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Folklore in a Contemporary African Society: Focus on Concepts of Deviance and Crime, Using Oring Folktales

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Abstract

This paper discusses how the concepts of 'deviance and crime' in folklore can be used to understand social conformity and deviance, while also addressing challenges facing contemporary African society. The study focuses on examining the nature of conformity and deviance within society through the lens of Oring folktales. By analyzing events hidden beneath the symbolic elements of these tales, the paper seeks to address issues of greed in present-day Nigeria and the broader African context. The research data was gathered through oral interviews with three Oring elders aged 50-70, whose insights were recorded, translated from Koring language to English, and analyzed. The study utilizes discourse analysis and cultural dialectics, aiming to introduce folktales as a variable to mediate the dichotomy between stinginess and generosity, illustrated through the behavior of characters like the Tortoise (Ekul) and other animals, such as the Elephant, Lizard, and Cattle Egret, in selected tales. The paper argues that folktales possess a persuasive power that can influence individuals and society, employing a descriptive approach to analyze these stories as a means of addressing societal challenges in Africa, particularly in Nigeria.

Keywords: Deviance and Crime, Koring Folktales, Security Challenges, Discourse analysis, Cultural dialectics.

1.0 Introduction

Globally, issues like insecurity, crime, injustice, and social unrest are central to both national and international discussions and debates. The modern African society continuously seeks peace, social justice, tranquility, and development, among other

things. To address these concerns, this paper utilizes the field of folklore to analyze deviance and crime as contributors to the security challenges facing the African continent, particularly Nigeria. These challenges hinder economic growth and development, adversely impacting Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product and overall progress

in the region. Mbagwu and Onyeocha (2018: 115) note that "the role of folktales in African traditional society has attracted scholarly attention, encompassing hermeneutical analysis, discourse analysis, linguistic analysis, philosophical analysis, and documentation, aimed at preservation and revitalization." One objective of this paper is to redirect attention to the rich resources embedded in folktales. To achieve this, the study focuses on tortoise-based folktales from the Koring community, using them to explore values that sustain moral integrity in African society, with a particular focus on Nigeria.

Considering the social factors contributing to insecurity, this paper examines deviance and crime in Oring oral literature to highlight the various levels of crime today. By analyzing Koring folktales, particularly the interactions of the Tortoise (Ekul) with other animals like the Elephant (Enyi), birds, and squirrels, the paper showcases the negative behaviors and their consequences, using folklore as a tool. In contemporary African society, particularly Nigeria, deviance, and crime, fueled by greed, lack of contentment, and fraudulent activities, are on the rise.

Folktales play a crucial role in African cultural and traditional contexts as tools for

instilling moral values and exposing societal ills, thereby shaping individuals across generations. According to Frank Boas in Usman (2013), "Folktales from all parts of the world are particularly interesting because they clearly illustrate the modes of thought, homely wisdom, and ethical concepts of the people." This study is timely, aiming to consolidate past achievements and failures by reflecting on the past and preserving insights for future generations. This paper takes a pragmatic approach, emphasizing the persuasive power of folktales to change individuals and society. It uses a descriptive method to analyse selected folktales to address the social challenges entangling African society, particularly in Nigeria. As treasures are sought after for their value, a diligent search for the treasures found in folktales is necessary to curb social problems in our society today.

Folklore, the focus of this paper, is created with the conventions, norms, and values of society in mind. It serves as a tool to represent life, making it easier to understand social realities. Agyekum (2013) notes that "Oral literature is a reflection of people's experiences, created through imagination and fantasy." This paper employs qualitative and analytical approaches to study variables in the selected folktales. To achieve its

objectives, the paper is divided into four sections. The first section includes the introduction, objectives, and methodology. The second section highlights key concepts such as cultural dialectics, discourse analysis, folklore, deviance, and crime as security challenges in Nigeria and Africa, using Tortoise folktales to allegorically reflect the character of the Tortoise and other animals in Oring folklore. The final sections present discussions, analysis, findings, and recommendations. The paper concludes that deviance and crime, as reflected in Oring folktales, not only pose security challenges but also slow down the development and progress of Nigerian society and Africa, affecting social, economic, and political stability.

Ultimately, this study aims to stimulate interest among applied linguists specializing in anthropological linguistics, cultural dialectics, and documentation, encouraging them to invest in studying Koring culture and language. It will be valuable to folklorists focused on collecting and describing folktales, as well as increase the global understanding of cultures, making the Oring people and their culture more visible,

1.1 Historical and Ethnolinguistic Information on Koring

Nkamigbo (2012) observes that the Oring settlement has long puzzled scholars. Cook (1935) speculated about the origins of the Oring people but did not reach a definitive conclusion. Talbot (1969) claims that the Oring people were the first to settle in their current area, now cohabiting with the Igbo in South Eastern Nigeria. He suggests that the Igbo later joined the Oring people in greater numbers, eventually subduing them through constant conflict, which forced some Oring people to migrate further north and south. However, there is no linguistic or traditional evidence from the Oring to support Talbot's conclusion.

Nkamigbo further asserts that the Oring people are primarily agrarian, cultivating crops like yam, cassava, and rice. They maintain religious traditions, both historically and in contemporary times, involving rituals and deity worship. This belief system is also reflected in their folk tales, which this paper seeks to analyse. The tortoise, depicted as a trickster, greedy, and cunning, serves as a metaphor for societal vices that lead to moral deviance and crime. Anagbogu (2008) states that the language of the Oring people, known as Koring, is spoken in North Eastern Ebonyi State and parts of Cross River and Benue States. It is classified by Williamson and Blench (2000:3) and

Sterk (1979:59) as an Upper Cross language of the Benue-Congo family. Nkamigbo (2012) describes Koring as a minority language with limited functional use, and a rapidly declining number of speakers. This paper also aims to revitalize this endangered language by using folk tales, which are integral to the moral and ethical fabric of the people's culture.

2.0 Literature Review

This study, while reviewing related literature, adopts two theoretical frameworks: discourse analysis and cultural dialectics. These approaches will be discussed sequentially in the following subsections.

2.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has been significantly influenced by many scholars, with Norman Fairclough and Michel Foucault being two of the most notable contributors. This review focuses on Fairclough, who is recognized as the pioneer of critical discourse analysis. Coming from a linguistics and language background, Fairclough is an emeritus professor in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at the University of Lancaster, UK. Fairclough views discourse as a social practice that constructs social identities, relationships, and the knowledge systems of the social world, reflecting and

producing ideas and assumptions related to these aspects. Critical discourse analysis, therefore, sees language as both a mirror and a contributor to the social world, encompassing its knowledge systems and social relations. There are two key dimensions in critical discourse analysis: the "communicative event" or specific instance of language use, and what Fairclough calls "discourse order," which refers to the "discourse practices" or the ways in which language is used within particular social institutions.

Nielson and Nørreklit (2009) describe critical discourse analysis as employing three levels of analysis:

1. The text of the communicative event, focusing on vocabulary, metaphor, rhetorical forms, grammar, and argument types.
2. Discourse practice, examining how the communicative event alters or replicates existing practices within that discourse.
3. The broader social practice of which the communicative event is a part.

Cheng (2009) highlights that critical discourse analysis combines the internal study of language with an external

examination of its context, exploring how texts are influenced by social practices and relationships. This theory is particularly relevant for this study, which focuses on how language, especially standard Igbo, impacts society. Discourse analysis, as defined by Nonhoff (2017), is a discursive formation where the structure of what can be said influences the language of critical intervention more significantly than in mainstream scholarship. Discourse encompasses various forms of communication, including written, spoken, and sign language, and plays a crucial role in transmitting messages and knowledge across society, time, culture, and customs. For example, signs have historically communicated socio-cultural practices, as seen in ancient Egyptian civilizations.

Van Dijk (1985) further elaborates on the scope of discourse analysis, examining the use of written, spoken, and printed language in analyzing the role of texts or language in society through media, political speech, advertising, and other communication forms. Breeze (2011) asserts that discourse analysis, particularly critical discourse analysis, helps interpret how ideology functions within and through discourse, bridging the gap between real language phenomena and the workings of power in society. Discourse analysis

provides a detailed understanding of how language influences audiences and is influenced by societal factors across various disciplines.

In summary, discourse theory focuses on language use as a medium for human expression and knowledge reflection within society. Michel Foucault explored the "regime of truth" in different societal domains, considering discourse analysis as a form of archaeological knowledge. This study employs descriptive discourse analysis to examine how language describes people, objects, concepts, or events, particularly within the realm of folklore, which is a subset of oral literature.

2.2 Cultural Dialectics

According to Emenyonu (1978), African storytelling began when humans first started communicating. It evolved with the advent of communal life, which necessitated education, entertainment, and the coding of vital information." This tradition has genealogical, historical, and legendary roots, with its educational and entertainment aspects being particularly relevant to researchers as a reformatory art. Emenyonu (1978), in Osadebemen's work, notes that the oral tradition of African storytelling was primarily intended to instruct in the

principles of right and wrong, targeting the young and opinion shapers. However, this perspective captures only a part of African storytelling, which, when examined more deeply, reveals its dialectical constructs that demonstrate Africans' inherent dialectical thinking from the inception of interaction. Osedebemen's analysis challenges Hegel's view that black Africans constitute a unique, separate race that humanity cannot scientifically or intellectually comprehend. This study examines African storytelling, particularly folklore and tortoise-dominated folktales, through the lens of dialectical constructs, using these narratives to teach morals and values related to deviance and crime in contemporary African society, with a focus on Nigeria.

Various definitions of dialectics are relevant to this study. According to Merriam-Webster, dialectics involves discussion and reasoning by dialogue as a method of intellectual investigation, often seeking to resolve conflicts between opposing ideas. The Wikipedia encyclopedia adds that the dialectical method aims to resolve disagreements through rational discussions in the search for truth. This method, applied in ancient Greece, has evolved in modern times, with thinkers like Emmanuel Kant, Hegel,

and Marx giving it different interpretations, including dialectical materialism.

The dialectical construct of African storytelling is rooted in reasoning and the use of logic in storytelling. An example is the story "Ekelekhhome and Aisiralemen," where Ekelekhhome represents patience, and Aisiralemen symbolizes evil and jealousy. Such characterizations are also evident in tortoise-based folktales like *Ekul béé Kénòh* 'Tortoise and the Birds in a Feast in the Sky' and *Ekul béé Enyi* 'Tortoise and the Elephant' where themes of greed, impatience, intolerance, and insecurity are explored. These stories highlight the implications of such behaviours, which can lead to societal breakdown, crime, and the loss of peace and progress.

2.3 Folklore

Yero (2019) defines folklore as the collection of customs, beliefs, traditions, and all forms of folk literature, including myths, legends, tales, poems, proverbs, and sayings, passed down through oral tradition or imitation. Propp (1984) and Danandjaja (1991) describe folklore as literary works that live among the people, transmitted orally from one generation to the next. Folklore serves society by educating about supernatural forces, assuring people of present life,

imparting information, and serving as a tool for moral and value consciousness. Hasanuddin WS (2003) identifies the social purpose of folklore as fostering social integrity, serving as a tool for social control, and promoting social solidarity, group identity, and communal harmony. Okwechime and Legemah (2017) emphasize that folklore communicates intense, complex responses to human experiences, reflecting what people think, how they live, and their values, joys, and sorrows. Folktales, as part of oral tradition, play a crucial role in preparing the young for life's challenges by teaching them traditions, customs, lessons, and morals. African folktales, also known as myths, are believed to have the power to unite communities and promote peace and harmony among generations.

2.4 Deviance, Crime, and their Security Implications in Nigeria

Imobighe (2003), as cited by Aminu (2019), describes security as the persistent state of freedom from threats or danger, essential for the development and well-being of a nation. The current security situation in Nigeria is concerning, with insecurity affecting lives and properties nationwide, undermining the peace and tranquility necessary for development. Olufayo & Iyabo (2014) note

that security in Nigeria is frustratingly inadequate, with citizens living in constant fear of attacks. The future of the nation seems uncertain due to these ongoing security challenges, including corruption, violence, ethnoreligious crises, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, political thuggery, greed, and deceit.

These issues have significantly contributed to the unrest and underdevelopment in Nigeria. Through the lens of tortoise-based Koring folktales, this study identifies the vices and triggers of these security challenges, using the stories as tools for correction and guidance against crime and deviance. Deviance and crime in Nigeria create an insecure and restive society, discouraging investment and development. Aminu (2019) defines deviance as actions or conditions viewed as deviant or criminal by society, observed through negative social reactions. Crime, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, involves breaking prohibitive rules or laws, requiring public intervention and punishment. This study views crime as the violation of societal rules agreed upon by all members, actions seen as morally and publicly wrong by authorities.

2.5 Empirical Studies

This section reviews related works on folk stories, myths, and storytelling concerning dialectics and discourse analysis, exploring their impact on contemporary African society and the broader world.

Ruth Finnegan's "Oral Literature of (1972)" provides a comprehensive examination of African oral literature, including folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, and riddles. Finnegan categorizes African folktales, interprets various theoretical approaches to studying oral narratives, and discusses the occasions for their performances.

Skinner (1980) presents an anthology of Hausa literature, analysing the performance of folktales, known as "Tatsuniya," primarily told by women to children in the evening. Despite challenges like insecurity and negative peer influence, this tradition remains significant in many parts of Nigeria such as in Idoma land. In recent times however, this practice faces imminent decline due to contemporary challenges.

Fayose (1986) highlights that written literature originated from oral genres like folktales, myths, and legends, with folktales serving as both entertainment and inspiration for modern writers. Adeyemi (1997) focuses on the educational function of Yoruba

folktales, despite the impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism on their relevance.

Ahmed (1996) studies Hausa trickster narratives, identifying the spider as a prominent trickster character and comparing it to the tortoise in Koring folktales. Osedebemen (2009) explores the dialectical construct of African storytelling, using the story "Ekelekhoma and Aisiralemen" to demonstrate the intellectual depth of African narratives and their role in solving societal problems. He highlights the dialectical nature of African storytelling, illustrating how good and evil coexist in these narratives and how good ultimately triumphs over evil. In his work, he challenges the unfounded beliefs about Africans, asserting that storytelling is an intellectual tool through which African character and intellect can be better understood. This stands in contrast to the earlier views held by European and American scholars, who claimed that Africans lacked the scientific or intellectual capacity for such comprehension.

Samson-Akpan (1986), as cited by Amali (2019), examines the role of folktales in education. The study notes that folktales and their sessions incorporate dramatic and educational elements, which the author compares to an "integrated classroom" (p.

67). These educational components, as detailed in the study, include the structure and form of folktales that capture children's interest and promote group participation among listeners. The use of symbols, especially the portrayal of animals as human characters in Ibibio folktales, enhances expression and fosters a deeper mental understanding.

3.0 Data Presentation

In this section, the five Koring folktales analyzed in this work are presented with their corresponding English translation. The stories are centred on the tortoise and other animals such as the elephant, birds and the lizard.

Folktale 1

Ekùl bée Enyi 'The Tortoise and Elephant'

Ekùl bée enyi. Enyi kume otu kama is O tikpe kumé. E bée ọ bọ isae, itotikp Enyi O gbázé ose kumé bée obo gwéé séé. Ekùl o tié ke luphu lophor oshike bame otikpe bée nyi ophira me. Egwé, ekùl okom agwá, be o tie o bon gwésé, enyi uphu e huchiri ame Ọ kỌ kiphor, losum wan we letal akpọọ uokakpe, ame ukpọọ mi kileme, enyi, obone mi udine mi e ọ do bée ame Lobukpe la lum ọ bọ gweséé agwa. Ekul u chim Ekul kipher ekul o

kpée kobo bée ko ta letọ osen kikporo. Ame, agwa osum letal akpoo uu kokpé mi ke ben uдеми ukokpe.

Enyi o bo, obipe idi Ekul du ? Bo kamé lem el, ogbaze uko opho é liko bée okpaléné obipe ogbáá. Ke ame oti idi Ekul di, osé kadi o bukpe lakum. Bee olélé, onane Enyi utune mi okété

letal akpọọ otoph baa kigbé. Bée agwa ekul oka e, ke loo chin letal akpoo ame onyi amé. Abaname edemi anan áánum, ekul urihaa ephite, a tope azo ukperé eta, édo ophélé o, b mi oyen ibe. Bée abite bée tophone oto bée agwatal. Otie ke Enyi osum letal akpo. Akpoo ame otoph ozo, bée amé. Bée Ekul otie ke lo odiri me onyi agwá me bée amé otikpe kumé ame okom me bée oni uphele ose. Odin me odim omu. Kporogiji, ame onane enyi osum kama otu lise, oke na nan ophién letal ákpọọ ágwá ekul, memu, ekul oti kpé kumé.

English Translation of Folktale 1 'The Tortoise and the Elephant

The tortoise and the elephant were friends, but the tortoise owed the elephant money and kept delaying repayment. One day, the tortoise told the elephant to come the next day for his money. Before the elephant arrived,

the tortoise instructed his wife to flip him upside down, sprinkle some grinding pepper on his flat stomach, and continue grinding as if nothing was unusual when the elephant arrived. When the elephant came, the tortoise's wife did as instruct. The tortoise withdrew his legs and arms into his shell, and his wife continued grinding. Mistaking the tortoise for a grinding stone, the elephant, in anger, picked it up and threw it into the nearby bush.

Afterwards, the tortoise reappeared and asked his wife what had happened. Upon hearing her story, the tortoise told the elephant that he would not repay the debt until the elephant retrieved the grinding stone from the bush. The elephant searched everywhere, even using his trunk to dig, but he could not find the stone. Frustrated, the elephant left, and to this day, it is said that the elephant continues to dig the ground with his trunk, still searching for the grinding stone so that the tortoise will repay his debt.

Folktale 2

Enyi béé Ekul 'The Elephant and the Tortoise'

O bo ényá gun, béé ekul béé éréngérén enye ne enwa itumélé e ada koboanyi béé ekul o i n ke ame koke okūma, béé itumele agbaze ne

ose, karera éréngérén. Ekul oti ame éréngérén e lagwa udemu oyete kedu. One uyo gbee osa kpe uphum. Bee ekul o tom me olugwa ame kekpophia lose itee eze agbe, otie lose iyo odin ophiene kegben wati e eze agbe oti oke o no umu anyi kikpo uphere, ara ame okener ono ame u gbel. Béé ekul o se ne ukophio eze agbe otie ke ame o din ko sa wati eze. Bee aze otier ke wati ame oti oke onoo umuenyi kekpo uphere ame Okene onoo ame u gbel. Ekul u phele o din enyi ose. Béé otie ke koto ame itee eze agbe, U de mi o phon ame o din ne k odokpo. Béé enyi o yi a e, otie ke ame uдеми e okir me, béé o bo ne gweséé, iséé ekul iko o gboriolo ugwe, enyi O gbonolo ugwe o, u kpo kir ekul ogbonolo ne o bo mi enyi a tie Ke agbe, lakpeasé, béé ephélé ne ase, béé a se, pee enyi o tie losé ge duduu béé ekul o tie ke kpere, o yeri ke kota ame otinetin, kpee bu tééa me utere k imere, béé agbe sé. Bee enyi o tie ke lukun duduu itọ Oka ame u doo, nanari agbe, ekopho eze. Mi bee ekul ukum ne káákáá mi omu, bee o tie kpee lu tel ame o su m liji, O yee mekiloka, bee ame akom kogbo mikiliji ukum. Bee enyi o tie ke kwe e o nari lo nan me dúúdúú. Utane loka onyie, bee ekul o sun ne liji e ukum utere enyi kimere, béé be asene anyaa ekul use e igbin oti:

nnam eze akwota mu enyi kwo gwo goro ngwo, (twice) Mbe isi n'ikwate onye? Asim ali ya chebe enyi dube enyi isi oche (twice) enyi na aga anyi sogi na azu kwoginon goro ngwo (etc). Be ase agbomumabo itie eze, ekul oyoro umueliji o sumne yee enyi kiloka e oyee eze kogbo.

English Translation of Folktale 2 'The Elephant and the Tortoise'

Once upon a time, the tortoise and the other animals participated in a money contribution scheme. The tortoise opted to be the last one to collect his share. As the meetings continued, the tortoise announced that he intended to use his money for marriage, specifically to marry the king's beautiful daughter. This princess was known for rejecting all suitors. Curious, the tortoise sent his friend, the squirrel, to find out why the princess refused every marriage proposal. The squirrel discovered that the princess would only marry someone who could drag an elephant on foot to the palace.

Armed with this information, the tortoise confidently approached the king, declaring that he would marry the princess. The king reiterated the condition: the tortoise would have to drag an elephant to the palace on foot.

Undeterred, the tortoise met with his friend, the elephant, and asked him to accompany him to the king's palace, saying there was something important to discuss. The elephant, eager and prepared, agreed. On the day of their journey, the elephant was ready and waiting before the tortoise. As they walked, the elephant noticed their slow pace and urged the tortoise to move faster. The tortoise, pointing out his small legs, requested to climb on the elephant's back to speed up their journey. The elephant agreed, and the tortoise easily climbed up. The tortoise then asked if he could put a rope around the elephant's neck to help him climb, and the elephant agreed.

Once on the elephant's back, the tortoise began to sing a song, proudly announcing that he had captured the elephant. The song goes thus: "My father, the king, I have captured the elephant—gwogwongwongwo (chant repeated twice)! Tortoise, who did you say you've caught? I said let the hand protect you; it now seems like I've captured the elephant." He sang again, "Elephant, you will be the chairman of the ceremony. Elephant, keep moving; I'm right here on your back (chant-gwogwongwongwo!)" As they reached the king's palace, the tortoise dismounted, handed the rope to the king, and

presented the elephant as proof that he had met the princess's challenge.

Folktale 3

Ekul béé Kénòń 'The Tortoise and the Bird (At feast during famine)'

O bo enya gun, bee kenon bee atu ka ma E itumele baa kilokpata. Bee ekul otine be ke ne otunono abe boo eke ame ituyo. Bee be atine kea be kada esel anyie be ame gwe uton ukur ugwon abe ose itumele baa kilokpata. Bee onono odane e sel onyi ekul, bee be ekure ase itumele baa kilokpata, abe be ekul. Bee be abone bee o noo e yone itame okiere be bole be ekul otine ke onono o telene lekol ame, bee ekul otune Ameoraa ayo-agbootu. Bee asum ne legbe ejile be, ati legbu Oke ayo-abootu , bee ekul otarane legbia ogba aminari oti legbu oke kwee ame keboke ati Oke kwee ayo-abootu, ame loranne ayo-abootu Ophon ootu asum ne ejile be Ekul okpeeme One, keboke ne abo mi, ati oke ayo o abootu. Asum gbati ejile, Ekiul ona ogwa keyori, ibekan atoo bo won. Bee ase izu ati kwekweni abe aphara, onono konma ekul esel onyie iso-kom ukwur ukpu. Bee ono kwee uphele be ophura lyo olupha Ekul esel ame, gbishiri a kpee. Aliph, Ekul kpo too kpooro mi beeoya chila obiphi Ekul idi

ibekan o bee Ekul otie Di bee otie ke be apha o bee Ekul otie Oke ne amen an ophura bee otunono Erengeren okete. Ekul uti baa kilo kpata O topho ka kilise Ekul uti baa kilo kpata. Okene ke atopho kikporo Ekul Letoph O nane ki kporo Ekul ota ne kporokyi boye kono loyaa okofu.

English Translation of Folktale 3 'The Tortoise and the Bird at Feast during famine'

There was a time when the birds held a meeting in the sky. The tortoise, feeling that as an elder he should attend, told the birds it would not be right for him to miss it. The birds agreed and decided to contribute feathers so that the tortoise could join them in flying to the meeting. Once they reached the sky, their host warmly welcomed them. The tortoise then suggested that everyone should introduce themselves. When it was his turn, he said his name was "All of you."

Later, their host brought out a tray of kola nuts and announced that it was for "All of you." The tortoise pulled the tray towards himself, claiming that since his name was "All of you," the kola nuts were meant for him alone. He continued to eat the food by himself, under the pretense of his name. The birds, angered by his greed, held a meeting

and decided that each bird should take back the feathers they had given the tortoise. One by one, they took back their feathers, leaving the tortoise stranded and featherless.

When their host saw the tortoise alone, he asked why he was still there. The tortoise explained how the birds had taken back their feathers and left him behind. The host, displeased with the tortoise's behaviour, chased him away. In the end, the tortoise fell and ended up with a broken shell.

The moral of the story is that greed is harmful, as demonstrated by the tortoise's fate.

Folktale 4

***Ekul béé Utumu* 'The Tortoise and the Lizard'**

Bee isum me isitere ekul béé utumu, bee be anane elomolo. Phon e be anari otu utumu otolo. Bee Ekul otine utumu ke a be laburi emara bee be abuna Emara, bee utumu uphilo otolo kwe ekul otie ke olugwa come emara ano oyeph kidu, okeke nyere koda come, bowali. Koser kelosum lokon upha bee egwife oser bee Utumu oseni i yoo sum uku e lokon so uphu, isakom aphophoto koda e see ajaa o na cokon banu ukui okaene atumu. Osua kalu oshi leko urie ikpona kileto osene

ajaa uke e on a kileto uwe ake aphone olugwa ame on an ame uphilo ona kileto

English Translation of Folktale 4 'The Tortoise and the Lizard'

Once upon a time, the tortoise and the lizard became friends. They were highly competitive, always challenging each other in everything they did. One day, the lizard proposed that they should have a competition to see who could build the best house. After the competition, the Lizard's house was judged to be the best, while the tortoise lost again. Despite his loss, the Tortoise praised the Lizard's house, saying it looked great but mentioned that the roof had not dried properly. He suggested that the Lizard should use fire to dry it completely.

Taking the advice, the Tortoise went to get fire, intending to help dry the roof. Unfortunately, the fire ended up burning the house down to ashes. The Lizard cried and cried over the loss of his home. His sorrow was so intense that his throat became sore from the crying, and from that day on, whenever the Lizard looked at the ruins of his house and remembered what his friend the Tortoise had done, he would nod his head before moving on.

Folktale 5

Ekúl bée Aphìòphió 'The Tortoise and the Bird (Cattle Egret)'

Ekúl bée aphìòphió bee aka ne olugwa. Bee aphìophio osumi ne ona osenri ekul bee olie ke gwesee okar ereri odugbari lokwoni me bee abe atinee gwesee oka eren epelosum me o taa. Bee Ekul oyiran. Ne onya ikpoka eren o dingbari, ekul okowon aphìophio useren me, aphìophio, nza. aphìophio nza, onye amanza, omaragenik nza, omaru, (ele nza). Bee aphìophio o sene o bu ni osoke ekul liphilo osum ne otaa. Ekul ogbare onari me gbamu im gbishir obo gwe jen elom oto e konya, gbe, o bo ne mi like oyame. Bee okoro okwom aphìophio (chorus) (aphìophio nza, aphìophio nza), onya ama nza omara ge ni nza omaru (Ele nza) bee ahphìophio o sene o bo mi osoke. Ikala aphope ama ne aphopho eren iyekan. Bee akete ne alom aphura iyee aphoph. Aphopeegwe ekul oraaletón e aphotes alom, u yomolo bee zol ame ogbu otolo, ekul amina. Bee u kenelene o phon onari, uphele o se bee eze abe otike lagbo okele gberegeren ase i gume, okeke onono ikolupha zol ame udoo memu ugime anyi , bee anyi ituyime. Agbe Ekul alom egwebee agbo ne okele, edom ligure e bee o bone. Ligurese eregeren ejile ase kigume, ati onono loliphis zol ame udoo, teegbanyì uyime. Bee

onono olute zol ame udoo oto ugwe anyi, ekul o lupha ame udon oto ugume pee mi oyaa ujile. Osum zol enyi ogba eregeren onono uyile osum zol ameogba. Bee Ekul otine onono o ugbagbee ophon epee lase. Ononoo eree bee ophon epee lase kporogyi ame onane ekul oyaa zol epe eenyi oya zol odugba. Oyeph ke ophori omoo e onari hidoo kogbo gbolon.

English Translation of Folktale 5 'Tortoise and the Bird (Cattle Egret)'

The tortoise and the bird (cattle egret) became close friends and decided to set a trap together. The bird trusted the tortoise and told him that if the trap ever caught a large animal, he should call for him, so they could share the meal. However, the tortoise had other plans and intended to eat the catch alone. Each time the trap caught something, the Tortoise would sing to the Bird: "aphìophio nza, aphìophio nza, the trap has caught meat nza, what did it catch? Nza, it caught ibe nza! Did it catch? Nza, then carry and eat nza." After singing, the tortoise would take the animal and eat it by himself.

This went on until one day, the trap caught a spirit instead of an animal. When the tortoise arrived at the trap, the spirit seized him, and the tortoise began to sing his usual song in

distress: "Aphiophio Nza, the trap has caught meat nza, what did it catch? It caught nza, did it catch ibe? Nza then carry and eat nza."

Realizing that a spirit had been caught, the bird saw the trouble the tortoise was in. The spirit, angry at being trapped, declared that the tortoise must be roasted and eaten, just as he had done to the other animals. The tortoise and the bird took the spirit home and roasted it, but during the process, the tortoise's nose became swollen and much larger than before.

In a panic, the tortoise devised a plan. He went to the king and suggested that the king call all the animals together by sounding the gong. Once gathered, the tortoise proposed that before any animal entered the river for a swimming competition, they should all remove their noses.

After the decision was made, the day of the swimming competition arrived, and all the animals gathered for the event. As planned, the Tortoise announced that every animal should drop their nose before entering the water. The Tortoise, being clever, quickly swam and exited the water, taking the Elephant's nose and attaching it to his own face. When the elephant finished swimming and went to retrieve his nose, he realized it was missing. After searching, he discovered that the tortoise had taken it. This led to a

heated argument, and the elephant reported the incident to the King.

The tortoise defended his actions by saying that, as a large animal, the elephant deserved a big nose, while he, being small, should have a small nose. This incident is why the tortoise has a small nose and the elephant has a big one.

The moral of the story is to be cautious about trusting others too readily.

4. Data Analysis: The Concept of Deviance and Crime in Oring Folktales – A Focus on Contemporary African Society with a Case Study of the Nigerian Situation

This section explores how the themes of deviance and crime are depicted in Oring folktales, particularly in the context of contemporary African society, using Nigeria as a case study. The analysis aims to shed light on the cultural and societal values embedded in these tales, how they mirror real-world issues, and the lessons they convey regarding social norms, morality, and justice.

Traditions and values are integral to societies and cultures, and they are widely shared among their members, as reflected in literature. Folklore plays a significant role in

African narratives, particularly in Nigeria, and especially among the Koring-speaking communities. As a form of oral literature, folklore is passed down through word of mouth, primarily to children, youth, and women, in settings like farm settlements and ancestral homes. Although this rich tradition is well-known, my focus in this work is on folktales, particularly those centered around the Tortoise, with a specific lens on deviance and crime within the context of contemporary African society, using Nigeria as a case study.

In folktales, characters often mirror real-life situations, with animals symbolizing human beings in society. Names are used functionally or allegorically to avoid direct references, ensuring the narrative remains universal. These tales feature a wide range of character traits: some animals are portrayed as cunning, greedy, stingy, dishonest, selfish, and dubious, while others are depicted as wise, selfless, supportive, generous, and accommodating. Additionally, the size and stature of the animals often play a role in the story, either as an advantage or a disadvantage. Themes of friendship, contractual agreements, and the violation of those agreements are also prevalent, reflecting the complexities of human relationships and societal norms.

In the narrative of *The Tortoise and the Elephant* (Ekúl béé Enyi), we witness a tale of deviance and dishonesty, particularly highlighted in the character of the Tortoise (Ekúl) and his wife. The story begins with a seemingly straightforward agreement between two friends, where the Tortoise promises to repay the Elephant for a loan. However, the Tortoise, in collusion with his wife, devises a plan to betray this trust and the contract between them. This mirrors real-life scenarios in contemporary society, where individuals often break agreements or fail to honor contracts, driven by greed, a lack of contentment, and dishonesty.

In the tale, the tortoise instructs his wife to deceive the elephant by pretending that he is in distress when the time comes to repay the debt. She is to turn him upside down and pretend to grind something on his flat stomach, making it appear as though she is preparing food. When the elephant arrives, she remains silent as instructed, leading to the elephant's frustration. In his anger, the elephant throws what he believes is a grinding stone into the nearby bush. The tortoise then emerges, pretending to be unaware of what transpired and insists that the elephant retrieves the supposed grinding stone before any repayment can occur. When the elephant fails to find the stone, the

tortoise uses this as an excuse to avoid repaying his debt, leaving the elephant in a state of anger and frustration.

This story illustrates not only the theme of broken trust but also the introduction of a third party—in this case, the Tortoise's wife—into a contract or agreement. This element of the tale is a clear representation of greed and deception on the part of the Tortoise. It is a scenario commonly observed in modern society, particularly in business dealings. For example, in real estate or property sales, it is not uncommon to see one party introduce a fictitious third party during the payment process, claiming that this individual is entitled to a share of the proceeds as a commission or percentage. This tactic is used to unjustly deprive the other party of their rightful share. The tale of the tortoise and the elephant serves as a cautionary example of how dishonesty, greed, and manipulation can lead to broken agreements and the erosion of trust in relationships, whether in folktales or real-life situations.

The dishonesty depicted in the folktale of the tortoise and the elephant reflects broader societal issues today. This mirrors the struggles between governments and their citizens, where politicians' failure to keep

promises results in a loss of trust, much like the Tortoise's betrayal of the Elephant. This breach can lead to public frustration and instability. When politicians fail to fulfill their commitments, it erodes public confidence and damages the relationship between the government and its people. This mismanagement of expectations can have serious consequences, including economic stagnation and corruption. Such dishonesty not only hinders economic development but also exacerbates social inequalities.

The public's reaction to such breaches, as seen when the elephant's anger led to a loss of peace, can result in protests and a general mistrust of institutions. The widespread impact of dishonesty extends beyond individual cases, affecting overall societal cohesion and progress. To address these problems, it is essential to enhance accountability and transparency in governance to rebuild trust. Active citizen involvement in governance is crucial for ensuring that leaders are held accountable and that promises are honoured. Implementing systemic reforms can help prevent corruption and ensure fairness. Promoting ethical behaviour and integrity among leaders can set a positive example and foster a culture of trust. Additionally, strengthening institutions to enforce laws and

regulations effectively will support sustainable development and maintain societal order. Addressing these issues can help create a more trustworthy and effective governance system, leading to economic growth and improved societal well-being. This analysis underscores the relevance of traditional narratives in understanding and addressing contemporary issues.

4.1 Stories Reflecting Deviance and Crime in Oring Folktales

Deviance in Oring folktales is frequently illustrated through characters that break societal norms, either for personal gain or out of malice. For instance, the tortoise's cunning actions in the stories, such as tricking other animals or manipulating situations for his benefit, can be seen as deviant behavior. These tales often emphasize the eventual downfall or punishment of such characters, reinforcing the idea that deviance from societal norms leads to negative consequences.

The concept of crime in Oring folktales is closely linked to the idea of justice. Crimes such as theft, deceit, and betrayal are commonly depicted, with the narrative typically leading to a form of retribution or punishment. This reflects the traditional African view of justice, where communal

harmony is paramount, and those who disrupt it must face consequences. The tales often conclude with the restoration of order, signaling the importance of upholding societal values.

4.1.1 The Tales of the Elephant and the Tortoise (*Enyi béé Ekúl*)

The first tale demonstrates how greed and dishonesty can lead to broken agreements and conflict. The Tortoise's betrayal of the Elephant is a clear representation of how deceit and exploitation can cause significant issues, mirroring real-life instances where individuals or entities fail to uphold their commitments. In this tale, the tortoise betrays the elephant out of greed and desperation. This reflects situations where friends often betray each other, leading to various negative consequences. Such betrayals can incite retaliatory actions from those wronged, and can severely damage relationships and partnerships. Greed and discontentment often lead to the breakdown of business agreements and partnerships, fostering an environment where crime and deviance thrive. This undermines social order and hampers governmental and investment efforts aimed

at fostering development and progress in society.

The second narrative shows how betrayal by a friend, motivated by greed and desperation, can lead to serious repercussions. It highlights the destructive nature of broken trust and the potential for such actions to lead to further conflict and instability.

4.4.2 The Tale of the Tortoise and the Birds. (*Ekul béé Kéńòń*)

Greed and cunning are central to this tale, where the tortoise's actions lead to his downfall. This reflects how self-serving behaviour can destroy relationships and opportunities, and how individuals who rise through collective efforts might turn against those who helped them.

In this tale, we observe how the tortoise's greed leads to his downfall. This mirrors real-world situations where individuals, once they achieve success through collective efforts, may abandon those who helped them because they believe they have reached their goals. This behaviour exemplifies greed and dishonesty. When someone benefits from the contributions of others, it is essential for them to acknowledge their sources and allow

others to share in the benefits they have received.

For instance, in the story, the tortoise is given feathers by the birds to attend a meeting in the sky. Once there, he claims that all the food provided is for himself alone, despite it being meant for everyone. This selfishness causes the birds to take back their feathers, leaving the Tortoise stranded and eventually chased away by their host. The tale underscores the harm that greed and cunning can cause, as it can quickly destroy what has been built over time. Such actions not only affect individuals but can also hinder societal growth and development. It is crucial to view success as an opportunity to serve others rather than solely benefiting oneself. As the saying goes, "to whom much is given, much is expected."

4.1.3 The Tale of the Tortoise and the Lizard (*Ekul bee Utumu*)

This tale portrays how envy and jealousy could result in destructive behavior, as the tortoise burns down the Lizard's house out of spite. This exemplifies how negative emotions can lead to harmful actions, impacting not only individuals but also the broader community.

In this folktale, the destructive nature of envy and jealousy is vividly illustrated through the

tortoise's actions towards the lizard. The tortoise, driven by envy, intentionally burned down the lizard's house—a crime comparable to arson, where property is deliberately set on fire. This act of malice is mirrored in real-life situations where such destructive behaviour is observed. The story details how the tortoise, feeling envious of the lizard's more beautiful house, set it ablaze. The resulting destruction left the Lizard devastated, to the point where his throat cracked from the intensity of his cries. The Lizard's reaction—nodding his head whenever he looked at the ruins—symbolizes the lasting impact of envy-driven harm.

The moral of the tale underscores the importance of rejecting envy. Instead of being envious of others, we should strive to emulate and learn from them. This approach fosters personal growth and contributes positively to society.

4.1.4 The Tale of the Tortoise and the Bird (Cattle Egret) *Ekul bee Aphiophio*.

In this tale, betrayal of trust is a central theme, as the Tortoise cunningly tricks the Elephant and takes its nose against its will. This mirrors behaviours we see in society, where individuals deceitfully take what does not belong to them out of greed. This can be likened to acts of fraud or deception,

commonly referred to as "419" or "OBT (Obtain by Trick)," where people are misled into losing their money or valuables.

The tale begins with the tortoise enjoying favourable circumstances, but when things take a turn for the worse, he avoids responsibility and resorts to deceit. The story unfolds with the Tortoise and a bird capturing a spirit in a trap, leading to a series of events where the Tortoise's nose becomes swollen. Seeking a solution, the Tortoise devises a plan to trick the Elephant during a swimming competition by stealing its nose. During the competition, all the animals remove their noses before swimming, and the Tortoise seizes the opportunity to take the Elephant's nose for himself. When the Elephant realizes what has happened, it confronts the Tortoise, leading to a quarrel and a report to the king. The Tortoise argues that the Elephant, being a large animal, should have a big nose, while he, as a small animal, should have a small nose. This explains why the Tortoise now has a small nose and the Elephant a large one.

The lesson from this tale is a caution against placing too much trust in others, as betrayal and deception can have lasting consequences.

5. Summary and Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is seen that Oring folktales often serve as vehicles for social

commentary, offering reflections on acceptable and unacceptable behaviours within the community. Through symbolic storytelling, these tales convey messages about the consequences of deviance and crime. Characters such as the tortoise, often portrayed as cunning or deceitful, provide insight into societal views on behaviors that deviate from the norm. By analyzing these tales, one can understand how traditional African societies, and by extension contemporary Nigerian society, perceive and address issues of deviance and crime.

The lessons from Oring folktales are clear: deviance and crime are not to be taken lightly, and those who engage in such behaviors will face consequences. These stories reinforce the idea that moral conduct and adherence to societal norms are essential for the well-being of the community. In a contemporary context, they serve as a reminder of the importance of maintaining social order and the role of cultural heritage in guiding present-day moral and ethical standards. This analysis demonstrates that Oring folktales are not just stories but are integral to understanding the cultural underpinnings of societal views on deviance and crime in Nigeria. By studying these tales, one gains insight into the collective psyche

and the values that continue to shape contemporary African society.

In contemporary Nigerian society, issues of deviance and crime remain pertinent, with the country's legal and moral frameworks deeply influenced by traditional values. Oring folktales, therefore, offer a lens through which modern societal challenges can be examined. The stories provide cautionary tales about the dangers of deviating from societal expectations and highlight the enduring nature of these cultural narratives in shaping collective attitudes towards crime and punishment.

This paper concludes that deviance and crime are vividly depicted in Koring folktales, which serve as a reflection of the insecurity prevalent in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. It is evident that development cannot flourish in an environment marked by insecurity, which ultimately results in poor leadership, destruction of lives and properties, breakdown of law and order, and erosion of social values and norms.

The Koring folktales analyzed in this study reveal that the structural setting of deviance within Oring society reinforces the cultural values and norms of social groups. These tales not only delineate the moral boundaries of the community but also teach individuals

the distinction between right and wrong, along with the consequences of deviant behaviour.

Furthermore, the nature of deviance portrayed in these stories often unites people, prompting collective action against deviant behaviors. Finally, deviance challenges societal moral boundaries, leading to social change and evolution within the community.

5.1 Recommendations

Moral lessons and experiences from Koring folktales should be encouraged in contemporary Nigerian society, particularly among the youth. This suggests that oral tradition should be revived and reintroduced into our educational system.

- These documented folktales should be integrated into school curricula.
- Parents must play a significant role in ensuring that their children receive valuable life training through oral literature and education, both at home and in school.
- This modern approach to children's socialization should be managed carefully to prevent the erosion of our cherished values and norms.

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