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# CONVERSATION OF TWO MASTERS



*We underwent a series of preliminary conversations. But there was first of all this insistence on the part of the artist, Bruce Onabrakpeya, that we first write to formally request for an interview and that a catalogue of proposed questions be forwarded. Our original idea was to get an open-ended, free-flowing conversation recorded on Nigerian art thus far, and on emergent trends. The artist had been irked by an offensive 'letter to the editor' in our maiden edition which took a swipe at the older generations of Nigerian visual artists and demanded to know just how contemporary they would want to claim they were when even at the present time, the content and styles of their works little differs from the themes and styles they had pursued since the 1940s! What would have been a fluid, enthusiastic interview thus was almost dampened in its opening parts, before trailing on to wider issues relevant to the current conditions of the arts in Nigeria and in Africa.*

*Dr. Bruce Onabrakpeya is of course one of the best known names in the world of African art. His uniquely styled etchings and prints are world-renowned but Onabrakpeya is also an intellectual who has written extensively on African art in addition to his public speeches and lectures. On the GR team's arrival in Onabrakpeya's three-storey home at Papa Ajao, Mushin, on the outskirts of Lagos, luck seemed to have completely run out on us, even as we found arriving at about the same time, a visitor to the Onabrakpeya's. This was no less a person than Onabrakpeya's long-time friend, former school-mate at the Zaria School of Art and world-acclaimed uli master and academic, Professor Uche Okeke! Inevitably, we had to draw him into our discussions, but not before the host's family had treated the two comrades to a dish of traditional delicacies.*

*And then, we set to work.*

*Onabrakpeya fished out his copy of the GR and read the 'letter's' complaints audibly.*

*Thereon, he sparked. But insightfully, Uche Okeke joining in in his characteristic reflective and philosophical tone!*

**ONABRAKPEYA:** These are the questions and queries.

Before this interview, I thought, and asked the publisher to create a questionnaire... Then

I gave my copy of *Glendora Review* to a man at Yaba Tech (Yaba College of Technology, the base of the Yaba school of art) called Michael Omoige, a lecturer, who has read it,

and is responding, through an article.

You see there is a problem in having to answer these questions.

You see, this kind of whooping down!

**OKEKE:** I would not even respond.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** You see, there are other young people who should answer for us, we do not have to defend our stand now.

**OKEKE:** These issues are too basic and trivial and too fundamental, which is why the young man Omoige has decided to take it up. I remember the time at Enwonwu's memorial people asking these same questions, why do not people go and research and do their homework. For we have written extensively ourselves.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** From this *Glendora Review*, it is clear that it is an Ife affair.

**GR:** We are not connected to any school or movement...

**ONABRAKPEYA:** I understand exactly what you are saying. But you see in the article in *GR*, it fails to answer nor see the relevance of those mentioned, and it even fails to mention Okeke, Demas Nwoko, etc. How relevant are they to the Nigerian art today? It even points out the theme of what you are saying. Because these artists are working and still working. The young people growing up however who should really study the works of these people before they die out. Ben Enwonwu died last year, they are just not doing their work.

In the 60s and early 70s some white people in this country pitched the Osogbo artists against



Bruce Onabrakpeya (left) and Uche Okeke

the academically trained artists. What Ulli Beier did, especially with the fame that had attained between Twin Seven Seven and Jimoh Buraimoh etc. They said that people who were informally trained were better artists than those from the academies. That the academics were wrong. I had a friend from Canada, a big person in the government there now who said we should go ahead and write ... we said no. When you see a stick that is bent, you do not go ahead describing how bent the stick is. You just take a straight one and put it beside it so everybody would see how bent it is. So, all we did was to keep quiet. We did not say anything. We just kept working. Now, time has passed and we leave you to judge whether academically trained artists are inferior to people who come from workshops or that these workshop artists are developing as opposed to the academically trained ones that 'are continuously bugged down with theories' and so on...such that they 'cannot produce anything'. So, I am sorry, I feel there are people that can say something now to this effect. I am sorry I have got you to write these questions. This magazine as I see it is very important in developing contemporary African thought in the arts and I will contribute to it - though I am not a writer. Uche here is the writer. (We stayed in the same room in Zaria for two/three years.) Writing is feeling. So, you feel about something and put it down. So, we left. He left for

Germany. I was not that fortunate but since then an idea comes, I put it down. So, I write and I do have ideas. I have just written for **africa '95**. I would not, however, want to answer directly... which is why I have put some others on this issue to write for you.

The fear, you should know, is that we distance ourselves from mischief. And I must admit we saw mischief and provocation in the article of the **GR**. Trying for a kind of response to sell the journal.

**GR:** But can this possibly be the...

**OKEKE:** The important thing about a publication like this is not who publishes it or the person who writes because ultimately other people would have to react and in the process if the journal is open-minded, ah-ah, it will grow. If not, there will be problems.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** You are not a temporary, you want to be contemporary...He ha ha!!! (Laughter)

**OKEKE:** Just yesterday, I was talking about some problems, about painters who cannot draw, who cannot paint properly, who cannot even get their techniques for their work... the grounds for their works to be properly done. So, we want to run a workshop to

retrain them. Unlike *Nka*, for instance, who are talking about post-modernism, which to us Africans is total bull shit, especially for an African artist living in Nigeria. It is not our problem. Our problem is how do we get up. How does an artist eat here, live here and make it. How do we create our own audience in our own society.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** Yes, this is what is relevant. Relevant to our people.

**OKEKE:** If you produce a work such as a cassette and nobody buys, or if it does not have a meaning to the people, no relevance to the people... this is what a magazine such as yours should address. In fact on the 21st of September, I would be in Britain to deliver a paper. Our main argument is on development. Africa and development with the artist as medium, at the London University. I have done a paper and for your information, I have gone through the schools not in Nigeria alone, but the whole of Africa. Also all the workshop centres from the early 30s upward. The development of the art institutions like Ife. Originally, the art school at Ife was part of the Education (faculty), I went there to study the scene and said to the authorities, the students at the time would not go far. I wrote a report and finally a department of the arts was given to them. Most of these art schools around,



people of our own generation were instrumental to the creation of these schools.

We do not go around claiming these things. At IMT [Institute of Management and Technology] Enugu, I had to write the first programme for that school. At Port Harcourt, the same. I graduated the first batch. The same thing for Rowland Abiodun; I assessed him for professorship. So, these are the things you must consider.

They come to our institute, people from America and so on, and use our books there. So, when you go and meet someone from the Zaria Art society from 1958 to 1961, we had always been discussing these topics such as the development of art in Africa. At that time, you must note there was nothing like that in any part of Africa. There was no questioning of even the basic tenets of Nigerian art. We questioned it and made the first philosophy.

problem.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** Please, let me say now, although the question was asked in the article that the people who did the art of the 30s and 40s, if they could still be contemporary. He [the writer] gave us the Oxford dictionary... the *Advanced Learners' Dictionary* and which defines contemporary art as 'of the time' or 'period being referred to'.

**OKEKE:** Maybe one thing you do not realise is that, (it is in my paper the one I have just written for London. In fact, I have just got my visa to go. There are two of us going) contemporary means everybody even donkeys that are living at this time, in the same period in history. Bruce, don't you remember Frith at Zaria with us looking at the vultures at the dining hall there, when we were students? He looked at them and did a series of paintings of vultures.

**OKEKE:** No. That is not the meaning of contemporary art. What we mean, or should I say my main argument in... the paper I am about to deliver is on modern African art. By modern African art, I mean art based on enlightenment, knowledge. So, we have to start something in this country. Or when we say Osogbo art, Osogbo art is contemporary.

**GR:** People call it traditional.

**OKEKE:** It is not modern. The modern art is based on scientific knowledge and scholarship, produced by someone educated. You have to use your knowledge. I do not think the same way as an Osogbo boy because these people were mostly drop-outs from schools.

We have to be honest with ourselves. There are other schools, not just Osogbo. The earliest one started during the last century or

***'No. That is not the meaning of contemporary art. What we mean, or should I say my main argument in... the paper I am about to deliver is on modern African art. By modern African art, I mean art based on enlightenment, knowledge. So, we have to start something in this country. Or when we say Osogbo art, Osogbo art is contemporary.'***

We were students then!

**GR:** What then went wrong?

**OKEKE:** What went wrong is indeed what we are asking. Why is it that no man can draw properly, not to talk about filing his brush before painting. And why is it that I should pay so much for a painting that is basically badly produced. Nobody would do it in Europe or America. These are problems.

So, when people here talk and write because they have pen and paper, some of us also have it, Huh! Huh! (Laughs) But we do not use it for destructive purposes. Because if we land on some of these topics, we know the history. So, we must be cautious and careful. You cannot write about people without knowing what they have tried to do or done.

**GR:** In fact, they are seeming rather basic and fundamental, these issues. This is a real

**GR:** Who was Frith?

**OKEKE:** Frith was our professor at Zaria. He graduated us. A white man. He looked at the top of the dining hall with so many vultures and he painted them. We then asked: 'Why are you so interested in these vultures?' He said because they are contemporary.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** That is, they are living.

**OKEKE:** They are contemporary at that point. We were living at the same time.

**GR:** I think the impression young people have of contemporary art is bugged down with the confusions they see and feel everyday. That is the vision they see on T.V. on art, of what is coming out of the West, the symbols they see. Or when they travel and see these Western works on canvass. It is like, man! this is heavy and so different from the vibes of Africa, that traditional old stuff.

so... art in Congo called Poto-poto. In fact, there were schools that came before Poto-poto. The Poto-poto, I am sure you have seen the style before - figures like match sticks on black velvet cloth etc. Now, you see that kind of development is almost parallel to what started happening from the 1930s when Margaret Trowell went to Uganda, the earliest art school in Africa in Uganda. The next one was in Kumasi. Margaret Trowell's daughter is married to our present UK High Commissioner to Nigeria here. Margaret was the first professor involved in the real training of artists at Makerere University. She started teaching them Poto-poto in her house and finally the university grew not just for art but other subjects. So, by the time we got to Ife, that is recent. Even at Zaria, the art school is recent. But the advantage Nigeria had was Aina Onabolu.

**GR:** How? Because he did not come from any school?



**OKEKE:** He started in the 1900s. He went to secondary school in Lagos, was encouraged to read and take post secondary courses. And later by 1920, he went to Britain. He studied in London and Europe. He came back in 1923 to develop a programme for teaching. So, from that time, Nigeria had an academic tradition in art. So, we have the earliest tradition in art. By the time most people came in the 30s, we had already changed students in the 20s. Thanks to Onabolu. So, that really is the difference between Nigeria's art tradition and some of the others. Those ones were produced by white people. Onabolu stayed here with his own. He went there and came back and continued here. Before eventually some white people came and started...Murray, and Murray's students had no structured way of drawing. They were not like Onabolu's students because he had to do his stuff scientifically with perspective in mind. I remember the late Okolo, our classmate. He was complaining that why don't we want to go through this rigour of perspective, etc. for he

was trained by Onabolu at Baptist Academy, Lagos. In fact, there were quite a number of them such that by the time we went into the business only five years, the tradition had been set. We were already seeing what they were doing, the forms. Remember, the man from Benin, Osagie from Edo College. So, we are not really pioneers as such; this tradition had been developed.

**GR:** But you have extended the frontiers of this tradition and given it your own personality?

**OKEKE:** No, not really. What really happened was that Onabolu wanted to get this white man tradition to develop. But when the Zaria Art Society came up we said no. We have to of course learn how to do these things well, learn how to draw well and decide not to do it that way. Before rejecting...

You see, a lot of people today do not know how to draw things properly. They will tell

you they are abstract artists. If you want to say a thing is sweet, tell us whether it is sweet like sugar or sugarcane. Abstract means removing from what was there. What was there would be learning how to put things as they are in nature. If you change or remove aspects of this then you are moving towards abstraction.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** You asked what was special to Zaria at that time. At the Zaria school, when we came up, independence was at the doorstep. Colonialism had been so successful that our people were thinking about the West, it had done its job so well that everybody was thinking about the west. All the values we had, that we acquired over the past millions of years were being washed away because of the technological bamboozlement from the West. The Zaria Art Society students studied very well in the classroom, studied all that was to be learnt and done. But went to their cubicles, we were seven.

**OKEKE:** No, we were eleven

(They argue for a minute or two)

**ONABRAKPEYA:** We went to our cubicles and discussed how relevant is this art we are learning to our living. That was where the philosophy of synthesis came in. So, if you look from that time, 1958, to the present, you are looking at the development of the consciousness of our people, the identity of our people. The use of their own art to promote the life, the thinking and the personality of the people. When you judge the result of all these things, therefore, you judge it from how art is taken in the universities, how art has gone from being a useless subject in the mind of the people to something that is now useful. How in the time parents used to refuse to sponsor a child to train in art. David Dale of St. Gregory's College was going to run away from his home when his sister who refused to sponsor him to Zaria called him a silly thing for wanting to paint the sky. But all that has been changed because of the philosophy a few people had adopted and followed up and have worked all their lives. Rejecting all material gains apart from art, so as to create a personality for the artist and to educate people to create awareness that art is not just about creating something beautiful. Art is something to explain your life, to explain the personality of your people, your thoughts and create a basis for economic, cultural, political and industrial development. The moment you look at art for art's sake, or as a picture that is hung on the wall, then you miss the idea, you miss it all. Which is why we are honoured continuously at the Univer-



sity of Ibadan and other universities in the country for projecting and promoting the consciousness of the people and contributing to learning.

So, when people talk about contemporary art to an artist who has been into contemporary art in the 40s and still is on the contemporary scene now, you have to know we know what we are talking about. If you guys follow up well and even look at the works well, you will see that art has improved, it has grown, it is developing. For here you will see development in ideology, personality and how people in and out of the country rate the artists. Or perhaps as in the article in the *GR* says, we artists do not deserve the respect which the art society give to us. But how can we take the millions of Nigerians for a ride?

**OKEKE:** You see, a critic is more or less a prostitute. He gives his opinion of a particular problem he thought he knew at a given time. It has this time limit which depends on the person who is passing the judgement. But a good critic would study, of course, study the history of the period, the evolution, study the reasons for the art. Because there must be reason for what an artist produces. There is no human being who makes art just for the sake of making it.

**GR:** But is that not the Western idea?

**OKEKE:** That is the real Western style. But it is not even a very good Western artist that would just create for art's sake. He must communicate his ideas at least.

**GR:** But what is this post-modern stuff?

**OKEKE:** The playing of words by critics! After post-modern where do we go? Maybe post-post-modern? How do you remove what is modern? I remember reading recently of Mali in *West Africa in the Sixteenth Century*, the city of Timbuktu and Djenne, how they produced books to sell to the whole world, that centre of that time was at its highest point and very modern. You see, as I have mentioned before, I do not talk about post-modernism; it is not an issue for us. The African critic, those ones in the diaspora are fighting their own battle, because they have a problem there, since they are not American artists or British. So, in essence, they are struggling to be heard.

But inside Africa, we who are developing art here have other languages to use and the language is not that kind of flowery language of post-modernism. Our problem primarily is how we survive in this our given circum-

stance, how an artist can live here like a human being and make it. If you are a mechanic and cannot live by that job, the best thing is to move on and forget it. So, it is wrong for an artist to go around attacking another artist when he is going hungry. So, the issue is how we develop our society in such a way that the artist would live, etc. For I believe that someone that has been blessed with that creativity should be able to get more. For if an artist uses his gift well, he should live well and help develop his society.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** Exactly, I will like to add a bit here. If you go back to the art of our ancestors, that is traditional art, when you examine the role of the art within that society, art was used for personal aggrandisement, the chiefs and obas used it as a personal embellishment. Art was used for ancestral worship, you develop a soul through the art. It was used in form of medicine. The abikus, ibejis, etc. were created in a way to ward off spirits. Art was, therefore used in religion, politics, was used in entertainment. All these things were done in the past. Now ask, what is modern art doing? Has modern art, that is the art we practice today, has contemporary art fallen short of these roles which the ancestral forms played in the past? Has the art of today gone beyond to tackle education, religion, politics, psychology, medicine. All these things are going on in the works of artists today. If you want me to enumerate, Yusuf Grillo, you mentioned in your article. Go into ten churches in Lagos. Grillo's artworks will be in seven of them. Presbyterian Church, Yaba; All Saints' Church, etc. In the newspapers, you cannot do without seeing an illustration here and there. Look at books, also in the government houses, go to Saint Paul's Church, Ebute-Meta or go to Onitsha. Also our art goes abroad thereby helping the image of our country through exhibitions.

Therefore, if our art is doing all these things for the people and the people know it so, and they use it, could it be anything else other than contemporary? So, when you ask, you should be asking about good or bad art, which is a different ball game entirely, not the trivial use of whether art is contemporary or not.

**OKEKE:** You see, art is devotion to life. It is not about just drawing. It is a whole package. When I leave here for home, I am helping with the town square. The town asked me to do it. There is a thinking, to help and elevate the soul of the human being. Art is a way of life. And we are practical and creative.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** If you look at my piece, *The*

*Sahelian Masquerade* there is a philosophy, a thinking expressed in the drawing and it comes out in all kinds of things to help and raise the spirit of the soul of the human being. *The Sahelian Masquerade* again, looked at the problem of the West African sub-region with desertification, the spoiling of the environment, the burning of bushes, et al. So the question of art being the makeup of a beautiful picture that you put in a parlour of a white man is not it. It is just not the case. This is something that talks about a people and helps to keep the soul.

That is their identity, to create identity. You therefore do not look at art as only in style or in form or what people are buying.

**OKEKE:** Because they could buy the wrong thing. I had an interview recently coming out on 9th or 10th of September done by BBC where I was looking at creativity. I believe to be creative is to be endowed with a gift. I asked them that if a Japanese has this gift, a Briton has the gift and a Nigerian, which person would you say is superior to the other?... for this is a thing given to an individual in any society and so what they make out of it will depend on all kinds of things. If you are very technologically advanced, then you can use technical processes to bring the art out. But that does not mean you are more creative. So, it is also the creative process, the way you produce what is there, what is in your mind that you then show. So, these are the problems, when you talk about identity, about culture and development. In fact, these things belong to every people. It is not particular to any. And if you say the white man talks about the post-modern, that is his palaver. He will decide to talk about post-modern, then pre-modern and post-colonial. It just goes on. By and large, it is the human being that is endowed that can help us develop our society.

**GR:** Does the fact that at Nsukka, a lot of professors of your calibre are still out of the country teaching as well as exhibiting across the globe of any significance to the quality of graduates that leave that university?

**ONABRAKPEYA:** Let me help answer that question. Recently, there was an Uli exhibition put up in New York. Uche is Mr. Uli. When he left Zaria, he went back to study the body painting of the Igbo people and the wall painting of the Igbo and evolved an art style.

**OKEKE:** I did not leave Zaria!

**ONABRAKPEYA:** I mean, he was still there, but during the holidays. He evolved the Uli style.



Obiora Udechukwu took it up. Tayo Adenaike, a Yoruba, also took it up. And even a Ghanaian, El Anatsui also took it up. And so, today, Uli is a name in the art world.

**OKEKE:** You see, Uli is a system of drawing. That is drawing in our tradition. Not a synthesis. Uli is drawing. The truth is that the thing they draw are things from the environment. Plant forms, animals. They are all stylised and because of our religious system, that is the African religion system, which is abstract. Because of this, instead of drawing from nature, as taught in art schools, they draw from abstract religious concepts. So, the idea are symbols. Because symbols could be of an ordinary thing or an abstract thing, it could be a line symbolising something, but these things are extracted from a natural form. Like there is a form we got from the kolanut, got from the end of a kolanut called *Isi woji*. If you take a kola that has four lobes, it has some form that have meaning in the cultural sense and significance of the people. Also, they are derived from nature. Whereas in the European sense, you go out and make

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a drawing of kola or plants or human being or form, etc. The motivation in Uli is therefore more spiritual than temporal or ordinary.

**GR:** What is the difference in the Uli forms and that of the forms from Osogbo aside from the academic differences?

**OKEKE:** Good. The Osogbo artists are doing Uli too except they are using or operating in the Yoruba system or cosmology as style of

drawing. It is the same thing conceptually. The Osogbo artists are not just as exposed. So what they do is, in fact... I went to Osogbo and bought one of the early Osogbo drawings. It was one of my drawings done in the 50's, late 50's, **The Orphan**. This man Buraimoh copied it and made it in print. When I got there, I said it is my drawing. You see, that is how they started. They also copied Bruce, Demas and so on. I did not have any grudge. These are the ways we can grow. We know they are handicapped and have to learn and try all things. They started from us. We were experimenting and they also saw that it was possible and then they borrowed from tradition and therefore cannot accuse them of stealing from our own experimentation. But however, this is what the search for a new synthesis is all about.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** If I may add, you see what the white people do is this, they come round see your artwork whether contemporary or traditional. They take it away, manipulate it and bring it back to you as a new thing. They take an idea form as a drawing, copy it, use it there. By the time it comes back to you, you look at it as a new form. But we are saying instead of borrowing from you, treated, and all that, instead of borrowing that idea, go straight to your own source, get your idea, polish it and use it. Like go back to the Yoruba culture for eating and polish up your food and eat it. It would be as good as any food elsewhere.

This is exactly what Picasso did. What Picasso did was he came down, he saw our forms, went to Mexico, etc., removed what he could remove and produced. And people say, Ah! Ah! but they only touched the surface. We are the priests and the priestesses of our own culture. We go beyond the surface to the inside. And so, the Oyinbos (Whites) would expect us to continue from where Picasso stopped. No, we said no. What we have to do is go back into our own and bring out because there are so many that we can still bring out, Picasso only touched the surface. And we bring these things out. Our people here, some do not even understand. Worse still, our academically trained artists don't understand. Now, I have taken a collection of artworks to London. These articles are not paintings nor drawings but a collection of objects which simulate the shrine as it is originally conceived by the Nigerian. This is my presentation at **africa '95**.

There is another artist, Debeb is his name. His real name is Bebetiedor. He shortened his name to Debeb in America. He came and said to me that we should look forward, take



ideas from outside and forget these primitive things we are doing. So, I told Debeb: 'What is wrong with your skin? Why are you revolting against your skin? Are you going to be able to change your skin because you stay in America?' Now, he does what is labelled 'Pointilism' - the use of dots to produce a picture. There is a French group of artists, one of them Seurat, is a French exponent of this style. He became very famous. So, I told him Pointilism originated from here in Africa. Look at the nature doctor or a young girl or a woman undergoing rites. They will use white chalk all over the body. They use dot forms on walls of traditional homes as well as shrines, etc. This is pointilism. So, please, don't look at Seurat because he borrowed from us. Come back home. Go to the roots and develop what is there and your work will definitely be better off than that of Seurat. So, this call to—roots, people like to look at it as primitive, as retrogressive. You have to go

back and bring back the values that we have left behind. I mean Africa had been growing for millions of years. Our values must have been right—to have survived. For all those values to be thrown away because of fifty years of contact with whites is wrong. Which is what we are saying. This is our case.

**OKEKE:** You see, all these things are defined in my work when you see them. I do not even need to talk. When I was in Germany during the civil war (Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970), there were sculptors we had in an exhibition and they looked at my work and exclaimed 'Ganz modern', meaning very modern. I asked what do you mean by my work being very modern because that was the kind of thing they had been pinching before with all these Picasso types. So, if I decide to get my source from home, they then accuse me of being very modern. The European does not have any problems with our works. It is just

these critics who pretend they are clever, and always fall into trouble. But if they are objective, they tend to understand these and what you are doing. Most, however, are not objective. They are prejudiced.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** Let me tell you, it is politics. An American told me that it is very difficult for an American to accept Nigerian art or art from Africa as equal to art from the West because once they accept it they are accepting the quality and your mental capabilities. It is a sickness.

**OKEKE:** I tell my friends that Picasso's works, my people here, if they see his work would think it is nonsense because their own form of communication does not suit ours. They are communicating with their own people out there while we are doing our own here. My people would think Picasso does not know anything, how come they draw human beings this way, which is the same way they appreciate our own art the way they do there. It is only a person with a liberal mind that can tolerate your own. The cultures are different, and they cannot be blamed for feeling my work is 'very modern' but I blame them for thinking we Africans are not up to it for having that prejudice.

**ONABRAKPEYA:** This does not mean that we are closed to what is going on in the West. We are open to modern techniques, ideas and scientific development for these things are universal and are open to the world, which is knowledge in itself. After all, knowledge and scientific development began from somewhere along the Nile valley, Egypt and went up on. So, they got something from us, that is the West, and so, the knowledge they have is a world property. If we get it, we should use it, mix it up etc. If you look at our institutions here, you find almost everyday we get something new from the traditional part and from outsiders. So, we are very much in touch with the outside world. All we are saying is how we should be inward looking, get out what is inside you, give it a focus, get other things and add to it, get this fertilised effect. The result would be very strong. If you do not like your work, you cannot have respect for what other people are doing.

**OKEKE:** You see, one great thing about African culture is tolerance. When the whites came originally, especially in the south (southern part of Nigeria), people sent their children to find out what they were doing 'Let us see what tricks they have', etc. This synthesis enables us to have more than the whites themselves. There is no monopoly of knowledge anyway. **GR**

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