Chapter 4

The Trials of Brother Jero

&

Jero's Metamorphosis: Suffering Spirituality
The central problem that Soyinka discusses in both the plays *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero’s Metamorphosis: Suffering Spirituality* is that of the survival of the tribal faith of Africa. Africa is originally the land of tribal with their native religion, faith and way of life. But that faced a disastrous challenge during the days of the colonisation in Africa. It was to promote colonisation that the British Empire introduced and established Christian missionaries in Africa. For the colonisers Christian missionaries was less a path of spirituality and more modus operandi to advance politically in the African region. The colonisers used it as a tool to cure and convince the native tribal that though outsiders, they had genuine sympathy for the native tribal. The innocent tribal of Africa failed to realise the political design behind the establishment and advancement of the Christian missionary. When they realised it, it was too late for them. The continent was captured politically by the white man when the native tribal realised how they had been trapped in the name of religion.
Poor and struggling native Africans came in this trap of white man because they were offered free food and medicine, education and social status. This easily available benefit played a vital role in preparing a way for the white man to have his political power in Africa.

The local situation of Africa seems to be equally responsible for the entry of the white man and remaining successful in tempting the native Africans. The social hierarchy even among the tribal of Africa made the white man's job easy and smooth going. Those tribal, who were considered to be backward, socially of low cadre, were not allowed to live with other tribal in the villages. They were compelled to have their huts in the forest and live the life of extreme struggle. They were even not allowed to enter the holy places of the upper caste tribes. This was the first lot to be captured by the white man when the Christian missionaries were first established. The gradual progress and development of the lot of backward tribal were noticed by the tribes of higher status. That finally led them also to accept Christian faith. The long period of colonisation in Africa made the roots of Christianity very powerful and this is how it proved to be the first challenge for the tribal faith.

The political decolonisation in the continent of Africa has not brought any remarkable change in the condition of religiosity in Africa. In fact
in the second half of the twentieth century the tribal faith of the African continent has been facing one more challenge in the form of growth and popularity of Islam. The African tribal faith has been struggling at two fronts for its survival. Originally it had to survive against Christianity only while the challenge of Islam has opened one more front of struggle for its survival.

The African continent today witnesses multiplicity in religion and tribal faiths. All these religions and tribal faiths face one challenge and that is the challenge of the growth of materialism. That exactly is the heart of both the plays.

One can say in general that the traditional faith in Africa has to fight a battle at three fronts. The first front is that of the strife among the followers of different tribal faiths. That has weakened Africa as a continent and identity. The second front is of the growing popularity of Christianity and Islam in Africa. Both these religions work like two counter forces and create a dilemma for a tribal African. The third front, though invisible but very challenging is the front of materialism. Soyinka in both these plays presence how religion and moral dignity of church have declined because of expanding materialism.

The first scene of the play starts with a speech of Jeroboam, a prophet by profession. His hair is thick and high but well combed. He addressed to the audience:
"I am a prophet. A prophet by birth and by inclination". (145)

He talks of prophets and their actions and adds that due to his thick and long hair at the time of birth, his parents thought that he was born a natural prophet. He is interested in trade and commerce. Prophecy was made the matter of trade and commerce by Jeroboam and many other prophets like him. The beach on which they practiced divinity became over populated with prophets and divinity became a profession, an object of ridicule. He also says that some of them gained their present beaches by getting women penitents to shake their bosoms in spiritual ecstasy. This prejudiced the councillors who come to divide the land of beach among them. It becomes very important for the town council to come to the beach and settle the territorial warfare of prophets permanently. Jeroboam now talks about himself and says that his master who brought him up in a prophetic ways staked his claim and the authority granted him a piece of land. He accepts that he helped his master in acquiring the land but he registered that piece of land on his own name. He says:
"What my old master did not realise was that I was really helping myself". (145)

But according to him the beach is now hardly worth. The worshippers are now no more and they have to fight for the new convert. The people are accepting the modern ways and the television is also the reason that keeps the wealthier persons at home. They stay at home and watch television. He clarifies how his old master's curse has come true. Meanwhile his old master enters shouting. He says:

"Ungrateful wretch! Is this how you repay the long years of training I have given you? To drive me, your old tutor, off my piece of land...telling me I have lived beyond my time. Ha! May you be rewarded in the same manner. May the wheel come right round and find you just as helpless as you make me now..." (146)

Jeroboam makes it clear and says that his master is fool enough because when he acquires the land his old master thinks that he is doing everything for him. His master curses him for whatever wrong he has done for him. He says:
"Ingrate! Monster! I curse you with the curse of the Daughters of Discord. May they be your downfall. May the daughter of Eve bring ruin down on your head!" (146)

He accepts that it is a very cheap curse because he knew very well that he had one weakness and that weakness is a woman. He says it is not his fault but because he is rather good-looking and that always attracts the woman. The first scene ends with his confession.

The second scene starts early in the morning. Chume and Amope come to the stage. The action is nearly a hut. A cycle bell is heard ringing. Amope asks Chume to stop the cycle. She is selling women's household stool. There is a small injury at her leg and Chume asks to take her back in the morning. But Amope replies sarcastically:

"I can look after myself. I've always done, and looked after you too..." (148)

This remark of Amope indicates many things. Amope is a woman merchant and she is earning for the family. At the same time she is
looking after not only herself but also after her husband. She is able to handle everything and she has that capacity to manage everything. A reference to shortage of drinking water at the market place is much more a problem. Amope is shown very witty. She is reminded of a mat which she uses to sleep. She says:

“You’ve forgotten the mat. I know it’s not much, but I would like something to sleep on. There are women who sleep on beds of course, but I am not complaining. They are just lucky with their husbands and we can’t all be lucky I suppose”. (149)

The poor and needy people of Africa know it well that they don’t have good present but at the same time they know it well how to struggle with the situation. Amope knows it well that she is a poor woman and it is difficult for her and for husband to meet with the two ends of their life. At the same time she says she is not complaining about her situation which indicates that she has that courage to struggle with the situation. These words of Amope are the existing reality and in a sense African voice spoken by her and presented by the dramatist Soyinka. She refers to some of Chume’s friends who have become ministers and have car to drive. Now this reference is not in the sense of the poverty of the husband and wife. She refers it
in the sense of wrong means of ways and that is how they got their ministerial post. Chume is a straightforward Chief Messenger in the local government office. Amope says:

"Am I go to my grave as the wife of a Chief Messenger?" (150)

These words of Amope indicate Chume to be very practical in his life. This means he must not be a straightforward man but he must use some ways through which they become at least not poor through out their life. This indirect indication of corruption is a part of African life.

Jeroboam appears on the stage. He tries to see Amope and she immediately comes to know about it. She asks for money. She says:

"One pound, Eight shilling and nine pence for three months. And he calls himself a man of God". (150)

The sentence of Amope itself is an African voice. Jeroboam has not given money for the cape that he bought from her before three months. Now he is trying to hide himself from her because he does not want to give money for that cape. At the same time he is a prophet and he is preaching morality to the people. It is his humble
duty to keep people morally strong. But he himself is not ready to put that morality into practice in his own life. He is preaching everybody but does not try to put that into practice for himself. Meanwhile a trader comes with a smoked fish. Amope exchanges few words with her. During this time Jeroboam escapes through the window and she cries:

"Help! Thief! Thief! You bearded rogue. Call yourself a prophet? But you will find it easier to get out that to get in...” (151)

This is once again an abuse to a prophet. Amope knows him well and therefore her words are the words of the African people. It is a matter of shame for a prophet to escape from a lady for the monetary matter. We also feel that the curse of his old master becomes true. This is his spiritual fall and after this fall he is not suppose to call himself a priest. But he is not in a mood to reform him. It is also a shocking through his behaviour that he indulges more and more in such matters after realising the matter. When Amope completes her speech the sound of ‘gangan’ (152) is heard and a boy enters carrying a drum. Amope talks to him and asked to stop. But the drummer boy does not follow her instruction and starts beating drum more loudly. The second scene ends here.
The third scene starts at the beach. Jeroboam is standing as he was last seen when he made his escape – white flowing gown and a very fine velvet cape. He was to prove his supremacy in the field of spirituality on the basis of his dress and appearance. The reason behind his buying that cap is to differentiate him from the rest of the prophets. He believes that his cap would enable him to draw more pilgrims – customers and so he bought it from Amope. His way of thinking proves not only his hollow spiritualities but also the changed pattern of thinking in the new era, giving more importance to the exterior. He is still surprised how Amope has found his house. When he bought that cape from Amope, she has not asked a single question. His words are enough as a guarantee of payment. He makes it clear why he bought this cape. He says:

"...It becomes important to stand out to be distinctive. I have set my heart a particular name. They will look at my velvet cape and they will think of my goodness. Inevitably they must begin to call me ... the velvet-hearted Jeroboam". (153)

This hypocrisy and foul show is not a part of a prophet. He wants to be different from the other prophets not by religious deeds but by
outer appearance. It is very important for a prophet to maintain inner as well as outer appearance as per Christianity. But that does not mean outer appearance only is enough to show that he is a good prophet. He firmly believes that fashionable appearance attracts the people and by that he will manage his dignity. These are not the features of a good prophet. It is a tragedy of Africa that an ignorant woman like Amope understands this thing but a person like Jeroboam is not able to understand. It is a tragedy of character that the person like Amope who knows the all ways of a prophet is not a prophet in real sense but a person like Jeroboam who does not know anything about his prophesies becomes a prophet.

Jeroboam makes Amope responsible for not maintaining dignity and for his escape. He says:

"But how does one maintain his dignity when the daughter of Eve forces him to leave his own house through a window". (153)

Jeroboam does not accept his fault for escaping from the window. He throws that blame on Amope. A prophet is supposed to purify the soul of a Christian when he/she does something wrong to the others. A prophet is a direct agent to God for the Christians. Now if a
prophet like Jeroboam’s soul is not purified, what about his religious deeds? I am reminded of a story. A lady took her child to a saint and asked the saint to prevent her son from eating jaggery. The saint asked the lady to come after a week. The lady goes to saint after a week and the saint told the child not to eat jaggery. The lady was surprised and asked the saint why he did not impart the same instruction to her child before a week. The saint very calmly replied that before a week he himself was eating jaggery and how can he asked others not to eat the thing that he is taking. He has to stop eating jaggery first if he would like to give sermon to the others and therefore he called them after a week. The lady understood the meaning and went away. But here the case is totally different. Jeroboam imposed those things to the others whom he does not want to follow.

Brother Jeroboam accepts that he has to run away from a window in order to hide himself from a lady. This is the first evidence that he feels that his old master’s curse become true. Woman is a means of downfall spiritually for him. This is also a tragedy that a man prophet has to run away from a woman for the materialistic things. This is the first spiritual fall of Brother Jero. He calls one pound eight shillings nine pence for the little cape a robbery.
A young girl passes through him. She is clothed only in her wrapper. According to Jeroboam she passes every morning to take her swim and for him it a very dirty kind of thing to see. We find here something different in his speaking and in his practice. Publicly he says that to see such a girl is a bad thing for him. But by his hearts of heart he is happy to see such scene. Once again it is a moral downfall of a prophet. Jeroboam is well aware that he is a prophet and it is not good to indulge in trivial thing like seeing a young girl in her wrapper clothe. At the same time by heart he is very lustful. So he cannot avoid seeing a young girl in her less costumes. He confesses that being a prophet waiting for worshippers is just like a shopkeeper waiting for the customers. He says:

"...I always get that feeling every morning that I am a shopkeeper waiting for customers." (153)

He opines that the worshippers who come regularly at their definite time are strange and dissatisfied people. He gives the reason for this and says:

"... I know they are dissatisfied
because I keep them dissatisfied. Once they are full, they won't come again." (153)

He gives the example of his disciple brother Chume. Chume wants to beat his wife but he as a prophet won't let him beat. If he permits him, he will become contented. As long as he doesn't beat his wife, he will come there feeling helpless and so there is no chance of rebelling against him. Once again the young girl crosses him. She has just had her bath and she looks different. Jeroboam looks at her and follows her all the way with his eyes. He says:

"Every morning, every day I witness this divine transformation". (154)

He knows well the weakness that he has and so he prays God and asks him to save him from that weakness. In fact it is only a show. Chume enters and he sees Jeroboam praying god. He asks Chume to pray with him. Jeroboam asks the reason why he has not gone to his work. He gives the reason of sickness. Jeroboam suggests him to commune silently for a while. This is also a very remarkable scene. He asks Chume to meditate for sometime. He joins him but in his mind he is thinking about Chume instead of prayer and making
conspiracy against Chume. Chume is too crude but then his crudeness is an advantage for Jeroboam. He has never claimed to be his equal. He asks permission to beat his wife. He again and again requests him to give him permission and he willingly denies the permission to beat Amope. Jeroboam claims that he has made Chume chief messenger from a very simple labourer.

After sometime a drummer boy enters running. He is followed by a woman. She has sash tightened around her waist, wrapper pulled so high up that half the length of her thigh is exposed. Jero asks drummer boy the reason why she is running behind him? The drummer boy replies that he is only drumming and she feels that he is abusing her father. This is the second incident when a prophet indulges into a trivial matter like this. Chume enters with a filled bottle of holy water. Jero says that he knows her well because she is his neighbour. Once again the drummer boy and the woman appear. Jero runs behind them. Chume shouts him to perform the ritual of blessing the water. But Jeroboam doesn't listen to him. Chume has to perform the ritual of blessing the water as Jero has gone out. Brother Jero appears after sometime with torn clothes and face bleeding. He asks Chume to tell all the people to leave him alone. He says:
"...Brother

Chume, kindly tell these friends to leave me. I must pray for
the soul of that sinful woman. I must say a personal prayer for
her." (161)

Once again it is a kind of hypocrisy shown by the playwright. Jero is
a prophet and after being beaten by a woman he is not ready to
accept his follies. Instead of finding his own fault he tries to pray
personally for the sinful soul of that woman. By doing such thing he
wants to hide his own weaknesses. He says:

"Who would have thought that she would dare lift her
hand against a prophet of God! "(161)

He has premonition in the morning that woman would be his
downfall today. He thought in terms of spiritual fall but he feels that it
is his physical fall also. Soyinka has rightly shown this incident to
focus on the condition of prophet and church. A prophet is supposed
to be a man of moral values in his life. But Soyinka’s prophet is a
man without all these things. Chume talks about his wife and
Jeroboam immediately comes to know that the woman for whom he
has to escape from the window is nobody else but Chume's wife. He confesses:

"...This morning alone I have been thrice in conflict with the Daughters of Discord. First there...no, never mind that. There is another who crosses my path everyday. Goes to swim just over there and then waits for me to be in the midst of my meditation before she swings her hips across here, flaunting her here nakedness before my eyes..." (162)

When Jeroboam comes to know that Amope is a wife of Chume, as he has been longing since long time to beat her, he immediately gives permission by saying:

"...After all, Christ himself was not averse to using the whip when occasion demanded it. ...Your wife seems such a wicked, wilful sinner; I think ... you must take her home tonight. And beat her". (162)

He again says:
"Remember, it must be done in your own house. Never show the discord within your family to the world. Take her home and beat her". (162)

This is once again shows the sinful nature of a prophet. Until he comes to know about Chume’s wife, he has not given permission to him to beat his wife. Whenever Chume has asked to beat, her he has said no on the name of God. And now when he comes to know that Amope is a wife to Chume and it is the same lady for whom he has to run away through the window he immediately gives the permission. Jeroboam wants to punish that lady but it is not possible to punish her directly. So when Chume asks the permission he gives the permission and in that way he fulfills his desire to punish Amope. This tendency of Jeroboam reflects the sign of a common man. Such are the incidents that happen with the common mass. But here we have a prophet like man and he indulges himself in such a trivial thing. So naturally this throws the light on the condition of Prophet and church in Africa and in this way it is an African voice. Chume is very happy with this permission and he is told that he is the successor of that church and it is the will of God. The third scene ends with this. We see one more thing in this conversation. The
disciples are befooled by their master prophets. It is also equally important that the disciples misguided because they do not have their own thinking. They are guided on the name of God. For such people the words of a prophet are the final verdict and they try to follow those words as much as possible.

The fourth scene is in continuation with the second scene. It starts with Chume and Amope. They are talking to each other. Amope is still complaining about him that he has not yet brought drinking water for her. Chume asks her to pack the things because he has to go home little earlier because he has some work at home. Amope calls him drunkard. But he claims that he has not touched it. She gives the reason why he has not yet touched the liquor. She says that he cannot afford to have it. She is not ready to leave the place until she got her money. She calls Jeroboam ‘Good-for-Nothing’ (164). And she gives the example of a sanitary inspector to Chume to suggest how people make money:

“A Sanitary Inspector is a better job anyway. You can make something of yourself one way or another. They all do. A little here and little there, call it bribery, if you like, but see where you have got even though you do not drink or
smoke or take bribes. He's got a motor bike, any way, who would want to offer cola to a Chief Messenger?" (164)

Chume is a very innocent fellow and he does not know the worldly affairs. But Amope being a wife of him never lost any chance to talk to him about wrong deeds. It shows that Chume is not in a mood to apply any misconception in his life. And he wants to live the life as he has. But the wife is not satisfied with this type of life. She always refers to him such cases of bribery. Chume asks her to shut her mouth but she doesn't follow him so he started beating his wife. They are near Jero's house but he does not try to save her. He grimaces only. She calls for police. Many people gathered there to see what has happened. She asks him again and again to kill her. During this time Amope refers to the money that she has to take from Jeroboam. Chume immediately understands the situation and he says:

"...I may beat my wife, eh?
For his own convenience. At his own convenience." (167)
The people who are gathered over there are surprised to know about the changing mood of Chume. Amope once again prepares to unpack her bundle. The scene ends here.

Once again the scene turns to the beach and there is nightfall. It starts with Jeroboam and the member of the Federal House. The member is interested in his ministerial post. Jeroboam tries to attract that member to him. In the beginning the member tries to avoid him. But Jeroboam gets success in drawing his attention to him. He gives him temptation of making him a minister of war with the grace of God. It is a position of power on land and brother Jeroboam asks him to have special recommendation for him. He says:

“...The lord knows best, but he has empowered his lieutenants on earth to intercede where necessary. We can reach him by fasting and by prayer...we can make recommendations...brother, are you of God or are you ranged among his enemies?” (169)

Meanwhile Chume enters agitated and talking to himself. He is very angry because he comes to know that Jeroboam has befooled both of them. He feels that whatever brother Jero has done for him is not because of sympathy for them but he has done it out of revengeful
nature. He has come to kill brother Jero with a dagger. Jeroboam flees away from that place leaving that member without any notice. The member who is standing and praying to God opens his eyes and surprised that brother Jero is not there. After sometime, Jero returns and explains to the member of the Federal House that he has gone to haven for a special recommendation for his ministerial post. He desires to send Chume in Asylum for a year. The play ends here but it leaves many questions unanswered.

The opening of *The Trials of Brother Jero* is more than enough to have a realisation that no difference has remained between religion and commerce. Religion is also commercialised and it has become a profession for a priest to get money. On the beach the prophets are more than pilgrims, each prophet having his own hut known as church. That is the reason why Brother Jero says:

“And I grew to love the trade. It used to be a very respectable one in those days. And competition was dignified. But in the last few years the beach has become fashionable, and the struggle for land has turned the profession into a thing of ridicule”. (145)
These words of Brother Jero make it clear that the decline in man's spiritual standard is a universal issue. Brother Jero considers himself a shopkeeper, his church a shop, his pilgrims are his customers and what he sells is divinity. This is how religion has become a trade in Africa.

The persons who occupy church on the beach and call themselves prophets demand a special attention. They have nothing in them to be called prophets. Some of them are criminals but having found this profession of divinity more beneficial and less risky have opted to be prophets. Many of them are history sitters. Brother Jero is no exception to it. How he occupied the land for his church from his master is more than enough to believe that he is no different from others. His master trusted him to do the paper work in order to occupy the land on his master's name but Jero occupied that land on his own name by betraying his master. The method employed by him to betray his master exposes one more loophole in the Nigerian public administration. He offered a bribe to the authority in the form of a performance by six dancing girls and got his work done. His master being a sincere, honest man felt insulted deceived by his disciple and cursed Jero that a woman would become the cause for his moral fall. Jero wants to avoid that curse but at the same time he cannot resist the temptation of looking at a girl and thinking about
her. He knows that woman is his weakness and that is why he has to be very careful.

The content of the play indicates that he finds his master's curse coming true at every stage of life. He finds it coming true not only at the level of moral fall but also physical fall. The first example of it is the way he gets absorbed in watching a woman who is going to take bath. When she returns after her bath, her wet cloths have become transparent which attracts Jero even more. He continues following her with his eyes with an exclamation what a divine transformation! The language which he uses is of divinity in order to pass a remark on her physical beauty. Here is a prophet who uses the language of spirituality for physical matters.

The second example of how his master's curse comes true is his involving himself in a small misunderstanding between a drummer boy and a woman. The woman believes that the drummer boy beats that drum to make fun of her father and so she wants to beat that boy. But at that very moment Jero jumps into this rift and gets beaten by that woman. He speaks:

“I had a premonition this morning that woman would be my downfall today. But I thought of it only in the spiritual sense.” (24)
In fact Jero is beaten by that woman because of his interfering in the matter of her quarrel with that boy. This is how the second moral fall of Jero is in the form of his being beaten by that woman.

Two more important characters of this play Chume and his wife Amope need to be referred to in order to expose the hollow spirituality of Brother Jero. Chume is a devotee and a follower of Jero having all his faith in Jero as a prophet. His wife Amope is a sales woman who deals in dress materials and different types of caps. Jero knows Chume but does not know that the cap that he bought at one pound twenty eight ceiling six pens from the lady is a wife to Chume. The reason why he purchased that cap adds one more point to his triviality as a prophet. He wants to look different from other prophets thinking that his cap would enable him to attract pilgrims. In fact in the field of spirituality outward appearance has no importance at all. It is the inner worth which is important. Our prophet Jero does not know this fact of spirituality. He buys that cap but does not pay the amount which creates doubt about his honesty. When Amope and Chume go to his place to get that money, he has to run away simply because of the arrival of a common woman, can have no moral standard or courage at all. His escape and running away display his inner hollowness. Initially he prevents Chume from beating his wife because he does not know the fact that Chume's
wife is the same lady because of whom he had to escape through the back door. When he comes to know about it, he allows Chume to beat his wife in the name of Jesus Christ. Not allowing to beat her and allowing to beat her — both the instructions are imparted to Chume by Jeroboam keeping in view his own personal gain, but in the name of God. The concluding scene of this play presents Chume with a realisation about Jero's inner attitudes. He comes to know that the person whom he considers a prophet is nothing more than a criminal. So he wants to punish this prophet and runs after him with a dagger to stab him. Once again Jero has to run away. The way he offers his explanation to that ambitious political leader for his sudden disappearance and appearance make one more thing clear that he is not free from the habit of telling lies just like other human beings. The explanation offered by him is no doubt a comic element in itself but it should be better interpreted as black humour. He mentions that he had gone to God personally to recommend that political leader's case so that that leader may get a good portfolio and position. He calls himself a prophet but he has not been able to free himself from the low instinct of revenge which could be found in any other layman. Since he is threatened by Chume, his desire is to see that Chume is admitted to an asylum. He wants to prove Chume a mad
fellow because of his jester of running after the prophet with a dagger in his hand.

Soyinka's achievement in the present play is the discussion of a serious issue in a light manner and yet nowhere the play degrades. The Nigerian church suffers from all evils and priest hood is a part of those evils. Those who have to correct others are themselves corrupt, criminals and need to be corrected. This naked truth comes to the surface when *The Trials of Brother Jero* ends. The character of Brother Jero reminds the reader of one sentence spoken by the poor parson – one of the pilgrims of Chaucer's "Prologue", "If gold rusts what shall iron do!" A prophet has to have a moral life, holy vision and noble thinking which we do not find in Jero. Soyinka would call this play a play of comic elements but it has tragic element to impart for the audience. The play creates definitely sympathy in viewers for the church of Nigeria where Christianity has become a sellable commodity and worshiper a customer.
Jero's Metamorphosis:

Jero's Metamorphosis is a sequel of The Trials of Brother Jero. It has the same characters, same locale and the same theme which we find in the earlier one. Soyinka has intelligently used the word 'Metamorphosis' in the title of this play. Metamorphosis means a change, a complete change which we find in a person or a thing. The present play portrays the character of Brother Jero in metamorphosis. The earlier play presented him as a prophet following the path of a ruffian for his practice. In Jero's metamorphosis Brother Jero comes before the audience as a sophisticated villain using sweet language for bitter actions. Jero practices the same profession but he has brought in sophistication in his profession. It is proved by the presence of a beautiful lady working as a typist cum personal assistance for him in his office. The presence of this lady reminds the spectators of that curse that Jero has undergone in the opening of the earlier play. His sophistication is to be found in the way he dictates notes and notices to his personal assistance Rebecca. His use of language, codes of conduct and dealing with others have undergone a complete metamorphosis. Soyinka presents this metamorphosis to highlight that unchanged within of Jero which has remained the same. The
central issue of the play is the decision taken by the government to remove all the churches from the beach to develop it into a place for tourists. The government has decided to establish one amphitheatre for public execution to attract the tourists. The government decides to remove all the churches of the prophets. This decision affects Jero's church and so he plays a lead role in the name of the survival of all the prophets.

The first scene of the play starts at brother Jero's office. It is a modest white washed room, quite comfortable. It is not just like a shack of *The Trials of Brother Jero*. It is well furnished. He now keeps a young and attractive personal secretary and he is dictating to her a letter. Sister Rebecca is his personal secretary and Jero dictates a letter in which he justifies his means. He says that unity and strength are necessary in the time of troubles. He refers to his fellow prophets and opines that most of them have their secret past and even secret present. He is afraid of his brother prophets as they are not trustworthy at all. They may give him a bad name. Rebecca tries to praise his master so she says:

"Nothing could give you a bad name, Brother Jero. You stand apart from the others. Nothing can tarnish your image, I know that." (175)
He refers one word “Bar Beach Show” (175) and it is a popular expression for the new fashion of public execution in Lagos, capital of Nigeria. He once again refers to his letter and dictates:

“...After much prayer for guidance,
I am inspired to invite you all to a meeting, where we shall all, as equals before God and servants of his will deliberate and find a way to stop this threat to our vocation. In our own mutual interest ... I trust that all shepherds of the lord whose pastures are upon this sandy though arable beach will make in their duty to be present.” (176)

It makes clear to the readers that he has called a meeting of all the priests of the beach who have land on the beach because the authority has threatened them all to vanish from that place to build an amphitheatre. Jeroboam refers the rest of the priest as “cut-throats, dope-peddlers, smugglers, stolen goods receiver, ex-convicts” etc. (176) that shows what kind of people have taken command of the religion and the church in Africa. This is the real African voice that we see in this play. No doubt, Soyinka has referred them all in *The Trials of Brother Jero* but here Brother Jero
himself introduces them all. This indicates that a culprit knows the other culprits well. It is also a matter of sorrow for the Nigerian people that religion has become an instrument in the hands of such culprits in the Africa. So the question is why Soyinka has shown such people in this play? We can very easily say that these people have not joined religious activities because they are interested in religion and beneficial of the people of Africa but they joined it because this is the safest mode to save their lives from the authorities as their past is recorded in almost all the offices of the authority. Also they find this activity safer and secure than they were doing. Rebecca knows Jero well and therefore all the time praises her master and inspires him in his act. In one of the answers she says:

"All things are God's gift. It is not wrong to use them wisely". (177)

We also find a kind of hypocrisy in the words of Jeroboam:

"Jero: The voice of the people is the voice of God; did you know that sister Rebecca?"
Rebecca: I trust you. I follow wherever you lead me, Brother Jeroboam.

Jero: I shall lead you to satisfy, you and all who put their faith in me". (177)

When he says "who put their faith in me", it indicates that he is behaving as if he is something more than God. He would have said "God will lead you to satisfy, you and all who put their faith in Him".

He instructs her to distribute the letter to the fellow prophets and he himself starts preparing for the meeting. He fixes the meeting on the same night at eight o'clock and says that he does not want to waste the time. He knows well that he has to fight strongly for the fulfilment of his goal. When Sister Rebecca asks about his going, he replies:

"Preparations, sister preparations. If we must fight this battle well there is a certain ally we cannot do without. I must go and seek him" (178)

He goes out and slips round the side and starts observing Sister Rebecca through a window. Soyinka writes:
“The women’s condition obviously uplifts him for he moves off with even jauntier step and a light adjustment to his chasuble”. (178)

He meets a fellow poor prophet Ananaias. He asks Jero about what he is watching in his own house. He calls it ‘ spying’ (178) because he feels that since Jero is out of Church why he looks inside slipping round the side and observing through a window! This means he has some doubt in his mind and he tries to clarify his doubt. He asks:

“What are you up to now? Spying on your own little nest?” (178)

Ananaias is very clever and he puzzles Jero by asking questions. He refers to bailiffs and asks Jero indirectly about his crime. Jero is surprised to know this and so he replies that he is not giving shelter to criminals in his humble abode. Jero asks him to let him know what he knows about him. He also claims that bailiffs do not know his dwelling Ananaias speaks to him and says that bailiffs do not know his home because he is a clever man. He adds that even his worst enemies do not deny about this. Jeroboam asks him the reason why he has arrived there. Ananaias declared that the city council has taken a final decision to chuck them all out of the beach. He says:
"...They're going to chuck us out. Every last hypocritical son of the devil." (179)

Here Ananaias looks realist. He uses the word 'Every last hypocritical son of the devil' which refers to all the people like him. He accepts before Jero that they are all very hypocritical and then also they are prophets. A prophet is supposed to be out of all these hypocrisy. Jeroboam is not ready to believe this. But Ananaias accepts it very frankly. He refers this in two different ways. First, most of them are criminals in the past. But they have disguised themselves as prophets in the costumes of religion. Their past records are not suiting the qualities of a saint. Secondly, all human beings have faults and follies. We know it well that we are bundle of mistakes. But then also we pretend to be good and God like. This is hypocrisy. Therefore he refers the word 'hypocritical son of the devil.' (178) when he gives the news of the council's decision, Jeroboam considers it old news and says that it does not matter for the person like him. Jero adds that it concerns only with the persons who have no true vocation. Then Ananaias replies immediately "Like you" (179) at this time Jero argues with him and says:
“What are you going to do when you wake up one morning and find yourself face to face with a bulldozer?” (179)

Ananaias does not care for this argument so Jero once again puts another argument:

“Wrestling is one thing but a bulldozer is another. Not even you can wrestle with a bulldozer. And let me tell you, you are getting no younger.” (179)

Ananaias is not ready to believe this. So he argues:

“Am I a born fool? There’s a man drives those clumsy beasts isn’t there? I leave the machine alone and drag him out by the scruff of his neck. When I’ve dipped him in the sea a few times he will emerge a good Christian and learn how to leave holy prophets alone.” (179)

Jeroboam replies that it is not the right way to fight against the council’s decision. Ananaias recalls his past and reminds that he was a wrestler before he became a prophet and as a wrestler he had good name and fame. He says:
“I was doing quite well as a wrestler before I got the call and come into the service of the Lord...? (179)

Jeroboam argues that violence would not help them and therefore, he has called a meeting that night with all the prophets and he would discuss all these matters.

When Ananaias hears about the meeting called by Jeroboam, he doubts his intention. He says:

“Calling a meeting? You already have something up your sleeve or you wouldn’t be calling a meeting. Come on, let’s have it. Let’s be partners, you and me.” (180)

He threatens:

“...I will go in that room and tell whoever is there you were hiding and spying on them. I will shout and tell them you’re right here.” (180)

But Jeroboam is not hesitated with this. He reminds and bluffs him:
"...when the battle is over
and we have won our rights; I shall run you off this beach
without lifting a finger." (180)

Ananaias argues that he cannot do it. But jeroboam reminds him his
past history and refers” Kiri-Kiri prison” (180). When Ananaias hears
this, he is surprised to know that jeroboam knows everything about
him and his past life. He asks Jero:

“You’re the devil himself you are. How come
you know that? (180)

He tells him his past and Ananaias is surprised to know that
Jeroborn knows everything for which he believes that it is known
only to him. This incident is a proof most of them have criminal
records. After becoming a priest they have not left their old business.
Jero refers to this in the following manner:

“Reformed sinner? Hm. You didn’t by any chance thug for
a certain businessman just this last week did you? A Little trade
war over the monopoly of the whisky retail trade. Whisky
Ananaias, Whisky!” (180)
Ananaias is surprised to know how Jeroboam comes to know about the things which no body even knows. He surrenders completely to Jeroboam and promises to give all his support as he himself is threatened by Jeroboam. The conversation is very interesting:

"Jero: Tonight at the meeting I shall put forward certain plans....

Ananaias: I'll support you, Bother, depend on my vote any time. And if to there's anyone you'd prefer to take a walk outside on his head for making trouble...

This is for the first time in the play that Jeroboam justifies his means of calling a meeting. This also clarifies that he has some malice intention behind calling the meeting. He is well aware of his enemies and he knows well how to tackle with them. In this sense he differs from all the prophets on the beach. He knows well how to irritate the fellow priest for his own purpose. He has to pay a price to keep Ananaias away from the place of meeting. Ananaias is well aware that it is the proper time to take money from Jero as he himself has his own purpose to be solved with the help of fellow priest. Ananaias says:
“Brother Jero could you lend me a shilling or two till
the meeting? ..Things haven’t been going well lately.
No contribution, nothing at all. The congregations have shrunk
to nothing and even then as comes, all I get is the story of
their family troubles. They no longer pay tithes”. (181)

Here is a reference of diversion of the followers of religion in Africa.
Ananaias himself accepts that the people are not ready to give tithes
to them. The people who came to church are coming to complain of
their family members. This means the priests are also facing a crisis
of money and they have to tackle and listen to the things that are not
their function as a priest. It is also very clear from the reference that
religious place like church has become a part of problem solving
place of the domestic problems. The people come to the church to
find the solution of their domestic problem and not as a part of moral
and religious obligation. Brother Jero gives the reason for this fall
and makes greediness of the priests responsible for the same. He
argues that if every man of a hundred congregations paid a tithe of
everyone means several times what each man is earning. They
stopped giving money because the tithe is only for a man and it is
quite different from their thinking.
The chief executive officer of the Tourist Board of the city council enters with a clerk and a police woman. Ananaias hides himself and observes the activities. The executive is very angry because he is in charge of recovery of the land on the beach. The clerk suggests completing the work before Jero's arrival. The executive gets angry once again and tells his clerk that he is not in a mood to escape from a window if he returns suddenly. The clerk seems very intelligent so he says:

"Nothing of the sort, sir, nothing of the sort. I only say time is money, sir lets go in" (182)

The executive is surprised to know about presence of Rebecca in the church. He says:

"I do not believe young lady that we are on Christian name terms" (183)

Rebecca claims that the executive does not have faith in religion. She identifies herself as Jeroboam's keeper. The executive is not happy with this. The clerk explains to him the story how Brother Jeroboam gets her. She argues with him and says that the chief
executive officer is planning to seduce her. The executive threatens her of an inquiry for this change and says:

“What? You dare slander a senior government official of my department in my presence? I shall order an investigation and have you charged with ...” (183)

The clerk justifies her talk and says that the Chief Executive Officer has had his eye on her for a long time. He wouldn’t let her alone in the office, making her do overtime even if there was no work to do in the office. The executive asked her about the file that she has and orders to give it to him. He calls Jeroboam a fake prophet and a transparent charlatan. Rebecca says that it is the devil which speaks in him. It is the devil in him which makes him call prophet Jeroboam all these abusive words. The executive says:

“He deserves more than a bad name. He deserves a bad end and he will come to it yet” (184)

According to him all the prophets on the beach are devil and they have to be evicted. He says:
"They stand in the way of progress. They clutter up the beach and prevent decent men from coming here and paying to enjoy themselves. They are holding up a big tourist business. You know yourself how the land value has doubled since we started public executions on this beach" (185)

Rebecca is against his plan. She advocates him to give up his plan and let the prophet continue their task of turning men back to the path of goodness. She approaches executive as if to embrace him. She follows him. Both executive and his clerk made to run away from the window.

The second scene starts at Chume’s rented rooms. He is practicing on trumpet. Major Silva from Salvation Army enters. Chume is a corporal and Major Silva informs him that the captain could not come that day. He is happy to know that Chume has done some practice. Chume is of the opinion that Major Silva can not blow trumpet. He asks about Captain Winston. Major Silva replies that he was unable to come and he is desirous to teach him a lesson of music. Chume is dissatisfied with it and so he says that Captain Winston understands how to teach him. Silva hopes that he will try to teach as Captain Winston. Major tries to teach him a lesson but he is not ready to
listen to anything so what Silva says or suggests doing, he rejects directly without any reason. The dramatist has indirectly shown here how Silva is curious to teach Chume in spite of the fact that he is not well aware of any musical lesson. His insistences to teach him and Chume's rejection again and again suggest the type of people who have taken shelter under the name of religion. Major tries to teach him and insists him to learn from him but he himself is not sure about music and its lessons. Chume starts dancing in an angry mood before Silva and suddenly Jeroboam appears and starts dancing with Chume. Chume does not know about his arrival but slowly and gradually he becomes aware that other legs have joined his and he stops. He sees Brother Jeroboam dancing with him. He asks Brother Jeroboam to quit the place. He says:

"Commot here before I break your head" (192)

Jeroboam asks the reason of his anger. Here Chume uses his colloquial language and it is the success of this play that the use of such language glorifies the effect of the dialogue. A person, who does not know such language or is not able to understand the words, has the same perception as Jero or Chume has in the play:
“Jero: Break my head? What good will my broken head do you?

Chume: It will make compensation for all de ting I done suffer for your hand. I dey warn you now, commot.


Chume: You tell the police say I craze. Because God expose you and your Cunny-cunny and I shout am for the whole world....

Jero: Brother Chume...

Chume: I no be your brother, no call me your brother. De kin’ brother wey, you fit be na the brotherhood of Cain and Abel.

The brotherhood of Jacob and Esau. Eat my meat and tief my palrimony...

Jero: You do me great injustice, Brother Chume.

Chume: Na so! And de one you do me na justice? To lock man inside Lunatic asylum because you wan! Cover up your wayo.

You be Wayo man plain and simple. Wayo prophet.

[Warning up] Look, I dey warn you, commot here if you like your
Brother Jeroboam is surprised to his rude behaviour. Chume is reminded of his three months imprisonment. Jeroboam argues in such a way that we have to call him an intelligent rogue priest. He argues:

"But look round you brother Chume, look around you. You want to make this world a better place? Good! But to get Hanged in the process? And perhaps in public? For whom? For The sake of the people like Major Silva? People who don't even Understands the musical soul which the lord has given you? Are they worth it, Brother Chume? Oh! I was watching you For sometime you know – that man is an enemy believe me. An enemy. He does not understand you. I am sure they are all Like that...

A white man. He is not one of us. And you know yourself He's a hypocrite. All white men are hypocrites." (193)

This is all a psychological treatment through which Brother Jeroboam changes the mind of Brother Chume. The process of changing the mind is just like complete hypnotism. Jeroboam proves once again an intelligent priest among the other priests on the
beach. When he says "For Whom" (193) gives a sense of doubt in
the mind of Chume and that leads him to his original nature of
selfishness. Here he treats Brother Chume the way lago treats
Othello in Shakespeare's play "Othello". Othello is an innocent just
as Chume but lago but lago makes him doubtful by his speech that
his wife has some illicit relation with Cassio. No doubt in that play the
concept of story and the objectives are different from this play but
the mode of turning the mind of someone is the same. lago's aim is
to take revenge against Othello but in this play Brother Jeroboam
makes him suffer in order to make him follow throughout both the
plays. I am reminded Othello in general and lago in particular
because the speech and dialogues use of high flung words,
psychological treatment in both the case is alike. Soyinka has used
his psyche to show the black side of a religious people like Brother
Jeroboam in Africa. Shakespeare has shown human psychology in
order to project the question of doubt or suspicion. Shakespeare
wrote it before more than six hundred years and Soyinka wrote it in
the present age but the human mind presented in both the plays is
the same. This shows that human mind has not yet changed with the
advancement of time and science and technology. We have been
using the same logy to prove our arguments true. Brother Jeroboam
addresses Chume as 'Brother Chume' but he has never treated him
as his fellow brother in both the plays. He wants to keep Chume as his servant and not in a mood to rectify his soul in real sense.

Chume argues that Captain Winston has saved him from the lunatic asylum and therefore, he is thankful to him. But Jeroboam argues that he has not saved him out of humanity or Christianity but he saved him because he is in need of a trumpeter. He again argues that Captain Winston has heard him playing penny flute and so he saved him for his own sake. Chume argues that the day for the first time he met him it was the most unfortunate day in his life. Jeroboam gives a long speech in reply to convince him about what he wants to do. He tempts him with word 'promotion' (194) and at last Chume is convinced with his argument and he is excited by his speech and starts singing:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah; praise the lord, Hallelujah!" (195)

Jeroboam adds that the Salvation Army brothers are weaker in comparison to black blood of the bar beach brotherhood. He himself starts dancing with Brother Chume and then taps him on the shoulder. He says:
“Yes, of you. You have stayed too long among the
Opposition. Cheated. Humiliated. Scorned. It is time for your
Elevation. Pick up your trumpet and follow me. I shall explain
It all on our way to meet your – brother prophets……
Not any longer, Chume. From now you are a holy prophet
In your own light. No, no that is not the promotion. It is only
The first taste. Your full elevation takes place to night, before
The assembled brotherhood of the beach, You have gone
Through the fires of hell and emerged a strong servant of the
Lord. You are saved, redeemed, inspired, and re-dedicated.
From now on, a true brother, an equal; no longer a servant of
Mine. Kneel, Brother Chume.” (196)

The third scene starts at Jeroboam’s headquarters. The atmosphere
is of meeting between and among the brother prophets. Sister
Rebecca emerges carrying portrait from the office and hangs it
against the outer wall. Shadrach complains that they have not been
treated well as prophets. He complains that Jeroboam has called the
meeting and he himself is not present there to welcome all the
brother prophets. Rebecca argues to convince him that Jeroboam is
held up by the matter which concerns this very affair for which they
all have gathered. Isaac thought that Jeroboam would have thought about it long ago. Shadrach says:

"Much much too long, sister Rebecca. To make us wait is an act of indignity thrust upon us." (197)

Ananaias tries to make the situation balanced. Caleb suggests for the walkout from the meeting place as the parliamentarians. The word parliamentarians referred by Soyinka indicates the situation in the parliament of Africa. Most of the people have that image of the politicians that they walk out most frequently to compel others to believe what they believe. This very phrase of Caleb expresses the true African voice. He says:

"Let's all stage a dignified walkout. Nobody walks out these days. Not since the parliamentarians vanished." (197)

Though the members of the parliament are not there and there is no reference of their work but Caleb reminds us of their style. Isaac opines that those were the good days of their profession. It is the situation where Sister Rebecca feels it hard to maintain decorum among the priests.
Jeroboam and Brother Chume enters. The appearance of Jeroboam makes Sister Rebecca happy and she feels a kind of relief. At this moment also his speech impresses all. He regrets in the following words:

"Welcome, Brothers, welcome all of you and forgives me for arriving late at my own meeting..." (199)

He knows well how to tackle with these fellow prophets so he says:

"A-ah, I see empty mugs. No wonder our brothers are offended. Sister Rebecca, we require better hospitality...

Trust me, I know what I am doing sister. More drinks for our brothers. Fill up the cups sister Rebecca." (199)

Shadrach is very angry and he says that they had not arrived for wine and dines but they had gathered for a serious discussion. Jeroboam admits that he has come late and he accepts his fault. He addresses the crew in an impressive manner. He talks of the community of the prophets but indirectly he talks of his own purpose. He pulls out a sheaf of photographs from his bag and circulates them to the crowd. He then observes their reactions. Most of the
prophets, after hearing Jeroboam’s speech opine that this should not happen there. He shows Brother Matthew some minutes of the meeting of cabinet at which certain decisions were taken. Matthew reads on the paper word “Confidential” (201) and he says:

“It says Confidential on that paper. I don’t want any Government trouble.” (201)

In this response Brother Isaac comments:

“Very wise of you, Brother Matthew. Mustn’t risk your parole.” (201)

This remark of Isaac indicates many things. It brings to the notice of all that Brother Matthew is on parole. This means he himself has indulged into some punishable crime in the past and at present he is on parole. Once again it is a mystery that all of them know the past record of everybody. And then also they become prophets on the beach and in that way befool the people on the name of religion. It is also equally important that they all use this knowledge to ridicule each other and to make comment on them. This also shows how criminals and evil minded rogue people have taken charge of the
most sacred place of the earth – the religious church in Africa. They prefer this sacred business after a criminal offence because they know well that this is the place where they do not have any problem either from the government or from the rivals. Even the court of law and the officials of the government think twice before entering the holy place like this. Isaac reads the memorandum:

"...proposal to turn the Bar Beach in to a National Public Execution Amphitheatre." (201)

He asks Brother Jeroboam why he has not mentioned this in his speech. Jeroboam replies that he has kept it as a secret to surprise all of them. He once again asks Isaac to read the section titled slum clearance. He reads:

"Unfortunately the beach is at present cluttered up with Riff-raff of all sorts who dupe the citizenry and make the beach Unattractive to decent and respectable people.

...the so called prophets and evangelists. All these are not only to be immediately expelled but steps must be taken to ensure that they never at any time find their way back to the execution stadium." (201-202)
Jeroboam puts forward a proposal that one respectable religious denomination be licensed for the moral edification and spiritual enlistment of the people. This religious licensed body will say prayers before and after each execution. Shadrach gets angry after hearing about the Salvation Army. Jeroboam advises all of them to organize and band together. Shadrach raises certain doubts organizing band but Jeroboam opines that all the problems can be overcome afterwards. Brother Matthew asks what he has in his mind. He says:

".... You
didn't call us together without some idea in your head". (202)

Brother Jeroboam replies tactfully that he has planned out something and he has started working on that plan. He says:

"...We form ONE body. Acquire a new image. Let the
Actuality of power see itself reflected in that image, reflected
And complimented. We shall prophesy with one voice, not as
Lone voices crying in the wilderness, but as the united oracle of
The spiritual profession." (203)
Jeroboam reminds them all about their old profession and warns that the rulers have come to know about it. Shadrach proposes to absorb all into his The Shadrach – Medrach – Abednego Apostolic Trinity, but it is rejected unanimously. He then talks about Brother Chume and says that he has left the enemy and with his knowledge which he has acquired working with the foreign body to which he once belonged. He asks all to recreate themselves in the required image. He orders Rebecca to bring out the banner. Isaac asks about who is to be head of this army. Jeroboam replies that the person who has the secret of the tourist board in his hands and who can guarantee that the new body does obtain nomination from the tourist board. Here his remarks are very witty in a sense that what ever condition he has put forward can be fulfilled by him only. He knows well that these brother prophets have not done anything after becoming a priest except to collect money and to think about the ways through which they may get money. It is remarkable in a sense that he has predecided to become the head priest of the newly formed Salvation Army. But he cannot propose his own name by his own self. So he puts the condition which nobody except him will fulfil. It is only he among the crew of the priest who knows everything about the Tourist Board because of Rebecca. So naturally his name comes first when the name of head priest will be selected. Ananaias is the
first to support Jeroboam as he was threatened before the meeting by Jero to support him to his proposal at the time of meeting. He accepts by saying that he is ready for any kind of duty. Jeroboam calls him Sergeant – Major and asks him to find a uniform that fits him from the room. The second is Isaac who is given the designation of Major. Matthew is given the position of Captain. Shadrach is the only person who does not agree with this. He says:

"The uniform will not change you. You will still be the same bar beach riff-raff no matter what you wear. Nobody will give you a monopoly." (206)

Caleb strongly opposes this view and says that he has not yet known anything about Brother Jeroboam. He warns that this syndicate will be closed. It is meant for the foundation members only. Jero asks him if he wants to meet the chief executive. Shadrach knows well that the officer whom Jeroboam refers is nobody else but Eviction Officer. The executive officer who has arrived is in danger. He says:

"Yes, I foolishly risked my life coming without Protection to this haunt of cut – throats." (208)
He gives him two sheets of paper from the file. He asks him to sign the papers. Sadrach speaks in between and the executive gets angry. Jeroboam threatens him and says:

“Our image also conforms on all levels. We are not fanatics. Our symbol is blood. It washes all scenes away. All sins, Mr. Tourist Board.” (210)

In the end the executive departs and Brother Jeroboam calls Chume and addresses him as Brigadier Joshua and takes salute of the army. He then seats himself at the table and pulls towards him a file or two as if to start work. He is very happy for this victory and it is seen on his face. At last he looks at the framed photo, takes it down and places it face towards the wall and speaks:

“After all, it is the fashion these days to be a desk general.” (213)

Thus from the beginning with his notice to all the prophets for a meeting to decide what kind of protest should be framed against the policy of the government to the end of the play he remains dominated. This confrontation between the Government and the prophets indicates that money is at the centre. The Government wants to raise the income and for that purpose decides to develop
that beach into a site for tourist. The prophets care for their own income and so they protest against the Government policy. The prophets know their history well that they all have the criminal record and except Chume there is nothing with which they can survive. The metamorphosis in the character of Brother Jero is to be found in his quest for the third alternative. It is to find out that alternative that he calls the meeting. We find this metamorphosis not only in the character of Brother Jero but also in the character of Mr. Chume who was put into asylum at the end of earlier work because of his attempt to kill Jero. The same Chume is now released from that asylum and joined the bend of Brother Jero. It indicates that Chume dances as per the tunes of Brother Jero.

The meeting session presented by Soyinka is one of the metamorphoses in Jero's character. He knows that he should go late to prove his importance and busy schedule. Other prophets who have assembled pass their time in confronting one another, making it difficult for Rebecca to control them. Jero's arrival, his speech and particularly his talking about brotherhood among all the prophets is a sign of complete metamorphosis in his personality. He believes that getting late to any function is a sign of dignity. This technique of political diplomats is practiced by Jero as a polished good for nothing fellow. The address delivered by him is a proof of his
mastery over the art of convincing others. He knows how to tame and bring under his influence the most violent and opponent. The ways he convinces other prophets and tames Chume to be a part of his band are two more evidences of brother Jero as a person with a metamorphosis. His efficiency and skill to tame a violent fellow like Ananaias is the best available proof in the play that he is now no more a crude unpolished prophet but a refined sophisticated more a crude unpolished prophet but a refined personality and snobbish fellow who can with his refined personality bring any person – even his opponent under his influence.

Brother Jero remains successful in getting his own objective fulfilled. All the prophets agree that there should be at least one church near amphitheatre for the soul of the dying person and brother Jero should be the head priest to perform the rituals. Here the remarkable achievement of Brother Jero is that he gets his own purpose served with the help of other prophets who are not going to get any benefit by supporting Brother Jero. The character of Brother Jero as portrayed in this play is a sign of sophisticated wickedness and snobbish clergy to be found in Nigeria in special and Africa in general. Soyinka calls both these plays comedies but the humour which we find in both the plays is known as black humour. There is a tone of sarcasm, sad reality and helplessness appealing to the
spectators and audience. That tone continues operating behind the so-called comic situation in both the plays.

Both the plays when we read in sequence give an impression that a genuine prophet has no place in any religion in the twentieth century. A fake prophet gets everything with his sophisticated cunning while a genuine prophet remains obscure and unknown.

It should be noted here that the metamorphosis which we find in him is exterior and not interior. Inwardly he is the same self-centred wicked and dangerous man who deceived Amope, Chume and the political leader. Only his exterior has undergone a change to practice greater cunning for his personal benefit. All the prophets decide to press a demand for one church on the beach to conduct the rituals for the soul of the dying man in the amphitheatre. Jero will be playing the chief priest for that church and thus securing his position as well as his income. His sophistication is to be found in his art of convincing others to support him. His cunning is to be found in securing his own position without bothering for the rest of his community. His metamorphosis has taught him to implement all techniques for his personal gain, known in the Indian political science as "Sham, Dam Dand Bhed, and Niti". Whenever any prophet opposes his views, he knows how to shut his mouth. He has several techniques with him for that purpose and one of them is the
past record of all the prophets. He can control anybody by revealing the past of that prophet and thus gets his work done. When prophets like Ananaias who was a wrestler and others oppose him, he controls them using the same technique. Even Chume has lost that vigor and self respect which the readers notice in the early play. Jero’s metamorphosis has enabled him to play the master for his own gain in the name of welfare for all prophets. This fact is presented by Soyinka in *Jero’s metamorphosis*.

The change which is to be noticed in the personality of Brother Jero is indicative of the changing times. A primitive man’s rash nature was visible, more physical and temporary. It was never practiced by him for long-term benefits. But the case is different with modern man’s entire sophisticated exterior and wickedness interior. Brother Jero belongs to that category in *Jero’s Metamorphosis*. He has become aware of the ugly strategy that rash violence and rough behaviour do not pay so much as polished behaviour with calculative mind. He implements it and becomes the chief priest of the church – government approved church near amphitheatre to conduct the rituals for a hanged person. *Jero’s Metamorphosis* though treated as a comedy by the playwright, has the capacity to present to the world the condition of shattered religion and church in Nigeria. The way Nigeria faces
social crisis, cultural crisis and crisis in education, religion is no exception to it. Both the plays as one unit reflect that church in Nigeria demands an unrest attention which it would remain just a commercial complex.