Pragmatic Roles in Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis*

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Abstract

Performance of role is central to the understanding of any discourse or activity because, through it, the implicit meaning is made obvious. Previous studies have considered the role of context in understanding interaction or discourse but they have neglected pragmatic roles in the understanding of any discourse, especially literary discourse. Thus, this study, therefore, examines how pragmatic role contributes significantly to the understanding of discourse and how it reveals participants' intentions in Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis*. The study adopts Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic act theory. Data were sourced from relevant utterances in the text and were subjected to pragmatic analysis. Two broad categories of roles: social-informed and religious-informed roles, characterised Wole *Soyinka's The Trials of Brother Jero and Jero's Metamorphosis*. Social-informed role divides into a deceiver, debtor and creditor roles; while religious-informed role splits into prophet, discipler and disciple roles. Denying, forecasting, impersonating, lying, insisting, predicting, instructing and submitting are various practs used to foreground these roles. The paper concludes that studying various pragmatic roles in any discourse will not only contribute to the understanding of the discourse but will also reveal the interactants' covert intentions.

Key words: Pragmatic role; Intention; Religious-informed; Social-informed

INTRODUCTION

Most studies on Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis* have mostly come from literary perspective (Kaouakou, 2013; Mosibalaye, 2011; Mena, 2011; Musa, 2006; Kasseem, 2000; Dasylva, 1997; Gillard, 1996; Povey, 1969; Moore, 1971; Brietzke, 1973; Dameroon, 1975; & Gibbs, 1980). These studies have focused on thematic consideration, style, characterisation and satire as they relate to the happenings in the contemporary Nigeria society. It should be noted, however, that there have been very scanty work on the text from linguistic perspectives except Ajiboye (2013) who considers the issue of fraud in the text where he identifies the context of leadership ambition and context of conflict which divides into debt-related conflict, space-related conflict and goal-related conflict. He also identifies deflection through distraction and mendacity, impersonation, double-crossing; Invocation of physical and spiritual reality through blackmailing, racial sentiment, persuasion and prediction as well discursive manipulation as goals negotiation strategies used in the identified contexts. Balogun (2010) considers the role of context in meaning explication with emphasis on contextual features such as reference, inference, shared knowledge of word choices and shared knowledge of the topic of discourse. Eke (1996) identifies the graphitic and graphology of the text. Obilade (1993) considers the characters' use of Pidgin English in revealing the deeper meaning of the text. These studies leave a lot unconsidered from the linguistic perspective, especially from the pragmatics angle and most especially with the issue of pragmatic roles and their to contributions to the understanding the text. This paper shall, therefore, unlike earlier studies, examine the issue of roles, examine various pragmatic roles and their contributions to the understanding of the text using Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory.

The choice of *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis* has not been only informed by the little attention paid to it from pragmatics perspective, but also from the neglected importance of contextually-determined roles and their implications for the understanding of the text. For data, relevant utterances in the text are randomly selected for analysis.

1. ROLE: AN OVERVIEW

The concept of role has gained the attention of many scholars from many fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and linguistics. It is a concept that defines who and what we are within a particular society; through this concept, people in the society are known and understood. Roles can also be defined as a social construct. That is, they are constructed and determined by the society people find themselves. Similarly, a role can be described as a position or the function one accepts or performs in any interactional engagement. This is known in the way interactants position themselves and the way they are positioned in an interaction. A role is a theatrical term which is borrowed by social scientists and popularised by Erving Goffman (1965, 1961). A role is defined by Leemay (1999, p.205) as what

> …we think of ourselves in different situations and of being ourselves and yet the regularities of behaviour that exist from day to day and between persons who are in similar situations has led to the common man to express in the vernacular that which is commonly used and understood by all.

From the above definition, it is obvious that roles are the conception of self in situations and a set of behaviours that are displayed in those situations. This means that roles are susceptible to change as situations change. This fact is also buttressed by Srikant Sarangi (2010, p.36) when he says "roles are transformed over time: there are multiple roles available to any individual within a given activity but some of these roles can be situationally ambivalent and conflicting". To have a clearer understanding of what role is, Linton (1971, p.112) distinguishes status from a role. According to him, status is "the position of an individual in the prestige system of a society" while a role is "sum total of the cultural patterns associated with a particular status". Though his view has not gone uncriticised for viewing status and role relationship from a static perspective, he does explain that "a role is the dynamic aspect of a status: what the individual has to do in order to validate his occupation of the status". In a bid to support his argument, he explains status-role interrelationship thus:

> Under the necessity of reorganising our social structure to meet the needs of new technology and of spatial mobility unparalleled in human history, our inherited system of statuses and roles is breaking down; while a new system, compatible with the actual conditions of modern life, has not yet emerged. The individual thus finds himself frequently confronted by situations in which he is uncertain both of his own statuses and roles and of those of others. He is not only compelled to make choices but can feel no certainty that he has chosen correctly and that the reciprocal behaviour of others will be that which he anticipates on the basis of the statuses which he has assumed that they occupy. (Linton, 1971, p.114)

It is obvious from his submission that a person's role is susceptible to change once a person's status also changes in society. This position further explains the dynamic nature of roles in society.

In MicCall and Simmons' (1963, p.131) bid to explain the concept of role, they make a distinction between social role and interactive role thus:

> Role-taking ability can thus develop both from subjective' experience with similar roles and from more objectives experience in observing others in these roles. Professional often develop a great deal of this objective knowledge about their clients, and the latter are often surprised by what seems to them uncanny familiarity with their own point of view. Such knowledge on the part of the doctor, the teacher, the official point up the fact that empathy must not be confused with sympathy or emotional involvement of any kind; the professional is often quite aloof and clinically distant from a client.

Social roles, therefore, are professional roles. They are the obligations of one's profession. Each profession has expectations and obligations, such obligations are seen to characterise such professions such as doctors, teachers, amongst others. In discharging such roles, objectivity is actually the keywords. For instance, a teacher's evaluation of a student academic performance is usually base on objective knowledge of such student. In other words, social roles are occupational roles. Interactive roles, on the other hand, are roles that are enacted in the interaction. They are speakers' obligations or roles in an encounter or interaction.

It should be noted that role can be embraced and distanced as proposed by Erving Goffman (1961, p.64). According to him, "to embrace a role is to disappear completely into the virtual self-available in the situation, to be fully seen in terms of the image, and to confirm expressively one's acceptance of it." While Role distance is the "separateness between an individual and his putative role". Similarly, Thomas 1986 cited by Srikant Sarangi (2010, p.44) differentiates activity roles and discourse roles. Activity roles are the roles that are constraint base on the activity performed. They are the type of roles performed based on the activity type. For example, pastor, chairperson, interviewer, committee member etc. Discourse roles are roles enacted in a discourse. It is the relationship between the participants and the message. (e.g. spokesperson, mouthpiece, reporter etc.) They are roles that enact people's identity.

Of importance to this study among the identified dimensions of the role are the concepts of interactive, activity and discourse roles. Because these concepts of roles can be termed situated roles, and they are determined by the context of interaction. Not only are they susceptible to change, but they are also enacted in the interaction

or determined by the kind of activity performed. For example, interactive roles are roles that are enacted in the interaction and the backbone of every interaction is the concept of context. It is not out of place to summarise that interactive, activity and discourse roles as pragmatic roles. By pragmatic roles it means they are roles that are contextually determined; they are dynamic and productive in any interactional engagement. They are roles that are enacted in any discourse of whatever therefore means that to understand any discourse, activity or interaction, a close look at the roles perform in such interaction is very crucial. Similarly, in understanding a text, consideration of various pragmatic roles assumed and performed by the characters in such a text will be necessary. It is in this light that this present study examines various pragmatic roles in Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis* using Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory. This is with the view of understanding the contribution of different participants' role within the activity or context of religion.
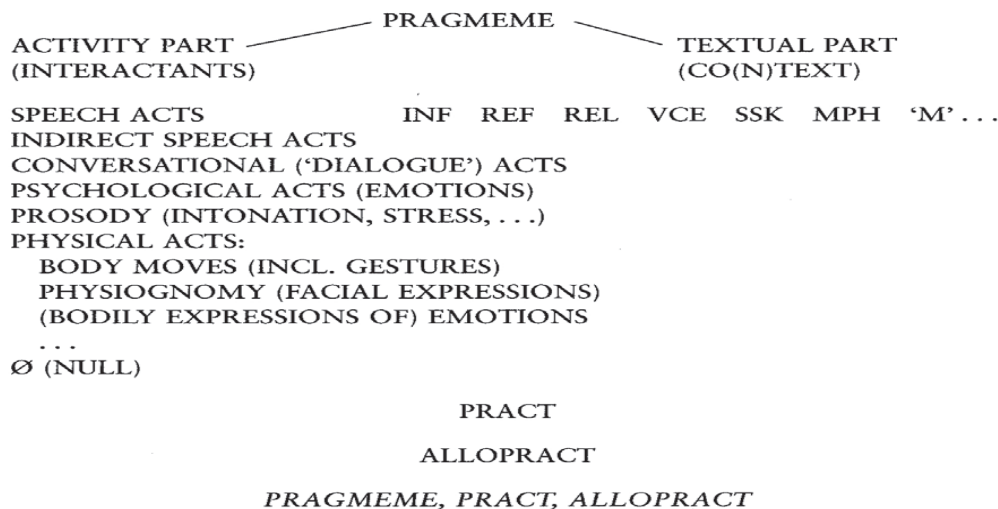
2. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study are collected from Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis*. The first text comprises one act and five scenes, while the second text comprises one Act three scenes. Utterances are selected based on the relevance to the issues under consideration. This is because the two texts are dialogic in nature. Insight from Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory is the theory upon which the analysis is based. The theory does not only help in pinning down various pragmatic roles but also expose the context as well as pragmatic functions in the identified roles. Similarly, it reveals pragmatic features that are present in the texts for meaning explication.

3. MEY'S PRAGMATIC ACT THEORY

Mey's Pragmatic act looks into the behaviour of an individual within the affordance of the context. It is a theory of context. This means that context is the central epoch of pragmatic acts. Mey (2001, p.211) says context is a determinant factor in knowing the nature of the pragmatic act. Pragmatic act "focuses on the environment in which both the speaker and hearer find affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said" (2001, p221). A pragmatic act is the instantiated act that is realised through ipra or pract. The pragmatic act is not about grammaticality but participants' understanding of the situation, the exhume pract in a context. It is also situated speech act that a particular speech act in a context. He presents the theory of Pragmeme in the schema below:

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                    ─── PRAGMEME ───
ACTIVITY PART  ─────/              \─────  TEXTUAL PART
(INTERACTANTS)                            (CO(N)TEXT)

SPEECH ACTS                INF  REF  REL  VCE  SSK  MPH  'M'...
INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS
CONVERSATIONAL ('DIALOGUE') ACTS
PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTS (EMOTIONS)
PROSODY (INTONATION, STRESS, ...)
PHYSICAL ACTS:
    BODY MOVES (INCL. GESTURES)
    PHYSIOGNOMY (FACIAL EXPRESSIONS)
    (BODILY EXPRESSIONS OF) EMOTIONS
    ...
Ø (NULL)

                    PRACT

                  ALLOPRACT

        PRAGMEME, PRACT, ALLOPRACT
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Source: *Pragmatic act theory* (Mey, 2001, p.222)

In the diagram above, there are two parts to pragmeme: activity part available at the interactants' disposal and the textual part, which deals with the context within which the model operates. At the activity part, there are lists of various choices available to language users in communication, while the textual part consists the elements that are present in the textual chain where INF represent inference, REF is for reference, VCE is for voice, SSK stands for shared situation knowledge, MPH symbolizes metaphor, M represents metapragmatics. The ellipsis shows that the list is open to addition; it is at this point that Odebunmi (2006, p.159) added Shared Cultural Knowledge (SCK) to cater for all socio-cultural issues in pragmeme. the example below shows the working of pragmeme:

That woman of easy virtue is waiting in the reception.

By the term 'easy virtue', reference is made to a prostitute; the term is used to save the client's face from

the embarrassment that may result when using the word 'prostitute'. The voice is that of officialese and socio-cultural as it represents the administrative institution and the Nigerian or Yoruba society's use of euphemism; the choice of the term and the situation of use is shared between the secretary and his boss. Odebunmi (1996, p.623) says: 'the union of the activity and the textual parts produces a pract or an allopract which is an instantiation of a pragmatic act'. Similarly, in Mey's words, ipras or pract is the instantiated, individual pragmatic acts as two practs can never be identical. Therefore, every pract is at the same time an allopract; this means that a concrete and different realization of a particular instantiation of a particular pragmeme, Mey (2001, p.221).

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Two operational pragmatic roles are identified in this study: social-informed roles and religious- informed roles. In each of the roles, interactants play out different roles within the constraints of religious activity which is foregrounded by Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory. Each of these roles will be taken in turn for explication.

4.1 Social Informed Role

Social informed roles in the context of this study, are marked roles that are not expected in any religious activity but are not novel to fraud-related activities. They are roles that are informed by social vices. They are pragmatic roles that are informed by the context of interaction. These roles are deceiver, debtor and creditor. Each of this will be explained in turns.

4.1.1 Deceiver

A deceiver is a person who leads people into believing something that is not true. In other words, a deceiver is a trickster. A person with a double life; someone who claims to be something but, in reality, he is not. This role manifests in the life of Prophet Jeroboam who claims to be a prophet of God but in reality, is not; he uses the prophetic calling as a means of enriching himself.

4.1.1.1 Deceiver Through the Act of Denying

This role is obvious in Brother Jero's interactions with various people in the texts from various contexts to contexts so as to achieve his intention of deceit. This role is foregrounded through the pragmatic act of denying as seen in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1

JERO. I am glad I got here before any **customer**. I mean worshippers- well, **customers** if you like. I always get that feeling every morning that I am a **shop- keeper** waiting for **customer**... **Stranger, dissatisfied.** Once they are full, they won't come again. Like brother Chume. He wants to beat his wife, but I won't let him..... As long as he doesn't beat her, he comes here feeling helpless, and so there is no chance of his rebelling against me....; social

The extract above gives us an insight into Jero's personality and his deceptive nature not as a prophet but as a trader who is waiting for his customers. He deceived his follower based on the background knowledge he had about them. The role of a deceiver in the above extract is informed by his choice of words or expressions when placed against his acclaimed person or personality. Expressions such as "I am glad I got here before any customer"- worshippers, 'I am a shopkeeper waiting for customers' orient the role of a deceiver, which by inference reveals his true personality as a person who uses prophetic calling to defraud people in one way or the other. His fraudulent act of keeping them dissatisfied as well as seeing himself as a trader does not only inform his hypocritical nature but also portrays him a deceiver.

It could also be noted that the utterance above betrays his acclaimed personality as a prophet. The expression such as 'shop-keeper and customer also inform this role. It should be noted that the role of a deceiver is foregrounded through the subtle pragmatic act of denying. He deliberately denies his self- revealed customers (through direct speech act) in one way or the other to perpetually keep them under his control. The act of denying foreground this role as obvious in this utterance: "Stranger, dissatisfied. Once they are full, they won't come again". This is revealed through Jero's utterance as he refers to his worshippers as customers and reference of shop-keeper to himself. Similarly, the role of a deceiver is also obvious in Jero's hypocritical life of claiming to be a prophet but indeed he is a shop-keeper. The pragmatic act of denying is obviously used to buttress the role of deceiver from this utterance: 'Stranger**, dissatisfied.** Once they are full, they won't come again. Like brother Chume. He wants to beat his wife, but I won't let him....'

Based on Jero's situation knowledge, he denies Chume the opportunity he is looking for so as to keep him a perpetual member of his church.

4.1.1.2 Deceiver Through the Act Of Impersonating

Jero's act of claiming what he is not as obvious in the excerpt below also indexes the role of a deceiver. He claims to be a prophet whereas in practice is a trader who makes merchandise of the prophetic calling.

Excerpt 2

JERO: I am a prophet. A prophet by birth and by inclination. You have probably seen many of us on the street, many with their own churches, many inland, many on the coast, many leading processions, many looking for processions to lead, many curing the deaf, many raising the dead. In fact, there are eggs and there are eggs. Same thing with the prophets. I was born a prophet. I think my parent found that I was born with rather long and thick hair...this was a certain sign that I was born a natural prophet. And I grew to love this trade... the beach has turned the profession into a thing of ridicule.

The above excerpt does not only reveal Jero's identity as a deceiver rather than a prophet but also discloses many deceivers like him as well as their manifestations. Jero's utterance of being a prophet by birth and inclination

reveals that his prophetic calling and many like him are based on feeling and physical attributes rather than having a special calling from God. This also reveals a false representation of a person who claimed to be a prophet by birth but equates the prophetic calling to trade and profession which by inference reveals him a trader, while his acclaimed worshippers are perceived ascustomers. The interaction does more than confession but reveals Jero's impersonating character, which invariably informs deceiver's role who only makes merchandise of prophetic calling. The pragmatic act of impersonating foregrounds the role of a deceiver exemplified by Jero. Though prophet, Jero claims to be a prophet his reference to prophetic calling as trade does not only foreground the act of impersonating but also reveals the role of a deceiver. This pragmatic act is validated through reference and metaphor. The manner he equates prophetic calling to a profession as well as a trade reveals the treatment he melted out to his worshippers. Also, his double-face-life is obvious through the pragmatic act performed.

4.1.1.3 Deceiver Through the Act of Forecasting

The interaction below is between Prophet Jero and a member of the house who comes to the beach to rehearse his speech, a situation that Jero is fully aware of.

Excerpt 3

(The conversation is between Prophet Jero and a member of the Federal House, who usually comes to the beach to rehearse his speech)

> JERO: I could teach him a trick about speech-making. He's a member of the House of the Federal House, a back-bencher but with one eye on a ministerial post. Comes here every day to rehearse his speeches. But he never makes them. Too scared…. Now he is already a member of my flock. He does not know it of course, but he is a follower. All I need do is claim him, My dear Member of the House, your place awaits you…or do you doubt it? Watch me go to work on him. (Raises his voice) My dear brother in Jesus!
> *The* MEMBER *stops, looks around, resumes his speech*
> Dear brother, do I not know you?
> MEMBER (with great pomposity). Go practise your fraudulence on another person of greater gullibility.
> JERO. (very kindly, smiling) indeed the matter is quite plain. You are not of the Lord. And yet such is the mystery of God's ways that his favour has lighted upon you...Minister... Minister by the Grace of God...
> *The Member stops dead*
> Yes, brother, I saw this country plunged into strife. I saw the mustering of men, gathered in the name of peace through strength. And at a desk, in a large gilt room, great men of the land awaited your decision. Emissaries of foreign nations hung on your word, and on the door leading to your office, I read the words, Minister for War...
> *The Member turns round slowly*
> …it is a position of power. But are you of the Lord? Are you in fact worthy? Must I, when I have looked into your soul, as the Lord has commanded me to do, must I pray to the Lord to remove this mantle from your shoulders and place it on a more God-fearing man?
>
> The MEMBER moves forward unconsciously. The PROPHET gestures him to stay where he is. Slowly…

In the above interaction, the role of a deceiver is obvious and it is foregrounded through the pragmatic act of forecasting. Jero's knowledge of the member of the house who comes regularly to the beach to rehearse his speech exploits the situation to deceive the man into being a member of his flock. Based on Jero's knowledge of the situation, upon which he draws inference and capitalises, prophesies and eventually makes the man a member of his church, which is his ultimate goal. Though the man initially rejects Jero's proposal, when Jero's prophesy matches his intention of being a minister, he changes his mind. The psychological response from the man shows a kind of contentment and pragmatic effect to what the prophet says. It should be noted that Jero is aware of the man's situation and prophesies accordingly, which invariably foregrounds his act of deceit.

Other expressions that informed the role of a deceiver are: 'My disciple believes that I sleep on the beach... but I love my bed',' I know they are dissatisfied because I keep them dissatisfied', My brother in Christ as...you come as it was predicted', Yes... I see Satan in your eyes, I see him entrenched in your eyes' 'arable beach', 'vocation', among others, are expressions that inform the role of a deceiver.

4.1.2 Debtor

This role manifests in Jero's life and his interaction with Amope who sold him some items and his consequent refusal to pay eventually generates the conflictive situation. Various expressions as well as inference orient to this role as obvious in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 4

> JERO.. ..I don't know how she found the house. When I bought the good off her, she did not even ask any questions. My calling was enough to guarantee payment...

From the above utterance, Jero's debtor life is revealed. In this is particular utterance, Jero is not seen as a prophet but a debtor who wants to use his prophetic calling as an escape route from his debt. Jero in the above excerpt does not only subtly admits to buying goods from Amope but also reveals his intention of not wanting to pay the money but using his prophetic calling as a reason. This a point at which the role of a debtor is foregrounded. This is a marked role that is not expected of an acclaimed man of God but an unmarked role in the life of a fraudster like Jero. The extract below further buttresses Jero's debtor life:

> AMOPE. Listen, you bearded debtor. You owe me. .. you promised you would pay me three months ago but of course, you have been busy doing the work of God. Well, let me tell you that you are not going anywhere until you do a bit of my own work.
> JERO. But the money is not in the house. I must get it from the Post Office before I can pay.

In the above interaction, the role of a debtor as earlier emphasised is foregrounded. Also, the pragmatic act of insisting is seen in Amope's responses. The shared

situation knowledge between the two interactants informs the manner in which she talks. Also, there is a voice of business in the interaction which indexes the role of a creditor. Based on Shared Situational Knowledge between the two interactants there is a reference to work which metaphorically means money that Jero is owing; a task that must be performed before Jero would be allowed to go out. Jero's responses expose him as a trickster who is not even ready to pay the money. This role is foregrounded through the act of lying as obvious in his response: '... I must get it from the post office before I can pay'. Jero's response reveals his desire not to pay the money on one hand and reveals the trick he is playing on Amope on the other hand, as the post office is not a bank where the money is deposited and withdrawn but a place where letters are posted and where goods are received. His response through the act of lying foregrounds the role of a debtor. It is obvious from the utterance that Jero's lying attitude is a tact to get Amope out of his way on the one hand, and also reveals his intention not to pay up his debt on the other hand. The voice of business (as well as the word post office) in the interaction is used to trick his creditors. It should be noted that the post office as earlier said is not a bank as claimed by Jero that he must get to before the money could be paid.

4.1.3 Creditor

This role is obvious in the character of Amope, who sold Jero some items and as a result of his inability to pay up his debt, accords Amope a creditor. There are some expressions which serve as pointers to this role, such as, 'One pound, eight shillings and nine pence for three months. And he calls himself a man of God', 'You bearded debtors...', among others. The interaction below further buttresses this issue:

Excerpt 5

1. JERO: Yes, thanks be to God. (Hems and cough) I – er- I hope you have not Come to stand in the way of Christ and his work.

2. AMOPE: If Christ doesn't stand in my way and my work.

3. JERO: Beware of pride, Sister. That was a sinful way to talk.

4. AMOPE: Listen, you bearded debtor. You owe me one pound, eight and nine. You promised you would pay in three months ago.... well, let me tell you that you are not going anywhere until you do a bit of my work.

In the above extract, in line 1, the expression '...I hope you have not come to stand in the way of Christ and his work' has been explained under the role of a debtor. This expression is used in a metaphorical sense to mean the money he owes; the information she processes and replies back in a metaphorical manner accords her the role of a creditor who is demanding the payment of her money. Also, the expression in line 4 '...You are not going anywhere until you do a bit of my work' is an expression that also informs

the role of a creditor who has the intention of not leaving until her money is paid. The 'work' here is referring to the money she came to demand of Brother Jero. The pragmatic act of insisting also further buttresses this role as this is possible in the business institution on the part of creditor insisting that her money must be paid. SSK helps the two interactants to process what 'work' stands for in reference to the money between them.

4.2 Religious-Informed Role

Religious-informed roles, in the context of this study, are unmarked roles in any religious activity. They are roles that are performed within the constraints of religious activity. In this study, prophet, discipler and disciple/follower are religious-informed roles identified. They are taken in turns for explication

4.2.1 Prophet

This role is obvious in Jero's utterances as well as in his interactions and actions with people at various levels. It is, therefore, necessary to understand that the roles identified are contextually determined basically from their utterances as well as their actions. There are various expressions that inform the role of Prophet in the text such as: 'disciple', 'worshippers', 'Did I not prophesy that you would become an office boy?',' forgive him', forgive this sinner', 'mantle', 'prophecy'. Other expressions include religious language such as, Praise the Lord', My dear sister in Moses, '...after much prayer for guidance, I am inspired to invite to you....as equal before God...'

The excerpt below also buttresses the role of a prophet:

Excerpt 6

JERO. Praise the Lord, Brother Chume, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord for the gift of reason and...for your coming promotion, yes, your coming promotion for this is the glad tiding of which I am the humble bearer.
CHUME. Promotion?

The above interaction further elucidates the role of prophet assumed by Jero. It is indeed the work of the prophet to prophesy which Jero does through the voice of religion. This shows the pragmatic act of prophesying performed in the interaction through the voice of religion as obvious in his utterance. This is a situation that is expected in any religious circle, from any prophet.

The subsequent interaction also establishes this role:

Excerpt 7

JERO. Do you doubt, brother Chume? Do you doubt my prophecy? Has your sojourn among lunatics made you forget who prophesied war and have we not lived to see it come to pass/ do you trust in me and praise the lord or do you confess yourself a waverer at this hour of trial?
CHUME. Praise the Lord.

There is the pragmatic act of re-assuring in the above extract; an act that further buttresses the role of a prophet which is to build up and instil confidence to any doubtful and weary soul, a role evident in Jero's utterance. This pragmatic act is based on the Shared Experiential

Knowledge (SEK) between the two interactants about his past prophecies which shows that whatever he predicted usually comes to pass. This is further established in Chume response of 'praise the Lord'. In addition to SEK is the voice of religion which establishes the activity performed within this context of religion. Other expressions that orient to this role are: 'I send you, Prophet Jero, said the Lord. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall inherit the kingdom','I shall lead you to safety, you and all who put their faith in me' 'The call of prophecy is in my blood...', faithful penitent...', among others. All the above expressions orient to the role of Prophet. From the above expressions, it is obvious that it is the work and the responsibility of a prophet to prophesy, mediate and seek peace, which he exemplified in the texts.

4.2.2 Mentor/ Discipler/ Leader

This role is established in the relationship between Jero and Chume. In various instances, Jero refers to Chume as his disciple. He (Chume) has also led a congregation in the absence of the prophet. This role is obvious in Jero's utterances as seen below:

Excerpt 8

JERO. Rise Brother Chume. .. Apprentice of the Lord, are you not he upon whose shoulders my mantle must descend?
CHUME. it is so, Brother Jero.
JERO. Then why do you harden your heart? The Lord says that you may not beat the good woman whom he has chosen to be your wife, to be your cross in your period of trial, and will you disobey him?
CHUME. No, Brother Jero.
JERO. Will you?
CHUME. No Brother Jero.

The interaction above shows that Chume is being mentored to take over from Jero, at the appointed time. The interaction also establishes a mentee/ mentor relationship between Jero and Chume. Also, the word 'mantle' symbolises leadership after one has diligently been mentored by a superior in the ministerial calling. The excerpt also reveals a leadership role through the pragmatic act of inquiring. Though Jero's utterances on the surface show the pract of inquiring but the context transform it to that of instructing through the voice of religion that Jero and Chume are both aware of. It is the utterances of the interactants that produce religious activity. (Levinson, 1979, 1992) The activity places some constraints on the allowable contribution in the interaction. Jero employs SSK to remind Chume through inquiring the mind of God in the matter at hand and thereafter instructs him not to do what he has in mind. Chume also understands, by inference, that Jero is instructing him not to beat his wife. The pragmatic effect of Jero's instruction is evident in Chume's act of submissiveness: 'No Brother Jero', It is so, Brother Jero'.

It is obvious from the explanation above that Jero performs the role of a mentor, disciple and leader in the discussion above. He guides and instructs Chume of what to do and provides an adequate interpretation of the situations. This role is also obvious in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 9

JERO.. .. this is the son whom you appointed to follow my footsteps. Soften his heart. Brother Chume, this woman whom you so desire to be is your cross- bear it well. She is your heaven-sent trial- lay not your hands on her. I command you to speak no harsh word to her. Pray, Brother Chume, for Strength in this hour of your trial. Pray for strength and fortitude.

The above extract shows clearly a mentor-mentee relationship between Jero and Chume. It is obvious in the word 'follow' and in the pragmatic act of instructing. Based on Jero's knowledge of Chume's situation, he resorts to the voice of religion and equates Chume's wife to a trial and across that is expected of Chume to have in his prophetic mentoring and in his prophetic and Christian pilgrimage on earth. In Christendom, it is believed Christian journey is not trial free and trials are equated with crosses which are emblems of Christianity. Jero's biblical allusion is expected as a prophet. Chume, on the other hand, understands by inference what Jero meant when he is talking about cross and trial. The expression 'My disciple believes that I sleep...', also suggests that Jero is a disciple as well as a mentor to Chume and other followers. An expression such as 'It is me your old master...' also substantiates this role.

4.2.3 Followers/ Worshippers/ Mentees

Various interactions and utterances index this role, and it is obvious among those that are following Prophet Jeroboam. They see him not only as a prophet but also as their leader. Many expressions orient to this role are seen in the participants' responses and their dealings with Brother/Prophet Jeroboam as shown in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 10
JERO...And before...yes, I think we have neglected our earthly inspirations.

REBECCA. But Brother Jero...
JERO. Trust me, Sister Rebecca.
REBECCA. I do, Brother Jero I do.
JERO. The voice of the people is the voice of God, did you know that Sister?
REBECCA. I trust you. I follow wherever you lead, Brother Jeroboam.
JERO. I shall lead your safety, you and all who put their faith in me.
REBECCA. Instruct me, Brother Jero.

The above extract shows the heart of a follower as well as a worshipper who in all situations trust the prophet and ready to follow him and obey his instructions. Various expressions such as 'I do, 'I trust you', 'I follow you wherever you lead' and 'Instruct me' show the role of a follower, who can do anything for Brother Jero. Not only do all the responses show a willingness to follow but they perform the pract of submission, which is expected of followers. The knowledge shared between Jero and Rebecca is situational and the relevance of Jero utterance

reinforces the understanding that his follower must submit to him. She understands by inference that Jero meant that he should not be questioned but she and others that follow him should surrender in submission to his leading.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing, two broad categories of the role: the social- informed role and religious-informed role have been identified in Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero Metamorphosis*. The Social-informed role, a marked role, divides into a deceiver, debtor, and creditor. The role of a deceiver is foregrounded through the act of denying, impersonating and forecasting; the role of a debtor is foregrounded through the act of lying, while the role of a creditor is foregrounded through the act of insisting. The religious-informed role, an unmarked role, divides, into a prophet, disciple and follower. The role of a prophet is foregrounded through the act of predicting; the role of a discipler is foregrounded through the pract of instructing and denying, while the role of a disciple or follower is foregrounded through the pract of submitting. The pragmatic roles, seated in the theoretic frame of Mey's Pragmatic act theory which is a theory of context has demonstrated the importance of context in the explication of meaning.

The paper argues that understanding any literary text is depended not only on the activity performed such as religious activity or interaction but also on looking at various pragmatic roles perform by the characters or interactants in the texts. Similarly, various participants' pragmatic roles play an important function in understanding any fraud-related activities.

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