

Poetic Exploration of Obasa's Prolegomenous Poetry

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Abstract

Mere mentioning of poetics often ignites the memory of Aristotle whose admiration is hinged on the elegance and clarity of his style in poetics. This is as a result of the historic influence of poetics or aesthetics as well as the quality of its thought. Thus, poetics is not devoid of philosophical nuances. Based on this premise, an attempt is made here to explore the poetic strands in Obasa's trilogy, wherein Yorubá proverbs are strung together. The paper, therefore, considers aesthetic category of artistic mimesis, intertextuality and components of all diction alongside stylistic elements because the principal task of poetics is to measure its legitimate domain in language. Thus, it is averred that literature depends on linguistic structure for its existence since language is the substance of literature (in our own instance, poetry). The essay adopts an eclectic theoretical approach since Obasa's craftsmanship and subject-matter span an avalanche of forms and structures imbued with stylistic features. Primary data are largely drawn from his anthologies which facilitate the content analysis. In its findings, the paper has brought to the fore the fact that Obasa employed adaptation and mimesis in his presentation creatively, while different stylistic elements in his trilogy are replete with deviation. An attempt is made to bring into bold relief the suggestion that metaphor forms the hub of all other tropes that give grandeur to poetics in Obasa.

Introduction

There is paucity of critical works on Obasa's poetry. Extant studies on his prolegomenous poetry are Olábímtán (1975), Akínyemí (1987, 1991, & 2017). While appreciating the trilogy, Afolábí Olábímtán (1975) opines that

Ọbasá's greatness lies in "his ability to assemble traditional sayings (including chants and songs) which embody the traditional wisdom of Yorùbá society" (1032), and "his use of Yorùbá oral poetic language and style to 'produce' written poetry" (1034). Ọlábímtán must have situated Ọbasá's trilogy within Longinus' (1995) *On the Sublime*, which focuses on "appreciation of greatness ("the sublime") in writing."¹ He also observes that Obasa goes beyond mere assemblage of traditional sayings as he brings in his creative ingenuity to deconstruct some of the proto oral texts as well as having his own original composition. Unlike Akinyemi (1987 and 2017) whose preoccupation consists of poet's background, philosophical themes, and social value of Ọbasá's poetry, Ọlábímtán concerns himself with language and style in Ọbasá's poetry. However, his treatment of the language and style has not been exhaustive, hence, the intention to focus on poetic diction and style in this treatise. A deep look at his poems reveals that Ọbasá inundates his trilogy with poetic diction drawn from Yorùbá oral variety of language and cultural milieu.

It is important to point out that Akinyemi's consideration of inherent philosophical issues on pages of the trilogy is not a misplaced one for indeed Ọbasá taps in on Yorùbá pithy lore, thus given himself some sort of divergent style from other Yoruba poets of his period. In fact, philosophical outlook of his text marks him out as: "Ọ̀ǹk̀ò̀wé Akéwì" and "Akéwì Ọ̀ǹk̀ò̀wé" (I am the poet's scribe and I am the literate poet) (see Ọlábímtán 1975; Akínyemí 2017). Both Ọlábímtán and Akínyemí aptly note that Ọbasá's poems are "strings of traditional sayings", but beyond this, he has creatively woven together different proverbs to form a whole unit of poem. The weaving together of proverbs is essentially employed, if viewed from classical perspective, as 'foundational strategy' to build up the form and structure of his poems. Suffice to say here that 'foundational strategy' has brought about 'foundation quality' hinged on Yoruba philosophical worldviews spanning destiny, virtues, vices, metaphysics, etc. It is important to say also that the weaving together of proverbs is meant "to explore an understanding of the world – above all, or human experience itself – through fictive representation and imaginative "enactment of experience" (Halliwell, 1995:8).

The intention here, therefore, is to take a poetic exploration of Obasa's trilogy which has not received much attention from scholars. This might have been caused by his creative style which could have "elicited admiration in some readers, and discomfort in others" (Halliwell 1995:7). A deep look at some of the poems exhibits creative ingenuity of Ọbasá; and as such enlists the interest of readers. For instance, his creative skillfulness is visible in "Ìkà-Èké" (Obasa 1982: 9-12), while "Gba Ọwó Ọ̀sì" (Obasa 1982: 10), lacks poetic

1 <http://bookre.org/reader?file=1444103>.

luster. This poetic study of Obasa's works, therefore, straddles both linguistics and literature or focuses on the interface between literature and linguistics. Thus, the essay concerns itself with the use of language in Obasa's trilogy which falls under the purview of literary linguistics.

Linguistics and Literature

Poetic exploration focuses on poetic diction which exploits both linguistics and literature. This is premised on the fact that, "language is the instrument of literature and there is such affinity between language and linguistics" as such "the relationship between literature and linguistics should be more easily appreciated" (Vincent 1990: 139). We reason along with Vincent that "language is the substance of literature or that literature is a linguistic structure which encodes meanings", for "language is the building block of literature" (138). Needless to emphasize here, that "the key to a true understanding of literature is a grasping of the linguistic structure" and so language is not merely analyzed for its own sake in literature (Vincent 138). In other words, we consider these three elements as indivisible tripod, for "language, literature, and linguistics are closely tied up in the task of explaining our world to us through the vision of writers and in our appreciating this world" (Vincent 141).

Fabb (1997: 2) attests that literary texts have linguistic form because they are texts (the product of verbal behavior), and they have literary forms. It is useful to affirm that, "the linguistic form nourishes the literary form; thus, literary form depends on linguistic form for its existence" (2). This implies that, "certain aspects of literary form are adaptations of linguistic form" (2). It is crucial to state at this point that, "the real wonder of literature is the achievement of expression" and "the manifestation of thought in language" (Fabb 230). Thus "thoughts are the real medium of literature; language is their vehicle" (Fabb 231); hence, we concur with Graham (1992) that the structures of rhetoric and poetics are actually the work of reason in language, because

... it is said that literary texts show or exhibit rather than just say or tell; that they embody or incarnate their meanings; that they illustrate, demonstrate, manifest; mirror, or reflect; that they dramatize, enact or mime a certain truth, and so present it as fact with all the force of experience (225).

It is little wonder then that "a literary work is meant to be a special use of words designed for a specific effect" (Graham, 1992:233), and so, language is frequently contrived in poetic art so as to allow "for ambiguity, paradoxes and some other irrational uses of language" (Olabode 2008: 230). And indeed,

proverbs are contrived; thus, given preeminence to their poetics (Olatunji 1984; Adeleke 2009).

Theoretical Approach to Obasá Trilogy

Poetic diction foregrounds different stylistic features, because “the components of all diction include element, syllable, connective, noun, verb, conjunction, inflection, statement” (Aristotle Year 1995: 99). Aristotle notes that, ‘[E]very word is a standard term, loan word, metaphor, ornament, neologism, lengthening, contraction, or modification’ (Aristotle 1995: 105). All these aforementioned elements are prominently featured in Obasá’s poems as he tinkers with phonological and morphological processes, as well as, the syntactic structure. This has, thus prompted us to engage in an eclectic approach since “no theory is ever sufficient in itself” (Graham 1992: 215) to analyze African literatures and in particular stylistic features. Wales (1989) has earlier affirmed that, “stylistics has always been remarkably eclectic in its approaches and influences” (319). As regards poetic diction, it is pertinent to underscore the roles and place of stylistics and stylisticians as “stylistics - and stylisticians who practice stylistics – have been the mid-wives in this delicate operation” (Vincent 139).

A profound look at Obasá’s poems reveals that it could accommodate many theories, be it at the major or subsidiary level. It is a matter of choice. From formalist’s perspective, Obasá’s trilogy is “a deviation from a norm” (Olorun-toba-Oju 1998: v), as he weaves different and autonomous proverbs creatively to form various philosophical poems that eventually cohered. With this foregrounding, and perhaps, deviation from known norm, Obasa has forcefully displayed “the enduring presence of orality in African literature” (Vincent 1990: 141). He engages in the norm-deviation so as “to be stylistically distinctive, a feature of language must deviate from some norm” (Oloruntoba-Oju 1998: v). Both defamiliarization and cohesion are immanently featured and present in the trilogy. In sum, Obasá exhibits estrangement which is based on the Russian Formalist principle of poetic art; he defamiliarizes proverbs by weaving them together. Through deviation in Obasa’s , it is observed that stylistic ‘foregrounding’, a term borrowed from Prague School of Linguistics is employed by Leech and Short (1981:48) to refer to “artistically motivated deviation”; this notion is a detour from the Czech theorist Jan Mukarovsky’s original term, which focuses on the range of stylistic effects that occur in literature, whether at phonetic level – alliteration, rhyme; the grammatical level – inversion, ellipsis; or the semantic level – metaphor and irony. Though more will still be said on foregrounding later, it is needful to state here, that foregrounding manifests through a variety of means and these are largely grouped

into two main types: Deviation and Repetition, or, Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic foregrounding. Apart from violations of linguistic norms; grammatical or semantic, it has been noted that through employment of "unusual METAPHORS or SIMILES (the traditional tropes)" deviation brings about "unexpected conjunctions of meaning" and thus "forcing fresh realizations in the reader" (Wales 1989: 182). Obasa's trilogy is replete with formalist's strands as it will be demonstrated shortly.

It is also possible to have an interface with Obasa's trilogy by applying post-colonial theory, especially the strand of parody. Obasa selectively makes deliberate choice of heterogeneous proverbs, if perceived from both context and content, to create homogeneous poems. The weaving together of these proverbs has brought about the issue of intertextuality. He parodies the poetic oral genre of proverb via displacement. For instance, in "Pèlèpèlè":

<i>Pèlèpèlè, pèlèpèlè!</i>	}	1
<i>Pèlè l'arewà nri n</i>		
<i>Jéjé l'omọ olọlá í yan,</i>	}	2
<i>gbá oní pèlè kí í fọ,</i>		
<i>Awo oní pèlè kí í fàya!</i> (Obasa 1982: 7).		

Gently, with care, gently with care!
 A beauty walks gently
 An honorable citizen walks leisurely
 The calabash of a gentle being is not broken
 The ceramic of a gentle being is not fragmented

Both proverbs 1 and 2 are autonomous but now recontextualized in the poems. At autonomous level, both are proto-texts while at recontextualized level the two have become meta-texts and they cohered artistically.

Due to displacement and meta-texting, the meaning decipherable from proto-text becomes mutable; hence, the reader will be grappling with myriad of meanings. It is not surprise then that deconstruction theory is associated with intertextuality. On this, Wales (1989), has this to say:

Each deconstruction opens itself to further deconstruction. Text itself gives way to INTERTEXTUALITY, meanings are disseminated across text's sources, and as a result, the boundaries are dissolved between LITERARY and other kinds of DISCOURSE (108).

We are not unaware of negative perception of deconstruction, for it has been seen as ‘destructive: nihilistic, counter-intuitive, and open to fanciful interpretative licenses/licentiousness, what Geoffery Hartman wittily calls “Deridadaism” (Wales 108). This gives the reader a leeway to generate meanings at will.

It is plausible to say, ‘different readers, different horizon of expectations’ (Adeleke 1995). Based on this, it has been noted that, “double or multiple meanings” generated by readers arise as a result of indeterminacy, an inherent feature in Reader-Response or Reception theory; we need to state here that ‘strategic indeterminacy’ is a special characteristic of ‘LITERARY, especially POETIC LANGUAGE’ (Wales 243). Three important variables accounting for myriad of meanings are psychological, sociological and physiological (Adeleke 1995). Apart from these three variables, figurative language also leads to polysemy, different from literal meanings; we have expressive devices in mind that give grandeur. Oḃasa’s creative exercise has brought about ambiguity, known as *amphibologia* in rhetoric. For instance, lexical ambiguity occurs in the poem “Pẹ̀lẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀”:

Pẹ̀lẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀ l’á n̄pa,
Àmúkùrù pẹ̀lẹ̀
Pẹ̀lẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀ n̄i
Ejò f̄i í g’òpẹ̀

It’s with caution that one lash out
 The perching *àmúkùrù* on the scrotum
 It’s with extreme patient that
 The snake climbs up the palm tree

Through reduplication or compounding, *pẹ̀lẹ̀*, which is a verb or adverb or noun, forms a new word or morpheme *pẹ̀lẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀*. The morpheme, *pẹ̀lẹ̀*, being a homonymous word, can mean ‘caution’, ‘patient’, ‘be careful’, ‘gently’ and ‘scrotum’, notwithstanding, the fact that the three morphemes are the same in form but having different semantic origins. In short, different readers with different interpretations, more so, “literature is obliquely symbolic; its words express a meaning and that meaning is a symbol. Thus, literature has entire range of verbal meaning as its medium” (Graham 1992: 242).

Tropes and Literary Linguistic Features

There are different tropes and literary linguistic features dotting different pages of Oḃasa’s trilogy. Time and space, however, will not permit a detailed

analysis of all the literary features. Attention will focus on form and structure, use of traditional materials, tropes and literary linguistic features.

Form and Structure

Obasa exhibits a unique style as regards form and structure of his poems. In his trilogy, he frequently welcomes his readers, and this is not unexpected for the Yorubá thrive and enjoy courtesies. Obasa, being a cultural man, intersperses his poems with different kinds of Yorubá greetings that show the Yorubá dialect groups, foreign language, as well as the time of the day and climatic period. For example, when a visitor is about to enter any household Yoruba, it is of importance that such a visitor utters, *àgò oní lé* (landlord, I hope the way is clear); the landlord may now respond as dramatically presented below by Obasa:

Oní lé ní, 'Wọ ta ha nù un?'
Òìbò ní, 'who is that?'
Èkó ní, 'Ìwọ tani yẹn?'
Ìwọ ọmọ lèsí yẹn wà?' (Obasa 1982: 1).

The landlord asked, 'Who are you?'
 The European asked, 'Who is that?'
 The Lagosian asked, 'Who is it?'
 Whose child are you?'

The lexical item *oní lé* refers to the proto-Yorubá otherwise known as the standard Yoruba (SY) that is intelligible to all Yorubá native speakers, irrespective of the dialect areas. For instance, Adetugbo (1982) identifies three dialect areas of Yoruba as Central Yorubá (CY), Northwest Yorubá (NWY), and Southeast Yorubá (SEY). Contrary to these three Yorubá dialectal areas, Oyelaran (1978) has earlier come up with the following dialect grouping: West Yoruba consisting Oyo, Ibadan, Egbá, Oḥorí-Ìfòhìn, Šakí, Ìjìó, Kétu, Sábe, Benin, Ifè (Togo), Ìdásà, Mánígi; South East Yorubá – On dó, Ọwọ, Ìjèbú, Ìkálẹ, Ìlàjẹ; Central Yorubá – Ilé-Ifè, Ìjẹša, Èkítì; and Northern Eastern Yorubá – Ìgbómìnà, Kàkàndá, Ìbòlò, Jùmú, Bùnù, Ọwọ̀rò, Owé and Ègbè. There are overlaps in the classification of the two scholars. To avert any controversy, some scholars have gone into the specific by listing the available dialect groups including: Oyo-Ibadan, Onko, Egbá, Ekiti, Moba, Ijebu, Ig-bomina, Ibóló, Iyagba, Ijumu, Owé, Ifè, Ijẹša, On dó, Ọwọ, Oka, Akoko, Ikalẹ, Ilajẹ, Yorubá-Èkó, Àwórí, Okun, and a host of others (Awobuluyi 2001; Adeniyi & Onadipe 2000). In the above excerpts, Obasa parodies the

Ọ̀yọ́-Ìbàdàn and Yorùbá-Èkó varieties. He further alludes to some other dialect groups by miming their varieties thus:

Ègbá ní, 'Lè é iyèn?'
Ìjẹ́bú ní, 'Lès'óun wá?'
Ìjẹ̀sà ní, 'Ìwọ yèsí ré nì?'
Ifẹ ní, 'Ìwọ yèsí ré nì?' (Ọbasá 1982: 1).

The Ègbá asked, 'Who is that?'
 The Ìjẹ́bú asked, 'Who is that?'
 The Ìjẹ̀sà asked, 'Who is that?'
 The Ifẹ asked, 'Who is that?'

To show that the Yorùbá is not a close climate, Obasa draws attention to the heterogeneous nature of the Yoruba society, where the foreigners are allowed to co-exist with the Yorùbá; hence, he brings in the English language to show the existence of Europeans in Yorùbá community, *Òìbò ní, 'who is that?'* (The European asked, 'Who is that?'). It is important to state here that, the WH- question, which is common to all linguistic groups identified, only takes a new form in those linguistic varieties. In sum, the phonological, morphological and syntactic forms account for dialectal variations. Obasá, through dramatic form presentation, injects life into his poetry by cashing in on bi-dialectism, bi-lingualism and multilingualism that are common features in heterogeneous society. It may not be out of place to postulate that Obasá has knowingly or unknowingly brought to the fore the issue of language confounding when the tower of Babel (see Genesis 11: 6 - 9) was being constructed. This may lead one, therefore, to infer that the employment of bi-dialectism, bi-lingualism, and multi-lingualism is a metaphor of or allusion to the story of Tower of Babel parodied by Obasá. Aside from this we align with Işola's (1998) submission that, "This device of making characters speak appropriate languages and dialects increases our confidence in the story teller. We believe that he knows what he is talking about" (110). This excerpt aptly fits Obasá's poetic endeavors in his trilogy.

Through his opening form and structure, Obasá has been able to establish some sort of phatic communication between himself and his readers. The rapport already established, plausibly may enlist the interest of the readers or listeners to willingly be receptive to his poems. He also taps in on traditional homage paying to audience by the *egúngún aláré*. For instance, he acknowledges the presence of his anonymous audience:

Eni t'ò duro, ẹ ku iduro!
Eni joko, ẹ mà kú ikalẹ̀
Erò òréré, ẹ ku àgbọ́-dide!
Gbogbo nyin ni mo ki,
Mi kò l'olodi kan!
Mo ki nyin t'ẹ̀şo-t'ẹ̀şo,
Mo ki nyin t'ologun-t'ologun... (Obasa 1934: 17).

All who are standing, we appreciate you!
 All who are seated, you are acknowledged
 Those of you in crowd afar off, you are welcome!
 I greet you all,
 I nurse no grudge against anyone!
 I salute all the Lieutenants
 I salute all the Generals...

The *eégún aláré* tradition thrives and cherishes *ibà* – paying homage to animate and non-animate, before engaging in any public performance. Little wonder then that Obasá employs the *egúngún aláré* structural mode of homage paying, beginning from line 1 to line 100. It is an art ingrained reader-response or reception theory.

Obasa deploys stanzaic format in *Àwọ̀n Akéwì, Ìwé Kinni*, not based on regular rhyme and metrical schemes like the western format. The verses in the same poems do not contain the same numbers of lines. Let us illustrate with “*Etétò-ètò*” where there are 10 stanzas. In verse one there are five lines; verse two: seven lines; verse three: four lines; verse four: 11 lines; verse five: seven lines; verse six: seven; verse 7: four lines; verse 8: four lines; verse 9: four lines; and in verse 10: five lines. It is important to state here that all the separate stanzas are thematically linked, as they all focus on ‘limitations’ and ‘inhibitions’ with which all beings have to contend with. However, it is instructive to draw attention to deviation brought in by Obasá in his *Àwọ̀n Akéwì, Ìwé Keji* and *Àwọ̀n Akéwì, Ìwé Kẹta* where he deploys free verse in the two texts, a departure from stanzaic style employed in book one. This free verse allows him to unlimitedly explore and exploit his creative ingenuity, as such; he is able to bring in his own ideas and thought to bear on different poems. The free verse has enabled him to engage in serious and long narratives, as demonstrated in “*Ìtàn Tápà àti Yorùbá*”, and “*Ìlú Ilorin*”. In employment of free verse, poetic default occurs along the line as revealed in “*Gba Ọwọ́ Òsì*”.

*Òfin yí ti dé ilẹ̀ yí bí ti Èkó àti Abẹ̀òkúta. Àsà yí jẹ́ ohun tí a ti mò ní ilẹ̀ wa;
láti ọ̀jọ́ pípeé ni àwọn baba nílá wa ti ñkọ́ ọ́ l'òrin pé;*

L'òsì,

L'abiamọ́ ídamọ́ sí;

Èní gb'owó ọ̀tún gbé;

Òsì ni ẹ́ gbà o. (Obasa 1945: 10).

This act has come to being, just as in Lagos and Abeokuta. This tradition is a familiar one already known in our clime; since ages do our progenitors have been singing thus;

‘It’s by the left,

That a nursing mother unstrapped a baby to;

Whosoever takes right hand is doom;

Adhere strictly to the left hand.

This excerpt verges between prosaic and poetic genre. It thus lacks poetic candor.

Use of Traditional Poetic Materials

We agree with Oḷábímtán and Aki nyemí that Oḃasá has made use of traditional materials covering *òwe* (proverb), *oríkì* (praise poetry), *ẹ̀kún ìyàwó* (nuptial chant), *òkú pípe* (elegy), *ọ̀fò* (incantation), and *àlọ́* (riddle). All the afore-mentioned traditional materials are deftly deployed in his poetry.

Òwe (Proverb)

It is apparent that age-long sayings and proverbs inundate Oḃasá’s trilogy. Olatunji (1984) has forcefully demonstrated that, “Yoruba proverbs are terse and pithy”; little wonder then that, “The Yoruba value proverbs very highly, for they are considered to be the wisdom lore of the race. And because the proverbs are considered to be traditional, and originate from the observation of natural phenomena and human relations, old people are regarded as a repository of proverbs” (p.170); and as such, “Great respect is therefore given to anyone who can use proverbs frequently and appropriately.” And indeed, Oḃasá has earned himself great respect as master craftsman who dexterously recontextualises through deft weaving of separately autonomous bloc of proverbs piled up unit by unit to form a cohered semantic theme. Through his creative skillfulness, Oḃasá employs intertextuality to soar up meta-poetics in his trilogy, as well as deploying deviation device that estranges proto-proverbs from their normal norms to bring about displacement.

As aptly observed by Işola (1978), just like other authors, Oḃasá has been able to “re-animate some old proverbs that are almost obsolete and bring them into circulation again” (92). There are many examples; however, two will suffice here:

- a. *Èkè tan `ni s'í ja` Ekun,
Ó f'orun sí sè s'ápo` eni!* (Oḃasá 1982: 36).

The Deceit lured one to confront a Tiger
He then stored one's quiver with broken arrows

- b. *'Ni sò! Ni sò!', kì í sí wá jú,
Ò sin `mọ dé `gbó è rù padà sè hi`n* (Oḃasá 1982: 36).

'Go on! Go on!', will never take the lead
Having accompanied the lad to the dreadful forest only for him to desert thereafter

These two proverbs are rare to come by as they are not constantly common in quotidian communication. Sometimes Oḃasa engages in deconstruction of proverb in order to defamiliarize a well-known proverb to his audience. For instance, the example below illustrates the estrangement of a proverb:

*Kò s'ágbà l'ọ ja` mọ
Orí ọmọ gbogbo ñwó!
Ògèdègèdè ọmọ kéré* (Oḃasa 1982: 82).

No elder in the market anymore
All infant heads are becoming crooked!
Just mere little children remaining

The proto-text of the proverb is, *àgbà kì í wà lọ ja, kóri ọmọ tuntun wó* - the elders present in the market will not allow the heads of newly born babies to be crooked. The poet has not only veered off the usual rendition of the proverb, he has also embellished it with a noun phrase, *ògèdègèdè ọmọ kéré* (Just mere little children remaining). We need to recall here that he has informed us that he is *Ònkòwé Akéwì* and *Akéwì Ònkòwé* (I am the poet's scribe and I am the literate poet); therefore, he cashes in on his poetic license to rupture the proto-proverb for aesthetic purposes. He sometimes deploys structural deconstruction or sentential deconstruction, for instance, in

*Ebi mbẹ lẹhìn ayo,
Ayo mbẹ lẹhìn ebi.* (Obasa 1982: 76).

Hunger comes after bounty
Bounty comes after hunger

he deliberately illustrates that life is static, it is just like a clock pendulum which swings to and fro, fro and to. There should not be disillusionment or whatever. This further affirms that Obasá employs structural deconstruction to enhance meanings and understanding of his poems.

Ọfọ (Incantation)

He creatively weaves *ọfọ*, another rich traditional material, to his poems. *Ọfọ* thrives on esoteric language in order to invoke spiritual assistance from celestial world. He mentions *omi* (water) three times in the example below through the form of semantic repetition, for calculus is a vital force that fans the ember of potency in *ọfọ*

*Omi òkun kì í gbẹ,
A kì í b'òdò kó l'ójú;
Àbùdì ní t'omi,
Èiyẹ kì í fò,
K'ó f'orí sọ 'gi,
Èèwọ̀ Èdùmàrè.* (Obasa 1982: 8).

The Sea does not dry
Scooping water from the river is never impactful
Scooped water leaves no traces
A soaring bird
Will never hit its head against a tree
Olódumàrè forbid it.

In the above excerpt, the semantic repetition here includes *omi*, *òkun* and *òdò*. Generic name for the three lexical items is water. In the next example, esoteric language - which is referred to as “entirely a stock of centuries-old magic formulas” (Babalola 1966: vi) – dominates the excerpt:

*Ile, òrìgí, a k'odi s'ìgbà!
Àwọ̀n agba kóribójo
F'ínu igbo se 'lé,*

Òkété f'orí òkìtì se 'yèwù; (Obasa 1982: 15).

Building, firmly erected, with fortified outer walls backs the sands of time
The coiled *agba* ropes
Have their abode in the forest,
The giant rat inhabits the ant-hill as its abode

All the highlighted lexical items are magic words affirming the importance of building to different human and animal species. Thus, he concludes that:

B'íló kò dùn,

B'ìgbé n'ílú rí.

Ilé san-mí dùn joyè ló! (Obasa nd mimeograph:16)

If the household is devoid of happiness
The town looks deserted.
The home has proved beneficial to me is better than
contesting for chieftaincy!

Anybody with home to live in; will at least, have a blissful life.

Oríki (Eulogy)

Obasa integrates *orí kì* in some of his works. This oral material may be in form of *orí kì sòkí* or *orí kì àbíso*, *orí kì orílè*, *orí kì bọ̀rọ̀kìnní*, *orí kì ìlú*, *orí kì ẹ̀ranko*, etc. It is expedient for him to use *orí kì ìlú* (praise name of a town), especially when he has a poem titled, "Ìlú Ìlọ̀rin":

Ìlọ̀rin, ọ̀pá n'íló Olódó

Àgèrè ni baba ìlú;

Ìlú tó báyí kò l'Órò?

Ìlú tó báyí kò l'Égún?

EEşin l'Égun ibẹ!

Okò l'Orò ibẹ (Obasa 1945: 35).

Ilorin, the Paddle inhabits the abode of Owner-of- river
Hunter's drum is the father of all drums
A town is as big as this without its Oro (bull-roarer)?
A town is as big as this without its Masquerade?
The Horse is the Masquerade therein!
The Spear is the Oro therein

Ìlòrin is a town flourishing in Islamic religion and culture; as such, it will sound strange to find Ìlòrin to celebrate ‘Oro’ and ‘Eégún’ festivals. He dwells on “distinctive attributes” of Ìlòrin (Akinyemi, 2017:198). As regards the *orí kì orí lẹ̀*, Q̄basa has *orí kì* of two lineages Ológbojò and Q̄lópòndà, wherein he highlights that both lineages thrive on *egungún* dramaturgy as they belong to Q̄jẹ troupes. Outside this, he also has *orí kì* on Q̄tí (Liquor) and Erin (Elephant) to show that the Yoruba people are very creative as they have praise poems for living and non-living things. Let us demonstrate as follows:

Q̄tí, ati'mọ l'áşọ!
Şàngó inú àgbá!!
Q̄ya inú un ságo!!!
Q̄mọ şí mi ní fílà,
Kí mi tí ọ şubú,
Q̄mọ tẹ mí yẹ ké
Kí mi yí ọ gbiri-gbiri (Q̄basa 1945: 36)

O Liquor, you make it impossible for a person to have adequate clothing!
 Sango, dwelling inside the cask!!
 Oya, dwelling inside the demijohn!!!
 You take off my cap,
 I will push you down,
 Bend me double
 I will make you roll on the ground. (Q̄labimtan's translation 1975:1052).

In the praise of liquor, Q̄basa adopts different stylistic devices to illustrate types of imagery and perception that could be cut for different readers. According to Q̄labimtan, Q̄tí (Liquor) is personified, while both Şàngó and Q̄ya deities are employed metaphorically. This has shown that *orí kì* is frequently laden with stylistic devices that add aesthetic values to it. Personification is also featured in his poem, Erin (Elephant); he writes:

Erin f'ọla mi.
Erin f'ọla yan! (Q̄basa 1945: 12).

The Elephant breathes with dignity
 The Elephant swaggers slowly and joyously with dignity

The characteristic manner of walking majestically is foregrounded in the Elephant *orí kì* with the aid of a literary trope, personification.

Ekún Ìyàwó (Nuptial Genre)

Ekún Ìyàwó is also known as epithalamium and it is one form of the rites of passage associated with marriage. In traditional Yorùbá community, the bride is expected to render the nuptial to commend and appreciate her parents, siblings, relatives, guardians, friends, neighbors and sundry. While chanting, she will be emotive on account that she is about “to be uprooted permanently from her ancestral home to live with a man whose character she knows vaguely, to live with parent-in-law with whom she has hardly had any conversation, and with whom numerous other people in the new household whose ‘dos and don’ts’ she does not know” (Faniyi 1975:679). Obasa cashes in on his exposure to this nuptial chant as follows:

Ìkéwì mi kò jọ t'ará oko
Ìkéwì mi kò jọ t'àgbẹ̀
Èkà tí mo bá ká tí kò bá pé
K'égbẹ́ ó bọ́ mi l'áṣọ; (Obasa 1982: 2).

My chanting is not like that of a rustic
 My chanting is not like that of a peasant farmer
 Any counting I have counted and is incomplete,
 My peer group should strip me naked;

This is an allusive reference to:

Odò kan odò kàn,
Àní tí n bẹ láàrín ìgbé,
Aráa 'wá jú ò gbọdò bù wẹ̀.
Èrò ẹ̀yìn ò gbọdò bù wẹ̀
Èmi Ayòkà débẹ̀, mo bù bọ́ jú
Ojúù mí wá dojú oge,
Ìdí ì mi wá dì dí ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ o,
Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀, àní tẹ ẹ̀ bá kà tí ò pé,
Elégbé mo ní

Gbogbo aráa 'lé, ẹ̀ máa kó mi lásọ lọ (Faniyi, 1975: 688-689; see also Ajibade 2019: 9).

A secret river
 That flows in the jungle
 Those who walk in front dare not drink out of it

Those who walk behind dare not bathe in it.
 I, Ayoka, reach there and wash my face
 At once, I change to a lovely virgin.
 My waist is full of lovely beads
 Count the beads, oh my dear friends
 If any is missing, strip me naked.....

Obasa has decided to parody this in his poem, “Ìkíni” to show how sure he is as regards his creative ingenuity and capacity, just as a bride is sure of her *virgo intacta* with pride (Fadipe, 1970).

Elegic Verse

In traditional Yorùbá, when an aged dies, the family members accord the dead honor by rendering dirge to commemorate and mark the rites of passage that human transition from one stage of life to another is part of the ontological journey of man from earth and back to the world beyond, i.e. terrestrial plane to celestial plane. It is known as *òkú pípè* in Oyo area or *ìgbálá* in Ègbá area. Obasa has drawn from mode of *òkú pípè* as follows:

B'ílé l'o bá wà, o w'òde,
Bí 'yàrá l'o bá wà, o w'òdèdè;
B'èhìnkùlé l'o bá wà,
O w'òkánkán ilé, (Obasa 1982: 4).

Should you be indoors, kindly peep outside,
 Should you be in the bedroom, please glimpse the passage;
 Should you be at the backyard,
 Please surface at the center of the compound

It is believed that the spirit of the dead will continue to hover around the household stead until the funeral rites are performed; hence, the chanters will invoke the spirit of the dead to come in and witness the burial rites being performed. This is the reason why we share Dejo Faniyi's view (1975), that the act, “points to the belief of the Yorùbá people that their dead ancestors are still around” (683). However, Obasa deviates from the traditional rendition format, by composing an elegy for his former editor who died:

Ògá mi d'èrù, ó rọrun-
Ọrun Alákeji, Àrèmábọ!
Ọrun rere, Ọrun rere!!! (Obasa 1982: 3).

My boss garnered all his, he transposed to heaven -
 The Alakeji's heaven, heaven of no return!
 Blissful heaven, Blissful heaven!!!

He thereafter mentions the name of his boss:

Ògbèni G.A Williams onínúure!
Editor àgbà n'Ílé-Èkó -
Òun l'Ògá mi (Obasa 1982: 3).

Mister G.A Williams a kind-hearted man
 Chief Editor in Lagos -
 He was my Boss

He does this to show he can still create his own original composition without leaning on the traditional material.

Àlò Àpamò (Riddles)

Àlò Àpamò, known as riddle, is poetic in form (Olatunji 1984). Akintunde Akinyemi (2015) has written extensively on *àlò àpamò* wherein he considers Yorùbá in performance in terms of content and context, riddles vis-à-vis metaphor and creation of meaning. Riddle flourishes on “the elements of intellectual exercise and verbal skill” in order to resolve the verbal puzzle posed (Akinyemi 2015: 11). Obasa, who is quite familiar with the Yorùbá *àlò àpamò*, recontextualises it in one of his poem, “Ìkà-Èké”:

E'ké ilé, èké òde
Àwọn l'àgádágo
Nwọn kò f'inú han ara wọn (Obasa 1934: 10).

The deceit within, the deceit without
 They are the padlocks
 Who are not faithful to each other

The above excerpt has stemmed from the body of an *àlò àpamò* as demonstrated below:

Omọ iyá mēta sùn,
Wọn kò fínú han ara wọn

Three siblings from the same mother sleep together

They are not open to themselves

The solution to this riddle is *awùsá* (walnut). Obasa creatively foregrounds the tenor of the *àlò àpamò* while the vehicle *omò iyá méta* is expressly suppressed. This kind of deviation falls under the purview of postmodernism.

Drum Language

He deploys the drum language otherwise referred to as surrogate language vitalize his poetic creation and making it dialogic. This has been possible through the use of talking drum. According to Fatona Adewale (1979), “the most effective and popular among these non-verbal traditional media in Yoruba land today is the talking drum” for “The talking drum actually ‘talks’” (cited in Ajikobi, 2017:29). This has been made possible as a result of tonal flexibility of the three pitches of the voice – High, Mid and Low (Olateju, 1990). Obasa has only reenacted the performance of drum language in his trilogy. However, two examples will suffice for now.

*Ní gbangba ní gbangba,
Ní kedere, ní kedere;
Òrò ìkòkò ní gbangba ní mbò,
Ní gbangba (Obasa 1982: 10).*

Openly, openly
Plainly, plainly
A secret conversation will soon be revealed
Openly

*Enu wọn l'òfà
Enu wọn l'òje
Èké omò aráiyé
Enu wọn l'òje (Obasa 1982: 11).*

Their mouth is six
Their mouth is seven
The hypocrite of man
Their mouth is seven

It is important to state that the membranous sound draws its materials largely from Yorùbá proverbs as exhibited from the above excerpts. Thus, the products from the drum language are meta-texts: the proverb in

proto-language (i.e., the speech form) is parodied by the drummer via the talking drum (membrano-phonous form) and then released into the air and to be deciphered by the audience. The intertextuality scheme is as shown:

PROTO -TEXT	==>	META-TEXT
Proverb in its original	form	Proverb transposed

This surrogate speech deployed is also known as paralinguistic code, and this often complements the verbal code.

Tropes and Literary Linguistic features

Here attention is on a number of tropes and linguistic features that are preponderance in his trilogy.

Archaic words

It is observed that linguistic anachronism is employed, as the poet intersperses his poems with non-quotidian words, perhaps to gain the attention of the audience, (in our own instance, reader), or to revive or imitate older forms of language. Leech (1969), refers to this style as archaism. For example,

Eṣin kò ñj'oko bí?
Kò s'óhun t'ó dùn l'Eyò... (Obasa 1982: 4).

Hope the horse is gracefully grazing?
 There is nothing more pleasing at Eyò

The archaic word here is Eyò, and meaning Ọyọ́. Adeleke (in press), says, “It is on record that it was only the Ọyọ́ ... referred to as Eyo; Hio” as early as 1850. Besides, the salutation preceding, *Kò s'óhun t'ó dùn l'Eyò*, that is, *Eṣin kò ñ j'oko bí?* referred to the Aláàfin of Ọyọ́ in the time past until it has recently been corrupted, although it has been refracted in the poem in line with Chomskyan Transformational Grammar wherein language is both finite and infinite. The surface structure of the sentence, here, is: *Kéṣin ọba jẹ oko pé* (May the king's horse graze for long).

It is also observed that very opaque archaic words are employed. For instance, Obasa deploys an archaic metonym as demonstrated below:

Eni tí yìò f'asọ bora,
Kì í dájọ̀ ògòdò l'ẹ̀bi, (Obasa 1982: 4).

Whosoever will use coverlet
Will dare not apportion blame to ògòdò

In this instance, ògòdò, refers to the cotton wool fruits, of which end product is cloth. There is an Ifá verse that corroborates this: Ògòdó òwú sòkè odò; *Payín keke s'ólóko* (The ripe cotton wool fruits up the river bank; invitingly, beckons on to the farmer). This same lexical item, ògòdò has been personified as human attributes have been given to it, that is, *payín keke*, which implies laughter (*rérìn-ín*) in this instance, for, *payín keke*, could be interpreted as 'gnashing of teeth'.

Repetition

It is difficult to define repetition, considered as a vital rhetorical strategy, which is deployed to emphasize, amplify, clarify, and create emotional effect among the readers. Repetition cuts across different disciplines, and not exclusive to literary field, as well as cutting across age, profession, and personality. For instance, "when children repeat, it is imitation, when brain-damaged people repeat, it is echolalia, when disfluent individuals repeat, it is stuttering, when novelists repeat, it is cohesion, when morphemes are repeated, it is reduplication, and when conversations are repeated, it is reiteration" (Aitchison 1994; cited in Oyedéji 2019: 51). It is a common knowledge, as noted by Olatunji (1984), that Yoruba oral poetry flourishes in repetition, and this can be in form of lexico-structural, lexical and semantic. We encounter repetition in Obasa's trilogy in different forms. Lexical repetitions, do recur to create intensity demonstrated in "Aláṣejù",

Aláṣejù! Aláṣesá!
Aláṣejú, Aláṣeté;
Aláṣejù, Aláṣebó
Aláṣejù, péré ní í té! (Obasa 1982: 21).

He-who-is-overzealous! He-who-labors-in-vain!
He-who-is-overzealous, He-who-labors-undignified!
He-who-is-overzealous, He-who-labors-disgracefully
He-who-is-overzealous, swiftly, he loses his prestige!

The lexical item *Aláṣejù* has been repeated four times to reinforce the theme of and the characteristic features of an *Aláṣejù* as exhibited in the poem. Besides, there is a partial repetition, *Aláṣe...* in the poem which form the root morphemes for all other nominalized lexical items: *Aláṣe + jù, Aláṣe*

+ *sá*, *Aláşe* + *té*, *Aláşe* + *bó*. The bold lexical items are suffix morphemes in this instance. They are adverbs employed as complementary morphemes because they add more meanings to the verb *şe* as established in the word formation: *oní* + *a* + *şe* + *ju/sá/té/bó*.

Obasa engages in the use of the repetition of the last part of one unit of the sentence at the beginning of the next line.

*A nsunkun Awugbo,
Awugbo ko sunkun ara re?
A nja f'Oja, Oja ni:
Tani nja l'ehinkule on? (Obasa 1934: 21).*

We are grieving Awugbo,
Awugbo does not grieve for herself?
We are fighting for Oja, Oja retorts:
Who are fighting at her backyard?

Notwithstanding the structural defect in line three, Awugbo, which ends the first line, still begins the second line, while Oja is repeated on the same line, the second Oja ought to be on line four. The device deployed here is a very common one in the Elizabethan poetry and it is known as anadiplosis. The essence of anadiplosis is to link lines, stanza and to reinforce the progression of ideas. Another poem, "Oní jekuje", aptly demonstrates this:

*Oni-i-je-ku-je o-é è,
Oni-i-je-ku-je -ò;
O je 'reke, je mōsa -a l'Ejinrin-
O je 'reke, je mōsa -a l'Ejinrin-
L' Ejinrin-o-onijekuje o é è! (Obasa 1982: 27).*

Glutton oh,
Glutton oh;
He consumed sugarcane, thereafter, ate *mōsa* at Ejinrin
He consumed sugarcane, thereafter, ate *mōsa* at Ejinrin
At Ejinrin, the glutton oh!

The noun phrase ending line four begins line five.

Line 63, *Ọlọrun Ọba Kòkòyí-bèèrè* (Obasa 1982: 8), under the poem titled "Oore" is repeated creatively on page 22, as *Ọlọrun Kòkò-yí-bìrì* under the poem, "Aláşeju" (line 21). By the time the reader gets to lines 43 and 101, s/he now encounters *Kòkòyí* and *Kòkòyí bìrì* respectively. This style adopted

by Ọbasa is known as foregrounding which manifests through a variety of means and this falls largely under Deviation and Repetition. We have four types of the lexical item *Kòkòyí*. Three suffix morphemes foreground the deviation from the proto-lexical item; these are - *Kòkòyí-bèèrè*, *Kòkò-yí-bìrì* and *Kòkòyí bìrì*. As revealed in these examples, the deviation manifests at the level of free morpheme + free morpheme, (*Kòkòyí+bèèrè*, *Kòkò+yí+bìrì* and *Kòkòyí+bìrì*); and, at the level of supra-segmental phonemes. A close examination shows that the tonemes on *bìrì* and *bìrì* are defamiliarized in order to foreground semantic deviation between the two suffix morphemes. The tones on *bìrì* Low=High contrast *bìrì* Low-Low. This tone contrasting is what Olatunji (1984) tags tonal counterpoint. In another breath, these three lexical items, *Kòkòyí bèèrè*, *Kòkò-yí-bìrì* and *Kòkòyí-bìrì* can be aptly referred to as partial repetition since *Kòkòyí* is the based form for all of these lexical items.

Another figure of repetition which features in Ọbasa poems is epizeuxis, in this instance; such repetition has no intervening variables or lexemes. The apt example is drawn from the poem “Aláìgbọ̀ràn”:

*Aṣá nkẹ̀ rẹ̀gbẹ̀, kẹ̀rẹ̀ gbẹ̀,
Bí àgbé̀bọ̀ adìẹ̀ l'áki t̀àn;
Ní torí ọ̀sí ọ̀mọ̀ adìẹ̀
Ó di fì-rì-rì-gbà-jà!
Ó di fì-rì-rì-ṣà-kà!
Ó di, síó! síó! síó!
'Un l'ọ̀mọ̀ adìẹ̀ í pè̀yá rẹ̀:
Ìyá ọ̀! Ìyá ọ̀! (Ọbasa 1982: 16).*

The hawk is puffing, puffs,
Just like a layer bird on the refuse ground;
All because of the chick sound
In furry flight, it grips!
In furry flight, it strikes!
Grievously it ends in *síó! síó! síó!*
That is how the chick beckons to its mother
Mother! Mother!

The endangered chick is beckoning to its mother to rescue it from the claws of the hawk. It is noted that epizeuxis occurs when somebody is apprehensive or agitated. Deliberately, the poet makes use of onomatopoeic ideophone to reveal the excruciation of the poor chick. See this other example below:

*'Kòì gbó, kòì gbó', l'enu onilé,
'Ó gbó' l'enu àlejò:
Ebi ní í jẹ́ báun! (Obasa, 1982:72).*

'It is not ripe, it is not ripe', uttered the host,
'It is ripe', responded the guest:
That's hunger!

The host is telling his/her visitor not to harvest unripe farm products from his/her farm but because the visitor is hungry, s/he contradicts or counters the farm owner who is already agitated. In another instance, epizeuxis may be employed for caution as demonstrated below:

*"Má jẹ́ é, mà jẹ́ è,
Má jẹ́ é, mà jẹ́ è -
Má mà jẹ́ é!" (Obasa 1945: 27).*

"Don't eat it, I will eat,
Don't eat it, I will eat,
Don't ever eat it"!

Thus, it is used to emphasize the warning that the unknown character should heed the warning given.

Before closing the discussion on repetition in Obasa's trilogy, it is important to state that the poet dotes many of his poems with full and partial repetitions. It is therefore important to illustrate with just two examples in this write up:

*Òní, Òyèkú bààrà
Òlá, Òyèkú bààrà (Obasa 1982: 43).*

Today, Òyèkú bààrà
Tomorrow, Òyèkú bààrà

Both lexemes, *Òní* and *Òlá* cause the partial repetition in the two sentences. Thus, *Òyèkú bààrà* is the partial repetition. The excerpt below is sample of full repetition:

*Àbá f'èyí sè 'wọ
Ìwọ jẹ́ fẹ́? Ìwọ jẹ́ gba?
Ìwọ jẹ́ fẹ́? Ìwọ jẹ́ gba? (Obasa 1982: 45).*

Should you be the one at the receiving end
 Would you like it? Would you accept it?
 Would you like it? Would you accept it?

This full repetition, here, is emotionally laden, hence, the regurgitation without any intervening lines. Equally, the poet transposes same lines from one poem to another as typified with the example below:

Èṣẹ̀ ñ ṣe gírì – gírì
L'ode girigiri
Ọfa nta firi-firi
L'ogun firi-firi
Ìbọ̀n ñrọ̀ pẹ̀rẹ̀pẹ̀rẹ̀
L'ohun, pẹ̀rẹ̀-pẹ̀rẹ̀ (Ọbasa 1934: 8).

Feet are bustling
 In the frontage of the hustle and bustle
 The arrows are flying ceaselessly
 In the fiery war
 Guns are pumping ceaselessly
 Over there, roaring ceaselessly

These same lines which appear under the poem, titled “Orin Agònnigàn” are re-echoed in poem “Agònnigàn” (Ọbasa 1945: 27). Ọbasa resorts to echo-lalia in order to connect the second poem having same thematic focus. It may be plausible to state here; that the poet might have enjoyed the puns soars up in the re-echoed lexemes: *gírì – gírì, girigiri; firi-firi, firi-firi; pẹ̀rẹ̀pẹ̀rẹ̀, pẹ̀rẹ̀pẹ̀rẹ̀*. The use of homonym *firi-firi, firi-firi*, unknown to Ọbasa, he has added grandeur to his creative works for the two homonyms have different semantic imports.

As regards the next excerpt earlier ingrained in poem “Orin Agònnigàn” and later, transposed “Agònnigàn”, the two lines have cultural connotation:

È wí f'álejò k'ó lọ
È fi ọ́ṣara b'agbo! (Ọbasa 1934: 9).

Tell all strangers to steer off
 Deep the brooms in the concoction

The cultural signification is premised on the Yorùbá axiom: *Èni mé jì ní sèlú* (Two beings jointly govern the town); these are *oní lé* (citizens) and *àlejò* (denizens), where the *àlejò*, is forbidden to participate in ritual rites of the indigenes of a given town, “even if s/he has had a theoretical exposure the traditions” (Adeleke 1995: 76). The lexical item, *şaşara*, a metonym, is metaphorically employed to represent a bunch of brooms known as *owò*, while *àgbo* is indexically deployed to signify harmful charms. Needless to remind ourselves that *şaşara* is also an archaic word.

Parallelism

The characteristics of parallelism include “juxtaposition of sentences having similar structure”, “matching of at least two lexical items in each structure”, “comparison between the juxtaposed sentences” “and a central idea expressed through complementary statements in the sentences” (Bamgbose, 1969:12; also see Olatunji 1984:25-30). Let us demonstrate with the example below:

Fílàní bímọ bí kò mu wàrà:
Ọmọ rẹ kọun, ọmọ ọlọmọ ni!
Bí Gàmbarí bímọ bí kò r'ẹrù:
Ọmọ rẹ kọun, ọmọ ọlọmọ ni!
Bí Tápà bímọ bí kò kokùn:
Ọmọ rẹ kọun, ọmọ ọlọmọ ni!
Sabarumọ bímọ kò sán wílikí?
Ọmọ rẹ kọun, ọmọ ọlọmọ ni! (Obasa 1934:17).

If a Fílàní begat a child, and does not drink cow milk:
 That child is not his; it is a child of another person!
 If a Gàmbarí begat a child, does not carry load (on its head)
 That child is not his; it is a child of another person!
 If a Nupe begat a child, and does not fish nets:
 That child is not his; it is a child of another person!
 A Gbagy/Gwari begat a child, and does not wrap leather apparel:
 That child is not his; it is a child of another person!

The four highlighted lines are juxtaposed sentences having similar structure, while the four bold lexical items match one another. The intersperse sentence, *Ọmọ rẹ kọun, ọmọ ọlọmọ ni!* is deliberately employed to emphasize the incongruous activities being engaged in by the offspring of different ethnic groups. Each cultural group has its innate tendencies; as such any cultural

traits, not in tune with the proto-characteristics of the given culture will put doubt on the consanguinity of such a child. Perhaps, who knows, Ọbasa may be drawing attention of his readers to traditional DNA in existence before the modern day one. The central idea being conveyed here is that any behavioral traits not in tandem with known norms of any given culture is considered alien or alienation.

It is equally observed that parallelism may occur without any intervening sentence as revealed the example below:

*Èlùbọ́ ẹ̀gbodò rí,
 Òkúşú s'aró rí,
 Arúgbó s'oge ri... (Ọbasa 1934:1-2).*

The yam flour was a yam tuber earlier,
 The waste product of indigo was proto-indigo,
 The aged was once fashionable

This example is a perfect structural parallelism and suitable lexical matching along both paradigmatic axis and syntagmatic axis. The lexical matching along syntagmatic axis is as shown below:

*Èlùbọ́ → ẹ̀gbodò`
 Òkúşú ←→ aró`
 Arúgbó ←→ oge`*

However, at the paradigmatic axis the lexical matching will be:

*[Èlùbọ́] [ẹ̀gbodò`]
 [Òkúşú] [aró`]
 [Arúgbó] [oge`]*

We therefore agree with Olatunji (1984), that “the relation between the lexical items in the sentences is equated in order to bring out the implication of the comparison” namely, that nothing can exist in vacuo, as life is a process and stage that is never static (20). The last example here,

*Ajá kì í gbàgbé olóore ẹ̀kọ́,
 Àgùtàn kò gbàgbé eleri bọ̀rọ̀; (Ọbasa 1982: 7).*

A dog can never forget the provider of pap,
 A sheep does not easily forget the provider of maize remnant;

shows that “in parallel sentences, the significant lexical items occur in identical places in the structure of the sentences as in the sentences that display partial lexico-structural repetition and tonal counterpoint” (Olatunji, 1984: 27). The partial lexico-structural repetition with *Ajá* and *Àgùntàn*; and, *olóore èkọ* and *elèèrí bọ̀rọ̀* shows “area of lexical variation and also contrasting in tone as tonal counterpoint” (Olatunji 1984: 28; also see Bamgbose 1982).

Simile

Obasa engages simile maker *bi* in his poetry to show overt comparison so as to show attributive similarities between two objects. See examples below:

Ọ̀lọ̀run kò dá kanyinkanyin
Kó ní-ńlá bí ẹ̀şin; (Obasa 1982: 9).

God did not create the ant
To be big as the horse

The size of *kanyinkanyin* (ant) is compared with the size of *ẹ̀şin* (horse), but the attributive comparison intended here, is the pain being inflicted on man by both *kanyinkanyin* and *ẹ̀şin*. It is important to allude to the Yoruba sayings: *Bẹ̀şin dá'ni, à tun gùn* (If a horse inflicts one with pains, one will still mount it), whereas with regard to the ant, its inflicted pain is more painful for it stings its victim unexpectedly. If it is seen, the victim or the sympathizer will snuff life out of it. In the next example, the inability of the guest to sleep off as a result of hunger makes him to flip his ears like that of a dog that is infected with fleas:

Ebi kò j'álejò ó sùn lọ
Ó ń gbọ̀n'tí pàpà bí ajá! (Obasa 1982: 72).

Hunger does not allow the guest to have deep sleep
S/he flips her/ his ears clangorously like a dog

Just as the fleas or tick will not allow the dog to rest so also is the hunger will not permit the hungry guest to have a blissful night rest.

Metaphor and Metonymy

Two other tropes that resonate in Obasa poetry are metaphor and metonymy. Olatunji (1984), describes metaphor as “an object, action or situation described in a terminology proper to another” (51); while in case of metonymy,

it is, “a figure of speech that substitutes the name of a related object, person, or idea for the subject at hand” (Morner and Rausch 1997: 134). In the example below,

Ebi kò pà ’Màle
Ó l’óun kí í j’ayá
Ebí pa Súlé, ó j’òbọ! (Ọbasa 1982: 73).

Hunger has not caught up with the Muslim faithful
 He says he does not eat monkey meat
 Hunger caught up with Sule, he ate monkey meat

the lexical item Súlé is metaphor for the Muslim body ’Màle, however, the name Súlé, is metonymically adopted as a substitution for ’Màle. In this instance, there is a substitution of one noun for another. As noted by Olatunji (1984), it is possible to submerge a metaphor without explicitly mentioning the analogical object. Let us consider this example in Obase (1982: 23) *Ọba Gẹ̀ẹ̀sì*, *Ọba tí í f’ọba jẹ* (The king of England, the King that enthrones other kings)

The submerged metaphor here is *Olódùmare* (the Supreme Being), whose innumerable attributes include *Ọba tí í f’ọba jẹ*. Thus, the *Ọba Gẹ̀ẹ̀sì* has been given the Supreme Being’s attributes. This is so, because the British Government had colonized so many countries around the world, Nigeria inclusive. All the colonized countries were coerced to accord respect and pay homage to the sovereignty of the Queen or King of England, to the extent that they were forced to render the England’s national anthem below across colonies on the Empire Day for the Queen possessed a tremendous and awe-inspiring power:

Ọlọrun, d’ Ọba si
K’Ọba k’o pé titi
Dá Ọba si.
Jọ, fun ni iṣẹgun
Irọra at’ ogo
K’ o jọba pẹ titi,
Dá Ọba si.

God save our gracious Queen
 Long live our noble Queen
 God save the Queen!
 Send her victorious,
 Happy and glorious,
 Long to reign over us,

God save the Queen!

It is interesting to note that an anonymous composer composed verses 1 and 2, while the verse 3 was composed by W E Hickson (1803-1870). The English version cited above is in the Yorùbá Hymnal Book of Anglican Communion, Hymn 600. Suffice to say here that the Queen wielded her powers on the Church of England that was synonymous with Church Missionary Society. This song was regularly rendered on Empire Day. This narrative has been given just to give an insight to why the Queen has been compared with God directly.

Personification

The poet employs anthropomorphism. The device allows the poet to endow non-human “with human feelings and attributes” (Olatunji, 1984: 49) or “in which human characteristics and sensibilities are attributed to animals, plants, inanimate object, natural forces, or abstract ideas” (Morner & Rausch 1997: 165). In this example:

*Ekòlò mì gbàgò,
Inú mb'ádiẹ sùùsu* (Obasa, 1982: 31).

The Earth worm gleefully moves around,
The fowl is seriously enraged

In the above excerpt, the Earth worm (*ekòlò*) and the Fowl (*ádiẹ*), are personified. Two other animals – the Doe (*àgbònrin*) and the Tiger (*ẹkùn*) are also personified as revealed below:

*Àsà t'ágbònrin ndá
Kò j'ẹkùn l'ójú!* (Obasa, 1982: 62).

The fashion being flaunted by the doe
Does not entice the Tiger!

They now take human attributes of showing off and jealousy.

Pun

Ọbasa ingrains in his poetry pun also known as wordplay as exhibited in his poem “Aláṣeju” thus:

Ọba Nàpó, Nagìrì Napoleon
Ọba nà ‘kòkò, nà ‘ṣasùn (Ọbasa 1982: 23).

King Napo, stoutly built Napoleon
 The King who strikes the pot as well as striking the cooking pot

The syllable *nà* has been used in different ways to bring about tonal contrast as well as creating new meanings among the following lexical items *Nàpó, Nagìrì, Napoleon, nà ‘kòkò, nà ‘ṣasùn*. The example above is phonologically based for the tones bring the new meanings.

Hyperbole

The poet sprinkles hyperbole in a number of his poems to evoke emotions of his readers; that is, “obvious, extravagant EXAGGERATION or overstatement, not intended to be taken literally, but used figuratively to create HUMOR or emphasis” (Morner and Rausch 1997: 102). For instance, in the example below

Òjò òlá m’ílú tìtì:
B’o ti ò m’ilé
Béè ní ò m’òko (Ọbasa 1934: 25)

Heavy rain shakes the whole town
 Just as it shakes the homestead
 So it shakes the farmland

The turbulent rain has simultaneously disrupted lives in town, homestead and farmland. The excerpts here appear to negate the Yorùbá axiom: *bí Ìlá kò bá ṣe é gbé, à má a gbé Ìlálá* – if Ìlá is not a safe haven, we can opt for Ìlálá). All the three abodes could not have been unsafe at the same time; Ọbasa employs the hyperbole to illustrate the stormy rain. Thus, *òjò òlá m’ílú tìtì* is equally a metaphor for storm. There is another hyperbole deployed by Ọbasa which will likely shock the sensibility of the reader:

Oore tí a ṣe f’ádìẹ kò gbé;
B’ó bá d’ogún ọdún,

Omitoro rẹ̀, a kán sí 'ni l'ẹ̀nu! (Obasa 1982: 7).

Any good deed to the fowl is not in vain;
When it would be twenty years thereafter,
Its delicious soup will still be felt in the mouth

It is unimaginable that a fowl will be reared for 20 years before it would be ready for consumption. It is deployed to create humor.

Ideophones

Ọlabimtan (1975) has written extensively on ideophones, both onomatopoeic and phonaesthetic. These are very common in world languages, Yoruba language inclusive, for ideophones invoke ideas of sound. As regards onomatopoeic ideophone, the sound of the word employed mimes the sound of the object being named (Morner and Rausch 1997). The perfect illustration from Obasa's poetry is: *Ó di, síó! síó! síó!* - Grievously it ends in *síó! síó! síó!* (Obasa 1982:45). The sound coming from the endangered chick is echoed so as to imitate the sound of the chick, which conveys sense to the reader. On the contrary, the phonaesthetic ideophone will create a mental image of the movement, intensity of action and surplus of a named object. The example underneath basically creates a mental image of the dawdling movement of the *sago* worms (palm weevil) at the dunghill: *Níbi ògòṅgò ñjọ wúyẹwúyẹ* - Where the *sago* worm is dancing slowly (Obasa, 1982:15). It is necessary to stress it here that the English translation has made the poetic grandeur in the proto Yoruba lusterless.

Alliteration

It is observed that in some instances, alliteration appears in poems wherein there are repetitions of consonant sounds *k* & *m* be it at the beginning or within words as exhibited in the examples below:

A kì í kí 'Kú ijẹta' (Obasa 1982: 4).

We do not re-appraise, 'You had been splendid two days ago'

Máku kò m'awo, ó mbú Ọpa,

Máku kò mọ'wẹ̀, ó mbọ́ s'ódo (Obasa 1982: 7).

Maku is not a cultist he contends with the.....

Maku does not know how to swim he jumps into the river

Nígbàwo ni Maku kò nì í kú? (Obasa 1982: 17).
When will Maku not eventually die?

The poetic value of alliteration is for unity, emphasis, as well as for musical effect. This is visibly seen in the examples cited above.

Allusion

Allusion is made to fictional characters in the Yoruba folktales by Obasa so as to refresh the memory of his readers as exemplified in the tale of “*A ó m’ Erin j’Oba*”

Ogbón l’Àjàpá fi m’Erin
Bọ wá sínú ilé;
L’Erin bá fi wá joyè (Obasa 1982: 60).

Through the use of native intelligence, the tortoise was able to bring the Elephant
Back home
That was how the Elephant was enthroned

This is a form of intertextuality employed to accentuate the thematic focus of the poem; in this instance, “*Ogbón*”.

Employment of Foreign Words

It is not strange that Obasa’s poetry have an avalanche of foreign words, perhaps this must have borne out of his experience as journalist who must have come across many cultural groups. There are borrowed words from English, Hausa and Arabic languages. In some instances, has to domesticate some English words through eye and ear loans, while there is wholesale borrowing.

Oba Gẹ̀sì ni Sẹ̀n-Tẹ̀lì St. Helina (Obasa, 1982:23).
The of British in St. Helena (St. Helina)

Làì l’Áwọ̀dà (Machine gun)
Mààdi pe Kíşínà n’ijà (Obasa, 1982:26).

Without ceaseless pumping (Machine gun)
(Lord Kitchener) Mahdi challenged Kitchener to a battle (Lord Kitchener)

Kí l'a ti máa se e?
A jí búré̀dì: (Obasa, 1982: 48).

What should we do?
 To who stole bread

Olówó Mòtò 'sò̀tì'
A-wa-mòtò ní kòlé mọ́'lé! (Obasa, 1982:56).

The motor seller made a loss
 The chauffer is putting up building, upon building!

The following lexical items in italics are ear-loaned: *Gẹ̀sì* (British), *Sẹ̀n-Tẹ̀lí* (St. Helena) and *Kísínà* (Kitchener), while *búré̀dì* (bread), *mòtò* (motor), *sò̀tì* (short) and *Mààdi* (Mahdi) are eye-loaned. From postcolonial perspective, Obasa is writing back to the center as such he domesticates these foreign words. However, the wholesale borrowing is deliberately employed to give inkling as regards the source of a particular poem. A very good example is that of Mahdi Muhammad, a Nubia religious leader, whose followers were involved in the battle of Omdurman with Lord Kitchener. Also in the same poem, "Aláseju", the historical reference is made St. Helena Island where Napoleon Bonaparte was detained by the British Government in October 1815, and he died there on 5 May 1821 (see Obasa 1982: 23).

The poet also borrowed from both Arabic and Hausa languages as reflected below. Example from Hausa language goes thus:

Gàmbàrí, ọmọ kò-yó, kò-siré!
Gàmbàrí, ọmọ 'Kàwó Àbíńsí
Nwọn ní, 'Fàrí, fà̀rì, fà̀rí,
Ó l'óun kò l'óri í fá (Obasa 1982: 75).

Gàmbàrí, he who when starving, will never play
 Gàmbàrí, the offspring of 'Kàwó Àbíńsí
 They ask him, "Scrape off the hairs, scrape off the hairs, scrape off the hairs
 He says he will not scrape off the head hairs

The title of the poem is "Ebi"; because Obasa wants to show the gravity of what hunger can cause, he picks on a character, *Gàmbàrí*, which is a corrupt name for the Hausa in Yorùbá language. As demonstrated in the poem, Obasa employs two significations to show that the referent here is Hausa, namely: language i.e. *Kàwó Àbíńsí*, and her itinerary barbing profession - *fà̀rí, fà̀rì*,

fárí. This only affirms the Yorùba axiom: *ebi kì í wọnú, kórò mì'íràn wọ ọ* – (a hungry man is an angry man). However, the poet consciously uses the loan words as deviation to arrest the attention of his readers. The metaphorical import of *ebi* is visible and impressive. With regard to the borrowing from Arabic language, he illustrates as follows:

Aláròd ní, Sàlám àlékù
Onilé ní 'Sàlám, àlékù kan kò sí
Bí k'á j'ólóunjẹ k'ó jẹun! (Ọbasa, 1982: 80).

The Stranger greets, *Sàlám àlékù* (peace be unto you)

The House owner replies, 'there is nothing like, *Sàlám, àlékù* (peace unto you)

Than to allow the eater to eat its food

These excerpts are drawn from “Ìyàn Ẹlẹ̀fẹ̀.” This is a caricature of Arabic language deliberately used to invoke laughter. This is a form of salutation in Arabic language meaning, ‘peace be unto you’ uttered by the stranger to alert the house owner of his/her arrival, but the house owner who is eating and is not prepared to share his or her food with the guest twists the meaning to mean, *Sàlá ma'lé kù* (*Sàlá* has left over of debris); and so, he or she cautions the in-coming stranger to let the eater eat his or her food in peace. The significance of this is accentuated in Wande Abimbola’s *Òtua Méjí*:

Wútùwútù yááki
Wútùwútù yáam̀bèlé;...
Lékèélekèè, ẹyẹ̀ ị̀mọ̀le,
Bó bá sí lóri ọpọtọ̀,
A bà sórí ọrom̀bó
A máa fì gbogbo ara kéwú eléwú kiri; (Wande Abimbola 1969: 96).

Wútùwútù yááki
Wútùwútù yáam̀bèlé;
 The cattle Egret, the Muslim bird,
 When it takes its flight from the fig tree,
 It perches on the lemon tree,
 And as such, it will continue to be parasite

In other words, the house owner takes the stranger as a parasite. Traditionally, the Muslim faithful relish eating *sàráá* (free food), that is the reason they move from one destination to another: (*Bó bá sí lóri ọpọtọ̀, A bà sórí*

òrom̀bó). It is not a surprise then that Obasa, intentionally, cashes on this Arabic phrase: *Bísímíláì*, to expose some gluttonous Muslims who delight in eating free food by deploying pun so as to rupture the original meaning of the Arabic phrase i.e. "In the name of God" in order to delight his audience/reader:

Bísímíláì, Lau! Lau!
L'o d'ífá fún 'Mòle
A b'èwù rẹ̀gẹ̀ jẹ̀:
T'o faiye gbogbo ẹ̀ 'feje
Bísí kì í' là lásán!
Bí kò bá là 'yán
A la kà, a là 'kọ:
A la 'bì, a l'amálà,
Ore onímọ̀le l'èmi! (Obasa 1934: 9).

Bísímíláì, in its totality! In its totality!
 Divined for the Muslim faithful
 Donning overflow garment:
 Who always scavenge for free food
 Gyre is not for fun!
 If the Gyre is not for pounded yam
 It will be for pasted yam flour, it will be for pap
 He will break Kolanut lobes, he will eat pasted yam flour
 I am an associate of the Muslim faithful

Apart from the wordplay deployed, to present the burlesque inherent in this Islamic tradition Obasa combines alliteration – B, K, L and assonance – *là lásán*, *bá là*, *la kà*, *a là*, *la 'bì*, *a l'amálà*, along both paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes, as well as employment of lexical matching – *là 'yán*, *la kà*, *a là 'kọ* – in one breath, so as portray the insatiable greed of a set of group of people within the Islamic religion.

Obasa openly parodizes explicitly the complexity of Arabic language to the non-native speaker to expose the interpreter of Q'uranic verses who takes delight in exploiting the naivety of the other adherents who are not verse in Q'uran thus in "Ìrẹ̀jẹ̀ tàbí Ogbufò Kéwú Ìbàdàn":

A-la-mu, tàrà-kéfa
Fa-a - la rà buka"
O ni:
Qlórùn yio mu 'Ka sùgbon

“Alefì, Ba sin, Lamu
Nugunda, Mimu, Ra, Ja
O ni:
Èni t’a ba julọ l’ai irejẹ
Mo ju ọ lọ, mo rẹ ọ jẹ
O ni:
“Lakum ‘dinni kun,
Wali a dinni
Labi-kulubi,
O bi mọ tun ‘mọ bi
Ó ṣubú tàbí kò ì ṣubú? (Obasa 1934: 34).

“A-la-mu, tàrà-ké fa
Fa-a - la rà buka”
 He says:
 God will catch the evildoer but
“Alefì, Ba sin, Lamu
Nugunda, Mimu, Ra, Ja
 He says:
 Whosoever we are superior than, we cheat
 I am your superior, I therefore cheat you
 He says:
“Lakum ‘dinni kun,
Wali a dinni
 Continue to procreate
 You begat a child and retrain the child
 Has he stumbled or not

Obasa has domesticated via pastiche of the Arabic words in tandem with Yoruba style of writing to create humor. He places premium on *ka* which is the last syllable in the lexical item *buka*. The cleric interpreter is intentionally misleading the Muslim congregation to suit his own whims and caprices; hence, he capitalizes on *ka* to give corrupt interpretation as follows:

A-la-mu, tàrà-ké fa
Fa-a - la rà buka
Ọlọrun yio mu ‘Ka ṣùgbọn

A-la-mu, tàrà-ké fa
Fa-a - la rà buka
 God will catch the evildoer

Whereas, the interpretation ought to have been as follows: "A-la-mu, Tara-kefa, fa-a-la ra buka. Have you (o Muhammad) not seen how your Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant" (Q'uran 105: 1).

Equally, the interpreter also tinkers with some of the Arabic alphabets: *Alefi, Ba sin, Lamu / Nugunda, Mimu, Ra, Ja* thereby, super imposing wrong meanings to his unwary Islamic believers by harping on, *Ba ... , Lamu ... Mimu, Ra, Ja* to convey the sense of oppression of the poor or the lowly. *Lakum 'dinni kun, Lakum 'dinni kun, / Wali a dinni Wali a dinni* is interpreted out of tune: *Lakum ... kun – procreate ... continue...to procreate.* The gullible Islamic believers will definitely take this interpretation hook line and sinker on the premise that Muslim faithful are allowed to marry more than one wife, which in excess will bring about procreation of more children. The untainted meaning should have been: "*Lakun 'dinni ku'n, wali a dinni.* To you be your religion, and to me my religion - Islamic monotheism - (Q'uran, 109:6). Obasa has brought to the fore how religious interpreters have gulled so many religious faithful through the use of foreign languages.

Aphesis

It has also been observed that Obasa's poetry is inundated with aphasis. In Linguistics, it is known as either elision or clipping. Clipping in lexicology is a process of shortening lexical items. Hardly, will one read his poem without seeing elision or clipping of a lexical item in which the initial syllable is omitted. For instance, in

'Un 'ó wọ ọ ká 'gbó
Èhì n ara rẹ̀ ni í fi í là 'na (Obasa 1982: 41).

'I'll drag you through the forest'
He will have to create the pathway with his back

the following syllables have been deleted *yóo; igbó; ọna*. The use of aphasis has given the lines colloquial coloration peculiar to oral community. In another instance, Obasa thus applies aphasis in order to create ambiguity in meaning as revealed below:

O b'égún jà, o d'égún,
O b'òrìsà jà, o sì d'òrìsà;
Ìgbà t'ó b'Ọlọrun jà,
Gbangba l'O dá ọ!

Eni Ọlọrun dá (Ọbasa 1982: 59).

You wrestled with the masquerade, you defeated the masquerade
 You wrestled with the gods, you defeated the gods
 When you wrestled with God
 Uncontestably, He defeated you!
 Whosoever God has created.

The ambiguity is to task the mental capability and capacity of the reader that a poem could be finite and still be infinite if perceived from Chomsky's Transformation Grammar. It is plausible for another to take the excerpts as follows:

O b'égún já, o d'égún
O b'óriṣà já, o sì d'óriṣà;
Ìgbà t'ó b'Ọlọrun já
Gbangba l'O dá ọ!
Eni Ọlọrun dá

You engaged in fisticuffs with the masquerade,
 you became the alter-ego of the
 masquerade
 You engaged in fisticuffs with the gods,
 you became the alter-ego of the gods
 When you engaged the Supreme Being in fisticuffs
 Openly, He created you
 Whosoever God has created

The multiple meanings generated are always premised on indeterminacy which is deeply hinged on the Reader-Response or Reception theory. Notwithstanding this strategic indeterminacy, the central semantic idea being passed here is that, you do not engage your chi or your ẹlẹdaá in fight. The last phrase is incomplete, the full rendition is:

Eni Ọlọrun dá;
Kò sẹ́ f'ara wé

Whosoever God has created
 You dare not mime

Little wonder then that Olabode (2008), says that, "The way language is contrived in poetic arts confirms that it allows for ambiguity, paradoxes, and some other irrational uses of language" (230).

Thus, aphesis adds grandeur to poems; because the excess of clipping or elision is to economize in speaking, writing, and space in order to create memorability in artistic creation.

Lexical Choice and Selection

A poet of note pays conscious attention to selection or choice of words in line with the thematic preoccupation of his or her poems so as to make his/her creative works memorable. Right diction and appropriate register will not only enhance the poetic cadence, it will also reveal the artistic ingenuity of the poet. There are so many examples, an example dwelling on flora and fauna will suffice for this essay:

Àwọ̀n ejò kékèké
Un l'ológun le gbe!
Ọ̀ka mbẹ̀ n'ìgbó,
Ológun kò gbé e;
Ere mbẹ̀ n'ìgbó
Oloógun kò gbé e
Agbaadu mbẹ̀ n'ìgbó,
Oloógun kò gbé e
Sèbé mbẹ̀ n'ìgbó,
Ológun kò gbé e
Abirusooro m bẹ̀ n'ìgbó
Oloógun kò gbé e
Paramólẹ̀ m bẹ̀ n'ìgbó
Oloógun kò gbé e
Gun-nte mbẹ̀ n'ìgbó
Ológun kò gbé e
Gbagbà Fúù fúù mbẹ̀ n'ìgbó
Ológun kò gbé e (Obasa 1945: 31).

Only small snakes
 That the snake charmers can carry
 Gaboon viper inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it
 Royal Python inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it

The small cobra inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it
 The Spitting cobra inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it
 The Green Tree snake inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it
 The Night Adder inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it
Gun-nte inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it
 The Puff Adder inhabits the forest
 The snake charmers dare not carry it

Obasa titles this poem “Àwọn Ejò” and thus enlists the names of different snakes with their actual names - *Ọka, Agbaadu, Sèbé, Abiruṣooro, Paramólẹ̀, Gun-nte, Ere`* - without depending on the generic name *ejò*. Even, he knows their characteristic features; hence, he informs his readers that only small snakes could be carried about by the snake charmers. Since Obasa is very verse in Yorùbá proverbs, it is logical to say that he could have elicited his information from them. For instance, the following proverbs give insight to the inherent danger associate with snakes:

- (i) *Mónámóná l’òlòògùn lè gbé*
Olòògùn tó gbé paramólẹ̀
Yóó kàn yonu
 It is only the python the snake charmer can play with
 Any charmer who ventures to carry the night adder
 Will find himself to blame
- (ii) *Eni t’óká niru*
Yóó kàn yonu
 Whosoever tramples on the tail of gaboon viper
 Will find himself to blame

These proverbs demonstrate that some snakes are very poisonous as shown in the poem above. This skillful selection of apt lexical items for different poems has shown Obasa as a wordsmith of grand style.

Conclusion

Demetrius' treatise on style reveals three distinct styles –grand, plain and forceful - that make the works of arts sublime and grandeur are profoundly found in the trilogy of Obasa; thus, his poetry is fresh, insightful, and enduring in the heart of his reader(s). Obasa has exploited and explored Yoruba language to its fullest by deploying linguistic features and literary devices suitable and memorable for all his poems. Obasa displays great thought, strong emotion, noble diction, dignified word arrangement that all add up to poetic grandeur par excellence. His works transcend mere aping of traditional materials as Obasa's poems are replete with deviation.

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