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du Département d'Anglais adossée au **Groupe de recherches
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INTER-TEXTUAL

PLOTTING NARRATIVES WITH TEXTUAL SEMANTICS: AN ONOMASTIC SURVEY OF AFRICAN AND HISPANIC LITERATURES

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Résumé:

Les noms propres des personnages contribuent à l'intrigue et aux sens narratifs des récits africains et latino-américains. Cette étude illustre les différentes manières dont la sémantique des noms se reflète dans la performance, la perception et les actions des personnages, et confère à ces derniers une approche culturelle complémentaire de l'interprétation narrative et de sa fonction idéologique. Grâce à l'onomastique, qui étudie l'origine socioculturelle et le sens des noms, l'étude conclut qu'à partir des noms des personnages, un récit offre des exemples permettant d'expliquer les figures de style et leurs contributions dynamiques contextuelles à la fluidité narrative et à la création de sens.

Mots clés : Fonction narrative, intrigue narrative, nom du personnage, signification de l'action, changement

Abstract

Proper names of characters contribute to the narrative plotting and meaning in the African and Latin American narratives. This study gives instances of the various ways in which the semantics of names reads in the characters' performance, perception and actions in the narrative and gives to the narrative an additional cultural approach to the narrative interpretation and ideological function. Through the use of Onomastics that studies the socio-cultural origin and meaning of names, the study has reached the conclusion that based on the characters' names, a narrative offers instances to account for figures of speech and their contextual dynamic contributions to narrative fluidity and meaning creation.

Key words: Narrative function, narrative plot, character name, action meaning, change.

Introduction

The imaginative times have different narrative elements that participate in the plotting of the narrative and sense making. In this study, the focus is on characters' proper nouns, in both African and Hispanic contexts, the way these names contribute to the plotting and meaning making in the two socio-cultural backgrounds.

This paper, therefore, shows how names and their socio-cultural semantics participate in the plotting, and the potential meanings that help uncover the dynamism of figures of speech on the basis of the interplay between the meaning of names and the character's actions. Thus, this study gives instances of the various ways in which the semantics of names reads in the characters' performance, perception and actions in the created world. This capacity of names to contribute to their meanings enables the reader to sense figures of speech and their semantic implication on the actions and reactions. Through the use of Onomastics that sheds light on the socio-cultural origin and meaning of names, the study shows that the characters' names and actions complement each other to impact the narrative plotting and give instances of figures of speech as well as their contextual contributions to narrative fluidity and meaning creation. Thus, the theoretical framework leans on Izevbaye (1981) and Orie (2002) who unfold the specificity of names and functions in the narrative.

The African context of study and the Hispanic backgrounds illustrate different contexts of the study as a way of corroborating the literary study opportunity names suggest. The study is built around 'Plotting stories through onomastic awareness', 'narrative sustainability through the influence of names' and 'matching Names with Textual Semantics'.

1. Plotting Stories through Onomastic Awareness

Onomastics is the "study of the history and origin of proper names, especially personal names" (*Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1999:1996). Whether in the Western culture or that of Africa, names play important roles in the narratives. Specific contexts of Africa, and those of Spanish and Latin America are the backgrounds against which this study is conducted. Yerma is the epimorous character in the book *Yerma*. The name means "dry", "barren". She is desperately looking for a child where her husband Juan is totally indifferent. Yerma looks for a child while Adaku in *The Joys of Motherhood* is looking for money that is not so important for her husband Nnaife. In

Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, Adaku, means "daughter of wealth" (Emecheta, 1994, p. 170) and she is always thirsty for money allowing the plot to derive its meaning from her desire for money and not for children. Whether in the African context where the narrative focuses on the barrenness and the paradoxical longing of the woman for money or that of Yerma in the Spanish context where she longs for a child and the husband having no such desire, the two narratives have implemented the philosophy of their names in the narrative plots.

An analysis of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* of the Spanish writer Federico Garcia Lorca and *Anthills of the Savannah*, *No Longer at Ease* and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, and *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta shows the ways in which the respective plots are knit, premised on the characters' names. Adela is a female character in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. Her name means 'dignity', 'nobility', but in the play she is a rebel, for her lost noble identity after her father's death whereby her mother imposed on her a long period of bereavement, which frustrated her and led her to an open conflict with her mother. The onomastic context of study aligns with Orie (2002) who marks gender with names. (Beatrice) Nwanyibuike (Achebe: 1987,105) is also known as Beatrice Okoh. For this character, it is her proverbial "Nwanyibuike — A female is also something "(Achebe, 1987: 87) that matches with her performance in the novel. Beatrice is a "nwanyi, the female half". She reconciles Christopher Oriko and Ikem Osodi whose friendship was being frustrated by the controversial role His Excellency Sam was having them perform, as Editor of the *Gazette* and Chief Editor, in *Anthills of the Savannah*. From the mother's perspective, the "female is also something" is an expression of sorrow and despair. But given Beatrice's performance, she has achieved what was often associated with men: Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, the mediator between the Chief-editor and the *Editor of the Gazette*.

Again, whether in the Nigerian context of *The Joys of Motherhood*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* or that of Spanish in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, the story is shaped by the logic in the meaning of the characters' names. The reader is led by the logic imposed on the imaginative cosmos and performances. Through *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and *Things Fall Apart*, there is a strong connectivity between characters' names and their fate in the narratives. Angustias is a female character in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. Her name means anguish and expresses her bad luck. Despite the fact that she is the Elder sister, she cannot enjoy her father's heritage for long. Anguish is introduced into her life by her younger sister who snatches

her handsome boyfriend from her, her mother who decreed a long time of **bereavement** having the daughter miss companions. All this happens after the death of the rich father. She is designated by words such as ugly, old, and the elder sister of the family. The writer has made it a narrative fate for Angustias to suffer. Angustias' name foreshadows her life anguish. In parallel with the African context of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Yerma has an enduring life among other people of her created society just as Unoka in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Unoka means unsuccessful, 'mouthfull' which suggests that the character is only playful with this rhetoric ability. Else, the character has a lot of debts. He neither owns a farm nor has enough means to take care of his family. In the Igbo society of the novel, Unoka is the very expression of the name he bears. He is a failure. However, he plays the flute well, as a griot, in the community where it is not enough to rely on the generosity of others to fulfil oneself. The narrative is a display of the character's destiny buried and stretched in the plot for the theme of human failure to stand. Worthy of notice is the fact that it is not always established that the philosophy in the characters' names destroys the characters themselves. In *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, the name "Maryrio" which means "Martydom" is not the sufferer. According to the plot of the story, he is the very perpetrator of suffering onto others. Yet, the name contributes to understanding the life course of the character, not as a victim but as a culprit.

Considering the various contexts of study in Africa and those of the Spanish, there is evidence of the ways in which the philosophy attached to each name can read in the character's life, actions and performance in the created social microcosm. Izevbaye (1981) finds a connection between naming and the character as a moral choice that influences the narrative. The study argues here that a piece of literature is based on aesthetic norms including names and their potential contribution to the shaping of the plot. The extent of the norms is yet unknown until contexts offer themselves to the study. This study offers aspects of what needs to be known about the contribution of characters' naming, actions and the contextual dynamics that contribute to the textual Semantics. It is worth knowing how proper names of characters participate in their identification and characterization, and allows to read the figures of speech from the African and Hispanic perspectives.

The plotting of stories with names falls into what Peter Newmark (1999) refers to, on two-folds, as semantic translation and communicative translation. The semantic aspect entails working with the meaning of the name and its connectivity with the characters' attitude, actions and achievements. The communication aspect goes with how the writer of the corpus text selects words and molds phrases to fix the semantic load of names as social semiotic sign in the text.

Such an alignment can only lead to a conscious translation of names, a situation that is facilitated by the lexicon / grammatical nature of African names. Besides, translating the semantic and semiotic values of African names with ample evidence of spatial, temporal, personal, religious, historical and gender deixis can be stimulating to a reader [...] whose worldview of the African culture and literary genre in question would be greatly enriched. (Bariki, 2009, p. 59).

In the quotation above, it is shown that literature in the colonial language is a form of translation where the colonial language is used to retell a version of the old story that originally belonged to the local language. The narrative transfer is conducted from the local language and socio-cultural specificity to the colonial language. Here, the writer is exposed to the reality of working out the textual semantics, bringing to the fore a form of dialogue between the inspiring culture and the medium language. The medium language in this context is English, though it could be any other colonial language. However, the two realities agree thanks to the genius of the writer to produce a literary discourse in his capacity as a writer. The idea of Semantics is not that of denotative meaning but the meaning that is constructed from the textual. Though the name does not change in as far as form considered, it can change in meaning and function. It can also be an objective element from which any subjective interpretation can be tied. In terms of textual interplay, three possible variations can be seen: keeping company with the philosophical meaning of the name; keeping with the aspect of the original meaning of the name and offering possibility of variation as a result of the creative function of literature. Creativity points to the symbolic variations that agree with the liable figures of speech in the narrative contexts.

Traditional African names are often laden with cultural and historical significance, while Western names or nicknames might be adopted due to colonisation, assimilation, or personal preference. This duality reflects the complex interplay between traditional values and modern influences in the characters' lives (Nkansah and Bonsu, 2024, p.9).

The communicative translation is about the construction of the narrative chain for the story to unfold and raise awareness that names play the same role as other narrative devices and can be

adapted, if and when needed, to any possible adjustment creative literature requires. In any case, characters play their roles along with the cultural connotation of their names boosting a coherent narrative influence on the readership.

In many African languages, personal names have a strong historical, socio-cultural and ethnopragmatic bearing that go beyond mere identity or referentiality. In most cases, the names are neither arbitrary nor semantic. This is not to imply that names in other climes are entirely arbitrary as all cultures have their parameters for naming. What is obvious is that African names have a strikingly semantic and semiotic load. In other words, they have communicative functions. Personal names in Nigeria are multifunctional despite their mono-referential status (mono- referential in the sense that they refer to one person only). (Bariki, 2009, p. 46)

This quotation corroborates the multifunctional capacity of proper names in the appreciation of the narratives. Individual characters reveal their personalities in the way they act and how their names pinpoint their cultural, social and contextual meanings in the narrative.

2. Narrative Sustainability through the Influence of Names

Beyond the usual function of identification that names perform, this section offers the narrative functions of names in the African novel as well as in the Spanish novel. The whole spectrum of names across cultural boundary has staged the impression in different narrative environments. A cross-cultural reading of characters' names stresses textual meaning and the ways in which names contribute to a better reading, understanding and interpretation of the narrative. On the whole, the dynamics created sheds some critical light on the literary projection of life and the subsequent actions requested for the impact the story is liable to promote.

2.1. Mapping Identity with Names

The novel as a whole has been the Western product. It got adapted to the African context through the effort of domestication. In the process, names of all cultures have been used consciously or not to play roles beyond a mere apprehension of identity. It is common to note that connecting the philosophical meaning of names to narrative contexts can knit the plot of the story and reinforce meaning. But this complement may be lacking in the readers that have no knowledge of the genuine culture behind.

In the two cultures, proper names are used as a means of identity among the ethnic groups and beyond. Names are products of cultures that contribute to a certain order inherent in the events that inspire those names. The idea of identity in the study ranges from gender, order and age of the name bearer in her/his culture community. Because names speak to the reader, they give local colors and enable the reader to identify the culture they belong to. The knowledge of the characters' names – their sociological, cultural and philosophical information help fix thoughts or more specifically understand the characters' interplay, which as a whole, makes up the plots of these

novels. In this connection, we agree with Bailly (1991, p. 58), “Names are as important as other literary signs or symbols. As such they are important for the production of a meaning” my translation). Through placing names among narrative signs and symbols, Bailly opens vista on interpreting texts with a stress placed on figures of speech among other textual devices.

These figures of speech often read as they spell out their characteristics for the critics or readers to take notice. Some English, Spanish, Latin American and African proper names in conjunction with the story shape some aggregate meanings from names in English, Spanish and local African culture in both the African narratives and the Spanish narratives. Gender determinism is borne by the name given to people as evidence of cultural marking. In the Spanish context. Carla is the feminine form of Carlos, Bernando stands for the masculine form of Bernanda, while Alfonsa is the feminine form of Alfonso which means “noble and ready”. The characters that bear these names can be appreciated in connection to the names in this study.

The way Federico Garcia Lorca, Gabriel Garcia Márquez in Hispanic context and Achebe, Armah and Emecheta in the African context have handled the proper names in their narratives is an indication that African and Spanish (European) names coincide in so far as they appeal to the cultural and social realities the names bearers belong to. Regarding age and hierarchy in the extended family system, some names communicate the strength of the bond between the grandparents and their offspring. For example, in Ireland and according to Maciver (1986), a son is linked to his grandfather by the name and known to the public as such. With reference to the same study by Angus Maciver (1981, p.17) where it is established that “Fitz” and “mac” mean “son of”, the prefix “O” is taken from “Ogha” which means “grandson of” is attached to the surname in order to highlight the reality, which pays tribute to the grandparents. In Achebe’s novels, such a sociological meaning is given a thought through an inference of the reincarnation. Achebe has his character Odogwu name Obi Okonkwo “Okonkwo kpom-kwem” (NLE¹:49). According to the old Odogwu, Obi is the grand-father, Ogbuefi Okonkwo, who is believed to have come back (NLE: 49). Through this approach, the socio-cultural reality that consists in explaining the genealogy through the name is fully conveyed. Achebe has brought to light the philosophy of African oral traditions suggested in the names of persons. In relation to Western culture, he has introduced this philosophy to account for the abstract reality of civilization in Africa. Though names are abstract as we hear them, there is evidence that they assist the reader to identify and locate the characters’ actions against the cultural and social background meanings as well as the expectations that map the narrative plot. In this context, names and actions agree to unveil each character’s mission; therefore, it can be said that Achebe has associated his characters with several narrative functions in the plot. This traditional context of Achebe’s Africa, agrees with Awoonor’s (1974) perception of custodians as guardians of their people’s identities.

¹ NLE stands for *No Longer at Ease*, a novel by Chinua Achebe.

2.2. Reading Figures of Speech through the Dynamics of Names

Figures of speech are identifiable through the semantic relations the text establishes between the characters' names and the socio-cultural implications their actions suggest in the narrative. Figures of speech are narrative devices whose expression, words or phrases have rhetoric effect that contribute to make the language non-literal but creative to generate an effect. The mental agitation that the exceptional use of the language provokes in the readership drives away the ordinary meaning and sways new Semantics in the textual environment. The figure of speech has the merit to convey meanings or reinforce ordinary effect of discourse on the readership. Thus, when reading stories with the onomastic knowledge, there is a surprising dynamics of the name systems which contributes to complete the narrating meanings. The meaning of the name oftentimes introduces a conflicting mood in the implementation of what the name projects from the socio-cultural logic for the reader to sense textual Semantics.

3. Matching Names with Textual Semantics

This section deals with the contribution of names to the narrative aesthetics and the social reforms as the story unfolds. The section also connects the characters' actions and the philosophy that their names suggest as established throughout the plots of the stories. Attention is paid to whether the fulfilment meets resistance or not. On the whole, the reading of names and the efforts to understand them in the culture of their existence as well as in the context of the narrative whereby they are used determines the logic in which the connectivity of the names and the text are carried out. The literary reforms that texts suggest also agree with the meaning of the names.

3.1. Emotive Charge of Names and Character Performance in Parallel Realms

Clara is a female character in Isabel Allende's *La casa de las espiritus*. The name "Clara" is the feminine form of the Late Latin name "Clarus," which meant "clear, bright, famous" and by extension, Clara stands for "clarity" and "intelligence." In the novel, Clara stands for brightness, a symbol of magic realism. She stands for an Oracle that inspires fear and respect thanks to the prophetic gift and she can predict the future with precision. She predicted the death of her sister Rosa. She could also talk with spirits. With her gifts in the plot of the narrative, she influences the life of the community with rightness and clarity and is needed when confusion is caused by humans or spirits. This mood is introduced in the narrative plot and accounts for how solutions are brought to problems using intelligence and creativity in the Latin American context of the study and potentially in real life.

In Armah's *Fragments*, Onipa Baako is the protagonist. His name means 'a man alone'. In the narrative context, he is the family's champion when it comes to schooling. He is the only one family member who has achieved a relatively high level of education at school. For the school and as the family champion of Western education, he is the only one who has travelled abroad. Everybody in the family sees Baako as the elevator of the family, the one that will bring fame and wealth in the community where families are ranked on the basis of achievement and potentially on the contribution of their members. A been-to, a person that has studied abroad. With his

accomplishments as a “been-to,” Baako is perceived as someone who will raise his Ghanaian people of the novel to a wealthy standard among other communities. The semantics of the text, in this case, that of the proper nouns, and characterization in the narrative match closely with the story plotting.

Baako’s name and the narrative performance do not always agree. Thereby making the name a complement to the story unfolding and the story Semantics. This young Ghanaian, Baako, fails alone in an environment where he was expected to be the symbol of success for his family and to a larger extent, to his community. It is a hard fact that pet children end up disappointing their families. He no more understands his culture, and history. Baako has become Mister been-to, a stranger, an alienated person. Agunwa (Agbadi’s senior wife who was buried with a slave girl) means “the heroic child”. The ancestral funerals where the deceased person is venerated with the company of a person alive commands that the deceased person deserves the heroic stature.

Malachi (One of the second set of twins born to Nnaife and Nnu Ego) means “you do not know what tomorrow will bring” (Emecheta, 1994, p. 187). Nnu Ego and Nnaife gave these names based on specific occurrences and circumstances during the time of pregnancy and delivery. And hopefully the character approaches life with prudence. Moreover, UCHENDU, in *Things Fall Apart*, suggests the meaning of “sense control”. He is endowed with the quality of prudence and sense control so that he can help Okonkwo control his “sense” while facing his son Nwoye’s betrayal of the Ibo tradition. Uchendu is also the one consoling Okonkwo and telling him to feel at home on his mother’s land during his time of exile. All these names are expressive of character, attitude, power, wish, and hope. The expected things have happened in the characters’ lives as the stories unfold.

OBIERIKA signifies “plenty heart”. The name is coined to tell the quality of ambivalence of its bearer. Thus, the character Obierika is made to question abnormal things in the traditional community of *Things Fall Apart*. A female could not be given that name in the hyper-patriarchal context of the novel wherein it is established that women should remain submissive and be happy.

DOLORES is a female character in *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo. Her name derives from the Latin « doloris » and means "sorrows". In the Spanish context, the name derives from the title, *Nuestra Señora de los Dolores*, referring to the Virgin Mary, meaning "Our Lady of Sorrows". The life of Dolores in Juan Rulfo’s novel is filled with anguish as a result of the influential figure’s betrayal of her love, after having one child with her. She sent her son to the father for all he owed them as breadwinner who abandoned his family and responsibilities. Unfortunately, the mother died in sorrow and the son went seeking the father who died before the arrival of the latter. The plot is, therefore, a mixture of the feelings of sorrow and happiness that hint at the very nature of life in the novel and in the true Latin American context.

In Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego is the daughter of Agbadi and Ona whose earlier marriage to Amatokwu was a failure. Nnu Ego signifies “twenty bags of cowries” (Emecheta, 1994,

p. 26). Ngozi means “blessing”. She is the first child of Nnaife and Nnu Ego who died some months later. In contrast with the meaning of the name, the reader wonders how “blessing” Ngozi can be. Ngozi is given to their first child because his presence makes Nnu Ego no longer a failed woman and provides a guarantee that her second marriage gives hope. Nnu Ego mocks Adaku who prefers money to children in the society where a child is more than money: “If you spent all your time making money and getting rich, the gods wouldn’t give you any children: if you wanted children you had to forget money, and be content to be poor...Never mind, he will grow soon and clothe and farm for you... (Emecheta, 1994, p. 80).” The foregoing excerpt is a rival discussion between Adaku and Enu Ego, the two wives of Nnaife. A childless wife of Nnaife. In the narrative, Adaku is excessively looking for wealth with no heed for having children. That is no doubt for a reader who is aware of the meaning of her name, “daughter of wealth” (Emecheta, 1994, p.170). Contrary to the preference of the Ibo society for male children, when Adaku finally had children, she kept on longing for money regardless of whether they are males or females. Adaku is not with tradition seeking male children. Money is her main interest. Whether a male or a female, for Adaku he or she makes it well when he or she can make money. While her husband Nnaife, one that inherited her after the death of her own husband, ruminates anger about Adaku having given birth to two twin girls, her reply is money-focused on the situation. Her husband complains because the twins are girls and in the belief of the community women cannot bring wealth to the family. Adaku replies that in twelve years’ time they will bring bride-price instead. They are married out. The narrative influence caused with the meaning of the name is outstanding. The character’s achievement is so much tight to the meaning of her name, giving the impression that the powerful energy in her name implements the destiny in the name.

Dramatic irony is worked out around the name Adaku, “daughter of wealth”, who desperately longs for wealth. Is the meaning a challenge, a premonition or a wish in the narrative? If it is taken for a challenge then the reader understands why she is in constant search for money. If it is a premonition, when will this meet with the character’s expectation? But if it is a wish, it sounds an unfulfilled wish. The meaning of the name makes the plot a dynamic context for multiple interpretations in conjunction with gender and prosperity.

Gender and prosperity are flavor in the narrative plotting. The male-female relationships filled with the philosophy of naming are grounded on new social values. Unlike in the past, some people prefer money to children even in Africa. The meanings of the names are stressed as they appear to the common Ibo people. The African context and that of the Hispanic imaginative world of both Hispanic writers have impacted the narratives, shedding more light on the various ways in which gender, social rank, human relations and figures of speech determine the plot direction.

These writers have given the names to their characters with well-shaped narrative plans to have them influence the plotting and contribute to the meaning-making. The narratives are mopped with forces in the names that are culturally and ideologically predetermined but the power is in the hands of the writer who validates the logic or creates his or her own based on his or her social plans.

Through the impact that the names have on characters in accordance with the meaning of the name, Achebe is willing to shape ways of understanding from the lies between the narrative techniques and the story. In the case of Achebe and in connection with the Ibo culture that has inspired his writing, not all characters have positive names.

NWAKIBIE of *Things Fall Apart* and *Anthills of the Savannah* is, as was already said, a name of hope, great expectation. In the first novel, that character is called “Our father” (TFA: 14). In the context, only a wealthy man bears this name. The narrative, it is from NWAKIBIE that Okonkwo borrowed yams to begin his farming activities. In *Anthills of the Savannah* the character named NWAKIBIE has the *ozo* title. This title is given to people who have achieved great amount of wealth.

All things considered, with Gavy-Prieur (1994, 26), we are told that,

La compréhension d'un nom propre, contrairement à celle d'un nom commun, requiert toujours des informations extérieures au nom lui-même, ces informations pouvant être ou non explicitement fournis à l'intérieur même du discours [The understanding of a proper name contrary to that of the common name, always requires pieces of information that are outside the existence of the name itself. These pieces of information may or may not be spelt out in the very discourse] Gavy-Prieur, M.- N. 1994, p. 26.).

Nwoye's sister is OBIAGELI. Her name means “One who comes will eat or enjoy”. OBIAGELI is playful and too proud of herself. She drops the pot of water through playing.

Thus, the cohesion Achebe has created between the name meanings and the characters' actions prefigures a division of tasks (Adotevi, 1972, p. 65) with gender as his ideological background. Thus, to drive the reader's emotion to the concern of the narrative, names are chosen to steer the reader's emotion. The uploading of the meaning the name carries floats the reader's imagination here and there depending on how the context lends itself to the sociological meaning of the given names and the dynamism in which the context allows the name to speak again.

Names fall under different shades: praise names, names of the market day, gendered names, name of wishful fulfilment, evil casting names and death prevention names. The meaning of the names when they are contrasted with the bearers' actions and life quality in the narrative can offer opportunities to read the usual figures of speech through the implication the contrast gives. It is established in this vein that names are polysemantic in nature, going beyond society, culture of the community in which they are used. The created context gives context where names take up contextual meaning and lend themselves to possible interpretations. Names in context are signs or symbols and as such they can drive any potential meaning. There is evidence in the context of the study that names in fiction help in meaning creation and the textual Semantics with multiple interpretations and prospects.

3.2. Social Reforms through Renaming and Action Reform

Naming in the West African narrative, whether consciously or subconsciously, falls in the achievement of the story as well as to the impact assigned to the narrative in the specific context of the text under study. As a narrative device, names and their philosophical load participate in the appreciation of the figures of speech in the same way any narrative device lends itself to the interpretation. In *Anthills of the Savannah* (AOS), Achebe gives positive roles to his female characters and articulates these roles in connection with the meaning of the names. Through the name “Nneka”-“mother is supreme”(AOS: 98), Achebe corroborates the idea previously introduced in the first novel while explaining the protective role of Okonkwo’s motherland when Okonkwo was compelled to exile by his father’s people.

Beatrice is endowed with male qualities such as courage and intelligence. In the Ibo context of the narrative these qualities are often associated with men in the created society. Beatrice’s life shows the fulfilment of constructed philosophy in her name. To Sam, as he introduces Beatrice to Lou, another female character:

...this is one of the most brilliant daughters of this country, Beatrice Okoh . She is a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance – the only person in the service, male or female, with a first-class honours in English. And not from a local university but from Queen Mary College, University of London. Our Beatrice beat the English to their game. We’re very proud of her (AOS: 75).

The meaning of the name agrees with Sam’s introduction of Beatrice’ greatness: “this is one of the most brilliant daughters of this country, Beatrice Okoh . She is a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance – the only person in the service, male or female, with a first-class honours in English”.

Interestingly enough, Achebe knows how to turn sorrow into joy. Thus, it is worth noting that the name Nwanyibufe, meaning “a female is also something” is an expression of sorrow, that of Beatrice’s mother who finds herself contending with a female child against her own desire to have a male child. In the narrative plotting, here is Achebe filling the sympathetic reader’s mind with satisfaction with the ground that though Beatrice is only a girl, her social performance goes beyond all the expectations associated with a male child. In the context, Achebe shifts the public in the story and the readers out here in society from a narrow perception of greatness to a larger one. Success is not a war of genital but people’s proof of their positive impact on society. That shift in the narrative uncovers Beatrice’ mother’s hidden fear as Beatrice notes:

I didn’t realize until much later that my mother bore me a huge grudge because I was a girl- her fifth in a row though one died- and that when I was born she had so desperately prayed for a boy to give my father. This knowledge came to me by slow stages which I won’t go into now. But I must mention that in addition to Beatrice they had given me another name at my baptism, Nwanyibufe – A female is also something (AOS: 86-87).

Achebe has plotted the character's actions for different meanings rather than they are ordinarily expected. "Nwanyibuife – A female is also something" (AOS: 86-87). In the unfolding of the narrative, the reader is fully aware of Beatrice's potential, she is, as indicated earlier, "a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance – the only person in the service, male or female, with a first-class honours in English... not from a local university but from Queen Mary College, University of London". Besides, as mediator between Oriko and Ikem, editor and chief editor of the *National Gazette* when His Excellency raises conflict between the two, one can only but conclude on the onomastic note that a "female is also something". Achebe has given the character a daring name of female successful social achievements and shaped her actions in the narrative to match with the needs: unity and cooperation. The advantage of this attempt gives solace both to men and women on the issue and shapes a new understanding in line with common advantages.

Achebe has not caused the change alone. In the story, a dialogue installed on the gender awareness and preference during the naming ceremony of Elewa's baby girl for protagonists to give their opinions. In the context, a boy's name is given to the girl. Here comes the challenge to the tradition. A character is created to raise the wonder: "But that's a boy's name" (AOS: 222). Another character is given the floor to speak the words of tolerance: "No matter / Girl fit answer am also" (AOS: 222). In other words, it does not matter if a girl bears the name.

The contribution of names to the story meaning encompasses narrative orientation such as wish fulfilment, success, greatness in a "genderless" version of Achebe's plotting of *Anthills of the Savannah*. In the reform of names in the narrative, emancipation is meant to affect both male and female characters positively, regardless of their sexes.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to explain the connectivity between characters' names and their narrative performances. It has also been to point out the ways in which textual Semantics leaning on Onomastics complements story-telling and narrating sense-making.

The study has found evidence in both African creative texts and the Hispanic fiction. Through using Onomastics and textual Semiotics, it has come to the conclusion that in the narratives of the two literary worlds, names contribute to the understanding of pieces of imaginative texts in the same way the participants in the plotting of the narrative influencing textual semantics. The sources referred to have obvious cases of contribution to plotting and the semantic direction names give to plots. In the mixture of actions, their interplays and sequencing, there is a share of the names provided one can read them and grasp their cultural and ideological implications in contexts. It is pleasurable to feel the cohesion or contrast between the name the nature and function of the plots that sequence created stories. Plotting as placing one event after another is not for its own sake when socio-cultural ingredients are articulated in accordance of the setting and all its stands for.

Figures of speech also have proven their importance when narrative knit by socio-cultural names have been the unfolded African and the Hispanic contexts of study. The figures of speech have

been read thanks to the way the names' meanings relate to the narrative performances of the characters that bear the names.

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