

VISUAL ADAPTATION, PARODY AND INTERTEXTUAL LINKS AS TOOLS FOR BRUCE ONOBRAKPEYA IN COMMUNICATING HIS ARTISTIC THOUGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Thematic linkage in Bruce Onobrakpeya's artworks has been a significant subject, which attracted the consideration of this research work. The choice of system of links in Onobrakpeya's artworks observed by these researchers informed the main reason why three different thematic approaches: visual adaptation, parody and the intertextuality links have been positioned as the main discursive elements within the context of communicating his artistic thoughts. Onobrakpeya is a Nigerian art empiricist who defines his artistic boundary based on his African cultural heritage. He is a prolific artist who mostly leans backward to fathom great ideas from the past dictum to address the dictate of the present. His artworks describe the different arena of African pristine primordial cultural values, which have motivated these researchers into appreciable determinism in the context of their belief that all events are caused by things that happened before them. His artistic ingenuity is the root cause of significant reason for taking a decision to look at different thematic approaches in his artistic genre. It is observed in the study that Onobrakpeya has proactively sharpened his artistic skills towards a distinctive art locomotion that points to relations between various textual and visual approaches. The study of these approaches has, however, revealed the fact that his artistic creations have literary trope of emblem, symbol and metaphor in them.

Keywords: Thematic linkage, Thematic approaches, Art empiricist, Cultural heritage, Artistic thoughts

INTRODUCTION

Bruce Onobrakpeya has carved niches for himself in the glorious annals of contemporary Nigerian art and he has been able to unite in his artistic creations a dramatic and psychological imagination of textual veracity, pictorial intensity and an equally great plastic imagination. In his

early artworks the illustration of psychological conceptions sometimes demeans the total formal unity, but in recent times he has been able to accomplish a perfect fusion of the two elements in his artistic imaginations and creative endeavours.

Today, Onobrakpeya is enabled to work with greater freedom than ever before, unhindered by any concessions to art connoisseurs' taste. This is because his unique plastograph techniques, which he developed in the year 1967 during a workshop experiment in Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria, have reached their full maturity and he has also achieved new artistic fits undreamt of in his earlier art career. He now combines richness and subtlety of visual forms and textual messages in a wholly novel manner to express his thoughts and feelings. It is worthy of mention that the unique method of combining both Visuality and Textuality in his creative ingenuity has never been given serious attention in scholarly literature and this has created holey walls. This is a yawning gap in knowledge that this present study is trying to fill.

It is noted that Onobrakpeya has been adapting from (1) his immediate environment (2) artistic creations of art masters of old time and (3) textual messages from literary works of acknowledged writers in Nigeria, to enrich his artistic sensibilities. His encounter "with *African curios*, that is, traditional African objects admired for their beauty, their intricacy, their rarity or their marvellous and even mythical properties" (Elebute, 2012), had helped him to understand Nigeria's creative ideals, cultural symbolisms and general belief systems. In the 1960s, he joined other renowned Nigerian artists in propagating the philosophy of *Natural Synthesis* of the old and new art forms as well as working towards radical and positive transformation in the practice of contemporary Nigerian art. Based on the above analyses this study will be focusing on visual adaptation, parody and intertextuality links that he had been using in communicating his artistic thoughts.

At this juncture it is apposite to first view the creative strategies of transforming and manipulating ideas through techniques of **adaptation** and **parody** in advertising design as it was espoused by Arens (2004: 386-389). In his theses Arens (2004) positions **visual adaptation** as a creative idea in which "an agency visualizer changes part of a discourse that surrounds textual messages and visual images to explain a symbolic event in an advertisement".

According to him, "an agency visualizer can adapt to change contexts...He will think what else a product might be besides the obvious". A Campbell's Soup advertisement that showed a steaming bowl of tomato soup with a bold headline underneath: **HEALTH INSURANCE** was used by Arens (2004) as an example of creative ability in the transformation and manipulation of ideas to suit the purpose of the advertisement.

The **visual adaptation** within the realm of Onobrakpeya's artworks involves his meddling with borrowed ideas in which part of a discourse that surrounds textual and/or visual messages is coined by him to explain all symbolic observations about his immediate milieu. A good example of his print that depicts adaptation of an event that is very familiar to him is the one that is always giving him a sense of *déjà vu* while walking past fields of corn when he was an art student at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State in Nigeria. This particular print which he titled: *Leopard in a Cornfield* was produced in the year 1965

Arens (2004) positions **parody** as a situation in which an agency visualizer imitates the style of a well-known artist to modify concepts and to create a humorous appeal to buyers of products. He expatiates this position further by saying that "there is a close relationship between *ba-ba*: in the experience of humour and the *aba!*: in the experience of creative discovery".

He clarifies the fact that "humour stretches humans' thinking and if humour is used in a good stead it can produce some great advertising". He displayed a humorous advertisement on the page of his book (389) to further explain a parody issue. This particular advertisement shows how Faber Castell: the manufacturer of art materials parodied Edvard Munch's print of 1895 titled: *The Cry*, which was published in Gombrich (1972).

He also explicates a classical newspaper advertisement with the headline: **HANDEL WITH CARE** to support his discourse. While speaking of this advertisement's classics, he narrates that "Fila USA got a rave review from *Advertising Age* for its 'bizarre, absolutely hilarious, and totally cool' spot of a praying mantis racing up a leaf stem in Fila sneakers to escape his murderous mate".

The word **parody**, within the context of Onobrakpeya's artistic creations, is used to modify visual or textual concepts that he has adopted to retain his artistic lustre for far longer than his compeers and to explain the humorous creative appeal that he has been using to attract the desired art audiences. A typical example of his work in the direction of parody discourse is the one he titled: *Three Standing Forms*, which was produced in 1969. The print presents a much idealized version of Edvard Munch print titled: *The Cry*.

The **intertextuality link**, in the instance of this study, involves Onobrakpeya's conceptualization, comprehension and visual interpretation of literary texts created by some Nigerian writers. It is worthy of note that our discursiveterm, which is *intertextuality*, is a subdivision of the word *transtextuality* that was theorized by Genette in the year 1992. In his theoretical postulations Genette (1992) has been able to subdivide the term *transtextuality* into five broad categories such as: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality for operationalization sake.

To Genette, “**intertextuality** consists of quotation, plagiarism, and allusion, thus providing a pragmatic and determinable intertextuality relationship among specific elements of individual texts” (Genette, 1992). The **paratextuality** in Genette’s conception deals with the elements at the entrance of the text (indexical), which helps to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers. In his postulations, **metatextuality** denotes “explicit or implicit references of one text on another text” while **hypertextuality** represents the “relation between visual text/image or a genre on which it is based, but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends and all these include the parody, spoof, sequel and translation” (Genette, 1992).

Genette’s postulations also concern the way in which a text can be transformed by ways of self-expurgation, excision, and reduction. In his further theorizations he relates **architextuality** to the designation of a text as part of a literary or artistic genre. “The **architextuality** nature of texts”, according to him, “also includes thematic and figurative expectations about the texts”. Genette (1992), however, admits the fact that these five types of *transtextuality* cannot be absolutely separated from each other, because there is overlapping in their usage in literary and visual parlance.

REVIEW OF RELATED WORKS

The scholars’ works that are related to this present study can be divided into three categories, they are: (1) Studies on contemporary Nigerian art and artists (2) Studies on Bruce Onobrakpeya and his prints and (3) Studies on the works of Bruce Onobrakpeya and his pupils.

Studies on contemporary Nigerian art had started since 1960 with Nigerian culture central to the themes of notable scholars who were involved in this intellectual enterprise. The contemporaneous artworks of master artists have been documented in existing literature by notable Nigerian art scholars and critics that include Taylor (1962), Onabolu (1963), Lawal (1963), Yussuff (1974), Jegede (1984), Adesanya (1992), Oloidi (1993), Akatakpo (1994) and Adepegba (1995). All these art scholars focus mainly on art forms that have been produced by other Nigerian artists while none of them refers particularly to the uniqueness of Bruce Onobrakpeya’s artistic genres.

Also, numbers of scholars namely Kennedy (1968), Willett (1971), Mount (1973) and Lawal (1976), among others, have examined Bruce Onobrakpeya’s artistic practices. These studies have provided literature on Bruce Onobrakpeya and his prints from which these researchers draw some of their secondary information. These aforementioned scholars focus mainly on Onobrakpeya and his popularity without making any appreciable reference to how he has adopted designs, patterns, symbols and imageries from Nigerian cultural environment to enhance his creative ingenuity.

Attempts have also been made by a number of scholars including Obatala (1987), Elebute (1988), Jegede (1988), Ogunsakin (1988) and Olanipekun (1992) to compare the works of Bruce Onobrakpeya and his pupils with a view to determining the similarities and differences in the works of the master and his pupils. None of these scholars, however, takes the pains to mention the fact that Bruce Onobrakpeya has been serving as archetypal figure or model from which the budding artists/his pupils draw their inspiration. All the shortcomings observed in these studies are holes in knowledge that this present study is trying to fill.

THEORETICAL POSTULATIONS

Two theories have been used to lay the ideational foundation for this study. They are archetypal and postmodernist theories. **Archetypal Theory** is generally applied to the fundamental patterns and models, which serve as prototype from which copies are made, or from which an idea developed. Plato, as recorded by Webster (1961), proposes that the theory could be applied to ideas or forms of natural objects, held to have been present in the divine mind prior to creation, and still existing as cognizable intellect, independent of the reality or ectypal form.

More (1642) holds that the archetypal, which is called the intellectual world, is the very word of God, that is, the archetypal paradigm, which means the basic theory or the conceptual framework from which scientific theories are constructed. In his own case, Jung (1919) proposes that the word: archetypal, is freely used in literary criticism, especially of motifs that recur in mythologies, folktales and in pervasive symbolic representation. To him, archetype is an inherited idea or mode of thought derived from the experiences of a community and present in the unconscious mind of individual.

Jung (1919) notes that certain archaic or archetypal images and beliefs are collective property of human race and that the primordial images derived from each community determine the uniformity and regularity of man's appreciation of his immediate milieu. He concludes that Pablo Picasso was able to reveal archetypal images, which are characteristics content of his (Jung) theory in art creations. "The usage of characters, images, forms and figures as models and patterns", according to Jung (1919:54), "corresponds with the ideas derived from three schools of thought: the first is Platonism, which states that archetypal theory is one of the ideas of which existing objects are imitations; the second is the Scholastic philosophy, which stresses that archetype is the idea in the divine intellect that determines the form of a created object, and the third is Locke's philosophy, which refers to archetype as an external reality that corresponds with human ideas and impressions".

Baynes (1923) relates Jung's archetypal theory of patterns and models to the latent primordial image of the goddess, which serves as an archetypal soul-image for most artists and writers in

the middle ages. He further states that the inborn manner of creativity is a natural instinct possessed by most artists and creative writers. To him, the term archetypal embraces the same ideas contained in Jung's theory of primordial images, which are symbolic formulas that always function whenever there are no conscious ideas present in human brain. McDougall (1926) stresses that: "all the main features of humans' dream are instances of archetypal thinking thrown up from their collective unconscious mind".

In his own case, Brit (1950) says that the archetypal images and motifs are prevalent in different phases of life. This theory corresponds with Roger's (1848) theory, which states that the real existence of prototype ideas is inherent in human thought and belief system. Roger further reiterates that the archetype, whose innermost nature is exposed to various experiences, represents a creator who uses forms, images, signs and symbols as models for his works. Following the above analysis, it can be said that Onobrakpeya is an archetypal artist who mentored myriads of budding Nigerian artists that adopted his deep etching techniques; he has equally influenced the works of professional artists who participated in his Harmattan workshop experiments.

Symbolic African objects have had archetypal influence not only on Onobrakpeya's etchings, drawings, paintings, relief and installations, but also on the works of some of his students who have adopted his deep etching techniques. Examples of such archetypal influence can be seen in such works as: (1) *Ariya* (Plate 1) a deep etching (41 x 55cm) produced in 1978 by TayoQuaye (2) *Mother and Child* (Plate2) a thermoplastograph (55 x 75cm) produced in 1996 by Nse-AbasiInyang and (3) *Durbar* (Plate3) a plastograph (62.5 x 45cm) produced in 1999 by Ufuoma Onobrakpeya.



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

It is worthy of mention that these researchers are looking into visual adaptations, parody and intertextuality links in artistic genres of Bruce Onobrakpeya. The linkage of visuals and texts is first observed in his artworks that are embellished with a body of African symbolic objects. The referent objects are derived from shrines, totems, sayings, dreams and proverbs, which serve as models, prototype or fundamental that he arranged into patterns. For example, the Urhobo shrines and objects from other parts of Nigeria are aspects of artistic heritage from which he draws his inspiration.

Onobrakpeya (2004) confirms this statement when he reiterates that “many of his pictures were inspired by traditional architecture, including the design and decoration of Urhobo shrine sculptures”. His works also portray the rich artistic heritage of Africa as a whole by drawing inspiration from the arts and cultures of ethnic groups completely different from that of Urhobo, his homeland. These fundamental patterns and prototypes as well as signs and symbols, which are discussed in the light of archetypal theory needs to be critically examined in this present study

The **Postmodernist** theoretical postulations to be discussed in the context of this present study will be divided into two categories. The first focuses on the usage of *literary messages* and the second is based on the adoption of *visual forms*. These two patterns of explaining creative literary pieces and visual art works will be used to articulate our discourse in this present study. In the *literary context*, it is assumed that the postmodern intertextuality challenges both closure and single centralized meaning.

Those who postulated the theory opine that the intertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationship with one between reader and text, and the one that situates the locus of textual meaning within the history of discourse itself. This postulation presupposes the fact that literary works that are adapted by an artist to articulate his/her thoughts and feelings may not be considered original to him/her, and if they were, they could have no direct meaning for their viewers. This by implication is a classical reference to the fact that it is only as part of prior discourses that any text adapted by an artist to foster the expression of his/her artistic thought derives meaning and importance. Observably, this theory that is redefining aesthetic value of intellectual properties by a creative mind has coincided with artful dynamism that is observed in the original artworks being produced by a prolific art master such as Bruce Onobrakpeya.

In the context of *visual arts*, parody and/or intertextuality, in both aesthetic and historic concept, has brought about a real twisting of humanist notions of subjectivity and creativity. Basing our arguments on historiographical postulation, it can be said that creative forms can be used to parodically cite the intertexts of both **the world** and **the art** and in so doing the historiographers have queried the boundaries that many had unquestioningly used to separate the two: *the world* and *the art*. Derrida (1977) has espoused this postulation when he stresses the fact that “in its most extreme formulation the result of such querying by historiographers would be a “break with every given context, engendering infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable”. However, it has been discovered that the typically contradictory intertextuality of postmodern art both provides and undermines this contextual postulation.

Surprisingly, the paradoxically formulated in tertextuality in the arts has offered a liberating determinism. This is why Angenot (1983) has argued that “to use the term intertextuality in art

criticism is not just to avail oneself of a useful conceptual tool, but to signal *aprise de position, un champ de reference*". But intertextuality usefulness as an artistic framework, which is hermeneutic as well as formalist is obvious when dealing with historiographical meta-fiction that demands of the art connoisseurs not only their cognition of textualized traces of the visual art historical past, but also the awareness of what has been done through irony to those traces.

The art connoisseurs have been forced in this process to acknowledge not only the inevitable textuality of the past knowledge, but also both the value and the limitation of the inescapably discursive form of that knowledge in the art world. Viewing this academic discourse from White's (1984) perspective it can be summed up that "the parodically doubled discourse of postmodernist intertextuality is not just a doubly introverted form of aestheticism, but as theoretical implications of historiographical meta-fiction that coincides with historiographical theory about the nature of art historical writing as narrativization and descriptions of the past and about the nature of the archive as a textualized remains of historical past"

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were gathered through one of the major research methods that are frequently used in communication research. This method is called Content Analysis. The researcher did a systematic classification and description of communication content of books, newspapers and journals collected for the study according to predetermined categories. After this, he made replicable and valid inferences from data collected to their context. The key methodological concepts adopted in the content analysis study are: unit of analysis; content categories; sampling and coding.

The **units of analysis** used in the study are *textual* and *visual* materials. In the **content categories**, the issues of visual adaptation, parody and intertextuality links are categorized into: textuality, Visuality and plastic imagination. In constructing the content categories these researchers have ensured that the categories are pertinent to the objective of this study and that they are functional and manageable.

The **sampling** involves taking a part of a population that these researchers were interested in studying. Because all the elements cannot be studied some were selected: as it is not possible to study the content of all textual and visual materials, some were selected for content analysis. In doing this random sampling method was adopted to sample certain literary works of Nigerian writers and artistic materials in Onobrakpeya's repertoire. The purpose for this is to reduce the quantity of works to be looked at to a manageable size. After this, the occurrence of the content to be measured was listed under appropriate content categories in a prepared coding sheet and it was ensured that the sampled elements are representative, relevant and manageable.

In the **coding** exercise there was a surety that all evidences observed in the literary works and artistic materials were well recorded. Content categories from the works were prepared and a coding sheet that was showing content analysis on visual adaptation, parody and intertextuality links in Bruce Onobrakpeya's artistic genre over a period of time was designed. The data were later subjected to scrutiny in order to ascertain their veracity and validity. After verifying and validating the genuineness of these materials, they were then synthesized and interpreted using textual and iconographic analyses methods.

Data Analysis

This study has revealed the fact that Bruce Onobrakpeya's artistic creations have tropes of emblem, symbol and metaphor in them. This revelation presupposes the fact that he has indeed shown an extraordinary capacity to renew himself in the struggle to move to *anex nihilo* beginning only for a short so long, by carrying on to succeed upon the past and present creative ingenious almost indefinitely, catching continuous success from his predecessors' surcease. Going by this revelation, this study hereby distinguishes three different thematic approaches in his artistic genres: visual adaptation, parody aesthetic and intertextuality link of creative ideas. These three thematic approaches have been wrapped by these researchers in a shroud of creative activities that showcase his prints and/or *plastograph* art works such as: (1) *An Encounter with Three Ghosts* (2) *The Seven Hunters* (3) *Leopard in a Cornfield* (4) *Three Standing Figures* and (5) *Ominira*.

Onobrakpeya's work titled: *An Encounter with Three Ghosts*(Plate 4) is a *plastograph* measuring 61cm x 41.4 cm that was produced in 1970 and he has successfully situated the locality of textual meaning of this theme within the realm of Yorùbáoral narrative to connote struggle for power and survival of the fittest. He shows a pictorial impression of a boy that had an encounter with three ghosts in the forest. It is a theme adapted from a literary work titled: *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* by a Nigerian Yorùbá prose writer: Amos Tutuola.

The story is based on a seven year-old boy who fled into the forest when war broke out in his village. His first encounter in the bush was with three old ghosts, who had golden, silver and copper appearance respectively. Onobrakpeya depicts the boy tied to the body of the silver ghost with rope: this is an indication that the silver ghost has an upper hand over two other ghosts who are now scrambling for the boy pulling him here and there for possession and for sacrifice. Onobrakpeya embellished the print with figural sheaths and intricate decorations.



An Encounter...(Plate 4)

The decorative patterns on the body of the ghosts and the boy can be categorized into four such as diamond, circle, triangle and square. The images of the ghosts combine both zoomorphic and anthropomorphic shapes. The copper ghost on the right side of the panel has a head surmounted by animal horns. Its form is treated with the neck showing an elongated proportion. The golden and silver ghosts have rigid formula of facial appearance that shows horn headdress. In African society, the images of ram with such horns are mostly used as altar piece and mask. In Yorùbá tradition, representation of horns and ram-like head signifies sacrifice: an implication that the boy might be killed for a special religious ceremony as an offering to a god.

In the second plastograph: *The Seven Hunters* (Plate 5), Bruce Onobrakpeya depicts hunters who on the order of their king went on a long journey to a Mountain called *Langbodo*. The hunters, in a fixed, almost squatting stance, and with disproportionate small figures placed their guns on the shoulder. Onobrakpeya places emphasis on the decorative quality and element of forms rather than on space usage.

The pigments applied on the human forms appear as decorations and the one-directional movement of the hunters within the intervening distance between the background and the foreground creates a tense, restricted space quality. The locus of textual meaning for Bruce Onobrakpeya's *plastograph: The Seven Hunters* is placed within the demesne of Yorùbá oral narrative discourse in *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* written by D. O. Fagunwa, translated into English as: *Hunters in the Forest of Ten Thousand Demons* by Wole Soyinka and put on

dramatic stage as: *Langbodo* by Wale Ogunyemi during the Black Festival of Art (FESTAC 77) in Lagos.



Seven Hunters (Plate 5)

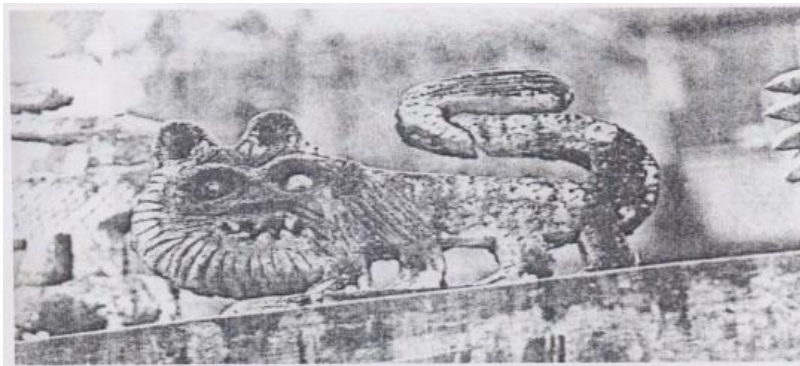
The work *Leopard in a Cornfield* (Plate 6) of 1965 was a print produced by Bruce Onobrakpeya as a serial, which results from the joyful feelings that he used to have whenever he had an opportunity to rove through a field planted with corn when he was an art student in Zaria. In the print he did not care much about 'stereoscopic reality,' that is, photographic exact picture of nature, but he exaggerates and even changes the appearance of the leopard to suit his personal idiosyncrasy. One of his disciples David Dale was inspired by the ingenuous of his master Bruce Onobrakpeya and this creativeness instigates him to parody this Leopard concept that he christened: *Leopard in the Cornfield* (Plate 7).

It is evident in the two artworks that both of them deliberately abandoned the aim of art as an imitation of nature. Dale's *Leopard in the Cornfield* is highly characterized by myriads of hues and it is depicted as stylized, elaborate and richly decorated Leopard placed against a cornfield setting.

Noticeably, Onobrakpeya and Dale represent the Leopard's body showing frontal head and a profile body that calls up the format of a Leopard form that is pristine primordially depicted in the Brazilian heraldic architectural sculptures that are popular in Yorùbáland (Plate 8). The type of Leopard depicted by the master and his disciple resembles a large spotted animal motif of the cat family found in Africa and Asia, which symbolizes strength and agility in Yorùbá culture.



Leopard in a Cornfield (Plate 6) Leopard in the Cornfield (Plate 7)



Heraldic Sculpture (Plate 8)

The *Three Standing Forms* (Plate 10) is a plastograph of about 45cmx59cm produced in 1969 by Bruce Onobrakpeya. The composition is made up of three figures that are probably in harrowing and/or vociferate mood. Onobrakpeya claims he discovered these three standing figures on a sawn wood before conceptualizing them as artistic forms. These sculptural forms that are depicted on a very moderate working format are linked together with a background of visual or tactile surface characteristics and appearance of the Yorùbá *adire* fabric arising in a bodily organ.

It is worthy of note that the *Cry of Three Spirits* (Plate 9) that was produced by David Dale has closeties with these *Three Standing Forms* produced earlier by Bruce Onobrakpeya. The natural affinity between the two artworks is obvious in the archetypal influence, intertextuality aesthetic, conceptual interpretation, contextual account and arrangement of forms. Dale's *Cry of Three Spirits* is a simple abstract piece that has strong dark colours that are alternated by patches of bright yellow hues.

Dale shows a dominant dark image that resembles a felled tree trunk positioned horizontally with its lower base hollowed like the arches in Roman's bridges. Decorated around the dominant dark

image are abstract faces of the three spirits alternated by four unidentified objects. “The agonizing posture of the three spirits”, according to Dale (2003), “symbolizes the protests against the destruction of their dwelling place”.

The two prints: *Three Standing Forms* (Plate 10) and *Cry of Three Spirits* (Plate 9) can easily recall in human memory the work titled: *The cry* (Plate 11) “a beautiful lithograph made in 1895 by a Norwegian painter Edvard Munch” see Gombrich (1972). Onobrakpeya’s and Dale’s parodist style of rendering objects could serve as a common focus in their search for expressiveness, structure and simplicity inherited while travestyng Edvard Munch’s experiment of caricature expressionism with focus on distortion of forms to express just what they feel about things in their immediate milieu. A parodically formulated intertextuality within the context of Onobrakpeya’s and Dale’s adaptation of the work: *The Cry* could be termed as an imitation of Munch’s work in an exaggerated manner.

Edvard Munch’s *The Cry*, according to Gombrich (1972) “expresses a sudden excitement that transforms humans’ sense impressions”. All the deeply cut lines seem to lead towards the one focus of the print, which is the shouting head. Gombrich (1972) opines that “all the scenery around the lone shouting figure shared in the anguish and excitement of the cry...the face of the shouting person is distorted like that of a caricature...the staring eyes and hollow cheeks recall a death’s head.” The description of this observed behaviour done by Gombrich (1972) presupposes that “something terrible must have happened, and the print is all the more disquieting because viewers may never know what the cry is all about”.

Faber-Castell, one of the greatest producers of art materials world-wide had, however, parodied Edvard Munch’s *The Cry* (Plate 11) and christened it *Scream* (Plate 12) to modify concepts and to create a humorous appeal to crayon and pastel buying audience. Faber-Castell parodied this classical piece perhaps to suggest that “myriads of artists’ world-wide can use its products to create their own work of art” (Arens, 2004: 389).



Cry of Three Spirits (Plate 9) Three Standing Figures (Plate 10)



The Cry (Plate 11) Scream (Plate 12)

Bruce Onobrakpeya's artwork titled: Ominira (Plate 13) is a plastograph measuring 45cm x 60.3cm produced in 1991. The concept: Ominira is derived by Onobrakpeya from the textuality aesthetic and/or literary couch of the Yorùbá in the South-Western Nigeria that means freedom/independence to foster the expression of his artistic consideration. The work was done by Onobrakpeya to celebrate Nigeria's attainment of independence. According to Onobrakpeya (1992: 220) "the picture is a reference to the birth of new states, which brought the total to twelve in the Nigerian federal system".

The principal forms in the print are three figures supporting a globe-like object, which symbolizes a united nation and/or the unification of three major ethnic groups in Nigeria and it supports the Yorùbá aphorism that says: Aro meta 'kii da obe nu, meaning "three earth stones support the soup pot better". It is a stylized work that has human and symbolic structures, which are redolent of the narrative panel common in the Benin and Yorùbá art.



Ominira (Plate 13)

In the print, Onobrakpeya uses curve lines to create an impression of liquid substances. At the upper section of the print are: (1) three vignettes of small soldier ants working hard to sustain their queen (2) mountain climbers bound together by the same rope and (3) masquerades from different ethnic groups coming together to celebrate Nigeria's freedom from colonial rule. These activities portray unity in diversity. Also, at this upper section of the print are motifs of masquerades: assembly of persons wearing masks.

The supplicating figures depicted directly above the masquerades symbolize faith, while the two men depicted at the extreme left corner of the print, cutting down the thorny tree of vice with seven vicious head symbolize morality. The overall meaning of the literary cum visual messages in the print is that with able leadership, adequate manpower, moral courage and material resources Nigeria can emerge as a successful nation.

CONCLUSION

This study has made an attempt to have an exploration of various thematic approaches in the linkage of visual adaptation, parody aesthetic and intertextuality link of creative ideas that are observed in Bruce Onobrakpeya's artworks by these researchers. Before Onobrakpeya adopted these myriads of approaches that boosted the character and individuality of his creative ingenuity he has had a significant contribution to the development of two unique printmaking techniques that serve as the backbone of his art practice.

The two techniques are: *plastograph* and *additive plastograph*. This development of unique creative ideas by Onobrakpeya is an indication that he has been opened to a modern art horizon by creating a new vision of artistic expression in the twentieth century art studies. After Onobrakpeya had developed his creative expertise in printmaking techniques he began to define

a creative combination of artistic forms and literary genres as a relation between visual and textual means of communicating his artistic thoughts.

The three thematic approaches that are distinguishable in his artistic endeavour have been wrapped by these researchers in a shroud of creative activities that showcase works like: (1) *An Encounter with Three Ghosts*, (2) *The Seven Hunters*, (3) *Leopard in a Cornfield* (4) *Three Standing Figures* and (5) *Ominira*. These aforementioned artworks have been given scholastic interpretations in the study by these researchers in order to articulate their research findings.

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