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ARTICLES

BOOK REVIEWS

RETHINKING THE IGBO-UKWU CHRONOLOGY RIDDLE: RADIOCARBON DATING AND HISTORICAL FUZZY MATH

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Abstract

This study restates the crucial relevance of the Igbo-Ukwu archaeology in West African history. It tackles the persistent questions surrounding the ninth-century date amidst the concerns scholars have raised about carbon dating. The result corroborates the original timeline identified with the artifacts.

Considering the monumental archaeological work Igbo-Ukwu symbolizes, and the heated concerns scholars have raised about the carbon dating, the time is long overdue to take advantage of advances in scientific research to propose a resolution to the lingering questions surrounding the ninth-century date. Since 1970, experts have produced techniques for ameliorating radiocarbon errors, including dendrochronology, and the Uranium-Thorium method (used to recalibrate not to measure), hailed by Batler as "radiocarbon dating's final frontier."[1] Averaged means of the five significant Igbo-Ukwu findings computed from the initial radiocarbon figures, the dendrochronology corrections, and U-Th recalibrations show that Samples 1-2008 (902 CE) and Hv-1514 (923 CE) could not have been anywhere later than the first half of the tenth-century. Samples Hv-1515 (894 CE) and 1-1784 fall within the ninth century, and Sample Hv-1516 (1469 CE) belonged to the mid-fifteenth-century.

In 1939, Igbo-Ukwu, a small town in eastern Nigeria, took a protuberant place in the domain of African archaeology when a laborer digging a water reservoir (*ọmị*) in the compound of the Anozies (Isaiah, Richard, and Jonah) found a cache of bronze artifacts.[2] Similar findings in 1949 a few feet away led Bernard Fagg, then director of Nigerian Federal Department of Antiquities (NFDA), to invite Thurstan Shaw, a British archaeologist, to conduct an expert study of the area. Shaw tagged the three sites that were the focus of his research after their owners: Igbo-Isaiah, Igbo-Richard, and Igbo-Jonah. The recovery of I65,000 pieces of glass and stone beads, 1,300 iron, copper, and bronze objects, over 20,000 broken fragments of pottery, and some whole ornate vessels from the excavation

revealed an ancient Igbo civilization with advanced bronze metalworking.[3]

The results of the excavation that appeared first as an "Interim Report" in *Man* (1960) drew widespread enthusiasm among scholars. In his review of Shaw's work, for instance, an appreciative Guy Atkins described it as "nothing comparable" ever "known from Nigeria or elsewhere in West Africa."[4] The eminent historian A. E. Afigbo captured the popular sentiment fully when he greeted Shaw's effort as a "renaissance" (that is a development that was to bring about the validation of accounts already produced from oral sources and conjectures) in Igbo historical studies. Afigbo noted that the Igbo, as evident with other precolonial ethnic groups lacking a widely developed writing culture, are "anxious to discover their origin and reconstruct how they came to be who they are," and to appreciate "the reality of their group identity which they want to anchor into authenticated history."[5] Four decades later, archaeologist Benedicta Mangut added that the Igbo-Ukwu artifacts stand as "a good example of indigenous processes of trade expansion, social stratification, and urbanization in Igboland in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries."[6]

In perspective, the period between the 1950s and 1970s was both exciting and depressing as scientists went back and forth with conflicting reports on the usefulness and complications of radiocarbon dating.[7] In questioning the authenticity of the Igbo-Ukwu periodization, critics cast doubt over the history behind the ancient settlement. This turn of events punctured the celebration of Igbo-Ukwu as the most influential post-World War II era archaeological discovery in West Africa. By implication, the Igbo search for its historical past scholars had predicated on the archaeological discoveries turned into a mirage. It is vital to seek a resolution to the periodization deadlock because there are critical historical questions connected with the ancient settlement that deserve precise answers. For instance, were the Igbo-Ukwu people an ancient civilization as ethnographers and colonial officers such as M.D.W. Jeffreys concluded several decades before the Igbo-Ukwu findings?[8] Did the ancient Igbo directly or indirectly participate in the trans-Saharan trade as contended by some scholars and disputed by others?[9] Did the Igbo-Ukwu artifacts predate the famous Benin and Ife terracotta objects?[10] Getting the Igbo-Ukwu timeline right holds the answers to these questions. The key is to use the post-Igbo-Ukwu radiocarbon research to revisit the chronology. First, a quick review of the radiocarbon technique and its mathematical principles is imperative. Following this is a brief highlight of the major questions that scholars have raised about the ninth-century chronology. The last section presents a revised Igbo-Ukwu periodization computed from averaged means of radiocarbon, dendrochronology, and the Uranium-Thorium dating method.

RADIOCARBON SCIENCE AND HISTORICAL DATING

A product of Willard Libby's research published in 1952, radiocarbon isotope No. 14 (C^{14}), is the technique of determining the age of organic material by measuring the level of its carbon content.[11] The instrument emerged on the scientific fact that every organic material (both plants and animals) absorbs, at a steady ration, two types of carbon – namely carbon 14 and carbon 12 (C^{12}). The term *organic* is crucial because the material in question must have lived in the past to be able to absorb these two kinds of carbon. In other words, the idea of carbon-dating iron, rocks, and other nonliving things is almost conjectural.[12] With no exception, absorption of both C^{12} and C^{14} ceases once the life ends.

In alignment with the Igbo understanding of the world as a function of dualism, a phenomenon Chike Aniakor identifies as "the inseparable unities of Igbo cosmology,"[13] Carbon 12 is very stable and not susceptible to change in form after absorption or after the organism dies. Carbon 14 stands as the antithesis of C^{12} in that it is precarious and, in fact, will automatically activate a process of alteration soon after life ended. Each C^{14} nucleus drops an electron (i.e. decays) at an unbroken pace or pattern. Experts, including Libby and the palaeobiologist, Edward Deevey measure the rate at which the decay process in C^{14} unfolds at its "half-life" – that is the length of time it takes for an object to lose precisely half of the amount of carbon 14 stored in it.[14] The process of shedding carbon at a half-life is constant, and the cycle continues at the same pace forever. The initial scientifically formulated half-life of carbon 14 was 5,568 ± 30 years (BP - Before Present), but a revision made in the 1970s raised the figure to 5,730 ± 40 years (BP).[15] In other words, it will take 5,730 years (on average) for an object that absorbed a total of 1,000 grams of C^{14} to shed 500 grams (i.e. half its original amount). To carbon date a fossil, scientists test the amount of carbon 14 stored in the sample and then compare it to the initial amount of carbon 12 retained at the time of death.[16]

Assuming, for example, that the carbon 14 content in a fossil is 35 percent compared to the living sample, the carbon date is computed using the formula.

$$t = \left[\frac{\ln\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right)}{(-0.693)}\right] \bullet t_{\frac{1}{2}}$$

Here, $t_{½}$ is the half-life of the isotope carbon 14, *t* represents the age of the fossil (i.e. the date at death) and in () is the natural logarithm function. If

the fossil retains 35 percent of its carbon 14, then its age could be determined as follows:

$$t = \left[\frac{\ln\left(\frac{35}{100}\right)}{(-0.693)}\right] \bullet 5730$$

$$t = \left[\frac{\ln(0.35)}{(-0.693)}\right] \bullet 5730$$

$$t = (1.5149)(5730)$$

$$t = 8680$$

The result shows that the fossil is 8,680 years old.[17]

The term *estimat*e is central in radiocarbon dating because, as J. Terasmae has noted, "the overenthusiastic users" of the method "have expected greater accuracy than the method can normally offer, and this has led to disappointment and sometimes rather unwarranted criticism."[18] Deevey asserts that the radiocarbon method has only a slight error and that scholars can "live with a dating method that has only this moderate high probability . . . and if it is necessary to measure all the dates several times in order to get accurate averages, historians can afford to be patient."[19] The points made by Terasmae and Deevey cautions users not to throw away the child with the bathwater. Indeed, recalibrating the Igbo-Ukwu findings to get its chronology right is a noble venture because of all that is at stake. Terasmae reminds us that "a date is based simply on the best estimate of radiocarbon content of the sample submitted to the laboratory," and that sampling errors are common, including those that are physical and biological in nature that can affect the date. In short, "the reported date is a mean value with a stated error figure," hence a radiocarbon date of 11,180 ± 180 years BP implies that the pendulum of error revolves within the range of 11,000 and 11,360.[20]

IGBO-UKWU CHRONOLOGY QUESTIONS

Table 1 shows the five dates at the center of the Igbo-Ukwu debate. The two columns to the right respectively show Shaw's 1975 revisions using the 5730-year after-life and dendrochronology (a measurement of age by tree-rings).[21]

Table 1
Igbo-Ukwu Artifacts: Dendrochronological Adjusted Chronology

Laboratory number	Provenance	Radiocarbon age Half-life 5568 years bp	ad	Radiocarbon age Half-life 5730 years bp	ad	Dendrochronol-ogically corrected range ad
I-2008	Wood from the stool, Igbo Richard	1100±120	850±120	1133±120	817±120	730-1010
Hv-1514	Composite charcoal sample Pit VI, Igbo Jonah	1075±130	875±130	1107±130	843±130	730-1030
Hv-1515	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.37-1.68 m	1110±110	840±110	1143±110	807±110	730-1000
Hv-1516	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.52-1.68 m	505±70	1145±70	520±70	1430±70	1350-1430
I-1784	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.6-2.9 m	1110±145	840±145	1143±145	807±145	690-1020

Source: Thurstan Shaw, "Those Igbo-Ukwu Radiocarbon Dates," *JAH* 16, no. 4 (1975), 504

While the revised timeline shows consistency among four out of the five dated samples, the correction obtained from dendrochronology pushes back the Igbo-Ukwu dates from the ninth-century to the eight-century. In a 1974 review of Shaw's *Igbo-Ukwu*, James Bellis had noted the obvious that "the most compelling evidence for a ninth-century assignment," is that four out of the five dates "cluster tightly within the ninth-century" C.E.[22] But Babatunde Lawal, one of the most aggressive critics of the Igbo-Ukwu timeline, thinks otherwise. Lawal, whose primary research is on the Yoruba visual arts, sees the point that "the four ninth-century dates are consistent enough to suggest that the fifteenth-century date must be the 'odd man out.'" Nonetheless, Lawal strongly disputes any chance that the four dated clusters are accurate. He anchored his contention on the observation that all the five dates are from samples collected from two out of the three excavation sites. Four of the samples came from Igbo-Jonah, one from Igbo-Richard but none from Igbo-Isaiah. Thus, Lawal posed the rhetorical question whether the ninth century would still hold had four dates came from Igbo-Isaiah and/or three additional dates.[23]

In general, the copious works produced in the 1970s in the disputation of the Igbo-Ukwu chronology converge on a fundamental but presumptuous argument related to climate. The implied argument is that since the radiocarbon 14 dating technique relies on the carbon present in an artifact to determine its age, contamination from outside carbon ultimately compromises the dating accuracy. Given the fast rate of plant and material decays in the Igbo region, Lawal, in particular, questions how the pieces of wood and textile materials discovered at Igbo-Ukwu could have survived

the equatorial rainforest climate since the ninth-century if they were not produced in a period much later than we know.[24] The counter-proposition then is that all the Igbo-Ukwu materials must have belonged to the fifteenth-century and nowhere close to the ninth-century.

It is to reflect more in-depth on the imbalance in sampling that Lawal contends along with the broader question related to climate. While Lawal's questions are legitimate, one observes that he chose not to address the designation of Sample I-2008 (a piece of wood from Igbo-Richard) as the A1 class. Sample I-2008 is not only distinctive by its supposed preservation with the copper bosses found in the pit, as Shaw argued. Instead, the uniqueness of the sample resides in its easy validation with the use of dendrochronology, a scientific measurement of age by tree rings.[25] The issue then is that Lawal underplayed a piece of scientific evidence over philosophical rhetoric foisted on a disproportional sampling.

In a 1977 rejoinder to Lawal, M.A. Onwuejeogwu and B.O. Onwuejeogwu expressed frustration that the Igbo-Ukwu critics would reject results "if radiocarbon dates came disproportionately from some two sites" out of three and presume that the third site would "alter the overall results of the former dates."[26] The Onwuejeogwus see a grave problem with an approach to a historical debate devoid of the benefit of scientific confirmation that comes with fieldwork. "Any analysis of African traditional or even modern cultures and societies that not based on some sort of fieldwork may be considered one-sided." Thus, the Onwuejeogwus add that "researches on Africa based only on documentary sources are apt to end up in echoing anachronistic assumptions."[27]

Even a more problematic issue with the Igbo-Ukwu dating debate is the inherent supposition that the ancient people produced or procured (in case of acquisition through trade) the artifacts at the same time and/or even within the same generation. Experience from ethnographic fieldwork among the Achi community of eastern Nigeria in the 1990s and early 2000s revealed considerable diversity in periodization among the collection of cultural artifacts under the custody of the village's Chief Priest, Mr. Abraham Abiazieije.[28] The items examined at the site included a 280-pound carved sacred wooden gong dated 230 years in 2001, remains of two cow heads dated 260 years, and eleven carved wooden representation of the deity Eze-Ala Akubaa and his family. All the wooden images were found in varying states of decay – thus indicating they were produced at different times in the past.[29]

In essence, it is a naïve idea to think that because the Igbo-Ukwu artifacts show variations in dating, they must have belonged to the fifteenth-century. Ritual and kinship paraphernalia change as society change. If the Igbo-Ukwu findings belonged to the ancient rulers of the Nri Kingdom, who, in observance of the *ọbụ* (or *ọdụ*) tradition kept storehouses for mate-

rials related with the Nri sacred title system as Onwuejeogwu suggested or the masquerade institution as Emeka Nwabueze proposed, it is evident that these objects have changed hands across the centuries.[30] Scholars are yet to ascertain why the owners of the Igbo-Ukwu objects abandoned them. It is reasonable to assert that as homesteads collapsed, and chiefly authorities changed hands among the Igbo-Ukwu people, so did the ritual paraphernalia. Thus, Eluwa et al. postulate that most likely, the custodians abandoned Igbo-Ukwu bronze vessels - seemingly "used for ritual or ceremonial purposes," in a hurry because of a raid or death, and as sacred objects, no one wanted to touch them.[31]

Concerning the broader question on climate, a similar problem is common in the field of archaeology and radiocarbon dating. When politics is not in the way, and concerning the Igbo homeland, the damp climate and dryness that come with changing seasons of the rainforest zone along with the activities of termites bring about the destruction of many cultural artifacts. A new study by Sturt Manning and others at the Cornell University Tree Ring Laboratory tells us that in the southern Levant, there is a "substantive and fluctuating offset in measured radiocarbon ages between plant materials growing in the southern Levant [which vary from] the standard Northern Hemisphere."[32]

In another study published in 2015, Imperial College physicist Heather Graven points out that the vast quantity of fossil fuel spewed by humans in the past few decades has affected the steady process of C^{14} manufacture in the atmosphere by minimizing its size to C^{12}. The implication is that the excess carbon emission will further skew the radiocarbon dating since the after-life is determined by using C^{12} as a base. Graven concludes that:

Over the next century, fossil fuel emissions will produce a large amount of C_{O2} with no 14C because fossil fuels have lost all 14C over millions of years of radioactive decay. Atmospheric C_{O2}, and therefore newly produced organic material, will appear as though it has "aged" or lost 14C by decay. By 2050, fresh organic material could have the same 14C/C ratio as samples from 1050 and thus be indistinguishable by radiocarbon dating. Some current applications for 14C may cease to be viable, and other applications will be strongly affected.[33]

Although those who dispute the Igbo-Ukwu dates have no scientific evidence to support their case, it is notable that they raised the climate question long before Graven.

VALIDATING AND RECALIBRATION IGBO-UKWU CHRONOLOGY

At first glance, the accuracy of the radiocarbon 14 dating appears inadmissible, and those who contest their validity see no remedy for the system's

shortcomings. A satisfactory reconciliation to the Igbo-Ukwu chronology question not only holds the key to moving Igbo revisionist history forward but also upholding the honor Shaw's unrivaled work rightly deserves. The prospects for this revision had never been better because the science of radiocarbon dating has improved since the 1960s. While radiocarbon dating remains prone to errors and contamination through the infiltration of outside materials (including $C_{O2)}$, technological advancement and innovative research are assisting users in making the technique more accurate and, in some instances narrow its margin of error to within a few decades.

Drawing inspiration from Graven's 2015 work, Peter Köhler, a physicist at the Alfred Wegener Institute in Bremerhaven, Germany, has put forth an idea he called "the Suess Effect" that can help correct probable radiocarbon errors. The new focus is on Carbon 13 (C^{13}), a stable isotope that comprises about one percent of the earth's atmosphere. Köhler shows that levels of C^{13} in a sample will benefit scientists in determining whether C_{O2} emissions have compromised a specimen's carbon 14 content, in which case its date is not to be trusted.[34] This new insight adds another layer to other available carbon dating authentication processes, among them the science of dendrochronology – technique scientists have found very useful.

It is noteworthy that a 1990 study by Bard and co-researchers showed that plants and animals are not subject to C_{O2} contamination. This is because the dead animal and plant "can no longer accumulate fresh carbon, and the supply of the organism at the time of death is generally depleted."[35] About Igbo-Ukwu, this means, as Nwabueze argues, that the human bones, wood materials, and the remnant of textile materials found at the site may indeed belong to the ninth-century.[36]

Bard and others are emphatic on the effectiveness of dendrochronology in recalibrating radiocarbon dating inaccuracies. This optimism emerging in the 1970s motivated Shaw's 1975 revision of the Igbo-Ukwu dates. The science of dendrochronology reveals that throughout their lives, trees build a new ring each growing season. Each of the rings reflects the climatic conditions of that growing season. When studied alone, a single record offers limited information about the ecological conditions of the time in the tree's life and at what age the tree fell.[37] However, when scientists collect the tree-ring records in the hundreds, they access a unique trove of data that is hard to come by.

Among other things, the tree-rings can convey the precise year that certain tree-ring grew and the carbon content in the sample. The specific information is vital to deciphering the age of organic material.[38] The process involves comparing the volume of the radiocarbon-14 isotope in the artifact against the tree-ring data for calibration. While the system unfail-

ingly produces an absolute date for the object, scientists still include a margin of error. Accurate tree-ring age record is available for 9,000 years BP.

Yet, the most important result of the research related to the post-Igbo-Ukwu radiocarbon dating is the revelation that the Uranium-Thorium (U-Th.) dating technique, which makes use of electrons, can be used to recalibrate (not to measure) and correct figures determined with radiocarbon 14 technique. For clarity, U-Th, which dates objects up to half a million years, is more suitable for marine organisms than land animals and plants because uranium is abundant in seawater than in most soils. Despite the discrepancy in purpose between carbon 14 and U-Th dating techniques, the latter, with the aid of a mass spectrometer that speeds up streams of atoms, dates objects by using magnets to sort them out following mass and electric charges. According to the study, the significant deviation between the use of Uranium-Thorium dating and radiocarbon 14 dating is 3,500 years for samples that are 20,000 years old.[39] When applied to Igbo-Ukwu using the ninth-century base, the artifacts are about just 1,100 years old – that is 9,000 years short of the age where the most substantial deviation occurs. Assuming for a while that the most significant deviation applies to Igbo-Ukwu, the result will be a ratio of 1: 5.7 if we use ±800 CE as a point of analysis.[40] This calculation will put the Igbo-Ukwu materials 213 years later than the highly disputed ±800 CE date. In other words, Igbo-Ukwu timeline will be somewhere around the eleventh-century – i.e. ±1000 CE

However, the accurate possible deviation (APD) applicable to Igbo-Ukwu is APD-193. Column 5 in Table 2 shows a revision of the dates using Uranium-Thorium to recalibrate at both the most substantial possible deviation (LPD-213) and the actual possible variance (LPD-193). The computation is based on the carbon dates determined from 5,730 half-life. This step adds another layer of validity and analysis to Shaw's 1975 dendrochronological adjustment of the original Igbo-Ukwu timeline.

Table 2: Igbo-Ukwu Artifacts: Uranium-Thorium Adjusted Chronology

Laboratory number	Provenance	Radiocarbon age Half-life 5730 years bp	ad	Dendrochronol-ogically corrected range ad	Uranium-Thorium Recalibrated Range lpd-213	adp-193
I-2008	Wood from the stool, Igbo Richard	1133±120	817±120	730-1010	1030±120	1010±120
Hv-1514	Composite charcoal sample Pit VI, Igbo Jonah	1107±130	843±130	730-1030	1056 ±130	1036±130
Hv-1515	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.37-1.68 m	1143±110	807±110	730-1000	1020 ±110	1000±110
Hv-1516	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.52-1.68 m	520±70	1430±70	1350-1430	1643±70	1533±70
I-1784	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.6-2.9 m	1143±145	807±145	690-1020	1020 ±145	1000±145

As shown, four out of the five U-Th recalibrated dates put the Igbo-Ukwu artifacts to the eleventh-century. This recalibrated date is closer to the ninth-century than the sixteenth-century Posnansky, Lawal, and others had projected, while completely dismissing the possibility that the Igbo could have entered the trans-Saharan trade early as asserted by Shaw and others.[41]

Table 3
Igbo-Ukwu Artifacts: Consolidated Chronology Averages

Laboratory number	Provenance	Radiocarbon age Half-life 5730 years bp	ad	Averaged Dendrochronology range ad	Averaged U. Th range lpd-213 / adp-193	Consolidated Average
I-2008	Wood from the stool, Igbo Richard	1133±120	817±120	870	1020	902
Hv-1514	Composite charcoal sample Pit VI, Igbo Jonah	1107±130	843±130	880	1046	923
Hv-1515	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.37-1.68 m	1143±110	807±110	865	1010	894
Hv-1516	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.52-1.68 m	520±70	1430±70	1390	1588	1469
I-1784	Composite charcoal sample Pit IV, Igbo Jonah depth 1.6-2.9 m	1143±145	807±145	855	1000	890

Table 3 offers the overall mean chronology determined from averaged dates obtained from the initial radiocarbon calculations, the dendrochronology corrections, and recalibrated Uranium-Thorium averaged dates. The result shows that Samples 1-2008 (902 CE) and Hv-1514 (923 CE) could not have been anywhere later than the first half of the tenth-century. Samples Hv-1515 (894 CE) and 1-1784 fall within the ninth-century, and Sample Hv-1516 (1469 CE) belonged to the mid-fifteenth-century. To the best knowledge of this study, no archaeological work has ever passed through this level of scrutiny. Thus, one corroborates Garlake view that "Certainly there is no concrete support for alternative interpretations" of Igbo-Ukwu as a ninth-century civilization.[42]

It is now time to return to the three central questions that are the focus of this analysis. (1) Were the Igbo-Ukwu people an ancient civilization as ethnographers and colonial officers speculated decades before the Igbo-Ukwu findings? (2) Did the ancient Igbo directly or indirectly participate in the trans-Saharan trade as the ninth-century dating of the artifacts suggests? (3) Did the Igbo-Ukwu artifacts predate the famous Benin and Ife terracotta objects? Already, the third question is self-explanatory, and if the trans-Saharan trade query is satisfactorily resolved, the rest is clear.

The question on whether Igbo-Ukwu predated Benin and Ife artworks (in woods, ivory, and brass) is perhaps the easiest of the three questions because every study on these three arts acknowledges that Igbo-

Ukwu's *cire-perdue* style was an outlier among its West African cohorts. Perceiving it as exotic, Shaw pushed the idea that an experienced slave artisan who married his technical skill to African traditions and African forms such as the calabash, the shell, woodcarvings, and plaited and twisted string bindings perhaps introduced the *cire-perdue* style in Igbo-Ukwu. Shaw further sees the possibility that the filigree work and detailed overall decoration came from the Arab world.[43] There is no evidence to date that the precolonial Igbos imported slaves from outside. What we know is that the Igbo were one of the chief exporters of slaves. Thus, the hard-to-prove attempt to externalize the *cire-perdue* style is a consequence of a standard error when scholars enter the field of historical research with the assumption that they know what happened.

A piece of vital information from The British Museum, London, indicates that most of the Ife and Benin arts and sculptors belong to the periods 1550-1650, and 1200-1500 respectively.[44] Ife's development into an arts center with the famous bronzes, terracotta, and stone sculptures ran from 1200 -1500.[45] Thus, whether the consensus is the ninth, tenth or eleventh-century, Igbo-Ukwu remains primordial to both Ife and Benin. The collective agreement among Igbo scholars is that the Igbo have lived in their present homeland since the third millennium before Christ, and the movement of people inside and outside the Igbo territory continues today.[46]

The trans-Saharan trade hypothesis is critical to the envisaged Igbo revisionist history because it raises a broader but more complex problem that the Onwuejeogwus describe as a "grandiose diffusionist theory."[47] This matter is more profound than the eastern versus western trans-Saharan trade route debates among Shaw, Timothy Insoll, J.E.G. Sutton, Lawal, and Posnansky, among others.[48] The burial of tusks found at the feet of the old Igbo-Ukwu chief at Igbo-Richard along with elephant features on four of the twelve pendants recovered from the excavation is the proof that the elephant was influential in the Igbo culture. Posnansky insists that since the gold of Guinea anchored the trans-Saharan; it is difficult to see why ivory from the Igbo area should have entered into the Saharan trade when there were abundant supplies of ivory about a thousand miles to the north in the Lake Chad. Although both agree on the attempt to externalize the Igbo-Ukwu materials, Posnansky's no-elephant-from-Igbo-area argument in the trans-Saharan trade falters where Lawal acknowledges that there is indeed evidence to show importation of brass and copper rods to West Africa before the arrival of Europeans. Lawal rejects any suggestion that the Igbo people participated in the trans-Saharan trade with the definite assertion that "Igbo-Ukwu is far removed from any known trans-Saharan trade route."[49]

A 1997 study by Thurstan Shaw and Timothy Insoll reinforced the trans-Saharan trade hypothesis while proving Posnansky and Lawal wrong. The study, which involved excavations in the ancient city of Gao in eastern Mali, found a substantial collection of local and imported beads. On a closer examination, the Goa beads proved in many ways to be similar to those uncovered at Igbo-Ukwu. The parallels between the two collections are suggestive of inter-regional trade along the River Niger. Thus, Shaw and Insoll reasserted that Egypt is the likely source of many of the beads and that Gao may well have been the intermediary between Igbo-Ukwu and Egypt. This study was, in essence, a revision of the earlier proposal by Shaw, which claimed a direct trade between North Africa and the Igbo country through the eastern trans-Saharan highway.

The revised account by Shaw and Insoll offer the Gao route as a more satisfactory explanation than a direct east-west trade across the Sudanic zone, which Shaw previously presented as a channel of international trade for Igbo-Ukwu.[50] Shaw had earlier declared that the glass beads found at Igbo-Ukwu might be of Indian and, to some extent, Venetian origin, and they must have found their way to Igbo-Ukwu in the first millennium. In a 2011 study, J. E. Sutton rejected Shaw's revisionist Gao-route paradigm, insisting that an eastern Sahelian routing from Lake Chad to the Middle Nile instead of the Gao to Igbo-Ukwu idea seem most probable.[51] Nevertheless, Lawal, among others, strongly dispute any manner of an idea based on the ninth-century because there is not enough evidence in its support. Lawal contends that our knowledge of specific Middle Eastern sources of beads is scant, and places like Hebron in Israel may have supplied the North African market. Moreover, both Lawal and Posnansky insist that the possible time the glass beads arrived in Igboland must be around the sixteenth century.[52]

All considered, the question of whether the Igbo participated in the trans-Saharan trade may remain a riddle, but one could not agree more with the Onwuejeogwus that it is disbelieving to dispute the legitimacy of the Igbo-Ukwu dates just because they are radiocarbon dates while the validity of other similar sites, especially those recorded for Nigeria is not in question. Pointing to a list of 72 radiocarbon dates collected by Shaw, the Onwuejeogwus observed that eight came from Igbo-Ukwu, and forty-three from other archaeological sites within Nigeria's tropical forest region, including those from Nok, Ife, Benin, Iwo Eleru, and Afikpo rock shelters.[53] It is curious that while concerns over radiocarbon dating in the forest region are common, disputation over the dates from the other seventy-one sites is uncommon.[54] There is no similar charge of "disproportionate sampling" Lawal made against Shaw elsewhere in Nigerian archaeological studies. This inconsistency resonates with Bruce Brew's observation that "If a C-14 date supports our theories, we put it in the main

text. If it does not entirely, contradict them, we put it in a footnote. And if it is completely out of date, we just drop it."[55]

The critical question about when the Igbo people evolved as a distinct ethnic group is difficult to pin down despite what oral accounts tell, hence Elizabeth Isichei, an authority on Igbo history, talks about the "elusive problem of Igbo Identity."[56] In broad terms, there are two theories floated by scholars in connection with the question of Igbo origins. These are the creationist and evolution theories. In brief, the creationists argue that the Igbo are autochthonous to their present homeland in eastern Nigeria. For instance, the Nri tradition of origin claims that Eri, a mythical entity, came down from the sky and settled down at Aguileri town (Anambra state), where he met an autochthonous group who had no memory of their origin. By implication, in Igbo culture, only new towns like Aro, Onitsha, Ibiza, and Ọgwásiukwu can claim the origin of certainty. The rest of Igboland depend on similar mythical origins of uncertainty.

The evolutionists' account uses documented creation theory in the Bible or the Koran to advance theories of Igbo origins. The proponents of this paradigm have tried to tie the Igbo with "the lost tribe of Israel" based on some assumed similarities between Igbo culture and that of ancient Hebrew. In 1794, Olaudah Equiano, an Igbo ex-slave, contended that the Igbo were a branch of the Jews and that Christianity, which enlightened "barbarian Europe" was a Jewish culture. However, as a former slave, Equiano may have tried to redeem his predicaments, misery, enslavement, and poverty with a claim to a noble ancestry. The point Equiano wanted to prove is that the ancestors of the Igbo came from the East, in this case, Israel. Thus, since it was from the East that humankind got its civilization, it means that Igbo, as a race, is associated with a superior civilization.

In 1912, Archdeacon G. T. Basden, a British ethnolinguist, reflected on specific structures in the Igbo language and corroborated Equiano's claim that the Igbos originated from Israel. Because certain Igbo rituals such as circumcision and words such as *Uburu* sounds like Hebrew, Basden concluded that Igbo culture probably evolved under the influence of the Levitical Code.[57] Additionally, colonial officer, Sir Herbert Richmond Palmer, examined the Aro and the Nri religious and ritual practices with the conclusion that both Igbo communities had hermetic blood in their veins and that it was under their leadership that the highest character of Igbo culture evolved.[58]

The salient point is that in their explanation of Igbo origin, Equiano and the British colonial scholars fell prey to the allure of the "oriental hypothesis." Unfortunately, these traditions have little or nothing to offer in an attempt to reconstruct Igbo cultural history. Consequently, the circle of

imaginations on Igbo origins widens, and the "renaissance" that was expected to lift the haze of conjectures in Igbo historical studies falters.

Igbo-Ukwu archaeology remains central to West African history in general and, in particular, to appreciate the reality of Igbo identity that Igbos want to anchor into authenticated history. It is dangerous to make the Igbo-Ukwu archaeological findings a victim of the characteristic Yoruba-Igbo ethnic struggles disguised in the form of academic debate. Shaw alluded to this in response to the critics in the 1970s, and Garlake decried this manner of "cultural chauvinism," regretting that Igbo-Ukwu has been misunderstood, distorted, -- in one instance, in a peculiarly unpleasant, foolish and tendentious way – and used as weapons in contemporary Nigerian rivalries."[59] Whatever might be the case, the materials unearthed at Igbo-Ukwu are confirmation of West African cultural achievement predating the European arrival.

NOTES

[1] Michael Batler, "Radiocarbon Dating's Final Frontier," *Science* 313, no. 5793 (2006): 1560-3. For a similar view, see Edouard Bard, "Extending the Calibrated Radiocarbon Record, *Science* 292 no. 5526 (2001): 2443-4.

[2] Thurstan Shaw, "The Igbo-Ukwu Bronzes," *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973): 18-19. Some artifacts recovered from the site earlier in 1922 constituted part of those included among those later labeled "Igbo-Isaiah" by Shaw. See S.C. Ukpabi, Review: "The Archaeology of Iboland," *African Studies Review* 14, no. 2 (1971): 336-41.

[3] See Thurstan Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria* (Evansville, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 222, 239, 282; Thurstan Shaw, "Excavations at Igbo-Ukwu, Eastern Nigeria: An Interim Report," *Man* 60 (1960): 161-4, Raphael Chijioke Njoku, "Igbo-Ukwu," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, Oct-Dec. 2018; and Babatunde Lawal, "'The Igbo-Ukwu Bronzes': A Search for the Economic Evidence," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 6, no. 3 (1972), 313-21.

[4] Guy Atkins, review of "Igbo-Ukwu," *Bulletin of SOAS* (1971): 680; and Ukpabi, "Archaeology of Iboland," 337. Frank Willet, Review: "The Archaeology of Igbo-Ukwu," *JAH* 13, no. 3 (1972): 514-6, extolled the Igbo-Ukwu materials for their "technical complexity," 515.

[5] A. E. Afigbo, "Prolegomena to the Study of the Culture History of the Igbo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria," in F. Chidozie Ogbalu and E. Nolue Emananjo (eds.), *Igbo Language and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 28; and A. E. Afigbo, "On the Threshold of Igbo History: Review of Thurstan Shaw's Igbo-Ukwu," *The Conch* (I971), 213 [205-I8].

[6] Benedicta N. Mangut, "Igbo-Ukwu," in Kevin Shillington (ed.), *Encyclopedia of African History, Vol. 1*(New York: Routledge, 2013), 676-7.

[7] The radiocarbon frenzy generated tones of studies and commentaries such as V. R. Switsur, "The Radiocarbon Calendar Recalibrated," *Antiquity* 47 (1973): 131-7; Colin Renfrew, "The Radiocarbon Calendar Recalibrated Too Soon? An Archaeological Comment," *Antiquity* 47 (1973): 314-17.

[8] Michael Jeffreys' 1930s ethnographic work inspired a generation of African scholars such as Afigbo, Onwuejeogwu, and others who have continued to assert the antiquity of the Igbo civilization using mostly oral evidence.

[9] For instance, while Shaw and Timothy Insoll affirm this, Posnansky and Lawal disagree.

[10] A similar question has been the focus of several studies among them Babatunde Lawal, "The Present State of Art Historical Research in Nigeria: Problems and Possibilities," *JAH* 18, no. 2 (1977): 214 [193-216]; Willet, "Archaeology of Igbo-Ukwu," 515.

[11] W. F. Libby, *Radiocarbon Dating* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952). In 1956, Beek applied radiocarbon dating for early South Arabian chronology, with the declaration, "we now have a clear time-point, established by a stratigraphically controlled excavation and an impartial agency" (7). G.W. Van Beek, "A Radiocarbon Date for Early South Arabia," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 143, (1956): 6-9.

[12] Argon-argon (Ar-Ar) or Potassium-argon (K-ar) techniques are most suitable for dating rocks and other nonliving objects.

[13] Chike Aniakor, "Household Objects and Igbo Space," in Mary Jo Arnolde et al. (eds.), *African Material Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 229.

[14] See W. F. Libby, "Radiocarbon Dating," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 269, no. 1193 A Symposium on the Impact of the Natural Sciences on Archaeology (Dec. 17, 1970): 1-10; and Edward S. Deevey, Jr., "Radiocarbon Dating," *Scientific American* 186, no. 2 (1952): 24-9.

[15] See George Kubler, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican, Maya, and Andean Peoples Third Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 473; and Barbara Ann Kipfer, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Archaeology* (New York: Kluwer, 2000), 470. See also An Zhimin, "Radiocarbon Dating and the Prehistoric Archaeology of China," *World Archaeology* 23, no. 2 Chronologies (1991): 193-200.

[16] Ben Panko offers an excellent explanation of this process, in "Thanks to Fossil Fuels, Carbon Dating is in Jeopardy. One Scientist May Have an Easy Fix," *Smithsonian*, Dec. 7, 2016. Panko based his synthesis on Peter Kohler's "Using the Suess Effect on the Stable Carbon isotope to distinguish the Future from the Past in Radiocarbon," *Environ. Res. Lett* 11, no. 124016 (2016): 1-9.

[17] See the University of Regina, Canada (accessed on October 1, 2018, at http://mathcentral.uregina.ca/beyond/articles/ExpDecay/Carbon14.html).

[18] J. Terasmae, "Radiocarbon Dating: Some Problems and Potential Developments," *Developments in Paleontology and Stratigraphy* 7 (1984): 2 [1-15].

[19] Deevey, "Radiocarbon Dating," 28.

[20] Terasmae, "Radiocarbon Dating," 2.

[21] Thurstan Shaw, "Those Igbo-Ukwu Radiocarbon Dates: Facts, Fictions and Probabilities," *JAH* 16, no. 4 (1975): 504 [503-17]. See also E. K. Ralph, H. N. Michael, and M. C. Han, "Radiocarbon Dates and Reality," *Masca Newsletter* 9, no. 1 (1973), 1-20; and Thurstan Shaw, "Radiocarbon Dating in Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 3 (1968): 460 [453-65].

[22] James O. Bellis, Review: "Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria," *American Anthropologist* 76, no. 1 (1974): 184-5; and Marla Berns, Review: "Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu," *African Arts* 11, no. 4 (1978): 14, 17-19.

[23] Babatunde Lawal, "Dating Problems at Igbo-Ukwu," *JAH* 14, no. 1 (1973): 1 [1-8].

[24] Lawal, "Dating Problems," 7; Merrick Posnansky, Review: "Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria by Thurstan Shaw," *Archaeology* 26, no. 4 (1973): 310 [309-11]; Berns, "Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu," 14, 17-19; and P. Emeka Nwabueze, "Igbo-Ukwu Revisited," *Transafrican Journal of History* 18, no. 19 (1989): 190 [187-92].

[25] Shaw, "Igbo-Ukwu Radiocarbon," 504. Kenneth P. Oakley, *Framework for Dating Fossil Man* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), 7, notes that samples of this nature belong to the A1 class of evidence.

[26] M.A. Onwuejeogwu and B.O. Onwuejeogwu, "The Search for the Missing Links in Dating and Interpreting the Igbo-Ukwu Finds," *Paideuma* 23 (1977): 171 [169-88]; and Lawal, "Dating Problems," 8.

[27] Onwuejeogwu and Onwuejeogwu, "Missing Links," 171; and Nwabueze, "Igbo-Ukwu Revisited," 187-8.

[28] Abraham Abiazieije, Interviews, June 15, 1998; Dec. 20, 2001; Albert Abiazieije, Interview, July 12, 2008.

[29] The structure housing Eze-Ala Akubaa, the Achi village principal deity, was close to the *ọbụ* (sacred storehouse). The Chief Priest disclosed that he inherited most of the items in the store from his father, who in turn received them from his grandfather.

[30] The *ọbụ* is a hut where ceremonial goods associated with the title system, masquerade deity or shrine is stored and used in gaining access to the spirits of former lineage members. See G.I. Jones in "Ohaffia Obu Houses," *The Nigerian Field* 6, no. 4 (1937): 169-71; and G.I. Jones, "Mbari Houses," *The Nigerian Field* 6, no. 4 (1937): 72-9. See also M. A. Onwuejeogwu, *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony* (Benin City: Ethiope, 1981), 82-95; Nwabueze, "Igbo-Ukwu Revisited," 187-92; and Francis Chuks Madukasi, "Ozo Title: An Indigenous Institution in Traditional Religion that Upholds Patriarchy in Igbo Land South-Eastern Nigeria," *The International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Invention* 5, no. 5 (2018): 4640-52.

[31] G.I.C. Eluwa, M.O. Ukagwu. U.N. Nwachukwu and A.C.N. Nwaubani. *A History of Nigeria for Schools and Colleges* (Enugu: Africana-Fep Publishers, 1988), 13.

[32] Sturt W. Manning et al., "Fluctuating Radiocarbon Offsets Observed in the Southern Levant and Implications for Archaeological Chronology Debates," *PNAS* (2018): 2 [1-6].

[33] Heather D. Graven, "Impact of Fossil Fuel Emissions on Atmospheric Radiocarbon and Various Applications of Radiocarbon over this Century," *PNAS* (2015): 1 [1-4].

[34] Köhler, "Using the Suess Effect," 1-9. See also Helene Muri, "The Role of Large-Scale BECCS in the Pursuit of the 1.5^{o}C Target: An Earth System Model Perspective," *Environ. Res. Lett* 13 (2018): 1-10.

[35] E. Bard, B. Hamelin, R. Fairbanks, and A. Zindler, "Calibration of the 14C Timescale Over the Last 30,000 Years, Using Mass Spectrometric U. Th Ages from Barbados Coral," *Nature*, (1990): 345: 405, 410; and Malcolm W. Brown, "Errors Feared in Carbon Dating," *New York Times*, May 31, 1990.

[36] Nwabueze, "Igbo-Ukwu Revisited," 190; and Njoku, "Igbo-Ukwu." Nwabueze asserts this optimism because the Igbo-Ukwu fabrics were indigenous to the Igbo area and connected with the masquerade tradition in the Nri-Awka areas.

[37] Peter Ian Kuniholm, "Dendrochronology and Radiocarbon Dates for Gordion and other Phrygian Sites," *Notes in the History of Arts Archaeology* (1986): 5-8.

[38] Grant L. Harley, "Tropical Tree ring and Environmental Change," *Southern Geographer* 53, no. 1 (2013): 1-3.

[39] Bard et al., "Calibration of the 14C Timescale," 345: 405, 410. See also Leon T. Silver, "Uranium-Thorium-Lead Isotope Relations in Lunar Materials," *Science* 167, no. 3918 (1970): 408-71.

[40] Other techniques for validating the radiocarbon dating errors include the Robust Bayesian statistical method, which has a ratio of 1:4. See Maarten Blaauw and J. Andres Christen, "The Problem of Radiocarbon Dating," *Science* 308, no. 5728 (2005): 1551-3.

[41] Lawal, "The Igbo-Ukwu 'Bronzes,'" 315-6; Posnansky, "Igbo-Ukwu," 309-11; Afigbo, "On the Threshold," 213-8; and Insoll and Shaw, "Gao and Igbo-Ukwu," 9-23.

[42] P.S. Garlake Review: "Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu by Thurstan Shaw," *Africa* (1979): 90-1.

[43] Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account*, 283; V. E. Chikwendu, "More Bronzes from Eastern Nigeria," *Anthropos* 79, no. 1/3 (1984): 260-3; and Ukpabi, "Archaeology of Iboland," 337, 339-40.

[44] The British Museum, "Benin: An African Kingdom," London, Learning and Information Department, undated, 1-12; Frank Willett, *Ife in the History of West African Sculpture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 108, 210, and Graham Connah, "Archaeological Research in Benin City, 1961-64," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 4 (1963): 473-4.

[45] Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, "Ife (from ca. 6th Century)," in Heilbronn Timeline of Art History, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000– http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ife/hd_ife.htm (originally published October 2000, last revised September 2014).

[46] A. E. Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture* (Ibadan: University Press, 1981), 8; Eluwa et al., *History of Nigeria*, 63. Both sources put the date of Igbo settlement in the present location at about 2,500-2,000 BCE.

[47] Onwuejeogwu and Onwuejeogwu, "Missing Links," 169.

[48] Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu, Volume 1*; and Shaw, "Igbo-Ukwu Radiocarbon," Lawal, "Igbo-Ukwu 'Bronzes,'" 317-8; and Lawal, "Dating Problems," 1-8; Insoll and Shaw, "Gao and Igbo-Ukwu," 9-23.

[49] Lawal, "Igbo-Ukwu 'Bronzes'" 313-21; Lawal, "Dating Problems," 7; and Posnansky, "Igbo-Ukwu," 310.

[50] Insoll and Shaw, "Gao and Igbo-Ukwu," 9-23.

[51] J.E.G. Sutton, "Igbo-Ukwu and the Nile," *The African Archaeological Review* 18, no. 1 (2001): 49 [49-62].

[52] Babatunde Lawal, "Archaeological Excavations at Igbo-Ukwu - A Reassessment," *Odu: A Journal of West African Studies* 8 (1972): 72-97; and Lawal, "Igbo-Ukwu Bronzes,'" 316-8. Shaw defends the results of the radiocarbon dates by pointing to the absence of tobacco pipes, whose presence would indicate a post-seventeenth-century date, rouletted decoration on pottery and cowries.

[53] See G. Connah, "Radiocarbon Dates for Benin City and Further Dates for Daima, N.E. Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 2 (1968): 313-20; Berns, "Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu," 9; and Chikwendu, "More Bronzes," 260-3.

[54] Onwuejeogwu and Onwuejeogwu, "Missing Links," 174; Shaw, "Radiocarbon Dating in Nigeria," 453-65; and Lawal, "Dating Problems," 1-8.

[55] Bruce Brew, cited by Ian Stott, *The God Solution: Are You Ready* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris LLC, 2013), 38.

[56] Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1973), 3.

[57] G.T. Basden, "Notes on the Ibo Country, Southern Nigeria" *The Geographical Journal* 65, no. 1 (1925): 32-41.

[58] NNAE, Palmer, H.R. ARODIST 1/7/33, Aro People (Memo dated 1/5/21 by Palmer H.R.).

[59] Shaw, "Igbo-Ukwu Radiocarbon Dates," 503-17; and Garlake, "Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu," 90-1.

THE EMERGING TREND OF BLACK AFRICAN ZIONISM: THE FACTS AND MYTHS OF CLAIMS OF JEWISH ORIGINS BY THE IGBO OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

In recent times there has been increasing interest among the Igbo to define their identity in terms of Jewish origins. This has led to the formation of some Zionist-oriented organizations. Among such organizations are Igbo Interests World Wide, College of Igbo Elders for Igbo Reformation Back to Jerusalem Reconciliation Movement, Ibo-Hebrew Language Project, and now the trending Obu Gad-Aguleri Hypothesis of Igbo-Jewish origins. Their common objective seems to revolve around the quest for the official recognition of the Igbo as part of the World Jewry and subsequent return to Eretz Israel. The present paper, therefore, examines the facts, myths, and probabilities of this seemingly emerging trend of Zionism in Black Africa. It begins with the examination of the existing three theories of Igbo origins. It, however, concludes with the probability of a remote Igbo - Jewish connection.

INTRODUCTION

The Igbo are often referred to as the Jews of Black Africa by some writers. The reasons for such characterization range from their habitual enterprising spirit, particularly in the areas of commerce, industry, and education, which often earn them the unguarded envy of their neighbors. This has led to their recurring experience of organized hostilities in the hands of their host communities. Beyond this circumstantial identity, however, is the theory of Igbo-Jewish origins which dates back to 1789. This theory, controversial though it might appear, carries strands of irresistible facts that tend to create the historical probability of a remote Igbo-Jewish connection; thus hazarding the rationale behind the current upsurge of interest to create a Zionist field of interest in Black Africa through the Igbo.

There is no doubt that the origins of the various peoples of Black Africa have often formed one of the primary foci of early historians and ethnographers working on the history and culture of sub-Saharan Africa. Most often, these researchers are confronted with endless catechisms of myths and legends of origins, which are in most cases used as legitimacy charters for socio-political title claims and land disputes. This is common with most societies of Black Africa, but prominent among the centralized polities.

Thus, among the Hausa there exists the *Bayijida* myth and legend of origin which talks of the *Hausa-Bokwei* and *Banza* kingdoms with their obvious spurious Yemeni connections. Similarly, among the Yoruba, there is equally the *Oduduwa* myth and legend with Ile-Ife as its revolving center, and the pendulum of origin probably pointing towards Saudi Arabia. However, these myths and legends most often speak more about the origins and migrations of mythical figures or heroes whose descendants evolved into dynasties, leaving out the ordinary people who were probably met by the often invading heroes.

Most scholars, however, attribute the rise of these mythical and legendary traditions to outside influences. For instance, in the cases of the Hausa and Yoruba, Islam appears to be the guiding factor in their respective attempts to link their origins to Yemen and Mecca. Roland Oliver and J.D. Fage appear to be saying the obvious when they wrote:

> It cannot be entirely without significance that over large stretches of the central and western Sudan traditions ascribe the foundation of early dynasties to pre-Islamic immigrants from Yemen…. There can be no doubt that these traditions as we know them today represent hypothetical explanations suggested by early Muslim literati for the situation which they found in Sudan.[1]

J.A. Atanda in agreeing with Oliver and Fage confronted the *Oduduwa* hypothesis of Arabian origin with traditional evidence of pre-*Oduduwa* inhabitants of Ile-Ife.[2] Most importantly is the fact that similarities between the primordial cultures of the Hausa and Yoruba on the one hand, and the two and the Arabs on the other cannot be explained beyond the influence of Islam. The point however remains that these traditions came to be popular among the two peoples, who quite often cite them on occasions in the hope that such ascriptions will consider them more Islamic than the other or others.

Among the Igbo, however, an all-embracing and widely accepted myth and legend of origins do not exist. This can rightly be explained by the absence of centralized kingdoms with its institutionalized instruments of transmitting oral traditions. In the case of the Igbo also, the transmission of oral traditions is done in bits of origins, migrations, and settlements of individual towns and villages. Although this is equally evident in other traditional African societies, the case of the Igbo seems to be more historically institutionalized in the absence of a domineering politically-driven myth of common origin. Thus, in considering the origins of the Igbo people, every piece of evidence must be examined in the light of the prehistoric origins of the peoples of West Africa, and Africa as a whole.

It is in accordance with this that historians, after careful considerations of the several traditions of origin of the peoples of Africa, and placing them on the relevant cultural matrix, arrived at three schools, or what is often called theories of Igbo origins. These include the Theory of Independent Origin or Autochthony Theory, Niger-Benue Confluence Theory, and the Theory of Jewish Origins or what is normally called the Oriental Hypothesis. Being that the question of Igbo origins has over time remained a source of controversy the need to examine in appreciable details, the contents of the three theories become necessary.

THE THEORY OF AUTOCHTHONY

According to the theory of autochthony, the Igbo originated in their present homeland. In other words, they did not migrate from anywhere but rather were created in their present abode. Those who propound this theory point to such evidence as the existence of some settlements which have lost their traditions of migration and settlement which often arose out of amnesia due to their long period of continuous settlement. Such settlements often dismiss the issue of their origins and settlements with the claim that they sprouted from the ground. Although common among the high-density zones of the Northern Igboland, historians regard such claim as both a response to the problem of amnesia, which resulted from a long period of permanent settlement, and claims over disputed rights, such as traditional chieftaincy titles, land, and other related matters.

However, the present study is primarily concerned with the dimension dealing with the evidence of long continuous occupation. And this can only be explained from the evidence offered by archaeology and such other related sources as linguistics and palynology. But since linguistics belongs characteristically to the second theory, it will therefore not be considered at the present stage.

Adebisi Sowunmi of the University of Ibadan had suggested in her palynological research that as remote as three thousand years ago, settled agricultural populations had existed in the area presently known as Igboland.[3] What this means is that the ancestors of the Igbo might have occupied the present Igboland since well over one thousand years before Christ. Sowunmi's position appears to be supported by some archaeological evidence. Apart from Thurstan Shaw's monumental excavations at Igbo-Ukwu, which was dated to the ninth century AD by Carbon-14 dating method, the marathon excavations by D. D. Hartle, which were carried out in different parts of Igboland, appear to have revealed considera-

ble evidence of the antiquity of Igbo origins and settlement. During his tenure at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, he excavated fourteen archaeological sites in Igboland.[4] Among these sites, however, the most revealing was the one carried out at the University of Nigeria Agricultural farm, which yielded artifacts of pottery shards among other objects.

In this site, two carbon-14 dates associated with some of the pottery materials recorded the age of 2,555+-130 BC and 1,460 +- 115Bc.[5] Since pottery-making is associated with agricultural communities, and agricultural communities are associated with sedentary societies, it thus suggests a much earlier period of primary settlement. Other archaeological sites excavated by Hartle and which suggest equally evidence of the antiquity of settlement, include the *Isi Ugwu Obukpa* Rock-shelter, which was a stone-age culture, the *Ifeka Garden* site at Ezira, the *Nwankor* site in Bende, and the *Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa* Rock-Shelter in Afikpo, which was also a stone-age culture.[6]

Although archaeology does not offer direct evidence on the identity of the bearers of most of the excavated material cultures, there is however evidence, based on the interpretation of the available artifacts, that the present inhabitants of the Igbo culture area might have descended from those whose material cultures were unearthed. However, when all this evidence is put together, Igbo presence in their present abode with a defined common identity might not have been later than four thousand years ago when considered in the context of linguistic evidence. But the fact however remains that archaeology alone cannot provide all the needed answers to Igbo origins and settlement, hence the need to explore such evidence as linguistics, which is embodied in the Niger-Benue Conference Theory.

THE NIGER-BENUE CONFLUENCE THEORY

The Niger-Benue Confluence theory is hinged on the linguistic theory of glottochronology and lexicostatistics. Glottochronology explains the evolution of a language in terms of the rate of change of its basic vocabularies over a thousand years. On the other hand, lexicostatistics explains the statistical calculation and study of the vocabulary changes.[7] According to this theory, the *Kwa* language family, which is a branch of the larger *Niger-Congo* language family of Africa, gave birth to such languages as the Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Idoma, Igala, Igbira, Ewe, Akan, and Nupe, Bassa, Igede, among other languages, most of which are domiciled in the West African sub-region. It is believed to have branched off from the parent *Niger-Congo* proto-language about ten thousand years ago. Similarly, the Igbo and Yoruba are believed to have separated from the *Kwa* proto-language about four thousand years ago.[8]

This theory no doubt explains the closeness between the Igbo, Edo, and Idoma, as well as the Igala, Itsekiri, and the Yoruba, suggesting that they might have separated from the other in more recent times than between the Igbo and Yoruba. It also explains the existence of some common vocabularies among the Igbo, Idoma, Igala, Yoruba, Edo, Bassa, Igede, Ebira, and Itsekiri among other neighboring languages of the same family.

Thus, among the Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, and other related languages, there exist frequent occurrences of common vocabularies. For instance, the common food item of tropical origin with one common name among the Igbo, Igala, Idoma, Igbira, Edo, and Yoruba, is *Ogede* (Plantain/Banana) Among the Igbo, Igala, Idoma, and Edo, you equally have almost identical names for the traditional four-market-day week. Thus, the Igbo four market days – *Eke, Olie, Nkwo,* and *Afor* are similar to those of the Igala, except *Olie* (*Oye*) which is called *Ede*. Other similar common vocabularies include rock (stone) which is commonly known as *Okwute* in Igbo and *Okuta* in Edo and Yoruba. The Igbo *Onu* which means the mouth is also similar to Yoruba *enu*.

Northcote W. Thomas, one of the most celebrated colonial anthropologists, could not rightly explain the occurrence of common vocabularies in Yoruba, Edo, and Igbo languages. While he tried to explain these occurrences in both Edo and Yoruba in terms of dynastic relationship, for the Igbo and Edo he found it difficult to explain. Thus, he stated:

> Among the words common to Edo and Yoruba are such terms as Oke (hill), Okuta (stone), and the like, and the reason for their appearance in both families of languages is first, that the line of kings which formerly ruled the Edo came from the Ife country; and that, secondly, hills and stones being virtually unknown in the Edo country, terms for them would naturally be adopted from the language of the immigrants.[9]

Concerning the Igbo and Edo, he continued:

> There are certain resemblances between the Edo and Ibo languages which are more difficult to explain. Parts of the body for example, like the mouth (unu), are known by identical names and here it is difficult to suggest an explanation.[10]

All these similarities in vocabularies tend to point to one direction. That is that the Igbo, Edo, Yoruba, Igede, Igala, Idoma, Nupe, and Igbira once in the remote past spoke one common language, were one people, and lived in one common area. This common area of their abode, researchers have identified as the area around where Rivers Niger and Benue met. From this point, it has been suggested, the forebears of these groups dispersed to different areas, and aided by environmental hindrances and long periods of continuous isolation evolved into their present distinct forms of language.

The Niger-Benue Confluence Theory is the one riddle in Igbo origins which if followed to its logical conclusion could terminate at the *Biblical Tower of Babel*. But then in explaining this riddle, one must first take notice of the distinction between the origin of languages and origin of peoples. Can each exist in isolation of the other? The explanation here is that while it is not possible to isolate a people's origin from the origin of their language since communication is the essence of being, either of them could go into extinction, or both could jointly go out of existence. Equally notable is the fact that a new language could evolve as a result of circumstances arising from cultural and environmental confrontations.

Examples of the latter occurrences could be noted in the existence of virtually unintelligible dialects in a given language. For instance, among the Igbo, the *Ikwerre* dialect of the Southern Igbo sub-group assumes a form that makes a first-time Igbo visitor to often assume that it does not form part of the wider Igbo linguistic group. Other extreme examples include the Yiddish language of the German Jews and, the Swahili of the East African coast.

In the case of those people who have lost their original languages, the Ngoni people of Southern Africa, who were once members of the Nguni-speaking people of present South Africa is a living example. The Ngoni people who now live mainly in Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and, Mozambique migrated from present South Africa in the wake of the 19th century *Mfecane.*[11] Most of them, although retaining strong features of their original culture, have lost their original Nguni tongue, wholesomely adopting the languages of their host communities.

Equally revealing in this aspect is the extinct language of ancient Egyptians, the Assyrian Aramaic language, which was the language of commerce and *lingua franca* in most parts of the Middle East at the time of Jesus Christ, as well as the Chaldean language of the Babylonians, which of cause still retains some significant features in the liturgy of the Iraqi-based minority Chaldean Church. Although extinct and regarded mainly as historical relics, both languages however serve to authenticate Biblical traditions.

The Niger-Benue Confluence Theory of Igbo origins thus appears to have established itself as a subject of historical inquiry that cannot easily be discarded without leaving certain ethnolinguistic questions unresolved. In one important respect, it explains the antiquity of settlement and interactions of the ancestors of the various peoples that today live in this part of the great continent of Africa. Beyond this linguistic evidence is however the question of similarities in culture, bound by certain religious customs and traditions forming the nexus of Igbo claims to Jewish origins.

THE THEORY OF JEWISH ORIGINS

The Theory of Jewish Origin or what is equally referred to as Oriental Hypothesis is yet another riddle of Igbo origin which, apart from being webbed in controversy cannot be dismissed as mere mythical and legendary imagination. In fact, its strength lies in its time-depth, having been dated to the late 18th century, when nothing was known about the Igbo and their culture beyond the accounts of Slave Merchants.

Unlike the conventional Oriental Hypothesis which was inspired by European Colonial and Arab adventurism in Black Africa, the Igbo theory of Jewish origins began as a pre-colonial reaction against European slavery and racism in the Diaspora. Apart from being based on extant cultural similarities, it coincided with the era when the Jews were still in bondage in several countries of the world like the Black Africans. So, there was a question of Equiano being influenced in his theory by the modern advancement of the World Jewry in science and technology.

In 1789, an Igbo ex-slave who, with the inherent traditional Igbo spirit of enterprise, worked in the day and studied in the night to free himself from both physical and mental slavery, published his autobiography, a first-hand original account of the Igbo, their hinterland, and their culture. Olaudah Equiano in great detail explained and subsequently propounded the theory of Jewish origins of the Igbo. Reminiscent of the Jewish land flowing with milk and honey, Equiano opened up by painting the picture of the 18th century Igbo society thus:

> Our land is uncommonly rich and fruitful, and produces all kinds of vegetables in great abundance. We have plenty of Indian corn, and vast quantities of cotton and tobacco. Our pineapples grow without cultures; they are about the size of the largest sugar-loaf, and timely flavoured. We have also spices of different kinds, particularly pepper; and a variety of delicious fruits which I have never seen in Europe;

> together with gums of various kinds; and honey in abundance. All our industry is exerted to improve those blessings of nature. Agriculture is our chief employment; and everyone, even the children and women are engaged in it. Thus, we are all habituated to labour from our earliest years. Everyone contributes something to the common stock, and as we are unacquainted with idleness, we have no beggars. The benefits of such a mode of living are obvious. The West Indian planters prefer the slaves of Benin or Eboe to those of any other part of Guinea, for their hardiness, intelligence, integrity, and zeal.[12]

The above graphic presentation no doubt would appear to have further debunked the demographic hypothesis of Igbo enterprise and migration. But beyond this, is Equiano's exposition of the basis of traditional Igbo belief. He proved beyond all reasonable doubts that Igbo belief in one Supreme God goes beyond the era of Christianity in the land. This he averred by the statement that "*the natives believe that there is one creator of all things ….*"[13]

Today, one could only but remain dumbfounded by the primordial origins of such divinely oriented-Igbo names as that of the present author, *Nwaezeigwe,* meaning "the son of the King of Heaven," *Chukwuokike* – God the Creator, *Chukwujindu* – God the custodian of life, *Chukwunwike* – The all-powerful God, *Chukwunenye* – God the Giver, and *Chinazo* – God the Savior, among others. It is evident that Christianity cannot lay claim to the idea and origins of these names, since up to the present times most Igbo Christians still prefer popular European names, which are in most cases said to be historically connected with ancient Roman and Greek traditions rather than Christianity for baptism, to their indigenous names which possess better understandable connections with God.

On specific Igbo – Jewish connections, Equiano was emphatic:

> We practiced circumcision like the Jews, and made offerings and feasts on that occasion in the same manner as they did. Like them also our children were named from some events, some circumstances, or fancied foreboding, at the time of their birth. I was named Olaudah which, in our language, signifies vicissitude or fortune also; one favored, and having a loud voice, and well spoken.[14]

But of most striking in similarities is the Levitical code of the Jews and the Igbo customary rites of cleanliness. As Equiano again pointed out:

> I have before remarked that the natives of this part of Africa are extremely cleanly. This necessary habit of decency was with us a part of religion, and therefore we had many purifications and washings; in-

> deed almost as many, and used on the same occasions, if my recollection does not fail me, as the Jews. Those that touched the dead at any time were obliged to wash and purify themselves before they could enter a dwelling house. Every woman at certain times was forbidden to come into a dwelling – house, or touch any person, or anything we eat.[15]

Equiano went further in the above account to report that he at one time as a kid who was very fond of his mother had cause to violate the custom, for which he was kept isolated with his mother till evening. In agreement with Equiano's observations, the book of *Leviticus* chapter 15, verses 19 to 23, explains this aspect of the Jewish Levitical code, the *Torah*

> When a woman has a discharge of blood which is her regular discharge, from her body, she shall remain in her impurity seven days; whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Anything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; and anything that she sits on shall be unclean. Anyone who touches any object on which she has slept shall wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; and anyone who touches any object on which she has sat shall wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening. Be it the bedding or be it the object, on which she has sat, or touching it shall be unclean until evening.[16]

Olaudah Equiano's thesis of similarity of culture between the Igbo and the Jews was carried forward in the 19th century by another Igbo scholar of liberated class, Lt. Col. (Dr) James Africanus Beale Horton. In what appears as a rebuttal to Dr. Baikie's declaration that "*the religion of the Eboes is entirely pagan,*" Horton asserted that, "the religion of the Eboes is Judaism, intermixed with numerous pagan rites and ceremonies."[17] As Christopher Fyfe further put it:

> He quoted from Crowther and Taylor to show similarities between Ibo theology and worship and those of the Old Testament Jews, hazarding the theory of a Jewish dispersion over Africa.[18]

However, during the four decades that followed British colonization of Igboland, and against the back-drop of the Hamitic hypothesis propounded by C. G. Seligman, those colonial anthropologists who ventured into the subject of Igbo origins clearly departed from the concept of Jewish

origins. The central premise of the Hamitic hypothesis is that Black Africa never had any civilization that developed out of her own initiative but had such civilizations imposed by a band of White-men who invaded the continent through either the Mediterranean or the Red sea carrying superior cultures. In fact, Black Africa had no history outside the history of the activities of these White-men in Black Africa. As Seligman put it:

> The civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites, its history the record of these peoples and of their interaction with the two other African stocks, the Negro and the Bushmen, whether this influence was exerted by highly civilized Egyptians or by such wider pastoralists as are represented at the present day by the Beja and the Somaili.[19]

In Igboland, H.R. Palmer and M.D.W. Jeffreys, the two colonial ethnographers who worked among the Aro and Nri sub-groups respectively, did not at one moment, in the course of their monumental researches on these two sub-groups, contemplate the idea of any similarity between certain Igbo practices and those of the Old Testament Jews. They were all the while guided by the hypothetical imaginations of C.G. Seligman. In applying the Hamitic hypothesis in their analyses of Igbo cultural values, the two men described the Aro and Nri as belonging to a superior race through whom what appeared to be superior cultural values got to the Igbo. In the words of H.R. Palmer:

> … the only reason why the Ibos are a more advanced people—a people of distinctly higher grade than the Ibibio and Ejaw is because, firstly of Aro teaching and secondly of a large admixture of in certain areas—particularly the Abakaliki and Enugu region – of Aro blood.[20]

What Sir Palmer did not however know about the Aro is that they have more Ibibio blood in their veins than that of the Igbo. And that there is nothing more superior about Aro values than what they learned from the Igbo on their arrival from the Ibibio country. For instance, the concept of oracular adjudication is not indigenous to the Ibibio but a primordial intrinsic aspect of Igbo cosmology. Before the Aro *Ubinu-Ukpabi* (Long Juju) came prominent, such similar oracles as the *Agbala* of Awka, *Kamalu* of Ozuzu and *Igwe-Kala* of Umuneoha among so many others had been in existence on the cosmic terrains of Igbo credulity.

Neither could the Aro be said to be imbued with any outstanding martial prowess beyond the services offered by the Eda-Ohafia-Abam group of cultic head-hunters. Similarly, the Aro cannot claim to have introduced long-distance trade. The fact is that they emerged in the course

of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the 18th century as a result of their primordial connections with the Efik-Ibibio group to dominate the trade in slaves in some parts of the interior Igboland.

The Isu sub-culture group of the Southern Igbo, apart from being the most widely dispersed single Igbo sub-group, was well-known for legitimate long-distance trade. They dominated the interior commerce of most parts of pre-colonial Igboland. Their activities were so dominant that early European visitors described interior Igboland collectively as *Isuama* country, after the Isu people. For instance, Major A.G. Leonard in his effort to locate the home of the well-known itinerant Nri ritual agents described their town, Nri as being situated in Isu country. Thus, wrote Leonard:

> Nri or Nshi – evidently the same place, but a different pronunciation of it—is a town which is situated about forty to fifty miles to the east i.e. behind Onitsha, on the east bank of the Niger, just below its confluence with the Anambra, in the district of Isu or Isuama, or the country of the Isu.[21]

To show the extent at which Isu people were held in high esteem, Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton was reported stating that he "*descended from the royal blood of Isuama Eboe.*[22] Even, in colonial days, C.K. Meek was to remark on the distinct character of the Isu as long-distance traders. He observed that:

> Among men the propensity towards trade varies considerably in different groups. Thus, in Owerri Division, the large group of people known as the Isu are noted traders, and on any of the main roads leading to Port-Harcourt hundreds of Isu can be seen making their way on foot or on bicycles to and from this center of trade.[23]

One thing that should be noted in respect of the above observation by C.K. Meek is that, the Isu trading activities could not have just begun with the advent of British colonialism. It is therefore not improbable to assume that what C.K. Meek observed was merely a sequence of daily activities that had been taking place many centuries earlier. And it is equally probable that the ability of the Isu to sustain this primordial commercial tradition over time could be attributed to the fact that they were *ab initio* primarily engaged in legitimate commerce. On the contrary, because the Aro grew into prominence following the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade,

they evidently went out of commercial circulation with the collapse of the illegitimate trade.

It is therefore clear that Palmer's hypothesis of a superior Aro race was not based on any primordial or extant body of evidence. However, one notable distinct of Aro personality is their acclaimed craftiness, which pitches the other Igbo sub-groups against them. Thus, among the Igbo, there has always been the general tendency to believe that the Aro habitually put on dual personalities in any business transaction. This assumption followed the seeming belief by most Aro that they are, in line with Palmer's hypothesis, more imbued with superior intelligence than their other Igbo counterpart.

For M.D.W. Jeffreys, the Nri probably originated from the Igala; while the ruling dynasty of Igala originated from Jukun, and the Jukun, on the hand migrated from Egypt. Using the *Ichi* scarification, which he erroneously ascribed to *Nri* origins, as the basis of his hypothesis, Jeffreys believed that the practice of *Ichi* title markings on the face originated from Egypt through the Umunri. With this, he appears to hazard the Hamitic origins of the Igbo culture. Stating this he wrote:

> The Ibo evidence in support of an independent invention is nil. The Umundri group claim to have migrated to their present sites from the north and to be a branch of the Igala. The Igala ruling group claims to have come from the Jukun and the Jukun derive from the east.[24]

To both Matthews and Jeffreys therefore, no evidence suggesting the Jewish origins of the Igbo was ever stumbled upon. Rather, what they believed was that if at any rate Igbo origins could be traced to external roots, definitely it could have been to Egypt or any Middle Eastern country other than the land of the Jews; and which could have been through the Umunri (Nri) connection.

But it was Reverend G.T. Basden of the Church Missionary Society, who raised very interesting questions on the Jewish origins of the Igbo, more than even Olaudah Equiano and James Africanus Horton. His observation in this respect was straight and clear. Said he:

> Over twenty years ago, I wrote: 'To any contemplating residence in the Ibo country, particularly those likely to be associated with native affairs, I would recommend a careful study of Levitical law. In many ways the affinity between Native Law and the Mosaic system is remarkable.'[25]

Basden went further to engage in what could rightly be called an incising intellectual promenade into the similarities between Igbo practices

and the Old Testament Laws, using the Bible in most cases to justify his comparisons. He observed that among the Igbo, there were a lot of light and red-skinned individuals that could easily pass for the average Caucasian. He further noted that their carved masquerade, (masks) wore the facial features of the Middle East and not negro.[26]

Basden's observation could be said to be a collaboration of an earlier description by a British slave merchant, Captain Hugh Crow, in his memoirs which was published in 1830 after his death. Hugh Crow described the Igbo complexion of being *"generally of a yellowish tinge, but varying to a jet black."*[27] Bringing these observations to the present, there is no doubt that the Igbo have frequent unexplained occurrences of light-skinned complexion more than any member of the Kwa language family. This prominent racial feature could lead researchers of Igbo – Jewish tradition to bend towards a possible connection.

On specific similarities between the Jewish Levitical code and Igbo Native Law and Customs, it is however important to acknowledge the remarkable high level of morality and religious observances among the pre-colonial Igbo. It is, therefore, possible that a parallel of what obtained in Igboland could be drawn with what obtained among the Old Testament Jews.

Among these similarities was the law relating to retaliation and sanctuary in respect of murder and man-slaughter. These are explained in the Book of Deuteronomy Chapters IV:41-42 and XIX.[28] Like the Jews, the Igbo in applying the law of retaliation in respect of the killing of one's kinsman, recognize the distinction between murder and manslaughter. Although no cities of refuge existed in Igboland as in the case of the Old Testament Jews, the Igbo had their counterparts in shrines and related institutions.

A man who committed murder (*Ochu-Ukwu*) if not immediately apprehended, had such options as: hand himself over to the people, who could summarily deal with him; flee to an unknown land or a community deemed hostile by his people; or take refuge in an oracle, thereby becoming an *Osu*, in such case becoming a perpetual property of the oracle. The Osu caste system is mostly practiced among the Southern Igbo, specifically among the Owerri-Oratta sub-group. Elsewhere in Igboland, particularly among the Western and Riverain Igbo sub-groups where Osu caste system did not exist, such a person who did not have a hiding place was normally hanged once apprehended.

On the other hand, the man who unwillingly caused the death of his kinsman (*Ochu-Nta*), if able to escape from instant justice had the prospect

of returning back home after some number of years in exile. He was required to stay away from his community for a ritual period of seven years, when it was believed, the spirit of retaliation might have died down and the spirit of the killed rested. As Achebe graphically noted:

> The only course open to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman, and a man who committed it must flee from the land. The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female, because he had been inadvertent. He could return to the clan after seven years.[29]

In some communities of the Western and Riverain groups, particularly in Ibusa, a man who killed his kinsman accidentally and succeeded in taking refuge in the house of the *Ikwelle-Ibusa*, the Warrior King of the town was automatically granted reprieve by the latter by immediately initiating the culprit into the *Ogbuu* warrior cult. The man was immediately required to commence the *Ikwa-Ochu* ceremony, which is the process of atonement through the formal initiation into the *Ogbuu* warrior society. The palace of the *Ikwelle* was therefore a kind of sanctuary for remorseful killers.

However, in respect of the killing of a member of a neighboring town, there might be no proper means of settlement except a replacement from the offending community. In the event of the latter not conceding to the request of the town whose member was killed, the option would be war, or a declaration of a state of enmity between the two towns and the subsequent plot for revenge. This is again noted by Achebe in the Ikemefuna episode of his *Things Fall Apart* when the people of Mbaino murdered the wife of Ogbuefi Udo of Umuofia, and Umuofia people gave them an ultimatum to choose between war and atonement of the murdered woman, in which a female replacement to the murdered woman and a male—Ikemefuna were given to Umuofia in appeasement.[30]

Basden was also quick to observe during his time, the strong displeasure among the Igbo of women putting on men's attire, and the men doing likewise. He saw this Igbo attitude as being consistent with similar injunctions in the Book of *Deuteronomy* Chapter xxii: 29.[31] One does not however need to go into the issues relating to circumcision and menstrual purity of the woman, since these have earlier been dealt with. But it remains to explain the practice of female circumcision among the Igbo, which incidentally did not exist among the Levitical Jews.

Most Black African societies where morality took the principal stage of religion and where the culture of proper clothing was not highly developed saw in the practice of female circumcision more of a moral control measure than mere religious rites. A situation where most young women

had their bodies unguardedly exposed only required an extraordinary means of sexual restriction on the part of the women against the menacing advances of the male sexual hawks. Hence, despite the widespread nude culture among the Igbo of the time, there was a high rate of morality. The Igbo might have therefore adopted the practice of female circumcision as a reaction to the needs of their moral values in relation to the dearth of clothing.

Other similar laws that Basden noted were those relating to adultery, as recorded in Leviticus xx:10, and witchcraft also as recorded in Leviticus xx:27. He equally saw in the Igbo New Yam Festival (*Iwa-ji*) a resemblance to the Hebrew Feast of Tabernacle. He further traced the cultic Igbo respect to the elderly to the Biblical injunction in Leviticus chapter xix: 32. But the most striking resemblance between the two peoples is the law of inheritance. Apart from the Igbo being patrilineal like the Jews, the old practice of inheriting one's late brother's young wife appears to have taken the same form with that of the Old Testament Jews.[32]

When therefore all these posers are put together, one is left with no option than to accept the fact of a connection, in some remote past, between the Old Testament Jews and their Igbo counterparts. Otherwise, how could one rightly explain the basis of these similarities? Much as there are equally elements of evidence suggestive of the possible veracity of the two earlier theories, the theory of Jewish origins raises such questions that one cannot jettison without risking a case of throwing away the bathwater with the baby away.

For one thing, both the Jews and the Igbo share common sentimental attachments to their homelands. They are both imbued with a strong spirit of enterprise, which often attracted the envy of their host communities. Both peoples have equally suffered repeated mob attacks and outright pogroms by their respective hosts on account of, not just their enterprising successes, but also their religious identities. In fact, Captain Hugh Crow made several references to the distinctive character of the Igbo in respect of their preference by plantation owners in America. In one such remark, he stated:

> The Eboes, tho' not generally a robust type, are a well-formed people, of the middle stature: many of their women are of remarkably symmetrical shape, and if white, would in Europe be deemed beautiful. This race is, as has been already remarked, of a more mild and engaging disposition than the other tribes, particularly the Quaws and though less suited for the severe manual labour of the field, they are

> preferred in the West Indian colonies for their fidelity and utility, as domestic servants, particularly if taken there when young, as they then become the most industrious of any of the tribes taken to the colonies.[33]

The Igbo experience under slavery had always been observed in the Jews under similar conditions. Be it in Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Macedonia, ancient Roman Empire, Arab Caliphates, Ottoman Empire, or European nations. Thus, the reference to the Igbo as the Jews of Black Africa might not have arisen without reference to the foregoing evidence of common experiences.

It is not therefore out of place for the Igbo to lay claim to the membership of the World Jewry, a status which is anchored on the claim that their progenitors belonged to one of the lost tribes of Israel. They further link this claim to the etymology of the term Igbo, which is interpreted to be a corruption of the word "Hebrew", which originated from the earliest European reference to Igbo as "Heebo."[34]

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing body of evidence, it seems there is ample evidence of some similarities between some aspects of the ancient Hebrew practices and elements of traditional Igbo values. There is also the evidence of the unexplained widespread occurrence of a strong ting of light complexion skin pattern among the Igbo when compared to other ethnic groups in Nigeria. And if this remains unexplained in the context of racial classification, then it becomes explicable only within the context of Igbo-Jewish origins.

The description of the Igbo as the Jews of Black Africa would seem to be explicable not only in their achievement instinct and widespread persecution in foreign lands in the manner of the Jewish experiences but also in the context of the two peoples being often described as exceptionally intelligent.

Above all, the fact that the earliest European reference to the Igbo was in the form of the word "Heebo" may actually suggest that the word might have actually been a corruption of Hebrew since there appears to be no record of the origin of the word "Igbo." In other words, the probability weighs more in favor of the claim that the word "Igbo" originated from Hebrew and a yet to be determined source.

There is no gainsaying the fact that there are obvious similarities between the Igbo and the Jews, which probably point to the fact that the Igbo claim of being part of the lost tribes of Israel might not be totally out of place. This probability further points to the fact that the present negroid

racial character of the Igbo mighty have the consequence of long periods of interactions and miscegenation between the aboriginal Black African Stock and the immigrant Jews on the one hand, and the environmental circumstances arising from the climatic condition of the environment.

In laying credence to the above possibility, the case of the Ethiopian Falashas rightly comes to mind. Thus, even though their racial character is clearly distinct from those of the Jews from other parts of the world, yet they are classified as Jews. This evidence is further supported by the fact that even among the contemporary Jews, one could still notice some distinctive color differences, with each of the Groups evidently assuming the racial character of their host communities. These characteristic distinctions are evident in the cases of such Jewish groups as the *Sephardi* of mainly medieval Spain, other Western European nations, and the Mediterranean region, the *Ashkenazi* of mainly Eastern Europe, as well as the Oriental group of the Middle East. It would therefore appear hazardous to define a group's Jewish identity only in racial terms. Thus, if all other facts clearly point to the probability of Igbo – Jewish origins, except in fact the racial factor, the evidence would seem to tilt in favor of the tradition that the Igbo of Nigeria might have originated from the Jews.

To most Igbo therefore, the reason for the continued hostility of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani ethnic group in the North against them might have been their professed claim of Jewish origins. This possibility of origins appears to equally account for the periodic spillover of the Middle East conflicts in Nigeria, in which the Igbo are always the principal targets of unprovoked anti-Israeli demonstrations and attacks.

A recent random survey carried out by the present writer among some Igbo young men shows that a large number of the Igbo youth would be willing to enlist in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), to fight the Arabs. Allied to this also, is the rising desire of some Igbo groups and individuals to immigrate to *Eretz* Israel. This desire has resulted in the emergence of a number of Igbo Zionist organizations. This rising interest has also led to a gradual shift among the Igbo from the stereotyped Judaism called "Sabbath Missions", to the actual practice of Orthodox Judaism. For instance, Rabi Ike, who hails from Nteje, a town in the present Anambra State of Nigeria, lives and practices Orthodox Judaism in Israel presently. His wife, Dr (Mrs. Chy Ike, also a practicing Orthodox Jew, founded an Igbo-based Zionist organization known as "Igbo Interests World Wide" (IIWW), which is aimed at creating increased awareness in the historic connection of the Igbo to the Jews.[35]

In general, therefore, there appears to be a strong sentimental attachment of the Igbo to the Zionist idea and aspirations. Most striking in this attachment is the emerging trend among the Igbo to presently attach the suffix title of "JP," "Jerusalem Pilgrim", for anybody who undertakes the Holy Pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem. This trend no doubt appears to be a counter-sentimental devise against the over-bearing Muslim title prefix of *Al-Haji* ascribed to those who undertook the Holy Pilgrimage to the Muslim Holy Lands of Mecca and Medina. In the same vein, there have also been increased Government involvement in the conduct of Christian pilgrimages to Israel and Rome among States with a majority or substantial number of Christians. This is evident in the establishment of State Pilgrim Welfare Boards for both Muslims and Christians. Although this emerging trend is not exclusive to the Igbo, the fact remains that, beyond the general attachment of the Christian population of Nigeria to the aspirations of the Jews, the Igbo remain the flag-ship of pro-Jewish consciousness in Nigeria, particularly given the circumstances, both of their claim of origins from the Jews, and being the only ethnic group in Nigeria where adherents to Judaism are found in greater number.

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IKENGA: REIMAGINING AN ICONOGRAPHY OF CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

The traditional concept and imaginary of ikenga encapsulates the Igbo essence of male good fortune, economic achievement, and sociocultural advancement. This paper explores ways that elements of Ada Uzoamaka Azodo's "di-feminism," with its focus on the Igbo concept of agunwaanyi, might be appropriated to signal a possible reimagining of ikenga. Through a critical reading of Azodo's theory and re-reading of the scholarship on ikenga, the paper argues that while ikenga manifests the idea of wholeness (as the attainment and realization of one's cherished aspirations) for a people whose worldview operates within a duality of ideas, objects, and existence, its gender-specific construction does not acknowledge and address the socioeconomic advancement of women within the Igbo society. To continue to exclude any gender from the reality and ambitions that ikenga represents would, therefore, amount to a diminishment rather than an enhancement of the Igbo person and the Igbo world.

INTRODUCTION

The Igbo conceive of and engage with ikenga, the cult of the right hand, as an encapsulation of the Igbo essence of male good fortune, achievement, and sociocultural advancement.[1] Even when the material culture of ikenga may no longer be prevalent in contemporary Igbo society, due to the presence and overarching influence of Christianity, the ikenga mindset still orients the Igbo worldview and approach toward success and accomplishment borne out of hard work and industry. In its iconographic representation as a carved wooden figure of a man with ram's horns on his head and holding a machete in the right hand and an elephant tusk in the left, ikenga embodies the idea that artifacts do not only illustrate an extension of the self but also constitute an extension of the human consciousness by providing some solidity to the human mind.[2]

This paper reviews the scholarship on ikenga and articulates the centrality of its conception and art form in Igbo culture and consciousness. It argues that while ikenga manifests the idea of wholeness (as the attainment and realization of one's cherished aspirations) for a people whose worldview operates within a duality of ideas, objects, and existence, its gender-specific construction does not acknowledge and address the socioeconomic advancement of women within the Igbo society. Granted, the gender specificity of ikenga does not deny the industry of women, but the ikenga imaginary nonetheless symbolizes a celebrated machismo integral to male success. In the face of the growing scholarship in literature, an-

thropology, and history by Igbo feminist scholars like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Akachi Ezeigbo, Ifi Amadiume, Nwando Achebe, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,[3] whose work continue to highlight the socio-cultural, economic, and political achievements of women in traditional and contemporary Igbo society, the paper explores ways that elements of Ada Uzoamaka Azodo's "di-feminism," with its focus on the Igbo concept of agu-nwaanyi,[4] might be appropriated to signal a reimagining of ikenga. The paper will first articulate Azodo's idea of agu nwaanyi and then set the context for the understanding of ikenga as well as the worldview that informs and sustains its imaginary. Afterwards, it will analyze the discourse ikenga has generated among scholars, consider its iconography and form as well as ritual and symbolism, before concluding that even if rooted in history, ikenga constitutes an enduring part of the contemporary conceptions of success in the Igbo world, albeit entrenched in masculine ethos.

AGU-NWAANYI: INTERROGATING IKENGA'S GENDER EXCLUSIVE QUALITIES

In keeping with a long tradition of African feminist scholars (like Chikwenye Okonjo-Ogunyemi, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Catherine Acholonu, Ezeigbo, Mary Kolawale, Obioma Nnaemeka, and Chioma Opara,[5] whose tradition dates back to Alice Walker's "womanism," in critique of Western feminism[6]) who propound indigenous feminisms, Azodo advances her "di feminism." This twelve-point approach that represents "a blend of inclusivity, awareness, and 'open-eye' that compulsorily demands to be seen and to be heard,"[7] becomes her alternative to Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminism, which advocates for a conciliatory and cooperative approach in women's relationship and engagement with men. However, more than the assertiveness that Azodo calls for, it is agu-nwaanyi (lion-woman), one of the two key concepts she employs to illustrate her theory that speaks to this paper's interest in a possible women's dimension to ikenga.

Di-feminism, Azodo states, "valorizes the indigenous Igbo concept of Agunwanyi, that androgyny that manifests a perfect blend of feminine and masculine qualities by sheer dint of acute intelligence, initiative and intuition."[8] Among other influences, Azodo acknowledges the impact of Amadiume's seminal work (*Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*) on her development and articulation of di-feminism. However, although Azodo does not make further specific reference to agu nwaanyi in the rest of her essay on di-feminism (beyond her introduction in the quoted section above), the concept nonetheless forms part of the overarching outline of her theory. "Agu nwaanyi" speaks to

the reality of (exceptionally) accomplished women, women who excel in their respective endeavors and who often, as a result, take on the added philanthropic exercise of caring for individuals beyond their own immediate families. These women are exceptions and Azodo makes the case that in order to level the playing ground for both men and women, Igbo society and culture should provide equal opportunities for growth and development for women so that all women would be set on the course toward becoming agu nwaanyi, successful women "contribut[ing] to the (re)development of Igboland, through equality in gender opportunities."[9] Part of this process, she argues, requires the normalization of women's access to wealth, for instance, as well as title-taking, so that, like men, women too can take titles, all the way to the highest level of the chieftaincy ranks.

In her response to di-feminism, Ezeigbo (in her own rejoinder to Azodo's critique of snail-sense feminism as unacceptable strategy that "sacrifices women's respect and freedom at the altar of practicality and functionality"[10]) notes that di-feminism merely "reaffirms[s] already established practices in a rather articulate manner [without] offer[ing] new knowledge or principle."[11] Yes, the idea of gender equality is a common thread among African feminist scholars in theorizing feminism in Africa and as such not original to Azodo. But, Azodo brings a novel fierce, non-apologetic approach to it. The "open-eye" (assertive) attitude of that approach, for instance, definitely strikes one as different from preceding indigenous feminisms that seek to negotiate, accommodate, and compromise. Whether Azodo's approach is better remains a subject of debate for feminist scholars and future historians. But there is no denying the fact that she brings a different perspective to the table, as she puts it, a "radical opposition to patriarchy,"[12] that is definitely opposed to Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminism approach.

However, at first glance, it is not obvious why Azodo would anchor her feminism theory on a masculinist term which appears to undermine its application as a key term for formulating the foundation of gender equality and the basis for agu nwaanyi. "Di" simply means "husband" and sometimes, for emphasis, it is rendered as "di nwaanyi," literally, "husband of the woman." Yes, as Azodo states, the "di-ness" articulates expertise and specialization in Igbo society which should not exclude women. The reality, however, applies otherwise, given that none of the prefixes of "di" for such expertise applies to women. "Di ochi" (palm wine tapper), "di mgba" (wrestler), "di nta" (hunter), "di ji" (exceptional yam farmer), "di oka" (blacksmith), "di ogu" (warrior) and all other "di" prefixed terms in Igbo language speak of only men even in contemporary times.[13]

Not even a woman who has also succeeded in those areas that women traditionally controlled, like trading, weaving, pottery, and cassava farming, had any such "di" specialized qualification attached to her.[14] Rather, such a hardworking, industrious, and successful woman is called "agbangala nwaanyi" (exceptional woman, onomatopoeically derived) or "agu nwaanyi" (Azodo's lion-woman). As a matter of fact, not only are women not called "di ochi" (wine tapper), for instance, the idea of a female wine tapper is still tabooed as "nso ala" (that which the earth forbids) in parts of Igboland; and women are even forbidden to climb palm trees. This taboo, coupled also with the fact that, still in some Igbo communities, women are also forbidden to break a kola nut, climb a kola nut tree, or even pick up the kola nut that has fallen from the tree, might undermine Azodo's theory. Even, when in exceptional cases, for example, a priestess might break a kola nut that she offers to her god, part of gender challenge that still persists among the Igbo remains that women mostly do not (certainly did not in the pre-colonial period) inherit land in their father's house. They are also easily dispossessed by their in-laws of any land gift from their husband, in the case of his death, especially if the woman involved does not have any male child. Other than in few uncommon cases where modern (educated, enlightened, and exposed) Igbo men may include their daughters as inheritors of their estate in the cities (seldom in the villages, as women are expected to marry and leave their paternal homes), this sad reality still obtains in many Igbo communities, no matter the rhetoric of gender assertiveness or the extent of the woman's educational qualifications or socioeconomic achievements. Whereas these instances appear to undermine Azodo's position, they in fact buttress her point for the unequal gender treatment in Igboland and, therefore, make her case for the need to re-engineer the patriarchal system of the culture in order to engender equal opportunities for men and women.

"Akataka," another masculinist term that Azodo deploys as the theoretical framework upon which to build the gender synergy of di-feminism raises a further concern. "Di-Feminism," she writes, "borrows light from the 'akataka' in Igbo tradition, a genre of 'mmanwu' (mmonwu or muo), a masquerade, at once in human and spirit forms …"[15] Ezeigbo disagrees strongly with Azodo on the use of the term, noting that such a violent and unruly masquerade is inadequate and "grossly unsuitable as a framework to theorize feminism or establish a model of self-fulfillment and development for women."[16] The terrifying, aggressive, disruptive, and frenetic energy of Akataka is counterproductive and as such, Ezeigbo argues, unsuitable for navigating the complex maze of gender relationship in Africa and the world. Violence of any type has not resolved any issue anywhere in the world. What is needed, she maintains, is dialogue.

Building off akataka, Azodo calls for a return to the pre-colonial "umuada" (daughters of an extended patrilineage) phenomenon. However, Azodo fails to critique the excesses that have dogged the umuada's cruel treatment of their fellow women, as she references the umuada to buttress her argument that women were as active as men in the political and economic processes of many pre-colonial Igbo communities and so could not have been as powerless as European historians and anthropologists constructed them to be.[17] In championing the power of Igbo women of that era, Azodo fails to acknowledge the abuse of that power by the same umuada, say, in the way they treated (and to certain extent still treat) the widows of their male relatives. Such umuada hide behind tradition and custom to perpetrate and perpetuate oppression and cruelty against their own kind, thereby preserving the same culture that holds women down.

Nevertheless, one can read Azodo's deployment of "di" and "akataka" in her theory as a subversion and in that case one could see within their perimeters how the "di-ness" of her feminism could be an invitation to also extend the aspirations of ikenga to women, an exercise that will eventually lead to establishing the agu nwaanyi phenomenon as the norm within the culture. If human desires, dreams, and ambitions for advancement and success are similar for men and women in the contemporary conceptions of gender, the continuing association of ikenga with men will not no longer be acceptable in a world of gender equality. Representational language, Stuart Hall[18] notes, is constructed and Azodo is saying that "di," and by extension ikenga, has been constructed in a men-dominated world to dislodge women from whatever value it represents. Nwapa, for instance, calls out Nigerian male writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka for writing strong and formidable women out of their earlier works. These male writers, Nwapa insists, would rather represent the women as prostitutes, nags, temptresses, and seducers than accord them the power and valid ambitions they truly wield. Both Ezeigbo and Ogundipe-Leslie[19] make a similar point. Decrying Soyinka's denial of agency to women in his memoir, *Ake*, for example, Ogundipe-Leslie notes that "the greatest historical disservice Soyinka does the Women's Movement [of the 1949 Abeokuta revolt] is to portray it as an unplanned, impulsive, gut reaction to contemporary maladministration [by a group of *incapable* and *non-plussed* women told what to do at their meeting by the wise Mr. Daodu]. The movement was, in fact, highly organized."[20]

Demonstrating the difference in the portraits of women between African male writers and their female counterparts, Nwapa notes what she did differently: "In my two heroines, Efuru and Idu, I was inspired by the women around me when I was growing up. … [These] were solid and superior women who held their own in society. They were not only wives

and mothers but also successful traders who took care of their children and their husbands as well. They were very much aware of their leadership roles in their families as well as in the churches and local government."[21] Note the idea of women as care givers—tying into the idea of African feminism generally not being conceived as antagonistic to motherhood and to men. But then again, notice the framing of women as the ones who take care of their husbands in addition to running their successful trades. The concern never arose for Nwapa, even in her vanguard attempt at representing strong women (the agu nwaanyi of her time and place), to question the burden such care giving might place on women. In their role of caring for both their children and their husbands, Nwapa fails to interrogate the question of who cares for the women. To the extent that one could argue that their agu-nwaanyi-ness makes women capable of taking on such roles without paying heed to their own wellbeing, one has to also acknowledge that such a position can amount to perpetuating the subjugation that di-feminism and all other indigenous feminisms seek to emancipate women from. In order to better appreciate the import of Azodo's clamor for the leveling of gender playing field so as to create the necessary conditions for enabling every Igbo woman to become an agu nwaanyi, one has to comprehend the central position of ikenga in the Igbo conception of masculine achievement.

UNDERSTANDING IKENGA: MEANING AND CONTEXT

The representations of ikenga crystallize the male ethos in Igboland, but ikenga in itself "is by no means a simple concept, even if, as in the nature of symbols, it may have a very simple form."[22] As a famous icon which the Igbo associate with individual and group achievements, ikenga represents both a conception and material image associated with good fortune, achievement, industry, and the physical strength of the right hand.[23] Its iconography embodies, for the Igbo, meaning, significance, and symbolism beyond its formal attributes. Consisting of two compound nouns, "ike" (strength or ability) and "nga" (place), "ikenga," as it stands, could translate as "the place of strength."[24]

However, its literal translation has remained a subject of debate for scholars. Writing about ikenga in the mid twentieth century, for instance, M. D. W. Jeffreys' claim that the term "ikenga," might have its roots from Kengawa or Kenga, a northern Nigerian group.[25] E. Okechukwu Odita dismisses Jeffrey's position as tenuous and maintains that although it seems convincing, "it is objectively unsound."[26] Odita then proffers an Igbo origin of the term: "Ikenga in Igbo language means *Ike/-nji-/aga* (*ike-n-ga*): the strength/with which I/advance."[27] Odita's translation could have provided a relief for the challenges that the meaning of ikenga has

posed for both linguists and scholars of Igbo culture except that the language does not lend itself to such a contraction of syllabi and vowels. There is no evidence of other such unexplainable contractions in the language.

A war of semantics has also raged among scholars regarding whether ikenga is associated with the right arm, hand, or shoulder. Jeffreys notes the difference of usage among the early studies of social organization of the Igbo by scholars like George Basden, P. Amaury Talbot, and C. K. Meek.[28] Whereas Basden uses hand, the others, together with Jeffreys, prefer arm. Ejizu calls out another Igbo scholar, M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu,[29] for his preference for hand rather than arm. Generally believed to be "positive, active and powerful," this right arm, Ejizu argues, "serves to indicate not only ikenga but also such other important indigenous symbols like ofo"[30] (more on ofo later). One wonders however the basis for the arm-hand differentiations, since the Igbo do not draw any fine distinction when they refer to the hand (aka), especially between hand and arm.[31] Termed differently, however, the shoulder (ubu) represents the site of contact for greeting among warriors and strong men (as in "dike na dike zu n'uzo, ha were ikenga naa n'aka"), a point that is, ironically, lost on those engaged in the war of terms. Francis Arinze seems to bridge that semantic gap when he deploys "arm" and "hand" in his description of ikenga, without betraying any sort of contradiction. "The personification of a man's strength of arm," he writes, "has everything to do with his good fortune. It is a man's 'right hand' that leads him through thick and thin."[32]

No matter the privileged nomenclature, however, three categories of ikenga exist, namely "ikenga mmadu" (human ikenga), "ikenga alusi" (spirit ikenga), and "ntutu agu" (divination objects).[33] Whereas the first is a fully developed human figure with horns, seated on a stool, the other two do not have human forms. The second is a cylinder with horns while the third is often simple miniature rendering of the second in different shapes. Recent scholarship, however, follows a two-fold typology: abstract or chip-carved ikenga and anthropomorphic or smooth-carved ikenga.[34] Cole and Aniakor acknowledge that a close link connects the abstract ikenga and the naturalistic ikenga together, which makes any elaborate typology problematic. Nevertheless, they note that "literally hundreds of individual carvers' hands can be recognized,"[35] in the Igbo artistry of ikenga, an observation that has inspired further divisions and subdivisions of known ikenga figures along the lines of regional, workshop, and individual carvers' attributions.[36]

History has as well revealed more varieties of ikenga beyond Igboland, as ikenga also exists among neighboring groups like Igala in the northeast and Edo in the southwest. However, "available evidence shows

that the Igbo possess the most developed concept, iconic forms and range of functions of the symbol."[37] Odita questions the assumption of the existence of ikenga among the Edo, arguing that Edo oral tradition does not bear any evidence to the availability of ikenga objects in the culture. He sees as incidental the primary work by William Fagg[38] that is often cited in support of such a presence given that Fagg "did not illustrate his sample of Edo and Igala ikenga for purposes of comparison and close analysis; nor has he any documentation to that effect."[39] As engaging as Odita's argument appears, it does not, however, address the concern why the presence of ikenga in Edo culture should be dismissed based, as he claims, on the inconclusive methodology of Fagg's work.

Ejizu argues that much of the above scholarship has focused on outlining the iconographic qualities of ikenga to the detriment of articulating its ritual symbolism and functions. According to him, as far as the owners of ikenga are concerned, "it is really the symbolism and the role which the ritual object plays that are of primary concern rather than the structural embellishments of different structural forms."[40] However, although he does a great job in highlighting the Igbo worldview that informs the material representations of ikenga, he nonetheless focuses solely on the ritual components of the object.

The Igbo worldview is infused with an ontological concept of duality, for nothing ever stands alone, an idea that remains central to how the Igbo perceive their world. This duality also drives the central phenomenon in the Igbo conception of a person's chi—one's spirit being in the spirit world.[41] Ikenga hearkens back to this dual notion of reality but then expands it to its absolute completeness of four, the duality of twos, thereby "incorporat[ing] a person's chi, his ancestors, his right arm or hand, *aka ikenga*, his power, *ike*, as well as [its] spiritual activation through prayer and sacrifice."[42] Although ikenga embodies these four key elements of the Igbo cosmology, as an entity, it has a duality of its own, ofo (a consecrated tree branch from the tallow tree, *Detarium Senegalense*), which symbolizes the customary sacred authority for justice and propriety. The use of ofo for the invocation of spiritual powers as well as the symbolism of striking it four times on the ground, points to the number four as an auspicious unit that completes ritual actions, with the ground symbolizing the Earth Goddess (Ala), custodian of communal morality. Given that the basic function of the ofo is to prove the innocence of its bearer and those who implore its intercession, its complementarity with ikenga becomes obvious for a people who depend on the land for their sustenance and advancement. The bearer (often male) who commits any offense, like murder, that is tabooed by Ala, not only violates Ala's sacredness but also diminishes both the community and the bearer, together with his social capital.[43]

The Igbo man encompasses different related tendencies. On the one hand are those obedient and moral aspects embodied in the ofo. On the other hand, are those individualistic, aggressive values represented by the ikenga. "These derive from the cultural emphasis on the freedom to act outside of the hereditary system," Eli Bentor notes, "for in the egalitarian and decentralized Igbo society, power is shared and positions of authority are attained by individual achievement."[44] However, this necessity for "an ecological balance with nature"[45] could also cast chi as the ultimate duo for ikenga. According to Aniako, in an agrarian culture where the size of one's harvest determines their wealth, "the prosperous farmer traces his success not entirely to his ability to farm but to his ancestors (ndichie), who provided the land and continued to enhance his procreative actions through his chi—hence his possession of a viable Ikenga."[46] This chi-ikenga duality is made apparent in the Igbo proverb, "onye kwe, chi ya ekwe"—when one says yes, his or her chi affirms. So, a human being, as an embodiment of life force, becomes the necessary integrating element in generating the force, with the assent of his or her chi, that makes ikenga viable. This duality that holds the opposite forces of Igbo cosmology in a creative balance approximates "an inter-penetration of the material and immaterial, of form and content, of the immediate and enduring, a controlled tension of opposites."[47]

IKENGA: ICONOGRAPHY AND FORM

Figure 1

The "warrior" form (figure 1) could be said to be the most famous ikenga. It depicts a well-developed human figure with horns and a fierce

expression. The figure seats on a stool and holds objects in both hands. In one of the prominent representations of this distinct subgroup of ikenga, the figure sits on a double-disk stool, the back of which is carved and the front, supported by the figure's legs. It holds a slightly bent-blade machete in the right hand and in the left hand a tusk or a severed human head, with bulging eyes, nose, and mouth. The figure's head is often elongated, seated on a thick neck. From the top of the head emerges a pair of horns that tapers as it rises and curves backward, sometimes making a full twist in its backward trajectory. In a second popular ikenga type, the seated figure holds instead a tusk and a staff in the left and right hands, respectively. Many examples of this elaboration of the warrior form wear ornate facial marks (ichi) for titled men. Some of the figures could be more than a meter high and are often represented to typify display figures known as "Ugonachomma" (literally, "the eagle that seeks beauty," implying a handsome man). This ikenga type together with its superstructure of human and/or animal images attest to an elaborate artistic ingenuity. In the similar way that the Igbo stress achievement and individuality, they also "encourage their artists to experiment with this art form and to demonstrate their skills, while retaining the essence of the ikenga."[48]

One can attribute the inspiration of the warrior ikenga to masquerade troupes formed by young men of particular age groups. The social relations that bound such groups operate outside of the authorities of the elder and ancestors and are driven, not by morality, but by opportunity, as individuals strive to succeed and excel. For such a youthful group that measures itself, therefore, by heroic performance it is fair to assume that it is motivated by the values of competition, aggression, and violence.[49] The period of acquiring this type of ikenga coincides with the stage in life when the community expects men to demonstrate their bravery in war. Ogonna Agu advances the war origin of the warrior ikenga when he argues that ikenga could have been created for war purposes but was reappropriated in peacetime for the archetypal masculine aspirations for success through hard work.[50]

Ejizu states that both the machete and the severed head held by the warrior ikenga "are conventional symbols of achievement among the indigenous Igbo,"[51] but offers no explanations why, particularly with regards to the head. The right hand, called "aka ikenga," the ikenga hand, always holds the machete. In some parts of Igboland, those who did kill in wars were admitted into a lower rung of the complex set of title societies known as "ogbu mmadu" (killers of people).[52] But in recent times, the plain violent dimension associated with the machete and the head has been replaced with a metaphorical explanation that stresses the aggression necessary for survival in an environment that encourages competition among individuals. Ikenga's most iconographic element, the horn,

embodies a sense of both understandings—the war aggression as well as the new meaning reflected in masculine valor. "Ebune ji isi e je ogu" (the ram charges headlong into a fight) is an Igbo aphorism that indicates the necessity for one to confront whatever challenge they face with courage and audacity. The noun "ogu" means fight as well as war which, in either case, applies very well to both the implied and the real meanings of the ikenga aggression.[53]

Related to the Igbo construction of ikenga using masculine attributes in their conceptions of a person is the complex system of titles. Titles allow the Igbo man (and to some extent, woman) to demonstrate his economic good fortune and achievements and then turn them into culturally recognized kinds of status and political power. Given that most titles are not hereditary, communities expect their upwardly mobile young men to progressively acquire higher titles, as markers of their achievement and advancement through life. In his classic novel, *Things Fall Apart,* Achebe beautifully illustrates this point, capturing the accomplishments as celebration and reward of hard work among the Igbo, when he writes: "Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements."[54] The reader right away locates the protagonist within a specific context of industry. Okonkwo labored in order not to end up like his easygoing father, Unoka, who, unable to engage in the conventional masculine farming occupation among his people, died a pauper, in debt, and without taking any chieftaincy title. But Okonkwo was lucky. "Among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father."[55]

So, Okonkwo worked very hard to re-author his fate. He would distinguish himself early in life by taking two titles, after he had established himself at a young age as a wealthy farmer and the greatest wrestler in Umuofia. "Age was respected among his people," Achebe observes, "but achievement was revered. As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings. Okonkwo had clearly washed his hands and so he ate with kings and elders."[56] Life for the Igbo represents a process of individual maturity in a give-and-take relationship with others that enhances an accumulation of wealth for social mobility. A man's negotiated relationship with his chi exemplifies this process. The warrior ikenga, hence, reflects the earlier phases of this process of individual development, when men are required to demonstrate their physical strength. Gradually, "the pugnacity of peer relations is replaced by the tempered authority of a titled person. At this stage, the elaborate ikenga, with their authority symbols are more appropriate."[57]

The elaborate super-structured ikenga figures do correspond to a large extent to the more advanced, title-taking stages among the Igbo. The

three-legged stool was traditionally reserved for the members of the ozo, the highest rank of the title system. The staff is a sign of authority. Staffs and the complex hierarchy of their usage are a common feature Igbo culture. They range from simple wooden ones to rods of forged iron with brass rings. The most common type represented in ikenga and carried by the ozo titled men is the ribs' hook (ngu agiliga) so called because of its distinctive rib-like openwork on the shaft, which bulges out in the middle to form an oblong protrusion. The tusk, held in the left hand, is used as a trumpet (odu). It refers to the elephant, symbolizing power and leadership. An ozo titled man would usually have his stool and tusk carried by a young boy to public functions.[58]

Figure 2

Although many of the warrior ikenga have the maiden-spirit mask face, most of the elaborate ikenga bear the ichi sacrification pattern, which consists of parallel vertical lines on the forehead and temples. Depending on the part of Igboland, the ichi represented marks of distinction for the highest members of the title societies, mid-point in the ozo title ascendancy, or sons and daughters of the nobility. The super-structured ikenga also includes references to animals. Crouching on top of the structure is a four-legged mammal believed to be a leopard (agu), the king of the animals and a symbol of the political authority for titled men. The horns of the ram

or other animals, found on all ikenga figures, signify power and aggression.

THE RITUAL AND SYMBOLISM OF IKENGA

Ikenga can easily be acquired, either purchased in the market or commissioned from carvers. But for it to be active and potent, it has to be consecrated. In some parts of Igboland, a father could commission an ikenga for his sons, or the first son. This could be done as part of the naming ceremony or during the adolescent initiation into the masquerade society. Depending on the region, young men acquire ikenga at different ages but generally have one by the time they marry and establish their own families.[59] However, the most common form is that initiated by a man on the account of his success and achievement. In the latter case, it is a diviner, invited by the candidate, who would discern the extent of the manifestation of the ikenga spirit force on the candidate, what visible form the shrine should take, the particular carver to be contracted, and the nature of the consecration ceremony.[60]

Consecration is a public ceremony, usually in the presence of male relatives, friends, and members of the candidate's age group.[61] While Onwuejeogwu[62] situates the ceremony at the home of the candidate, Ejizu locates it at that of the lineage head (okpara). Although a diviner officiates, Ejizu and Onwuejeogwu allot that task to the lineage head. This difference, again, could be put to regional variations, as is also variations in the ritual itself. Depending on the region, the candidate would provide four kola nuts, four tubers of yam, a cock, two gallons of palm wine, and a bottle of gin. Seated before the lineage or family altar, the lineage head or the diviner prays to the gods and ancestors, offers them kola not, and pours a libation to them. Then he specifically invokes the ikenga spirit force and makes similar offerings to it. He takes the ikenga figure and rubs it with nzu (white clay), and afterwards sprays it with chewed kola nut, praying as follows[63]:

Ikenga taa oji.
Ikenga Emeka taa oji.
Gi ka a na amacha ka I di ire,
ka I chee Emeka, duo ya n'ezi na n'uzo.
Duo ya n'Eke, duo ya n'Orie, duo ya n'Afor, duo ya na Nkwo.
Emeka si na ihe gaziere ya, ya enye gi ebune

(Ikenga accept [and chew] kola nut.
Emeka's ikenga, accept [and chew] kola nut.
We consecrate you so that you become potent,
to guide Emeka through his personal and public endeavors.

Guide him on Eke, guide him on Orie, guide him on Afo, guide him on Nkwo.[64]
Emeka pledges to offer you a ram when he succeeds.)

After that, the lineage head or diviner kills the cock, smears the blood on the new ikenga figure and on the family alter. He plucks some feathers and sticks them on the ikenga. The yam and the cock are used to prepare a meal of pounded yam and soup from which he also offers some as well as some wine to the gods, ancestors, and the ikenga spirit force. He then addresses the ikenga again saying:

Ikenga kwu oto ka anyi choro,
ka I butere Emeka ihe aku-aku,
ihe enwe-enwe, ahu ike, nwunye, omumu nwoke
na omumu nwaanyi, oba ji an oba ede,
ka obarie.
Response: Isee!

(We desire enterprising ikenga,
so that you will bring Emeka abundant wealth,
good health, wife, male children
and female children, barn-full of yam and cocoyam.
May he prosper immensely.
And the people respond: So shall it be!)

The newly consecrated ikenga is then placed among other ritual objects on the family altar of the owner within his guest parlor (iba/obi), and the owner offers sacrifices to it in order to enhance its power, thank it for favors received through its support, or request its assistance for particular endeavors.[65] But should a man's efforts continually be met with no reward from his ikenga, his regard for his ikenga would wane and he is allowed to cut it in two and get another one. An Igbo proverb validates this type of action by indicating that an ikenga that is no longer potent becomes firewood. Achebe, with the description of the rivalry between Ezeulu and Chief Nwaka in *Arrow of God*, buttresses this point that the Igbo would discard any god that no longer served its purpose.[66] Nevertheless, once an ikenga is consecrated, it becomes "a sacred piece, a cult and ritual object" of worship and veneration that reveals the sacred and supernatural powers while at the same time forming an integral part of a "dynamic relationship and communication between the owner/owners and the supersensible cosmic order, particularly the ikenga cosmic-force."[67] At death, a man's ikenga is discarded, buried, or split in two as a sign that it has accomplished its task. It could also be kept in the family or

communal heirloom to remind the owner's descendants of the great achievements of their forbears and the motivating force behind such achievements.

The practice of destroying a man's ikenga at his death meant the lost of the preservation of its art for antiquity. That ritual destruction assumed an iconoclastic dimension in the hands of Christian missionaries and overzealous, non-compromising, intolerant Igbo converts to Christianity which resulted in the destruction of not only ikenga but also of other traditional religious objects and symbols. Nevertheless, Christianity, albeit inadvertently, contributed to some preservation of ikenga objects, as some of them belonging to Christian converts were hidden away as a result of the new faith of their owners. Since these were never acknowledged openly, they were also never brought out for destruction at their owners' death.

With regard to the material used for ikenga, that is, wood, Aniako argues that the potency of an ikenga is also dependent on the type of tree from which it is hewn. According to him, "the vital force of ikenga is sculpturally realizable only in the type of tree where its potency, *ire*, is fully concentrated—such tree as *Ogilisi*."[68] The ritual essence of this sacred tree, Aniako argues, derives from its funerary meaning. However, Ogilisi serves much more than funerary functions. It is medicinal, but more importantly, it is a staple of religious rituals, rites, and sites. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that ikenga is not always represented in its carved iconic figure, for in some parts of Igboland, it exists as plain shrines, sometimes signified with such loose material representations as live braches of local oha tree, usually planted "as part of the commissioning ceremony of new symbol objects."[69]

Once the ikenga is set up, for as long as an individual's chi is active his energy and actions would be well directed, for it is through hard work that his ikenga would be effective. He then advances in society the more he exerts his right hand and the more wealth and influence he acquires.[70] The full significance of the association of ikenga with the right hand "is better appreciated when viewed against the background of the ecological environment, mental and cultural orientations of the traditional Igbo."[71] The Igbo who inhabit Africa's rain-forest zone live largely on a land and agriculture-based economy which offers the context for accessing and assessing status, success, and achievement. Against that backdrop, the right arm, commonly referred to as the right hand of strength, with which a person hacks his way through thick and thin, whether in farming, hunting, trading, or other endeavors, understandably becomes highly significant. Since, therefore, none of these endeavors has ever being exclusive to men, it makes no sense, as Azodo's di-feminism and its promotion of agu nwaanyi imply, to exclude women from the conception of ikenga as well as the reality and imaginary it represents.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing has highlighted not only the centrality of ikenga in the sociocultural and economic conceptions of ikenga among the Igbo, but also the pertinence of its possible reimagining based on Azodo's agu-nwaanyi-focused di-feminism. Ikenga becomes a "living image or animated icon"[72] that enables the Igbo to continue to make meaning of and harness the vital forces that cohabit their ecosystem. It is through such an engagement that the supernatural becomes visible in the life of the community, making ikenga then central in the religious consciousness of the people.[73] Understanding the ikenga symbolism and imaginary remains, therefore, key to plumbing the depth of Igbo worldview, as explored and engaged by both men and women. The sense of achievement tied to an individual's strength as a result of his or her positive thrusts in life, which is central to the concept of ikenga, continues to underlie the Igbo pursuit of good fortune, success, and accomplishment. It remains an ever-integral part of Igbo sociocultural thought and philosophy, pervading their consciousness and fundamental attitude to life. The notions of individual enterprise, determination, and achievement then remain the hallmarks of Igbo personality, for an average Igbo accepts as "an essential aspect of 'right and natural' that talent should lead to enterprise, enterprise to promotion, and promotion to privilege."[74] As a result, the Igbo man and woman are driven to work hard, determined that they would excel in whatever task they set their mind on. This mindset underpins the clamor for equal gender opportunities at the core of Azodo's di-feminism and its practical manifestation through agu nwaanyi.

Both the cult and the iconography of ikenga are therefore driven by the one continuum of achievement, success, and enhanced social status that would ultimately lead to a dignified afterlife—for both men and women. In that case, in addition to generating a healthy competition among individuals and groups, the symbol of ikenga stands as "a veritable instrument"[75] which enables the Igbo to mobilize their spiritual and physical energies, to exploit their talents in the life-long effort to define and affirm themselves as successful individuals. Hence, in its various forms and symbolism, ikenga articulates the way in which the Igbo culture defined and still defines, albeit with less material representations in contemporary time, the processes through which its members mature as human beings within the community as well as maintain their individual identity. Even with the public diminishment of the religious rituals that were traditionally associated with ikenga owing to colonialism, Christianity, Western education, and urban migration among the Igbo, the enduring significance of its iconography remains evident in its contemporary manifestations in popular culture, street art, individual titles, institutional

brand names, corporate logos, and academic journal titles.[76] Given this reality, then, it diminishes rather than enhances the Igbo person, as well as the Igbo world, to exclude anyone, on the basis of gender, from the reality and aspirations that ikenga represents.

NOTES

[1] See F. Chidozie Ogbalu, *Omenala Igbo: The Book of Igbo Custom* (Onitsha: University Publishing Company, 2006).

[2] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyl, "Why we need Things."
https://llk.media.mit.edu/courses/mas714/fall02/csik-things.pdf

[3] Flora Nwapa, *Efuru* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1966), Flora Nwapa "Women and Creative Writing in Africa, in *Sisterhood: Feminism Power – From Africa to the Diaspora*, ed. Obioma Nnaemeka (Asmara & Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1998), 89-99; Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1979), Buchi Emecheta *Head Above Water* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1986); Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo, *Gender Issues in Nigeria: A Feminist Perspective* (Lagos: Vista Books, 1996), Akachi Ezeigbo, *Snail-Sense Feminism: Building on an Indigenous Model*. (Lagos: University of Lagos, 2012), Akachi Ezeigbo, "Unity in Diverse Indigenous Feminisms," in *African Feminisms in the Global Arena: Novel Perspectives on Gender, Class, Ethnicity, and Race*, ed. Ada Uzoamaka Azodo (Glassboro, New Jersey: Goldline & Jacobs Publishing, 2019), 64-75; Ifi Amadiume, *African Matriarchal Foundations: The Igbo Case*. London: Karnak House, 1987), Ifi Amadiume, Ifi, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society,* 2nd ed. (London: Zed, 2015 [1987]); Nwando Achebe *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005), Nwando Achebe, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011); Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "We Should All Be Feminists," TedxEuston, video, 29:28, Filmed December 2012), https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_we_should_all_be_feminists, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions," *NollyCulture*, https://nollyculture.blogspot.com/2016/10/adichies-feminist-manifesto-teach-her.html.

[4] Ada Uzoamaka Azodo, "Di-Feminism: Valorizing the Indigenous Igbo Concept of 'Agunwanyi,'" in *African Feminisms in the Global Arena: Novel Perspectives on Gender, Class, Ethnicity, and Race*, ed. Ada Uzoamaka Azodo (Glassboro, New Jersey: Goldline & Jacobs Publishing, 2019), 7-61.

[5] Chikwenye Okonjo-Ogunyemi, "Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English," in *The Womanist Reader*, ed., Layli Phillips (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1985]), 21-36; Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, *Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1994b); Catherine O. Acholonu, *Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism* (Owerri: Afa Publications, 1995); Ezeigbo 1996, 2012; Mary E. M. Kolawale, *Womanism and African Consciousness* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1997); Obioma Nnaemeka, ed., *Sisterhood: Feminism Power – From Africa to the Diaspora* (Asmara & Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1998); Obioma Nnaemeka, "Nego-Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing and Pruning Africa's Way." *SIGNIS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, 1 no. 2 (Winter), 2004, 359-385; Chioma Opara, "On the African Concept of Transcendence: Conflating Nature, Nurture and Creativity," *M&Lintas* 21, no. 2, 2005, 189-200.

[6] Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1983).

[7] Azodo 2019, 47.

[8] Ibid., 7.

[9] Azodo, 2019, 55.

[10] Azodo, 2019, 32

[11] Ezeigbo 2019, 68.

[12] Azodo 2019, 54.

[13] See also Ezeigbo 2019.

[14] The statement on women cultivating cassava in no way diminishes neither the quality of that enterprise nor the value of the crop. Nwapa (1998), for instance, makes the point of the strength of cassava, a crop often derogated against for being a woman's crop but which actually plays a more active role in the life and sustenance of Igbo communities than yam, the so-called king of the crops and a man's crop.

[15] Azodo 2019, 47.

[16] Ezeigbo 2019, 70.

[17] See also Amadiume 2015 [1987].

[18] Stuart Hall, "Representation, Meaning and Language," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997), 15-74.

[19] Ezeigbo 2019; Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, "The Representation of Women: The Example of Soyinka's *Ake,*" in Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, *Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994 [1981]), 101-110,

[20] Ogundipe-Leslie 1994, 106; see also p102.

[21] Nwapa 1998, 92.

[22] Herbert M. Cole and Chike C. Aniakor, *Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos (*Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1984), 30.

[23] See Christopher I. Ejizu, "Ritual Enactment of Achievement: Ikenga Symbol in Igboland," *Paideuma*, 37 (1991), 233-51; M. D. W. Jeffreys, "The Winged Solar Disk or Ibo Itsi Sacrification, *Africa* 21, no. 2 (1951), 93-111.

[24] Eli Bentor, "Life as an Artistic Process: Igbo Ikenga and Ofo," *African Arts*, 21, no. 2 (1988), 66-71, 94.

[25] M. D. W. Jeffreys, "Ikenga: The Ibo Ram-Headed God," *African Studies* 13, vol. 1 (1954), 25-45.

[26] E. Okechukwu Odita, E. O, "Universal Cults and Intra-Diffusion: Igbo Ikenga in Cultural Retrospection," *African Studies Review*, 6, no. 1 (1973), 79.

[27] Ibid.

[28] G. T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* (London: Seeley, 1921); P. Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,* 4 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1926); C. K. Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937). Before the ethnographic studies of Basden and Talbot among the Igbo, late nineteenth century European travelogues of Adolphe Burdo, *The Niger and the Benueh, Travels in Central Africa*, trans. Mrs. George Sturge (London: R. Bentley, 1880) and Augustus F. Mockler-Ferryman (*Up the Niger*, London: Cassell & Co., 1891), for instance, mentioned ikenga among the curios that intrigued them in Igboland.

[29] M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu, "The Dawn of Igbo Civilization in the Igbo Culture Area," *Odinani,* 1 (1972).

[30] Ejizu 1991, 234.

[31] See E. Okechukwu Odita, "Universal Cults and Intra-Diffusion: Diffusion of Ikenga Art," *African Studies Review*, 16 (1973b).

[32] Francis A. Arinze, *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion,* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970).

[33] See Jeffreys 1954.

[34] John Boston, *Ikenga Figures Among the Northwestern Igbo and the Igala* (Lagos: Federal Dept. of Antiquity, 1977). See also Cole and Aniakor 1984.

[35] Cole and Aniakor 1984, 23.

[36] Bentor 1987. See also Basden 1921; S. R. Smith, "The Ibo People" (PhD Dissertation, Cambridge University, 1929); P. Amaury Talbot, *Tribes of the Niger Delta* (London: Sheldon Press, 1932), 98.

[37] Ejizu 1991, 233; see also Boston 1977; Cole & Aniakor 1984; Jeffreys 1954; Odita 1973).

[38] William Fagg, *Nigerian Tribal Art* (The Art Council of Great Britain, 1960).

[39] Odita 1973, 75.

[40] Ejizu 1991, 237.

[41] Chinua Achebe, "Chi in Igbo Cosmology," in *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (Garden City, new York: Anchor Press/Doubleday1975), 159-175.

[42] Cole and Aniakor, 1984, 24-25.

[43] See Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart,* (London: Heinemann, 1958).

[44] Bentor 1988, 71.

[45] Basil Davidson, *The Africans: An Entry to Cultural History,* (London: Penguin, 1969).

[46] Cole C. Aniako, Cole, "Structuralism in Ikenga: An Ethnoaesthetic Approach to Traditional Igbo Art," *Conch*, 6, nos. 1-2 (1974), 1-14, 2.

[47] Davidson 1969, 25.

[48] Bentor 1988, 69.

[49] Bentor 1988. See also Simon Ottenberg, "Ibo Receptivity to Change," in *Continuity and Change in African Culture*, eds. W. R. Bascon and M. J. Herskovits (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 130-43.

[50] Ogonna Agu, "The Ikenga as an Archetype of the Hero in the Igbo Cultural Tradition," in *The Hero in Igbo Life and Literature*, ed. Donatus Ibe Nwoga and C. Azuonye (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 2002).

[51] Ejizu, 1991, 235.

[52] Basde 1921; Talbot 1926; Bentor 1988.

[53] Helen O. Chukwuma, "The Oral Tradition of the Ibos," PhD. Dissertation (University of Birmingham, 1974).

[54] Achebe 2010 [1958], 5.

[55] Ibid., 8.

[56] Ibid., 8. See also Chijioke Azuawusiefe, "Telling Africa's Story: Chinua Achebe and the Power of Narratives," in *Chinua Achebe and the Igbo World: Between Fiction, Fact, and Historical Representation*, eds. Chima J. Korieh and Ijeoma Nwajiaku (2020, forthcoming).

[57] Bentor 1988, 71.

[58] Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (New York: Doubleday, 1974); Agbaogu, "The Art of Nri." B.A. Thesis (University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1974); M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu, *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony* (London: Ethnographica, 1981); Nwankwo T. Nwaezeigwe, *The Igbo and their Nri Neighbours: A Study in the Politics of Igbo Culture and Origins* (Enugu: Snaap Press, 2007).

[59] Cole and Aniakor, 1984.

[60] Ejizu, 1991.

[61] Richard N. Henderson, *The King in Every Man: Evolutionary Trends in Onitsha Ibo Social Life and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

[62] M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu, *The Social Anthropology of Africa: An Introduction,* (London: Heinemann, 1975).

[63] This invocation and the subsequent ritual descriptions follow closely Onwuejeogwu's 1975 rendition.

[64] Eke, Orie, Afo, and Nkwo are Igbo weekdays, constituting the four market days of the Igbo week.

[65] See Ejizu 1991; Onwuejeogwu 1975; and J. U. Tagbo Nzeako, *Omenala Ndi Igbo* (Enugu: Longman, 1979).

[66] Achebe 1974.

[67] Ejizu 1991, 240.

[68] Aniako 1974, 5.

[69] Ejizu 1991, 234.

[70] Onwuejeogwu 1991.

[71] Ejizu 1991, 242.

[72] W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Images Want: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[73] Diana L. Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[74] Davidson 1969, 25.

[75] Victor Chikezie Uchendu, *The Igbo of South-East Nigeria* (New York: Holt, Rinchart and Winston, 1965).

[76] See for, instance, *Ikenga: Journal of African Studies*, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

THE PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF AN IGBO ANDROGYNY: EFURU'S QUEST FOR HER HIGHER SELF IN *EFURU*, FLORA NWAPA'S EPONYMOUS NOVEL

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Abstract

Efuru's[1] *Psycho-Spiritual Journey in Flora Nwapa's eponymous novel, Efuru, retraces Maureen Murdoch's The Heroine's Journey, a gendered modification of Joseph Campbell's The Hero's Journey,*[2] *which is a cyclical and archetypal mapping of the idea of life as a continuous search for self-identity and purpose espoused in his Theory of the Monomyth. At journey's end, the hero or heroine returns home renewed, wiser and integrated for self and service to the community. Employing the combined critical methodologies of the imaginary, semiotics, and reader-response---Roland Barthes' ideas of the readerly and writerly texts---this study seeks to derive extra meaning from the metanarrative beyond the pre-established, stable meaning of the text. From this angle of vision, all of Flora Nwapa's heroine's trials and tribulations are signposts of her reemergence, healing and wholesomeness, and are not by any means misfortunes. At her apotheosis, like Uhamiri, the Goddess of the Lake, her mirror image, ally, spiritual guide, and male-identified mentor of the spirit world, triumphant Efuru metamorphoses into a moral warrior against endemic and paralyzing patriarchy, becoming a role model of courage, endurance, and female empowerment.*

Key Words: journey, sacrifice, guide, spirituality, hero, heroine, model, patriarchy

INTRODUCTION

> That is why it is so necessary to redefine *hero* and *heroine* in our lives today. The heroic quest is not about power over, about conquest and domination; it is a quest to bring balance into our lives through the marriage of both feminine and masculine aspects of our nature. The modern-day heroine has to confront her fear about reclaiming her feminine nature; her personal power, her ability to feel, heal, create, change social structures, and shape her future. She brings us wisdom about the interconnectedness of all species; she teaches us how to live together in this global vessel and helps us to reclaim the feminine in our lives. We yearn for her.—Maureen Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey.*[3]

> Literature is always relevant, whether written 10, 50 or 500 years ago. Perhaps the most fascinating thing about studying literature (…) is learning just how little have changed, regardless of when or where they lived. That revelation, in turn, gives us a renewed appreciation for our common humanity, not only across cultures but across time.—Rob Jenkins, "The forgotten Value of a Literature Course," *Chronicle of Higher Education*:[4]

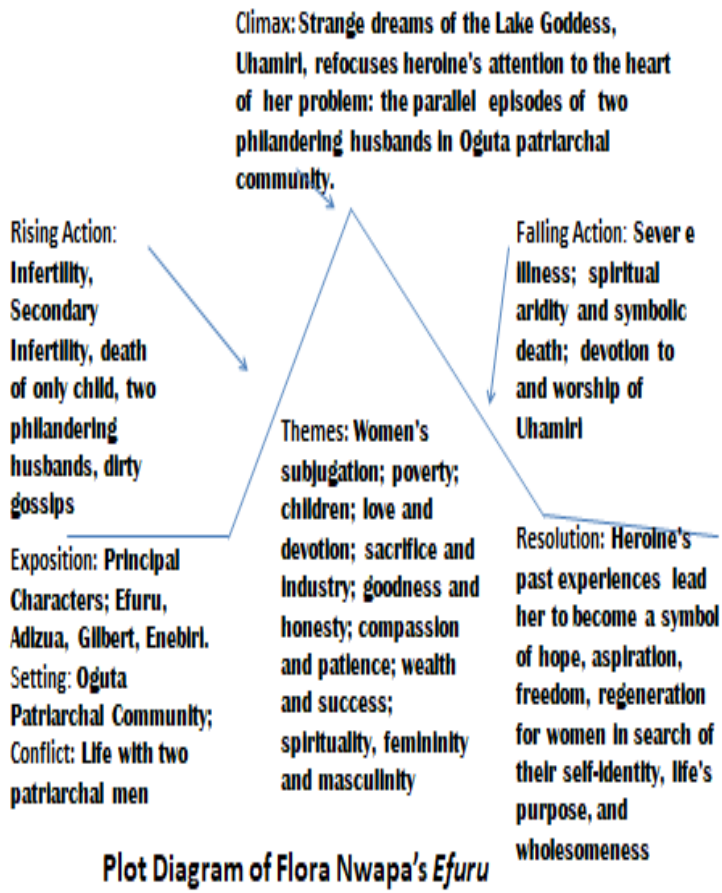
Life is a continuous search for one's self-identity and one's purpose on earth. Employing the journey metaphor, this study will follow a heroine's quest for her higher self in her patriarchal community.[5] The quest motif will illuminate the concepts of God and Goddess, the world and self, and knowledge and wisdom; these are the same ideas that are very much intricately intertwined with human existence in societies. Anthropologist cum mythologist Joseph Campbell[6] first came up with the journey metaphor in his Theory of the Monomyth, seeing life as a mythic and heroic journey of the individual in quest of wholesomeness. In Campbell's footsteps, psychotherapist Maureen Murdock[7] came up with her own gendered mapping, *The Heroine's Journey*, taking the heroic cycle out of the mythic realm and putting it into the lives of women she has actually met and tried to understand and help with treatment in her office. These two textual authorities, *The Hero's Journey* and *The Heroine's Journey*, constitute the theoretical framework for this study on the Psycho-Spiritual Journey of *Efuru*,[8] the heroine who embarks on a personal quest for healing and wholesomeness, through seeking to integrate her female principles that she all but lost shunning femininity, emulating masculinity, and living a hero's life in her patriarchal society. Efuru's quest succeeds and she returns home to her Oguta community, from which she fled at the beginning, as an integrated and mature male daughter with balanced feminine and masculine sides to her personality.

PLOT SUMMARY OF *EFURU*

A simple reading of the novel, *Efuru*, from Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, to Plot Resolution, tells the story of a motherless, young, beautiful and hardworking Igbo girl, who grows up exclusively in the care of her father after the death of her mother when was only two years old. Deprived of the nurturing and guidance of her mother, Efuru

the protagonist of this novel fails in relationships with men and marriage and life generally.[9]

Yet, added to the foregoing manner of reading are seven other possible ways of reading Efuru's story: as a folktale of the young Igbo girl who chooses her own husbands contrary to tradition and fails; as a feminist and critical text on masculinity and femininity and how one woman effectively thrives in a traditional patriarchal setting; as a counterpoint to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, a novel that carries masculinity too far; as a novel about traditional Igbo women promoting generational continuity; as a novel about a first-generation Nigerian woman writer's ambivalence before phallocentric male novels that fail to field strong women, for the heroine of this first novel pales in comparison to the secondary characters that appear stronger; as a *bildungsroman*, for the heroine learns over



Plot Diagram of Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*

time to listen to herself, blossoms, and gains power to fulfill herself despite failure at wifehood and motherhood; as a Quest novel subgenre in which the heroine regenerates as a man-woman, an androgyny[10] with well-balanced feminine and masculine aspects to her personality.

A writerly reading[11] of the novel as a Quest allows other meanings to emerge; the resultant oblique reading takes the reader through the heroine's treasure hunt for something invaluable that she is missing, something that resembles the Magic Elixir of life or the Golden Fleece of the grail. Hard knocks on the road to success and personal autonomy in her patriarchal and male-defined community, force this 'daughter of her father' to reconsider her choices. She determines to tap into her masculine inner mode, in order to circumvent the helplessness and disadvantages of dependence of the feminine beings in her community. She becomes wiser and experienced about the intricacies and complexities of gendered division of labor and structuring of masculine and feminine roles in her community, thanks to her intuition and creativity and divine intervention. At the end of her journey, which embodies her psychological development and her search for healing and wholesomeness, as is typical with heroines in a *bildungsroman*, she returns to her father's house well-balanced to assume her newly found self-identity and life's purpose as a male daughter.

Generally, the quest plot sometimes overlaps in details, and includes the following eight cardinal steps: story goal, consequence, requirements, forewarnings/forebodings, costs, dividends, prerequisites, and preconditions.

The 8 Cardinal Steps of the Heroine's Quest for Wholesomeness

The **story goal** is the heroine's determination to be strong both within her inner being and outwardly, like her father and mentor, so as to gain prestige, respect and esteem that the Oguta patriarchal community reserves for men but denies women. Hence, her innate fear is how to escape being swallowed up by this patriarchal community. It is an obsession, unknown to her clearly at this beginning, which propels her forward in the direction of her fate, destiny and life's purpose. With a noble, respectable, valiant, big-farmer father and ally, Nwashike Ogene, Efuru values achievement and responsibility for her life, and does not want to be dependent on anyone as her mother was.[12] She learns to press on, despite failures and normal anxieties about life. An only child of her mother and a girl-child at that in a patriarchal community that thrives on boy-child preference, Efuru sets out to eliminate the absent and diminished mother and identify with her ego-dominated father. Her overwhelming urge is to overcome the crippling qualities of femininity, but rather to identify with strength and authority in masculinity that mirrors self-esteem, respect, ability, and responsibility as the driving force of one's being. This image is reminiscent of Athena, the daughter of Metis and Zeus, who springs out fully grown from the head of her father, brandishing a gold armor and sharp spear after her father absorbed her mother into himself. Much like an 'Athena woman,' then, Efuru, this 'father's daughter,' believes her mother was 'swallowed up,' not by death, but by her patriarchal community and possibly her husband's male ego. She appreciates masculine and patriarchal values, but devalues and discards her mother's maternal values and deprecates her mother. Efuru's mother—unnamed in the novel--is only known through Efuru's recollection of her story that her father shared with her.

Efuru fears the **consequence of failure** should she not succeed in her quest, for there is the possibility of reenacting her mother's destiny and becoming just one of the women of this male-dominated community, women without distinction, women without respect from men and women alike, women who daily face oppression and subjugation to secondary existence by the men through the customs and mores in place. It is on this fear that the primary dramatic tension of the novel hinges. The best scenario for Efuru would be to overcome the onset of infertility that is in its second year since her marriage to her first husband Adizua Ukachukwu. In their patriarchal community, a baby girl would not be a consolation, for right from birth a baby girl suffers discrimination, is condemned to disregard from all and sundry, and would die from heartache, as was the fate

of Efuru's mother, who might have died from pangs and pains of regret from an unfulfilled existence. Therefore, a baby boy would be preferable.

Nonetheless, there are **requirements** for Efuru to fulfill, some of them quite dangerous, in order to achieve her goal of fleeing from femininity. First of all, in her intransigence to choose her own husbands, Efuru elopes with her first husband, Adizua Ukachukwu, rather than follow tradition and allow her father and the fraternal league of the extended family of Umunna to be part of it. It is noteworthy that even her mother-in-law, Amede, thinks that her son is not worthy of her, for she has such a high regard for her new daughter-in-law. Yet, in Efuru's wish to identify with and be rescued by the masculine, she marries down; she marries Adizua Ukachukwu in a union that at best is a hypogamy, after helping *him* to pay *her* dowry. Such a masculine gesture makes things worse for Efuru; she loses the regard and respect of the young man. When she decides to go through excision during her puberty rite of passage, and this only to please her father and doting mother-in-law, like a master would, she gives instructions that her father not be notified, and this also contrary to tradition. Then, where many women would take three to six months off from work after childbirth, she feasts for a month only and returns to her trading business that is falling apart, because her lazy husband Adizua is not managing it well in her absence.

Despite all of Efuru's masculine attempts to succeed, there are **forewarnings, forebodings** that she may indeed fail in her quest. When Efuru goes back with her husband and baby to thank the community *dibia* for his intervention in arresting her infertility, the dibia foresees another problem looming. But, before the dibia could stop the new danger, he suddenly dies in his sleep. The consequence is that Ogonim, Efuru's only child, dies. Thereafter the quest climbs to another height with costs in self-pride and loss of self-confidence for Efuru, complicating the story goal.

Efuru's persistence in her quest multiplies her **costs**, which include sacrifices and pains to achieve her goal. Little by little, she is stripped of her worldly possessions, respect, security and money. Is Efuru haunted by an idealized memory of the 'swallowed' mother and a different life she could have lived as 'her mother's daughter,' had her mother lived long enough to see her successfully through as a wife and mother? Is Efuru haunted by life with her father that ended abruptly, when she fled from home at the beginning of her search for self-identity and her life's purpose? Is her problem rather the psychological torture, due to the death of her daughter, Ogonim, her only child? And the parallel episode of two renegade husbands, Adizua Ukachukwu and Gilbert Enebiri, is bother-

some and surmount all her other misfortunes. And the community women pile dirty gossips about her and her new husband that resemble the painful stings of hornet bees. To the common folk in her community, Efuru's stoicism before such hostility is novel and incomprehensible.

Nonetheless, Providence pays Efuru in good **dividends**, as is usual with those who make effort to take their destiny into their hands. Efuru's popularity and renown soar among her people, thanks to her empathy and compassion in helping the sick, the needy, and the downtrodden of the community. She is rewarded with the status of community mother, although it is an illusionary success. On a personal level, she gains more experiences about life and living. She again experiences romantic love and remarries, this second time to Gilbert Enebiri, a relatively educated young man, an old classmate, and a rich trader, raising her hopes and prospects of having children with a man capable of taking care of their progeny, a man who treats her well and with respect as an equal. However, it is all illusion as it was with her first marriage before.

A series of **prerequisites**, crucial to the requirements of attaining her life's goal, challenge her. Metaphorically, Efuru is alone in the darkness fighting obstacles, fiends, ogres and dragons as she winds her way towards the center of the labyrinth. First, she suffers secondary infertility, which is debilitating, for if she is not equipped outwardly as a man, she should at least be able to get pregnant and bear a child like a woman. Second, she is abandoned by husband Gilbert Enebiri, making it impossible for her to become pregnant should she decide to remain faithful to him. Third, Gilbert marries a rival co-wife, Nkoyeni, without asking for her input as the senior wife, according to customary expectation. Fourth, news spreads of Gilbert's imprisonment in Onicha, reportedly for theft, the worst crime of which an Igbo man could be accused, because it shows him up as a lazy man that pilfers from other men's hard labor. Fifth, Gilbert refuses to come home and mourn with her the death of her father, Nwashike Ogene. And, sixth, there are rumors that Gilbert has a young son outside of marriage and is keeping it a secret from her, although everybody else knows about it. These travails at this point in Efuru's life are serious obstructions and stumbling blocks on her pathway to psychospiritual wholesomeness. The aforementioned parallel episode of Gilbert Enebiri and Adizua Ukachukwu is an eloquent novelistic strategy that has not escaped the writerly reader's observation.[13] Finding herself at the crossroads and at her wits ends, Efuru does not know which way to turn. Her endurance, clarity, ambition, sense of self-worth, and self-confidence

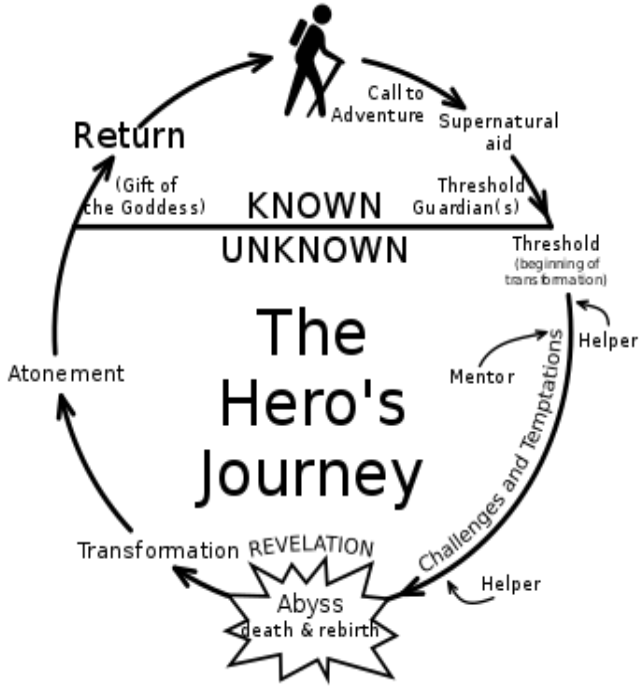
vanish, and rearing their ugly heads are feelings of paralysis, self-doubt, and inadequacy.

To mitigate these prerequisites requires some **preconditions** of the heroine. As her happiness again sours, and expectation dampens her hope of reaching her goal, she fights like a wounded lioness or tigress. After Gilbert accuses her of infidelity and to remind herself of her humanity, like Psyche, wife of Eros, she at once learns to discriminate, focus on one task at a time, set order, boundaries, and limits, curb generosity, sacrifice and compassion, and experience disappointment. She seizes elemental power; her intriguing and mysterious illness allows her to *die* in her old ways, in order to achieve *rebirth*. Through the cooperation of her inner male self, she is about to find her autonomy as a healed and strengthened being. She abandons the spell of Gilbert's romantic love and has courage to demythologize Gilbert as a demi-god that can provide for their family. Instead, she takes back responsibility for her own life and works hard to be rid of marriage entanglements with Gilbert in her march forward towards becoming a human goddess. First, to retaliate for Gilbert's disgrace of her she marries her maid Ogea to him, and to give competition to Nkoyeni who is proving recalcitrant. This singular but double-barreled gesture turns Efuru into a female husband, giving her the added value of freeing herself from the yokes of wifehood and motherhood. As the novel plot gallops now to an interesting resolution, Gilbert accuses Efuru of infidelity, a crime only second to murder as the worst that a woman could commit or be accused of in Igboland. Then, Efuru decides to leave her husband Gilbert Enebiri and return home to her father's house. Not even the interventions of her bosom friend and counselor Ajanupu or the entreaties of her long-term friend, admirer and mentor Dr. Uzaru could constrain her to change her decision to end her second marriage.

With her return as a male daughter, Efuru's life's story has come full circle. She has integrated her masculine and feminine aspects, becoming a veritable androgyny with balanced masculine and feminine principles.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Joseph Campbell's archetypal hero cycle map, *The Hero's Journey*, the hero departs in quest for self, God and the world, that is, wisdom and knowledge.



Joseph Campbell's Archetypal Map of the Hero's Cycle[14]

Through the seventeen stages of the journey, from the ordinary world through the spiritual world and back to the ordinary world, the mythical hero searches for the Golden Fleece or the Magic Elixir. Joseph Campbell was the first to opine that most narratives about mythical heroes, such as a Gilgamesh, follow this mythic pattern of Call to Adventure, Symbolic Death, Rebirth, and Return to the community.

When the hero answers his call, he delves into unknown realms, crossing the threshold of the known ordinary world into the unknown realms of spirits in the spiritual world. There, he meets with supernatural guides and mentors, who help him in his quest while on his journey, by confronting obstacles, adversaries, fiends and guardians of the threshold that try to obstruct his progress. A period of darkness ensues, when the hero descends into the Belly of the Whale, as Jonah did in the Sea of Galilee. There, the hero undergoes a series of trials and tribulations that test his resolve and skills, before he is able to find the elixir, the boon that he seeks. Then, he meets a mysterious being or spiritual guide, usually in the form of a god or goddess. He enters into a sacred matrimonial alliance, and fi-

nally returns to the threshold with the trophy to spread civilization, development and other benefits of his travel among his people.

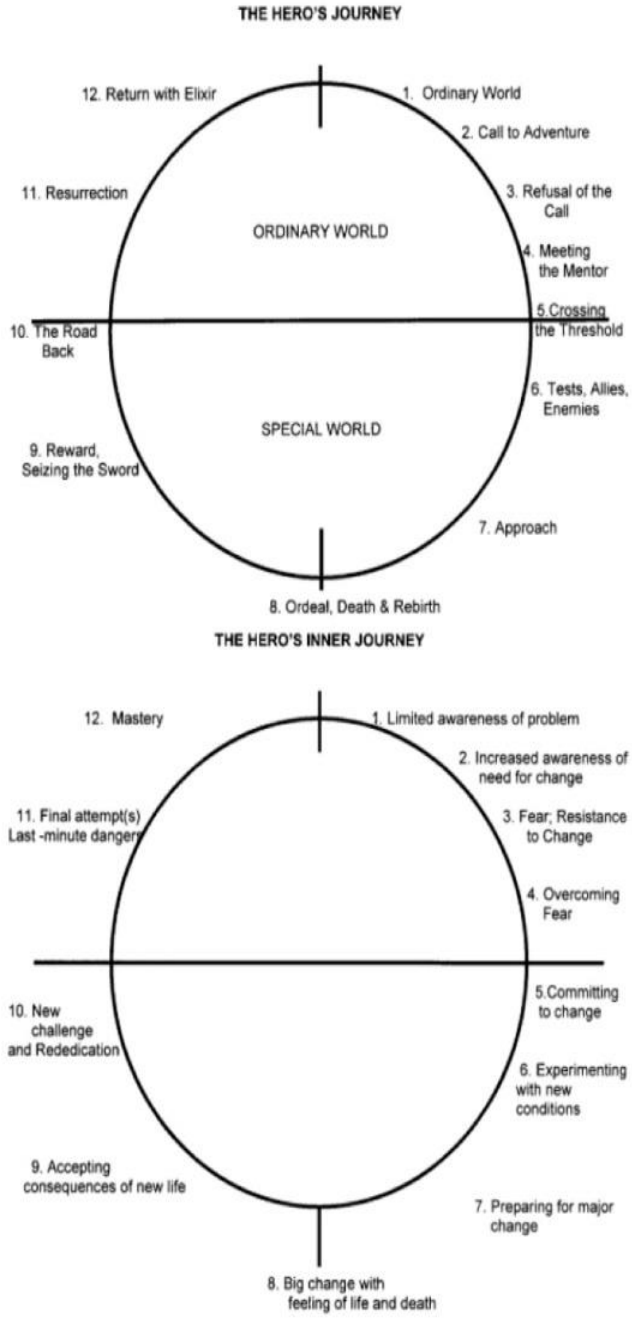
In 1981, Campbell responded to a charge of gender discrimination by feminists with this rebuttal:

> Women don't need to make the journey. In the whole mythological tradition the woman is *there*. All she has to do is to realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to. When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being pseudo-male.[15]

Maureen Murdock, however, thought differently. In *The Hero's Journey* by Joseph Campbell, she insists, the inner and outer hero cycles[16] are constructed for men and males and has not much in it that speaks to the real life experiences and issues of real women and females that she knows. She argues that the archetypal outer journey of Campbell's hero, particularly, does not address the archetypal journeys of troubled women, women whose quest is significantly inwards, women whose reality involves real-issues, such as the healing of the wounding of the feminine in a grossly patriarchal culture that diminishes women and their efforts, seeing them perpetually as weak, dependent, inconsequential, and immoral.

In *The Heroine's Journey*, she proposes a cyclical map of the archetypal heroine's journey, from her own personal experiences and as a professional psychotherapist that has come across several Western women in search of their self-identity in contemporary times. Hence, Murdock's heroine's experience reestablishes women's agency that is missing from Campbell's mythical study. The heroine does not start with a Call to Adventure, like a hero, but rather with a Separation from the Feminine and its values. The heroine seeks to gain recognition and success in her patriarchal culture on her own terms. Unfortunately, she garners illusion of success, followed by experiences of spiritual aridity or death. Finally, turning inward, she is able to reclaim the spirt and power of the sacred feminine. In the final stages of her journey, the heroine acknowledges the duality of her union and power for the benefit of her community.[17]

The heroine is motivated interchangeably by her mind and her hear throughout the stages of the journey. In the first part, she wants to detach from her parent's family and move on as an adult, in order to attain self-identity in the outer world. But, that is just when she inwardly experiences a lack of completeness. At a great sacrifice to her soul, she achieves all that she set out to do, but she must continue on with her journey or all shall be lost in the outer darkness.

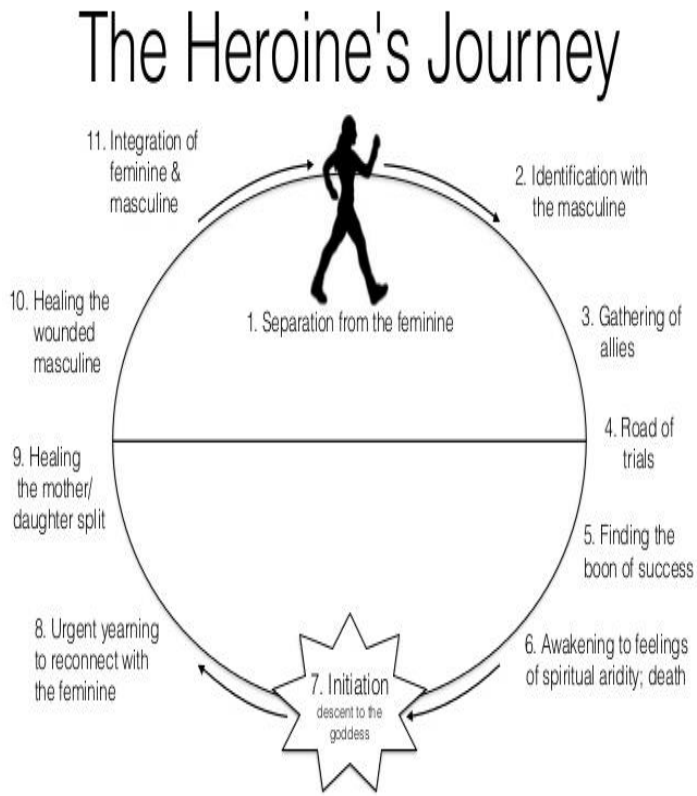


Joseph Campbell's Theory of Monomyth and the Hero Cycles[18]

In the second part, however, despite successes in achieving her goals, she may still be lacking in a new sense of creativity. At this point, the heroine's quest to heal the deep wounding of her feminine nature, on personal, cultural, and spiritual levels, turns mythic. She undertakes her psychological cum spiritual journey to become whole and integrate all parts of her nature in the community. She does this at once consciously and unconsciously, and in voluntary isolation.

EFURU'S QUEST FOR HER HIGHER SELF

It is from the foregoing perspectives that we construct the heroine's Psycho-Spiritual Journey in *Efuru*.



Maureen Murdock's mapping of the Archetypal Heroine's Cycle[19]

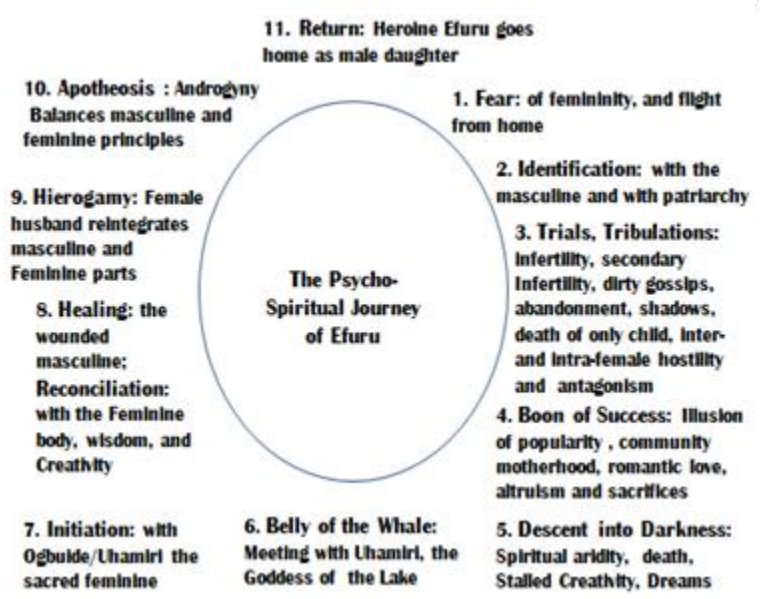
First, it is noteworthy that Efuru starts and ends her quest in her community, without leaving Oguta or shunning her culture. Second, a non-hater of men that understands there are good and bad men, Efuru distinguishes between styles of masculinity exhibited by different men she meets along the way. Some men are helpful, whereas others are unkind, even evil.[20] Ada Uzoamaka Azodo has opined in an earlier study on language and masculinity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which premier novel was the motivation for Flora Nwapa's own first novel, *Efuru*, that even when men are good, bad or evil, they may not be so to the same degree as others.[21]

Recall that foreshadowing Efuru's life, right from the beginning, is the fear that she might end up like her mother and the dread of the consequences to her if she does. Somewhat inadvertently, therefore, she determines to do things differently by herself, namely, emulate the masculine and the heroic and distinguish herself. Then she elopes to take her life into her own hands. Upon experiencing infertility and frustrating anxiety in the first two years of marriage, she laments:

> My mother had only me (…). My father told me so and also that she found it difficult to become pregnant. Am I going to be like my mother? But if I am going to be like her, then I too will have a daughter like her. But what if that is denied me? What if that also is denied me? What will I do? Oh, what will I do?[22]

HEROINE EFURU'S PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Efuru undertakes a psycho-spiritual journey in eleven stages in search of her self-identity and life's purpose.



First Stage: **Flight from Home**: Efuru rejects the feminine that her mother symbolizes, which holds that to be human and not be secondary and inferior to males and men a woman must be wife, mother, and fit any of other feminine nurturing roles. On the contrary, in her mind Efuru aligns with the idealized image of her father as savior, provider, problem-solver and dominant masculine figure in her life and the larger Oguta community. Subsequently, on that fateful day before the cock's crow, at the instigation or suggestion of her lover, Adizua Ukachukwu,[23] she packs her belongings and elopes with him. She may not have known at the time that her intrinsic motive in moving in and cohabiting with Adizua was to find a different (read masculine) identity for herself in the patriarchal culture of her Oguta community.

Second Stage: **Identification with the Masculine**: But, identify with masculinity Efuru does, not with her inner masculine personality that she already has, but with the outer masculine and patriarchal community, the driving force of power and domination. In a similar way as her patriarchal community, she seeks control over herself and the others that are bandying about dirty gossips about her perceived infertility. To shame her detractors, fiends and enemies, Efuru goes to see the dibia with the staunch belief that "God cannot deny me the joy of motherhood,"[24] and that God cannot condone in all his righteousness and infinite mercy her communi-

ty's inhuman and radical desire for perfection on earth. After all, it was death that snatched away her mother early in her childhood, depriving her of relevant nurturing and lessons about life, the world and God, pieces of knowledge and wisdom that she could have gained from her mother. She bemoans the absence of the gods and the ancestors who allowed such a calamity to happen to her:

> She called on the god to bear witness. She raised her hands and asked the gods and her ancestors where and when she offended them that they should allow her only child to be snatched by death.[25]

In other words, the gods, goddesses and ancestors, in essence, mirror diverse ways of being in existence. Efuru counts among her allies her father, the dibia and her mother-in-law's sister and her bosom friend and counselor, Ajanupu. Working against her psychological growth and spiritual progress are her antagonists, the two renegade husbands, Adizua Ukachukwu and Gilbert Enebiri, who in turn treat her disrespectfully and disgracefully. In some way, Efuru believes she is a victim and that her community is right in treating her the way they do, due to some fault of hers. Nonetheless, at the same time within her she continues to fight back. She will not be a martyr, she says, like her mother-in-law, Amede, who was utterly maltreated by her own philandering husband, Adizua's father, and was later abandoned for another woman.[26] She goes about, twice only, to look for Adizua and not finding him leaves the home she built with him and returns to her father's house. Efuru would later also leave Gilbert Enebiri, when he accuses her of adultery. Efuru's fixation appears to be to prove to herself that she is much higher morally than everyone else deems her to be. She would just not don that coat of one-size-fits-all designed for women and females in her community. But, what tasks are available to help Efuru develop her ego?

Third Stage: **The Road of Trials and Tribulations**: On the road of trials and tribulations, Efuru undergoes tests that will begin her ego transformation. She does not know it, but she gives and gives to everyone in need, sacrificing herself and her material acquisitions and wealth. Her popularity soars high. As community mother, she takes care of her mother-in-law when she is ill,[27] ministers to the needy, the poor, men and women alike, sends some to the hospital and pays the bills, as she does for the old lady, Nona for her septic wound,[28] and for prostate surgery for Nwosu, her maid Ogea's father. She also gives Nwosu money capital to purchase

yams for the planting season. She forgives his bad debts and continues to lend to him, and to others, without recompense.[29] Efuru is most probably getting a high in happiness with her empathic and compassionate deeds, for in spite of herself she continues to do these simple things for her greater happiness. But, quite unexpectedly it is her maid, Ogea, fearing for her, who draws her attention to the bad consequences of overdoing good: "If you continue giving people money in this way, they will take advantage of your generosity and worry you all the more."[30] Inwardly, though, Efuru suffers from her ordeals and disgrace, for her husbands do not support her emotionally nor do they with their physical presence in her hours of need, such as when her daughter dies and later at the death of her father. Both men are nowhere to be found, making Efuru a laughing stock in her community, especially among her fellow women.

Efuru also suffers inter- and intra-female hostility. The bitter and jealous tongue of the village gossip, Omirima, among others, wags on:

> Seeing them together is not the important thing (…). The important thing is that nothing has happened since the happy marriage. We are not going to eat the happy marriage. Marriage must be fruitful. Of what use is it if it is not fruitful. Of what use is it if your husband licks your body, worships you and buys everything in the market for you and you are not productive.[31]

Omirima objects to, even blames, Amede, Efuru's mother-in-law's stance in allowing the couple to go about town in public together:

> Why must they go to these places together? It is your fault for allowing them to be together always. Are they companions? Don't they know that a man and a woman should not be seen together often whether they are married or not? Amede, you must see to this. You behave as if you are not the one any more. What has come over you?[32]

Clearly, women perpetrate male dominance and patriarchy in the community, by colluding with men in putting fellow women down. This collusion of her own kind in her oppression is most agonizing to Efuru, who comes to the realization that motherhood, any kind of motherhood, and sacrifices are not enough to give her self-fulfillment, and that all along her achievements have been based on pleasing the internalized masculine or father-image within her unconscious mind. As she awakens to her decep-

tion and betrayal by the father and masculinity, she regains her creative self and accepts her limits.

Fourth Stage: **Boon of Success**: Efuru reemerges from the tunnel of tribulations with a boon in the form of enlightenment about what life is really all about and her proper place in it. This is the ultimate goal of her quest. This boon is illusory, nonetheless, because Efuru resists the temptation to be free from her masculine entrapments and return to feminine virtues. As Murdock puts it about women resisting their awakening:

> Finding the inner boon of success requires the sacrifice of false notions of the heroic. When a woman can find the courage to be limited and to realize that she is enough exactly the way she is, then she discovers one of the true treasures of the heroic journey. This woman can detach herself from the whims of the ego and touch into the deeper forces that are the source of her life. She can say, "I am not all things and I am enough." She becomes real, open, vulnerable, and receptive to a true spiritual awakening.[33]

Efuru would not give up any of her charitable works of mercy, though, still feeling victorious, confident and happy as she does. She acknowledges she is a victim of cognitive empathy when she responds to Ogea's advice to control the degree to which she pushes her compassion, when she states: "I know it well, but what can one do? It is difficult to deny these people anything."[34] Rather than scale back, she adds the education of the young to her good deeds, by inviting the community storyteller on moonlight nights to entertain and teach the children she gathers in her home front. She welcomes the rival wife Nkoyeni with open arms, so that their common husband Gilbert Enebiri can perpetuate his immortality. When Nkoyeni is delivered of her baby, she helps to nurture and raise it. When Nkoyeni loses self-control over the imprisonment of Gilbert in Onicha for theft, as well as the return for a visit of his illegitimate son, Efuru marries her maid Ogea to Gilbert to give her a competition and to 'tame the shrew' in her into the bargain. With these measures, and relishing her new status as community mother and female husband, Efuru is at the end of her creativity. Her achievements take their toll on her health and emotional wellness. She experiences an inexplicable emptiness. The next best thing for her is *being* herself, not *doing* something. But, she cannot see it, because the uncertain future is not revealed to her. Still, a *regressus ad uterum* is not an option, this retreat that Jean Markale has defined as "a return to true

paradise in the real or imaginary protection of an ever-damp and nourishing maternal womb."[35]

Fifth Stage: **Descent into Darkness**: Perhaps, Efuru is ready and willing to undergo a metamorphosis that will separate her old self from her new self. She is lucid enough and able to express her feelings of emptiness, otherwise she could suffer a nervous condition or depression. Despite her numerous achievements, she feels she has achieved nothing worthwhile and continues to believe she only just struggles to play male roles. She has a feeling of being in the dark about her past, present and future, but is not yet clear as to what changes she needs to make to take her life back into her own hands and move forward to a healthy and more fulfilling life. So far, the masculine and heroic path is unsatisfying to her feminine part, prompting her to wonder the usefulness of the successes she has garnered. Nor Hall put this way the feeling of deception and betrayal common to modern achieving women, when they have reached the 'mountain top,' as Martin Luther King, Jr. would say, and yet are not satisfied:

> There is a void felt these days by women and men --- who suspect that their feminine nature, like Persephone, has gone to hell. Wherever there is such a void, such a gap or wound agape, healing must be sought in the blood of the wound itself. It is another of the old alchemical truths that "no solution should be made except in its own blood." So the female void cannot be cured by conjunction with the male, but rather by an internal conjunction, by an integration of its own parts, by a remembering or a putting together of the mother-daughter body.[36]

Sacrifices, for these reasons, are no longer effective weapons against Efuru's feelings of emptiness, spiritual aridity or death, for she did not reckon that her pursuit of masculine values would entail giving up her body and soul. Nonetheless, she is aware that she no longer wants to deal with masculine values or play by patriarchal rules, but is still lost as to which way to go. Hence, just what she needs to resurrect is her descent into a period of darkness in which she listens and quits *doing,* but *being* as she searches for her whole self.

A reader uninitiated into the world of the imaginary[37] may see this period of stasis as depression, but it is really a period of pause that is necessary before the rebirth of a wholesome individual. It is at this point in Efuru's journey that strange dreams invade her being at night,[38] as she

seeks to heal the split with her mother and the feminine and recover that relationship in the larger context of the Oguta community. According to Murdock, "This period is often filled with dreams of dismemberment and death, of shadow sisters and intruders, of journeys across deserts and rivers, of ancient goddess symbols and sacred animals."[39] Murdock continues:

> When a woman has made the descent and severed her identity as a spiritual daughter of the patriarchy, there is an urgent yearning to reconnect with the feminine, whether that be the Goddess, the Mother, or her little girl within. There is a desire to develop those parts of herself that have gone underground while on the heroic quest: her body, her emotions, her spirit, her creative wisdom. It may be that a woman's relationship to the undeveloped parts of her own father gives her clue to her true feminine nature.[40]

Efuru is about to gain items that will be useful for her in the future as she embraces the Goddess of the Lake, Uhamiri, to learn about female beauty, power and so get a hold on her body and the experiences she has gained. Uhamiri is the Great Mother, a beautiful and rich woman, who lives at the bottom of Lake Oguta. In her dreams, Uhamiri takes her down to her abode and shows her all her riches and wealth. The beautiful woman is not married, yet she is happy and living a fulfilling life. Her father, Nwashike Ogene, explains the strange dreams to her, adding that it is the Goddess of the Lake Uhamiri that is inviting her to become one of her numerous female devotees and worshippers, adding that her own mother (Efuru's mother) had such dreams too. The dibia confirms the dreams as supernatural signs of good news and self-awakening:

> You are a great woman. Nwashike Ogene, your daughter is a great woman. The goddess of the lake has chosen her to be one of her worshippers. It is a great honour. She is going to protect you and shower riches on you. But you must keep her laws. Look round this town, nearly all the storey buildings you find are built by women who one time or another have been worshippers of Uhamiri. Many of them had dreams similar to yours, many of them came to me and asked me what to do. I helped them. Some of them remember me, some don't remember me at all.[41]

Unwittingly by this dream interpretation, and unknown to himself at the time, Nwashike Ogene has transformed into a new and creative masculine figure that will lead Efuru to the Goddess of the Lake. He is no longer the patriarchal masculine voice of the beginning. Inwardly, Efuru is afraid to take the next steps of her journey, clinging instead to the charted pathway, although that will not be for a long time. Refusing to make progress, psychologically and spiritually, however, are not options for Efuru, for something more powerful than herself has taken over her being and is propelling her forward. Like a spiritually-obsessed person, she is urged to march on along her life journey's pathway. Murdock explains this intricate female power vis-à-vis female wholesomeness:

> Whether we think of the Goddess as a personified Being or as energy that occurs within and between women, the image of the Goddess is an acknowledgement of female power, not dependent on men or derived from the patriarchal vision of women …. The Goddess reflects back to us what has been missing in our culture, positive images of our power, our bodies, our wills, our mothers. To look at the Goddess is to remember ourselves, to imagine ourselves whole.[42]

Marian Woodman adds in her book, *In Leaving My Father's House*:

> It takes a strong ego to hold the darkness, hold the tension, waiting for we know not what. But, if we can hold long enough, a tiny light is conceived in the dark unconscious, and if we can wait and hold, in its own time it will be born in its full radiance. The ego then has to be loving enough to receive the gift and nourish it with the best food that new life may eventually transform the whole personality.[43]

Sixth Stage: **Descent into the Belly of the Whale**: This meeting with the Goddess is the ultimate adventure for the neophyte. As we have seen above, Efuru descends in a dream to the Goddess, Uhamiri, at the bottom of the lake. Efuru is now at the center point of her adventure, where her initiation begins, and where she must confront her masculine side head on and decide once and for all whether she wants to live out her life as a hero or a heroine. She meets Uhamiri, who, although a woman is a de facto man-woman. Efuru must lay to rest in this abyss of confrontation the erroneous notion that life and power are synonymous with masculinity and father image, what Joseph Campbell has defined as 'atonement.'[44]

Efuru's spiritual progress appears to reach its dizzying heights as snakes and tortoises, messengers of Uhamiri, populate her dreams. On dream symbolism in general, Murdock states:

> We produce symbols unconsciously and spontaneously in the form of dreams. Many women and men today are dreaming about the Goddess; she is a projection of the feminine principle that needs restoration in our culture. She takes many forms, often embodied in the rich symbols of a person's heritage.[45]

Efuru descends into darkness, because she is afraid, confused, alienated, disillusioned, isolated and in despair. She feels unfocused, undirected, dismembered and without a structure by which to go. Her loss of identity as daughter, spouse, mother, community role player as mother, and loss of direction plague her for weeks on end. How to reclaim her discarded aspects, the parts that split off when she separated from the feminine at the beginning, is her problem now. These were feminine values she devalued, repressed and ignored as she strove forward in search of success and wholesomeness in her patriarchal community as a masculine being that was loaning out money, doing business, paying bills and consulting with dibias, spirits of living-dead ancestors, gods and goddesses, divorcing one husband and marrying off another husband to another woman, and ceasing thereby to be a de facto wife.[46]

Seventh Stage: **Initiation with the Sacred Feminine**: Efuru is now poised to make use of wisdom gained in her journey quest. As her struggles are rewarded with more and more encounters with Uhamiri in her dreams, and she experiences rebirth into a new personality and new awareness of herself, rebirth which only comes after the removal of the cold hands of death, Efuru is now becoming logical, not merely intuitive. She realizes that since she became an Uhamiri worshipper she has not seen babies at her house: "She cannot give me children," she says, "because she has not got children herself."[47] Before now, Efuru was unaware that her heroic quest had degenerated into an obsession to be a mother, in order to heal her mother-complex. James Hillman and Marie-Louise von Franz explain how the basic content of mother-complex affects intimately and permanently women's perceptions of themselves:

> One faces the mother as fate, ever again and anew. Not only the contents of feelings, but the function itself takes patterns from the reac-

> tions and values which come to life in mother-child relationship. The way we feel about our bodily life, our physical self-regard and confidence, the subjective tone with which we take in or go out into the world, the basic fears and guilts, how we enter into love and behave in closeness and nearness, our psychological temperature of coldness and warmth, how we feel when we are ill, our manners, taste, and style of eating and living, habitual structures of relating, patterns of gesture and tone of voice, all bear the marks of mother.[48]

Observe that Efuru's quest at the beginning was her fear of turning out like her mother. It was a reaction to her mother's fate, a disillusionment and frustration with femininity. Perhaps, her mother, the mother of a mere baby girl, was neglected by family for inability to provide her husband with a son to assure his immortality. Perhaps she died of depression and heartache for being perceived as a failure in her community. It did not matter that her husband loved her very much and preferred her to all his seven wives put together that he inherited from his own father.[49] In dreams, Efuru searches for her absent mother.

At last, her spirit mother Uhamiri hears her crying and comes to the rescue. To better understand her ambivalence, Efuru chooses to advance and seeks to reclaim connection to the sacred feminine, by dropping her false and pseudo-false identities, old illusions and fear of losing her quest. She confronts her shadows, her own dark sides and the repressed urge to deny her mother and femininity, but rather please her father by being masculine. Noteworthy is that Efuru's yearning to reconnect with Uhamiri and heal the mother-daughter split of the beginning is not yearning to rejoin her dead mother nor Ogonim her dead baby girl nor her mother-in-law from whom she voluntarily separated when she gave up Adizua. On the contrary, the yearning is a grief at the separation from feminine values. Hence, she has the urge to reconnect her body to creativity; recover the losses she has experienced, due to pursuit of masculine values in the patriarchal domain. Implicitly, she vows to reconnect to intuition and wisdom, meaning, listen to and seek guidance from signs in the supernatural world, as well as from plants and animals and inanimate things in nature.

Uhamiri demonstrates by her life's example that the feminine does not have to exclude the masculine. As Murdock states, "For a woman to be whole, she must reclaim the dark mother in herself."[50] Very subtly, Flora Nwapa's authorial strategy turns on their heads the usual Igbo folktales that irrevocably portray women as cruel, manipulative, mean, repugnant,

greedy, and jealous, fit only to be killed. In the folktale curated by Efuru and given by Eneke the storyteller, the story is "about the woman whose daughter disobeyed her and as a result was married to a spirit."[51] One can say that by projection, by burning alive the male spirit (no longer is it a female spirit that is killed)[52] that took the woman's daughter away in an unwanted matrimony, Efuru reclaims her mother by 'killing' the father. "Serves him right," the children say in their rejoicing, "to think that he could marry such a beautiful girl."[53] The voices of the innocent children are the voices of the gods and goddesses, ancestors and spirits, and animate and inanimate creatures of the earth.

Eighth Stage: **Stripping/Reconciliation with the Feminine**: Efuru makes a firm and irrevocable decision to return home to her beginning at her father's house and once there engage in mundane tasks of a feminine nature that she left behind. At her return as a male daughter, patrilineal wives, her father's widows, and others in the community would defer to her. Hence, through mindful or unmindful suffering, stripping herself of her earthly belongings and successes--money, friends, amorous relationships and family--Efuru reconciles with Uhamiri, the symbol of the sacred feminine, and obeys her rules and taboos as the dibia instructed. Every day, she dreams of the Goddess of the Lake, the one that does not implore her to *do* anything else but *be* herself. She realizes that women who worship Uhamiri succeed in life. Nonetheless, Murdock warns all and sundry to be ware of women on the road to recovery:

> Beware family and friends that want her to go back to the way she was like before. She now realizes the extent to which she has sacrificed herself in pleasing others, and she is not willing to do things the old way. She ruthlessly cuts away people and situations that do not support who she has become.[54]

Efuru is convinced that her redemption will come through persistence in this latest chosen pathway that now appeals to her as the right pathway to her destiny, self-identity, life's purpose, and wholesomeness.

Ninth Stage: **Healing the Wounded Masculine**: Finally, at peace, Efuru achieves a balance between the masculine and the feminine as a male daughter who is comfortable in her body with her masculine and feminine parts. She takes back her negative projections on all the men in her life, including family, friends and acquaintances. She works towards healing the wounded masculine and reincorporating it into her life. She comes to the definitive realization that nothing is wrong with men and

that they are not to blame. On the contrary, everything is wrong with patriarchy, especially her community's style of masculinity that hurts both men and women. In healing these somewhat unrelated or wounded aspects of her masculine nature, Efuru identifies parts of herself that have ignored feelings of herself and her health. These were the parts that refused to accept her limits, parts of her that always urged her on and on without allowing her to seek rest or redress. Her mysterious illness at this stage is a rude awakening to how much she has abused herself without knowing it, thanks to her blind ambition to always be on top of everything, to achieve it all in a masculine-dominated and patriarchal community.

Nonetheless, Efuru gains new awareness of her ability to become a female husband, thanks to the masculine aspects of her nature. With this new awareness, she realizes her potential ability to gain greater masculine authority as a male daughter, for that status shall positively impact the community from which she split at the dawn of her search for her higher self. If there is any crisis at all, it is how to reconcile who she was with who she has become, that is, how to reincorporate the masculine, without allowing it to dominate her life, given that she now understands how much the masculine impulses have helped her to understand her inner needs that led to her loss of self-identity and purpose in the first place. Efuru realizes that granted that the masculine was a significant and important part of her psycho-spiritual journey, yet it was not the essential or true goal of her being. She then resolves to channel her masculine impulses into positive goals. She decides to go back home to her father's house. In her father's absence, now that he is dead, she will assume the role of male daughter, which in Igbo tradition requires the woman so named to take care of the homestead and not allow the family name to fall or disappear. As male daughter, Efuru can have children by men with whom she chooses to have sexual relationships, but she does not need to marry any of them. All the children she may have shall belong to her father posthumously, as the head of the household, and such children shall bear the family name.[55]

Tenth Stage: **Reintegration of the Masculine and the Feminine:** The final stage of the journey is hierogamy, a veritable convergence of the Earth and the Sky. Efuru integrates her masculine and feminine impulses together into a union of opposites that blends her masculine and feminine parts. Efuru has overcome her temerity and is no longer afraid to be feminine in her community, when the occasion calls for it. As she accepts herself for who she is, all the problems of her divided psyche are resolved.

Yet, she hopes that all her inner sufferings will take her to a new level of existence, which equates to a different style of female consciousness that also admits masculine consciousness as she seeks to make her voice heard in the community. The union of the masculine and feminine opposites requires Efuru to recognize her wounds, accept them, and let go. It calls for artful balance and patience, given that human nature embodies masculine and feminine chromosomes. All the experiences and successes garnered during her quest and the skills learned and cultivated along the way are important in forming her new self-identity. After all, gender is socially constructed and keeps evolving and changing all the days of one's life. Indeed, in Campbell's parlance, the hero has become a Master of Two Worlds.[56]

Eleventh Stage: **Apotheosis:** At her Apotheosis, first, Efuru becomes a spiritual warrior for Uhamiri; she strives to bring to the Goddess for healing women in the community suffering from oppression, subordination, discrimination and lack of self-esteem and self-regard, her ultimate quest goal being to bring people together, not for her personal, individual gain. Second, she realizes the need to extend her integrated body to the larger collective for a new beginning,[57] a stage of "the sacred marriage of the feminine and the masculine—when a woman, like water spirit, can value and be responsive to and truly serve others' needs, as well as her own needs," according to Murdock.[58] Furthermore, continues Murdock, this awareness of independence is important for human beings in their daily relationships and to preserve balance on earth, in life and in health.[59] P. G. Zolbrod sees this interdependence and balance as the virtue of solidarity in *Dine bahane: The Navaho Creation Story*:

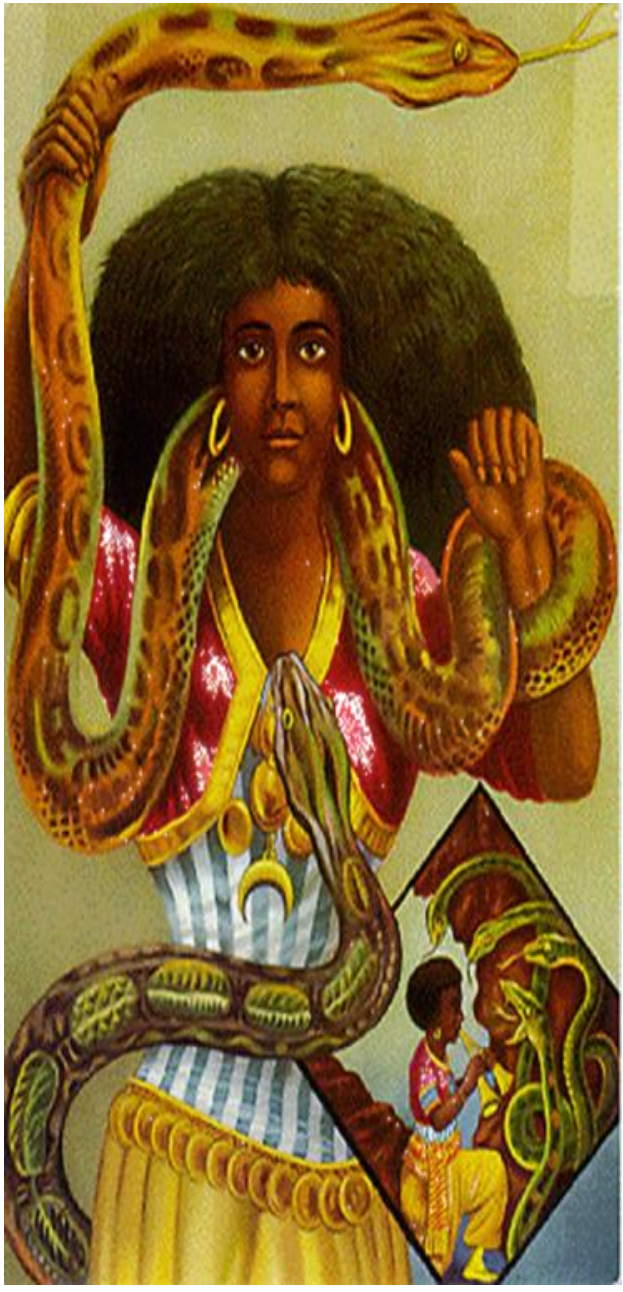
> Remember, as different as we are, you and I, we are of one spirit. As dissimilar as we are, you and I, we are of equal worth. As unlike as you and I are, there must always be solidarity between the two of us. Unlike each other as you and I are, there can be no harmony between us.[60]

At the end of her journey Efuru makes a **return** home, ready for a more fulfilling life for herself and to impart the new knowledge gained to all around her. Efuru now knows the value of the masculine and the feminine in the strongest ways possible in Oguta community. She sees as faulty, arbitrary, and destructive the gender duality that holds sway, which makes male out as superior and female out as inferior. She realizes that the community does not need to be destroyed, in order to find one's

higher self. Gender roles are only acceptable as divisions of labor that promote peace and harmony in the community, not as instruments of oppression and subjugation. Complementarity of male and female genders needs to be acknowledged, and also the fact that there are more than a few genders must be entertained. When Efuru's psycho-spiritual journey is seen as a specimen of rite of passage, it is clear that for individual and community development people must grow and mature. It should not be taken for granted that growth is automatic or that a sense of responsibility as community-oriented adult is a given. Both qualities need hard work, sacrifices and compassion. These are the ultimate moral lessons of the heroine Efuru's psycho-spiritual journey in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*.

CONCLUSION

This study has employed the methodologies of the imaginary, semiotics and reader's response theory to unearth hidden meanings in the metanarrative of Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*. It has employed as theoretical framework *The Heroine's Journey*[61] by Maureen Murdock, a gendered-adaptation of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*,[62] to follow a modern Igbo woman's psychological cum spiritual journey towards wholesomeness. That this study has been able to adapt the said theories to the study of an Igbo novel says a lot about the similarity of the human condition on earth, but especially of the female condition cross-culturally. It also gives tremendous credit to the ingenuity of Flora Nwapa, the novelist who no doubt had no inkling to what heights critics like us could take her work in this twenty-first century reading, analysis, and interpretation. It is difficult to imagine that she might have had knowledge of hero and heroine cycles, let alone gear her literary exegesis towards those ends. As she once replied, when she was confronted about being a feminist, she insisted that she was not a feminist, but rather was a mere sociologist who recounted stories about women she knew. In *Efuru*, Flora Nwapa has put across a thesis that the masculine and feminine have great values in the community and that patriarchy needs to be dismantled to salvage female personal needs for self-fulfillment and to quicken development in the community. She has done this, through efficient use of archetypal characters, including protagonists, antagonists, contagonists, guardians, allies, goddesses, gods, ancestors and spirits, among others.



Mammy Water: Master of Two Worlds, the Animal Kingdom and the Spirit World

And, this last point brings us back to the points we made at the beginning, about the value and roles of literature in society. Efuru's Psycho-Spiritual Journey, our constructed mapping of Efuru's story, has focused on the struggle within the heroine's soul for her higher self and the truth about life and being in the contemporary world. Like Efuru, many women are changing their perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Men are coming along too, are slower evidently, but also embracing the changing notions. Clearly, the world is changing in perceptions of gender and racial equality. Efuru is the new and modern-era feminine that descends into her dark side to unearth noble lessons for humanity, not for approval, honor or accolades, but rather to relish her femininity fully and without abandoning her masculine nature. That Efuru is able to work out her life's purpose inside and within the collective existence of men and women of her Oguta environment states at once that the individual does not have to abandon her culture to find her self-identity, purpose and meaning in life, that the community remains stronger than the individual, and that struggle and devotion to moral and spiritual goodness is symbolic of healthful life and being. Noteworthy is the heroine's return to the community of the beginning with the knowledge and wisdom that one does not have to fit into any rigid mold, masculine or feminine, to have a fulfilled and successful life and be useful in one's environment. She blames nobody for anything. She willingly goes through sufferings on personal and human levels as a goddess would, rather than look for a scapegoat. As an acknowledged astute business woman, the added lesson of Efuru's quest is that women should carve a career path for themselves to help them find their self-identity. Skills learned during the heroic quest should help a woman to carve out for herself an independent life from her parents, husband and other significant people in her life. Furthermore, feminine values are significant and just as important and useful in society as the currently dominant masculine values. How a woman feels about herself and perceives things that are feminine has a lot to do with how she is treated by people and things in the outer world of her community.

The ultimate value of this study, then, is that Efuru's life example as agent and catalyst for transformation will change the hierarchical pyramids in Oguta culture to a cyclical form in which the political, religious and economic communal structures are geared towards gender equality in the true sense of community, structures in which all members, irrespective of their gender, embark together on a life's journey from an equal per-

spective, and all feel accountable for one another.[63] Murdock states in reference to life's cycles that the heroine: "(She) gains the wisdom of the cycles of change, accepting the dark, instinctive side which helps us find meaning in suffering and death as well as the light, joyous side which affirms our strength, courage, and life."[64] And, on the interconnectedness of human beings, Murdock again states:

> Our task is to heal the internal split that tells us to override the feelings, intuition, and dream images that inform us of the truth of life. We must have the courage to live with paradox, the strength to hold the tension of not knowing the answers, and the willingness to listen to our wisdom and the wisdom of the planet, which begs for change.[65]

NOTES

[1] According to Ejine Olga Nzeribe and Ebere Nzeribe, the full name of Efuru, Flora Nwapa's protagonist in the novel *Efuru* is 'Nwanefuru,' meaning, 'A child that everyone loves.' Compare the name that Flora Nwapa gave to the heroine of her first and largely autobiographical novel, *Efuru*, to 'Ken Bugul,' a name that in Wolof means 'A child that nobody wants/likes/loves,' the name that Mariètou Mbaye Biléoma (pen name, Ken Bugul) gave to the protagonist of her first and clearly autobiographical novel, *The Abandoned Baobab: The Autobiography of a Senegalese Woman*, and you begin to see how African women writers have used the naming of their heroines to capture the intriguing psychological and spiritual journeys of many a troubled woman fighting endemic patriarchy in their environments.

In the case of Ken Bugul, from the point of our literary analysis and interpretation with The Heroine Cycle, it could be said that the heroine fled from home out of fear of masculinity, after her mother ended her matrimony with her father early in her childhood, returned to her place of birth, leaving her abandoned. Endless wanderings in Europe as prostitute, striptease artist, bisexual, engagement in multiple abortions and other marked her as arid in spirituality and morality, until her return to Senegal, love, marriage first to a marabout and later with an obstetrician, then childbirth, and writing helped her reintegrate her masculine and feminine sides and she again became whole and salvaged.

Source: http://dangerouswomenproject.org/2016/04/21/flora-nwapa/ Accessed 03/24/2019.

[2] *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell. Introduction by Phil Cousineau, Ed., Foreword by Stuart L. Brown. Novato, CA: New World Library (Joseph Campbell, (2003) [1990].

[3] Maureen Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholesomeness* (Shambhala Publication, 1990, 129).

[4] Source: https://community.chronicle.com/news/1896-the-forgotten-value-of-a-literature-course Accessed 06/16/2020.

[5] Critics Ejine Olga Nzeribe and Ebere have resolved that due to female marginalization endowed women resort to all sorts of subterfuges to fulfill themselves and live a fulfilling life. They become opportunistic, courageous, wily, cunning, rebellious, brave, opinionated, masculine, enterprising, devious, ambitious, 'dangerous,' etc.

See Ejine Olga Nzeribe and Ebere Okereke's answer to their own question: "To Nigerians, who would be considered a dangerous woman?" They believe it is first and foremost Flora Nwapa (b.1931 d.1993), Pioneering Nigerian administrator, academic and author," and then women like the characters in her novels, who could be construed (by men) by dint of their enormous accomplishments as 'dangerous.' Accessed 21st April 2019 http://dangerouswomenproject.org/2016/04/21/flora-nwapa/

[6] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 2008 (1972; 1949) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey Accessed 04/19/2019.

[7] Maureen Murdock, 1990. See also *The Heroine's Journey Workbook* (Shambhala Publications, March 31, 1998).

[8] Literature, in general, has the value of being a mirror of society along with past and present happenings in it, with the added role of preserving and expanding human knowledge and expressing creatively and innovatively a multiplicity of human experiences about the and living and nonliving creatures in the environment. In Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, we have opportunity to glimpse the complexity of human experiences through the saga of the heroine, Efuru.

[9] Awa, Sam (2008). "Summary and Analysis of *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa" Retrieved July 15, 2015. http://www.salvationpress.net/summaries-and-analyses/prose/Efuru

[10] An Androgyny is gender fluid and does not fit in cleanly into the typical masculine and gender roles of the community. It is a term in transgender topics that could align with gender queer, non-gendered or genderless. However, Efuru is a psychological androgyny, neither behavioral (social and personal anomalies in gender) nor physiological (physical traits, such as intersex), because her issues deal with matters of gender identity.

[11] In "Understanding Texts," (*S/Z, Seuil: Paris, 1970)*, Roland Barthes contrasts the **Readerly text** with the **Writerly text**. Whereas the passive reader merely absorbs the predetermined meaning of a text and does not require the reader to produce her/his own meanings, the writer on the contrary is active and in control of discovering concealed meaning from the text as a producer. The metanarratives or stable meaning of the Readerly text is replaced by a multiplicity of meanings derived from a conscientious disregard of the text's narrative structure. Barthes believes that the writerly text is ideal for modern mythological culture where the lines between the real and the artificial are blurred, adding that the ideal text blurs the distinction between the reader and the writer and the **Author** is obsolete and has been replaced by the **Scriptor**, who in a given text is able to combine pre-existing texts in different ways. He states:

"... the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable . . . ; the systems of meaning can take over

this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language" (*S/Z*, 5).

[12] Among her travails and tribulations are: her mother's early death; her humiliation by her two philandering, cheating, lying, disrespectful and abandoning husbands; her infertility, secondary infertility, and death of her only child; female hostility endured from women of her community and attendant dirty gossip; costly sacrifices in self-pride and loss of self-confidence with illusionary recompense, and finally the death of her father, ally and mentor.

[13] Roland Barthes, "Understanding Texts," (S/Z, Seuil: Paris, 1970).

[14] Joseph Campbell's archetypal map of the Hero's Cycle (Accessed 05/30/2019):

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=5B10F4A1BF67C67410DCAD8DCDD8A59F6ACE3F3E&thid=OIP.r2uDI0HdxNPp7X7-Uzf9LwHaHy&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwes1energymasterkey.files.wordpress.com%2F2014%2F02%2Fherosjourney.gif&exph=800&expw=761&q=joseph+campbell%27s+archetypal+map+of+the+hero%27s+cycle&selectedindex=0&qpvt=joseph+campbell%27s+archetypal+map+of+the+hero%27s+cycle&ajaxhist=0&vt=0

[15] Murdock 1990, 2

[16] Campbell's archetypal map of the Hero's Cycle diagram

[17] Murdock 1990, 2

[18] Joseph Campbell's Theory of The Monomyth and the Hero Cycles. Accessed 06/17/2019. https://runningfather.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/herosjourney.jpg

[19] Maureen Murdock's archetypal map of the Heroine's Journey Accessed 05/30/2019:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=E79CF21DD4893B8D32EAB631B98C38333C60B047&thid=OIP.z8NpVvR9zFHkCEdUMIwQVwHaFj&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fimage.slidesharecdn.com%2Fherosjourney20150112-150113091335-conversion-gate01%2F95%2Fsummary-of-the-heros-journey-16-638.jpg%3Fcb%3D1427726934&exph=479&expw=638&q=maureen+murdock%27s+mapping+of+the+archetypal+heroine%27s+cycle&selectedindex=0&ajaxhist=0&vt=0

[20] *The Science of Good & Evil* (*TIME Magazine*, Special Edition, April-July, 2019).

[21] Ada Uzoamaka Azodo. "Masculinity and Language in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*," Ed. Ernest N. Emenyonu (*Emerging Perspectives on Chinua Achebe*: Omenka *the Master Artist: Critical Perspectives on Achebe's Fiction*, (Africa World Press, 2004), 49-64.

See also. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart and Related Readings (*Evanston: McDougal Littell 2002 (1997).

[22] Flora Nwapa, *Efuru*. (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1989; Chicago: Waveland Press, (2013), 24.

[23] Nwapa 2013, 8-9.

[24] Nwapa 2013, 24.

[25] Nwapa 2013, 70.

[26] Nwapa 2013, 58-61.

[27] Nwapa 2013, 155-158.

[28] Nwapa 2013, 170-171.

[29] Nwapa 2013, 168-170.

[30] Nwapa 2013, 172.

[31] Nwapa 2013, 137.

[32] Nwapa 2013, 139.

[33] Murdock 1990, 69

[34] Nwapa 2013, 172

[35] Jean Markale, *Women of the Celts* (Rochester, VT.: Inner Traditions International, 1986), 100.

[36] Nor Hall, *The Moon and the Virgin* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

[37] Ada Uzoamaka Azodo. *L'imaginaire dans les romans de Camara Laye*. New York, Berne: Peter Lang, 1993.

[38] Dreaming is understood to be the link between one's conscious persona and the unconscious that comes up at night when one sleeps. Dreams process intense emotions and an abundance of information and experiences of the day time that the conscious being refuses to process or finds traumatic. Recurring dreams can be linked to anxiety that has not been addressed. Efuru's dreams are of the predictive kind, because in the future will be her upcoming adherence to Uhamiri to regain her emotional and spiritual stability. Her mother also had the same dreams, meaning that she also was traumatized in their patriarchal community. On dreaming, www.californiapsychics.com Accessed 03/31/2019

[39] Murdock, 1990, 8.

[40] Murdock, 1990, 111.

[41] Nwapa 2013, 153.

[42] Murdock, 1990, 27-28.

See also Kathie Carlson, *In Her Image*: *The Unhealed Daughter's Search for* ***Her*** *Mother*, 77.

[43] Marian Woodman, *In Leaving My Father's House* (1991), 115.

[44] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949, 35). "Atonement consists in no more than the abandonment of that self-generated double monster—the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id). But this requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself, and that is what is difficult. One must have a faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the center of belief is transferred outside of the bedeviling god's tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve. It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic (pollen charms or power of intercession) he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father's ego-shattering initiation. For if it is impossible to trust the terrifying father-face, then one's faith must be centered elsewhere (Spider Woman, Blessed Mother); and with that reliance for support, one endures the crisis—only to find, in the end, that the father and mother reflect each other, and are in essence the same. The problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being. The hero transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands—and the two are atoned."

[45] Murdock, 1990, 118.

[46] Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Book 1988-89. "Chapter 5, "The

Ideology of Gender," In: , *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (London and New Jersey, Zed Books Publishing, 1995 (1987), 89-98.

[47] Nwapa 2013, 165.

[48] James Hillman and Marie-Louise von Franz, *Jung's Typology: The Inferior Function and the Feeling Function* (Dallas, Spring Publications, 1971), 113-114.

[49] Nwapa 2013, 149-150.

[50] Murdock 1990, 105.

[51] Nwapa 2013, 106.

See the entire folktale of The Disobedient Daughter, In: *Efuru*, (Chicago: Waveland Press, 2013), 106-111.

[52] "The reality of our time in history requires that we reverse the patterns of the fairytales—we must go back, restore and heal these female constellations in order to renew and integrate the suppressed masculine element." Madonna Kolbenschlag, *Kiss the Sleeping Beauty Goodbye,* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).

[53] Nwapa 2013, 110.

[54] Murdock 1990, 109.

[55] Egodi Uchendu, "Woman-Woman Marriage in Igboland. "In: *Gender and Sexuality in African Literature and Film*, Eds. Ada Uzoamaka Azodo and Maureen Ngozi Eke, (Trenton, N.J: Africa World Press, 2007), 141-154.

[56] Joseph Campbell, 1940: "The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is. "Before Abraham was, I AM." He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the 'other thing'), as destroying the permanent with its change. 'Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms. Be sure that nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form.' Thus the next moment is permitted to come to pass."

[57] https://i.ytimg.com/vi/jME9fIgQMAA/hqdefault.jpg Accessed 03/24/2019.

[58] Murdock 1990, 11.

[59] Murdock 1990, 11.

[60] P. G. Zolbrod, *Dine bahane: The Navaho Creation Story* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 275.

[61] Maureen Murdock, "The Heroine's Journey." In: *The Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*. Ed. David A Leeming, 2016.

[62] *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell. Introduction by Phil Cousineau, Ed., Foreword by Stuart L. Brown. Novato, CA: New World Library (Joseph Campbell, 2003) [1990].

[63] Murdock 1990, 180-181. "A circle has no beginning and no end (…). When one sits in a circle with others, everyone is equal and linked. No one person is in power, the power is shared, and there is no place for egocentrism. Because everyone is interrelated and derives meaning only through the relationship of the circle, each person's vision is transformed as the circle takes form. Magic occurs in circles. A circle is a hug of giving and receiving; it teaches us about unconditional love."

[64] Murdock 1990, 109.

[65] Murdock 1990, 31.

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RITUAL AS A TOOL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN IGBOLAND

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Abstract
Socio-cultural studies have shown that human beings are conflict-prone and communal life is always characterized by conflicts between individuals or groups. Just as conflicts lead to divisions, violence, and wars, they have also led to the search for an institution of various methods of conflict resolution and transformation. One of the tools people use in resolving and transforming conflicts between conflicting parties is ritual. Ritual has been employed to bring about peace between parties since it is seen as a form of religious drama and system of communication to transmit a collective message to the parties. Ritual taps into the core of people's perceptions and beliefs about their world and molds their beliefs into symbols. Ritual uses these symbols to communicate and actions to recreate and transform the world, especially, the world of conflict. Ritual in conflict resolution and transformation regulates relationships between individuals, groups, and communities, and serves as a way of defining identity and means of relating to and rebuilding peace-bridges between parties. The Igbo people adopt various methods in the resolution and transformation of conflicts. In any method employed, ritual-actions are at the centre. This paper is an attempt to explore the central role of ritual and posit it as an effective tool in conflict resolution in Igboland.
Key Words: Ritual, Conflict resolution, peace, symbols, identity

INTRODUCTION

The nature of human living in society is most often marked with different kinds of conflicts. Conflicts are, therefore, by-products of human societal living. Conflicts form part and parcel of human life in a society. It is difficult to think of any human society or organization without conflict. It is from this perspective that Cloke and Goldsmith assert:

> Every society and every organization produces a culture of conflict, a complex set of words, ideas, values, behaviors, attitudes, archetypes, customs, and rules that powerfully influence how its members think about and respond to conflict. Cultures of conflict are shaped in and by our social experiences.[1]

Indeed, many nations of the world today have never seen peace and harmonious coexistence between different cultural groups for more than half a century. Indubitably, in the present historical period, there are conflicts between nations and peoples of the world, that every child of this century

knows that conflict is a common feature of human life in the world of today.

We are living in a conflict-ridden world. Conflicts, if not properly handled and resolved, can lead to interminable chains of violence and wars. This is why the recognition of this dangerous nature of conflicts has led societies both in the past and in present to look for ways of managing, resolving and transforming conflicts between persons, groups, and communities. It is true that most societies that have experienced the disastrous nature of conflicts have also experimented on various methods of its resolution and transformation. Thus, scholars of social science do not only talk about the reality of conflict and its causes, but they also talk about various methods and processes employed by different societies to resolve and transform conflicts. These western-based transformative conflict programs have neglected to see the power in the oldest form of dealing with conflict. Lisa argues that ritual taps into the core of our perceptions and beliefs about the world and molds these beliefs into symbols. She went to affirm that rituals use these symbols to communicate as they act to recreate and transform the world of conflict.[2] Therefore, it is a truism of the sociocultural studies that just as human conviviality gives rise to conflicts; it also generates modes and methods of conflict resolution. This is what is observable in every people and nation of the world.

The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, like any other society in the world, has experienced different forms of conflicts. Over centuries, there have been various kinds of inter-clan or town or village conflicts. In view of this, Francesca and Joseph in their article on the nature of conflicts in Igbo traditional society have this to say:

> Igbo society in the pre-colonial period was not at all times peaceful. There were moments, as we witness today when tensions and open physical conflicts ensued. Examination of human affairs has in many cases showed that interactions among human beings are sometimes characterized by intolerance, which in turn engenders tensions and conflicts. In other words, as long as human beings exist and interact, conflicts are bound to ensue amongst them.[3]

Indeed, the Igbo people, like other nations of the world have witnessed various kinds of conflicts. However, despite this, the Igbo people have consistently sought ways of settling and recreating the peace and harmony that define the unfathomable depth of their social relationships. Indeed, in most difficult moments of conflicts, the Igbo have demonstrated the rare art of resolving issues and rebuilding peace bridges using ritual and other appropriate grassroots methods of conflict resolution and transformation. This research is an attempt to look at the central role of ritual in different

types of conflict resolution methods used in Igbo communities. Thus, it goes to identify the nature of conflicts in Igbo society, bringing particular attention to the unique role of rituals in different methods of conflict resolution and transformation. It is the research finding of this paper that in all the methods used in conflict resolution practices, rituals play a very significant role in restoring peace and harmony, and rebuilding relationships between groups and communities in conflict.

THE NATURE OF RITUAL AS A CULTURAL REALITY

As a cultural and religious reality, a ritual is defined in accordance with its use and role in society. Rituals can be seen from its rhythmic, dramatic, and performative aspects, but we are more inclined to their religious roles in this paper. The *Encarta Concise Dictionary* conceptualizes ritual as an established formal behavior and a prescribed pattern of observance; it is the performance of actions or procedures in a set, ordered, and ceremonial way. In the same way, Mari Womack defines it as a behavior that is repetitive, sequential, non-ordinary, and 'powerful.'[4] She explained that ritual is repetitive as it cannot accept or tolerate innovation since it has to conform to tradition and has to be performed the same way every time. It is sequential since it follows the order of performance. The sequential order makes it meaningful in understanding the symbols. Again, a ritual is non-ordinary since it is set apart from ordinary reality by time and space.

From socio-cultural and religious perspectives, a ritual is ceremoniously performed and takes place in sacred places and at sacred times. It cannot be performed without a ceremony or celebration. Indeed, here we are not concerned with every form of social rite (as in respect of national flags or mace), but we are more interested in sacred rites that affect the behavior and relationship of people, with their signification drawn from mythical enunciations. According to Louis J. Luzbetak, ritual and myth are linked together and share the same power of signification, since sacred rites reinforce beliefs and beliefs reinforce rituals[5]. According to him, rituals are the dramatization of myth since in ritual; myths are not only narrated but are also performed through prescribed, repetitive social acts. Ritual-actions reenact the interpenetration of the human world with the spiritual world. In fact, through ritual-actions, one gets in contact with the holy, and actively participates in the collective process of community regeneration. It is in this sense that ritual acts as a potent instrument of reconciliation, regeneration, and transformation. It is from this perspective that Leonard Boff argues strongly that ritual celebrations reconcile everything and for a short time create a paradisiacal world, a *mundus reconciliatus*.[6] Similarly, Mari

Womack argues that those who perform it consider ritual powerful.[7] Ritual has the 'power' to change the world, either by the intervention of supernatural entities or by the transformation of the participants. As a cultural reality, ritual plays multiple roles in various forms of cultural communication systems. Emphasizing on this fact, Lisa Schirch, says:

> Rituals are forms of communication, which transmit both verbal and nonverbal messages. Ritual communicates a unique way, using symbols rather than verbal forms of communication and using the entire body of senses, rather than just verbal.[8]

Rituals, according to scholars, can involve any number of activities and practices, such as eating, singing, dancing, religious ceremonies, and other cultural celebrations.[9] These rituals are ingrained in the culture, help share and develop knowledge, and promote relationships and reconciliation between people.[10]

THEORIES OF RITUAL

The complex nature of ritual and its various roles in cultural operational dynamics has given rise to different forms of theories. Indeed, different theorists have different conceptions of rituals. For some, it is a positive means of checkmating the social life of the people, while for some others, it is a repressive means of stopping perceived violence. Indeed, for some cultural anthropologists, scholars of religion, and even theologians, ritual is directly linked to religious beliefs. Given this, some theories see no difference between ritual and religious beliefs. For some others too, beliefs, symbols, myths, and creeds are mental forms that act as blueprints that motivate and inspire ritual actions. It is from this point of view that the Descriptive ritual theory regards ritual as action and distinguishes it from other aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols, and myth. For some of these scholars, belief and action are interwoven in ritual functions. It is in a sense that Catherin Bell argues that ritual, like action, acts out, expresses, or performs these conceptual orientations.[11] Edward Shils argues that ritual and belief are intertwined and yet separable since it is conceivable that one might accept beliefs, but not ritual activities associated with them[12]. He concluded that beliefs could exist without rituals, but rituals cannot exist without beliefs.

The Functional ritual theory describes ritual as a type of functional or structural mechanism to reintegrate the thought-action dichotomy. The Functionalists explore ritual actions and values to analyze society and the nature of social problems. One of the proponents of this theory is Cliford Geertz, who argues that ritual has meaning only on the account of its func-

tions more than being a simple analytical tool. From a different perspective, Performance theory is very dissatisfied with the traditional categories brought into ritual theories.[13] For this theory, a ritual is simply a performance. It is from this point of view that some of its proponents like, Victor Turner and others, focus mainly on sports, drama, and media as universal factors of performance.[14] Indeed, for these scholars ritual, through its performative functions communicate its embodied religious content that indirectly affects social realities. Equally, from a social theoretical point of view, Emile Durkheim holds that ritual is a sacrament of social solidarity. According to him, religious rituals provide a means of organizing the sentiments of the group, thereby making possible the maintenance of social solidarity.[15] Equally, from the perspective of conflict and violence theory, Rene Girard's negatively proposes that the root of violence could be traced back to the mechanism of mimetic conflict. For him, religion or ritual is a form of organized violence in the service of social tranquillity. Girard believes the origin of ritual and religion is traced to this mechanism of mimetic conflict.[16]

Therefore, as a cultural reality, a ritual is an essential part of religion that has a great impact on the life and behavior of the people in every society. It is this important role of ritual in the socio-religious life of every society that makes it a potent instrument in every method of conflict resolution and transformation. In fact, in every part of Igboland, like in most African societies, ritual plays a very central role in the various processes of conflict resolution and transformation.

CONFLICT AND THE NATURE OF ITS OCCURRENCE IN IGBOLAND

To understand the role that ritual plays in the various methods of conflict resolution and transformation, it is important to highlight in a very brief way the reality of conflict and the nature of its occurrence among the Igbos.

Definition of Conflict

Indeed, both scholars and students of social sciences agree that conflict is a reality of human social life and something that happens every day. It is encountered within the arena of human interactions as we encounter oppositions and counter oppositions where different human desires and interests are incompatible. Although conflict is a thing of daily occurrence, it is a difficult reality to conceptualize. According to Stobbe, the definitions of conflict are as varied as the numbers of conflicts that are occurring inside us, and around our families, workplaces, communities, and the world[17].

Deutch, Coleman and Marcus define conflict as a disagreement in varying degrees between two groups.[18] However, this definition does not indicate at what level such disagreement produces a real sense of conflict. In view of this, Coser, defines conflict as a struggle over scarce power, status, and resources in which the aims of the opposing groups are neutralized, injured or even eliminated by their rivals[19]. Baron, on the other hand, defines it as a social situation in which incompatible goals and activities occur between two or more parties who held antagonistic feelings towards each other and attempt to control each situation.[20]

In fact, in their attempt to understand the reality of conflict from the analysis of dysfunctional societies, some conflict theorists ask the fundamental question of "why does conflict arise between humans?" This question tries to probe deeper into the possible sources of conflict. In their attempt to proffer answers, some of these scholars explain that when human interaction becomes disrupted in a dysfunctional society, conflict may ensue. Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and Freud in their separate writings advanced theories of conflict in societies. It is an underlining fact of their convictions that societies consist of conflicts and that when conflicts are not openly taking place, processes of social domination that give rise to them exist. Summarising the views of Karl Marx Darwin and Freud, Stephanie Stobbe writes:

> Social psychologists, such as Darwin, Marx, and Freud, emphasized conflicts as competitive and destructive (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Darwin saw conflict as "the competitive struggle for existence" and "social Darwinism" saw conflict as the "survival of the fittest" (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Marx focused on conflicts as class struggles between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Freud viewed psychosexual development and conflict as the struggle between the biologically rooted impulsive "id" and the socially conscious "superego."[21]

A conflict could be defined therefore as a rift in a social situation that occurs when opposing parties vehemently disagree over a contending issue of good interest to both. In every social order, where groups and individuals try to advance their interests over others, conflict or violence is likely to arise. In most cases, the policies and ideologies of such individuals or groups portray the real self-interests hiding behind them to control and dominate. It is in line with this thought that Karl Marx opines that the world is a place of domination and conflict. He saw class divisions defined by economic interests as the most recognizable source of social conflict. According to this theory, it is the economic factor (substructure) which is the most decisive of all these elements of society and which largely determines the nature of divisions that leads to conflict in the society.

CONFLICTS IN IGBOLAND

The Igbo ethnic group is one of the three most influential ethnic groups in Nigeria. They are profoundly religious adhering to two major religions: Christianity and African Traditional Religion. The Igbo occupy and live in the South East of Nigeria with a population of about 35 million people. Igbo culture has lots of structures of social control. Cultures and their associated mechanisms for social control always represent restrictions on human freedom. In Igboland, people are expected to conform to certain normative standards that symbolize oneness of membership and participation within the same group. The cultural norms act as the moral guidelines in different spheres of human life and activities, both in dealings with individuals and groups. However, in spite of all these norms, it is often impossible for individuals and groups to adhere to those standard norms of social conviviality. Thus, there is always the tendency to breach the established norms of social justice and conviviality. And such breaches only give rise to one form of conflict or the other. Speaking about this, Francesca and Joseph say:

> Igbo society in the pre-colonial period was not at all times peaceful. There were moments, as we witness today when tensions and open physical conflicts ensued. Examination of human affairs has in many cases showed that interactions among human beings are sometimes characterized by intolerance which in turn engenders tensions and conflicts. In other words, as long as human beings exist and interact, conflicts are bound to ensue amongst them. In the pre-colonial period, some of the issues that sparked off conflicts among individuals, communities and states have remained the same in the present time. These include issues arising from marriages, inheritance, religion, land, boundaries among others. It is important to understand the fact that conflicts, though may cause division and enmity, would always occur so long as human beings live and interact with one another in a given society.[22]

Just as these authors testify, in the Igbo society, there are different kinds of conflicts, and it is important to say that there are hierarchies of conflicts. There are conflicts arising from common children's play in competitive sports, quarrelling and fighting among adults. Other sources of conflict are cases like stealing, incest, murder, and poisoning (which are serious crimes forbidden by tradition). Some of these conflicts occur between individuals or groups over issues of interests or domination. Just as Coser, testifies, conflict occurs when two or more people struggle over values and claims to status, power, and resources, in which the aims of the opponents are

neutralized, injured or eliminated by their rivals.[23] Conflicts occur between groups of opposing parties and between communities and even religions. Indeed, besides the cases of murder, rape, incest, marital infidelity, other issues that generate conflicts are land problems, chieftaincy tussles, and desecration of ancestral shrines. Some of these crimes are considered as abominable and sins against the sacredness of the land. Therefore, such crimes, when they are committed, need ritual procedures for redressing them to restore the sanctity and integrity of the land. This indicates the centrality of ritual and its use to restore the integrity of the land reconcile and transform conflicts between individuals or groups.

THE NATURE OF IGBO RITUALS AS A TOOL

As indicated above, a ritual is a very potent tool of conflict resolution and transformation in Igbo society. Even though there are various methods of resolving or transforming conflicts, but there is no method that does not use one form of ritual or the other. In most cases, ritual formulas are enacted at the beginning of the process and at the end. In every method of conflict transformation, ritual action processes are enunciated by the appropriate authoritative personalities with the use of ritual instruments. Therefore, before we go into the different methods of conflict transformation, it is important to highlight more on the nature of Igbo ritual and the roles of the ritual personalities and instruments.

In the Igbo traditional society with its sacred cosmology, every form of life is embedded in ritual actions. Indeed, there is no Igbo celebration that goes without rituals. Some of these rituals could be formal or informal, personal or communitarian. Ritual generates the sense of a feast or celebration in any cultural festival. In this way, rituals order the calendar of events and sustain the life of the individual and the community in their life cycle. Some rituals are associated with certain personal or communitarian events. Writing about this, Ekwuru says:

> Just like any African, the Igbo is aware that he is socio-ontologically inserted into a mesh of intimate relationship with other beings visible and invisible. He believes that in order to maintain and sustain ontological peace and ethical order, which engenders peaceful living and harmony, he has to perform series of rites from conception to death. Ritual-actions therefore vary from simple family and communal acts of everyday life to complex ones. There are festivals and festival circles lasting for days, weeks, even months and years. Typologies of Igbo ritual practices could be branched into two major categories: personal rituals and community rituals.[24]

There are various types of rituals employed by the Igbo for one ceremony or the other. Each ceremony calls for what type of ritual to be employed. As Ekwuru notes, there are both personal and community rituals. Personal rituals range from birth through various forms of initiation to death. Rites of passage mark the transitions in the life of individuals. In Igbo communities, rituals are performed at birth, naming ceremonies of children, at their circumcisions and at their puberty. Rites of passage are also marked at death, marriage and age-grade ceremonies. According to Turner such periods of transition are socially 'dangerous' because they involve a realignment of the position of the individual with respect to society.[25] Societies may also undergo a 'dangerous' change of state, as when a community goes to war. In some parts of Igboland, such as in Ehime Mbano, Etiti and Ihitte Obowo, all in Imo State; Aro communities in Imo, Anambra, Abia and Afikpo in Ebonyi State, the Age grade ceremonies and rituals are held very high. Any young man who did not celebrate with his age grade will not be regarded as a worthy member of the community no matter how wealthy he might be. He will be isolated and will not be part of any communal activity. It has to be performed no matter your status in the society.

Community rituals are those public rituals that include collective rituals of initiation, fertility, the commemoration of major cosmic events and New Yam festivals, purification of the land. On those occasions, people prepare themselves interiorly and externally to celebrate. Inwardly, people fast and purify themselves while they prepare themselves by providing all the materials needed for personal and collective decorations. Indeed, people spend time in various forms of rehearsals and practices of songs, music, dance, that will form part of the celebration. The day of community ritual is marked by festive moods and unrestrained excitement. It is considered as a day of joy and reconciliation. In fact, rites of reconciliation mark moments when the community through rituals celebrates the reconciliation of victims of conflicts with their oppressors. It is a time when people who have been quarrelling for a long time are once more united with a stronger bond of friendship that the ritual process guarantees. Such conflicts arising from murder, rape, incest, desecration of sacred places, are reconciled through religious rituals.

Among the personalities needed for any conflict resolution, are the Elders of the community. The elders are heads of families. In fact, Kopytoff argues that elders can initiate reconciliatory processes and facilitate peace and harmony in the land.[26] Community elders are men of integrity and respect, and it behoves on them to be upright and firm in matters of testifying to the truth in the community. Their interventions in community or family disputes are important. However, besides the college of the elders, the political and social harmony of any given community lies in the hands of the traditional rulers known as the Ezes/Igwes and their cabinet. While

the elders and priests administer oaths and rituals, the Ezes, Igwes see that there is peace in the community. Through negotiation, dialogue and mediation, the mechanisms of social harmony are pursued and actualized in the community. The Ezes are the custodians of ancestral norms and guarantors of security in their communities. Equally, the Age Grade Association, Umuada, Masquerade cult and others have roles to play in conflict transformation in Igboland.

RITUAL INSTRUMENTS IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Indeed, in any ritual celebration, certain symbolic instruments are very vital to the ritual process. Thus, there are symbolic objects of ritual-action stick known as *Ofo* and the object of warding off evil powers referred to as *Ogu*. As symbolic objects or principles of justice and moral rectitude, they are always invoked together as *Ofo* and *Ogu*. Indeed, Igbo people believe in the concept of justice symbolized in *Ofo* and *Ogu* as a governing principle of retributive justice. The idea of justice (upheld or denied), is invoked through the instrumentality of *Ofo* and *Ogu* in any process of conflict resolution and transformation.

METHODS OF RITUAL RESOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF CONFLICTS

The Igbo have various ways and means of resolving, reconciling, and transforming conflicts. In their social and religious conflicts, and as they occur in the family or between families, villages, communities and inter-communities, there are ways of resolving and transforming them as well. Indeed, whether the conflicts arise over issues of land encroachment or over economic trees, the methods are there to be applied. When there are cases of opposition and encounter-opposition, concurrently there arises the immediate need for a dialogue, which can be initiated by any of the opposing parties, or a third party interested in the reconciliation of the two conflicting parties. Some of the conflict resolution methods used include the normal adjudicative (process) to a more complex oath-taking and covenant-making process.

Adjudication

Igbo people, like other African countries, in some cases, adopt the method of adjudication in resolving disputes. Adjudication is one of the procedural means of adjudging the right or the wrong in any conflict, with a view of arriving at a proper judgment of its cause and proper mode of resolving it.

In Igbo societies, adjudication, in most cases, follow a less pronounced ritual process. The forum is constituted by the ritual personalities and within a sacred location or community square. At the beginning of the process, the ritual action instruments (*Ofo* and the statues of the deities) are brought out and the conflicting parties are meant to swear that what they are going to say is nothing but the truth. The elders of the land constitute the adjudicating panel and their decision is final. This process of adjudication cannot be compared with the Western method of litigation. Litigation as the western alternative of dispute resolution is a non-violent process of resolving conflicts through a court of competent jurisdiction. The decision of the court is binding on the parties involved in the conflict. In the Igbo case, the elders are considered as to be competent in dealing with issues of conflict and can decide with authority. The nature of the conflict determines what type of ritual to be applied within the process of adjudication. Indeed, a ritual at the end of the conflict seals the bond of friendship and re-establishes the relationship.

Oath taking

Oath taking is one of the methods used to reconcile disputing parties in Igboland. It is one of the oldest tools in conflict resolution and transformation in Igboland. It is believed by the Igbo that oath-taking is a ritual practice, which compels the disputing parties and their witnesses to prove their sincerity over the issues under contention.[27] Oath-taking is a potent socio-religious control and conflict resolution mechanism among *Ndi Igbo*. It derives its power from the people's belief system embedded in their culture. There is the Igbo belief system that swearing an oath traditionally guarantees an immediate result. Conflict breeds mistrust and breaks relationship. It generates and suppresses truth. This is one of the reasons to resort to oath-taking. The oath can take place at any of the community shrines before the community's god or goddess if the conflict involves the community. It can as well take place before the elders on the village square. On the other hand, conflicting individuals can reconcile through swearing an oath at a designated place depending on the offense committed and its gravity. Every oath-taking is time limed. Generally, the duration is between one month and up to a year. It does not exceed one year. Within the period in view, if any sickness or death befalls any of the parties, it is attributed to the oath sworn and therefore the victim is guilty of the offense. It is believed that the victim has committed an abomination and would need to sacrifice to the deity concerned for cleansing. The rites of purification, it is believed, would pacify the gods, cleans the family or community and reconcile them.

Traditionally, the Igbo believe in the immediate intervention of the gods when beckoned upon. The gods and goddesses are believed to control the mysteries of nature. They are consulted through ritual processes for the well-being of the people, especially during the feasts of the gods (deities). Those who want an immediate solution to their problems resort to them (deities). Onuigbo affirms that though the deities and the ancestors help the people in one way or the other, nonetheless they can inflict some punishments to a person(s) due to some evil acts they perpetrated[28]. It is the reason practitioners of traditional religion resort to the ancestors and the gods to intervene in their conflicts with their belief in the power of the deities, weak Christians too, patronize the shrines for their problems. There is no single process and formula in traditional rites of conflict transformation. Each community has its own formula and different instruments for the process.

In the process of resolving disputes, the disputing parties are usually first listened to by the constituted council of elders before the oath-taking where it is deemed necessary. In fact, oath-taking is considered as the last resort in a very difficult dispute. And various items used in administering the oath include *kola nut (oji)*, *ofo*, water, *live animals* or animal blood. Kola nut is common in Nigerian cultural traditions and is very significant in every ritual socio-cultural gathering. In Igboland, it is called *Oji* and symbolizes life, hospitality, goodwill and good wishes. It is generally used for ceremonies, and to welcome visitors. In ritual ceremonies of oath-taking, the eating of *Oji* by both parties is the culminating point of the binding force of the oath. In some communities, water is used for the same purpose. Thus, drinking or washing your hands or legs with the water provided within the context of this ritual, and the words pronounced over it form the essential part of the ceremony. When any of these is done, the chief priest of the shrine and the striking of the ofo stick on the ground seal the swearing of the oath up with the declaration. *Ofo* is a sacred symbol. Arazu argues that *ofo* is used to make contact with the ancestors and other benevolent spirits. It opens vistas of a world inhabited by the living, the life-after-death inhabitants of the great beyond and the gods of the race. He went further to affirm that *ofo* is the baton in the relay race of the prayer life of the nation.[29] Its use in ritual reconciliation is symbolic, connecting, purifying, and harmonizing.

From the moment the oath is taken, the two parties are at the mercy of the gods for the expected consequences of this ritual ceremony. The parties to the oath are forbidden to relate in any way and will not talk with each other or eat together within the duration of the oath. At the end of the duration of the oath, if nothing happens to any of the parties (if no person died or falls sick), the parties can rebuild their friendship and trust, relate and eat together without fear of each other. It is publicly celebrated. The

reason for oath-taking in the process of conflict transformation is to re-build trust, re-establish the broken relationship, and ensure that members of the group concerned keep party's secrets.

Covenant making

Covenant making (*Igba ndu*) is another form and means of resolving disputes in Igboland. It is different from oath-taking. The covenant-making is a ritual ceremony whereby two parties that have been quarrelling, and or, suspicious of each other is given the opportunity to declare before the gods, and in the presence of the chief priest and the community, that they will never do anything to harm each other. *Igba ndu* means to bond or life bonding. It is a part of Igbo judicial system employed to effectively bring about reconciliation and the re-establishment of broken relationships. The central item of covenant-making is blood, but modernity has affected the use of blood. Kola nut, water, palm oil, etc, are some of the items of covenant-making. Arazu asserts that kola nut summons the Igbo man to prayer. By eating the kola nut at a public gathering, we celebrate our unity in diversity and appeal to the cosmic forces called up in our consciousness when the kola nut is shared and distributed according to custom, to be favorable on our behalf. It rebuilds trust among the covenanting people, reassures solidarity and re-enforces the spirit of unity within the group.

Equally, in most cases, it is used to purify the land and appease the gods when some abominable crimes like incest or homicide are committed, or after a war in the communities in which so many people are affected. Whenever this takes place, it serves as peace and trust-building mechanism for the disputing parties or the entire community. It also checkmates the activities and behaviors of the parties against each other. Indeed, as long as the covenant lasts, it assures the disputing parties and the entire community of security of life and properties. There is however no single method of covenant-making. But in each method adopted, varied forms of rituals are involved. In the different possible formulas, apart from the covenant-making ritual process, there are some ritual demands and obligations made on the disputing parties in the whole of Igboland. It is accepted that this ritual communion and bond of union re-established during the covenant rituals are under the surveillance and custody of the gods. Anyone who breaches the covenant terms will face the wrath of the deities.

RITUAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES

The Igbo are very religious whose cohesion as a people is tied to their belief in gods and goddesses. This is evidenced in many shrines that dot the Igbo landscape. The belief in the gods and goddesses by the Igbo influ-

ences their actions in both private and public life. It is expected that the Igbo man carries along and brings into his public life his religious belief system. In other words, he imbibes the moral and customary obligations into his work. He should not separate the two. His attitude to work is therefore a confession of his faith in the Supreme Being and the deities. It is on this basis that people are made to swear according to their belief system at the beginning of their public service. The Christian is expected to swear on the Bible, the Muslim on the Qur'an while the traditionalists do so, on the sacred traditional symbols like the *Ofo* in Igbo land**.** The form (words) and matter (Bible) of swearing constitutes the rites.

Public rituals have unfortunately become symbolic rather than practical life of commitment, service, truth and responsibility. It has resulted in non-productiveness in the public sector. It is too why many public institutions have collapsed in Nigeria. Corruption has become endemic in our body system. It is partly because of a lack of proper understanding and meaning of what we swear to, and the living out of the meaning of their ritual values. The political class takes an oath of office, and so do many officers in Nigerian societies. How they keep to the oath of their office leaves many questions to be answered as related to the ritual values they took. It is only in appreciating these values and living them out in private and public lives, that we can experience a new responsible society, with fewer tendencies to corruption and conflict.

CONCLUSION

The adoption of ritual as a potent tool in methods of conflict resolution and transformation goes to show its centrality and significance in Igbo belief and tradition. In this sense, it could be said without equivocation that rituals, taps into the core of Igbo perception of reality and beliefs about the universe, and molds these beliefs into symbols. In its unique socio-religious roles, it uses these symbols to communicate, re-enacting the deeds of the gods and recreates the world. In fact, it has the power to resolve and transform conflicts in the most exceptional ways. As ritual suffuses and permeates every element of the socio-cultural life, it forms part of the essential cultural baggage that is handed down from one generation to the next.

As some social scientists and cultural anthropologists like Luzbetak, have testified, rituals play a central role in the social drama and cultural life of every society.[30] In the Igbo society, this is witnessed dramatically in the installation of traditional rulers, burial ceremonies, age-grade ceremonies and rites of passages. In rituals, we can change our perceptions of the world around our conflict and us. The Igbo are very much at home with ritual transformative actions from time immemorial. As we have variously

testified, the Igbo people perform many ritual ceremonies that greatly affect the surface and deeper levels of human relationship, toning down tensions and building bridges of peace and harmony across families and communities. Therefore, it is important to rediscover the power of rituals and adopt them at the national and international levels of conflict resolution and transformation. It is important to note at this point that although ritual practices influence the everyday life of the people, yet, it is an area that is so neglected in post-colonial African studies that there is a paucity of literature in the area. It is necessary, therefore, to revive the interest of scholarly research in this area of cultural life, as it will help to understand the unique roles of rituals in the lives of the Igbo people and other peoples of the world and rediscover its embedded potentiality in resolving and transforming conflicts.

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THE URBAN/RURAL CONFLICT IN AFRICAN LITERATURE: AN EXAMINATION OF SELECTED WORKS BY IGBO AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the conflict between the urban and the rural is examined in earlier works of literature of various Igbo authors. There are several passages in their writings that illustrate this conflict, using these themes and sub-themes: 1) Corruption, 2) Fertility and Sterility, 3) the Role of Village Associations, and 4) the "Urban/Rural Conflict Journey." Another theme, "filth," often offers strong contrasts between the city's filth, especially its toilets, and the cleanliness of rural life. This theme is not examined here, as the works cited do not offer much proof. However, the list of further readings will offer many examples, especially of urban filth, for those able to bear reading such graphic details.

The duality of the urban and the rural settings are discussed: The city appeals to youth who live in rural areas for its amenities, opportunities, and excitement, while it offers some of the least desirable aspects of society, including blatant corruption. On the other hand, city dwellers yearn for their rural upbringing, recalling a tranquil, orderly time, yet the sheer boredom and suffocating, controlling life in the village is what drove them away and keeps them from permanently returning. A few of the authors have some of their characters move restlessly, on this "journey," from rural areas to cities, back to rural areas, and back to cities.

Igbo writers, unlike many others who write on the same conflict, often present stories where city dwellers maintain an urbanized version of village associations. (This paper is based, in part, on a larger work that includes writers from elsewhere in Nigeria and from several other African countries. See list of recommended sources and further readings.)

Authors for this paper include Chinua Achebe (*Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease, A Man of the People,* and *Girls at War*), Clement Agunwa (*More Than Once*), Cyprian Ekwensi (*Beautiful Feathers, Lokotown and Other Stories, People of the City,* and *Jagua Nana*), Speedy Eric ("Mabel the Sweet

Honey That Poured Away," Onitsha Market Literature), Nkem Nwanko (*Danda*), Flora Nwapa (*Idu*), and Onuora Nzekwu (*Wand of Noble Wood*).

CORRUPTION

Corruption is conspicuous in rural literature by its absence. It appears only when introduced by the modern Western world and the things that world has brought into the rural society: politics, law courts, a cash economy, and competition for things that did not exist in traditional society, such as places in a school.

An example of modern corruption in rural literature is found in Chinua Achebe's short story, "The Voter," in *Girls at War*. Rufus ("Roof") Okeke, a local man who has been working in Port Harcourt as a bicycle repairer's assistant, comes home to campaign for the re-election of another local man to a Ministerial post. His fellow villagers are exceedingly proud of the fact that they have a local man in such a position, but it is not until Roof gives them two shillings each, and then, after much discussion, two more, that they agree that they will vote for his candidate. Roof is himself bought by the supporters of the rival candidate, mixing traditional with modern, when he takes the bribe and then is forced to swear on an *iyi* (a powerful fetish) that he will indeed vote the way they want him to. So, Roof, once a rural man but now of the city, works for another former rural man, the Minister, now of the city, and both sides of the campaign come into the village and bribe their way to election day.[1]

For many of the characters in urban literature, corruption is a way of life. It is such a common theme in describing urban life that readers come to expect corruption to be a central theme. In these tales, corruption is often a topic that everyone always talks about, but no one does anything about. And, often, there is denial: it is always the "other person" who is involved in bribery, but rarely oneself.

Obi Okonkwo of Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, beset by mounting problems upon his return to Lagos from overseas, finally succumbs to taking bribes to award scholarships. He becomes so cynical about it all that he even takes bribes from those who, unknown to themselves, are already safely on the list of scholarship winners.

> "You dance very well," his whispered as she pressed herself against him breathing very fast and hard. He put her arms round his neck and brought her lips within a centimetre of his. They no longer paid any attention to the beat of the high-life. Obi steered her towards his bedroom. She made a half-hearted show of resisting, then followed…. Others came. People would say that Mr. So-and-so was a gentleman. He would take money, but he would do his stuff, which was a big

> advertisement; and others would follow. But Obi stoutly refused to countenance anyone who did not possess the minimum educational and other requirements. On that he was unshakeable.[2]

He speaks of honesty in what he is doing, as he feels he can make a distinction between being, one might say, an honest crook and a crooked crook. He does consider himself to have scruples despite what he allows himself to do.

Just as he vows that he will quit doing it, he is caught and put on trial. When he is brought into court, the supreme irony of corruption takes place: Some spectators have bribed someone else for a doctor's certificate to be freed from their work to sit in the court and watch this case of bribery:

> Every available space in the court-room was taken up. There were almost as many people standing as sitting. The case had been the talk of Lagos for several weeks and on this last day anyone who could possibly leave his job was there to hear the judgement. Some Civil Servants paid as much as ten shillings and sixpence to obtain a doctor's certificate of illness for the day.[3]

In urban literature, corruption exists in the form of political pay-offs, bribes to any number of people to forestall or eliminate trouble, or get something thought unavailable otherwise, and a corruption of the soul because of one's deep involvement in illegal and immoral activities. Some people suffer because of this corruption, yet others prosper. Money changes hands, and, in many cases, everyone gets something, perhaps freedom, a job, or a scholarship, on the one hand, and money or material possessions, on the other.

People win and people lose when it comes to the alternate theme of village justice, as well, and, despite the sorrow one feels when one looks into the literature at innocent persons being punished, often violently, one comes away with a satisfaction that, most of the time, most of the people were convinced that they were right, that the guilty were punished, and that the society was served the application of this kind of justice. Causes were found for otherwise unexplainable circumstances and one's mind could then rest at ease. By and large, justice was objectively dealt to the people at hand and the kinds of accusations leveled at the practice of justice in the urban environment were not applicable in the rural societies.

FERTILITY AND STERILITY

Pregnancy, welcomed with joy and celebration in rural literature, is often a cause for alarm in urban literature. In the latter, the father often does not want the child. Sometimes, he is reluctant – or outright refuses – to acknowledge paternity, whether he believes he is responsible or not. Sometimes, the woman does not want the child, either. Pregnancy often casts a tragic pall over the literary work. Abortion, often conducted by unsafe methods, is the result, frequently with serious consequences for the woman.

In Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City*, Amusa Sango, a band leader and crime reporter, is faced with the news that he is about to become a father – unless something is done about it. Aina, one of his girlfriends, informs him:

> "I want you to help me because… I am pregnant!"
>
> "*What!*" All the drowsiness vanished from his eyes….
>
> "So, you're pregnant. And you think I am the father—"
>
> "Since that night at the beach, I have not been feeling well. I didn't want to come till I was sure."
>
> "Enough!"
>
> "…My mother is prepared to take you to court to claim damages if you refuse to marry me." She kept her eyes on him and smiled. "Perhaps you'll let us have about ten pounds to maintain ourselves till the child is born."
>
> "At a time like this! And you have the guts to smile. Oh, what a fool I've been!"
>
> "But everybody knows you're my lover, Amusa; it's only you that keep making a fuss. What's in it, after all?"
>
> "So, every time I raise my head in the world, every time I collect a few hard-earned pounds, you, Aina, come and stand in my way – with a new misfortune! Look, do you know this is blackmail? I could take you to the police – they know your record."
>
> "I'm not afraid of them. What do I care?"
>
> …. "I'll give you what I can now, Aina. And I beg you to keep away from me – for good! the baby cannot be mine, and you know it! I'm helping you because… well, because of memories!"

He is trapped, yet he believes he is not to blame or, at the least, not the only one. As he tells his friend, First Trumpet:

> "The child is not mine! Certainly not, and she knows it. if that girl continues to pester me, I shall…"

"Kill her? Then you'll hang. For such an irresponsible creature, too!"[4]

He doesn't kill her, but he does come close. She later comes back to get more money out of him. He beats her and she has a miscarriage at his apartment:

> He could not decide whether to be pleased or sorry, for Aina was having a miscarriage...he did not completely forget the unsatisfied desire to avenge the injustice he had suffered at her hands. He was glad she might live; glad she had not involved him in a sensational accident.[5]

Abortions or miscarriages remove the responsibility and demands of parenthood, as well as the opportunity to view the birth as a joyous occasion which will ensure the parent, especially the father, that there is someone around who will take care of him when he is old, someone who will bury him.

Aina's mother is a troublesome woman. She went to see Sango's mother in hospital to tell her about Aina's condition in hopes of hurting Sango. But the reverse came true, as she tells Sango:

> "Sango, your mother was a wonderful woman. She loved you so much! Do you know she died of *happiness*? When she heard you were to be a father, she was so so glad. She said, 'Thank God, he is becoming something at last.' ...You must forgive me, Sango," she said and pressed the edge of her cloth to her eyes. "You see, I went there to spoil your name before your mother. Because of Aina, but your mother was above it all!"[6]

His mother is the only person who does not fit neatly into the urban landscape. She has come from her hometown to Lagos for medical treatment. We know little about her, but the above does reveal that she is the only one who is happy about Sango fathering a child. It does not matter that Sango does not love Aina, nor that Aina is a woman of questionable repute. What is important is children, and no one else has realized that, or agrees with that, being creatures of the urban environment.

Cyprian Ekwensi's Jagua Nana also becomes pregnant. She does not get pregnant in all the years she has lived in Lagos, but once she comes back to settle down in her old village in Eastern Nigeria, she takes up briefly with a passerby and manages to conceive. But, like many other Ekwensi characters, she finds that her joy is temporary. The child dies:

> On the third day, Jagua put Nnochi to the breast. It was early evening and her mother and Rosa had not come in from the farm. Jagua felt a sudden slackening of the lips on her nipple….
> Rosa and her mother came in from the forest and found her silent and stiff as an effigy before the oracle. She pressed the dead baby to herself and blubbering, would not part with it.[7]

For Jagua Nana, it is both urban sterility and rural fertility, even though she does lose the child. After all those years of living in the vast urban environment in Lagos, she returns home without a child. but, after a few months of rural life (and a casual liaison with a stranger), she becomes pregnant. The loss of her baby sends her back on her spiral and she will now desert the rural area once again and head back for the urban one, childless once more.

Pregnancy is a theme of urban literature, as well as rural literature, but it is a negative theme. In rural literature, having children is one's whole purpose. For so many reasons, it is necessary to procreate. Barrenness is a stigma no woman wants.

An even more melodramatic, didactic piece of fiction concerning the same theme is an example of Onitsha Market Literature, Speedy Eric's "Mabel the Sweet Honey that Poured Away." The use of language throughout the story is so original, and often so bizarre, that the reader is hard put to have sympathy with any of the characters, as the story is found to be too entertaining. Yet there is a feeling of guilt, as expressed by Adrian Roscoe in his book of criticism, *Mother is Gold*:

> But the pamphlets…are not aimed at the outside reader; and leafing through their pages, one gets, besides this accidental mirth, a guilty feeling of trespassing on private land.[8]

But a moral is indeed intended, no matter how it is put. It is the wicked city as its worst, involving the ruin and then the death of Mabel. She had fled from Onitsha to Port Harcourt and set herself up at the Palace Hotel as a prostitute. The following quote is the end of the story:

> She lasted only three months at Palace Hotel…many young men had left the town unable to continue their business, having been sucked to the bare-bone by Mabel….
> How did the sweet honey pour away? Within two months of her arrival in Port Harcourt Mabel found out that she was to expect a baby in the next six months.
> It was horrible. She thought how she could afford to keep a baby in her own type of life….

> She decided on one thing. Do away with the child! But inexperienced and young as she was she did not know that the third month was a dangerous one for expectant women.
> She took her contraceptives and in overdose too. The next day the result came. In the middle of the day the abortion took place, but a hell of blood followed….
> Inside the lavatory our seventeen years old sweet honey was pouring away….
> The blood flowed freely, unchecked, by about four thirty the last drop that held her together flowed away. And she collapsed and died.[9]

Speedy Eric, like the other writers of Onitsha Market Literature, deems it important to give his readers a moral, and the moral here is that loose living, especially when pursued to the degree that Mabel pursued it, will lead to death.

In Flora Nwapa's novel, *Idu*, Idu's fellow villager, Ojiugo, left her husband, Amarajeme, to live with another man, Obukodi, supposedly because she has no child and thinks her moving can rectify this. (It does.) Uzoechi, one of the village women, is shocked by this unusual behavior:

> "And Obukodi's other wives?" Uzoechi asked, still not believing. "What will they do? This thing is bad. That's not how our people behave. Obukodi and Amarajeme are friends. What's wrong with them?"[10]

But why children at all? A question these characters would not need to ask, though they are constantly *answering* this question.

Peter Obi, the bachelor of Onorua Nzekwu's *Wand of Noble Wood*, gives some of the reasons to a non-Igbo friend:

> "…children among us are priceless possessions. To us, the primary aim of marriage is to have children, particularly boys, who will perpetuate our names. Those who show an interest in my marriage are considering my age. The essential thing to them is that I should start having my own children, with a legitimate wife of course, as early in life as convention dictates….
>
> "In the past it was necessary to have children early. Before you aged, the boys were strong enough to work on our farm, the size of which depended on the amount of free labor that was available. Larger and more farms meant more food production and therefore more wealth. The girls among them spelled wealth too. Suitors came, they paid handsome bride prices; evidence of their ability to maintain their

> wives. Today what do we have? A new social set up based upon a cash economy. A good number of us depend on monthly salaries. If one had children, he would be expected to give them school, college, and if possible, university education. It is not how many children, but how well you have trained them to fit into present-day society, that counts.[11]

THE ROLE OF VILLAGE ASSOCIATIONS

An inter-tribal marriage in Lagos is the subject of "Marriage Is a Private Matter," a short story in Achebe's *Girls at War*. The village association of the groom accepts his wife, though with a bit of coldness at first, but his father turns a deaf ear to any thought of acceptance (going as far as returning the bride's portion of the wedding photo) until, a few years later, the wife writes him about his grandsons who want to see him, and he breaks down and relents to have them come home. The climate of Lagos, then, is more liberal, but not by much.[12] The feelings of dissatisfaction towards a marriage with an outsider are lessened by a cosmopolitan atmosphere, but the strength in tradition, bolstered by the association of clansmen, is evident.

The masqueraders in rural Igbo society play the role of meting out justice in one other book, *More Than Once*, by Clement Agunwa. Nweke Nwakor was to have been babysitting his little sister, but he left her alone, and the child fell off a platform in the house and injured herself. His mother wants him punished. She is talking to the palm-wine tapper who saw the whole thing:

> "Now, let's think about this child Nweke. No amount of beating or starving has done him any good. Do you think you can help in any way to check him?"
>
> "Well… I'll go and tap my wine quickly and the voice of a masquerade may be heard this evening."[13]

And, sure enough, it is. Nweke has gone to the river to get some water for his mother, in an attempt to curry her favor. He is set upon by a masquerade and becomes frightened. Rather than flee, he obeys:

> The masquerade lifted Nweke on his shoulder and made for the bad bush at the outskirt of town. His crying was swallowed up by the general appeal of the public: some sincere, others mocking.
>
> ….Very close to the bad bush, the masquerade put him down, whipped him several times and asked him to narrate how he threw the baby down, which he did without hesitation. The masquerade then clapped for him and asked him to dance a dance of guilt which

> he also did, after owning up to several offences he had not committed.[14]

So Nweke is punished for his crime and rural justice continues, sure that it punishes the guilty and lets the innocent go free.

In addition to such controls as the masquerade and the oracle, the unwritten traditions and customs, there is the social control in the rural area of what is done and what is not done to avoid being talked about or being shunned by one's fellows. This control is a very effective one, and when people ignore this kind of custom, they pay for it by, at the least, being gossiped about, or the most, being ostracized from certain groups or certain activities without being physically harmed or openly, publicly humiliated.

In the urban area, on the other hand, people are much freer to do what they will without fear of being ignored. There are too many people, the society is too loose-knit, and too many urban residents simply do not care what you do or do not do, having fled to the urban area themselves to escape that rural social control over their lives. Here, too, the contrast is evident by the absence of such control in the urban environment (except, perhaps, in the urban-based village associations).

In *More Than Once*, there is a protective union in Onitsha for the men of the village of Ndigwe. There is a feeling of superiority about the group as explained below:

> It was a Sunday afternoon, the Eke Sunday afternoon when the sons of Ndigwe at Onitsha met in their miniature parliament to legislate for their home town some thirty miles away. They, as "abroad members," were supposed to be broader in outlook than their less fortunate brothers encaged within the thick walls of their compounds at home.[15]

Those still in the village, however, know the ability of such associations to help them "get up." The headmaster of the village school writes to this Onitsha-based group or assistance and the speaker below, a Mr. Nwadiaka, exhorts them to meet the challenges of modern times:

> I will not speak long. All I am saying is the Ndigwe is used to great deeds. Our fathers never allowed neighbouring towns or villages to put fingers into their eyes. Why should we today? You heard the letter from our headmaster which has been read, requesting the extension of the school building to enable the school to read standard six next year. It means work and it means money. Shall we dig up our fathers from the grave to come and do it? The days of dane gun battles

> are over. This is the type of challenge that faces our own generation today. Shall we be found cowards? Our fathers will disown us from the grave.[16]

The "days of the dane gun battles" may be over, but the days of "getting up" through education and better jobs in the nearby urban areas are now at hand. Because of the allegiance to their motherland, this money, which might have gone for improvements in Onitsha, instead goes back to their village, as they see their staying in Onitsha as a temporary thing.

THE URBAN/RURAL CONFLICT JOURNEY

In *More Than Once*, Nweke Nwakor's departure for the town is precipitated by the fact that he and his father feel he can no longer remain in the village after coming back empty-handed from a lumbering job, a job in which he was tricked out of his money by a fellow villager, Ofodile. He is forced out of the village into the town, therefore, by modern pressures: the inability to "take up the hoe" after having lived "abroad."

> They began to deliberate on future plans. Nweke must not cross that river Niger again. But what would people think if he sat down and took up the hoe again? They would know that he had failed where others had succeeded. Ofodile might even return to tell that it was all cowardice that drove Nweke home. He would in that case be a laughing stock for all.[17]

Before Nweke had left for the lumbering camp, his father gave his son advice for his journey and for the duration of his stay:

> I have not spoken to you yet. I do not think it is necessary. But I just like to remind you of a few facts you know already.
>
> ....You know how we are," the advice ran. "Never in history had anyone of our ancestors been kidnapped, or sold into slavery for being lazy or irresponsible. We are never mentioned with stealing, or with poisoning, or with women. We do not owe. We try to live according to our means….
>
> We are not like the caterpillar that clings tenaciously to the leaf when it is slim; but having fed fat, loosens his grip and falls to the earth to be food for hens. We are like soldier ants. We never lose our grip. We bite till our head goes into the struggle and we prefer to die rather than lose. Be like us.[18]

When rural people arrive in the town or city, urban dwellers tend to be dismayed by their actions and habits. It is amazing, too, how quickly one adapts to town ways so that when a brand-new arrival comes to the residence of someone who has not been in the town that much longer, the older residents can be most disgusted with habits they themselves may have had a few years or even months before. In *More Than Once*, Nweke has left his job at the lumbering camp and stops at the house of Mr. Adigwe in Onitsha on his way home. Mr. Adigwe and his family have lived but a few years in Onitsha and he and Nweke knew one another in Ndigwe, their common village:

> ….Nweke Nwakor arrived, escorted by a schoolboy. He had a small cheap box of white wood. The carpenter who made it, if he was really a carpenter, must have used either a blunt jack-plane or a sharp matchet in planing the wood….
>
> This was the miserable burden he deposited at the entrance of the house before he knocked. He looked brown with dust collected during the long journey on dusty roads. On the whole he presented a miserable and uncultivated aspect, at least by Onitsha standards. Such a man needed conversion by the Patriotic elements of Ndigwe. Mr. Adigwe's children sent water into the bathroom for him to wash in. It was said that he did not understand the need for the towel kept for him there and that he dressed up over a moist skin and walked into the room. It was further said that he pulled one of the buckets into the latrine and defecated into it, having heard that that was the system there. Only Mrs. Adigwe had the boldness to tell him that his bushness was stinking.[19]

Yaniya, the wife of Wilson Iyari, the pharmacist/politician in Ekwensi's *Beautiful Feathers*, flees her husband and the city life of Lagos and goes to a rather improbable site, the "village of Ol' Man Forest, Emorwen," near Benin. The Ol' Man is her father. Her arrival:

> Yaniya inhaled the damp scented air of the forest. In the distance she saw the roof-tops of the three huts that comprised the village of Ol' Man Forest, Emorwen. The camp was a little clearing in the forest...the three huts were like a discovery in the jungle. Yaniya's heart bounced with joy as she set eyes on them.[20]

Yaniya spies her father in front of his house. She tells him she has left her husband in Lagos and that she is "tired." Her father gives palm wine to the driver and crew of the lorry that brought her (palm wine in which

there is not "too much water, like the one they sell to you in the town"). Then she and her father are left alone:

> Yaniya watched the lorry till it turned a corner and was hidden by the massive trunk of a tree. That was her last link with the world outside. She felt at ease...all the worries and problems of Lagos, could never reach her in this fresh-scented forest. She was safe.[21]

Safe. Safe from the troubles of her marriage, of the life she has led (she was a prostitute before she married her husband and was unfaithful to him after their marriage), of all the temptations and distractions of Lagos.

Yaniya returns to the city, at her father's urging, not because he wants her necessarily to live in Lagos again, but because he feels it is wrong that she deserted her husband. After a long separation, occasioned by the death of one of their children, they are reunited after she has thrown herself in front of him and received the political goon's bullet meant for him. She recovers, and they are all set to live happily ever after – in Lagos – at the end of the book.

Her temporary flight to the rural area to get her thoughts in order is reminiscent of Nwuke's wife's journey in Ekwensi's short story, "Lokotown." Their child has been killed and Nwuke decides to send his grieving wife back home to see her mother:

> When you have stayed at home for some time – one month, two months – come back to me. Do not come back till you know you have forgotten the past, and will face only what God has for us in the future. I, too, must change.[22]

So, she will be cleansed just as Yaniya was by going to the rural setting. There are strong attractions for someone wanting a little more variety in his or her life and it is these people who do succumb to the temptations and go to the town or the city. Ekwensi likes to let us know why his characters opted for the city. Two of his *People of the City* characters and their motivations:

> Beatrice: She made no secret of what brought her to the city: 'high life,' cars, servants, high-class foods, decent clothes, luxurious living. Since she could not earn the high life herself, she must obtain it by attachment to someone who could.[17]
>
> Aina: It was a way of life she liked. The glamorous surroundings, the taxis, the quick drinks. This was one reason why she had come to the city from her home sixty miles away: to ride in taxis, eat in fashionable hotels, to wear the *aso-ebi*, that dress that was so often and so

> ruinously prescribed like a uniform for mournings, wakings, bazaars, to have men who wore white collars to their jobs as lovers, men who could spend.[23]

Later, Beatrice dies and is buried as a pauper. Sango explains to one of her lovers that, ironically, she came to the city because she was "not content with poverty."[24]

Jagua Nana also found some of the same attractions pulled her to Lagos. She had been married to a man in Coal City, but she was bored with her life. One day, on an impulse, she went into the railway station to ask for the time table for Lagos. Her reaction:

> Lagos! The magic name. She had heard of Lagos where the girls were glossy, worked in offices like the men, danced, smoked, wore high-heeled shoes and narrow slacks, and were "free" and "fast" with their favours. She heard that the people in Lagos did not have to go to bed at eight o'clock. Anyone who cared could go roaming the streets or wandering from one nightspot to the other right up till morning. The night spots never shut, and they were open all night and every night; not like "here" where at 8 p.m. "latest" everywhere was shut down and the streets deserted, so that it looked odd to be wandering about.
> When she came away from the railway counter, Jagua felt a sudden uneasiness. There was something sinful in her act, and from that moment on, she began to look at her man with a detached air. To her, he was good as dead. Dead and buried in her heart though he did not know it. She gave him her body, and thought instead of the slim young men in the dark bow-ties and elegantly cut lounge suits.
> She cooked for him, but longed for quiet restaurants where the lining was velvet and the music was soft and wine glasses clinked and men spoke in whispers to girls who burst suddenly into outraged laughter but were devils in nylon skins.[25]

Jagua Nana does not hark back to her childhood but to what might have been in her adulthood if either she had not come to Lagos or she had left before she did. She does finally leave, but before that happens, we are reminded elsewhere in the book that she is dissatisfied with her lot:

> Sometimes she talked of going to Onitsha by the Niger. There she hoped to become one of the Merchant Princesses who controlled tens of thousands of pounds. Freddie had an idea that she was capable of doing it, but she would not leave Lagos. Or while in Lagos she would not exert herself. It was three years now since she had been to Ghana. The Tropicana had sapped all her energy. She seemed to be one of

> those women who are always trying to prove to me that they are still young. And to do so, she must always remain focused in their sights. Going away from the social centre might make them forget her.[26]

When she returns to visit her village, she is welcomed, albeit with curious stares and whispers. Jagua Nana romanticizes her childhood as she walks along the path leading into the village:

> The smell of wet humus and damp undergrowth brought back memories of her girlhood days when she ran errands along this same lane for her mother. The hot tears filled her eyes and blurred the forest. She saw her father's house, roofed with zinc, standing at the end of the courtyard. The waterhole in front was new to her, but not the carpenter's bench standing under the iroko tree. Ten years! And this tree where she had played see-saw with the children was still standing there.
>
> A woman came along the road and met Jagua as she was coming towards the house. She said, "Welcome, our daughter," and wiped her hands on a big cocoyam leaf. She stared at Jagua without recognising her until she said, "I am the daughter of the Pastor," and then a loud jubilant cry went up. The cry was taken up and soon all over Ogabu it was known that the daughter of the pastor had come from Lagos. Little boys…ran away from Jagua because she looked strange in those down-to-earth surroundings.
>
> In Ogabu the people tilled the soil and drank river water and ate yams and went to church but came home to worship their family oracles. They believed that in a village where every man has his own yam plots, there is much happiness in the hearts of the men and the women and children; but where it is only one man who has the yam plots there is nothing but anger and envy; and strife breaks out with little provocation. Jagua knew that the men thought only about the land and its products and the women helped them make the land more fruitful. So that her city ways became immediately incongruous. The film of make-up on her skin acquired an ashen pallor. The women fixed their eyes on the painted eyebrows and one child called out in Igbo, "Mama! Her lips are running blood!..." Jagua heard another woman say, "She walks as if her bottom will drop off. I cannot understand what the girl has become."[27]

Surely other people from this area living in Lagos have sent word back about her, if her family has not already guessed what she is doing. (Her brother speaks of her as "the wayward one.") But Ekwensi allows her a reasonably friendly welcome, perhaps because he so much wants to

point out the contrast between the peace, harmony, and beauty of the countryside and the hustle and bustle and filth of Jagua's Lagos:

> ….Jagua never thought she would be able to adapt herself to the new life. She found, after a few months of it that the atmosphere in Ogabu had a quality about it totally different from the Lagos atmosphere. That driving, voluptuous and lustful element which existed in the very air of Lagos, that something which awakened the sleeping sexual instincts in all men and women and turned them into animals always in heat.[28]

After she becomes pregnant, she reflects on a move to the city once again:

> Even if she went back to the Coast to live, to Lagos or to Port Harcourt, things would be on a new footing. She would never again be so reckless with the ingredients of the fast life and faster oblivion.[29]

Her mother senses that Jagua has not forgotten Lagos, and so, after the death of her baby, she approaches her with the question of what she is going to do now:

> "When you are strong again, Jagua, what you goin' to do?"….It was a week after the burial of Nnochi and slowly Jagua was beginning to see the sun, to feel a thirst for water and hunger for a little food….
> "Mama, I don't know yet. But I wan' some place – not too far to Ogabu. Dere I kin trade. I kin come here when I like for look you. An wan' try Onitsha wedder I kin become Merchant Princess. I already get experience of de business…. I kin buy me own lorry and me own shop by de river. I goin' to join de society of de women an' make frien' with dem. I sure to succeed."
> As she spoke, she saw the relief mount into her mother's eyes. "Is good," she said. "I fear before whedder you wantin' for go back Lagos. Now is good I got me daughter on dis side of de Niger."[30]

The idea of becoming a Merchant Princess in Onitsha, the same idea she has thought about again and again in Lagos, is now to become real. But will she remain even in that urban environment? She seems to have thought too much and too often in the past about such places as Lagos and Port Harcourt. Margaret Laurence in her book of criticism, *Long Drums and Cannons*, has the final word on that argument:

> From everything that has ever happened to Jagua, it is only too apparent that the solid life of a market trader woman is not for her. It is easy to imagine her being drawn back to Lagos, staying on and on there until finally it is too late. But she will go down, when she does, like a ruined queen.[31]

Whether or not Ms. Laurence is right, we do know that Jagua is leaving the rural area, once again, for an urban one, be it medium-sized Onitsha, or sprawling Lagos or Port Harcourt. The city has reclaimed her.

CONCLUSION

One could argue that, in these examples and others, too much emphasis is placed upon the evils and troubles found in the urban environment and, on the other hand, the tranquility and fairness of life in rural areas. However, the writers have had their own experiences in both worlds and are acting not only as novelists and short-story writers, but as reporters on conditions, attitudes, and an abundance or absence of certain ways of life. This paper, however briefly, has examined some of the major themes exhibited in the descriptions of urban and rural life in the earlier works of Igbo authors.

NOTES

[1] Chinua Achebe, "The Voter," in *Girls at War* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 11-19.

[2] Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease* (London: Heinemann, 1963), 168-69.

[3] Achebe, *No Longer at Ease,*1-2.

[4] Cyprian Ekwensi, *People of the City*, 137.

[5] Ekwensi, *People of the City*, 147-48.

[6] Ekwensi, *People of the City*, 148.

[7] Cyprian Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana* (London: Panther, 1963), 144.

[8] Adrian Roscoe, *Mother Is Gold* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 151.

[9] Speedy Eric, "Mable the Sweet Honey That Poured Away," in *Onitsha Market Literature*, E.N. Obiechina, ed., (London: Heinemann, 1972), 109-110.

[10] Flora Nwapa, *Idu* (London: Heinemann, 1970), 105.

[11] Onuora Nzekwu, *Wand of Noble Wood* (New York: New American Library, 1963), 25-26.

[12] Chinua Achebe, "Marriage Is a Private Matter," in *Girls at War* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 20-22.

[13] Clement Agunwa, *More Than Once* (London: Longman, 1967), 59.

[14] Agunwa, *More Than Once*, 59-62.

[15] Agunwa, *More Than Once*, 1.

[16] Agunwa, *More Than Once*, 9-10.

[17] Agunwa, *More Than Once*, 138-39.

[18] Agunwa, *More Than Once*, 118-19.
[19] Agunwa, *More Than Once,* 138-39.
[20] Cyprian Ekwensi, *Beautiful Feathers* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 94-96.
[21] Ekwensi, *Beautiful Feathers*, 94-96.
[22] Cyprian Ekwensi, "Lokotown," in *Lokotown and Other Stories* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 38.
[23] Ekwensi, *People of the City*, 88.
[24] Ekwensi, *People of the City*, 145.
[25] Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, 126.
[26] Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana,* 19-20.
[27] Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, 52-54.
[28] Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, 133-36.
[29] Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, 143.
[30] Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana*, 144.
[31] Margaret Laurence, *Long Drums and Cannons* (London: Macmillan, 1968), no pagination

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RUTH AND NAOMI (RUTH 1:16-17): PARADIGM FOR RELATIONSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY FAMILY LIFE

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Abstract
Oftentimes, the relationship between mothers-and-daughters-in-law (nnedi na nwunyenwa) is described in less than positive terms. The caricature of the mother-in-law in cartoons amplify the adverse relationship setting up some women to approach marital state with trepidation. Positive images of the relationship between in-laws that can be appropriated for contemporary family life abound in the Scripture, of which, the narrative of Ruth and Naomi is emblematic. This positive image of the female in-law relationship in the book of Ruth questions the default assumption of the antagonistic relationship between mothers-and-daughters-in-law. Ruth, a multilayered tale in the Hebrew Scripture, captures succinctly the themes of steadfast love, solidarity, friendship, life, covenant, community, among others, themes that further positive and secures family wealth, aku, be it material or non-material. The narrator employs metaphors, drama, and innuendos to tell in a terse form, the resilience of women in bringing about life in the midst of poverty, deprivation, misery, and even death. The desperate condition of life in most areas of contemporary Nigeria, and family crises, closely resembles the historical context of the text under study, and as such underscores the significance of the investigation. Although levirate-like marriage in the tale resonates with traditional African family life, however, family relationship, secured in ḥesed (steadfast love), within a homestead, resonates more with the contemporary audience. On this relationship rests the argument of this paper. The essay employs cultural and feminist hermeneutics, new historicism, and literal reading as methodological tools to show that insight from the book of Ruth remain pertinent to and as well challenge modern women, particularly female in-laws in forging enduring constructive relationships for the well-being of the family.
Key Words: Ruth and Naomi, solidarity, nnedi, nwunyenwa, relationship, family.

INTRODUCTION

The desperate relationship between mothers-and-daughters-in-law *nnedi na nwunyenwa*, continues to create tension in family life across many cultures of which Nigerian is not an exception. Although not widely spoken about, but more or less taken for granted, female in-laws' relationship unlike male in-laws is often described in negative terms. Even so, a literal reading of the Gospel according to Luke 12:52-53 appear to support the assumption. While noting potential division among members of a household, "For from now on, five members of a family will be divided, three against two and two against three; father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-

law against her daughter-in-law." The passage is silent on the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law, a silence that tends to suggest a conflict-free relationship between the male-in-laws. Regardless of primordial or social factors that produce as well as sustain the assumed antagonistic relationship between female-in-laws, the situation is redeemable. The Scripture, particularly the book of Ruth, provides insights that can be appropriated for a more nuanced positive *nnedi na nwunyenwa* relationship for the security and wellbeing of the family. In the exquisite short tale of Naomi and Ruth, which instructs as well as delights, is woven in a universal and timeless value of fidelity, solidarity, loyalty, friendship, love of family, justice, and generosity towards strangers. The timelessness of the story remains encapsulated in the values it communicates, which is reinforced by African Christian ancestor, St. Augustine of Hippo. St. Augustine ranks friendship and justice as primary values in spiritual life and moral life. Worthy of note are other positive representations of friendship between in-laws in the Scripture such as the bond between David and Jonathan. David was the husband of Michal, daughter of Saul, and Jonathan Michal's brother. Though both Israelites families, Jonathan and David were not of the same ethnic group, Jonathan was a Benjaminite and David a Judean.

Although most marriages in Nigeria occur between persons from a similar ethnic group, the female in-law dilemma still abound. Regardless of ethnic origin, the adverse relationship between mother-and- daughter-in-law, produces tales of woes on both sides of the family. Consequently, the women trapped in the retrogressive rather than being life-affirming, become life-denying agents in the immediate and extended family, a situation that tends to jeopardize family life, its *aku* and overall wellbeing.

But the protagonist of the book of Ruth emerges from a family setting unlike that of Naomi, *nwunyenwa*, her mother in-law, moreover, the disparity in age as well as experience, marks the sterling quality of the novella. *Ḥesed*, was the motivating force as well as the anvil of the exceptional relationship between the two women of rather strange backgrounds—Naomi, an Israelite, and Ruth, a Moabite. Traditionally, Israel and Moab were sworn enemies (Judges 3:12-30; Deut. 23:4). However, the historical setting of the book of Ruth reflects a time of relative peace between the two nations. Moreover, the story of friendship between Naomi and Ruth, expressed in the writing is best understood in the historical context of the peaceful milieu, "In the days when the judges ruled" (Ru 1:1). Given the scholarly range of the book of Ruth, which extends to such as feminist views, xenophobia, immigration, refugees, among others, the present essay focuses on in-law relationships within family life, a contemporary burning issue in the context of this investigation. Although Ruth is most read from the perspective of the Torah, advocacy criticisms offer possibili-

ties of other readings of this Jewish wisdom writing, which the study adopts. The essay facilitates a constructive mother-and-daughter-in-law relationship. First, we offer a brief discussion on the background of the text. Next comes a discussion on the surviving members of the family of Elimelech, namely, Orpah, Ruth, and Naomi. The contextualization of the study follows with a conclusion.

BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK OF RUTH

Written in rhythmic prose in about the 5th century B.C., the book of Ruth, a fiction set in history, is the only biblical work named after a gentile, and a woman, Ruth the Moabite. The gentile woman designation indicates its subversion,[1] pointing to an exception that questions the rule. Ruth's subversion in its liberal interpretation of the Torah, insisting that Torah is *ḥesed* (fidelity), and not the law, a *ḥesed* that redeems everything, in unexpected circumstances. Traditional Judaic adherents read the book of Ruth during the annual feast of *Shevuot; Shevuot* celebrates the gift of the Torah (on Sinai).[2] The motivation for the reading of Ruth during the festival remains connected with its theme of *ḥesed*, convent fidelity, characterized in the central characters of the novella, Naomi and Ruth and later, Boaz. This Second Temple piece of work can be read as a political parable relating to the issues around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah when intermarriage in Israel had become controversial (Ezra 9:1; Neh 13:1). The writing moderates the religious isolationism propagated by Ezra and Nehemiah during the period. As for authorship, André LaCocque notes, Ruth is "a feminine book from beginning to end,"[3] and these four chapters and 85 verses narrative, was probably authored by a woman.[4] Undergirded by mutual love between Ruth the Moabite and Naomi, her mother-in-law, the tale is rooted in a condition of a family in dire need for survival. Driven by famine and potential death, from his native Bethlehem (meaning, house of bread), in Judah, Elimelech (meaning, my God is King) took his wife Naomi (meaning, charming, pleasant), and their two sons, Mahlon (meaning sickness) and Chilion (meaning wasting), settled in the land of Moab as economic refugees. Both sons married Moabite women, Ruth (meaning to water, satisfy) and Orpah (meaning back of the neck). Elimelech died, Naomi was left with her two sons Mahlon and Chilion, and their Moabite spouses. Later, the sons also died leaving the family with three widows, Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah. The author of Ruth spares no details applying the meanings of the names into this masterful testimony of the literary genius of ancient Israel. This study, however, excludes the particularities of names, which has already been explored in another work.[5] When bread returned to her home, Bethlehem of Judah though, Naomi bereaved of husband and sons, including ten rather "hollow" years of economic exile,

prepares to return home to Bethlehem alone and "empty," without *aku* to take back to *ulo*. The Ruth story then begins with Naomi deciding to end her economic exile and return home to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (Ru 1:22) the Passover period. Ruth's *ḥesed* etched in her unilateral declaration of allegiance even beyond death to Naomi (Ru 1:16-17), her mother-in-law, drives the short story.

RELATIONSHIP IN THE FAMILY OF WOMEN: ORPAH, RUTH, AND NAOMI

Stooped by age and bereavement, Naomi, the once charming wife of Elimelech, prepares to return home to Bethlehem dejected: "I went out full but the LORD has returned me empty" (Ru 1:21), loosely translated, *ebun aku puo ma gbara aka lota*, a harsh experience that prompted a name change, from Naomi (pleasant, charming) to Mara (bitter). It is instructive to note the willingness of the two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to return with her to the land of Judah (Ru 1:7) as a mark of fidelity and friendship an opening and pointer that can be remotely characterized as a *ije aku*, journey of wealth, back home.

Orpah

Orpah a Moabite and widow of Chilion, son of Naomi and Elimelech was persuaded by Naomi, her mother-in-law to return to her family regardless of her willingness to return to Bethlehem with her. An emotionally packed scene (Ru 1:7-15), witnesses the return of Orpah to her "mother's house" (Ru 1:8), to her people and, to her gods, to continue with life. Orpah, the back of the neck as the name suggests, describes how she turned her back on her mother-in-law and returned to *bet immah*, her mother's house, *Usoekwu nnem* or *mgbala* (in Igbo).[6] *Mgbala* represents the soul of the household, where life is nurtured, hurts healed and the future delicately fashioned, at the mgbala, a child learns to morals and values, a transformation that takes place in this sacred space, the *mgbala*, translates fine adulthood.

Naomi's use of the term "mother's house," in a decidedly patriarchal society, instead of the established "father's house," is significant. A note would elucidate the point further. In most agrarian cultural settings, such as ancient Israel, the mother's house remains a child's most secured space as the following paragraph explicates.

After an encounter with the servants of Abraham, young Rebecca runs off to her mother's household with the news of the visitor in connection with marriage to Isaac (Gen 24:28). Another wisdom writing, Song of Songs, twice sights "mother's house." The female lover would have no

respite until she had brought her lover to her mother's house: "I would lead you, bring you into the home of my mother" (S of S. 3:4; 8:2). Furthermore, there is an allusion to the significance of the mother's house in William Ross Wallace in his 1865 poem titled "What Rules the World: The Hand That Rocks the Cradle is the Hand That Rules the World." In essence, Wallace points to the *mgbala* as the source of a child's socialized ethics that shapes hers or his imagination about how to understand herself or himself. Here also the child learns how to experience life and death, success, and failure, love, and betrayal,[7] and the intricacies of *aku ruo ulo*. It could then be said that Naomi's feminine instinct, directs her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, back to the very foundation from where they could rebuild their lives with dignity and contribute more effectively to society.

Furthermore, centuries of a literal reading of the book of Ruth in a way negatively portray Orpah as a deserter. She has been read as one who abandoned her mother-in-law, an older woman in a dismal situation, a disloyal *nwunyenwa*. But Laura A. Donaldson's Postcolonial work titled, "The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth through Native Eyes," exonerates Orpah of the accusation of abandoning her mother-in-law, Naomi; rather Orpah is applauded for returning to her *bet immah*. Donaldson insists that "Centuries of reading vilify Orpah. But a native reading by the Cherokee (Indian), applauds Orpah's action[8] for not abandoning her people, she returned home "empty" as it were, widowed and childless but a sense of dignity. Although her loyalty to Naomi was extraordinary, she, Orpah, acted justly. For a native reader, however, Orpah rather than her sister-in-law, Ruth, is the heroine of the tale, for she did not abandon her people and her god. Ruth, possessed by *hesed*, however, cleaved to her *nned*i and returned with her to Bethlehem. To Ruth, we now turn.

Ruth

The peculiar character of Ruth the Moabite as subversive emerges from several angles. Her marriage: a Moabite maiden, marries an outsider, a Judean, while still with her people, Moab; her clinging to an older widow, who had nothing to offer her are but a few examples. From the onset, this anti-establishment character of Ruth was positioned as detribalized and a bridge builder as well. Her marriage to Mahlon, son of Naomi and Elimelech, was without progeny. Widowed in Moab, Ruth nevertheless, attaches herself unconditionally, to an older widow, her mother-in-law, Naomi, and determined to return to Bethlehem in the land of Judah with her. Naomi persuaded Ruth and her sister-in-law Orpah, to return home to their families: "Go back each of you to your mother's house . . ." (Ru

1:8), Orpah did but Ruth would not return to the land of the Moabites. Rather, she clings to Naomi as a man clings to his wife (Gen 2:24) and much more, even after death; she commits herself to the God of Israel thus:

> 'Do not press me to leave you
> or to return from following you!
> Where you go, I will go;
> Where you lodge, I will lodge;
> Your people shall be my people,
> And your God my God.
> Where you die, I will die—
> There will I be buried.
> May the LORD do thus and so to me,
> And more as well,
> If even death parts me from you!" (Ruth 1:16-17; NRSV)

A vibrant young widow, Ruth, true to her name, which means "to water", "satisfy," commits herself unconditionally to *nnedi ya*, Naomi, an older widow who has practically nothing to offer her. In verse 16, her decision to leave everything compares to Abraham (Gen 12). Her extravagant resolution led to a voluntary change of identity "your people shall be my people," and religion, "And your God my God." To understand the impact of Ruth's commitment, one must realize that in ancient Israel, as it remains true in some Nigerian cultures today, a woman has hardly any social standing. Her personhood is defined socially by either her being her father's daughter, her husband's wife, or her son's mother. Outside this parameter, a woman is a non-entity. She can neither take a loan in her name nor witness in court. Against this background, a widow has little or no social status. In the light of the foregoing, one begins to appreciate the courage, the audacity of Ruth, a Moabite, who left her gods, family, friends, and country to follow her mother-in-law, Naomi, back to the land of Judah. Ruth's commitment to Naomi in verse 17, goes beyond this present life, it implies that even if Naomi ceases to exist, she, Ruth will not return to her home country, Moab, but would continue to remain in Bethlehem and, indeed be buried in the land of Judah. Burial places remain sacred and significant for biblical characters (see, Gen 25:16-20; 50:13, 24-26; Josh 24:32) as well as many African peoples. In effect, Ruth became a naturalized Bethlehemite and her "naturalization" would become part of the grand narrative of the Jesus event in the New Testament.

Why did Ruth sacrifice so much for Naomi? The answer can be found in the wide range of sensitivity entrenched in *ḥesed*. Ruth seems to understand what awaited her mother-in-law on her return to the land of Judah[9]

and would not let the old widow suffer alone. Moreover, it does appear Ruth's marriage into the family of Elimelech could be nothing other than a self-gift. A self-gift expressed in her determination to convert the emptiness of Naomi's ten years of exile into fullness. On this basis emerges a new kind of family, mediated by Boaz, a kinsman-redeemer, for the family of Elimelech, a family not borne out of lust but *ḥesed*, a fidelity that embraces the entire community, the living, the yet to be born, and the dead. Alice L. Laffey echoes other scholars in recognizing levirate marriage "made possible the perpetuation of a patriarchal line in those families where the husband died before his wife had conceived any offspring."[10] The reason being that in ancient Israel, the notion of life after death was nonexistent, consequently, one continues to live through one's children. That is to say, the absence of children meant total annihilation.[11] For unlike the Christian tradition, "sex" was not a dirty word in Judaism, neither is it so in some indigenous cultures such as the Igbo; the author of Ruth, in order to protect the dignity of sex, employs innuendoes and metaphors, to further the narrative in the encounter between Ruth and Boaz. One must not, however, downplay the levirate-like marriage shrewdly orchestrated by Naomi to achieve their goal, continuing the family of Elimelech. In this regard, a close reading of the text presents an understanding of Boaz marriage to Ruth as more ritual and legal than marital. In risking all to fill the emptiness of another woman, a widow, who wrote her off, Ruth challenges the community to practice solidarity, a solidarity expressed by Boaz, and the women of Bethlehem (Ru. 4) after Ruth's birth to Obed, the grandfather of Israel's greatest king, David (Matt 1:5).

Naomi

Naomi (meaning, charming, pleasantness) is the widow of Elimelech and mother of their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Naomi's ten-year sojourn in the land of Moab, as an economic exile, dispossessed her of three male relatives, a husband, and two sons. Stooped by age and bereavement and blinded to the gain of two vibrant loving daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, Naomi decides to return home to Bethlehem without the two women. But why would two vibrant young widows consider spending the rest of their lives with their *nnedi*, who had practically nothing to offer them. A response could be found in the fuller meaning of the name, Naomi—charming, which connotes a sweet gentleness she undoubtedly etched deeply in the lives of the daughters-in-law during their years of marriage. But Naomi rejects her daughters-in-law's voluntary offer to return home to Bethlehem with her. Bitterness marked her life at the time of the return (1:20), hence the self-name change to Mara, "call me Mara" (meaning bitter), she tells the women of Bethlehem, who came out to welcome her

back. Naomi's shrewdness is manifest in the astute deployment of her daughter-in-law, Ruth, "water" in order to "satisfy" her deepest desire, which is keeping her husband's lineage open. Here, Ruth and Naomi's agenda meets—bringing forth new life in the midst of death. The neighborhood women of Bethlehem praises Naomi's good fortune in her daughter-in-law, Ruth. For them, nothing but the expression *aku ru ulo*, could describe Naomi's good fortune. In an attempt to quantify Ruth's love for her mother-in-law, the women praise- singers compared Ruth to the worth of seven sons: "for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons" (Ru 4:15); Ruth leaves the story exalted above the ideal number of male children, seven sons.[12] With the birth of Obed, bitterness gives way to joy for Naomi.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

The social system that governs marriage in Nigeria and most parts of Africa keep couples and parents-in-law in close proximity. In a patrilocal or virilocal marriage, couples reside with or near the husband's parents, which accounts for an apparent lack of privacy in the new family. Thus, mothers-and-daughters-in-law seem to practically circulate within the same sphere, physically and emotionally. In addition to operating within the same domain, female-in-law conflicts appear to have roots also in competition for the attention of the son/husband—two women liking the same man, son, and husband, respectively. In some extreme situations, narcissistic mothers-in-law, regardless of their status, never let go of their sons emotionally. Perhaps the practice of securing a spouse for a son offers the would-be mother-in-law some degree of control over the daughter-in-law. Female in-laws unfriendly attitude cuts across social status; such behavior can be found among, lettered as well as unlettered women, urban as well as rural women. Some mothers-in-law hardly allow the young couple to become independent as a nuclear family. Such control is unlike Naomi, who literally, attempted to push out her daughters-in-law, to seek their independence. Although Naomi could also be criticized for being self-centered, buried in her disappointment while rejecting the offer of new life in Ruth, the water that satisfies.

Similarly, some daughters-in-law leave no stone unturned in determining their legitimacy in a patrilocal homestead. Freedom from in-law interference often force many young couples to break bounds with cultural expectation of living within the homestead, they take up residence in locations far from the prying eyes of their mothers-in-law. To avoid faceoff, these young couples rarely visit their home even during festivals. Moreover, the social and cultural loss of the negative relationships on grandchildren is incalculable. Issues bordering on fertility more often than

not remains a source of conflict between female-in-laws regardless of medical history. The list and scenario of such undesirable attitudes among female in-laws abound, they cannot be exhausted in this essay. Most importantly, the female-in-law problem among Christian women, questions an understanding of the biblical "mother's house" elucidated above. In such a tension-packed scenario, one may question the sense in which family is understood in Nigeria, particularly the place of *ḥesed* in family relationships.

Conflicts exist in other aspects of family life but that of *nnedi na nwunyenwa*, is mostly trumpeted. Even a plant species is designated "mother-in-law's tongue," on account of its elongated tongue-like shape, a term associated with a breakdown in the female-in-law relationship. Notably, the plant species, *sansevieria trifasciata* is of the family *Asparagaceae*, native to tropical West Africa from Nigeria east to the Congo. It is most commonly known as the snake plant, mother-in-law's tongue, and viper's bowstring hemp, among other names.[13] Worthy of note is how overwhelmingly the relationship between mother-daughter-in-law empties the woman of her life securing role in the family. The author of Ruth understands this point clearly in harmonizing the desires of Ruth and Naomi to safeguard the community. The need to safeguard life is more pronounced in a time of economic and political crises such as exist in contemporary Nigeria. Mutual support undergirded by *ḥesed* remains the default mode for survival amid apparent life-denying circumstances.

In Nigeria, many women profess the biblical faith tradition, belonging to one Christian women's group or another, Catholics, Protestants alike. They belong variously to: Catholic Women Organizations, Mothers' Union, and numerous Charismatic and Pentecostal women's groups. These groups can take up the task of eradicating what has become a cliché, that is, the mothers-daughters-in-law conundrum.

Presumed cultural constrictions governing *nnedi na nwunyenwa* relationship, notwithstanding, Ruth and Naomi working together achieved their purpose of bringing about new life, they became restorers of hope in the midst of death. Relationship grounded on reciprocal love between the in-laws undergird their actions. *Ḥesed* exemplified by Ruth and Naomi remains the elixir to female in-law quandary. Written over two millennia ago, one can find parallels of the book of Ruth in some contemporary African fiction.

The parallel of the book of Ruth with Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*,[14] is startling in its theme of women as restorers of life in the midst of death. In both tales, women keep hope alive in their mutual fidelity. Women's indispensable role as preservers of life, epitomized in the act of naming. Like the woman who named Ruth's son, Obed (servant), a woman, Beatrice Nwanyibuife, names Elewa's daughter born after the

devastation in Kangan, Amaechina (loosely translated, "may my lineage never become extinct").[15] In the case of Ruth, the women of the neighborhood said to Naomi "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel," (Ru 4:14). Amaechina and Obed in both narratives, function as the biblical "shoots from the stump," (Isa 11:1) that continue the lineage after devastation occasioned by war and by deaths, respectively.

I draw insight from the work of LaCocque to further buttress the parallel in the two narratives, the book of Ruth and *Anthills of the Savannah*:

1. In both stories, there are three men Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion (family members) on the one hand and Sam, Chris, and Ikem (Kangan socio-politics major actors) on the other hand.
2. Both mention the deaths of the three men.
3. In both, it is a question of the role of women in death-dealing circumstances.
4. In both stories the women, Naomi and Ruth; Beatrice and Elewa, seek to resolve the problem of descent.
5. In both, the story ends with the birth of a child.
6. In both women were name givers of the new-born.
7. Both works are subversive, involving a hermeneutic of power, the socio-economic and political system.

In both narratives, two women, Beatrice and Elewa on one hand, and Ruth and Naomi on the other hand worked in solidarity to redeem sterility by bringing back light (Beatrice) and water (Ruth) into a dying realm.[16] Of the undervalued women, particularly widows, Nigerian poet, Ben Okri captures vividly the possibilities and beauty produced by the underrated:

> It would seem a miraculous feat, but the unvalued ones can help create a beautiful new era in human history. A new vision should come from those who suffer the most and who love life the most. This marvelous responsibility of the unheard and the unseen resides in this paradox.[17]

Ruth and Naomi had made brave choices in a circumstance that allowed them no freedom, an intensely patriarchal enclave. They choose, as far as the law permitted, to do whatever would allow them to stay together, without undue penury, or censure by the townspeople of Bethlehem. Aware of their primary responsibilities as bearers of life, contemporary mothers-and-daughters-in-law, drawing from the text studied, can truly

become those hands that rock the cradle, ruling the world with beauty and grace.

CONCLUSION

The practice of *ḥesed* permeates the book of Ruth, a Jewish wisdom writing explored in this work. Although classical rendition offers variant readings of the text, the celebration of friendship between female in-laws underscores the present work. Naomi and Ruth, *nnedi na nwunyenwa*, strong and resourceful women, whose mutual love enables them to survive in a dire situation offer insight that can be appropriate for women's relationship in marriage. Self-giving in friendship catapulted Ruth into fame and etched her name permanently in Israel's salvation history. Ruth is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus as the grandmother of Israel's greatest king, David (Matt 1:5). This wisdom text transcends society's expectation of making in-laws, *ndi ogo* remain strangers and antagonistic to each other. Ruth makes it abundantly clear that the backbone of family life is its womenfolk. It thus means that *nnedi na nwunyenwa* relationship cannot but be life-giving in the service of family and society at large. The story amplifies maternal survival instinct, the lifeline of the human race, insights that can be appropriated in resolving female in-law challenges because any society that has lost its maternal instinct is doomed. Consequently, the story of Ruth and Naomi instructs in more ways than one level of relatedness. The story shows that social ills bedeviling Nigeria today such as corruption, moral decadence, political misadventure, to mention but a few, are redeemable with a commitment to *ḥesed*. Ultimately, Ruth instructs that without God's Word as an anchor, modern women, married, unmarried, or widowed, drift to extremes forgetting that woman, the finishing design of all creation has been created with a unique task to bring forth new life.

NOTES

[1] André LaCocque, *RUTH: A Continental Commentary*, Translated by K. C. Hanson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 1

[2] LaCocque, RUTH, 80.

[3] LaCocque, 5.

[4] LaCocque, *RUTH,* xvii.

[5] See, Caroline N. Mbonu, Handmaid: *The Power of Names in Theology and Society*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

[6] Caroline N. Mbonu, Women's Religious Culture in Etcheland: A Traditional and Biblical Perspective, in *Interface Between Igbo Theology and Christianity*, ed. Akuma-Kalu Njoku and Elochukwu Uzukwu (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 113-115.

[7] See, Mbonu, *Handmaid*, 39.

[8] Laura A. Donaldson, "The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth through Native Eyes," in *Vernacular Hermeneutics*, R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., (Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 20-36.

[9] The Hebrew term that designates a widow, אלמכה (Greek *chōra*), describes a legal position without parallel in our modern languages." For the Hebrew, this person is: (a) a widow and (b) without a son, son-in-law, or brother-in-law. The widow can inherit, according to all the codes of the ancient Near East except the codes in force in Israel. In ancient Israel as in most modern African cultures, a widow is a prime suspect in the death of her husband and as such treated with indignity. Some Catholic dioceses in Nigeria have progressed in dismantling obnoxious widowhood practices. Port Harcourt diocese, for instance, Msgr. Cyprian E. Onwuli inaugurated a widow's support group called Daughters of Mercy.

[10] Alice L. Laffey, "Ruth," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds, Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (India, Bangalore: Theological Publications, 1995), 554.

[11] Mbiti articulates the African notion of community, which closely aligns with that in the book of Ruth thus: The concept of personal immortality should help us to understand the religious significance of marriage in African societies. Unless a person has close relatives to remember him when he has physically died, then he is nobody and simply vanishes out of human existence like a flame when it is extinguished. It remains a duty, religious and ontological, for everyone to get married; and if a man has no children or only daughters, he finds another wife so that through her, children (or sons) may be born who would survive him and keep him in personal immortality. (See, John S. Mbiti, *Africa Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed, (London: Heinemann, 1990), 25.

[12] Phyllis Trible, "RUTH" in *Women in Scripture: a dictional of named and unnamed women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, ed. Carol Meyers, General Editor, Toni Craven, and Ross S. Kraemer, Associate Editors (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 146-147).

[13] https://www.thejoyofplants.co.uk/mother-law%E2%80%99s-tongue, accessed, January 26, 2016.

[14] Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (London: Heinemann, 1987).

[15] Uzoechi Nwagbara, "Power Play and Gendered Spaces in Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah: A Cultural Materialist Reading," in *Achebe's Women, Imagism and Power*, ed. Chukwuma (Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press, 2012), 149. See also, Caroline Mbonu, "Revalorizing Women's Agency: Motherhood in Anthills of the Savannah," in *Achebe's Women, Imagism and Power*, ed. Helen Chukwuma (Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press, 2012), 111-127

[16] While Ruth means "to Water," "satisfied," Beatrice means "bearer of light." The symbolism of water has a universal undertone of purity and fertility. Symbolically, it is often viewed as the source of life itself as we see evidenced in countless creation myths in which life emerges from primordial waters. On the other hand, light generally stands for illumination in the metaphoric sense, revelation, goodness, clarity, insight. Light often means a conversion or new understanding. It is a symbol of purity and openness. In the Scripture, water is often depicted as a symbol of God's Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit symbolized by light suggesting a synergy between light and water. See Caroline N. Mbonu, Handmaid: *The Power of Names in Theology and Society*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 81-82.

[17] Ben Okri, *A Way of Being Free* (Great Britain: Phoenix, 2002), 103.

NIGERIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS: IDENTIFYING, PURIFYING, AND PRODUCING DRUGS FOR THE TREATMENT AND CURE OF HUMAN DISEASES

EMMA ONUA

Abstract

Plants have been well documented for their medicinal uses for thousands of years. They have evolved and adapted over millions of years to withstand bacteria, insects, fungi, and weather, to produce unique, structurally diverse, secondary metabolites. Their ethnopharmacological properties have been used as a primary source of medicines for early drug discovery (McRae et al, 2007; Fellows and Scofield, 1995). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 80% of people still rely on plant-based traditional medicines for primary health care (Fansworth et al, 1985) and 80% of 122 plant-derived drugs were related to their original ethnopharmacological purpose (Fabricant and Farnsworth, 2001). The knowledge associated with traditional medicine (complementary or alternative herbal products) has promoted further investigations of medicinal plants as potential medicines and has led to the isolation of many natural products that have become well-known pharmaceuticals. The use of herbal medicines among Nigerians and the tendency by patients to combine this class of medicines with allopathic drugs while on hospital admission is on the increase (Fakeye and Onyemadu, 2008). The reasons for this include the affordability of these remedies as well as superstitious beliefs commonly spread by the traditional herbal medicine practitioners, and their patrons alike, contribute immensely to the increase in consumption of these herbal remedies (Calixto, 2000; Kaplowitz, 1997; Shaw et al, 1997).

INTRODUCTION

Historically, natural products have been used since ancient times and in folklore for the treatment of many diseases and illnesses. Classical natural product chemistry methodologies enabled a vast array of bioactive secondary metabolites from terrestrial and marine sources to be discovered (Dias et al, 2012). The earliest records of natural products were depicted on clay tablets in cuneiform from Mesopotamia (2600 B.C.), which documented oils from *Cupressus sempervirens* (Cypress) and *Commiphora* species (myrrh), and which are still used today to treat coughs, colds, and inflammation (Cragg et al, 2005). It has been well documented that natural products played critical roles in modern drug development, especially for antibacterial and antitumor agents. Even though the popularity of the synthetic products increased, due to its production cost, time effectiveness, easy quality control, stringent regulation, and quick effects, still their safety and efficacy always remained questionable, resulting in the depend-

ence on the natural products by more than 80% of the total population in the developing world, because of its time-tested safety and efficacy. A huge number of natural product-derived compounds in various stages of clinical development highlighted the existing viability and significance of the use of natural products as sources of new drug candidates (Veeresham, 2012).

Owing to the high diversity of terrestrial and marine organisms, natural products (secondary metabolites) are some of the most successful sources of drug leads for the treatment of many diseases and illnesses (David *et al*, 2014). In the 1990s, advancements in automation [high-throughput screening (HTS)] and isolation technologies resulted in the surge in research towards natural products both in the fields of human health and agriculture. These strategies and techniques generated a substantial shift towards this 'green Eldorado', a real 'Green Rush' between 1990 and 2000. However, in the early 2000s, most of the big Pharmas terminated their HTS and bioprospecting endeavors. But, to date, the low productivity of combinatorial chemistry and rational drug design is silently positioning pharmacognosy back on the rails and natural product discovery is remerging as a reputable source of current drugs on the market (Chen *et al*, 2003., Butler, 2004., David, *et al*., 2014).

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization has come to the realization of the importance of biodiversity, which would be able to offer affordable, therapeutic solutions to a majority of the world population. The preservation of the world's biodiversity and its access is a critical issue, which could hamper a serene utilization of natural products in the developing world, with herbal-based phytopharmaceuticals representing a significant share of the total world pharmaceutical market. This review presents an industrial perspective that discusses natural product drug discovery, lead research, botanicals, pro-drugs, synergy effects, drug interactions with botanicals, traditional medicines, reverse Pharmacognosy, and presents the difficulties in accessing biodiversity (David *et al*., 2014).

Akande et al (2012) explored the biochemical constituents of a locally prepared herbal remedy (Agbo) in Nigeria and observed that they contained tannin, saponin, alkaloids, and flavonoids in various amounts. They recommended that there is a need for standardization of dosage regimens and scrutiny of the pedigree of the peddlers of these herbal remedies by appropriate government agencies. Traditional medicine is still the predominant means in the Third World for the preservation of health of the rural majority that constitutes over 70% of the total population (Okoli et al, 2007).

A review of the Malaysian experience with medicinal plants, conducted by Muhammad and Awaisu (2008), noted that about one-third of the

world's population still lacks regular access to essential drugs, and this figure is believed to be rising to over 50% in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia. They further noted that traditional medicine, therefore, offers a major and accessible source of treatment and continues to play an important role in healthcare management. According to the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations, the process of pharmaceutical research and development (R&D) is a complex, costly, risky, and long undertaking. It requires a sustained mobilization of substantial human and financial resources over a long period before a new drug finally reaches the patient. On average, this process takes between 10-15 years, and the estimated average cost of developing a new medicine exceeds $800 million. In the course of the R&D process, more than 8,000 compounds are tested on average, of which only one is developed into a potent and safe drug (IFPMA). As a result, Pharmaceutical R&D is largely dominated by private multinational companies known to possess the financial capacities, expertise, know-how, and technical excellence that guarantee the sustainability of the whole process (Muhammad and Awaisu, 2008).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Extensive reviews of publicly available records, published literature, and the author's personal experiences as a pharmaceutical research scientist of nearly thirty years were the sources utilized for this article.

THE BASICS OF PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D)

The research and development (R&D) of modern pharmaceuticals follow some general principles. Whether the starting material is of natural sources (herbs, extracts from roots or seeds, fermentation products, etc.) or synthesized through elaborate chemical processes, an active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) must be isolated, characterized, tested for safety and efficacy, and the proper dosage set for the intended indication. If an API successfully scales through these initial hurdles, it is subjected to rigorous processes for consistent manufacturability, including characterization of the parent compound and metabolites, elucidation of its degradation products, storage stability, and determination of appropriate storage conditions. Following the completion of these activities, (which could take up to 6 to 10 years), a dossier of all the Safety and Efficacy data generated for the drug is compiled by the development sponsor and submitted to the relevant regulatory agencies for review and possible approval. Of course, there are unknown factors that play a role in pharmaceutical R&D, includ-

ing the specific activities required for the particular drug, the time interval required from initiation to completion of these activities, as well as the cost of development.

Fundamentally, drug discovery and development is a multi-disciplinary endeavor, requiring the collective effort of scientists in various areas including Chemistry Computational, Chemistry, Organic, Chemistry Synthetic, Chemistry Analytical, Biology, Physiology, Mathematics, Statistics, Computer Science, Law (Patent and Proprietary), etc. The sub-disciplines that have developed under these broad subjects, such as Biochemistry, Pharmacology, Enzymology, Process Chemistry and Toxicology, all play important roles in the process as well. Typical processes for Pharmaceutical R&D include some or all of the following:

1) Synthesis or isolation of a pharmacologically active ingredient (a potential drug)
2) Purification and Scale-up
3) Preclinical Development and Optimization
4) Pre-clinical and Clinical testing
5) Commercialization (Scale-up, Chemistry, Manufacturing, Control etc.)
6) Regulatory Approval
7) Marketing and post-approval safety monitoring

SYNTHESIS OR ISOLATION OF A PHARMACOLOGICALLY ACTIVE INGREDIENT

The process of synthesizing a pharmacologically active molecule is usually driven by a computer-aided drug design approach. A known or suspected target of pharmacological activity is identified, and if a molecule registers a "hit" on the target, it is said to have drug-like properties. The design and synthesis effort requires close collaboration between systems biologists, computer drug modeling experts, and the chemists who would eventually translate the designed molecule into an actual substance in the laboratory. Usually, tens or hundreds of molecules are generated from a common chemical scaffold (backbone), with specific modifications introduced to enhance or diminish certain characteristics. These compounds are then screened in assays to determine their drug-like characteristics, which would inform further development efforts.

Alternatively, a pharmacologically active ingredient may be isolated from a herbal preparation that has demonstrated pharmacological activity in the past. The biggest challenge for herbal preparations is that they contain a multitude of chemical substances with varying levels of pharmacologi-

cal activity. Unfortunately, these preparations do not only contain desirable pharmacological properties but often do contain undesirable attributes as well. Therefore, selecting one of the components of a herbal preparation requires careful and methodical application physico-chemical separation techniques to isolate the compounds of interest. Thereafter, the isolated molecules are subjected to elaborate tests to identify the specific molecules that are responsible for the observed pharmacological activity.

PURIFICATION AND SCALE-UP

Often, the initial synthetic chemical products contain impurities, which do not have known or beneficial pharmacological characteristics. Herbal preparations are even worse in this regard because they usually contain other compounds that may have undesirable characteristics. In each of these cases, there is a need for isolation and purification of the preparations, so that only the compound of interest is available at the end of the process.

The purification processes that are available to Chemists include electrophoretic separation, liquid chromatography, fraction collection, etc. Following purification and characterization, the next challenge is to scale up production of the pure form of the molecule from the laboratory scale of a few milligrams required for initial testing during the Drug Discovery phase, to a "Development" batch of several grams or even kilogram amounts. The larger amount will be utilized in the multiple studies that are part of R&D activities.

PRECLINICAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPTIMIZATION

In this phase of pharmaceutical R&D, the molecule of interest is subjected to a battery of tests in a combination of *in vitro* (Latin for "in a test tube") and *in vivo* (in a living organism) setting. The reason for starting most of the preclinical tests is that putting untested molecules into animal testing is both unethical and expensive. It is unethical, because the potential toxicity of a compound is largely unknow in the early stages of R&D, and testing compounds in animals without indicating the side effects would be frowned upon by society.

Using *in vitro* tools, such as liver microsomes, hepatocytes, cell cultures, and isolated perfused organ systems, etc., potential drug molecules are evaluated for drug-like properties, such as metabolic stability, metabolic profile, the potential for interaction with other co-administered drugs, protein binding, the potential to cause reactive metabolites, etc. The results of these tests would help re-design or make modifications to a molecule, in order to decrease it. The *in vivo*

tests would involve the use of animal species (mouse, rat, dog, and monkeys), to generate safety and dose-setting data that would permit a reasonable extrapolation into human doses.

CLINICAL TESTING

Following compilation and evaluation of preclinical data for a likely drug candidate, a decision is then made to proceed to clinical studies involving human subjects. Clinical studies are organized in phases, starting from a Safety evaluation in healthy volunteers, and culminating in large-scale studies using complex statistical designs and blinded treatments to verify Safety and Efficacy of the drug candidate.

COMMERCIALIZATION
(Scale-up, Chemistry, Manufacturing, Control)

If a potential drug meets the pre-defined clinical end-points for a particular disease indication, then, the molecule is manufactured on a large scale for commercialization. Scale-up of chemical manufacturing is often complicated when the lab-scale synthesis is changed to commercial volumes. The use of different reaction volumes, equipment, and processes do not always translate directly from lab-scale to commercial scale. To ensure that the output is consistent in quality and purity, the so-called CMC (Chemistry Manufacturing and Controls) processes are particularly important, because the drug product at this stage is ready for a larger audience. Each batch of the drug compound is subjected to rigorous physical and chemical tests to confirm their identity, purity, and other specifications before they are released for use.

REGULATORY APPROVAL

At the time of submitting a Dossier to a relevant regulatory authority, all the known information about a potential drug is assembled to demonstrate its safety and efficacy. The regulatory agency will then review the entire package of data. If the regulatory agency is satisfied that the drug molecule is what the sponsor claims that it is and that it is safe, and efficacious against the claimed disease condition, they will approve its use in the general population. Sometimes, the drug is restricted to a segment of the population for which adequate information exists for a claim of safety and efficacy. For other indications or an expanded use, the regulatory agency may request additional information, additional studies, or a modification of the application in accordance with the new request. In the U.S.A., the regulatory agency is the Food and Drug Administration

(FDA), whereas, in Nigeria, it is the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). The NAFDAC process for the production of herbal medicines (and its derivatives, presumably) is contained in NAFDAC Doc. Ref. No. DER-GDL-006-00, effective 2018-2020.

CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING DRUGS FROM NATURAL PRODUCTS IN NIGERIA

The pharmaceutical sector in Nigeria is made up of the academia, administrative, regulatory, community (retail), industry and hospital practice areas and is regulated by the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) (Ekpenyong et al, 2018). They reported that there are 21,892 registered pharmacists in Nigeria. However, the data suggest that only 12,807 (58.5%) are in active professional practice as indicated by the number of licensed pharmacists in 2016. The challenges of developing drugs from natural products are discussed in detail in the works of Akande et al, 2012., Agbo and Mboto, 2012., Walubo, 2013., Shakya, 2016., Habtamu and Melaku, 2018).

In a keynote speech delivered by Farouk Gumel (Partner, Price Waterhouse) in 2014, he projected that the global pharmaceutical market would grow to $1.3 trillion by 2020. Unfortunately, Nigeria was not listed in the countries where the anticipated growth would take place. He reported annual average GDP growth of 6.8% for Nigeria, but this growth does not include a significant contribution from the pharmaceutical sector.

THE ECONOMICS OF PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The cost of developing a new drug from *de novo* synthesis to marketing is estimated to cost between $600 million and $800 million (Adams and Brantner, 2006, Prasad and Mailankody, 2017). Between 2009 and 2018, the median cost of developing a new drug was $985 million, while the average sum totaled $1.3 billion (Wouters et al, 2020). The high cost is mostly linked to the high attrition rate of molecules in the drug discovery and development pipeline. It is estimated that for every 10-20 molecules that emerge from pharmaceutical research and enters the development pipeline, about 10,000 molecules would have to be isolated, synthesized and screened for pharmacological activity (Torjsen, 2015). Essentially, pharmaceutical drug discovery and development is a very expensive and capital-intensive enterprise, without assurance of success. The cost could be considerably cheaper if the starting material is a naturally occurring compound, likely extracted from roots, leaves, bark, and fermentation of

microbes or other constituents of the animal and plant kingdoms. Another area of very high costs is the conduct of clinical trials.

Whereas on the surface, drug discovery and development does appear to be an expensive proposition, nonetheless, it is a high-cost and high-paying enterprise. For the sake of comparison, in 2018, a total of $25.08 billion was remitted by Nigerians in diaspora into the country (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2019). This represents about 83% of the federal government's 2018 budget in value (equivalent to N8.7 trillion Naira @ N350=$1). In the same year, Nigeria's total receipts from the sale of crude oil were estimated to be between $16.1 billion and $26 billion.

On the other hand, the top-five pharmaceutical companies reported the following gross revenue figures in their publicly-issued financial records: Pfizer ($53.6 billion), BMS ($20.8 billion), Novartis ($51.9 billion), Merck ($42.3 billion), Johnson & Johnson ($81.7 billion), Eli-Lilly ($35.9 billion), Bayer (£39.6 billion), and GlaxoSmithKline (£30.8 billion). If Nigeria were to develop drugs from common plants that are known to have pharmaceutical properties, the cost of discovery and development would, almost certainly, be overshadowed by the revenues from marketing such drugs.

IMPORTANT MEDICINAL PLANTS IN NIGERIA

Chukwuma et al (2015) and El-Ghani (2016) have provided excellent and comprehensive reviews of medicinal plants in Nigeria. The African Regional Standard Organisation (ARSO), an intergovernmental body formed by the African Union (AU), has identified ten medicinal plants from Nigeria:

- Moringa oleifera (drumstick tree),
- Bitter kola (*Garcinia kola*),
- Bitter leaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*),
- Cashew (*Anarcadium occidentale*),
- Scent leaf (*Ocimum gratissimum*),
- African bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*),
- Yellow yam (*Dioscorea bulbifera*),
- Prunus Africana for prostate cancer,
- Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), and
- Hibiscus sabdariffa (zobo).

The plants, and their associated pharmaceutical properties, sourced from the works of Muanya, 2017, Tilaye et al. 2018, Biswas et al, 2002, Okpanyi and Ezeukwu, 1981, Neuwinger. 2000, Franz and Franz, 1988, Ali et al. 1991), are the following:

Moringa oleifera (the drumstick tree, Odudu oyibo, Okochi egbu, Okwe olu, Okwe oyibo):

This plant is thought to be a natural energy booster, strengthens the immune system, has antibiotic properties, cures headaches, migraines, asthma, ulcers, reduces arthritic pains and inflammations, restricts tumor growth, increases milk production in nursing mothers, and nourishes malnourished children, who gained more weight after the leaves were added to their diets.

Garcinia kola (bitter kola, aku-*ilu* or *ugolo*):

Nigerian scientists have confirmed in clinical settings and in animal models that eating moderate quantities of bitter kola enhances sexual activity, and it has clinically significant analgesic/anti-inflammatory effects in knee osteoarthritis patients. Nigerian scientists have also patented eye drops made with bitter kola for preventing blindness in patients with glaucoma.

Vernonia amygdalina (Bitter Leaf, *onugbu*):

This plant is thought to be an effective treatment for diabetes, cancer, drug-resistant microbial infections. Indeed, a bitter-leaf-based herbal anti-diabetic medication has passed human clinical trials and received a United States Patent 6531461. It is also a phytochemotherapy (treatment based on plant chemicals) for cancer made from aqueous extracts of leaves of Bitter leaf, which has received a United States Patent 6849604. In a study of acetaminophen-induced hepatic damage in mice (DILI = Drug-Induced Liver Injury), bitter leaf extracts protect the liver by eliciting hepatoprotectivity through antioxidation (Tilaye et al, 2018).

Anacardium occidentale (Cashew):

Cashew seed extract has anti-diabetic effects, anti-inflammatory properties, have a beneficial effect on blood pressure, prevents insulin resistance among diabetics, and helps control diarrhea, dysentery and hemorrhoids. It has also been shown that gram-positive bacteria, which cause tooth decay, acne, tuberculosis, and leprosy, are killed by chemicals in cashew nuts, cashew pulp, and cashew shell oil.

Ocimum gratissimum (Basil or *nchuanwu* or *arigbe*):

Arigbe or *nchanwu* leaf is a relatively well-studied herb, with research that has demonstrated that it can radically and speedily improve anxiety and depression and reduce stress. It has also been used for the treatment of headaches, diarrhea, wart, worms, and kidney infections. The leaves of certain varieties of *nchuanwu* are said to contain thymol oil, which is highly antiseptic and also used to prevent mosquito bite.

Irvingia gabonensis (native mango, *ugiri* or *ogbono*):

Ugiri and ogbono seeds help to lower body weight in overweight persons, reduce abdominal fat, lower cholesterol, chances of developing diabetes, chances of developing heart diseases, chances of developing cancer, chances of developing stroke, and chances of developing kidney failure.

Dioscorea bulbifera (yellow yam):

Yellow yams are used in the treatment of piles, dysentery, syphilis, ulcers, cough, leprosy, diabetes, asthma, and cancer. It is a raw material for local contraceptives in Nigeria. In other areas of the world (Asia), they are used externally, usually

as a poultice, to treat wounds, sores, boils and inflammations; in dressings for treating dermal parasitic and fungal infections; or crushed, mixed with palm oil, and massaged onto areas of rheumatism, and for troubles of the breasts and for jiggers. The tuber is used as a diuretic and can be used as a remedy for diarrhea and hemorrhoids.

Prunus Africana (red stinkwood, African cherry, African prune):

African sherry seeds are used to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia (enlargement of the prostate), erectile dysfunction and enhanced sexual vitality, urinary tract disorders, kidney disease, male baldness, stomach upset, chest pain and inflammation.

Adansonia digitate (baobab):

Baobab leaves, bark, and seeds have been used to treat "almost any disease," including malaria, tuberculosis, fever, microbial infections, diarrhea, anemia, toothache, and dysentery. The leaves and fruit pulp have been used to reduce fever and stimulate the immune system.

Hibiscus sabdariffa (zobo):

Hibiscus sabdariffa has been used to treat high blood pressure, liver diseases, and fevers. Hibiscus tea is a mild laxative in large amounts. In Iran, it is a traditional treatment for high blood pressure, which is the focus of several studies, and for cholesterol reduction.

Azadirichta indica (NEEM or *Dogonyaro*):

Dogonyaro has been used for the treatment of malaria, intestinal worms, skin ulcers, diabetes, gum disease (gingivitis), birth control, leprosy, cough, and asthma. Also, the oil is also used for healthy hair, to improve liver function, detoxify the blood, and balance blood sugar levels.

CONCLUSION

According to a UNIDO country profile of the pharmaceutical sector in Nigeria report (2011), the key challenges confronting Nigeria's pharmaceutical market include counterfeit medicines, poor healthcare infrastructure, and the limited spending power of citizens. While foreign pharmaceutical companies operating in Nigeria simply import and market finished or semi-finished drugs, very little basic and applied research is conducted by the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry. Indeed, the lofty goal of sourcing APIs locally has never been realized, despite the academic research conducted in Nigerian universities.

Some of the biggest challenges confronting prospective R&D activities in Nigeria, in addition to the ones identified above, include paucity of capital (Nigerians are more likely to trade in finished commodities than manufacture them locally), the length of time it takes to bring a drug to the market, the challenge of setting up and operating high-quality laboratories for Research-scale operations and scaling such up to commercial manufacturing. Besides, a steady source of reagents that are critical to the operation of a standard R&D facility may not be assured, due to fluctuations in economic policies, uncertainty in the availability of foreign exchange, availability of competent scientists, and technical operators.

Finally, there is an abundance of natural sources of potential pharmaceutical raw materials in Nigeria. The pharmaceutical properties of some plants have been described in the literature in university labs, but adequate attention has not been given to the development of drugs from those raw materials. With the availability of a dedicated workforce and capital, it is possible to establish major pharmaceutical R&D facilities in Nigeria, which would extract, refine, identify, characterize and develop drugs from the medicinal plants that abound in Nigeria. These facilities would produce the active pharmaceutical ingredients needed by pharmaceutical producers. The potential earnings from such an industry could earn enough foreign exchange for Nigeria to dwarf the dwindling receipts from the sale of crude oil. Nigeria and Nigerians would benefit immensely from investment in this area. They only need the discipline to stay focused on the long-term benefits that could result from the effort.

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IGBO LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATION

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a universal phenomenon that is seen as an identity that marks out one group of people from another. It is a means of communication among people. As humans are gregarious beings, it is imperative to communicate and engage in social interaction among people. This communication takes different shapes and forms. Essentially, there are two main types of communication, namely, the verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. The spoken language is what is referred to as Linguistics. Igbo Language in Communication is an exploration of the Igbo spoken language as a means of social interaction. Igbo language in communication involves the study of human interaction through coded spoken language signal, its interpretation in social environment with the knowledge of the culture and values, aided by our mental faculty and what has already been stored in the subconscious mind.

Igbo language is spoken by the Igbo people. The language has over twenty-four (24) dialects, and they are mutually intelligible. The Igbo language belongs to the "Kwa" sub-family group of languages according to Ubahakwe.[1] Ubahakwe explains that the languages that belong to the "Kwa" sub-family group share some common certain traces of structural similarities especially relating to word roots or word stem. The Igbo language was said to have been written first by the British colonialists who introduced the use of the English alphabet. According to Ohiri-Aniche, "the study of Igbo language started around 1940 with only two Secondary Schools – Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS), Onitsha and Methodist Institute, Uzoakoli.[2] Today, however, the teaching of Igbo language is widespread in secondary schools in Igbo speaking states and in universities and tertiary institutions."

According to Echebima the study of Linguistics "enables us to analyze and understand the nature of the complex structural components of a language"[3] that produce meaning for social interaction. The paper focuses on the study of the sound (Phonology) system of Igbo language; the combi-

nation of the sounds to form words (Morphology); the issue of the formed words and their meaning (Lexical items), the arrangement of words in an utterance to produce meaning (Syntax); the deduction of the meaning through the Syntax order (Semantics) and the study of meaning in context (Pragmatics) All of them combined to form what we hereto call Igbo language communication.

PHONOLOGY

Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language. Ume, Dike and Ugorji define phonology as the study of the characteristics of sounds of a language.[4] Just like every other language, words, letters, or scripts represent definite sounds in the Igbo language. Each letter that represents a sound is called a phoneme. A phoneme is the minimal or the smallest unit of sound or the basic significant element of sound in a language. The Igbo language has 36 phonemes as presented below:

a	b	ch	d	e	f
g	gb	gh	gw	h	i
ị	j	k	kp	kw	l
m	n	nṅ	nw	ny	o
ọ	p	r	s	sh	t
u	ụ	v	w	y	z

Among these letters of the alphabet are eight (8) vowel phonemes and twenty-eight consonant phonemes. The eight vowel phonemes are: e i ị i o ọ u ụ.

Vowel phonemes are sounds produced without any obstruction of the air in the mouth while the consonant phonemes are the sounds that have some obstruction of the passage of the air through the mouth during their articulation and production. The organs of articulation which cause the obstruction of the air in the mouth during the speech production include the movement, the action and position of the lips, the teeth, the tongue, the alveolar ridge (the upper gum), the hard and soft palate (the roof of the mouth), the uvular and the vocal cord. The twenty-eight (28) consonant sounds are:

b	ch	d	f	g	gb	gh
gw	h	j	k	kp	kw	l
m	n	nṅ	nw	ny	p	r
s	sh	t	v	w	y	z.

The Igbo phonemes with their equivalent sounds in English words are represented in Table 1below:

Table 1: The Igbo Phonemes realized in English words

Igbo alphabet	English sound equivalent
/a/	as in arm
/b/	as in bill
/ch/	as in church
/d/	as in dog
/e/	as in egg
/f/	as in fish
/g/	as in god
/gb/	not in English
/gh/	as in high
/gw/	not in English
/h/	as in house
/i/	as in eve
/ị/	as in eagle
/j/	as in jug
/k/	as in kite
/kp/	Not in English
/kw/	as in queen
/l/	as in lemon
/m/	as in middle
/n/	as in note
/ṅ/	as in king
/nw/	not in English
/ny/	not in English
/o/	as in old
/ọ/	as in odd
/p/	as in pin
/r/	as in road
/s/	as in sing
/sh/	as in sheep
/t/	as in test
/u/	as in book
/ụ/	as in joyful
/v/	as in vine
/w/	as in wind
/y/	as in yield
/z/	as in zinc

Source: Echebima (2015:7-9

Se some of the Igbo phonemat have diacrit. This makes ace, significant differeeen between two seemingly similar words. Diacritics bring about

change the in meaningthe similar words. The following examples will suffice the above submission.

oku (a call) and ọkụ (fire) with the diacritic
olu (neck) and ọlụ (work) with the diacritic
iko (cup) and ịkọ (to plant) with the diacritic
iri (ten) and ịrị (to climb) with the diacritic

Furthermore, with the application and the influence of the to,nes one can differentiate between

ike [HH] strength and ike [HL] bottom
ọkụ [HH] fire and ọkụ [LL] clay pot

To illustrate the nasalized sound of [n] we can see the difference between

anụ [HH] meat and anụ̀ [HH] bee
ịnụ [HH] to hear and anụ̀ (HH) to drink

The nasalized sound is indicated with a dot or a tilde above the letter [n].

MORPHOLOGY

Morphology is the study of word-building or the study of the internal structure or composition of words, or the study of morphemes. According to Echebima (2015:41) morpheme can be a wora d or meaningful part of a word.[5] Morphemes are also described as "building blocks of meaning." The two types of morphemre the free morpheme the bound morpheme. The free morpheme is a word or a morpheme that can stand on its own, while a bound morpheme is one that cannot stand on its own but must be attached to a word or another morpheme. Unlike the free mor,pheme the bound morpheme usually does not have a definite meaning but its prestelys lend or accord a definite meaning to the formed word. For example:

bu + je = buje (carry to); two bound morphemes

bu + lie = bulie (carry up); two bound morphemes

tụ + da = tụda (throw down); two bound morphemes

buda + chaa = budachaa (carry down all), free morpheme and a bound morpheme.

bata + gḥi = batagḥi (did not come in), free morpheme and a bound morpheme.

buda + chaa + la = budachaala (has carried all down); a free morpheme and two bound morphemes.

di + nta = dinta (hunter); two free morphemes ụmụ + nne = ụmụnne (siblings); two free morphemes

akara + aka = akaraka (destiny); two free morphemes.

Bound morphemes are also known as affixes. Apart from the original prefix, infix, and suffix as forms of affix, the gbo language houses other features which are attachments that are attached to the work stem to form more words. One of these feature is called agglutination in which a string of morphemes joins to form a t atwhich tends to express a long statement. For example, the word, "budachaala" means "has carried all down" and "mezichabeghila" means "has not yet finished putting things in order." The term agglutination is derived a from Latin word meaning, "gluing" or "sticking together."[6]

Another type of affix to Igbo word called the enclitics includes the words, "keduzi" (How are things and "rienụ" (eat [you people] in which the syllables "zi" and "nu" are enclitics.[7] Enclitics do not have their own meaning but form a peculiarity of the language offering a shade of understanding to the listener. These affixes influence the meaning of the basic word or morpheme to which they are attached. These affixes could gen aerate multiplicity of verb forms and new words as illustrated below.[8]

i + be + pụ = ibepụ (to cut off)
prefix verb root suffix.

wepụ + ta + chaa = wepụtachaa (bring out all)
basic word suffix suffix

wepụ + ta + cha + ra = wepụtachaa (has brought out all)
basic word suffix suffix suffix

saa + la = saala (has washed)
basic word suffix

na + e + ri = na-eri (eating/eats)
prefix vowel verb root

ga-	+	a	+	ga	=	ga-aga (will go)
prefix		vowel		verb root		

Sometimes an Igbo word can have the affix called "infix" which comes between two morphemes, such as the [m] in:

eri + m + eri = erimeri (food
ede + m + ede = edemede (writing)
echi + m + echi = echimechi (investiture)

Mean,while there is an influential part which the suffix playthe s in Igbo verb wish are demonstrated in the two types of suffixes – the Extensional or Derivational suffixes and the Inflectional suffixes. The derivational suffixes relate to the formatiof an entirely new words with new mesaning or new connotsation. For example

base verb		suffix		
iwe	+	je	=	iweje (to take and go)
ibu	+	da	=	ibuda (to carry down)
ịtụ	+	ba	=	ịtụba (to throw into)
ba	+	mie	=	bamie (to enter farther in)
tụ	+	fee	=	tụfee (to throw across)
bata	+	gḥi	=	batagḥi (did not come)

On the other hand, the inflectional suffixes relate to the issue of grammar and tenses as illustrated below.

base verb		suffix		
bute	+	re	=	butere (brought)
bata	+	ra	=	batara (entered)
bata	+	la	=	batala (has entered)
batala	+	ṛi	=	batalari (has since entered)

THE SYNTAX

Syntax looks at how words are sewn or knitted together in a string into a meaningful sentence or part of it. Syntax can be defined as the positioning of words in the proper and correct order to make a meaningful sentence. It can also be viewed as a rule governing how words are arranged in a sentence to form a meaningful utterance. Echebima also describes Syntax as the study of the relationship between words for meaningful expression.[9] It

is this word order, this syntax that constitutes the grammar. Hence, a good syntax order in a sentence makes the sentence grammatical and correct, while an improper or misplaced order leads to an ungrammatical, incorrect, or incomprehensible sentence or statement. ,Syntax the,refore demands that words and their sounds are correctly placed and knitted together to make a correct sentence.

Since a language is for communication and social interaction, each language has its own set of rules governing the arrangement of words in an expression to be meaningful and easily understood by others. Otherwise, the expression will not make sense. So, every language has its own peculiar language typology. Echebima (2015:10) say thes that Igbo language belongs to the (SVO) language typology in which the words are arranged in the form: the subject (S), followed by the verb (V) and followed by the object (O).In Igbo it is seen as: Agụ/tagburu/ewu (SVO). This is to say that the subject is followed by the verb and the object follows the verb. This means that the subject (S) is the "doer", the performer of the action; that verb (V) indicates the action, while the object (O) is the "sufferer" or the receiver of the action. Table 2 below illustrates the (SVO) Igbo sentence structure.

Table 2: Igbo SVO syntax structure (with -ingle word subject)

Subject	**Verb**	**Object**	**English translation**
Ikechi	Tara	Azụ	Ikechi ate fish
M	Nọ	n'ụlọ	I am in the house
Ha	Riri	Akpụ	They ate cassava
Onyinye	mụrụ	Nwa	Onyinye delivered a child
Anyi	na-ata	Ọji	We are eating kolanut
Nkịta	tara	Ụkachi	Dog bit Ukachi.

The above table presents simple sentences with a single noun or pronoun as the subject or head of the sentence, a single verb, and a single object., It is the,refore necessary to explain the (SVO) structure further with some longer or extended sentences, to show that the subject could be a noun (N), a pronoun (Prn), or a noun phrase (NP) and the object could be a noun (N), a pronoun (Prn) of a noun phrase (NP), while the verb could be a verb or a verb phrase (VP). In summary:

(S) = S + V + O
= NP + VP + NP

The following sentences in Table 3 below gives more explaations

Table 3: Igbo SVO Syntax structure (with phrasal subject)

Subject	**Verb**	**Object**	**Meaning**
Onye a	Bụ	enyi m	This person is my friend
Nwaanyị ahụ	ga-eri	ofe egwusi	That woman will eat egusi soup
Enyi Azụka	Gotere	ọmaṛichaa uwe	Azụka's friend ba ought fine dress
Efere ọhụrụ ahụ	Dị	n'elu tebụlụ	The new plate is on the table
Okwuchi na Ada	na-aga	ahịa ọhụrụ	Okwuchi and Ada are going to the new market
Onyenkuzi anyị	Bịara	n'ụlọ anyị taa	Our teacher came to our house today

The constitution of the subjects in the above table are:
Onye a = NP = (N + Det)
Nwaanyị ahụ = NP = (N + Det)
Enyi Azụka = NP = (Adj + N)
Efere ọhụrụ ahụ = NP = (N + Adj + Det)
Okwuchi na Ada = NP = (N + Conj + N)
Onyenkuzi anyị = NP = (N + Prn)
Let us consider the Verb (V)
These are: bụ, ga-eri, gotere, dị, na-aga, bịara
Let us consider the Object (O)
enyi m = NP = (N + Prn)
ofe egwusi = NP = (N + Adj)
ọmaṛicha uwe = NP = (Adj + N)
n'elu tebụlụ = NP = (Prep + N)
ahịa ọhụrụ = NP = (N + Adj)
n'ụlọ anyị taa = NP = (Prep + N + Prn + Adj)
where N = noun, Prn = pronoun, Adj = adjective, Conj = conjunction, Adv. = adverb, Prep = preposition, Det = determinant.

It is obvious that English and Igbo languages share the same sentence structure, there are some differences in their word order in some phrases such as in the following phrases.

Table 4: Igbo phrases in comparison with English phrases

Igbo phrase	Equivalent English Phrase

onye a (n + det)	this person (det + n)
enyi m (n + prn)	my friend (prn + n)
ofe egwusi (n + adj)	egwusi soul (adj + n)
aḥia ọhụrụ (n + adj)	New market (adj+n)
efere ọhụrụ (n + adj)	New plate (adj + n)
onyenkuzi anyị (n + prn)	our teacher (prn + n)

nwaanyi ọjọọ (n + adj)	bad woman (adj + n)
akwụkwo a (n + det)	this book (det + n)
nwoke ise (n + adj)	five men (adj + n)
anwụ ụtụtụ (n + adj)	morning sun (adj + n)
oche ahụ (n + det)	that chair (det + n)

Furt,hermore the (SVO) structure of Igbo language deals with transitive and intransitisve verb. In the transiti,ve verb the action passes from the subject the "doer" to the object, the "sufferer", whereas in the intransitive verb the action does not pass from the subject to an identifiable object. Consider the following examples.

Table 5: Showing the Transitive Verbs

Subject	**Verb**	**Object**	**Translation**
Chike	Nọ	n'ụlọ	Chike is at home
Ha	Gburu	Anụ	They killed an animal
Nkechi	Butere	Akwa	Nkechi brought cloth
Anyị	na-eri	Nri	We are eating food
Ọ	gara	Ụlọikpe	He went to court

In the sentences of the table above, the action passes from the subject to the object while the reverse is the case in the sentences of the table below.

Table 6: Showing the Intransitive verb

Subject	**Verb**	**Object**	**Translation**
Unu	ga-abịa	-	You (p) will come
Nnamdị	Bịara	-	Nnamdị came
Ọ	Garuola	-	He has reached
Ha	na-eche	-	They are waiting
Ngọzi	Abịala	-	Ngọzi has come

Despite the general (SVO) syntactic rule, there is an aspect of sentence structure called the Generative or Transformational grammar, a concept in which a sentence can be re-written or transformed into various possible versions of utterances and still retain the meaning which in essence is proof of linguistic competences in the language. For example, in English the superficial surface difference between Nnamdi built the house: N_1P_1 + V + N_2P_2 (Active Voice) and the house was built by Nnamdi: N_2P_2 + Aux + V + N_1P_1 (Passive Voice)
Where Aux is Auxiliary

In Igbo language, it can be said,

Nnamdi rụrụ ụlọ ahụ
or Ụlọ ahụ ka Nnamḍi rụrụ
or Ọ bụ ụlọ Nnamdi rụrụ
or Ọ bụ Nnamḍi rụrụ ụlọ ahụ

The above differing word arrangement meaning the same thing is what transformational grammar is all about.

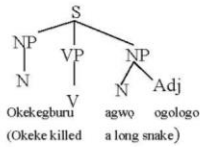
TREE DIAGRAM ANALYSIS

There is an aspect of the analyzing Igbo Communication Syntax that is known as the tree diagram structure whisch show the constituent parts of the sentence also called the phrase analysis in a tree-like structure with branching lines and nodes resembling an inverted tree.

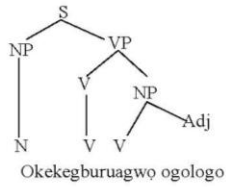
The following sentences are going to be used in the illustration.

Okeke killed a long snake
(Okeke gburu agwọ ogologo)

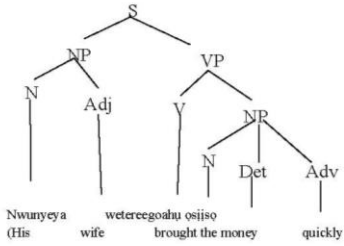
S is sentence S→ NP + VP + NP



ii) Using two parts structure, as S → NP + VP



iii) Another example is: "nwunye ya wetere ego ahụ ọsịịsọ" (his wife brought the money quickly)

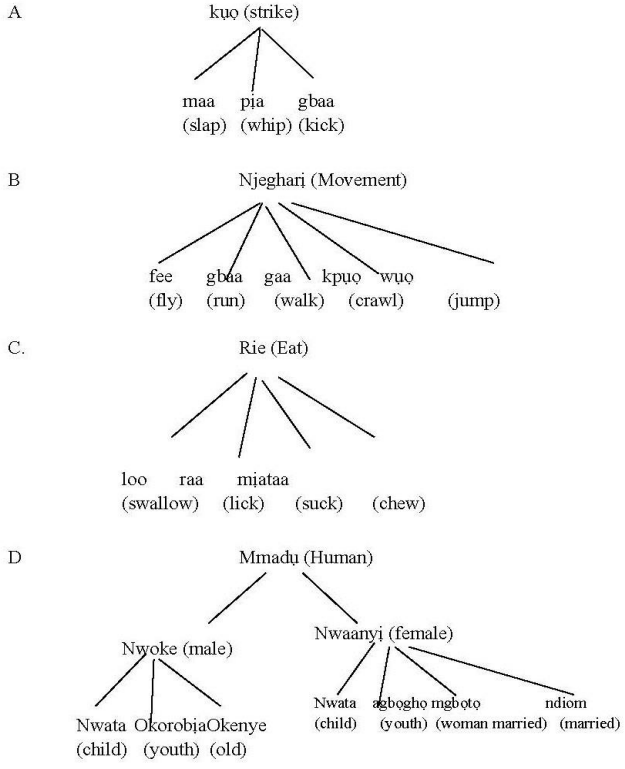


SEMANTICS

Semantics is the branch of linguistics that studies meaning. It deals with the interpretation of sound, words, and sentence structure. It deals with language and how we und theerstand meaning. It is the study of the relationship between words and their meanings and how those meanings are constructed. According to Echebima, Semantics is the cumulative result of the meaning stored in the sound of the words, the meaning of the Lexical items, the words and the syntactic or grammatical arrangement or structure of the words in a sentence or utterance.[10] Semantics is a field of linguistics that is concerned with the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Meaning is elusive and therefore, it is difficult to account for the different types of smeaning, contexts, beliefs, and individual experthat iences affect meaning. For example, in the semantic field analysis for 'cook' which is "si", the listener should be able to know which language "code" the speaker has used in the message. That is, to say whether the speaker used the word, "ghu", "ghe" or "hụ" ie boil, fry, or roast, respec-

tively. According to Okeke and Igbeaku, the terms are related and belonging to the same semantic field of coo aking on fire or heating process to prepare food.[11] It should be recognized that although the three words belong to the same action of cooking that is sharing something in common, they have various shades or meaning. In the cultural ,setting each word has its own peculiar meaning. So, there are definite meanings to, Ọ na-eghu ji", Ọ na-eghe ji", and "Ọ na-ahụ ji" (He is boiling yam' He is frying yam; and He is roasting yam, respectively. So, the speaker should choose the right word to use, so that the listener will understand and interpret the right meaning. This is why we cannot claim to know a word by merely knowing the pronunciation and the grammatical function of it in the sentence but when we know how to use it acceptably semantically. The knowledge of this semantic analysis will enable us to employ the right word to convey the right semantic meaning to achieve the right purpose.

The semantic analysis can be illustrated with a few Igbo words to show how a head word can branch out into various shades of semantic meaning.



The next aspect of this work which is meaning outside the meaning is Pragmatics.

PRAGMATICS

Pragmatics is the study of meaning in context. In pragmatics, utterances are interpreted based on the context of use. It is concernevidininingion for the distinction between sentence meaning and s'peakers meaning. Pragmatics is concerned with how the society/situation in which an expression is used influence determines the meaning. Pragmatics is the meaning of an utterance which is outside the linguistic, syntactic, or grammatical meaning, but the extra meaning hidden in the words of the utterance. The following examples illustrate how meaning is derived based on the context of use:

a. Conversation between an old woman and a young man

The old man says to the boy:

i) Nna m, bịa ka m lee ihu gị, (My father, come let me see your face).
ii) Di m, ebee ka ị na-aga? (My husband, where are you going?)

In (i) there is the use of "Nna m" (My father) and in (ii) there is the use of "Di m" (my husband) but they cannot be taken literally because the young boy can neither be the old woman's father nor husband, but in their social context or setting the boy will understand that the woman is only showing love and endearment.

b. Igbo greetings like

i) Unu abọọla chi? (Have you people woken up from sleep)
ii) Unu dịkwa mma? (Are you people fine?)
iii) Ị bịala? (Have you come?)

The three expressions above sound like questions, but they are not. In social context they are just normal Igbo greetings; (i) means, "Good morning" (ii) means, "How are you?" and (iii) means, "welcome." And the respondent's reply in each case would be simply, "Ee" (yes).

c. Conversation between two people

On hearing about a feat performed by a person, the listener responds by saying, "onye ahụ bụ arụsị" (that person is a devil). Although the person has used the word, "arụsị" (devil) to describe the person being referred to, he does not really mean that. Instead, the person is being praised as a very clever and ingenious person.

d. Consider the following statements

a) Aẓịrịza na-agba m. (I am perspiring). Although the speaker is saying that he is feeling hot and perspiring, in that situation he could actually be mean one of the following:

i) I want to remove my shirt
ii) I want to go outside
iii) Put on the air-conditioner
iv) Open the doors and windows

b) Mmiri na-achọ izo. (It is threatening to rain)

This could mean any of the following:

i) We cannot go out now.
ii) Let us take an umbrella.
iii) Let us call a taxi
iv) I don't want to be drenched.

c.) Gbụpụ asụ. (Spit out)

In the Igbo society, when one hears about something detestable, an abomination or horrible action committed by a person or persons, the listener shows disgust and condemnation of the action by making that statement which, though it says "spit out" does not really mean spit out saliva, but rather it serves as a kind of exclamation meaning, "it is horrible!" or "it is terrible!" or "God forbid!"

With the above e,xamples we have been able to demonstrate that there is a lot more to the meaning of what people say sometimes than we can capture from the ordinary grammatical or linguistic form of the expression. The illustrations have shown that Pragmatics relates to the aspect of meaning that hinges on the extra-linguistic word, the context and the situation surrounding such a word. In other words, one can derive more meanings from the unsaid and that deeper meaning of an utterance depends on the context of the interaction, the circumstances surrounding the time of the utterance as well as the cultural setting.

CONCLUSION

In thi,s paper we have examined how the Igbo language functions in communication. We have seen thct, in Communicating the Igbo l,anguageisere are much to know than just speaking. We have been able to state the fact that there is a lot when there is communithatn which must be comprehended and which we termed meaning outside meaning. The paper has illustrated that sound produces the letters of the alphabet and showed how the combination of the sounds of the alphabet created the words and their meanings. It was further shown that the words are ar-

ranged in a string or structured to make meaningful expressions used for communication, information, and social interaction. The paper further demonstrates that in the spoken language an expression has to be decoded or interpreted for the meaning to be understood. We have also established that the expression or utterance is capable of having double meanings which means that interpreting for meaning is not an easy thing because one does not only need to know what the linguistic structure means but also know what the society knows and believes, what the circumstances are, and the facts that are stored in the subconscious mind. Again, in addition to the main subjects of Phonology, Morphology and Syntaxthe as in English language, we also have in our spoken Igbo language, things like the affixes influencing the meaning of words, vowel assimilation and elision, tonal modulation influenced by syllables and stress sound and the unspoken pragmatic meaning of utterances. Moreover, like the English la thenguage, Igbo language does not shy away from absorbing loanwords.

NOTES

[1] E. Ubahakwe, "The Language and Dialects of Igbo," in G.E.K. Ofomata (ed) *A Survey of the Igbo Nation* (Onitcha: African First Publishers Limited, 2002), 256.

[2] C. Ohiri-Aniche, *Nkuzi Igbo Dịka Asụsụ Epum (Igbo L_1) N'ụlọ Alwụkwọ Nọ̀ị Seḳọnḍịrị,* (Port Harcourt: Emhai Publications, 2004).

[3] G. Echebima, *A Textbook of Igbo Linguistics,* (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2015), 1

[4] I. Ume, G. Dike and J. Ugorji, *Ụmị Nḳọwa Ụtọasụsụ Igbo*, (Orlu: Nneji & Sons Press, 1998), 5-24.

[5] Echebima, *A Textbook of Igbo Linguistics*, 41.

[6] Echebima, *A Textbook of Igbo Linguistics*, 45.

[7] The term enclitics is derived the from Greek word meaning "leaning on."

[8] See also Echebima, The place of The Affix.

[9] Echebima, *A Textbook of Igbo Linguistics*, 97.

[10] Echebima, *A Textbook of Igbo Linguistics*, 120.

[11] C. Okeke and B. Igbeaku, "Igbo Verb of Cooking: A Lexical Semantic Analysis," Language Matters, Vol. 46, No. 1. (2015) (Retrieved from https/www.Tandfonline.com. 9/4/2020.

OMUMU NA OMENALA EZI NA UNO NDI IGBO[1]

BIKO AGOZINO
Virginia Tech

Okwu Mpkilipki:

Cha-cha-cha ndi Igbo Kwenu! Kwenu! Muo nu! Zuzuo nu!
Ndi Igbo turu ilu we si o, na ihe amuru amu ka ihe agwolu agwo. Ya mere omumu jilu bulu ihe di mkpa na omenala ndi Igbo maka na nwa mkpi si na njepuga di mma ya jili jee ibe nne ya welu muta isolu onu elu. Umu akwukwo na eje akwukwo jee muta ihe di iche iche. Ma na tufu ha ebido jewe akwukwo, ha ga egbegodu igbe, jee ije, muta asusu Igbo nke di na ire nne ha. Omumu na ada ka imu nwa, imalu dakwaa ka ima mma. Onye mutalu ihe ofulu di ka onye mutalu nwa ofulu. Ikwu amaghi, ibe ezi ya bu okwu ndi Igbo ji egosi na adighi amacha ife uwa amacha maka na a na aju ajuju si, ebe I ma nke a, I ma nke ozo? Nwanne m asikwana na gi amalusigo bu ndumodu Osita Osadebe dulu anyi. Ndi ogbalu ofulu ufodu achoghizi imuta ihe ofulu, ufodou na ime ha bu soso ego oku ka ha cholu, a si ha bia muo olu aka ha asi mba, a si ha bia kowa ugbo ha asi gi akplikwana ha, a si ka a zuwa ha na akwukwo ha ajuo gi ma ndi nke guchalu ha agutalu ya gini? Ya melu obi uto jili di m na a si m bia kwuo okwu gbasalu ihe omumu na omenala ezi na uno ndi Igbo maka na ndi omumu na ato uto ebuka na ala Igbo. Na ime okwu m a, aga m eji soso asusu Igbo welu kwuputa ya, onye si na ya anaghi anu Igbo, ya mara na uzu amaghi akpu ogene ga ene anya na odu egbe. Ma I na anu Igbo ma I naghi anu Igbo, Igbo ga anu gi bu okwu Ojukwu gwara ada ndi Igbo amuru na obodo America. Atuolu omalu, omalu; a tuolu ofeke, o mee gini? O fejie olu.

NKOWA

Ihe ndi ocha na akpo edukeshonu dibu adi na ala Afrika mgbe ochie tufu enwelu ndi ana akpo ndi ocha, ndi nkuzi, na umu akwukwo. Umu madu bu na Afrika ka ha bu uzo puta bia muwa, zuwa, bawa uba nwa, welu gaba njem welu bijuo uwa niile na mgbe ochie, mgbe elu bu ala osa, mgbe ezi di na ukwu ukwa. Ada anyi nwanyi bu Katirinu Acholonu delu akwukwo kpu oku no onu welu kwuo na anyi bu ndi nna nna Adamu bu aha nwoke mbu Chineke kelu nke dalu ada welu zawa Adaa mu, nke nwunye ya bu Ive na egosi ya uzo na abani. Tufu edee akwukwo nso nke Jee na isisi, ndi Africa aluchagoli piramidi ukwu na piramidi nta, welu akala nsibido welu deputechaa ka esi agba okpukpu na ka esi eri ozu, ka esi agbako ihe na ka esi ako nri, ka esi ekpe ikpe na ka esi agu oge di na elekere, ma na ubochi, ma na izu uka, ma na onwa, di na aro nke ndi ocha

[1] Ekene kenelu m Kanayo K. Odeluga na ndi Igbo-American Cultural Educational Series (ICES) bu ndi si mu meelu ha semina na ubochi 20 Novemba, 2019, bu ebe edemede a si puta.

jizi welu na eme kalenda ha taata. Ndi ocha ufodu di ka Hegel biaziri na etu onu na asi na o bu soso ndi ocha ma ka esi ede akwukwo ma na Derida bu nwa Afrika julu ha si, obu ebee bu ebe mbu umu madu mutalu isu asusu na ide edemede? Afrika. Derrida kwuru na ndi obuna nwelu ike ibo onwe ha aha ebidogo ide akwukwo maka na edemede di na obodo obuna di na uwa gburugburu. Diop tinyekwalu onu welu si na Afrika bu nne na nna mmepe obodo na uwa niile gburugburu.

Nke a na egosi na o bughi ndi ocha kuziri ndi Igbo ihe di iche na mma na njo. Nwa afo anyi bu Oluada Ekwuoanu nke ndi ntori gbalu ohu kwuru na ndi ocha bialu tolu ha welu gbaa ha ohu bu ndi na eme ihe atiti na ebi agbo. Ha amaghi na o bu alu ime ka madu riwe ihe ma ya akwoghi aka, ma ya foduzia ita atu ututu, ma obu isa ahu ugboro abuo oge niile, ma ya fodu izacha uno madu ga ano hie ura. Ha nyuchaa nsi, ha ejili aka nri ha fichaa ike, emechaa ha abiakwa jili ya riwe ihe ma obu kwee madu na aka. Omume ha na aso oyi na anya umu Igbo ha gbalu ohu. Ha amaghi ka esi ako nri, ma obu ka esi esi nri, ha amaghi ka esi akwanyelu ndi okenye ugwu, ha amaghi na anaghi amabulu umu nwanyi na ike jee dina ha welu tuwa ha ime, ha chelu na ihe e ji atuwa nwanyi ime abughi ka anuwa di na nwunya welu zuwa umu aka, o ka a mutalu ha umu ha ga ere welu kpata ego igwe. Ha amaghi na ndi Igbo mulu nwa welu boo ya Nwakaego, ma obu Ndukaku, ma obu Akubilo. Soso ihe ndi ocha ma bu ka esi agba egbe ma na ha amaghi na ogba egbe na esi na egbe ana.

Umu Igbo o gini na ada?
Ejikwa m ohu gbalu ndi Igbo ofo o,
ejikwa m oria kwashioko ofo,
ejikwa m onwu aguu ofo o,
ejikwa m oria amaghi ihe ofo.
Umu Afrika gini na akpotu?
Ejikwe m mgbo ogbunigwe ofo o!

Ma ya bulu ka Shidodo nwata be anyi siri guo egu maka onwu Ebola. Ihe kpatalu ndi ocha jili bia na ala anyi bia tolu imerekiti umu madu ha gbalu ohu nnukwulu nnu aro bu maka na anyi mujuru umu ebe niile, welu koputa nri anyi ga erikocha na udo na anwuri na ihunanya maka oganiru anyi. Ihe omumu so na ihe diolu ndi Igbo ndu oge ana agba ohu maka na ndi nne nan di nna anyi jisi ike na amuzili umuaka akwukwo nke bu akwukwo nri, nke eji agwo iba, nke eji agwo onye agwo talu, nke na agbaka agbaka na ahu, na nke bu nsi na egbu madu.

Onweghi nwa afo Igbo I ga aju aha osisi di iche iche ma ka oghalu igwa gi aha ha. Ndi ocha batazia bia kuziwe maka roses, daffodils, oak, na asikwa na asighi di na be ha. Ufodu ndi azuchalu na akwukwo tata amaghizi aha ugu, ugbogiri, ose di iche iche, okwulu, oka, anwara, oha, egusi, onugbu, ogbono, ule, agwa, ahikere, akpu, ede, ji, ma ya foduzi ka esi emezi ha ka ha bulu nri. Ihe ha ma bu esichaa ka ha rijuo afo ha ma na ha amghizi na o bu aka aja aja na ebuta onu manu manu. Gi jee ala Igbo tata, oba ji adighizi na ezi na uno, uno ede adighizi, erimeri foduzili welu bulu akwa ahuhu na abacha ma obu garri ma obu Indomi. Ufodu jizi ji edelu akala welu na agba Ikeji ha. Unu ahugo ihe Bekee melu anyi o? Bekee size anyi suwa olu Bekee.

Akwukwo na ato uto
Ma o na efie ahu na mmuta
Onye nwelu nkasi obi
O ga amuta akwukwo
Ma ya bulu na nne ya na nna ya nwelu ego
Ma ya bugodulu na nne ya na nna ya engweghi ego.

Mgbe gboo, ndi Igbo bu ndi eji igu akwukwo welu malu amalu. Uno akwukwo bu uzo bido na ala ndi Yoruba bu ebe ndi uka bu uzo bido igbasa ozi oma ha. Oge Bekee bialu ani Igbo, ndi Igbo juo ha akwu isi ole welu buso ha agha Ekumeku nke dalu afo iri ato na uma tufu Bekee merie ndi nke anyi. Azikiwe delu na ubochi amulu nna ya na Onicha bu ubochi ugbo mini ndi ocha tulu ogbunigwe iji melie ndi Onicha (Azikiwe, 1970). Ozugbo ozugbo ahu ndi ocha bialu chiwa, ndi Igbo dabanye na uno akwukwo di ka azu si adabanye na mini. Anyi bido jili aka anyi luwa uno akwukwo, bido zipuwa umu anyi ka ha jee muta ihe niile ndi ocha ma di ka Ezulu siri zipu nwa ya ka o jee bulu anya ya na nti ya ebe ndi ocha no, ma kwatalu ya oke ya ma ya bulu na o nwelu ihe ha na eke, ka Achebe si koo ya. Uchendu (1965) delu na izu umuaka na akwukwo so na uzo ndi Igbo si ebuni obodo ha enu ka aghalu isi na obodo niile emepezigo kalia obodo nke ha maka na ndi na achi obodo ha amaghi akwukwo. Adi ama ama, O gwalu O.

Azikiwe, nwa jelu obodo Bekee, natalu obodo Ola Edo nke ana akpo Ghana, bido ibiputa akwukwo ozi ya iji kuzielu ndi isi ojii na isi ha na isi ndi ocha ha, onweghi nke ka ibe ya. Ofu nwoke welu dee akwukwo na aju ma ndi Afrika ha enwekwalu Chukwu nke ha ka obu soso ndi ocha ka Chineke na azoputa. Azikiwe biputa ya na akwukwo ozi ya. Ndi ocha bulu onwe ha tuo na ala, bia wewe iwe oku, si na Azikwe kpalili ochichi

ha, na ihe o kwulu bu ekwu ekwu. Ha pkupu ya na ulo ikpe ha welu ma ya ikpe, nakwaa ya uha, si na o dalu iwu sedishonu. Emechaa Zik kpegbuo ha maka na agbakpo dike izu, agbaa ya ugbolo abuo. Oge Zik meriri ndi ocha ka Nkrumah jili jee juo ya ebe onye isi ojili jelu muta ihe kalu ya obi ibia riowa ndi ocha mgba mechaa merie agu Bekee. Nna anyi, Zik, welu nye ya akwukwo nkowa si ya gawa Mahadum Linkon ebe o jelu akwukwo na Pensilvania. Ikwu amaghi, ibe ezi ya.

Zik meriri ndi ocha na Ghana ma ha chulu ya si ya naa Naijiria bu ebe amulu ya. Tufu o natawa na afo 1937, o biputa akwukwo chikotalu ebe o delu ako na uche ya na akwukwo ozi ya ahu welu kpoo ya *Afrika Ogbalu Ofulu* ma obu *Renascent Africa*. Na ime akwukwo ahu, Zik gwalu ndi Afrika ha kwusi iche na ha agaghi abu madu ma ha abaghi na otu, ma obu gwoo ogu, ma obu bulu amosu, ma obu kowa nsi, chuwa aja ukwu na aja nta. O si o, na ihe Bekee jili meria anyi abughi otumakpo ma obu otu nzuzo; ihe ha jili kalu anyi ike bu na ha na eso usoro sayensi (scientific methods) na ihe obuna ha cholu ime. Ha ga agwa gi ihe ha cholu ime, kowalu gi ihe o ji di mkpa ka ha mee ihe ha cholu ime, gwakwa gi usoro ha ga esi mee ya. Ha mesia ya ma ya adabaghi ka ha siri choo, ha emeghalia ya uzo uzo. Zik si ndi Afrika na obughi ichu aja ka ha ga eji chupu ndi ocha na achi ha ochichi nchigbu. Ihe ndi Afrika tosiri ime bu imu akwukwo, ofu onye kuzielu ofu onye, ka anyi welu rughalia oku na uba anyi, mee ka mmuo anyi kulie na ula, mee ka anyi jikoo aka welu bunitewe umu Afrika gburugburu (Azikiwe, 1937). Ndi ozo chelu na Azikiwe satalu ogu na aka mamiwata melu ndi ocha bia ijide ya o wolu ulukuru fepu. Ma obu ha guo oluru tua ya ute oma dewelu ya oche eze na elu ya, Zik asi ha mba jee nolu ani na oche umu mgbe. Zik si ha na o bu asi, na soso soshal sayensi (social science) bu ihe ya ji bido *West Afrikan Pilot* na akwukwo ozi ndi ozo o bidolu, bidokwa uno ego nke Afrika Jikolu onu African Continental Bank), biakwa bido Ogbako ndi Obodo Naijiria na Kameruunu (National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon).

Awolowo, maka na a si na nna ya bu Babalawo, deputa akwukwo mgbalu uka si na o bu asi ka Zik na asi. Na uche Awo, juju bu sayensi ndi Afrika maka na o nwelu nwoke atulu nga ji juju tibuo iga atulu ya welu gbajie igwe di na ulo nga putalu onwe ya. Awo kwukwalu na 1939 na madu nwelu ike jee na ebe uzo gbalu ano welu kpoo aha ndi iro ya ugboro ato welu gbuo ndi iro ya (Awolowo, 1939). Zik si ndi nwelu juju ahu ha ano ebee mgbe ndi ocha na anyu anyi ikpakwu ka o bu soso ndi ojii ka juju ha nwelu ike igbu? Ndi Igbo gelu Azikiwe nti bido zuwa umu ha na akwukwo ka ana anwu anwu. Emesia, Awolowo dee akwukwo ozo si na ihe melu ya ji bido uno akwukwo anaghi ana ugwo akwukwo bu maka

na ndi owuwa anyanwu galu na ihu karia ndi odida anyanwu. Ndi ugwu awusa chialu imu akwukwo waka maka na ha siri na umu akwukwo anaghi eruwezi isi. Azikiwe welu jee na ogbako ndi na eti iwu na ugwu na afo 1947 jee gwa ha na ije akwukwo di mkpa. Kama na umu akwukwo nata, ndi nne na nna tosiziri ikuzili ha ka esi eruwe isi na uno. A si na ha gelu Zik nti, malu na ha agaghi na ata afufu irio aririo na nsogbu ndi Boko Haram tata nke na atolu imerekiti umu akwukwo umu nwanyi jee na edina ha na ike maka na ha ekweghi na umu nwanyi tosiri ije akwukwo. Ndi Igbo si ezi na uno obuna gbaa mbo zuwa umu ha niile na akwukwo ma o bu na olu aka, ma o bu na imu ahia. O so na ihe na azo ndi Igbo ndu tata.

AGHA BIAFRA NA OMUMU

Oge agha Ojukwu na Gowon bidolu, Ekwe-Ekwe (2006) kwuru na ebe mbu egbulu umu Igbo ka ha bu akwu bu na uno mahadum nke di na ugwu. O di ka ndi ozo chelu na ha gbuchaa ndi Igbo gulu akwukwo, maluzia na madu niile ga abuzi ndi iberibe ma o bu ndi itiboribo. Umu okoro na umu agbogho gulu akwukwo bu ndi egbuchalu na agha ahu, gbukwuo umu aka nke na acho ibido akwukwo, gbuo ndi nne na nna galu inye aka zuo ha. Ya bulu ndi ozo ka emelu ihe emelu ndi Igbo, ha kalu itata ya ntu. Ma na ihe obuna ha melu ndi Igbo, ha edie ya si onye ebekwana anya mini kpatalu ndi ugwu jili kpowa ha ndi Nyamini. Ulo akwukwo niile aluchalu na ala Igbo, ndi iro sekaa ha, tuo ufodu bombu, bulu oche niile di na ime ha welu mekwaa oku. Ma na onye ji madu na ala jikwa onwe ya. Oge ndi iro na agba anyi mgbo di ka Achebe siri kwuo na akwukwu ikpazu ya, O Nweburu Ofu Obodo (*There Was a Country*), umu nwanyi anyi so na ndi na akuziri umuaka anyi ka esi agu akwukwo melu anyi jiri nyaa agha mmegbu ahu (Achebe, 2012). Oge anuchalu agha mgbuchapu na Biafra, umu Igbo bidokwa gbawa mbo, zuwa umu ha nwoke na umu ha nwanyi na akwukwo maka na onye arafulu, uche ya odi ebee? Uche bu akpa, onye obuna nya nke ya.

Oge agha belu umu Igbo gba oto laghachi na be ha, ndi ochichi nchigbu si na ego niile ha dewelu na uno aku, na soso pomu iri abuo (20 pounds) ka ha ga enye ezi na uno obuna. Uno ufodu ndi Igbo luchalu na akuku Naijiria ozo, analu ha ya na ike si na o bu oku a hapulu gbawa oso ndu. Ndi Igbo si ha na o bu dike kpatalu aku ndi ike bialu zulu, ahu dihaala mma, dike ga akpatakwa aku ka nke ahu ozo.

Ihe omumu di iche iche maka na ofu ihe kwulu, ihe ozo akwudebe ya. Imu akwukwo di mkpa ma na ufodu mutalu akwukwo na ejekwa jee

muo ahia ma obu jee muo olu aka. Agozino na Anyanike delu akwukwo iji gosi ka ndi Igbo si welu Imu Ahia mee di ka uno akwukwo ebe ana amu ihe gbasalu mgbele. Onye fulu onye ihe na agaziri, o gaghi ebido fuwa ya ufu anya. Ihe o ga eme bu na o ga akpolu ofu nwa ya kponye gi si gi akwukwana ya ugwo onwa, kama ka o fee gi afo ise, ka I wolu muzieru ya ihe niile I ma gbasalu udi mgbele ahu, ma o bu udi olu aka ahu, I jiri bulu madu. Emechazia, nna ukwu ya bu nwata ga enye ya ego ka o jee bido mgbele nke ya welu nwelu ike ikpotakwa umu olu nke ya nke o ga amuzili ka e si muzielu ya. Ya melu ndi Igbo jili kpaghachite uba ha niile nke agha mebili na oge adighi anya. Biazia welu ego ahu ha kpatalu ofulu welu zuwa umu ha na akwukwo welu bulu ndi kacha zuo umu ha na akwukwo na obodo Naijiria tata. Ya melu na ndi Igbo no na mba so na ndi kacha baa uba na ndi kacha guo akwukwo na obodo niile ha no.

Maka na nne ha na nna ha zulu ha ofuma, ha anaghi echefu ebe ha si bia. Ha gbasia mbo kpatachaa ego, ha ezinatalu nne ha na nna ha na uno ka ha ruo nnukwu uno na be ha, ma o bu kwuolu umu nne ha ndi ozo ugwo akwukwo, ma o bu tukota ego ha ga eji gote ogu di iche iche jee kee ndi ahu na eme na uno afo niile. Ndi azughi umu ha na akwukwo enweghi ofele iziputa umu ha rie nne di ka ndi Igbo maka na agbalu aka na azo ani, ndi ji ji ana ako.

UNO AKWUKWO NDI IGBO

Uno akwukwo ndi Naijiria no na nnukwu nsogbu tata maka na umu akwukwo enweighizi ike igafe ule nke WAYEKI (WAEC) ka ha si agafebu. Umu akwukwo amaghizi ka e si ede olu Bekee na ka esi agbako na mwepu ihe. Onye agafeghi ha abuo, malu na onye ahu adago, o ga enelekwa ya bu ule mgbe ozo ka o malu ma o ga agafe. Ndi Igbo so na ndi na agafe ule obuna nke ukwu, ma nwoke ma nwanyi ha. Ma na ndi Igbo sokwa na ndi na ada ule make na miri zowe, o dighi ezo soso na elu uno Mbe nwa Aniga.

Gini na gini melu uno akwukwo adighizi ike ikuziri umuaka anyi akwukwo di ka mbge mbu? Ufodu siri na o bu maka na ndi agha bialu welu uno akwukwo niile ndi uka luchalu sizia na o bu ndi ochichi nwe ha. Uche ha bu na ndi ochichi nwelu uno akwukwo niile, malu na ihe ana akuziri oke ga abu ihe aga na akuziri ngwere. O nweghi onye aga achu na ugwo akwukwo maka na ndi ochichi siri madu niile gawa akwukwo na akwughi ugwo obula. Ma na ihe ndi ochichi nwe di ka efi oha niile nwe, o nweghi onye o di oku na obi ka o jee gbutelu efi oha nri. Ego e wetalu ka e

wolu dozie uno akwukwo, ndi wuluwulu ufodu erie ya awufu. Umu akwukwo bidozia dawa ule ha gwogwo.

A si m kwuo, a ga m asi na uno akwukwo mgbe gboo abuchaghi oyoyo ma na ihe di iche bu na ndi nne na ndi nna ma mkpa igu akwukwo balu welu tinye anya na omumu umu ha. Nwata si na ya agaghi aga akwukwo, nne ya ga eji itali chulu ya chuba na uno akwukwo. Nwata nata si na onyue nkuzi pialu ya itani, nna ya apiakwuo ya nke fodulu. Ndi nna ufodu leelu ani ha iji welu kwuolu umu ha ugwo akwukwo iji gosi ha na akwukwo di mkpa. Ma na mgbe asiziri na enweghizi ugwo akwukwo, o dizia ka igu akwukwo o bu igbu oge na uche ndi ufodu. Ihe ozo melu bu na ndi gusiri akwukwo, o nweghi olu enyelu ha. Nke ato buluzia na ndi Nollywood biazili weputawa ihe onyinyo o di ka o bu mini onwunwu. Ezi na uno ga ano ruo onu ututu na ekili ihe onyinyo di iche iche mgbe umu akwukwo tosiri ilaru ula ma ha gusia akwukwo mgbede welu kwadoo maka uno akwukwo echi. Ha anaghizi agu akwukwo ha.

IHE AKUZIRI AKUZI NA IHE AMULU AMU

Na iga na ihu na okwu mu a, m si o, na ihe amulu amu ka ihe akuziri akuzi. O nweghi onye na akuziri umu aka ka esi aga ije ma obu ka esi achi ochi ma obu ka esi ebe akwa, ma obu ka esi asu asusu nne ha. Omumu adighi akwusi ma ozuzu kwusi maka na omumu tosiri ina aga na ihu bido na nwata ruo na okenye ma na ozuzu na akwusi oge nwata tosiri bulu okenye. Onye gasiri uno akwukwo welu si na soso ihe ya ma bu ihe ndi nkuzi kuziri ya mara na onye ahu amutaghi ihe nke oma. Ufodu ihe ka ndi nkuzi ga akuzi ma ndi ozo bu nke umu akwukwo ibe gi na ndi enyi gi ma obu ndi iro gi, ndi ogbo gi, ndi agbata obi gi, ndi uka gi, na ndi ezi na uno gi ga amuziri gi.

Ihe eji akpo ha ndi nkuzi nwelu ike ibu maka na ha na apia itali nke ukwu. Mgbe ndi ocha na achi anyi, ha kwuru na akwukwo nso si na atufuo itali emebie nwata. Oge Azikiwe batalu na okwa na Enugu, iwu mbu o binyelu aka bu iwu machili ipia itali na ahu ndi okenye ikpe malu, ma na Zik si na ya amaghi ma anyi tosili imachikwu ipia umu aka ihe. Ndi ocha tie mkpu, si na Zik melu alu. Na uche ha, ndi isi ojii niile di ka umu aka, ya bulu na apiaghi ha itali, ha agaghi anu ihe. Ya melu ndi nkuzi jili apia itali ncha. Ufodu ndi nkuzi na-akpo ya mkpo ogu ha na agba anyi na ike maka odi mma nke anyi. Zik si na nke ahu bu okwu asi. Na ihe akwukwo nso kwulu bu osisi nduu nke onye na-achi umu atulu ji egosi ha uzo, o bughi makai pia umu atulu ihe. Osisi ozo akwukwo nso si anyi atufukwana ka aghalu imebi umuaka bu osisi eji agba ji na ubi ka o

ghalu itosasi na ala nkiti. O bughi maka iji piawa aka ji itali. Anyi tosili imuta udi amamihe nke a ma ya bugodulu na ndi nkuzi akuzighi ya na uno akwukwo. Ndi nne na ndi nna, mutanu ka esi agwa umuaka okwu ndumodu, etizikwana ha ihe ka ha bu umu anumanu.

Abiagodu na imuta akwukwo, o nwelu udi omumu nke anyi enweghi onye ga-akuziri anyi ma anyi esie onwu jili aka anyi muta ya. Ihe di ka Igbo ya na Commerce bu ihe anyi enwechagi onye nkuzi ga akuziri anyi ma na ufodu anyi si na anyi ga eleleli ha na ule WASC. Ya bugodulu ihe di ka English na Math nke anyi nwelu ndi nkuzi, ihe ufodu umu akwukwo ji anafe ha ma imerekiti adaa ha bu maka na agbasaa akwukwo, ndi ma ihe na aga na ihu na amuta ihe na aka ha mgbe ndi ozo na egwuri soso egwu ma obu na ekili onyinyo di iche iche. Ya bu na umu akwukwo cholu inafe ofuma, ha chetekwa na o bughi ndi nkuzi ga akuziri ha ihe obuna, na ha tosiri iji aka ha muta ihe karia nke akuziri ha akuzi. Asighikwa m umu akwukwo egwuna egwu ma obu ije ozi nne n anna ziri ha, ma obu irahu ezigbo ura. Ihe m na ekwu bu na ha weputa awa ole ma ole ha ga eji muwa ihe ufodu akuziri ha ma nke akuzighiri ha, mara na o ga amalu ha ahu nke oma nke bu na oge ule ga abia, ha anafee nke oma.

Ihe ndi ozo anaghi akuzi akuzi bu ihe di ka olu ubi, imu umu, ka e si aka akuko Mbe nwa anuga, ka esi anyu nsi ma o bu mamiri, ka esi eri erimeri na ka esi anwu mini. Udi ihe a bu ihe madu na amuta na aka ya ghalu ichebe ka ndi nkuzi bia kuzielu ya. Udi ihe ufodu di ka igwo oria nke ndi dibia na agwo bu ihe nzuzo ha naghidi akuziri umuaka nke ha maka na ihe ya na ya so abughi ogu nne na agbalu nwa ya. Ndi dibia ahu na asi na onye o dabalu na akala aka, onye ahu ebulu ya gawa maka na o bughi madu ncha ka agwu na adabalu. Emesia, ndi dibia ufodu ebulu omumu ha naa mmuo o dizia ka nke ahu o nalu na iyi. Di ka Agozino na Anyanike siri dee na akwukwo journal, 'Imu Ahia' abughi ihe ana akpo ikuzi ahia. Ihe eji akpo ya imu ahia bu na nwata na amu ahia na eji aka ya amuta ihe di iche iche maka na nna ya ukwu na amuziri ya ahia, anaghi akpo ya onye nkuzi.

Ma na o bughikwa soso ndi Igbo na ezo ihe ufodu ezo. Obodo niile nwelu otu nzuzo ha eji ezo ihe omumu ufodu ka o bulu soso ndi no na otu ha ga ama ya maka ndi uta. Ma na ka omumu mkpo akwukwo na mgborogu ji di na ala Igbo na egosi na o nweghi otu aka nwelu ike izo elu igwe; ezochaa ufodu, ama agbaa. Nna m kuziri m akwukwo eji agwo afo osisa nke ndi bekee na akpo dysentery welu si m na nke ahu bu ihe nzuzo m nwelu ike iji nyelu ndi ahu adighi aka ma ghalu ina ha oke ego. O chelu na agwa madu niile ihe na agwo afo osisa, ha ga eje kpachalu akwukwo

ahu niile ka odiwazia uko, o welu dawa onu nke ukwu, mezia na ndi ufodu cholu ya, aka ha agaghi elu ya. Emesizia, m jili aka m mutawa ka m ga esi welu ahu m gwowa onwe m na ejighi mkpo akwukwo ma o bu mgborogwu obuna ma o bu ogu Bekee. Omumu nke ahu m ji aka m muta di na akwukwo m nke ana akpo, *ADAM: Africana Drug-Free Alternative Medicine* (Agozino, 2006), nke ndi ezi na uno m na ndi ozo kwuru na o na ere ire. Adodo na Iwu (2020) edeputagokwa akwukwo nke ha iji gosi mgborogu na mkpo akwukwo di iche iche eji agwo oria na Naijiria abughizi ihe nzuzo. Ndi Igbo mutalu ihe ga enyelu Ohaneze aka tosiri ibiputawa ha na akwukwo ka o ghalu iso ha naa ala ndi iche ma emechaa, ndi ozo esolukwa lee anya welu malu ma ihe ha kwuru o dikwa ire ka o bu okwu asi na ndu ha.

OKWU MMECHI

Ndi Igbo bu ndi Chineke ji omumu gozie. Onye Igbo furu na onye ozo ka ya malu ihe ufodu anaghi eji anya ufu ma obu obi ojoo sowe onye ahu. Kama ha ga eje riowa aririo ihe oriri na aka onye ihe na agaziri, ezi na ulo ndi Igbo ga ebulu manya jee be onye ahu si ya muzielu nwa ha udi olu aka ahu ma obu ahia ahu o ji aracha manu. Onye mutasia, o kpolu onye ozo kuzielu ya. Nwa gi bulu Doctor ma o bu Lawyer ma o bu millionair, o bughi soso gi ga na aza nne lawyer ma o bu nna doctor na obodo unu. Ndi ozo ga agba mbo ka umu ha mutakwa ka esi abu nnukwu madu.

Ya melu na oge Bekee bialu na ala Igbo, ndi be anyi lusalu ha agha iji zoo isi onwe anyi di ka agha Ekumeku nke dalu iri afo ato na akuku Asaba. Emesia, Bekee welu awuwo ha na oke mmuta ha jee kewaa anyi na ndi agbata obi anyi welu bia merie anyi. Ndi be anyi welu si na ebe amulu dike ka amulu ibe ya. Na ha ga ezipu umu ha ka Ezulu siri mee na akuko Achebe nke o kpolu *Arrow of God*, ka umu anyi jee bulu anya anyi na nti anyi na ihe ndi ocha bialu ime na be anyi. Ya nwelu ihe di mma ha cholu ike, ha eketelu anyi oke nke anyi; ya nnwelu aruru ala ha cholu ime di ka iweta ochichi nchigbu nke ndi Warrant Chief, ha abia gbalu anyi ama ka anyi kwusi ya. O bu umu nwanyi anyi ruru Ogu Umunwanyi welu melie ndi Bekee (Echewa, 1993). Ya melu na ndi Owuwa anyanwu Naijiria enweghi Uno ndi Chief no na-eti iwu mgbe Azikiwe na achi anyi ma na ndi Ugwu na ndi Odida anyanwu nwelu ha. Nke ahu na egosi na ndi Igbo jili bulu ndi na acho ka ha muta ihe ogbalu ofulu ma jidekwa omenala anyi nke di mma. Ma na oge aluchalu agha Biafra, ndi ocha gwa ndi agha na achi Naijiria na ha choo itinye ndi Igbo na akpa ha, malu na ha ga eti iwu si na obodo niile ga enwelili Chief. Obasanjo welu tie iwu ahu na afo 1976

welu meminaa omenala ndi Igbo nke kwuru na Igbo Amaghi Eze. Anyi tosiri iji ndi Mayor na ndi Council ebinyelu aka na ndorondoro ochichi welu nochie anya ndi Chief na ala Igbo gburugburu.

Ndi Igbo chetakwa na agwo ka no na akirika. Umu aka ufodu achoghizi imu ahia ma obu imu akwukwo ma obu iso nne na nna jee olu ugbo. Ihe ha cholu bu ego awufu nke si na aka ndi na azo ndororndoro ochichi. Ha zochaa okwa, ha echefuo ndi oti mkpu na ndi akpu obi ha jili yie ndi ozo egwu. Ndi ufodu umu okoro anya na acha oku ebidozia mewe abani di egwu, mewe ntolu madu, mewe ogwu ego. Akwukwo a na erotelu anyi na ihe amulu amu ka ihe agwolu agwo. Ezi na uno niile tinye anya na omumu umuaka ha. Ekwezina ka umu akwukwo na ezi na uno ha muru anya ruo oge okuku ututu ga akwaa nolu na ekili enyinyo Nollywood ma obu na eme ekpere ebiebi. Si umuaka ha jee raru ura ihe ruru awa asato ka isi ha welu juo oyi mgbe ha ga eje uno akwukwo na ututu. Ndi nne nan di nna, gbaa nu mbo ka ha rie ihe ututu tufu ha ejewe akwukwo maka na ibu afo ocha jewe imu ihe na ebute na ha ga ano na uno akwukwo ma na uche ha anoro ebe ozo. Kuziwekwalunu ha asusu Igbo ka ha muta ka esi agu ya na ka esi ede ya maka na Igbo amaka mma.

Abia na erimeri, ndi nne na nna tosiri ime ka umuaka ha muta na anaghizi eri akpu ma obu osikapa ka erijuo afo dachie uzo ebe obu na adighizi eje olu ugbo. Oke erimeri akpu na akwa ahuhu na ebute oria sugar na ezi na uno. Ihe erighi tata, Igbo si na aga eri ya echi. Wetukwanu aka na ita anu nama maka na o na anochi uzo obala si aso na ahu madu. Wedatakwa nu aka na oke anwurima, unu bu ndi nna ufodu nwuchaa unu agbanyelu umu aka unu manya ka ha bido na umuaka mutawa anwurima iberibe. Gini ka Dinwenu jili mee miri ka o bulu manya? Ihe o ji mee miri ka o bulu manya bu ka anyi na anwu miri ka anyi si anwu manya maka na miri bu ihe onwunwu kacha ibe ya mma. Ofu ubochi solu anyi, ndi ezi na uno anyi niile sikene na anyi ga eji agha Biafra muta ihe, na anyi agaghi eri nri obuna, na anwu soso mini, bido na odida anyanwu welu ruo odida anyanwu nke ubochi ozo. Ibu onu nwelu ike iso na ihe anyi jili nyaa agha ahu. Ekenekwa m Ohaneze na ezi na uno ndi Igbo ka ha siri azuputalu anyi umu oma umu oma. Di ka Umu Oriental siri guo na egu, 'Nwa ada di mma, onye mulu nwa a lee?'

Igbo mma mma nu!

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REVIEWS

Tomi Adeaga, Sarah Udoh-Grossfurthner, eds. *Payback and Other Stories: An Anthology of African and African Diaspora Short Stories*. Vienna: Vienna African Languages and Literatures (VALL) Series, Number 1, 2018, 169 pp.

Payback and Other Stories: An Anthology of African and African Diaspora Short Stories, No. 1 in the Vienna African Languages and Literatures (VALL) Series, with Adams Bodomo as Series Editor, is designed to publish books--short stories, poetry, anthologies—as well as journals and monographs on African languages, as part of the well-established European LIT Verlag Series.

The collection comprises nineteen short stories that run anywhere from two pages to thirteen pages, presented in various styles by writers of wide-ranging ages and experiences. It boasts of diverse complex and complicated accounts of cultural experiences in colonial, postcolonial and neocolonial times. Naana Banyiwa Horne sums up succinctly this vastness and the attendant collective awareness of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora, when she states: "The narratives capture not only the angst of seeking meaning in a world that challenges wholeness for African communities and individuals but, above all, look at ways of retrieval of cultural/ancestral knowledge in authenticating themselves." Indeed, the authors from Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe do go beyond mere geographical map boundaries to reflect other notions determined by racial, historical and sociological factors. In the order in which they are listed in the anthology, the writers and the titles of their works, in parentheses, are: Raphael D'Abdon ("An Easy Sunday Morning"); Tomi Adeaga ("The Letter"); Ada Uzoamaka Azodo ("The Prodigal Son Shall Not Return"); Ernest N. Emenyonu ("A Rigid Code of Silence"); Sarah Udoh-Grossfurthner ("Madam Shopkeeper"); Naana Banyiwa Horne ("Payback"); Tendai Huchu ("The Prestige"); Irehobhude O. Iyioha ("Brave"); Busi Jonathan ("Granted Wish of the Dead"); Neema Komba ("Mother's Shop"); Sindiwe Magona ("The Most Unidentical Identical Twins"); Setty Mhandu ("The Anointing Softener"); Eric Mwathi ("America 11"); Famia Nkasa ("The Underqualified Saviors"); Mfilinge Nyalusi ("Nyani Mzee: The Old Monkey"); Tanure Ojaide ("When Pastors Took the HIV/AIDS Test"); Chinyere Okafor ("Dropped Doreen Rides High with Jabulani"); Chika Unigwe ("Bethlehem"), and Dennis Walder (The Climb").

As can be expected, the differences show in the authors' adaptations into the text of aspects of indigenous languages, pidgin, religious fervor, dealings with church missionaries, and complications of travel, exile and immigration, what Charles Larson has seen as the writer "injecting a healthy dose of his own cultural and aesthetic values into a traditional Western genre and created in the process a frequently new and radically different form." Indeed, the writers' individual experiences color their short stories, quite a few times with satire and humor as added value, giving them by so doing distinctive breaths, tones, styles, and perspectives.

From those angles of vision, this collection of short stories taken more globally from the perspective of African literature in toto is a notable contribution to contemporary African and African Diaspora literature in which the victims become agents that defy their lot, stand up against their aggressors and demand their human rights, instead of succumbing to discrimination and abuse.

The major themes that cut across the entire anthology are, in the order portrayed, violence and police brutality, challenges of leaving the home of origin to begin a new life in a new residence in the diaspora, hardship and disappointment of raising some very difficult children, mother-in-law vs. daughter-in-law issues, the dichotomy of African and Western cuisines, the value of African traditional foundations against Western cultural oppression, misogyny, womanizing, gender inequality and male dominance, children's forced invisibility in the face of grow-ups' dominance, human folly vis-à-vis changing world landscape, violence, rape and murder, HIV/AIDS, drug and narcotic addictions, mediums and spirit possession, migration and exile, challenges of single-parenthood, stepmother-stepdaughter problems, lack of or inadequate healthcare, childbirth and postpartum depression (PPD), trauma, institutionalized discrimination, and Apartheid and its defeat.

Thus, the short stories in this anthology mirror subjects that were dear to the people in the past, are still of interest to them today, and will be of utmost appeal to them in the future. Then again, due to their brevity and capability to appeal to the ordinary person, the short stories will likely appeal to the general public, perhaps more than would novels that are elitist and long by their very nature. Furthermore, the writers as performers mimic modern-day versions of the traditional African storytellers of the past; they unify the continent in their own peculiar way, through aspects of their individual ethnic group or country's cultures that come through in their writings. Thanks to the themes, styles, and ellipses within the short stories, the writers portray the diversity of African and African Diaspora experiences. Students stand to learn from the writers and the stories how to (re)construct memorable characters, setting, conflict, point of view, and more in their learning experiences.

That having been said, readers can recognize the import and significance of these excellent short stories only by studying them, partly for their didactic quality, social functions, and the moral forces embedded within them, and partly because the said import and significance go well beyond the aesthetic values of the stories.

Finally, the writers in this anthology have presented literature in forms that are more attuned to the peoples' lifestyles. Earlier African writers preferred the novel genre because they were formed in that tradition under colonialism. But things have changed rapidly since then. More and more writers today embrace shorter forms, such as the short story, poetry, journalistic jottings, and so on, published in hardcopies in newspapers and book anthologies, and through Kindle on the PC and online, just because they are more suited to the peoples' lives on the go. And, for the present and the future, with the growing speed of technology and communication, people have less time for long discourses, but rather prefer shorter pieces that go to the heart of the matter right from the beginning. The writers in this anthology and their short stories, then, do play a part in helping the reading public understand how Africans and their peoples in the African Diaspora can survive the present and win the future.

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Raphael Chijioke Njoku. ***West African Masking Traditions and Diaspora Masquerade Carnivals: History, Memory, and Transnationalism*** **(Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora) (Volume 88). Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2020. Xvii + 296 pages. $19.00**

Scholars have extensively debated the degree of African continuities in the New World. The historiography reveals a long and vigorous debate characterized by the attempts to affirm African cultural retentions in the Atlantic Diaspora, the challenge to the claim that African cultures were transmitted into the diaspora, and a middle road approach that sought to privilege the notion of hybridity in a cultural complex that was neither purely African nor European. Considering the more than half a century of this scholarly debate, one wonders what is left undone. Apparently, new grounds continue to be broken, particularly in transnational and Atlantic cultural history, and especially one that centralizes African culture as a framework for understanding aspects of Afro-Atlantic cultures. Nigerian eclectic historian Raphael Njoku's most recent work has added to this tapestry of the African diaspora studies and debate in a fundamentally significant way.

In *West African Masking Traditions*, Njoku explores the "origins, religious idioms, symbols, internal and diasporic diffusions, and the music, dance, and drama that accompany African and African Diaspora masks and masquerade performances." With its focus on the Igbo of the Biafra Coast, this book adds to the scholarship of a very influential group in the making of the Atlantic world due to its proportionately high number of exports of enslaved persons during the Atlantics slave trade. Despite a large number of enslaved Igbo who made the involuntary crossing of the Middle Passage, their history, identity, and impact has been largely neglected, misrepresented, and misunderstood. Njoku's book reveals that Igbo cultural practices were an essential element in the construction of New World culture in ways that survived their trauma and became deeply implanted in the masking and festival traditions of the African Diaspora.

Essentially, the author argues that "African epistemologies of religion, music, dance, and other repertories of ideas embedded in the masquerade phenomenon aided enslaved people to survive oppression" while reinventing African-themed cultural prototypes in the New World. This conscious or unconscious articulation and re-articulation of the new world "contributed to the subsequent growth of what we know today as African American art, music, and literature in particular and the Grand American culture in general."

Focusing on masquerading traditions in the Africana world a dynamic system of thought, narration, and ideology, this book draws upon a cultural practice whose link to African indigenous ideology and world view enabled it to endure even the face of a systematic attempt to suppress such critical elements of African personhood under slavery and servitude. As the author affirms, for enslaved people, "the art of masquerade *engagee* was one of the most potent

survival devices in the Americas." But the book does more than that expose. It engages the debate and historiography on African continuities in the Atlantic world but calls for a framework

that "recognizes the complexities inherent in the cross-regional diffusion of ideas and symbols."

In chapter one, the book explores the origins of masking and its early development. The chapter places the history and ritual observance associated with the masking tradition to indigenous religion, spirituality, and ritual abstractions that make the intangible spirit world tangible through "the ingenuity of physically costuming "spirit beings" for the public theater." Thus, masquerading is a reflection of the duality through which groups such as the Igbo articulate the world—the physical and spirit worlds as expressed through music, costumes, and performance art forms.

To understand this complex world of art, performance, and spirituality as expressed through masquerade traditions, the book explores "Aspects of Society and Culture in the Biafra Hinterland," to offer explanations on the potentials and possibilities of a small cultural space to have an enduring influence of regional and global significance. This approach has important implications for understanding the trajectory of cultural dispersal and transatlantic perspective and framework. In essence, to situate African culture in the diaspora, it is essential to understand the African background of the enslaved Africans, their cultural milieu that gave rise to their worldview and practices, and the capacity of that world to endure.

Perhaps, one of the most important contributions of this book to African and African Diaspora studies is its articulation of the notion of culture within what he called Bantu Culture Area." Bantu speakers had their origin in the Bight of Biafra cultural zone, and their spatial spread highlighted their role as "culture modeling agents." This book characterizes the spread of the masquerading tradition as an extension of the Bantu as culture bearers to firmly leave their imprint in their new environment despite the different contexts through which the arrived the New World as forced migrants.

The above background provides the reader with the context to understand the rest of the book. The next chapter, "Bight of Biafra, Slavery, and Diasporic Africa in the Modern Global Age," support the need to understand the origins, the histories, and identities of enslaved Africans from the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland as a framework for articulating their influence in relation to time and place. Centralizing the African side of the equation, the chapter accounts for the expansion of masquerading culture into the Americas, drawing on the transatlantic slavery connection and how the enslaved served as "modeling agents in the New World," through the masquerade carnivals and cultural performances associated with art.

Chapter five focuses on "Igbo Masquerade Dances in the African Diasporas: Symbols

and Meanings," Here, Njoku uses the Igbo, a group that contributed a disproportionately high number of the enslaved Africans from the Bight of Biafra to explain the process of cultural diffusion as hybridity. Chapter six, "Unmasking the Masquerade: Counterideologies and Contemporary Practices," Njoku explores the diverse meanings of masks and masquerades within a cultural milieu shaped by the intersection of many forces—Christianity, Islam, and Western cultural hegemony—but one in which masquerade carnivals assumed a new role in the African Diasporas, including as a strategy of resistance. In chapter seven, "Idioms of Religion, Music, Dance, and Africana Art Forms," Njoku "highlights the integral meanings of the various cultural forms in the lives of people of African

descent." The chapter raises important questions that suggest continuity as well as the fungibility of identity. An important lesson from this chapter is the fluidity of cultures and identities across the Atlantic world. Yet the African background formed the basis of new intellectual production as expressed in music and dance.

The last chapter, "Memory and Masquerade Narratives: The Story of Remembering," redirects attention to the "effectiveness of masquerade carnivals in structuring narrative forms that … respond to the needs of those societies that created them. Masquerade narratology, the author argues, "changes as the society transforms," implying the dynamic nature of culture and the adaptability of cultural practices with a new contextual setting of competing ideas, ideologies, and sensibilities.

The book brings fresh insight into old questions in a highly stimulating and intellectually sophisticated way. It is a delight to read. I recommend it highly to all scholars of African and African diaspora studies.

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Nkuzi Micheal Nnam. *Igbo Jurisprudence: An African Philosophy of Law*. Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, 2020, 238 pp

Colonial powers in Africa used laws as a major means of imposing hegemony over colonial territories. The British volitionally failed to establish a legal system in Africa in accordance with the African custom, and the laws introduced were designed to ensure that the colonized would not rise up against the colonizers or to struggle for autonomy. African customary laws were portrayed as "primitive." But are African customary laws really primitive? How did African's preside over cases in the precolonial era and what principles guided their logic? Does the so-called "primitive" law deserve more attention and respect that the western jurisprudence had enjoyed? How has the imported legal system affected the African jurisprudence? The above are the thought-provoking questions investigated by Nkuzi Nnam in *Igbo Jurisprudence.*

In *Igbo Jurisprudence*, Nnam undertook a comparative study of an African and Anglo-American jurisprudence. He argues that the western judicial system had prevailed to the detriment of the African customary legal system. This is shown in the way many, if not all access western jurisprudence. Nnam claims that there are more contrasts than similarities between the Igbo and western jurisprudence. In his view, the Igbo believe that laws are natural and are inseparable from religion, and any deviation from that incurs the anger of the gods on the people. No one has the right

to take the life of another. But when one chooses to do instead, he will be forced to take his own life. That is why Nnam used the adage "Osisi Kpara eso na eso ya ana" (a millipede is gotten rid with the stick on which it coiled).

On the contrary, their Anglo-American counterpart does not acknowledge natural law, it must be made by man, just like an "arrow is directed by the archer". Additionally, in Igbo jurisprudence, offenses are based on the principle of collective responsibility" unlike the "individual responsibility" that prevails in the west. The author explained the idea of collative responsibility using a metaphoric expression of a canoe on the sea. It is assumed that all are traveling on a canoe that can sink, leaving no one alive. If one commits aru (Crime) or nso ala (taboo), he tries to contribute to the sinking of the canoe. It will now require a collective effort to paddle the canoe or else it sinks- one must "be his brother's keeper.

Legal testimonies are valued in Igboland. The law regards the defendant's action as a sin that will affect the entire community, himself included, and the witness is bound in conscience to testify. Whereas in the Western court, witnesses are viewed as traitors and could be subjected to losses including his life. The end of the Western court system is to divulge the guilty and the innocent. But the Igbo traditional case trial is reconciliation, pacification, unification, and reintegration of adversaries into the society.

Nnam makes other claims in the book. In chapter one he addressed the conceptual and methodological issues as well as an examination of the traditional background of Nigeria societies. These are contrasted through a comparative global perspective. In Chapter two the author explores the traditional law in precolonial and Nigerian society. He claims that most African laws are similarly reasoned because they stem from a "natural law" perspective. The concept of law according to Natural Law theorists is the focus of chapter three. He argues that law and rights are inextricably intertwined and shape the nature of African conceptions of law. Chapter Four is an overview of the legal reasoning among the Igbo. Clearly, Nnam noted that the British should have considered the uniqueness and variedness of the Igbo custom, tradition, belief (Omenani) which determines their legal reasoning, before imposing their western legal style of jurisprudence on them. However, Nnam, impels Igbo professors, law students, lawyers, Judges to acknowledge not only the fact that the Igbo jurisprudence has its own contribution to make, but deserve as much respect as their western counterparts.

Nnam concluded that besides the fact that Anglo-American culture is relatively homogeneous and Nigeria is not, most of the distinctions examined in the book can be accounted for by the distinct aim of the Western court system which is to discover and separate the guilty party from the

innocent. In contrast, the primary goal of Nigerian traditional case trials is "reconciliation, pacification, propitiation, and unification of both parties regardless of who is guilty and who is innocent."

Nnam attains his objectives. His work is well organized and articulated, and of the high quality. The author's diction is simple and understandable. It is pertinent that the book is made accessible in the Igbo law library, for lawyers, law students, academics, prisoners, and anyone undergoing research on the related field.

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