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**Politics of Language in Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine*  
(*Araromire*)**

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**Abstract**

Language is the most essential feature of any work of art, which is necessary for the communication of meaning. Language could come in different forms: oral, written, sign and material. Whatever form it takes, it helps in the continual promotion and reconstruction of socio-cultural identity. Using Afolayan's *The Figurine (Araromire)* as a point of reference, this article examines the place and implications of multilingualism, and the socio-cultural impact on Nigerians, and Africans at large. It also examines how the various forms of language can aid the shaping of the cultural identity of the people towards the preservation of valued culture for the present and future generations. Lastly, the article suggests that Nigerian films and filmmakers/producers should be seen and employed as cultural ambassadors of Nigeria to the outside world.

**Keywords:** Language, Multilingualism, *The Figurine*, Cultural ambassadors, Filmmakers

**Introduction**

Language is critical in laying the foundation of every literary expression, and it is about the most reliable medium through which humans communicate. It could either be conveyed orally, through sign, material or written forms. Wardhaugh (2006) asserts that language is what members of a particular society speak; Sapir (1921, p. 8) sees it as "a purely and human and non-instructive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols." But Barber (1993) goes further to describe it as the great machine-tool which makes human culture possible. Furthermore, wa Thiong'o (1986) asserts that:

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Language, any language, has a dual character: It is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. Languages as communication and as culture are the products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture...the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community or human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relation to the world (pp. 13-16).

The crux of the matter is that language is a means of communication and the hub of the wheel of culture used to establish social relationship (Akindele and Adegbite 1999, p. 2). In other words, language is a manifestation of belonging to a community with a common culture, carrying the entire body of values, ways of life, identity and philosophy of a group/community. This is in support of the Chinese saying that if you want to colonize a man for life, teach him your language. Because Africans and Nigerians, in particular, are mindful of their indigenous language as their heritage, that invaluable treasure to human endeavour (Svetlana 2001), Afolayan and some other notable filmmakers have taken it upon themselves to produce films not only in English Language, but also in other languages, all in one film, in order to shape and preserve their peoples' identity.

#### **Multilingualism: Place and Implication**

Multilingualism is a societal occurrence that deals with languages existing in a society; it is not a promise but a reality. Multilingualism is a product of convergence and coexistence of various national language/local languages in the same geographic area. It describes a situation where an individual or a community speaks more than two languages. Mansour captures

multilingualism succinctly as "communication through several languages" (1993, p. 3), Kachru (1985, p. 159) describes it as "the linguistic behaviour of the members of a speech community which alternatively uses two, three or more languages depending on the situation and function". It can also refer to either the language use, the competence of an individual to use multiple languages or the language situation in an entire nation or society (Clyne 2007). According to John Edwards, in his book titled *Multilingualism* asserts that:

Multilingualism is a perfect fact of life around the world, a circumstance arising at the simplest level, from the need to communicate across speech communities (1994, p. 1).

From the above, we see that multilingualism is the practice of using, knowing, speaking and even writing more than one language by a person or within a social group. It assumes the ability to switch and/or mix different languages within the same conversation. Being multilingual is a natural potential of every normal human being because "given the appropriate environment two languages are as normal as two lungs" (Cook 2002, p. 23).

According to Gerhardt (1990, p. 174), Africa is known to be the continent with the greatest linguistic diversity, a people with very rich culture, which they are proud of and willing to preserve in spite of modernization and acculturation. As a means of describing their ethnic identity, Africans do not wish to lose their language because language is a depot of values, symbols and memories; which essentially is a semiotics of culture. Fanon aptly captures it in this way, that a flight away from one's language is a departure from one's culture since both are inseparable (1978).

Nigeria is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation where various customs and cultures coexist. These diversities contribute to her rich tradition with languages, excluding dialects, put at 550 (Blench & Dendo 2003), which excludes 510 living languages, 2 foreign languages (English and French) and 9 extinct languages (Crozier & Blench 1992; Gordon 2005; Ikegbunam 2009).

However, to reference books like the *Ethnologies* and the *Index of Nigerian Languages* there are about 500 languages spoken in Nigeria today (UNESCO 2003, Wikipedia 2012). These languages are tied to over 250 ethnic groups (Haynes 2000, p. 2); a disparity that stemmed from an ethnic group speaking more than one language. Like many other African countries, Nigeria has been described by Ogunba and Irele as òa fortuitous agglomeration of ethnic groupsö (1978, p. x). These multilingual traits give us a unique perspective among Africans and the world.

It has been observed that most people in Nigeria are bilingual, which is, using two languages effectively. For the elite, the lingua franca English and their mother tongue, while for the uneducated, pidgin and their mother tongue. Whether as illiterate or literate, most people tend to mix and switch the English Language and/or pidgin and their mother tongue in their utterances when communicating (Babalola & Taiwo 2009). Despite the fact that there are many languages in Nigeria, they have various statuses. English, the colonial language has become the official language, which Adekanbi (2013) describes as domineering. In his words:

English has furthered its domineering influence on the world as the most widely spoken and used global language. After 53years of independence, Nigeria has not been able to fight off English. Today, it is the most prestigious language. It is the official language by default (p. 33)

Pidgin English is the closest to the official language in usage, often referred to as *broken English* (Holmes 2000). It is the fusion of two languages, an upshot of the contact and convergence between a nation's indigenous languages (substrate languages) and English language (the superstrate) (Holmes, 2000) at the most basic level, which is mutually understood by both speakers. It is a language that all strata of the society speak, whether consciously or otherwise, though stigmatised as low status or low prestige, marginal, corrupt, and bad (Wolff 2000, p. 326). Ukeje describes pidgin as òí fast becoming a mass language í It is indeed the business language of the lower cadre of the Nigerian societyö

(2005, p. 190). Because the language is derived from English language, but is flawed with a mixture of indigenous language, Awodiya refers to it as 'the language of men of brute strength í the language of determined and strong-willed characters' (1995, p. 248). Hence, it is considered a midway house for the people. Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa are the three major ethnic groups/languages (Rakov, 2014, p. 1). However, there is a growing interest in other indigenous languages in Nigeria, including Edo, Urhobo, Ibibio, Ijaw, Fulfulde and Kanuri, which are increasing appearing in scholarly discourses. That is why Bamgbose says that despite the linguistic dominance of English, Nigerians have indigenous languages that can be found to have more speakers/users than English (2004, p. 3). This is because most Nigerians think and reason in their mother tongue, but are compelled to speak in English, a language that is foreign to them, hence, the frequent code-mixing and code-switching. When languages are in contact, they are bound to influence one another. Code-switching is alternating between one language and the other in communicating events, that is, mixing words or making a complete statement in a particular language (local language) with another language especially the lingua franca (Milroy & Muysken 1995, p. 7).

Africans in trying to be involved in the process of self-reflection and identity through cultural exhibition went into filmmaking. A medium, Orewere (1992, p. 206) says, is very powerful in terms of entertainment and transmission of cultural values. Films are cultural products and assets. They are popular and influential forms of communication around the world presently because they are money spinning ventures media through which the world sees itself and is faced with social truths. The world over has accepted film as a major medium of entertainment and education, apart from being a vehicle for cultural identity. Africans, however, used it as a window that has the power to influence how they are perceived and how they represent their identities. Nigerian video films may be seen as stabilizing forces that contribute to the maintenance of social order as well as reinforcing the collective mentality of the society. The films help

in developing collective reminiscences of events past, maintaining a distance from the endangered present and projecting life in the future. These are some good reasons why Nigerian films are globally accepted and seen as being very important (Jedlowski 2013). Krings and Okome (2013) affirm that „...Nigerian video films travel the length and breadth of the continent connecting Africa, particularly Nigeria, to its diverse and far-flung Diasporas elsewhere“ (p. 1).

According to Odhiambo, Nollywood performs and occupies a crucial social role and position in assisting viewers to interpret their experiences and society (2004, p. 33). Nollywood films cut across and go beyond ethnic, language, cultural and geographical boundaries and they are accepted and enjoyed by all no matter the age, educational attainment and social class. Although video films have become a significant avenue through which peoples' attitudes are influenced, and a means of cross-cultural obligation, they are tools for impacting strong cultural heritage of a group on any society. The Nigerian film industry is claimed to have entered the global scene through the production and marketing of a home video *Living in Bondage* by a businessman, Kenneth Nnebue in 1992 (Ebewo 2007; Haynes 2007; Onuzulike 2007). According to Larkin (2004):

It was businessmen involved in that infrastructure (led by Kenneth Nnebue, whose *Living in Bondage* (1992) is considered the inaugural Nollywood film) who saw the profit to be made in Nigerian-made films distributed through the same system (p. 290).

However, artists like Hubert Ogunde, Oyedele Yekini, Alade Muyideen, the Awada Kerikeri group, among others began the making of home video in the early 1980s (Ogundele 1997; Haynes & Okome 1997; Adesanya 1998; Adedeji & Ekwuazi 1998; Oyewo 2003; Adejunmobi 2007). Alamu (2010) adds that at its height of productivity and popularity in the 1970s and early 80s, there were at least 100 Yoruba traveling theatre troupes. Consequently, from this robust popular theatre base, it was rather simple for the Yoruba travelling theatre to take control of the

industry for the advancement of their artistic career in another medium. The industry though produces films in English, but from inception Nigerian pioneer filmmakers produced films in indigenous languages, especially in Yoruba. With time Igbo and Hausa filmmakers came into the scene. Presently other films in Benin, Urhobo, Esan, Tiv, Ibibio languages and even pidgin, among others sprang up (Omoera 2013, p.). Aside from production of films in these languages, some filmmakers have devised new means through which people will further enjoy watching their movies. In spite of the subtitling of films, directors/producers went into code-mixing and code-switching in order for their films to be more accessible, educative and entertaining to any of their audience members. Afolayan used a blend of our indigenous languages including Yoruba with English and pidgin, spiced with a little of Izon and Urhobo, which helped in expressing the typical Nigerian cultural background.

The drastic turn to the new mode of filmmaking in both our indigenous language with a blend of English and/or pidgin is as a result of the profound impact it has on the people, giving them a sense of belonging with the message being more appreciated as well as its contributory aspect in the preservation of our language and culture, what Okezie captures in these words:

The languages and customs of Africa define and identify the people at their local settings. They guide their behaviour and determine the outcome of their efforts. It means that without language and customs, the continent has no identification and thus cannot be defined, cannot think, nor act constructively and independently, which are necessary elements for development. (2010, p. 204)

Filmmakers have seen that indigenous language films are medium through which they can express those powerful local scenes of being and belonging, and that these films also stay closer to the aesthetic and moral visions of the people, even when they cross ethnic borders and linguistic boundaries. Language,

therefore, may be seen fundamentally as any communication system employed in giving, receiving or hiding information. It may be made of sound, calls, signs, signals, gestures and posturing, including silence. It may be oral or written. Hence language and the complementary communication become the basis of this analysis because a people's cultural heritage is not only transmitted through language, but also translated through religion.

### **Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine (Araromire)***

*The Figurine (Araromire)* is a film written by Kemi Adesoye, it gives an account of the primitive nature of Africans who believe that their destiny lies in the hands of some gods. Femi (Ramsey Nouah) cashes in on this, and uses it as a weapon of destruction when he noticed that Mona (Omoni Oboli) believed so much in the power of the figurine. *The Figurine* is about two friends, Femi and Sola (Kunle Afolayan), caught up in an unusual love triangle that develops into a bizarre revelation of human behaviour, as seen in Femi's deceptive, obsessive and murderous personality. They find a mysterious sculpture in an abandoned shrine during their endurance trek through the forest as corps members. Ignorant of the powers of the figurine, Sola not only touches it but he takes it and plans to sell it to any foreign museum after the orientation camp exercise. According to ancient legend, this mystical figurine is from the goddess, 'Araromire', which bestows seven years of good luck, prosperity and fruitfulness on anyone who encounters and/or touches it, and thereafter another seven years of bad luck, hardship, misery and despair. The lives of these two friends change for the better in terms of health, business, and procreation, among others. However, after the seven years boom, bizarre occurrences followed, stretching their family lives and their friendship to a thin line of treachery and murder; and nothing was the same again as things changed for the worst.

*Araromire* is a historical, social, domestic and multi-cultural feature film highlighting the value and quintessence of tradition, friendship, betrayal and love. This film, in line with the modus operandi of the Yoruba Travelling Theatre groups' indigenous methods of storytelling combines mythology, ritual,

narrative and performance (Falola & Heatron 2003, p. 74) to drive home its points. We do know that the Yorubas as portrayed by Okome (2000) are famous for their expressive culture, especially in oral and performance arts; hence they became a colossus in Nigerian cinema. The younger generation of writers/filmmakers taking up the challenge of wanting to sustain this rich cultural heritage, delved into films produced in multiple languages. From all aspects, the film speaks to the audience using various means of communication to convey the principles, philosophy and cultural values/images of the Araromire people, and by extension Nigeria and Africa. The director uses multiple languages ó English, Yoruba, Pidgin, and a tint of Izon, Urhobo and French with a lot of code-mixing and code-switching ó to convey its overt messages, while using symbols, images, sound, music, actions, costumes, architectural designs, cuisines, dance and song of some ethnic groups as cultural markers to transmit its covert messages.

Beginning from the known that is spoken the word, the Priest of Araromire (Ombo Gogo Ombo) starts the movie by welcoming the goddess into their community. Though set in a Yoruba community, the Priest uses Izon to exalt and welcome the goddess into their midst. Although Izon does not fit into the setting, it is believed that when the gods (supernatural powers) take over a person he/she speaks in strange languages. Going further into the scene, we see Sola and Mr. Fidelis, the Director of a company discussing employment issues as Sola went to seek for one in his organization, but was turned down basically because there is no National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) certificate. This triggered Sola's anger who speaks rudely to Mr. Fidelis, switching from English to Pidgin and vice versa.

Sola: Is it because I say I no go wear khaki for 1 year, you kan say I no fit work for your company? But listen Mr. Fidelis even for all the millions, I no go work for your jaga jaga office.

The English language, they say, is not our own hence most people are more comfortable speaking their mother tongue or

pidgin. Even as the Force Personnel in the film - the Camp Instructor and the Policeman at the entrance gate spoke pidgin all through though they are in the midst of graduates. The Police officer is from Oyo by merely looking at his face, a Yoruba state in Nigeria is more at ease communicating in pidgin, though this researcher believes if he were aware of Sola's ethnic background, would have done so in Yoruba. Most of the characters communicated in English Language during formal communications; people like Femi and Mona. Between Femi and Mona in a conversation in English, but with a switch to French word *ôcœst finiö* meaning *ôit is finished/I have finished*. Sola and his immediate family members, Sola and Lara, Femi and Linda, Sola and Ngozi, and Prof, Sola and Mona. For Femi and Sola, their communication could be private in Yoruba then reverts to formal conversation in English as in the office scene and even as switch from English to Yoruba or a mix of both languages and pidgin.

Sola: Femo, how far? O sokpe e bi bahyi lo gbe  
o wa. How far ki lo shele? Wo bakassi yen

Femi: Mona is here you know?

Sola: ehen? But iyin o da nko ko duro nawh.

Femi: she is in the clinic

Sola: ki lon shele? Okay let me settle down,, I  
will catch up with you.

This, among other such conversations, give the film a natural flavour and realism, but according to Gbileka the conversation of these characters whether *ôin* their mother tongue, pidgin or simply everyday Englishö (1997, p. 169), language is used to achieve social distinction. As for Lara and Mona there was a little mix of English and pidgin, this I am sure is unconscious.

Mona: Please let me lend Femi from you for a moment.

Lara: Please take him I dash you. (this literally means  
I give him to you free of charge)

This kind of switch and mix of Pidgin, English and Yoruba

are seen in most part of the performance between Sola, Femi and Lara, which gives Nigeria a greater opportunity and need of retaining multilingualism among themselves. This mixing and switching in and out of English to other languages show that the lingua franca though important, is still a borrowed language. But the blend of our indigenous and pidgin languages gives the film a natural flavour; a living reservoir of the history and cultures of Nigerian people, a reason why Egbokhare quoting Prah says that:

In Africa, the cultural base of mass society, which is in reality premised on African language, provides the credible condition for the development of a society, which involves the masses and these uplifts them socio-culturally and economically from where they are, or the bases of what they have (2003, p. 26).

Afolayan adopted this means of multilingual performance to drive home his themes, having at the back of his mind what Chinua Achebe advocated, that English must be Africanized to become a literary language in Africa (Nigeria). Achebe describes his style as that of adapting English language to carry the weight of my African experience... a new English still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding (1975, p. 62).

So, the writer/filmmaker must adapt the language to situate his/her work. Like *The Figurine* whose central idea/plot is situated in the Yoruba background, the movie cannot be fully classified as a Yoruba film. That is why Achebe translates Ibo construction into English, he ðIbo-iseö his syntax and sprinkles his vocals with easily accepted Ibo words, in an Ibo context (Osofisan 1983, p. 64). Afolayan went a step further by putting into practice in film what Rotimi has done with two of his playsö *If...Tragedy of the Oppressed* (1979) and *Hopes of the Living Dead* (1993) in terms of experimenting with multiple indigenous languages in order to communicate with a wider audience.

National unity as showcased in *The Figurine* through intercultural relationships like that between Sola (Yoruba) and

Ngozi (Igbo), Femi (Yoruba) and Linda (Igbo) and marital union between Sola, a Yoruba man and Mona, an Urhobo . Both try to teach their child Junior, (Tobe Omoni), both languages because it helps the child to have an identity, it is also a precondition for language preservation and a revitalization of minority language. Because English is almost taking total control in most homes among Nigerians, filmmakers introduced multiple language films so that Nigerian languages would not become extinct. This film, *The Figurine*, is an eye opener to parents that without teaching their children their language ó major or minor ó these children may not know the worldview of their people, beliefs, personal responsibility or important individual morality, thus questioning the integrity of the family, which might eventually disintegrate. A scene from the film showing what transpired between Sola, Mona and their son: He runs into the room and jumps on his father lying on the bed, climbs down and greets, but Mona asks him a simple question which he decodes immediately

Mona: Is that how Nigerian men show respect

Son: Prostrates and greets his father in

Yoruba: e ka ro and his mother in Urhobo:  
mighwo.

This situation is seen between Femi and Lara (Tosin Sido) when he came from school to prepare for his youth service. Lara walks up to Femi, gesticulates by kneeling to greet him because he is older. Though the means of communication between the Kajuresø is English, they continue to instil in their son the values of his people, believing that he might be able to speak both languages as time goes on. Mr. Kalejeiye (David Oserwe), Femi and Lara are always communicating in Yoruba; English was never spoken in their home in spite of their (Femi and Laraø) educational attainment and social exposure,, though their Yoruba is adulterated, which establishes the fact that language is dynamic, changing every day. These communication processes among both families lead to more bonding and intimacy not only between them but the generations unborn.

Language in *The Figurine* goes beyond words because other things speak, though silently but messages of our cultural

heritage, belief and philosophy were passed across to the people. Starting from the music, the words/lyrics of the songs give an insight into the message of the film. Starting with the background song *Araromire* (Wale Waves), to *When we are together* (George Nathaniel) at the wedding, then *Awada* (Ayinde Barrister) at the *Kajures* party and *Africalypso* (Lagbaja) showing the busy Lagos lifestyle. All these songs expose to Africans and non-Africans alike some of the music genres in Nigeria and their relationship/importance in the people's life and Afolayan led the audience to hear the tale of Nigerian rural life and possibly a tale of a simple Nigerian past.

The director also uses architectural designs to make statements. This is evident, for example, in *Kajures* beautiful beach house built with bamboo and thatch depicts an iconic landmark of African traditional setting and heritage. Though the *Kalejaiyes* building is of modern European design, the internal arrangements of both homes show that African cultural heritage and values are of importance to both families. Some of the paintings, crafts, and relics found in Professor's office, are also found in the homes of the *Kalejaiyes* and *Kajures*. According to Prof., all the relics are historical and not diabolical. Not for sale and cannot be cast away. They are priceless, so cannot be sold to any Museum. This statement may have influenced Sola's later decision to keep the figurine in commemoration of their youth service days. In *Araromire*, Afolayan provides us with a vision of a Nigerian in which modern urban world is to be found alongside with traditional rural life.

The mode of dressing in the movie also reflects our culture especially the outfits made with local fabrics worn by Mr. Kalejaiye, Professor, Mona, Sola, and to some extent Lara and Linda. Their costumes transcend both the ancient and modern, bringing to the fore the changes in fashion trends over the years. Love for Nigerian cuisine by Femi and Linda at the restaurant probably reflects Nigerians' pride in their heritage despite their social status, educational background and exposure. African traditional narrative is evident in the interactions between Sola and Junior. Sola tells Junior bedtime stories even if they are stories of the *Whiteman's Spiderman*, to inculcate in his child the need to

relive historical events in words and partly fulfil his promise made when the boy was still in the womb. In his words: òI promise you baby that you are going to have everything I never had a father, a mother and a familyö. He largely fulfilled this promise until the unexpected termination of his life by Femi.

The imagery of the masquerade as mentioned by Junior during one of his hide-and-seek game sessions with Lara, and the sight of the masquerade in performance on the streets of Lagos, show that the traditional way of life of Africans is still in existence and held in high esteem. The genuine nature of the African traditional society is portrayed in the film. Africans are good at using objects or signs to represent something about their major philosophy, belief and values in order to pass a message across. The director, in this instance, uses a figurine, a sculptured object that represents Araromire, the goddess who displays a dual nature of fortune and misfortune, though small in size, but greatly influences those that come in contact with her.

Araromire connotes so many things in the film, though smallish, but with outrageous performance in the shaping of the lives of the characters. Her nakedness represents the blatancy of life as nothing goes unnoticed; her full breast is an expression of humanity and motherhood, which represents the nature of prosperity she bestows on whoever comes in contact with her. The jewel depicts her extraordinary powers; hence she manifests her benevolence and destructive tendencies. In spite of being sculpted from a cursed tree, Araromire means peace. But because of the kind of tree, it also represents misery, misfortune and destruction. Araromire also means different things to each of the character: it connotes fear to Kalejaiye, apprehension to the NYSC Camp Instructor, curiosity to Professor Ajala, obsession to Femi, reluctance, indifference and conflict to Sola, toy to Junior as well as fear and horror to Mona. The ring that pops up in Femi's hand when he remembers the love he has for Mona means so much to him, depicting his obsessive nature and signifies marriage and love. However the ring he gave to Linda does not connote anything as far as love or marriage is concerned, but meant to gain Linda's confidence and making her feel secure in the relationship.

However the same ring Femi bought seven years ago, he still wore on Mona in her dying state. This brings to light his vicious obsessive nature.

The emotions of awe, anxiety, fear, hate and hope conjured by the effects of the movie cannot be forgotten in haste. The various emotions were shown throughout the film because of the nature of the goddess, Araromire. The fear experienced from the mysterious eerie sounds on the parade ground, the repetitive swift turns on the parade ground, the mysterious magnetic pull of Sola, Femi and Lara by Araromire; to the emotion of hate expressed by the bloody attacks on Sola, Linda, Mona and prayer warriors; the discouragement experienced by Mona's miscarriage and Junior's death, the anxiety and fear faced at sight of the drowned priest as well as the hope elicited and dashed at the sight of the NYSC Parade Commander and also the awe of that enveloped the characters at the sight of the waterfall. There are certain sounds that signify that death is close by, destruction lurks around or that there is peace and prosperity in the land. The sound that emanates from an object hanging on a tree close to the shrine shows that a strange force is calling on certain person(s), which it wants to destroy. The bleating of the goat, the crowing of the cock, the sound of fresh stream water, the mooing of cows, all indicate the peace and prosperity in the land. The windy storm indicates that there is a beginning in the lives of the people, while the heavy rainfall shows that an old order has been destroyed like the burning of Araromire's shrine and a period of misfortune, misery and death sets in. Apart from its destructive nature, rain brings water which is life sustaining and also good for growth of agricultural products.

Most of the actors in terms of movement and gestures signify certain things and they help to convey the message of the film. For instance the signs of asthma orchestrated by the way Femi breathes, Sola's careless, reckless and unstructured attitude, Femi's deceptive look, Lara's indecisive and protective manner, Linda's aggressive attitude had their effects and helped in propelling the message forward

## Conclusion

Language is the expression of all these things evolved through communication among members of the community and the culture it represents. Language, like culture, is community specific and is intricately interwoven with the culture it represents. Language helps members of the community to establish, assert and maintain their sense of identity and solidarity as individuals and as a group. Each language, therefore, is the vehicle for a unique way of thinking, a unique literature, and a unique view of the world. This, Afolayan utilized so well. He succeeded in using the language to raise national consciousness, promote national cohesion, national identity, and national integration and as a form of cultural revival. His characters/actors move from the language of familiarity through the language of immediacy to languages of local, national and global recognition. In sum, *The Figurine* is effective because even with the use of multiple languages, there is simplicity in communication of the characters, hence, it is easy to translate and understand without a previous knowledge of the legends or history of the Nigerian society. *The Figurine* is a film that not only informs, instructs, entertains but also thought-provoking and provocative. Afolayan achieved this in terms of expression that approximates societies' spiritual fulfillment as well as reveal the soul of the Nigerian nation which in turn creates intercultural power, understanding, and tolerance.

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