

ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF ROUND CHARACTERS' ONOMASTICS IN WOLE SOYINKA'S *DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN*

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Abstract

This study examines Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* from an ethnography of communication's point of view. The work is designed to break the silence on the dearth of onomastic studies on Soyinka. The playwright infuses his novel with onomastic sensibility such that the names reflect different socio-cultural backgrounds, and, in turn, stress the themes of death and scapegoatism raised in the text. The study further reveals that conversation genre is a major tool which the author has manipulated successfully in exercising his naming power over his characters. In addition, it is clear that informing is the principal illocutionary act underlying all the names. These therefore imply that the playwright is both conversing with and informing his reader/audience through his naming strategies. This is so because there is economy of words in naming and, oftentimes, more is being communicated than said through the few strands of letters woven together as a name. The study finally affirms that names are "identity markers that depend on established convention" (Adams 2009, p. 82) and "whatever difference exists between literature and life can be explained as a difference of the contexts in which naming takes place" (Izevbaye 1981, p. 168).

Keywords: Wole Soyinka, horseman, ethnography, onomastics.

1. Introduction

Wole Soyinka is a global titan as far as literary works are concerned. His works have been studied from different angles by literary and linguistic scholars. However, there has been little or no attention from onomasticians. This study is therefore an attempt at examining one of Soyinka's plays, *Death and the King's Horseman*, from the onomastic point of view, where onomastics is the study and science of names. Similarly, Soyinka is often attacked by critics as an obscure writer. Some of these critics include Roscoe (1971, p. 220), Osundare (1983, p. 24), Umukoro (2002, p. 126) and Ogunsiji (2005, p. 1472) to mention a few. However, naming, whether it is naming things or characters, is part of general human communication, and meaning is the central consideration in naming (Arua, 2009, p. 65). This study arises from the need to shed more light on one of Soyinka's works in order to reduce the problem of interpretation that often results from his artistic ingenuity and literary versatility.

2. Contextualisation of the Text

The issue in *Death and the King's Horseman* can be summarized as the conflict between the "native law and custom." In the words of Joseph, one of the main characters in the play, "The king die last month. Tonight is his burial. But before they can bury him, the Elesin

must die so as to accompany him to heaven” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 28). But the ethnocentric District Officer, Simon Pilkings would not allow this to be. He counts the rites of passage culture as barbaric. The *play’s* treatment of the themes of death and colonization is based on actual events experienced in Oyo in 1943. The first scene starts with Olohun Iyo (Praise Singer) who is eulogizing the king’s horseman for his bravery in preparing for the necessary rites of passage. This is later followed by Elesin’s reluctance and his desire to have carnal knowledge of a lady called “Bride” in the play, who is betrothed to another man. Iyaloja (market mother) warns Elesin of the danger of his desired action. But the recalcitrant horseman is adamant. While he enjoys his tryst with the maiden, Amusa, the police sergeant and other constables arrive to effect Elesin’s arrest as ordered by Simon Pilkings.

Shortly, Olunde, Elesin’s eldest son arrives from medical school in London to bury his father whom, he understood from tradition, would commit ritual suicide. Learning that his father had not in fact done so, Olunde is overcome by a sense of family dishonor and commits suicide in the hope of redeeming his lineage glory. His suicide brings about the corollary theme of the play—scapegoatism. Realising that his son is dead, Elesin finally strangles himself in detention. But his death is without honour as the society already makes a mockery of him, rendering, perhaps, both deaths to be of no avail in the larger scheme of the village’s cosmology.

3. Literature Review

Ogunsiji (2001) evokes the stylo-linguistic strategies of meaning making in Soyinka’s ‘faction’. The Soyinka texts examined by Ogunsiji (ibid) are *Ake*, *Isara* and *Ibadan* which, according to the researcher, are ‘faction’ because they blend facts with fiction and make “references to real historical personalities, events and places... in a genuinely creative manner”. (Ogunsiji, 2001, p. 218). The work incorporates Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics which emphasizes a multifunctional approach to the study of a text; thus admitting many interpretations based on semiotician’s view that meaning postulate is always “scattered... along the chain of signifiers” and not condensed in just one sign (Eagleton, 1983, p. 128).

A major importance of the present study is its interpretation of the names of characters in *Death and the King’s Horseman*. Agreeing with Ogunsiji (2001, p. 196) that naming is an important aspect of African culture, it is argued here that Soyinka exploits fully his Yoruba culture to animate the narrativity (structure and design) of his texts. Though it uses ‘faction’ as its point of view, Ogunsiji’s study provides a strong basis for the present study because it highlights ideational and interpersonal functions of names in literary texts such that the events in *Death and the King’s Horseman* whether or not the events are assumed to represent real or imagined experience(s) at Oyo in 1943.

The work of Ogunsiji (2001) differs from the present study in that it incorporates onomastics as a minute part whereas the present study is largely based on the concept. The study also considers three of Soyinka’s ‘faction’ as opposed to the present work which considers one drama text by the playwright. Ogunsiji (2001) uses linguistic stylistic method while the present study uses the ethnography of communication theory to unravel the total meaning behind a specific concept—naming—within the immediate and wider environments of the texts.

Okenwa (2007) does a christonymical study of names by dissecting the various aspects of Jesus' anthroponyms and its associate nomenclatures. Through this technique, the author is able to juxtapose Christ's name with some other existing names while bringing out its supremacy, spirituality and efficacy above others. The first strength of the work is its contribution to our knowledge of onomastics, particularly from the Judeo-Christian point of view. It is insightful to note also that the work brings about an interface of disciplines. It gives an interdisciplinary approach to the study of names using the biblical perspectives and anthroponymic perspectives. Hence we see a kind of relationship between theology (divinity) and onomastics; sociology and naming, history and names as well as politics and names.

Okenwa (2007) further updates our literary and historical sense by the use of flashbacks and allusion to different stories, for instance, the story of Alexander the Great, Tertullian, the author's personal experience and the Hebrew world and names. Names, therefore, historicize and socialize. The work differs from the present study because it examines a generic deified name (of Jesus) while our focus at present is on literary names as used by Wole Soyinka in a drama text.

Odebunmi (2008) examines Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* from an onomastic perspective. He discovers four prominent naming techniques deployed by the author which replicate the major ethno-religious groups in Nigeria. These are official names, first names, nicknames and institutional/titular names. The work by Odebunmi (2008) is different from the present study because it uses contextual theory to unravel Chinua Achebe's text while our focus at present is to analyse one of Wole Soyinka's text using the ethnography of communication theory.

Maalej (2009) investigates the cognitive model of naming in Tunisian Arabic. He discovers that naming in Arabic domains indicates a patriarchal cultural pattern of modeling. He further discovers that naming as a concept is motivated linguistically and conceptually. Linguistically, naming makes use of a lot of noticeable morphological derivations. Conceptually, naming attracts a great deal of conceptual intersection which reflect cultural specificity. The work is rich because it offers insight into the structures and semantics of names in Tunisian Arabic. However, while the study is based on generic naming, ours considers literary onomastics from a text authored by a Nigerian writer.

Odebode (2011) takes a lexico-semantic approach to the study of characters' names in Wole Soyinka's *King Baabu*, a drama text that parodies the regime of General Sanni Abacha in Nigeria from 1993 to 1998. Pragmatically, he discovers that Soyinka exercises his authorial power as the naming agent over his character(s) (i.e. the named). But functionally, the name(s) serve(s) primarily as an initial illocutionary act of declaration and secondarily as a means of further identification and expressivity. The name(s) finally presents a negative face of the satirized Nigerian ruler, General Abacha, with his cabinet members. The study provides evidence for the popular Aristotelian saying that a work of art imitates reality. The work by Odebode (2011) is similar to the present study because it is based on literary onomastics. It however differs from the present study in theory and focus. While it studies *King Baabu* from the lexico-semantic point of view, we are using the ethnography of communication framework to examine a different drama text, *Death and the King's Horseman* by the same playwright.

4. Theoretical Framework

Hymes (1972, pp. 35-71) has taken the concept of sociolinguistics far beyond the discipline to include pragmatic concepts like speech acts (what we use words to do as proposed by Austin (1962)). He believes that saliencies differ and we do not have to achieve the same goals by uttering or writing similar strands of letters in different socio-cultural setting. Similarly, he believes that in getting to the root of an utterance, certain questions are pertinent. These are 'Who Speaks What to Whom and When,' (Hymes, *ibid*). Therefore, he proposed the following taxonomy of situation components known as the SPEAKING model or ethnography of communication, which are a set of acronyms in which S stands for Setting, P for Participants, E for Ends, A for Acts, K for Key, I for Instrumentalities, N for Norms and G for Genre (literary or linguistic).

Setting/scene refers to the general circumstance in which the communication event takes place, including time and place, and the psychological setting of the event (formal or informal, serious or festive). The term 'participants' refers to the role—relationships between participants in a speech event: the addresser/speaker, on the one hand, and the addressee/hearer/audience, on the other. However, it is possible for the participants to change roles. Ends refer to the outcome of a speech act which may manifest in two forms: Results (intended and/or unintended) and Goals (individual and/or general). Act sequence indicates the form and content of the message of text. The form has to do with how it is said while the content has to do with what is said. For the purpose of this study, act will also subsume speech acts by Austin (1962) namely: locutionary act (i.e. the act of saying something), illocutionary act (i.e. the function of what is said) and perlocutionary act (the effect of what is said on the listener).

Key on the other hand stands for the tone or manner in which a textual message is delivered. However, instrumentalities constitute the different channels of speech transmission e.g. oral, written, telephone, e-mail etc. Norms cover the conventions of social and speech behavior which could be linguistic and non-linguistic, universal or culture-specific. Finally, genre refers to the linguistic form employed such as poem, letter, story etc.

5. Data Analysis

As observed by Bloomer, Griffiths and Merrison (2005, p. 82) certain questions ("who makes, what utterance, to whom, when, where and how") are pertinent to any ethnographic discourse. By applying these questions to our data, we shall be able to unmask the intended message inherent in the major characters' names deployed by Wole Soyinka in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Thus, we may come up with the following tabulated results which start with Olunde, a name which denotes "my principal child has arrived".

The name Olunde (my principal child has arrived) presupposes that the bearer has travelled before. Initially, Olunde has been away to England to study medicine. He is being sponsored by the Pilkingses, i.e. Simon and Jane. But his sudden appearance on the scene is very significant to the plot of the play. It predicts the bearer's role and lends credence to his anthroponastics, i.e. personal name. As a real Yoruba man, he received a cable from a relation that says "Our King is dead" (Soyinka, 2002, p. 52). He quickly deciphers the message as meaning that he has to return home to bury his father, Elesin (who must

accompany the king to heaven) and probably succeed him as the next king's horseman. The following lines from the text illustrate this situation better:

JANE: But how do you happen to be here? Only this evening we were talking about you. We thought you were still four thousand miles away.

OLUNDE: I was sent a cable.

JANE: A cable? Who did? Simon? The business of your father didn't begin till tonight.

OLUNDE: A relation sent it weeks ago, and it said nothing about my father. All it said was, Our King is dead. But *I knew I had to return home at once so as to bury my father. I understood that* (p. 52 *Emphasis mine*).

Table 1: Olunde (my principal child has arrived)

QUESTION	ANSWER	ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY
Where?	Oyo	Setting
To whom?	Elesin's family and the entire Oyo society represented by Iyaloja	Participants
With what aim or why has he arrived?	To bury and succeed his father, Elesin or to prove his principality	End
What type of act is the assertion?	Informative: The message can be assumed to have come from the society represented by the matriarch of culture, Iyaloja - to Elesin (that a principal child (Olunde) has arrived who is noble, brave and understands the culture better than his father, Elesin	Act
What is the tone of the utterance?	serious and ironical: (this can be buttressed by iyaloja's further remarks that "...The son has proved the father Elesin..." in <i>Death and the King's Horseman</i> , p. 75)	Key
What is the choice of channel?	Verbal/speech	Instrumentality
What are the expectations of the situation?	That Olunde will perform the rites of passage which his father has rejected).	Norm
What linguistic event is involved (employed)?	Proverb/paradox	Genre

Unfortunately, Olunde's father, the pleasure-loving Elesin, is incarcerated by Simon Pilkings, the District Officer, in order to prevent the Elesin from committing suicide. Ironically, this action further complicates the matter as Olunde decides to restore his lineage glory by committing suicide in place of his father. Iyaloja breaks the news to Elesin as follows:

ELESIN: I cannot approach. Take off the cloth...

IYALOJA (moves forward and removes the covering): Your courier Elesin, cast your eyes on the favoured companion of the king.

(Rolled up in the mat, his head and feet showing at either end is the body of OLUNDE)

There lies the honour of your household and of our race. Because he could not bear to let honour fly out of doors, he stopped it with his life. The son has proved the father *Elesin*, and there is nothing left in your mouth to gnash but infant gums (p. 75 *Emphasis mine*).

Understanding what has happened, *Elesin* strangles himself in detention. But it is too late for him to have the glory. PRAISE SINGER lends credence to this when he says, “There lies the swiftest ever messenger of a king...If you had followed when it was time, we would not say the dog has raced beyond and left his master behind” (Soyinka, 2002, pp. 74-75).

By applying the SPEAKING acronym to *Olunde*, we may come up with the following deductions highlighted in Table 1. If my principal child has arrived, the pertinent question is ‘arrived where’? Our answer to this question will give us the setting of the play which is *Oyo*. The next question is ‘To whom has my principal child arrived’? Our answer to this question will reveal the participants in the play. These include *Elesin*’s family and the entire *Oyo* society represented largely by *Iyaloja*. Furthermore, we may want to ask ‘with what aim or why has he arrived’? Our answer speaks to the End of the discourse, i.e. to come and succeed his father, *Elesin*, or to prove his principality. The next question is ‘What type of act is the assertion “my principal child has arrived”’? Our answer gives the Act of the locution which is informative.

The next WH-question demands for the tone (Key) of the utterance which, according to the text, can be said to be serious and ironical. This can be buttressed by *Iyaloja*’s remarks that “...The son has proved the father *Elesin*...” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 75). The succeeding question has to do with the choice of the channel. This has to do with instrumentality within the SPEAKING acronym. The answer is verbal/speech. The next question is ‘What are the expectations of the situation’? Any answer to this will give us the Norm in our model. The expectation is that *Olunde* will redeem the public image of his lineage by performing the rites of passage which his father has rejected. The final question is ‘What linguistic event is employed’? This question is soliciting for the genre of the utterance which is proverb as well as paradox.

Table 2: *Iyaloja*, ‘mother of the market’

QUESTION	ANSWER	ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY
Where?	<i>Oyo</i>	Setting
Over whom?	<i>Oyo</i> marketers	Participants
With what aim or why?	To lead and direct their affairs	End
What type of act is the assertion?	Informative (giving information about the woman’s role)	Act
What is the tone of the utterance?	Paradoxical	Key
What is the choice of channel?	Verbal/speech	Instrumentality
What are the expectations of the situation?	To indicate that there is someone who could scold and send the unwilling <i>Elesin</i> out of the market	Norm
What linguistic event is involved (employed)?	conversation (drama)	Genre

Another round character in the text is Iyaloja whose name denotes ‘mother of the market’, contextually. Similarly, by testing the SPEAKING acronym on the name, as a locution or an utterance, we may come up with the following interpretation. The first question is ‘where is she a market mother?’ Our answer is ‘Oyo,’ which is the setting of the play. Consequently we may want to ask ‘over whom is she the market mother?’ The answer to this question actually indicates the participants, i.e. the people of Oyo (e.g. Elesin, Praise Singer, Olunde). It should be noted that the Yoruba believe that the world is a market and heaven is home. The inference from this is that Iyaloja is the progenitor of the world and the matriarch of culture. This is probably why the word mother is quoted in the cast list on page 8 of the text. Affirming this, Praise-Singer says “Iyaloja, mother of multitudes in the teeming market of the world...” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 22). Iyaloja is therefore in charge of giving orders and warnings to almost everybody in the play. She berates the regretful Elesin thus: “You have betrayed us...I gave you warning. The river which fills up before our eyes does not sweep us away in its flood” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 68-69). She later confronts Simon Pilkings and as a mother, she addresses the District Officer thus: “Child, I have not come to help your understanding” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 71).

Similarly, when the girls and women are play-acting in mockery of Serjeant Amusa after seizing his hat because he has come to the market uninvited, it is Iyaloja that comes in saying “Daughters please...My children, I beg of you” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 39). The next question is “With what aim or why is she the market mother?” Our answer to this question indicates the end, i.e. to lead and direct their affairs. Furthermore, the next WH-question is demanding for the act inherent in the locution/name, *Iyaloja*-market mother. The answer to this is an informative act because the appellation is giving information about the woman’s role. It should be noted that the tone (key) of the utterance is paradoxical because, as mentioned above, the Yoruba believe that the world is the market and heaven is home. The choice of channel, i. e. instrumentality, is verbal/speech and the expectation of the situation (i.e. the norm) is to indicate that there is someone who could scold and send the unwilling, pleasure-loving Elesin out of the market. The final question has to do with the linguistic event involved (genre) which is conversation or drama.

Table 3: Simon Pilkings, District Officer

QUESTION	ANSWER	ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY
Where?	Oyo	Setting
Over whom?	Oyo people	Participants
With what aim or why?	To colonize and control the citizens as the Queen’s representative.	End
What type of act is the assertion?	Informative	Act
What is the tone of the utterance?	Pun	Key
What is the choice of channel?	Verbal/speech	Instrumentality
What are the expectations of the situation?	Contextually, to prevent Elesin from dying, generally, to prevent civil unrest.	Norm
What linguistic event is involved (employed)?	conversation (humour, joke)	Genre

By applying the same ethnographic principle to the name of another round character, Simon Pilkings, District Officer, we might come up with the following interpretation summarized in Table 3: ‘where is Simon Pilkings the District Officer?’ The answer is ‘Oyo’ (setting). ‘Over whom is he the District Officer?’ The response is ‘Oyo indigenes such as Amusa, Iyaloja, Joseph and Elesin’ (participants). ‘With what aim or why is he the D.O?’ The answer to this question is ‘to colonize and control the citizens as the Queen’s representative’ (end). As in our analysis of Iyaloja above, the act of this name is informative because it defines the role of the bearer; the key is pun because the person named is very strict like the biblical Simon (a stone/rock) who would not want Jesus Christ to fulfill his messianic ministry of dying for the salvation of the human race.

These attributes therefore showcase the pun in the name as: Simon, District Officer = Simon, the strict officer. As a corollary, the instrumentality is verbal/speech. Then, why is Simon Pilkings so strict? The answer to this question indicates the norm of the utterance which contextually, is to prevent Elesin from performing the rites of passage (committing suicide), and to prevent civil unrest. Finally, the linguistic event involved in the locution is conversation in the form of humour and joke as the reader is likely to be amused by unraveling the connotative meaning of Pilkings’ name. Pilkings’ strictness is explicated with the following lines where he is ordering the arrest of Elesin despite the latter’s plea that it is a show of shame and a loss of his name:

PILKINGS: (off) Carry him.

ELESIN: Give me back the name you have taken away from me you ghost from the land of the nameless.

PILKINGS: Carry him! I can’t have a disturbance here. Quickly! Stuff up his mouth (Soyinka, 2002, p. 60).

Even when Iyaloja comes to pay a visit to the incarcerated Elesin and to probably plead with the District Officer, Pilkings remains undaunted by giving a standing order to his guards as follows:

PILKINGS: Alright. I am trying to make things easy but if you must bring in politics we’ll have to do it the hard way. Madam, I want you to remain along this line and move no nearer to that cell door. Guards! (They spring to attention) If she moves beyond this point, blow your whistle (Soyinka, 2002, p. 67).

Elesin is a Yoruba word which means the king’s horseman. It is a role name because it indicates the office of the bearer whose real name is concealed in the play context. In modern terms, the expression ‘Elesin’ stands for a king’s chief of staff. As a chief, he is respected in the community and as customs demand; he is expected to commit suicide anytime the king dies. Therefore, because his life is tied to that of the king, the Alaaftin of Oyo, the chief is entitled to whatever accrues to the king. Confirming this, Elesin enthuses: “Who says the mouth does not believe in ‘No I have chewed all that before?’ I say I have” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 14). However, the present Elesin is a pleasure loving chauvinist and a hypocrite. He sings the heroic Not-I bird song on page 14 of the text and boasts as follows:

I am master of my fate. When the hour comes
Watch me dance along the narrowing path

Glazed by the souls of my great precursors
My soul is eager. I shall not turn aside (Soyinka, 2002, p. 14).

Table 4: Elesin – Horseman of the King

QUESTION	ANSWER	ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY
Where?	Oyo	Setting
Over whom?	Oyo people (palace workers)	Participants
With what aim or why?	To oversee the king’s servants, enjoy with the king and die with him.	End
What type of act is the assertion?	Informative	Act
What is the tone of the utterance?	Light and sarcastic	Key
What is the choice of channel?	Verbal/speech	Instrumentality
What are the expectations of the situation?	That he would die with the king	Norm
What linguistic event is involved (employed)?	conversation (oxymoron)	Genre

But he is a coward. He tarries longer than necessary in the market centre and demands to have carnal knowledge of a betrothed Bride (see page 23 of the text). This sets the stage for the conflicts between him and the white man, Pilkings on one hand, and between him and his kinsmen on the other. At last, Elesin dies shamefully. In the words of Odebode (2005, p. 209), “As Yoruba is a tonal language, we may infer that Elesin is synonymous with ‘**Elesin in**’ meaning a dishonourable and contemptible one” (emphasis original). In regret, Elesin replies Iyaloja, “I more than deserve your scorn” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 67). Iyaloja reprimands him further angrily, “I warned you, if you must leave a seed behind, be sure it is not tainted with the curses of the world” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 67). Even the Praise-Singer mocks Elesin thus “Elesin Oba! I call you by that name only this last time....If you had followed when you should, we would not say that the horse preceded its rider” (Ibid., p. 74).

Realising the implication of the Praise-Singer’s statement, Elesin tells Pilkings, “Give me back the name you have taken away from me” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 60). Eventually, after Elesin decides to strangle himself when he sees the corpse of Olunde, Iyaloja says, “...but oh, how late it all is. His son will feast on the meat and throw him bones” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 76). This statement underscores the belief of the Yoruba in life after death. It connotes that both Olunde and Elesin will resurrect to honour and dishonour respectively. Therefore, by applying our ethnographic questions to the name, Elesin—Horseman of the King, we may come up with the following:

‘Elesin is the horseman of the king, where?’ Usually, the felicitous answer to this question is Oyo which is the setting of the play. Then, ‘over whom?’ The answer to this indicates the participants, who are the Oyo people led by Iyaloja. Furthermore, the aim of this name as a locutionary act is to oversee the king’s servants, enjoy with the king and die with him. Similarly, the name has an illocutionary act of informing, as the reader is being intimated with the title or role (name) of the bearer. The tone is light and sarcastic, the choice of channel (instrumentality) is verbal speech and the expectation or norm of this

name is that the bearer will die with the king. The linguistic event or genre involved in the name formation is generally conversational, but specifically oxymoronic.

Table 5: Amusa, a sergeant

QUESTION	ANSWER	ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY
Where?	Oyo	Setting
In whose services?	His Royal Majesty	Participants
With what aim or why?	To enforce law	End
What type of act is the assertion?	Informative	Act
What is the tone of the utterance?	Dramatic	Key
What is the choice of channel?	Verbal/speech	Instrumentality
What are the expectations of the situation?	To take orders from Pilkings and prevent civil unrest like Elesin's case.	Norm
What linguistic event is involved (employed)?	conversation (humour/joke/drama)	Genre

On the one hand, Amusa is a derivative of the Arabic Hamzi which denotes a brave servant of God (Odebode 2005, p. 210). Graphologically, the name undergoes sound modification because the Yoruba language does not have consonant clusters. On the other hand, we may infer that the playwright also puns on Amusa's name (like Simon Pilkings's) to denote 'amuser.' Furthermore, the name combines with "serjeant" (a corruption of sergeant) in the text to showcase the bearer's level of education as a half-baked. According to Dasylva (1997) Amusa, as a police sergeant in *Death and the King's Horseman*, "occupies a lower rung of the social ladder. A messenger with a low education, if any, expresses himself in pidgin English or badly expressed English" (Dasylva 1997, p. 86).

As a brave servant in the service of His Majesty, who is represented in the colony by the District Officer, Amusa confronts all the market women in his bid to get Elesin arrested. But while doing this, he demonstrates maturity by not using coercion. This leads the women to seize his helmet and batons of two police constables who accompany him as explicated in the following conversations which reveal Amusa's level of education:

AMUSA: Iyaloja, make you tell these women make dem no insult me again. If I hear that kin' indult once more..

GIRL: (pushing her way through) You will do what? (p.36)

IYALOJA: Daughters...

GIRL: What next? We have your batons...

Move if you dare. We have your hats, what will you do about it? (p. 37)

Amusa also berates the Pilkingses for putting on the Egungun's costume while simultaneously refusing bluntly to tell the District Officer what is happening in town unless the latter puts off the "uniform of death" in the following lines from the text:

AMUSA: (stammers badly and points a shaky finger at his dress) Mista Pirinkin... Mista Pirinkin... Mammadam...you too!

PILKINGS: Nonsense, he's a Moslem. Come on Amusa, you don't believe in all this nonsense do you? I thought you were a good Moslem. (p. 24)

AMUSA: Sir, I cannot talk this matter to you in that dress. I no fit.

JANE: He is dead earnest too Simon. I think you'll have to handle this delicately. (p. 25)

Despite Jane's intervention in the conversation above, the strict officer (Simon) would not let go. He threatens Amusa who in turn demonstrates his bravery as follows:

PILKINGS: Delicately my...! Look here Amusa. I think this little joke has gone far enough hm? Let's have some sense. You seem to forget that you are a police officer in the service of His Majesty's Government. I order you to report your business at once or face disciplinary action.

AMUSA: Sir, it is a matter of death. How can man talk against death to person in uniform of death? Is like talking against government to person in uniform of police. Please sir. I go and come back (p. 25).

From the foregoing, we may apply our SPEAKING acronym to Amusa's name thus:

Amusa, a serjeant: where? Oyo (Setting); In whose services? His Majesty, represented by Pilkings, the District Officer (Participants); With what aim or why? To enforce law (End); What type of act is the assertion (Amusa (is) a serjeant)? Informative act (Act); What is the tone of the utterance? Dramatic (Key); What is the choice of channel? Verbal/Speech (Instrumentality) as contained in Pilking's statement thus: "Look here Amusa... You seem to forget that you are a police officer in the service of His Majesty's Government." (p. 25); What are the expectations of the situation? That the bearer will take order from Pilkings and prevent civil unrest like in Elesin's case, in the colony (Norm); What linguistic event is involved? Conversation (humour/joke/drama) (Genre).

Table 6: Joseph, houseboy to Pilkings

QUESTION	ANSWER	ETHNOGRAPHIC KEY
Where?	Oyo	Setting
With whom?	Jane and Simon	Participants
With what aim or why?	To be a pointer to the Pilkingses	End
What type of act is the assertion?	Informative	Act
What is the tone of the utterance?	Light and dramatic	Key
What is the choice of channel?	Verbal/speech	Instrumentality
What are the expectations of the situation?	To take order from Pilkingses and guide them through the native culture.	Norm
What linguistic event is involved (employed)?	conversation	Genre

Another round character in the text is Joseph whose name denotes "he shall add" (Genesis 30 verse 24, <http://www.behindthename.com/name/joseph>). The playwright uses him as a parallel to Amusa in different ramifications. Unlike Amusa, he is a Christian, timid but

faithful and loyal to the white man's way and beliefs, rather than his (Joseph's) native culture. This is captured in the following conversation where Joseph approves of the Pilkingses' desecration of Egungun's costume and subsequently reveals the meaning of the proverbial drum (indicating what is happening in town to the white man).

PILKINGS: Joseph, are you a christian or not?
 JOSEPH: Yessir.
 PILKINGS: Does seeing me in this outfit bother you?
 JOSEPH: No sir, it has no power.
 PILKINGS: ...Now Joseph, answer me on the honour of a Christian-what is supposed to be going on in town tonight? (p.27)
 JOSEPH: It is a native law and custom. The king die last month. Tonight is his burial. But before they can bury him, the Elesin must die so as to accompany him to heaven. (p.28)

By testing our ethnographic key on Joseph, the following might be deduced: Joseph (is) houseboy to Pilkings, where? Oyo (Setting); With whom? Jane Simon (Participants); With what aim or why? To be a pointer to the Pilkingses (End); What type of act is the assertion? Informative (Act); What is the tone of the utterance? Light and dramatic, as demonstrated in the excerpt above (Key); What is the choice of channel? Verbal/speech (Instrumentality); What are the expectations of the situation? That the bearer will take orders from the Pilkingses and guide them through the native culture (Norm); What linguistic event is involved (employed)? Conversation (Genre).

6. Statistical Analysis

In this section, we attempt a statistical analysis of the genre(s) or linguistic event(s) inherent in the names studied. The results are statistically indicated in Tables 7 and 8 as well as Fig. 1 as follows.

Table 7: Table Indicating Genre/Linguistic Events in the Names Studied

Name	Linguistic Event	Percentage
Olunde	Proverb/Paradox	16.66
Iyaloja	Conversation	16.66
Pilkings	Conversation	16.66
Elesin	Conversation	16.66
Amusa	Conversation	16.66
Joseph	Conversation	16.66
Total		100

Table 8: Table Indicating Frequency and Percentage of Genres

Genre/Linguistic Event	Frequency	Percentage
Paradox/Proverb	1	16.66
Conversation	5	83.33
Total	6	100

From Table 7, five names (Iyaloja, Elesin, Pilkings, Amusa, Joseph) have conversation as their linguistic event(s) or genre(s). Conversely however, only Olunde has paradox/proverb as its genre because he is the son that plays the expected role of the father—Elesin in the play context. These translate into 83.33% and 16.66% respectively in Table 8.

It should be noted that our conversation genre includes pun, jokes and humour as praised in the body of the work. At the surface level, the play looks like a joke, humour and pun on the characters' names. But a careful look will reveal that the plot revolves around Olunde while all other characters in the text are just being manipulated to get Olunde's mission accomplished. The chart therefore presents the real paradox of the play that the way up, is down; only one character has a different name with a distinct genre, and it is Olunde. Buttressing the above, Izevbaye (1981, p.168) argues that this different name is the only real name in the text. He submits that other names: Elesin (the king's Horseman), Iyaloja (Market mother), Joseph (an adapted Christian name), Bride and Praise singer (Olohun-iyó) etc. are all role names since their real names are concealed within the context of the play.

7. Conclusion

The study has established that rather than mere entertainment, Wole Soyinka has kept his reader/audience informed about the events in pre-independence Oyo, Nigeria; hence his deployment of a hundred percent informing illocutionary functions of the names which all point to a similar setting i.e. Oyo. Furthermore, his integration of the dramatic tone into the text is important as it enlivens the message of the play. In addition, most of the genres are conversational with the exception of Olunde which is proverbial and paradoxical. This brings to the fore the fact that events in the text revolves around Olunde as the real horseman who has to die for his people. This buttresses the words of Iyaloja that “the son has proved the father Elesin” (Soyinka, 2002, p. 75).

As a corollary, the study further reveals that the conversational genre with informing illocutionary act is deliberately used as the major tool which the playwright has manipulated tactfully in exercising his naming power or verdictive illocutionary force over the characters. That is why Adams (2009, p. 83) notes that naming involves an illocutionary act in which the namer judges or evaluates the named in order to choose an “appropriate name”. The authorial dubbing of characters therefore becomes an “assertion of power (or verdictive illocutionary force) over the (concerned) characters. This can be conceived of as being complimentary to paternal power exercise by parents in naming their children” (Adams, 2009, p. 82).

This, therefore, implies that the playwright has used his power to choose appropriate names for his major characters with the aim of conversing (SPEAKING) and informing his reader/audience through such naming strategies. This is so because there is an economy of words in naming and, oftentimes, more (ethno-religious as well as socio-political issues) is being communicated than said through the few strands of letters woven together as a name; hence, ethnography of communication in onomastics. We may therefore conclude that the text transcends ordinary entertainment; it invokes and appeals to the reader's sense of history, politics, religion and aesthetics particularly, through the naming strategies deployed by the playwright.

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