© Kamla-Raj 2007 J. Soc. Sci., 15(1): 35-42 (2007)

Parody of the Shakespearean Fool Tradition in an African Society

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KEYWORDS Parody; Shakespearean fool; Yoruba playwrights; Yoruba fool genre; ironic trans-contextualization

ABSTRACT There is always a precursor in any well-established institution, and artistic institution is no exception. The fool tradition itself has its origin in Dionysian phallic rituals, or Greek, Roman and English festivals in general, thus serving as the springboard for the Shakespearean fool. Shakespeare then popularises the fool character in his plays whereby he turns it into an institution. The Yoruba playwrights, like others from any part of the world, seem to have been influenced by the Shakespearean fool tradition to a large extent. This paper, therefore, sets out to draw the Shakespearean parallel that is visible in the Yoruba fool genre with special reference to the appearance, the role and language of fool. Copious examples are drawn from the written and film genres to back up the issue of parody. The paper concludes by paying attention to the mark of departure and what account for such a disparity.

INTRODUCTION

A number of critics, such as Wiles (1987), Richmond (2002) have noticed that some texts produced by many playwrights do have Shakespearean semblance. For instance, it is observed that Marston's *Antonia's Revenge* produced by the Paul's boys shared a similarity with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Implicitly, Shakespeare is taken as the forerunner. Wiles then speculates that it could have been an issue of expanding 'Shakespeare's idea' or writing 'simultaneously, each knowing what the other was about' (p. 57). The point here is that, even Shakespeare's contemporaries (e.g. Robert Green, Christopher Marlowe) are said to be indebted to Shakespeare, how much more the later writers who have the opportunity of perusing some of his works when in schools. The Shakespeare-centric theatre tradition has found its way to different cultures, hence it is possible to talk of 'Shakespearean imports' or 'Shakespeare in . . .' whatever culture (Abọdunrin, 2004: 114-120). Some creative writers have adapted some of his texts to suit their own immediate environment. Duro Ladipo's *Ọtun Akọgun*, a Yoruba play is an adaptation of *Macbeth*. The Yoruba videographers have gone a step further; they have on the screen a Yoruba translated version of *Julius Caesar* (also with the same title), perhaps a parallel of Julius Nyerere's earlier translation of the same text into Swahili. All the casts don Yoruba traditional apparels. In other words, the Shakespearean tradition is visible in the productions of some creative artists, the Yoruba writers being no exception.

THE FOOL'S DESCENT

It is necessary to say that just as a number of writers are said to be indebted to William Shakespeare, so also is he (Shakespeare) indebted to some other artistic traditions, especially the fool tradition which is the focus of study here. Several critics – Welsford (1966), Willford (1967, 1969), Goldsmith (1974), Lukens (1977), Barber (1981), Lehmann (1981), Sypher (1981), Wiles (1987) - have suggested that the fool tradition finds its ancestry in the early fertility rites which definitely antedated the birth and the creative works of Shakespeare. Vidabaek (1996: 195) confirms that, 'the Elizabethan stage clown has ancestors as far back in time as Greek and Roman theatre'. This indebtedness from traditional festivals – such as the Greek Dionysian or the Roman Saturnalian- does not rub off his creative ingenuity and invention. For instance, Barber (1981: 244-254) highlights the gleanings of Saturnalia in Shakespeare's Comedies, while Goldsmith (1974: 15) says that 'Feste, Touchstone, and Lear's Fool come near the close of a great popular tradition' (cf. Lukens 1977: 74; Wiles 1987: 165). It is even advanced that the Shakespearean fool's antecedence could be traced to the French *sotties* and the Tudor moral plays. His play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is reported to have a semblance of Adam de la Halle's *Le Jeu de la Feuillee* produced in c. 1276. Goldsmith confirms that 'cap

and bells' that are parts of the fool insignia in Shakespearean plays first made their appearance on the French stage in the sotties or farces of Adam de la Halle; and not on English stage. This goes to show that Shakespeare's fool is a distant descent of French tradition, if we go by Goldsmith's account:

…the English had no fool plays of satirical sort comparable to the French sotties or the German Carnival play. Instead, we find that the fool of tradition had become merged in the character of the comic Vice of the Tudor moral play, his trait of ironical jesting having interfused with other, less commendable features. And it is this trait of irony which the Vice chiefly passed on to the latter stage fool (p. 17).

In other words, clowning on stage might have borrowed from the following traditions- 'medieval entertainer, the professional minstrel, the amateur Lord of Misrule and the Vice' as different patterns of these traditions frequently resurface on the stage. It is however possible that the semblance may occur as a result of coincidence or exposure to an earlier work. Nonetheless, Shakespeare popularised the fool tradition by turning it into an institution in Elizabethan drama unlike any other writers or men of theatre of that period (cf. Vidaek 1996: 189). A number of writers, like Robert Greene, who introduced the role of the fool into their works could not do much to advance the figure beyond the stereotype of 'the jesting Vices of the moral interludes' (Goldsmith, p.29).

One of the foremost Yoruba playwrights, Adebayo Faleti, who was the first to introduce the fool genre into Yoruba written plays, informed me in a personal interview that his exposure to Shakespearean texts at the University of Ibadan propelled him to create this absurd character (i.e. the fool) . He later found the Alebiosu Theatre Group, which he asked Ọlanrewaju Adepọju to lead, as he was in the government service then. While Faleti was away on a trip, Adepọju also produced a play of his own, *Ládépò Ọmọ Àdánwò* which parallels Faleti's *Ìdààmú Páàdì Mínkáilú*. Incidentally, the two texts are published by the same publisher – Onibọnoje Press and Book Industries, based in Ìbàdàn. Therefore, Faleti could not take any legal action. We may also recall here that Robert Greene too alleged William Shakespeare of plagiarism which degenerated to verbal attack on Shakespeare in c.1592 (Wells, 1998: 63-64; cf. Richmond, 2003: 210-211). The point here is that writers tend to emulate a popular culture that may likely enjoy the reception of the readers or audience. This phenomenon is what the critics call parody of existing or original work. And this results to intertextuality which is a feature of postmodernism or globalization. This makes it possible to bridge the gap between the low and high cultures.

DEFINING THE TERM "PARODY"

Several theorists have perceived parody from different perspectives. From classical point of view, Aristotle takes parody as an 'adaptation of a verse epic' (Muller, 1997: 3). The Russian formalists, apart from seeing it as a form of transgression, regard parody as 'a kind of stylistic exercise' (Muller, p. 6) that bothers on caricatures and defamiliarization or estrangement. This might have informed the theorists in hermeneutic circle to take it as a sort of 'servile forgery towards ironic imitation of literary fads' (Bersier, 1997: 34). No wonder then that it is also considered as a form of ridicule (Hutcheon, 2000: xii), especially when the original text, also known as the 'pre-text' or 'parodied text' (Bohn, 1997) or precursor text is seriously cannibalized (Hofele, 1997: 71-72; Hutcheon, 2000: 8). All these arguments suggest that parody 'is a form of imitation . . . characterized . . . inversion' (Hutcheon, p. 6). But this is just a side of a coin.

The etymological root of the word, parody, derived from the Greek word *parodia*, reveals that it transcends mere imitation as the arguments above tend to portend. According to Hutcheon , many theorists of parody have always taken cognizance of one semantic angle of the Greek word *para* , 'counter'/ 'contrast', while they ignore the second meaning, 'beside' (p. 32). She further draws our attention to some sort of mutual relationship between the original text which she calls 'the background text' and 'the incorporating work'. She therefore argues that what has taken place is not sheer imitation of the background text but 'trans-contextualization' (p. 34). Her basis of argument is that the parodist brings his or her artistic ingenuity to bear on the reworked text; hence she concludes, 'for whatever reason the artist's parodic incorporation and ironic "trans-contextualization" or inversion has brought about something new in its bitextual synthesis'(p. 35).This is the reason why Alan Singer takes parody to be a form of 're-thinking' (cited in Sanford,1997: 192), and it has to be considered as

'metafiction' (Rem, 1997: 157), that is , text within a text. However, it has to be stressed that the ironic trans-contextualization can manifest at different levels of artistic parody- style or form, linguistic, plot, characterization, (cf. Muller, 1997: 138; Schneider, 1997: 234).

ADAPTATION OF THE SHAKESPEAR'S FOOL TRADITION IN WRITTEN TEXTS

The Yoruba playwrights- who derive their influence from Shakespeare's fool tradition- have not made caricature of the fool figure in their texts which 'possess such a high artistic quality that it can no longer be distinguished from the original' (Schneider, 1997: 224). Also, they are so deft in the manner they employ Shakespearean graft in their plays to the extent that none aficionado of Shakespeare's works cannot have any inkling whatsoever. The adaptation of the Shakespeare's tradition by these Yoruba playwrights is however marked with cultural difference. This is in line with Hutcheon's (2000: 38) principle of trans-contextualization which permits parody to 'seek differentiation in its relationship to its model'.

The four Yoruba playwrights who have fool genre in their texts are Faleti (1972), Adepọju (1974), Ogunniran (1977), and Ọlabimtan (1980). This list forms part of our data. With regard to the fool genre in the Ogunde tradition (Ogundeji's 1988 coinage), we have Baba Sala School (to use Jeyifo's 1984 term) which gives principal role to the fool. Like Shakespeare, Moses Ọlaiya Adejumo, whose stage name is Baba Sala, venerates the fool institution on the Yoruba stage. There were other theatre troupes who took after him during the stage era; they included Ojo Ladipọ (Baba Mero) Theatre, Ọla Ọmọnitan (Ajimajasan) Theatre, The Jester International, Òtòlò Theatre, Babatunde Omídínà (Baba Suwe), Abiọdun Arẹmu (Baba Sàbíkó) Theatre just to mention a few as time and space will not permit an extensive list. With the movement to the screen, we have several actors and actresses who now play the fool in Yoruba video films. Reference will be made to some of them in the course of our discussion in this paper.

Afọlabi Ọlabimtan in his *B'ó Ti Gbà (BTG*), allows Yàyá, the court fool to play the choric role, which found its origin in classical tragedy and not in Elizabethan drama, though Shakespeare also introduced the Chorus into some of his texts. It is Yàyá who renders the prologue, thus providing the audience with background information as to the plot of the play. He actively participates in the play as he interacts with several characters that have one thing or the other to do in the palace. This is contrary to Shakespearean tradition where you find 'Less pervasive choric figures' as exemplified in either Rumour who opens *Henry IV, Part 2*, or Time who throws open the door in *Act 4 of Winter's Tale* (Richmond, 2002: 100). As the play progresses Yaya passes comments on different manners of behaviour that crystallize human folly. He berates the kingship institution for breaching the status quo, as chieftaincy titles are for the highest bidders and not for the ruling families.

We find fools in the Yoruba royal court, the house of the nobles or with 'heroes', to use Thomas Carlyle's word. Yàyá in *BTG* is Ọba Gbádélà's court fool, while Tégbè in Adepọju's *Ládépò Ọmọ Àdánwò (LOA*) is in Ọba Fagade's palace. Ọbọ Lagídò in *Àarẹ-Àgò Aríkuyẹri (AAA*) resides in Ògúnńdé Ajé's household (mini-court) as his domestic slave-fool, whereas Sufianu in *Idaamu Paadi Minkailu (IPM)* is a domestic servant-fool in Paadi Minkailu's *manse*. These fools, especially those in court, act as surrogates for their masters in welcoming visitors to the palace. When occasion warrants it, they chant or render *oriki* (praise poetry) of their masters as demonstrated by Ọbọ Lágídò (*AAA*, pp. 15-16). As virtually all the Yoruba fools give a large dose, (or perhaps over-dose), of entertainment either through the rendition of songs or chant, or even verbal gymnastics, there is tendency to hastily approximate them as mere entertainers who lack profundity in display, and merely relish in babbling nonsense. Superficially, this seems to be so especially with the presentation on video idiom. Nonetheless, this will definitely be a pitfall arising from the inability to read between the lines. The misjudgement could also stem from using western measure, especially the Shakespearo-metric. Different cultures have their own cultural values and traditions. A number of Yorùbá ritual dramas and festivals - the Edí Festival in Ilé-Ifẹ̀, the Òkèbàdàn in Ìbàdàn, all in the south west of Nigeria - that serve as the antecedence of the Yoruba fool tradition, tolerate the festive entertainment as frequently exhibited by the fool in Yoruba theatre. The Yoruba fool idiom is very much in consonance with the saturnalian culture. With regard to the scripted plays, the playwrights appear to operate within the confine of

Shakespeare's matrix. This makes it a bit easy to classify the fool as entertainer or jester, as commentator, and as truth teller (Goldsmith, 1974). But the fool may combine two or more personal attributes at varying proportions. The common denominator to all the fools featured in Yoruba texts is entertainment. That is the reason why some characters in the play label them as 'Apanilẹrinín' (he-who-provokes-laughter), 'Afẹniléyín síta' (He-who-makes-one-to-expose-one's-teeth) - *AAA* pp.6 and 15). However, in Yoruba video idiom, they are referred to as 'Aláwàdà' (One-who-creates-humour); of late, some of the characters in these video films now adopt the English generic 'clown' or 'jester' as exemplified in *April Fuulu* and *Thuraya L'Ọmọ* respectively, to call the fool in performance. In essence, the fool is venerated as a comic character in one breadth. With his/her behaviours and manners he/she does provoke laughter.

THE FOOL – THE YORUBA VIDEO FILM GENRE

Earlier, I identified different fools with their habitat and roles to their masters. All the fools in the Yoruba texts are given specific names unlike Shakespearean tradition, which may sometimes present the audience with unnamed fool or jester or clown. He just employs generic term fool or clown. We find examples in *King Lear, Timon of Athens*, and, *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Individuals, within Yoruba society, may be identified by their different professions; all the same, they still seek to know the real name, as the society does not believe in anonymity. This is emphasized in an axiom which runs thus: *Àpónlé ni ìyáá káà, kò sìyàá tí kò lórúkọ* (It is out of sheer respect that one says 'the mother in the chamber', there is no mother without her personal name). The Yoruba playwrights have brought in their cultural divergence into their creation. In the video films, the fools therein appear to have adopted different names ranging from 'àbiso' (name given at birth) to 'inagijẹ' (sobriquet). The precursor of the tradition in Yorùbà, Moses Ọlaiya, bears Làmídí Sànnì, Ajíbíkè' Ọ̀rọ́pọ̀, and Baba Sala. 'Lamidi' though a Muslim name is part of his 'àbísọ', so also is 'Ajíbíkẹ̀'. Sanni is his father's name while 'Ọ̀rọ́pọ̀' is his sobriquet. However, his friend (Adisa) nicknames him LMD, while Baba Sala pays the compliments back by saying 'Adis-sa-baba ọkọ Emily Oníkaba' (Adis-sa-baba, the husband of Emily who wears gown).

In Yoruba, an individual bears multiple names (cf. Ọlatunji 1984: 93-94). Here we are able to know that his father must have been a Muslim as reflected in his name. Lamidi later names his daughter Sàlámọ́tù which is shortened to Sàlá; that is why he is also referred to as Baba Sàlá. In other words, Yorùbá love 'the preponderant use of kinship terminologies that link the subject to his relations and forebears' (Ọlatunji, pp. 91-93). These terms include *ọmọ* (offspring), *bàbá* (father) and *ọkọ* (husband). No wonder then that he is called 'oko Wòsílàtù', which Baba Sàlá himself sometimes turns to 'ọkọ Wòsíwonkoko'. His imitators who follow suit take names such as Baba Mèró (Òjó Ladipo), Baba Sùwè (Babatunde Omídínà) who is also referred to as Àdìmẹ́rù, Baba Sàbíkó (Abíọ́dún Àrẹ̀mú). We also have fools who bear Alúwẹ̀ẹ́ ọmọ Ìyá Aláró – Alúwẹ̀ẹ́ offspring of the woman who trades in dye- (Sunday Ọmọbọlanle), Gódógbó ọmọ Ìyá Òṣogbo - Gódógbó offspring of the woman from Òṣogbo (Ọlawale Ọlanrewaju). The point being made here is that in Yoruba, at least to certain extent, the fool descent is visible, so also is his marital status. In Shakespeare's texts, the family lineage of the fool- whether extended or nuclear- is usually obscured or not well established. We are not unaware of Touchstone courtship with Jane Smile and his 'wooing of the country wench Audrey' (Levith, 1978: 89). We may also need to recall that Lavache, the clown in *All's Well That Ends Well* has a girlfriend named Isbel.

Those who take 'abisọ' include Ajímájàsán (Ọlá Ọmọnítàn), Adẹ́rúpọkọ̀ (Káyọ̀dé Ọláiyá), Déíntọ (Hamed Òdùọlá), Òjògẹ́ (Sẹ́san Àdió); those who prefer sobriquets include Alájẹ́ju- He who consumes exceedingly (Adébáyọ̀ Akọ́sílé), Epo Kínkín- Little Oil- (Tajudeen Yinusa). We also find that Shakespeare also adopts nicknames for the fool going by Levith's (1978: 96) speculation: 'Lavatch is French for 'the cow' *(la vache)*, and the name could have been intended by the playwright as a teasing noncename rather than a proper name for the character'. Again, some of the Yoruba fool do take Christian names, such as Jemiisi Dẹpẹ (James Ọjẹlabi).

It is important to say at this juncture that the Yoruba video genre presents us with the female fool. This is alien to Shakespeare's genre, but it is a phenomenon in Desiderius Erasmus's *The Praise of Folie* ('Englished by Sir Thomas Chaloner Knight (London, 1560?) sig. G3'). There

we find Moria as the female fool (Goldsmith, 1974: 7 and106). The most popular of the Yoruba female fools is Moladun Kẹnkẹlẹwu (Mọnsurat Omidina). However, there used to be one Iya Magi, (who could not be located as of now). Rather than labelling Ìyáníwẹ̀ (Abigael Ọladeji) and Sisí Alágbo –Lady who-hawks-herbs or Alábàárú – load carrier- (Zainab Oduwọle) as fools they fall under the clown-like character as conceived by Videbaek (1996: 189). He offers that 'the purpose of using clown-like characters (with variety of clown traits) is to enrich and deepen the audience's experience. . . When clown traits are used by non-clown protagonist, a greater intimacy is created, and we are allowed insights not otherwise accessible to us'. The use of female fool in Yoruba is a mark of great departure from the Shakespearean tradition. It transcends Maria's wily role in *Twelfth Night*, as the female fool like her male counterpart takes 'the focal role' or principal character (Willis and D'Arienzo's 1981: 207- 211), apart from being a 'secondary character' or an 'incidental character'.

CONTRASTING SHAKESPEARAN FOOL AND THE YORUBA FOOL

The fool in Shakespeare functions as both the secondary character and incidental character. But in Yoruba theatre, the fool features at the three character levels. For instance Mọ́ládún is the focal character in *Ọbákan*; she plays a secondary role in many films among which are *April Fuulu*, and *Àtọ́run D'ọ́run*. With regard to the male fool, Baba Suwe plays the focal character in *Baba Londoner* and *Aṣọ Ibora*; so also another fool known as Baba Latin (Bọ́lájí Amusan) features as the focal character in *Ta Longbemu*. In fact this film parades an array of fools to the audience. The tradition of the fool being the focal character in Yoruba must have come from the stage, where the theatre troupe leader was usually the lead actor, unless the play at hand did not create such an opportunity. For instance, the late Oluṣọla Iṣọla Ogunṣọla (also known as I Sho), the leader of Iṣọla Ogunṣọla Theatre, could not have taken the lead actor role in Akinwumi Iṣọla's *Ẹfúnsetán Aníwúrá* as we have heroine therein and not a hero. At any rate, he saddled one of his many wives, Ìyábọ̀ Ogunṣọla with the responsibility of playing the lead actress role. In the video film era, actors and actresses are paid according to the degree of their involvement in the performance or role playing. In order to maximize the financial outlay, some conservative videographers who double as script writers take the pain of weaving the story in a way to suit the film producers. Both Mọladun and Baba Suwe scripted *Ọbàkan* and *Baba Londoner* respectively, hence the reason why they are the lead film stars in these two films. We should not forget that Baba Sàlá, the forerunner of Yoruba fool culture on stage, plays the star role in two of his optical films - *Ọ̀run Móoru* and *Àarẹ Àgbàyé*. But when these fools are to appear in productions other than theirs, they are reduced to incidental characters, and perhaps seldom, to secondary characters.

There is an inherent problem with the fool genre on screen, the desire to feature the character figure at all cost when its role is inconsequential to the plot of the film. This sort of unfruitful featuring of the fool is strikingly at variance with Shakespearean culture, where the fool is introduced for a dramatic purpose or the development of the plot. In Shakespearean plays, as succinctly observed by Vidabaek (1996: 34), the appearance of the clown characters is always carefully timed to produce the greatest effect, usually to emphasize a turning point in the action or in a major character's fate or development or to set major events and themes of the plot in relief.

It has since been found out that commercial tendency compels the Yoruba videographers to forcefully impose the fool when not required at all. There are some members of the public who will purchase any video film where Baba Suwe is featured. Baba Suwe appears to dominate the Yoruba video industry when zero down to fool genre. The 'super audience' (Adeleke 1995) who has had contact with the Shakespeare genre takes such indiscriminate presentation as an offence to the video audience's sensibility; hence it hastily dismisses the Yoruba fool genre as anything worthy of discourse. The pitfall in such rapid conclusion is its ethnocentrism. Not all Shakespearean texts provide us with robust fool genre; the appearance of fool is determined by the ascribed role in the text. Videbaek (1996: 3) observes as follows, 'the Shakespearean clowns span a wide variety of subcategories and the sizes of their parts vary widely from play to play'. He clowns as the court fool in one text and the jester in another; he may also be presented as the rustic, the constable, the bawd, and sometimes as the servant.. The same thing is applicable to Yoruba fool idiom.

Let us consider the physical appearance of the fool in Yoruba. It is a pity that the Yoruba play writers fail to give any information as to what the fool in *BTG, AAA, IPM* or *LOA* puts on. Faleti only informs his readers that Súfiánù in *IPM* limps. However, when the play was performed on television, he put on a shirt tucked in a pair of trouser. When both Àárẹ - Àgò and his fool (Ọbọ Lagido) exchange dresses in *AAA,* Ogunniran fails to tell us what sort of dress one is giving to the other. That Ọbọ Làgídò has exchanged role with his master only confirms that he is wiser than his master. This act of role exchange confirms Goldsmith's submission that 'the fool frequently offers his coxcomb and bauble to those whom he considers more foolish' (p.25). But when the present writer played the part of Àárẹ Àgò at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, in 1982, he put on a traditional attire known as `gbàríyè', while Làgídò (Busola Shada) who had to play a male role when no man wanted to take the role) wore `agbada' for an obvious reason - to conceal her physiological make-up. The two dresses are voluminous in nature. When *LOA* was performed on the television screen in the late 1970s, Tégbè was cladded in `búbá' (short wear} and `sọ́rọ́' (native trouser). This is unlike the Shakespearean fool in motley. But Baba Sala, while on stage at the start, treasured hybridity of appearance, wherefore he would combine the western dress with the Yoruba attire in order to provoke laughter. He usually put on exaggerative materials like stripping on a table clock and tying on wooden-made bow tie. He could decide to tuck in his voluminous `gbàríyẹ' which would give him a ridiculous appearance.

On the contrary, the Shakespearean fool is marked out with the coxcomb, the asses' ears and the occasional fox tail. His hood which resembles that of the monk could in addition contain ears and bells. As occasion and his environment appear to determine his attire, the court fool could wear 'a long coat or jerkin of motley . . . exhibiting the parti-colored pattern' (Goldsmith, 1974: 3; cf. Wiles 1987: 1). The usual colour combination of the costume is green and yellow, but red is sometimes added, or it could be blue and yellow for the fool's cap. The fool's fantastical cap is usually pointed with bells (normally, three) attached (Wiles, p.1). In fact, they 'are mostly marked out as licensed fool by their costume' (Wiles, p. 145). We cannot say the same for the Yoruba fool figures on the screen.

The fool part in Yoruba goes beyond an individual actor; it is unlike the Shakespearean culture where the fool figure was built around the person of Robert Armin of the Chamberlain's King's Company from1600 to1610, or his predecessor Will Kemp who left the company in 1599. The mode of dressing among the Yoruba fools is so loose that the individuals can dress according to the dictate of their whim. Some of them could don tattered apparels, while some appear in oversized dresses. A number of them may hybridize by combining foreign dresses with the local ones as typified by Alúwẹ̀ẹ́'s appearance in *Òjíji*. Sometimes, they wear the opposite sex's dresses, Adérùpọkọ̀ occasionally does this. To some extent, few of them have implicitly marked out their peculiar costumes. For instance, Baba Suwe is accustomed to donning a sweater underneath a traditional dress. He also wears local baggy trousers known as 'kẹ́nbẹ̀'. He fastens the 'kẹ̀nbè' with a thick rope (*Àt'Òrun D'Ọrun)*. In few of the video films he now appears in 'T' shirt on a well cut pair of trousers (*Ògẹ̀dẹ̀ Didun)* or in security outfit (*Kosorogun- No Rival*) or in winter coat and .cap *(Lepa Shandy; Larinlọọdu; Elebolo*). He does appear sometimes in expensive 'agbádá' (*Ọlabisi Ọmọ Lògbàlògbà*). This implies that situation and environment determine the outfit being donned by the Yoruba fools just like Shakespeare's; it is not however devoid of Yoruba cultural matrix. The female fool- Mọladun- regularly clads herself in traditional 'író' and 'bùbá'. She then holds on tightly to her Islamic rosary as the Shakespearean fool would do with his sceptre, this is why she is also referred to 'Olórí Alásàlátù'(the Muslim religious leader for women). She ties both her wrapper and head gear absurdly. However, she descends with her stereotypic dress by wearing English frock *(April Fuulu*).

Just as we find the fool as an entertainer, a commentator, a critic and truth-teller in Shakespearean texts, so also we come across such figures in Yoruba written texts and video film idiom. Ọbọ Lágídò, as does Shakespeare's Feste in *Twelfth Night,* 'combines in himself the witty fool and the 'artful' minstrel' (Goldsmith, 1974: 5). However, he is not blindly loyal to Àárẹ Àgò as does King Lear's Fool when in trouble. When Ogunmọla's guards turn up to arrest Àárẹ Àgò who has murdered his second wife, Fatọla, Ọbọ Lágídò attacks the guards in Aárẹ Ago's presence. But as they are going back to the palace, Ọbọ Lágídò quickly goes after them

secretly to beg for forgiveness on account of the attack he had unleashed on them. He explains to the guards that he had to do so in order to save himself from Aàrẹ Ago's wrath. Ọbọ Lágídò thus becomes a prankster and a turncoat. Ibidun, who is Ààrẹ-Àgò's daughter, exposes his treacherous activity (*AAA pp46-50).* He nonetheless stands by his master when he (Ààrẹ Àgò) is eventually arrested. He had earlier told his master the bitter truth about his irrational behaviour. Through his blunt truth, he is able to deflate the larger-than-life ego of his master who believes that he is above the law of the land by the virtue of his social status. Ọbọ Lagido's personality verges between three Shakespearean fool figures- King Lear's fool, Feste and Touchstone. As an entertainer, he can be likened to Feste, while like Touchstone, he makes efforts to sharpen the wits of his betters, Ọbọ Lágídò does the same. He seems to be the alter-ego of King Lear's fool in telling the bitter truth. However, it is in Tégbè in *LOA* that we find the semblance personality of Shakespeare's Thersites (*Troilus and Cressida*). He ceaselessly pours abusive words to any individual that crosses his path as Thersites does. Tégbè, as a railing fool, does not spare Ọba Fágadé, Olori Tọ́láni, Olóyé Ajomale, and Àjágbe the Ifa priest in his verbal attack.

However, in the film genre, Baba Sùwé is most likely to 'match (and perhaps surpass) Thersite in the muddy but turbulent stream of billingsgate that pour forth through the loose spigot of his mouth' (Goldsmith, 1974: 71). Baba Sùwé frequently makes reference to the physical defects of some casts to castigate them on screen. He corresponds with Jonson's Carlo Buffone, 'who knows no decorum of time and place' and equally 'delights in wounding others with his tongue' (Goldsmith, p.71.). With regard to Sùfíánù in *IPM*, his behaviour is akin to that of the satirist fool. He mocks and derides the folly in the religious institution, whereby the religious leaders are in shackles. Sùfiánù tells Paadi Minkailu that both Catholic and Church Missionary Society (CMS) unwittingly chant or render liturgy to honour the Papal and the King/Queen (of England) respectively by proxy, thereby misleading their followers.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion has revealed that the Yoruba fool tradition, especially the written texts has found its kindred in Shakespeare's genre, but the playwrights have also displayed their own creative ingenuity by allowing their cultural milieu to guide their creation of the fool figure. This has shown that when parodying a work of an artist from diverse environment, the parodist has to re-interpret, and more often than not, such exercise entails 'a drastic reinterpretation that reflects the creative genius' of the parodist (Mazrui, 1996: 68). This is borne out of the fact that the parodist attempts to decontextualize, and thereafter recontextualizes the decontextualized text in line with the horizon of expectations of the target audience. It is also observed that the fool figure in Yoruba dresses loosely. The female fool is highly visible in the video genre unlike Shakespeare's stage. We have also brought to the fore the well-established status of the Yoruba fool as regards his/her descent which is more often than not obscure in Shakespeare texts. It is obvious that though the past influences the present, the present equally creatively sieves and adjusts in line with the prevailing cultural matrix and situation. This is why we share Adediran's (2002: 3) view that, 'the past is not an isolated entity completely cut from the present. But that rather, there is continuity between the two'. This seems to be the pattern in the parody of the Shakespearean fool genre in Yoruba creative world, where two creative traditions unite.

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