The Road:
Corruption in Governance


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The Road occupies a distinct place in the dramatic output of Wole Soyinka in a sense that it is a play minus female characters. It can be considered an experiment on the part of Wole Soyinka to write a play without female character and yet the play achieving an expected effect. The central issue of this play is corruption and hollowness of administration in Nigeria. The political decolonisation has not yet brought sweet fruits of freedom in Nigeria. Simply the power is transferred from the English to the local but the basic situation has remained unaltered. The superficial reading of the play may give an idea that it is a play with comic elements but a close reading proves it to be a play with black humour. Absence of female characters does not curtail either interest or intensity of the play. The central character is Professor who does almost all types of illegal activities to be rich. The very name chosen by him for himself "professor" is ironical because his work differs from the work of a genuine professor. He runs one store which he calls "AKSIDENT STORE – ALL PARTS AVAILABLE" (01) It is a bus transformed into a store by removing its wheels and making it static. It is a store for
selling parts of automobiles and he earns a lot out of it. But there is a reason why his store runs so well. He is the man causing accidents on the road and compelling the travellers and drivers to buy parts for their damaged vehicles. In fact he has his well trained team and sophisticated network to see that there is no recession in his profession. He has appointed one mute fellow named Murano to remove the road signs and frighten the drivers at night by wearing strange unnatural dresses chiefly the dress of Ogun—the god of roads. Such an act of Murano is more than enough to cause an accident and when his job is over one more team remains present to rob not only the dead and fainted passengers but also good parts of the smashed vehicles. It is a task which requires a man with courage and skill. The man appointed by professor to do this job is sergeant Burma who has seen many injured and killed people because of his job in the army. Since he is a seasoned fellow, he is fit to do the job of looting dead and injured. He performs his skill for professor and gets his regular commission. The whole scenario at the first glance creates laughter and seems to be comic but the sad story of Nigeria which conveys transforms that comic into black humour. He has become a millionaire by practicing some such trades.

The sad reality of the Nigerian public administration is that those who know how to drive and want to drive to earn their livelihood,
unfortunately do not have an official license to drive and those who have it are not willing to drive. Such people prefer voluntary worklessness while for those who want to work but do not have a document, it is compulsory worklessness. It is sad rather tragic truth of the Nigerian population brought to the surface by Soyinka by introducing three characters named Samson, Kotonu and Salubi. Samson does the job of the tout collecting the passengers for the vehicle driven by Kotonu. But Kotonu once escaped an accident narrowly and from that day decided not to drive at all. This voluntary worklessness has compelled Samson to remain jobless because of his strange affiliation to Kotonu. Samson would do a job of a tout only if the vehicle is to be driven by Kotonu. The case is different with Salubi. He is having a genuine desire to drive but having no license with him has compelled him to remain jobless. He has tried several times to obtain an official license but his failure has inspired him to go for a fake license. Here comes to the light one more sad reality of the Nigerian government. Since people do not get official license in time in spite of their efficiency, they go for the fake documents. Salubi has decided to obtain a fake license from Professor who indulges into many illegal acts and one of them is to issue fake licenses to the drivers.
The play opens with the same scene of Salubi and Samson, their joblessness and willingness to work. Both Samson and Salubi know that the Professor is the final solution to any of their problems and this inspires Salubi to go for a fake license from Professor. This opening scene has enough of comic elements in it but reminds the spectators of helplessness and pitiable condition of an average Nigerian. Both know that Professor has become a millionaire by following illegal practice.

The stage situation is equally important. It opens at the dawn on the road side hut which is having broken fence near the old church. In a corner of the shack is the back of mammy wagon open sided without wheels. The inscription written on it is equally important. Samson stretched a few feet away. Salubi and Murano lay there. Murano gets up and sets off with his instruments. Samson walks half-way and watches Murano. He thinks of following Murano but some how, changes his thought and returns to his mat. The tower clock strikes five at dawn and Samson incenses himself seeing others sleeping peacefully. He kicks Salubi to awake him but he continues to his sleep on the floor. At last Salubi gets up and starts talking with Samson. Samson asks him about his uniform:

“Samson: Who land you uniform?
Salubi: I buy it with my own money.

Samson: Second-hand

Salubi: So what?

Samson: At least you might have washed it. Look at that Blood-stain – has some been smashing your teeth?"

(02)

This dialogue between these two persons makes many things clear. When Samson talks of borrowing uniform, it shows that they are not in a condition to get their own uniform. When he refers to second-hand cloth, Salubi replies that what difference does it make if it is second-hand. This also indicates that for a person like Salubi, having uniform is more important than the quality and the other things about the cloth or uniform. Samson tries to tease him more so he suggests him to wash it before wearing it as it shows blood-stain on it. He asks a comic question whether someone has smashed his teeth or not? Salubi calls it the stain of palm oils. Samson calls him a funny person and says:

“....funny like one of those street idiots. How can any one buy a uniform when he hasn’t got a job?” (03)
The remark of Samson indicates the real African voice of the people of Africa. Salubi is not having any job but yet he has his uniform. This is the real picture of Africa that the people do get uniform but they do not get job easily. The words that they use for each other are more important. When Salubi replies that he has put on uniform to impress other drivers, then Samson refers to the stale on the dress as a stigma and Salubi calls him "Jobless tout" (03). Samson calls him," A uniformed private driver-temporary unemployed" (03). Salubi calls it a jealousy and Samson makes a remark:

"Instead of using all that labour to shine your buttons you should spare some for your teeth, you know, and your body-a little soap and sponge would do it. After all, new uniform deserves new body. White coat deserves white teeth." (03)

This remark of Samson indicates the real condition of the people. When he talks of Salubi, it applies to all and not to Salubi only. It shows that the people of Africa do not care for the cleanliness of their body or we can say that the concept of health and hygiene is far from these people. Samson advises Salubi to clean his teeth and
to take bath. But Samson ignores the same cleanliness in his own life what he advises Salubi to do for his cleanliness. It is either because of their traditional way of living life or may be it is the vagueness of their life or hardship of their profession that they do not get enough time for all these things.

By profession Samson is a tout collecting passengers for lorry and talks of self-respect and self-pride. He does not want to become a tout without self-respect or pride. He refers to touts sleeping there and calls them part time burglar. He also calls them the pestilence of the trade who do not have any professional dignity. This thought of Samson brings to us the dignity and respect that they have for themselves in spite of the fact that they are merely drivers or touts. Professionally drivers or touts do not have any importance and they are called ignorant people. But Soyinka takes pain to tell about the respect and dignity that they have for themselves. He refers to Kotonu who wants him to work for any lorry as he desires to leave the profession. This is important because he calls it the question of dignity and self-respect. He does not want to lose his identity. He has his own self respect which he does not want to lose at any cost. He says:
"...as for me I
am a proud man. I tout for my own driver, not for anyone
else. I'm a one driver tout, no more no less." (04)

Salubi calls himself a driver for owner of private vehicles. He speaks
what is the voice of the most of the poor and needy people of Africa.
This is how Soyinka draws the attention of most of the people to
note the traditional way of living life of the native Africans. They are
the people who do not want to go beyond the limits and boundaries
of their own surroundings. Salubi says:

"All I need is a licence. It is only a matter of getting
Professor to forge one for me." (04)

But Professor is a man who knows well how to tackle such people
and how to linger them behind them as it is an important document
for the poor people like Salubi. He knows well that once such man
gets fake licence, he would not turn back to him. He has his own
interest in issuing fake licences. He always insists on getting job first
instead of fake licence. The dialogue between Samson and Salubi is
important:
"Salubi: You see. And a man can't get a job without a licence.

Samson: And you can't get a licence without a job..." (04)

This dialogue indicates the real pitiable condition of the poor people of Africa. It is a fact that the person who wants to do a job does not get official licence and therefore he has to find out a fake licence from the person like Professor. This corrupt way of getting licence is a symbol of corruption in governance in which the poor people suffer the most. It is important that a man can't get a job without licence. At the same time the person like Salubi does not get a licence without job. This refers to Professor's business. Both of them think that the man is a millionaire. They also dream themselves millionaire. The dialogue between the two indicates the limitations of the African nativity:

"Samson: Sometimes, I think what will I do with all that money if I am a millionaire?

Salubi: First I will marry ten wives.

Samson: Why ten?

Salubi: I no fit count pass ten.

Samson: Just like you to waste money on women.
Salubi: Why not? What else can a man do with a million pounds?

Samson: Me, I will buy all the transport Lorries in the country, Then make Kotonu the head driver." (05)

It is with this reference that the real African situation comes to the surface. The literacy level of the average African people is indicated when Salubi says that he does not count more than ten. This is also an indication that since they are illiterate, they do not get adequate job and therefore, they have to join the profession like driver or touts collecting passengers for the private lorry and they need the help of the person like professor in order to get fake licence. The corruption is an integral part of Africa. The people like Salubi and Samson know only one law and that is the law of corruption. It is a matter of great sorrow for such people that they do not get official licence from the government and therefore, they have to go to the person like Professor to get fake licence. Because of their ignorance and illiteracy the person like Professor misuses them for personal gain and benefit. He is well aware that these people should be kept under his feet so that they may work for him. He makes them loiter behind him all the time so that he may fulfill all his malice intentions. If he
issues fake licences very easily, he knows well that after getting licence from him, no body will come to him.

The remark of Salubi, "What else can a man do with a million pounds?" (05) is a remark which leads us to think once again about their traditional way of living life. It is a matter of fact that due to poverty and illiteracy in these people they do not think in any other terms except worldly affairs of their culture and particularly about polygamy. It is the root of their traditional life which all the time leads them to think about wife after wife. It is a belief that if a person becomes a millionaire, he can have as many wives as he wants and for him polygamy is a symbol of strength and power. As they do not have any new idea to create any new culture or ideology, naturally they are compelled to think about their culture of polygamy. This is also because their culture of polygamy has no norms if they want a new wife. They can marry a girl of the age of their daughter. It shows what their culture accepts and they do not have any problem with that. This violates the social norms of any civilised culture or country. It is the saddest thing in their culture that the senior wife of a husband has to find out a new wife for her husband and she has to play the role of a councillor. And if she is unable to convince that girl, it is not only a disgrace to her husband but also it is a matter of shame for herself.
Samson is willing to buy all the transport Lorries of the country. His ideas are different from the ideas of Salubi. He always thought in terms of money making through the medium of corruption. He wants to make Kotonu the head driver. He considers Salubi unfit for this business. He wants to make him his private driver. He wants to give Professor a special office with air conditioner, automatic printing press so that he can forge driving licences to all his drivers. He calls himself an artist as he is the master in issuing fake licences.

The talk between the two makes one more thing clear about the corruption in the police department. When Salubi refers to the police and the imprisonment for producing fake licences, Samson replies:

"Which kind of police? They will form line in front of my house every morning to receive their tip. No one will touch my lorry on the road." (5-6)

This once again shows the African reality in a sense that even the people like Samson knows well the corruption in the police department in spite of the fact that they are illiterate and ignorant. Soyinka has shown this with a special purpose. As the corruption in governance is an integral part of Africa, he has shown it to the
ground reality that even a small driver like Samson knows it well and he knows well how to tackle with them. They are of the opinion that with the help of money you can buy any thing. This means that with corruption he can handle the law and order in his nativity. When he says police will form a line in front of his house every morning to receive tip shows that the police is taking tips from the big transporters and such transporters can do any illegal act with the help of the person from the legal department. This also brings to the notice of the readers by Soyinka that the police department is the most corrupt department in Africa and the policemen are the means of that. Samson in an imaginative tone flings the coin as giving the tip to the police and then he says:

"...now that is what I call a well disciplined force." (06)

He goes ahead and says if he dies, he will start a bus service between heaven and hell. He talks of aeroplane and helicopter to travel to heaven.

Samson again and again refers to dirty cloths and stale smell coming out of Salubi's body. This is once again an issue that Soyinka would like to focus on. The native Africans are not
conscious of the cleanliness of their body or cloths. In one of his dialogue he says:

"...if you came near me with a dirty uniform like that I will have you thrashed like a horse." (05)

When he refers to thrashing like a horse to Salubi, it is something like comparing a man with an animal and treating him like an animal. Samson would like to give the same treatment as it is given to the animals in the Africa. Here comes a humanitarian approach of the writer. No doubt, he has shown the ugly side of the native Africans but at the same time he talks of the human approach to them. Salubi opines that the person who gets money automatically gets power. Samson makes a comic remark about Salubi's stale mouth:

“It stinks. It stinks so much that I will promote you Captain of my private body guard. When the police bring their riot squad with tear-gas and all that nonsense, you will open your mouth and breathe on them. That is what is known as counter-blast.” (07)
Meanwhile, professor arrives there and it is noticed first by Salubi and he is disturbed for some time and starts muttering. But Samson is unaware of this and he continues his speech. Later he also comes to know about this and he is disturbed for some time. Soyinka has described him as a tall figure in Victorian outfit. He is having a bundle in his hand which shows his business. It is purposefully displayed by the writer because it indicates the fake business of issuing that he is doing. He made the sign boards on the road being changed by his workers. Naturally, this wrong direction boards misguide the drivers on the road and this will lead to an accident. The real business of this man starts after an accident. Professor enters in a high state of excitement and starts muttering something to him. He sees Samson and calls him out. He then sees Salubi. He takes the chair-stick and jabs him again and again. Samson opines that Professor has missed his way. But Professor is a man of self control and firm determination. He says:

".....Any thing is possible when I pursue the word..." (09)

Again he sees Kotonu sitting up and stops. He says that he knows him well and he is a driver who has left driving. Samson argues that
he must have changed his mind. Kotonu desires to go with
Professor. But he questions about his master. Samson wants
Professor to go out. He tries to find the way to send him out.
Immediately he signals Kotonu frantically to get professor out. He all
the time tries to make himself free from him but Professor does not
make him out of his sight. When he asks about Kotonu to go with
him, he immediately pretends to accept his proposal with the
following words:

"...Take him. In fact I no
longer need him. He dreams too much. Go on. You are
sacked. Good bye to both of you. Good bye..." (10)

Indirectly Samson wants Professor to go but he has to say good bye
to his mate Kotonu for his own sake. Later he requests him not to go
with Professor but he does not listen to him and both go out. The
remark of Professor at the time of departure from Samson discloses
his real character and identity. He is a man who has achieved
everything by following fake ways. He is sure of what ever wrong he
is doing. He asks Samson to come with him but he denies and
remains there. Salubi asks Samson not to talk to Professor as he is
not in a mood to listen to anybody. He also opines that Kotonu need
not go with him. Both Professor and Kotonu go to the door and Samson and Salubi remain motionless until they go out. Samson does not understand the word business trip that Kotonu talked about when he went away from that place. This very moment Salubi makes it clear what he means by business trip. The dialogue is important:

"Salubi: Well, where do you think I get this uniform?
Samson: Stole it, of course. It is just like you to rob a dead man.
Common shop-lifter when sergeant Burma was alive
You wouldn’t dare.
Salubi: I am glad you can joke about it. Because I bought it from your mate.
Samson: From Kotonu? Are you gone mad?
Salubi: Why don’t you open your eyes and see who is now operating behind that tailboard." (13)

Samson is not ready to believe all these things. He calls Salubi a liar and feels a kind of shock listening that Kotonu is working for Professor. Salubi gives reason and asks him to wait for his return so that he will come to know about everything. Salubi informs him that Sergeant Burma is dead and Kotonu becomes the successor and he has taken over his business. Samson is very unhappy as he does
not know anything about Kotonu and his new business. He is still not ready to believe all these so he says:

“But Kotonu is it not like that. What is he trying to do?

This isn’t necessary at all. I only said take back your licence, not start keeping shop for the mortuary.” (14)

Salubi upsets him with statement after statement and continues his speech. He says that Kotonu has decided not to drive any more and Samson is worrying about him. He blames professor for all these things. He listens the music from the near by church and they started talking about the music and the organist and the role played by Professor to correct the music and the musician. This is again a talk in which they talk of Professor's connection with the church and the church funds. Salubi asks about it and Samson in response to his question about his connection with the church informs that the man is an inflective in the nearby surroundings. When he enters the church, everybody looks at him until he sits on his pew and if anybody, by mistake, sits on his seat, the church warden immediately drives him out from his pew. Samson talks of his manners and dressing style and says that when Professor wears suit to his evening services to church, the whole neighbourhood
used to come and see him. Salubi asks about his confrontation with the bishop of the church and it proves to be the most comic scene in the play. At the same time this scene reveals how both of them used their own malpractices to take revenge against each other and how both tried to keep their identity in the presence of the other patrons. It is a rumor in the public that Professor slaps the bishop during the church activities. Samson calls this fight “a duel of gentleman” (16) and makes every thing clear to him.

The bishop of the church is of the opinion that he has studied more than anybody else in the village. So he always takes pride of his bachelor degree and the degree of divinity. But it is a fact that the bishop is not skilled in his oratory as professor. So when the bishop starts reading sermons, everybody starts sleeping. Three-quarters of the congregation come there to hear professor’s voice and oratory. Bishop is jealous of all these things. This is once again a sarcastic remark on the church and the priests and their lack of knowledge of religion. Soyinka has said that the person who is supposed to have a good oratory in the church actually does not master the skill and at the same time the person who is connected with anti-social activities knows it better and he has that capacity to influence the other people who come to the church. This is a remark of the influence of white rogue on the people and on the church instead of the person
like bishop and the activities of the church. This shows that the religion is more influenced by rouges than the bishops and the religion persons.

Professor has habit of bowing his head whenever bishop speaks the name of Jesus Christ. Bishop makes this habit an instrument to teach him a lesson. During sermon he begins to use the word Jesus every other sentence. So professor has to bow his head every time with him. At the same time he starts reading the sermons little faster than his usual speech so that he may cause pain to professor's neck. He thought that he would teach him a lesson for whatever wrong he has done. At first professor tried to keep with his words, raising and bowing, bowing and sitting. The people present over there tried to look this battle better from all the angles and so they climb the wall. They are interested to know who will win the battle and who will be defeated. The question between the two is whether professor gets a cramp in his neck or the bishop would run out of grammar. The congregation present in the church knows what is happening and they know well that it is a final duel between the two.

The more comic elements are added when Salubi asks a question about the falling of the wall of the church. Samson explains that they were riding the wall like a victory horse. All the people present there used to come in and go out by jumping the wall. So suddenly it fell.
No body was injured but there prevailed a chaos. Salubi then asks about professor's stealing of the funds of the church. But Samson answers that Professor has not stolen any thing from the church. Salubi claims to have found the truth about the stealing of the funds from the church by professor. But the reply of Samson is important:

"You try. Professor will cockroach you like an old newspaper." (18)

Salubi thinks of the whole situation when he is alone and makes Kotonu responsible for the whole situation. Here, at the same time, Samson talks of the character of Kotonu. According to him he is a man different in his attitude from all the other drivers. It is a belief in the African drivers that the offering meat of a dog to Ogun – the god of road, is a kind of sacrifice to Him. So to praise their god the drivers kill the dog under their wheels and that way they would like to offer their sacrifice. But Samson laments that Kotonu doesn't like it. He all the time tries to avoid that accident by turning or jumping his lorry. Kotonu returns with an armful of motor parts like an old shoe, a cap etc. He goes into mammy wagon stall through hidden entrance. He tries to move silently pushing out an object covered with tarpaulin in his hand and tries to keep that object unobserved by Samson.
Samson sees Kotonu who has finished his work in the stall and he is now stretched full length on the bench. He asked about his return. Kotonu replies that he was talking to himself when he returned. He asked about professor and Kotonu replies that he is at his work and he will not come back at present. He asks about Sergeant Burma's business. Kotonu inquires about his fellow touts. The way he asks about them automatically reveals their character. Soyinka has indirectly mentioned the activities of such people in Africa and at the same time he has very clearly mentioned their mentality and the criminal records that they have. Soyinka writes:

"Kotonu: Where is Zooro who never returned from the North without a basket of guinea-fowl eggs? Where is Akanni the Lizard? I have not seen any other tout who would stand on the lorry's roof and play the samba at sixty miles an hour. Where is Sigidi Ope? Where is Sapele Joe who took on six policemen at the crossing and knocked them all in to the river?" (21)

Samson mentions that all have gone to their business with their Lorries. Kotonu shares his own experience at lorry with Samson.
This is once again a device used by Soyinka to describe the real and actual life and experience of the touts on the lorry. But at the same time he has given the real picture of the life of African people. He refers to Sergeant Burma who treated his tanker like a child's toy. Samson opines that such people are not human beings in real sense. Kotonu describes an incident that the man never moved by an accident. Once he was stripping down an accident and found that the driver was his old friend. He took him to the mortuary but first he stopped to remove all the tyres. He narrates in the following manner:

“.....A man must protect himself against the indifference of comrades who desert him. Not to mention the hundred travellers whom you never really see until their faces are wiped clean by silence.” (21)

He compares Professor with Sergeant Burma and says that this man moves round the road side and replants the road signs board on the road. This is again a trick used by a man like Professor and it is not only shown to cause an accident but Soyinka has shown the ways used by the native Africans in order to disobey law and order at the same time to serve the purpose of the man like Professor who misuses the corruption in governance for his own self.
Replanting of the signboard on the road under the corrupt and fake observation of the government officials in the African nativity makes it clear that the whole system of law and order is under the influence of corrupt administrative power. This is not only in Africa that has happened but almost all the countries in the world suffer directly or indirectly from this problem and it causes a series of accidents in which many innocent and helpless people loose their lives. This is again a question of the corruption in governance and malpractices used by the observers of law and order. Professor always keeps his workers ready to change the signboard. This shows that the situation of law and order is out of control due to corruption. This will create havoc in the form of accidents. But the people related to fake business and corruptions do not care for any loss. It is also a possibility in such a situation that the authority may know it well but they keep mum, their mouths are shut with the money.

A politician named Chief-in-Town enters. He is in need of few persons and he asks about it to Samson. But Samson does not reply properly and he concludes that he is new in the park. Here comes the question of unemployment and other related questions. Chief-in-Town knows well about it and he tries to take benefit of this as much as he can so he says:
"You will, you will ...Just give yourself a few more days sitting doing nothing..." (22)

When Samson denies working for him, he indirectly says that a day will come when he does not have any work and he is compelled to come to him for work. Here is an indication that if you want to work very sincerely and if you do not get any work, naturally such situation will lead you to do something illegal or against law. It is also a fact that when a person does something illegal or against law, that does not mean that the person has done that illegal work with his own will and desire. May be it is a compulsion which leads him to do something illegal. The key issue raised by Soyinka automatically leads to the questions and problems of poor and needy people. Soyinka means to say that when the person like politician speaks in this manner, he is making misuse of his power wasted on him by the same people. At the same time it is a tragedy of the people that they have right to elect their people but they do not have any right to discard that person before election if he fails to work for the welfare of those people. Say Tokyo Kid, a driver and captain of thugs, arrives there and informs him something. The Chief orders him to bring ten men for a campaign. He is preparing for a party meeting.
He asks him to bring them within fifteen minutes. The dialogue between the two makes one thing clear and that is, the link between the politician and the men of muscle power. Soyinka purposefully brings such people on the stage in order to focus the relationship between the two. The politicians are doing everything for the sake of money and the muscle power men are the crew for them. Chief-in-Town remark to Say Tokyo Kid is significant:

“I want the toughest you can find. This meeting is going to be hot.” (23)

Chief-in-Town gives a stick of hump to Say Tokyo. He takes it, sits in a corner and starts to inhale. This small incident in the play gives big information about drug edict people in Africa. At the same time it is important that this stick of hump is provided by the Chief in order to make them helpless after they become edict of drugs and in that way compel them to work for him to get more drugs. Soyinka has properly used this device of bringing such people on the stage and showing their activities to the common people. It is a sad story of every country that some politicians and their crew misuse the young generation of their country and make them edict to drugs and such other things so that they have to come to them again and again to
satisfy their edict need after they become completely the victim of these drugs. They need the young ones because they are the people ready to do any thing at any time. The root of this lies in the question of problems like over population, unemployment, ignorance, illiteracy and to some extent superstition. The politicians misuse their helplessness for their own purposes. It is a sad reality of Africa that the poor and ignorant people, because of either ignorance or illiteracy, willingly or unwillingly, join this dread habitual company and become the victim of that. Say Tokyo is given a stick of hemp by Chief-in-Town shows that Say Tokyo is not working for any party, not for any politician but to fulfill his own helplessness. Once they are edicted to this, they need it frequently but they do not get it easily or they do not have enough money to buy it after being evicted. They take benefits of this situation and start blackmailing the people. It is morally believed that the politicians are the real founders of any society. Their motto should be society oriented. But in today's situation all of them are working for their own self. They do not have society in centre but they have money in centre. Instead of reforming the people or society, they add decay to it. So they are just like a wood worm that weaken the wood inside but keep the outer appearance intact. These politicians weaken the society by making it
more and more habitual of evil habits but the outer picture they show to the others is just like a wood which looks intact from outside.

Once again Samson and Kotonu appear on the stage. Samson has been poking the spider with a stick. He calls Kotonu a spider and shows him a spider in the corner and addresses to it a brother to Kotonu. A uniformed policeman Particulars Joe thrusts his head through the door and sniffs the air, turns outside to look up and down the road and slides into the room. By this incident the playwright has shown a kind of link between the police and a group of thugs. He has shown all of them together taking wine. What does this mean? It is clearly indicated that the link between the police and the culprits instigates the later to commit crime without any fear and hesitation. The policeman Particulars Joe and is taking drugs and wine etc. This shows the real voice of Africa. But this is not only in Africa that the police and the thug have link together. It is everywhere same. Soyinka in this sense proves to be a realist as he has not been hesitating to show the drawbacks of the public administration in Africa. Such is an example of babucracy in the governance. Say Tokyo lights up Particular Joe’s cigarette. Is it not the misuse of power wasted in him by the government? All of them loose their sense as the scene progresses and at last Particulars Joe clutches his stomach and slithers to the ground. When the
power or authority permits such thing to anti-social people, then naturally the future of the young generation will not be a shining one. Such people are the barriers to maintain law and order. When the protector becomes a criminal, whom will you trust? When they loose sense, they loose everything. It is very sad that they drink wine heavily and loose their common sense.

The three men appear on the stage talking to each other. The subject of their talk is naturally Professor, Sergeant Burma, their profession and the different parts of accident vehicle and the stolen things of the passengers. Salubi enters with a bowl of soup and some food wrapped in leaves. He looks tired. He is worrying about his job. Both of them depart at a very quarrelsome situation talking about food and Professor. Samson tries to see into the stall through a gap in the wood. Kotonu sees it and asks him to go inside instead of looking like that. Kotonu says that he has not suspected any side of him and he asks him to stop walking as he is trying to sleep. Samson asks him whether he has sold his uniform to Salubi or not. In response to this question Kotonu replies that he has not sold it to him but he has stolen it. He has seen it with his own eyes. Listening to this Samson opines about Salubi in the following manner:
"That man not only stinks like Lagos lagoon, he lies like a Lagos girl." (33)

Samson informs him that Salubi is waiting for taking his licence so that professor will fake a new licence from it. Samson uses good phrase to describe it:

"....Then Professor will perform his artistry on it." (33)

Kotonu is ready to give it to him. He at the same time once again requests Kotonu to come back to his profession as a driver. He argues that they have worked together for nine years and now how can he start working with a new driver? He says:

"....Nine years we have worked together and now you want me to go and join any driver who happens along." (34)

Kotonu argues if he got killed in an accident what will he do in that situation? But Samson is not convinced with all these arguments. He just wants him not to give up the driving job for his sake.
Meanwhile Professor appears from the side of the church. He takes care that he is not observed by anybody. So he looks through a narrow chink. Samson sees him after some time. He is relieving him of his bundles and sets them on the table. He tries to talk to Kotonu but he is not ready to talk to him. So he goes to Professor to seek his advice for this problem. But Professor demands money if he needs his opinion in this matter. He demands on the name of consultation but at this situation it reveals the real identity false manners of Professor. He is not ready to listen to his request that both of them are jobless and they do not have enough money to pay to him. But Professor takes the coins and warns him not to tell anybody about his opinion otherwise he will charge full bill. The indication of taking money by Professor from Samson indicates the dark side of illiteracy and ignorance of the native African people and the misuse of their knowledge by the literate people to make illiterate understand something or to give them an advice in their time of needs. According to the drivers and the conductors like Kotonu and Samson, Professor is a well learned man and he knows everything. At the same time Soyinka makes it clear that the people like Professor in Africa misuses the ignorance of the natives. Samson and Professor are the mere examples but the reality comes before us by the words and conversations between all these people. The
playwright goes up to the extent of saying that the roots of corruption are not only in any particular field or area in Africa but the so called educated people have used their knowledge to make the ignorant people suffer in their hands. Professor says:

"...You are illiterate. It is lucky for you that I watch over you, over all of you." (36)

Samson tells a whole story of his driver Kotonu and why he has decided not to drive lorry any more. But Professor suggests increasing his salary. But Samson replies that the question is not of salary but it is a question of faith and commitment. Professor once again adds that if Kotonu does not work, he will lose his pension. Samson during their talk makes it clear that the job does not bears the option of pension. Hearing this Professor pretends to surprised with the following words:

“What! No pension?
What is your Trade Union doing about it? (37)

Again it is a very clever remark by Professor. He has taken money to advice him in his critical situation. But instead of suggesting any
remedy, he starts abusing the Trade union. This makes one more thing clear that the workers of Africa and particularly the illiterate native tribal are not aware of their welfare and the legal rights. A person like Professor takes their benefits from that. He tries to instigate them so that he may get success in drawing the attention of these people to other direction. Samson all the time tries to convince him about his relationship with his driver Kotonu. He remarks:

"...Everybody knows Kotonu. From Lagos to Monrovia they know him. And they know Samson his mate, his apprentice, his conductor and passenger collector. Look Professor, the road won't be the same without him." (37)

Kotonu inquires about Murano and Samson gets angry. Kotonu still tries to make his argument correct by saying:

"...I say I want to retire." (38)

Samson argues that the retirement age for him is sixty and both of them continue arguing for a long time and their conversation reveals many things which any reader who wants to know about it would prefer to read. Samson expresses his feeling like this:
"...It is just what
our people say-the man with a head is looking for a cap
and the man with a cap lacks the head." (38)

Samson is ready to pay the fees for licence on behalf of Kotonu but
he is not ready to accept this proposal. He says that he has buried
his money in the churchyard. Listening to this Professor tells him
many things about conjuration and proposes that his money is not
safe there. He has to think twice before doing such a risky work.
Samson informs him that he has not touched that money for the last
two years. Salubi enters, stop for a while and then directly goes to
Professor and asked him for licence. Professor again asks for
consultation fees and he places a shilling on the disk. He says that
he needs his licence urgently. Salubi makes a statement that if he
won't get licence, he would commit suicide. But Professor takes it in
a different way and says that he is threatening him and now he is not
ready to issue a fake licence to him. Both Samson and Salubi
request him to issue a licence but Professor makes a show that he is
not ready to issue a fake licence to him as he has threatened him for
committing suicide. At last Professor doubles his consultation fees
and agrees to give him a fake licence. He asks for two photographs and looking to his photograph he says:

"Are you an escaped convict? This photo looks villainous." (43)

This is again a sarcastic remarks put by the playwright in the form of dialogue that a culprit asks another man about his crime when he himself does a criminal activities. It is also a fact that this kind of thing makes it clear that in order to justify his own works, Professor scolds the other about the things that he is doing. When Salubi promises he has not gone to jail in his life, Professor addresses him as a gaol-bird which means the seal of crime is imposed upon him. Here the picture of Salubi is just like a situation of a helpless man before an officer, rebuking, scolding, humiliating and treating him like a culprit though the man is not at all criminal. Samson opines that it is not advisable to ask Professor to give the licence immediately as he will take his own time. He at the same time argues about Murano absence and says that Professor will not do it at present because it is a time for Murano to arrive there. When Kotonu asks about Murano to Professor, his dislike for the man comes forward in the following manner:
“Neglected in the back of a hearse, and dying moaned like a dog whose legs have been broken by a motor car. I took him-somewhere-looked after him till he was well again.” (44)

Professor informs during his talk that Murano has one leg longer than the other and all of them talk about it in a different way. Samson once again asks him to convince Kotonu to return to his job. He asks Samson to bring Kotonu’s licence and examines it carefully with the additional aid of the hand lens and speaks that he has to place salubi’s photograph over Kotonu’s photograph in order to prepare a fake licence for Salubi.

At this moment Professor himself reveals his own character. It is a good device used by the dramatist that the character himself reveals his own secret. At the same time Soyinka has shown one more thing that each and every person will understand his follies as well as limitations with the passing of time. Professor himself feels that he has become an old man and now he does not have the same strength as he had in his young age. He says:

“...It is a sign of my failing powers when I am glad for alterations this easy to hand. Not so long ago I would have spurned such clumsy craftsmanship, built a
new document from old electric bills and those governments circulars in which food-sellers wrap their food." (46)

When Samson again asks about his plan, once again he accepts his limitations. The remark of Professor is important:

"Nearly a year since I celebrated my hundredth forgery. It is difficult always to forge from scratch, and I am getting old. Once I could do three licences in a week and not feel The strain. Now if I manage one, I feel the life has gone from me. This needs only a little adjustment. A neat Transfer, not a basic forgery." (46)

Samson is worried about his profession and livelihood and feels helpless when Professor talks of weakening of his power. He feels that he has asked Professor to find out the way to find him on the road but Professor talks in a different way. Professor calls him 'Lion-hearted Samson' (47) and remarks that he has an ass's mind that he can not think twice that Kotonu will not return to his job. But Samson is hopeful about Kotonu's return on the road and he says that this is only a phase and he will get over it. But Professor informs him that Kotonu has decided to work with him and he has accepted him. He
tells this in a different manner so that he may not be shocked. He asks Samson a question whether he were a millionaire. His remark is important:

“I had a strange experience this morning. Missed my way and was received into the palace of millionaire. Your friend guided me out or I might still be lost and wandering. In return I took him to the latest offering of the word. I have accepted him—and you—like the others…” (47)

But Samson is not ready to believe all this so he argues that it is Kotonu's self-indulgent with feeling which leads him to think like this. When Professor asks him not to expect him to drive again, he remarks about Kotonu and shares his experience of Kotonu with him in the following manner:

“He will. He must. He knows no other life but driving, he can use his hands for no other purpose than to turn the heavy wheel, and to throw that wretched gear which I never mastered.” (47)
Samson claims that Kotonu and he were pupils together and he claims that Kotonu was conceived in the back of lorry. Hearing these, Kotonu replies that he was only born in a lorry and he was not conceived in the back of lorry. But Samson remains firm in his talk and informs Professor that his father used to tell him something which would shock everybody. Professor is surprised to know that Kotonu has a father and he was truck-pusher. He also informs him that his father was the only man who began his career with one truck and ended his career with the same truck. The rest had stopped because of big transport business. He talks of advancement of science and technology with the advancement of time and remarks about Kotonu’s father’s last position in the following manner:

“.....The only change was that he covered the wooden wheels with rubber.” (48)

Samson tells that Kotonu’s father was fond of market women. They were the backbone of transport business in those days. His father did not take money from them when they traveled in the lorry. Samson says:

“....Instead, he made
honeymoon with them. Anywhere. In the back of the stalls, under carter bridge...in the truck itself. Once he was locked up in a cell. Where others would have broken out and escaped, he broke into an adjoining cell where a woman was detained and spent night with her.” (48)

Samson discloses the secrets of Kotonu's father and his life as a truck-pusher. The way he talks to Professor makes us to think that the person like Kotonu has suffered a lot due to his father and his bad habits. This suffering is not the suffering of Kotonu only but it a voice of most of such children with whom the story of their birth and illegitimacy are attached either one way or the other. Samson goes ahead and opens one more secret in the following way:

"Kotonu and I grew up together helping him to push the truck. You know Kotonu was really conceived in a push-truck. Kolol'ori told me himself. He said he parked the truck on a slight rise in the ground and when he began to make honeymoon on top of Kotonu's mother, the truck started to roll downhill. Perhaps that was why he was so fond of him. Of all his sons Kotonu was the only one he would acknowledge.” (49)
The story of Kotonu's birth and his father's use of market women are again a key issue which Soyinka handles delicately to show the grim reality of truck drivers and their family. Again the playwright has discussed the question of polygamy and seduction of market women in Africa. No doubt, sex and sex activities are a part of their native culture as many of the native Africans even to day live completely naked. But that does not mean that that nakedness creates sex appeal in them. It is a very natural course and they do not feel ashamed to talk of this before any person. The most important and positive side of this story is that through this incident Soyinka has peeped into the life of the lorry drivers and how they spent their time when they are on lorry for many days or away from their home for many days. Kotonu opines that his father left that truck to him when he died. He also says that his father died before he became a driver. He explains his father's nature in the following manner:

"...If he had been alive
he would have slept with six women, to celebrate my becoming a driver...." (49)
Professor gets angry with the touts singing the dirge and they stop singing. He talks to all of them and asked all of them to leave him alone. A sound is heard from out side and Samson informs that it is the sound of funeral and mass burial of dead persons who died in an accident on the bridge. Kotonu drives Samson out and Murano enters. The conversation between the two reveals their cunning. Professor says:

"I thought it might happen, that is why I let them go....Morning is the time for funerals, and who knows, even they may have stumbled on that wisdom. So I....missed my way here-to keep watch. ........But you must return quickly, before you are seen. All faces are the same in twilight or by night. The word needs no vulgar light of day to be manifest. Go now." (52-53)

Salubi enters and Professor asks Murano to hide himself. Salubi tells him that he saw somebody hiding over there. He doubts about thief. Professor makes use of his own language and pretends that he doesn't need another thief's protection. He suspects that someone might be coming to rob the store who knows well that the place is left
deserted. But he sees Murano from the back and tries to catch him with a knife. But Murano twists it and drops knife from Salubi's hand on the ground. Salubi struggles to tear the rope from his neck but he fails and flails towards Professor to help him.

The second part begins with the discussion between Professor and Samson. They are talking about the accident on the bridge and their stall which sells all the stolen parts of an accident vehicle. The conversation between the two is worth noting:

"Prof: And you brought no revelation for me? You found no broken words where the bridge swallowed them?

Samson: How could we think of such a thing Professor?

Prof: A man must be alert in each event. But the store then?

Surely you brought new spare parts for the store." (55)

This conversation between the two reveals the real character of Professor who all the time in the entire situation tries to find his own benefits. When Samson suggests not to think in terms of personal benefit all the time, he advises him that they should be alert in any situation because he knows well that whatever he is doing is a wrong thing and if it comes to the notice of the people, what is his credit in the eyes of those people who believe him to be his leader or
saviour. He expects that he has brought some spare parts for his stall from the place where accident took place. Here it is a clear remark that their stall is meant for the accident store where all the parts are available stolen from the accident sight. This also indicates that Professor keeps few men who cause an accident on the road and his team will finish the rest of the work with the help of law and order. Professor insists that Samson should not be tardy in this business as three men on the road complained about the shop reopening very irregularly for many days. He warns him that the shop is everything for him and he is able to give the livelihood to others with the running of the store. Due to irregularity of Samson in reopening the shop they lose their business. It is mentioned here that Professor is making a statement for police on behalf of an eye witness who are his own people. He writes which is wrong and does not write which is right. He asks Kotonu what has happened on the bridge. Professor talks on the ministry of health and its people whom he fed with the medium of money of corruption. He argues that he has to spend handsome amount of money to make whatever he writes believable. He says:

".....What's the Ministry's needle after all expect for sewing the word together or the broken flesh. But mostly
the tattered Word. Twelve lashes everyday on his bare back and plenty of ground peepers pasted into the tracks that's the only effective inoculation." (56)

The readers come to know through this conversation that they have created an accident and put lives of many in danger because of an accident. At the same time the reason that they are giving is unbelievable. They said that it was rath of dust which caused an accident. But the reality is different from what they say or write. Soyinka makes an indirect remark when a Professor talks of the Ministry of Health and the corruption prevails in it. It is a device through which the playwright has talked about the corruption and the link between the congregation of thugs and the officials of such departments. It is a sad thing for any country that the people or officers who are supposed to take care of the health and other things of the people of that nation are in the hands of anti social elements like Professor for money. No doubt money makes difference in today's world but at the same time if you work for money only, it becomes a kind of decay to the society or the nation in which you are living. The welfare of the people is more important than the money they get out of corruption. Samson and Kotonu walk forward and peer down a hole in the ground. This is an indication of what
they are doing with the dead bodies after an accident. Kotonu remarks:

"I didn't know that a hearse could be this size. The gates would never open wide enough to take it, not in our burial-ground." (57)

Samson asks him to be careful about it because all the sides of the planks are completely rotten and if anybody is careless, he may fall into it. After some time Samson again requests Kotonu to kill a dog and return to his job. He requests:

"Kill us a dog Kotonu, kill us a dog. Kill us a dog before the hungry god lies in wait and makes a substitute of me....Ogun likes it that's all that matters. It's his special meat. Just run over the damned dog and leave it there, I don't ask you to stop and scoop it up for your next dinner. Serve Ogun his tit-bit so the road won't look at us one day and say Ho ho you two boys you look juicy to me." (59)
Professor asks him to reopen the shop. He is ready to accept Kotonu in his business. Since he is not ready to drive lorry any longer, Professor’s job is a good job for him. He says that he doesn’t need to drive any longer on the road. Kotonu after much argument with him goes to the store and disappears behind the tarpaulin cover and begins to rearrange the junk. Samson sincerely requests him not to compel Kotonu to do such a job and asks him to give the handling of the store to someone else. But Professor starts making a comparison between Kotonu and sergeant Burma and says that Kotonu is a perfect man to take place of sergeant Burma. He says very clearly:

“...Any way you can not neglect the material necessities of life. How does he intend to live since he won't drive?” (61)

Professor is surprised to know that if Kotonu will not drive any longer and asks how he could live without a job. Samson very innocently replies that they have some savings and he is ready to spend that for Kotonu. Professor cunningly asks him about his savings but Samson clarifies that they have nothing much but a little saving.
Professor is not ready to take it for granted whatever spoken by Samson so he inquires in detail. Professor has a plan which itself proves his cunningness and it clearly indicates how he takes benefit of their ignorance. He says:

"I propose we set up a syndicate, calculate the assets, decide on a policy. As a special concession I will permit you to come in as equal partners with me. I hold half the partnership. You and your friend can have the other half. Fifty-fifty all the way." (62-63)

But Samson seems to understand Professor's cunning and he frankly asks about the money that he saved for both Kotonu and he himself. He adds:

"...I always thought you were not as mad as people thought." (63)

Hearing all these things Professor gets angry on him and threatens him with rebuking words. Even this time also he pretends to be something different from what he is. Samson bravely replies in the following manner:
"Well, you always misled a man. I thought your assets were in there." (63)

He again gets angrier and sweeps the pouch of coins off the table with a stick. All the coins scattered all over the floor and many of them roll out scattering. Samson starts chasing and gathering the coins from the floor. He argues that he is not able to understand his character and therefore he questions about the currency that Professor has in his mind. Kotonu picks up one coin and gives it to his friend Samson. Samson calls Professor a 'cockroach' and 'termite' and he asks Kotonu to keep his shoes outside as he has some doubts in them. Samson continues his search and Kotonu goes back to his work. Salubi enters with a parcel and Professor takes it from him. Samson proves here very intelligent, having presence of mind.

Samson asks privately about his connection with the church fund and the sources of his private income. Professor gives a long speech in which hejustifies his action and the deeds. At this moment he starts telling something about himself. But this talk reveals many hidden aspects of the African voice. He says:
“Like your friend, I wished to retire into business. My pension would have sufficed but since I was sacked for blasphemy I was due for none. I forget now how much it was, it is so difficult to remember the details. Do you know this is the only house of rest from which you can see into the alter? But still, the business of the church funds addles my thoughts.” (69)

Professor accepts that whatever has happened has disturbed him and due to the church fund issue he had to quit the church and its activities. He even warns Samson that he must be careful because they weave a strong spell over human eyes. Samson agrees with it but Professor is eager to know what Samson knows about the church fund or what the others say about it. So he asks him to tell something about it if he is aware of it. He asks Samson to keep watch on the church. He says:

“.....Be like a bat.
Keep your ears stuck to the vestry door. If I lose the station All is lost. I must watch what they do. I must see what goes
On at the altar, at the pulpit. And you watch with me....
See that no changes are made without my permission.” (70)
It is believed that one who is a gangster of all the criminals has to keep a watch on his own companions and subordinates because a betrayal from any subordinate may cause a major loss to the gangster. The same thing can be said about Professor who supports illegally all the drivers, touts and jobless fellows but at the same time he keeps a watch on their activities so that none can betray him. Yet the betrayal takes place. Soyinka mentions without fail that the police department of Nigeria is not an exception to the general fact that every walk of Nigerian life witnesses some kind of corruption and hollowness. The presence of Particular Joe in the play is a proof of it. Particular Joe is a policeman whose prime duty is to resist crime and arrest a criminal but he himself allows Professor to continue his illegal activities. The conversation between the two is worth noting:

"Professor: How is the criminal world my friend?
Particular Joe: More lucrative every day Professor." (75)

This suggests because of the increase in the crimes the job of a policeman has become even more lucrative-beneficial. Professor's assurance to him that no other person will have the credit of
arresting him except Particular Joe indicates the strong bond existing between the criminal and the police department in Nigeria.

The drivers’ festival which we find in the play is one more example of the African voice in the play. The drivers wear masks and celebrate the festival by dancing fully drunk. Professor knows that such a situation may invite some trouble for him because a person who is drunk may reveal any secret of Professor’s illegal activities. Professor wants them to be quiet and they are beyond control. Samson and Salubi both are so much afraid of the dance of the drivers that they hide themselves for a while. Say-Tokyo-Kid goes beyond his own control and stabs Professor on his back. Professor though injured, has courage enough to lift Say-Tokyo-Kid and smash him on the bench. Say-Tokyo-Kid is also injured because of it. The dance of the drivers in this manner goes out of control and becomes a dance of death. It becomes a violent affair in which Professor is killed by a person of that group whom he made criminals for his own gain. This is how the ending of The Road justifies the idiom “As if shall you sow, so shall you reap”. Professor’s death at the end of the play and the dance of the drivers leave so many things for the spectators to think and realise on their own. The first hint which it passes is that one who creates criminals for his own benefit finally
becomes a victim of the same criminals. It is just like a spider getting itself entangled in the web prepared by it. Whenever our hopes are based on falsehood and not backed with our genuine support, those hopes are bound to be destroyed. One more fact conveyed through the ending of *The Road* is that the death of a criminal does not necessarily mean the end of criminal activities. On the contrary death of a criminal keeps many aspects of the world of crime in dark for ever. So in a way it is more harmful to a nation that wants to abolish crime. Crime can never be abolished by abolishing the criminals. Professor's death at the end of the play is Soyinka’s hint to convey to his nation that it leaves many things unsaid, unexplained and undiscovered. Such an event leads the country to a more dangerous situation. The ending of *The Road* bears the note of African voice in expressing helplessness, lawlessness and corruption in the public life of Nigeria.

The protagonist of this play Professor uses frequently the word "word" on several occasions which demands a special attention of the readers and spectators. It is not an unconscious and meaningless habit with which Professor is shown in the present play. There is a special purpose and design behind the frequent use of the word in the play. It has the Biblical overtone in it and at the same time it displays the power of words. The old testament of the Holy
Bible opens with the glory of words in a sense that it proves word existed prior to the existence of the universe. Even the Hindu myth and philosophy have accepted and proved the power of word. It is with the word that relationship begins and also ends. Soyinka pays his respect and reverence to word by making Professor speak that word again and again. Professor uses it again and again to convey it to his subordinates that they should understand the significance of words – spoken or written as he himself has understood. He wants to make them aware of its importance and unnecessary excessive use of it and so he refers to it again and again.

There are certain examples scattered in the play itself and they prove how every thing begins with words and ends with words. The exchange of words between Salubi and Samson reflect upon the personality of Professor and also upon the personality of an average illiterate native African.

The quarrel between the Bishop and Professor when he was a man of church also displays the significance of words. Word became a tool for them to continue their rift and quarrel. At the same time it became a mean for punishment. The frequent use of the word 'Jesus' by the priest as a man of church was just his use of word as a mean to punish Professor. It is worth noting in the play that Professor does not speak much as other character because he
knows the worth of words. Other characters have nothing to spend and so they depend upon word only.

Thus from the very beginning of the play and particularly from Salubi's statement to marry ten wives and his inability to count beyond ten tell a lot about how an average Nigerian would like to pass his life in the same traditional way. In fact the very thinking of an average Nigerian is so much limited, traditional and conventional that he or she cannot imagine the crossing of that boundary. Salubi does not know that he can open a school or a health centre or a centre for the social upliftment if he were a millionaire. His traditional thinking has given him an idea that he can do only one act with his wealth and that is the act of marrying ten wives.

Salubi's inefficiency to count after ten is a sign of his backwardness in the age of advanced calculation. The post modern culture is the culture of calculations and competence and calculation pays a lot in that competence. Salubi seems to be far behind in this main stream of calculation and competence. The opening scene is the best proof of Soyinka's insight in the dramatic art. He proves his efficiency in conveying the tragic truth of Nigeria in the most humorous way. Of course it demands alertness and intelligence on the part of the spectators and readers to realize that a tragic tone is operating below the surface of humour.
Some more tragic truths of the Nigerian public administration and people in general are highlighted through the characters of Samson and Salubi. Blind beliefs and superstition have played a vital role in the backwardness of the tribal lot. Ogun is the God of roads for Nigerians and the drivers consider it essential to offer a sacrifice to Ogun by crushing a dog beneath the wheel of their vehicle. Kotonu narrowly escaping from the accident has been interpreted by his friends as a warning of Ogun to him to offer a sacrifice. Kotonu's sensibility does not allow him to kill even a mongrel beneath his vehicle and so he has to remain prepared for his death if he wants to drive. Ogun's love for the meat of dog is an evidence of the Nigerian belief focused in the play by Soyinka.

In fact the play provides one remarkable view that poor public administration leads always to corruption and malpractices among the people. Had Salubi obtained a driving license officially, he would not have gone to professor for a fake license. Had Samson and Kotonu received some education, they would not have become the victims of blind faith. Had people like Murano and Sergeant Burma received some respectable work for their livelihood, they would not have become a part of Professor's machinery for causing accidents and looting people. It is an improper attention towards the people by the Nigerian Government which led to such a situation.
A close reading of the play and a minute observation of the characters like Murano, Sergeant Burma, Samson, Salubi and Kotonu prove that they have not chosen malpractices for their livelihood voluntarily. It is a compulsion on them because they are the victims of the poor administrative machinery of Nigeria. If Professor's attitude to all other characters is examined it would be visible that he is basically a wicked person driving others to the same wickedness. He knows all the tricks of his trade — how to remain clean and continue his dirty business. The past of his life as referred to by Samson and Salubi indicates that the ingredients of wickedness were in him right from the beginning. Those ingredients became refined and polished in course of time. His rivalry with the landlord of the village, his role as a priest and his acute desire to teach a lesson to that landlord for whom he uses the name of Christ again and again prove that he was more given to the lower interests and attitudes of life. The superficial reading of the play makes one feel that it is a play with comic elements in it. But there is a sad tone operating behind those comic elements. The absence of a female character does not affect either the appeal or interest in the play. The spectator's interest remains sustained all through the play, and he does not even feel that there is no female character in the play. It displays Soyinka's skill and insight in the art of writing a drama.