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A Socio-semiotic Analysis of Olúyẹmisí Adébòwálé's *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà.*

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Abstract

The author utilises the socio-semiotic approach to analyse six poems in Adébòwálé's *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà*. He aims to unravel how the poet has selected words to discuss the social happenings in her environment. Socio-semiotics emphasises the importance of context, the context of situation and context of culture, in reconstructing the meaning of a text. In the study, the context of situation (i.e., field, tenor and mode of discourse) and context of culture are used for the interpretation of the selected poems. The findings located in the field of discourse centre on the social vices that are prevalent among contemporary young girls and women and also the issue of bribery that has eaten deep into the fabric of all sectors of the society. The tenor of discourse exhibits the poet's role interaction as a wife and mother. The mode of discourse advises through the use of metaphorical expressions. The context of culture foregrounds the Yorùbá ideological stance on the marriage institution. The author concludes that the deployment of socio-semiotic tools to analyse the selected poems makes the interpretation of the poems easier, in terms of identifying some social problems in the society and also suggesting solutions to the problems.

Key words: socio-semiotics, context of situation, context of culture, *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà*

1. Introduction

Only few critical works exist on Yorùbá written poetry. Among these scholars are Fólórunso (1989), Ọlátúnjí (1995), Adéyẹmí (2001), Adéjùmò (2005), Olújìnmí (2005) and a host of others. Fólórunṣó (1989) examines semiotic features in Ọlábímtán's *Àádóta Àròfò*. He uses symbol as a semiotic tool in analysing Ọlábímtán's poems. Ọlátúnjí (1995) examines the works of Fẹ́mi Fátọ́ba in his work entitled "Fẹ́mi Fátọ́ba: A New Voice in Yorùbá Poetry". Ọlátúnjí expresses interest, not only for the novel way in which Fátọ́ba composes poetic meaning, but also for the kind of semantic decomposition called for in the appreciation of his poems.

Ọlátúnjí maintains that Fátọ́ba seems to have borrowed from Yorùbá oral poetry the art of multi-dimensional communication while most poets concentrate on the external stylistic devices. He, thus, suggests that "Yorùbá written poetry must go back to its oral counterpart. The multi-dimensional semantic composition of *ẹsẹ Ifá* and *òwe* (proverbs), the evocation of meaning in *ọfọ̀* (incantations), and the imaginative verbal productiveness of *oríkì* (praise poetry), are some of the resources which the literate poet can re-interpret for his own use". According to Ọlátúnjí, the metaphor should take precedence over external frills, if Yorùbá poetry is to engage the attention of analytical minds (Ọlátúnjí, 1995:337).

Another scholar, Adéyẹmí (2001), investigates political commitment and poetic utterances in Jíbọ́lá Abíọ́dún's *Àlọ ń lọ...Ewì*. He emphasises that the poet is opposed to the culture of silence which pervades the society. People keep mute and remain silent

under the tyrannical rule of the Military. Thus, the poet negates the option of muteness and proposes a revolutionary reaction. He charges the masses to react and not mind the consequences. The poet, according to Adéyẹmí (2001: 83), maintains that if the masses are afraid because of guns, the end result would be disastrous. He, thus, describes Jíbọ́lá Abíọ́dún as a committed poet in the progressive and revolutionary camp.

Adéjùmọ̀ (2005, pp. 34-43) appraises Àtàrì Àjànàkú's *Orin Ewúro*. She analyses some of the poems in the text using the sociological approach. Adéjùmọ̀ claims that the poet, in an attempt to comment on issues in *Orin Ewúro,* makes use of satire as one of his weapons. She notes that in both the classical and African satire, the use of invectives is one of the weapons satirists employ to wage verbal attack on their target. Hence, the use of invective is prominent in Àtàrí Àjànàkú's verbal 'missiles' at the ruling class and people who abuse their leadership position at all levels of the society. In other words, the poet, according to Adéjùmọ̀ (2005:38-39), advocates for a change of power and also predicts a reversal of fortune for looters of the people's wealth.

Another scholar whose work is relevant to this study is Olújìnmí (2005). He examines the works of two female authors (Adébọ̀wálé and Adéjùmọ̀) and assesses the image of the woman in their works. He is of the opinion that male writers, who promote the experiences and interest of men over women alongside the patriarchal school of thought, had dominated Yorùbá literature; hence, he calls on women writers to rise up to redeem the image of the woman created by male writers. Olújìnmí (2005) submits that the authors are able to portray the woman through their personal and creative experiences as a regenerative symbol of motherhood, procreator and child-bearer. The woman is also depicted as a nurturer, comforter and homemaker. Olújìnmí says further that "the woman is portrayed as sustainer, helper, supporter and a faithful wife. She is a defender, protector and guardian of both her husband and children. The woman also possesses the image of a precious jewel, an indispensable person and that of a deity, who deserves to be worshipped". In addition, as observed by Olújìnmí (2005), Adébọ̀wálé and Adéjùmọ̀ did not conceal the frailties of their fellow women (p. 101), as they also portray women who are wolves in sheepskin among the flock. There are women whose portraits suggest them as anti-womanists. They are the women who are promiscuous, child-abusers, indolent and abortionists (p. 115).

This present study takes a departure from Olújìnmí's (2005) work despite the fact that Olúyémisí Adébòwálé's *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà* is one of the texts examined in his work. Olújìnmí adopts a feminist approach in his analysis. In contrast, our present study of Adébòwálé's *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà* employs a socio-semiotic approach in its analysis. The pre-occupation of the study is to examine how the poet has used the selected poems to accentuate her views on different social issues in the society.

The study is divided into four sections. The first section, that is almost completed, is the introduction. The second section is on the theoretical framework presented in the sub-sections of the socio-semiotic principles. Section three focuses on the analysis of the selected poems, while Section five concludes the study.

2. Theoretical Framework: Socio-Semiotics

Socio-semiotics is a branch of the field of semiotics which investigates human signifying practices in specific social and cultural circumstances, and which tries to explain meaning-making as a social practice. The linguistic theorist, Michael Halliday, introduced the term 'social semiotics' into linguistics, when he used the phrase in the title of his book, *Language as Social Semiotics* (1978). This work argues against the traditional separation between language and society, and exemplifies the start of a 'semiotic' approach, which broadens the narrow focus on written language in linguistics. For Halliday, languages evolve as systems of "meaning potential" or as sets of resources which influence what the speaker can do with language, in a particular social context (Halliday, 1978:39). Social semiotics is, thus, the study of the social dimensions of meaning, and of the power of human processes of signification and interpretation (known as semiosis) in shaping individuals and societies. Social semiotics focuses on social meaning-making practices of all types, whether visual, verbal or aural in nature (Thibault, 1991). Social semiotics, as noted by Hodge and Kress (1988), can include the study of how people design and interpret meanings, the study of texts, and the study of how semiotic systems are shaped by social interests and ideologies, and how they are adapted as society changes.

Harris (2006) posits that socio-semiotics is an approach inspired by Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, which emphasises the importance of context, both context of situation and context of culture, in reconstructing the meaning of a text. The socio-semiotic approach views language as the embodiment of the social process in a society. This view consequently shows that context is very important in the understanding and interpretation of a text. All texts written in language are context dependent. Therefore, to understand a text, the context of the text must be deconstructed. Context plays a part in determining what we say; and what we say plays a part in determining the context (Halliday, 1978:3).

2.1 Context

There has been, in the past, a tendency among some linguists to restrict the term 'context' to 'context of situation' but Leckie-Tarry (1995:3) argues that no precise understanding of the linguistic process is possible without taking into account all the levels of context. The level of context is the phenomenon which determines the 'contextualisation' of a text. That is, any text will be principally governed by any one of the levels of context, context of situation, context of text and context of culture. The selection of linguistic structure depends on the predominating level of context, which in turn is strongly motivated by the language medium (Leckie-Tarry, 1995:3). The context of situation and context of culture are used to analyse poems in this study.

The context of situation is the immediate environment in which a text is actually functioning. This notion is used to explain why certain things have been said or written on a particular occasion, and what else might have been said or written that was not. The term 'context of situation' originated from the anthropologist Malinowsky (1923, 1935) cited in (Halliday and Hasan 1989:5). To Malinowsky, language usage has a context. The 'textual' features enable the discourse to cohere not only with itself but also with its

context of situation. He, therefore, analysed the context of situation into three components, corresponding to the three metafunctions. These components serve to interpret the social context of a text, the environment in which meanings are being exchanged. The three components are the field, tenor and mode of discourse. These are certain principles that we can use for choosing an appropriate way of describing the context of a situation of a text. Therefore, in this study, Malinowski's three components of interpreting the social context of texts would be employed because they are relevant to our analysis.

2.2 Field, Tenor and Mode of Discourse

Field is the total event in which the text is functioning, referring to inherent features of the situation and the events taking place with the emphasis on institutional areas of activity and function. The physical setting and its inherent features and activities, participants, world knowledge and semantic domain constitute both variable and invariable elements of the field of discourse (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:22). Arena/activity refers, particularly, to the locations of an interaction, both in terms of their inherent features, and in terms of the social institutions which determine them. The arena and the activities which take place are the most basic elements of context, motivating the possible range of selections in other elements of field, and in elements of tenor (Leckie-Tarry, 1995:36).

Participants, according to Leckie-Tarry, refer to inherent features of the participants, that is, their physical and mental attributes and the knowledge they bring to bear on the setting and events. Such attributes include characteristics such as race, gender, class, wealth, age, appearance, intelligence, cognitive and educational level, occupation, etc., and also the background knowledge which the participants bring to bear on the situation: cultural knowledge, including intertextual knowledge, linguistic knowledge, situational knowledge and textual knowledge.

Semantic domain refers to the broad domain, the general subject matter or content of the specific language event. The two variables of arena and participant will have a considerable predetermining effect on the semantic domain. The arena/activities will tend to narrow the range of possible events/subject matter, which will be further constrained by the participants.

Tenor refers to the participants in the social event, the characteristics of the participants, the status as well as the social role which each of them holds (Harris, 2006: 3). Halliday and Hasan (1976:22) define tenor as "the type of role interaction, the set of relevant social relations, permanent and temporary among the participants". The elements of the category of tenor are related to and motivated by aspects of field. While field refers to the inherent characteristics of the situation, tenor refers to the non-inherent features – elements which vary according to the social interactions taking place. Wales (2001:388) posits that tenor involves the relationships between participants in the situation, their roles and status. This will affect the kind of language chosen, particularly in respect of the degree of formality.

Mode refers to what part the language is playing, what it is that the participants expect the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organisation of the text,

the status that it has and its function in the context, including the channel (is it spoken or written or a combination of the two?) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, and the like (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 12).

2.3 Context of Culture

The context of culture is a large and complex knowledge system spread among the various members of a particular culture, and hence consisting of many sets of knowledge, including, in particular, the institutional and ideological. In any given interaction, that is, a particular context of situation, the context of culture is accessed by means of the knowledge systems which the various participants bring to bear on the situation, where the knowledge is triggered by aspects of the context of situation. Halliday and Hasan (1989:46) posit that the context of situation, however, is only the immediate environment. There is also a broader background against which the text has to be interpreted: its context of culture. Any actual context of situation, the particular configuration of field, tenor, and mode that has brought a text into being, is not just a random jumble of features but a totality – a package of things that typically go together in the culture. People do certain things on certain occasions and attach meanings and values to them: this is what a culture is. All these factors constitute the context of culture, and they determine, collectively, the way the text is interpreted in its context of situation. It is helpful to build in some indication of the cultural background, and the assumptions that have to be made if the text is to be interpreted in the way poets intend.

The exploration of meaning begins by putting the poems at the centre of the context of its generation. In other words, a poem is seen as a text which should be interpreted from two broad perspectives of the context of situation and the context of culture. Firstly, under the context of situation, the analyst is expected to consider the field, tenor, and mode of discourse of the text, which will subsequently give a clue to the intended meaning embedded in the text. The field of discourse will consider the arena in which the total event is taking place in the text. It also considers the participants in the situation, that is, their physical and mental attributes and the knowledge they bring to bear on the situation. The tenor of discourse will consider the participants' social status as well as the social role they hold. The mode of discourse considers the communicative function which a text is made to perform by the use of a given channel. Secondly, the analyst's background cultural knowledge, both institutional and ideological, of the text is required before he can unravel the intended meaning of a particular text; hence, the context of culture. It is felt that when textual analysis is approached from this dimension, it offers the analyst an opportunity of decoding a text comprehensively to mean what the language user has used the language to mean in a given situation.

3. Analysis of Adébòwálé's *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà (One Accounts for One's Time)*

The six poems selected from Adébòwálé's collection of thirty poems, *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà* are "Atẹ́ẹ́rẹ́ Loge" (A slim lady), "Farabalè Gbadé" (Be patient to collect a crown), "Ṣó Dáa Bẹ́ẹ̀?" (Is this good?"), "A-jí-gbó-toge" (Irresponsible man), "Ohun Ẹlẹgẹ́ Ni Àṣẹ" (Authority is Delicate) and "Ègúnjẹ" (Bribery).

3.1 Field of Discourse

Thè three constituents of field of discourse are arena/activity, participants and semantic domain (subject matter/theme). The theme of the poems "Atẹ́ẹ́rẹ́-Loge" (A slim lady) (pp. 44-47), "Farabalẹ Gbadé" (Be Patient in Choosing a Crown) (pp. 48-50), and "Ṣó Dáa Bẹ́ẹ̀?" (Is that Good?) (pp. 36-38), emphasise social vices such as promiscuity and indecent dressing that are prevalent among contemporary young girls and women. In "Atẹ́ẹ́rẹ́-Loge", the poet decries the act of indecent dressing that has become fashionable among both single and married women. Many of them wear clothes that expose their bodies to attract men as shown in the following:

Ìmúra wọ́n peléké
Bí wọ́n ti ń wọ fàyàálẹ̀,
Ni wọ́n ń wọ ṣídìílẹ̀.
Ká wọ̀ṣọ kó má bokùn,
Ilé oge ló pèkun sí,
Wọn a wàkísà bíi were
Wọn a láwọn ń ṣoge fákọ ni... (p. 44).

Èyí òṣóró abo ṣe kéré lẹ́gbẹ̀ẹ́ àgbà.
Wọ́n á ní kò sárúgbó ní Gánà...
Wọ́n á lọ́kọ tán, wọ́n á tún máa ṣoge alẹ́.
Wọ́n di sóòyòyò adìyẹ abólórùn
Wọ́n a kunjú kùntè bí gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ́
Àgbà ìyà a wọ̀ṣọ tí ò bàṣírí ara
Àtàgbà àtèwe a máa fara wọn wákọ kiri (p. 46)

(There mode of dressing is terrible
As they wear dresses which expose their chests,
So they wear the ones that expose their buttocks.
Dressing without covering one's stomach
Is common among young girls,
They put on rags like lunatics
Claiming it is to attract men...

The married ones are even worse than the singles
They fondly say, there are no old women in Ghana...
They are married, yet they go about parading themselves
They bleach their skins
They make their faces up like masquerades
Stupid old fool would expose her body
Both young and old of their kind expose their bodies
to attract men).

The foregoing describes some women as disgrace to womanhood. According to the poet, a cultured and virtuous woman should be aware that she should jealously conceal whatever natural endowments she possesses. The view of the poet is that a responsible woman should look presentable and not frivolous. Fashion, to her, is not the same as to expose one's body. In a similar manner, the poet, in "Farabalẹ Gbadé" (Be Patient in Choosing a Crown) advises young girls to be patient and not cheapen themselves while looking for men to marry. Hence, she reveals this in:

Má tara rẹ lọ́pọ̀ nítorí àtilọ́kọ
Má lura rẹ ní gbànjo nítorí àtigbadé
Má kánjú lábẹ gbígbóná... (p. 48)

(Do not cheapen yourself because you desire
a man to marry.
Do not auction yourself because you want to be crowned
Do not be in a hurry to lick hot stew)

In the excerpt, the poet cautions that marriage is a life's journey which requires a lot of patience and proper planning which once entered into, it is difficult to back out. In "Ṣó Dáa Bẹ́ẹ̀?" (Is this Good?), the poet frowns at the women (married and unmarried) who use the modern Family Planning methods to perpetuate promiscuity. It states that the intention behind the introduction of the methods is to forestall unwanted pregnancy, and also for child-spacing among married couples. However, the good intention of the programme has been abused by some married and even unmarried women, who have turned the methods to instruments of adultery. The poet declares that:

Bí dúdú wá, ọ̀nà ṣí sílẹ.
Bí pupa wá, ọ̀nà là gbaragada
Jọun pé kiní ọ̀ún ò ní mítà...
Fètò-sí-i dé
Irọ́ délé ayé (pp. 36-37)

(If the dark-complexioned man comes, the way is open
If the light-complexioned comes, the way is widely open
It seems that thing does not have a reading metre...
The introduction of Family Planning methods
Has brought a lot of lies to the society)

In "A-jí-gbọ́-toge" (Irresponsible man) (pp. 10-13) however, the subject matter centres on irresponsible men who fornicate with young girls that are of the same age with their children. According to the poet, these men give much attention to the young girls they go about with. They are ready to do anything, even to the level of compromising their dignity to please these girls, at the detriment of their family. The following lines attest to this:

Etí wo ló ń gbọ́ ọ;
Pónílé ọlọ́nà ń dọ̀bálẹ̀ fún màjèsín?
Màjèsín ẹlẹ́jẹ̀ tútú làwé rí
Tára jagun fi ń hó yeye...
Àbẹ́ẹ̀ rí i?
Akọ tí ò gba gbẹ̀rẹ́ fárá ilé
Bàbá fojú kabo tó wà lójú àjọ,
Ó wá dọ̀dẹ̀ kalẹ̀
Ó dẹni ń dọ̀bálẹ̀ kábo lè jẹ́ ẹ ní hò o (p. 11)

(It should not be heard;
That a family man is prostrating before a small girl?
On sighting the girl
His body system changes...
Can you imagine?
A man that does not tolerate nonsense from his family
On sighting the 'happening' girl in the society
He now turns to a moron
Prostrating himself before her so that she could yield to his desire)

"Ohun Ẹlẹgẹ́ Ni Àṣẹ" (Authority is Delicate) (pp. 18-19) is a poem centred on the authority a husband has on his wife in the Yorùbá context. Husbands are seen as symbolic crowns of authority on the heads of their wives. Thus, the poet postulates that this authority should not be absolute while urging the women to be submissive to their husbands. This idea is summed up in the following:

Akọ ladé orí aya
Akọ ladé orí abo.
Ọkọ ni baálè lọ́ọ̀dẹ̀
Ọkọ l'Elédùà dá lápàṣẹ
Aya l'Elédùà ṣe lágbàṣẹ
B'Ólú bá dá ọ lágbàṣẹ
Yára fayọ̀ rẹ ara rẹ sílẹ̀
Kó o tẹríba fáṣẹ Ọba Ńlá... (p. 18)

(A man is the crown of a wife
A man is the crown of a woman
A husband is the head of the family
It is the husband the Almighty God gives the power of authority
It is the wife the Almighty God makes to obey the authority
If God makes you to obey authority
Do humble yourself gladly
And submit to the authority of the Most High God...).

Aside from issues relating to the well-being of men and women in the society, Adébọ̀wálé is not apathetic to the issue of corruption in Nigeria. According to Adébọ̀wálé in "Ẹ̀gúnjẹ" (Bribery) (pp. 59-60), virtually all sectors and individuals are involved in this social vice. People demand for bribery and gratification before they discharge their constitutional responsibilities.

Ẹ̀gúnjẹ wá wẹ̀wù àgbékọ́ fọ́ṣìṣẹ́
Ẹ̀gúnjẹ wá wagbádá fọ́ṣèlú
Ẹ̀gúnjẹ dàlàbọ̀rùn fálákọ̀wé
Bó o délé iṣẹ́ tó o ló ò ń wáṣẹ́
Wọ́n á ní kó o tọ́mọlúàbí rẹ ṣe
Òbí tó bá ṣojúṣe lọmọ rẹ̀ ń ráyè sílé ẹ̀kọ́ gíga tó dára
Ọmọọ́ṣẹ́ tó bá mọyì ògá níí rígbèga
Ọmọ̀jọ tó sétù àlúfáà níí joyè láàrin ìjọ (p. 59).

(Bribery has put singlets on workers
Bribery has donned 'agbádá' on politicians
Bribery has become an attire for corporate bodies
If you go to any office in search for a job
You would be asked to give bribe
Parents that offer bribes have places for their
Children in the best school
Employees that give bribes get promoted
Members of the congregation that 'settle' their pastors
Are given positions in the church).

3.2 Tenor of Discourse

Considering the field of discourse espoused in "Atẹ́ẹ́rẹ́ Loge" (A Slim Lady), "Farabalẹ̀ Gbadé" (Be Patient in Choosing a Crown) and "Ṣó Dáa Bẹ́ẹ̀?" (Is this Good?), the participants are both married and unmarried women. The poet plays the social role of a mother and teacher to advise women and condemn the bad aspects of their lives. It can be deduced that the stance of the poet is that of displeasure on the ugly trends among women in the contemporary society.

The participants in "A-jí-gbọ́-toge" (Irresponsible man) and "Ohun Ẹlẹ́gẹ́ Ni Àṣẹ" (Authority is Delicate) are men as well as the poet whose role interaction in the poem is that of a wife and mother. In "Ajígbọ́toge", she portrays the behaviour of some irresponsible men that are in the habit of destroying the lives of young girls for their selfish satisfaction. "Ohun Ẹlẹ́gẹ́ Ni Àṣẹ" reveals the divine role expected of a wife to her husband, and cautions the husband against excessive use of authority in order to promote cordial relationship between the husband and wife.

The participant in "Ẹ̀gúnjẹ" (Bribery) is the generality of Nigerian people. This poem castigates all sectors of human endeavour in the society such as public service, politics, corporate organisations, educational institutions, and religious institutions. It

submits that all these sectors have been inflicted with bribery. It, however, warns that the consequence of unabated bribery taking would be grave.

3.3 Mode of Discourse

The paramount mode of discourse, i.e., rhetorical mode which permeates every strata of the poems, "Atẹ́ẹ́rẹ́ Loge", "Farabalẹ Gbadé" and "Ṣó Dáa Bẹ́ẹ̀" is accusative and advising. In some instances, very short witty lines are used to achieve this purpose as seen in "Atẹ́ẹ́rẹ́-Loge" (A Slim Lady):

Àgbà aláìmọra ẹ túnlùú ṣe
Ọ̀ṣọ́ọ́rọ́ abo ilẹ̀ yìí ẹ pìwàdà
Ẹ yé fihòòhò yín dàlú rú
Ẹ yé fidí yin dagbo rú
Ẹ yé fara yín bayé jẹ́ (p. 47)

(Irresponsible adults try to be responsible
Young girls of this land turn over a new leaf
Stop exposing your body to corrupt the society
Stop using your buttock to cause confusion in gatherings
Stop using your body to corrupt the world)

The effect of this is to punch the psyche of these kind of women to enable them change for the better. In "Farabalẹ Gbade" (Be Patient in Choosing a Crown), the poet advises spinsters against the danger inherent in choosing a husband out of desperation or frustration. The use of imageries and metaphors has proven to be a most effective medium of making a goal-ended presentation as substantiated by the following rhetorical questions:

Ọ̀rẹ, irú adé wo nìwọ fẹ́ gbà ojàre?
Adé pẹ̀rẹ̀sẹ̀ tàbí adé gogoro?
Adé tó dípẹ̀tà tàbí èyí tó ń kọ mọ̀nà?
Adé olómi wúrà tàbí tolómi góòlù?
Adé rere tàbí adé réderède?
Èyí wù ọ́ lo ó yàn.
Àmọ́ bade bá fi dórí tán,
Ànfàní à á yan òmíràn ò sí (p. 48)

(My friend, which kind of crown do you want?
Flat or tall crown?
Rusted or shiny crown?
Silver or golden crown?
Good or worthless crown?
The choice is yours
But after you might have been crowned

There is no room for choosing another)

The symbol 'crown' in this context represents man. There are different types of men as exemplified in types of crowns (flat or tall crown, rusted or shiny crown, silver or golden crown, and good or worthless crown). The poet submits that the choice lies with the woman who should take her time to choose the best. In "Ṣó Dáa Bẹ́ẹ̀? (Is this Good), the poet equally cautions some women to be aware of HIV/AIDS disease while admonishing them on the grave consequence of their action.

Ẹ má fidí bálújẹ́ mọ́
Ẹ rántí éèdì tó n bẹ lóde,
Kẹ́ ẹ má bà á fàrùn lògbà (p. 38).

(Do not use your buttocks to corrupt the society
Remember HIV/AIDS
Lest you spend your life in sickness).

In "A-jí-gbọ́-toge (Irresponsible man), the rhetorical mode strongly condemns irresponsible men who are in the habit of fornicating with young girls, and posits that it is a shameless exhibition of gross indiscipline. Moreover, the rhetorical mode in "Ohun Ẹlẹgẹ́ Ni Àṣẹ" (Authority is Delicate) is both suggestive and advising. Since both husband and wife are made to complement each other in the smooth running of the family, the poet suggests that though the husband possesses authority, he should respect the dignity and opinion of his wife in decision-making processes. This view is presented as follows:

Àmọ́, ọgbọ́n ò pin sọ́dọ̀ ẹnìkan
Bẹ́ẹ̀ ni agbàṣẹ ìí ṣe dìndìnrìn
Ọ̀tún wẹ òsì,
Òsì wẹ ọ̀tún,
Ṣe bí òun lọwọ́ fi í mọ́?
Kápàṣẹ, àtagbàṣẹ pa ìmọ̀ pọ̀,
Un layé fi le gún nínú ilé (p. 19)

(However, wisdom does not reside with a single person
Also, a receiver of authority is not stupid
Washing the right hand with the left hand
And washing the left hand with the right hand
Is that not what makes the hands clean?
Both decision-maker and decision-receiver should unite
That is when there will be peace in the family).

In the excerpt above, the poet suggests cooperation as a tool for cordial relationship between the husband and wife. The husband should not see himself as 'all-in-all', rather he should recognise his wife as co-partner in the relationship. Conversely, the symbolic

organisation in the poem "Ẹ̀gúnjẹ" (Bribery) is the strong repetitive lines with the word "ègúnjẹ" (bribery) which has been used to depict the imposing influence of bribery in Nigeria's day-to-day life. The effect of this device is to emphasise the havoc this vice has wrecked on the country. Also, the use of wordplay poetic device as found in 'ègún' (curse) and 'ẹ̀gúnjẹ' (bribery), has proven to be an effective medium of expressing the poet's view on the grave consequence of this bad act as presented in the following:

Ègún jíjẹ lègúnjẹ bẹ́ ò bá mọ̀
Orí mi má jẹ n jègún mọ́yán
Ẹ jẹ́ yára jáwọ́ nínú gbígbègúnjẹ.
Bẹ́ ẹ kọ̀, bẹ́ ò gbọ́
Ojú gbogbo wa ni yóò ṣe;
Nígbà tí ègún tẹ́ ẹ jẹ yóò máa jà ránìn bí èpè (p. 59)

(Bribery is a curse if you don't know
My head rejects being cursed
You better stop taking bribe
If you are adamant
We shall all be witnesses;
When the curse you have brought to yourself would be manifested.)

To the poet, nemesis will definitely catch up with whoever is involved in taking a bribe before discharging his responsibility. That is why she pronounces bribery as a curse that must be avoided.

3.4 Context of Culture

Marriage institution is highly respected in Yorubà society, hence it is jealously guided. In "Farabalẹ̀ Gbadé" (Be Patient in Choosing a Crown), the poet emphasises this Yorùbá ideological context of culture. The Yorùbá abhors divorce after marriage. Therefore, it is a stigma on a divorcee who returns to her father's house. A woman who divorces her husband and comes back to her father's house is called "ilémọ̀ṣú". Women in this category are not respected by the house wives because they believe such women may influence their husbands negatively against them. This is why young girls are often counselled to be careful while choosing husbands because once ventured into, it would be difficult to quit. The poet, as a Yorùbá woman, identifies this aspect of Yorùbá culture; hence she brings it to the fore so that the young girls may learn.

4. Conclusion

Socio-semiotic tools have been used to analyse the selected poems of Olúyémisí Adébòwálé. The themes in most of Adébòwálé's poems emphasised social vices such as promiscuity and indecent dressing among young girls and married women. However, there is a poem which centres on irresponsible men who fornicate with young girls that are of same age with their children. There is another poem whose subject matter is on the

issue of bribery in the society. To the poet, virtually all sectors and individuals are guilty of this social ill. Owing to the fact that some of Adébòwálé's poems focused on social malaise among young girls, the social role played by the poet is that of a mother and teacher to these young girls. Moreover, in the poem that condemned irresponsible men, the poet's role interaction is that of a wife and mother. The rhetorical mode in the poems that centre on social ills among women is both accusative and advising. The use of imageries and metaphors proved to be a most effective medium in achieving this feat. Also, the rhetorical mode in the poem whose theme was on irresponsible men is condemning. The symbolic organisation in the poem that condemned bribery is the strong repetitive lines with the word "ègúnjẹ" (bribery). The effect of this device is to emphasise the havoc bribery has wrecked on the economy of the country. Under the context of culture, the Yorùbá ideological stance on the marriage institution was foregrounded. Thus, the poet clearly stated why it is necessary for young girls to be patient and careful before choosing husbands. It is evident from our analysis that, socio-semiotics, as a theoretical framework has proven to be more engaging in unravelling the social issues in Adébòwálé's *Ìgbà Lonígbàákà.*

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