Biblical Names in Selected Plays of Wole Soyinka: A Sociolinguistic Study

Nomes bíblicos em peças selecionadas de Wole Soyinka: um estudo sociolinguístico

Idowu Odebode

Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria

odebodei@run.edu.ng

https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4933-7673

Ayodeji Shittu

Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria

shittua@run.edu.ng
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9164-742X

Comfort Adeleke-Adeniji,

Redeemer's University

hardelekecomfort@gmail.com

https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1881-7178

Abstract: This study interrogates the use of biblical names as charactonyms in selected plays of Wole Soyinka, the first Nobel laureate in Africa, with the aim of unearthing their morphological process and sociolinguistic imports in relation to the *Holy Bible*. The primary data from which extracts were made to illustrate the discussion were four drama texts: *The Strong Breed (1963), The Road (1965), Death and the King's Horseman (1975), King Baabu (2002)*- all tragedies, by the same author. The theoretical frameworks adopted were Yule's (1985) morphological taxonomy and Said's (1978) postcolonialism. Ten names inundated with biblical elements were purposively selected across-the-board and analysed using the theoretical frameworks. Findings indicated that Soyinka inundated his works with analogy (60%) by deploying six names (Ifada, Sunma, Samson, Simon Pilkings, Olunde, Joseph) patterned after the *Holy Bible* to illustrate didactic lesson and messianic scapegoatism theme(s). Furthermore, the study revealed that the playwright deployed clipping (20%) through the names Maariya and Tikim, to indicate popular culture among African youth. Finally, the playwright uses biblical names in his works to blend his Christian and traditional background, and as a means of taking indirect swipe at the issue of African complex dispositions to the colonial encounter and its legacies. The work is a contribution to onomastic scholarship in relation to the *Holy Bible* and African-contact literary texts.

Key Words: Wole Soyinka, Onomastics, *Holy Bible, The Strong Breed, The Road, King Baabu*

Resumo: Este estudo analisa o uso de nomes bíblicos como nomes de personagens em peças selecionadas de Wole Soyinka, o primeiro Prêmio Nobel na África, com o objetivo de revelar seu processo morfológico e suas implicações sociolinguísticas em relação à Bíblia Sagrada. Os principais dados para ilustrar a análise foram extraídos de quatro textos dramáticos: *The Strong Breed (1963), The Road (1965), Death and the King's Horseman (1975) King Baabu (2002)*- todas tragédias, do mesmo autor. A fundamentação teórica adotada baseia-se na taxonomia morfológica de Yule's (1985) e no Pós-Colonialismo de Said. Para este estudo, dez nomes repletos de elementos bíblico foram selecionados e analisados usando a fundamentação teórica mencionada. Os resultados indicaram que Soyinka inundou suas obras com analogia (60%) ao empregar seis nomes (Ifada, Sunma, Samson, Simon Pilkings, Olunde, Joseph) padronizados de acordo com a Bíblia Sagrada para ilustrar lições didáticas e tema(s) de bode expiatório messiânico. Além disso, o estudo revelou que o dramaturgo utilizou truncamentos de nomes (20%) como Maariya e Tikim, para indicar a cultura popular entre os jovens africanos. Por fim, o dramaturgo usa nomes bíblicos em suas obras para misturar sua formação cristã com sua formação tradicional, e evidenciar, de forma indireta, a questão das complexas atitudes africanas perante o encontro colonial e seus legados. A obra é uma contribuição à pesquisa onomástica relativa à Bíblia Sagrada e aos textos literários sobre os contatos africanos, à taxonomia morfológica de Yule (1985) e ao pós-colonialismo de Said (1978).

Palavras-chave: Wole Soyinka, Onomastica Bíblia Sagrada*, The Strong Breed, The Road, King Baabu*

Introduction

Wole Soyinka is an icon in African literature. He was the first Nobel laurate in Africa apart from being the foremost playwright, poet and novelist. One unique characteristic of this author is that he uses characters with symbolic names, patterned after the *Holy Bible*. Since most of the biblical teachings are fraught with moral and didactic lessons, the themes of scapegoatism and sacrifice for others pervade his works. In the present study, four plays by author will be examined with a view to bringing out their onomastic imports in relation to the *Holy Bible*. More specifically, the study aims at accounting for how names give us clues to the roles of the characters in the texts, and showing how they help us understand and locate the texts in their biblical settings. The study finally seeks to determine the appropriateness of the names to each of the characters. The primary data from which extracts will be made to illustrate the discussion are four drama texts: *The Strong Breed (1963) TSB, The Road (1965) TR, Death and the King's Horseman (1975) DKH, and King Baabu KB* respectively.

Synopses of the Texts

TSB is the drama that narrates the tale of Eman, who must give his life to save his peculiar tribe at an annual end-of-year rite that involves a purifying ceremony in an undisclosed hamlet. It is a ceremony to drive out the bad from the previous year. This means that the approaching New Year has to be viewed as a time of purification, and the hunt for a carrier, a scapegoat, to absolve the evil of the year ending, is necessary. Strangers are used as transporters as required by customs. The town is home to two strangers: Ifada, the obvious pick, and Eman, the schoolteacher. Ogunba (1982:15), citing Horton, asserts that the bearer is customarily a spiritual force and a fortunate scapegoat who passes through severe torments in place of others in order to become a spiritual super power. Unfortunately, Ifada, the choice, is averse to the mission. Then, his mentor, ascetic Eman, the school teacher, is compelled to perform it.

Meanwhile, the events in *TR* revolve around the Master Forger named Professor. To reveal Professor's past especially his excommunication from the church by the bishop, Samson, the only character with full biblical name in the text is introduced. The central theme of the play is the Professor's pursuit of the Word, or the essence of life, in the "manner of twentieth century existientialists" (Ogunba 1975:125). The three main phases of the search according to Ogunba (1975) are the Christian, Traditional Magical, and Bacchanalian stages (the term in the drinking bar), respectively. Professor hypnotizes people, forges drivers' license for the unskilled to cause road accidents, aids thugs and embezzles monies from the church. "It seems likely that I left the church coffers much depleted…but I remember little of this," he says (p. 69). Professor also calls attention to himself by using his eloquence and language skills to attract devotees and make them

disregard God. Thus, themes of subjugation and conceit are present. Another motif of jealousy is that the regional bishop excommunicated Professor out of professional jealousy. In the conversation that follows, Samson narrates the story:

> Samson: Look, I'll tell you what happened. Just because the bishop thought
> he had B.A., B.D….
> Salubi: How much?
> Samson: … But B.D or no B.D the man couldn't knack oratory like
> the Professor. In fact, everybody always said that professor ought to preach
> the sermons… and I'm telling you, three-quarters of the congregation only
> came to hear his voice. And the bishop was jealous. (Ogunba 1975: 16).

But nemesis soon catches up with Professor as he is stabbed and killed by Say Tokyo Kid, the captain of the thugs and a truck driver on account of the invitation of the *Egungun* masquerade to the joint without proper rites to Ogun, the iron god. This brings out the themes of nemesis and death. In conclusion, Soyinka, in *TR*, satirises the lawless world of corruption in Nigeria where the fake academics (like Professor), wicked politicians (like Chief-in-Town) and dubious law enforcement agents (like Particulars Joe) are dining and dicing with the thugs and layabouts. Such interaction will definitely spell doom for the nation on the road to democracy and death nemesis will catch up with every fraudulent participant (Jones 1973:63).

Conversely, the Yoruba idea that "the world is market and heaven is home" foregrounds the plot of *DKH*, a historical drama which is based on the 1946 meeting between Alaafin of Oyo and his chief messenger, Elesin Oba. Elesin is praised by the Praise-Singer and the market ladies at the market centre as he bravely prepares to travel home and die a ritualistic death. However, the chief chooses to stay longer than necessary in the "market" to have fun with a lady he is about to take as his bride and has sexual knowledge of. As a result, the play's central theme of death and the struggle between the living and the dead are shown to us. Elesin's society, under the leadership

of Iyaloja, puts pressure on him to complete the rite of passage since they understand the implications of his unwillingness to follow his master.

Nevertheless, Simon Pilkings, the District Officer who hardly knows the customs, intervenes and makes things worse. Pilkings stops Elesin from committing the ritual suicide by arresting and imprisoning him. Two other themes—ignorance and superiority complex—emerge from this. Later, Eleshin's son, Olunde arrives presumably to bury his father and succeed him as the next Elesin. Realising his father's cowardice, Olunde decides to die in his stead and thereby presents us with the theme of scapegoatism. Later, Elesin hears the news of his son's death and strangles himself in detention. The white man's intrusion into the traditional culture therefore complicates the play's tragedy. That is why Williams (1994:94) believes that *DKH* "represents an attempt to confront on a creative level the arrogance and cultural chauvinism of Western imperialism".

Moreover, the issue in *KB* is that of coup and counter coup by the military. General Rajinda was toppled by General Potipoo. Shortly, Potpoo's Chief of Army, Basha Bash takes over from his boss. General Bash later transmutes from a military ruler to a civilian King Baabu with tortuous and murderous tendencies. Of note is a character called Maariya (an adaptation of Mary from the *Holy Bible*). She is Basha/Baabu's wife and tutor. As we shall soon demonstrate in this study, she is instrumental to her husband's rebellion and wicked inclinations because of her name which contextually stands for rebellion. Basha is eventually assassinated by his predecessor, General Potipoo in another counter coup. Actually, the play satirizes the regime of General Sanni Abacha (1993-1998). Soyinka admits the relevance of his work (*KB*) to the socio-political situation in Nigeria during General Abacha's regime when he says:

> Those of you who wish to have a suggestion of what became the norm in Abacha's Aso rockery should consult my play *King Baabu*…I assure you that the overall picture of the ritual routine of Sanni Abacha was what I attempted to re-create in that play. (*The Guardian*, Friday, November 20, 2009:.27.)

Theoretical Approaches

The current investigation is based on Yule's (1985) morphological taxonomy and Said's (1978) postcolonialism. The taxonomy takes care of the names as lexical items while postcolonialism is used to underscore their significance as postcolonial discourse. Meanwhile, the author uses the following word formation procedures summarized in Yule (1985:64–72) as his naming techniques. These word-formation techniques include derivation, compounding, blending, borrowing, acronyms, backformation, clipping, and analogy. Here, our focus is on a comprehensive analysis of each of these. The process of creating new words that are somewhat similar to pre-existing words is known as analogy (Yule, 1985:70). The taking over of terms from different languages is known as lexical borrowing. Calque, also known as loan-translation, is a unique kind of borrowing according to Yule, wherein "the elements of a word are directly translated into the borrowing language" (Yule 1985:65). Coinage indicates the creation of entirely new vocabulary. Words created from a group of other words' first letters are called acronyms.

Compounding is the process of combining two different words into one. The process of "taking only the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word" is how compounding is normally done in blending. A specialized kind of reduction process is called backformation, or hypocorism which is the process of "reducing a longer word to a single syllable, then adding -y or -ie to the end, for instance movie (moving pictures) and telly (television)." Clipping is an element of reduction which is noticeable "when a word of more than one syllable (facsimile) is reduced to a shorter form (fax)," (Yule 1985:66). Derivation is a means of producing

new English words by small bits "which are not given separate listings in dictionaries" (Yule 1985:69).

The second theory, the postcolonial theory, considers the manner in which authors from the nations that were formerly colonized by foreign powers try to commemorate and take back their cultural identities from their oppressors. They also look at how the colonial powers' literature perpetuates inferiority complexes about the colonized in order to legitimize colonialism. Pioneered by Said (1978), postcolonial theorists hold that people who have been freed from colonial rule form a postcolonial identity based on the cultural norms of interactions among the freed society. It should be noted that the problem of colonial meddling and adoption of the Anglo/Jewish names as characteronymy are parts of the issues raised by the playwright in some of his works; hence the relevance of the postcolonial theory to this study.

Literature Review

In his study of names, Okenwa (2007) adopts a christonymical (study of Christ's name) method, breaking down the many facets of Jesus' anthroponyms and the nomenclatures that go along with them. By using this method, the author can swiftly highlight the superiority, spirituality, and efficacy of Christ's name over other names while also juxtaposing it with certain others. The work's first strength is the addition it makes to our understanding of onomastics (the study and science of names). It is also important to observe that the study creates a disciplinary interface. It uses anthroponymic and biblical viewpoints to present the narrative of names in an interdisciplinary manner. Thus, we observe a relationship of sorts between onomastics and religion (divinity); between sociology and naming; between history and names; and between politics and names. The work is comparable to the current research, which is mostly set in the Yoruba culture of Africa. The current study is filled with messianic names and personalities, such as Olunde

(*DKH*) and Eman (*TSB*), in terms of the christonymical approach. Furthermore, Soyinka expressly employs the flashback technique in *TSB*. The primary focus of the study is on christonyms, which sets it apart from ours. The goal of the current study is to approach the study of names from the biblical and secular perspectives.

Odebode (2012) examines six names of major characters in Soyinka's *TSB* from a socio-pragmatic perspective. According to him "naming by Soyinka transcends the illocutionary act of labeling…" (Odebode, 2012, p.136). He relates Soyinka's naming system to societal factors such as occupation, age and religion among others. Thus, he investigates the names based on six variables and discovers that religion has the highest frequency, hence, a need to study the religious names from a biblical perspective; a vacuum this paper intends to fill. Although, the present study is not limited to a single play but to selected plays to create a wider scope for the research, Odebode's (2012) study is insightful and relevant to the present research because of its focus on one of the plays of Soyinka, the same playwright this paper is investigating from an onomastic perspective.

Windt-Val (2012) explores "the case of personal names and identity in literary contexts." He works on the similarities that exist between names, the name bearers and identity or personality. He submits that there is a very close relationship between the name a character bears and his actions, hence, the establishment of a close link between names and identity. Windt-Val's research is a relevant study to the present one since it gives a foundational insight into the study of names in relation to literary context although it does not limit its scope to a particular playwright in order to achieve a limited but more focused research.

Wilson (2014) studies the reflection of biblical characters and concepts in Williams Golden's *Lord of the flies*. He considers the concept of original sin, the Garden of Eden, the notion of Devil cum the comparison of Simon with Jesus. He concludes that the names of the characters in the novel reflect the biblical characters. Though, Wilson's study investigates the characters in a novel, it provide insight into the study of biblical characters, hence, its similarity to the present study which examines characters bearing biblical names in selected Soyinka's plays.

Gafton and Chirila (2019) examines the concept of 'The Name Giver' from a religious perspective. The research examines the names of God, the names of man, the concept of renaming and euphemism. The duo submits that the word has the power to create. Names are words, hence, their power cannot be underestimated on the bearers as well. The relevance of the concept of the name giver to this research lies in its Christian religious approach since the present research is also studying characters' names in Wole Soyinka's plays through a religious lens. The two studies focus on biblical names with focus on different contextual scope.

Odebode (2016) approaches the round characters' onomastics in Wole Soyinka's *DKH* from the ethnographic point of view. He discovers that the playwright infuses his work with onomastic sensibility such that the names reflect different socio-cultural backgrounds. The study further reveals that the conversation genre is a major tool which the author has manipulated successfully in exercising his naming power over his characters. The study is related to the present because we are considering the same author and *DKH* is also one of our primary texts. The present study is however different because its focus is on biblical names as found in four different plays by the playwright.

Odebode (2019a) considers the application of the names of gods (theonymy) to the personal names (anthroponymy) of the Yoruba Africans. He discovered that theonyms do not just occur in names, they are used to perform certain illocutionary acts in the polytheistic context of the Yoruba nation. Furthermore, most traditional African names, patterned after the traditional gods, are being changed to reflect the Christian pattern of the same names, due to conversion, colonial mentality and civilization. The work updates our knowledge of the evolution of the Biblical names among the Yoruba Nigerians. Thus, we are inundated with the background of Wole Soyinka, who is a playwright from the Yoruba tribe. However, the work is different from the present study because it considers generic naming while the present study focuses on literary onomastics.

Odebode (2019b) takes a historical perspective to the consideration of Wole Soyinka's *TR* and the socio-political situation in Ibadan between 1999 and 2009. He discovered that the author acts like a clairvoyant as most of his predictions in *TR* came to pass within the decade identified. Furthermore, Soyinka uses names that parodies the real life principal players in the extratextual context of the text. The work is similar to the present study because it deals with the same author, the same play and similar concept, i.e. names. But it differs from the present study because it deals with history and just one text by the playwright while we are dealing with biblical onomastics in relation to many works of Wole Soyika in the present study.

Davor (2024) examines the similarities in languages from an onomastic perspective. Using proper names as tools, he studies the cohesions between different languages of the world. He discovers an obvious similarity between the proper names, the languages cum the cultures of different nations. Davor's research is a recent attempt to study language from a new perspective using names as tools. The paper is, however, related to the present study in its onomastic approach

but while Davor focuses on the assessment of different languages through the use of names, this study has interest in the biblical names of characters in Soyinka's selected plays.

Oduyoye (2024) proffers solution to the question, what's in a name? by examining the praise names (oriki) and personal names (oruko) among the Yoruba Nigerians. He discovers that a name is an identity, a mark or a brand which derives from the Hebrew *shem* and the Arabic *ism.* He highlights the naming typology peculiar to the Yoruba and believes that "to be nameless therefore is to be without identity." (Oduyoye, 2024:115). The study is apt because it relates name to identity. It differs from the present research because while it focuses on personal identity among a group in Nigeria, we are considering the manifestations of biblical identities in selected works of the foremost playwright in Africa.

Wole Soyinka's *DKH* is benchmarked using the color-purple model by Onmoke and Odebode (2024). The study used Robinson's (1991) color-purple paradigm to investigate how the characters in *DKH* perceived African culture. According to the study, more than half of the characters see the world through the eyes of their native culture (blue lens), 40% see it through the eyes of their target culture (red lens), and only 6.7% see the world through the eyes of their bilingual eyes (purple lens). According to the study's findings, the play effectively captured the clash of cultures in a society where only a small percentage of bilinguals saw things objectively and adjusted to fit their new circumstances. The study is related to the present because *DKH* is one of the primary texts we are investigating and Wole Soyinka is the same author. However, the present study differs because it concentrates on the Biblical names in selected plays of the author.

Data Analysis

This analysis is divided into four parts according to the order of the primary texts. Three names (Eman, Ifada, Sunma) are selected for analysis in *TSB*; two (Samson, Particulars Joe) in *TR*; three (Simon Pilkings, Joseph, Olunde) in *DKH* and two (Maariya, Tikim) in *KB*.

TSB

Eman – a stranger**:** *In TSB*, Eman is a clipping from Emmanuel, which according to the Bible denotes 'God with us' (Matthew 3: 25). Just as the Messiah (Jesus Christ), Eman prefers to die for his society in place of Ifada, an idiot and an unwilling carrier. Eman's action therefore brings about the theme of scapegoatism in the play. He and Ifada are both strangers in the unknown community. Commenting on the carrier, Jaguna says: "We only use strangers" (*TSB* p. 21). Also, Eman is a teacher just as Christ was. He is addressed as follows by Jaguna: "Teacher, open your door." (p 18). As Christ (Emmanuel) was crucified among thieves for the sins of the world. The Old Man tells Eman, "you will use your strength among thieves" (p 26). Addressing Eman initially, the Old Man says: "Son, it is not the mouth of the boaster that says he belongs to the strong breed. It is the tongue that is red with pain and black with sorrow" (*TSB* p. 25). This further attests to the fact that the Messiah was wounded in the house of his friends according to Zechariah 13:6. As a friend of the helpless, Eman tolerates the sick Girl and even gives his cloth to her. The Girl retorts:

> GIRL: No one lets me come near them
> EMAN: But I am not afraid of catching your disease (*TSB:* 8)

The above quote from the primary text attest to Jesus Christ's words in Matthew 25:35-40, "For I was…naked and ye clothed me…sick and ye visited me…In as much as ye have done it unto

one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The character therefore possesses Christ-like attributes viz teacher, saviour and friend of the poor as explicated in the text.

Ifada*:* Ifada /Ifœđ∂/is an analogy (the process of creating new words similar to pre-existing words) from farthing/fa:điŋ/which denotes one quarter of a penny and anything very small. (*The Chambers Dictionary,* 2003:54). Farthing is attributed to a poor widow in Mark 12:42 in *The Holy Bible*. Therefore, it connotes poverty in this context. Ifada is a poor stranger and an idiot whom Eman, another stranger, has to replace willingly as a carrier. Addressing Sunma, Eman says: "…Ifada who is so helpless and alone. We are the only friends he has" (*TSB* p. 6). This quotation emphasises the poverty of Ifada and the friendliness of Eman to the poor just as Jesus Christ. However, as an idiot, the character does not know the essence of being a carrier (a saviour) because he does not belong to "the strong breed." Thus, he is unwilling to fulfill the task. This is why the Old Man tells Eman that "Son, it is not the mouth of the boaster that says he belongs to the strong breed. It is the tongue that is red with pain and black with sorrow" (*TSB* p. 25)*.*

Sunma: Sunma is an analogy of 'sun man' (that is, Samson) due to the masculine traits possessed by the bearer. Samson by denotation is "sun man" or "like the sun" (*Biblical Cyclopedic Index*, 1985:271; *Complete Concordance-Cyclopedic Index,* 1998: 9). The character is an army chief's daughter and a native of the unnamed land. She is Eman's girlfriend. She can also be said to have belonged to 'the strong breed' based on her traits. When Eman shields Ifada from being arrested by Jaguna (army chief) and Oroge, Jaguna addresses Sunma thus: **"**Daughter, you'd better tell your friend. I don't think he quite knows our ways. Tell him why he must give up the boy" (*TSB* p. 18). This extract from the text affirms that Sunma is Jaguna's daughter and Eman's girlfriend. It also confirms that Eman is a stranger in the land. When Jaguna leads the team of Eman's (as a carrier)

assailants, Sunma cries out to his father saying, "Murderer! What are you doing to him?. Murderer! Murderer! (*TSB* p 28). With these words, Sunma flies and claws at shameless Jaguna's face like a crazed tigress.

In retaliation, Jaguna "succeeds in pushing her off and striking her so hard on the face that she falls to her knees. He moves on her to hit her again" (*TSB* p. 28). The above scenario brings about the following conversation between Jaguna and Oroge:

> OROGE: (*comes between*) Think what you are doing Jaguna,
>
>   she is   your   daughter.
>
> JAGUNA: My daughter! Does this one look like my daughter?
>
>   Let me cripple the harlot for life.
>
> OROGE: That is a wicked thought Jaguna
>
> JAGUNA: Don't come between me and her
>
> Oroge: Nothing in anger – do you forget what tonight is?
>
> JAGUNA: Can you blame me for forgetting?
>
>   *(draws his hand across his cheek – it is covered with*
>
>   *blood).*   (*TSB* :28).

As a warrior's daughter, brave Sunma engages her father in combat because of his cruelty to Eman as a carrier. Discovering that he has sustained injury in his mouth (covered with blood), Jaguna says: "My own daughter … and for a stranger…" (28). Sunma, therefore, like Samson, possesses strength to withstand a warrior (her father). But she is weak morally like the Biblical Samson. She says: '… my weakness betrays me' (7). Affirming Sunma's weakness, Jaguna says "… Let me cripple the harlot for life." (28).

DKH

Simon Pilkings – District officer: 'Simon' derives from the existing Biblical Simon Peter, a strict and hard disciple of Christ. It is therefore an analogy. Simon Peter tries to prevent his master, Jesus Christ from dying for the sins of humanity in *The Holy Bible* (see Mathew 16:21-23). Simon is an Aramaic word for stone (Dakes 1998:94). Simon, thus, denotes a hard man who prevents kings from achieving their 'glorious' purpose(s). According to the playwright, Simon Pilkings is District Officer (the strict officer) who prevents Elesin from performing the rites of passage. He typifies the themes of ignorance, arrogance and cultural chauvinism. He says "…. But we don't make our chief commit suicide to keep him company" (*DKH* p. 71). There is, therefore, a play upon this name "Simon, District officer to suggest Simon, the strict officer" (Odebode, 2010:85).

Joseph – houseboy to the Pilkingses: Joseph is an analogy from the Biblical Joseph who was a houseboy to the Potiphars. Joseph denotes "he shall add" (Genesis 30:24). This attests to the reason he is attached to the Pilkingses in our text. Joseph in the text under study is a faithful and obedient servant just like the Biblical one. This predicates the following conversation between him and Pilkings:

> PILKINGS: Joseph, are you a Christian or not?
>
> JOSEPH: Yessir
>
> PILKINGS: … Now Joseph, answer me on the honour of a Christian -
> what is supposed to be going on in town tonight?
> JOSEPH: It is 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. (*DKH* :27-28)

Joseph conventionally is a servant responsible to the Pilkingses. He is therefore "added" to them as a house boy. But the underlying conversational implicature of this name is that the bearer should be sincere, loyal and faithful like the Biblical Joseph. He is a faithful pointer/helper to the Pilkingses. This is why he explains the issue of Elesin's proposed 'suicide mission' to Pilkings in

a clear term. Also, he faithfully approves of Pilkingses desecration of   the *egungun's* costume. He finally interprets the meaning of the sound of drums (which is strange) to the Pilkingses.

Olunde: As an analogy, this is made possible as a new word (name) by the earlier existence of Olumide (my chief/principal child has come), Olohunde (the owner has arrived), Olurinde (the trekking principal has arrived) which are Yoruba expressions. Olunde is a circumstantial name which denotes "my principal child has arrived" (Babalola and Alaba, 2008:586). He offers himself to die in place of his father in order to protect his lineage name. It is culturally binding on him to bury his father, Elesin and equally succeed him. This would have occasioned his home-coming. Olunde speaks to Mr. Pilkings thus: "I came home to bury my father…"(*DKH* 52). On arrival, he discovers that his father is still alive, under the incarceration of Pilkings. Nonetheless, the peace and continuity of cultural transition must be ensured. Hence, Olunde serves as *deux ex machina* which resolves the conflict in the plot by performing the ritual suicide.

As observed by Odebode (2021:442), due to the influence of Christianity and civilization, "the Yoruba occasionally substitute the name of the Lord (Jesus Christ) for their traditional gods and goddesses' names." Thus, instead of Ifafunmi (Ifa oracle gave me this child), we have Oluwafunmi or Olufunmi (the Lord (Jesus Christ) gave me this child). Therefore, we may argue that Olunde can also denote *Olu ti de* (the Lord (Jesus Christ) has arrived) contextually. Given this background, we may establish that the author uses the name as an intertextual means to parallel Eman in *TSB* who decides to take the place of the *unwilling Ifada* as a carrier. In the same vein, Olunde decides to take the place of his *unwilling father* Elesin as a carrier. When Olunde's corpse is brought to Elesin in detention, Iyaloja addresses the chief thus: "There lies the honour of your household and of our race…….the son has proved the father Elesin" (*DKH* p.75).

TR

Samson by denotation is "sun man" or "like the sun" (*Biblical Cyclopedic Index*, 1985:271; *Complete Concordance-Cyclopedic Index,* 1998:9). Although a thug, he is principled and bold like the Biblical Samson; hence it is an analogy. He is the only man that could confront the dreaded Say Tokyo Kid before whom he declares that he (Samson) is the king of thugs. When Particulars Joe is investigating Kotonu and others, Samson takes on Particulars Joe on page 79 of the text. Professor tells Samson "You are a brave man" (66). Also see pages 9, 10, 47, 66, 68, 79, 85, 90 and 92 of *TR*.

Granted that Samson denotes "sun man", the sun characteristically is expected to give light and supply energy. The name, therefore, conventionally implies (a giver of) light and a strong personality. Conversationally he is supposed to be a powerful deliverer just like the biblical Samson. But ironically, Samson in this context is a companion of thugs, though he lives up to his name by being found in a hard place. Socially, Samson is an irony of light but textually, he gives the play a plot by giving the flashbacks which provides an insight into the lives of all other characters in the play. For instance, he narrates Professor's past deals and his excommunication by the bishop. Likewise, he narrates Kotonu's pedigree on page 100 of the text. As a strongman, Samson vehemently opposes Kotonu's decision not to drive again. He is also the only man that dares the dreaded Say Tokyo Kid and Professor in the play. In plain terms, Samson refuses to be a hired thug for Chief-in-Town in the text. The character therefore can be said to have lived up to his name. Moreover, in *TR,* only Samson (among names like Professor, Particulars Joe and Say Tokyo Kid) is a personal name which also doubles as an aptronym (a name that is aptly suited to its owner. It also suggests that people's life choices are influenced by their names. See Odebode 2010:26) by reflecting the traits of the bearer. Samson, thus, is a brave actor and narrator.

Particulars Joe: Particulars Joe is a name that derives from the Biblical Joseph denoting "he shall add" (Genesis 30:24). The name is an irony of Joseph as the bearer is unfaithful unlike the faithful Joseph in the house of Potiphar, and the one in *DKH*. He is a corrupt police officer (who inspects vehicle particulars). He befriends thugs and increases road casualties. The following lines speak better of him:

> PARTIC. JOE (blandly): That's O.K … money has been left for me in more unlikely places believe me.
>
> SAMSON: Well at least wait until I am back on the road before you collect tolls. (*Particulars folds his arms and waits*).
>
> PROF.:   How is the criminal world my friend?
>
> PARTIC. JOE: More lucrative every day Professor. (*TR* pp. 74, 75)

It should be noted that clipping is an element of reduction which is noticeable "when a word of more than one syllable (facsimile) is reduced to a shorter form (fax)" (Yule 1985:66). In *TR*, this name is an example of clipping i.e. (Particulars) Joe. **Joe**, a monosyllabic word, is clipped from **Joseph** a disyllabic word. That he checks vehicle particulars on the roads is significant to our study, hence his full name, Particulars Joe. He is supposed to be faithful like the Biblical Joseph in Potiphar's house. But, he is a corrupt police officer, a friend of thugs like Say Tokyo kid and an alibi in Professor's shady deals. He has, therefore, diminished in virtue. This "reduction" in his character might have occasioned the contraction of his name to Joe as he is unparallel to Biblical Joseph and Joseph in *DKH* who are faithful and loyal to their masters respectively.

It should be noted that thugs are on the road and in motor parks. Through this character, we have a thrust at the violent political methods, which brought disaster to civilian politics in Nigeria (Jones 1973:71). Particulars Joe who is the representative of the law becomes himself a

threat to order because of his total lack of integrity. He therefore, becomes a friend of criminals and thugs as revealed by the following conversation from the text:

> PARTICULARS JOE: Wey your particulars?
>
> A THUG: Particulars Joe!
>
> PARTICULARS JOE: I say gimme your particulars.
>
> > *(Say Tokyo reaches out a stick of weed to him which he accepts behind his back. Darts back to the door and sits apart sniffing the weed...)* (*TR* p. 24).

KB

Maariya, Basha's wife: Maariya is a case of lexical borrowing which is the taking over of words from other languages. Yule (1985:65) identifies calque or loan-translation as a special type of borrowing in which "there is a direct translation of the elements of a word into the borrowing language" (Yule, ibid). The Anglo-Jewish concept of Mary with Hausa's 'Amariya' is a borrowing with sound modification into *KB* as Maariya. In the Bible, three Marys are identified during the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Madgalene and Mary the wife of Cleophas (John 19:25-27). However, there was another Mary of Bethany mentioned in Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:1-3. Mary in English means 'rebellion' (see Dakes, 1991:73) while Amariya in Hausa denotes 'wife'. Maariya combines these qualities as the wife of Basha/Baabu in the text. The following conversation between Baabu and Maariya explicates her rebellious innateness:

> **Basha:**   Why you so much contradict yourself? You tell me just now there is no
> rebellion. You confess you invent the whole thing.
>
> **Maariya:** As Chief of Army staff you are in charge of troop movements. So?
> You-take-troops-your-elite-troops-to-put-down-the-
> REBELLION!...and thereby you-make-him-General Potipoo-a-
> virtual-prisoner.
>
> **Basha:**   You asking… you…you… what I… oh this woman really determine
> to finish Basha Bash honourable career.

> **Maariya**…you either carry out the plan or you're finished.
>
> **Basha:** You're saying …you want me to take over power? I depose Potipoo
>
>   you mean? (*KB :*. 23-24).

From the conversation above, it is clear that Maariya lives up to her name by compelling her husband to rebel against General Potipoo.

Tikim: Blending is a type of compounding that is typically accomplished by "taking only the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word" (Yule 1985:66). The major blending used by Soyinka in *KB* is **Tikim**, a parody that allegedly blends two names **T**om (Thomas) and **Ikimi**- (T+ikim). Tikim is Baabu's Minister of Foreign Affairs just as Tom Ikimi was during the regime of General Sanni Abacha in Nigeria. Addressing Tikim, Baabu says:

> Royal decision taken. Something for you to use polishing our image when you address United Nations- you tell them how our government grant general amnesty (*KB:*. 100).

Thomas in the bible is one of the disciples of Jesus Christ who doubted his resurrection; hence the saying doubting Thomas. In *KB* Tikim can be called a disciple of General Bash, having been a minister in his cabinet. However, unlike the Biblical Thomas, Tikim (Thomas Ikimi) does not doubt his master.

Summary

This study has indicated that a great deal of bible names cuts across the selected works of Wole Soyinka. The biblical names are subtly deployed by the playwright following certain morphological patterns summarisable in Table 1.

Table 1: names and morphological patterns
Source: authors

S/N	Name	Pattern
1.	Eman	Clipping
2.	Ifada	Analogy
3.	Sunma	Analogy
4.	Samson	Analogy
5.	Particulars Joe	Clipping
6.	Simon Pilkings	Analogy
7.	Olunde	Analogy
8.	Joseph	Analogy
9.	Maariya	Lexical borrowing
10.	Tikim	Blending

From the table, the following names are formed through the process of analogy: Ifada, Sunma, Samson, Simon Pilkings, Olunde and Joseph. Similarly, Eman and Particulars Joe are formed through clipping. Both Maariya and Tikim are formed through the processes of lexical borrowing and blending respectively. Though Particulars Joe and Simon Pilkings could be argued to be compounding, our emphasis is on the real biblical elements in the names which are, Joe and Simon respectively. Thus, they are analysed as such. Table 2 below indicates the frequency and percentage of the name patterns.

Table 2: name pattern, frequency and percentage
Source: authors

S/N	Name Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Analogy	6	60
2.	Clipping	2	20
3.	Blending	1	10
4.	Lexical borrowing	1	10
	Total	10	100

Meanwhile, Table 2 presents the name pattern, frequency and percentage studied. From the table, analogy has a frequency of 6 (60%), clipping, 2 (20%); blending 1(10%) and lexical borrowing 1 (10%). This situation is represented by a line chart in Fig. 1 below.
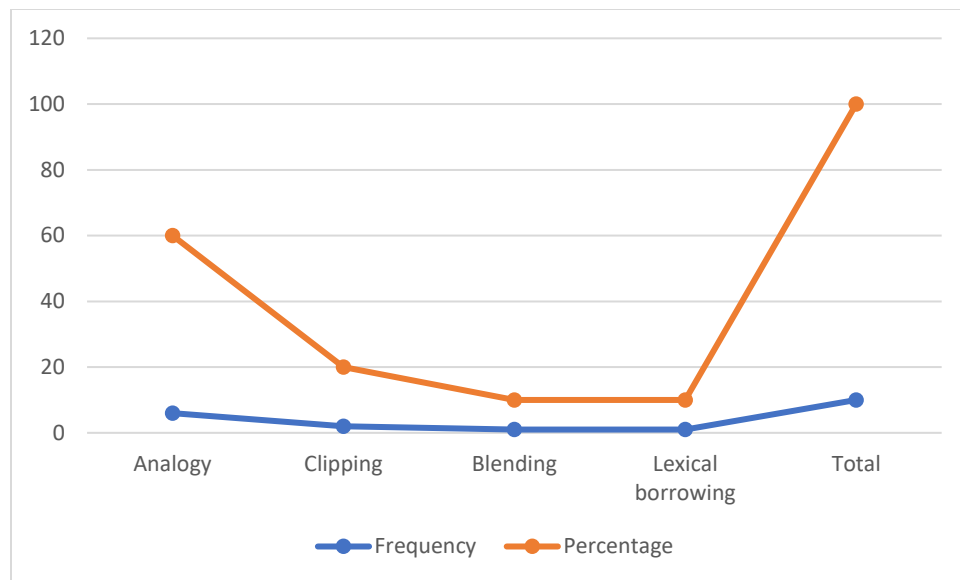
Fig. 1: A line chart showing frequency(ies) and percentage(s) of name patterns studied
Source: Authors

Conclusion

This study has shown that the playwright uses names formed through the processes of analogy, clipping, blending and lexical borrowing. From the discussion, we may submit that Wole Soyinka deploys a preponderance of biblical allusion by patterning most of his characters' names (characteronymy) after the names in the *Holy Bible*. Granted that analogy is a process whereby words are formed to be similar in some way to existing words (Yule, 1985:70), the study indicated that sixty per cent (60%) of the name studied were formed through the process of (the biblical) analogy. That we have names like Eman (clipping which has become popular culture among the Nigerian African youth) and Olunde (indigenous analogy) as part of the naming patterns is confirming the words of Izevbaye (1981:168) that "whatever difference exists between literature and life can be explained as a difference of the contexts in which naming takes place." The context of carrier and theme of scapegoatism among communities in need of a saviour (just as we have in the *Holy Bible*) led to the invention of the names. As a seasoned playwright versed in Christianity

and African traditional culture, Wole Soyinka has been able to create characters and plots that replicate the *Holy Bible's*.

Finally, as a postcolonial subject, the playwright uses biblical names in his works to blend his Christian and traditional background, and as a means of taking indirect swipe at the issue of African complex dispositions to the colonial encounter and its legacies. Based on the above, we may conclude that names in many African cultures are carefully constructed "in a semantico-syntactic sense to manifest specific meanings" (Oyeleye 1991:16) and because drama imitates realities, "fictional names are often taken directly from actual names in use" (1981:168) in the real life and in the *Holy Bible*.

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