

The use of Language in *Ìdààmú Páàdì Mínkáílù*: A Religio-Satiric Play

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Abstract

Literary satire is generally a social pre-occupation; an attempt to contribute to the advancement of a society in all the ramifications of the word. This is done by humorously pointing out individual or collective non-conformation to accepted norms and ethos. The task however demands subtlety, especially in the use of language by the satirist who must bring his or her ideas to the fore. This essay submits that in *Ìdààmú Páàdì Mínkáílù*, Adébáyò Faleti draws out from the reader a mirthless laughter in the confusion of a religious priest and elder statesman, who must not divulge the confession of a repentant member of his congregation, but who, at the same time, must ensure the obedience to, and the maintenance of the social order in his society. The satirist's bias and the probable reasons for it are highlighted in the essay.

Introduction

Language, a process peculiar to human beings, is for sharing information, ideas, thoughts and emotions between a source and a receiver. This is to bring about mutual understanding; reducing uncertainties about taking the proper actions (expected). Language therefore involves the process of coding and decoding of message(s) between a speaker and his/her listener(s). This can be broken down to other elements, such as source, transmitter, message, channel, destination/receiver and feedback (Osisanwo 2003). Man, being the only speaking animal, has made language to be defined as: "Human vocal noise or the arbitrary graphic representation of the noise used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for the purpose of communication" (Osisanwo 2010).

Language is not experienced in isolation; otherwise it would not be recognized as language. Rather, it is always in relation to an occurrence; some background of persons and actions and events from which things are said to derive their meanings (Halliday 1978). It is of utmost importance therefore, to have a knowledge of the environment in which a speech event takes place so that the pragmatics of an utterance, spoken or written, is understood (Adeniran 2010). Among sociolinguists, this is referred to as “context of situation”, a term associated with proto-pragmatists, especially Firth Malinowsky and Levinson (2003). The term is wide and varied in nature and texture. Its content may be physical or concrete and immediate, while some others may be psychological, abstract, and remote. Mey (2004), in the views of a pragmatist opines ‘context’ to mean “all the factors that play a role in producing and understanding utterances.” Levinson cited above, while summarizing Lyons’s (1977) view about “Knowledge”, opines that features shared by participants in a speech event as roles and status, spatial and temporal location to formality level, medium to channel and subject matter and domain, determines the register of a language.

It is imperative therefore to understand that the figures of speech employed by a literary artist, especially a playwright in the use of words, phrases on sentences, are purposeful. This is to secure strength of feeling or thought that cannot be had in its ordinary use. Figures of speech are therefore used to make descriptions vividly clear and real to life. This helps to present ideas in concrete terms. They also add beauty and intensity of effect to speeches and other writings (Nchikogwa 2003). The focus of this paper therefore, is to examine to what effect Adébáyò Fálétí has used language to satirically drive home the travails that befalls a Catholic priest, both as a cleric and a community leader in the play *Ìdààmú Páàdì Mínkáílù* (The Travails of Rev. Father Micheal).

Religion, Literature and Satire

The Yorubá have always had their own traditional religion which in monotheistic; a belief in Olódùmarè, the most Supreme Being and the creator of all there are, who has other divinities as His aides (Oshitelu 2016). Religion is the keynote of the Yorubá’s existence; forming the foundation and all governing principles of their lives. Oral literature for instance, enshrines the theology and cosmology of the people, and reflects their ethos and moral values. This is why early Yorubá writers in their works, bear a carry-over of this traditional function in their literary creativities (Olatunji 1984).

Being this religious, it is not surprising that the Yorubá received foreign religions like Christianity and Islam. The fact remains however, that the foreign religions have not been received and adopted hook, line and sinker,

to completely replace the traditional religion of the people. In the spirit of Yorùbá religio-cultural nationalism, there had been signs of rebellion against the modes, content, and practice of the ‘alien’ and ‘threatening’ religions. Their (the religions) appearances of being ‘fashionable’ and that of the ‘enlightened’, and having enlarged the people’s visions, liberated their minds from un-necessary fears and superstitious inhibitions, thereby giving them a progressive outlook and sense of personal values (Oshitelu 2006). This has led to a kind of syncretism of Christianity and Yorùbá tradition.

Some modern Yorùbá literary artists, in the vanguard of sustaining the credibility and relativity of the Yorùbá traditional religion to the people, write creative works that attempt to highlight and bring to the fore, the ‘inconsistency’ and ‘emptiness’ of foreign religious to the socio-cultural reality of the Yorùbá society. Playwrights for instance, more often than not, write satirical plays to point out this fact. Examples of such are *Abé Ààbò* by Isola (1983) and *Alàgbà Jeremáyà* by Awoyale (1983).

Satire is described as “the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to reveal and criticize people’s bad point (Adejumo 2007). This is to say in effect that the major pre-occupation of satirists is to extol morality. Religion too serves a similar purpose; that of supporting social solidarity and maintenance of social integration. The use of satire in rituals and festivals among the Yorùbá rests on the belief that if the aberrant are exposed, the gods will be pleased with the land. Humor is therefore directed intentionally to ‘evil-doers’ to deride them, in order to shame them into mending their ways, having behaved in conflicting manners to the accepted norms. This is what makes satire a social authority.

Operating in a (Nigerian) society that is undergoing political transition, the Yorùbá playwright has a crucial role to play, a role that goes beyond creating recreation; that of creating awareness and passing caustic comments on his/her nation, as it moves towards the utopia. In the Yoruba oral tradition, satirists such as fools, jesters, and rhapsodists, enjoy immunity, for they have the society’s backings to ridicule anybody, not excluding the monarchs. They are/were the community’s mouth-piece for checks and balances, the etymological derivation of Yorùbá maxims like: *N ó wì í, ọba kì í pòkòrin* (I will speak; the king does not kill a poet).

The individual person in present times is much less amenable to social control in the form of public opinion, than in the past. This is because the principal social control is the adopted British political and judicial systems, with their other peculiar functionaries. Literary satirists in contemporary times may risk litigation. As such, they practice their art of ridicule, mockery, caricature, burlesque, derision, sarcasm, lampoon and parody with subtlety. *Ìdààmú Páàdì Mínkáílù* (The travails of Rev. Father Michael) is a good

example of such written Yorùbá satires. The synopsis of the play is given below.

Synopsis: *Ìdààmú Páàdi Mínkáílù (The travails of Rev. Father Michael)*

Páàdi Mínkáílù agrees to serve as an ex-officio member of the Èjìgbò Local Government Council, after an initial resistance. His piety and sincerity earns him the position, for he is nominated by king Eléjìgbò the Patron, Ibrahim; another executive member, Yunusa; the council secretary and Sẹ́tílù; the treasurer. Consenting to the nomination, the State Governor sends the Reverend Father a letter of appointment. The term of reference for the committee is to put an end to the corrupt practices of the officials of the council secretariat. £20,000 is sent to the council for the construction of a bridge over the Ajìngòdò River. Having a pre-knowledge of the arrival of the money, Yunusa, Ibrahim and Prince Salu jointly swear to an oath to prevent divulgence, and attempt to steal the money from Sẹ́tilu; the hardworking and sincere treasurer. In the bid, Sẹ́tilu is shot by the hoodlums. The money is not found by those who wanted to steal the money because in a premonition, Sẹ́tilu already sent for his wife, who takes the money to Páàdi Mínkáílù's mission house. Tormented by his conscience, Prince Salu goes to confess stealing, murder, and membership of a secret cult to Páàdi Mínkáílù. As expected of the Catholic Priests, Mínkáílù does not reveal Salu's crimes to the detectives who come to the town to investigate the incidence. This repression and Salu's refusal to hand himself over to the police, set in the conflicts of the play, leading to the deaths of the three armed robbers and those of innocent Prince Rafilu and Sẹ́tilu, the hardworking and sincere treasurer.

The Readings

The complexity and the attendant sensitivity of the multi-religiosity of the Nigerian nation, makes it pertinent that a Nigerian playwright be tactical in the theme, characterization, plot and the settings of his/her creativity. This is evident in Fálétí's *Ìdààmú Páàdi Mínkáílù* under study. The characters are given ambiguous names which may at a face value, not be directly ascribed to neither Christianity nor Islamic origin. Christians are known to bear names of saints, angels or those of righteous people mentioned in the Bible. Examples of such are Mark, Paul, Luke, Gabriel, Raphael or Moses for males, and Ruth, Deborah, Elizabeth, Sarah, Hannah or Rebecca for females. For the Muslims, four groups of names are approved by the Shar' (Islamic laws). These are Ubudiyah (names that reflect the greatness of Allah) like Abdullah and Abd Ur-Rahman, (these names show that their bearers are worshippers of Allah).

The second group contains names with realistic meanings that portray being truthful and modest, like al-Harith (cultivator) and Hamman (planner). Another group is that which contains the names of the Prophet (PBUH). Examples of these are Ahmad, Mahmud or Hunay. The fourth group is that which has names of other prophets (PBUT) and other righteous people. Some of these are Musa, Isa, Abdullah, Urwah, Hamzar, Ja'far, Umar or Khalid.

In order not to be accused of partiality, Fálétí creates the names of the character in the play in three different ways. First, he modifies the Christian names in such a way that they look as Muslim names. These names are:

- Gabriel as Jubirilu (An Angel of God).
- Sarah as Saratu (The biblical/koranic wife of Abraham).
- Saul as Salu (The persecutor of Christians in the bible).
- Rapheal as Rafilu (An angel of God).
- Stephen as Sufianu (A martyr in the bible).

Yunusa (Yunus) and Ibrahimu (Ibrahim) are clearly Muslim names, that have Christian equivalents and similar meanings (Job and Abraham respectively). *Şetilu's* meaning as may be intended by the playwright is ambiguous. It is either meant to be the modification of Seith (a biblical name), or *Şetílù* (as it is), an old traditional name believed to have been that of the blind diviner from Nupe, who brought Ifa divination system to Yorùbáland (Olunlade 1999). The second option is likely to have been upheld in the light of *Şetilu's* protagonist's role in the play.

The figures of speech employed by the playwright in his satire are resemblances like simile, metaphor, and personification. Also, he uses associations like hyperbole, apostrophe and metonymy. The contrasts that can be found in the play are antithesis, irony, paradox and epigrams. Lastly, he makes use of other literary devices like word-play, dramatic irony, repetition, onomatopoeia, rhetorical questions, soliloquy and also dialect, loaned and archaic words. To situate the play in Yorùbá religio-social background, he also used Yorùbá oral poetry like incantations (*ofo*) and songs (*orin*).

Resemblances

The Yorùbá people have a lot of respect for the aged and the clerics. They are not only assumed to be wise but honest. Such people are usually entrusted with the custody of other persons' precious items. In modern times, the socio-cultural changes as seen in the increase of vices like theft, lying, greed and injustice, which have brought about the lack of respect for traditional norms and values, is making many elders to shun this type of responsibility. This is

why Páàdì Mínkáílù tells Saratu not to compare him (in a simile) with a bank, when the latter takes the £20,000 meant for the bridge construction to his (the Padre's) vicarage. He says:

Èmí jé bi banki ni àbí tẹ̀wo?
(Do I look like a bank or what?)

Another simile in the text is King Jùbirílù's statement that

...Bókùn ẹ̀mi yi bi ipẹ̀tì... (79)
(... if one's life is as thick as a rope...)

Metaphorical statements are also used by the playwright. For instance, Mínkáílù compares his burden as a member of the local council committee to the cross that Jesus bore on the way to Calvary, when He was to be crucified. In his acceptance speech, he says:

Mo gba àgbélẹ̀bú náà (6)
(I accept to bear the cross)

Another metaphor is seen in the text when Yunusa says:

Nítórí náà, bí mo bá kófírí àgùtàn kan nítòsí níhìn-ín, igbẹ̀hìn rẹ̀ kò ní í dá'a o. (77).

(As such, if I catch the glimpse of any sheep here, the aftermath will be unpleasant)

In the Yorùbá traditional religion, an initiate of a cult is known as *awo* (custodian of secrets), while a non-initiate is referred to as *àgùtàn*; a sheep. What Yunusa means here is that he is ready to kill anyone who may want to spy on them.

In the curtain speech by Mínkáílù at the end of the play, while lamenting Sétílù's death, he personifies death and sickness, and also mocks death by seeing Sétílù's demise as the peaceful sleep of a good person. He says:

Ikú kò m'ẹ̀ni àá pa
Àrùn kò m'ẹ̀ni àá lu...
Ẹ̀ wá w'atisun ẹ̀ni're (91).

(Death knows not who to kill
Sickness knows not who to club...)

Come and see the slumber of a good person)

Association

The use of hyperbole is very common with satirists. This involves exaggerated descriptions, the attributions to people or things and values or qualities far beyond their actual state or appearances. For instance, Prince Rafilu is shocked to hear Salu his brother, Yunusa and Chief Ibrahimu discussing how they falsely testified against king Jùbirílù. He tells them:

...Gbogbo aiye ni ó gbọ'yi. Ojú nyin rè é, Yunusa ! Ibrahimu! Salu-egbọn mi !... (77)

(The whole world will hear this. Here you are, Yunusa! Ibrahimu! Salu – my brother...)

It is quite impossible for Rafilu to go around the “whole world” to expose the wicked men. What he means is that he will blow the incidence open to everyone around.

Ìdààmú Páàdi Mínkáílù is a tragic play, as a result, it is inevitable for the writer to use apostrophes – a figure of speech in which a person, present or otherwise, dead or an inanimate object, is directly addressed by a speaker to invoke them as witness, pity, praise or blame them. In the curtain speech by Mínkáílù, he says to the corpse of Sétílù:

...Un lo ɛ ti'iku fi mu ọ lọ Sétilu, iku da ọ legbodo, iku mu ọ lọ... (91)

(That is why death snatched you away Sétilu death cuts your life short, and took you away)

This speech shows the general belief about the aftermath of the death of a righteous person.

The nucleus of the satire in the text is the position and role of the Catholic priest, especially as it concerns confession as an act of penance. When Yunusa is expressing his (mock) annoyance about Mínkáílù's trip to Ibadan with Sétílù's 'body', Saratu (Sétílù's wife) and the £20,000 meant for construction, King Jubirilu tries to placate him. Metonymy, a figure of speech whereby things, persons or circumstances are not referred to by their real names, but rather by their attributes or things associated with them, is seen in the king's statement that:

K'ò le da'a na ni, Paadi loun nşe-un.
(It is for the good of all, he is being Padre).

Contrasts

Paradox is a type of contrast used in literary pieces. Others are irony and epigram. A paradox is a figure of speech in which a statement may appear absurd, but when viewed vividly, it will be seen to be full of wisdom. An example of this is Sufianu's ridiculous statement to Prince Rafilu when the prince comes to Mínkáílù's vicarage to pluck oranges. He says:

...Ş'emi ni mo sọ pe mo lọsan yi? Iwo lo si ji i ka. Han-in iwọ t'ò o ka'san mi lo ye k'a o mu mi. Ole l'ò nmu oni-nkan l'ode oni (68).

(Am I not the one who says I am the owner of this orange? You are the one who stole them. Yes! It is you who have stolen them that is supposed to arrest me. It is the thief who arrests the owner these days).

Rafilu knows that Sufianu (the 'fool') is referring to King Jubirilu his father, who is working with the police detectives in their search of the culprits of the attempted robbery and murder, whereas Salu, Rafilu's brother is one of the hoodlums. While Saratu who is present at the scene does not understand Sufianu's statement, Rafilu does. Rafilu tries to exonerate his father by replying Sufianu thus:

Nje, o ye mi o. Emi ki i şole o. Baba wa o si kọ wa niru eyi ti ẹ wi-un... (37).

(Well then, I understand what you mean. I am not a thief. Our father never taught us such things as you imply...)

What Sufianu does here, as is wont of jesters, fools and parodists, is a diplomatic way of interrogating Rafilu to know if his father the king is aware, and consent to the fact that Prince Rafilu is a gangster. This is evident in Sufianu's statement after which follows shameful Rafilu's exit:

*Hèn-hèn-èn. Adegboye lọlọpa-inu
Emi Sufianu lọlọpa ode! Ẹni ti mo ba si mu... (38)*

(That is it. Adegboye is the detective
I, Sufianu is the police. Whoever I catch...)

Sufianu's statement to the effect that he is also a detective (though taken to be a fool) is very true. This is because he appears to know the culprits already.

Other Literary Devices

Word play, the juxtaposition of lexical terms that are similar in shape, is one of the literary devices used in the play. The intention is to bring about verbal dexterity. This device is seen in Sufianu's lackadaisical response to Mínkáílù's explanation that the *Oremus pro Pontificat nostro pio* is awesome, and must be sang with reverence. Sufianu replies

...nigbati Sufianu ò ba jẹ ninu owo rẹ, àgunlá, àgun-tẹtẹ, àg'ewekó-ko ja fùrùpòmù! (51).

(...when Sufianu does not feed from his money, let whatever can, happen to him)

Àgunlá is an expression used by the Yorùbá to mean "I do not care", 'Who cares?' or 'Let the worst happen'. Here, Sufianu is giving it a different meaning which is *à-gun-ilá* (climbing an okro stem). By this, he is able to 'play' with climbing *tètẹ* (spinach) and *ewéko* (plants), resulting in *àgun-lá, àgun-tètẹ àg'ewéko*. *Fùrùpòmù* in the second line above is an onomatopoeia. It is the sound that a person falling from a tree accidentally, is likely to make with his fall. The word-play is Sufianu's warning to the Padre that holding the Pope in reverence should be of little importance, compared to the disaster that is likely to follow, if the truth about Salu's confession is known, as the priest's silence is denying justice its due course.

Repetition is a device which refers to deliberate mentioning of certain words or phrases, more than once in a literary piece. The reason is for emphasis; in order to intensify on such words or phrases for effects. Repetition may be palillogic, anaphoric or anadiplosic (Nchikogwa 2003). An example of palillogic (deliberate) repetition is the word *wàhálà* (trouble / confusion / misunderstanding / uprising) used four times in two dialogues each, between Yunusa and Sétílù (18). This is done intentionally by the playwright to hint that there will be conflict/ confrontation between the two characters.

Soliloquy is a literary term which implies a character talking to him/herself while alone. It is a calculated attempt to inform the audience/reader of what is going on in the mind of the speaker, about him/herself, or about others. In *Ìdààmú Pààdi Mínkáílù*, Mínkáílù initially accepts to bear the cross of being a member of Ejigbo local council committee, but at a point, the 'cross' brings him misery. He is torn between his position as a Catholic priest who

represents Jesus Christ by listening to confessions and proclaiming forgiveness, and as a reliable elder who is expected to see to the welfare of the people in his community. In a soliloquy comparable with Jesus' *Eloi, Eloi Lama sabachthani*, before his death (Mark 15: 34), Mínkáílù asks a rhetorical question (in line 1) and laments:

*Hùn-ùn-ù, irú Ìdààmú wo ni mo kò sù yí o?
 Ìwòfà r'òba lònà o s'adúrà lábénu'
 Pé báyá, orí a se é, irú òun a sì j'òba
 Ìwòfà kò tètè mò,
 P'órí adé, kò jék'érú òba ó rọgbọ
 Ìdààmú olá kì í rọ, koko ní í le
 Òsùkà báramu ko rẹrù àgbà
 Hùn-Hùn-ùn... (43)*

(Hun-un-un, what problem is this that I have put myself into?
 A pawned slave sees a king, he prays silently.
 That may be destiny will allow him to become a king
 Little does he know,
 That it is not easy to bear the weight of royalty
 The travails of wealth are not simple, they are always hard
 A thick head-pad is insufficient to bear an elder's burden
 Hùn-Hùn-ùn...)

Dialect, Loaned and Archaic words

Adébáyò Fálétí, the playwright, is a native of Òyó, an ancient capital-town of Yorùbáland, now a town in present Òyó state of Nigeria. The Òyó dialect is very close to the Standard Yorùbá Language, the written version. This is why many Yorùbá literary artists use the Òyó version for aesthetic purposes in their works. This use of Òyó dialect therefore, is realistic to the story line. An instance is this statement during the interrogation, where Salu replies:

B'a ti ntele gbogbo rẹ jọ to fi doun nu-un (59)
 (That is how we pile things up to make the whole)

Nù-un (That) in this statement would have been *nìyẹn*, were it to have been said in the Standard Yorùbá Language. Another one is the question asked Sálù by his mother:

Iya: Salu, iwọ kí Páàdì mba wí ni...? (74)

(Salu, are you not the one the Padre is talking to ...?)

The negation *ki* in the sentence would have been *kó* in Standard Yorùbá Language.

Loan words from other languages are usually employed by literary artists for aesthetic effects and to lay emphasis on words or situations. Yunusa in the play under review, in a dramatic irony, talks like the pious Sahabah, a devoted Muslim he ought to be, when he says:

*Nwọn tẹle e ni. Amó asi-ta-nga-furulai o,
K'oba o fori eṣẹ j'n ẹnu mi o...* (28)

(He was being traced. But *astagfirullah*
May Allah forgive my utterances ...)

when Sẹtílù is robbed in the Council office.

Astagfirullah is an Arabic statement which means 'Oh Allah, I seek your forgiveness. Also, *medoki* (Hausa word meaning 'donkey rider') on page 4 and *Rìpẹ̀tò / Rẹ̀pẹ̀tò* (Inspector) on page 36, are other loan words.

Adebayo Fálétí is well known for his use of archaic or restricted words. Examples of this in *Ìdààmú Páàdi Mínkáílù* are Agódóngbó "agodongbo" (baby horse) on page 4 and Ìpẹ̀tì "Ipeti" (Strong rope) on page 76. The use of these words is meant not only to portray the playwright as an 'elder', whose didactic teachings must be upheld, but also to show the beauty and variability of the Yorùbá lexicon.

Oral Poetry

The oral poetry of the Yorùbá is very important in defining their traditional sociology, religion, culture and world-view. Some of the ones used in this play are *ọfọ* (incantations) and *orin* (songs). *Ọfọ* is a restricted, esoteric and mystical poetic form, that can be used by any individual who can obtain and master its use (Olatunji 1984). It is words of mouth backed with mystical powers, to bring about the realization of the chanter's intention (positively or otherwise). Yunusa chants the *ọfọ* below when himself, Ibrahimu and Salu are swearing to an oath of secrecy, prior to the attempted robbery and murder. Jointly, they say:

*Mo ba işin m'awo
Ki n le roju rere Olomi...
Mo ji f'ẹjẹ boju*

Ki n'ma ba da'le egbẹ awo...
Wiwo l'enu awo i wo... (12)

(I got initiated with fingerlins
 To seek the favor of the river goddess...
 I wash my face with blood
 So that I may not divulge the secrets of the cult
 An initiate knows but never says...)

A song is a form of communication with rhythmic pattern, indicating the singer's state of mind at a particular time. Songs can be rendered ordinarily or accompanied with claps or musical ensembles. Sufianu is the only character who has no stake (directly) in the incidences of neither the robbery nor the attempted murder. As such, he is merry and cheerful. He imitates the tune of the *Oremus pro Pontificat nostro pio* thus:

E jẹ k'a - a
Gbadura fun Su-fi-i-a-a-a-nu-u
KOlorun ko d'ẹ-ẹ-mi-i-re-ẹ siiii
Ko le pẹ fun Min-ka-a-a-i-lu-u
Ki o-o si le maa jẹ-e, k'oo-o-le maa-mu-u
Ki o-o si le maa yinbọn idi-i-i
...ku ! ka ! ku !... Amin (49).

Let us pray for Sufianu
 May the Lord preserve his life
 So that he may live long for Minkailu
 So that he may eat, so that he may drink
 So that he may fart...
 ...ku ! ka ! ku !... Amen

The purpose of the song (as far as Sufianu is concerned), is to make a mockery of the 'foolishness' in praying for the Pope, who has 'no direct relevance to the welfare of neither the priest nor the congregation'. In essence, Sufianu means to point out the stupidity in shielding (wicked) Salu's confession at the detriment of the lives of innocent people like Rafilu and Sétílù. This also affects the happiness of Jubirilu and his wife, and that of Saratu, Sétílù's wife.

Conclusion

Adébáyò Fálétí in his play under study, satirizes the conflicting roles of the Catholic priest in the church, and his social duties and responsibilities. This,

the playwright is able to achieve to some extent, especially with the use of the comic character, Sufianu. Sufianu's speech lines are the major dialogues which portray the intention of the playwright. His speeches and those of other characters are literarily examined in this paper, to bring to the fore, the peculiarity in the language used for this religious satire, and to reveal the real message of the play. Fálétí attempts to be optimal in the ridicule of clerics and other people who appear religious, but are either not personally convinced of their religious callings, or are outright spiritually dubious. However, we found him (with this play) to be biased against Catholic (Christians) than to Muslims generally. Though Fálétí is also a Christian, his stand is likely due to having no deep (enough) knowledge about Catholicism in the light of the plurality of Christianity as evident in the several Christian denominations. We say this, because the role of the priest in the sacrament of penance is to represent Christ as the only one who can forgive sins. The proclamation of forgiveness is to heal and restore the morally and/or physically sick, to full communion with Christ and the Church. This is to enable such person to continue to participate in the (Catholic) mission. This does not stop the confessor from going to hand him/herself over to appropriate authority to face punishment (even if it is death penalty). This is because his/her salvation is guaranteed (by the blood of Jesus Christ) after initial remorse and confession.

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