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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE RELEVANCE OF METAPHYSICS IN AFOLABÍ OLÁBÍMTÁN'S *ORÍLAWÈ ÀDÌGÚN*

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ABSTRACT

Metaphysics, a way or a branch in philosophy studies the basic constituents of the world by investigating into the nature of the fundamental related to the ultimate nature of reality and the human knowledge. One basic feature of metaphysics is that it requires into what there is in the world. It is the philosophy concerning the nature of existence, truth and knowledge. It has the totality of being and existence, that is, the nature and structure of reality in its all embracing and general aspects. In this paper, the relevance of metaphysics in Yorùbá is delved into in the novel *Orílawè Àdìgún* written by Afolábí Olábímtán to bring out the Yorùbá view about the world and its existence. It is also to establish the Yorùbá metaphysical thoughts and beliefs in charms as expressed in the novel.

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INTRODUCTION

Metaphysics refers generally to the field of philosophy dealing with question about the kind of things there are and their modes of being. Its subject matter includes the concepts of existence, things, property, the distinctions between particulars and universals, individuals and classes, change, causation and the nature of mind, matter, space and time. The word "Metaphysics" as first used to refer to a group of treaties written by Aristotle. The term represents the Greek phrase "ta meta ta physica" which means "the (books) next after physics". This is usually credited to Aristotle who defines Meaphysics as "being qua being" that is the study of existence or reality. Metaphysics is the study of the reality of being and existence, that is, the nature and structure of reality in its all-embracing and comprehensive forms. That is, it is the being in its most general aspects. Metaphysics has been associated with things spiritual, things religions, things political, and things occultic among others. Taylor opines "metaphysics sets itself more systematically and usually than any other science, to ask what after all is meant by being real". This shows that metaphysics studies the basic constituents of the world by investigating into the nature of reality. Part of the major tasks of metaphysics is to find answers to questions on people's curiosity about the reality of their existence, the activities that are taking place around them and their environment.

When we carry out an extra-ordinary investigations into the extra-ordinary or when we reflect on the perplexing feature of man and the world, we are compelled to ask the most fundamental questions about existence. Metaphysical question includes: what is reality? What does It mean for something to be? Why are things the way they are? What is a person? Can a man be said to be free? These are the questions that metaphysics tends to give answers to. The Yoruba too are curious about the happenings around them. They want to know about the reality of their existence, and the activities that are taking place in their environment. The aim of this paper is to investigate these in the novel *Orílawè Àdìgún*. The theory to be used for this work is Hermeneutics. It is the theory that digs deep into the deeper structure or meaning of a literary work. Hermeneutics came into limelight with the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer, (1976) argued that the meaning of a text goes beyond the author and therefore the subject matter is what determines the meaning.

Also Richard Palmer, (1960) says of Hermeneutics that 'it is the process of deciphering which goes from manifest content and meaning to intent or hidden meaning'. With the function that Hermeneutics performs, one can submit that the deep structure of literary works can be exhumed to the surface level and it will facilitate a deeper understanding and interpretation.

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## DISCUSSION

### THE RELEVANCE OF METAPHYSICS IN *ORÍLAWÈ ÀDÌGÚN*

In Yorùbá society, there is a great belief in metaphysical power. This shows in their belief of divination. In whatever step the Yorùbá want to take, they always go to the diviner to consult the Ifá Oracle whether to go ahead or not. Whatever the Ifá Oracle says is the final. If they have a new baby, the Oracle will be consulted to know about the future, the dos and don'ts of the baby {Adéoyè, C.L}. In the same vein, if there is any unforeseen trouble, the Yoruba have a way of averting it. They can do this by offering sacrifices to the gods.

Moreso, the use of charms is part of lives of the Yorùbá people. They make use of charms in their day to day activities because of the belief they have in it. This is not found wanting in their political, social and religious ways of life. Charms are being used in form of protection, detective measure among others. The use of charm is broadly highlighted in *Orílawè Àdìgún*. Being a political novel based on Yorùbá society, the author exhibited the usefulness of charms as a major ingredient in the political setting of the Yorùbá.

The visit of Àtíngà masquerades to Owódé town marked the beginning of the use of charm in the novel *Orílawè Àdìgún*. The Àtíngà masquerades would cast a spell on an innocent person who in turn would go inside the house of anyone that was in possession of bad medicine and would bring it out.

“Ìgbà tí elégùn òòsà bá dé iwájú onílù, yòò bèrè ijó, ibi tí ó ti ní jó ni òòsà yòò ti dari rè tí yòò sì sáré ní òjijì, tí yòò fi gbogbo ijó sílè, ó di ilé tí oògùn burúkú bá wà. Bí ó bá ti wo ilé ohún, tààràtá ibi tí oògùn nàà wà ni yòò lo, yòò sì gbe jáde” (oi.22).

Translated:

As soon as the spell carrier gets to the drummer, he will start dancing, as he will be dancing, the gods will take control over him and he will run straight to the house that is harboring bad medicine. As soon as he enters, he will go straight to where the medicine in and he will bring it out.

With this spell, a lot of people with evil medicine were detected. The most prominent case was that of Ìyá Olóbi who was made to confess all the evils she had done to the people of Owódé town. But in case of Ewéjé, Lawè's father, from whom a statue was taken from his house, he did not have any confession to make because he did not do any evil with his medicine. This issue of Àtíngà masquerades portrays the Yoruba philosophical way of life. They are enriched in masquerades portrays the Yorùbá philosophical way of life. They are enriched in metaphysical power by which they govern themselves. From this metaphysical power, they can detect the evil people among them. One method of this detective is the casting of spell.

Another use of charms that is noted among Yorùbá people as highlighted in *Orílawè Àdìgún* is the use of Ìsújú {Mirage power}. The author elaborated on the use of Ìsújú as a major means by which Lawe was able to carry out some actions that

would have been difficult to achieve. The first instance was when the class teacher deprived Lawe and his classmates to go for break. Lawe used Isuju to disturb the teacher, Mr Àlùkò, when he was eating by moving the plate of rice round the table. Meanwhile the teacher did not believe in charms, but from his experience with Lawè, he realized that the Yorùbá are rich in metaphysical powers. The second instance where Ìsújú was being used was when Lawè changed the speech to be read by the head of government. This Ìsújú made Dèlakùn to be invisible to the head of government as the speech was been changed. So, he read the speech that was different from the one he had prepared. Ìsújú was also useful for Lawè when he was in the prison. He was able to get to Àlùkò's and Alhaja Fúnmiláyo's rooms to warn them against eating the poisonous food that would be brought to them. With the help of the Ìsújú, Àlùkò and Alhaja Fúnmiláyo were able to escape from untimely death.

Also, metaphysical power that was exhibited in *Orílawè Àdìgún* was the use of Sígìdì (an image made of mud believed to have the power of protecting, avenging and attacking when appropriated). It was Sígìdì that Ewéjé used to send messages to Lawe in the prison in order to keep him informed about the happenings in the town.

Bí ó sì ti dùbùlè tí ó fè sùn ni sigìdì mú iwé dé láti òdò Bábá rè, ó jù ú sílè ó sì lo” (oi.167)

Translated:

As he lay to sleep, the statue brought a letter from his father, dropped it and left.

The use of charms was also illustrated in the case of hooligans that were sent to Adé's house by Nínálowó party to get an important document from him. They entered into Adé's house but they could not bring anything out and at the same time could not go.

“Ìgbà tí wón ti di gbogbo re tán tí wón fè gbé e, kí wón máa lo ni wón bá ní pòoyì lójú kan bí àga agéruntà. Òkan sì fa igbálè tí Adé fi kó òkè, ó bèrè sí gbále. Bí ó bá re okan a sì mú un fún èkejì. Báyì ni wón se tífi ilè fi mo”. (oi.95)

Translated:

As they have finished packing everything, they were about to carry them and go. Suddenly, they started to go round like a barber's chair. One of them took the charmed broom that Ade hung at the house top and he started sweeping. If one is tried, he would give the broom to another. They were like that till day break.

Another use of charms that the author made mentioned was exhibited in the case the emissaries sent by Nínálowó party to go to Lagos and find out the whereabouts of Àlùkò and Alhaja Fúnmiláyo. These two people were sent to Sádíákù, the national chairman of Nínálowó party who ordered the arrest of Lawè. They were pleading for the release of Lawe; but they too were arrested. Among the emissaries that were sent to Lagos were two hunters. On their way, their car broke down and it

was already late. So they were forced to sleep in the bush. They were attacked by armed robbers, but the hunters proved their worth with the supernatural power on them.

Òkan nínú won ni ó súnmo olórí àwon adánà, bí ó sì fẹ́ bó silè, ó fi òrùka owó rè ta olórí won láyà iyen sì subú. Ó fère má tii délè tí ó fi súnmo èkeji, ó gbá a lójú, tí iyen náà lulè . . . Àsé ode kejì tí kò tètè bó silè fi àgadágodo ti oko won sí idúró ni kí ó tó bó silè” (oi.138).

Translated:

One of the hunters moved close to the leader of the gang, as he was about to get down, he used his charmed ring to beat the leader at his chest and he fell. As the leader was falling down, the hunter moved to the second person slapped him and he too fell - - the other hunter that did not come out of car on time had locked the armed robbers car with charmed padlock so that it could not move before he got down.

Two major charms were used by the hunters in this illustration. They were the charmed ring and the charmed padlock. This shows that the Yorùbá have different ways that they protect themselves from dangers. Also it shows that the Yorùbá hunters are always at alert. They don't take things with levity.

As recorded in the novel:

Àsé àwon Alágbára ode Owódé méjì wà nínú won, àwon méjèjèjì sì ti múra bóyá irú ohun tí wón bá pàdè lè sele” (oi.138)

Translated:

So, two powerful hunters from Owódé were among them, the two of them had already got prepared in case something like what they met could happen.

What can be deducted from this quotation above is that the hunters among the Yorùbá serve as security to their people. They always serve as guards to their society. When it is time of war, they are the ones that will come out, also when there are attacks from armed robbers they will be the defendants for their people. They are always at alert and always all over the town in case of any danger.

Furthermore, the use of Obi Oòsà by the Àtíngà people is to protect the people of Owódé from evil attack was illustrated in the novel. In order to arm the Owódé people they are to eat the Obi Oòsà. It was the power behind the kola that made it to be supernatural kola which worked the magic for protection. It was believed that whosoever tasted the kola would not face the wrath of those that were exposed of their bad juju; for they might want to retaliate. This shows that the Yorùbá have the belief in supernatural power that it can give them immunity against any evil attack.

### Conclusion

This paper looks into the relevance of metaphysics in the novel *Orilawè Àdìgún* exhibiting the Yorùbá thoughts and beliefs in charms. Moreso, it establishes the efficacy of these charms and the various ways by which the Yorùbá make use of their metaphysical powers. It also establishes the fact that the Yorùbá are rich in charms and they make use of them whenever the need arises; for protection, defence, communication, detection among others.

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