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African Onomastics and Gender Semiotization in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus and Kunle Afolayan's The Figurine

1. Introduction

The question of What's in a Name? has stimulated several interrogative discourses among onomasticians globally but, it has not sufficiently been answered with researches on gender characteronyms from a Nigerian standpoint. This study is thus an attempt to break the dearth of silence on the symbolic implication of gender characteronyms in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Kunle Afolayan's, 'The Figurine'. It was discovered by the researcher that despite several laudable reviews on Adichie and Afolayan, there are no onomastic researches of their works particularly, gender characteronyms in the selected prose and film respectively. The present study is therefore an extension of the interrogation from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, as we suggest 'Gender Semiotization' to critique the significance of male and female characters' names in the two purposively selected texts.

Significantly, the above concept is an adaptation from OHA's study titled *Onomastic Semiotization in Nigerian Movies* (2005) which indicate the prospect of theorising a model for analysing names as symbols through synergetic components of onomastics and semiotics. The above concept from his study was purposely created to analyse names symbolically in Nigerian films so, it is not out of context to also adopt it for this study. The present study fuses literature (print) and film not solely film as done by OHA's study (2005) for hermeneutics because the latter genre took its germ foremost as a dramatic text before its eventual metamorphose into stage and screen productions.

Consequently, onomastic semiotization is a subtle way of fusing two different fields, onomastics (study of names) and semiotics (study of signs and symbols), where meaning becomes a unifying feature to both fields. Also, the researcher extends the above concept into gender studies as it fuses names and semiotics purposely to situate implicit and explicit functions of (male and female) characteronyms in the two selected texts. By permutation, names in Adichie and Afolayan's works then appear as signifiers of Nigeria's cultural and situational practices cum contexts. The interface between his and the present study necessitate this theoretical adaptative process.

The above premises establish that literature can provide a modest amount of detail, but a successful use of naming evokes powerful images (signs) and associations



which exceed limited textual descriptions (BUTLER 2010: 18). Thus, semiotics in this study is deployed as a theoretical enclosure for investigating names within the socio-cultural milieu of Nigerians. Names and naming in Africa have primarily two contexts, socio-cultural and literary contexts (IZEVBAYE 1981). In his study, he explains that an author infuses life into his characters through naming exactly as enacted in real names (1981: 168). By application, there is thus a thin line between name significations within the African culture and literary texts because it is the fundamental source of imagination for several African literary artists, the two selected artists inclusive.

2. African Onomastics

Apart from IZEV BAYE (1981), ODEBODE's study (2010) also pivots the direction of this study in that, it expressively demarcates the uniqueness of 'African Onomastics' (names and naming) and their functions from Europeans'. He establishes that a name is a 'social DNA' from which the ancestry, sex, occupation, education, birth aura and religious background of the bearer can be unearthed (ODEBODE 2010: 209). African names as such describe where an individual is from (past), his status (present), and where he is likely headed (future). Names in Africa are thus extremely mystical because, a name-bearer strides into the 'destiny' encoded in his/her name. Specifically, among the Yoruba (an ethnic division in Southwest, Nigeria), there is a prominent aphorism that *Oruko omo niro omo*, which implies 'a child's name propels him into fulfilling his destiny'.

Furthermore, DASYLVA's study (1997), another pillar upon which the present research leans similarly identifies the stylistic variables of sex, age, religion, education, socio-economic status and occupation of the characteronyms in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. While, AGYEKUM (2006) though a Ghanaian, further adds that, African names are not arbitrary but are based on sociocultural and ethnopragmatic contexts. African names to all the above scholars are thus influenced by culture from which variables such as sex, hierarchy in birth, circumstances of birth, the person's structure, status and several other variables originate. With the above explication, Nigerian names whether in print or film must thus be stereotypically analysed through a sociocultural naming context.

3. Gender Semiotization

Within the African context, gender names can be grouped into male and female names. Adichie and Afolayan's texts portray negative effects of patriarchal subjugation across lines of gender, social, and cultural differences, while ironical names in this case thus perform dual functions. They offer a way of



critiquing the attitudes of such culture within the text and also for the readers to establish connections with characters that bear such names (AKINYEMI 2016: 6). He further explicates that male names are popularly used by Yoruba playwrights to give special traits such as bravery, wisdom, royalty and wealth (AKINYEMI 2016: 3). While female names are used by these playwrights to reflect femininity and aesthetics thus they often adopt *oriki àbísò*, descriptive praise names that suggest endearment (ORIE 2002: 135).

4. African Names, Ethnonyms and Ethnotheonyms

The introduction of *African theonymy* into onomastic studies is germane in order to create an auspice to discuss the replete metaphoric names/name of God/gods in Christian/traditional religions of the African people (OJEBODE 2017). One of the previous studies of the researcher delineates on the concept of *ethnotheonymy* which was used to critique ten names of God extracted from Michael Fashina's (alias *Erujeje*) album. Similarly in the present study, some names of gods/deities will be appropriately examined.

The concept of *ethnotheonym* is premeditated, it is coined from three words, *ethno* culture, *theos* god/deities, and *-onyma/-nym* name. The concept of *ethnonym* offshoot of onomastics, which denote 'proper name of an ethnic group (tribe, folk clan, etc.)' has been in existence for quite some time. While *-onyma* is also certified by the *International Council of Onomastic Sciences* (ICOS, 2010) for wide usage, and it is reflected in onomastic terms such as: toponym place name, anthroponym proper name for a group of person/persons, zoonym animal name, hodonym street name, hydronym water body name, etc. The above concept negates, *theonymy*, that is, application of Biblical laws in place of civil laws, therefore, its usage does not in any way correlate with *theonyms*.

The Yoruba and most indigenous African communities are by nature, largely animist, therefore, they strictly celebrate and adhere to the belief of life-after-life. This belief foregrounds the unbroken link between their world (of the living) and the world of the (living-dead ancestors) DASYLVA (2006: 27–28). In respect to this notion, Soyinka also describes the metaphysical sphere of the Yoruba worldview as the 'liminal realm' and it takes appeasements to reunite the human essence with the divine ("Fourth Stage" 29). Soyinka's phenomenon exemplified in *Death and the King's Horseman* where *Olohun-iyò* 'the Praise-Singer' is visibly possessed by the spirit of the departed Alaafin of Oyo. The Praise-Singer as such becomes a transport for the spirit of Alaafin to communicate his worries to the living over the apparent devastative delay by *Elesin-oba* 'the King's horseman'.

Significantly, IZEVBAJE's study (1981) also supports the existence of the 'liminal realm', to him it is the stage that particularly dictate the destiny of a character in reality and fiction. The reality of this stage is supported by names like *Oruko Amutorunwa* (names brought from heaven) names like Dada, Iyabo, Funso and Abodunrin, etc. And also *Oriki* (invocation of *ori*, the "head"), the seat of mental and spiritual attributes, which includes reason, will, and luck (IZEVBAYE 1981: 169). The head (*Ori*) in some Nigerian cultures is depicted as *Chi* by Igbo, *Ori* Yoruba and *Ehi* Edo. The predestined head is the stage that prompts the literary artist to create individual and social identities which summarise the concept of *role performance* in literary context and *destiny* in the context of social reality (IZEVBAYE 1981: 169).

Consequently, below are the constituents of the Yoruba cosmological planes of existence is explained by B. M. IBITOKUN as follows: "there are the realms of ancestors (the past), gods (the eternal) and the unborn (the future) (the departed) [...] their home is a »resting place«. The ancestral is the measure of the Yoruba Past [...] stationed in the same metaphysical edifice are the unborn whose exact apartment Wole Soyinka rightly calls a 'staging house'." (1995: 22).

The abode of the unborn is likened to a "staging house" in the sense that before a newly born child arrives in the world of the living it must have rehearsed and gotten itself thoroughly equipped for the task. The fourth plane of existence according to IBITOKUN, "is the natural home of the unseen deities. While in the terrestrial realm rituals/rites permit free intimation of gods and mortals as done among the Yoruba people. The sustenance of the metaphysical is determined by the activities carried out by humans in the physical" (1995: 22).

The above explication is important for a complete overview of names and naming in most Africa cultures because they in their original forms are foremost offshoots of spiritual processes. It is from the spiritual realm that are transported into the physical realm and transferred by an herbalist to parents/aged individuals/oral performers during a naming ceremony. A literary artist as such mimics the role of a performer who presents the performance on a specific occasion (FINNEGAN 1970: 111). The third and least process in naming is the literary transmutations created by Nigerian literary artists to fulfil their respective ideological purposes.

5. Contextualisation of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Adichie titles the first chapter of *Purple Hibiscus*, 'Breaking Gods', a prologue to the ensuing chaos in Eugene Achike's home. "Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the etagere" (Adichie 2004: 3). The smashing of Beatrice's (Mama) figurines to the floor is crux to

Adichie's narrative because, it is from the event that she recounts Eugene's tyrannical leadership over his wife and children. Adichie's intertextual creation is conspicuous in the above statement which is an offshoot of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Such artistic creation indicates her emulation of themes of social, cultural and religious fragmentation resulting from the West's intrusion into African cultures and traditions through religious emissaries which typify most of Achebe's works. Brenda Cooper notes that Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* integrates Igbo customs and language with catholic ritual and which incorporates men into gender politics and embraces the literary traditions of her elders – Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong and Alice (COOPER 2012: 1–12).

Subsequently, as the narrative continues the significance of the *broken gods/figurines* is tied to Beatrice's personality (Mama). She is profoundly portrayed in a kneeling posture like a devotee appeasing her *gods* in the following instance, "She stared at the figurine pieces on the floor and then knelt and started to pick them up with her bare hands" (Adichie 2004: 7). The above act signals Beatrice's break from enduring constant physical and emotional abuses from her husband. As it is later revealed in the narrative, Beatrice's *ballet-dancing figurines* is a coping mechanism from emotional wounds inflicted on her and her children by her husband, and its breakage foreshadows an impending cataclysmic collapse of her rational personality.

6. Contextualisation of Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine*

The figurine: Araromire is a 2009 Nigerian supernatural suspense thriller film written by Kemi Adesoye, academic papers on it were compiled by Adeshina Afolayan in a volume titled, *Autering Nollywood: Critical Perspectives on the Figurine* (2014). The film was produced and directed by Kunle Afolayan, who stars in the film as one of the main protagonists. It also introduces Ramsey Nouah and Omoni Oboli. It narrates the story of two friends who finds a mystical sculpture in an abandoned shrine in the forest while serving at a National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) camp, and one of them decides to take the artwork home. Unknown to them, the sculpture is from the goddess *Araromire* which bestows seven years of fortune on anyone who encounters it, and after the seven years have expired, seven years of bad luck intermittently follow. The lives of the two friends begin to change for good, as they become successful and wealthy businessmen. However, after seven years, things start to change for the worse.

7. Synergy in Adichie-Afolayan Artistic Visions

BRENDA COOPER (2010), describes Adichie's integration of Igbo customs and language with Catholic ritual into her works. She portrays the syncretised world



through the material culture and everyday realities of life of modern Nigeria using solid objects – tables and chairs, grains of rice and ceramic ornaments – syncretised with bodies and infused with spiritual life. She like other African writers create a world where there are no boundaries between the living and the dead, the animate and the inanimate, the big and the small, the literal and the symbolic, words and things (COOPER 2012: 1–12).

Soyinka similarly describes this same world as the *liminal realm*, and it takes sacrifices to harmonise the human essence and the divine (“Fourth Stage” 29). The extra-terrestrial world described by COOPER and SOYINKA interlaces Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and Kunle Afolayan’s *Araromire* (The Figurine) exposing the spiritual influence of African deities on the destinies of individuals. The consecrated belief portrayed by the two artists is identical of Greek mythologies. Adichie’s belief in the supernatural is expressed in a *modern* ballet-dancing figurines, while it is a form of *traditionally* carved figurine of an African goddess in Afolayan’s film.

Symbolically, Beatrice as a type of *adherent* to her *feminine gods* inflicts death on her husband, Eugene for trespassing her gods. While, Afolayan depicts an African river goddess whom upon violation enacts seven years of prosperity and seven years of traumatic turmoil on her male victims. Furthermore, Adichie depicts a father that is obsessed with Catholic rituals, while Afolayan depicts Sola, another father as extremist philanderer obsessed with ladies as well as his friend, Femi who is passionately obsess with Sola’s wife, Mona. Both Beatrice (Mama) and Mona are trophies for patriarchal control, the former is propelled by religious zeal while the latter is an outcome of licentious passion.

After the breakage of the *ballet-dancing figurines* in the Achike’s home, Beatrice loses her pregnancy during a battering experience from her husband and this incidence with other grievances made her poison him. Mona on the other hand loses her pregnancy the time she attempts to dispose the mysterious reappearing wooden figurine in her house. Eugene assaults his wife physically while Sola victimises his wife psychologically with a scary-looking *statuette* in their home and sexually by indulging in extra-marital affairs. Both Eugene, Sola as well as Femi prostitutes religions contrast to their beliefs. Eugene, a son to a traditionalist enstrage himself with Catholic beliefs while the other male characters in the Afolayan’s text both repudiate their Christian faith.

Beatrice only son, Jaja goes to the prison to defend her mother’s murder of his father, while Mona’s son dies when he attempt to jump over the balcony of their house to rescue his mum from with his father during a heated argument. The paedophilic act is alludes *Spiderman*, his comic idol. Conclusively, both Mama and Mona have wrangles with their husbands, victims of supposed *influences* from Catholic and traditional gods whose beliefs they promote. The three male

characters, Eugene, Sola and Femi's lifestyles are all overshadowed with their *hypocritical* profession of the Christian faith.

8. Methodology

The primary source for this study are texts from Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine*, while secondary sources are interviews from fellow scholars who are Igbo. Also, bibliographic search on relevant reviews are added. Six (6) Igbo and six (6) Yoruba characteronyms are respectively selected for analysis in this study. The twelve names indicate the cultural milieu of both literary artists, Adichie reflects Igbo culture in her naming origin while Afolayan reflect Yoruba culture.

9. Theoretical Framework

The uniqueness of the African naming context informs the adoption of HALLIDAY's Socio-semiotics as our study's theoretical framework. Unlike semiotics in the tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure, which focused primarily on theorising unchanging semiotic systems or structures (termed *langue* by de Saussure), social semiotics tries to account for the variability of semiotic practices termed *parole*. This altered focus shows how individual creativity, changing historical circumstances, and new social identities and projects can all change patterns of usage and design (HODGE-KRESS 1988).

Signs are considered to be resources which people use and adapt (or "design") to make meaning from a social semiotic perspective, rather than being fixed into unchanging "codes". In these respects, social semiotics is influenced by, and shares many of the preoccupations of pragmatics and sociolinguistics and has much in common with cultural studies and critical discourse analysis. The main task of social semiotics is to develop analytical and theoretical frameworks which can explain meaning-making in a social context (THIBAUT 1991).

HALLIDAY's Socio-semiotic theory is basically sociocultural and it is within such context that certain situations trigger variation of meaning and supply treasured information in understanding why and how a name varies in meaning when it is used in a particular culture. Texts in the present study have been domesticated as characteronyms in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Kunle Afolayan's , *The Figurine*. Cultural context in this study is centred on ethos, tenets and philosophies that define traditional/ethnic implications of names in Nigeria, while the situational context is centred on circumstances around the portrayals of characteronyms (male and female names) in Adichie and Afolayan's works.

By application, gender names in the selected texts would then be signs uniquely meant for signification and de-codification purposes by the researcher. The deployment of African names as signs does not reduce their symbolic-cultural function, they act as the essence of an individual's existence, the license into the world of the living unlike the Western culture where name is merely a tag, pointer-out which in itself is meaningless (ADAMIC 1942: 72).

10. Data Analysis

	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i>	<i>Araromire (The Figurine)</i>
1.	Modern <i>ballet-dancing figurines</i>	Wooden Figurine
2.	Mmuo (Igbo Masquerading spirits) during Aro festival	<i>Araromire</i> (Yoruba Goddess)
3.	Papa Eugene	Sola, Femi
4.	Beatrice (Mama)	Mona
5.	Jaja	Junior (Spiderman)
6.	Kambili	Lara
7.	Papa Nnukwu	Femi's father

10.1. Feminine/Masculine/Ethnotheonymic Names

In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Beatrice *gods* (the *ballet-dancing figurines*) depicts probably, a kinetic moving statuette of Virgin Mary which would symbolise delightful moments in the life of the character before the eventual collapse of/ in her home. The *dancing figurines* may also symbolise gradual depletion of the joys of Africans before Western incursion into their culture. Eugene's forceful smashing of the figurines symbolise the destructive instincts of adherents of neo-colonial ideologies. Similarly, in Afolayan's film, *Araromire* which in Yoruba implies 'water fosters friendship', where *Ara* denotes, 'kinfolk', while *romi* imply, 'to touch water' and *ire* 'wealth/favour' (a Yoruba fictional River Goddess). In the film, the deity is deified as a carved wooden figurine which brings the presence of a supernatural power to its plot through the timeline of seven years blessing and accompanying turmoil.

Mmuo (Igbo Masquerading spirits) are celebrated during the Aro festival in reality and *Purple Hibiscus*. A cultural reference in Adichie's text which symbolise the patriarchal strength of Eugene and in extension the Igbo community. While *Araromire* (a Yoruba Goddess) symbolise feminine *power* reflected in the physical and psychological devastations undergone by female characters in the film and extension the Yoruba community. Its feminine undertone cannot be disputed considering the physiological outline and nudity of the deity.



10.2. Masculine/Cultural/Descriptive/Ironic Names

Eugene is a Greek name that denotes a person that is 'noble', well-born'. While *Sola* denotes a person that is 'clad in wealth', it is taken from the Yoruba word, *ola* which denotes 'wealth'. Also, *Femi* denotes 'love me' from the Yoruba word, *Ife* 'love'. In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Papa Eugene falls short as an extremist and fanatic of the Catholic rituals to the point of tyranny. While Sola is depicted as a philanderer, who is obsessed about women, and his friend, Femi is alike obsessed with marrying Mona, Sola's wife.

10.3. Feminine/Historical Names

Beatrice is a Latin word which denotes a 'bringer of joy, blessings', though, in Adichie's novel, her name is ironic of the life she is forced to live. Her joy and expectation of having a blessed home is dashed by her wife-battering and oppressive husband, Eugene. Likewise, *Mona* is an abridged version or nickname for *Mona Lisa*, Leonardo da Vinci's most popular painting of a flawlessly beautiful woman. Mona as her name implies is the trophy for male contentions between Sola and Femi, two friends who are locked in the battle for her heart. The aesthetics of art history in this name is further complemented with the introduction of a feminine god named, *Araromire* represented with a wooden figurine, which depicts the producer's predilection for his female characters. Equally, Adichie also keenly emphasises on the broken *étagère*, and modern *dancing-ballet figurines* which represent Beatrice, as used in depicting her shattered personality and home.

The choice of viewing the novel from the feminist approach is also supported by BRENDA COOPER (2010), who includes Susan Stewart's quote on the 'compelling and powerful miniature shelf where the figurines were kept in the novel. She says, "Susan Stewart in her *On Longing*, which is a study of *Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* suggests that Adichie's figurines occupy a »privatised and domesticated world«" (STEWART 1993: 172). It is a woman's world, where knickknack shelves satisfy the longing of women, who seek limited mastery over space. She suggests that Adichie exploits her fictional space by magnifying her plot to accommodate radical feminism at the central stage. STEWART further elaborates that the 'miniature' shelf where Beatrice's figurines are kept becomes a stage on which Adichie and other female writers deliberately project series of actions (1999: 54).

10.4. Feminine/Cultural/Descriptive Names

Lara in Yoruba is an abridged version of *omolara* which implies 'a child is relational/next of kin/covering'. The name points to the importance of giving birth to a child, it is believed among the Yoruba people that couples that are



barren may not have a continuity or someone to inherit their possessions long after they are gone. In Afolayan's film, Lara plays out her name as the only sibling/relation of Femi, and she is compelled to follow her brother's instructions even when they are inhumane. She also has sexual escapades with Sola, a known philanderer/Casanova in the film. Similarly, *Kambili*, an Igbo name which implies 'let me live', 'let me be'. In the Adichie's novel, she attempts to find expression for her initial naivety under a tyrannical father. Also, like Afolayan's Lara, she is also infatuated with Father Amadi. Both characters share juvenile and fantastical emotions by imagining an unrealistic relationship with Sola, an already married man, and Father Amadi, a sworn Catholic priest who has settled not to marry.

10.5. Masculine/Cultural/Descriptive/Role Names

Nnukwu in Igbo denotes 'castle'. In Adichie's novel, he closely acts out his name being an encase and embodiment of the Igbo traditional beliefs just like Femi's father. In Afolayan's film, Femi's father is portrayed as a proficient sculptor and in fact, he is the persona that assists Femi's to reproduce *Araromire's* figurines. His real name is not used because he has a minimal role to play in the film thus, his given name is meant to solely reflect the relationship between him and his son. He attributes his speedy recovery from cancer as a *miracle* during the *supposed* seven years of fortune bestowed on individuals who have had contact with the deity. He apparently, believes in ancestral deities as obvious in the displayed sculptures in his studio.

10.6. Masculine/Historic/Appellative/Role Names

Jaja is adapted name from *Jaja of Opobo*, a prominent King during the colonial era in Ijaw land, which is today in Niger Delta region, Nigeria. He goes down in history as a courageous King, man of valour and one who sent fear into the hearts of imperialists. The introduction of this character's name can be linked to him being a fighter against oppression, though, in this case, feminine subjugation. Similarly, *Junior* (a name that depicts him as a younger version of his father) is an appellation among Nigerians for firstborn sons of prominent families. They are issued to the sons to preserve their fathers' surnames and legacies. The characteronym serves as role name to show association with main protagonist of the film, Sola. The character has a minimal role to play hence, his real name is not considered important. In the film, Sola being an affluent personality indulges his son with comics on Hollywood's Spiderman purposely to inspire his son to live a hero. Tragically in the film, while trying to rescue his mother from a heated argument with his father Junior jumps from a balcony, falls and die in an attempt to showcase his flying technique learnt from the comic.



Conclusively, characteronyms analysed in this study indexically reflect the cultural context of names and naming in Nigeria. Although, they are locally-generated as oral renditions yet, they attain global significance when they are deployed as symbols within a Nigerian literary context. Also, by analysing characteronyms in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Afolayan's *The Figurine*, the researcher has been able to unearth art, history, religion, cultural beliefs and gender names that typify Nigerians. The study asserts that the spirits of Nigerian tradition and literature both align in the two selected texts.

Furthermore, Adichie's broken figurines and Afolayan's *figurine* are *feminist symbols/ideologies* through which the two artists portray the delicateness and ill-mannered experiences of their female characters. Overall, the two selected artists have both used their arts to challenge the subjugation of females within Nigeria's rigid patriarchal system. Though, they are tender and easily underestimated, yet, they wield deific powers as displayed by Mama, Mona and their Matriarchal gods, *figurines* and *Araromire* who avenge male oppressors with death and mishap. On this note, it is highly recommended that onomasticians should further explore African characteronyms imbedded in African cultures and traditions within close Nigerian literatures and films.

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Abstract

This study explores characteronyms in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine* with the aim of reflecting Nigeria's gender, sociocultural and religions philosophies. To this effect, we fused filmic and prosaic genres to institute the symmetrical adaptation of *gods – figurines* from literary into graphic formats. Adichie depicts some delicately cherished household *gods* of Beatrice to whom she owes her *devotion* until Eugene, her husband's interruption who is subsequently punished for the trespass. While, Afolayan depicts an African river goddess whom upon desecration similarly enacts seven years of prosperity and seven years of traumatic turmoil on her male victims. Furthermore, Halliday's Socio-semiotic theory serves as the study's theoretical construct and it is deployed to unearth a plethora of significations on feminine subjugation which is crux to the selected literature and film. The study postulates that Nigerian names though indigenously generated from a cultural context however, attain global relevance when they are deployed as symbols within Nigerian literary context.

Keywords: Afolayan, Adichie, literary onomastics, Gender and Nigeria