

# LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE FOR COMMUNICATION IN HUMAN SOCIETIES

Papers in Honour of Late Dr Elisabeth Amegah De Campos

## Edited by

Prof. Taofiki Koumakpai,  
Dr. Taofiq A. Alabi,  
Dr. Théophile G. Kodjo Sonou,  
Dr. Samson O. Olatunji,  
Dr. Comfort Ojongkpot,



## **Editions Africatex Media,**

01 BP 3950, Porto-Novo, Republic. of Benin.

Tél: (+229) 95 13 12 84 / 97 29 65 11

E-mail: [aficatexmedia@gmail.com](mailto:aficatexmedia@gmail.com)

Site web: [www.iup-universite.com](http://www.iup-universite.com)

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**Dr Elisabeth Amageh De Campos**

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and

**Linguistic Immersion Centre for Foreign Students, University of Ilorin,  
Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria**

**Edited by**

**Prof. Taofiki Koumakpai**, University of Abomey Calavi, Republic of Benin  
**Dr. Taofiq A. Alabi**, Linguistic Immersion Centre, Unilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria  
**Dr. Théophile G. Kodjo Sonou**, Panafrican University Institute, Republic of Benin  
**Dr. Samson O. Olatunji**, Linguistic Immersion Centre, Unilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria  
**Dr. Comfort Ojongkpot**, Department of English and Linguistics, University of Buea,  
Cameroon



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### **Africatex Media**

01 BP 3950, Avakpa-Tokpa, Porto-Novo, Republic of Benin.

Tél: (+229) 95 13 12 84 / 97 29 65 11 / 99 09 53 80

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# CHAPTER 3

## YORÙBÁ PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE AS A THREE-MODAL ARTS – THE ATÓKA EXAMPLE

**Dr. CLEMENT ADENIYI AKANGBE**

Department of Library, Archival and Information studies  
University of Ibadan  
[akangbeclem@gmail.com](mailto:akangbeclem@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Photoplay magazine was a veritable media of dramatic production for Yorùbá theatre practitioners in South-West Nigeria between 1967 and 1991. It was a secondary media of production as the plays published in photoplay magazines were first usually produced on stage, which is the primary home and the homing ground of drama. *Atóka* was the first and the prime of all photoplay magazines that existed in Yorùbá. This paper focuses on the principal arts of photoplay which are dramatic arts, photographic arts and publishing arts. Employing the theory of New Historicism, this study traces the evolution of *Atóka* photoplay magazine; identifies the three-modal arts of *Atóka*; examines the concept, constituents and interrelationship of these arts and their impact on the overall success of the magazine as a publication.

**Key words:** *Yorùbá Photoplay Magazine, Three-Modal Arts, Atóka.*

### INTRODUCTION

*Atóka* photoplay magazine was a unique art that was prevalent in the South-West Nigeria from late 1960s to early 1990s. It was a dramatic collaboration of theatre practitioners and publishers which aimed at bringing entertainment in form of play productions to the doorsteps of the teeming theatre lovers in printed form. Photoplay is an amalgamated art which enlists the input of different professionals. It is therefore creative, systematic and procedural. *Atóka* was the first version of photoplay in Yorùbá and as such it employed Yorùbá language as its medium of communication. This paper examines *Atóka* as a three-modal arts comprising – dramatic art, photographic art and publishing art.

*Atóka* photoplay magazine was a production of different Yorùbá theatre troupes which Ògúndèjì (1985, 1988) called Ogunde dramatic tradition. This modern Yoruba drama is a dynamic performative movement which may be said to have formally come into being on June 12, 1944 with Hubert Ogunde's popular opera titled *The Garden of Eden and the Throne of God* which was staged at Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos Island. This tradition, which Clark (1979) called a "re-incarnation" of traditional drama, is highly phenomenal in development, dynamic in operation, astronomical in patronage and diverse in performance. The tradition became an instant success with its ready acceptance by the society till date. A manifestation of the dynamism of this movement is its different media of performance over the years. Beginning with the era of the stage production, the modern Yoruba drama has passed through different production eras of radio, television, phonograph-disc, photoplay, cassette tapes, celluloid films, and home video films (Ogundeji, 1988:87; Akangbe, 2005:2). At each of these production eras, the practitioners explored the media of performance such that extensive productions – both in duration and in quantity – were carried out. Our concern in this paper is to single out one of these multi-media of Ogunde dramatic tradition for detailed research; and that production media is the photoplay era.

## 1. METHODOLOGY

Extensive research have been done on Yoruba drama by several scholars and many of them centred on Ogunde dramatic tradition. These studies include Ògúndèjì (1981), Aróhunmólàṣe (1982), Adéoyè (1984), Bólájí (1985), Adétúnjí (1987), etc. Despite these myriad of works, most other production media seem to have gained the attention of researchers but the phase of photoplay has not been so favoured. There were only few works that discussed aspects of Yoruba photoplay (Ògúndèjì, 1981), Adélékè (1995), Aróhunmólàṣe (1998), and Àkàngbé (2005) until Akangbe (2014) carried out an in-depth study on *Atóka*. So till date, Yorùbá photoplay remains a green farmland largely uncultivated and a literary field largely untilled. This study therefore sets to fill some of the void by examining the arts of *Atóka* photoplay magazine.

The study adopted *Atóka* as its case study. This is because it was the first, being the pioneer photodrama in Yoruba. *Atóka* series was also, unarguably, the most prominent of the titles in the tradition as it adorned the newsstand for a long period of time. In the quarter of a century that it existed, WABP produced a total of one hundred and twenty (120) volumes which numbered four hundred and thirty (430) editions, thus generating sufficient data for a study of this nature. The

geographical scope of the study is the south-west Nigeria and the population of the study was mainly the Yoruba people who occupy the south-western states in Nigeria namely: Èkìtì, Lagos, Ògùn, Ònḽó, Òṣun, and Òyó.

The general objective of this paper is to examine the three modal arts of *Atóka*. The specific objectives are to: identify the principal arts of *Atóka*, discuss the process of each art, examine the constituents of each of the arts, and find out the interrelation ship of the arts. The study which focused on the photoplay magazine as a dramatic form and a production medium in Yorùbá is significant in that it delves into the dynamic history, sophisticated production, and multifarious contents of *Atóka* photoplay magazine. This study is also an attempt to give photoplay media leverage with other production media in the Ogunde dramatic tradition like stage, radio, television, celluloid film and home-video film that had received attention from, and had been studied, though in varying degrees, by researchers. This study is a qualitative research and it employed multiple methods for its data collection. The primary source of data collection was the *Atóka* photoplay magazine while scheduled oral interview constituted the secondary data. The theory of New Historicism was adopted as theoretical tool for the study.

## 2. EVOLUTION OF *ATÓKA* PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE

*Atóka* was the first Yoruba photoplay magazine which was established in 1967. It was published by West African Book Publishers (WABP) which was located at No.4 Industrial Avenue, Ilupeju, Lagos State. *African Film*, a photoplay magazine in English, was regarded as a major influence on the evolution of *Atóka* photoplay magazine.<sup>1</sup> According to Oyèéwólé Olówómojúòrè, a.k.a. Kèngbè Òrò,<sup>2</sup> one time editor of the magazine, the desire to have a replica of *African Film* in Yoruba gave rise to the birth of *Atóka*. Incidentally, Academy Press, the leading press in West Africa then, acquired a state-of-the-arts equipment. It was reported to be the best printer of almanac and diary. The quality machines that were acquired were being underutilised so there was the quest to put them to maximum use for profitability. The only way to achieve this was to find more jobs for the machines. As corroborated by Pa. Şégun Şófowótè<sup>3</sup>, the desire of Academy Press to venture into book publishing prompted her to establish West African Book Publishers (WABP) in 1967 as her publishing arm. Paramount on WABP's agenda was publication of series of periodic magazines both in English and Yorùbá languages as replica of *African Film* which was being produced in South Africa. WABP considered the popularity and high level of patronage being enjoyed by the

flourishing theatre tradition in Yoruba land in particular and Nigeria in general as a great potentiality for the *Atóka* photoplay magazine project. *Magnet*.<sup>4</sup> a photodrama magazine in English language, was the first to be established before *Atóka*. Mr. Ràsídi Oníkòyì,<sup>5</sup> who was initially appointed to be in-charge of the *Yorùbá Photoplay Series*<sup>6</sup> invited Mr. Şégun Şófowótè, a brilliant and talented broadcaster with Western Nigeria Television and Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNTV/WNBS) in Ìbàdàn to come over to take charge. A very versatile artiste, Mr. Şégun Şófowótè joined WABP after negotiating his terms of appointment with Academy Press.

To actualise the dream of fielding a Yorùbá photoplay magazine successfully, Mr. Şégun Şófowótè explored his working and cordial relationships with the notable dramatists of his days. As a former producer at WNTV/WNBS, he had worked closely with Chief Hubert Ogunde, Kólá Ògúnmólá, Dúró Ladipo, Oyin Adéjòbí, Àyínlá Olùmègbón, Akin Ògúngbè, and other performing theatre groups. As a matter of fact, many of them had become his friends so he had no problem in enlisting their cooperation.

Ogunde dramatic tradition spread like a wild fire in the harmattan wind. The tradition which began with the stage, the ancient homing ground of drama, changed phases consistently from stage to radio in 1945 (Clark, 1979); television in 1959 – 1960 (Olúşolá, 1981); phono-disc in 1964 (Ògúndèjì, 1985), photoplay in 1967 (Ògúndèjì, 1981), celluloid film in 1976 (Ògúndèjì, 1988), and the home video in 1990 (Ayòrindé & Okafor, 1996). Photoplay is the only print media adopted by the Yoruba theatre practitioners. It is employed as a secondary media of dramatic performance by the practitioners of Ogunde dramatic tradition. It is therefore an ancillary media. The first Yoruba photoplay magazine was *Atóka* which debuted in 1967 with Ògunde's play titled *Yorùbá Ronú* (Ògúndèjì, 1988). Before the advent of *Atóka*, there was no similar publication in Yoruba. However, there were a number of magazines published in English language that might have influenced the establishment of *Atóka* overtly or covertly.

### 3. THEORY OF NEW HISTORICISM

This study employs the theory of New Historicism for its analysis. The term "new historicism" was coined by Stephen Greenblatt, an American critic and his book titled *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, published in 1980, was usually regarded as signaling the beginning of the theory though similar attempts were identifiable in the works of various critics published in the 1970s. New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic



moment that created it. Barry (1995: 172) defines new historicism simply as “a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts usually of the same historical period”. He expatiates further that “new historicism refuses (at least ostensibly) to ‘privilege’ the literary text: instead of a literary ‘foreground’ and a historical ‘background’ it envisages and practises a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other”.

This implies that the theory, in analysing a text, is preoccupied with two issues: the literary and the historical. It does not present and project one side of the coin and relegate the other. The theory compels literary and historical fairness in dealing with a text; hence the emphasis by Barry that “...literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight.” American critic – Montrose (in Barry 1995: 171) also corroborates this principle of “equal weighting”. According to him, new historicism is “a combined interest in the ‘textuality of history, the historicity of texts’”. In a clear and unambiguous expression, Montrose’s succinct and accurate definition brings to fore the duality and paradoxity of new historicism. It is dual in the sense of its textual and historical preoccupations; and paradoxical in the sense that contrary to convention, it does not tolerate siding or privileging of the literary. Greenblatt’s postulation is that a new historical essay will place the literary text within the ‘frame’ of a non-literary text. He advocates strongly that historical documents are not subordinated to contexts, but are analysed in their own right. Therefore, we should perhaps call them “co-texts” rather than ‘contexts’. He emphasises that the text and co-text used will be seen as expressions of the same historical ‘moment’, and interpreted accordingly (Barry, 1995: 172). To New Historicism, literature and history are inseparable. The theory does not see history as a coherent body of objective knowledge which can be readily applied to a literary text in order to discover what the text does or does not reflect. Literature is regarded as a vehicle for the representation of history, and it contains insights into the formation of historical moments. Literary texts therefore can have effects on the course of history, on the social and political ideas and beliefs of their time (Brannigan, 1999:418).

According to Tyson, a helpful way of considering New Historical theory is to think about the retelling of history itself. “...questions asked by traditional historians and by new historicists are quite different... traditional ask, ‘What happened?’ and ‘What does the event tell us about history?’ In contrast, new historicists ask, ‘How has the event been interpreted?’ and ‘What do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?’. So New Historicism resists the notion that “...history

is a series of events that have a linear, causal relationship where event A caused event B; event B caused event C; and so on'. New historicists do not believe that we can look at history objectively, but rather that we interpret events as products of our time and culture and that "...we don't have clear access to any but the most basic facts of history ...our understanding of what such facts mean... is... strictly a matter of interpretation, not fact". Moreover, New Historicism holds that we are hopelessly subjective interpreters of what we observe. On the whole, as Brannigan submitted, "the new historicist approach to literature did mark a significant turn away from the humanist idea that literature could teach human beings valuable lessons in moral and civil behaviour.

The theory of New Historicism is adopted because *Atóka* discourse is essentially historical. *Atóka* as a dramatic genre, its modes and medium, its rise and development are all crucial historical factors that were fashioned and shaped by the time, place and historical circumstances surrounding its birth. The theory is therefore appropriate to dissect the history in *Atóka* as literature while also employing the same theoretical tool to examine the literature in its history. Apart from this, the social and political contents of the magazine are veritable materials that shape both its history and literature, since the two are inseparable.

#### 4. THE THREE-MODAL ARTS OF *ATÓKA*

The concept of modal arts<sup>7</sup> has its root in the word *mode* which implies a way, manner or form of doing something. It is a method of presenting a composition to make it unique and different. A mode also implies a style or set-pattern through which a creative piece is projected thereby making its product ingeniously appealing and aesthetically imaginative. Modal arts therefore is a fusion of different skills and crafts, indeed a melting point of series of artistic strategies methodically synthesised to communicate for information, entertainment and education. The concept of modal arts therefore is procedural, sequential and successive. In *Atóka*, there are three of such principal arts which are dramatic art, photographic art, and publishing art. It is on these three arts that our discussion in this paper will be based. *Atóka* is an amalgamated art which encompasses different skills and crafts. These crafts are interrelated and interdependent. They are interrelated in the sense that one leads to the other; and interdependent because one relies on the strength of the others to attain a full expression. Each of these arts is a process which has its different stages and subsets.

#### 4.1. Dramatic arts

Dramatic art is a melting point of activities like auditioning, rehearsal, acting, stage setting (location), performance and shooting, etc. *Acting* is the work of an actor or actress (otherwise called a performer) who tells her/his story by portraying a character usually by speaking or singing the written text or play. *Atòka* plays were usually not scripted, what was available for the editor to work on was the sketchy synopsis of the dramatic story. The absence of a formal script also nullified a proper auditioning or casting. In Ogunde dramatic tradition, the norm is that the troupe leader plays the lead role followed by the senior members who also play other important characters. Minor roles and extras are reserved for the upcoming members. What then followed was rehearsal.

*Rehearsal* in drama simply means a practice or trial performance of a play or other work (dance, music, etc.) for later public performance. In drama, a rehearsal is an intensive session of practicing acting, movement, voicing, dance, dialogue, etc. in private as a team in anticipation of a successful public performance. A rehearsal is a preparatory process of performance. It is a play-making process which engages different professionals for a unified goal through improvisation. In *Atòka* photoplay production, as it was the practice of Ogunde tradition, each actor and actress would have to interpret his/her role, compose his/her dialogue, and invent his/her action and movement. Though the rehearsal for *Atòka* production was usually intensive, it must be noted that the production was neither for a live audience nor was it meant to be acted on stage; therefore “the performer-audience relationship is monodirectional” (Ògúndèjì 1985: 18). It was primarily for voice recording on tape and photographing on camera. Also, the rehearsal usually took place at the base of the theatre company and the editor only watched it when he and his crew went for shooting. So the rehearsal would first be watched and critically assessed. Corrections would be made where necessary and costumes, props, etc. would be examined in one breath. Thereafter, performance would follow. When performance is approaching, the theatre company would scout for locations for their production.

*Location* is an actual place in which a drama or a film is made. Location is determined by the story, therefore, a location can change frequently from market place to hospital, stadium, airport, sitting room, school, public street, footpath, church, mosque, grove, forest, etc. as the story demands. However, the “actual place” in itself is neither complete nor totally suitable for performance if it is empty. It must be filled with the required objects and materials to transform it into a setting. Setting is the historical moment and geographic location in which a story takes place.

Technically, location is different from setting. Setting is a fictitious dramatic locale while setting is the actual place used to represent it in the performance and shooting of a play. According to Ògúndèjì, setting can be macro or micro. “The macro-setting is the large dramatic community that forms the background of the plotal events while the micro-setting is the specific place in the macro-setting” (1988:212).

In *Atóka* production, relevant-locations were usually sought. The task of scouting for locations was the responsibility of the theatre company. As professionals and owners of the story, it was easy for them to get the actual settings that were appropriate for different scenes in the play. However, their selection was subject to the approval of the editor. Usually, the *Atóka* editor and his crew would arrive a day or two to the commencement of production and shooting to, among others, watch the rehearsal, visit the various locations for approval or replacement, and check the costumes and props. After this, the stage is set for performance and shooting.

The performance of *Atóka* plays was usually laborious, intensive, painstaking and time consuming. It called for resilience and enduring commitment. A typical performance would last for days and could run to weeks. The editorial crew from West African Book Publishers would arrive at the location a day or two earlier to ensure that every preparation was intact. The team comprised the editor, photographer, a supporting staff and the official driver; other people on location were members of the theatre company. The editorial crew was usually armed with photo cameras, films, tape recorders and batteries. At least two cameras were taken to location, one black and white camera and one colour camera. Each camera, of course, would be loaded with the compatible films while enough extra would be on reserve. Performance was neither at a permanent place nor sequential. In other words, later scenes could be taken before the early ones. The implication of this is that it called for great concentration and accurate record keeping on the part of the editor and indeed the crew.

One hallmark of performance at locations was frequent discontinuity and interruptions. Repetition of action was another experience. It would be recalled that the actors and actresses were not performing for a live audience, their audience was the reader at home. Because of the media of destination therefore, it was compulsory to violate and disrupt the conventional dramatic flow of performance through constant breaks, pauses, repetitions and issuance of different commands by the editor: action, cut, freeze, etc. to ensure the desired result. The frequent discontinuities were not counter-productive, rather, they were to ensure and enhance effective production. Action could

be halted to attain the projection level; it could be repeated to get the desired elaborated dramatic action, it could also be to enable the photographer capture the right shot(s). Topical actions must necessarily be repeated so as to get the shots from the different angles and at different ranges. For instance, a topical action which was a potential picture for cover illustration must essentially be captured and recaptured not only in black and white but with colour camera. In photoplay, greater emphasis is laid on pictures than verbal expressions; dialogue is, as a matter of fact, complimentary to pictures therefore a lot of responsibility rested on the photographer and the editor for a successful production.

The process of performance for photoplay is somehow similar to that of film or movie except that photoplay is static picture while film is motion picture. The editor is the equivalent of the director in motion picture (therefore a great responsibility rests on his shoulders) while the photographer is the equivalent of cameraman in motion pictures.

#### 4.2. Photographic arts

Photography is a principal medium of expression in *Atoka* photoplay magazine. It is interesting to note that acting and photographing take place simultaneously. The art of photography is dependent on acting, and it is a process of making the fleeting and transient art of acting permanent in visual form. Photography is the art, science and practice of creating durable images by recording light or other electromagnetic radiation, either electronically by means of an image sensor or chemically by means of a light-sensitive material such as photographic film. Photography is a mechanical process through which desired images are focused by a camera lens and in the process light is reflected or emitted from objects into a real image on the light-sensitive surface inside a camera. This is processed electronically and stored in a digital image file for subsequent display for processing. The image is subjected to chemical activities so as to develop them into visible images either negative or positive. This however depends on the purpose of the photographic material and the method of processing. A negative image on film is traditionally used to photographically create a positive image on a paper base, known as a print, either by using an enlarger or by contact printing.

Photography as a narrative device in *Atoka* production is quite technical. The movement of the camera and the angle of the camera are two vital factors in photography. These constitute what is called *shots* in photography, shots are usually described in relation to a particular image or subject. Camera in the print media is a visual medium that serves both technical and fictional purposes.

These dual purposes are basically attained through camera movement. Camera movement implies the manipulation of the camera to capture objects. Stressing the functional purpose of photographs, Enwezor and Zaya in Adéèkó (2012:354) maintains that

for photographs to have any meaning beyond their functions as memento mori and as instruments of evidence and record, we must acknowledge another stabilizing factor: the gaze, that which Gordon Bleach has aptly termed the “negotiated space of viewing.

“Negotiated space of viewing” entails variables like gaze, posture, and outlook. Beyond this however, like Enwezor and Zaya opined, “photographic practices should be seen not as completely natural chemical reactions but as results of the immersion of chemical and optical machineries in local socio-cultural conditions” And as argued by Geoffrey Batchen, “camera placement, the position of the photographer in relationship to the subject, and the ‘natural’ environment selected by the photographer to enact the subject’s authenticity” are all fundamental factors in photography (Adéèkó, 2012:355). In other words, the background, that is the environment, and in this context setting, coupled with other peculiarities, is principal to attainment of photographic objectives; all these are basically applicable to the photographic art of *Atóka* photoplay magazine. Various camera shots are employed in *Atóka* as visual compliments to aid clarity and comprehension, the common ones that were peculiar to *Atóka* productions are highlighted here.

The peculiar shots in *Atóka* photoplay magazine were wide shots (WS), medium close-up (MCU), close-up (CU), extreme close-up (ECU), and cut-in. Wide shot, otherwise called long shot or full shot, presents the full frame of the subject; mid shot shows some part of the subject in more detail; medium close up is a half way between mid shot and close up; while in close up, a certain feature or part of the subject takes up the whole frame. Extreme close up is a shot of great emphasis that shows extreme detail while cut-in shows some part of the subject in detail (Akangbe, 2014: 281).

### **4.3. Publishing Arts**

Publishing is a profession of multifarious professionals which include author, editor, assessor, typesetter/compositor, illustrator, graphic artist/designer, indexer, lithographer, printer, binder, marketer, etc. The production of *Atóka* also entails aspects of publishing which are discussed below.

*Manuscript Acquisition:* Basically, publishing arts take off with manuscript generation and there are two types of manuscripts. These are solicited and unsolicited manuscripts. (Aniyi, 2009; Emenanjo, 2010). Unsolicited manuscripts are those manuscripts that are not sought or demanded by the publishers while solicited manuscripts are those that publishers request directly from authors. In the production of *Atóka*, we could talk of both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts. At the very beginning, manuscripts were solicited. For instance, the maiden edition of *Atóka* was the Late Hubert Ogunde's *Yorùbá Ronú* which was followed by his *Ológbòdúdú* Numbers 1 and 2; then Kólá Ògúnmolá's *Òmùtí* Numbers 1 and 2; Ogunde's *Àròpin N Tènyàn* Numbers 1, 2 and 3; Dúró Ladipò's *Morèmi* Numbers 1 and 2; and then *Awo Mímó* Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4; also by Ogunde.<sup>8</sup> Ogunde was specially contacted by WABP for the manuscripts of those plays. When *Atóka* had become known however, reverse became the case as manuscript sourcing became unsolicited. Manuscripts in this context were synopsis of plays submitted for production consideration. Drama manuscripts are usually in dialogue format but the synopsis of *Atóka* was in prose. This is because the synopsis is meant to guide the performers to build the play proper. Again, unlike in publishing where a manuscript is readily subjected to origination and design, the *Atóka* manuscript would be subjected to play-making process: casting, rehearsal, performance and shooting before publishing activities could begin. In the hey days of *Atóka*, WABP had more than two hundred manuscripts on queue at a point in time. Practically, every performing company wanted to be published in *Atóka* which was the rave of the moment. As Oyèèwólé Olówómojúòrè puts it<sup>9</sup>, the queue of manuscripts was so long that for two years it might not get to the turn of some theatre companies. Some were even ready to have their plays published for free. Manuscript assessment was usually carried out by the editor. The indices of assessment were the quality of the story, entertainment potentialities, educational values and sales promise. After rehearsals, performance and shooting, the editor then embarked on editing to prepare the play for production.

*Editing* is a professional operation of technically preparing a manuscript for publication. It is an act and art of selecting, arranging and presenting a written piece in a readable form. Editing is a process and it is procedural (Adesánóyè, 1995; Okwilagwe, 2001; Aniyi, 2009, Emenanjo, 2010, Igudia, 2012). Editing photoplay magazine was a sequential and procedural process. It involved transcribing the recorded dialogue from tape, editing of the transcribed text and editing of the pictures. It was after this that a dummy of the publication would be prepared and passed to the lithographic unit for the production of what could be called the galleys. Thereafter, the galleys

would be edited until it became error-free and the camera-ready copy (CRC) was obtained. In carrying out these series of operations, the editorial unit, the photography unit, the paste-up unit, and the lithography unit were all co-players. In the production of *Atóka*, the recorded dialogue of actors and actresses was usually transcribed, and this marked the beginning of in-house activities after returning from location.

*Transcription* is the art of transferring recorded information from tape or its equivalent to paper in written form. It is the conversion of oral information to written form. It was the task of the editor to personally transcribe the recorded dialogues of the actor and actresses. Transcription is a very laborious task as it is quite slow and painstaking. Clarity of voices and audibility are essential for accurate transcription. Transcription was followed by editing of dialogue. *Editing of dialogues* is carried out by the editor. Dialogue editing is a careful and thoughtful process of selecting right expressions to match pictures to build a play. It is a critical exercise which entails re-arrangement of the structure, outright elimination and substitution of expressions. According to Ògúndèjì (1981:11), "it is also possible for the editor to alter or even reconstruct the dramatic dialogue to suit his own purpose, though this is applicable to all print media".

Usually, the recorded dialogue could be long, lengthy, and atimes watery, verbose and winding. It was the duty of the editor to perform a linguistic surgery on such dialogue by summarising it in rich and concise language. By nature, photoplay does not tolerate lengthy expressions because it is the photograph that is of greater essence than the dialogue which is merely complimentary. Moreover, an edition of photoplay has a limited page extent of 32 pages, including all other additives. By additives we mean all the supplements to the drama in the magazine. Therefore, needless waste of words with repetitions and undue wordiness do not arise. The 32 page format was a leaf borrowed directly from *African Film* which also had 32 pages. As a matter of fact, the dialogue of photoplay depends a lot on the creative ingenuity and linguistic competence of the editor as the long expressions recorded on location become reasonably fragmented and logically summarised in the hands of the editor who must, in addition to his multi-talents, be a wordsmith in his right. It is evident that the editor of photoplay enjoys a limitless liberty as regard the composition of dialogue, among others. This prompts Ògúndèjì (1981: 8 – 12) to submit that "the editor can interfere with the structure of the play and may decide to even change the title of the play". He cited the example of Oyin Adéjòbí's *Èkùró Olójà* which was



published under the title *Ènìyàn Şòro*. Àkàngbé (2005: 74) also remarked that Léré Pàímó's play titled *Ìdájó* as a stage play also became *Oluèsan* in *Atóka*.

In composing the dialogue, the editor employs three devices. These are speech balloon, thought bubble and cap prints. Speech balloon is the verbal expression of the character which is carefully placed beside, on top or below the picture in the frame without obstructing the visibility of the photograph in any way. Thought bubble is what Ògúndèjì (1981: 8 – 12) called “thought balloons”. Thought bubble presents the thought going on in the mind of the character so the thought is graphically represented in bubble oozing out of her/his head. It should be noted that when thought bubble is employed, speech balloon does not exist. Thought bubble is therefore a substitution for speech balloon. Cap print is the third creative device. Cap prints are what Ògúndèjì (1981: 8-12) called “bold prints”. These are texts, written in capital letters and boxed in a rectangle and served as comments by the editor. Cap prints served multiple purposes at various times by representing stage direction to aid reader's understanding. They also served as linkers by giving additional information that would assist the reader to link the previous happening in the story with the new. This is what Adeleke (1995:24) called “vacuum-fillers and ‘bridges’ to aid reader's comprehension by linking the previous action with the new”. At other times however, the use of cap prints may be redundant and repetitive and therefore adding no meaning or value.

*Editing the Pictures:* Editing the pictures is of great importance because the story is summarily told in pictures. The pictures present the characters in action. The plot of the story is presented through the sequential concatenation arrangement of the pictures. While the editor is not necessarily writing the story anew, his creative ingenuity, imaginative prowess and sense of artistry will be required to synthesise and sew the pictures together like pieces of clothe to make an organic creative garment. Several pictures are taken at locations and their films would be developed in the dark room into negatives in small sizes. After developing the films, the bright negative films would then be selected by the editor for the photographer to print. The selected ones would be printed in black and white in passport-like sizes. When the editor and his team were satisfied with the selection, he would now prepare a 32-page dummy which was the normal size of an edition of *Atóka*. *Dummy* is the replica or prototype of a publication. It is a temporary and a make-believe copy. It serves as a guide in production. The picture for each page would be selected and pasted on the dummy. Also the dialogue for each picture would also be prepared. Each picture was numbered

and the corresponding speeches that make up the dialogue was equally given the same number. The desired production size of each picture was also indicated on each picture by the editor. A page of *Atóka* could contain a minimum of two pictures and a maximum of six pictures depending on the size. Thereafter, the dummy would be returned to the photographer with the desired size of each picture to be reprinted in the dark room in the sizes indicated. As for the dialogue, it would be given to the typist who would type them out. It is remarkable to point out that when *Atóka* was newly established, typesetting of the dialogue was being outsourced to one Mr. Adéyemí, a staff of West African Examinations Council (WAEC) at Yaba in Lagos state.<sup>10</sup>

*Editing the Proofs:* In editing the proofs, the editor of *Atóka* photoplay embarked on copy editing and assumes the responsibilities of a copy editor. At this stage, the editor must display a presence of mind and unfettered consciousness by marrying happenings with facts, pictures with dialogue, and actions with utterances. He should also be able to detect minor contradictions of names, places, locations, action, expressions, etc. The *Atóka* editor should exhibit versatility in Yoruba language by displaying a mastery of the orthography, history, culture, tradition, custom, mores, arts and crafts of the language. He should be versed in the house style of his publishing outfit. He must know the features and content of *Atóka* in detail, he must be conversant with its characteristics and properties so as to maintain a true-to-type publication at all time. To a great extent, these rules of thumb were adhered to but there was a general failure in the area of orthography throughout the life span of *Atóka* particularly as regard tone marking. There was no single edition that had its texts tone marked.

*Cover Concept:* The cover is the outermost layer of a publication. It serves three basic purposes which we called *three Ps*. It is usually meant to protect, preserve and project the title. The cover is indeed a promotional tool and as such it is designed with that intention. A book cover is divided into three main parts. These are the front cover, the spine and the back cover. The front cover must be made attractive and enduring. It is designed with a concept in mind. The spine is the spinal cord of a publication. It is the only un-open end of the book. In most cases, periodicals such as magazines, newspapers, bulletins, newsletters, etc. do not have discernible spine. The back cover is the concluding part of the cover. In books, it bears the blurb which advertises the book and may give the author's profile. In *Atóka* photoplay magazine, the cover was also designed with special attention but its back cover bears no blurb but advert. The shots for the cover were

carefully and specially spotted and taken. Multiple topical and action photographs were taken and developed out of which the best would be selected in the course of origination and design. The covers of all the editions of *Atóka* were in processed colours. At the beginning, the digital separation of the cover films was done in the United Kingdom. It should be remarked that all but one of the covers of the editions of *Atóka* bore artist impression and not the photographs of the performers. This was Oyin Adéjòbí's *Àjàṣorò*, Volume 26 Number 2 Series No. 71 of February 1971.<sup>11</sup>

The contents of the attractive and colourful cover include the name of the magazine – *Atóka* – in bold print at the top left hand corner of the front cover. It is under this that we have other publication index such as the series number, volume, month and year of publication and the price listed. Also on this segment we have the logo of the magazine which is a bird named *Atóka* elegantly perching on a tree branch. The name given to the magazine was actually derived from its logo – *eye Atóka*. Linguistically, the word *atóka* is a noun derived from the verb *tóka* which means 'to point'; *Atóka* literally therefore means 'pointer' and denotatively 'index'. By implication, *Atóka* photoplay magazine is an index of the history, politics, economy, religion, culture and the value system of the society. On the top right handside is the title of the play in bold prints and under it is the name of the theatre company that produced it and also the number of that edition, be it part one, part two, part three, etc. The parts: *Apá kinni*, *Apá kejì*, *Apá keta*, etc. are usually boxed. All these occupied one quarter of the entire cover page up while the cover picture occupied the remaining three quarter of the page. It must be emphasised that each part of a title came with its own different cover. For instance, *Volume 21* titled *Tení bégì ló jù* by Dúró Ladipò was produced in three parts with *Number 1* as *Series 54*, *Number 2* as *Series 55* and *Number 3* as *Series 56* with all of them having distinct covers. The same is applicable to *Volume 22* titled *Àsírí Bàbà Ìbejì* by Akin Ògúngbè which was produced in four parts with *Number 1* as *Series 57*, *Number 2* as *Series 58*, *Number 3* as *Series 59* and *Number 4* as *Series 60*. *Olúmo* by Omilani Theatre was produced in five parts, *Ìpádàbò Odùduwà* by Oyin Adéjòbí was in three parts, *Wàhálà ñ pàniyàn* by Kólá Ògúnmolá was in two parts, etc. with all of them having their distinct covers. It should be remarked that at the onset, both the inner pages and the cover were produced with bond paper as seen in the examples of Ogunde's *Yorùbá Ronú*, Dúró Ládipò's *Mòremí*, Oyin Adéjòbí's *Àjàṣorò*, etc. Later on however, the inner pages remained in bond paper while the cover was produced with art paper.

The readiness of the cover marked the end of origination and design processes and opened the door to printing.

*Printing:* This is a technical process of reproducing texts and images on machines for mass consumption typically with ink and paper using a printing press. It is an essential part, indeed a concluding part, of publishing activities. *Pre-press* was the first stage in the printing of *Atóka*. It had two stages which were filming and plate-making. Films were made from the camera ready copy (CRC) which the editor passed to the lithographic unit. The pre-press process was basic to attaining good or poor printing quality so the lithographer usually ensured that stripping was perfect, imposition was accurate, chemical application was neither excessive nor insufficient, and burning on the plate-making machine was timely. When *Atóka* plates had been made, the lithographer would pass the plates to the machine room for press activities. *Press* implies mass printing of a publication from plates to paper, card or board on a printing machine. The first thing the operator would do on receiving the plates was to examine and assess its quality. This was quality control measure. Having been satisfied, he would fix the plates on the printing machine, load paper on the machine, apply ink and water as appropriate and commence mass printing. *Post-press* was the concluding set of activities in printing. These concluding activities are called *finishing*. The post-press activities of *Atóka* included folding, collating, stitching, trimming, checking and repairs, and wrapping. *Atóka* employed a simple binding method called stitching with two stapled points at the two ends. After stitching came trimming which was followed by checking and repair. Checking was a careful scanning of each copy page by page to detect pages with defamation such as unevenness of ink, blotting, scumming, dirtiness, poor registration, etc. The final activity was wrapping and delivery to agents for marketing.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

New Historicism as an approach to literary criticism is based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of the time, place and historical circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated work of art or text. In other words, a text should not be studied as a mere literary composition but rather there should be a proper understanding of the relationship between a text and the political, social and economic circumstances in which it originated. *Atóka* was indeed a social and cultural construct shaped by more than one consciousness. First, it was a product of economic quest, a production quest to put printing machines acquired by Academy Press into

maximum use and yield. Two, it was a product of the young Ségún Sófowótè's creative ingenuity and artistry. And third, social wise, *Atóka* took a queue from the "look books" such as *African Film* and *Boom* that permeated the post-independent English-speaking African countries, including Nigeria. *Atóka* as a media is a socio-historical product of its time in that the taste, sentiment, and tenor of its age were all complimentary to its acceptance and boom. It reigned at a time in Yoruba society when the stage was the revered home of drama and printing was the height of technology. The stage was highly patronised both in the city and towns so *Atóka* readily became an acceptable supplementary art. The advent of the video technology, among other factors, however scuttled its reign as it could no longer satisfy the fleeting trends of the society. It gradually lost its entertainment grip and ran out of fashion.

The socio-historical relevance of *Atóka* cannot be over-emphasised. The pivotal role of *Atóka* in preparing the Yorùbá theatre practitioners for the eras of celluloid films and the home video is indubitable. The photoplay experience of performance and shooting at locations was an enhancing prelude to the filmic and cinematographic exploits of the practitioners in later years.<sup>12</sup> The *Atóka* project therefore exposed them to camera lens of still photography which was preparatory to the lens of the motion picture cameras. A corollary to this was the archival significance of *Atóka* publications. A serious successive deficiency of the practitioners of Ogunde dramatic tradition is poor documentation and record keeping. Their plays were not scripted. The tapes of radio drama and television productions were wiped off almost immediately to admit other recordings. Personal archives and libraries were virtually non-existent. It was only through *Atóka* medium that tangible documentation is obtainable. It is also remarkable that *Atóka* debuted with the play *Yorùbá Ronú* by Ogunde. The satirical play was quite popular and its socio-political import was clearly understood and appreciated by a greater percentage of the Yorùbá population. Moreover the ban placed on Ogunde Theatre Company by the late Ládòkè Akíntólá had just recently been lifted by Colonel Adékúnlé Fájuyì, so there was both sympathy and adoration for the play as well as admiration for the photoplay media which was novel and unique. *Atóka*'s entrance into the market was therefore powerful, authoritative and laudable.

At this juncture, it is worthwhile to venture into a critique of the three modal arts of *Atóka* photoplay magazine. The dramatic art of *Atóka* photoplay magazine is a popular art that is premised on the convention of Ogunde dramatic tradition. These conventions included collaboration among different theatre groups where by artistes from other performing companies would participate free-

of-charge in another group's production and logically, the beneficiary of such assistance would readily reciprocate when occasion demanded. The tradition of the company owner playing the lead role is another tradition while improvisational approach to play making through collective creation is another. These three peculiarities of Ogunde dramatic tradition also featured in *Atóka* photoplay production. Technically speaking, the dramatic arts of *Atóka* had its peculiarities nay cut-and-sew approach. The dramatic arts were not wholly implemented. First, there was no proper scripting as the so-called script was a synopsis of the story line of the play. Second, there was no audition. The casting method was self-styled as the players of the key roles were virtually identified by everybody based on seniority and status in the troupe.

On photographic art, *Atóka* rightly reflected the technology of its age. If *Atóka* were to be resuscitated, the photographic story would be different. We are in digital age today where every act is digitalised. Photographs are now taken with digital camera that enhance sharpness, clarity, size and image. Pictures can be edited, postures can be changed at will and images can be imposed on one another or mounted on an entirely different background and environment. Therefore the development process, the dark room activities and the attendant labour would not only be drastically reduced but almost eliminated with enhanced results. Barring its susceptibility to abuse, deceit and manipulation, the dexterity and innovative prowess of technology has made photography adventurous and interesting. No twenty first century magazine will possibly employ black and white photographs for its production as *Atóka* did in its age.

Publishing-wise, the method of manuscript sourcing for *Atóka* was peculiar and far from the established norm. In the area of editing, we discovered a tremendous empowerment for the editor far from it is in the publishing practice. For instance, in *Atóka*, the editor summarily became the author at the stages of editing the pictures and dialogue since he solely determined and approved the right pictures and their accompanying dialogue. Printing wise, the quality of printing of *Atóka* was excellent for its time and age as Academy Press ranked among the best printers in Africa then. It was also reputed for its array of state-of-the-arts printing machines. A comparison of printing in the days of *Atóka* and now shows a tremendous transformation. *Atóka* was produced in the days of negative films. Today, there has been a tremendous technological progress in printing arts and science. Printing is now highly digitalised. Negative film is completely eliminated. From the computer, camera-ready-copy (CRC) can be printed directly on laser film for plate making. Today, Desktop publishing (DTP) is the trend as typewritten (monospaced) printout has been jettisoned

for typographic (proportional) printout. Other wonderful wonders of printing technology include Computer-to-plate, Computer-to-press, Computer-to-print, and Direct imaging, among several others.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has examined *Atóka* photoplay magazine as a three-modal arts and identified dramatic arts, photographic arts and publishing arts as its principal arts. It also traced the history of photoplay magazine by dwelling on the evolution of *Atóka* photoplay magazine.

## NOTES

1. Professor P.A. Ògúndèjì, the supervisor of this study, was the first to link *Atóka* with *African Film* in the pre-study discussion he had with me on September 21, 2008.
2. Mr. Múrítálá Oyèéwólé Olówómojúòrè *a.k.a. Kèngbè Òrò*, a former editor of *Atóka*, made this submission in the course of an interview with the researcher on *Atóka* in his house at Àkóbò area in Ìbàdàn in 2007.
3. This was submitted by Pa. Şégún Şófowótè, the founding editor of *Atóka*, on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 at Grail land in Lagos during the researcher's interview with him.
4. The revelation was also made by Pa. Şófowótè.
5. According to Pa. Şófowótè, Mr. Raşìdì Onikòyí, his close friend, was the first appointed *Atóka* editor. It was Mr. Onikòyí who actually recommended him (Şófowótè) to WABP as a very capable hand.
6. *Atóka* was initially called *Yorùbá Photoplay Series*, it was later that the name *Atóka*, suggested by Mr Abimbádè Oládèjò, the company's photographer, emerged.
7. The concept of modal arts was a coinage by the researcher.
8. The order of production of *Atóka* from inception was as listed. Late Hubert Ogunde, Kólá Ògúnmolá, and Dúró Ladipò were all contacted for the scripts of *Yorùbá Ronú*, *Ológbòdúdú*, *Òmùtí*, *Àròpin N Tèniyàn*, *Mòrèmi*, and *Awo Mímó* by WABP, hence they were solicited manuscripts.

9. This was also revealed by Mr. Múritálá Oyèéwólé Olówómojúòrè in the course of an interview with the researcher on *Atòka* in his house at Àkóbò area in Ìbàdàn in July 2007.
10. Pa. Şégún Şófowótè stated this in the course of an interview the researcher had with him on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. In the later years however, WABP did the typesetting in-house.
11. The editor of the magazine then, Pa. Şégún Şófowótè, confessed that that edition bore artist impression rather than photograph due to the tardiness of the theatre company.

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