

INTERROGATING POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN DIRAN ADEMIJU-BEPO'S *NO MORE THE TAMING HAWKS* AND OJO BAKARE'S *ROGBODIYAN*

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Abstract

Corruption has taken center stage in contemporary African politics, permeating political, economic, religious, and social spheres. This paper examines how Diran Ademiju-Bepo's *No More the Taming Hawk* and Ojo Bakare's *Rogbodiyan* satirize political, social, and religious corruption. It critically evaluates the intersections of systemic corruption, dictatorship, and moral decadence, with a specific focus on the ethical erosion of the community—an area that remains underrepresented in current scholarship. Against this background, the paper interrogates the depiction of political power and corruption in both plays, identifying the dramaturgical elements used to lay bare the oppressive attitudes of public officials and the gullibility of the ruled. Utilizing Vilfredo Pareto's Political Elite Theory as its theoretical framework, the study argues that unscrupulous political elites pursue power with an egocentrism devoid of democratic ideals. Consequently, the paper engages in a contextual reading of both texts, positioning them as a moral compass to navigate contemporary societal anomie. Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative research design centered on textual and critical analysis. The analysis demonstrates that both plays serve as artistic and political calls to action, urging citizens to embrace their responsibilities as stakeholders in the democratic process to forge a unified front for national renewal. Ultimately, this textual analysis underscores the utility of Nigerian theatre as a mirror through which society can confront its endemic vices and curb the corrupt activities of public officials. The paper concludes that drama is a potent instrument for dismantling institutionalized corruption, and recommends its systemic integration into public discourse to foster moral rectitude, raise political awareness, and drive collective action toward a more transparent and ethical society.

Keywords: Corruption, Democracy, Nigerian Society, Political Corruption, Social Justice

Introduction

Corruption is broadly defined as the violation of established rules for personal gain or profit, typically operationalized to secure wealth or power through illicit means at the public expense. It encompasses behaviors such as bribery—the use of rewards to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust; nepotism—the bestowal of patronage based on ascriptive relationships rather than objective merit; and misappropriation—the illegal diversion of public resources for private utility. As a pervasive social stigma, corruption has compromised every facet of contemporary society. It functions as an endemic cankerworm within governance frameworks, cutting across faiths, religious denominations, and political systems.

Corruption not only impedes macroeconomic growth but also exacerbates structural inequalities and inhibits the state's capacity to address citizens' core needs. It distorts economic and social development by fostering toxic competition and sharp practices within the public service. Consequently, it widens the gap between the wealthy and the impoverished, deepens systemic poverty as a select elite amasses wealth at the expense of the majority, and triggers what Udoinwang and Amonyeze refer to as "social hysteria" along with the structural complexities born of institutional collapse (2022: 185).

In Nigeria, for instance, systemic corruption operates hierarchically from the macro-governmental level down to the grassroots, causing society to navigate a landscape where corrupt practices have been normalized into an acceptable cultural paradigm. Under the weight of this corruption, citizens are systemically disenfranchised from acquiring qualitative education, political agency, or civic virtue. The Nigerian political space has been thoroughly permeated by corruption and greed across historical epochs, stretching from the pre-independence era through the post-independence dispensations to the current republic. It remains a pernicious affliction that erodes trust in public institutions, undermines democratic principles, and perpetuates structural injustices. Addressing this crisis, Akaenyi notes that:

"the trend in corrupt practices by public office holders, most especially in many parts of Africa and Nigeria as a nation, has seriously hampered the efforts of international bodies, the governmental and non-governmental agencies towards national development" (10).

Consequently, corruption has become so deeply embedded within societal life that the few individuals who maintain ethical sincerity are frequently viewed as absurd, old-fashioned stumbling blocks to progress, often facing systematic marginalization or elimination. It is particularly disheartening that ordinary citizens, who are structurally positioned to resist and dismantle these corrupt frameworks, instead look up to corrupt office holders as aspirational models, effectively becoming sheep without a shepherd. This manifestation of corruption affects all demographics—young and old, men and women alike—and thrives equally within democratic and dictatorial political models.

Political corruption in Nigeria can be traced from nuclear family socialization through various state parastatals up to peak leadership positions. The scale of this vice has grown to the extent that it is widely treated as a natural phenomenon or a popular subculture, leaving individuals who cannot defeat the system with little choice but to comply with it. Thus, the socio-political

landscape is riddled with a collapse of foundational values, transitional crises, electoral manipulations, and fragile, highly vulnerable political institutions. As a result, Nigeria is consistently ranked among the most corrupt nations globally. Undoubtedly, corruption operates as the root cause of the multifaceted political crises Nigeria faces today (Dayop, 2024: 129).

Nigerian political corruption manifests in various forms, including the abuse of office, fraudulent manipulation of data, nepotism, embezzlement, financial misappropriation, the "ghost worker" syndrome, the "10% kickback" syndrome, and a host of other malfeasances across both public and private domains. The detrimental impact of this corruption spans administrative, political, economic, and social spheres, severely hindering the overall development process. This extends directly into bureaucratic corruption—often branded as a "corruption of need"—which occurs at the administrative or implementation end of politics when individuals navigate public sectors through inappropriate procedures. Concurrently, electoral corruption includes the outright purchase of votes, which occasionally escalates to political violence, maiming, and assassination. Indeed, corruption remains an endemic contributor to poverty across most African states and is fundamentally responsible for a decadent socio-cultural system (Ogbeidi 3).

The problem of corruption, as an endemic phenomenon that has plagued societies across the world for centuries, continues to captivate scholars, creative writers, policymakers, and ethical citizens. In response to these pervasive political abuses and the gross misuse of power, contemporary dramatists utilize their creative works to signal that the current political system is overripe for structural re-evaluation. Prominent among this cohort of dramatists are Diran Ademiju-Bepo and Ojo Bakare, whose plays reveal urgent themes of rebellion, corruption, dictatorship, and moral decadence. They argue that a lackadaisical public attitude will ultimately plunge the country into a severe cultural and socio-political catastrophe. Based on this premise, this study analyzes the artistic strategies by which these authors magnify corrupt practices in their plays, while scrutinizing the broader implications for national development. The ultimate goal is to reassess the role of political actors in the nation's developmental crisis, offering a critical framework for curbing corruption in the pursuit of national progress and sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework: Political Elite Theory

This paper adopts Political Elite Theory as its foundational framework. This theory is uniquely suited to the study because it directly addresses the dynamics of political power and how it is exercised by those in authority, which constitutes the central focus of this investigation. Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923) is regarded as the foundational and most prominent theorist associated with this framework. The term "political elite" refers to a distinct, highly organized stratum of individuals characterized by exceptional performance, strategic positioning, and influence within the political arena. These individuals effectively monopolize power and maintain a high degree of group cohesion, which enables them to secure authority and govern the state.

Consequently, elite theory provides a structured set of ideas, principles, and assumptions regarding the concept, organization, and execution of power. It is a paradigm that inquires into and elucidates power relationships within modern societies. The theory postulates that a small,

cohesive group of individuals—typically situated within key economic, policy-planning, and military institutions of the state—is vested with overriding decision-making power (Ekundayo 1).

Concurrently, this minority group holds exceptional systemic advantages in politics and enjoys a near-total monopoly over state authority. From a critical perspective, political elites flourish across societies primarily because they possess unique organizational and strategic abilities that help them secure, perpetuate, and expand their rule. Ekundayo (2) outlines the core assumptions and structural assets of elite theory, noting that the framework:

Locates Ultimate Power in Institutional Keys: It stipulates that overriding and ultimate power resides among individuals who occupy commanding heights within the economic, political, and military institutions of any society.

Recognizes the Permanence of Power Interventions: It assumes an inherent human drive toward power accumulation. Through this lens, the theory explains why ruling elites rarely surrender authority willingly, choosing instead to hold onto power tenaciously through various manipulative or coercive means.

Identifies Stratified Capacities: It asserts that human endowments are inherently unequal, placing a strong emphasis on the psychological, social, and intellectual advantages leveraged by the elite. This reinforces the perceived and actual differences that separate the political elite from the non-elite mass.

Validates Structural Inequality: It emphasizes systemic stratification rather than egalitarianism, operating on the premise that elites are the highest accomplishees in their respective fields. Political elites, in particular, are viewed as possessing specialized personal resources, including advanced social skills, high intelligence, and an intense, focused interest in statecraft.

Dichotomizes the Social Order: It divides society into two distinct groups because politics is, fundamentally, a transactional relationship between rulers and the ruled, defined in terms of power dynamics. In any given society, it is this ruling class that produces the power elite—the power-wielding minority group (Azunwo 102-103).

Ultimately, Political Elite Theory underscores the structural dominance of the minority over the majority. It maintains that society is consistently governed by a highly organized, self-conscious political elite that will employ every available mechanism to secure, conserve, and perpetuate its authority over a mass population that remains largely unorganized, fragmented, and politically passive.

Literature Review

Corruption is a cankerworm that has thoroughly permeated the fabric of African societies. As a malignant global phenomenon, it continues to cripple sustainable development efforts in Nigeria, manifesting as misappropriation, bribery, embezzlement, tribalism, nepotism, money laundering, and the outright looting of the public treasury. In Nigeria, a significant portion of

elected and appointed public officials, alongside top bureaucrats, routinely exploit their positions of authority to engage in corrupt practices (Udoinwang and Amonyeye, 160).

Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, and despite a growing institutional embrace of democratic governance, the African continent has continuously grappled with systemic corruption alongside deep-seated challenges of insecurity, poverty, injustice, and underdevelopment. These crises span a wide spectrum of socio-political disruptions, including civil wars (Liberia and Sierra Leone), post-election violence (Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 and Nigeria in 2011), coups d'état (Mali and Guinea-Bissau in 2012), large-scale civil uprisings with associated migratory flows (Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya since 2011), xenophobic attacks (South Africa and Zambia), and the escalating threats of transnational crime, violent extremism, and terrorism across sub-Saharan regions (Yagboyaju and Akinola, 4).

Consequently, post-independence Nigerian politics has been defined by a definitive undercurrent of systemic corruption. Given the precarious state of contemporary Nigeria, it is understandable that the populace yearns for a structural savior, hoping that ethical restoration will come from political leaders who took sacred oaths to safeguard the electorate. Ultimately, however, the reverse occurs; leaders routinely succumb to corruption and other social vices in a desperate bid to secure parochial personal gains. Left unchecked, this greed plunges Nigeria into an ongoing cycle of kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, insurgency, terrorism, cyber-fraud, religious bigotry, ethnic conflict, political thuggery, and illegal oil bunkering. Because these systemic issues require urgent redressing, the onus falls squarely upon dramatists to proffer creative and radical solutions (Azunwo, 103).

This civic urgency explains why dramatists over the years have made politics a crucial anchor of their creative output. Societal developments motivate them to craft works that expose structural decay while presenting models for social reshaping. For example, Wole Soyinka frequently utilizes the theatre to lambast these political parasites. While his early plays, ranging from *A Dance of the Forests* (1960) to *Madmen and Specialists* (1970), established a foundational template for satirizing power, exposing the horrors of war, and warning against tyranny, they also dramatized the traumatizing impact of the Nigerian Civil War on both the collective psyche and the individual citizen (Akaenyi, 94). Similarly, *Kongi's Harvest* (1965) captures the volatile friction between emergent modern dictatorships and traditional authorities, while *Death and the King's Horseman* (1974) links colonial cultural misrecognition directly to political chaos.

Building on Soyinka's radical legacy, playwrights such as Femi Osofisan in *Once Upon Four Robbers* (1984), Bode Sowande in *The Night Before* (1988), and Kole Omotoso in *The Curse* (1992) deployed socio-historical determinism to trace the root causes of institutional corruption, civil unrest, and material obsession (Gbilikaa). Furthermore, Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (1977) exposes politicians preoccupied with embezzling national funds while mocking the chaotic consequences of political polygamy. Meanwhile, contemporary works like *Champagne to the High Table* uncover deep-seated societal greed, class conflict, and socio-economic marginalization, symbolically representing human avarice through a female elder who alters her natural form, metaphorically tampering with divine creation (Azunwo, 96). In the same vein, J.P. Clark's *The Raft* serves as an extended allegory for the Nigerian state as it drifts helplessly down an uncertain historical course (Akaenyi, 94).

Although the return to civilian rule in 1999 promised democratic renewal, successive administrations were marred by godfatherism, widespread electoral malpractices, and widening class inequalities. To challenge this decay, contemporary playwrights responded by chronicling the anxieties of the Fourth Republic. Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* (2006) dramatizes the ecological and militarized crisis of the Niger Delta; Segun Adefila's *Fela: Arrest the Music* (2011) links cultural heritage directly to civil protest; and recent documentations of the 2020 youth-led uprisings against extrajudicial police killings show how playwrights interrogate contemporary leadership failures. These works demonstrate that the theatre operates not merely as a passive mirror, but as a conceptual hammer with which to actively reshape society—revealing not only how things are, but how they could and should be.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design centered on textual interpretation and critical analysis. This approach provides the analytical baseline for interpreting the dynamics of political corruption and systemic imbalance within Diran Ademiju-Bepo's *No More the Taming Hawks* and Ojo Bakare's *Rogbodiyan*. The structural framework of this qualitative design integrates both historical and analytical methodologies. While the analytical method entails a close reading of written literary texts, archival scripts, and secondary critiques, the historical method is utilized to trace the genesis of Nigerian political corruption alongside the intricate socio-economic class structures that perpetuate contemporary societal imbalance.

Synopsis of *No More the Taming Hawks*

The play unfolds in a symbolic avian colony populated by doves and hawks who have coexisted in communal harmony for generations. This peace is shattered when the sudden demise of the king dove throws open a bitter interim succession race among the royal heirs: Tomide, Maderin, and their sister, Rohunfade. Although the sacred oracle appoints Princess Rohunfade as the legitimate queen, the coronation ceremony is thrown into absolute chaos when a predatory hawk named Asagbade storms the celebration. Scattering the defenseless doves and hijacking the colony, Asagbade perches on the throne, suspends traditional customs, disbands the Council of Elders, and forcefully transforms himself into the Commander-in-Chief of the Hawks Forces, styling himself as "His Hawkcellency."

The dramatic tension deepens when a clandestine, pre-existing relationship between the usurper Asagbade and Princess Rohunfade is revealed during a secret tryst—a romance Asagbade seeks to revive at all costs while maintaining his illegal hold on her throne. The complication intensifies as Rohunfade, determined to reclaim her birthright, mobilizes the doves into street protests demanding Asagbade's immediate resignation. Led by the heirs, the regent-designate, and the reinstated Council of Elders, the doves find strength in their unity of purpose, forming a formidable opposition against the predatory tyrant.

Under their relentless pressure, Asagbade finally concedes a date to return the kingdom to its rightful heirs. However, on the threshold of liberation, a dramatic climax occurs: Asarinle, the Chief Hawk of the Right Hand, discovers that Rohunfade is pregnant by Asagbade. He launches a palace coup, forcing Asagbade to abdicate. Asarinle proves to be an even more

vicious dictator, plunging the land into anarchy and imprisoning the pregnant Rohunfade. Hope is restored only when another hawk, Adabaoye, deposes Asarinle, releases Rohunfade, and restores her to the throne, where she gives birth to a new era on the day of her formal coronation (Dayop, 2024: 133-134).

Political Corruption in *No More the Taming Hawks*

In *No More the Taming Hawks* (2018), Diran Ademiju-Bepo dramatizes the historical tragedy of military incursions into civil governance driven by an unbridled desire for power. Drawing on the African total theatre tradition of integrated ritual, song, and storytelling narrative, the playwright crafts a searing critique centered on the necessity of popular revolution against the cycle of failed republics in Nigeria. The violent usurpation of power depicted in the text functions as an extended metaphor for Nigeria's historical military coups, mapping a nation navigating a volatile "take-off" moment in its socio-political evolution.

Structurally, the 79-page text is divided into ten movements encompassing the introductory "Take-Off," "Flights One to Eight," and the final "Landing." This structural design traces the socio-political history of the country, offering an allegorical journey through Nigeria's post-colonial realities:

- **The Take-Off:** Captures the brief promise of late-colonial and immediate post-independence Nigeria.
- **The Flights:** Dramatizes the subsequent political crises, characterized by a dizzying alternation of corrupt civilian governments and brutal military dictatorships.
- **The Landing:** Resolves the immediate dramatic conflicts while thrusting the audience directly into contemporary anxieties regarding democratic authenticity, institutional corruption, and the intergenerational battle for political leadership (Dayop, 2018).

As a dialectic on popular culture and power, the play dissects the historical era when military dictatorship was absolute. It highlights major milestones in Nigerian history, most notably the January 15, 1966 coup led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. Nzeogwu claimed to intervene to redeem a nation run aground by corrupt politicians, only to realize that military intervention introduced a far worse socio-political narrative. Written as a modern political parable, the text employs proverbs, soliloquies, stichomythia, monologues, adages, and witty repartee to confront urgent questions of national survival, including the clamor for structural restructuring, secessionist threats, communal conflicts, industrial-scale public looting, and institutional insecurity (Ayuba, 24-25).

For example, the text captures the visceral tragedy of agrarian populations facing unchecked violence:

LAMETO: Our land has now been turned into a den, surrounded by arms-bearing hawks, who destroy people's livelihood in the name of fending for their animals. They take life with such impunity never known in our history. Leaving a trail of carnage, destruction, death, poverty, division and evil in its wake... (9).

The drama further highlights how the economic survival of ordinary citizens is systematically crushed by state apparatuses under the guise of public order:

KOFO: The lesser hawks came into the market today, Lasi, and destroyed all our sheds. They said they are the task force... yes. On the order of His Hawkcellency, they tore down everything. (41).

LASI: Task force? Is that how they want to preach their slogan of change and better life?

KOFO: Come and see as they seized goods upon goods, item after item, from the shed owners who could not pack in time...

LASI: Did you hear that? Our markets are no longer ours. After the fire incident, they still will not allow us to live in peace... (42).

The play also critiques the state's reliance on extrajudicial detention to silence citizens calling for structural restructuring and equity:

ASARINLE: Your Hawkcellency? Your love of land-wide debates before you took decisions.... Remember the foreign debts and other similar debts on structural adjustment. Now what is so much in respecting their wishes? How long will it take you to release money for all they want, or even release their friends and relatives languishing in detention? (64).

ASAGBADE: And what? After respecting their wishes, what follows? You think they will stop at seeing our backs, and not also see our heads bowed in shame? Do you want them to bring disgrace upon our dynasty and those of our children's children? No, if that is why you have come, we are not ready to listen. We won't be disgraced... (64).

This exchange reveals the foundational narcissism driving the tyrant Asagbade. His predatory tendencies cause him to turn a deaf ear to the material demands of the masses. He systematically suppresses public agitation, relying on empty promises and bureaucratic procrastination even when his own inner council advises the release of budgeted public funds. By withholding these resources, he embezzled capital earmarked for public infrastructure. Through Asagbade's actions, Ademiju-Bepo demonstrates that the withholding of democratic dividends, the systemic embezzlement of funds, and unbridled personal greed remain the primary instruments of corruption deployed by ruling elites.

To the playwright, the ultimate antidote to this decay is the mobilization of collective will through popular revolution, mirrored by the doves who set aside their factional differences to present a unified front against the taming hawks. To this end, the text serves as an activist rally, calling upon traders, farmers, laborers, students, teachers, and religious leaders to unite against internal enemies and salvage the state. The power of political participation becomes evident as the unified citizens successfully dismantle the regime of Asagbade and his "Supreme Hawks-in-Council"—a clear metaphor for predatory leadership, unholy agitations, and a tyranny marked by institutional collapse, food insecurity, and infrastructural decay. The play functions

as a critique of Nigeria's contemporary political leadership, reframing it as a predatory "Hawks-Public" built on systemic exploitation (Dayop, 2018).

Through these vivid animal metaphors, the text portrays a ruling class that prioritizes self-preservation over people-centric governance. By staging the symbolic clash between the predatory Hawks and the peaceful Doves, the play highlights that unity among virtuous citizens is a prerequisite for restoring democratic ideals. *No More the Taming Hawks* is an evocative drama of power plays and political control. It establishes Ademiju-Bepo as an artistic image-maker for marginalized populations seeking liberation within the contemporary Nigerian polity (Ayuba).

Ultimately, the play serves as a parable of unbridled political ambition. Nigerian politicians are exposed as hawks who prey upon the commonwealth, deploying false promises during electoral campaigns only to renege on them once power is secured. Like literal hawks swooping down to steal a mother hen's chicks, they plunder public resources indifferent to the cries of the populace. The text encourages the youth to become active agents of change, while noting the absolute failure of the various national conferences convened over the decades. It stands as a vital warning, hoping that the voice of reason will prevail, enabling citizens to achieve the structural transformation and national regeneration they deserve (Dayop, 2024: 130).

Synopsis of *Rogbodiyan*

Following the demise of the king, an intense search for a successor begins in the land. Regent Adegban, having publicly proclaimed his strict impartiality, disqualifies his own royal lineage (the Adeakin house) from contesting, choosing instead to bequeath regal authority to any loyal and worthy member of the community. To execute this plan, he involves the traditional kingmakers—Chiefs Aloba, Eto, Abere, and Salotin—in the critical task of selecting a candidate fit for the throne. Eventually, Asagidigbi (symbolized as the great Eagle) and Gbadegeshin emerge as the final rival claimants; both quickly resort to competitive bribery and occult manipulation to secure the crown. Driven by financial inducement, the corrupt chiefs select Asagidigbi, who subsequently ascends the throne.

However, traditional customs dictate that the new monarch must undergo a sacred seven-day period of palace seclusion to commune with ancestral spirits and designate a new Arugba Oge (the sacred virgin carrier). The Arugba's duty is to carry the communal sacrifice and lead the spiritual procession to the ancestral shrine on the main festival day. Like the king, the Arugba Oge must remain in absolute isolation within the palace until the festival, preserving total purity of body, mind, and soul to ensure the gods accept the community's offerings.

These rigid cultural codes form the religious foundation of traditional kingship. However, this sacred order is shattered when the secularly corrupt Asagidigbi sexually assaults the royal virgin, violating the taboo and triggering an immediate, devastating epidemic that symbolizes the deep-seated social decay of the state. Recognizing the spiritual malignancy of this act, Agogo—the king's special adviser and chief curator of royal traditions—stabs himself in the abdomen in ritual protest and dies.

Angered by this royal sacrilege, the deities unleash terror upon the populace. The entire village, including the corrupt monarch, becomes stricken with severe physical deformities. The only remedy is a sacred water cure procured from the mythical River Awogbaarun, situated at Ite-Esumare in the land of the dead. Because the king is incapacitated by the epidemic, the chosen emissary to the underworld must dress in full royal regalia to represent the crown. Regent Adegbanu volunteers for this perilous journey. He successfully retrieves the water after negotiating a pact with the King of the Dead, promising continuous communal sacrifices in exchange for the cure. Assured by the kingmakers that this heroic feat will earn him the crown, Adegbanu returns and offers the healing water to the community. Adegbanu is subsequently crowned king, while the disgraced Asagidigbi is bound and driven into permanent excommunication (Inegbe, 441-442).

Political Corruption in *Rogbodiyan*

Written by Ojo Bakare in 1990, *Rogbodiyan* is a site-specific cultural text that explores the traditional heritage of the Yoruba community while offering a blistering critique of modern Nigerian governance. The play depicts high-level systemic corruption in all its variants, alongside political violence and state treachery. The title itself, *Rogbodiyan*—a Yoruba term translating to "chaos," "disaster," or "acute confusion"—operates as a semiotic icon that captures the image of systemic disarray within the fictional hamlet of Koroju, the setting of the play. As Bakare notes in his prefatory remarks, the drama is set in:

"...a land where merit is thrown to the winds, an entity controlled by non-entities, abode of religious hypocrites and political sycophants, [a land] where intelligence means nothing and the academically brilliant is a potential pauper... a land where truth has been hindered and falsehood exalted" (7).

The text satirizes the plight of Koroju, a community suffocated by institutional greed, selfishness, the abuse of office, moral decadence, and a material obsession born of a self-imposed leadership class. Bakare maps out various hierarchies of corruption, maladministration, structural violence, financial misappropriation, and political terrorism across all strata of the state. He highlights widespread bribery across municipal bureaucracies, using characters who serve as recognizable archetypes of contemporary political egoists, individualists, and Machiavellian diplomats.

These figures are concentrated within the inner cabinet of traditional chiefs: Aloba, Salotun, Eto, Abere, and the Akigbe. The text heavily emphasizes the moral decay that thrives within this legislative constituency. This ethical collapse is epitomized when the monarch gets drunk and assaults the Arugba Oge, transforming a sacred spiritual custodian into a victim of royal predation.

Rogbodiyan provides an unvarnished reflection of a nation where wealthy elites buy leadership positions for purely selfish reasons, subsequently unleashing suffering, pain, and disillusionment upon the citizens they govern. The play portrays a severe decline in cultural values and normative behavior, demonstrating the destructive effects of corruption as an impediment to national development. This systemic failure is lamented by Chief Aloba during a brief moment of defensive reflection:

"If people like you could enslave themselves to money and allow their conscience to be bought then I weep for the land..." (26).

This statement underscores the deep-seated hypocrisy and pretension that characterize the leaders of the land. Asagidigbi serves as a primary example of this predatory class, openly using his wealth and influence to bribe the kingmakers. He explicitly monetizes the sacred selection process:

ASAGIDIGBI: Money, man, money. Ego, wazobia! In each bag is contained what all of you combined cannot earn in twenty years. Give me the throne and take the money or give the throne to Gbadegesin and die in poverty. The choice is yours (25).

Gbadegesin, the rival candidate, is equally complicit in this corrupt ecosystem, manipulating the public with hollow promises. Meanwhile, Aloba—the head of the kingmakers who is tasked with protecting the community's cultural integrity—unmasks his own moral hypocrisy by eagerly accepting Asagidigbi's financial inducements. This transaction seals the corrupt bargain:

ASAGIDIGBI: Money, man, money, Ego, wazobia! In each bag is contained... (22)

ALOBA: Your ascending the throne Asagidigbi is as certain as milk in the breast (23).

Similarly, Chief Eto represents the political sycophant who shifts alignments based on personal gain. He is unbothered when Chief Abere dismisses him as a "bat"—belonging neither to land animals nor birds. Eto openly defends his opportunism by invoking what political scientists classify as "the politics of the stomach":

BRUSH/ETO: Yes. That is how I get what I want, by belonging to all the camps. The only politics I know now is the politics of my stomach and probably that of my immediate family... that is the politics I play now (18).

Through these characterizations, Bakare demonstrates how ordinary citizens are induced to accept financial rewards from prospective leaders instead of electing them based on merit. By selling their consciences, the characters halt the community's development (Inegbe, 444).

Ultimately, the play reveals the consequences of unchecked institutional corruption: macroeconomic collapse, mass starvation, falling educational standards, socio-psychological violence, hyperinflation, and systemic human suffering. Crucially, Bakare demonstrates that when a nation collapses under the weight of greed, the ruling elite is not immune to the fallout; the state becomes entirely unproductive, dead, and dysfunctional for rulers and the ruled alike. The failure of the nation's democratic experiment is thus traced directly to a lack of purposeful leadership. Rogbodiyan calls upon leaders to exhibit discipline, transparency, accountability, and selflessness to enable the nation to thrive on its historical path to progress.

Conclusion

Through their exploration of the socio-political crises facing the nation, *No More the Taming Hawks* and *Rogbodiyan* demonstrate that contemporary political decay is worsened by a lackadaisical public attitude toward political participation. This political apathy allows predatory elites to deplete the country's resources, plunging the state into acute poverty, socio-political instability, insurgency, and institutional collapse.

The texts demonstrate that sustainable economic development can only be achieved through a shared commitment to the collective good that transcends ethnic, regional, or factional divisions. Both playwrights illustrate how bad leadership has stalled the nation's immense economic and political potential—metaphorically turning the land into a den of armed actors who destroy livelihoods and take human lives with impunity, leaving a trail of carnage, poverty, and division. Consequently, these dramas challenge the subcultures of regionalism, political godfatherism, nepotism, and structural violence that dismantle the nation's cultural and socio-political institutions.

Ultimately, this paper posits that *No More the Taming Hawks* and *Rogbodiyan* serve as urgent artistic and political calls to action. They urge citizens to recognize their responsibilities as active stakeholders in the democratic process, to transcend divisive self-interest, and to forge a unified front for national renewal. Finally, the study emphasizes that until political stakeholders establish a unified, consensual framework for tackling institutional corruption, systemic oppression, and the unequal distribution of wealth, true socio-political stability will continue to elude the Nigerian people.

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