọ̀* (youth) is a grown matured (unmarried) male or female of about sixteen to thirty years, who is still being fed and to a large extent, catered for by the parents and other members of the *mọ̀lẹ̀bí*. Such child by age eighteen to twenty if a female; is given out in marriage; if a male and ages twenty three to twenty eight; a bride should have been gotten for him. For whatever reason that may delay a male youth's marriage, by thirty years of age, he should be married and start raising a family. In a case where a male Yorùbá ọ̀dọ̀ is impotent, another male (blood) relation in the *mọ̀lẹ̀bí* is asked (in strict secrecy that usually involves oath taking) to sleep with the impotent male's wife/wives, so that offspring may be sired for him. After thirty-three to thirty-five years, a male child is no longer seen or regarded as a youth but *ọ̀mọkùnrin-ilé* (a full-grown married male child in the family compound) (Adeoye, 1980, 266).

Yorùbá youths, especially in the past, play prominent socio-political and economic roles in the community. Under the leadership of the *olóri-ọ̀dọ̀* (youth leader), they constitute a large percentage of the warriors, who protect the territorial integrity of the community and as soldiers in battlefronts. They are also known to be sentries at the major entrances of their towns and villages, apart from forming themselves into groups to watch over the community day and night. Male youths also take care of the environment, sink wells, expand rivulets and shallow ponds, clear bushes and erect stalls in the markets. The roles of female youths are more of social in nature. In many towns in Yorùbáland, especially among the *Ìjẹ̀bú*, youths belong to *Rẹ̀gbẹ̀ rẹ̀gbẹ̀/Ẹ̀gbẹ̀ ọ̀jó-ori* (age-grade associations). These associations make it easy to apportion duties to all the youths in the community. Though the tradition is no longer practised as before, it still subsists in *Ìjẹ̀búland* where in present times its roles are now social and philanthropic. For instance in *Ìjẹ̀bú-òde*, males and females born between 1956 and 1958 are known as *Ẹ̀gbẹ̀ Ọ̀báfùwàjí Ọ̀kùnrin* (males) and *Ẹ̀gbẹ̀ Ọ̀báfùwàjí Ọ̀bìnrin* (females). In *Àgó-Ìwòyè* (another *Ìjẹ̀bú* town), those born between 1974 and 1976 belong to the *Ẹ̀gbẹ̀ Màyégún* age grade—separately for males and females too. In virtually all Yorùbá towns and settlements, the *olóri-ọ̀dọ̀* and other youth representatives are allowed

as members of the *Ọba/Baálẹ̀* (King/Town heads') cabinet. Therein, they are free to make suggestions or contribute to governance.

In modern times, a youth, according to the African Youth Charter, is anyone between ages fifteen to thirty-five. Akande (2014) puts the population of Nigeria at one hundred and sixty seven (167) million and claims that fifty percent (50%) of the population are youths. According to Bloomberg (2016) report, the number of youths in Nigeria is put at being more than half of the nation's one hundred and eighty two million (182,000,000) population. In the magazine programme; *THE DISCOURSE* on Noble, 107.1 FM radio station in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, on Monday, June 28, 2021, Nigeria's population was put at two hundred and eleven million (211,000,000). The high percentage of youths, being more than half of the population, is a pointer to the fact that the condition of living and the general welfare of the youths in any country determine the advancement of the nation. Youths are generally susceptible to the operating socio-political and economic conditions that are prevalent in their environment. Such situations, if negative, militate against their wellbeing.

In Nigeria today, many youths are directly unemployed or engaged in disguised employment with low-level income; that cannot sustain them. Because of this, most youths, even after leaving colleges and universities, still live (undesirably) with their parents and relations. Many of them are actually ready to forget about their unrealistic crave for white-collar jobs (that are virtually non-existing), and are willing to start small-scale enterprises, but have neither the skill nor the financial wherewithal to do so. All these predicaments lead to low self-esteem, which forced many youths into gangs, drug and alcohol abuse, rape, suicide, murder and the likes.

In a study of a targeted population of randomly selected six hundred and thirty (630) youths and thirty two (32) parents by *Ọla* in 2018, employment issues, youth's negative experience, substance addiction among other challenges, are faced by youths. In another research conducted by Wanjohi in 2014, it was found out that the key issues facing youths in developing countries like Kenya are "unemployment, lack of youth support services like funding, substance abuse, health issues and breaking of family and societal value system." According to infoguidenigeria.com, the ten topmost problems facing Nigeria youths are; unemployment, laziness, social media distractions, drug/alcohol abuse, insecurity, poverty, lack of good healthcare, bad governance, lack of means to pursue entrepreneurship endeavours and poor state of education. It can be acknowledged, that youths all over the world, especially in developing countries are facing a number of challenges, apart from the biological issues that are associated with their physiological and psychological

growth. Dúró in *Gbẹgẹde Gbiná*, for instance, laments his unemployment thus:

*Èwo ni mo rò tí kò tóó rò?
Èwo ni kò tó bà mí lẹkàn jé?
Mo ɣàisùn, ɣàisùn
Mo kàwé tán, mo ɣe dańwò, mo yege
Ó wá ku kárisé ɣe
Mo kòwé, kòwé wáɣé
N kò ríɣé
Mo rìn, rìn, bàtà kan tí mo ní
Tí jẹ tán túé túé.
Wọ n ní a kó sabú wá
A kò sabú lọ
Wọ n tún bèèrè ọ rọ a tún dáhùn
Áṣé eni tí kò bá mènìyàn kò leè ríɣé ... (Alamu, 1987, 17).*

What is happening that does not deserve deep thoughts?
Are there not several things to make me sad?
I stayed awake endlessly
I read, went through examinations and I was successful
All it remains is to get employed
I have written several job applications
But I got none
Walking all about, the only shoe that I have
Has gotten flat totally
They requested for certificates
These I took to them
I was interviewed and I responded
Alas, if you do not know the people that matters, you will not get
employed...

Dúró and Àlàbí's unemployment is the cause of their poverty. While Dúró's only shoe is torn and the sole uneven, Àlàbí says of his trousers:

*Wo ɣòkòtò labú tí mo tí n tẹ mólẹ tẹlẹ
Ó já, já, já, ó já kàn mí lójúgun
Níbi tí mo tí n wáɣé kiri.*

See my wide-mouth trousers that used be too long,
It has gotten so torn that it is now at my knees

All in the name of going about, for employment.

Unhappy with their situation, Dúró tells Àlàbí his friend that he is not going to attend Wale; their classmate's, birthday party.

The pressure of materialism it is that turns Olúmokò to stealing (Ajéwoḷé 1980, 46-77), just like what happens to Wálé (Àlámú 1987, 72-88), that he joins his gang members to be forging the signature of bank customers on blank cheques. The inability of Sẹgilọlá to shy away from materialism it is that makes her to deceive Sànyà her boyfriend that she will marry him, when her desire in actual fact is to marry legally, a step which Sànyà claims he is not interested in, as his desire is not monogamy but polygyny. Sẹgilọlá feigns acceptance because:

Iṣẹ́ akòwé tó n tajà nínú sọ ọ̀ bù àwọn òyìnbó oníṣòwò ni Sànyà n ẹ́, àwọn oriṣiríṣi aṣọ àrán olówó iyebíye pẹ̀ lú àwọn gèlè ni ó n bẹ̀ nínú sọ ọ̀ bù tí Sànyà ti n ẹ́ṣẹ́. (Thomas, 2009, 8–9)

Sànyà works as a clerk in a shop owned by white traders, there are different types of expensive velvet cloths and head gears in the shop.

Bio-Sociological Analysis of Youth's Behaviour

The youth, as a young person who is just developing into an adult, is known to draw some (immature) characteristic behaviours which adults consider as selfish, egoistic, rebellious and inconsiderate. Such behaviours, if left unchecked and without 'divine interventions', may have irreparable negative effects on the youth. For this, the Yorùbá say; *Yíyò ni ọ̀nà ọ̀dọ́ máa n yò*, Olódumarè ní í bu ilẹ́dú sí i (Slippery is the path of the youth, it is God who lays humus soil on it). This means in effect that youths are susceptible to many 'evils' that can adversely affect them as they grow towards adulthood, it is God alone that can intervene so that they are spared the consequences. These behaviours in support of Jean Piaget's theory on cognitive development, is egocentrism; the inability on the part of children in pre-operational stage of development to see any other point of view, other than their individual owns (see Galanaki, 2017). This is manifested in focus on own perception and opinion, lack of empathy, inability to recognise the needs of other people, excessive thoughts of how others might view them and making decisions around the needs of self. These behaviours often continue in the life of children to adolescent age. 'Adolescents Egocentrism' (Elkind, 1967) is a term used to describe the phenomenon of adolescents' inability to distinguish

between their perception of what others think about them and what people actually think in reality. It involves the constructive imaginary audiences that account for a variety of behaviour and experiences that play roles that emerge in the youths (Galanaki, 2017). This attitude is called ‘Personal fable’ (Elkind, 1967; Galaki, 2017)

Sègilólá, for instance, in *Ìtàn Sègilólá*, is so conscious of her beauty that she feels she is the most beautiful girl in the whole of Lagos; a cynosure of all eyes, with whom no other female can compete. She says:

Ènìyàn pupa fòò lẹ̀ mí ñ ẹ̀... ara mi kúná, ó sì wẹ̀ ...rí múlọ̀ múlọ̀ ... Mo síg-bonlẹ̀ láti òkè dé ilẹ̀ ...şàşà ni àwọn obìnrin tí wọ̀n...tó láti bá mi kẹ̀gbẹ̀.
(Thomas, 2009, 2–3)

I am very fair in complexion... my body is very soft and alluring... I am lanky from head to toe... only very few women ... dare to compete with me.

Sègilólá also feels that a new song being sung in Lagos then is composed particularly because of her desperate desire to have a monogamous wedding. Here is the song:

Ó sunkún láti gbáradè
Bàbá rẹ̀ kò gbé
Ìyá rẹ̀ kò gbé
Wẹ̀ rẹ̀ ló ñ sunkún
O! Dear lover!! Follow me!!!(Thomas, 2009, 10)

She is weeping to have a legal marriage
Your father was not married legally
Your mother was not married legally
You are weeping profusely
O! Dear lover!! Follow me!!!

This attitude of believing that others are watching and making judgement on one is termed ‘Imaginary Audience’ (Elkind, 1967).

In the same vein, Fẹ̀hìntólá; Olúyosólá’s younger sister in *Eni Bímọ̀ Ọ̀ ràn* comes to report Olúmokò her nephew to Olúyosólá his mother, that instead of staying in school to learn, Olúmokò is in Aşẹ̀jirẹ̀ River swimming. Olúyosólá becomes agitated as she looks forward to her son’s safe return home. Olúmokò returns and he is not bothered by his mother and aunt’s ‘unnecessary’ worries. Concerned about his hunger, he turns to his mother and says:

Màrà, mo lóúnjẹ mi da?

Bé-è bá fẹ̀ fàdín fẹ̀sù jẹ (Ajéwólé, 1980, 14).

(Mother, I say, where is my food?

If you do not want to make a sacrifice of

palm kernel oil to Devil – If you don't want trouble)

With the unchecked behaviour, Olúmokò does not outgrow his self-centredness. He eventually joins Fátínwọ́, Ìnàjú-Èkùn, Ìbíyélé and their grand patron; Alówólodù's cultic robbery group out of his insatiable desire for material wealth, he swears to the membership of the group. When caught during a bank robbery, he was brought to the court for trial, Olúmokò confesses their supposed secret and robbery association, as he aspires to be set free while other members get sentenced. This is because he stupidly falls for the Judge's bait that if he says the truth and nothing but the truth, he will be set free. The Judge passes his judgement by sentencing all the members of the robbery gang to death. Olúmokò then asks the Judge, *Ìdájọ̀ tẹ̀mi ñkọ̀, Alàṣẹ?* (Ajéwólé, 1980, 87-88) - (How about my own judgement, your lordship?) The Judge answers him:

Tirẹ̀ báwọ̀? Gbogbo yín ni mo dájọ̀ fún pọ̀...

Ìwọ̀ ò mò pólófòófó ò gbegbẹ̀wá

Ibi opẹ̀ náà ní í mọ̀, ó dáa o ẹ̀ é o...(Ajéwólé, 1980, 88)

(Yours as how? I have just given my judgement on you all...

Do you not know that the talebearer receives not thousands,

All he receives is thanks. Alright then, thank you)

Youths, more often than not, equate themselves with adults. Wálé in *Gbẹ̀gẹ̀de Gbiná* is paid a mobilisation fee for the very first contract that he is awarded after swindling and voluntarily retiring from the bank he earlier worked with. Rather than saving his profit from the contract after he might have executed it and buy a less expensive car for a start, he decides to buy a Mercedes Benz car instead of the "ordinary Peugeot car" used by Àdìgún his schoolmate (who introduced him to the contract job). Taking himself for a full-grown adult, a socialite and an important personality in the community, he boasts;

...Mo gbò dọ ra ọkò tí ó tóbi ju tí ẹ lọ ní...Bí n bá rọra jókòó sí ẹ yìn ọ bọ kún, t'omódé t'àgbà t'ó bá rí mi á máa wí pé 'bàbá kẹ ẹ, àjẹpẹ ayé... (Àlámú, 1987, 39)

(...I must buy a car that is bigger than his...When I sit gently at the back of the Mercedes Benz, both young and old that see me will hail me 'the big man himself, long may you live...')

Adéjùmò (2002, 10-11), observing youths in present time says:

*Omọ tí ò tìl yọ lójú ara
Tó ti n kẹ gbẹ kẹ gbẹ
Bó ti n mugbó
Bẹ ẹ ni n mutí
Patí òròòru kò lònkà
Ìgbà tí ẹwe ìwòyí bá sáyó tán
Ni wọn n ki mọ tò mọ lẹ...
Wọn n wá tẹná ọkò látẹpa...
Ó le fọkọ sáré títí kó fori sọgi
Ó le sáré títí kọkọ tàkìtì
...ó le kó sábé àjàgbé...*

Immature youths
That join bad peers
As they smoke weeds
So they drink ceaselessly
Uncountable night crawling
When they are drunk to stupor
That is when they get hold of cars
They drive recklessly
Their speed can make them collide with a tree
Their speed can cause somersaults
They can run into a trailer from behind.

Peer group effect mentioned by Adéjùmò above is another bane in the successful treading on the slippery path of the youths. They believe that it is expected of them to be at par with their friends who are free at home and are legally or otherwise affluent. Adéòtí in *Jẹ Ng Lògbà Tèmi*, secretly visits Éésità (whose mother is very receptive to modern ways of life and as such tolerant of her daughter's excesses) to dress up in frocks, adorn her face with modern cosmetics and goes out with Éésità and her friends. When Déòtí's

mother finds out about her daughter's strange mode of dressing and accuses her, she gets this shocking response from Déòtí:

*È fi mi sílẹ̀ jàrẹ. È jẹ́ kí ng lò'gbà tẹmí
Mo ẹbí èniyàn ni Éésítà, àbí a kì í wáyé
ni mo wáyé? Ng kò sá sìn wọ n wá. (Àlà mú, 1987, 39).*

Please let me be. Let me enjoy my prime.
Is Esther not a human being, or is it wrong
for me to have been born? After all I am
not alive because I only saw some people off to
this world.

It is Sẹgilọlá's friendship with wayward Àyòkà; her friend, that particularly leads to her downfall in *Ìtàn Sẹgilọlá*. In her confessions she says:

*Ọkùnrin...yóò máa gbúròò iṣẹ́ tí èmi bá fẹ́ rán...láti ọ̀dọ̀ ọ̀rẹ́ mi
Àyòkà...pé ohunkóhun tí èmi Sẹgilọlá bá sí rán Àyòkà... kí ó fi àwọn
nńkan náà ránṣẹ́ sí mi...mo rán Àyòkà sí ọkùnrin náà pé kó wá pàdẹ́ mi
nínú ilẹ̀ àwọn Àyòkà lálẹ́ ọjó náà. (Thomas, 2009, 38-39)*

A male friend hears my message from Àyòkà my friend... that he should
do some things to me...I sent Àyòkà to the man, that he should meet me in
Àyòkà's house that night.

Àyòkà in *Itan Segilola* has limitless freedom in her own parents' house just like Éésítà does.

Psychologically, youths (unconsciously) resist the checks on their lifestyle by parents, who being in charge of their (the youths') general welfare, 'control' and 'restrict' their freedom 'unnecessarily'. For this reason, they want to resist the control of their parents, teachers and other adults in charge of their welfare; trying to assert their imaginary 'adulthood'.

The youth's believe in personal uniqueness, ascertained maturity and 'invisibility', is the illusion that they are above social rules, disciplines and laws. Thus, their consequences are applicable to others and not themselves, making them engage in risky behaviours like excessive consumption of drugs and alcohol, drug peddling and involvement in unprotected sex (Linn, 2016). For instance, Sẹgilọlá in *Ìtàn Sẹgilọlá* thinks her sleeping around with different men will not have any repercussion, only for her to be infected with a strange disease. In like manner, Éésítà throws cautions into the wind and assures her mother that she is safe, only for her to have an unwanted pregnancy

for which none of her several male friends is ready to take responsibility, in *Jé Ng Lògbà Tèmi*. In *Gbeḡedé Gbiná*, Wálé knows that fraudulent actions by bank officials if found out, carry stiff penalties, yet he goes ahead with his friends to forge customers' signatures on stolen blank cheques and he is sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour.

Parenting and Its Effects on Youths

Parenting styles are more often than not inherited. Most parents try to bring up their own children the way they were brought up. It is of great importance that when a parent finds out that the way he/she is brought up is faulty in some areas, adjustments could be made, such that their offspring can be of improved behaviour. This is because the parenting style adopted as earlier said, will have peculiar effects on the youths, within the family and on the society in general.

When parents are over-protective of their children or they become too dotting to curtail the excesses of their children, such children grow wings. This is very common among parents-especially the mothers who have just one child. Such spoilt children may not turn out well in life as a result of being pampered and granted all their requests. This is the case of Wálé in *Gbeḡedé Gbiná* where the mother does only what pleases her son, despite her husband's warnings. She uses her illicit relationship with a bank manager to get Wálé employed in a bank, a child who failed woefully in his examinations, and cannot do simple calculation. In reply to her husband's warnings, she says:

Á! Á! Àbí òrò ọmọ mi ni è ń sọ káàkiri igboro? È jòwó mo fi Ọlórún bẹ yín, ẹ má pa mí lápasáyé o...Èni t'ó bá ní òun yóò gbà kan yìi lówó mi, èmi pẹ lú olúwarẹ la ó jọ kú pọ. (Àlà mú, 1983, 1).

Ah! A! Have you being going about telling people about this child? Please I beg you in the name of God, do not make me half-dead... Whosoever wants to take this only one from me, myself and such a person will die together.

In *Èni Bímọ Ọ̀ràn*, Fẹ̀hntolá warns Olúyosolá his sister against her attitude of indulging Olúmokò her only child. She responds:

...Wón lógèdè dúdú ò ẹ é bù sán
 Ọmọ burúkú ò yáá lù pa
 Kí ẹ nínà ló ń mú ọmọ gbón
 Ọmọ tí yóò mòye, fúnrarẹ ni yóò mò ọn...

Èyí tó bá wu Olúmokò kó máa ẹ̀ jàrẹ
Ilẹ̀ ọ́lá nì wọ́n tí bí ọ́ Olúmokò,
Ewu kan ò sí lóràn rẹ̀ rárá...(Ajéwọ́lé, 1980, 15–16).

(...It is said that it is not easy to eat unripe plantain
 So it is difficult to beat a spoiled child to death...
 It is not beatings that makes a child wise
 Any child that will be wise does so of his own accord...
 Let Olúmokò do as he pleases
 You were born with a silver spoon Olúmokò
 You do not have anything to fear about...)

Youths and adolescents' first role models are their parents. Children practice whatever they see their fathers and mothers do. Adéníkẹ̀ẹ̀ in *Gbegeḡe Gbiná* asks her son Wálé:

...*Àbí bàbá rẹ̀ tún bá ọ́ wí lóniù nígbà tí ó gba kinni rẹ̀ pé tán?* (Àlámú, 1987,2)

(...Is it that your father scolded you again today after consuming his alcohol?)

This implies that Adébáyò (Wálé's father) is a drunk. No wonder then that Wálé turns out a drunk.

The demise of divorce, or separation between parents, also affects the upbringing of a youth. Psychologically, the child who is used to having both parents present will definitely feel incomplete without one of them. In the case of Akin in *Akin Gbayi*, he goes through a lot of sad moments and neglect from Ìyá Ayò; his stepmother, who often says:

Ọmọ ọ̀sì kan ò le è fòrò é mí mi, èmi kọ́ nì mo pa iyá rẹ̀. Ìkòkò ò ní gba eyìn kó tún gba omi inú è. Bí bàbá rẹ̀ bá dé, nínú kó fowó mú ọmọ rẹ̀ tàbí kí ó fowó mú èmi. (Quadri, 2019, 6).

One wretched child can not disturb my peace, I was not the one who killed his mother. The two of us can never live together. When his father returns, he has to make a choice between his son and myself.

The lackadaisical attitude of fathers in leaving virtually all the parental roles for their wives, is a very germane point in the issue of the outcome of a youth's upbringing. Instead of joining hands with their wives in training

and disciplining a recalcitrant youth, most of them often abandon their duty by refusing to call such child to order, with the thought that they can have other children from countless women if need be. In *Ení Bímọ̀ Ọ̀ ràn*, Òkíkíọ̀lá laments to death about Olúmokò his son:

Béèyàn gbélé ayé láibímọ̀
Ó sàṅ ju àbíràainù ọmọ...
Nítorí irònú rẹ̀ kún àisàn mi yìí
Èyí tó ñ gbé mi roko ikú yìí (Ajéwọlé, 1980, 27).

If one lives without an offspring
 It is better than having a worthless one
 Because thoughts of him is one of the reasons I am ill
 This illness that is leading me to my early grave.

Òkíkíọ̀lá's expression of grief above is better captured by the novelist's comment on Èésítà's outcome and the type of parenting she has in *Jẹ́ Ng Lògbà Tèmi*:

Mo bí ogún, ọmọ koóko
Mo bí ogbòn ọmọ mèrùwà
Kàkà kí ng bí egbàá ọ̀ b̀ùn
Tí ng bá ti bí ọ̀ kanṣoṣo ọ̀ gá –
Ó tó. (Ládélé, 1979, 75)

Giving birth to twenty worthless children
 Giving birth to thirty children who are just like grass
 Rather than giving birth to thousands of dirty ones
 If I have just one who is excellent –
 I am done.

Exposing youths to unnecessary affluence is another mistake that many wealthy parents make. Instead of teaching their children to fish, they prefer to show them where fishes are stored, so that at their whims and caprices, they lavishly spend their parents' money. This is the reason for the warning:

Èyin òbí ẹ̀ tẹ̀ tí kẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbọ̀
Dákun kiyèsí bí o ẹ̀ ń fowó kẹ̀ mọ̀
Èwe iwòyí ń fákìyèsí
Ọmọ tí ọ̀ tìl yọ̀ lójú ara
Ñjẹ̀ iwọ̀ obí tó o nífọ̀ n lèèkán

Ò bá mà rọra ẹe...
Şiké ọmọ níwọ n... (Adejumo, 2002, 10–12)

Parents, listen attentively...
 Please be careful about how you pamper your children with money
 Youths of today need to be watched over
 You that are very wealthy
 You need to be very careful
 Pamper children moderately...

The exact opposite of this poet's advice is what Adéníkèè in *Gbegeḍe Gbiná*, Olúyọṣolá and Òkikiọlá in *Eni Bímọ Ọ ràn*, do. Adéníkèè tells her husband in Wálé, their son's presence, that:

...pátápátá rẹ á fídí rẹmi, iyẹ kò pé kó má rí işé kẹ e. Áfi bí ọjú bá ti owó tí ó sì ti gbajúmọ ni n ò ní fi wá işé fún un n'ílẹ̀ yìi. (Àlámú, 1987, 2)

...the worst that can happen is that he fails, that does not stop him from being employed. Except if money can ever suffer shame and being well known does too, that I will not get him a job in this land.

Olúyọṣolá assures Olúmokò her son in Fẹhìntọlá her sister's presence when the latter admonishes her to train her son properly:

Èyí tó bá wú Olúmokò kó máa ẹ jàre
Ní towó, owó ñ bẹ tí yòò ná dalé...
Ohun egbé mi ẹ n ò ní sàìşẹ nílẹ-ìwé fún un...
Bí wọn túbọ, igún yòò ẹjun yó
Bí wọn ò sì tubọ, gúnugún yòò ẹjun
Ilé ọlá ni wọn ti bí ọ Olúmokò
Ewu kan ò sí ló ràn rẹ rárá (Ajéwolé, 1980, 15–16).

Please let Olúmokò do as he pleases
 As for money, there is enough for him till he gets old
 His going to school is just to be like our associates
 If sacrifices are not offered, vultures will eat
 If sacrifices are offered, vultures will eat
 You are born with a silver spoon Olúmokò
 You have nothing to fear at all.

If parents are too strict and do not give room for dialogue between themselves and their youths and adolescents, it may create fear and a lack of self-confidence. In *Ó le ku, Bàbá kékeré*, Àṣàkẹ́'s uncle who acts as her father when her biological father is on a business trip to Ghana refuses to listen to Àṣàkẹ́'s pleas for her to retain the pregnancy by Ajani her boyfriend, to later resume for her admission in the university after the delivery of her baby. *Bàbá kékeré's* friend lends a voice to Àṣàkẹ́'s pleas but the uncle remains adamant and eventually terminates Àṣàkẹ́'s pregnancy without her consent, putting her life at risk. Bàbá kékeré's action destabilises the lives of Àjàní and Àṣàkẹ́. Àjàní then has a fatal auto accident while driving to the hospital to visit Àṣàkẹ́ upon hearing the news that she is ill.

Conclusion

In this essay, our bid is to examine the impact of parenting, during adolescent and youthful stage, on the present political socio-economic and security challenges faced by Nigeria. We have looked into parenting, its typology and traditional focus among the Yoruba of South West Nigeria, by exemplifying excerpts from randomly selected literary materials created by Yoruba artists. We have also looked into psychological and bio-sociological reasons for the exuberances of the youths. Having highlighted the neglects of parents in their duties and responsibilities of nurturing their children and wards in the expected ways, to make them cultural-abiding, selfless, co-operative, truthful and well-mannered members of their immediate community and the world.

We found out that fathers' attitude of pushing the responsibility of parenting to the mother alone, always have negative effects on the upbringing of youths. We are presently in a situation where religions like Christianity admonishes 'one man- one wife' and the prevailing economic situation teaches one to control the size of one's family, thus not giving room for the practise of polygyny. We further discovered that, a recalcitrant child or children can be abandoned and a father can choose to identify with well-mannered ones. Another finding is that living a lavish life, displaying affluence and granting unnecessary financial freedom to youths, cause unnecessary trouble for the youth – a slime that can make the path of youths slippery. Moreover, not spending good time with children and youths in a way that fosters good rapport, showing them love and applying constructive discipline, is a bane in raising promising and well-mannered youths.

We also noted that some parents do not exhibit good behaviours to enable their children to grow up well. For instance, a mother who engages in extra-marital affairs and insults her husband when the latter tries to correct their children, is simply sowing breeze, she will certainly reap whirlwind in

the end. A father who is a night crawler and a drunk will not have a sober, responsible and successful mourner at his graveside. In addition to the aforementioned, offspring of a previous marriage may suffer depression and neglect, in the hands of a step mother. That is if a widower or male divorcee does not stand for his children's welfare..

Our suggestions therefore, are that parents should only give birth to the number of children which their emotional and financial capacity can conveniently cater for. Parenting should be seen as a joint venture between parents and not as a prerogative of the (modern) mother, who is also expected to go to work to supplement the husband's financial responsibility. Parents must correct and encourage their youth jointly, exuding respect for each other in the presence of their children, so that the children will understand that they can be equally disciplined by either of the parent when they misbehave. Furthermore, parents should provide for their basic needs of life, and not wishes or desires. To achieve the best in life, youths should not be gagged; but be given freedom for self-expression and guided properly, they should see their parents as primary 'confidential friends.' In addition, it should be acknowledged that the Yorùbá extended family life practice may not be applicable in the present modern day. However, allowing youths to spend vacations with relatives, contributes to them being properly nurtured. An only child for instance, is not likely to receive unnecessary pampering from aunties, uncles or cousins, when he needs to be corrected. The maxim *Ìyá ọmọ ní í lé ọmọ rẹ̀, tí kì í bá a, bí ará ìta bá bá a lé e, síkún ni'* (It is a child's (biological) mother that runs after the child and is not able to overtake them, if another person does so, it will be accomplished with ease) comes readily to the mind here.

Youths and young adults must see and relate to their parents as friends and confidants. They must be made to realise that no (normal) mother or father can have bad intentions towards their own children. They must always try to resist peer pressures and be willing to quickly open up to their parents when they sense danger, and shy away from living a fake life of affluence when in fact they may be from humble, loving and prestigious family background. Youths should also know that material wealth is ephemeral and they should not be desperate to acquire it. Youths should know that the temporary relief that comes with drugs, alcohol consumption and raping to dowse tensions from poverty and unemployment, is always short-lived; the pains and agony doubles when the effect of the consumption and action wear off.

The Nigerian government at all levels should factor the happiness and welfare of the youths into their socio-economic policies. They should, create more jobs for the teeming youths who graduate from colleges and universities yearly. Offering loans with little or no interest with long-term payment plans, will enable youths who are willing to go into small and medium scale

enterprises to access funds. Religious and non-governmental corporate bodies should continuously come to the aid of Nigerian youths by organising seminars and workshops based on living purposeful lives in pursuit of a better future. Government and the private sector individual employers should as a matter of urgency desist from offering youths poor remunerations and toxic working environment.

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