

INYUMUGH AND BOTWEV TALES AS TIV LOW COMEDY

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Abstract

Inyumugh and Botwev are two legendary figures in Tiv oral history who are associated with humorous and eccentric behaviour, often leading to serious mishaps and even misfortune for themselves and others. This paper examines a selection of the stories of these two men, exploring their use as low comedy, protest, and psychological relief. The theoretical perspective taken here is Sigmund Freud's conception of comedy as an outlet for suppressed desires within the human subconscious, an expression of thoughts and actions that are unacceptable in a normative society. The paper reveals that while the actions of Botwev and Inyumugh are an outward display of deceit, oddity and even buffoonery, there are important moral and philosophical lessons to be learned from their deviant behaviour. The meaning of words is the key to every Botwevic encounter, while Inyumugh's stinginess and excessive self-preservation reveal much about why the Tiv have a disdain for extreme individualism.

Keywords: low comedy, moral philosophy, functionalism, Botwev tales, Inyumugh tales.

Introduction

Comedy is a social activity that reveals itself in several sectors of life. It is sometimes involuntary, but most often carefully plotted to elicit a particular emotional response. Comedy is both a traditional oral art with therapeutic consequences and a modern genre of performing arts and literature. In all cases comedy is about human relations and the absurdities that so often come up to distort meanings, hamper the intentions of persons and create conflict over minor affairs. The emergence of laughter and amusement at the end of a verbal encounter implies that comedy has taken place. Thus, the expression 'comic relief' suggests that out of a serious, perhaps conflictual situation, has emerged something that can be laughed at; something that swings humour emotions in the other direction from tension and displeasure.

This paper depicts the traditional mode of comedy of the Tiv people using two historical comic characters: Inyumugh, a largely fictional personality who is cast as a stereotype, and Botwev Ndur, who lived and performed comedies until his death in 1959. The purpose of the work is to demonstrate that within Tiv, comedy can be found in mischief and even deceit, but there exists in it a cache of moral teachings, deep philosophy and even social protest. Thus, humour and laughter are supposed to be followed by edification and improvement.

The Concept of Comedy

Comedy is a complex art form, often subjective in nature and is designed as a play on emotions, causing relief and laughter. In the view of Sigmund Freud, comedy can tap into the unconscious mind to create sudden humour and relief from stress. This implies that the change of mood, the break into laughter, may be involuntary, triggered by some surprise element in the tale. Sombo and Shittu suggest that: 'Humour, in its modern usage, continues to have something to do with the evocation of laughter and amusement generally, and that is needful in a world that is increasingly leaving mankind with little or no reason to laugh'. (123).

Tiv Comedy

In Tiv comedy, the joke usually turns on the use of superior wit to overcome an adverse situation. The best Tiv jokes are always at someone's expense, and the lesson to be learnt usually emerges from hearty laughter at someone being defeated verbally or practically. This will be seen here in Inyumugh's story and a selection of Botwev's adventures. The fictional nature of Inyumugh tales is validated by the real-life Botwev tales, showing that the folk-tale themes reflect the culture and worldview of the Tiv.

Low Comedy

This is a comic style associated with physical pranks, crude language and what may be called practical jokes. At first, the distinction between 'high' and 'low' comedy was made by English writers like Henry Fielding, who classified those stories and plays that use 'sophisticated humour', intellectual dialogue and refined language as High Comedy. This, of course, left the other

less refined comic works that involve coarse, less educated characters acting in ridiculous, often farcical situations to be called Low Comedy. The content of a low comedy would thus be lumped together with those forms which, according to Bamidele, cause our moods to shift “between meaningful and meaningless laughter”. These he identified as “Dark comedy, savage comedy or comedy of menace and black humour” (3).

While blending the qualities of both high and low comedy in his writing, Henry Fielding held them to be different approaches to humour and comic writing. In the comic forms being studied in this essay, the qualities that stand out are the physicality of the jokes, the near-absurd issues that are pursued seriously, and the coarse buffoonery that nevertheless carries satirical import.

Theoretical Framework

In his book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Sigmund Freud argues that comedy is a social mechanism that creates bonding and allows people to overcome inhibitions. For him, comedy has psychological origins and is related to ‘Dream work’: i.e. we can express in comedy things that are repressed in serious conversation. This view of comedy as a tool against social repression and introversion, an agency for realising what exists in the subconscious, is interesting for the study of *Inyumugh* and *Botwev*. Freud’s view perhaps informs the functionalist ideas of Bronislaw Malinowski, which lay emphasis on understanding cultural products in terms of their practical utility and social contexts. This study examines the Tiv comedies selected in terms of their value to performers, the audience and the community.

Background of the Comedies

The main Inyumugh story is found in *Usha Utar*, a Tiv literature text used in school, while the Botwev tales are in *Tar Hômon u Botwev* compiled by James Humbe. All the comedies are orally composed and performed, but now rendered in writing, thus becoming written oral literature. As many artists pass away with no audio or video recordings made of their works, studying the written versions is increasingly serving as the best option. As Emmanuel Amase argues:

The artificial wall separating oral and written literature is gradually crumbling with the discovery that most of the separating criteria for keeping them apart are relative and elusive...Both the oral and written forms are not so mutually exclusive; they are interdependent. (128-129).

Culturally, the actions of Inyumugh and Botwev generally fall into the 'negative ethical principles' laid out by Akpenpuun Dzurgba in his *Elements of Tiv Culture*. These vices include: *Aie* (lies), *Atseregh* (trickery), *anyie* (cheating), *Zehe* (quarrel), *Ayôôso* (conflict or disturbance), *Bo* (stinginess and selfishness), *Icugh* (Deceit), *Icihi* (Rudeness, Arrogance), *Ihyom* (malice), etc (40). But the stories are nevertheless comic and entertaining. The two types of tales will now be examined together as orally inspired comic literature.

Alôm Vea Inyumugh

The title of the story means '*The Hare and Inyumugh*'. The narration is a highlight of the eccentric behaviour of Inyumugh and the tricks of Alôm (Hare), whose character is well-known in Tiv folklore. Clearly, the author chose one oral Inyumugh story and wrote it with Alôm as a counter-hero, matching wits with, and finally defeating Inyumugh. The story is rather long for this work, and so an abridged version is presented below:

Ngise la Inyumugh tema ya na vea kwase na ve uhar. Tsô kaa er, mayange or ngu yan un rwam shawon ga. Mbanyam nôngo nan nan, kpa hembra ve. Iyange i gen yo, Alôm mogh kange ikyav er un ngu zan un a za var iywa shin ya u Anyam. Man, a va kaha a nyôr hen ya u Inyumugh a gba pinen gbenda. Alôm vande ungwan êr kwase u Inyumugh lu kumen rwam yô. Tsô a tema ken ate vea Inyumugh, i tese un gbenda doo doo, Rwam u kumen kpa huan, i due a mi ga!

Alôm due tôô ikyav nav gba yemen. Fe er hegen nahan Inyumugh un a lu hiin u yan rwam yo, a cin fese a hide. Inyumugh nengen a Alôm van yô, a daa rwam a wa shin ityô kpandegh. Alôm kaa er Inyumugh tese un gbenda shami ga, un za tsume hen ape igbinda i za kaha ihyar yô! Inyumugh man due a na sha gbenda za tese un doo doo, cin gba hiden. Shie ne ijen kôr Inyumugh je zua ga. Nyer ken ya yô, a ôô ave, a tôô rwam na fese a due a mi. Coon rwam nahan man shi a nenge a Alôm hiden. Inyumugh shi daa rwam koso. Alôm kaa er kpei! Inyumugh er a na doo ga. Un za nyôr hen

yala yô ayou nga her kpishi, un fa i i lu i Anyam jim ga. Kpa kwagh u a lu yô, tugh ile hegen. Un ta angahar kera kpishi, man shi iyô i a va za nyima un. Nahan guda yô un a tsa vea Inyumugh, kper tsô un a zahemen a zende.

Kwagh hembra Inyumugh tar Alôm ikyagh ve yav ken Ate. Inyumugh fe er Alôm yav yô a mogh a gba nongon u tōn rwam na shin ityô kpandegh er un a ya. Er ijōndugh uva yô, Alôm tōo antyōv na ker ta Inyumugh sha we, akaa er: 'Ka nyi anhyevev mban ve a de or a yav ga?! Nyion Inyumugh je, kpa a ngor Ayou! ga. Tugh mbu ze ken atō yô, Inyumugh shi fa er Alôm yav hungur. Nahan a mogh a tōo rwam na. Coon rwam nahan Alôm shi ker ityōv va gber Inyumugh kwa ne hembra taver. Inyumugh ngor er "Ayou! Alôm ka nyi u wua'm ikyaa rwama? Yô mogh gba va yan tso!"

Alôm man mogh ya rwam sha inyam vea Inyumugh doo doo! Been yô, a kange ikyav nav tugh la je a mogh a hide ken ya na. Ityô na Mbanyam ger diing, èr a za hembé Inyumugh yô!

English Summary

In those days, Inyumugh made his home in a separate compound, just he and his wife. He vowed that nobody would ever eat his food. All the animals kept trying, but nobody ever succeeded in sharing in Inyumugh's meals. One day, Alôm the Hare took some luggage and announced that he was travelling to the house of the Lion to do some blacksmithing. When he got near the house of Inyumugh, he hid until he heard Inyumugh's wife pounding yams, then he entered the compound and was received by Inyumugh in his *Ate*. Alôm asked for directions to the home of Lion, and Inyumugh showed him the way. By this time, the pounding of yams had stopped, but no food was brought out. Alôm took his load and departed but returned suddenly a few minutes later. Inyumugh was just about to start eating, but he pushed the rwam under his bed. Alôm gave an excuse that he had lost his way. Inyumugh took him to the road and redirected him. But just as Inyumugh (who was now very hungry) brought out his food, Alôm entered the compound again! He said he could not find the specific house of the Lion, and as night was falling, he hoped to spend the night with Inyumugh before continuing with the journey the next day. So they slept in the hut.

When Inyumugh thought that Alôm was asleep, he pulled out his food from under the bed. Alôm threw his small axe towards the sound, hitting Inyumugh on the hand. He said, 'Why

will these rats not allow anybody to sleep?’ Inyumugh was in pain but kept quiet.

Much later in the night, the hungry Inyumugh became convinced that Alôm had finally slept. So he brought out his *rwam* to eat. But Alôm threw his axe again, hitting Inyumugh and cursing the rats. Inyumugh screamed, “Ayou! Alôm will you kill me because of food? Get up and eat!” And so Alôm got up and ate the food heartily with Inyumugh. After that, he packed his things and departed for his house! The animals received him with singing and dancing. He had defeated Inyumugh finally.

Comic Significance of the Inyumugh Tale

The first motif of note in this story is the isolationist nature of the target character. Inyumugh settled away from other people and lived with his wife. There is no mention of children, relations or neighbours. In Tiv culture, that signals a questionable lifestyle. Inyumugh’s vow that nobody would share his food is just the confirmation of his extreme individualism. In this condition, he is quite useless to the community and can only serve as a road sign, directing people.

Alôm the hare is a tool for societal disapproval, and his mission is to defeat Inyumugh at his unhealthy game, restoring communal authority over the individual. This is almost a formula for Tiv narratives: a diminutive character acting with intelligence to overcome a larger and more powerful personage. As Charles Keil observed long ago:

Tiv composers and their helpers offer a constant corrective for whatever is going wrong and loud praises for those who do right. The tales, as told and enacted, not only return the Tiv to laughter but create a parallel world in which the powerful, the ‘big men’, are always undone and ‘the people’ are made wise in the undoing (21).

Keil’s reference to ‘laughter’ above is a homage to another anthropologist, Laura Bohannan’s *Return to Laughter*, a work on Tiv life and aesthetics. In this book, Bohannan explores Tiv storytelling, showing that satire is in wit, mockery, ridicule and word-play, used to critique vice and maintain social balance. These are indeed the motifs found in the Inyumugh and Botwev tales.

FOUR BOTWEV TALES

Biographical Note

Botwev Ndur was a man of Ukan lineage who lived in the Mbaivende community of the present Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State. He is said to have been a tall, slim man with a wiry frame, physically strong and agile. He often travelled from his village to Gboko (about 25 kilometres), and many of his comic adventures are set in either Mbaivende or Gboko. Botwev died in April 1959. As he was 'not yet an old man' when he died (according to his surviving family members), this paper assumes that he was born in the 1890s.

i. Won Ne Ka U Wuan Ikyegh (P1)

English: This in-law is worth a chicken.

Won u Botwev ugen za va her a na. Tsô anngô na za kaa Botwev er: Won ne ka u nengen sha na daang ga. Ka u wuan ikyegh, tsô Botwev gema kaa a kwase na er: Ior a puun kwase na kpa un yô, un a wuese gbem. Yô, a yem ase fese a za kaa wuhe na ve kura ikyegh cica ve haa ken ityôv, ga yô, won ne a va tim ikyegh a bee. Tsô won na tsa a Botwev Lahadi uhar cii kpa lu yan atuur tseghe, ayange a won lu her la cii ikegh duen ken won ga zan zan kar yemen.

English Summary:

One of Botwev's in-laws once came to visit him. His sister (Botwev's wife) came and said to Botwev: "This in-law is not one to be looked at lightly. He is an in-law for killing a chicken". Botwev thanked his wife and ordered that all chickens in the house be gathered and locked up for the duration of the in-laws' visit, to prevent him from killing them. Thus, the in-law stayed for two weeks in that house, eating only okra soup!

Meaning and Comic Function

The trickster Botwev seized upon a linguistic aphorism in Tiv language to escape an important but often burdensome cultural duty of married people: the lavish entertainment of in-laws.

While it is a laughing matter to see how Botwev's wife the major interested party in this matter, unwittingly caused her brother (and herself) to miss a delicious chicken meal, there is a social implication to this tale. It reveals the deep-seated

resentment of Tiv men of the endless marital obligations. This cannot be expressed openly but can only be protested using trickery, words, and comedy as Botwev does here. This is reminiscent of the Freudian idea of subconscious, repressed thoughts finding expression through comedy.

ii. Botwev Tôô Foto (P22)

English: Botwev Takes a Photograph

Hanma shie Botwev a zer ungowan ior ôron er mba tee foto. Tsô iyange igen yô, Botwev mogh yem shin Gboko er un kpaa un a za tôô foto. Za nyer yô, nenge ortôônfoto ugen ver ufoto hen hunda kpishi sha ci u ior ve fa er un tee foto yô. Botwev nengen a ufoto mbala yô, a se, a gema a kaa er kape kwagh shon a lu kpishi kpa ior ve ye ican u tûôn nee? Tsô shir wegh dugh uhar! Mba pin un yô a kaa er un lu je un ngu a tôô foto ga, ka nahan man un soo u tûôn mban nyian ye. Or la se zanzan man de un yem ami.

English Summary

Botwev often heard people say they have taken a photograph. So, one day Botwev travelled to Gboko for the purpose of taking a photograph. When he arrived, he saw many printed photographs displayed outside by the photographer. Botwev laughed, saying, "Is this how easy it is to take a picture?" So, he took hold of two of the photographs. When the photographer asked, Botwev replied that he had never taken a picture, so he was taking these today.

Meaning and Comic Function

On the surface, the '*Botwev Tôô Foto*' story is an act of pure buffoonery. Botwev played on the meaning of the word 'take', which is used in Tiv as well as English to describe the operation of a camera in photography. At the time of this event, the camera was a new and rather mysterious piece of technology, and Botwev was a rural man, illiterate by Western standards. His action on this day shows his intelligence and makes a mockery of the 'modern' people who made such a hype about 'taking' a photograph.

The functional value of this tale is its satirical treatment of modern ways, which were often held to be superior to anything

previously known in African life. 'Taking a photograph' is shown here by Botwev to be not a taking at all; a rather vain and idle engagement that is not worth all that is said about it.

iii. Tegh Tegh Hemba Ayem (P2)

English: Slowly, slowly is Better than Running

Botwev za zende vea wan na. Mba za nyer hen ya ugen yô, iywa lu hunden her, í lu meen i sha u a wua yô. Or môm lu hen tembe ga saa or u keren gbuuka tseghe. Tsô, wan la nengen êr iywa i hunden lu yevese van sha ve yô, man un yevese unde sha kon shi kaa a Botwev kpaa er, a unde sha kon fefa ga iywa i a va nyima un. Botwev gema pine wan na er: iywa shon ngi van tegh tegh shin ngi yevese? Wan na gema kaa a na er a de timbir ashe ga iywa la ngi yevese van. Kpa Botwev wa ikyo ga gema kaa a wan na er, aluer i a yevese yô, ka kwagh ga, tegh tegh hemba ayem i a fatyô u kohol un ga. Tsô Botwev gba yemen her tegh tegh zanzan iywa va nyuma un. I tôô un i yem a a na ken iyouchi.

English Summary

Botwev went on a trip with his son. As they entered a certain compound, they encountered a rabid dog! The entire yard was empty; only a man with a gun was seen there, as an effort was made to kill the dog. Botwev's son ran away and climbed a nearby tree, calling on his father urgently to do the same. Instead of running, Botwev asked his son whether the mad dog was running towards him or coming slowly. The boy replied that the dog was running! Botwev calmly replied that it was okay: Slowly, slowly is always better than running. He walked on slowly until the mad dog came and bit him! Botwev was taken to the hospital.

Meaning and Comic Function

This is one of the 'Unbelievable' tales of Botwev. That a man would knowingly risk (and actually receive) a dog bite just to prove a point is truly amazing. But Botwev was a comic hero: strange, unpredictable and erratic. Whatever psychological release he obtained from going against the grain of social behaviour is not known. The English proverb 'slow and steady wins the race' is expressed in Tiv as 'Tegh-tegh hemba ayem'. Its logic must have been irksome to Botwev, as life often proves that speed indeed leads to success. 'Delay is dangerous' is a

contrastive saying to “slow and steady wins the race”. Botwev’s extreme misadventure did help to prove that in many cases, speed is the best.

iv. Wan u Botwev Tôô Kwase u Ter Na (P28)

English: Botwev’s Son Takes His Father’s Wife

Er Botwev kpe kera yô, Ukan cii kohol za sha u ve a za wa wan na dyako na sha ikev yô. Mba ne un akaa cii yô, ve shi ve kaa a na er a tôô kwase u ter na u kiriki la, a de eren a na daang ga. Tsô wan u Botwev za wegh ken akwati u ter na dugh gbagir hure ikyar a mi, veren sha ityo yô, man a kôr kwase a penda sha ityogh nagh, er un ngu tôôn un sha ishighe ki ityô na sha er ve fa er un lu eren a na daang daang ga yô, rumun kwase la zenden hen nya ga cii. Tsô Ukan kaa er, kwagh u been a bee hembe.

English Summary:

After Botwev died, the elders of Ukan gathered to formally hand over Botwev’s property to his son. After giving him other things, they also asked the young man to take his father’s youngest wife and not to treat her badly. At this, the young man removed a gbagir cloth from his late father’s box, formed a head pad with it, then lifted the woman and put her on his head! He said he was taking the young wife in the presence of all his people for them to see that he would not treat her badly. Hearing this, the Ukan elders said: ‘The likeness is usually greater than the original version’.

Meaning and Comic Function

This story is remarkable because it is one of the few Botwev tales that date after Botwev Ndur’s passing. It signifies that the comic tradition became ingrained in his family, and at least one of his children inherited his comic gift, returning to the motif of ‘take’ earlier seen here in ‘taking a photograph’. This grabbing of literal meaning to promote a wrong and mischievous interpretation runs through all of Botwev’s tales.

Aside from the humour, this tale reflects upon the Tiv tradition of wife inheritance, which served as a social safety valve, perhaps for centuries. But in Botwev’s time (circa 1890-1959), many changes were taking place in the land, and wife inheritance was already problematic. Whether Botwev’s son

sought to showcase his acceptance of a burden in the form of a wife he did not marry by dramatically carrying her on his head is not clear. Whether he intended the gesture as a show of love is also not indicated. But Botwev's outwardly silly acts often caused, and still cause people to reflect deeply after their hearty laughter: Is a woman a part of a man's property? Is she transferable property after the man's demise? These are important cultural issues thrown up by the comedy.

Analysis of Inyumugh and Botwevic Comedies

Inyumugh is an amusing moral tale with a central anti-hero personality. He is a flat character by every standard, as he stands for one trait only: stinginess. He does not change in any of the few oral tales about him, in addition to the published episode, and little is known about his motivation for being what he is. Hoarding and accumulation seem to be his sole life ambition, and his activities consist mainly of struggling to prevent anybody from sharing his food. Inyumugh is not portrayed as being particularly in want or poverty, and his resort to trickery is unlike that of Ananse, the popular comic hero of Akan folklore in Ghana. While Ananse (particularly in Efua Sutherland's depiction) comes gradually to dishonesty and selfishness due to adversity, Inyumugh is stingy and self-serving by nature, and his character cannot be interpreted outside of those two vices.

All the humour found in Inyumugh tales is at the expense of Inyumugh himself. He is set up for ridicule, and no attempt is ever made to relieve his reputation of this authorial condemnation. What does this reveal about Tiv's societal view of individual accumulation and selfishness? The Tiv ideal of 'Ya Na Anngbyan' is antithetical to Inyumugh's doctrine, which is extreme individualism and self-prioritising even about friends. Inyumugh will not give to anybody as a principle, not because of lack or insufficiency: it is simply his ethos of self-protection. Tiv moral philosophy views Inyumugh's lifestyle with distaste and disapprobation, so the comedy relentlessly satirises such persons who are represented by this Inyumugh stereotype.

The eventual defeat of Inyumugh's stingy devices and his surrender of his food to a cleverer trickster character show one simple lesson: society frowns upon selfishness and meanness. Tiv life is open, lively and even generous. Friendship is a virtue that is held dearly, and so Inyumugh's lifestyle represents a

vice that is met with scornful laughter. As Hagher observed long ago, the Tiv verbal art forms are 'for social utility' (55).

Botwev's tales are more numerous than those of Inyumugh. This is obvious as Botwev lived while Inyumugh is a fictional creation. But many of the stories attributed to Botwev are also doubtful, and it is safe to consider some of them as fiction. Indeed, this is what makes the Botwev tales a mini genre of orally inspired comedies rather than a line of biographical stories. What then does Botwev stand for, and specifically, what is the place of Botwevian comedy in Tiv oral art and philosophy? As noted here before, on the surface, Botwev is a buffoon who takes meanings literally sometimes at his own cost. He is a cheat who often uses mischief and wordplay to escape responsibility. His utilisation of the pun device often leaves his victims linguistically at a loss, although the real meaning may be clear enough. Botwev is a trickster-hero who escapes many precarious situations.

But while the comic elements in Botwev are obvious, some introspection is necessary to unearth the psychology of protest and revolt against the fast-changing world in which Botwev found himself. Each of the Botwev stories sampled in this paper represents a struggle against an adverse situation. In '*Won Ne Ka U Wuan Ikyegh*' the trickster hero revolts comically against the burden of using his chickens (wealth at that time) to entertain his in-laws, who would stay for two weeks! In '*Botwev Tôô Foto*', he ridicules the modern fashion of self-portraiture through expensive photograph 'taking'. His attitude is comparable to what elderly people today feel when they see young boys and girls taking 'selfies' with their expensive phones. There is some Freudian outpouring of deeply repressed feelings in Botwev's mockery of photography.

In '*Tegh Tegh Hembra Ayem*', there is a brutally masochistic low comedy as Botwev is bitten by a rabid dog while trying to prove to his son that 'Slowly, Slowly is better than running'. Could it be that Botwev was not performing for his son at all, but for the man with a gun and other adults who were hiding in their huts, but no doubt watching from windows and partially opened doors? Botwev was a proud man and feared no man. Running from a dog to climb a tree was a public humiliation he would shrink from. There is clearly a double lesson here: speed

is the best sometimes, and pride can be temporarily discarded. As the Tiv adage goes: 'Mba Cirin Ayem Ikondo ga'! 'Wan U Botwev Tôô Kwase u Ter Na' indicates that the grotesque comedy of Botwev has crossed to another generation. In taking over his father's property (the Dyako), Botwev's son was inheriting the comic genre that uniquely works with words and their many meanings.

Conclusion

This study has revisited two strands of orally composed Tiv narratives, one fictional and the other based on the activities of a man who lived. The quantity of fiction in Botwev tales is not known, and Nyumugh tales are fictional but may also be taken from the actions of a real person. But whether fiction or fact, the paper has established that the stories are Tiv comedy and represent a type of low humour and satire that exists in Tiv oral art. Many Tiv comedies are lived rather than merely performed: it was Botwev's and Inyumugh's way of life to behave the way they did, and they created comedy, often ridiculing themselves too. The Botwev and Inyumugh comedies offer a fascinating glimpse into Tiv moral philosophy, and the two men studied here are embodiments of humour, protest, pranksterism, deceit, stinginess, and self-preservation. Above all, they represent some valuable, time-defying comedy.

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