

N°15, vol.2
2022

ReSciLac

Revue Pluridisciplinaire
ISSN : 1840-8001

1^{er} semestre 2022
(Juin 2022, vol.2)

Université d'Abomey-Calavi
Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication (LaSciLCom)
©UR-02-SODYLARY, 2022

Indexation : Worldcat, Stanford Libraries, Penn Libraries, Zeitschriften DatenBank

Preuve de l'indexation

- <http://www.worldcat.org/title/rescilac-revue-des-sciences-du-langage-et-da-la-communication/oclc/957341200>

- <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/11844535>

Université d'Abomey-Calavi
Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Communication
Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication
UR-02-SODYLARY / UAC – 2022

ReSciLaC N°15, vol.2
Revue pluridisciplinaire

I^{er} semestre 2022 (juin), vol.2

Directeur de publication

Prof. Akanni Mamoud IGUE (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Rédacteur en Chef

Prof. Aimé Dafon SEGLA (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Comité de rédaction

Dr (MC) Moufoutaou ADJERAN (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Dr (MA) Guillaume CHOGOLOU (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Comité scientifique et de lecture

Prof. Aimé Dafon SEGLA (CNRS, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Akanni M. IGUE (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Blaise DJIHOUESSI (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Céline PEIGNE (INALCO, Paris)

Prof. Christophe H. B. CAPO (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Flavien GBETO (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Pascal O. TOSSOU (Université d'Abomey-Calavi)

Prof. Gratien Gualbert ATINDOGBE (Buea, Cameroun)

Prof. Jean Euloge GBAGUIDI (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Kofi SAMBIENI (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Laré KANTCHOA (Université de Kara, Togo)

Prof. Maxime da CRUZ (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Prof. Tcha PALI (Université de Kara, Togo)

Prof. Romuald TCHIBOZO (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Dr (MC) Djoko Luis Stéphane KOUADIO (Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire)

Dr (MC) Innocent Sourou KOUTCHADE (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Dr Michael AKINPELU (Université de Regina, Canada)

Dr Etienne K. Iwikotan (Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin)

Dr Dame NDAO (Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Sénégal)

Adresse

Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication (LaSciLCom)

Unité de Recherche en Sociolinguistique, Dynamique des Langues et Recherche en Yoruba (UR-02-SODYLARY)

Université d'Abomey-Calavi.

laboratoiresociolinguistique@yahoo.fr

Site : <https://lasodyla.uac.bj>

Consignes aux auteurs

Modalités de soumission

Les articles doivent être envoyés au directeur de publication à l'adresse suivante : **laboratoiresociolinguistique@yahoo.fr**

Chaque proposition est évaluée par deux instructeurs anonymes dans un délai d'un mois (les propositions sont anonymées pour la relecture). Un article proposé pourra être refusé, accepté sous réserve de modifications, accepté tel quel. Les articles peuvent être rédigés **en français, en anglais, en allemand, en espagnol et en yoruba**.

Ils doivent comporter un résumé de 20 lignes maximum en français et en anglais, ainsi que 5 mots-clefs en français et en anglais. Le nombre de pages ou de caractères d'un article n'est pas limité. En revanche, un minimum de 8 pages est requis.

Présentation des contributions

Mise en page :

Format A4 ; Marges = 2,5 cm (haut, bas, droite, gauche) ; Reliure = 0 cm ; Style normal (pour le corps de texte) : Police Centaur14 points, sans couleurs, sans attributs (gras et italiques sont acceptés pour des mises en relief) ; paragraphe justifié, pas de retrait, pas d'espacement, interligne simple.

Titre de l'article : Police Centaur14 points, sans couleurs, majuscules, gras ; paragraphe centré, pas de retrait, espacement après = 18 points, pas de retrait de première ligne, interligne simple.

Titre 1 : Police Centaur14 points, sans couleurs, gras ; paragraphe gauche, espacement avant = 18 points, espacement après = 12 points, pas de retrait, pas de retrait de première ligne, interligne simple.

Titre 2 : Police Centaur12 points, sans couleurs, gras ; paragraphe gauche, espacement avant = 12 points, espacement après = 6 points, pas de retrait, pas de retrait de première ligne, interligne simple.

Titre 3 : Police Centaur12 points, sans couleurs, italiques ; paragraphe gauche, espacement avant = 12 points, espacement après = 3 points, pas de retrait, interligne simple.

Notes : notes de bas de page, numérotation continue, 1...2...3... ; Police Centaur10 points, sans couleurs, sans attributs (gras et italiques sont acceptés pour des mises en relief) ; paragraphe justifié, pas de retrait, pas d'espacement, pas de retrait de première ligne, interligne simple.

Références bibliographiques : Police Centaur 14 points; paragraphe justifié, pas d'espacement, interligne simple. Retrait d'une tabulation à partir du début de la deuxième ligne de chaque référence.

Exemples :

Blakemore, D. 1992. *Understanding Utterances*. Oxford : Blackwell Publishers.

Braconnier, C. 1993. Quelques aspects du passif mandingue dans saversion d'Odiène. *Linguistique Africaine* 10 : 29-64.

Casali, R. 2008. ATR harmony in African languages. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 2/3 : 496–549.

De Korne, H. 2007. The pedagogical potential of multimedia dictionaries. Lessons from a community dictionary project. The 14th annual stabilizing indigenous language symposium in Michigan on 1-3 June 2007. Consulté le 1er février 2012 sur <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/ILR/ILR-11.pdf>.

Présentation

ReSciLaC (Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication) est une revue du Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication (LaSciLCom), coordonnée par l'Unité de Recherches en Sociolinguistique, Dynamique des Langues et Recherches en Yoruba (UR-02-SODYLARY) de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (UAC). ReSciLaC est une revue pluridisciplinaire qui accueille des contributions abordant un grand nombre de champs d'études des sciences humaines et sociales.

ReSciLaC permet de faire la diffusion de travaux de jeunes chercheurs ou de chercheurs confirmés en sociolinguistique, en linguistique, en didactique des langues, en communication, en littérature, en philosophie du langage, en sciences de l'éducation, en sociologie, en histoire des sciences et techniques, en histoire de l'art, etc.

L'objectif de ReSciLaC est d'encourager des discussions scientifiques et théoriques les plus larges possibles portant aussi bien sur les sciences humaines, les sciences sociales que sur l'éthique et la déontologie.

Ethique et authenticité

Pour lutter contre le plagiat, nous utilisons l'application en ligne **Grammarly – plagiarism-checker** pour vérifier les contenus des articles publiés. Un code QR pour la revue. Ce code QR personnalisé contribue au renforcement de la sécurisation et de l'authentification des articles.

SOMMAIRE

SCIENCES DU LANGAGE, LETTRES & LANGUES

1. DISCOURS EPILINGUISTIQUES COMME EXPRESSION DES REPRESENTATIONS DES CITOYENS A L'EGARD DES ENTREPRISES AU BENIN ET LEURS IMPLICATIONS DANS LEURS PRISES DE DECISION, Moufoutaou ADJERAN, Jonas YEZOUNME & Justine BASSABI SAMA CHRISTOPHE, Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Bénin).....I-31
2. PROCÉDÉS D'ENRICHISSEMENT DU LEXIQUE MATHÉMATIQUE EN MOORÉ DANS LES CLASSES BILINGUES FRANÇAIS/MOORÉ AU BURKINA FASO, Issoufou François TIROGO, Université Joseph KI-ZERBO (Burkina Faso).....32-45
3. POUR UN NÉCESSAIRE AMÉNAGEMENT TERMINOLOGIQUE DES LANGUES IVOIRIENNES : LE CAS DU BAOULÉ, Konan Stanislas KOUASSI, Université Peleforo Gon Coulibaly (Côte d'Ivoire).....46-58
4. STRUCTURES DESCRIPTIVES ET DECOUVERTES DANS SOUNDJATA OU L'EPOPEE MANDING DE DJIBRIL TAMSIRNIANE, Drabo Alidieta, Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (Burkina Faso)59-72
5. SEMIOTICS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN PATRILINEAL AND MATRILINEAL CONTEXTS: A STUDY OF JOHN MUNONYE'S *OBI* AND ASARE KONADU'S *A WOMAN IN HER PRIME*, Yémalo, C. AMOUSSOU, Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Bénin).....73-90
6. THE ENACTMENT OF MULTICULTURALISM IN *SIGN YER HEART OUT FOR THE LADS*: A POSTCOLONIAL READING, Akondo Dyfaizi Nouhr-Dine, Université de Lomé (Togo).....91-105

SCIENCES SOCIALES & SCIENCES DE L'INFORMATION ET DE LA COMMUNICATION

7. TRAVAIL DOMESTIQUE ET MALTRATANCE DES FILLES AU SEIN DES MENAGES A ABIDJAN, Djagbré Esaïe OKOU, Université Felix Houphouët Boigny (Côte d'Ivoire).107-119
8. RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX NUMÉRIQUES ET PROMOTION DES FÉDÉRATIONS SPORTIVES EN CÔTE D'IVOIRE: UNE ANALYSE DES USAGES DE FACEBOOK, TWITTER et YOUTUBE EN 2022, Katia OUATTARA & Hamanys Broux De Ismaël KOFFI, Université Peleforo Gon Coulibaly (Côte d'Ivoire)120-133
9. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, SENSIBILISATION DU PUBLIC (CESP) DANS LA LUTTE CONTRE LES VIOLENCES SUR LES RESEAUX SOCIAUX NUMERIQUE EN PERIODE ELECTORALE EN COTE D'IVOIRE, Amino Liliane KOUASSI, Institut National Supérieur des Arts et de l'Action Culturelle (Côte d'Ivoire).....134-145

10. FONDEMENTS DE L'HUMOUR DANS LA PUBLICITE TELEVISUELLE
DECOTE D'IVOIRE, ADHEPEAU Julien Laurent Michel, (Côte d'Ivoire)..146-161

SEMIOTICS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN PATRILINEAL AND
MATRILINEAL CONTEXTS: A STUDY OF JOHN MUNONYE'S *OBI* AND ASARE
KONADU'S *A WOMAN IN HER PRIME*⁶⁶

Yémalo, C. AMOUSSOU,
Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)
cayemal@yahoo.fr

Abstract

*This paper identifies and contextually analyses about one hundred and thirty (130) sayings and metaphorical utterances from two West African novels – John Munonye's *Obi* (1969) and Asare Konadu's *A Woman in her Prime* (1969) to uncover gender-determinants and male-female tenor. After overviewing the conceptual and theoretical background drawing on the gender-theory and semiotics, the study reveals that these proverbs and metaphors encode so much on gender-variables that they help to deduce the male-female interpersonality and the ideology that governs gender symbols and relations in the novels. Indeed, from the contextual analysis of the symbols used for strong and weak men, for strong and weak women and for the male and female partners in a 'union', the study contends that gender is more spiritual and cultural than biological and may have little to do with sex differences.*

Keywords: Ideological context, Matrilineal, Metaphor, Patrilineal, Proverb, Symbol, tenor.

Résumé

*Cet article a identifié et contextuellement analysé cent trente (130) proverbes et expressions métaphoriques dans deux romans africains – *Obi* de John Munonye (1969) et *A Woman in her Prime* de Asare Konadu (1969) aux fins de ressortir les déterminants du genre et de déduire les relations interpersonnelles et idéologiques homme-femme. Après avoir passé en revue les cadres conceptuel et théorique notre analyse prend appui sur la théorie du genre et la sémiotique et, montre que ces proverbes et ces métaphores renseignent assez sur les déterminants de genre qu'on peut en déduire le ténor homme-femme et l'idéologie qui sous-tendent les rapports de genre dans ces romans. En effet, l'analyse contextuelle des signes utilisés pour les hommes forts et faibles, les femmes fortes et faibles et les partenaires en couple soutient que le genre est plus culturel et spirituel que biologique et peut se passer des différences de sexe.*

Mots-clés : contexte idéologique, matrilineaire, métaphore, patrilinéaire, proverbe, symbole, ton discursif.

⁶⁶ **NB:** *Obi* (= *Obi*: John Munonye, 1969); *Woman* (= *A Woman in her Prime*: Asare Konadu, 1969).

Introduction

A careful side-by-side reading of Munonye's *Obi* (1969) and Konadu's *A Woman in her Prime* (1969) would help anyone to realize that the major couple-characters in both, Anna and Joe on the one hand, and Pokuwaa and Kwadwo on the other, are in much the same predicament for their lengthy search for the fruit of the womb. It can also be noted that both women have had at least one miscarriage before and get pregnant only after they have stopped visiting witch-doctors, sacrificing to idols and using charms and decide to direct their prayers to the Almighty God. Before then, they have been variously perceived, represented and addressed by the narrators and other characters around them. In addition, the two stories are set around the same period (late 1930s-early 1940s) and published around the same year (1969) and this helps to carry out both a diachronic and synchronic analysis. *Indeed, though the characters operate under two different ideologies, the patrilineal Ibo ideology on the one hand and the matrilineal Ashanti one on the other, the two women face so much similar pressures, one from the husband's side, and the other from the wife's side, that it is possible to postulate that ideological differences matter little in the perception of 'barren' women in Anglophone African fiction.*

This paper studies the semiotic representations and social perceptions of these characters and their like-fated ones with the view to decoding the major gender-determinants and ideology behind them. For that purpose, it has been necessary for the researcher to briefly overview the major gender and character theories on the one hand and semiotics on the other. Then gender symbols and the aspects gender (masculinity/femininity; manliness/womanliness, potency/impotency, fertility/infertility, sterility/barrenness, etc) they encode are identified and analyzed. The findings are summed up, discussed and interpreted before a short conclusion is drawn. Some data appear in the text and others are appended to avoid long breaks in the analysis and the APA style is used as recommended in the field of linguistics.

I. Theoretical Framework: An Overview of the Gender Theory and Semiotics

When one agrees with Beauvoir (1973:301) that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman;" one must also be inclined to opine that 'one is not born, but rather, becomes a man'. While Beauvoir's statement should not be understood in terms of growth from girlhood to womanhood, it must be so in terms of the status-determining functions of one's deeds. As Nietzsche, cited in Butler (2006: 25) states: "there is no 'being' behind 'doing'... The 'doer' is merely a fiction added to the 'deed' –the deed is everything". It thus becomes possible to situate the Beauvoir-Nietzsche view of gender within the broader structuralist functionalist approach to character. While the relational character theory can be captioned in this dictum by Henry James –"What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is not of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it?" (James, [1884]1963:80; Rimmon-Kennan, 1983:35)–Chatman ([1972] 2009: 57) argues that "Structuralists wish to base their analyses strictly on what characters DO in a story, not on what they ARE –by some outside psychological

measure”. Indeed the conflict is that the former emphasises the relational definition of characters in terms of what others say they are while the latter stresses their how their own thoughts, behaviours and deeds define them. The structuralist approach thus seems to best summarize the Beauvoir-Butler views, as Butler (2011: 25), insists: “Gender proves to be performance, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to re-exist the deed” (Butler, 2011: 25). If gender is performative, it thus involves the choice and performance of social roles and identities in conformance or not with socio-cultural conventions and expectations: “We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman...So to say gender is performative is to say that nobody really is a gender from the start” (Butler, 2011, Interview). Other theorists have similar opinions on gender and its social manifestations:

Gender doesn't just exist, but is continually produced, reproduced, and indeed changed through people's performance of gendered acts, as they project their own gender identities, ratify or challenge other's identities, and in various ways support or challenge systems of gender relations and privilege (Eckert and McConnell Ginnet, 2003:4)

Gender is only one part of a person's social identity, and it is an aspect, which will be more or less salient in different contexts. In some contexts, for example, it may be more important to emphasize one's professional expertise, one's ethnic identity, or one's age than one's gender (Holmes, 2009:9)

These views entail that gender goes far beyond biological sex and encompasses a broader five-strata continuum: ‘birth-assigned sex’, ‘gender-identity,’ ‘gender-expression,’ ‘physical/sexual attraction’ and ‘emotional attraction’ (Amoussou, 2021: 38-39; Pan & Moore, 2014). While anyone is aware that they are either male or female by birth (sex), they may mentally identify more with one side than the other (identity), tend to socially/behaviorally to conform more to one side than the other (expression); to be more physically/sexually attracted to one group than to the other (attraction) or more emotionally moved to defend the causes of one side than the other (affection). The second, third and the fifth items give rise to the existence of a third and fourth gender: ‘female men’ or ‘men who tend/choose to function as women’ and ‘male women’ or ‘women who choose/tend to function as men.’ However, in adopting a semiotic approach, the relational theory must be favoured as characters in fiction do not necessarily represent themselves but are portrayed by the narrator and other characters.

As semiotics is defined to study “everything that can be taken as a sign” (Eco, 1976:7) and a sign to operate iconically, indexically and symbolically (Chandler, 2001: 11-12), this table is proposed to sum up these three modes:

Table: *Modes of Expression of a Sign; adapted from Chandler, 2001: 11-12*

<i>Modes of expression of a sign</i>	<i>Definitions & examples</i>
symbol/symbolic	a mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified but which is fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional, so that the relationship must be learnt (e. g.: language, graphemes, words, numbers, Morse code, traffic lights, national flags, metaphor, etc).
index/indexical	a mode in which the signifier <i>is not arbitrary</i> but <i>is directly connected</i> in some way (physically or causally) to the signified through observation or inference (e. g.: natural signs: smoke, thunder, footprints, etc; photographs, pointers, signposts, medical symptoms, recorded voices, catchphrases, clocks, etc).
icon/iconic	a mode in which the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified (e. g.: a portrait, a cartoon, onomatopoeia, a simile, etc).

As it also widely agreed that “*wherever a sign is present, ideology is present too*” (Voloshinov, 1973:10), then semiotics can be a suitable way to study gender representations across cultures. The next section identifies and analyses the gender signs –indices, symbols and icons– in the novels. A few examples (n^{0s} 61.1; 61.2; 62.1; 62.2; 62.3; 62. 5; 63; 64; 71; 96 and 97) are taken from a few other African writings to give some intertextual back-up to the corpus findings.

2. Semiotic Analysis of Masculinity and Femininity in the Novels

This analysis helps to come up with a few stereotypes about gender and male-female tenor in the corpus novels. For instance, there are proverbs and metaphors that encode physical strength and outcomes of wrestling matches as indices of *masculinity/power* and *femininity/weakness*. While Uzondu’s descriptions (n^{0s} 1-2) evoke ‘*a female man*’, a girl named ‘*Egodinobi*’ (*Obi: 104*) is nicknamed ‘*Warrior*’ for her masculinity (n⁰ 3) and Joe (n^{0s} 4-6) is feared and respected for his strong limbs and hairy hands:

(1) “In those days, Uzondu was *a slow, clumsy lad, good-humoured and friendly*. everybody liked him, and *every boy of his age threw him in wrestling*” (*Obi: 28*)

(2) “He found nobody in except *a fat boy* that *looked as though* he was *Uzondu’s son*, and who *did not seem* to know his right from his left” (*Obi: 179*)

(3) “Her nickname was *Warrior* –*a tall, strong woman* who in her younger days *had wrestled and thrown many boys of her age* –*not just Uzondu*; and she was *bold and forthright* in speech” (*Obi: 99*)

(4) “Joe had then a reputation for *pugnaciousness*, for in the school they would refer to him *as the Father’s boy* who argued all his points with *his fists*” (*Obi: 20*)

(12) “*It did occasionally happen* that *a man* wanted to face *another* in combat and invited his opponent to the bush where they would be alone and *the stronger* would batter *the weaker* one to death” (*Woman: 58*)

(13) “*Everybody knew* that one of the surest and quickest means of establishing *respectability* in the land was still *the use of the fists*: thus the unruly lad who threw others in wrestling, or who beat up his age-grade, was regarded as *a hero*, even by the very victims of his fists” (*Obi: 196*)

(14) “Cecilia was *a big, muscular girl*: they had already nicknamed her ‘*Not-Fit-To-Be-A-Girl*’” (*Obi: 68*)

(15) “They would say...*her buttocks* are bigger than *any house* in Ossa: *No wonder* that she cannot find a husband. She’s *two people* together and churchmen are not allowed to marry more than one; and she wouldn’t marry a heathen either” (*Obi: 2*)

Though Uzondu is *a boy/man*, the fact that he is thrown down by other every boy and some girls of his age-grade helps to portray him as *a female* (n⁰ 1), the male index ‘*Warrior/Soldier*’ evokes Egodinobi’s manliness as is manifested in her physical

strength, courage and wrestling victory over many boys (*n*^o3). In identifying a foolish fat boy with Uzondu (*n*^o2), the latter is turned into an icon of male-obesity and emasculation. As a result, he is mocked with such signifiers as ‘*the Fat One*’ (*Obi*: 26) ‘*Fat One*’ (*Obi*: 50) and ‘*Big Sack*’ (*Obi*: 96). In particular, the plural signifier ‘*fat creatures*’ (*Obi*: 93) for Uzondu means that he is used as a symbol for ‘*male obesity*,’ which makes him both a symbolic and iconic character (*n*^o2). As for Joe, he is known to live by ‘*his fists*’ (*n*^o4), as such other signifiers for him as –‘*Giant*’ (*Obi*: 28), ‘*a lion*’ (*n*^o5), ‘*a blood-thirsty lion*’ (*n*^o6), ‘*Hitler Hand*’ (*n*^o7) –show. As the nickname ‘*Hitler Hand*’, which contextually stands for ‘*Iron Hand*’ (*Obi*: 122), shows, Joe’s hand is so strong and used that this part of his body becomes an index of his character. Joe is also identified with an ancestral strongman called ‘*Udemezue of Burning Eyes*’ (*n*^{os}8-9) and is so much believed to be a reincarnation of this grandfather for his physical build and strength that his mother addresses him as ‘*My husband’s father*’ (*Obi*: 28, 29) and almost the older members of the extended family, including his uncles, iconically call him ‘*Father*’ (*Obi*: 14, 33, 48, 76, 77, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 105, 119, 120, 154) or ‘*My good Father*’ (*Obi*: 93). Oddly enough, whenever Joe is caught eating his wife’s dried fish, he is likened to ‘*a masquerade*’, maybe for his ‘*hoarse voice*’ (*Obi*: 55) or for his identity as a reincarnation (*n*^{os}8-9). Anna’s use of the vocative ‘*daylight rogue*’ (*Obi*: 157) when she catches Joe eating fish might give the impression that she authors the comparisons (*n*^{os}10-11), but the ideological context of her unbelief in reincarnation and masquerade worship helps to more accurately attribute their authorship to the narrator. Indeed, though the survival-of-the-fittest-rule is traditionally promoted (*n*^{os}12-13), the colonial rule does not favor this ideology (*n*^o13), which somehow deprives people like Joe and Warrior of this masculine index and emasculates them (Achebe, 1960: 151). Moreover, a strong-limbed girl is viewed as ‘*a boy*’, as the nickname ‘*Not-Fit-To-Be-A-Girl*’ (*n*^o14) and the application of her ‘*masculine strength*’ (p. 68) to the sewing machine show. Likewise, a forty-five year-old plump lady is called ‘*Miss Fat*’ or ‘*Fat Agatha*’ for her generous size. As she is seen as ‘*two people – one man and one woman*’—in one body (*n*^o15), monogamy and pagan-marriage prohibition are blamed for her singleness.

There are sayings that encode the ideology that a *deficient/childless* man is ‘*a woman*’ and that an infertile woman is ‘*a man*’. Indeed, men who fail to have children or have only female ones or opt for celibacy are also emasculated. In these adages, such symbols as ‘*a pulpy pillar*’ and ‘*a single rope*’ are used by women to complain about three such men –Joe, Uzondu, Willie– from the same family tree to fearful hint to the extinction of the line:

(16) “This thing you do is like climbing a *palm-tree* with a *single rope*! You are the only son of the family: what would happen if *the rope* should suddenly snap and break?” (*Obi*: 33)

(17) “He’s not dead who has a *son* that can continue *his obi*, but it’s *death*, stark and tragic, if one has *no son*, or if the son is a *vagabond*, or a *pulpy pillar* which will crumble under the weight of *an edifice*” (*Obi*: 34)

(18) “It’s now I know that Okafo, your father, is *dead*; for his son is only a *pulpy pillar* which will give way under *the weight of an edifice*: you are not a *man*” (*Obi*: 33)

(22) “She is like *any boy* in Brenhoma, for there is no difference between a *barren woman* and a *man*” (*Woman*: 89)

(23) “Have you become a *woman*?...Pokuwaa my child is a *woman* before my eyes” (*Woman*: 99,100)

(24) “She thought of the number of times she had carried *yam tuber like a child* on her back, occasionally pushing it up to settle properly, and tightening it *more securely* with a twist of the ends of her cloth” (*Woman*: 81).

Joe, an only son, is seen as ‘a *single rope*’ (n^o16) for choosing to become ‘a *Mission Boy*’ (Obi: 4) and the new faith is as ‘a *palm-tree*’ and should be climbed at least with ‘a *double rope*’. The same Joe is seen as ‘a *pulpy-pillar*’ and ‘a *woman*’ and his father’s homestead as ‘a *weighty edifice*’ because he is still a bachelor at 25 (n^o17) and is not yet a father at 31 (n^o18). This ‘*pulpy pillar*’ symbol is broadened to other men for remaining single above 25 and for having only female children (n^{os}19-20). The charges against Joe are summed up in the curses from his mother and his female cousins (n^o20-21), which means that despite the masculine indices (n^{os}4-11), he is still perceived as a woman, a failure and disgrace for his ‘*inability*’ to impregnate. Likewise, a childless woman named Pokuwaa is called ‘a *boy/man*’ by her mother for remaining childless at above 40 (n^o22) and has become ‘a *woman*’ only when she gets pregnant (n^o23). As the curse of a barren woman is often expressed in the proverb “A *childless woman will carry a stone on her back*” (Masanda, 2011, *non-paginated*), the fact that Pokuwaa carries ‘a *yam-tuber*’ on her back like ‘a *child*’ (n^o24) means she is painted to operate under such a curse. While the proverb of ‘a *hoe-less handle*’ and ‘a *handle-less hoe*’ (n^o25) expresses her plight, ‘*the seed-and-sorrow metaphors*’ (n^o26) are used to respectively stand for her ‘*pregnancy*’ and ‘*barrenness*’

Like Joe, most of the other men who delay or refuse to marry (Ojiako, Ozondu and Willie) are suspected to be impotent and they seem to be known for their loud-mouths. While the first one is shouted down for his ‘*cock-and-bull stories*’ (n^o27), the second one’s refusal to marry (n^{os}28, 34) and thirst for social palm-wine drinking and claims for worthiness and manhood turn him into a proverbial laughing stock (n^{os}28-35):

(29) “The jar of *palm wine* explained why *Uzondu* was following so closely” (Obi: 47)

(30) “Rather than leave *palm wine* in *the container*, let it remain in *the stomach*” (Obi: 76)

(31) “What is it the proverb says? ‘*The udala fruit* drops of its own accord when it sees *a worthy person* passing” (Obi: 48)

(32) “What is it a proverb says? ‘The child who watches *a performing monkey* runs the risk of missing a day’s work” (Obi: 96)

(33) “When a man has paid *his tax*, only then does he have the courage to appear before *the white man*” (Obi: 127)

(34) “He that maltreats *a young palm-tree* rues his offence when time comes for *fence-making*” (Obi: 127)

(35) “Women *bully* their husbands and *produce children* that resemble neither father nor mother; and that is exactly why *Uzondu* has refused to marry” (Obi: 23)

(36) “Religion is *the opium* of *the people*,’ that’s what a certain wise man once said. I would amend that: ‘it’s *the opium* of *women*’ (Obi: 51).

While the move from ‘*the dead snake*’ to ‘*the dead squirrel*’ somehow shows the illogicality of Ojiako’s tale and points to his escape into fantasies to cover his ‘*impotency*’ (n^o27), the ‘*bush fowl*’ story is often evoked by Uzondu to justify his bachelorhood (n^o28). The verb ‘*explained*’ (n^o29) shows that ‘*palm-wine*’ is an index of Uzondu’s presence in much the way the presence of ‘*vultures*’ is of ‘*carcasses*’ (Matthew 24: 28). While the latter’s theory about palm-wine is encoded in the *container-to-stomach transfer* (n^o30) and he is rebuked by men for counting himself a ‘*worthy man*’ when palm-wine is around (n^o 31), his real image before the womenfolk is encoded in the ‘*performing monkey*’ symbol (n^o 32). In addition, proverbs (n^{os} 33-34) are viewed as ‘*nicknames*’ (Obi: 126) by which he is known and rebuked whenever he makes loud-mouthed claims. Indeed, he is viewed as ‘a *duty-free or un-taxable male*’ (n^o33) and thus

an ‘*un-man*,’ ‘*illegitimate man*’ before the white rulers and ‘*the young palm-tree*’ symbol (n^o 34), which contextually stands for ‘*a young woman*’ (n^{os} 50-51), falls within his fantastic claims about women to hide his inadequacy, as this over 30-year-old single man (n^o 35) sees women’s infidelity as a reason for remaining so. Likewise, another twenty-five year-old man called Willie is rebuked for his claims and attacks on women and the church (n^{os} 36-40). It comes out (n^{os} 27-40) that effeminate men are portrayed to do things with their mouths; for just as Ojiako can kill ‘*a big snake*’ with his mouth (n^o 27), Willie can fell ‘*four hundred iroko trees with his mouth*’ (n^o 39) and Uzondu has so much married with his mouth (n^o 29) that it is said of him that “*his twentieth wife arrived yesterday*” (Obi: 29).

As Joe’s case (n^{os} 16-21), Pokuwaa’s one (n^{os} 22-26) and those of the three single adults (n^{os} 27-40) show, both single and childless women and men are stigmatized and socially pressurized most often by wicked mothers, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. The attitude to Anna of her husband’s female relatives is expressed through proverbs, metaphors and sensitive stories that hint to barrenness, pregnancy and patrilineage:

(41) “This is *the cock, the cock, the cock!* This is *the cock, the cock, the cock!*” (Obi: 7)

(42) “When *the cock* crows for the first time... *every kind of thief* makes haste to escape” (Obi: 127).

(43) “*The chicken* there is for you to rear: I’ll know from it what luck you have with *livestock*” (Obi: 37)

(46) “I thought it was *a happy sickness*; that you were beginning to be *two bodies*” (Obi: 31)

(47) “I am *not a dead body* which want cloth for burial; I am a living body and therefore want to see *my own blood*. Spirits of *the righteous dead* move about looking for where to get re-incarnated and yet the two of you are *like that*” (Obi: 32)

(50) “I can easily recognize *the raffia palm*: like *that tree* which pours out its life together with *its wine*, Anna had poured out all the energy in her” (Obi: 81)

(51) “We think she is *well-bred* and she is *beautiful* too; but then, what use is *a kolanut tree* if it fails to bear fruits” (Obi: 99)

(55) “A woman who says ‘I will not give birth is *useless, useless!*’” (Woman: 89)

(56) “So you’re still *like that*... that a man should undertake to build such *a house for rats and lizards* and *snakes!*” (Obi: 142)

(57) “They all refused to attend: ‘What is the need building *a house for rats and lizards?*’ they asked” (Obi: 138)

(60) “But *her order* had little or no effect only a small number heard *her tiny voice*, and partly because, *being boys*, they were not used to being hushed by *women like that*” (Obi: 57-58).

‘*The cock*’ symbol (n^o 41-42) is used for Joe first to announce his manly decision and return to his homeland to rebuild his father’s obi and then his floor-taking in a meeting, after he has heroically scared away the corrupt tax-officials. However, the ‘*pullet-raising test*’ (n^{os} 43-44) is meant to check on Anna’s fertility and the ban on egg-consumption (n^o 45) is likewise based on the fact that a hen that eats or pierces its own eggs is seen as a witch or wicked one, as is attested in the African proverb: “*he who eats an egg foregoes a future meal of chicken soup*”. As ‘*the young hen*’ (n^{os} 43-44) stands for ‘*Anna*,’ ‘*the eggs*’ (n^o 45) do so for her potential children. While the metaphors of the ‘*happy sickness*’ and ‘*two bodies*’ (n^o 46) stand for ‘*pregnancy*’ and express, together with that of ‘*the righteous dead*’ (n^o 47), the mother-in-law’s eagerness to see her grandchildren, the stories of the running woman and the wife-beater (n^{os} 48-49) are meant not only to stigmatize Anna and blame the couple’s childlessness on her but also to incite Joe to become rude to her. As the ‘*foot-corn disease*’ (n^o 48) is an index of menopause, this story is used to warn the woman that she must obey customs if she does not want to grow beyond child-bearing age without an issue. The metaphors of the

'palm-tree', 'kolanut tree' and 'raffia-tree' (n^{os} 50-51) contextually stand for Anna to evoke, not only her barrenness but also her advancing age. In particular, the 'lifeless raffia-palm' and 'the etiolated fruit' similes (n^{os} 50, 58) help to blame Anna's premature aging on the herbs she drinks, but the narrator tells the reader that these concoctions affect her less than the insults from Joe's female relatives (n^o59). As the process 'to produce' stands for 'to mother a child,' this metaphor is used by the clan women to pressurize Joe to get another wife or to deny Anna 'wifehood' in the absence of her 'motherhood' (n^{os} 52-54). Indeed, the indexical link between 'wifehood' and 'motherhood' is somehow reversed as a young lady must normally be 'a wife' before becoming 'a mother'. Likewise, Pokuwaa, in addition to being regarded as 'male' for her infertility (n^o 8), is also viewed as a useless fruitless kolanut-tree (n^o 55), as the symbols of the 'handle-less hoe' and 'hoe-less handle' earlier show (n^o 25). The metaphor of 'a house for rats, snakes and lizards' (n^{os} 56-57) helps to stigmatize and pressurize the childless couple, as these animals are seen as their heirs. It even seems as if a childless woman cannot correct young boys when they misbehave. Small boys refer to Anna as 'women like that' (n^o 60) to mean 'childless women' (Obi: 142) to object to being silenced by her, seeing her as a type of the women who should not hush boys.

While there are proverbs and metaphors that imply that a woman's glory is found in childbirth, that boys are the old-age security for their mothers and that motherhood is acquired and can be lost or maintained, there also are statements that reject those traditional views and posit that childbirth can even lead a woman to lose the so-called glory. Indeed, drawing on the controversial belief that a woman whose child dies at birth or an early age is worthier or better than a barren woman or one who dies at childbirth (n^{os} 61.1-61.2), both Anna (n^o 61.3) and Pokuwaa (n^o 61.4) reason that what matters most is to be called 'a mother', even if the child or the mother has to die in the process:

(61.1) "A woman whose sons have died is worthier than a barren woman" (Ndungo, 2006: 55)

(61.2) "Whenever my people go to console a woman whose *baby has died at birth or soon after*, they always tell her to dry eyes because it is better *the water spilled* than *the pot broken*" (MOP: 32)

(61.3) "God, why not give me *just one*, even if *its birth* would mean *my own death*? Let me die immediately *it's been delivered*... Let me die even while it's coming out, provided that it *lives*" (Obi: 103)

(61.4) "Is it any advantage to bear a child only to see it die? Why have *the pain of the birth* and *the pain of the loss*? But *perhaps* the fact of being able to say that *you once gave birth to a child was the important thing*" (Womar: 80)

(62.1) "I am *not a woman* anymore! I am *not a mother* anymore! The *child* is... *dead* on the mat. My *chi* has taken him away from me. I only want to go in there and meet *her*" (Emecheta, 1979:62)

(62.2) "I am not prepared to stay here and be turned into a *madwoman* because I have *no sons*... I am going to make some of our men who return from the fighting happy... I will spend the money I have in giving my girls a good start in life" (Emecheta, 1979: 168)

(62.3) "She was now sure, as she bathed her baby son and cooked porridge for her husband, that her old age would be happy, that when she died there would be somebody left behind to refer to her as '*Mother*'" (Emecheta, 1979: 54)

(62.4) "A woman with many children could face a lonely old age and maybe a miserable death, just like a barren woman" (Emecheta, 1979: 224)

(62.5) "It was hard on *an old woman with eight children*: it was like having a *river* and yet washing one's hands with *spittle*" (Achebe, 1960: 122)

(63) "*Giving birth* is proof that you are not a *mule*" (Ngũgĩ, 1982: 20)

(64) "A barren woman is like a *bull* that can be yoked and used to plough in the field" (Masanda, 2011, non-paginated).

While the interrogations show that Pokuwaa questions the odd belief (n^o 61.4), Anna is likened to 'a madwoman' (Obi: 103) for willing to die for her newborn to live

(n^o 61.3). Intriguingly, a woman experiences the loss of her tender-age son as that of both her ‘*womanhood*’ and ‘*motherhood*’ (n^o 62.1). Another sonless woman refuses to be seen as ‘*a madwoman*’ and prefers to sell herself to educate her girls (n^o 62.2). While the beliefs (n^o 61.1-61.3) are shattered by those cases (n^{os} 61.4-62.1), they are further so by modern-day realities that women with many children lack so much affective and material support from them through rural exodus or brain drain that they end as if they were worse than barren ones. Indeed, a former fruitless woman, who later thought her status and future secured by the birth of her first son (n^o 62.3), finally realizes that, even with three sons and four daughters, she can and does end like a barren woman (n^{os} 62.4). Through ‘*the spittle*’ and ‘*the river*’ symbols (n^o 62.5), it is also lamented that that a woman with eight children should have ended as if she were childless. As the ‘*mule*’ and ‘*bull*’ symbols show (n^{os} 63-64), the race for motherhood is caused by the ‘*glory of motherhood*’ theory and the de-feminization or masculinization and dehumanization of barren women in Africa as those examples (n^{os} 41-64) are from four African ethnic groups (Ibo, Ashanti, Gikuyu and Xhosa), as Kimathi (1994) and Davies (1986) respectively stress:

(65.1) “Women grow up hearing that a woman’s *glory is crowned in childbirth*” (Kimathi, 1994:82)

(65.2) “*Motherhood defines womanhood: motherhood is crucial to a woman’s status in African society. To marry and mother a child, a son preferably, entitles a woman to more respect from her husband’s kinsmen as she can now be addressed as mother of...*” (Davies, 1986: 243).

There are proverbs and metaphors that encode the view that the women who are cherished by their husbands ‘*padlock*’ them into becoming ‘*women*’ and that they often cause dispute between their men. Drawing on the friendly tenor between Anna’s parents, her father’s death soon after her mother’s is attributed to ‘*a broken-heart*’ (n^o 66) and the similar one between Pokuwaa and her husband (n^o 67) and between Anna and Joe (n^o 68) is rumored to be charm-mediated. Another woman (n^o 69) who has her husband kneel and beg for her return is also suspected to have padlocked him:

(66) “*People said that Papa died of a broken heart for he loved Mamma very much and could not bear her loss*” (Obi: 2)

(67) “*People said that she was using charms on him, but he knew better: in her company he always radiated happiness*” (Womar: 23; 91)

(70) “*The two had hitherto blended like salt and oil something must have happened: an evil spirit had done it*” (Obi: 128)

(71) “*I did not know that you and he had suddenly become palm oil and salt again*” (AOG: 75)

(72) “*But Obieke wasn’t the type that was wife to a woman, or that licked his wife’s skin*” (Obi: 128)

(73) “*Do you want your neighbours to call me a woman? It is sufficient for me that one of us should smell nice, and that it should be you*” (Womar: 78)

(78) “*You are the proverbial tortoise: it lost its patience on the very day it was to be released, after it had been imprisoned for several years in a refuse of dump*” (Obi: 47)

(79) “*As the saying went, a good couple do not sit down and talk about old quarrels, they just forget*” (Obi: 203)

(80) “*They also felt that the cause of the disagreement must be traced close to the women: ‘When brothers begin to quarrel over land, trace the cause to the wives,’ that was a common saying in the land: it was a statement of fact as well as a proverb*” (Obi: 128)

(83) “*How could any woman be rich if the husband was not? This was a prosperous couple...Let it rain and they would cover their heads with banana leaves. And if the sun should beat down fiercely they would take narrow, shady footpaths!*” (Obi: 69)

Indeed, while men view a man who begs his woman to return as ‘a woman,’ women regard such a woman as ‘a symbolic good one’ (n^o69). Indeed, men’s stand is backed up by the Ibo customs that “a man is not expected go down on his knees and knock down his forehead on the ground to his wife to ask for forgiveness or ask for a favour” (Achebe, 1964: 172; Amoussou; 2021a:55), but the rebellious women’s approval of Helen’s demand can fit into the claim for gender-equality.

The metaphors of ‘the salt’ and ‘palm-oil’ (n^o70) are found to signal a friendly tenor between husband and wife (Amoussou, 2021a:53) and to encode the similar one that is widely known to exist between Joe and Obieke, on the one hand, and between Joe and Anna, on the other (n^o69). Surprisingly, though Obieke, does not fight back when his wife bites/beats him (*Obr*: 49), curses/insults him (*Obr*: 118) and throws food into his face (*Obi*: 118); he, unlike the ‘soft’ men (n^os66-69), is said not the type of man who is wife to his wife, which confirms that some typically are (n^o 72). Indeed, the man’s inaction to his wife’s provocations is anchored on the Ibo proverb and belief that ‘only a fool/coward beats or fights a woman’ (Amoussou, 2021a: 44; 55; Achebe, 1958: 66; 1960: 124, 148; 1964: 66).

That is why he is warned against turning into ‘a fool’ (*Obr*: 136) when he threatens to beat his wife. While a man refuses to wear cosmetics because it indicates womanliness and fear that he would be called a ‘woman’ for doing so (n^o73), the very man is likened to a woman for his ‘heavy sleep’, as the reversal of the ‘bodyguard-function’ (n^o 74) from him to the woman entails some transfer of ‘manliness’ to her and of ‘womanliness’ to him. It must, however, be noted that this man’s heavy-sleep is due to the fact that his first wife does not easily let him leave her laps while the woman’s wakefulness comes from her concern over her infertility. Pokuwaa’s courage is also shown in that she single-handedly kills a big cobra that tries to swallow her hen (n^o 75) but cowardly elders are likened to ‘women’ and ‘slow snails’ and manly ones to ‘hasty rats’ (n^o 76). The woman’s ‘hairy-chest’ is equated with seduction and masculinity (n^o 77) and the banishment of ‘old quarrels’ an index of a good couple (n^o 78). The proverb of the latrine-trapped tortoise (n^o 79) shows that both wife and husband must be patient to the end, as ‘the tortoise’ stands for Anna who has patiently waited for her ‘new workshop’ and is about to despair when it is almost completed. While it is emphatically stated that women are the causers of discord between men (n^o 80), Anna’s good character (n^os 51, 84-88) helps to spare her of every suspicion about the origin of the dispute, but Akueze’s sharp tongue (n^os 88-93) gets her convicted for it, as she is the ‘evil spirit’ and ‘dividing tongue’(n^o80).

The orientational metaphors of ‘back’ and ‘front’ are traditionally used to reflect the tenor between ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ on the way to church but ‘the side-by-side’ position adopted by Joe and Anna (n^o 81) becomes a novelty that tells them from village couples. It is even encoded that a woman cannot succeed either academically or financially where a man fails (n^os82-83). For instance, a catechist who has twice failed in an exam excludes the possibility for *Agatha* (n^o15) to make it (n^o82), and despite Anna’s hard work (n^os84-85), it is believed that she cannot have money if her husband has not had (n^o83). Yet these successes by women where men cannot and do not expect (n^os n^o82-

83) confirm earlier findings that women do succeed when men fail (Amoussou, 2021b: 64).

In these other adages, a wife's character is expressed in proverb-mediated symbols. While the vocatives '*the good woman*' (p. 49), '*our good wife*' (p. 80,153), '*a good woman*' (p. 128), '*a virtuous wife*' (p.153), '*the best-sewer*' sayings (n^{0s}83-84) and other *metaphors* (n^{0s}85-88) help to account for Anna's goodness, beauty and laboriousness, other symbols like '*the villain!*' (*Obi: 199*), '*misfortune*' and '*pepper*' (n^{0s} 89, 92), '*evil*' (n^{0s} 89, 90 & 93), '*Scorpion*' (n^{0s} 91), '*the evil dog*' (n^{0s} 93), '*the wicked*' (n^{0s} 94), etc' are used to point to Akueze's sharp tongue:

(87) "And then *the moon* appeared in the sky, at long last, *as if she* had just been persuaded to *grace* the occasion with her *queenly presence*" (*Obi:80*)

(88) "Like *the moon* that shines at night, Anna did not have to announce her *departure* before it would be known" (*Obi: 183*)

(89) "Akueze is my own wife, but when I see something that is *evil*, I say it out...she's *pepper*" (*Obi: 49*)

(90) "In spite of all Adagu does I like her for one thing: she's the only person who can talk to *the evil thing* I call my wife in the language she deserves" (*Obi: 104*)

(91) "Probably *Akueze* got her character from her mother who until she died was popularly known as *Scorpion*. What was the saying? It's *the mother's milk* that forms *a child's character*" (*Obi: 194*)

(95) "You're very fond of children and yet you won't get your wife to produce for you, *castrated bull!*" (*Obi: 189*)

(96) "If you want to shout like *a castrated bull* you must wait until you return to Umuaro" (Achebe, 1964:24)

(97) "What annoys me is not that *an overblown fool dangling empty testicles* should forget himself because wealth has entered his house by mistake" (Achebe, 1964:130).

Indeed, despite her infertility, everybody attests to Anna's good and hard-working character: her sewing talent gets proverbial (n^{0s}84-85) and '*the moon-symbol*' (n^{0s}86-87) helps to portray her not only as a serenely beautiful woman but as an impactful one. While these symbols (n^{0s}84-88) show that language for the virtuous wife is highly praiseful, others (n^{0s}89-95) make that for the wicked one dishonorific. Indeed, though she has borne '*three girls*' (*Obi: 101*), Akueze is reviled by everybody as all the negative signifiers used to describe her show (n^{0s}89-94). In addition, she usually opens her mouth to curse her husband and a motherless boy: '*you evil thing!*' (p. 169), '*Villain of a child!*' (p.188) and '*you malefactor!*' (p.189). Though her death at Joe's strong hands for a grave insult (n^{0s}95) might be seen as the return of her curses unto her own head, the fact that her family's doctor friend is sent to take the direct blame for her death might be God's way to legally justify Joe and to lay her blood on her own head.

The use of the '*castrated bull*' symbol for Joe (n⁰95) and for two other characters (n^{0s}96-97) gives an idea of the Ibo attitude to '*impotent*' men, and this can be paralleled with the '*mule*' and '*bull*' signs used for barren women (n^{0s}63-64) and help to generalize the de-sexualization of real and fictional childless figures. Indeed, '*the castrated bull* and '*empty-testicles*' symbols have nothing to do with actual castration and point more infertility than sterility and the reader is told not only of the gravity of the mockery but also that this man (n⁰96) is really '*impotent and his two wives were secretly given to other men to bear his children*' (Achebe, 1964:24). The narratorial modality '*nobody should ever have told*' (Achebe, 19964:24) shows that both Joe's and Akukalia's assault (n⁰6) on their insulter indicate the severity of the abuse. These insults and pressures appear as the temptations that one has to endure on one's road to fulfillment.

Interestingly, Joe's trials with patrilineal trials and Pokuwaa's ones with matrilineal ones are encoded in symbolic signifiers, as in these examples:

(I01) "You should be proud that you have *a husband like Joseph*—somebody who has overcome *those temptations* to which others in his position have yielded" (*Obi*:6)

(I02) "I know *this* has been a source of *temptation* to many converts in this part...especially when their wives do not give them *male children* or any at all: It is on *that rock* that many a man's faith has foundered beyond rescue....I shall not tolerate *a thing like that* in this parish: it were better for such a one never to have been born at all than to contemplate *a thing like that*" (*Obi*: 61-62)

(I05) "But you know what the proverb says: 'He who has been given a chase once by *a white monster* takes to his heels when *green leaves* begin to stir" (*Obi*: 181)

(I06) "Don't we have a proverb that nobody ever leaves *his father's ama* for *his mother's*" (*Obi*: 83)

(I07) "But one son had died *without a son* and his *obi had disappeared* and the approach to it was now *overgrown by a bush*" (*Obi*: 72)

(I15) "Everybody else there knew that her next step would be to *give birth to a child*" (*Woman*: 23)

(I16) "My five sons will have children for their wives' families, but the child that you will have will be my own grandchild" (*Woman*: 22)

(I17) "You are my *only daughter*, and unless you have *a child* our lives will end *miserably*" (*Woman*: 19)

(I18) "To the people of *Brenhoma*, to be barren was *the worst thing* that could happen to a woman, and so the approach of *her time* caused her apprehension *every month*" (*Woman*: 23)

(I19) "I should stick to Kwadwo and leave *the rest to God*: even if it breaks my heart to do it, it is best to attempt to build new memories" (*Woman*: 26)

(I20) "In the very first month...Pokuwaa's *blood failed to appear*. Then there were *signs in her breasts*: O God, there were *signs* that she was expecting *a baby*!" (*Woman*: 20).

While Chiaku's eagerness to see her grandchildren may justify the use of the '*the earth-and-sky*' proverb (*n*^o98), the evil-tongued relatives clearly curse Joe to eternal extinction with the same adage (*n*^o99) for his refusal to take a second wife. Joe's victory over these taunts can be seen in his use of the same saying to assure Anna that he will never add a second wife to her (*n*^o100). The signifier '*temptations*' stands for '*adultery/fornication*', '*polygamy*', '*spiritual prostitution*' and '*bribery*' (*n*^o101), it takes on the first three meanings (*n*^o102) and sticks to the last one (*n*^o103). Indeed, despite Joe's position and search for a child, he refuses to have '*a mistress*', '*a second wife*' or to run from church to church, as many do, and he sternly opposes bribery, unlike many. Though he yields to his elder cousin's plea to take his wife to a '*witchdoctor*', as is encoded in the chi-proverb (*n*^o 104), he soon learns such a bitter lesson from that visit and that from the '*white-garment church*' that he later cautions against taking his wife to a church-owned health centre (*n*^o 105). In this proverb (*n*^o 105), the '*white-monster*' stands for '*a witchdoctor*' or '*a white-garment church*' and the '*green leaves*' for an '*Anglican church-owned missionary hospital*'.

Though he is raised by his mother's clan and owes them more, patrilineage bars him from building in his motherland before his fatherland (*n*^o 106). Indeed, like the pulpy pillar adages (*n*^{os} 10-13), family-line continuity (*n*^o 107) is such a concern in this culture that childlessness and the procreation of only girls are viewed as a curse of extinction. As is indicated in the overgrown house-front saying (*n*^o 107), a sonless man is viewed to have extinguished. Like Joe, Anna has defeated a plot by a devout Christian couple who first convince her to wear a juju belt and then to have her sleep with a man known to plant only male seeds to prove Joe's '*deficiency*' (*n*^o 108). While '*the devil-signifier*' stands for the deviant Christian couple (*n*^o 108), Joe's female relatives are likewise likened to a figural '*mad woman*': Adagu is called '*Akuka*' and likened to '*Akuka*'

(n^{0s}109-110), and so is another woman (n⁰111). Joe's mother appears as a *foolish wicked woman* who thinks insults can force her daughter-in-law to become pregnant (n⁰112). Likewise, when Anna demands that Joe should marry a second wife as his relatives demand, she is treated in the same breath as Akueze (n^{0s} 89-94) and Joe's female relatives (n^{0s}109-111), as the negative signifiers (n⁰113) show. Like the 'Warrior' symbol (n⁰3), the use of the male-endowed signifier 'spokesman' for Ugoada (n⁰114) somehow indicates her masculinization. These relatives are thus painted as wicked, pompous and mad women who not only carry their proud father's compound into their husband's but also want to play men's role in their fatherland.

Pokuwaa has first yielded to social and parental lobbies and broken her first two marriages (n^{0s}115-120). While a modality metaphor (n⁰115) is used on her first betrothal to encode the social expectation that the next step is a *baby*, her mother's constant admonition (n⁰116) forces her to divorce from her first husband at three years, just as it does her second marriage another three years later (n⁰117). Though popular pressure adds up to her mother's (n⁰118), once she resolves to rely on God and stick to just one (n⁰119), she sees her first sign of fertility soon after her third marriage (n⁰120).

Through 'the sky-and-earth' metaphors and the double modaliser 'maybe' (n^{0s}103-104), the mockers nullify their wish for God to give the couple a child, but Joe's and Anna's reaction to adversity is cry to God (n⁰61.3) and to look up to the Cross of Christ to have their infertility is taken away (n^{0s} 121-122):

(121) "Joe gazed with concentration at *the crucifix*. ...it seemed as if *the crucifix* had more meaning for him this night than ever before" (Obi: 145)

(122) "Remember the things *the umuada* were saying about us? But I am grateful to *God*. *He is always awake*...*He alone knows* when to give...I don't think you have noticed that I am becoming *two bodies!* ...I didn't want to tell you about *the headache* and *other signs* until I was sure" (Obi: 210)

(123) "It seemed that all of them had come to an understanding and acceptance of *the situation*" (Woman: 92)

(124) "If the High God is there, *who comforts people*, someday I shall have *my own child* to comfort and keep me company" (Woman: 15)

(128) "It is so rare for a woman to start childbearing at her age: she must thank *the gods* properly for *their gift*, and thank Kwadwo... who has proved his claim of being *a giver of children*" (Woman: 105)

(129) "Mother, Tano has nothing to do with it: I know that it is *Nyankopon Twedeampong* who has shown me *this mercy*" (Woman: 100)

(130) "I have begun saying to *Nyankopon* the thanks which I will continue to say for the rest of my life: His name is *Daasebre* indeed" (Woman: 103).

Likewise, while the signifiers 'misery' (n⁰117), 'misfortune' (p. 94), 'sorrow' (n⁰26), 'the worst curse' (n⁰118), 'monthly time/blood' (n⁰118) and 'the situation' (n⁰123) are then used for Pokuwaa's 'barrenness', her pregnancy is now signaled by such others as 'blood failure' (n⁰120), 'darkened navel', 'swollen breast-nuts' (n⁰124), 'heavier breasts' (n⁰124), and 'fast heartbeat' (p. 94), 'seed' (n⁰26), 'good fortune' (n⁰127), 'a gift' (n⁰128) and 'a triumph' (p. 103). Indeed while her mockers credit her pregnancy to idols (n^{0s} 126-27), the woman traces its origin to 'the Almighty God and the Great Benevolent One' (n⁰ 131), credits it to Him and plans call her potential daughter 'Adwoa Nyamekye' (Woman: 107), which means 'Gift of the Almighty God', as she emphasizes (n^{0s} 128-130). The endurance of these two couples helps the researcher to deduce that only 'the One True and Faithful God' can heal every infertility, sterility or barrenness if one really

relies on Him. the next section summaries the major findings and draws a few deductive conclusions.

3. Recapitulation of findings and conclusion

This article has identified and analyzed as many as 130 gender-expressive proverbs, symbols and metaphors that reflect manhood, manliness and masculinity, on the one hand, and womanhood, womanliness and femininity on the other. It is noted that such unmanly men are identified with such signifiers as ‘a slow snail,’ ‘a defeat/victim’ (n^{os} 1, 2, 5), ‘a big sack,’ ‘fat creatures,’ ‘a big pot’(n^{os} 1-2), ‘dead snake’(n^o 27), ‘dead squirrel’(n^o 27), ‘pulpy pillars,’ ‘worthless creatures’ (n^{os} 19, 20), and ‘performing monkey’ (n^{os} 31) and are preferred dead than alive because they do not contribute the continuity of the family line (n^{os} 20, 21). These ‘female’ men are best known for their bragging about women and palm-wine and criticizing political and religious leaders (n^{os} 28-40). Men who endear and respect their wives are regarded as ‘soft men’ or ‘women’ (n^{os} 65-70), just as are those who beat women (n^{os} 71-73). Likewise, drink-addicts (n^{os} 28-30, 81-84), oversleeping and cosmetics-wearing men (n^{os} 85-88) are emasculated. ‘Barren’ women (Anna and Pokuwaa), fat single ones (Agatha) and muscular and strong women who beat men at tasks initially viewed to be manly (Egodinobi, Cecilia and Helen) are portrayed as ‘men’ or ‘male women’ (n^{os} 3, 14, 15, 21-23; 47-57; 62-63, 86-87) as symbols like ‘warrior,’ ‘bull,’ ‘mule,’ and ‘fruitless kolanut tree’ show. However, women who take God’s place fertility matters or to play men’s role are portrayed as foolish and mad women (n^{os} 115-120).

Though Joe is portrayed as a strongman, with such symbols as ‘the iron-fists’ (n^o 4), ‘a ‘the lion’ (n^o 6), ‘a blood-thirsty lion’(n^o 6), ‘strong-limbed one’(n^o 6); ‘Hitler Hand’ (n^o 7), ‘the giant’(n^o 9), ‘Burning Eyes’(n^{os} 8-9), ‘a masquerade’(n^{os} 10-11), ‘the fittest’ and ‘the hero’ (n^o 13-14), ‘the cock’ (n^o 41-42), and as a morally irreproachable character (n^{os} 105-109), he is also, for his failure to impregnate his wife, depicted with female and negative symbols: ‘single rope’(n^o 16), ‘pulpy pillar’ (n^o 17-18), ‘woman’ (n^o 18), ‘worthless creature,’ ‘the bane,’ ‘the death’(n^o 20), ‘the distress’(n^o 21), ‘sorrow,’ ‘father of rats and lizards’ (n^{os} 56-57) and ‘a castrated bull’(n^{os} 95-97). While the use of such symbols as ‘curse, reproach, disgrace, misfortune, disgrace, death’ for infertile characters (n^{os} 17-21, 61.3) is based on the scriptural belief that whoever is barren is viewed to be cursed and socially dead’ (Genesis 30:1, 23; Exodus 23: 26; Deuteronomy 7: 14; Hosea 9:11, 14; Luke 1: 7, 25), it does seem that ‘the castrated bull symbol’ often does to strong/potent but infertile or sterile men in the Ibo culture (n^{os} 95-97). The use of symbols like ‘a young hen’ and ‘a wicked hen’ (n^{os} 43-44); ‘a lifeless raffia palm’ (n^o 50), ‘a useless kolanut tree’ (n^o 51-54) and ‘mother of rats, lizards and snakes’(n^o 56-57); ‘foot-corn disease’(n^o 48), ‘an etiolated fruit’ (n^o 58) for Anna and such others as ‘a mule’(n^o 63) and ‘a bull’(n^o 64) other barren women help to blame their infertility on them and deny them the rights of motherhood (n^{os} 57, 61-62). Yet, the positive symbols for Anna (n^{os} 51, 59; 85-88) more than compensates for the insults for her infertility as she is preferred to Akueze (n^{os} 76, 89-93) despite the latter’s mothering ‘three girls’.

It can thus be concluded that gender is a multifaceted and complex concept and can manifest biologically, physically, emotionally, spiritually and culturally. As the analyzed symbols show, *masculinity/femininity* is proved to be more emotive, spiritual and cultural than biological and physical and thus applies to both boys/men and girls/women: male/masculine men and female/feminine ones; female/feminine women and male/masculine ones. As a result, this study shows that some men can really behave as ‘*wives*’ to their ‘*wives*’ and some women as ‘*husbands*’ to ‘*their husbands*’. In addition, gender can and does manifest temperamentally. Despite Obieke’s and Joe’s cool temperament, their attempted violence on a woman has them equated to cowards or women. On the other hand, Joe’s ability to defeat sexual immorality, idolatry, polygamy and corruption has him praised as a real hero. Gender can also be expressed through man’s virility and efficiency or through woman’s sexuality and fertility. Though Joe has all the physical and moral assets of a good and strong man, his failure to impregnate his wife in time has him treated as ‘*a woman*’ and though Anna and Pokuwaa are beautiful and virtuous women, their infertility gets them likened to ‘*boys/men*’. Moreover, though each woman has ‘*a miscarriage*’ earlier (*Obi*: 103; *Woman*: 21), which means that they are just ‘*infertile*’, this is viewed as *barrenness/sterility* under patrilineal and matrilineal pressures. First, in both cultures, a childless woman is viewed as a failure and is less valued than one whose child has died (n^{os} 60-61): “*motherhood is the highest goal of traditional African woman: the attainment of this goal is identity, status and satisfaction*” (Lippert, 1972: 166).

Furthermore, while it is deemed to be a curse of extinction for a man to have no son in a patrilineal society, it is equally so for one to have no daughter in a matrilineal one. So, Kenyatta’s (1978: 13) first conditional sentence –“*If a man dies without a male child, his family comes to an end*” –which applies to patrilineal societies, can be adapted into “*If a man dies without a female child, his family comes to an end*” for matrilineal ones. One can thus understand why, though the Joe lives in a patrilineal culture and Pokuwaa does in a matrilineal one, the fact that they are respectively ‘*the only son*’ and ‘*the only daughter*’ are put under the most severe form of pressure respectively from the man’s side and the woman’s side. Finally, ‘*the joy of motherhood/fatherhood assumption*’ (n^{os} 61.3; 61.4; 62.3; 65.1) is shattered (n^{os} 61.2; 62.1; 62.4; 62.5) as some multi-child parents end as if they were barren or worse

References

- Achebe, Ch. (1960). *No Longer at Ease*. London: Heinemann Educational Books
- Achebe, Ch. (1964). *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann Educational Books
- Amoussou, C.Y. (2021a). “Proverbial Representations of Gender and Male-Female Tenor in Chinua Achebe’s Fiction,” in Ligan, Ch. D., Houédénou, F. A. & Gbeto F. (dir.). *La Représentation Sociale du Langage de la Femme*. pp. 37-66, Abomey-Calavi: Les Editions LABODYLCAL.
- Amoussou, C.Y. (2021b) “Proverbial Discourse, Sexual Semiotics and Sexual Politics in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s Novels; Cahiers du CERLESHS, Tome XXXI, N0 69, 59-88.

- Beauvoir, (de) S. (1973). *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2011). ‘Your behaviour creates your gender’ , *Interview*.
- Chandler, D. (2001). *Semiotics: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Chatman, S. (1972/2009). “On the Formalist-Structuralist Theory of Character;” *Journal of Literary Semantics*; Vol.I, IssueI, 57-79.
- Eckert, P. and McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Eco, U. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. London: Macmillan.
- Emecheta, B. (1979). *The Joys of Motherhood*. New York: George Braziller.
- Holmes, M. (2009). *Gender and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.
- Hodge, R. & Kress, G. (1988). *Social Semiotics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Kenyatta, J. (1938/1978). *Facing Mount Kenya: the Traditional Life of the Kikuyu*. Nairobi, Heinemann; Kenya.
- Kimathi, G. (1994). *Your Marriage and Family*. Institute for Reformation Studies: Potchefroom (Series F2, 58)
- Konadu, A. (1969). *A Woman in her Prime*. London/Ibadan: Heinemann
- Lippert, A. (1972). ‘The Changing Role of Women as Viewed in the Literature of English and French Speaking West Africa (PhD Thesis); Indiana University.
- Masanda, P. (April 21, 2011). “The Curse of a Childless Woman”. *Parent 24*
- Munonye, J. (1969). *Obi*. Heinemann: London/Ibadan/Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Ndungo, C. M. (2006). ‘The Image of Women in African Oral Literature: A Case Study of Gikuyu Oral Literature,’ in *Gender Issues Research Report Series n^o 23*, Ethiopia: OSSREA. 1-80.
- Pan, L. & Moore, A. (2014). ‘*The Gender Unicorn*.’ *Trans Student Educational Resources*, 2014. <http://www.transstudent.org/gender>.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (1983). *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London: Methuen.
- Thiong’o (wa), N. (1982). *Devil on the Cross*. London/Bedford/Ibadan/Nairobi: H.E.B. Ltd.
- Voloshinov, V. N. (1973). *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press.
- The New King James Bible (1970). Oxford, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix

- (5) “I will catch you – even if you run into **a lion’s mouth!** –and I must skin you alive today” (*Obi*: 188)
- (6) “**It** [i.e. **the insult**] had transformed Joe, *the tamed, disciplined and reticent man*, into **a blood-thirsty lion**: all the crude strength which he seemed to have laid aside, years back, were revived at that moment and charged into **his big, hairy hands**” (*Obi*: 190)
- (7) “People told all sorts of stories about *Joe’s hairy hands*: some nicknamed **him ‘Hitler Hand**” (*Obi*: 196)
- (8) “He would often call him **Father**: though baptized, Joe was **their grandfather Okoli** [*sic, Udemezue*] come back to life” (*Obi*: 14)
- (9) “He was **tall** and **huge** and his eyes were **ferce** and he frightened people into surrendering their wives and property...That is why the called him **Udemezue of Burning Eyes**” (*Obi*: 27)
- (10) “‘There’s still a lot of fish left,’ he sounded **like a tired masquerade**” (*Obi*: 27)
- (11) “‘This fish is very tasty,’ he spoke **like a masquerade**” (*Obi*: 44)

- (19) "Willie is twenty-five and yet he's not talking about marriage; therefore in Okoli's family we have only *-pulpy pillars-* People will soon begin to say there's *a curse* in this family" (*Obi*:100-01)
- (20) "She called him *a worthless creature, a tramp, a lunatic, the bane* of his father's spirit and *the death* of his mother" (*Obi*:34)
- (21) "Let him die and be forgotten rather than continue to cause *so much distress*" (*Obi*: 143-44)
- (25) "What a world! When you find *the hoe* you can't find *the stick*: when you find *the stick* you can't find *the hoe*!" (*Woman*: 7)
- (26) "You have known that you have *seed*, after all these years of *sorrowing* together and have not told me?" (*Woman*: 100)
- (27) "He told them the story of how he once caught *a big snake* alive with his hands and wrung it until it was dead, and then put it inside his bag; but when he reached home he found *a dead squirrel* instead of *the dead snake*" (*Obi*:73)
- (28) "I once decided to look for a wife...Then one morning I set out to take *a jar of rich palm-wine* to my prospective father-in-law...A bush fowl saw me and started to crow a warning: *woman is trouble! Woman is trouble!* it said. I turned back and I drank *my wine* when I reached home" (*Obi*: 96)
- (37) "It was better everybody ruled in *his own compound* if it should ever come to *self-rule*...Let Willie first try to rule just *one woman* before he could think of extending his authority to *the universe*!" (*Obi*: 125)
- (38) "True, he can fell *four hundred iroko trees* in one day with *his mouth*: let him show us what he can do with *his hand*" (*Obi*: 195)
- (39) "What is it the proverb says? 'When you hold *a small man* by *the two hands*, all his strength ends! The white man has held Willy's two hands, let him rule now and let's see!" (*Obi*: 195-96)
- (40) "Yesterday when I saw him, he was telling me *the story of a certain Reverend Father* who he says sends thousands of pounds every year to his wife and children at home" (*Obi*:182)
- (44) "Joe tried to find what it was that had won her *the prize of a young hen*" (*Obi*: 154)
- (45) "And remember, do not eat *eggs*...a woman mustn't eat *eggs*: nobody who expects something from the gods should deliberately offend against custom" (*Obi*: 39)
- (48) "Chiaku told Anna the story of *a certain woman*...who ran faster than many of the men, and the result? She had *no issue*—not until *corns* had started to eat up *the sole of her feet*" (*Obi*: 39-40)
- (49) "They told him the story of *a certain man* who recently *beat his wife until the teeth flew out of her mouth*" (*Obi*: 100)
- (52) "Of course we *can't call her our wife* yet, not until she's *produced* for us" (*Obi*: 100)
- (53) "There are many unmarried women in Umudiobia: beautiful ones and ugly ones, tall ones and short ones...only, whoever you marry let her *produce for us*" (*Obi*: 100)
- (54) "We don't regard her as *a wife*: how can we allow *Okafo's obi* to disappear when the gods were kind enough to bring you home?" (*Obi*: 101)
- (58) "I've noticed a change in the color of your skin: you now look like *an etiolated fruit*" (*Obi*: 148)
- (59) "She was now *twenty-five years old*—if truth must be told; and she was *still beautiful in look* and *elegant in build*, but her face skin had begun to *slacken*, prematurely. *People said* this was the effect of the concoctions she had been drinking into her stomach, but *in actual fact* what worried here more than anything else was the attitude of the women who were Joe's relatives" (142-43)
- (68) "Tell me, have you made *some medicine* to hold our brother to yourself *alone*?" (*Obi*: 144)
- (69) "*The men said* that the singer was *unfit to be a man*, that the woman, Helen, must have emptied *something into his soup*; *the women concurred but declared* that only *wives like Helen* could teach *most men the much needed lesson*" (*Obi*: 95-96)
- (74) "Sometimes I feel that my role is to *keep guard* over you at night...A man shouldn't sleep like this: you *must* sleep less heavily, if you are going to be of *any help in an emergency*..." (*Woman*: 77)
- (75) "If the *black snake* was *a bad spirit* or *a man* turned into a snake, it had been conquered" (*Woman*: 8)
- (76) "We shall take a man's decision to fight *the animals*, not walk with women to collect *snails*" (*Woman*: 31)
- (77) "Indeed a woman excites her husband if she allows *hair to grow on her chest*" (*Obi*: 1)
- (81) "They walked *side by side* and they *conversed*, which was rather a curiosity in a land where the women kept a long distance, *usually in front*, of their husbands" (*Obi*: 56)
- (82) "*Speculation had it that* she had *Government Standard Six Certificate*, which has quite *a rare qualification* in those days... *'A woman! How could she?'* the catechist would sneer" (*Obi*: 4)
- (84) "She was popularly known as *the Forest Guard's wife* who did wonders with the sewing machine" (*Obi*: 42)
- (85) "She was well-known even outside Umudiobia as *the one who sewed better than any* and had not time to mend old dresses" (*Obi*: 66)
- (86) "I've seen the whole thing as *any sensible man* would...I owe you something for *your great virtue*" (*Obi*: 154)
- (92) "What you should not forget is that *a bad word* hurts *the heart* worse than *ripe pepper* does *the eyes*" (*Obi*: 207)
- (93) "Of course, Akueze is *an evil thing*...like *the dog* that has *some filth* on its ear, she goes about looking for people whom *to stain*" (*Obi*: 194)
- (94) "She may not die after all: don't you know that *the wicked* don't die so easily?" (*Obi*: 194)

- (98) "The children will come... when *the ground* has met with *the sky*?" (Obi: 34)
- (99) "Maybe God will answer our prayer... Maybe when *the earth* has met with *the sky*!" (Obi: 145)
- (100) "Your husband's second wife will arrive when *the sky* meets *the ground*" (Obi: 46)
- (103) "He was *indeed very glad*: he never yielded to *the temptation* and he had *no remorse* about what he once did to Ephraim" (Obi: 88)
- (104) "Our people that man must do something to help *his chi*: let us do something for Anna" (Obi: 105)
- (108) "I know *the devil*: it's *the headmaster and his long-beaked wife*, but God will set the two of them ablaze one day, in the same way I burnt *the belt*!" (Obi: 155)
- (109) "*Midday lunatic*... *Akuka*, come in please... *Akuka* was a lunatic well-known throughout Umudiobia for the speed with which she chased *invisible shapes*" (76-77)
- (110) "Our sister, you behave *as if Akuka* had asked you to deputize for her today" (Obi: 93)
- (111) "That's not why we've come here; at least you look better than *Akuka*" (Obi: 98)
- (112) "It was her belief that *such taunts* would annoy *the son's wife* into being *a mother*" (Obi: 35)
- (113) "He called her *a fool, an idiot, a villain, a devil* and *other names* but she shut her mouth tight" (Obi: 146)
- (114) "As soon as they had eaten kola the discussion started: Ugoada was *their chief spokesman*" (Obi: 98)
- (125) "She felt that she wanted to dare to hope that it was *pregnancy* that was causing *the signs* that had been confusing her" (Woman: 92)
- (126) "O *Twedeampong*, since I am not sick, *these heavier and swollen breasts* cannot be a sign of disease! I am pregnant, O *Twedeampong*, I am pregnant!" (Woman, 97)
- (127) "It is by the mercy of *the powerful ones alone* that you did not lose *your good fortune* with the hard work you have insisted on doing" (Woman: 101)