

## METAPHORICAL ROOT FORMS OF CASSIA TORA IN PAINTING

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### Abstract

Over the years, artists across various art movements have used metaphorical approach in diverse ways in the production of artworks to express emotion, feeling, notion, idea and to tell certain stories about the society. In modern art movements, such as postimpressionism, symbolism, expressionism, cubism, surrealism, among others, metaphor played vital role in relating their artworks to the socio-cultural issues. It is still used in contemporary art by installation and conceptual artists for drawing analogies with their assembled forms. With the works done in this direction, notwithstanding, metaphor still has a lot to offer art, as it establishes coherent links between content and forms in a composition. Root forms have been vastly used in linguistics and other fields as metaphors for diverse expressions. This however, is not the case with painting, despite its interesting visual features. This study has observed some root inspired artworks as well as works that adopted metaphorical approach. It faces the challenge of providing creative practical solutions to the following questions. What are the contributions of the artists who worked with metaphorical rendition approach? What are the gaps left in the rendition of root forms? What would this study accomplish by creating compositions in painting through metaphorical rendition of root forms of Cassia tora? These are the major questions underpinning this study. This paper reviews some artworks related to the study.

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**Keywords:** Painting, Root Forms, Cassia tora, Metaphorical

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### Introduction/Background of the Study

Roots of plants are interesting creative imageries from natural environment, which have not been given adequate attention by contemporary Nigerian artists. The natural environment is full of plants with various roots systems, such as taproots, which could serve as sources of inspiration for artistic expression in Nigeria. Plant roots can be read in different ways and serve various purposes as the subject of root is broad. The imageries from plant roots can aid artists, in creative expression. Captivated by the root forms of Cassia tora and their creative possibilities, the researcher embarked on a task to develop compositions in painting that would thrive on metaphorical rendition of root forms.

In contemporary art, some artists use metaphorical approach in the production of their works. Through metaphorical rendition, an artist can use a dissimilar image from a composition to represent a person, place or thing. A metaphor creates a link between different ideas through visual image that suggests a particular association or point of similarity. An artwork, produced through a metaphorical rendition of forms is known as visual metaphor, pictorial metaphor or analogical juxtaposition (Nordquist, 2017).

In linguistics, metaphor is used to express imagery in words. It is a figure of speech that equates two different things for the sake of comparison or symbolism in order to suggest a resemblance. It is a word or phrase used to compare two unlike objects, ideas, thoughts or feelings to provide a clearer description. For instance, 'going back to my root' means going home. Root forms have been extensively used in linguistics as verbal metaphor. Munteanu (2014) observes that, "The 'language' that writers and painters use finds its parallels in form, structure and intent." This explains the importance of metaphor in creating compositions.

Metaphor is incorporated in visual and auditory art, to portray events, thoughts and imagery. (Carrol, 2001) claims that some art works are considered as metaphoric, because they communicate in same way as verbal metaphors. It is not mainly the exploration of form in a medium that results into a work that is metaphorical. In other words, visual metaphor is idea-based. It is a combination of form and content. It is the product of rendition of form and its related story. Thus, a composition in painting with root forms must be accompanied by related stories in order to be referred to as a visual metaphor.

Artists through the ages have been motivated by certain perceptions in articulating and developing their concepts and compositions. It is observed that from the Stone Age to the early beginning of Modernism, art was based on realistic style with little consideration to metaphor. Some of the Modern art movements that used metaphorical approach include Postimpressionism, Fauvism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, Cubism,

Dada and Surrealism, (Kleiner, 2009). In Postmodernism, metaphorical rendition of forms is common with Conceptual art, Minimalism, Video art, Performance art and Installation art, (Kleiner, 2014). Metaphorical rendition of forms is further elucidated by the works of some contemporary artists, including Jerry Buhari, Mu'azu Sani, El Anatsui, Jacob Jari, Eva Obodo and Hadieh Shafie, (Buhari 2015), (Sani, 2014), (Jari, 2012), (Arthouse Foundation, 2015) and (Castro, 2016). Despite this aesthetic development, neither the metaphorical rendition of forms nor the use of root forms has been exhausted in painting.

Metaphorical rendition of forms in painting continues to be a vital approach by some contemporary artists, such as Nnenna Okore and El Anatsui, (Gauss, 2014) and (Enwezor, 2012). However, root forms appear to be a subject for developing composition in painting yet to be given attention by Nigerian artists. Roots of *Cassia tora* have posed little interest to Nigerian artists, despite the wide spread of *Cassia tora* plant in the country. *Cassia tora* is an element of nature that is known as a wild weed. It grows alongside other grass and shrubs in fields and bushes. Due to its physical nature as a perceived unwanted plant, it has posed less creative interest for artists. There is rare record of paintings done on this subject matter. A few works available are basically agricultural or botanic illustrations of *Cassia tora*, (Fig.1 – 4).

Nonetheless, some artists have studied elements in nature especially roots in the production of their artworks. Vincent Van Gogh, Ishrath Humairah, Dayla Luttwak, Mary Shiros and others have explored roots alongside elements and principles of design (which include: line, colour, shape, form, balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm and texture), (Van Gogh Museum, 2017), (Humairah, 2010), (Luttwak, 2010) and (Schiros, 2017). Others made significant contributions to knowledge in the study of singular elements of art and nature and their dynamics, which they have applied on different objects and subject matters, few artists have solely studied the linear movements, shapes and forms of plant roots for the purpose of artistic expression. Based on the literature review the few artists who have used plant roots in producing artworks, have not carried out a scholarly exploration of root forms in a broad perspective that is systematic, for painterly expressions.

*Cassia tora* is regarded as weed by the agronomists and by most farmers. This subject-matter, according to Pankaj (2002), is also known as *C.tora*, sickle sienna, sickle pod, *tora*, coffee pod, *tovara*, *chakvad* and *foetid cassia*. Its Hausa name is 'Tafasa'. It is a dicot legume with healing properties, mostly found in Asian and African countries. *Cassia tora* is well distributed in Zaria and grows in every town in Nigeria. Roots are the veins which sustain life of plants by providing support, water and nutrients. Roots are the organs of plants that typically lie below the surface of the soil. However, some roots, known as aerial roots grow up above the ground. There are also fibrous roots, adventurous roots and tuberous roots. Roots of *Cassia tora* lie below the soil. The root pattern is composed of a taproot, branch roots and spherical nodes. Visually, it possesses design elements consisting of line, shape, form, texture and depth which provide a creative impetus for this research to create paintings using metaphorical approach.

Various contemporary artists such as Barbara Snyder, Cedar Lee, Gary Tonge, Dayla Luttwak, among others, are inspired by root forms in creating works of art. Barbara Snyder was enchanted by the roots of a fallen giant Sequoia in California, which she developed into a realistic composition in painting. Despite the beauty of her realistic depiction, the root forms were not rendered metaphorically. Dayla Luttwak uses steel to realistically produce root-inspired sculptures. The researcher acknowledges their concepts, philosophies, materials, styles and techniques, in consideration with the elements and principles of design inherent in the root forms, especially line, colour, texture, depth and movement. A closer look at the root inspired works of Snyder, Lee, Tonge and Luttwak, shows that there is little attempt at rendering root forms metaphorically. The artists did not use the root forms as metaphors; rather their aesthetic directions were confined to the beauty of the paintings. The common practice by these artists is a naturalistic representation of roots. In most of the paintings, other plant and environmental imageries are added to the composition. These fact points to the need for an in-depth study of root forms, through metaphorical approach, in order to exploit their creative possibilities in painting.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The use of plant roots to create painting composition, especially in transforming space and forms, remains one of the areas that have not been given scholarly attention by Nigerian painters.

## **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to create paintings by metaphorical rendition of the root forms of *Cassia tora*. The objectives are to:

- explore the dynamics of *Cassia tora*'s root pattern in painting;
- infuse vibrant colours into patterns of taproots, branch roots and nodes of *Cassia tora*;
- generate compositions in painting with the nodes of *Cassia tora*;
- create paintings that encompass root forms and non-figurative vegetal space; and
- produce root-inspired paintings using unconventional materials.

## **Research Questions**

What are the dynamic features of *Cassia tora*'s root patterns that are ideal for painting?

In what ways can an artist infuse vibrant colours into root patterns of *Cassia tora*?

By what means can composition be generated in painting with the nodes of *Cassia tora*?

How can paintings be composed with root forms and non-figurative vegetal space?

How can root-inspired works be made using unconventional materials?

This study is significant due to its deviation from the traditional way of interpreting a subject matter, such as root in painting, using root forms of *Cassia tora* plant to create compositions in painting. Furthermore, this study is justified as it redefines existing methodologies for rendition of root forms, within the context of contemporary art practices in Nigeria. The common practice by artists working with root forms is mostly naturalistic and semi-naturalistic methods of interpreting plant roots. The Scope and Delimitations of this study will be restricted to the use of roots as a source of inspiration in painting. It focuses on the roots of *Cassia tora* specie (Leguminosae Family of Plants), located in Zaria, Nigeria. The choice is due to its distinct visual characteristics that are not common with the root systems of other plants, like the umbrella-shaped branch roots, a taproot and rhomboid and oval nodes.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study hinges on certain features of Post-Impressionism, with particular reference to the semi-abstract paintings of Vincent Van Gogh, as exemplified by "Tree roots and trunks" (Fig. 5). Post-Impressionists tenets were based on the portrayal of emotion, intellect and visual imagery. They deployed vivid colours, often thick application of paint, and real-life subject matter. Van Gogh was more inclined to distort forms for expressive effect, and used unnatural or arbitrary colours. He redefined forms to express his emotions. Van Gogh's dedication to articulating the inner spirituality of man and nature, in the light of Japanese wood-cut prints, by the Ukiyo-e School of Painting, led to a unique fusion of style and content that resulted in dramatic, imaginative, rhythmic, and emotional canvases, (Adams, 2011).

His personal temperament came to symbolize the romantic image of the tortured artist. Van Gogh used an impulsive, gestural application of paint and symbolic colours to express subjective emotions. As stated by Kleiner (2009) and Adams (2011), Van Gogh "explored the capabilities of colours and distorted forms to express his emotions as he confronted nature." This study adopts Van Gogh's approach of metaphorical rendition of form and vibrant colour palette, thus serving as a major stimulus in articulating a concept in painting with root forms of *Cassia tora*.

Critical ideas dwell on certain theory of causality by Immanuel Kant and aesthetic theories of other thinkers. In his philosophical theory on causality and aesthetics, Kant found that it is possible to generate knowledge with universal validity through the analysis of cause and effects. In the 'Critique of Pure Reason', Kant (1998) affirms that,

I call intelligible that in an object of sense which is not itself appearance. Accordingly, if that which must be regarded as appearance in the world of sense has in itself a faculty which is not an object of intuition through which it can be the cause of appearances, then one can consider the causality of this being in two aspects, as intelligible in its action as a thing in itself, and as sensible in the effects of that action as an appearance in the world of sense. Of the faculty of such a subject we would accordingly form an empirical and at the same time an

intellectual concept of its causality, both of which apply to one and the same effect.

From the above, Kant upholds that, true knowledge can only be generated through a combination of experience and intuition (pure reason). In terms of knowledge production in painting, this is corroborated by Graeme Sullivan's theory for a research in visual art. Sullivan (2010) states: "Knowledge creation in visual arts is recursive and constantly undergoes change as new experiences 'talk back' through the process and progress of making art in research settings." By intuition or pure reason, Kant refers to reasoning without bias. Kant's causal theory is essential to this study, as experimentation with root forms of *Cassia tora*, metaphor, and symbolic reflection, constitute the creative frames of this study.

Literature review is divided into two parts. In the first part, dominated by art theories and history, the researcher reviewed the roots of *Cassia tora* in terms of its origin and visual characteristics. Modernism was reviewed with emphasis on Post-impressionism in terms of their style and techniques. Also contemporary art, in terms of practice, materiality and contents was considered. In the second part, the researcher examined related works consisting of root-inspired paintings, root-inspired works in other media, works done with unconventional materials, and works of some contemporary artists. A review of Vincent van Gogh's paintings, gave insight to luminous colours and metaphorical rendition of forms. A review of contemporary and conceptual art gave insight to metaphorical rendition of forms and social commentary, which are vital to the realization of this study. A review of aesthetic theories of Immanuel Kant, Rudolf Arnheim, Susanne Langer, Graeme Sullivan and other philosophers were essential in sharpening the researcher's thinking and methodology for this study.

A variety of root-inspired works analysed, showed the area of challenges and contributions of various artist using root forms to produce painting. Metallic Sculptures of Dayla Luttwak are a naturalistic representation of roots, with total elimination of the upper part of the plant, while most artists included the upper part of the plant and other natural imageries of the environment in the composition. A review of mixed media works made with unconventional materials, gave insight to the use of raffia, jute, polythene, beads, woollen yarns, and off-cut fabrics at the last phase of the study. It acquainted the researcher with collage technique.

The works of contemporary artists, such as El Anatsui, Mu'azu Mohammed Sani, Philip Obed Gushem, Jerry Buhari and Hadie Shafie are not physically related to root forms, but were reviewed in terms of their metaphorical content. The creative ideas, and philosophies of various artists reviewed were taken into consideration while creating various compositions in painting with the root forms of *Cassia tora*, using metaphorical approach.



**Fig. 1: Cassia tora Plant at its Natural Habitat, 2016**  
Source: Artist's Collection



**Fig. 2: Cassia tora vs a Hand, 2016**  
Source: Artist's Collection

### Visual Characteristics of the roots of *Cassia tora* plant



**Fig. 3: An illustration of Adult *Cassia tora***

**Source:**

<https://2.imimg.com/data2/RA/RW/IMV...>



**Fig. 4: Roots of Adult *Cassia tora***

**Source:**

<http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpc/doc...>

Fig. 1 is an illustration of a *Cassia tora* plant with buds of seeds, flowers, leaves, the stem and roots. Fig. 2 is a picture of *Cassia tora*'s roots, replete with a taproot, nodes and branch roots.

#### Review of Related Works

**Vincent van Gogh**, to a great extent was self-taught. His dominant symbolic palette, ranges from ochre to vermilion and blue. He wished that his luminous paintings "sung a lullaby with colour", underscoring the expressive role of colour in his art. (Van Gogh Museum, 2017).



**Fig. 5: Tree Roots and Trunks, 1890, Vincent Van Gogh, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 100 cm**

**Source:**

[http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/wwfeatures/wm/live/1280\\_640/images/live/p0/42/7h/p0427hgc.jpg](http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/wwfeatures/wm/live/1280_640/images/live/p0/42/7h/p0427hgc.jpg)

Tree Roots and Trunks (Fig. 3) is a jumble of bright colours and abstract forms. It depicts a slope with tree trunks and roots from trees used for timber, growing in a marl quarry, located around Auvers, in France (Van Gogh Museum, 2017). It is inspired by Van Gogh's wish to express life's struggle, using the imageries of gnarled roots to represent his emotional anguish. At a glance, it depicts a jumble of bright colours and abstract forms, prompting some art historians to identify Van Gogh as an important forerunner of abstract art. On a closer observation, however, the root forms become clearer. The painting is composed of tree roots, other plant imageries and sandy forest floor of brown and yellow beneath them. These imageries are rendered on the canvas with short brushstrokes and outlines. This work is relevant to this study in terms of metaphorical rendition of forms and the use of colour and line.



**Barbara Snyder** is a contemporary artist, practicing in California. She has a passion for photography and the environment, with some interest in seascapes, vineyards, desert, mountains, forest and waterfalls. The major inspiration in her works is the pursuit of "fresh, natural and alive" subjects and scenes (Barbara, 2017). This aesthetic direction is highlighted by the following painting.



**Fig. 6: Roots of a fallen giant Sequoia, 2015, Barbara Snyder, Oil on canvas, 61 x 76 cm**  
Source: <https://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large-5/roots-of-a-fallen-giant-sequoia...>

'Roots of a fallen giant Sequoia' is a realistic rendition of the roots of a giant Sequoia tree in her Californian neighbourhood. There are other similar trees depicted in the background. On the foreground, there are shrubs and grass. The dominant colours of the monochromatic painting are emerald green and yellow ochre. The roughness of the root forms intensifies the textural quality of the painting. The work epitomizes the serenity of a virgin forest. However, there is no attempt by the artist to abstract the root forms, thereby confirming the claim of the researcher that most root inspired paintings are rendered realistically with little attempt at abstraction and metaphoric inclination. She did not draw some analogy from her depiction; she is rather contented with her naturalistic representation. Nonetheless, Barbara's painting enabled the researcher to unravel other visual characteristics of roots.

**Cedar Lee** is a contemporary artist based in Portland USA. She believes that in order to attain a balance of full human experience, people "must be both grounded, in their bodies, honouring and celebrating their roots, and airy, for lack of a better word: active in our minds, experiencing emotions and non-physical connections to others and to all of life" (Lee, 2017).



**Fig. 7: Grounded, 2013, Artist: Cedar Lee, Medium: Oil on Canvas, Size: 120 x 120cm**  
Source: <http://www.artbycedar.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/grounded.jpg>

'Grounded' is a semi-abstract painting, dominated by the tones of blue and sienna. On the picture frame, Cedar depicts a tree standing on top of a hill, with aerial roots. There is an arc of white stroke at the top right side, suggesting the crescent. This is encased by a wavering ring of light brown that echoes the reflection of the moonlight over the serene environment. The background is dominated by the tones of blue representing the sky. The seeming night scene is brought to life by the glittering stars, represented by a swarm of white dots.

The distorted tree at the top left side of the picture plane, as a result of perspective, indicates that the position of the viewer is at the base of the tree. Cedar also foreshortens its height to lay emphasis on its roots. The lower part of the painting is dominated by abstracted roots. The lower half of the picture plane is filled with chequered forms, zigzag lines representing the roots. Her contour-linear use of root forms was very vital in developing chequered compositions with the roots forms of Cassia tora.

**Gary Tonge** is an Art Director, who practices in Canada. His major focus in art is animation, with the challenge of utilizing colour and imageries to generate feelings and emotions in movies. 'Tree Root Canopy' is a still-image, extracted from his animation. It shows another contemporary way of creating root-inspired works, through digital medium. Describing his animation, Tonge (2017) emphasizes that,

This is a concept image illustrating an area with such enormous vegetation that you can actually walk under the roots of larger trees. I always loved the look of "A Bugs life" when they turned mere blades of grass into glowing cathedral-like ceilings and the like; I've just made the foliage larger rather than the characters smaller.



**Fig. 8: Tree Root Canopy, 2005, Gary Tonge, Animation Software**

**Source:**

[https://pre00.deviantart.net/dd9f/th/pre/i/2005/181/9/c/tree\\_root\\_canopy\\_by\\_antifan\\_real.jpg](https://pre00.deviantart.net/dd9f/th/pre/i/2005/181/9/c/tree_root_canopy_by_antifan_real.jpg)

The animation is a realistic composition, consisting of highly exaggerated aerial roots, river, landscape, human figures and cloudy environment. Tonge's animation is necessary to this study. It aided the researcher in accessing root patterns and discovering other ways of rendering root forms in painting.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted the practice-based methodology with historical and observatory qualitative methods, which are peculiar to the visual artist. "I never made a painting as a work of art, it's all research." So says Pablo Picasso, as cited by McNiff (2007). Practice-based Research Methodology is a form of research that strives towards advancing knowledge and understanding using practice, invention of ideas, images, performances or artefacts, where these lead to new or substantially improved theories. It is a research conducted for practice purposes. A pivotal point in practice-based research is the relationship between artefact and the theory. Borgdorff (2012) describes the key in practice-based as the relationship between the practice (what can be shown, displayed, demonstrated, and made) and the theoretical

verbal aspects. There is an element of reflection. The research also involves certain amount of contemplation and writing.

The primary source of data for this study emerged from samples of roots of *Cassia tora*, upon which the foundation of the research is established. Some *cassia tora* plant were uprooted from their natural habitat and brought to the studio, to serve as creative models for the study. Each painting started with perceptual encounter with the roots of *Cassia tora*. The secondary source of data came from the vibrant colours of postimpressionism, allegories, stories, societal affairs and materiality. Ideas came from Intuition, aesthetic speculations, chance encounters, theory reading, library consultations and the internet. Data was sourced from videos, documentaries, books, magazines, journal articles, newspapers and the media, which include social media, radio and TV programmes.

The major instruments used for data collection are the Camera and the sketch pads, for capturing images. Other instruments used include the information and retrieval systems, consisting of CD, DVD, Computer hardware and software, Flash Cards, USB, Bluetooth and Micro SD Cards. Field trip was made to collect samples of roots of *Cassia tora* and other plants.

### **Process/Procedure**

In the process/procedure the researcher was engaged with a variety of studies, in tune with relevant artistic theories, leading to the production of paintings. This was achieved through the use of a variety of media, drawings and colour studies undertaken within the studio and its surrounding environs. Sketches were made of select root samples of *Cassia tora*. These were further developed in colours using various drawing and painting media, including pen, pencil, ink, water colour, pastel, coloured pencils, gouache, acrylics, enamel and oil colours. These media were used interchangeably for the researcher to ascertain which of the medium, or the combination of media that was more suitable to produce a particular painting. Some of the studies are shown on Plates I-IV below.

### **Studies with Pen, Ink and Acrylic**



**Plate I: Tafasa 2015**  
**Pen & Ink on Paper, 46 x 55 cm**



**Plate II: Tafasa Tea, 2015**  
**Ink on Paper, 55 x 46 cm**





**Plate III: Composition (i), 2015**  
Acrylic on Paper, 91 x 124 cm



**Plate IV: Composition (ii), 2015**  
Acrylic on Paper, 124 x 91cm

### **Discussion on selected Paintings Produced**

The paintings produced are grouped into six phases comprising Phase-1: Singular Element, Phase-2: Cross-sections, Phase-3: 'Romeo and Juliet' series, Phase-4: Nodal Forms, Phase-5: Multiple Elements and Phase-6: 'Roots of Fashion' series. The composition of paintings in Singular Element dwells on a root pattern of Cassia tora, replete with a taproot, orchestrated by branch roots and nodes. Cross-sections rely on cross sections of root imageries of Cassia tora. Every painting in the 'Romeo and Juliet' series is composed of two units of Cassia tora's root patterns, while the picture plane of Nodal Forms' composition consists of Cassia tora nodes. Multiple Elements integrates three or more patterns of Cassia tora's roots. However, the compositions in the 'Roots of Fashion' series rely on a combination of Cassia tora's root patterns, unconventional materials and collage technique.

### **Phase-1: Singular Element**



**Plate V: Guerrilla Warrior, 2015**  
Oil Pastel on paper, 91 x 124 cm



**Plate VI: Hero, 2015**  
Oil on Canvass, 112 x 92 cm

Paintings produced under 'Singular Element', lay emphasis at a visual analysis of the subject matter. The realistic paintings rely on singular element of the roots of Cassia tora as well as contrasting backgrounds. Roots of Cassia tora were subjected to a thorough aesthetic examination through close observation, photographing and drawing. There were also various studio experimentations with the root forms of Cassia tora and various painting media. This procedure led to the production of Guerrilla Warrior (Plate V) and Hero (Plate VI) series of paintings. The common theme among the paintings produced at Phase-1, is a view of the risen hero, who defied all odds, in conquering his enemies at a battle field. In each painting, the 'Hero' is suggested by a singular element of Cassia tora, which dominates the picture plane. The major compositional elements among the works are branch roots, a taproot and nodes. There is

distinct variation in colour combination, shape, form and pattern of roots among the paintings. There is also variation in depth and the interaction between space and root forms.

#### **Phase-2: 'Romeo and Juliet' series**



**Plate XI: Romeo and Juliet (i), 2015**  
Oil Pastel on Paper, 91 x 124cm



**Plate XII: Romeo and Juliet (ii), 2015**  
Water Colour on Paper, 91 x 124 cm

'Romeo and Juliet' series of paintings (Plates XI – XII) dwells on double root patterns (Double Elements) of *Cassia tora*. Various root components of *Cassia tora*, consisting of taproots, branch roots and nodes are depicted with limited palette. Nodes are incorporated into the composition. It exhibits similar flexible character as the second painting that is more colourful. In both paintings, the taproots of a set of two roots intertwine each other, expressing the depth of the power of love that intertwined Romeo and Juliet. 'Romeo and Juliet' series serves as a metaphor, expressing the opinion that with time the tribal and religious conflicts affecting the development of Nigeria would fade away, paving way for a country that is united.

#### **Findings**

The main finding of this research is that metaphorical rendition of root forms of *Cassia tora* in painting can be fully attained after the artwork has been practically completed. The last procedure is intuitive, which engaged the researcher in a meaning making process. The researcher utilized the root forms from the paintings to reflect on analogous events, allegories, speculative notions, ideas and stories in Nigeria. Other findings include:

- i. Plates I-II show the paintings created with the dynamic features of *Cassia tora*'s roots, in response to the research questions that states: "What are the dynamic features of *Cassia tora*'s root patterns that are ideal for painting?" The research identified the taproot, branch roots and the nodes as ideal features for painting. It also found that the singular root pattern of *Cassia tora*, which stands out from the background, could be likened to a hero.
- ii. Plates III-IV show the paintings with vibrant colours infused into the patterns of taproot, branch roots and nodes of *Cassia tora*, in response to the research question that states: "In what ways can an artist infuse vibrant colours into root patterns of *Cassia tora*?" The research established that in the light of analogies, the vibrant colours imbue the paintings with social meaning, relating to certain events in Nigeria.

#### **Conclusion**

Deducing from the outcomes of objectives 1 and 2, redefinition of experiences can help people to live a better life. The study is driven by certain precepts of Post-impressionism, which rely on vibrant colours and emotional contents, anchored works of Van Gogh. It dwelled on analogous juxtapositions of forms and contents. The root pattern of *Cassia tora* is umbrella-like in shape, with monochromatic shades of brown. The taproot (central root) is orchestrated by branch roots and nodes.

The researcher saw the opportunity that roots of *Cassia tora* offer in creating paintings. He reckoned the possibility of metaphorical approach in utilizing the root forms, to create compositions. Enchanted by the dynamic patterns of *Cassia tora*, he carried out series of studio experimentation with the root forms of *Cassia tora*, in the light of element and principles of design, as well as aesthetic speculations, allegories, stories and subjective notions. This led to the creation of non-figurative abstract paintings. The final procedure was

the analogous process which aided the research in linking the root forms to some storylines and notions. The paintings produced redefine root forms in diverse ways, as metaphors for inspiration, hope, aspiration, reincarnation, heroism, among others.

This study shows that artists are capable of creating and reviewing knowledge by visually contemplating plant roots in painting. This means that the research has fulfilled the assertion by Read (1977) that art has no limit and that it is everything that can be imagined and expressed. Contemporary artists need to acquire more knowledge of the environment, make sense of them, in order to understand the future. The study therefore, concludes that the metaphorical rendition of the root forms of *Cassia tora* in painting, has created not only visual metaphors that express hope for a better Nigeria but also visual symbols that transcend the phenomena of roots beyond their botanical garden into icons of expression in painting.

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