

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v7i2.7>

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS AND TOPONYMS IN KWABENA ADI'S "BRAKO"

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Abstract

This paper examines the creation and use of fictional characters and fictional toponyms in Akan literature, both written and oral. The emphasis is however on a book entitled *Brako* in Akuapem Twi by Kwabena Adi (1973). The paper looks at the characters and places created by the author and the fictional names given to them. We will analyse the morphology and semantics of these names looking at what they connote, their appropriateness, precision and socio-cultural functions within the Akan society. The paper will then be able to evaluate the creativity of the author and his in-depth knowledge of the Akan language and culture. The paper is based on the theory of onomastics that looks at names and what they connote.

Keywords: *onomastics, fictional characters, toponyms, cultural ideology.*

1. Introduction and Definition of Onomastics

Names can best be analysed through a combination of philosophical and anthropological notions. This technique for analysing names has the same level of applicability whether the names being analysed are names of actual social entities and individuals or are names of fictional characters. The lack of distinction between fictional character names and actual entity names is what informs the assumption that the names of fictional characters can provide a window into unravelling the author's socio-cultural, and philosophical background. From a definitional perspective, an important characterisation of names is provided by Rey who points out that

[i]n the logical and philosophical sense, a name refers to a different element of human experience i.e. to an individual or a collective entity, which it designates or denotes. Names are therefore purely referential. Names are considered as arbitrary labels that refer to certain signified entries, therefore the signifier and the signified may not share certain intrinsic qualities (see Rey 1995:26).

In spite of the factuality of Rey's view that names are referential, it is the case that the referential function of names is informed by cultural and social contexts. It is this understanding of the relationship between names and socio-cultural contexts that informed a study by Agyekum (2006). This study examined Akan personal names by employing the notion of onomasiology. In every culture, names have cultural and social contexts that identify the bearer of the name or the entity that bears the name (Agyekum 2006). In this study, Agyekum also examined the **emic** and **etic** notions as they relate to names and concludes that "[t]he emic and etic points of view on the Akan naming systems depict the Akan philosophy and culture. The emic perspective is the point of view of a cultural practice of the members of the group based on their conceptualisation, meanings and interpretations of their belief systems and the things around them. The etic is the point of view of the observer and ethnographer" (Ibid: 11).

Every person in this world has a name that solely identifies and marks him/her from all other persons in the world (Ibid: 208). In Saussure's notion of semiotics, the name is the sign, and the denotatum is the signified. Simply put, the name is a label that refers to a person.

Sign -----	signified
[-animate]	[+ human]

There is an inherent element in the name that corresponds with the bearer's mental and social behaviour. We will see this in our discussion of fictional characters and toponyms in *Brako*. Zawawi (1993: 6) posits that "a name constructs a person because the name one bears may create an attitude in those who hear it before they meet the name bearer." In discussing names with particular attention to proper names, Bright (2003: 671) states that

[w]ithin the general category of names, people often use the word *name* for what we can more precisely call *proper names*. Within this subdivision, it is common to distinguish two principal types. One of these is *place names*

or *toponyms*; another is PERSONAL NAMES, for which we have no commonly used term derived from Greek, but which are sometimes called *anthroponyms*.

Frege (1949) and other scholars on onomastics, consider names to have attributes that are attached to referents (Algeo 1992). This is exactly what pertains in the Akan culture where the social and cultural analyses of personal names, strongly reveal the power of names to emphasise social relationships and behaviour. Fictional character names are thus iconic representations of composite social variables that indexicalise and relate to the name and the person. They include sex, hierarchy in birth, circumstances surrounding the birth, the person's structure, power, and status. The choice of names for fictional characters and places has traceable links to the referent. In effect, people expect the inherent power of words in names to reflect the lives of **fictional characters**, **toponyms** and the life of the people we find at different places (see Agyekum 2006: 209).

1.1 Definition of Fictional Characters

Fictional names are shadow names that are created by literary artists that pretend to behave and act as real individuals. In the view of Haraldsen (2013: 300) "fictional names are names for fictional characters, introduced in a context of pretence." According to Friend (2007: 142), the term fictional character can be used in a broader sense not to cater for only persons but also include fictional places, fictional things and fictional events. Nevertheless, it is usually narrowly restricted to characters introduced into works of fiction. In this paper, however, we are using the term for persons and toponyms created by Adi (1973).

Fictional characters are created by their authors to perform certain basic functions in the literary piece. Friend (2007) adopts the antirealist strategy on fictional characters and argues as follows:

Most philosophers accept that names in ordinary contexts are *directly referential*: the semantic content of the name is its referent, rather than a descriptive sense. If a name lacks a referent, it has no semantic content, and sentences containing it cannot express complete propositions (Friend (2007: 143).

Fictional characters and toponyms are not created in vacuum. They are based on contexts that propelled the authors to create them. Fictional characters have attributes and properties and these tally with their behaviours in the narratives. Friend (2007: 144) further argues that in standard antirealist discourse, we engage in the *pretence* that there are such individual characters created for various purposes. Ontologically, fictional characters are non-concrete, abstract, artefactual and non-existential and are not located in space and time (see Zalta 2001, Zvolensky 2015: 172). Kotatko (2013) reinforces this and avers that "for any text of fictional narration, the characters spoken about in it are those persons whose existence in the actual world we have to assume (in the *as if* mode) in order to allow the text to fulfil its literary functions." (Cited in Zvolensky 2015: 170). The fictional characters only exemplify the properties that exist in the real world within the environment in which they were created. Fictional characters and toponyms are like artefacts and designs created in arts by their authors and artists. According to Meinong's (1904) theory, fictional objects are higher order entities that are constructed out of simpler entities (see Marek 2009).

Scholars of fiction who subject themselves to realism have posited two types of realism, namely *internal* and *external realism*. Friend (2007: 147) avers that "in the case of fictitious objects, the individuating properties are those the character has from a perspective 'internal' to the fiction, such as being a young woman or being a Danish prince." The authors of the fictional characters create them only in the sense of making them *fictional* in the narratives they find themselves.

In terms of *external realism*, fictitious objects are more like novels, literally created by authors, and their continued existence depends on the texts and how the readers see and evaluate them. Hepola commented on the distinction between internal and external characters as follows:

The *external context* is used whenever we speak of fictional characters as fictional characters, recognizing that fictional characters are very different sorts of things from real-life persons and objects. The *internal context* is used whenever we speak of fictional characters as they are described by their stories (or by interpretations of their stories). Using the internal context always involves a certain amount of pretence. We pretend that characters are not fictional characters, but rather real-life, nonfictional, spatio-temporal people who perform certain actions, who think certain thoughts, who can be psycho-analysed, who can be morally evaluated, and the like (Hepola 2014: 83-84).

In creating fictional characters and places, authors use the concept of **fictional assertion** that is so strong to make readers and hearers believe that what they are claiming is true (see Walton 1990). This is captured by Adams et al. (1997: 131) in their contention that “when one fictionally asserts, one typically makes believe, imagines, supposes that what one fictionally asserts is true or at least intends one’s hearers to do these things.”

When authors have applied the *fictional assertion concept* for audience and readers to believe them, the picture can only be complete if readers and audience apply their social, cultural, environmental and cognitive experience to concretize the non-concrete characters and also form good mental images of the characters (see Sklar 2009). Sklar notes that there is always a gap between how the fictional author has portrayed his characters and what the reader/audience perceives about the characters; and there is therefore a process of gap-filling to capture the full picture. Iser (1978: 121) contends that “the reader “concretizes” (forms a complete or stable picture) from “references not explicitly manifested” (from something that is not supplied by the text), either by drawing connections between elements in the text, or by drawing in notions that come from the reader’s own experience.” In a similar vein, Hochman asserts that:

What links characters in literature to people in life, as we fabricate them in consciousness, is the integral unity of our conception of people and of how they operate. ... [T]here is a profound congruity between the ways in which we apprehend characters in literature, documented figures in history, and people of whom we have what we think of as direct knowledge in life. In my view, even the clues that we take in and use to construct an image of a person are virtually identical in literature and in life. (Hochman 1985: 36)

Thus the appreciation of the fictional characters in this study would derive from our understanding of Akan, language, culture and environment.

1.2 Methodology

The data for this paper was taken from an Akan literature book entitled *Brako* by Kwabena Adi (1973) and published by the Ghana Publishing Corporation. This book was selected first on the bases of fair representations of fictional characters in terms of persons and toponyms, and also the fact that the names given tally with the role of the characters and the behaviour of the people at the places mentioned.

The book was also selected based on its popularity and wider readership, having been used as a textbook by the West African Examination Council. Again, tertiary institutions that teach Akan recommend it for their written literature courses. Furthermore, it has been used on a radio programme, *Kenkan Me*, 'Read me' on a Ghanaian radio station – Peace FM – for the enjoyment of the general public.

A close reading of the book was done in order to select the fictional characters and toponyms. The names were selected based on their morphology, semantics and functions. The analysis involved examining the morphological components of each name, assigning literal meanings to them, and investigating the links between the personal names and toponyms, on one hand, and the people's life and the places that have such names, on the other.

2. Fictional Names in *Brako*

All the names in this short episode have meanings that are worth examining through morphological and semantic analyses. The title *Brako* also refers to the protagonist. Let us start our discussion of the fictional characters by first studying the protagonist in relation to the title. The title is a reflection of what the main character went through, and as in many characters in literature, the individual character is a representative of a general phenomenon; that is, what happens to *Brako* during his stay in Accra is a reflection of urbanization and what the youth go through even today.

2.1. Major Fictional Characters

The major characters are *Brako*, *Akora Hwewodeeso* (*Brako's* father page 2ff.), his mother *Akosua Nyawodee* (*Brako's* mother page 2ff.), *Nana Ayebofo*, chief of *Obrakyere*, and *Onimdefo Anyakoafre*, the Guest Speaker at the inauguration (page 97).¹

¹ The other fictional characters are *Akora Famanyame* (page 58), *Opanin Ohianhyeda* of the *Obrakyere* Youth Association (page 91), *Opanin Peohiahu* and his son *Kofi Aninwu* (page 100, 110), *Akora Diasempa*, father of *Ohianhyeda* (page 110), *Bediako* (pages 111, 114), *Nana Dɔwɔman* (page 120).

2.1.1 The Name *Brako*

The name *brako* is a compound made up of the noun (ɔ)bra, ‘life’ + the verb ko, ‘to fight’. The composite is a truncated form derived from the proverb ɔbra ye ɔko, which means ‘life is war’, which literally signifies that life involves many fights with people, with situations, the environment, nature and within the SELF. This fictional name was selected to capture all the hardships the protagonist went through in the book.

The book talks about the influx of the youth into the urban areas and cities for white collar jobs, and the troubles and hardships they go through as a result of hustling and bustling in the cities. The protagonist is a young man called **BRAKO**, which is also the title of the book. After school, Brako informed his parents that he wanted to be in Accra. His father advised him strongly to stay in the village and till the land but he vehemently opposed it. The parents unwillingly agreed to his proposal and he left. After going through many troubles that nearly ended his life, he decided to go back home. Brako was well received by his aged parents. His father ushered him into farming. He went into full time mixed cropping with the advice from agricultural extension officers. Together with his wife Yaa Oforiwaa, they became well established farmers and got a lot of economic gains from agriculture.²

When it appeared he had sailed through the struggles, the worst ensued; not long after he had started farming his mother died, followed soon after by his father’s death. On the demise of his father, the maternal family members of his father wanted to revoke the *nsamansee*, “traditional will” made by his father to bequeath all his lands and property to Brako. Fortunately, some old men in the village who were present when the father made the will, defended Brako and got the land and farms for him. The family members were left with nothing.

As his name implies, Brako had to go through another struggle. Some weeks after the funeral of his father, and after winning the land case from his father’s family, his farm got burnt. He was lucky to get the town folk to help him extinguish the fire, and luckily it rained that very day. He would otherwise have lost all his cash and food crops. Most people alleged that it was an arson and attributed it to his father’s family who had lost the case. However, it was later revealed that the fire had extended from a nearby farm.

² Even though Brako’s wife was very supporting in all that he was able to achieve, the author did not create a fictional name for her. It has nothing to do with male domination else Brako’s mother would not have got a fictional name. The author personalised Brako’s wife Yaa Oforiwaa and his friend Yaw Addo by not giving them any fictional name. The absence of fictional names for the two did not imply in any way that they were relegated to the background. They were painted as real characters, and this is indicated by their first names Yaa and Yaw as distinct from the fictional characters in the book.

Chapter 16 of the book begins with some lamentations from Brako after all the struggles, as follows:

Nsem ahorow a etotoo Brako yi na anka eye obi a, anka nea edi ara ne se oka se: "Na eye den na me nko de miso dua mu a, na apan me yi? So nea obra no de me besi ara ni? Maye na anye yie a, wonto me Ayebiagu na mempe me baabi mentena. Annya anye yie ara ne nne." (Adi 1973: 91)

"All the misfortunes that befell *Brako*, had it been another person, all that he would have said is: "Why is it that as for me, everything I touch fall unto the rocks? Is this the endpoint of my life? If I have tried several times and things have not been fruitful they should just call me Mr. Failure then I will just forget everything and relax. Since things will not be successful, that is it."

The author states categorically that Brako was not despaired but took all the misfortunes in good faith and remarked *enye nea onipa pe biara na ne nsa ka*, 'it is not all that a person wants that he gets.' He was self-motivated to move ahead against all odds and this resilient attitude confirms his name Brako, 'life is war'.

Brako revamped his farm and re-cultivated the palm trees, cocoa and the other food crops with the help of his industrious wife. His wife supported him in diverse ways and very firmly stood behind him in these hard times. By God's grace, Brako regained his economic gains from agriculture. It was a blessing in disguise for it made him stronger and more united with the youth of the town. Later on, some of the youth in *Obrakyere* and neighbouring villages were motivated to take to farming and shed away laziness.³

Through the initiation and ingenuity of Brako, the youth of *Obrakyere* who had upheld agriculture, and the values and norms of the society, and wanted to develop their village formed the *Obrakyere Nkoso Fekuw*, '*Obrakyere* Development Association'. They appointed Brako as their leader and their major goal was to fight for the prosperity and development of *Obrakyere*.

³ Some of the nearby towns which imbibed the agricultural policy have also fictional toponyms; they are *Bɔbrapa*, 'Put up good life', *Saguase*, 'A liquor drinking place', *Akamani*, 'It has touched my eyes', and *Kyenkyetakyikurow*, 'Firm Takyi's village'. We will discuss the morphology and semantics of these names in the section on toponyms.

During the launching of the association, they invited the chief and his entourage and all members of the community, and appointed the chief, *Nana Ayeboafo* (another fictional character) as the chairman of the function. Brako and the youth worked very hard to make the association a formidable group. In one of their meetings, the executive members invited one inspirational and motivational speaker Mr. *Anyakoafre* who talked to them about **patriotism** and **moral values**.

On another occasion, Brako invited his old friend Yaw Addo who he struggled with while in Accra to speak to the association members. He also spoke on the need for hardwork and the essence of agriculture, and titled his speech *Fifire mu wɔ siade*, 'there is treasure in sweat'. He recounted a short story using fictional characters (see pages 110-111).

There was a rich man called *Ohianhyeda*, 'poverty does not fix dates', whose father was called *Odiasempa*, 'he who does good things', and they lived in a village called *Anhuntem*, 'we did not realize it early'. *Ohianhyeda* and his wife had a single child called *Bediako*, 'came to fight'. As a single child *Bediako* became swollen-headed, and on the death of his father he messed up with all the wealth and properties bequeathed to him, and ended up as a pauper. He went to a medicine man who asked him to bring a pot full of sweat for him to conjure some money for him. This implied that he had to work very hard on the land; eventually he was able to make a good farm that provided him with money.

In Chapter 20, Brako was honoured, and the chief recounted all the hardships and struggles he went through and the fact that after his sojourn in Accra he decided to come back home and embark on farming. The chief praised him as follows:

Esiane Brako mmɔdenbɔ, ɔbra pa, nyansa, nimdee a emu dɔ ne ne ho nsem pa pepeankoma a meka a, ade besa yen no nti, me mpanyin ato ne mmati se enne yemmɔ no abɔntendɔmhene wɔ ɔbrakyereman mu ha."

'Due to *Brako's* zeal and hardworking, virtuous life, his wisdom, deep knowledge, and all the good things said about him that if I decide to mention all them the night will befall us, the elders have decided that we honour him as *Abɔntendɔmhene* in *ɔbrakyerɛ*.'

Brako accepted the honour, thanked the chief and his elders and also motivated his colleagues to forge ahead towards unity and development and shun laziness, disunity, arrogance and pride. Brako stayed focused and served his family and the Development Association till death, aged 75 years. On his death, the king and the community organised a befitting funeral and placed an epitaph on his tomb that highlighted his “patriotism”.

2.1.2 *Anidaso* (*Brako-Protagonist*)

Chapter 2, entitled *ɔbra ye ko*, ‘life is war’, captures the ordeals the protagonist went through during his first days in Accra. Another name given to Brako by his father was *Anidaso*. The word *anidaso*, meaning hope, is a body part term derived from Akan cognitive semantics. The verb attached to the eye indicates the experiences the physical eye undergoes, and the states it assumes day in day out. In the expressions for hope, even though it is the eye that is captured, it is rather the person or the mind that hopes for something (see Agyekum 2015: 16). Hence the eye is a metonym for the personality as in (1) below:

1. [N	V	Postpos]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>ani</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>so</i>]	→	<i>anidaso</i>
[eye	lie	top]	→	‘hope’

The concept of hope is indicated by the eyes lying or casting glimpse at something yet to happen (a posterior event). Akan consistently and metaphorically extends body part lexicon to refer to these abstract notions.

In *anidaso*, the eyes are literally lying on something yet to come or happen, and hence focuses on the item so that it is not missing; Akans thus have the metaphor EYES ON FUTURE IS HOPE. The future is a forward moving event; the eyes, metonymically representing the brains and the entire personality, are focused on the future, and one has to work hard towards that. In the case of Brako, despite the fact that he suffered very much in his initial youthful days, the parents knew that he was not going to be despaired forever. As a reincarnated child, the parents gave him *anidaso* ‘hope’ to indicate that all was not lost in the family and there was going to be light at the end of the tunnel.

The author titles Chapter 6 as *akyea na emmui*, ‘it has bent but not broken.’ This is a truncated form of the Akan proverb *akyea nso emmui sene abebuo nyinaa de*, ‘it has bent but not broken is the mother of all proverbs’. This chapter begins with the sentence

*Amanehunu ahorow yi akyi no, nnamfo yi tenaa ase dwenee ɔkwan
ko a wɔbɛfa so abɔ dwetiri foforo.*

‘After all the hardships and the ordeals, the friends sat down and thought about the strategies to use to raise more capital.’

This was after they had been swindled by fraudsters in Accra who promised to double their money for them but never fulfilled it. As Brako alias *Anidaso*’s name depicts, there had been the struggles but there was still hope. Brako thus took the final decision to go back home to *Ɔbrakyere* and start farming. In Chapter 8, he bid farewell to his friend Addo; and he travelled back home. The chapter is captioned *ofie ne fie*, ‘(lit) home is home’; there is nothing better than coming back home.

Another nickname for Brako was *Hiapa* (page 63). This is made up of *ohia*, ‘poverty’ and *pa*, ‘good’. This seems oxymorous for it is hard for people to consider poverty that is good since poverty is generally considered negative. In Akan, *ohiapa* means that the poor person lives within his means, and Brako depicted this when he returned to his village. He led a moderate life and God in his own wisdom lifted him up to become an icon and a mentor for the youth of the village.

There are three fictional names attributed to the protagonist to depict his life and what he went through in life, the values he cherished, and his achievements. The names are *Brako*, *Anidaso* and *Hiapa*. The synergy in the three depicts that life is full of struggles, hardships, hustling and bustling, conflicts, ups and downs (*brako*) but if one has *anidaso*, ‘hope’, self-motivation, resilience and tenacity, things will change against all odds. The transformation in life will come if one lives a moderate, decent and moral life full of initiative, hard work and ingenuity, and one eschews greed, envy and corruption (*hiapa*, decent poverty). God will raise this individual from the doldrums and place him or her on a higher pedestal in the society. This happened to Brako.

2.1.3 Akora Hwewodeeso (Brako’s father)

Akora Hwewodeeso is considered one of the major characters. We meet him in the earlier parts of the book as the father who was so passionate about the welfare of his only son Brako. In Chapter 1, we listen to his advice and notice his counselling skills. We meet him later in the book when he writes a letter asking his son, Brako, to return home, and how he warmly received him when he came back. There is a fair account of his interest in farming and how he ushered Brako into it and gave him a vast land. We see him as a visionary, fair, just and knowledgeable person in the Akan

culture. We followed him closely till his death and we saw the befitting burial given to him. The component parts of his name are as follows:

2. [V	Poss	N	Postpos]	→	Nominal Word
[Hwe	wo	dee	so]	→	Hwewodeeso
[look	your	own	on]	→	'be focused on your own'

His name implies that he should be cautious, and be content with what he had and that is why he was so focused on seeing that his son Brako took care of his land and prospered. This fictional character carries a proverbial and advisory name that depicts Brako's father as a counsellor. He advised his son Brako when he was travelling to Accra. He said:

Nea ehia ne nokwardi, odwo, ahohyεso, ahobrease ne ahofama.
 'What is essential in life is honesty, calmness, self-discipline, humility and commitment.'

On page 4, he advised Brako to put up a good life worthy of emulation and avoid stealing, gossiping, impropriety, too many friends, drunkenness, sexual activities, and ungratefulness. He emphasised the need to be mindful of himself as an individual, and his speech reflects his name *Hwewodeeso*, 'mind your own'.

We noticed how he wanted Brako to be on his own when he returned from Accra, and motivated him to go into farming. He showed him the land that he could till to bring about economic gains, and to become independent. He mentioned cash cropping, crop farming, animal husbandry as areas that Brako could engage himself to be self-reliant. He eventually bequeathed his land to Brako in the presence of some traditional elders who served as witnesses. To make Brako fully independent and focused, he made sure that Brako married a very industrious woman who helped him throughout his life.

2.1.4 *Akosua Nyawodeε (Brako's mother)*

She is one of the round characters and we meet her from the beginning of the book and follow her activities as a good and compassionate mother.

3. [V	Poss	N	]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>nya</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>dee</i>	]	→	<i>Nyawodee</i>
[obtain	your	own	]	→	'obtain you own'

Brako's mother is called *Nyawodee*, literally 'seek your own', implying 'work hard'. This is a woman who supported both her husband *Hwewodeeso* and her son *Brako*. On page 72, she advised Brako on self-agrandisement and lust for money using the biblical allusion that money is the root of all sins. She spoke against lust for women, and advised him to shun women when he becomes rich, and to respect all human beings irrespective of their status, and to be humble. *Eno Nyawodee* continued as a good mother till she died in Chapter 12.

2.1.5 *Nana Ayebofo* 'Nana the Helper'

4. [Pref Cop V	V	Suffix]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>a</i> <i>ye</i>	<i>boa</i>	<i>-fo</i>]	→	<i>Ayebofo</i>
[has been	help	-er]	→	'has been a helper'

Nana Ayebofo, the chief of *Obrakyere* is one of the major characters in the book. He played his role as a good chief who was interested in development, and was ever willing to help. This reflects his name as "the helper". On page 93, he acts as the Chairman at the launching of the *Obrakyere* Development Association. He contributed substantially towards the development and sustenance of the Association. He made sure to honour Brako so as to motivate the youth to go into agriculture and be very patriotic. He played magnificent roles during the funerals of Brako's parents, *Akora Hwewodeeso* and *Eno Nyawodee*. He also gave Brako a befitting funeral when he passed on.

2.1.6 *Onimdefo Anyakoafre*

We meet this fictional character on pages 97-102 as the Key Speaker at one of the *Obrakyere* Youth Association's meetings. The component parts of his name are:

5. [Pref V	N	Pref	V]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>a-</i> <i>nya</i> <i>ko</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>fre</i>]	→	<i>Anyakoafre</i>	
[has been war	has	call]	→	'has been called during wars'	

His name implies that he is one who is brought in to save situations. He is literally a mercenary called to fight for a group. He was thus called as an inspirational and motivational speaker to talk to the members of the youth association. The major themes of his speech were on unity and patriotism, and he spoke about a person who is considered as a noble person or a gentleman or lady. He emphasised the need to eschew discrimination, laziness and other vices. He further touched on agriculture, urbanisation, communal labour, and commitment to one's place of birth. On agriculture, he advised the youth that it is shallow-mindedness for one to think that when you finish school it is shameful to engage in farming. He finally touched on the reward for morality. In his concluding remarks as an inspirer on patriotism, he said:

Momfa mo ahoɔden, mo nyansa ne mo sika nsom mo man. Momma mo man ho dɔ nhye mo so kosi se mubetu otintinye, nsisi, amim, adanmugye, ketεasehye, akwadworɔ, apɔmpɔmpε ne ɔhyeketee afi ɔman yi mu.

“You should use your strength, your wisdom, and money to serve your nation. Let the love for your country control you till you are able to eradicate extortion, cheating, greed, fraud, corruption, laziness, indolence, pride and oppression from this country.”

2.2 Minor Fictional Characters

These were characters that came in only in some limited sections of the book yet as fictional characters their names and the meanings of these names contribute to the overall discussions of fictional characters.

(a) *Odiasempa*, ‘he who engages in good issues and things’

6. [Pref. V	N	Adj]	→	Nominal Word
[ɔ di	asem	pa]	→	<i>Odiasempa</i>
[Pref engage	issue	good]	→	‘benevolent’

This fictional name is a compound as seen in the morphological components above. The character, as the name implies, should be a good person ready to help others. Such a person is

compassionate and ever ready to share with people their pains and sufferings. He is benevolent and ready to give, he therefore gave his property to his own son.

(b) *Ohianhyeda*, ‘poverty does not fix a day’

7. [N	Neg.	V	N]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>ohia</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>hyɛ</i>	<i>da</i>]	→	<i>Ohianhyeda</i>
[poverty	not	fix	day]	→	‘poverty does not fix a day’

The meaning is that poverty does not fix a date. Poverty is personalised as a person who can decide to visit you anytime. The fictional name warns people to be aware of what poverty can do to them and work towards the eradication of poverty. Even when you are very rich, you do not know when you can become poor. One should therefore be cautious in life. This name serves as a motivation for those who easily forget themselves when they are rich and live ostentatious lives. In the novel, the rich man’s son Bediako was not aware that he was going to be poor one day. He should have understood and analysed his father’s name *Ohianhyeda*. This name was given to guide him and his “would-be children” to be aware of how poverty can afflict people at any time.

(c) *Bediako*, ‘came to fight/suffer’

8. [Pref.	V	N	]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>bɛ</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>ako</i>	]	→	<i>Bediako</i>
[come to	engage	battle]		→	‘came to fight’

The name *Bediako* literally means ‘came to fight’. It is normally given to people who are born during hard times such as economic hardships, predicaments, misfortunes, and disasters in the family or in the state. It means that the child has directly fallen into these, and he is therefore unfortunate. In this novel, Bediako was named as such because his parents tried several times to get a child but failed. Eventually, they gave birth to a son who they named *Bediako*, “came to suffer”. In Akan, being a single child is an unfortunate event. *Bediako* is, however, considered as one of the Akan honorifics used to refer to a warrior; it is an appellation for the name Asare.

Other minor characters found in the book include *Akora Famanyame* (page 58), *Ɔpanin Peohiahu* and his son *Kofi Aninwu* (page 100). Each of these names has intrinsic meanings that are related to issues in the novel and where we encounter them. Let us now briefly look at the morphological components and the semantic roles of these names in relation to the novel.

(d) *Famanyame*, 'give it to God'

9. [V	V	N	]	→	Nominal Word
[fa	ma	Nyame]		→	<i>Famanyame</i>
[take	give	God]		→	'Give it to God'

Akora Famanyame, 'Give it to God' was one of the people who shared a common boundary with *Akora Hwewodeeso*. His name implies that every aspect of his farming activities is entrusted to God. *Akora Hwewodeeso* mentioned this name when showing the size and coverage of his land to Brako. This was to instil in him the idea that God is at the centre of all things. He gives the rains and fertilises the soil. Again, if any tragedy happens in farming Brako should just entrust it into God's hands. No wonder, after his farm had been burnt, he had the confidence to rejuvenate the farm. *Akora Hwewodeeso* said again that there is a river called *Onyameboame* that lay between his farm and *Famanyame's* farm. The name *Onyameboame* is made up of *Onyame*, 'God' + *boa*, 'help' + *me*, 'me' to mean 'God helps me'. This demonstrates the religious belief of the author and the people of *Obrakyere*, and constitutes part of the religious ideology of Akans as a whole. These two theophoric names were chosen as pre-cursor to whatever precarious situation Brako will encounter in his career as a farmer.

(e) *Ɔpanin Peohiahu*, 'search for poverty to find it'

10. [V	N	V	]	→	Nominal Word
[pɛ	ohia	hu	]	→	<i>Peohiahu</i>
[search	poverty	find]		→	'search for poverty'

(f) *Aninwu*, 'does not become ashamed'

11. [N	Neg.	V	]	→	Nominal Word
[ani	n-	wu]		→	<i>Aninwu</i>
[eyes	do not	die]		→	'eyes do not die'

On page 100 we meet Father *Peohiahu* and his son *Kofi Aninwu*. Their personalities squarely depict their names. *Peohiahu* as depicted in its morphology means exploring to find poverty. *Peohiahu* asked his son *Aninwu* why he had completed school but still wanted to stay in the village and go into farming. He complained that if after sending his son to school he only remained in the

village after completion in order to go into farming, then his son had made him waste his money. The name *Peohiahu* might have been given to the father to reflect his attitude towards his son who he thought should not stay in the village and farm. The major occupation that made Brako and most of the youth become rich was farming, hence this man was searching for poverty by shunning farming. His son was *Aninwu*, ‘I am not ashamed’ and this means that he was not ashamed of engaging in farming since he could foresee the overall benefits in future. *Aninwu* is a post event name to reflect his behaviour and his response to his father who did not like farming.

3. Fictional Toponyms

Toponym is the branch of onomastics that deals with place names, their meaning, structure, and origin. In this paper, we are discussing fictional toponyms that have been created to reflect the activities and characters of the inhabitants. Toponymy is closely interrelated with geography, history and ethnography. Our concentration in this study is on microtoponymy which is the study of the names of such smaller geographical units as localities, springs, and farmlands.

The novel *Brako* has a lot of fictional and proverbial villages. On page 8, the author described how the only car from *Ɔbrakyere*, *Brako*’s village, left the place early dawn and moved past certain nearby villages. Adi (1973:8) states “*Efi Ɔbrakyere, kɔfa Bɔmudwen ne Ehiawoanwu de kosi ɔtempɔn kɛse no mu ye ɔkwammɔne.* ‘The feeder road from *Ɔbrakyere*, through *Bɔmudwen* and *Ehiawoanwu* up to the highway is very bad.’” Here are some examples.

(a) *Ɔbrakyere*, ‘life depicts’

The town is a compound with the following morphological components.

12. [N.	V	]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>ɔbra</i>	<i>kyere</i>	]	→	<i>ɔbrakyere</i>
[life	shows	]	→	‘life depicts’

On page 1, the author gives a vivid description of the town and mentions some neighbouring towns. According to Adi (1973: 1), *saa nkurow yi mu biara din bra mu nnipa.* ‘Each of the names of these towns depict the characters, attitudes and the calibre of the inhabitants.’ The towns are *Bɔbrapa*, *Mmɔdenbɔ*, (page 1, 118), *Gyemanyawo*, *Akamani*, *Bɔmudwen*, (page 70), *Ehiawoanwu*, *Anhuntɛm* (page 118), *Animia* (page 118), and *Nimdeɛ* (page 118).

Ɔbrakyere is pre-event toponym created to be the epicentre of all the toponyms in this study and to depict the citizens and their life. The author talks about the neatness of the town despite its size. The episode starts from this town and shifts briefly to Accra where the protagonist lived and returns to *Ɔbrakyere* for the rest of the major events, pleasant and unpleasant. It is the location where the fictional characters including Brako, his parents, the chief and his elders, and members of the youth association operated. It is the place where agriculture and all that it entails are featured. It is the place where the protagonist Brako spent most of his life and embarked on farming and also suffered from bush fire. It was *Ɔbrakyere* where he was able to withstand all the misfortunes and came out as a hero, and a mentor.

Ɔbrakyere is considered as a centre of Akan culture and tradition. We encounter customs like marriage, naming ceremonies, funerals, libation, traditional will and purification rites. It is a place where patriotism, love for one's neighbour, and norms and moral values are cherished while vicious life and immorality are abhorred. In talking about the people of *Ɔbrakyere*, the author states:

Ade biako a eda nsow wɔ ɔbrakyereman mu ne emufo ahosɔre ne ahohyɛsɔɔ. Eyi ye ade a wɔntoto no ase koraa. Ade a edi Ɔbrakyerɛni biara tiban ne sɛ ɔbɛbɔ bra ama asɔ ani.

'One unique feature about the inhabitants of *Ɔbrakyere* is their spirituality, piety and self-discipline. They do not underrate these at all. What is so dear to every citizen of *Ɔbrakyere* is to put up a life which is acceptable and worthy of emulation.'

The above represents the name *Ɔbrakyere* 'life depicts' where the inhabitants' life depict the name of the town. It serves as a model village even for current Ghana.

(b) *Anhuntɛm*, 'did not realize it early'

Brako proposed that his house be named as **Anhuntɛm** (page 81 and page 84, 118)

12. [Pref Neg	V	Adv.	]	→	Nominal Word
[a	n	hu	ntɛm]	→	<i>Anhuntɛm</i>
[past not	see	early	]	→	'did not realize it early'

The name *Anhuntɛm* is a post-event name created to imply that *Brako* has accepted that he did not recognise the benefits in agriculture early else he would not have wasted his time in Accra hustling and bustling. The name advises the youth to start agriculture early, and ‘it is never too late’ since there is treasure in sweat that comes out of farming.

(c) *Bogyabiyɛdɔm*, ‘some kinsmen are rebels’

On page 19, *Brako*’s friend, *Addo*, narrated his background and how he had suffered since he came to Accra after school. He referred to his village where he had his elementary school as *Bogyabiyɛdɔm*. The morphological components of the word are:

13. [N	Det.	Cop	V	N]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>bɔgya</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>yɛ</i>	<i>dɔm</i>]	→	<i>Bogyabiyɛdɔm</i>	
[blood	some	is	rebel]	→	‘some family members are rebels’	

In the Akan language, the word *mɔgya*, ‘blood’ also refers to blood relations, and people who trace their background to one great grandmother are said to belong to one biological blood and are therefore matrilineally one family. The above expression means that “some family members will despise you”. The name of this town refers to one of the maxims about Akan family system and how some family members who are rich will decline to help the needy in the family thereby making them feel like strangers in their own families. The narrator, *Addo*, implies that in this village nobody is ready to help others, not even your family members.

(d) Other Toponyms.

In this section, we will only give the morphological components of the names of the other places and their semantic connotations with reference to where we meet them in the novel. The towns are *Bɔbrapa*, *Mmɔdenbɔ*, (page 1, 118), *Gyemanyawo*, *Akamani*, *Bɔmudwen*, (page 70), *Ehiawoanwu*, *Animia* (page 118) and *Nimdeɛ* (page 118).

(i) *Bɔbrapa*, ‘put up a good life’

14. [V	N	Adj]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>bɔ</i>	<i>bra</i>	<i>pa</i>]	→	<i>Bɔbrapa</i>
[put up	life	good]	→	‘put up a good life’

The name enjoins her citizens to put up a good moral and virtuous life worth emulating for the youth and also for development.

(ii) *Mmɔdenbɔ*, 'Industriousness'

15. [V	prefix	V	Adj]	→	Nominal Word
[bɔ	m-	bɔ	den]	→	<i>Bɔmmɔden</i> → <i>Mmɔdenbɔ</i>
[strike -	strike		hard]	→	'striking a hard strike'

The semantics of this word implies that no matter how hard the striking of a metal or the breaking of a rock is, just keep on striking, try to endure, be resilient and you will finally succeed. The town advises the individual to be hardworking and self-reliant. They know that success resides in people putting out their best and striving, no matter the hardships.

(iii) *Gyemanyawo*, 'unless I do not get you'

16. [Conj	Pro.	Perf	V	N]	→	Nominal Word
[gye	me	a-	nya	wo]	→	<i>Gyemanyawo</i>
[unless	I	have	got	wo]	→	'unless I do not get you.'

This refers to one of the towns where the people were very vindictive and if you fell into their trap they would deal with you mercilessly. The author therefore advises other people to be very cautious in dealing with them since they were unforgiving.

(iv) *Akamani*, 'it has touched my eyes'

17. [Perf	V	Poss	N	]	→	Nominal Word
[a-	ka	m-	ani	]	→	<i>Akamani</i>
[has	touched	my	eyes]	→	'it has touched my eyes'	

In the name *Akamani*, 'it has touched my eyes', the Akans see the eye as very delicate and advise people to be cautious. If any particle or ointment touches your eye, it is painful. *Akamani* is used when one falls into some danger or hardships and suffers some bitter experiences. It teaches him/her to be cautious; it is a post-event toponym.

(v) *Animia*, ‘pressing of the eyes’

18. [N	V	]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>ani</i>	<i>mia</i>	]	→	<i>animia</i>
[eye	press	]	→	‘eyes press’

The above implies that during certain times of your life, things will be so hard and pressing that you only have to stand firm and resolute and forge ahead. This name motivates people to move away from thinking too much and getting depressed. The name enjoins the citizens to press on against all odds, for suffering leads to success (see Agyekum 2015).

(vi) *Bɔmudwen*, ‘think together’

19. [V	Postpos	V	]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>bɔ</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>dwɛn</i>	]	→	<i>Bɔmudwɛnɛ</i>
[strike	inside	think]	→	‘think together’	

The name *Bɔmudwen*, ‘think together’, signifies the essence of unity and the need to take collective decisions. This name foresaw the advent of the Youth Development Association where the youth recognised that their town *ɔbrakyɛrɛ* could only develop if they all united and had a common goal. This is a post-event toponym to indicate that the co-operation in the Youth Development Association has yielded good results.

(vii) *Ehiwoanwu*, ‘do not die when you are poor’

20. [Pro V	Pro	Rel	Neg	V]	→	Nominal Word
[<i>e</i>	<i>hia</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>wu]</i>	→ <i>Ehiwoanwu</i>
[it	need	you	then	do not	die]	→ ‘do not die when you are poor’

The name of this town motivates the inhabitants to move forward even when they are poor, for time changes. This tallies with the Akan maxim that *enyɛ ohia nko ne ka*, ‘poverty is not the only indebtedness/suffering’. They think that *wonwui a, wonnim deɛ wobɛnya*, ‘since you have not died, you cannot foresee what you will get in future’ (see Agyekum 2017). The philosophy is that poverty is not the end of life.

(viii) *Nimdeε*, 'knowledge' (page 118)

21. [V	N]	→	Nominal
[<i>nim</i>	(<i>a deε</i>]	→	<i>Nimdeε</i>
[know	things]	→	'knowing things / Knowledge'

In Akan, knowledge is conceptualized as the knowing of many things. The name implies that the town can only develop when it has many people with deep knowledge about various things including agriculture, and when the different types of knowledge from individuals are pulled together and well harnessed, the town will develop.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined fictional characters and toponyms created by the author, and the Akan fictional names given to them. We analysed the morphology and semantics of these names looking at what they connote, their appropriateness, precision and socio-cultural functions within the Akan society. We found out that the fictional characters and the toponyms are morphologically compounds, and semantically, the component parts give a summation of the meanings.

One feature of the names is that they are proverbial and this is a common feature in Akan onomastics. The knowledge about fictional characters gives insight into the Akan cultural, philosophical, intellectual, environmental, religious, and linguistic notions about their ideology, worldview, language, and culture.

One of the major findings of this paper is that fictional characters and toponyms are not created in vacuum, but are derived from socio-cultural contexts. Fictional characters have attributes and properties, and these tally with their behaviours in the narratives. They create a strong synergy between context and text. The fictional characters and toponyms are make-believe entities and they are well crafted by the author Adi to emphasise that staying in the rural village and tilling the land was more prosperous than hustling and bustling in the cities. The major and minor characters and the names of the toponyms in this paper depict the Akan cultural norms and values.

The fictional names captured certain Akan maxims and witticism that include seeing life as war that needed planning and preparation, in-depth knowledge, focus and concentration. Other values discussed are self-help, self-realisation, self-reliance and dependency, patriotism, unity,

progress and development, resilience, industriousness, and being resolute and forging ahead against all odds. The author portrayed these values through the fictional characters and toponyms to drum home to the youth the essentials and obligations in life.

The fictional names can be grouped into two, based on pre-or post-signalling. They could signal future events envisaged in the fictional characters and places they were created, to befit people's character and behaviour and events that happen in some places. The fictional names chosen that signal future events in the character's life include, *Brako*, *Akora Hwewodeeso*, *Aberewa Nyawodee*, *Nana Ayebofo*, and *Bediako*. In this novel, *Bediako* was named because his parents tried several times to get a child but failed until finally they gave birth to a son and therefore named him *Bediako*, "came to suffer". In Akan, being a single child is an unfortunate event. On page 118 the author creates pre-event toponyms and hopes that by their names people who will go there will acquire certain values. These are *Mmɔdenbɔ*, 'Industriousness' *Animia*, 'Perseverance, press hard', and *Nimdee*, 'knowledge'. The author laments that although people are supposed to get training in these fictional towns, return and transform their societies, they have nothing to show after their return.

There are other fictional names that appear to have been given after the occurrence of an event. Examples of such fictional characters are *Onimdefo Anyakoafre*, *Peohiahu*, *Aninwu*; the toponyms include *Bogyabiyedɔm*, *Ehiawoanwu*, *Akamani* and *Anhuntem*. The town *Anhuntem*, 'did not realise it early' was created to imply that *Brako* had accepted that he did not recognise the benefits in agriculture early. In Akan, people and towns may be given names, in addition to the ones they were originally given, based on events which occur in connection with them or their behaviour, in the case of people.

Even though the book – *Brako* – was published in 1973, 45 years ago, the issues discussed are even more relevant for the contemporary Ghanaian society where there are numerous vices, problems of urbanization and the shunning of farming by the youth. In effect, the book reflects one of the major roles and the interconnection of literature and society as recorded in Agyekum (2013: 22-23).

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