

Names as a Deliberate Stratagem by Dramatists – An Anthroponomic Survey of Ola Rotimi’s *Kurunmi*

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Abstract

In some (particularly Africans) literary master-pieces, names exist as a purposeful ploy by authors to call critical attention to the thematic concerns of the pieces. While this aspect of literary criticism is usually ignored by critics, or have not been given sufficient critical attention as though names in literary works exist for mere purposes of character and characterization as necessary literary elements, the study shares the concern of authors whose literary pieces contain names that form a substantial part of the holistic thematics of such works. Investigating *Kurunmi*, which qualifies as an anthroponic research by Ola Rotimi, the paper calls analytical awareness to names and naming in literary works as one way to content the craving of authors on the holistic appreciation of literary texts. The foci, therefore, are to reintroduce anthropological investigations of literary texts; show how this intersects with interests in the relationship between humans and their beings or identities, ritual and daily social life; demonstrate how names govern the unconscious stimuli of individuals in Yoruba (African) society, and specifically, fasten the carnage, including the suicide of *Kurunmi*, in the play on the name of the protagonist. An aspect of onomastics, anthroponymy, is employed as a frame to justify names as forceful linguistic and literary codes permeated with didactic logic, establish some authors as anthroponymists, and provide reasons why critics should give attention to names in any literary work under study.

Keywords: Metaphoric nominalization, anthroponymy, *Kurunmi*, Stratagem, Yoruba names

Introduction

“Oruko nro ni.” (Name influences and determines one’s behaviors).

Ola Rotimi’s *Kurunmi* (1971) has attracted several scholarly essays. However, the anthroponym significance of the play has not been given adequate critical attention. Critics seem to be missing out on one important cause of the nexus between the protagonist’s name, *Kurunmi*, and the tragic events in the play. The current study, building on this powerful dramatic device, therefore, positions itself towards a critical reinterpretation of the carnage and the eventual suicide of the eponymic protagonist in the play within the purview of Yoruba naming culture to conclude that, the tragedies in the play (may be factors of tradition, enthusiasm, escape from shame, or a necessary and practical step to attain honour) are more of the results of the influence the protagonist’s name, *Kurunmi*, has on his destiny. As Oyeleye and Olateju write, *Kurunmi* means “Death has ruined me or Death ruins me,” (Oyeleye and Olateju, 2003, p. 260).

Literature Review

Anthroponymy is a socio-cultural instrument used to uncover some realities of naming in a culture. It guarantees the preservation of linguistics, cultural, and historical information. Thus, through the name of a person, the nationality, the history, as well as the cause of his/her fortunes or misfortunes can be traced, (Bruck, Gabriele vom, 2009, p. 1).

Generally, names have been found to fulfil two main cultural functions: **i.** identify their bearers; differentiating them from other individuals, and **ii.** classify them in terms of their parental, economic, ethnic or geographical group. However, according to Stephen Ajimisan, those folks who see the essence of names and naming secluded to only identification or labelling “can assume any form of name such as Stone, Bush, Fish, Flower, Wood, Rice, Moon etc,” (Ajimisan, 2021, p. 3). Yoruba names do not obey the rules of this style of naming or labelling because of the firm belief Yoruba have in the affinity of one’s name and one’s destiny or fate. In Yoruba culture, it is conceived that the proper names an individual bears can exert enormous influence on his general lifestyle and life prospects. Specifically, Yoruba believe that a man’s destiny, prosperity, fortune or misfortune are tied to his name.

The saying, “Oruko nro ni”, summarises how names are invested with the status of symbolic representations. Literarily, “Oruko nro ni” means, names are so profound, meaningful and powerful that they can influence the entire life cycle of the bearer: from sundry behaviour to integrity, professions, success, failure and so on. By custom and traditioj, Yoruba names are traditionally found by divination performed by a group of Babalawo - traditional Ifa priests, or a diviner, a spiritualist and or a psychotherapist. According to C.L. Adeoye (1979), and Yusuf, Olatunji and Issah (2014), the process of giving a name to a baby starts as soon as a woman desires to have a baby. She approaches a Babalawo who divines what destiny or fate the child in the womb carries. The first Odu Ifa (Yoruba divination codes) that appears at first divination, determines what name will be given to the child. This belief system anchors the reason Yoruba organise a private ceremony, first, for the parents where the names are given in consort with their taboos. Suggestions on what the child will need to be successful are also made, (Adeoye 1979). In situations where names are given without Ifa divination, a great care is placed upon selecting names so as not to give names that will signal any sort of negativity, (Adeoye, 1972, p. 6). Other cultural factors that determine naming of a child are the circumstances surrounding its birth, the profession of the family into which a child is born, and the religious totem (Orisa) of the family, (Ajanaku, 1969, p. 16). Based on these cultural factors, Yoruba names are categorized into four major types, namely, Oruko Amutorunwa (names that are determined by natural or biological factors), sometimes they are referred to as destiny or fate names. Oruko Abiso (ascribed names or given names), Oruko Oriki (ancestral-praise cognomen/panegyric names given to the child as a result of the lineage), and, finally, *inagije* (nick or pet names that are attitudinal or complementary).

In “Beyond Mere Words: Seeing Names through the Yoruba Lens of Function”, Damilola, Adebajojo A. (2021) examines Yoruba names from the perspectives of functions and significance. Exploring the saying, “Oruko nro ni”, he likens a person’s name to the brake of a vehicle. Thus, as the brake plays a significant role in preventing the vehicle from accidents, a person’s name also functions to prevent the bearer from incidents and accidents. At the same time, the name also functions as the accelerator or the stirring of the person’s destiny or fate. It drives the bearer to fortunes or misfortunes, (Adebajojo, 2021, p. 1).

P.M. Mohome asserts that, names are so relevant that some of their socio-cultural “characteristics cannot be well understood except one peeps into the dynamic nature of their meanings,” (Mohome, 1992, p. 12). Ehinmore advances this further that, naming, as a concept, goes beyond just an instrument for the construction of identity. It is a crucial signification and symbolic system in African cosmology. It encompasses people’s perception of life and thought about their living and destiny. “This gives more insight to why certain individuals who are not contented with the names they were initially given change them to suit or portray their new personality,” (Ehinmore, 2021, p. 8). The logic is, given names are cryptographic. They encipher the destiny or fate attached to the child. If the bearer discerns any negativity attached to

his/her name, he/she may decide to change it except, as Kurunmi, he/she feels that the fortunes in the name exceeds the misfortunes.

Statement of the Research Problem

Over the years, critics have not devoted sufficient critical attention to the study of socio-cultural and environmental relevance of names in literary texts as a deliberate ploy or stratagem by authors even when names are distinct and generally unique to the entire thematics of the texts. This research, therefore, sets to unravel and bring to the fore the fact that names in plays goes beyond mere textual necessity or character identification. Critics should investigate names of characters to unearth the treasure some great authors shroud in a particular text.

Research Questions

- i. Do authors merely or randomly create personal names in their plays or they do so for to corroborate and explicit the character's roles in the plays;
- ii. Should critics ignore names in a text even when they play significant roles in the thematics of the text;
- iii. Should anthroponym be seriously considered when analysing a literary text?

Hypothesis

Sometimes, to unearth the treasure some great authors enshroud in a particular text, critics must not ignore the names of, particularly, major characters. In most cases, great authors conceal some significant truths in some names of major characters. Thus, critical studies of a literary text are inadequate if critics ignores the anthroponomic constituents of the text.

Methodology

The study adopts anthroponym, an aspect of onomastics, to analyse the name of the protagonist, Kurunmi, as the play is subjected to a critical anthroponomic analysis. The methods of the study are divided into two major categories: the collecting of anthroponomic information and the analysis, and interpretation of anthroponyms. The collection of anthroponymic information includes: inscriptions, documents, onomastics-tax records, dictionaries, books, monographs, and websites, which are used afterward for mapping purposes. The analysis and interpretation take into account the processing of the collection of the information gathered, which consists of linguistic analysis, comparative-historical method, geographical method, statistical method, belief and historical materials.

Findings

The semantics of characters' names in present day literature is very crucial to meaning making and development in capturing ideas and themes of every literary text. The study also justifies it that, critical attentions to names in literary pieces should be sacrosanct with the thematic analysis of a text. Some playwrights deliberately choose names to add a voice to the thematics of their plays. There is a significant link between the name or names of character(s) in the text and the thematic preoccupation of the text. Some great authors keep or hide under a character or characters and their names to pass their message as Ola Rotimi does with Kurunmi to factorize the carnage in the play. Names of characters are very relevant to the entire analysis of a play. Critics should not ignore names, particularly, proper names.

Aim of the Study:

The paper pursues two main goals: **i.** adds voice to the calls for onomastic critical attention in literary texts, **ii.** demonstrates how names, consciously and or unconsciously, govern the impetuses of individuals in Yoruba (African) society,

Objectives of the Study

The study sets to:

- i. justify how much values the Yoruba race place on names by digging deep into some significant actions in the play;
- ii. justify the rule of thematic unity as the chief reason for the rule of metaphorical coherence;
- iii. justify the qualification of the play, *Kurunmi*, as an anthroponic research by demonstrating how names govern the conscious and the unconscious acts of individuals in Yoruba societies;
- iv. blame the circumstances that surround the suicide of Kurunmi in the play on the name of the protagonist, and not just an escape from shame;
- v. call critical attentions to names and naming in literary pieces as one way to content the craving of authors on the holistic appreciation of literary texts;
- vi. provide answers to some basic questions on the thematic significance of names and naming in literary works as a way of concluding that a successful (African) dramatist (literary author) gives thematic importance to names.

***Kurunmi* – A Historical Background**

The play draws its subject from the Yoruba history at the dawn of colonialism in the late nineteenth century; detailing the Ibadan-Ijaye war as derived from the rivalry of the different successor powers of the Old Oyo Empire, an empire trying to fill the power vacuum created by the collapse of the empire due to its sack by the Fulani army in 1831. Before the sack of the Old Oyo or Katunga, as it was then called, the empire had become the most important power with its territory spreading from South-western part of the present Nigeria to Dahomey. Its capital was well-situated in the Savannah near the River Niger. The prescribed authority that was the main victim of this liquidation was Alaafin Atiba. After its collapse, Atiba moved with some of the refugees to establish a new Oyo, and by the middle of the 19th century, Oyo had bounced back as a major political force as it was now secure from the threat of the Fulani. Smith and Ajayi (1971), cited in Tunji Azeez's *Reading Kurunmi and Ijaye as Factual Historical War Dramas: A Genre and Text*, note, at the new capital also named Oyo, "Atiba worked patiently to regain the power of his ancestors. He had been a wild dissolute young prince... but as Alaafin, he returned to tradition as the only possible restorer of order," (Smith and Ajayi, cf. Azeez, 2012, p. 105). Atiba succeeded in building a new capital but for military strength, he depended on two major warrior towns: Ibadan and Ijaye. He, therefore, cleverly, gave titles to the leaders of these towns – the leader of Ibadan, a fierce warrior, Ibikunle, was given the title of Balogun or War general, while the leader of Ijaye, Kurunmi, was invested with the title of Are-Ona-Kankanfo or Generalissimo. Smith and Ajayi have this to say of Ibadan and Ijaye:

...though Ibadan continued to recognize the suzerainty of the Alaafin, it was largely an autonomous republic ruled by a military oligarchy. The class of chiefs trained their young men in war and set their slaves and prisoners of war to cultivate their farms. Agriculture was a lowly and war a noble profession. At Ijaye, Kurunmi, the greatest Yoruba general established a personal ascendancy. He was king, judge, general, entertainer, sometimes also executioner. All refugees in the town had to submit to his will or quit. (Smith and Ajayi, cf. Azeez, 2012, p. 105)

Thus, there was rivalry between these towns established. Therefore, when Atiba sensed that he was soon to die, he called his leading chiefs, notably amongst them Kurunmi and Ibikunle, to accept the crowned Prince Adelu, as his successor. This was contrary to the constitution of Oyo, which stipulated that, at the death of an Alaafin, his eldest son, the crowned Prince, had to die with him. Ibadan accepted Atiba's plea while Ijaye, under Kurunmi, rejected it as a violation of tradition. The outcome of their respective stance was the source of the play, *Kurunmi*.

Discussion

In the play, *Kurunmi*, the significance of the protagonist's name, Kurunmi, lies in its depiction of the character's identities, aspirations, and relationships, and contributes to the overall theme of carnage. Interrogating Olu Amoda's *Third Eye*, Ihioma Ifounu Pogson (2015) explores the question of naming as a catalyst for investigating some of the deeper issues of the process of artistic production. "It is a perennial

issue in art history whether a work of art can stand meaningfully alone, or whether it requires a name for its meaning to become discernable, and for its identity to be established” (p. 235). This study, therefore, from the standpoint of an insider engagement with the social, historical, political and spiritual conditions that inform the naming strategies of Ola Rotimi, puts forth the argument that artists have the ultimate responsibility to decide how to situate their works through naming. For Ola Rotimi, naming is a necessary part of the process of producing a play.

Boróka PROHÁSZKA-RÁD (2016) in “Discourses of the I: The Panic of Identity in Edward Albee’s *Me, Myself and I*”, writes,

The motif of the doppelganger and doubling has been a recurring theme in literature from folklore to works by Shakespeare, Poe, Dickens, Wilde, Borges, and many others. It often appears as the embodiment of split identity, belonging to the realm of the carnivalesque, the monstrous, the supernatural, suggesting the threatening possibility of expropriation of identity. In Albee’s play as well, the motif of twins and OTTO’s struggle to separate himself from and “get rid” of his brother create a play that “[o]n the surface [...] is a very funny story of a pair of twin brothers and their family, but on the deeper level [it] addresses core questions of our modern society. How do we shape our identities and sense of self in a world that seems to inscribe culture upon us? In our increasingly virtual era, does the very meaning of existence change? In an age of molecular biology, how do we distinguish ourselves from our DNA?” – as Emily Mann, director, phrases it, (Pp. 29–39).

As earlier established, a given name does not only serve as a social identity; it also influences several aspects of the bearer. This explains why the classification of Yoruba names as destiny/fate names is usually excused by Ifa divination of the mission such a person is meant to carry out on earth. Although, Ifa may not speak in clear terms the destiny or fate the bearer carries; it passes such a message in the name given to the child. Yoruba believe that a child’s name plays some parts in its development and future career, “and consequently that child may react to a name having negative social implications,” (Akinnaso, 1980). This is what Ola Rotimi (1975) means with Aderopo in *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, who is born after the first child believed to carry ill destiny has been ordered to be killed, which he symbolizes as the filling of “the nothingness left behind by the first,” (p. 4). However, parents of the child or the child him/herself, at adulthood, enjoys the liberty to change any name that carries unpleasant or negative undertones.

As a Yoruba man, a custodian of the Yoruba culture and tradition, Kurunmi should be well-informed of this aspect of the Yoruba culture so as to do the needful: change his name. Perhaps, being power-drunk, a demander of absolutes, he is beclouded by the fear his name instills in the heart of the people. Indeed, Kurunmi is a name that threatens those who pronounce it, not the bearer. Whoever pronounces Kurunmi is simply instilling the fear of the curse the name carries on him/herself. Kurunmi means death *ruins me*! And, as the Yoruba saying goes, when you call a warrior, you strike the ground with the sword. Therefore, he is obnubilated by the name. To change it will mean to forfeit a large chunk of his absoluteness. In the cause of the events in the play, the negative connotations of the name also starts to play out in optimistic disguise when Kurunmi begins to exhibit his genuine intention, concern and defence for the culture or tradition that gives him birth; gives him name, and gives him credit. For whatever reason, he has a high regard for the existing tradition. Thus, he is bent on protecting it. This dogged pursuit of an identified course of action and a commitment to righting a perceived wrong may be seen as the design of those forces behind the fulfillment of the destiny or fate attached to his name. Thus, the metaphor of the name, which comes in form of rebellion against the society, absorbs the good intention of the bearer, Kurunmi.

The first indication that Kurunmi’s name carries the fate or tragedy of a people is established in the opening of the play in Kurunmi’s “agbo’ le” wherein the gods of the tribe are present in varying images of earth,

granite and wood. Here also exists, or are believed to exist the spirits of departed ancestors: ethereal, invisible – eternal guardians of the bodies of the living, bodies that have warmth, and blood, and sweat, (Ola Rotimi, 1971: 1). These are spiritual personages that form the *alale'le* (owners of the earth) or the tradition. As Ola Rotimi writes in *The Gods are Not to Blame* (1975), these gods are, no doubt, present on the day of his naming. They know what destiny or fate comes with him. So, they, systematically, influence the name given to him to fulfil the destiny or fate it carries: he grows “too powerful”; he prefers being “feared than [being] loved”; he is “even Chief Priest to all the gods... Sango, Ogun, Oya, Orunmila. All of them, the gods of our fathers, are [his] personal property,” (Ola Rotimi, 1971, p. 55).

The second indication is, during the feast of Ororun – a feast where Kurunmi, the lord and master of Ijaye and the chief priest, feeds all the people of Ijaye whom he calls his “children”, Kurunmi assumes the position of the next in command to the gods. The Praise-Singer’s praise-chants Kurunmi as the unfathomable, “Granite. Lord that must be obeyed. Like a thief – demander of absolutes. The lion himself, prowling, unrushed in the mysteries of night,” (Ola Rotimi, 1971, p. 11). There is no gainsaying that a character portrayed in this manner will definitely not be reasonable but be unreasonable, stubborn, arrogant and abrasive. In the euphoria of this accolade, Kurunmi, closely followed by his five sons, storms in in anger against Adelu. Everybody prostrates himself, and hails, “kabiyesi! Are-ona-kankanfo”, (Ola Rotimi, 1971, p. 11). It is important to understand the eternal truth that, in the Yoruba world presented in this play, only a king is addressed as kabiyesi (One-who-must-not-be-questioned). The mere fact that Kurunmi has assumed this imperial personage portrays him as a man who has perfectly set himself on the path of ruin because, anyone who alters the gods’ hierarchy, has challenged the authority of the gods. Therefore, it is understandable why Kurunmi is being driven by the forces attached to the name to commit taboos that will lead him to the impasse of the name.

The third factor is, Kurunmi stands before the shrine of Ogun, the god of iron “pouring libation on it from a keg of palm-wine in his other hand”, cursing, “He who plots evil against Kurunmi, Lord of Ijaiye, Ogun, let the earth burst, burst open, And swallow up his body,” (Ola Rotimi, 1971: 11). Little, however, does Kurunmi know that, like Odewale in Ola Rotimi’s *The Gods Are Not To Blame* (1975), he is the one who plots evil against himself. Like Odewale, too, he has a curse on him. He cannot run away from it. The gods have willed that he will *ruin* his own people and himself. The only thing he can do not to carry out the will of the gods is to change his name that seems to inebriate him. Unfortunately, however, “The snail may try, but it cannot cast off its shell.” (Ola Rotimi, 1975, p. 54). The “shell” in the case of Kurunmi, is his name. Kurunmi addresses the crowd to register his grievance, “...Adelu will be king after his father, Atiba.” In conclusion, he says, “Over my dead body...” (Ola Rotimi, 1971, p. 12).

Kurunmi’s strong-will couched in the dramatic irony, “Over my dead body”, is the bastion of tragic epistemology in the play. It reflects his determination to do all he alone considers most appropriate to do. He, alone, chooses to fight against the earth. It is a great sacrilege to fight against the earth or what Yoruba call *Alale Ile* wherein one’s placenta or what Yoruba call *ibi-omo*, is buried. The earth holds what feeds you in the womb, your placenta, *ibi-omo*, *ekeji omo* (the child’s pair). By implication, the earth has access to some highly classified information about your components or total wellbeing through the placenta. Through that, the earth can manipulate every individual. That is why Yoruba love to pour libation on the earth. The earth is the mother of any tradition, not the people. It is whatever the earth wants as tradition that the people must adopt. The Yoruba words or expression that best captures tradition that dictates human actions is *alale ile*. The term tradition even falls miserably short in defining the sacred semantic core of what *alale ile* really is. Some foundational spirits, ethereal, invisible – eternal guardians of the ancient order – are believed to have been occupying the stead since Obatala, God of Creation, created the earth. Therefore, each *alale ale* (or, for the purpose of this study, tradition) of every portion of the earth occupied by man, has its own preference and laid down principles which form the rituals. Therefore, since the Old Oyo had been sacked and destroyed by the forces of the Sokoto Caliphate, forcing the Alaafin of Oyo to move his capital southwards to the present-day Oyo, and Oyo Empire had succeeded in re-establishing itself protected on this new site, a new tradition has been established, too. As Hope Eghagha puts it, the ways of man are

not like the stagnant pond, still, quiet, sleeping yet breeding noble mosquitoes causing deadly malaria. “Man flows like a stream gushing into new channels. When storms shake the earth, when earthquakes shake the earth, man changes, bends, adapts else the stem will snap. We came to this land and the past was no more, (Eghagha, 1998, p. x).

The fourth factor is, all the important chiefs in Oyo, who appreciate the plights of Kurunmi, pay him a visit to appeal to his understanding and sense of the dynamism of their culture, and tell him to abide by the new tradition on the basis that “time passes and the ways of men must change with time”. But Kurunmi is not comfortable with what he describes as “pervasion and disgrace,” (p. 17). Defiantly, he insists that “We have tradition, and tradition is tradition. Time may pass but the laws of our fathers, tested and hallowed by the ways of men, live on. That is tradition,” (p. 17). Oluyole admonishes that tradition adapts to time, “Life’s time.” It must change with time and “with man.” Kurunmi calls this, “Dog’s shit....” (Ola Rotimi, 1971, p. 17-18). Consequently, in his vitriolic sentiment, he, arrogantly sends a message to Alaafin Atiba that, he will never “prostrate himself to shoot a deer with a father one morning, and then squat with the son in the evening to shoot a goose!” (p. 21). In the same spirited sentiment, he evolves a rather elaborate metaphoric fable to capture his passionate hatred for the whole idea:

When the tortoise
Is heading for
A senseless journey,
and you say to him:
‘Brother tortoise,
brother tortoise,
when will you be
wise and come back
home?’
The tortoise will say:
‘Brother, not until
I have been disgraced.... (p. 21).

Adelu becomes king. To register his difference, disagreement and insubordination, Kurunmi leads Ijaye to war equally when the land is “not quite ready for war.” War is not all about warriors alone. The expertise of a general and his lieutenants alone cannot win a war. Adeoye, C.L. in his *Asa Ati Ise Yoruba* defines war as “a great matter!”

Whoever has not experienced or does not have its knowledge may not know to what extent it ruins. Only those who experience its damaging impact can tell of its ruin. Wars are not like pounded yam, black-starch or palp. To appreciate it, one should just strike the earth with his own hand or frighten another man’s child by blinks of the eyes. Preparing for a war, we anticipate two things: first, to take people captives, second, to kill enemies. But, when we get to the war front, the third becomes our lot, and we are taken as captives. (Adeoye, 1979, p. 295) [Translation by me].

Kurunmi losses thousands in the war. “...River Ose flows on, deep red with the blood of [his people... and his five sons]”. Leaving in the land, hunger, thirst and fear. Caught in the double trap of being demander of the absolute and at the same time enchanted by passion to sustain tradition, being unable to resist the charm and the horror of his names, Kurunmi, being frustrated and confused by his own doing, ascribes the ruining to himself, “When a leader of men has led his people to disaster, and what remains of his present life is but a shadow of his proud past, then it is time to be leader no more”, (p. 93). He drinks poison and dies. The death that his destiny carries to ruin his people also ruins him.

Conclusion

The semantics of characters' names in literature should remain very central to meaning-making and development in capturing ideas and themes of every literary text. The truth is, whenever great authors of the class of Ola Rotimi, Soyinka, Osofisan chooses names for their characters, they do so for a purpose of a holistic thematics to offer rich philosophical, deep insight, meaning (connotation and denotation) postulations and logical interpretations that are capable of giving entirely and creatively didactic messages and reprimands. For instance, Soyinka's attempt at portraying various images and ideas (filled with African values) has grown to its peak, as he frequently explores the culture of his cosmic environment and thus stricken a balance between the meaning exemplified by the Yoruba language and that of the Europeans. In an attempt to get this done, he, like Ola Rotimi, with unique syllogism, has been very successful in making his characters bear the names that corroborate and explicit their roles in his plays. Elesin Oba, in *Death and the King's Horseman*, (1975) that denotatively translates as the King's Horseman, also connotatively translates as Elesin Oba, the King's ridiculer as he makes to shame the king by refusing to die the ritual death necessary for the king's passage to the land of his ancestors.

In what Kendall Lankford (2023) titles, "Name Change", the story of Alexander the Great and a fugitive soldier in his army, serves a sure jetty to dock this discussion. During one of Alexander's great conquests, he and his army were engaged in a very serious and important battle to take over more land in the region. While the fighting was at its fiercest, one of his soldiers, being filled with the certainty of death, fled the scene of the war. When he was eventually tracked down and brought before Alexander the Great to a stand trial, Alexander the Great, asked, "Soldier, why did you run?" After a silent moment, the man answered, "Sir, I left because I was afraid." Alexander the Great asked another question even when he would have preferred a death sentence. "Soldier, what is your name?" The soldier bowed his head in awful humiliation, barely able to admit the painful truth, that his name was also "Alexander." Upon hearing this, Alexander the Great, in his vitriolic indignation, forcefully demanded, "Then you will either change your behavior, or you will change your name." One obvious truth about this story is that, Alexander the Great demanded that anyone who shared his name would also behave like him, as the Alexander was a name reserved for champions, warriors, and the brave! To this end, through the application of the theory and other concepts of meaning to the Kurunmi, it could be established that, rather than mere entertaining his reader/audience, the playwright, through his use of names, often times prescribes, informs, asserts and predicts among others. Thus, the study has anthropologically proved the efficacy of the reference theory of meaning, connotation, entailment and others that the meaning of a name is not only what it points to, but also what it entails and performs.

Recommendations

It is, therefore, recommended that,

- i. Names in literary texts should also be given critical attention when critiquing them;
- ii. Critics should not avoid the rigors of doing an onomastic ethicology of names in literary text;
- iii. Writers should also choose names of character on the purpose of relevance to the thematics of the pieces.

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