THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF IGALA PROSE FICTION IN ENGLISH (1980 - 2010)

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is a product of my research. It has been written by me, and has never been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are duly acknowledged by means of references.

_____ _____

Omogwoni Zekeri Kasim **Date**

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "The Emergence and Development of Igala Prose Fiction in English (1980-2010) by OmogwoniZekeriKasim meets the regulations governing the award of Masters of Arts in English (Literature) of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

With gratitude to almighty Allah, the most Glorious one, and the most compassionate, this thesis is dedicated to all members of my immediate family, particularly my wife (Maryam Zekeri) for their patience and trust in God for me.

_____ _____

ZEKERI KASIM OMOGWONI **DATE**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the emergence and development of Igala prose fiction in English within the larger corpus of Northern Nigeria literature. In this vein, the study evaluates the peculiar conditions from which Igala prose fiction in English evolved in Northern Nigeria,specifically, the role of the colonial and Christian missionaries in the structural and literary transformation of Northern Nigeria and how this affected the evolution and growth of Igala prose fiction in English.The distinct characteristic of Igala prose fiction in English is derived from the centrality of Igala culture icons such as proverbs, oracles, tradition, belief system (world view) religion, masquerades, ritual celebration and songs, which are peculiar to the Igala people. The signification of phenomena such as, folk literature, legends, and Igala myths provide a unique historical background. Their symbolic aesthetics and emotional significance not only provides a deft explosion of Igala world view but review on historical experiences of people and society undergoing socio-cultural and religious transformations in the post-independence Nigeria.Within this paradigm therefore, the study adopts post colonial discourse as a tool of analysis of the selected texts in the study. The study also argues that literature in Northern Nigerian is influenced by the human variation in terms of culture, tradition, language, social patterns and historical experiences. To appreciate these complex resonances, approach to the literary study of Northern Nigeria must consider the concrete condition and situation out of which the literary developments is taking place and on behalf of which the literary artist express themselves. This study therefore reveals that Northern Nigeria is a broad area of reference determined by different ethnic, historical and sociological factors which influence the literature of the region. Igala prose fiction contain local images and metaphors which give the work Igala color, however, it does not blur the focus of the literary work, as the works also expresses issues of national concern. In specific terms this research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one has the introduction, the concept of minority, research problem, objectives, scope, justification, significance, post colonial discourse as the framework of analysis, defines Igala prose fiction in English, and literature review. Chapter two, three and four focuses on the work of Sunday Okpanachi, Sule Idakwoji and Yusuf Etu, three writers from Igala land whose works illustrates the cultural, socio-political and religious experiences as well as changes in the Igala society. The choice of these works is to provide balance understanding of Igala norms, aesthetics and the social realities that constitute the daily existence of the average Igala man as contain in Okpanachi's *The Red masqueradesand*

other stories as fiction, Idakwoji's *The Story of the Akowe*- ritual festival of Ibegwu in prose and Etu's the legendary Ata Igala *Ame Oboni* (1993) faction work, all from genres of prose fiction. Chapter five, the concluding chapter, is summary and findings of the issues raised in the study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research examines the emergence and development of Igala prose fiction in English within the larger corpus of Northern Nigeria literature. It is a contribution to the ever growing works onliterature from northern Nigeria literature, especially on the relationship between literature and history, and human experience. The term northern Nigerian literature like African literature in Achebes's words cannot be cram into small, neat definition, but as a group of associated units- in fact the sum total of the national and ethnic literatures. Northern Nigerian literature is a conglomeration of works by different ethnic groups which inhabits the region. These ethnic groups have no cohesive or integrated language, religious doctrine and experiences. Thus the literature that emanates from this region are various with dynamic perceptions on the reality and the transformations taking place in their societies. Igala prose fiction in English makes a contribution in this direction. It captures the human dilemma of Igala ethnic groups. In depicting Igala and their life situations, the entire spectrum of Igala traditions, world view, religion, politics etc. are laid bare.

The study is located within the historical matrix which characterizes the evolution of modern literacy in the northern region. The colonial experience of marginality, plurality, dominance and "Otherness", invariably, distorted the hitherto socio-political economic and cultural development in the north. The appropriation of sovereignty, the establishment of laws that negate the indigenous society system of order, brought disorder and disconnecting them from their histories, their languages and social relations. It was a process of systematic fragmentations, "which make the stories of colonization part of a grander narrative and yet part also of a very local, very specific experience" (Smith 1999:23). This study is, therefore,

predicated upon a perspective or conceptual premise of the 'interconectiveness' between history and literature in which the colonial past (cross fertilization of culture) become inevitable to growth and development of Igala literature in English.

In spite of the significance of the role of Islam and Arabic in the establishment of literary foundation in Northern Nigeria, the colonial factor is a significant historical event which enthroned modern English literacy in the region. The literary culture and intellectual tradition in the region therefore, cannot be divorced from the socio-political development in Northern Nigeria. The activities of the colonialists (rule of practice) and Christian Missionaries privileged English language, the Roman script as a major ideological weapon over the indigenous languages. To sustain a hegemonic condition that would benefit them, the colonial policy and its agency such as the literature Bureau "failed to truly promote literature in all the major languages of the north with the obvious exception of Hausa", (Abba 1980:21).

The point is that, the colonial policy (rule of practice) through the hegemonic influence of the caliphate allowed the legitimating of different ideologies with real consequences for other languages in northern Nigeria. Other languages suffered neglect in terms of access to western education and had little or no opportunity for literary creativity in English (Abel 2005). The apparent exclusion of other languages meant cultural alienation: death of human virtues and his development because literature is the expression of society. What this meant is that other languages had no opportunity to share ideas about their life: human virtues, fables, desires and failures with the entire humanity through creative writing. Their strive for relevance emanate from the grappling with the legacies of colonial experience.

The activities of the literature Bureau which later transformed into Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) provides no opportunity for the development and integration of other ethnic literature in English into the mainstream cultural discourse in Nigeria for a long time. The colonial situation resulted in a retrogressive approach to modern literary creativity among other languages.The development is responsible for the attention given to Hausa works as only literature in Northern Nigeria for a long time. This can be gleaned from the works of scholars such as Mervyn Hiskett (1975) NeilSkinner (1980), Stanishlaw Pilaszewiez (1985), Graham Furniss (1996) and others. The state of other languages in northern Nigeria as whole, therefore, is a story of underdevelopment, stunted and arrested development right from the colonial era to the present. Given the fact that the area in question did not benefit from the Arabic/Islamic literacy tradition, the other languages in the north did not have a written literary tradition, religions or temporal to fall back on for a long time. This explains the absence of creative writing in English from this part of the north for a long time (Abel 2005:24). The argument is that other languages have to battle with the problem of identity, integration, development and other related issues in their struggles for relevance within the northern geopolitical polity after Nigeria's independence.

Following from the above,the written materials are with one exception, the product of the colonialists in these areas. The enthronement of independence and the expansion of the missionaries' activities into other ethnic areas, and the later establishment of schools significantly created creative consciousness. The written publications of the missionaries stimulated the creative impulse in other languages which led to the emergence of ethnic literatures in northern Nigeria. From the foregoing, the emergence and development of the Igala prose fiction in English is contextualized within the paradigm of the missionary activities,

colonial philosophy and occupation of northern Nigeria and the Nigerian independence. Igala literature, therefore, is fore-grounded in a post-colonial discourse,the explication of its post colonial reality and social development.

Like colonialism, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries globalization is equally a limitation to human development because it pay little or no attention to international equality and solidarity. Consequently, it is capable of leaving behind the same terrible economic, political and social legacies received from colonial contacts and domination. The development of the Igala prose fiction in English, therefore, serves as part of northern Nigerian contribution to the great struggle, the struggle to correct the suppressed and distorted African image visible in the books authored by erstwhile colonial officers, missionaries and anthropologists.

Literature from Northern Nigeria has undergone serious development and transformation, and writers from different ethnic groups have written literature of their own, which reflect the historical experiences of the people and society. The literature in Northern Nigeria has outgrown its original threshold designed by the colonialists to achieve their aim. From Hausa literature initiated by Rupert East in 1933, other ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria today have their literatures written in their local languages and English language that express the reality of the people and their society. English language, though a colonial language, serves as a meeting point for the region's cultural diversity, which hitherto sought expression in a multiplicity of local languages.

To understand the minority ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria, it is necessary to understand their historical setting. Northern Nigeria is a heterogeneous and multi-cultural society where Muslims, Christians and the practitioners of indigenous religion live. It is inhabited by different ethnic groups with different values and experiences. E.P.T. Crampton (1975) in his

book *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, describes Northern Nigeria thus: "the North is not the solid Muslim block that is sometimes taken for granted in superficial accounts. It is diverse, not only in relief and climate, but in culture and tradition". Abel describes Northern Nigeria in geographical terms as: "a land area of nearly three hundred thousand (300,000) square miles; it is seven hundred and twenty (720) miles from its border with Dahomy in the West, to the Cameroon Republic in the East and four hundred and twenty (420) miles from its northern neighbor, the republic of Niger" (Cited in Abel 2005:1). The study of Cultural vignette of Northern Nigeria has revealed that the people of Northern Nigeria comprise more than two-thirds of Nigeria's land mass. Ethnically, they include a hundred groups of peoples, each with its own language, culture and long history of intertribal wars and social relationships. The Hausa speaking peoples of the Core North whose "numbers can be matched only by the Swahili-speakers of East Africa in the spread and international stature of their culture and lingua franca (Kirk-Greene et al 1975:9)" remain the dominant ethnic group. In terms of their numerical strength, influence, the dominance of this ethnic group is felt through the effectiveness of its cultural hegemony. In fact, Lugard (1919:60-61) argues that "the Hausa are the most pervasive ethnic group in Northern Nigeria.

However, dozens of smaller communities or minority ethnic groups live in the mountainous or riverine areas of the North- East, North-Central, Benue, Plateau and the old Kwara State. In the Niger-Benue confluence are to be found ethnic groups such as Nupe, Igala, Tiv, Idoma , Egbira, Jukun, Chamba and Bata. Smaller ethnic group which include the Bassa komo, Alago, Afo , Koro, Gade, North East Yoruba, Gbagi, Bassa Nge and others, "were autonomous ethnic groups each with its Emir or Chief and government in the pre- 18th century" (Sa'ad 1980:168). From the above, it suffices to say that what is formerly known as Northern

provinces of Nigeria comprised of a number of communities and states within its borders. Thus, before the British conquest, there is no centralized authority exercising political control over what became the Northern province. But the greater part of the area is under the Sokoto Caliphate, stretching from Sokoto to Abuja, apai and Nassarawa emirates. Presently, Northern Nigeria comprises nineteen out of the thirty-six states of Nigeria, including Abuja, the Federal Capital, (Hickney 2000:280). The area around the Niger Benue confluence, middle Benue region and upper Benue region are known today as the Middle Belt which "is the home to more than half of Nigeria's estimated three hundred ethnic groups", (Abel 2005:2). Sa'ad Abubakar (1999: 457) describes the Middle Belt as:

> The region comprised states, Chieftances and small communities in varying scales of political organization. It is also a region where the majority of the inhabitants were non-Muslims.

In the same vein, Meier Karl (2000:193), also describes the Middle Belt region as:

> not a formal region or state, rather as its name suggests it stretches like a wide grindle across the lively central plateau that separates the strongly Islamic cultures of the Hausa Fulani and Kanuri peoples in the North from the mainly Christian Igbo in the South east and Southern Western Yorubas Who have embraced both religion.

The Middle Belt region of Nigeria is the area in Northern Nigeria inhabited by different ethnic nationalities which include the Christians, the Muslims and the traditional religious practitioners. The argument is that Northern Nigeria constitutes a form of living that is more complex than 'community' more symbolic than society; more connotative than 'country' (Bhabba 1994:1440). It is a region undergoing perpetual transformations.

1.2 The Concept of Minority

In this research the term minority is used to refer to a part of a population identified as a group (the demographic area) and it is to this type that the adjective ethnic is applicable. The

term minority is surrounded by different conceptual and ideological stands. Most writers agree that minorities are culturally distinctive, relatively cohesive groups which occupy a position of numerical inferiority and socio-political subordination vis-à-vis other cultural sections in the society [Amersfoort 1978]. According to Thornberry (1980:257)

> minorities are groups that are: numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state in a non- dominant position. Whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics different from those of the rest of the population, and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, tradition, religion or language.

It implies that any given ethnic group in Nigeria can be classified as minority. In this vein, Rotimi (1996:8) states that:

> . . . every ethnic group in Nigeria is a minority " communal contenders" since no single group constitutes a demographic majority of the population. Nevertheless, the term ethnic minority groups is now universally used in Nigeria to designate all the 250 odd ethnic groups in the country excepting the three largest formations of Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo, who collectively comprised about two third of the population.

From the above statement, the Hausa-Fulani is recognized by the Nigeria Constitution as majority ethnic group in Nigeria. This view is also supported by Kay Williamson (1990:118) when he states that "the term minority languages in the Nigerian context... refer to all Nigerian languages other than Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, the three languages which are defined by the Nigerian Constitution as majority languages". This is the classification and meaning applied in this research. The term minority is used in this study to refer to ethnic groups that are not in the majority in Northern Nigeria.

The term minority may also designate smaller socially defined groups, a group of people within a society whose numbers are small in terms of population, racial and linguistic heritage,

often in a subordinate position with less power and influence than majority. In the case of Northern Nigeria, such groupings consists primarily of the Tiv, Igala, Idoma, ebira Jukun and the Ilorin-Kabba Yoruba, the ethnic minorities in Southern Kaduna such as Baju, Kartaf, Kanikon, Jabba, Adara, Kagoro, Marauwa and just to mention a few. Again, further northward in the states such Yobe, Taraba, Gombe, Bauchi, Adamawa, Zamfara, Kebbi and others, are to be found ethnic minorities whose languages and culture are characteristically distinct though influenced by Hausa tradition and language. These minorities include the Auyukawa, Kudawa, Shirawa, Techena and Kirfawa. However, the term minority is relative now as some of the ethnic minorities named above such as the Tiv, Igala and Jukun, are now majority in their domains of influence due to the transformation taking palace in the Nigeria society. Furthermore, no ethnic group is completely unified as social integration is on the increase. This has created diversity in ethnicities, religious and secular belief within a group. . Intermarriages between people of different heritages, cross-racial births, assimilations and others, just to mention a few, has made ethnicity a hybridized phenomenon.

Writers from the Igala ethnic group like their counterparts from other parts of Nigeria have emerged lately with a literature of their own which shows the reality and the transformation that has taken place in their societies. Writers from the Igala minority ethnic group such as Yusufu Etu, Sunday Okpanachi, Eugenia Abu, David Oguche and Ahmed Bello, Emmy Idegu and others, to mention a few, have emerged lately with literatures that provide divers discourse and insights to the realities of their society. These writers explore various facet of Igala society, and the customs and norms of the people serves as a source of inspiration. Minority literature in this way add a new perspective to the literary terrain Northern Nigeria. The research posits that literature from Northern Nigeria is a heterogeneous one.It has move away from its original

colonial setting to the cultural locality, Bahbba (1994) call this "space without places, time without duration". One inevitable result of the diversity of Northern Nigeria has been that literature in English has developed at different rate in different areas.

1.3 Research Problem

Literary articulation is one way of addressing or tackling social issues. Such expression either reinforce or challenge established social institutions, their ideals and practices. The study is concerned with the emergence and relevance of the Igala literature within the larger corpus of Northern Nigeria literature. The problem of the study is the question of approach to the scholarly study and critical interpretations of the minority literature in Northern Nigeria. The problem of the approach is that it does not account for the diversity of the expressive scheme and for contextual background from which the expressive scheme obtained its significance. What this means is that approach to the study of literature from northern Nigeria must be placed within the context or discourse that take into cognizance the development of the individual constituent parts that constitutes the whole phenomenon called literature from northern Nigeria. Literature is a response to the fact of human existence and experience in relation to others and to the world.

1.3a Hypothesis

The research premised on the prepositions that:

1. Northern Nigeria is a broad area of reference, a geographical area determined by ethnic, historical and sociological factors, and these factors, affect and express themselves in Northern Nigeria literature.
2. Northern Nigeria in a multi-ethnic society, therefore, study of literature from northern Nigeria must be placed within the context of the larger struggle of the people to provide a pluralistic identity of the region.

3. The study of Igala prose fiction in English is to provide an understanding to the cultural formation and representation of the Igala ethnic group as a constituent part of literature from northern Nigeria. This would lead to a healthy inter-cultural study among the people of northern Nigeria.

1.4Aim/ Objectives of Study This study is undertaken to show that:

- Northern Nigeria literature is multi-faceted and heterogeneous, and the Igalais constituent part of the lager Northern Nigeria Literature.
- Igala prose fiction is a particular type within the Northern Nigeria literatures. And it has a specific character (internal and external traits) which distinguishes it.
- Igala literature demonstrates a great depth of analytical characteristics, revealing a profound knowledge of literary traditions.

1.5 Scope

The range covered by this study is Igala prose fiction in English 1980--2010, east of Northern Nigeria. The study deals with the works of three Igala writers namely Sunday Okpanachi, Sule Idakwoji and Yusufu Etu. In this study, a fairly detailed analysis is made with the aim to show that Igala literature has specific character which distinguish it in some particular respects from other literatures from northern Nigeria. However, this position is not considered as absolute, but there are certainly external factors and internal traits, which mark it off as a peculiar area of literary production and of imaginative expression. The customs and norms of the people (Africa culture) serve as the critical source base to the writers from the area. In this way, Igala prose fiction enriched Northern Nigeria literature with 'new reading' or reflection. These

authors are selected because their works provide extensive insights into the cultural, and historical experiences that explain and define Igala identity.

1.6 Justification

The study of Igala prose fictions in English is undertaken to show the heterogeneous nature of northern Nigeria literature. In this regard it is motivated by the desire to account for the human variation (in terms of culture, tradition, language, social patterns, historical experiences and even ancestry) that inhabit Northern Nigeria geography land area, Igala ethnic groups is a minority language in Northern Nigeria and its literature has certain peculiarity that distinguish it. The major objective of the study is to acknowledge this variety to be able to project an identity multi-culturally enough and distinctively Northern. The study has enriched the studies on Northern Nigeria literature with new horizons of thought on the dynamics of Northern Nigerian literature.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study expands the frontiers of literature from Northern Nigeria with the focus on Igala literary experiences. The study is a shift from the broader Northern Nigeria literary experiences to a particular ethnic literary experiences. The study is significant because it charts a new direction in terms of Igala literary value, and the people's historical experiences, thereby crystallizing a new consciousness and thought of the dynamics of literary growth and transformation in northern Nigeria literature.

1.8 POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE AS A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

This thesis is premised on the colonial occupation of Northern Nigeria, which revolves around literature and history the text to be analyzed are located within the colonial experience

based on the sociological and historical interpretation of the selected texts. In this view, "the study draws from the insights provided by post-colonial discourse on contemporary African literatures' (Abel 2005:57).

The African world has been affected to some degree by the nineteenth-century European domination and this has led to the continuing effects of colonial /neo-colonial power and exploitation in most African countries. Issues of relations in terms of minority, majority, class, domination, hegemony, economic and political power and exploitation of the poor masses have remain as fundamental inhibitions to the growth of most African countries. This is because the structures of power established by the colonizers remain pervasive through cultural relations. Postcolonial discourse is a field of study that is not only polysemic, vast and variegated but even complex phenomenon which is heterogeneous and whose dispute is unresolved. Although the term post-colonial is still a subject of debate, it is used across disciplines in relation to the effects of colonization on cultures and society. The meaning embraced by the protean term range from an emphasis on the discursive and material effects of the historical fact of imperialism to an incorporation of cultural difference and marginality into a form of synchronic post-moderns (Ashcroft et al 1998). Terry Eagleton (1983) opines that stages in the development of post-colonial writing are rooted in history. Post colonialism is a trans-historical thing, always present and always in process, (Aijaz Ahmad 1995). William and Chrisman (1994:20) define post-colonialism as that which:Is not a homogenous category either across all postcolonial societies or even within a single one rather it refers to a typical configuration, which is always in the process of change, neverconsistent with itself.

These statements explain that post colonial has different facets which encompass and describe heterogeneous set of subject positions and critical initiatives or specialized field. It is a complex

school of thought characterized by divers subjects in relation to the colonized and the colonizers. It is not confine to a particular period in history- pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial.

Post-colonialism is something that is trans-historical and unspecific, used in relation to very different kinds of historical oppression and economic control (Selmond 1999:3). Like patriarchy, it remains crucial to a critique of past and present power relations in world affairs. It is important in the critique of the culture affected by the imperial process as well as the new cross-cultural criticism which is characterized mostly by resistance to colonial ideology. However post-colonial may be defined, it concerns itself with diverse and numerous issues. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's *The Post-colonial Studies Reader (1995)*, its subjects include universality, difference, nationalism, postmodernism, representation and resistance, ethnicity, feminism, language, education, history, place and production. As divers as these topics appear to be, all of them draw attention to one of post-colonialism's major concerns: highlighting the struggle that occurs when one culture is dominated by another. Post-colonial critics have pointed out that to be colonized is "to be removed from history" because in its interaction with the conquering culture, the colonized or indigenous culture is forced to go underground or to be obliterated. How the colonized respond to changes in languages, curricular matters in education, race difference, and a host of other discourses, including the act of writing itself, becomes the context and the theories of post-colonialists (Bressler1995:201).

Individuals who played substantial roles in defining the terrains of post-colonial theory include Said, Bhabha and Spivak, regarded as "Holy Trinity" by Robert Young (Phebe:14), Arjun, Abdul Jan, Bill Ash Croft et al, and a host of others, to mentioned a few. The post colonialists are concerned with the claim of the West which use the monopoly of power to define the world , and insists that the 'centre' can be shifted ideologically through imagination,

to recreate history (Smith1999).Most former colonies are economically, culturally and politically affected by their colonial overlords. The structures and legacy of colonialism remained even after the colonialists formerly left. The peculiar historical realities of the former colonies, though not oppressed in the same way remain at the centre of post-colonial discourse. Post-colonialism is concerned with the necessity of how to reveal and understand the complexities of imperial system. Essentially, post-colonial discourse seek to 'decolonize our mind, to recover ourselves, to claim a space, in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity (Smith,1999 :23). From the above, Post-colonial discourse, therefore, is a way of reasserting oneself either as individual, a group, a race, or a nation in the course of history. The reassertion takes the form of politics, languages and cultural reorientation.

Another circle of post-colonialists maintains that the kernel of post-colonial discourse is in it being a critique of imperial culture (Webster,1996). This view is a derivation or outgrowth of Said and Fanon's books-*Orientalism (1978) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961)* respectively. While Said's work exposed the Eurocentric Universalism which see the West as superior and inferior of what is not (seen as other) ,Fanon (1961), examines the traditions in which colonialism rewrites a nation's history as well as its present. Fanon argues that the first step for the colonized people in finding a voice and identity is to reclaim their own past while the second is the erosion of colonialist ideology by which the past had been devalued. Fanon out rightly question the motive behind the hegemony and monopoly of the imperialists culture and civilization superimposed on the colonized world.

Furthermore, post-colonial discourse identifies and recognizes the double identity of the colonized, his been part of the colonizers by virtue of exposure to the values of civilization which is purportedly the exclusive reserve of the West and by being part of the colonized other

by origin, tradition and culture. Identity has remain crucial in the discourse of post-colonial works which centre on being double or hybrid and unstable, according to Barry (1995), this is a characteristic feature of the pre-colonial approach.

Post-colonial discourse is also another designation for the classification of literary activity which "sprang up from a new, and vibrant political energy within what used to be called 'Common-Wealth literary studies (Selmon, 1994:15)". It accommodates 'literatures in English' rather than English literature'. Therefore, post-colonial signifies creative writing emanating from colonial countries, together with the critical and theoretical writing content upon the imaginative works (Webster,1996).The accommodate literatures in English rather than English literature in post-colonial studies, serve as the fulcrum around which framework of analysis in this research revolved. It accommodates cultural, social, regional and national diversity in experience. In this regard, post-colonial discourse allow a literary representation of past experience peculiar to the regions or states and "to resist being labeled according to the categories which do not fit" (Smith 1999).

In spite of its diversity, "its discursive ramification derives its essence in privileging particular methods and problematic as a way of subverting some of the assumptions, stereotypes and rationalization of imperial historiography and epistemology about indigenous societies in Africa" (Abel 2005:61). Thus, the effect or influence of colonial domination on contemporary literatures makes post-colonial discourse an effective and efficient literary theory capable of explaining the post-colonial phenomenon in Nigeria/Igala novel in English. Nigeria novels describe the colonial contact and the people's resistance to the destructive effect of the contact on the socio-political, economic and cultural setting of the regions that later became Nigeria.

However, post-colonial literature has been classified variously by different post-colonial critics. According to Barry (1995:195), there are three stages in post-colonial literature, namely the 'Adopt ', 'Adapt', and 'Adept', phase. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989), like Barry accept that post-colonial literatures developed through several stages In the first stage, most of these writers are literate elite who identified with colonial power, using the language of imperial power , and these include the gentrified settlers, travelers and sightseers or the Aglo-India and West African administrators, and others, just to mention a few. These writers are loyal to, and privileged the centre, metropolitan over provincial.

The second stage of postcolonial literatures, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, comprised of those literatures produced under 'imperial license' by the natives. These are literatures which consist of prose and poetry produced in the 19th century by the English-educated upper class. African missionary literatures fall into this category. The third stage include the modern post-colonial literatures written by 'aberrant' group who appropriate language and writing for new and distinctive usages. They adopt the English language to the different linguistic communities in the post-colonial countries (Phebe 2005). The use of English language as a means of communication resulted from the way pre-colonial culture is suppressed by colonial conquest and supplanted by cultural hegemony. In Nigeria creative and critical works on post-colonial writing have been "individualized thematically, ideologically or historically" (Phebe2005:17).

However, by appropriating the imperial language (English), its discursive forms and its mode of representation, the Nigerian writers are able to intervene more readily in the dominant discourse, to interpolate their cultural realities, or use that dominant language to describe those realities to a wider audience. Post – colonial literaturesare meant to subvert mainstream

European or Western imposed notion of postcolonial societies. The colonized society is seen as a margin, thus, it sees itself as "other" thereby subjugating it. In fact, Africans were portrayed as a people without culture living in a mindless society. They attributed laziness, aggression, violence, greed sexual, innocence and irrationality to Africans. Works with such European consciousness belong to the first phase of post -colonial development, and such works include E.M Foster's *A passage to India (1924),* Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson (1961),*Joseph Comrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1983) and others. These representations were criticized for their limitation and bias.

With independence came the development of independent literatures in English language, and writers such as Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and others that belong, wrote in response to the historical state or order that denied Africans their humanity, forcing them to reject their color. These writers wrote against the backdrop of harsh realities and devastating arrogance of cold humanism. Through their literature, the colonized sought to redress the negative self-image created in many black people by their long history of enslavement and discriminatory treatment, treatment made inescapable "by the visibility of their perceived difference"(Fanon1952:109-140). Post-colonial theory allow not only the dismantling of the binaries (center/margin) by asserting the independence of the marginal but also the very idea of such a center, deconstructing the claims of the European colonizers to a unity and a fixity of a different order from that of others. Post-colonial theory, therefore, call into question the claims and exposes them to all as historically constructed and courage-able formation. Thus, post-colonial discourse in Nigeria literary development meant to restore identity, nationhood, humanity and decolonization. Within African region, Nigeria postcolonial literatures stand as an entity, with broad and diverse experiences. Intellectuals, Scholars and Critics such as Nnolin, Emenyonu(1989), Cook (1977),

Gurr and Zirimu (1973), Achebe 1963b, 1964b, 1965, 1975, 1978a and 1978b), Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike (1983), Soyinka (1968, 1975, 1976 and 1986),Jeyifo (1979,1980), Irele (1975,1981), Omotoso (1975), Sowande (1979) and Amuta (1983, 1984 and 191989) and others among, play a fundamental role to the total enterprise of post-colonial studies in Nigeria by identifying issues and providing critique on post-colonial studies in contemporary Nigeria.

Post-colonial theory is used to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonization, in a form of deconstruction which demonstrate the extent to which the text contradicts the colonizers underlying assumption------ civilization, justice, aesthetics, sensibility etc and reveals its ideologies and processes. Considering the rhizomic nature of imperialism, post-colonial theory is used to subvert the tap root of the myth of monolithic power (centre) that "assert the canon, the standard and the patented". The colonized, in rejecting the claim of exclusive right to knowledge and civilization by the colonizer reconstruct its own image and past to project its distinct identities and experiences.

Essentially, post-colonial discourse is centered on "victim literature" or "resistance literature". The theoretical issues are latent in two fundamentals namely materiality and location. This provides a rich difference in terms of effect and specific analysis of the various experiences in the study. Thus repudiating a separatist aesthetic of affliction and at the same time deconstructing its effect remain the nexus upon which post-colonial discourse is built. Post colonial discourse therefore suggests decentering, plurality, hybridity and dismountling of authority. The research argues that post-colonial discourse is a general concept that can be employed to the study of Igala prose fiction in English. The Igala prose fiction in English describe the colonial contact and the people's resistance to the devastating effect the contact had on the socio-political, economic and cultural milieu of the Igala people, the northern region and

Nigeria respectively. This study therefore, is premised on the way the selected Igala writers explored Igala society and tackled the issues of culture and socio-political development as post-colonial reality. The thesis therefore explores the ways in which Igala society/Northern Nigeria, a colonized society "articulates his/her identity in order to reverse the cultural distortion that have defined and realigned his/her past and in the context of the larger Nigeria experience" (Abel 2005:62).

Post-colonial poetics are discursive concepts central to colonialist and post colonial discourse. The poetics are crucial sites for inscription of how colonial discourse theory perceived, control and represent people or the colonized, and the symbolic resistance against the capacity of established discourse. It identifies constituted reality and it subversion as the very locus at which cultural and historical changes occur. The poetics are spaces which describe the complex ways in which challenges to dominant discourse especially those of the imperial centre might be mounted from periphery. Such terms or concepts like hybridity, mimicry, appropriation and ambivalence and other, are important terms in post colonial poetics.

Hybridity is one of the most widely employed and most disputed term in post –colonial theory. Hybridity refers to the creation of new Trans-cultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial etc. However, the term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhaha, whose analysis of colonizer/ colonized relation stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities as (mimicry, ambivalence) Bhabha contend that all cultural statements and system are constructed in a space called "third space" of enunciation(1994:37) The emergence of cultural identity is this contradictory and ambivalent space, makes the claims to hierchical purity of culture untenable. The recognition of this

ambivalent space of cultural identity help to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in fovour of the recognition of an empowering heredity within which cultural difference operate.

Hybidity also is used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural exchange. This use of the term has been widely criticized because it implies negation and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilations policies by masking or white washing cultural differences.

The idea of hybridity also underlies other attempts to stress the mutuality of culture, the colonial and post-colonial process in expression of syncreticity, cultural synergy and trsnsculturation. The criticism of the term referred to above stems from the perception that theories that stress mutuality necessarily down-play oppositionality, and increase continuing post-colonial dependence. However, proponents of decolonization and anti colonialism have interpreted this usage in colonial discourse that nothing in the idea of hybridity that suggests that mutuality negates the hierarchical nature of the imperial process or that it involves the idea of an equal exchange.

It has also been subject to critique as part of a general dissatisfaction with colonial discourse theory by critics such as Chandra Talpade mohanty, Benita Pary and Aijaz Ahmad. These critiques stress the textualist and idealist basis in such analysis and point to the fact that they neglect specific local differences.

The assertion of a shared post-colonial condition such as hybridity has been seen as part of the tendency of discourse analysis to dehistoricize and de-locate cultures from their temporial, spatial, graphical and linguistic contexts and to lead to abstract, globalized concept of the textual

that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations. Critics such as Young draws attention to differences between unconscious processes of hybrid mixture and a conscious and politically motivated concern with the deliberate disruption of homogeneity. Young notes that politicized hybridity therefore becomes contestatory so that it embraces the subversion and challenge of division and separation. It is this potential of hybridity to reverse the structures of domination in the colonial situation which Young recognized in Bakhtin's discuss that Bhabha articulates. Hybridity therefore has been transformed by Bhabha into active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant colonial power, depriving the imposed imperialist culture not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed pontitically, often through violence but even of its own claims to authenticity.

The implication of hybridity as a concept to this study's framework work of analysis is that it serves as a model for resistance, locating this in the subversive counter discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and thus undermining the very basis on which imperialist superiority colonialist discourse raises. The study acknowledge that a state of political hybrization has occurred but this has produce complicity and resistance, a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. This ambivalence disrupts the clear–cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the relationship between colonizer and colonized.

The ambivalence of the colonial relationship therefore generates the seed of its own destruction. Just as ambivalence 'decanters' authority from its position of power so that authority may also become hybridized when placed in a colonial context in which it finds itself dealing with and often infected by other cultures. In this respect, the very engagement of colonials discourse with the colonized cultures over which it has domination inevitably leads to an ambivalence that disable its monolithic dominance.

Another important term in post colonial theory is mimicry. The term is used to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. While colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to mimic the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, mimicry is never very far from mockery, parody of whatever it mimic. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial discourse.

According to Bhabha (1994:86) the copying of the colonizing culture, behaviors, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and certain menace, so the mimics is at once resemblance and menace. Mimicry reveals the limitation in the authority by colonial discourse almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction. The consequence of this for post colonial studies are quite profound, for what emerges through this flaw in colonial power is writing, that is post colonial writing, the ambivalence which is menacing to colonial authority. The menace of post colonial writing comes from the disruption of colonial authority. The threat inherent in mimicry comes not from an overt resistance but from the way it continually suggest an identity not quite like the colonizer which means that the colonial culture is always potentially and strategically insurgent. The mimicry by the post-colonial subject is therefore always potentially destabilizing to colonial discourse and locates an area of considerable political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of imperial dominance.

The implication of mimicry to the analytical framework of the study is that, though the writers analyzed wrote within the dominant western political and cultural mode, it was with a fierce anti-colonial and nationalistic vision. Post colonial writing in this context draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effect of colonization on literary production revealing the underlying assumption (civilization justice, aesthetics sensibilities) of colonialist ideologies

and processes. Through the post colonial writing, post-canonical and colonial periods are interrogated to foreground the experience of colonization, which unsettled and fragmented pre-existing cultural conditions in the land and began the process of self reconstruction. This inappropriateness disturbs the normality of the dominant discourse itself.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

The name Igala stands "for the people, the language and the territory" (Armstrong 1970:77). The word Igala stands for the people and the language, the territory is called Ane-Igala (Igalaland) which signifies the cultural habitat of the Igala people. The bulk of the territory lie within the lower Niger and is bounded by river Niger on the West and the river Benue in the North. Today, Igala people are found in the nine local governments namely Idah, Ibaji, Dekina, Bassa, Ankpa, Ofu, Igalamela, Omala and Olamaboro, Kogi State of Nigeria (Lukman 2007). Ane-Igala (Igalaland) shares boundaries with different ethnic groups such as the Idoma of Benue state on the North East, on the South is the Ibos of Enugu and the Oguaugu of the Anambra river. However, these boundaries are not static throughout as they continue to extend inland or into the interior. Prose fiction may take the form of the novel, short story, novelette and anecdote, although, there are historical narratives such as the autobiography, biography and memoirs. Igala prose fiction in English, could be conceived as the imaginative writing in the form of the novel, short story, anecdote, autobiography, biography and memoires, written by Igala men and women, and non-Igala persons which capture the experience of Igala people and the circumstance in history which have influenced and are still influencing the Igala personality. The shift from orality to written form is due to colonial intervention and missionary activities in Northern Nigeria. The introduction of Western education served as impetus in the in the emergence of Igala natives writers of their realities. They depicts the people's tradition, history and experience

hitherto ever done before. Igala prose fiction in English recognizes the dynamic nature of its society and constantly respond to these realities i.e they are influence by the environment as well as the society. Writers of prose fiction in English from Igalaland source their resources from the people's values and norms and world view. Thus, it has a distinct cultural characteristic which is peculiar to Igala experiences and identity.

The major concerns of Igala prose fiction are cultural reassertion /representation, colonialism/ neocolonialism, domination, inequality, justice, poverty, exploitation and violence, and a host of others, just to mention a few. Beneath all these, is the idea of communal relationship which is the bane of human existence and this has ever remain the underlying structure upon which other issues are discussed. The unique joy of traditional communal relationships of old is explored in contrast with modern world which breeds despair, fragmentation and disintegration of modern man. In this way, the relationship of dominance, deprivation, exploitation, inequality and injustice which are legacies of colonialism and modern institutions remains the central discourse in Igala prose fiction in English. The past traditional values and above all, the way of life in the past is given much importance and recognition with its form, rules and order of existence. This past like the past of any colonial society has its short coming. According to Achebe (1964:158)

The African past is not only one of egalitarian peasant communities, and of empires rising and falling, but also one of continual exploitation at the hands of the West. That this exploitation is facilitated by the ruling classes whether in the traditional African community or by the middle classes in the colonial era, does not make it any less devastating for the African people. The starting point for the Nigerian novelist it to help his societyregainits belief in its self and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self denigration.

In recreating the past, these writers help the people to regain belief in themselves, and the images of society is rescued and liberated from colonial denigration. Major writers of prose fiction from Igalaland include Yusufu Etu *The Clever Dove and Other Stories* (1995) African-FEB Publishers Onitsha, Nigeria), Okwumaji Enebi's *The Sun and The moon (2000,* unpublished), Patricia Atama *Mother is Precious (1991)*Longman), Eugenia Abu's *And Tenderness Retune (2009), In the Blink of an Eye (2007)* Spectrum Books Ltd Ibadan, Sunday Okpanachi's *The Red Masquerades and Other Stories (1997)*, Yusufu Etu's *The Last Inheritors (2000), Ame Oboni (1993)* Macmillan), David Oguche Ahmad Bello's *The Noble Sacrilege*, *(2007)* Zaria, University Printing Press), Aimota Isah's *All that Glitters is not Gold (2001)*Panagraphic Publishers, Port Hacourt, and others, to mention a few.

These writers from their individual perspective explore endless essence of human natures, culture, needs and wants, environment and social relationship in Igala society. These issues remain the main concern of Igala literature. Those writers employ cultural icons such as proverbs, oracles, traditional deities, the drum, belief system (world view), Religion, masquerades and ritual celebration and songs which are peculiar to the Igala people in their artistic creation. Their symbolic aesthetics and emotional significance remains a deft exposition of Igala culutre. The use of customs and norms of the people give these works strength and a unique appeal despite their involvement in local discourse.

The distinct characteristics of Igala prose fiction is derived from the centrality of culture (African culture) which serve as prop in their works. Those writers sought the re-establishment of coherence and integrity in human life through cultural retrieval. Their effort in literature can be categorized as "cultural nationalism" which debunks Eurocentric cultural assumptions and extoll Igala tradition. By concentrating on the presentation of Igala culture derived from its

antecedent in the society, the writer draws attention to the wholesome dignit y of African traditional life and institutions, as evident in Sunday Okpanachi's *The Masquerades and Other Stories.*

The uniqueness of Igala prose fiction is also in the skillful blending and utilization of various Igala elements of the cosmological totality and chthonic realm such as the supernatural forces, rituals and sacrifices to reordered the social chaos which are the reality of Igala society. This is achieved when the people occupation and environment are taken over by elemental and visceral forces. The hovering of these natural forces on the daily existence of the people leads to the ritual. Rituals to the Igalas is linked to the "transcendent numinous because they provides socio-mythical affirmation to the Igala universe.

The rituals are performed and conducted with strong belief and thought as a means of solidifying beliefs and fostering unity in the community. What is significant here is that Igala prose fiction reveal that traditional values and institutions are capable of furthering personal development and that of the society. In this way, Igala prose fiction constructs a social vision within the elements that are rooted in the matrix of Igala culture. These elements bear metaphysical power and they are adjunct distinctly Igala, and their material contents: have potent and effective residual, reactionary potential capable of exorcism and spiritual cosmic manifestation. The prose fiction in vein shuffle through the disguises the Igala society takes. It blends the new with the old such as the Igala folk literature, proverbs, legends, customs and rituals and Igala myths to address socially relevant issues that affect average Igalaman.

Early literature from Northern Nigeria is greatly influenced by the Arabic and Islamic culture. Abel (2005:4) on the nature of literature in Northern Nigeria argues that: consequence upon the spread of Islam, a literary inspired by the Koran and transmitted through Arabic gained

prominence in such a way that even the social and political experiences of the people were drawn against the background of ecclesiastical exigygency. Similarly, Abubakar (2009:124) argues that early works from Northern Nigeria: synchronize divergent influences, Islamic, Arabic, Persian and African to signify the import of faith, morality, justice, wit and creativity to creation and sustenance of complex multicultural society. The content of these early works owes a lot to the Arabic literature even though " there are instances of interpolation of divergent discourses, at times fabular, about adventure, destiny, perseverance and morality which occupy a place between Afro centric and Eurocentric discourses, (Abel 2005:26-27). Comparing the North to Southern Nigeria, Tanimu Abubakar argues that: the type of creative writing that Southern Nigeria received international recognition and deservedly famous for is in a state of flux in Northern Nigeria. This is because the development of creative writing that designates the postcolonial condition has not reached iconic levels in all parts of Nigeria, in fact it is assumed to be in a state of perpetual childhood in the North (Abubakar 2009:16).

On the contrary, the Northern Nigerian writer of early 40s and 50s, according to Abel 2005: "depicts a firmly stable society in which Islam wields an overwhelming influence. As a result of this stability there is little recourse to traditional past characterized by gods, deities and traditional sacrifices or ritual celebrations (Abel 2005 :37). However, the development of literature in Northern Nigeria up to the 20th century, according to Abubakar (2009:24) is: anchored on extensive knowledge of society, adaptations and profundity of insight. Writers knew their societies, their histories and relations with other societies well and by so doing, they transcend the limitations of antiphony and in this respect these categories of northern writers were not different from other Nigerian writers. They portray their societies by conveying their essences, distortions and direction in history.

From the above statement, creative writing in Northern Nigeria preoccupies itself with the individual lives of a people pertaining to their religion, social issues, economic and political dilemmas. Literature in Northern Nigeria has undergone serious transformation "beginning from panegyric poetry in Arabic and Ajami as found in the work of Dan Maria (Ibn Al Sabagh) in Katsina in the 17th century, to those of Abdullahi Tilga in Kano and Mohammed El-Barnawi in Borno in the 18th century, (Hiskett 1975:13-14). While these early writers were learned in Islamic and Arabic language (mallams/clerics), those of the 70s and 80s, are learned in both Islamic and western education. The development of written literature in English since the 1970s has produced writers of considerable weight in Northern Nigeria. These writers include Labo Yari in the *Climate of Corruption*, Abubakar Gimba, Olu Obafemi, Helon Habila,Zaynab Alkali, Yahaya Dangana, Chris Obudumu, Dul Johson and others. There are several others who are writing and whose potential for excellence are high. Muazu Maiwada, Ibrahim Sheme, Audi Giwa, Halima Sa'adiya, andAdamu Kymca Usman and others not mentioned here. Considering the transformation and the state of the creative writing in Northern Nigeria Abubakar argue that it is false to insist that literature in Northern Nigeria is define by its provinciality, its micro-nationalism. It has far outgrown this narrow confine although it must contain with the onslaught of other competitors, rigid critical canon and the encroachment of corporate capitalism (Abubakar 2009:25).

Equally, to discuss the spate of creative writing in Northern Nigeria,(Alkali 2008:3) argues that attention must be paid to both writers in English and in the indigenous languages beginning with the early writers like Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Saidu Zungur among many others, who constitute the first generation writers, going down to the second generation, and the third generation to which Helon Habila, Yahaya Dangana and many others not mentioned belong

(Alkali 2009). The emergence of nascent writers from the late 70s and early 80s, lead to the production of novels with individual perception of truth and reality which are the major pre-occupation of modern writers or in Ben Okri's phrase "newly ascendant spirit" (Bochme 1995 :4). These writers in various ways tackle issues such as marginalization, disillusionment, moral decadence, feminism, and other themes that have direct bearing to Northern Nigeria environment. These new writers expressed themselves perhaps through "the major genres of the novel, from the popular romance to highly philosophical and the realistic, employing all manners of devices from allegory through parody and satire in the recreation of social reality". In this way Northern Nigerian writers respond to the distinct and various social political and religious doctrine which characterized the region and Nigeria. They (new writers) have repositioned the North on the literary platform in terms of new thought or perception and "they represent a modest but burgeoning literary renaissance" in Northern Nigeria (Abel 2005). Their works are truly new in both style and theme because they explore virgin areas of literary concern. The award- winning feat attained by the middle and young generation of Northern Writers like Zaynab Alkali, Abubakar Gimba, Yahaya Dangana and Helon Habila , demonstrates that there is a 'visible' body of writers in the region "contrary to the scant picture of Northern writers usually painted and marginally talked about in critical circles" (Obafemi 2009). Based on the above reality, Saleh concluded that the Northern creative desert or its tropical forest is actually a creation of the critic / reader (Saleh 2009).

Northern Nigeria literature, especially the novel, display characteristics that are "peculiar to the north such as feudal hegemony, unequal power relations, elite formation and the representation of the Northern interest within the post-independent Nigeria society" (Abel 2005).

Thus, the novel genre has of late enriched the larger corpus of the Northern Nigeria literature with 'new' perception, reflection and reconstruction of the historical experiences of the people The novel is employed by these new or modern writers to interrogate the issues of conquest, dominance and self-determination". This shows that the texture of creative writing in Northern Nigeria is now enriched with the current event of our time and place. It is not static but moves with the significance of events of the modern time. In Northern Nigeria, writers such as Olu Obafemi, Gimba, and Akali and others that belong "stands tall' in the discussion of decolonization, neocolonialism and the struggles for equity and justice, thus Northern Nigeria literature like other literatures from the third world or modern African literatures has been circumscribed by politics and ideology as the conceptual framework. Consequently, creative Writing in Northern Nigeria has moved beyond the Islamic trust to the secular world.

Thus Tanimu Abubakar argues that Northern Nigeria literature operates within an interactive continuum or spectrum of historical interactions about the complexity and nature of humanity and its essential concern. In this way literary creativity nurtures an endless enquiry about human nature, needs, culture and several other concept about man, his environment and relationship with other men(Abubakar 2009:19).

Saleh Abdu (2009:29) conceived "Northern Nigeria literary space" in postcolonial theoretical terms which exist beyond a historical critical gaze, one without a central casual logic but one which is realized from the combination of cultural formations and social process. Northern Nigeria literary space according to Saleh, is that where the Self, like the nation, is constantly appropriating the Other, versions of which are united by their collective alienation, adaptation by different versions of the self. In this perpetual flux of the nation, Space, Self and Other, the agents of Globalization intervene and destroy nations only to replace them with others,

mega nations. Thus, fiction is replaced with fiction in a continuity of narratives (Saleh 2009). Literature, thus, is an imaginative interruption into the cultural space, it saw and sews, and thus creates and recreates cultures, identities, peoples and nations.

The social transformation of Northern Nigeria especially the advancement in and access to western education created increase in literacy and the impulse for the development of ethnic literature. The enthronement of independence and the spread of western education not only pave way for the emergence of different cultural formations and expression of ethnic realities but also broken the colonial policy (rule of practice) which excluded the other languages "access to western education or the opportunity for literary creativity in English. In this vein Abel (2005:37) argues that as northern Nigerian undergoes social transformations it novel equally grows and new writers are emerging in the major genres of the novel, from popular romances to the highly philosophical and the realistic, employing all manner of devices from allegorythrough parody and satire in the creation of social realities. The emergent of these 'new' writers project northern Nigerian in the semblance of national character and gave it pluralistic identity to be called distinctively northern.

Unlike the Hausa who had experienced the Arabic / Islamic and Ajami literary tradition before the coming of the western colonialism, the minorities have no literary tradition to fall back on. Consequently, creative writing take along time to emerge from the minority area. However, minority literature has observable peculiarity drowned from the custom and norms of the people. This literature not only capture the realities of the writer's environment but express widely differencing cultural experiences, thus, the complex resonance of minority literature create a distinct phase of Northern Nigeria literature. The very fact that much of the minority literature arose originally out of the discipline of anthropology (or ethnology), accounts for it

concern with the socio-cultural conditions and experiences of the people. The minority writing is a constituent part of the general awakening in Northern Nigeria literary landscape. It provides a certain elaboration of Northern Nigeria sentiment; the idiom of cultural thought as a new phase in Northern Nigeria literature. The minority writers have employed with success those "convention of expression taken from traditional society and adapt them to their particular needs". It is within this framework that minority literatures operate or occurs.

Although minority literature is greatly influenced by the historical, and the cultural norms and values of the people, it display great insight and profundity in the discuss of national discourse. Their works represent a past, a present and future, marked by language which capture the messages and nuances of their environment. However, literature in Northern Nigeria is not without its challenges. Akosu (2009), in a paper entitled "sustaining Creative Writing in Northern Nigeria" argues that creative writing in Northern Nigeria is faced with social censorship, and that writers from the northern region apply themselves to the distinct and various political and religious doctrine. Equally, Saleh Abdu (2009) belies that northern literary space is in need of literary critic and reader. He argues that "the literary desert or its tropical forest, is actually a creation of the critic/reader". The critics preoccupation involves employing, exploring and exploiting the cross-currents of contemporary literary productions, including what Furniss (2006) calls "geopolitics of literature" to intervene in and modify, nurture nascent literature to attained relevance and acceptance. By the same token, Denja (2009:103) in a paper entitled "role of literary criticism" opines that literature from the North both in the indigenous language and English have not received enough from critics in whose milieu those works are conceived and published. While the inherent textual quality of literature earns it proportionate immediate impact on the reader, it is the critic's articulated reading that earns for the text national or higher

text recognition. Northern critics are therefore, required to encode the Northern literary experience in such away that it would be impossible to insulate the northern segment from the corpus of the Nigeria literature.

In the same vein Muhammed Tahir et al (2009: 189-190), blamed the obfuscation of northern Nigerian Writing on northern academicians: "the northern academics have been complicit in the promotion of the "dearth" of the Northern Nigeria writers because they choose to remain enamored of works of Nigeria's established writers who are largely Southern extraction, and they pay scant attention to Northern writing in their seminar, conference, workshop, or journal papers. And this has resulted in the failure of Northern literary scholars / critics in creating a space for themselves in Nigeria critical circles. The above concerns are derived from the fact that a piece of writing no matter how widely read, acquires a canonical status only when it is fully engaged by the critical establishment usually located in the academia and the media. Thus, the statements by SAleh, Denja and Tahir et al, are clarion call on the intellectuals and scholar from Northern Nigeria to do more, "editing, analyzing and theorizing" on writings, writers and the nature of Northern Nigeria literature. This would create a niche for Northern Nigeria literature within the larger corpus of the National literature.

Tanimu Abubakar (2009:19) argues that "creative writing today is fast becoming a trans-national phenomenon. In this global village, the assessment and rating of any piece of imaginative work be it the novel, the short story, the play or poetry, the way in which cannon formation actuate itself are geared towards parameters of world literature. The implication of this cultural world order for writers is enormous. To aspire to greatness, writers in Northern Nigeria like else must strike a balance between being local, national and international at the same time. In this context, the language in which the writer produces his/her creative works is no longer a

hindrance once the subject-matter of the work is ‘attractive’ enough to warrant translation. Literacy merit is therefore a value of the reduction of aesthetic vision into quantities of common, applicable or interesting experiences.

Considering the caliber of northern writers, it is obvious that they have not only demystified but explode the myth of literary backwardness in Northern Nigeria. Although Northern Nigeria authors takes their inspiration from their immediate environment, their writing go beyond the limit of the thought and belief and realities of Northern Nigeria to the broader national discourse, in terms of Nigeria socio-cultural and political discourse. In this regards, Northern Nigeria literature operates through a conceptual vocabularies that are themselves sites of negotiations and progressions, into the mainstream of Nigeria national literary discourse.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.1 IGALA MORES (ELIFO) AND COLONIAL CONTACT IN OKPANACHI'S *THE RED MASQUERADES AND OTHER STORIES (1997)*

Literature acts as a repository for and a means of propagating culture. The cultural values of a people are encoded in their literature. The socio-political and moral ideas of a people in their literatures. Literature therefore, is an expression of society. Igala culture includes: "mental and moral discipline, as regulated by religion, laws, ethical rules, custom and habits". These values are obviously not an exclusive possession of any ethnic group due to its dynamic nature but they are makers of difference in terms of sophistication and complexity. In this respect, Ralph Linton argues that "culture is the way of life of its members, the collection of the life and habits which they learn, share, and transmit from generation to generation" (Linton 1980:3).

In the "*Red Masquerades and other stories",* Okpanachi employs different Igala socio-cultural values and norms which are instrument of social cohesion to project Igalas ethnic experience, ideal and identity. The return to the customs and norms of the people has creatively distinct this work in terms of 'new' subject matter and style. This is because cultural difference resides in the process of how these objects (cultural elements) come to be known and come into being.

All the eight stories in the collection differ in terms of their narrative techniques, or plot. The stories have a common concern of depicting the experience and culture of Igala people in their contact with the West, which brought a number of changes in the religious and cultural life of the people. Although these changes did not completely destroy the old ways or traditions of the people, they were obviously significant.

The stories differ basically because each focuses on a particular experience of traditional society and the narration or plot structure of each story differ from each story based on organic relationship between the form and content. In this vein, Jacqueline et al argues: the structure or form of a work points to its central point, to its central concern and so provides a valuable key to its meaning (1989:141). Consequently, the diversity of concern has led up to the creation of fascinating variety of forms.

The first story entitled "Daughters of Ebulejonu" takes it bearing from historical past of Ata Igala (kingship) in Igala land. Igala historical account has it that princess Ebulejonu is the only woman in Igala kingdom who became Ata Igala. She is the daughter of Ata Abutu Eje, from Abutu Eje dynasty. Ebulejonu is a woman with determination and virtue in patriarchal society, where male dominance is the norm and the female is considered as inferior. A woman is not permitted to take decision where men are present and issues of politics are beyond her reach.

Okpanachi's story "Daughters of Ebulejonu" is set in the fictional town of Inye, surrounded by villages of Ejilogwu, Ofugo, Olufofo, and Ede market. Trees, including baoba serve as the abode for the guidance spirit of the community. This is a pre-colonial setting of Igala society, with its unscientific communalism. Its original traditional system untouched and free from outside contamination.However, in 18th century, the colonialists from the West infiltrated into this society and introduced policies unknown to the natives such as infrastructural, industrial and fiscal policies. The permeation of the new system and the reaction it generate as the ideal of colonialism destroyed commonly held values, norms and cordial human relationship, remains the trust of Okpanachi's evaluation.

"Daughter of Ebulejonu" is all about the lives of the people, their custom and tradition and social life of the people. One of such custom and tradition is that women are considered as inferior and don't pay tax. One of Okpanachi's characters, Ochimana states:

A woman eats from the man's farm. Women do not climb palm-trees to either harvest the fruits or tap the wine our women do not hunt. They are the mothers of our children. None of them earns any money. If they eat, it is from our farms. If they buy locust bean, it is from our pockets. Our fathers say that he who depend on others to eat is not expected have enough to share (p.4).

The above explains the position and roles of the women in a traditional, pre-colonial Igala society. The women's role is a passive one, severely constrained by her child, there is no way she can wrest a second chance out of life. She cannot lead an event but only accommodate herself to them. Okpanachi, wished to make the position of women under patriarchal societies emphatic and central. The female community is left with nothing but love and loyalty. The woman is not encouraged to challenge the established order of male domination. Through the statement of Ochimana, attention is drawn to the tradition and patriarchal system that forms the world of women.

The status of Igala women is affected by patriarchy, they have been relegated to the position of the 'other' and they are powerless, exploited and given subordinate position in society. Thus is the peculiar cultural position of women in Igala society of the Inye, in Ankpa division before the colonial incursion. Women are seen as inferior and incompetent in Inye pre-colonial traditional society.

Consequent upon the foregoing, Okpanachi writes to reconstruct a new identity for the Igala woman out of patriarchy and systemic oppression. In Igala society sexual division of labour is supported and justified by the belief and value system. In its pre-colonial state, a higher value is placed on culture than on nature. Okpanachi therefore in this story inbued his female characters with strong determination to achieve what their male counterpart could not to bring about equality and absence of oppression. This is clearly illustrated when male characters such as Amidu, Ojidu and Ochimana, who challenge the unjust colonial policy are arrested and sent to jail. They remain in prison for days, and their fellow men could not negotiate for their release. The fifth meeting of the elders breaks up without any definite solution in sight (p.8), but with great resolve women took charge and embark on the tortuous journey of the release of their husbands.

Women such as Ojonoka and others herein referred to as "daughters of Ebulejonu" intervene and takes their lives in their hands in disregard to the custom and norms of their society, and confronted the white man for the release of their husband "we will not leave here without our husbands (p. 14). What is crucial in this confrontation is that the women regarded as a naïve, acquiescence, andobject of child bearing, now confront the painful presence of colonialism. The emotional centre of "Daughters of Ebnlejonu" is the slow appreciation of the strength and dignity of womanhood. Okpanachi seems to be saying that woman like man, is governed by their heart and that man-made laws are external definitions. Thus, his male characters are humbled by their master authority. What emerges as the final product of Okpanachi's reconstruction of the feminine gender, is a woman whose power and liberation lies in the will to act and struggle.

By this achievement, Okpanachi's female characters are idealized. In spite of the traditions which tend to suppress them, the women are imbued with an inner strength to confront the dilemma, which threatens her home. Ojonoka, for instance, typifies such women and she remains a prominent figure throughout the event in the novel, in the vein that Flora Nwapa in her novel *Efuru* (1966) creates a woman who negotiates her way through the 'murky water' of patriarchy to realize limitation and potentials.

The uniqueness of this story is that the writer has not only used the customs and norms as his resource base but used it to make a feminist statement of the capacity of women, as the reservoir of love, care, patience and suffering which are source of spiritual healing and self – discovery. What Okpanachi has done with this story, is the attempt to demystify the socially construct difference which lead to forms of inequality, oppression, and exploitation where the male is regarded as the norm, the central and the female as other. Things have changed dramatically. Women are no longer silent. They now assess their particular condition as women and even become advocates of feminism within the Afrocentric context.

In reconstructing the female self "Daughters of Ebulejoni" Okpanachi proffer alternative to patriarchy in the face of male domination. The writer encourages mutual understanding and not oppression, Okpanachi is not against patriarchy, in totality but advocate that women be allowed to walk side by side with the man. Western influence has not even helped matters, as they are made to pay taxes as a new form of oppression within a capitalist economy. Okpanachi reconstructed the women folk to justify her quest for equality or better living which is central to her desire for a new status. However, the colonial tax system is one of the cruelest inhuman policy on women transformation and liberation. Infant, Okpanachi's work explores Igala multifaceted history and its various permutations: the impact of colonialism, culture denigration,

womanhood, culture and others. Other characters, especially, the male in the story are created as foils to provide contrast and background information. Such characters include Amidu, Ojidu and others, they are not only flat characters but memorable ones.

The second story in the collection "*The Enemy in the Dark"* is concerned with Igala hostile social-cultural environment, a shared consciousness by Igala peolpehood. Okparachi's perception or ideology herein is the articulation of the system of meaning, values and beliefs which are hostile to human development, and the need for a change. A transformative labor, a reality put into form – through a creative act. Its aesthetic effect leads us to question ourselves, and to evaluate our relationship to our surrounding-social reality.

"The Enemy in the Dark"is the mythic figure of the Igala folklores called Egwubi, Okagoli and Ichekpa. Okpanachi in this story does not glorify the Igala world but portrayed the lived experience, the intricacies of existence with social recognizable characters such as Obekpa, Amodu and others. The uniqueness of this story can be traced to the oral source, the folktale which are communal materials.

"The Enemy in the Dark" is purely an indigenous reality, and a visionary presentation of the lived experience for the purpose of a social direction. Okpanachi penetrate these complex Igala verities of existence for the purpose of a re-examination of the incubus that daily assaulted the social existence of the people. Okpanachi (1997:19) states:"suddenly a shrill cry rent the evening air the first voice is joined by a second then a third and a fourth (p.19).

These are emotional cries of people who sees Obekpa's wife slump while preparing the evening meal. When the occurrence is added to the equally "mysterious manner is which Ojege, the first wife of Obekpa collapsed and died, everyone is convinced that evil spirit is at work" Okpanachi

in this story present the occurrence of the social reality and the people's attitude in the face of ever unfolding modernity. Most of the people departed immediately as they came based on the ethnic customary believe that "it is wise not to be found between a malevolent spirit and its potential victim since somebody could otherwise receive blows meant for neither individual". The reflection of this attitude or complexities in the Igala society is meant to show how virtues of moderation and good conscience are no longer meaningful. Okpanachi here in explores the people's experiences, consciousness and response to their reality. The experience of Obekpa provides the platform through which Okpanachi portrays issues that threaten the harmony and corporate existence, such as the fear of the unknown. The poist is that, the protagonist welfare is inseparable from that of the total community, thus it is a self-submergence in universal essence.

Obekpa Omagwu, with his wife literally strapped to his back pedalled the old bicycle laboriously into "a forest populated by evil spirit and man devouring animals, undaunted" to the house of a (p.21), medicine man but half way through the forest his worst fear are confirmed, right across his path stands a being blacker than night. It is obvious here that Obekpa is inexorably drawn into a web of conflicts with the enemy in the dark, the unpredictability of life. He address the being thus:

> My name is Obekpa, son of Agwu. I do not look for trouble, but never recall from a just fight. I harbor no evil designs. I am not going to steal from anybody's farm-No, nor am I going to perform the duty of another man with his wife. I am not a woman that I should gossip. I therefore command you to vacate the road for us to pass in peace (p. 21-22).

The above shows that the peoples way of life is significantly affected by diverse influence.Obekpa's willful and stoicism illuminate virtues, communal will invested in him. Obekpa thus becomes the 'unresisting strength' of the community in confrontation with the

threatening enemy in the dark. His language is a symbolic medium that unearth the uncertainties which pervade human existence. By highlighting the paradigm of the deeper Igala reality, a mysterious one in opposition to immediate accessible, Okpanachi is initiating a process of revaluation. Despite the mystical effusion, the aesthetics of the novel are secular based on the harmonies of social relationship and human function.

The story *"Ojochide Newborn child"* is rooted in Igala world view and the impact of Western incursion on this society. In Igala society, there exists a mystical bond for continuity of society between the worlds of the living and the dead. The world of the living is older than the ancestral world just as the deities preceded humanity into the universe (Soyinka). To the Igala's the present life contains within it manifestation of the ancestry and the living, and all are vitally within the intimations and effectiveness of life beyond mere abstract conceptualization. In this vien Emmy Idegu states: the Igala believe in the world of the living (Efile), the dead Efojegwu-inhabited by the ancestors, some of which are deified as intermedinary gods) and the world that is the abode of the Supreme Being, Odoba Ogagwu-Ojo Chamachaala. The living are the lowest in the cosmology order, they live in complete obedience to Ojo and the ancestors who act as intermediaries between Odoba Ogagwu-Ojochamachaala and the living (Emmy Idegu 1988:21)This believe about death sharply contrast with Western consciousness where death is dreadful (Ogundipe – Leslie in Linfors 1975).

Okpanachi in this story sets out to highlight the ambivalence created by colonialism on his characters by appraising the continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite.

Okpanachi in this story created characters like Yakubu, the medicine man to represent the turgidity and excesses of the old order, while character such as Bartholomew, the village teacher and Pastor and the husband of Ojochide, as emissaries of Western cultural influences. Ojochide had been in excruciating labour pain for the past two days (P.25) Yakubu is invited to divine the ways of solving this problem but Batholomew is strongly opposed to this:The women could have asked Yakubu, who combined herbal medicine with divination to further inquire into the mystery of the prolong labour, but they were not unaware of the stout opposition of Brother Bartholomew (P. 26).

Barthelomew is opposed to any recourse to Yakubu, whom he referred to as an agent of witchcraft (P.27) but later accept that Yakubu be invited. This goes to show the ambivalence created in Bathelomew by the colonial influence. Bartholomew represents typical Africans who have lost confidence on their traditional way of life. His belief and the value he holds for his society is shaky, if not destroyed.

Okpanachi explores the colonial era, the existence of dominant colonial and dependent indigenous structures. The persistence of Igala traditional religious forms and values in the face of this Western dominance remains a big question. How capable is traditional religion in the face of the change – agent. The persistence of traditional religious belief and practice, S.N. Ezeanya called it “the endurance of conviction” due to its non – material (Ideas, beliefs, behavior etc) aspect of culture which does not wear away like the material cultural aspect. These explain the schizoid religious mentality among African converts like Bartholomew, the ability to combine traditional values with Western Christian culture. This shows that morality, religion, metaphysics and other forms of consciousness have no history, no development but men developed them.

Apart from depicting the negative impact of colonization, Okparachi also reflects on the issue of death and resurgents. It is a reflects of the forsightedness of the human medium of continuity inherent in the matrix of Igala myth of origin. “Ojochide gave birth to a baby boy but lost her life while the baby boy is being washed outside but resurged back to life later with the news that her late father in the land of the dead had chased her back to life (1997:27.32). The believe in the dead ancestors capacity for protection, salvation and refuge have been Igala thought. It is not that death and resurrection is peculiar to the Igala peoples world view but the degree of integrated acceptance of this life rhythm, mores and social organization in Igala society is certainly worth emphasizing. In the words of Obiechinna, “nature is so intimately integrated into the lives and experiences of the people that the consciousness and sub – consciousness levels of their minds are saturated with it” (Obiechin 1975).The story indicates that Okpanachi is promoting a true representation of Igala personality. The story offers a mordant dissection of a social situation by confronting reality. A cautionary moment in an otherwise ‘self-trapped’ duality of existence.

Inspite of Western influence, the peoples attachment to their culture is so strong that both traditional culture and the Western culture live side by side, therefore, broadening the entire cultural scope of Igala society. The dilemma of how to reconcile the claims of the past with the existences of modern life is central in this story. Mythical and national thinking remains products of consciousness. The real change is in man’s action in shaping his worlds.

In the story entitled “The Second Coming of Negedu Ajono” portend evil and negative things associated with the traditional social conventions,through the detailed exploration of the dilemma of characters within the contradiction of their social reality. “The Second Coming of Negedu Ajono” portray Igala custom and tradition in relation to the burial place of a deceased

person. The importance attached to the place of burial of a decease person is important in Igala custom and tradition. The place of burial or how a deceased person is buried shows the reputation of the deceased lineage. It shows the level of care, virtue and humanity exercised in that family. The important thing about this tradition is its corollary effect. Igala believe in the spiritual realm that if the dead person is not buried according to the custom of his ancestors, the spirit of the dead man continue to roam about in the spirit world because his ancestors have denied him entrance into their resting place. As the deceased wonder in the spirit world, he return (second coming) as evil spirit to hunt those who may be responsible for his restlessness.

To portray this custom and tradition of the Igala people, Okpanachi explore this custom of Igala people through two major characters, Negedu Ajono, as the deceased person and Abu Okete, as the character who try to helped or save the diseased from dying but "what is that art of man against the dictates of fate" (p35). Negedu Ajono died after a prolong sickness and the burial took place at Egaboda, Ajono's mothers village (p.35). By customs, this is an abomination and except the deceased consented to such before his death. Before Ajono's burial, there were symbolic signs that foretells this: the age owl, hooted indignantly", the bright sun suddenly dulled its bite and disappeared behind dark clouds from nowhere". A shield of darkness is thrown upon the forest", "the wind stood still" (p36). This aura of mysticism always occurred when bloated ego generate blind confrontation with the custom and tradition with tragic consequencies. These are signs of bad omen and horrible things to come in Igala culture. The rains that followed held the years record and the corpse of Negedu Ajomo has to be returned to the village. The assembled elders were speechless with panic. In accordance with the custom of Igala peoplehood, a corpse usually made only one way journey to the forest for burial, nobody needed an oracle to know that a return trip portended danger whose cause had to be identified for

appropriate appeasement. The people through custom and norms to the wind and, caught the anger of the gods. Acording to Okpanachi (1993 :37):the earth rejected the corpse being planted,' the rains filled the open tombs as if in anger. Since it is forbidden in such circumstance to use the same tomb, grave- diggers had to choose site, after site during hulls in the rains. The rains in fury, drowned four such graves before Ajono's burial p.37*).*

The above statements show the importance of custom and tradition in the life of the people. Okpanachi (1993), seems to be saying that the place of burial of a departed man is a serious affair. For a man to be buried outside his native village would not only amount to a double loss but also dishonor to relations. "No matter how far the arms swing out, they must ultimately return to the body". When a man died,' he descended to the spirit world where he acquired a certain omniscience. He offered guidance and protection to the family, nobody would like to be deprived of such advantage. The above proverb "no mater how far the arm swings, they must ultimately return to the body" underscore the importance attached to this custom. This is the reason why relatives from different village made claim based on the family ascendancy to the right to. have Inegedu Ajono buried in their respective villages.

The choice to bury Ajono in his mother's village is wrong, especially as it is against his wishes before his death. Consequently, fear of unknown,took over their daily existence and within this threatening metaphors, existence is economical and intense. The hovering of the natural forces create the image of a haunting habitation as in Hamlets of hermetic universe of forces or being. This is the most fundamental attribute of tragedy in its uncompromising interiority. Okpanachi in depicting the predicament of a society encumbered by mysterious forces states:No sooner is the deceased (Negedu Ajono) buried outside his community, strange things began to happen at Ofoke and Egabada anathema of all anathemas, the pangolin that

accursed little beast crawled across the village of Egabada, eerie voices crept into many people's ears at the same time each night, reminding them of an unknown debt, baby are born with full set of teeth (p.40).

The above are consequence of going against the custom, and the wishes of the deceased who is buried at the place or locality not acceptable to him or custom of the people. It is now no secret that the spirit of the decease does not respect the pact of burial of those who had nothing to do with him when he was alive, and who had not valued his last wish.

Any community where such abomination is committed must indulge in systematic and symbolic cleansing through sacrifice and transaction ritual to know peace and to recover their purity. The consequence of burying Negedu against the custom of his people is unspeakable, as famine unknown even to memories took possession of the land, the elder spent ceaseless night to consult the ancestors. Their revelation is startling, the community would never know peace nor plenty until Inegedu Ajono is properly buried in the village where he grow up. A second burial is not a child's game any failure would forever deprive Inegedu Ajono of eternal peace. It would be certain death for the undertakers and more catastrophically, the two villages of Ofoke and Egabada would have to be abandoned. Existence become defined as a temporal illusion, due to the displacement of the human component of the social architecture and is deprived of a bearing, of significant or meaningful relations. The tragic fate is the repetitive act of the taboo in nature Okpanachi in this story calls for the purging of the values that is hostile to human existence in the face of a new cultural reality. Man must dispense or separate himself from the traditional one-dimensional conception of reality. Separate oneself from values that threatens ones security and existence.

The story entitled *"Abutu Ijele and the messenger"* is all about Western cultural influences. The Christian missionary is represented by the messenger in an encounter and confrontation with the Igala cultural or traditional Chief Priest. The Christian missionaries wooed the people with songs, with ecstatic rollicking tunes, which had the power of plucking at silent and dusty chords in the heart (Pheba 2005:86). The messenger represent colonial cultural agent with an image of what the West or 'civilization' stood for.

Okpanachi in this story writes about Igala culture in conflict with modern religion and how this encounter speeded the disintegration of the socio – cultural cohesion and existence in the Igala society. Before the coming of the Messenger, the Igala people believe in the supremacy and creative deity of gods called spirits, deities, gods, nature gods and divinities. The gods determine the social activities of the community. Igala turn to them in times of trouble and the decision of the gods are seen as final in any controversy.

Considered as an idler, the people of Odo-eto welcomed the messenger as they would any harmless stranger, "especially one from Idah where the occasional visit of some Whiteman in roaring boats, with strange tongues and hot drinks" (p.47). These agents of Western culture distributed to the young ones cloths and drinks, with reason and dote their perception of traditional society. These young men are manipulated through all manner of tactics to retain their confidence, especially giving them gifts. They now violated the values and belief systems of their society. This is how the Western culture, especially Christianity creeps in and become established.

Okpanachi, draws inspiration, from the bounds of Igala socio – cultural situation. This is to reflect the alienation of the people from their culture, and how the colonialists encouraged a

rather reactionary view of the Igala traditional society among its youths. Thus the spread of Christianity in Igala land like elsewhere, is achieved through the cultural baggage the agents carried with them. New ideas, new material goods, dedication of the agents and the clear sign of their God won the day. Geographically, Idah is on sea – coast, therefore it face full onslaught of traders, missionaries and imperialists and tend to collapse more overtly to new cultural and religious form. After more than one full moon in the village, the messenger has planted new ideas among his flocks and they began to undermine their own culture. Okpanachi 1997:48, states:some young men started to challenge traditional authority over issues hitherto held absolute and settled. A discrete investigation revealed that the stranger was planting ideas inimical to the well – being of the land.

The chief priest of the "Erane" is the first to notice the danger the messenger constituted to the land. The guardian spirit reigned supreme over both land and mind, and a challenge to that monopoly has regrettable consequences, especially the 'cost' of expiation the community has to undergo or make to re-establish native tranquility.

Since it is an anathema to openly chase away a visitor from the community, the chief priest has to persuade the messenger to leave – "Carry yourself and your new god away from this village" your presence is an impediment to spiritual unity and the community will not be able to successfully celebrate the new yam season. That will spell danger for all we are and hope to be" (P.46).The contemptuous rejection of the old values by the youth resulted from lack of organic unity in the society. The new religion has created differences in status and a change in status necessitates a change of conscience and development. Consequent upon the refusal to leave the community after several warning, one evening, a violent wind from nowhere snatched the roof of the messengers church and deposited it on a nearby Kapoc tree, and lightening from a clear sky

set fire to the suspended roof to the amazement and sympathy of passer – by. (p.48). The attack created internal strains in the traditional society as converts began to reorder or rationalize their reality and life – style in terms of their new belief system. Thus a gradual process of uprooting the Igala traditional belief and replacing it with new faith began.

TheIgala traditional world became disunited and corrupt at heart. The society is not only deplorable but deplorable conditions set in, ardent follower like Acheneje is attacked to sound a warning to any defector or potential defector. The dualism applied to the society, the mechanical manipulation of human nature set in crisis and disposition which is the idea of orientation in nature and man disappeared.In a society where existence is based on commonly held values, norms and human relationship, the action of the defectors is seen to have implication for the peace of society.

Okpanachi explores Igala experience, consciousness and their response to the new reality, the new faith had shocked the status quo of the traditional society by its inflexible determination. Throughout the attacks, the messenger and his flocks remain determine in prayers, which made Abogili to began to think twice as he states. "the events of the last few days have shown that perhaps there may be new ways of doing old things or new things to be done in old ways (p.51). However in defending the traditional system, Abogils states:

> *I do not in any manner regret all the actions taken to defend our land against an alien spirit and his messenger. The regret would have been if I had taken no action to safeguard our own cherished value system.*

The above statement shows that Abogili is a strong devotee of traditional society who derived moral strength from the recognition of the supremacy of the deities, and gods to whom he utarly submits. His actions gave us the psychological depth by which the Abogilis stands for their belief in the traditional system in Igala land.

With the strains set – in traditional society, the new religious change agent overtly destroyed traditional belief and practices. The pattern of Igala response is a spectrum which ranges from over rejection of resistance to overt erosion. This is attested to by Abutu Ijeli the head of the Hunter – there is more to this new deity than met the eye may be, the land would benefit from it. I have come to find out (P.52). This statement implicitly point out the reality that the new religion had softened the old gods.

Okpanachi's story explores the cultural decay or the 'fatal impact of the West on Igala society, from contact and invasion, destruction and resistance. Land and resources are systematically stripped, marginalized; and subjected to layers of colonialism through economic and social policies. Consequently, the legacy of the fragmentation and alienation of the Igala cultural estate is that the material connection between the people, their place, language, beliefs and their practices has been torn apart.

Okpanachi's exploration of this cultural reality is meant to call for the synthesis of the old values and the new, because culture live by change. Contact has been made, therefore the psych and social values are constantly undergoing transformation.

The 8th story entitled *"The Red Masquerades"* is the title of the entire collection. Masquerades are of religious element and they are believed to be supernatural or closely associated with supernatural beings in Igala socio-cultural realm. There are different types of

masquerades, some are used for entertainment while others perform the function of discipline and spiritually need of the people and society. Okpanachi's masquerade in this story belong to the supernatural and the possession of spiritual element, make them all knowing and powerful. In this way, they acts as the guardian spirit of the land. Igala traditional society believe in masquerade and its spiritual role, as agent of expiation. The masquerades are used to publicly air taboos and other repressed or sensitive issues such as sex and human relationship.

Okpanachis explores this 'sacred' world view in contrast with the secular to provide the labyrinth of experiences that pervades the Igala society. Through the action of his characters, the traditional society is laid bare in its idealized past in contrast to the modern decay where people are estranged from their own cultural values to the point of being embarrassed by, and hostile towards, all that those values represented.

In traditional society, the masquerades were sent directly by the land to cleanse defilement (P. 85). Indeed their appearance to a person represent more than death sentence, it is damnation, the possession of supernatural power by the masquerades (Egwu), allow them to see what ordinary mortal cannot see. The masquerade were the highest and final court in the land, but the gods were the citadel of the morality and justice. Anytime the people deliberately put their will against the will of the gods, tragedy results, that is why the central character in this story, Onakpa, son of Edogbanya, who committed adultery with Achanetu, the wife of Obaka, the son of Ubolo, is not only driven away from his father's land but condemned to death. Even the two modern religion- Christianity and Islam condemn adultery as social evil.

Adultery is not permitted in most society but in Igala society it is a taboo. It is difficult to completely hide such on affair in a little community like Opulega, the small village in Ankpa

district of Igalaland. The consequence of adultery is grievous in the community. “it always ended in one form of death or the other” (p.79). The most obvious victim would be the adulterer. Sometimes the adulteress died, unable to withstand the shame brought to both families but atimes, “the cock old is killed by a more powerful rival in order to forestall any acts of vengeance” (p.80). But the vengeance of the land is the most dread in Igala culture. Consequently, parent always warn their children to avoid three things if they want to live long: the first is someone else wife; the wife is like a titled crown on a man’s head. She is his honour, his manhood. If you touch her, you defile him. Secondly, any young man who wants to live long enough to bury his father, should avoid rushing into chieftaincy disputes. And the third is engaging in unjust quarrel over land”. These three things are never settled except over dead bodies.

Onakpa’s adultery act is in conflict with the exigencies of the traditional society, especially the moral standard of the society. This has placed him in direct confrontation with the status quo, represented by the masquerades. The aura of mysticism and the knowledge of unknown or unseen which surrounded the masquerades transposed the masquerades into cult figures, and they become very dangerously omniscient in pronouncement and actions. In this context, Okpanachi is concern with the tragic impact of social environment on man’s vulnerability.

In the realm of his anxiety, Onakpa become more and more restive disillusioned of existence by the awareness of the calamity of his inadequacies. Even the father’s persuasion of Anigbaka, the chief priest to save him from the teeth of death is to no avail, based on the custom and tradition of the people that: to let the guilty go free defile the land as much as the crime does.

Deviation from harmonious conduct such as this are dealt with by set processes which vary from one part of Igala society to another but this anti – social act can be depending on circumstances, is a dangerous threat to communal well – being. Onakpa'a adultery act has destroyed those virtues of social and individual accommodation: patience, obstinacies, suffering and peaceableness. These are the imperatives of harmony in the community, the essence of quietude and forbearance. His action is a symbolic injury capable of social disharmony, thus it affects the moral structure of the society.

Onakpa's action is a threat to communal well – being, thus Onakpa is on his father's farm when suddenly a group of red masquerade with visages painted in various colours surged from the bushes, brandishing machetes and knives (P85) Onakpa knows there and then that he has been sentenced to death by the land (P 85).

Desecration of the land is a serious offence anywhere in Igala land. It follows the culprit everywhere. Onakpa escaped from the masquerades by not returning to the village or land, but became a man to be acted upon and incapable of acting out his fate. He has to roam through strange land, strange suns and unknown people until those who have condemned him free him through the instrumentality of his father who presently is one of them (p.85)". Onakpa remained in the strange land until the adulterous son born by Achenetu is grown up enough to appease the land, demanded and rehabilitate his father (p.89) This is a unique ethnic experience, and in Igala culture, the moral disorder is not simply a matter of sleeping with another man's wife but a threat to communal well being. It is an act which is against the matrices within which mores, personal relationships even communal economies are formulated and reviewed. In this society, each individual fate is intertwined with the fate of the entire community, a rupture in his normal functioning not only endangers this share reality but threaten existence itself.

Onakpa's adultery act is seen as a violation of customary law, man and nature with great consequences for the community. Such calamity as famine, death and excessive heat with the atmosphere of fear are known to underlined the action of Onakpa. Thus as custom goes dead, reason is no longer a normative drive. Onakpa by his action has laid mine to man, nature and good reason in his community.

Okpanachi, through this story not only exposed the social evil but made the people and society see themselves as they have not seen before. It is no longer a reflection but a mode of understanding of the complexities in the society. In this context, Okpanachi is interested in the world and the people around him, particularly in the intricacies of Igala socio-cultural society. His work revolves around morality and decency.

Okpanachi's "The Red Masquerades and Other Stories" provides a deeper understanding of cultural matrices. Okpanachi's work deals with the question of change and adjustment and accommodation. He subtly asks for the up-sets of the destructive principle of death to the violators of traditional custom and integration of what is good in the old value to that of the new. In this way, Okpanachi hasbroaden Igala experience to include the larger Northern Nigeria/Nigerian perspective in literary discourse. Okpanachi in depicting the socio-cultural reality of his immediate environment demonstrate the affinity between social issues and creative activity and the intricacies of pre-colonial society.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.1 IBEGWU (RITUAL) FESTIVAL AS AN INTEGRATIVE FORCE AND LEGITIMIZER OF SOCIAL FOUNDATION IN SULE IDAKWOJI'S *THE STORY OF AKOWE* (1995)

Ibegwu festival, according to Igala custom is meant to celebrate the victory of man over forces inimical to self-extension. It also concretize in the form of action the spiritual realization of the individual or communal entity. Ibegwu ritual creates a new being through utilizing and stressing the "language of self-glorification to which human nature is healthily prone. Ibegwu ritual by Igala custom is a cleansing, binding, communal, recreative forces, affirmation, supplication and thanksgiving to the dead ancestors. As an aspect of religion, it links an individual primary solidarities. It is interactive; it unifies and centralizes all the individuals values within a personalized synthesis.

Inspite of these social attributes, the Ibegwu ritual festival has the dynamics which invoke deep-seated fear and death, if there is a breakdown of moral order. Idakwoji interrogates the aspect that make the peoples fate pre-ordained with great misfortune and its relevance to modern times. The dilemma is how to reconcile the claims of the past with the exigencies of modern life. For instance, moral disorders place the victim. Thus:

> You have failed to appease your dead ancestors to let him have peace through ritual offerings, you are a dishonor to all our families. You have given up yourself to the dead (the story of Akowe P. 60)

With the realization of the extent of cultural estrangement, Idakwoji emphasis a "cultural revolution". The effort is to employ his work in the movement and direction his society is to take. The task is achieved in a number of varied ways – direct statement the juxtaposition of old and new with comments on the relative merit of each, through characterization, or through a detailed analysis of the factor that requires reconciliation. In this way Idakwoji's work can be likened to socialist realistic novels of Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons*. Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*or *Petals of Blood* by Ngugi. His thrust is what statement like Senghor and Knruma and Kofi Awoonor believe "is for synthesis, acculturation, for the cultural amalgams, that will still express her essential nature". (Awoonor 1978:33).

Idokwoji as an artist is not against the norms which represent a traditional foundation of communal cohesion, but against it essence that bring death to its victim. The failure to fall in step with the cultural rituals, made the protagonist vulnerable, and peace continue to elude him. Such a system lacksadequate social regeneration. Thus the artist appeals for dismantling, and to introduce modernity within the native traditions.

In pre-colonial society, most Igalas know that the living and the dead lives intertwine multiple existence. The relationship is cyclic in nature from the living to the dead. The ancestors enters the world of the living as spirit and as a child (through retrospective connection) and such children are called in Igala families or family by the elders as Baba, Ata, Ogijo, Odaudu, and others, (p.g.7) which means elder or father. Akowe's eldest son is call Ata-wode, the name of his grandfather, a third generation to his birth.Ifa oracle are consulted before such name are given. This situation is no longer absolute today. Modern Igala men and women give such name to their offsprings in remembrance of their late father and ancestors without due regards to this rites. The belief is anchored on Igala belief system which cover aspect of religion and culture. The

religious ritual aspect of the culture possesses ("Transmutativ power) and is capable of bringing the cosmic world. The ritual that constitute Ibegwu rites serves as means and re-course for normalization and regulation of social values and behaviours in Igala societies.Chants and music, are the intensive language of the communication, the catalyst and solvent of its regenerative hoard.

Idakwoji has a humanist vision, his work is a creative concern which attempts to upset orthodox acceptances in an effort to freed Igala society of historical superstitions. He want a re-examination of the aspect of culture that bring death to its victim to free Igala society from the traditional incubi. In this respect, Idakwoji's piece can be regarded as a literary ideology with a social vision which attempts to reorder society realities with his own idealistic disposition. This kind of creative expression is found in the literature of Negritude, in Brecht's epic theatre, and in the dramatic literature of European expressionism.

Akowe the central character is a man whose self – will drives him into collision with his ancestors. He is an individual whose "egoism forces him against the social and communal will (Banjo 1985). Akowe typically demonstrate the Igala proverb which says "Akamagbo on nuku imoto and ali maka lamuku ogijo" "Akamagbo" is an act of disobedience to caution or elders advice. The consequence is always death, miserable sickness, and others – Akowe break the Ibegwu rite. He go to the farm on the Ibegwu day, 'touch' the 'untouchable and the sacred land" (p. 45) the abode of the dead ancestors. The significance of this day in Igala culture lies in the belief that the ancestor are called upon from the spirit world to come and bless the living. Akowe has committed an abomination and he is adequately sanctioned by the gods of his ancestors. Akowe had several signs to make him avoid this destructive course. First is that of the excrement of a vulture which fell on his head (p.56), and secondly, he dreamt of "a big bush rat, called

"akoto" which pass his path on his way to the farm (p. 65). The excrement of a vulture falling on a man's head is "an ambiguous omen" and the "akoto" crossing a man's path in a daylight is a sign of misfortune in Igala traditional belief. Despite all the signs, Akowe without symbolic sacrifice and the invocation of eudaemonic guardians of the ancestors, ventured unprepared. The behavior of Akowe is likened to the protagonist in the Igala saying: that a person marked out for destruction by the gods cannot hear earthly warning, there is no amount of drumming you beat or drum into his ear that will stop him from the course of destruction. Akowe as a tragic victim "stands to his contemporary reality as the ritual protagonist on the edge of the "gulf" of death.

Idakwoji exposes the inhumanity that constitute the peoples humanity within the cosmic circle. Thus we are repelled by the mawkishness of Akowe's dilemma and this affects our human feeling. The dissection of cosmic world is done in subtle way, through the description of Akowe shortcoming. Ibegwu ritual, to the Igala people is an adjustive response to the cosmic and social universe. It should not portend tragedy. It is because of the reality of the gulf, this abyss that Ibegwu ritual ceremonies or sacrifices are performed time to time to render it less threatening by the appeasement of the gods and ancestors. Akowe can only be saved by the chief priest who experiences the matrix of death and being, the mouth piece of the ancestor. This can be seen when Akowe is led by his uncle to the priest shrine:

> *This is my son, the son of my elder brother who is with our fathers. My father's first son. He was not there with us to make sacrifice to his ancestors on Ibegwu day. Now he is under siege and hunted by our fathers (p.120)*

The priest utter sounds which ordinary mortal could hardly comprehend but which are reflections of the awesome glimpse of the gulf and ancestral world. To save Akome, a piece of black (Okpe)

cloth is spread in front of him (p. 130). A he-goat is slaughtered. Its blood is sprinkled on the face of Akowe to make him recover and be free.

The virtues of Idakwoji's work lies in the task on attempt to change the structure and the belief attached to the gulf, not a restatement of the value of the past but in integrated perspectives. Thus Akowe is created as sympathetic character attributed with tragic qualities within the matrix of death. But with the sacrifice Akowe is no longer to be acted upon, but free to act out his fate, from the-subconscious world to the conscious reality, in the new phase of his existence.

Akowe's father and ancestors are angry that one of their own blood and flesh is not there to represent their claim at the ritual of Ibegwu, and such a deliberate act of disobedience amount to death or curse on the family. Akowe was to remain the sacrificial lamb of the gods except through the symbolic ritual of expiation. Akowe impulsive desire or action has driven him into collision with his ancestors. Akowe's action is against customary norms that the Ibegu ritual is supposed to consolidate. However, through intensive consultation upon consultation and systematic sacrifices, Akowe is saved. In this vein, the Ibegwu ritual posses a force for human realization, a response to the world of the dead (ancestor) for atonement and protection. This is what Balkin called "tendencies of self-assertion and submission". The self is asserted through the ritual force which embodied submission. The ritual of expiration, thus saved Akowe from the state of inertia and brooding. During the Ibegu ritual festival, the priest go into an inner world from which he returns, communicating a new strength for action and solidarity. The community emerges from ritual experience changed and charged with new action.

Akowe's position is in no doubt related to the Christian missionary activity in Igala land. Since the incursion, individual who embrace this new faith see Igala culture essentially hostile and negative. It is a clear sign that Igala culture has been repressed by colonialism. Implicitly, there is a lack of faith in or a half-hearted acceptance of the old matrix of Igala society. Idakwoji is intensely committed to the substitution of the aspect of culture he viewed negative with humanistic perspectives as inspirational alternatives to existing society.

The last incident that kill Akowe, is his participation in the eating and drinking of the meal (ritual mean) prepared by his neighbor, Ikani, Igala custom and tradition forbid anyone whose father is late and have not performed the second burial or done the appropriate ritual from taking part in the eating of meals prepared for the dead. Thus Akowe's father lives between the world of the dead and that of his ancestors. Until symbolic ritual is made to remove him from such spiritual unrest. The consequences of his unrest is experienced by Akowe, the mortal man, Akowe's action has serious consequences according to Odaudu, the Ifa priest.

> *You must pay for your abomination*
> *Your deliberate act has made*
> *You the victim of the ancestor (P.140)*

The Ifa priest is horrified by Akowe's unthinking action, and by evening time, Akowes hands became unsteady, his sense became dull and his fingertips numbered (P.143). Akowe ate ritual meal prepared by Ikani knowing well that he has not done same for his late father. Consequently, Akowe received a big blow for abandoning his ancestors. Two weeks after the meal, Akowe took ill of a swollen stomach and did not recover from it before his death (P.150). The significance of ritual in Igala tradition is symbolic and real. It has therapeutic effect of purgation of sin against the dead and a moral –cum-spiritual to the social universe. Ritual acts as a life raft to the people.

In this vein, Smith 1999. 103 states: rituals are performed and people are brought together to make the transition from one state of being to another, a peaceful and settled process. The didactic strength of Idakwoji's creative vision is tied to the ritual which is a life saver, and has the power of influence over individual attitude toward the unknown forces of reality. Thus ritual in Igala society is a symbolic expression of social relations, status, or the social – religious role of individual toward his ancestors. It give socio – mythical affirmation to Igala religions universe.

Idakwoji invariably explores the tussle between individual quest for freedom against the established religious customs and tradition of his society. The new values and moores (Christianity) has created ambivalence in the peoples attitude towards the values hitherto sufficient, absolute and complete. Creativity in a ground breaking venture bring into being constant reshaping of society's norms and attitude. Due to colonialism, society is undergoing socio – cultural and religious transformations, and the artist has written to correct some distortion and injustices in the old in response to the new unfolding society. Communalism in the Ibegwu ritual make it significant and better than the excessive individualization which characterizes the modern times, and which is responsible for the fragmentation of modern societies, breaking up families and classis Okonkwo: 104).

Idakwoji's position, perhaps, is that the ritual stands to be relevant for the preservation of identity, for healthy development and for active participation in the future destiny of Igala people and society. If the unqualified tenets and practice which impedes personal development which stultify healthy living are undermined. In spite of the good qualities of the ritual, Idakwoji suggests that, it totality, Ibegwu ritual is inadequate for present needs. What is necessary is to

extract the relevant invigorating qualities which can serve as stabilizer for the present, some of these qualities are dedication, ideals, earnestness, moral probity and public spiritedness,

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 THE VIRTUES OF SELFLESSNESS AND MORAL PROBITY IN *THE LEGENDARY ATA IGALA AME OBONI 1946-1956 (1993)* BY YESUFU ETU

Ame Oboni is a legendary story of Igala's most powerful king who reigned between 1946-1956. Etu in this story depicts Igala historical past within the moral, social and the political. The aim is to provide the new generation with experience which is unique and peculiar to the Igala people. The importance of the past is enormous, according to Maret 1988:32,

> *The study of history provides an avenue for giving young people a panoramic view of all that happened to mankind in the past. Man's historical heritage is a foundation for understanding the present and giving him an insight into the future. The knowledge and understanding of the past can give young people cultural identity.*

The culture of Igala as a people consist of custom, tradition and traditional ceremonies, their festival beliefs, attitudes, languages, and others which project Igala identities.

Ame Oboni is the most powerful Ata Igala (king), he is greatly feared but respected by his people. In the kingdom everyman submit to the king on the throne, thus no one besides the king can have the same scope, power, and proper authority. The Igala people remember him (Ame Oboni) as a hero. To the Greek, a hero is a warrior, and the ideal state of heroism is a state of war. Ame Oboni is seen as a hero not because he had won wars but because he is a man with superhuman strength. He demonstrated remarkable constancy and singleness of purpose by sharing in the pains of his subjects, upholding Igala culture in the face of opposition and restoring order and glory to Igala kingdom. With this royal magnanimity, he became enviable to those prepared to threaten good order with impunity.

Etu relates the tensions and conflicts generated by morality and the colonial bureaucratic structure. This study is premised on the arguments that the emergence of the Igala prose fiction in English has not only expanded the northern Nigeria literary frontiers but is another facet or outlook in terms of issues, themes, and experiences of the Igala ethnic people.

The primary cause of conflicts in the text is the elected councilors whose convictions are at variance with that of the traditional society. The new councilors appointed by the colonialists became a liability to the kingdom and tools in the hand of their creator, as they could not differentiate the appearance from reality. They become element more in the confusion which threaten good order.The councilors moves within the schism of social-cultural conflicts to create an identity for themselves.

The other side to the conflict is the intrigues and contestation over power between the elected councilors, and the Ata which assume "a metaphoric significance in unraving social contradiction in the society (Abel 2005). The plot of the story brings about the death of Ame Oboni, the tensions and conflicts generated by the colonial incursion. Etu's story therefore, is the unfolding drama in a "fast-degenerating society in which the political structure is not only weak but the virtues of moderation and good conscience are no longer meaningful." The ways Ata Ame confront the divergence difficulty in his kingdom are captured in quotations from Thomas Carew, Epictus, T.S. Eliot, captain Cook, Anon and Aristotle.

The story of Ame Oboni shows a period or time when the people are completely dependent upon a king for protection. The external world is viewed as hostile, any place beyond

the boundary is a potential battle field. Etu explore this age, to show that there had been a heroic age in Igala history, an age or era that is charged with prosperity, fame and fulfillment and betrayal and greed.

Ame Oboni's trouble began after the death of his elder brother, and he became the heir to the throne. The trouble he encountered are enormous but they strengthened him. Political effectiveness suggests moral superiority, and therefore Ata is strong and good, but this goodness bring him into conflict with elected councilors who are politically ineffective and functionally irrelevant within the traditional society.

The conflict in the story is derived from three sources. One is that of the royal princess who felt Ame Obon'i new status as heir to the throne must be trimmed or else, his ambition will take him too far above them. Secondly, is the colonial intervention into the ascendancy of Ataship in Igala kingdom. The colonialists sent Ata Ame Oboni to Lokoja to learn acts of governance and public administration. The implication of colonial intervention is that, the British wanted a modern Ata who will be loyal to them. This is a break way from tradition, and the king makers are angry at the usurpation of their position. Secondly, the British had the intention of moving Igala traditional headquarter from Idah to Ochaja, the assumed centre of Igalaland. According to Etu 1997:27 .The British thought a modern Ata has ascended the throne, one whom they were able to groom to run the administration of the kingdom, according to their taste (p. 27).

The control of Igala kingdom through an obedient modern Ata formed part of the reason for training Ame Oboni at Lokoja. But they were surprised that Ata Ame prefer his people's custom and tradition to the Western domination. Thirdly is the introduction of Richard constitution which removed the autocratic power enjoyed by Ame Oboni unlike his forbear. Ata

Ame Oboni concerned with preserving the stability of his domain by exercising absolute control is seen to have challenged the status quo through insubordination when he disobeyed the colonialists. Ata Ame Oboni therefore, has fallen out with colonialists and the ensuing conflict affect not only his individual, the larger society but also intensifies the intrigues and power play within the council.

Etu in this context, explores the significance of politics and power to the social order created by colonialism. Ame Oboni has to make a choice either to play along or be thrown out of office. In each of these cases a question is put not only to man's will but to his reason, is the one free and is the other reliable? Etu examines the interplay of power by evaluating how individual characters negotiate their place within the tensions and conflict generated by the contradiction between morality, corruption and the central role of the colonialists. The faithless dealings of both sides (the princess and the councilors) with the regulating principle of civil decency and humanity are fully revealed. The literary piece "Ame Oboni" expresses discontent, demonstrates the impact of colonialism on the social foundation. The work's atmosphere is defiant with the images of confrontation, deceit and Machiavellian insight into human nature.

Ame Oboni, the central character goes through gestation and growth. from Lokoja Ame Oboni returned to Idah to be crowned 'Ata Igala' (father of Igala) after the death of Ata Amocheje. The journey into kingship and the responsibility it entails begins with coronation. The coronation rites and ceremonies of prince Ame Oboni are performed in accordance with Igala custom and tradition. Etu (1993:26) states

> *Ceremonies for the coronation of prince Ame Oboni started as usual at Ugwolawo and all the traditional steps were taken from Igala Ogba to Ojaina, from Ojaina to Ede where the Ome ede was*

> *to give birth to a new Ata Igala, custom demands that the Ata has to be reborn by the Onu-Ede and this rebirth, a new man emerges who now becomes Ata. The mother and the child however will never see each other anymore after the ceremony. (p. 26)*

The rebirth is a symbolic act of purification to cleanse the prince and to put him in the proper spiritual, divine realm of holiness of Ataship.

From this moment, the Ata is seen as a divine ruler and all actions and pronouncements by him (Ata) are regarded as sacred. Ame Oboni thus has crossed the boundary of ordinary mortal unto the threshold reserved for him alone, and therefore servers himself from the mediocre ambitious nobles to which he hitherto belong, to become God representation on earth in the art of guidance of his people and society. Thence, Ata Ame Oboni become the regulating principle of Igala traditional society.

Ata Ame Oboni now equipped with divine power and authority embarks on the development of Igala society through structural frames by which men live, work and think. This is not without threat from the councilors or princess. Thus Ame is seen in the light almost equally poised between the good and the bad. Ame Oboni represent the stable decencies of the traditional sovereignty, and his adversary moves from enormity to enormity to disrupt the frame of the whole common goal. Two order of experience can be gleaned from the drama that unfold: - the councilors as realists and Ame Oboni as the idealist – two different forms of human nature and its world. This setting reveals instability, moral apprehension, the web of several intrigues and manipulations between colonial officials and Ata Ame Oboni which gradually leads to political chaos.

To distinguish himself from the past Atas, Ame Oboni engaged himself in the art of mystical feat to develop the land. It is through this means, Ata Ame distinguished himself, one of the important weapon used by Ame Oboni is his 'curses,' which finally put into extinction Ikpelikpe (jiggers) from Igaland (p. 43). Etu (1993:43) depicts the scene of Ata Ame in action as the royal trumpets blared characteristically to reinforce whatever the Ata had in mind to say.

> *"and I say today, that jiggers will be a thing of the past both within my palace and all over my kingdom. The younger generation will never know what a jigger is and they can only be mentioned in parables. The Ata threw his saliva falling four directions of his kingdom. My curses are irrevocable until these sprays of saliva I threw came back to my mouth,that is when my words will be revocable (p. 43).*

In the same vein, Ata Ame Oboni also cursed with vehemence all the wild animals that trouble the farmers: "from today, farmers should let lose all their lethered animals, let them roam freely everywhere."

Several of the above pronouncements by Ata Ame Oboni brought great changes. Disease and sickness came to a minimal point in Igalaland. Such feats were performed at Ibaji, Ejule, Aloma, Enjema (p. 43-46), the name Ame Oboni became "anagram" for life and death in Igalaland. This entail a profound disturbance to his adversary but Ame remained the master of the field with moral superiority. In this context his adversary are drawn into a circle where politics cannot be discussed, in the context of the order to which goodness belongs. But this gain of respect and prominence is seen as arrogance and is attached with high vituperations.

Ata Ame Oboni is known by the power name such as Ugbakolo (a tree that produce seeds without flowering), and in other quarters, he is called "Ata a kabele, kia achi abele" – a man who

does exactly what he says. He has great ability to foresee life threatening incident and rescue his subjects from imminent death. This gift earned him the reputation of a hero. Through mystical or magical means, he stamped out leprosy and unhealthy social practices by the people. With enlightening speeches, he hold his kingdom firmly and with such success as has not been witnessed before. All these accomplishment made Ata Ame Oboni an extraordinary Ata. All Ata of Igala are seen as God's representative on earth, the expression of every Igalaman's natural honesty, and therefore, Ame Oboni is the embodiment of the health of Igala kingdom. However, the colonialists and the councilors desired a structural change within the polity and this puts them on collision course with Ata Ame Oboni.

Ata Ame Oboni is "an individual who is in the quest of perfection but always being drawn back by some inexorable oppositional force, thus affirming webster's argument that "…the individual is not free to determine his or her life but subject to the forces of control which operate in a given society." (Webster, 1996:8). The elected councilors backed up by the colonialists find it easy to suggest that Ata Ame Oboni is a villain, an exquisite hypocrite able by flawless acting to cover up sinister designs. With no pretention to wholiness, Ame is not, however, sinister. Ame Oboni's loyalty to the traditional stool and the love for his subjects are warm and genuine. Ame Oboni moved to rescue the Igala land from chaos is above suspicion and he believe that it is the public order which must be safeguarded at all cost.

To the Igala kingdom, the name Ata Ame Oboni is virtue, but the horror and loathing in which Ata Ame Oboni is held reveal the average social behavior of his opponents. The court scribes, colonial messengers (natives), the new councilors, all conspired to kill the love and the human kindness in Ata Ame Oboni. The Richard constitution removed the authocratic power enjoyed by Ata Ame Oboni, and the roles of the traditional councilors, who the colonialists see

as sycophantic hangers on. From this time onward, the orderliness in the kingdom ceased, the elected councilors acting as stooges for the white administrators battled Ata Ame Oboni for power through petitions to the colonial office Lokoja – Etu once again describe the struggle for power between the Ata Ame Oboni and the new councilors thus:

> The Ata had been put in a pitiful position because the new councilors though themselves Igala, were not in a position to support him. They had indeed seen their role as doing everything possible to squeeze out the last Ounce of the power myth in him (p. 93).

Etu portrays the reality behind the pretensions of social man. Their tacit disregard for the king (Ata Ame Oboni), their assumption of his irrelevance, is merely the unconscious aspect of what Etu brings to full consciousness. Loyalty become governmental handicaps, and the politically operative parts of man being greed for power and curious cunning provided the basic for the flesh-creeping pantomime. Up to this point, the dynastic issue is left for the princesses, and it is now a question of Ame Oboni's personal ambition. Ata Ame Obini's isolation might almost be said to be isolation of one who has become the consciousness of his time. Thus through ascetic self-discipline of Ame Oboni, the corruption of his time is made aware of itself. He is superior in consciousness compared to the councilors due to his fuller exercise of the human prerogatively of choice. The selected councilors concerned themselves with the eating of the whiteman's bonbons falling off his table (p. 141), while the colonialists undermines Ata Oboni's position and the people's cultural heritage. Igala society then has actually gone working with the assumption that order, loyalty and fear are relevant. The whole façade of administrative structure is a mask, the operative mechanism is the political.The incessant petitions caused more

confusion and the acerbic (ADU) uses such words as ‘clash’, ‘disorder’, ‘kill’, and the like to move and make the northern executive council of chief act against Ata Ame Oboni.

The internal tensions of the people involved and the external tensions created by the councilors/colonialists takes the drama forward from one situation to another. The conception is consciously hieratic in matter and manner. The emotions are vibrant, full of hate, lust, fear, pity, courage and despair. This situations developed Ata Ame Oboni into a mythic stature but a tragic figure.

Other factors and forces against Ata Ame Oboni stem from the relationship between social convention and the traditional or religions. Ata Ame Oboni is seen to have violated social convention when he refused to stretch out his hand to shake the Queen of England, a rite other chiefs were apparently too eager to perform. This shows down with the Queen angered the colonial administrators in the region. They never fully forgave him, and they began the scheme to remove him by watching Ata Ame Oboni closely, Ata Ame Oboni’s action is based on custom and tradition that Ata must not shake hand with a woman, white or black. Ata Oboni states: “this has been our customs and I should not be the first to break it.” (p. 67). Ame Oboni is also accused of making human sacrifice during “Ocho” festival and other allegations meant or designed to dent his image. Igala society move swiftly toward the society of Hobbes conception – “an inherent competitiveness, based on fear, diffidence and glory”. It was an era of confusion – mongering taut with anxiety, bafflement, with distress and bitterness. The councilors become agent provocateur and means Ata Ame Oboni would be dispersed of.

One person that is important in the drama Mamman Argugu, the government interpreter and chief messenger. Whether through ignorance, plain naivety or appalling wickedness chocked

the status quo by his unceasing petition against Ata Ame Oboni. To Argugu wickedness is a social advantage and he did his best to tear away the mask of authority and power from Ame Oboni through open conspiracy with the elected councilors. But "a strong ruler who is bad is better than a holy king who is also weak" thus Ame Oboni became a rider on the storm, all lost to prayer, to prayer, all lost, Shakespear (The Tempest) (p. v), in the drama which unfold his action leaves him no better off. It is all an inevitable and miserable encounter when he realized that private goodness can only be permanent in a society of goodness. Argugu became congeries of meanings, bankrupt, and hunted by the fiends of past, became incapable of regeneration and died.

Despite the rumble in the palace, Ata Ame Oboni's love for his subjects is like a natural inducement. Ata Ame Oboni is able to manage the outer order of the political sphere with passion and patience. Ata Ame Oboni era witnessed progressive awareness and growth in education like building of native authority boarding school, concrete building and corrugated iron-sheets roofs evolved in Igalaland. An airstrip in Idah (1954-59), landing in Idah was a fanfare and Idah found itself on aviation map of Nigeria but the civil war brought an impulsive order to close it down to prevent the rebels from landing at Idah behind the federal troops (p. 90). Ame Oboni therefore, is a good-hearted man with royal magnanimity.

The plot of the work brings about the death of the Ata Ame Oboni. Ata Ame Oboni's death is incidental to the basic struggle. The councilors and the princess, and the likes concerned themselves with issue of power and authority, they failed to live up to expectation. In this vein, said A.M. Khamis (2001:153) states a "societal tragedy is inevitable if leadership serves nothing more than mere consolidation of power. Etu's focus shifts the traditional theme of colonial denigration, to the contemporary issues of instability and underdevelopment. Etu is a writer who

generates a new consciousness about several concerns ranging from social justice, power and politics, greed and others. In his apprehension of these concerns, his vision is national and this provides an added freshness to the" corpus of the Northern Nigeria literature.

Etu is an intensely sensitive writer who is deeply concern with the reality of post-colonial Nigeria society and how this created disillusionment and despair. However, the contestations over power in Igalaland has assumed a world where the human decencies have no functional relevance. The Ayegba descendant union (ADU) wanted to share some traditional powers with Ata, a thing hitherto not done before. In Igala tradition, the Ata by the nature of his office is a priest-king and he is never intereferred within the administration (p. 121). They called on the government of Northern region to remove him. The touchstone here is that the society is face with a single dominating figure in person of Ata Ame Oboni who is aware of ideal demand and on the other, of the unideal actualities of society. Ata Ame is a virtue that stand its ground against hypocrisy and wrong-headedness. With complete courage, and implicit confidence both in himself and in the simple truth with patient Ata Ame Oboni holds out against the distraction. To him good human relation is a duty and fulfillment of normal instincts. But as the situation grows so far and so fast, the wound becomes greater than the cut.

The colonialists and their institutions worked hard with the oppositions to coerce Ata Ame Oboni, and Ata Ame Oboni to avoid the looming political chaos, considered suicide as an alternative to being dethroned and banished to Asaba by the colonial officials. Ata Ame Oboni's choice of suicide may be because it allows his offspring and lineage to be made king, if he dies as a king than a banished king whose offpsrings are cut off from the royal throne. With Ata Ame Oboni's death, Igala traditional system is gashed and riven down to its root. Indeed, it is not Ata Ame Oboni's local world that is torn open, it is Igala society too.

Etu projects the vision of virtues of selflessness and sacrifice which are necessary for the progress of society, as well as the need to abhor "maddening self promotion." This entails the embrace of collective commitment to avoid the abyss of destruction. This encapsulates self-denial, patriotism, the quest for justice and moral probity. This he achieved through the projections of the turbulence and intrigues involved in the power politics in a society undergoing the process of transformation.

The two nights to 'remember' before Ata Ame Oboni committed suicide or saga are full of nightmares that bedeviled the luminescent era of Ata Ame Oboni. The two nights to remember were the night preceding his departure to Kaduna and the night preceding his arrival at Idah, on his return from Kaduna. The night before his departure, Ata Ame Obi curses all his known and unknown opponents; he pronounced the nature of things to come all over Igalaland and what ataship would look like after his departure (death) which included cutting the fate of his opponents.Before Ata Ame Oboni's death, he gave a great speech at the Inikpi shrine with the phrase "akp ane on ane akpa in his mouth" "the person that destroys the land must himself be destroy by the land first" it was a night the entire Idah populations lay awake to the angry roar of the lion", the sharp voice of the Ata continued to pierce the gloom midnight. The implication of this divine pronouncement is that it is as prophetic as the prayer. It opens another vista into the historical future of the ataship in Igala society. The speech points to the continuing impossibility of goodness insulating itself against the world in any kind of virtuous of higher authority and power.

Ata Ame Oboni era is a luminescent era blocked by the absurdities of its time. Ambiguity and uncertainty figure as a theme. Typical here is that Ata Ame Oboni is presented as a character driven by psychic conflicts and this provides enigmatic experience. The second night is the night

Ata Ame Oboni committed suicide at Dekina. Ame Oboni's nature depends on his position which defines his disposition. The peculiar disposition given kings by God. To quit this position and order is to move into the sphere which is meaningful and indeterminate energy, but into chaos. This shows that human nature is a vast ramification of organic interconnections. What is unique about Ata Ame Oboni's death is the very superiority of consciousness of all the unhelpful socio-political travesty within his domain. His death may be tragic but it satisfactory. He died not only as great Igala king but through death (not dethroned) his lineage to the throne is maintained to this day. In fact the current Ata Igala Royal Majesty Michael Idokwo Ame Oboni II is his son. Ata Ame Oboni is remembered for his compassion, truth and patience. His reign and name has become a household conundrum which dominates or cast shadows over the Igala ataship and polity to this day.

The nuances which beclouded Ata Ame Oboni's era express themselves through the forces of inertia. The impudence of the councilors and the tyrannical leadership of the colonialists abuse all facets of power. Their distortions of Igala traditional polity resonate in cause and effect. Yusuf Etu creatively portrays the significant of incidents and situations, polity and human contempt mask by compassion. Ata Ame Oboni's dilemma is a human dilemma clearly realized and this embodies our own willed intention and those circumstances which seem given.Etu therefore, in this work relates the dilemma of new experience in conflicts with the traditional and cultural values of the Igala people to demonstrate political development and transformation in Igalaland.

The text Ame Oboni elucidates the human plight at a particular phase of a society in its historical unfolding. It is the culmination of a process of growth and transformation. The centre no longer holds, things in separate divide more and more, even wider than the sky and earth.

Attitudes and behaviour can no longer be governed or explained by the traditional morality because what is morally wrong seems politically so effective. Words such as order, reason and God, lose their value and meaning. The outside is the same as ever it was, internally everything is changed to a sinister sense. Etu by this literary work, has shown how a 'new' value has attacked the established status quo represented by Ata Ame Oboni and unearth the autocracy and the contestation over power of the time. Etu's vision therefore, is that of a transcendent society that require patience, compassion, love, and reason and understanding. These ideas are capable of human regeneration. Social conflict is an essential ingredient to change and progress for any society to attain greater height. What is necessary is collective commitment, patriotism and self-denial to rescue society from its state of despondency and moral rectitude.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study examines the emergence and development of Igala prose fiction in English within the larger corpus of Northern Nigeria Literature. In this context, the study evaluated the roles of the colonialists and Christian Missionaries influences in the emergence and development of Igala prose fiction in English in Northern Nigeria. The study therefore is located within the historical matrix of colonialism which relates to the evolution of modern literacy in Northern Nigeria, especially the colonial rule of practice (policy) of domination through the power of scripted word and the encouragement of expression through the concepts, practice and literary tradition of English.

However, the study is undertaken to show the heterogeneous nature of Northern Nigeria literature with the desire to account for human variation in terms of culture, tradition, language, social patterns and historical experiences. The study argued that within the boundaries which the body of Northern Nigeria literature defined around itself (a wide range of literary and ideological expression) is the Igala literature. The major objective of the study is to acknowledge this variety to be able to project an identity multi-culturally enough and distinctively Northern. The study is a contribution to the ever growing works on Northern Nigeria literature especially on the relationship between literature and history and human experiences. The study is a shift from the broader Northern Nigeria literary experiences to particular ethnic experiences, Igala literary experiences. The importance of this study is in the fact that charts a new in terms of Igala literary value, and the people's historical experiences, thereby crystallized a new consciousness and thought of the dynamics of literary growth and transformation in Northern Nigeria literature.

The study argued is that in spite of the roles of Islam and Arabic in the establishment of literary foundation in Northern Nigerian, the colonial factor is a significant historical event which enthroned modern English literacy in the region. The literary culture and intellectual tradition in the region therefore, cannot be divorced from the sociopolitical development in Northern Nigeria.

To maintain control over the people and to promote their interest, the colonial policy (rule of practice) allowed implicitly the legitimating of different ideologies with real consequences for other languages with the exception of Hausa in Northern Nigeria. Other languages suffered neglect in terms of access to Western Education and had little or no opportunity for literary creativity in English. The exclusion of other languages meant cultural alienation, human virtues and his development because literature is the expression of society. Other languages have no opportunity to share ideas about their life and experience with the entire human race through creative writing. Consequently the development and integration of other ethnic literature in English into the mainstream cultural discourse in Nigeria took a long time to evolved. Theirstrives for relevance began truly after independence. Therefore, the state of other languages in northern Nigeria is a story of arrested development right from the colonial era to the present. This explain the absent of creative writing in English from this part of the north for a long time. The point is that other languages have to battle with the problem of identity, integration, development and other related issues in their struggles for relevance within the northern geopolitical polity after Nigeria independence. For a long time therefore, the written materials are with one exception, the product of the colonialist in these areas.

The study argued that the enthronement of independence and the expansion of the missionaries activities into the area and the later establishment of schools brought creative

consciousness and the impulse for writing among other languages in Northern Nigerian. From the foregoing the emergence and development of the Igala prose fiction in English is contextualized within the paradigm of the missionary activities, colonial philosophy and occupation of northern Nigeria and the Nigerian independence. Igala literature, therefore is fore-grounded in a post colonial reality and social development.

The study also demonstrates that northern Nigerian literature is multifaceted and heterogeneous, and that Igala Prose fiction in English is a constituent part of the larger Northern Nigeria literature. Igala literatures is a particular types within the Northern Nigeria literature it has a specific character (Internal and external traits) that distinguish it. This is achieved through the emphasis of the homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons. The difference, in facts, resides tin the process of how these objects come to be known and so come into being, thus retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity. The customs and norms of the people served as the critical source base that determine and defined the Igala identity. However the study acknowledges that cultural differences are always open to further influence, especially in a society undergoing socio-cultural and political transformations.

The study argued that Northern Nigeria is a broad area of reference, a geographical area determined by ethnic, historical and sociological factors. The literature in Northern Nigeria is influenced these factors. Different ethnic groups today have their literature written in English Language which reflect the historical experiences of the people and society. To appreciate the complex resonances of each individual parts of the larger corpus of Northern Nigerian literature therefore, the approach must take into account the concrete condition and situation out of which literary development is taking place and on behalf of which the literary artist express themselves. It is therefore unrealistic to talk about a single literature but literatures Northern Nigeria literature

has undergone serious development and transformation, writers while drawing from peculiar antecedent of the environment are not limited by them, but still relates to the general Nigeria context in the reconstruction of their socio-cultural and political reality from different ideological perspectives.

The study also argued that no ethnic groups is completely unified as social integrations is on the increase. This has created diversity in ethnicities religious and secular belief within a group. Intermarriages between people of different heritages, cross racial births, assimilations and others have made ethoricity a hybridized phenomenon. Consequently Northern Nigeria constitutes a form of living that is more complex than community more symbolic than society more connotative then country. It is region undergoing conterminous transformation, cultural interaction is dynamism that no ethic group can exclude itself from. Culture exists in relation to other cultures and cultural difference emphasizes the awareness of the homogensing effect of cultural, symbol and icon. However a cultural difference is always open to further possible interpretation (the space of hybridity)

In spite of the state hybridity the works evaluated in this study have attempted to reconstruct the peculiar and cultural influences which define the identity of the Igala people of Northern Nigerian as reflected in Sunday Okpanachis. “The Masquerades and Other Stories, Yusuf Etu’s AmeOboni and Idakwoji’s.The Story of Akowe”. These writers are drawn to their immediate socio-cultural background and their thematic thrust and subject matter accommodated the wider socio-cultural, political situation of post-colonial Northern Nigeria and Nigeria respectfully. The range and depth of their works utilize both traditional and contemporary experiences that resulted from varying factors which have characterized the transformation of their society.

These writers depicted Igala society as fully aware of the intricacies of its existence based on the fact that social cohesion and harmony issues form commonly held values, norms and cordial human relationships. Their works are an encompassiveness of complex meanings that situates their concern within the framework of works on colonization and how societies confronted the forces of change.

This study has argued that the status of woman was affect by patriarchy and colonial incursion, From a cultural perspective, the study argued that gender roles are a product of culture rather than biology. Ann Oakler (1974) sherry B. Ortner (1974) all argues that it is the way in which every culture defines and evaluates female biology that determined woman's roles and statues in society. The post –colonial factors such as political socio-cultural and the religious have complicated the women question. Thus works evaluated attempted to reconstruct the womanhood by infusing the woman folks with strong values and capacity to change their statues in society. The central argument is that the distortion caused by colonialism necessitated reconstruction of self to reposition and re-assert cultural and spiritual values and dignity.

The study also used post-colonial discourse theory as the framework of analysis of the selected texts base on the fact that the thematic thrust, the subject matters explored, the origin of the literary texts are grounded in the landscape, languages, culture and imaginative works of peoples and nations whose histories are intercepted and reformulated by European colonialism. In this way Igala literature is a product of post colonial writing and it interrogates the colonial and post colonial periods to foreground the experiences of colonization which unsettled and fragmented pre-existing cultural conditions in the land.

On the whole, the study has argued that Northern Nigeria literary space is realized from the combination of different cultural formations and social process. As the society undergoes socio-cultural, political, religious and economic transformations, it literature also grows. Its literature becomes dynamic rather than statics, and Igala prose fiction in English is a product of the transformations. However, in spite of the peculiar European and Christian Missionaries cultural influences, Igala prose fiction in English copies from Igala folk literature, local proverbs, legends, customs, rituals, institutions and mythology in giving imaginative expression to national issues.

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