

Element of Parody in Nigerian Governance as Reflected in Selected Yorùbá Plays

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Parody is a literary term that could be employed to dissect or analyze literary piece(s). Literary writers are confined to the society where they get their experience and inspiration. Mostly, literary writers base their literary works on the economy, politics, education, health and socio-cultural issues of their environment. This paper examines parody as a literary term to explicate and analyze two Yorùbá plays of Ré ré Rún and Èèpà N Para Ré . Can the masses be given their right by employing parody as a societal means of emancipation especially when and where the political leaders are always adamant to the yarnings of the masses? The work is therefore concluded on the note that if employment of only parody can be a weak means of fighting the masses oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the leadership, why wouldn't the masses marry parody with the use of peaceful demonstration; combination this paper believes will work perfectly for the masses emancipation and general societal wellbeing and strategic development.

Introduction

The primary concern of literature is to respond and to justify that, art in times of society's crisis can contribute to the great social concern of managing the world (Bamidele,2003). Since the beginning of art, that is literary works, there has been a constant re-thinking on or appraisal of the relationship of the artist to the society. Modern writers who are touched by the marks of modern realities such as social disintegration, cultural decadence and widening chasm between the individual and his moral and material environment see their role as that of redeemers and their arts as redeeming agents (29). Ogunsina (1987) opines that literature could be a measure of criticism in man and his relationship to his immediate environment. Literature functions as a continuing symbolic criticism of social values. As a verile vehicle of human expression, literature seeks to investigate man, his behaviour in the society, his knowledge of himself and the universe in which he finds himself. Literature is part and product of society, its nature is essentially social(48).

Isola (2009) asserts that literature quite often forces group attention back to the various aspects of social life selected by the artist either for more reflection or for comment. He explains that the comment may contain tacit approval and glowing praise or mild criticism and heavy reprimand. The purpose of this is to suggest better way forward and to demand an adherence to those acceptable standards of right and wrong. Isola's (2010:39) opinion captures the essence of writing literature in local languages because:

literature in the local language teaches the people how to understand the world because it communicates directly with the local environment to make meaningful, relevant and effective comments and that literature also plays as a cleansing role for the community when artist react to current affairs and compose special songs to expose erring members of the community for castigation.

For several years back in Nigeria, issue of bad leadership has been the bane of the citizenry, where the masses are dazed with corruption, tyranny, crime, misappropriation of public funds, oppression and exploitation . Some literary scholars and the academics believe that exposing the erring political leaders even without any radical or open protest, an aspect of parody, the menace of oppression in the society would be curbed.

Literature is a product of society and it reflects socio-political, economic and climatic issues among others of the society that produces it. The relationship between the leaders and the followers is one of the issues reflected in literature. The Yoruba of south-western Nigeria see the relationship between the leaders and the followers as very important because *ilú kì í wà kó má ní olórí* (a town does not exist without a ruler). However, there are certain challenges in the relationship. Since the hegemonic leaders are always interested in oppressing the masses, so the masses device different means of emancipation. This is the reason behind rancor and societal revolts witnessed by the world at large following Marxist theory in the name of socio-political and economic change. Craig (1995:547) submits that:

For centuries, mass uprisings and destructive riot have been the nightmare of the people in power. Crowd action was common in eighteen and nineteen centuries in Europe, towns and countries throngs of armed men and women took over markets and warehouses demanding the rollback of prices and sometimes seizing goods. In England, angry band of craft people burned factories and destroyed the machines that threatened their livelihood. Violent crowd have also figured importantly in American history.

Hamiton (1982) comments that the world past revolution include French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917. Even in the postcolonial era in Africa, there were economic exploitations in several African countries; racial and cultural conflict in Zimbabwe and South-Africa , ethnicity and ethnic stratification in Rwanda and Burundi (Otite,2003). The Yorùbá are also conscious of positive socio-political and economic change. Several wars were staged. There have been protests and rampages rejecting capitalism, exploitation and oppression. Fadipe (1970) expresses that some of the wars which were fought in the nineteen century in Yorubaland had some ostensible political justification.

Upon all these protests and destructive riots, the question is, who has been the loser or which set of people have been at the receiving end? Is it the leadership or the masses?. Most times, it is the masses that suffer the bronze of the destructive riots. The political leaders are not easily conquered, they always have one hidden place or the other and escaping route in the time of crisis. If it is the masses that always suffer, must the masses continue to expose themselves to danger especially when they may not achieve their aim through the dangerous means. This work examines parody as an alternative masses' emancipational therapy as we explicate and analyze two Yorùbá plays, *Ré ré Rún* by Oladejo Okediji and *Èpà N' Para Ré* by Adeniyi Akangbe with a view that, if Marxist theory of open protest and destructive riot in the masses emancipational strategy would not work or failed, there could still be an alternative therapy as the masses fight for their right.

Theoretical framework: Sociology of literature

This paper adopts sociology of literature for its theoretical framework. Sociology of literature was developed by French historian, philosopher and critic called Hippolyte Taine (Ogunsina, 1987:16; Opefeyitimi, 2014:47). Taine proposed three concepts that he used to explain the thrust of sociological theory. These are ‘the race’, ‘the milieu’ ‘the moment’. These concepts precipitate a writer’s work. No writer would write beyond his historical knowledge based on the beliefs and ideologies of the society (the race), the events and happenings at different times in the society (the milieu) and the current happenings in the society (the moment)

Sociology in the opinion of Onyeonoru (1994) was coined by Auguste Comte in (1837). The term is a hybrid of the Latin word ‘socius’ which means society and the Greek word ‘logos’ which means science. This means that sociology is science of the society. It could therefore be deduced that both literature and sociology are interested in the society, hence the birth of sociology of literature. The goal of sociology, according to Ogunsina (1987) is to understand the society through scientific means. Thus, it sets itself the task of finding solution to the question of how society is possible, how it works, and why it persists. This could be achieved through a rigorous examination of the social institutions- religion, economic, political and filial- which together constitute what is called structure

Bamidele (2003) quotes Bantock to have argued that all novels and plays and a fair amount of dramatic or narrative poetry may not be understood without their context because they focus their attention on characters and incidents that bear close parallels to imitation of an action with the highest consciousness of the age in which they are written. Sociology of literature has preoccupied itself with the social commitment of arts, the position of the writer in society and his relationship to that society. In Yorùbá society, the significance of poets cannot be overemphasized. The Yoruba poets are philosophers in their own right. It is not a gainsaying that the poet in any society educates, informs, reforms and redeems the people of his/her society, the knowledge, understanding and wisdom he/she claims are all products of the society in which he/she found him/herself. This is why literary artists can not claim to be independent of the society in his/or literary works.

From all indications therefore, literature and society have one common concern which is understanding of society and the behaviour of man in the society.

Tenets of parody and its general overview

Parody is a brand or a blend of intertextuality, Adeleke (2008). The issue of intertextuality in parody is informed by its ability to repeat, copy, or imitate a style whether of writing, incident or even individual. This is why Hofele (1997) comments that parody is ‘reenactment of a given literary, mythical or historical sequence of events; as an imitation or impersonation of a given prototype. We also share Muller’s (1997:31) opinion on the tenets of parody that:

in a parody, many original features of the original are initiated, but at the same time, quite a few are subject to variations and there are also some respects in which the parodic text will differ completely from its model for imitation, variation and innovation are the three basic models of parodic intertextuality which is characterized by juxtaposition of imitated, varied and invented element

intended to bring about a complex incongruity through an interplay of analogies and differences

What could be inferred from the above is that a work of parody imitates, and that in the course of the imitation, there is every tendency for the parodist to bring forth some part of the original work with which he/she parodizes.

Dane's (1988) assertion that, parodic intertextuality is seen as 'literary allusion and literary polemic is reechoed in other language by Bersier (1997) that parodic intertextuality can trade on puns, allusion, direct quotes, pastiches of metrical forms and travesty entire tragic scene. The description of parody here could be explained in line with the work of literary artists, the society, governance, leadership and the masses' relationship. For instance, when there is presentation of series of incongruity in the political governance of a state and the economy of the state becoming dwindling and recession takes over the economy; when the leaders are corrupt and the masses are subjected to hardship and object poverty; when the masses are not allowed to express their feeling publicly, the literary artists in the society may design their work to be so incongruous to be so amused.

The focus of this work lies in the aspect of parody where parody, travesty and satire blend; where parody is observed as a piece of literary writing expressing or exposing socio-political and economic injustices as perpetrated by the leadership ridiculously in order to make mockery but not always subjected to laughter. Parody in this regard expresses deep thought and emotional feeling of the masses concerning corruption and ineptitude on the part of the political leadership of the society ridiculously. When the poor condition of the masses becoming unbearable and other means of emancipation such as Marxist theory of destructive riots, violence and radical protest had failed them, the masses resort to parody where their powerlessness and poor condition of living is incongruously presented to mimic the tragedy and douse the tension.

Brasset and Rossdale (2010) give an analogy of the U.K based anarchist group called the Space Hijackers who contribute to the debate on global democracy by provoking reflection upon fundamental assumption about globalization and ethics in every situation. Understanding that parody does not solve all problems, that it only offers a modality within which subjects can imagine and act creatively with regards to everyday closures of global democracy. Thus, the Space Hijackers seek to parody the onto-political assumptions of global capitalism. The Space Hijackers do not seem to force change.

What could be inferred from the above assertion is that the Space Hijackers engage in a tactical resistance which refuses the Marxist strategy. May, (1994) cited in Brasset and Rossdale(2010) compares the tenet of parody with that of Marxist stand regarding resistance of the ineptitude of the government to desist from corruption and other economic indiscipline. Margret Rose (1995) also defines parody as 'the comic refunctioning' of preformed linguistic or artistic material' because parodic works usually give 'new set of functions to the parodied materials' often in a playful and incongruous manner.

Uscinski's (2015) definition that parody is 'information explosion' is echoed by Kumar(1995) when he says that; information explosion has not produce a radical shift in the way industrial societies are organized to conclude that' the imperatives of profit, power and

control seem as predominant now as they have ever been in the history of capitalist industrialism(cited in Kostakis and Stavroulakis,2013).

What could be inferred from the above assertion is that upon radical and destructive industrial disputes witnessed, leadership exploitation and oppression of the masses has not reduced, rather, it is even escalating each day like a whirl fire. One can only imagine that former military dictator and president of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida whose government was accused of misappropriation of public funds and other corrupt practices has allegedly came out recently claiming that his government should be appreciated and given kudos if compared to his successors: Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan regimes. This invariably suggests that all the masses radical and destructive protests including tertiary institutions students' unrests and other industrial disharmony Nigeria had had in the recent past have not yielded expected results. Some few powerful political figures ruling the nation are not deterred, not bothered and not affected in any way, they always have means of keeping their belonging from the masses' radical and destructive protests front.

Most times, it seems the masses raise the arms against themselves, destroying their properties, maiming and killing, especially innocent people. If it could be concluded that the essence of the masses radical protests is to reject oppression and exploitation in its totality and possibly bring the corrupt leaders to book such that the society will be free of corrupt leadership and the societal sociopolitical and economic life of the people would be boosted, radical protest could be encouraged. But in societies where the political leaders have no insight and foresight; where leaders are not interested in the socio-political and economic development of the society, where impunity, nepotism, tribalism and more especially, when the leadership of the workers' union are also corrupt and insincere, struggling for selfish interest, are the order of the day; the fundamental question is, do the masses need to be killing themselves in the name of agitating for their right.

It is the system of government that bedevils the society at times, and the masses that may not be informed would start killing one another. A very good example is that of Ife-Modakeke riot of 1999. The Federal Government of Nigeria had earlier made an announcement that a local government area secretariat would be sited around Ife-Modakeke zone of Osun state. Both of the people of Modakeke and Ile-ife were interested in the local government area because of its apparent advantages. Therefore, the towns faced each other in war, destroying their properties and killing one another. Another scenario is the 2011 post general election riot especially in the North where many houses set ablaze, many goods and services burnt and many lives lost. In our own opinion, it is not only that radical protest destroys, maims and kills, it also subjects the masses to different hardship. If this is the situation in Nigeria, regarding crowd, mass protest and civil riot what is the gain of the masses?.

Our argument in support of the parodied playwrights is that if radical protests and civil riots would not provide adequate societal and industrial harmony regarding the masses emancipation and struggling for their right, why not engage in 'information explosive' and mimic the seemingly tragedy in the masses emancipation strategy. The Yoruba are very religious. It is the religious teachings that readily influence and assist them which also informed use of parody in the leadership and masses relationship in the society . The use of parody has

also been fore grounded by certain philosophical ideals which boost leadership and masses relationship in the society.

In the Yoruba thought, belief system, ideology, philosophy and world view, of paramount importance are the Yoruba proverbs. Like the proverbs of other races, Yoruba proverbs serve as social charter, to praise what the society considers to be virtues and condemn bad practices (Delano,1983; Olatunji, 2005). Sheba (2006) and Adeleke (2009) also see Yoruba proverbs as apparent truths reflecting human experiences. The following proverbs showcase the Yoruba world view as regards the leadership position, the masses and issue of parody.

- (1) Lè sẹ̀ bọ̀ lè sòdògùn, báa ti wáyé wáá rí làá rí (one may engage in charms and sacrifices to gods, he/she cannot outsmart his/her destiny). (2) Olówó pèlù tálákà ní òun kò ní jó, ọ̀ jó wo ni yóò tó rí owó pe tirẹ̀ (if a poor man dishonour an invitation to a party by a rich man, when will he/she gets money to throw his/her own party?). (3) È ni tí eégún n lé lẹ̀ kó máa rọ̀jú, bí tíí rẹ̀ ará ayé níí rẹ̀ ará ọ̀ run. (he, who a masquerade is pursuing should endure, for as the living gets tired, so the dead) (4) Fijà fún Ọ̀ lórùn jà fọ̀ wọ̀ lẹ̀rán, (allow God to fight for your course) (5) È ni tó rínni kò ní ìbáwí, orí ẹ̀ ni ní pé ká rínni.(if one destiny would not mock one, nobody would)

The thrust of the first proverb is that leadership and position of affluence is not by might but by destiny. Proverb 2 is a candid advice to the poor that if an affluent person has anything good to offer a poor person, the latter should not hesitate to collect and make himself happy. Proverb 3 encourages one to endure life challenges, that there are better days ahead. Proverb 4 encourages one to put his/her life affairs into the hands of God. Proverb 5 is a sermon; It admonishes that one should not blame anyone who laughs one to scorn as such a person would not have been able to do so if one has been lucky and successful.

Indubitably, the first set of Nigeria labour leaders were neither radicals nor agitators and their weakness lay in the fact that they were aristocratic to a fault. They did not just abhor strikes but they lack the courage even to make threats in furtherance of their demands (Ananaba, cited in Adeniyi, 2014) yet they were referred to as leadership that knew what they wanted. Adeniyi (2014:395) puts more succinctly this style of masses struggle:

Being reasonably well knowledgeable they were in better position to present their case in a persuasive approach. They also made use of their colour of their skin as an asset and passport for quick attention. This is clearly seen in the amazing alacrity with which their complaints were treated in those early parts of the twentieth century.

Going down memory lane, until the outbreak of the global economic depression of 1929, Nigeria labour history was more or less the history of the civil service union. Nigeria Civil Service Union or Nigeria Labour Congress had enjoyed sincerity and patriotism in general struggle for the welfare of the Nigerian working class since the leadership of Imoudu of 1929 till 1988(400). But there was a negative turned out for the Nigerian Labour Congress from 1988-1999; the Babangida, Abacha, and Abdulsalami Abubakar regimes as they took advantage of the lack of credibility and insincerity of the leadership that steered the NLC to wreck havoc on the collective aspiration of the Nigerian workers (400). It should be noted that

some of these leaders became resplendently wealthy over night while some began to pursue personal public ambitions (400).

Good governance in any socio-political and economic organization cannot be overemphasized. It is good governance that makes the followers be abreast with the leadership style and which embrace peace in the society. Over the years, the experiences and results of different elections in Nigeria, identify that the country has failed to produce honest and effective leaders both at the instance of the masses and the political leaders that will pioneer the vehicle of administration in the country.

YORÙBÁ PLAYS

In the course of the development of Yorùbá drama, it has contributed immensely to the political, educational, economic and social development of the Yoruba society in particular and Nigeria in general. Yoruba written drama or play emerged by the acquisition of writing skill brought by the colonial masters. Written Yoruba plays started in 1902 when D.A. Oyedele wrote *King Elejigbo and Princess Abeje of Kontagora* (Ogundeji, 1992; Adagbada, 1995). Yoruba news papers were not left out in the developmental strategies of Yoruba written plays as *Pamínkú Obinrin* was serialized in a news paper called *Elét i Ó fẹ́*, edited by E.A Akintan in 1923. It was in the 1970s that the Yoruba written plays multiplied in number. Many playwrights came on board. Notable among them were Akinwumi Isola who wrote *Efúnsetán Aníwúrà*; Akinsola Awosusi who wrote *Jaiyeola*; S.A. Durojaye who wrote *Gbékú Dè àti Iṣ é Abé*; and Oladejo Okediji who wrote *Ré ré Rún* (Ogundeji 1992). In the 1980s written Yorùbá plays further increased in number, as many new playwrights emerged writing and publishing new Yorùbá plays in line with their forebearers' style. Some of the Yoruba playwrights that emerged in that decade were Olu Owolabi, Tunji Opatotun, Ademola Odetokun and Tubosun Oladapo.

The Yorùbá plays have been categorized by different authors. This work will adopt Ogundeji's (1992) classification as amended by Adagbada (1995). Ogundeji (1992) classifies Yoruba plays into four: pure didactic, didactic historical, didactic protest, and didactic satirical plays and arranges relevant plays under each group. Adagbada (1995) adds didactic propaganda to Ogundeji's (1992) classification. We will like to add at this juncture, didactic parodic plays to the earlier classification of the Yoruba plays. We shall explain didactic parodic plays in the course of this work.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAYS: RÉ RÉ RÚN

Ré ré Run written by Olasejo Okediji first published in (1973) and recently published in 2009 is a play that depicts economic and socio-political injustices in Mògún, the setting of the play. The play depicts, people like, Onimogun, Olugbọ n, Arẹ sa, Balogun who form the leadership circle as corrupt leaders. The play also showcases the ineptitude of the leadership to providing the needed welfare packages for the masses, especially, people like Lawuwo, Morẹ niķẹ , Wuraọ la Idowu Adeniyi, Karimu Matiu Sapẹ lẹ , etc. Though, when the masses could no more bear the hardship meted out to them by the leadership, they move to fight the leaders. Though the masses move to reject the oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the leadership, certain issues such as poverty, insincerity and sycophancy prevent them from

achieving their aims. At the end of the play, the leader of the masses, Lawuwo is conquered as he becomes an insane and the masses invariably accept the dictates of the tyrant leaders and are further subjected to acute hardship as they are incapacitated to fight for their right

Èèpà N Para Rẹ

Èèpà N Para Rẹ is a Yorùbá play written by Adeniyi Akangbe in (2011). It is a play written to parody the ineptitude on the part of the Nigerian political leaders to provide enabling environment for the masses to live a rewarding sociopolitical and economic life in the society. In the play, Bọ sẹ and Iya Akin (Akin's mother) are discussing issue of corruption and other different vices hindering the wellbeing of the citizenry of Ayégún people. Bọ sẹ and Iya Akin are discussing the hardship meted out to them by the insincerity, dishonesty, self-centeredness and ineffectiveness of the leadership of Ayégún to provide good governance in the society.

Adedotun, the main character in the play is laced with corruption and other attendant vices. Adedotun commits different atrocities in the play. He engages in infidelity in his matrimony. Despite the fact that he is married to Bọ sẹ, he still engages in adultery with a spinster, Deola. Adedotun is an imprudent and extravagant. He is irresponsible; he could not provide for his immediate family wellbeing despite that he is a teacher in a secondary school in Ayégún. Towards the end of the play, armed robbers invaded his house and raid his house, carted away all his belongings. Adedotun is totally wrecked at the end of the play because he is sacked from his place of work without any gratuity.

Element of Parody in Nigerian Governance as Reflected in the Selected Yorùbá Plays

The authorial information on the preface of *Rẹ rẹ Rún* has preempted the thrust of the play as far as the issue of parody in the Nigerian governance and the fate of the workers or the masses is concerned:

Láti ọ jọ ti aláyé ti dáyé tí tí di òní olónì, àwọ n òsìsé ni oníyà. Wọ n a máa jìyà mọ pọ nmọ pọ nmọ ètè wọ n. Bí ó ti wà látètèkọ se ló n bẹ di isinsin yii, bẹ é ni yóò si máa rí tí tí ayé ànìpẹ kun (Okediji, 2009:IX)

Since the creation of the world, till date, workers are always at the receiving end. They bear the bronze of unworthy hardship perpetrated by the leaders. As it was in the beginning, so it is presently and so it will be till the end of time.

The above is the view of the playwright which suggests that workers or the masses are always subjected to hardship by the leadership of any society and which invariably sends a note of caution to the masses circle as far as the issue of emancipation is concerned. The above authorial comment is a replete of pulpit declamatory or sermon which points to the fact that the masses may not be able to overcome the leaders as there are a lots of impediments militating against the masses' struggle for their emancipation, those impediments include sycophancy, hunger, poverty, hypocrisy and insincerity.

The authorial information is also a blend of the Yoruba issue of ethical faith that the human affairs should be handed over unto God Almighty who has the overwhelming power over all things. This also embraces the Yoruba world view as shown majority in the ethnic proverbs. The hegemonic and powerful position of the leaders has earned for them to have an

edge over the masses. Parody is therefore construed to be a style of the masses' means of showing their problems especially when other means of emancipation could not work or have failed. The song being sung in the opening scene of the play also depicts the workers who form the masses in *Mògún*, the setting of the play as being resigned to their fate.

The song has declared them parodists:

Èrò ti n rọ́jééje	Ọ́jééje
È wí fún iyáa mi ;	Ọ́jééje
È yin tó fi sílẹ̀ o	Ọ́jééje
Lorogún se fọ́mọ̀ rẹ̀	Ọ́jééje
Ewùrà tó kan bóbó	Ọ́jééje
Lorogún sè pé kẹ́mi jẹ̀	Ọ́jééje
È ráyẹ̀ à bẹ̀ ò rí I	Ọ́jééje
È sọ́ fún iyá mi	Ọ́jééje
Péyà n jẹ̀ mi jọ̀ jọ̀	Ọ́jééje
Èrò tí n rọ́jééje	Ọ́jééje
Èrò tí n rọ́jééje	Ọ́jééje
People going to	Ọ́jééje
Help me tell my mother	Ọ́jééje
The egg she kept for me	Ọ́jééje
Was cooked by my stepmother for her child	Ọ́jééje
I was given sour water-yam	Ọ́jééje
Can you imagine this behaviour of human beings	Ọ́jééje
Tell my mother	Ọ́jééje
That I'm suffering a lot	Ọ́jééje
People going to Ọ́jééje	Ọ́jééje
People going to Ọ́jééje	Ọ́jééje

The excerpt is a demonstration and presentation of a deep emotional thought reflecting the level of the masses' experience of hardship generated from the oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the political leadership of the society. The excerpt illuminates that the resources and the economic prowess with which some few elements who form the leadership circle based their power and governance on, was pathfinded by the 'mother' of the workers' *È wí fún iyáa mi, è yin tó fi sílẹ̀ o, lorogún sè fọ́ mọ̀ rẹ̀ , ewùrà tó kan bóbó, lorogún sè pé kẹ́mi jẹ̀* '(tell my mother that the egg she kept for me was cooked by my step-mother for her biological child and sour water-yam was given to me in the place of the egg) This implies that the leaders in this regard are only usurpers. The heritage of the workers has been hijacked by some powerful and tyrant few.

In the excerpt, though the masses are suffering, experiencing hardship in different ways, yet, they did not open to any serious radical device than to engage in ‘information explosive’, only to air their plight. Parody is manifested here as the masses only mimic the tragedy and douse the tension of their sufferness by putting the tension into song. The song which connotes that the masses have accepted the defeat from the leadership oppression and resigned to ethical fate is another phase of parody.

Still in *Ré ré Run*, Lawuwo, the main character in the play is leading the course of Mògún people on the issue of their emancipation but the masses are not keenly interested in physical combat and or/open protest strategy coupled with the sycophancy of a character like Idowu. The people of Mogun have accepted that the leaders have overwhelmed them. Wuraola, who serves as the masses’ spokesperson says:

Wuraola: *É é , o kúu làákàyè. Ajuniló kúkú ti juni nù (Òkédìjì, 30)*

Wuraola: *Thanks for your wisdom. The oppressors have defeated us.*

The above Wuraola’s speech which is a Yorùbá maxim has been deliberately amended by the character in the play. The Yorùbá would say ‘*ajuniló lè juni nù*’ the oppressor has power to defeat the oppressed in a fight. For Wuraola to have adjusted the maxim to read ‘*ajuniló kúkú ti juni nù*’ ‘oppressors have defeated us’ implies that they should not even bother to fight the leaders. Even the incongruous speech of Wuraola when Lawuwo is being detained in the police custody is also an example of parody in this context. When it was realized that Lawuwo is ready to fight the leaders on behalf of his people, Wuraola says:

Wuraola: *Bígba bá dojú dé, à a si i bi kò sè se sí, àà fọ́ ọ́ . Bí kò bá wá se é fọ́ , tóò, ká fi sílé fún ọ́ ba*

Edumare. Òun tó mọ́ bí igbá ti se dojú dé kò ní

sàimọ́ ọ́ nà àtisíjú ré sókè (Òkédìjì, 33-34)

Wuraola: *If the calabash is turned facing ground, we shall turn the face up. If it refuses, we shall break it. If it could not be broken, then we shall invoke God Almighty who knows how the face is turned facing ground will definitely know how to make it turn facing up.*

Ordinarily, the traditional Yoruba frown at fighting their leaders or the rulers because of the system of the council representation. Fighting the leaders would be tantamount to fighting oneself because every compound or household is represented in the council of chiefs that governs the society (Atanda,1996). Most times, when the leaders err, the masses looked unto God. This is the message Wuraola in the above excerpt is stylishly sending to the masses in Mogun community especially Lawuwo who is bent on fighting war with the leaders. The power of parody among the Yoruba especially, is that God Almighty is omnipresent and omnipotent. Even if the masses could not match their tyrant leaders strength in strength, God Almighty could be invoked to come to the aid of the masses ‘*òun tó mọ́ bí igbá ti se dojú dé, kò ní sàimọ́ ọ́ nà atisíjú ré sókè*, (He that knows how the calabash turned facing ground will definitely know how to make it turn facing up).

In *Èèpà N Para Ré* , it is shown that the government in Ayégún community is irresponsible and irresponsive especially on the issue of mass education. The management of

the schools would collect development levies from students and would not build any classroom. But instead of the masses to put up a radical protest to rejecting the exploitation, they only mimic the system and make mockery of the situation ridiculously. Bọ sẹ and Iya Akin's conversation in the play suffices:

Bọ sẹ : *Ó rọ owó ilé é kọ òde òní ma le lé eniyan sáló nilu o. Òní owó idàgbàsókè, ọ la owó idàgbàsókè, bẹ é si ni é yọ ilé é kọ kan kò dàgbàsókè mó , kàkà bẹ é ilé ni wọ n n ló . Awọ n alá sẹ kì i kúkú ye tan ara wọ n jẹ , kí wọ n kúkú pè é ní owó idàgbàsílẹ*

Ìyá Akin: *Óótọ kúkú ni, a kò ri ohun kan ti wọ n n fi owó ọ hún se. Bi wọ n bá sì ti sọ fún wa láti ibẹ ré wa pe owó idàgbàsílẹ ni awọ n ọ mó wa n san o, kò nii jọ wá lójú mó nígbà ti a bá rí i pe gbogbo yàrá ikàwé ti kò jò tẹ lẹ , nígbà ti a kò tì san owó ni ó wá n jò lẹ yìn ti a ti san owó tán (Akangbe,2011:25)*

Bọ sẹ : *Today's payment of children's school fees may drive one to an exile. Today, development levy, tomorrow, development levy without any school developing, the schools go dilapidated. The leaders would not stop deceiving themselves. They would have tagged the collected levy, retrogressive levy, instead of development levy they tagged it. Ìyá Akin:* *It is true. We cannot see any meaningful developmental project they spend the collected levy on. We would not have been surprised if they had intimated us from the onset that the money we pay is retrogressive levy, and not development levy especially when the school buildings are becoming dilapidated*

The above is an example of incongruous speeches which is one of the tenets of parody. The above interlocution is more or less a parable: It is paradoxical. One may not easily understand what the interlocutors in the play are really talking about. How can one payment of his/her children's school fees become retrogressive when really the person meant to pay for developmental strategies of the child and the society at large. The management of the schools who represent the leadership in Ayegun's government which is replica of Nigerian governance is always interested in misappropriation of the public funds. The government would not spend the development levy collected from the students on any meaningful school developmental steps. Invariably, the parents believe therefore that they are paying for retrogressive and not development especially when formerly good school buildings are becoming dilapidated and no any move for their rehabilitation.

What really informed the idea of parody from the above is that the parents, the people of Ayégún, and by implication the masses who are bearing the bronze of the leadership corruption, and irresponsibility do not move for any radical protest to bail themselves from the plights and predicaments. They have stylishly agreed to make mockery of their hardship experience. The people do not bother to raise questions such as 'why should a few set of people be wasting the community resources or societal concerted contributions? Can't the government sponsor mass education: don't we earn the right to ask for our money back?'. The people have decided to let everything go. They have decided to dance to the tune of the tyrant leaders. The only means of the people's emancipation in line with parody is that the people would not stop complaining, talking about the hardship meted out to them by the leadership but at the same

time would not device any radical means in their emancipational strategies. Still in *Èèpà Ñ Para Ré*, the following also sheds more light on the issue of parody:

Bò sè: *Se iyé n ni o ri ti ò n sàròyé.... Bi ijó ba bá ni kò bọ kọ bọ ni òun yoo maa gbà lori igbésè kọ ó kan, wọ n kò jé ayò pa o. Emi rò pé yòò tó ó kẹ kọ ó kan ni nítorí pé owó ti ijó ba wa ná lóri ilẹ ti à n rin lóri ré yii nigba ti wọ n n dá a kò kéré o (Akangbe,2011:26)*

Ìyá Akin: *Ìjọ ba aláàánú mà tilẹ ni ijó ba wa o, se kò yé ki àwa aráàlú máa fi imoore wa hàn fún ti isé ti wọ n pèsè fún wa yanturu, o'jà kòsèémánì tó ya pọ ntọ lọ ja pé lú óúnjé ti o kú n igboro lówó pọ ó kú. Ni temi o, pé lú gbogbo idé ra ti ijó ba fi kẹ wa bi wọ n bá n gba owó fún itọ titọ , igbé yiyà, ikọ hihú àti itó titu, n kò rò pe wọ n jé ayò pa o (27)*

Bose: *The government would not be judged wrong if they decide to collect a kobo each for any step an individual makes on the land. I thought the government will want to collect a million naira on each step one takes because government spent a lot of money when they were creating the land on which we walk*

Ìyá Akin: *Our government is very merciful and lenient, we the masses suppose to appreciate their gesture on the massive employment opportunity, provision of daily need commodities and different kinds of food items at cheaper rate in the market. In my own opinion, with all these provisions the government has bestowed upon us, if they collect money as we urinate, stool, cough, I don't think it is too much.*

The above is an irony. Ironical speeches could also form parody. The excerpt is a direct mimic or mockery of oneself or ones catastrophic situation. The hardship meted on the masses is so overwhelming such that the masses ironically and incongruously presenting their grievances in a paradoxical way; though ridiculously but devoid of laughter. This is the only point of departure of parody and satire. Whereas satire lampoons and evokes laughter, parody only makes mockery ridiculously without exciting laughter. The basis of parody here is that as the masses continue to endure the bad situation, they would not desist from incessant airing of their grievances with a view that God almighty will touch the heart of the tyrants, self-centered political leaders some day and the masses would be given their right and portion of the national resources

Conclusion

This work examined tenets of parody in Nigerian governance as reflected in selected Yoruba plays. The work showcased that parody is a style or mechanism with which the masses could employ for their emancipation. The question is, is parody not too weak as a means of emancipation in a society where the leaders are always adamant and turning their deaf ears to the yarnings of the masses? Another question is, must the masses employ open protest and destructive riot including tertiary students' unrests which always come with different challenges such as destroying properties, maiming and killing of people where the masses suffer the bronze. This paper is concluded on the note that, though parody is a workable tactical

means of the masses' emancipation but it is weak as it cannot solve all the problems or the masses agitations

This work recommends therefore, that the masses may marry parody in the area of incessant presentation of their grievances on different functioning media in the society with the engagement of peaceful demonstration devoid of open riot or destructive protest. This will make the leaders see that the masses know their right and not satisfied with the system of governance. The government may therefore proffer solution on how the masses could be relieved of the hardship experience.

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