THE DRAMATIC DIMENSION OF THE COMMUNAL, ART FORMS OF THE WESTERN IBOS: A CASE STUDY OF THE FESTIVALS OF THE IGBUZO OF BENDEL STATE

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.

ANIKWE PETER ADIGWE

Date:_____

CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled "The Dramatic Dimension of the Communal Art Forms of the Western Ibos: A Case Study of the Festivals of the Igbuzo of Bendel State" by Anikwe Peter Adigwe meets the regulations governing the award of degree of Masters of Arts in Literature of Ahmadu Bello University and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Chairman, Supervisory Committee — 21/2/91 Date

Member, Supervisory Committee — 21-2-91 Date

Head of Department — 28/2/91 Date

Dean, Postgraduate School — 14-8-91 Date

DEDICATION

To:

My late father, Ikedimma, who impersonated the king spirit, the Sun,

My living mother, Agana, who impersonates the Queen mother, the Earth,

In the drama of life with earth as theatre, and elders as audience

And the memory of the manifestation of the union of posi-negative forces

Which is I ....

To that memory

And to all the lovers of traditional African culture,

This work is dedicated.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the dramatic nature of the performing arts of the Igbuzos. This is an area in which no extensive work has been previously carried out, although many exciting theatrical arts existed in Igbuzo. This thesis, therefore, highlights the dramatic traditions of the Igbuzos, and demonstrates their dramatic validity.

To say that the field of oral drama in Nigeria is a difficult one is an understatement. It is polemic, and the conflicting views on the subject make it a problematic field of study. The views of some critics, who have European orientation, are that African oral arts are not drama though they might possess some dramatic qualities.

However, this thesis examines the dramatic arts of the Igbuzos from the relativist viewpoint that argues that African oral performing traditions are drama because they meet the demands of the theatre. This relativist argument is pursued in this thesis which spans five chapters.

In Chapters One and two the socio-political structure of the Igbuzos is examined in order to establish the relationship between art and culture. The establishment of this relationship exposes the function of art in

society. It is this function that lends strength to the argument that Igbuzo festivals are drama.

Chapter Three discusses the dramatic dimensions of Iwu, Ine and Ulo. Chapter four looks at the dramatic extent of Ogbanje Festival, which is a hypnotic dance drama. The four festivals of the Igbuzos recreate the people's world view thus providing education and enlightenment.

Chapter Five examines the changes that have occurred in the performance of Igbuzo, festivals. It is argued in this chapter that European colonial domination which affected the entire polity of Igbuzo is reflected in the performance of festivals because of the tie that binds art and culture together.

Chapter Six concludes this work by summarising the essential findings in this work. In this chapter, it is argued that Igbuzo festivals have many dramatic elements. Because of these dramatic qualities, and because they can satisfy the functions of the theatre, it is argued that they are essentially dramatic.

Fig.1: MAP OF IGBUZO (IBUSA) SHOWING VILLAGES.

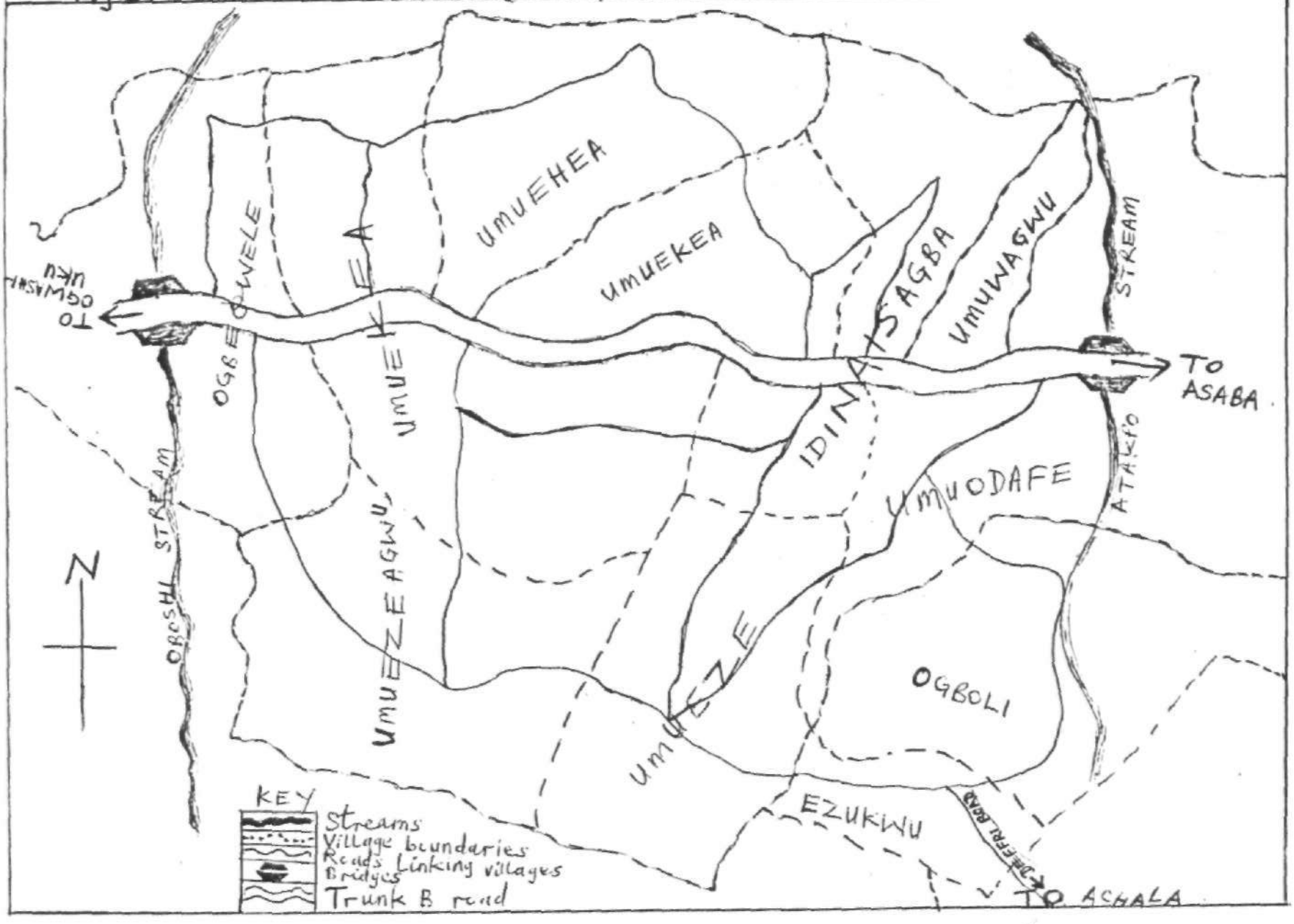
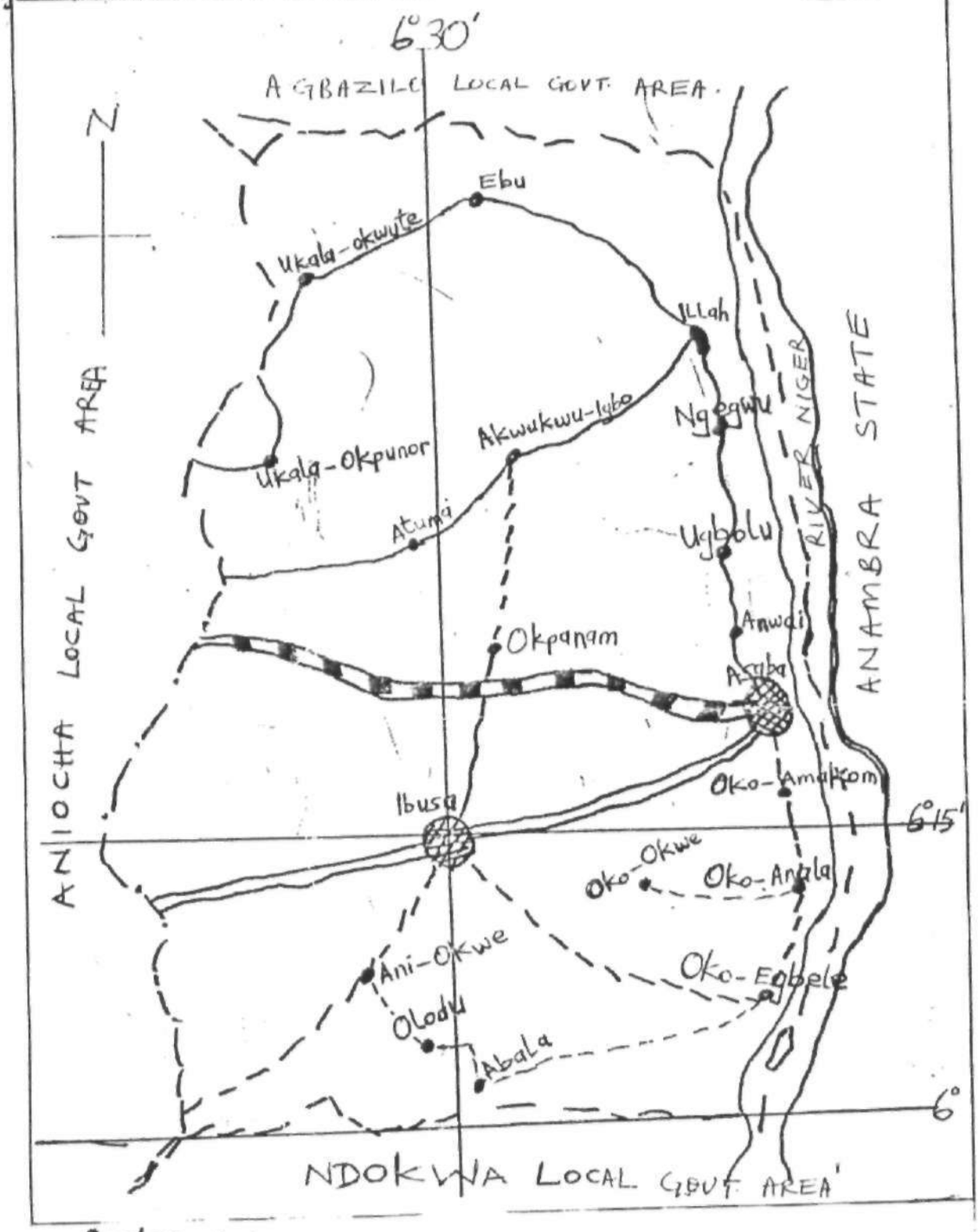


Fig 23 MAP OF OSHIMILI LOCAL GOVT. AREA SHOWING TOWNS AND VILLAGES



Scale: 1: 400,000

KEY

- Urban towns
- Rural villages
- Express road
- Trunk B road
- Roads linking towns

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. The Interplay of Religion, Ritual, Tradition and Culture

Nuances exist within religion, ritual, tradition, and culture. Religion forms the heartbeat of tradition. In spite of the seemingly inextricable blend between religion and tradition, a wall of difference can still be identified. It can be argued that although religion is somewhat in-born, firm covert devotion to, and overt manifestations of religion were preceded by certain modes of entertainment and education. Nevertheless, life at the earliest times was precarious since man was still trapped in the anguish of cosmic and phenomenal incomprehension. It was the dawn of religion and its systems of worship that dispelled that cloud of ignorance, thus giving form and dimension to tradition.

Tradition and culture cannot be said to share the same filial child-parent relationship. This is because tradition is not an offshoot of culture. The sum total of all the cluster of traditions, including the components of religion - beliefs, ritual, rites, and so on - constitute culture. Ritual tradition becomes conspicuously separated from the vast continuum of traditional ways in its differentiation from the secular. "Through ritual man transcends himself and communicates directly with the divine."[1]

Therefore, while culture may be all embracing,

ritual is that aspect that ensures its viability. It is the bond of communal essence because it enlivens communal interests, hopes and aspirations. It is the sole determiner of continual actuation of the link between cosmic and mundane forces. According to Bolaji Idowu, "while culture covers the whole of a people's scheme of life, religion gives direction and complexion to the scheme..."[2]

Ritual drama was necessitated by man's 'bitter' experiences such as diseases, sicknesses, sudden death, poor harvest, and so on. It was also occasioned by man's notion of subservience to, and helplessness before the unseen forces. Therefore, man is always anxious to expiate in order to correct distortions that have counter-balanced the whole system of creation. Man's total commitment to, and his belief in the efficacy of uttered words, elevates ritual drama above other traditional forms. This is why the secular is freely enjoyed by all, and can concede innovations. On the other hand, ritual excludes all forms of profanity and adulteration, adhering strictly to a set pattern of performance. The lofty height of ritual as a binding force is further exemplified in its power to momentarily suspend all secular performances like dancing, singing, clapping of hands, and so on, during its performance. In ritual observance there is total commitment.

B. Ritual and Drama in Igbuzọ Festivals

The Igbuzọ festivals of Ọgbanje, Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ embody ritual and dramatic elements. Although ritual is often associated with religious worship, ritual in the festivals of the Igbuzọs is geared toward the fulfilment of certain dramatic purposes. The ritual content of Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ re-enact certain important customs and belief systems of the people. Sometimes, ritual is derobed of magical qualities in which case it is employed to explain certain laws and principles which are carefully veiled in symbolism for fear of misuse and desecration. Examples of this point are replete in Ọgbanje, Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ as will be shown shortly.

In Igbuzọ community, the re-enactment of cultural ways constitute part of the cohesive machinery of society. For example, the Igbuzọs belief in the superior influence of the supernatural forces over man. Belief is thus enforced and reinforced by constantly invoking these forces for aid. Although ritual exercise is religious, it engenders cathartic influence on man because of its reassuring influence that man is in harmony with the forces on whom he depends. Thus, ritual gives impetus to existence. Ritual also offers entertainment. The verbal accompaniment of ritual with its emotional modulation of voice, the rhythm of music and the

systematic symbolic gestures affect the physical and the spiritual make-up of the participants and the audience. Thus, it helps to unburden care-ladden hearts.

Ritual enactment also educates the people on their traditional ways thus enabling them to meet up the demands of their society. Therefore, ritual as a dramatic tool is functional. The performers of ritual have implicit belief that its proper conduct will yield meaningful and manifold results necessary for the continued welfare of the society. It is because of the function of ritual that traditional festivals pull the greatest audience. It is also because of its binding force that popular participation in the festivals of the Igbuzọs is continually ensured.

Dramatically, Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ Festivals have their performing areas. This is an important theatrical aspect because it makes the performance of festivals possible. Iwu is celebrated at Ogbọ Iwu. Ine has the entire major road for its performance because of its processional nature. Ulọ has a permanent arena called Asha nta.

Again, although the festivals of the Igbuzọs admit numerous participants as actors, there are principal ones who enact and re-enact specific themes of the festivals. In Iwu, we have the Eze Ebo, the Ezeiwus, and the Enems. In Ine, there are the Ezeine and the

Adaine. In Ụlọ, the key characters are the Ezeulọ, the Onihe, and the Ọduah. These characters serve varying dramatic roles as stage directors, property managers, and other stage facilities.

Furthermore, there is impersonation or imitation in the festivals of the Igbuzọs. Imitation, according to the Romans, has "a direct relationship with art and drama."[3] In the dramatic displays of the Igbuzọs, previous earthly struggles are re-enacted. In Iwu Festival, for example, three Ezeiwus dance from the geographical West to the East in search of knowledge. This symbolic journey in search for knowledge is an imitation of man's earlier attempt "to court nature, to coax it" so that it would "work according to his needs."[4] The Ezeiwus themselves impersonate their wise ancient ancestors who embarked on knowledge seeking in the earliest time.

Moreover, the nut, ukpa, used in the celebration of Ụlọ Festival symbolises pleasure from hard work. This nut is very bitter when eaten. But it leaves a pleasant taste long after it is eaten. The eating of this nut is an imitation of toil and earthly struggles towards the enhancement of man's welfare. The initial bitter taste of this nut symbolises toil. The pleasant taste it leaves in the mouth symbolises pleasure or gain from

toil. Therefore, "experience" and "imitation" have contextual relevance in the festivals of the Igbuzọs.

Human experience includes the sum total of man's behaviour that strongly agitate human ethos. In this agitation lies the degree of importance attached to previous occurrences. In the festivals of the Igbuzọs, these occurrences are re-enacted in songs, music, gesture, and so on. For example, the tilling dance at Iwu is a re-enactment of an age-old profession of farming. Again, the dancing of the Ezeiwus, and the eating of the nut, ukpa, are imitations of past experiences that both entertain and enlighten.

In the festivals of the Igbuzọs, there is dialogue which is often a mixture of verbalized action and expressive thoughts. These expressive thoughts are conveyed by means of gestures and music. In Iwu, for example, the praise singer asks the Ezeiwu moral questions about his role, praises him, and asks him to repeat certain dance styles. The Ezeiwu responds by looking up to consider the questions posed to him, smiling, and dancing more vigorously. Also, the varying rhythms of music are communication gadgets. They help to direct dance steps, dance rhythms, and the tempo of songs.

The festivals of the Igbuzọs are educative. The songs of Iwu and Ine, for example, embody corrective

measures. They assist the Igbuzọs to avoid the pitfalls of others. They thus help to re-order the society. Furthermore, the dramatic enactments teach the people to avoid acts that will make them incur the displeasure of the gods. Sin, for example, prevents a bumper harvest. Festivals also inculcate knowledge of the importance of hard work as symbolised by the nut, ukpa. One can be sure of one's daily bread by working hard. Speaking on the place of education in society, L.N. Kogan et al argue thus:

> In the process of education, the individual assimilates cultural values, making them his own spiritual resources. Man does not simply obtain systematized knowledge of the world, he also prepares himself for the performance of specific labor.[5]

It is in the light of this that the festivals of the Igbuzọs are functional as drama.

Moreover, the festivals of the Igbuzọs are given very wide publicity. They are advertised through the medium of the village Crier. Some of the festivals have additional means of advertisement. For example, Iwu is publicised through wrestling matches. Again, the period between advertisement and performance extends to weeks to allow for large turn out.

In addition, the festivals of the Igbuzọs embody well known themes that give credence to their performance. The festivals' stories follow definite dramatic moments.

These dramatic divisions have chronology. That is, they have beginning, middle, and conclusion. Each of Iwu and Ọgbanje festivals, for example, runs from a preliminary action to a climax, and down to a denouement. The result is that festivals lead to a resolution which means increased societal welfare.

Colourful costumes, and the precision with which festivals are handled increase the atmosphere of festivity, and thus put the participants and the audience in the mood for celebration. Thus, the festivals of the Igbuzọs have strong dramatic elements.

Literature Review

Drama and the theatre have been of great concern to intellectuals since men discovered the need for dramatic displays. Since this discovery, drama has undergone systematic modifications to suit historical and socio-political changes in societies.

There is often the irresistible urge in man to track down, as it were, the very beginning of dramatic arts. This will enable him determine the engaging power of drama in societies. Speaking on the theme of the genesis of drama, Hugh Hunt in his The Live Theatre opines: "If not the oldest profession in the world,

the theatre is one of the oldest. Its origins are lost in prehistoric mists and the only certainty is that its matrix or womb was religious ritual...." He adds that "It was in the womb of religion and through its manifestation of ritual that the theatre was conceived."[6] In this connection, he enumerates "the prototypes, the origins of the species" which include "the lost Abydos Passion Play which celebrated the death of Osiris;" and "the liturgy of the Easter Mass out of which arose the medieval theatre."[7]

Helen and Richard Leacroft in their book The Theatre, assert that "The early dramatic attempts of all peoples were much the same;" and that they "took the form of.... religious dances led by the priests or witch doctors."[8] It is from the foregoing perspectives, and especially the legacy which ancient Greek Dionysius left for Greek and European dramas as we know them today, that many critics argue that the origin of traditional African drama can be traced to religious worship. As a result, they insist that the dramatic experiments of Aristotle which influenced European theatre should be applied to African theatre to validate its rootedness in tradition.

On this question of the origin of drama, Joe de Graft sees "secret rituals" as the root of ritual and folk entertainment in Africa. He points out that "the

movement towards secularization and dramatic art" which "led naturally to the theatre of entertainment probably began "with the involvement of a spectator-audience of the uninitiated in what had formally been secret rituals built around cults with a strong element of impersonation."[9] Yemi Ogunbiyi affirms "the existence, in many Nigerian societies, of a robust theatrical tradition," and attributes "the primitive root" of that tradition to "the numerous religious rituals...."[10] Although J.P. Clark is sceptic about the "precise" "origins of Nigerian drama" because of inadequate studies on the topic, he locates them "where they have been found among other peoples of the earth, deep in the past of the race."[11]

However, Oyekan Owomoyela questions the general belief that "dramatic instinct" resulted from religion." He argues that Aristotle concerned himself mainly with Greek tragedy in which he "recognized that imitation and impersonation are part of human nature" and not religion. To Owomoyela, the mimetic instinct develops in man very much earlier than any evidences of religious inclination, and before religious inductrination." He buttresses this argument with the behaviour of children who "evince a sense of mimesis by playing house, and cops and robbers" long before they "can make any sense of religious beliefs and practices."[12]

Nevertheless, what is evident is that drama is a

universal phenomenon, and a way of life. In Play, Drama and Thought, Richard Courtney writes that

> The essential characteristics of man is his creative imagination. It is this which enables him to master his environment in such a way that he overcomes the limitations of his brain, his body and the material universe. It is this 'something more' which distinguishes him from the upper primates... the dramatic process is one of the most vital to mankind. Without it we would be merely a mass of motor reflexes with scarcely any human qualities.[13]

Courtney further points out that "at the centre of human creativity is the dramatic imagination." He adds that "drama is inextricably linked with the nature and origins of society" because it is "a social activity." He goes on to say that the social nature of drama is the reason why we find in "the origin and development of dramatic play," "tribal, racial and cultural needs and patterns..."[14]

Views on the actual place of traditional African dramatic forms are rife. Problems often surface in dialectics and works on traditional African dramatic arts because of "lack of a precise conception" of traditional African drama. According to Bennison Gray, "there can really be no field at all until there is an agreed-upon definition" and "a whole body of interlocking scholarship based upon common principles and cumulative in its results."[15] Contrary to this view, most African critics subject traditional African art forms to irreconciliable values. Chinweizu et al write that "a significant number

of African critics are eurocentric in their orientation," and "habitually view African literature through European eyes," as if it were "an overseas department of European literatures, as a literature with no traditions of its own to build upon...."[16] This trend tends to make African theatrical arts seem inferior to their Western counterparts. This is why attempts by some African writers to portray African values in their literary works, which are replete with Western standards, often meet with heated debate.

Consequently, two dominant schools of thought on the status of traditional African drama emerged namely, evolutionism and relativism. The evolutionist contention is that traditional African arts are still in their rudimentary forms. They argue that although some of them embody dramatic elements, they need to shed their ritual aura to work towards secularization and rise above their traditional level to become drama. Ruth Finnegan, M.J.C Echeruo, James Amankulor, Andrew Horn and others are well known exponents of the evolutionist school. On the other hand, the relativist school championed by Ossie Enekwe, E.O. Kofoworola, Robin Horton and others argue that "theatre is first and foremost an experience." That is, that the essence of drama is underscored by the degree at which it affects and involves performers and the participants.

In Oral Literature in Africa, Ruth Finnegan writes that the view that oral tradition is characterized by "crude and artistically undeveloped formulations" often held by those trained in foreign cultures where emphasis is laid on "literacy and written tradition" is false.[17] Yet, it is the same eurocentric view that informs part of her writing which by implication demands that traditional theatre in Africa should be subjected to European standards. It is even more a contradiction of terms to turn back to assert that drama in Africa is not "a developed form" thus discovering in it only "certain dramatic and quasi-dramatic phenomena."[18] Finnegan has lost sight of the fact that the historical and socio-political changes that inform dramatic developments in Europe are quite different from those of Africa. In the main, literacy gave impetus to modifications in Greek drama from which Europe learnt. Again, Roman conquest and domination of Greece and parts of Europe were more total and enduring than Christian influence in Africa. Thirdly, there was the commercial bent of theatre practitioners and financiers before and after Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries. According to Glynne Wickham, "the professional and commercial theatre of the modern world was a parasitic growth which battened upon both the theatres of worship and the theatres of social

recreation... and then developed its own strength from those elements within the parents on which it fed that openly invited commercial exploitation."[19] Wickham further remarks that what the European 'professionals' of the theatre achieved by their activities was only the change of "the course of theatre history." He goes on to say that what those European professionals "offered their audiences was seldom more than a ludus, 'game' or 'play', compounded from" earlier theatres and theatrical practices.[20]

Considering the above, it is not surprising that Finnegan's assumptions should come under fire in the relativist camp. Ossie Enekwe avers that "society and history determine the shape that drama takes at any time or place."[21] Chinweizu et al's views lend support to the relativist contention when they argue that "African literature is an autonomous entity separate and apart from all other literatures." They further contend that African literature has its own traditions, models and norms" and that "its historical and cultural imperatives impose upon it concerns and constraints quite different, sometimes altogether antithetical to the European."[22] To J.P. Clark, "there is drama in plenty in Nigeria" which are distinct from those of Europe and other lands.[23] Like his relativist colleagues, Clark's contention is that drama should be viewed from the point of view of how it serves a people at a particular time, whether that drama is

sacred or secular.

E.O. Kofoworola seems to agree with the relativist reasoning about traditional African drama in his essay, "Traditional Forms of Hausa Drama." He sees the traditional forms of Hausa drama as theatrical arts that have deep contextual root in Hausa customs and traditions.[24] He calls them drama using as his criteria, the impact of art on the social and organizational structure of Hausaland as well as the aim of performance.[25] He categorically states that Wasan Gauta is "a full-fledged drama" because it is linked with the very concept of imitation in Hausa tradition" which "makes it an object of dramatization."[26]

However, more views held by the evolutionists maintain that 'content' rather than 'context' should be the determining factor in discussing traditional African theatre. One of such views is expressed by M.J.C. Echeruo in his essay, "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual." He is of the opinion that the Igbo have no drama because of the apparent absence of secularization of art, and non-elaboration of myth or story that could clearly define plot-structure and portray cause and effect progression in dramatic presentation. This, according to him, is because the Igbo drama is heavily encumbered by the ritual element which he sees as 'a dead end' that is devoid of expansion or growth. He, therefore, calls on the Igbo to follow Greek example by disencumbering ritual

thus turning its hidden principles into profane entertainment.[27] It is interesting that right from the start Echeruo made it clear that the substance of his essay was a "tentative statement" meant to generate controversy.[28] As should be expected, most, if not all, of his views are hotly challenged by the relativist school because of their eurocentric bearing.

Ossie Enekwe strongly refutes Echeruo's assertions that story line in Igbo dramatic displays is lost in ritual. To Enekwe, views like those of Echeruo, which lean heavily on Aristotelian models hinder proper comprehension of the theatre generally, and especially Igbo drama.[29] He reasons that variations abound in European drama. According to him, "Different periods have produced cultural products of quite different styles. All that is required is that the products have a unified design that is perceivable by the people for whom it is meant."[30] He further contends that rather than discuss drama from the interpretative angle of the original pattern of story, one should first examine the socio-historical context and functions" of drama. He argues that "Myth-criticism is inadequate for dealing with the theatre, for drama is not myth. Drama is activity involving the interaction of the audience and the performers within a public space."[31] Enekwe avers that what artists have always done is to adapt or hammer myth into

shape so that myth only serves as infrastructure, but "plays a very subordinate role in the theatre where impersonation and interactive activity are of the essence."[32]

Some critics share Enekwe's view that myth is not the essence of drama, but "function which determines the form of drama in every culture."[33] One of these is Meki Nzewi. In his analysis of the dramatic validity of Ikaki - The Tortoise Masquerade, he writes, 'Although every feature and sequence of this integrated theatre may be sketchy or symbolic, it succeeds in teleprompting the associated story and values." He goes on to say that expansion of plot is irrelevant because the plot of Ikaki and the meaning and information derivable from it are common knowledge among the people.[34]

Onuora Nzekwu concurs with Enekwe and Nzewi. In 'Masquerade', he explains that every masquerade display contains a myth which is short and considerably simple, and which is often dramatized. He reveals that a widespread myth is never performed. This, according to him, is because since the myth "serves as a frame upon which... music, dancing and dress are hung, the details of the myth would spoil the masquerade."[35] He intimates that masquerading in Iboland is a borrowed art which has been remoulded to suit various cultic, social and

administrative purposes. He argues that "the myths which surrounded individual masquerades in their original setting" have been abandoned in the process of adaptation.[36]

Again, Enekwe debunks Echeruo's contention that ritual is a dead-weight. He examines the various aspects of Odo Festival and shows that the ritual content of Odo can be transformed into theatre when the belief in Odo ritual declines."[37] He argues that as "the living and their ancestors" unite in ritual communion, "drama is introduced as a model for meaningful and ethical life" because of the social significance and enlightenment which Odo provides. He then writes that "A ritual becomes entertainment once it is outside its original context or when the belief that sustains it has lost its potency."[38]

J.N. Amankulor's views about traditional Nigerian drama are the same as Echeruo's. He asserts that the religio-ritual content of Ogbom Festival disqualifies it from being drama. He contends that although music, song, dance, mimetic action, and the use of colourful costumes inform Ogbom, it "has not passed through the transition necessary for it to become drama." His reason is that in Ogbom, "dialogue and word sequence remain merely repetitive and unelevated beyond the sphere of traditional ritual."[39] Ola Rotimi seems to differ a little with Amankulor especially on the subject of mimetic action.

To Rotimi it is imitation that is central to drama. He writes that forms of art "without the mimetic impulse" are non-dramatic. Later in his essay, "The Drama in African Ritual Display," he draws the whole idea of entertainment rituals to a conclusion. He contends that "Ritual displays that reveal in their style of presentation, in their purpose, and value, evidences of imitation, enlightenment and or entertainment can be said to be Drama."[40] But if the concept of imitation is something to go by in the treatment of every traditional African drama, "the number of ritual displays that can be labelled Drama"[41] does not diminish with such mechanical rate as Rotimi seems to imply. Local festivals, like those of the Igbuzọs, embody abundant dramatic qualities that qualify them as drama.

From the foregoing, the relativist view-point offers considerable appeal especially when it argues that drama should be approached from the context-criteria. The Igbuzọs, for example, have never been concerned with the plot-structure of their festivals. Rather, they are concerned with the power of the festivals to satisfy their conception of life as they live it, and the manifestations of the object and purposes of performance as they experience them through participation and involvement. This is what Hugh Hunt means when he talks about "doing" in drama.

By "doing" he means dramatic action which embraces participation, involvement and experience, and not myth analysis. Hunt writes, "It is what happens to us at the time of 'doing' that matters; from this experience may spring memories..."[42] Myth in itself is not functional, that is, it is not story-telling that informs festivals. Myth can only sustain a belief. In the acting out of that belief, myth fades to the background. Thus, in drama it is actually myth that "shrinks steadily," to use Echeruo's words, and not ritual.

Furthermore, in an oral tradition where belief complements action, drama can never exist in isolation, apart from ritual. Both draw from each other to ensure a successful performance. Oyekan Owomoyela argues that gods are associated with festivals because Africans look up to them as patrons from whom they need protection and spiritual assistance for the successful conduct of festivals. He goes on to say that "certain players elected the King, the Chamberlain, or the Admiral as their patron" because they "thought they could best" perform "if they enjoyed the protection of such powerful personalities. If the players later included plays about their patrons in their repertoire, that would still be consistent with their strategy."[43] Robin Horton also recognizes the gods as patrons of certain traditional

is meant to sustain belief, and serves the same function as the illusion of modern theatre. E.O. Kofoworola has identified Wasannin Gargajiya as the main corpus in which the entire concept of theatre in Hausaland is incorporated. Thus, from this general body of traditional performances he identifies other theatrical terms including Wasan Kwaikwayo which means "imitation play" or "dramatic plays."[46]

For one thing, traditional African dramatic displays are veiled in profound symbolism to prevent the lessons learnt from festivals from being too cheap, requiring little effort. Thus, symbolism makes festival messages enduring. Again, in this symbolism one deduces imitation, enlightenment, entertainment, story and its plot that are interlocking, and sometimes complex. Inability to identify this symbolism leads to a failure in interpretation. Misinterpretation of traditional African drama results from the fact that most critics pay little attention to the orality and distinctiveness of African culture and traditions. It also results from the misunderstanding of the objectives of traditional African arts.

On the rift between evolutionism and relativism, Yemi Ogunbiyi warns that accepting "evolutionist approach" "in its entirety" presents difficulties in that "the evolutionary line is not as straight as is presumed"

because "a robust dramatic tradition can develop alongside ritual without cutting itself off from its origin."[47] He points out that "what can pass for ritual, drama or plain entertainment would vary from a given context to another, a given time to another and one place to another." He uses the forms of Hausa drama namely, social, ceremonial, Royal Court, occupational and dramatic as examples.[48] He then declares:

> In the end, therefore, we must admit that until more work is done in the area of our traditional theatre and drama, each dramatic event must be taken on its own merit and adjudged not merely from whether it fulfils the "content-criteria", but more importantly from the context-criteria; from the dimension of how it is experienced by the actor/participant.[49]

Abiola Irele seems to be more forthright when he advises "African writers to work out a new spiritual coherence out of the historical disconnection between their African heritage and their modern experience." He adds:

> The essential direction of modern African writing, of the work of the truly significant writers is towards the definition, in and through literature, of a distinctive mode of thought and feeling, towards an imaginative apprehension of an African spirit.[50]

It is from perspectives such as this that I intend to discuss the dramatic validity of the festivals of the Igbuzos.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to highlight the socio-cultural structure of Igbuzo community as well as the religious practices of the people. The chapter has tried to show how the various aspects of the culture of the Igbuzos are integrated to effect a harmonious existence. Also, attempt was made to show how the various facets of culture act as parameters to festivals. Festivals in turn re-enact these cultural ways so as to preserve them, and to entertain and enlighten the Igbuzos.

From the views of some critics on traditional African drama, it is observed that festivals are dramas because they possess dramatic qualities, and are able to satisfy the demands of the theatre. What European theatre can do for Europeans, traditional African theatre provides a fountain from which Africans draw life's sustenance. It also offers a forum for the interpretation and reinterpretation of the interplay of the people's mental, moral and ethical well-being.

Therefore, socio-cultural structure, and history should be considered in determining what should be called drama in a particular place. If drama is acttion on stage, and is functional in its production of worthwhile

experience that is immediate, then Igbuzọ festivals are dramas. The festivals of the Igbuzọs are media for recreation, education, and reintegration into the corpus of cultural continuum.

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Chapter 2

The Socio-Political, Religious, and Artistic Background of the Igbuzọs

L.N. Kogan et al assert that 'For a "group" to be a concrete sociological phenomenon,' "it is necessary to define clearly the group at issue, to identify its quantitative and qualitative features. It is also important to define the group's place in the total structure of social connections and relations."[1]

A. Land Mass and Population

The Igbuzọs constitute one of the Ibo-speaking tribes of Oshimili Local Government Area of Bendel State. They occupy a land mass of about 75 square miles, or about 200 square kilometres, excluding the vast expanse of farm-lands. The total population of the Igbuzọs is about fifty thousand.[2] This analysis excludes Achala,[3] which is about 8 kilometres from Igbuzọ main town, and has a population of over five thousand people.

Igbuzọ is thickly populated, and the people live very close together, averaging about two hundred and fifty to the square kilometre. The total living land mass has expanded considerably over the years. Thus, the growth in population has led to an increasing density

which puts further pressure on cultivable land. However, this dense population distribution in Igbuzọ enables the people to tackle emergencies effectively, and to accomplish other communal responsibilities.

Igbuzọ is surrounded by her Ibo-speaking neighbours, with whom she engages in certain socio-economic activities. It is bounded in the East by Asaba and the riverain towns of Oko-Anala and OkoAmakom in the West by Ọgwashi-Uku, in the North by Ọkpanam, and in the South by Olodu and Abala. Some of the inhabitants of these neighbouring towns often increase the number of spectators during Igbuzọ festivals.

B. Vocation

The key occupation of the Igbuzọs is farming. Family heads and their adult male sons are regarded as farmers in Igbuzọ. They prepare the farms and weed them. Women and children contribute to the sowing and harvesting of crops. Otherwise, women are mainly recognised as keepers of the home, and small scale dealers on surplus farm products, and soup condiments. The soup condiments include the products of their husbands' hunting, trap-setting, and fishing. Households also rear domestic animals like fowls, sheep and goats for home consumption and for sale.

However, a man's social status is determined by the number of yams he has in his barn. His success as a farmer enables him to marry many wives, and thus have many children. This has economic importance in that it increases the number of farm-hands. It also affords him the necessary credentials to take titles in the land. It is because of the importance attached to farming that major traditional events, like festivals, are planned to fall within specific breaks in farming activities. Moreover, the importance accorded to crop production makes farming one of the principal themes of Igbuzọ festivals.

C. Historical Origin

Documented historical accounts classify Igbuzọ, or Ibusa as the European missionaries renamed it for easier pronunciation, among the group of Western Ibo-speaking towns that claim origin from "Nri, or from another member of the Umueri group to which Nri belongs."[4] These towns include Asaba, Igbuzọ or Ibusa, and Ọgwashi-Uku. Elizabeth Isichei locates the settlement of the Igbuzọs' Nri-descendant neighbour of Asaba among a "pre-existing settlement, perhaps in the early seventeenth century."[5] But she is silent to the probable period of the migration of the Igbuzọs and the Ọgwashi-Ukus to their present places.

There is reason to suppose that the Igbuzọs migrated to their present place earlier than 1500 A.D. Firstly, the historical accounts of the foundation of the Western Ibo towns are various, varied and conflicting, and are derived mainly from oral tradition.[6] For example, historical accounts locate the origin of the Umuezechima, the Benin descendants, and the Igala group around the 16th century during the reign of Oba Esigie of Benin from 1517-1550 A.D.[7] History relates that there was a great wave of migration resulting from the political turbulence in Benin and elsewhere during that early 16th century.[8] However, the Igbuzọs themselves relate that they had settled in their present location before the Aya Idu or Benin internal political crisis that escalated beyond Benin political frontiers as troops loyal to Esigie pursued the fleeing rebellious groups that had abducted one of the Oba's daughters.[9]

Thus Western Iboland became a melting pot of 'new comers' which included the Umuezechima group.[10] It is interesting that historians acknowledge the presence of pre-existing settlements that were later overrun by the superior force of new migrant groups.[11] This is because such admittance of pre-settlement lends support to the claim of the Igbuzọs that they had existed before the wave of migration from Benin and elsewhere in the early 16th century. The foundation of Igbuzọ can be located

around the 1490s,[12] a few decades before the Benin political crisis. This is because the Igbuzọs must have settled sufficiently to be able to withstand the 16th century forces of conquest and domination that overran her neighbouring, now extinct, towns that existed in the present towns of Ọgwashi-Uku, Asaba, Ilah, Oko, Issele-Asagba, and others.

However, since historians drew their information from oral tradition to explain the foundation of Western Ibo towns, there is reason to give credence to the oral history of the foundation of Igbuzọ as known, preserved, and related by the Igbuzọs. Oral history relates that the Igbuzọs originated from Isu, in Imo State of Nigeria. Umejei, the prince and heir apparent to the political throne of Isu, threw a townsman to death in a wrestling contest. The penalty for killing a Kinsman was death. This was so to avoid punishment, in form of general calamity, from the gods. But the ruling head of Isu arbitrarily vetoed the death penalty, converting it into banishment. This action resulted into a major schism in the original Isu otherwise known as Isu Nje-aba. In the ensuing encounter, there was blood-bath, and the pull-out of several groups who later founded the present day Isus which are scattered all over Igbo-land. Among them are Nkwere-Isu, Achala Isu, and many others near Enugu, Anam,[13] and Okigwe.

According to oral history, Umejei was loved by many among whom were the war generals of Isuland such as Odogwu, Iwọlọ, and Iyase. With these war Generals and a retinue of numerous servants, young maidens, wives, and friends, Umejei set out for exile. History also relates that he carried a specially prepared magical pot on his head on his way to exile. The instruction given to him, according to oral tradition, was that the pot would direct him, and that he would settle where the pot would fall. This magical connection with the foundation of Igbuzọ is buttressed with Isichei's assertion in her A History of the Igbo People that the Nri, a corporate body of the Umueri group to which Isu Nje-aba belonged, were "ritual specialists."[14]

Umejei and his followers crossed the River Niger with canoes. On his way, he met some hostile coastal towns that refused him passage and food. He subdued them and took many captives. Umejei's pot later fell at a place he called Anioshe meaning, 'the land of Oshe.' The place was so named because his first son, Oshe, was born there after the pot fell. There are relics of huts, pottery materials and fruit plants that offer evidence of Umejei and his followers' early settlement at Anioshe, in Igbuzọ.

Later, Umejei's sister became pregnant out of

marriage, at Anioshe. Umejei was angry. He sent her to a place later called Ezukwu. He built a house for her there and gave her several servants. However, because of the long distance from Anioshe to Ezukwu, Umejei brought his followers to a place later called Umueze. There he made his spiritual and political headquarters. Umueze was a strategic point because it was close to his sister's place. Again, it was at the centre of his numerous war outposts.

Umejei had two more sons, Ezebuọgu and Ezemesea. Oshe, Ezebuọgu and Ezemesea later had their own children. In appreciation, Umejei named seven, out of the ten villages of Igbuzọ, after his grand male children. One of the villages of Igbuzọ was named Ekea or Umuekea. Ekea was a woman's name. Ekea was a very popular trader who hailed from Obosi, near Onitsha. She was first married at Asaba, but later came to Igbuzọ because she admired Umejei's prowess. She was so popular that a village in Asaba was also named after her. Ekea villages in Igbuzọ and Asaba are still in existence.

After Umejei settled at Umueze, he named his entire territory Igbuzọ or Igbobuzọ meaning, 'the first Igbo settlers.' But there was a general wave of migration in Igboland at the time Umejei set out for exile. After he settled at Igbuzọ, other clans migrated from different

parts of Igboland and elsewhere. For example, Ọdaigbo, the founder of Ọgwashi-Uku, migrated from Nshi which was a clan within the Umueri group. These later settlers were also trying to chart territories for themselves. As a result, there were constant land encroachments and boarder clashes between the later settlers and the Igbuzọs. These conflicts led to many years of bloody inter-tribal wars. Igbuzọ's chief enemy was Ọgwashi-Uku. Their age-old boarder conflict is a tough legal issue in the law court today.

However, amity later developed between Igbuzọ and each of her neighbours. This friendship did not rule out occasional boarder clashes. However, they found the need for inter-personal and inter-town co-operation and trade which led to the adoption of some festivals from neighbouring towns by the Igbuzọs. For example, Ụlọ was introduced from Okoh and Abala when some Igbuzọ youths went on a fishing expedition there. In those days, people had friends in far away places. They paid constant visits to their friends as a means of strengthening inter-town friendship and good-will. They used the opportunity of such visits to borrow desirable customs with which they enriched theirs.

D. Socio-political Structure

The Igbuzọs live a communal existence. They work together toward achieving a common goal for the society. However, there is room for personal expression and accomplishment. But the sense of community often asserts itself over thoughts of the self especially, in times of emergency. Nevertheless, the Igbuzọs believe that individual accomplishment can be harnessed for the welfare of the entire society. Thus, individuals are often encouraged to develop along their separate talents. What Ossie Enekwe says about the Igbo is true of the Igbuzọs. He writes, "Igbo world view accepts the dualism and relatedness of all things... the Igbo combine a high sense of individualism and a very strong communal sense... Igbo society is characterized by social fragmentation and a strong accent on achieved status."[15]

The Igbuzọ political system is built on a hierarchical structure of age and social status. The political head of Igbuzọ is called the Diọkpa. He is the oldest male adult in the town. He has a council of chiefs called Ndi Eze or Obi. The Obiship transcends age. It is a cult of influential men who have achieved importance through hard work. Only successful farmers can afford the wherewithal to register for eligibility into the cult. Farmers work hard to qualify for the Obi title.

Ndi Eze constitutes the Legislative Council. As a form of respect, the Ndi Eze are exempted from minor communal assignments like village sanitation and digging of graves.

Following the Ndi Eze is the Nkpalọ. This is a title of induction into the mainstream politics of Igbuzọ. They are the leaders of the Executive Council. They also head important delegations, and arbitration panels.

The Ndi Ichia constitutes the judicial arm of government. It is the final court of appeal in Igbuzọ. Difficult cases of inter-personal, or inter-village dimension that can not be settled in a town meeting are referred to it for permanent settlement. Membership of this council is composed of members of Ogbuu cult and other titled men of proven probity and intelligence.

The lowest political group is the Ngba-nkpisi. This is a non-titled group. It consists of male children and lazy adults. They are mainly engaged in village sanitation exercise and other manual tasks. The political system of the Igbuzọs recognizes hard work and conformity to societal norms. In spite of one's wealth, one is not accorded political respect until one takes title. During town meetings, the Igbuzọs discuss their policies towards their neighbours, and other matters that affect the internal security and unity of their town. Also, matters

referred to the town by individuals, groups, or matters that village groups cannot handle are discussed during the gathering of the entire town.

Igbuzo community is made up of ten villages. Originally, there were nine. The tenth village, Ogboli, was an annexed enemy war base. Today, Ogboli is regarded as one of the important villages of Igbuzọ community. The others include Umueze, Umuekea, Ogbeowele, Umuidi na Isagba, Umuehea, Ezukwu, Umuọdafe, Umuwagwu and Umuezeagwu. Each village has an independent political system which is a replica of the political structure of the entire town. Every village has its Diọkpa, its Legislative and Executive Councils. Inter-personal, group or inter-family matters are settled at village meetings. Also, impending festivals are first discussed at village meetings before their celebrations.

In spite of the respect accorded to titles, everyone including the Ngba-nkpisi is regarded as an important political figure. This is because the Igbuzọs recognize smaller political units like the family. Disemination of village decisions, and mobilization of communal labour are most effected through family units. Therefore, everyone is equal before the law, and is thus given fair hearing. Everyone is also part of the decision making process, and has the right to oppose any decision upheld by the Diọkpa. This political pattern acts as an

effective check against arbitrary use of power.

Another important socio-political structure of Igbuzọ community is the age-group. The Igbuzọs have a name for every historic period, and persons born within that period, which must not exceed three years, form an age group. For example, there are age-grades that answer Aho chi ji eshishe ji, Aho mmili li umuaka Igbuzọ, Ogbo tax and so on. These mean, "age group of the year of eclipse of the sun," "age group of the year when some Igbuzọ youths were drowned in the River Niger," and "age group of the period of colonial taxation" respectively. Each age group has a god father called nna ogbo. He must come from an older age group. Members of an age group select their god father. They always look for an influential person who can inspire them to become prominent figures in the society. There is often a healthy rivalry among age groups. Each strives to contribute to the growth of the society. In times of emergency, age groups are very dependable. They respond to emergencies with great zeal. They contribute immensely to the success of festivals by assiting in the clearing and arranging of arenas, and by providing necessary props and costumes.

Women also play an important role in the corporate polity of Igbuzọ community. The married women of every

village are headed by the oldest married woman of that village. They discuss private matters of womanhood, and help to educate newly married women on the principles of successful marriage. Whenever their husbands' farms are threatened by wood-gatherers, they institute decrees banning unlawful entry into the farms. Defaulters are fined, and their firewood confiscated. They also respond, at short notice, to communal matters. They contribute to the success of festivals by donating materials for ritual sacrifices. They also form a powerful choric force during festivals.

Another powerful political female group is the Umuada. Every female adult, whether married or not, is a member of Umuada in the village of her birth. A woman can be married to a non-citizen of Igbuzọ; she is still a member of the Umuada. They exercise authority only in the village of their birth. They usually meet on an emergency, and for serious matters. Their functions include cautioning and fining unruely women married to their brothers and kinsmen. They can ban a rude, or an adulterous woman from associating with the other members of the village until she changes her behaviour. They can also give a run-away married woman a deadline at which to return to her husband's house. After the expiration of the deadline, it becomes taboo for the married woman

to come back to her husband unless she pays a certain fine.

The influence of the Umuada is also felt during important festivals. It is their duty to ensure that the wives of their kinsmen have contributed their quota towards the success of any impending festival celebrated by their village. During some important festivals, participants visit their Umuada. Such visits add colour to festivals, and strengthen the spirit of goodwill and unity. The Umuada also contribute to the success of festivals by participating fully, and by ensuring that their children participate.

The Umuada are so powerful that they can attend important meetings in the village of their birth. However, they do not express their views openly because women are not allowed to interfer during proceedings. They can at best whisper their ideas to a kinsman who can then raise it up for discussion. The socio-political structure of Igbuzọ community, therefore, directs individual and group behaviours. It is an important determinant of how successful a festival will be.

E. Religion and Belief Systems

Religion plays a crucial role in the social, economic, and political life of the Igbuzọs. The Igbuzọs

are so fundamentally religious that there seems to reside in them "an inherent urge" that "makes religion a matter of ultimate concern."[16] The mode of worship is basically animistic. There is the belief in one Supreme God called Chukwu, and numerous spirit intermediaries. The myriad subordinate gods are identified with sacred objects and things.

God created all the myriad gods, and the world of phenomena. He is the centre of all power. The gods derive their essence from the all-pervading influence of God. Mortals like the priests and medicine men tap this universal essence of God through the medium of the gods. With this, they practise their art. These mortals can perform certain feats like rendering themselves invisible, and invulnerable to harmful influences. They also have the power of extra-sensory perception. All this makes them apppear super-human, and are looked upon as demi-gods. Because of the belief of the Igbuzọs that there is a link between gods and men, these demi-gods or medicine men are often consulted for fortune telling. They also play important roles during festivals. They alert man on the wishes of the gods, and prepare certain magical props used in the performance of festivals.

In Igbuzọ community, ancestor worship is common. The people belief in life after death. Dead ancestors

are believed to pass on to the next life where they become spirits. They are either benevolent or malevolent ones depending on the type of life they led here on earth. Streams, certain objects and places are deified. These deities are believed to possess tremendous spiritual power. Their functions are as varied as man's needs and wants. Most of them have the power to effect punishment and forgiveness. These deities include Ọbọshi, the goddess of Ọbọshi stream, Ọkpuzu, Isinta, Asiama, Atakpo, the god of Atakpo stream, and other stream spirits.

An interesting aspect of these streams is that they make a ring round Igbuzọ. The fact that Atakpo, a stream god, flows into Ọbọshi, the major stream goddess, makes Atakpo and Ọbọshi essentially fertility deities. Their union is a kind of spiritual copulation. This is why Iwu, an agricultural festival, is associated with these two major stream deities.

Proper cleansing of self and a fervent appeal to Ọbọshi, turns barrenness into a potential matrix of fertility. If the barren wants children, she will ask the Ohene, the chief priest of Ọbọshi, to lead her to the goddess' shrine. There she provides an offering to the goddess. She also voices her desires, and promises to perform a thanksgiving ceremony to the goddess after her request is met. The Igbuzọs pin faith on these

spirits, and so their influences run through, and propel the entire network of culture. This network includes ethical norms, superstitions, rites, festivals, and so on.

Moreover, there is the belief in magic, witchcraft, and occultism. Through these media, practitioners can employ mysterious influences to cast spell on, and harm enemies. For fear of these malevolent forces, rituals, rites, and festivals become important avenues of lodging petitions to Chukwu, the Supreme Deity. This is done through the numerous God's spirit messengers embodied in streams and places that are declared sacrosanct. They are also embodied in sacred objects including trees, stones, and carved wooden materials. Thus, numerology or the science of numbers, palmistry, divination and colour are indispensable factors in ritual rites and festive performances.

The power in numerology is derived from the local week days. These are Eke, Olie, Afọ, and Nkwọ. These characters constitute the number 4. Obi Nwaokocha Uwashili[17] explains that the eldest, Eke, shares spiritual power among these characters. In the Igbuzọ context, the sharer does not choose first. The shares which must be in three parts are chosen by the other three characters namely, Olie, Afọ and Nkwọ. These three are added to the number of the local week days,

which is four, to make the number 7. The numbers 3 and 7 have great spiritual power. They can be manipulated to derive other potent numbers. For example, three in two, three, four, and other places give nine, twenty-seven, eighty-one, and so on. Again, the products of seven and two, three, four, five and other numbers give fourteen, twenty-one, twenty-eight, thirty-five, and so on.

The number 7 can be employed magically to produce wonderful manifestations. The power of 7 lies in the sacrifice which Eke makes in not choosing from the spiritual shares. Again, the number 3 can be manipulated to effect cure, to cast spell on people, or to effect magical feats. When the number 3 is invoked, Olie, Afo and Nkwo send their combined powers to produce manifestations. This power of manifestation is increased, depending on how 3 or 7 is geometrically magnified. Thus, these numbers are invoked during festivals to effect desired results.

In palmistry, the priest or medicine man uses extra-sensory perception to reveal one's destiny. He does this by reading the lines on one's palms. He sometimes rubs some white powdery preparations on the person's palms to make his readings clearer. A similar method is used in divination.

In divination, an instrument called afa is used.

This instrument consists of jingling shells of the fruits of a certain tree called oshosho. These shells are joined together with strong threads. The whole preparation is consecrated before use. The priest or medicine man makes some incantations and throws the afa on the ground several times. Each time, he has a message or two for the seeker. Kola-nuts are also used for divination. The kola-nut is split into parts, and thrown on the ground. Through this method, medicine men can predict people's future. Palmistry and divination are important in choosing principal actors of the major festivals of the Igbuzọs. For example, the Ezeiwus, the Enems, the Eze Ebo, the Ezeulọ, the Ezeine, and the Adaine are chosen through divination.

The use of cloth of multiple colours stems from the belief that these colours harmonize to attract spiritual influences. The chief colours used in divination, rites, rituals and festivals are white, red and, sometimes, green. White symbolises purity, and indicates that the place where it is kept is holy. Red symbolises danger. This indicates the presence of unseen powers. Green symbolises success and abundance. These colours blend to effect manifestations. In divination, rites, rituals, and festivals, numbers, incantations, and costumes of many colours are subtly used to coax cosmic forces to register their presence among men.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the social, political, religious, and artistic life of the Igbuzọs have been examined. This chapter illustrates that a large number of people is essential in accomplishing communal tasks especially as these tasks relate to the organization and enactments of traditional myths.

This chapter also demonstrates the fact that occupation, religion, history, and politics play crucial roles in the performance of festivals. Understanding these traditional ways therefore paves the way for a better comprehension of the festivals of the Igbuzọs.

Notes

1. Kogan, L.N. et al., The Cultural Life of the Soviet Worker: A Sociological Study. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975, p. 24.

2. See "IBUSA PATHFINDER" Vol.2.

   No.25, October 1988 p.1.

3. Achala is part of Ezukwu village. Because of its far distance from Igbuzọ main town, it seems unwise to compute her land mass into the total land mass of Igbuzọ because that will distort discussions on the distribution of population in Igbuzọ. The vast uninhabited land mass between Igbuzọ main town and Achala cannot be accounted for in questions of population distribution.

4. Isichei, Elizabeth, A History of the Igbo People. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1976. p. 55.

5. Ibid.

6. Isichei, Elizabeth, op.cit. p. 51ff

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 52.

9. All the elders of Igbuzọ who were interviewed on this issue were in agreement. One of them called T.N. Nkpulu revealed that the account of Aya Idu was popularized during the Ekumeku Wars of 1898-1910 because it provided basis for unity among the Umuezechima towns of the Western Ibos.

10. The Umuezechimas claim origin from Benin. See Isichei, Elizabeth, op.cit., p. 51.

11. Ibid., p. 52ff.

12. Mr J.O. Ashinze made this assertion. He was supported by Mr T.N. Nkpulu.

13. Anam is in Anambra State, and is classified among the Umueri clan. See Isichei, Elizabeth. op. cit. Map 3 The Niger Valley states, p. 53.

14. Ibid., p. 55.

15. Enekwe, Onuora O., Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1987. p. 42.

16. Idowu, Bolaji E., African Traditional Religion. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1973, p. 3.

17. Obi Nwaokocha Uwashili is the oldest and most experienced medicine man in Igbuzo.

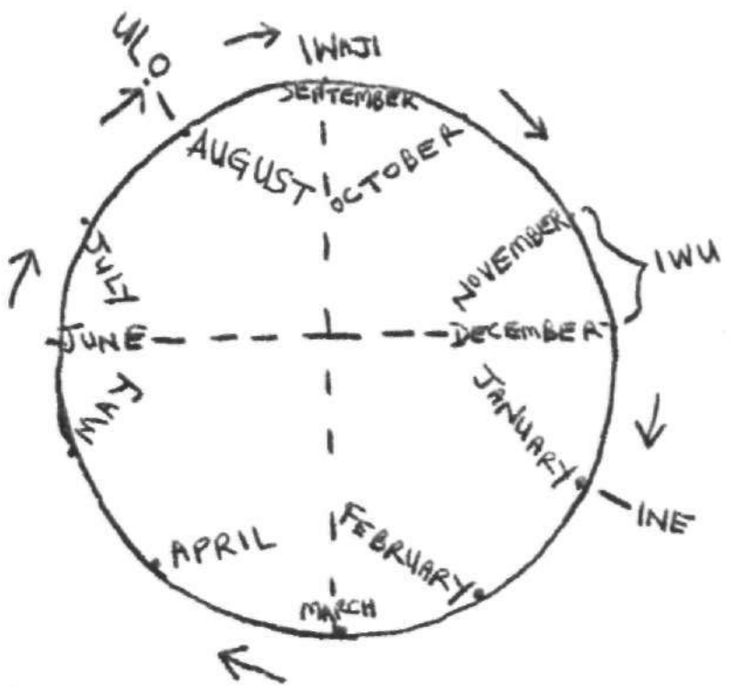


Fig.3: The Cycle of Igbuzo Annual Festivals

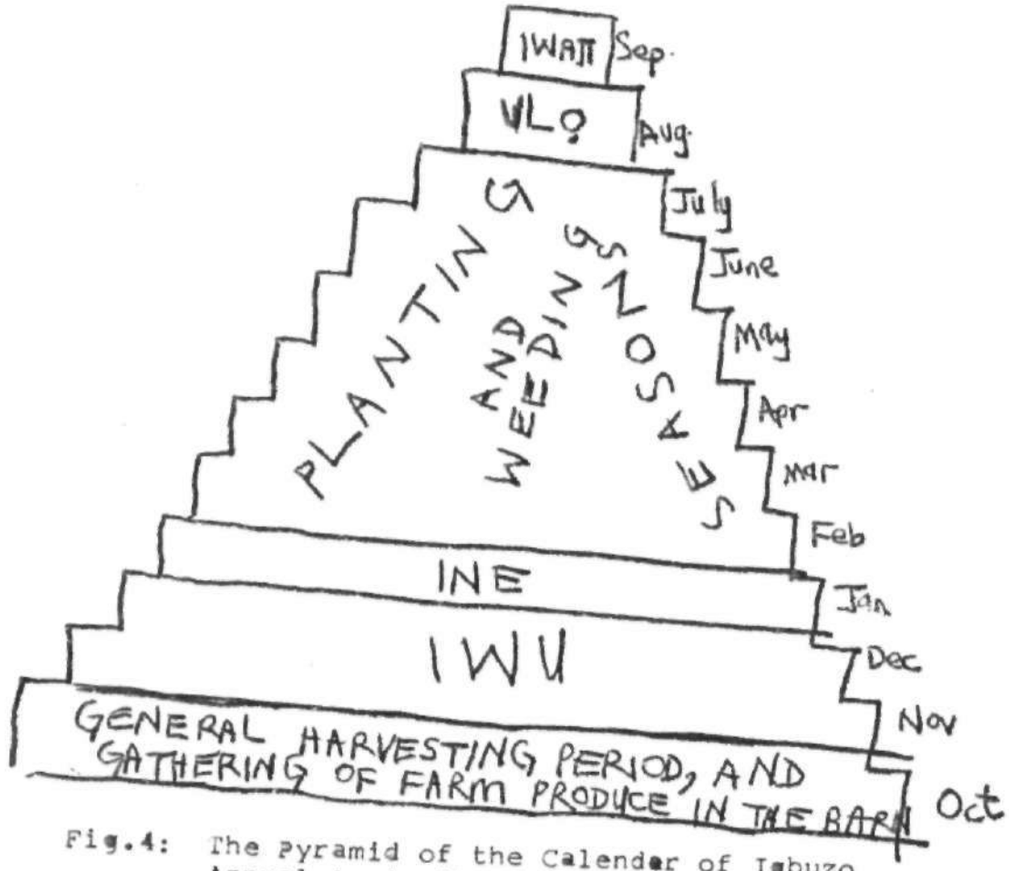


Fig.4: The Pyramid of the Calender of Igbuzo Annual Agricultural Events.

Chapter 3

THE DRAMATIC YARDSTICKS OF IWU, INE AND ULO FESTIVALS

Introduction

The Igbuzos are known for their industry, farm work, and their love for dance and merriment. Among them, many exciting theatrical arts subsist. Some of these art forms are annual festivals, which portray the social, the political, and the agricultural life of the people. These yearly festivals include Iwu, Ine, and Ulo. These three festivals have been chosen for this study because of their interesting theatrical elements that give them dramatic credence. They are rich in mimetic action, dialogue, dance, song, character, costume, education, and are performed in public places. Their dramatic strength lie in action rather than narration.

The calendar of Igbuzo annual festivals is incorporated in the yearly agricultural calendar. The agricultural year begins in September when the New Yam Festival or Iwaji is celebrated. Between October and August of each year, the three important traditional festivals of Iwu, Ine, and Ulo are celebrated. Their celebrations herald, and culminate into the Iwaji or New Yam Festival which is the key festival among the annual festivals. This cycle of events can be represented diagramatically as shown on page 49B.

During these festivals, the Igbuzọs thank the gods for their assistance in making the New Yam's Festival possible. They also use the occasions to reaffirm their religious beliefs. The Festivals are also occasions for the expression of communal solidarity and collective yearnings and aspirations. Consequently, the festivals provide entertainment. According to T.N. Nkpulu,[1] these fetes embrace the need for play, reunion, and provide media for mate selection.

The vowels in the festival names: Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ convey some subtle semantic relevance in their exemplification of the community's joy, and love for get-together. The vowels 'i', 'u', 'e', and 'o' in the festivals' names are used to derive certain emotional expressions of happiness which are always found in Igbuzọ songs, chants and invocations. In songs, chants and invocations the vowels form assonances which on rendering produce melody, and affect the human emotional make-up. They can also stand alone, in which case they are elongated thus: i-i-i-i-i-i-i, u-u-u-u-u-u-u, e-e-e-e-e-e-e, o-o-o-o-o-o-o, for emphasis on the emotion being expressed. The combination of these vowels with the internal consonantal sounds of 'w', 'n', and 'l' in the festivals' names is a subtle portrayal of the sublime poetic imagination of the originators of these festivals. Here combination of vowel and consonant sounds becomes

symbolic of celebration, joy, get-together, and happiness.

Therefore, Iwu celebrates the benevolence of the gods, and man's happiness over the success of the past agricultural year. It also celebrates man's hope for a more prosperous new year. On the other hand, Ine is a holiday celebration. The Igbuzọs use this period of rest, after harvest, to recreate themselves in preparation for fresh work in the farm. It thus heralds the new farming season. Ulọ heralds Iwaji or New Yam Festival. It is an occasion of thanks-giving to the gods for their assitance in the current agricultural year. It is also a short period of rest after several months of hard work in the farm.

It is thus clear that the Igbuzọs are busy all the year round. Every little break in farm work is utilized in the form of celebration during which they reaffirm their traditional beliefs, and put themselves in top form, ready to resume work in the farms.

Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ Festivals embody potent dramatic qualities both in form and in content. They serve great dramatic purposes in their satire, ribaldry, clowning, and so on. They are purification oriented. The purification exercises are borne out in blunt verbal exposure of evils and their doers. Corruption in high places is ridiculed. Again, adultery, fornication, stealing,

drunkenness, laziness and other vices are satirized. All these are believed to cleanse the land of evil. For purposes of clarity, the dramatic limits of each of the festivals: Iwu, Ine, and Ulo will be examined separately.

A. Iwu Festival: Dramatic Nature

1. Cast, Costume and Props

(i) Cast

Iwu has numerous characters who have predictable behaviours. Members of the audience already know what every actor will say at certain times, his gestures, and indeed, his overall mannerisms. Thus they are flat characters. Again, the circumstances under which they operate are stock situations. There is never any attempt on the part of the audience to conjecture what will happen next at any point in time. The situations are so conventional that any deviation from the fixed acceptable mode of performance will be judged as inefficient, and a failure.

These characters constitute three all-male sets chosen, through divination, from five age groups, from the several quarters of Ogbeowele village. These groups include Otu Iwu, Ndi Enem, and Eze Iwu.

Members of the Otu Iwu function as property managers. They provide all the musical instruments as well as the

symbolic objects like the pestle, wooden bowl, and small calabash used to perform Iwu. Again, they provide costumes for the members of Iwu. They are also charged with the responsibility of renovating the cult huts, digging out, and cooking the special yam, ji-Iwu, used for the festival.

Ndi Enem function as stage directors. They mobilize labour and direct the clearing and the arrangement of the arena. They also determine where each participant or groups of participants should occupy at every stage of the celebration. It is also their duty to indicate change of activities. This second group is composed of random selection of about nine men from the numerous members of the first set.

The Eze Iwu is a set of three dancers. They are the chief actors. They constitute the main protagonists who contend with antagonistic forces of the unseen by courting the assistance of benevolent powers. Each Eze Iwu has a confidant who assists him in his role. She is usually the Ezeiwu's wife, or a close female blood relation, who sings his praises continually. The Ezeiwu's confidant is often assisted by a professional praise-singer, an accomplished flutist, and a few Enems who play gongs.

Topping this hierarchy is a ceremonial head called Eze Ebo. He acts as the overseer of the festival. He officiates as the Ohene or priest. He has two assistant-

restrainers and one trumpeter. The integrated roles of these characters enhance the unfolding of the plot of Iwu.

(ii) Costume

The attires of the Eze iwus are very colourful, and they contribute to the advancement of the plot. The costumes include make-up. The Ezeiwus rub ula, a red liquid juice of a special plant, all over their bodies. This red colour signifies danger. They pin white feathers on their heads, and hold them in place with colourful scarfs. In addition, they wear red short skirts, and tie colourful scarfs on their waists, overlapping the red skirts. These colourful costumes dramatize the people's belief in the blending of multiple colours to coax the unseen forces to yield to man's biddings. Since the Ezeiwus are going to contest with inimical forces of the unseen, they use these colours to attain the necessary spiritual strength. To further fortify themselves, they tie agbokili, a protective charm, on each of their bicep muscles. They also hold consecrated canes with which they ward off evil forces.

Apart from the protective significance of these colourful costumes, they add to the glamour of the occasion. They also have aesthetic appeal in the

consciousness of the audience. Members of the audience admire these bright colours, and are thus put in the proper mood for the celebration.

(iii) Props

A lot of props are used to bring about a successful performance of Iwu. They include two round huts. One of them is used for cooking ji iwu. The other serves as a resting and changing place for the Ezeiwus and the Enems.

Other instruments of celebration include the ogene and the ekwe that is, metal and wooden gongs, palm fronds, loin cloths, and nzu or native chalk. Also used are nkpukulu or a small clay pot which is usually substituted with a small object of calabash family called onunu, and akangweose or a small pestle. Okweoji or a small wooden rectangular bowl covered up with a red cloth is also used to enhance dramatic progression in Iwu.

2. Staging

The dramatization of the story of Iwu is done in a fixed arena called Ogbo Iwu. The Ogbo Iwu is the usual traditional theatre-in-the-round arrangement. However, it is exceptionally large, and somewhat oval in shape.

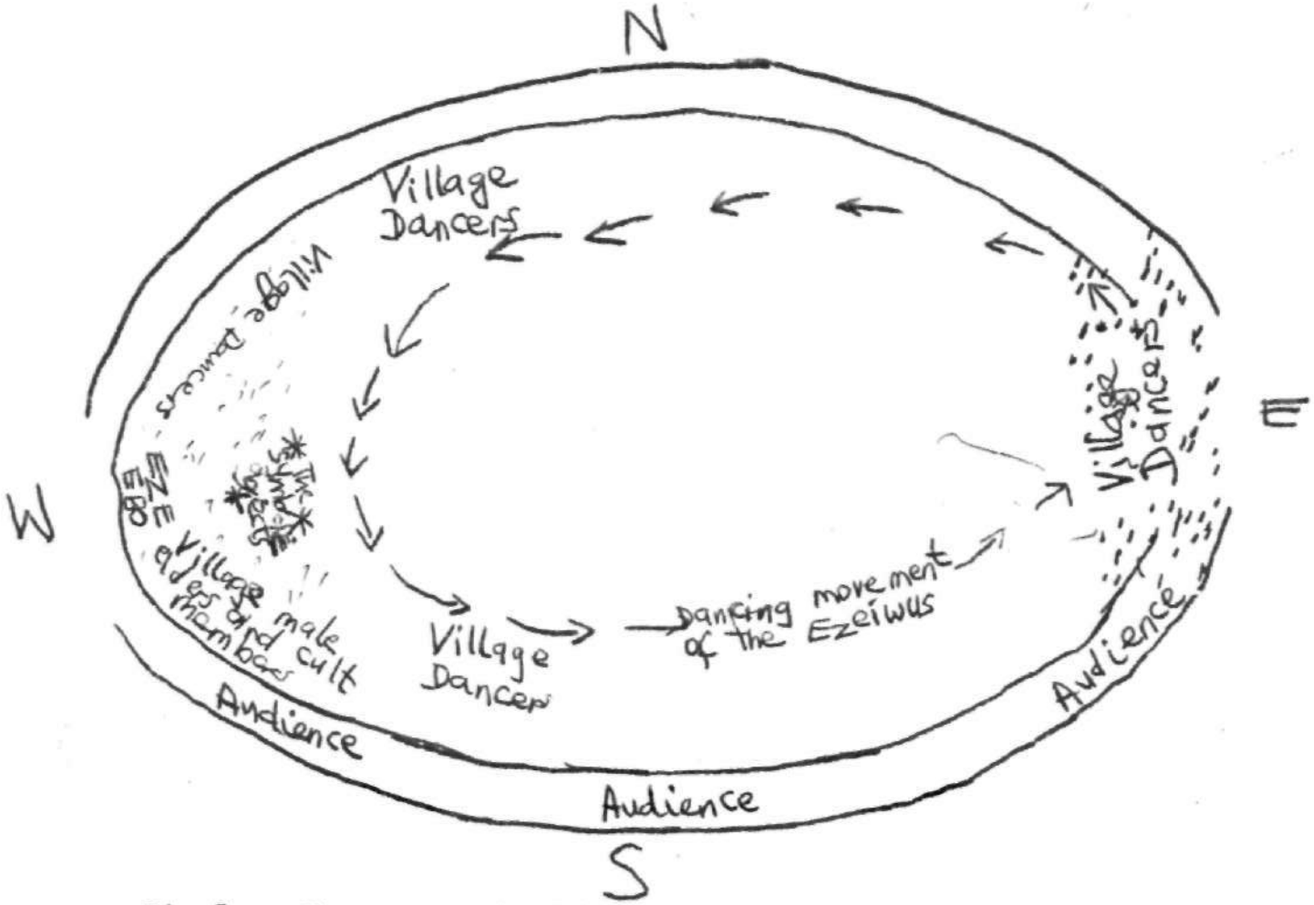


Fig.5: The Arena Staging of Iwu performance

It is such that the two elliptical ends extend from the geographical East to the West. This arrangement has dramatic significance in Iwu in that it affords the Ezeiwus sufficient space to make their journeys to and from the East-West course. It also enhances viewing.

There are specific stations in the arena. At the Western end, members of Otu Iwu, a few Enems, and many village male elders form a semi-circle facing the East. In the centre of this semi-circle sits the Eze Ebo, flanked by his assistants and his trumpeter. The Eastern end is mainly occupied by village dancers. The North and the South are occupied by spectators. The arena is always free for the Ezeiwus to dance along.

The dramatic validity of theatre-in-the-round staging is that it first and foremost demonstrates a sense of community. This arena staging enables people to come together and stand as if holding hands in friendship. Thus, the arrangement engenders a sense of togetherness, oneness, and belonging among the audience.

Secondly, the circular formation dramatizes the people's traditional belief in the continuity of life. This may be human life, animal life, or crop life. The arena formation relives man's age old experience of the endless flow of life whose beginning he doesn't know, and whose end he cannot predict. This formation also

stirs up thought in the consciousness of man. This thought makes him determined to contribute his quota to the advancement of the society that will continue to exist after him. Thus theatre-in-the-round becomes a symbolic vehicle for plot unfoldment.

3. Plot

Iwu runs through five main dramatic stages. These are exposition, challlenge, complication, climax, and denouement. These dramatic moments are matched by the five main parts of Iwu plot, which look like the Acts of scripted plays. These plot divisions include the stage of Advertisement, the Week of Peace, the First Phase, the Second Phase, and the Third Phase of dancing.

(i) The Stage of Advertisement

This is the preliminary situation or exposition. Although this stage is primarily used to inform the community of the impending festival, there are certain enactments that are both informative, and introductory to the story of Iwu dance drama. Therefore, the preliminary stage of Iwu is located here.

Advertisement takes two forms namely, music and chanting, and a wrestling match. The former consists of gong playing and horn blowing by the members of Iwu at the midnight of an appointed date. This music is

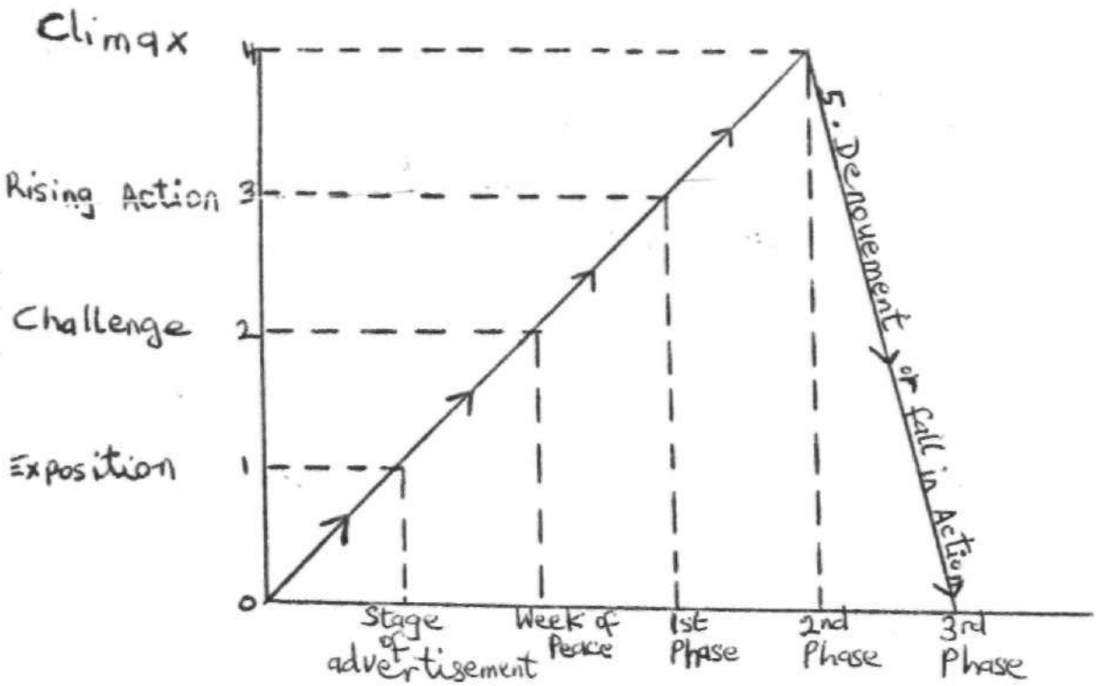


Fig 6: The Graph of Dramatic progression of Iwu Festival.

accompanied by rhythmic chanting of igo oha, igo oha, igo oha, which is a solidarity chant meaning 'free-for-all dance'. There is nothing particular about the form of dancing at this time. They all stand together and respond to the music by moving the body slightly from side to side, and stamping the feet alternately on the ground. This arrangement has its dramatic relevance.

Firstly, the music is raised to a high pitch in order to effectively serve its advertisement purpose. This is assisted by the tone of chanting which is often deep and high pitched. Again, timing has dramatic relevance here. Being midnight, it is easy for the vibrations of music to travel far and wide to the reclining town's people. Secondly, the group-dancing of the Iwu members dramatizes the socio-political nature of the Igbuzọs. The Igbuzọs believe in group action, and collective responsibility. The dancing together of the cult members, and the solidarity chant are subtle ways of binding themselves to the decision on a date for the festival which they are yet to take. It is significant that the decision is made there and then immediately after the group dance.

Music and chanting become more exuberant after this decision. This is a dramatization of the deep inner feelings of commitment to the decision just taken. As

music and chanting grow wilder, the cult members proceed to the eastern limit of their village. There, they stop the music. One of the Enems leads in the intonation of vowel chants. Facing the east, he raises his right hand toward the sky, and cries: Ho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o! All the others respond by pointing their right hands toward the earth, exclaiming: I-i-i-ho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o! This is repeated, after which they all point to the earth saying, iho! iho! iho! iho! iho! iho! iho! This simple ceremony has its dramatic significance.

Firstly, this chanting is a formal announcement to the entire people that a date has been fixed for Iwu. Although the actual date is not revealed, the community knows by experience that Iwu is one month nearer.

Secondly, the chanting is a vehicle for plot unfoldment. It subtly dramatizes the people's religious belief in the power of the sky gods to reach down and impregnate Mother Earth so that it will become fertile, and thus yield its increase. The Igbuzos believe that certain gods control sunshine and rainfall. The suspension of these elements of nature will spell agricultural doom. Therefore, these gods are adequately propitiated and invoked for their benevolence. Again, the tone of the vowel intonations is made highly emotional. The chanters themselves assume humble and prayerful countenances, and

allow the chanting to rise to a crescendo. All this is meant to stir the feelings of the gods so that they will act mercifully toward man.

Moreover, the Igbuzọs' belief in the application of the law of numbers to coax cosmic forces to reach down and manifest man's desires is dramatized in the vowel intonations. The complete vowels are chanted three times successively. The last line of the vowels is chanted seven times. We then see the combination of 3 and 7 in man's attempt to make the unseen forces act. The foregoing thus demonstrates the agricultural vocation of the Igbuzọs. It also points to Iwu as a social and agricultural festival.

Wrestling as an information device offers a wider coverage. Wrestling at Iwu is an inter-village contest. As a result, people from all the villages of Igbuzọ assemble at Ọgbọ Iwu every Eke night for the match. This weekly gathering refreshes people's memories of the impending festival.

Wrestling at Iwu also performs entertainment and enlightenment functions. The music of drums and gongs, the wrestling itself, and the movement and shouts of people appeal to the emotional side of man. They recreate the community. The event also offers opportunity for mate selection. Male adults use the opportunity to

look for their future brides. Women in turn fall in love with successful wrestlers. This purpose that wrestling at Iwu serves has some dramatic importance in that it gives an insight into the functions of Iwu. It points to Iwu as a festival of regeneration and reproduction. Love leads to marriage which in turn fosters human reproduction. Children so born grow up to till the soil for crop reproduction. Wrestling thus becomes an agent of the advancement of Iwu plot.

Wrestling also symbolizes earthly struggles. This is dramatized in challenges during the wrestling match. Individuals challenge their opponents to contest with them. Here the challenger impersonates life and its challenges. The challenged impersonates man who lives this life of challenges. It is customary for the challenged to take up the challenge squarely. Thus wrestling teaches man that life is a challenge. It teaches him to struggle with the problems and obstacles of life, and endeavour to subdue them.

Furthermore, the audience often shouts when a wrestler is thrown. This shout of applause has great psycho-social effect on both the wrestlers and the entire community. To the victorious wrestler, it is a shout of congratulation. To the vanquished, it is a mockery. Every wrestler has this point at the back of his mind

whenever he goes out to wrestle. So, he puts in his best, and tries as much as possible to conquer. This desire to conquer an opponent is symbolic of man's determination to conquer life's problems. The community always has a price tag for either the individual who wins honour and glory for it, or for the failure who brings shame and disgrace to the society.

Again, drumming and gong playing at wrestling have their dramatic effects. The music of wrestling often follows a set rhythmic pattern. However, it is often very wild and urging. Its high pitch depicts the inner desires of the music makers and the spectators that the wrestlers must strive to conquer. Thus music subtly relays to the wrestlers the intention of the audience. The result is that the wrestlers are often tensed up, ready for a show-down. As wrestlers close up in contest, there is often a tense atmosphere that is generally pervasive in the wrestling arena. This tension is symbolic of one of the messages of Iwu that is, that problems cause tension. Therefore, man must be diligent in his vocation in order to dispel tension in life.

From the foregoing, one sees that through wrestling man learns that living is made meaningful by working hard to eliminate the things that make life uncomfortable. Thus wrestling becomes a symbolic re-enactment of the

time when man began to coax nature to divulge her secrets. All this introduces the story of Iwu dance drama.

(ii) The Week of Peace

This stage of Iwu is the exciting force or challenge. A paradox is implied here: seeking peace through confrontation. More and more, the story of Iwu continues to unfold. 'Peace' and 'confrontation' are here juxtaposed to demonstrate that man must first strive to decode the riddles of life if he is to enjoy fullness of life. This salient lesson is subsumed in the symbolism of the cooking of ji iwu.

Ji iwu is a rare species of the yam-tuber family which is very hard to cook. By setting it on the sacred fire of Iwu to cook, the sanctity of Iwu becomes instituted. This difficult yam is going to cook in one market week through determination, dedication, assiduity, and care, and finally be eaten. This cooking of ji iwu underscores man's preparedness to dare the inimical forces of nature to disclose their riddles.

Again, this confrontation against life's challenges is further reinforced by the symbolic demarcation of the village boundaries with fresh palm fronds. This also exemplifies man's readiness to divulge cosmic secrets so as to translate and harness them into meaningful development in the society. This spiritual confrontation

or determination of man to work out a positive transformation of the society is predicated upon certain behavioural codes that the community must obey.

These behavioural codes include silence and cordial inter-personal relationship among villagers. During this Week of Peace, domestic chore like the splitting of firewood is absolutely prohibited. Firewood is taken to nearby villages to split. This interaction with neighbouring villages reminds the people that no man is an island. It shows them that there are times when people must of necessity need the assistance of their fellows. The response they get, however, will depend on the kind of relationship that has been existing among them. It thus teaches man to live good and cordial life. Again, marrital squabbles, fighting, quarrelling, shouting and whistling are not tolerated. All this re-enacts the ideal community of peace and harmony.

Moreover, cries of new born babies and children are disallowed. This dramatizes the duties of mothers, and their responsibilities in making their children comfortable. Wailling for the dead is also forbidden. Dead bodies are hidden until the end of the festival. This is done to avoid interruptions in the proceedings of the festival. It is noteworthy that people who contravene these regulations are severely fined. Thus

through living together in peace, man hopes to pull human resources together, and possess the right mental attitude necessary for societal development.

(iii) Performance: First Phase

This stage is the dramatic complication or rising action. Here, man has successfully carried out his symbolic confrontation against the opposing forces of nature. So, here the dramatic action rises. This progression is predicated upon two enactments: the putting down of the pot of ji iwu from the sacred fire, and the Victory Procession Dance.

The putting down of the pot of ji iwu from the sacred fire is called Iho Iwu. This marks the end of the Week of Peace. The exercise is a re-enactment of an ancient experience. It dramatizes the people's belief that its significance as a symbol of victory over hostile forces of nature will encourage man to work harder towards personal and communal fulfilment. This is why the entire community shouts happily with one voice when this Iho Iwu is announced. This announcement is made by the Enems by intoning their usual vowel chants of: ho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o! i-i-i-ho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o! etc. The collective shout of the villagers is a subtle dramatization of the communal nature of the Igbuzọs. It also depicts their inner desire for common aspirations and accomplishments.



Plate:1

The Victory Procession Dance has many dramatic points that enhance the dramatic progression of Iwu. The first is the solidarity dance. Following the general shout by Ogbeowele villagers, people from all nooks and corners of Igbuzọ run to Ọgbọ Iwu to celebrate the revocation of the sanctions of the Week of Peace. This show of solidarity dramatizes the communal life of the Igbuzọs. In Igbuzọ, one man's problem is everybody's concern; and again, one man's luck or success is everybody's joy. Again, people do not only come to rejoice with the Ogbeowele villagers for gaining freedom from restrictions, they also gather to begin the celebration of Iwu. As they gather, they dance together in the fashion described as follows:

Dacing at Iwu has a set pattern throughout the celebration. This conventional mode is the tilling gesture, in which the community dramatizes its agricultural vocation. This is performed by keeping the legs wide apart, bending forward, and stretching out the arms and hands. While in this position, the dancer moves the open palms from a point in front to a point in level with the buttocks. The arms are stretched out again, and the palms are brought to a point before the left leg. The arms are stretched out once again to the

point in front, and brought to a point before the right leg. The whole movement looks like an inverted 'V' with a single line running from the apex to the base thus, . While making these movements, the dancer says i-i-i! i-i-i! i-i-i! When the palms have reached the point in front of the right leg, the dancer raises his two hands up toward the sky and says, o-o-o! Thus, the cultivation of the soil is mimed.

The uttered vowel i-i-i, and the exuberance with which the tilling is performed dramatize the farmer's love for his vocation. They also dramatize his joy at the success he records during harvest. Thus, i-i-i! is an exclamation of man's inner joy of the abundance of God's providence. The raising up of hands and the vowel o-o-o! are expressive of thanks-giving to God. It is like saying to God and the ancestors: From you do glories come, and out of your bounties do we give back, with thanks. This metaphorical giving back to God dramatizes the social milieu of Igbuzọ whereby the haves use the blessings at their disposal to help the have-nots. The gesture is a symbolic promise to God that His blessings will continue to be used to bring about peace, goodwill, harmony and progress in the society.

This tilling dance is accompanied and directed by the complex but harmonious rhythms of gong playing and horn blowing. Here, the rhythm of music becomes a

communication system. Professional trumpeters use their instruments to weave expressive sounds. They use them to ask dancers to get ready, to dance well, to increase the rate of body movement, and even to stop dancing. The constant varying rates of the combined rhythms of gong playing and horn blowing help to regulate the various body styles that make up the entire tilling gesture. Thus music and dance are essential elements of plot advancement.

Moreover, music has aesthetic relevance in Iwu. It has an emotional effect on man. Dramatically, music adds to the festive atmosphere of the occasion. It makes man happy, and thus puts him in the right mood for celebration. Music depicts the inner states of the music makers. This is portrayed in their enthusiasm, and the accuracy of the different styles they perform. The maintenance of accurate tempo of music throughout the celebration helps to bring about a smooth transition from one event to another. This prevents boredom.

After this solidarity dance that lasts for about forty-five minutes, the cult members emerge from their huts. Their entry is a spectacular sight to behold. Their colourful attire, their single-file formation, and their brisk movements make some aesthetic impressions in the consciousness of the audience. This aesthetic

effect is portrayed in the delightful shout of applause by the audience. Again, the cult members' brisk and timed movements have psycho-social impact on the people. Their gestures show that the celebration is serious business. The result is often a marked increase of enthusiasm among the village dancers. The interest of the spectators in the celebration is also intensified.

The entry of the cult members marks the beginning of the processional dance drama. The Ezeiwus take the lead, followed by the Eze Ebo. The Enems and some village elders follow close behind. The village dancers and the audience take the rear. Everybody walks briskly, responding to the rhythm of music. The procession stops at each of the important shrines along the major road. There, the cult members pray for health, protection, and for the success of the festival. These enactments have their dramatic usefulness.

Firstly, the procession is a dramatization of the communal setting of the Igbuzọs. It dramatizes the people's love for common aspirations and goals. The procession also has a psychological effect in the minds of the people. It gives them a greater sense of unity and oneness. It thus strengthens the bond of communal life, and heightens the people's interest in the festival.

Secondly, the prayers said by the cult members at the important shrines dramatize the religious life of the people. The people's belief in the overseership of the gods over man is demonstrated. In Igbuzọ, it is customary to worship the gods before embarking on any project. This is because the Igbuzọs believe that the gods have the exclusive prerogative to sanction or cancel any human undertaking. Thus, the worship dramatizes this ancient belief. It further reassures the community that things are well with the society. Again, it strengthens the people's belief in the power of the festival to usher in a more prosperous life. Thus, these enactments are strategies that reinforce the nexus of community.

During the procession, dances are staged at three strategic points. The same tilling dance is exhibited. The purpose of staging the dances is purely entertainment. The dances entertain the public especially the aged and others who might not be able to attend the major celebration the following day. Thus, such dances are miniature, lasting for twenty to thirty minutes. The procession makes a final stop at Eke Market, the main market of the Igbuzọs, and then returns back to Ogbeowele village. This marks the end of the first stage of the celebration.

(iv) Second Phase

This phase begins on the second day, that is, the day following the first phase. The dramatic climax is located in this second phase. Here, the dramatic action rises to its highest point. This second phase is divided into two sections: the morning and evening sections.

The morning section, which spills over the afternoon, is characterized by satiric songs, and dances organized by youths and children. Youths and children go about the town levelling lampoons and satiric jabs on those who have fallen short of decorum and morality in the course of their existence. For example, when they approach a house where a maiden is pregnant out of marriage, or where a notorious female fornicator lives, they criticize her with the following song:

Lead Singer:	Njẹkọ asọka usọ	Corpulation is pleasant
All :	Njẹkọ asọka usọ	Corpulation is pleasant
Lead Singer:	Iladi asọka usọ	Fornication is pleasant
All:	Iladi asọka usọ	Fornication is pleasant
Lead Singer:	Mana uke dia	But there is danger in it
All:	Mana uke dia	But there is danger in it
Lead Singer:	Yaka (name) ji tulu ime na be nna-a	That is why (name) became pregnant in her father's house
All:	Yaka (name) ji tulu ime na be nna-a	That is why (name) became pregnant in her father's house.



plate: 2

The stinging force of this juvenalian satire is predicated upon the figurative use of expressions in the song. The extensive use of parallel repetition of lines makes the song's message cogent. The lead singer's assertiveness is reinforced by the chorus who repeat his lines. Again, '<u>Iladi</u>' in the song is transferred epithet. In Igbuzọ diction, it is a derogatory word used for female fornicators. In simple terms, it means that it is the girl who sexes the man, and not the other way round. This is unnatural, and it is used to hurt the fornicator. The song also moralises, and thus educates. It warns young girls of the danger inherent in fornication.

Again, the lines are short, and are rendered in quick succession. The rapid rhythm is enhanced by the rhythm of gong play. The combined rhythms gives the song its aesthetic quality, and its matter-of-fact tone. All this contribute to make the invective a vehicle for social change. The resultant effect of this satire is that young girls shy away from fornication because of the shame they will suffer if found out.

Again, if the person under castigation committed adultery, the singers will shout with one voice, <u>ọla di</u>! <u>ọla di</u>! several times. <u>Ọla di</u> means adulterer. Adultery is a very serious moral offence among the Igbuzọs. Such exposures can prevent prospective suitors from calling

at that house, or their male children from marrying from decent homes. Such satiric songs are "therapeutic." The Igbuzọs "assume that fixed norms exist to which men should adhere...."[2] Thus through music, dance, and songs, society reinforces its moral precept.

The satiric songs are easy to learn. They are often a continuous thread of simple but carefully selected words, idioms and epithets. A first hearing is enough to make one an active part of the chorus. What is important is knowledge of an individual's guilt. Gifted people among the chorus often fashion out songs even without previous practice. This point has its dramatic value in Iwu. It makes for large and active participation. More and more people are willing to join the group since they can easily understand and sing the songs. Here, the simplicity of the songs dramatizes the simplicity of the communal milieu of Igbuzọ. It also dramatizes the wealth of their language, and the fluency of the people. In Igbuzọ, wrong-doings are corrected instantly in simple but carefully framed figurative language.

Again, research has shown that the greater the number of singers, the more effective the satiric songs. Large number activates the force of tonal rendition. Moreover, it reinforces the seriousness of the song because of the communal involvement. Therefore, large number demonstrates the communal love of the Igbuzọs for

group fulfilment. In this way, the ingenuity of the singers becomes a means of dramatic progression.

Furthermore, there are songs that dramatize the Igbuzọs' belief in re-integrating recalcitrant and deviant individuals into the main-stream socio-political set up as long as they resolve to change their refractory attitudes. Such songs include:

Lead Singer:	Onye nwe unọ anyi abia	Owner of the house we have come
All:	Onye nwe unọ anyi abia	Owner of the house we have come
Lead Singer:	Nwa anyi mucha amucha	A child well bred
All:	Nwa anyi mucha amucha	A child well bred
Lead Singer:	Me ngwa-ngwa na oge na'ga	Be quick, time is running out
All:	Me ngwa-ngwa na oge na'ga	Be quick, time is running out
Lead Singer:	Ife anyi bu eshika	What we carry is enormous
All:	Ife anyi bu eshika	What we carry is enormous
Lead Singer:	Ebe anyi jekọ eshika	Where we are going are many
All:	Ebe anyi jekọ eshika	Where we are going are many
Lead Singer:	Kọbu ichọ ka'nyi kwua?	Do you want us to say?
All:	Kọbu ichọ ka'nyi kwua?	Do you want us to say?



Plate: 3

Lead Singer:	Anyi eje ga ekwu	We want to say
All:	Anyi eje ga ekwu	We want to say
Lead Singer:	Nwai fu osia je da?	That your son/daughter, how did he/she go?
All:	Nwai fu osia je da?	That your son/daughter, how did he/she go?
Lead Singer:	Ndi 'Police' bu osi-ali	The Police are our witness
All:	Ndi 'Police' bu osi-ali	The Police are our witness
Lead Singer:	Ndi 'court' bu osi-ali	The court is our witness
All:	Ndi 'court' bu osi-ali	The court is our witness

If, for example, their 'host's' son or daughter, or even himself/herself stole, the music of the ogene or gong will rise to a crescendo while the lead singer cries:

Lead Singer:	Oshi ngwo-o-o-o!	Bloody thief!
All:	Oshi ngwo-o-o-o!	Bloody thief!

This is repeated several times.

The first part of the song is complimentary and cajolling. This is so because the singers want gifts from their 'host'. In Igbuzọ, entertaining singers and dancers is a great mark of one's sense of communal life. If a once notorious family now begins to entertain consistently, the community will regard the gesture as a mark of change

for the better. Its former mistakes or crimes will be forgiven him, but not forgotten.

However, if the 'host' remains adamant then, the game will turn against him/her. The singers will be in the offensive as the later part of the song shows. One of the singers is ready to dig up one or two sordid acts committed in that family long ago.

Another dramatic relevance of such songs is that they help to re-order the society. Its power to transform the society partly lies in the use of rhetorical questions. In Igbuzọ diction, it is a serious matter to ask someone 'Do you want me to tell you?' Such expressions often make the recipients feel ashamed and downcast. He or she feels that one or two evils he/she might have committed have been unearthed. Again, in Igbuzọ it is shameful for one to be arrested by the Police, or prosecuted in a modern law court for wrong-doings. Therefore, the use of the Police and the court in the song makes the satire more scathing. Above all, it is the height of ridicule to call someone <u>oshi ngwo-o-o-o</u>! Even an acknowledged thief does not take it lightly. Such is the power of satiric songs that they make individuals conform to the ordered dictates of the community to avoid mockery.

The power of words has often been demonstrated through related songs. There was the case of one late

Mr Achakpo, who was bed-ridden for years. When the dancers called at his house, he was enthralled by the music of the ogene. He desired earnestly to dance with them, but he just could not. However, he presented valuable gifts to them. The dancing group was very satisfied with the gifts, so they sang with emotion thus:

Lead Singer:	Achakpo, kwulu, kwulu, kpa kpa de!	Achakpo, stand, stand, kpa kpa de!
All:	Achakpo, kwulu, kwulu, kpa kpa de!	Achakpo, stand, stand, kpa kpa de!

This was repeated several times. This is the song mothers and children use to encourage babies who are learning to stand. Kpa kpa de has no definite semantic significance. However, it is used as a form of added encouragement to stand. When the late Achakpo heard this song, he miraculously got up, walked and took some dancing steps. Since then, his health began to improve rapidly.

The dramatic importance of this incident is that it portrays Iwu as a festival of regeneration. It also strengthens the people's belief in the power of Iwu to do good. Again, it encourages people to be good and generous so as to receive the blessings of Iwu. Here again, songs are portrayed as agents of societal transformation.

Iwu songs do not only ridicule, but they also praise men of noble deeds. When the dancers approach the house

of one who has distinguished himself in the society, singers sing thus:

Lead Singer:	(Name) iga adi-o	(Name) may you stay alive
All:	(Name) iga adi-o	(Name) may you stay alive
Lead Singer:	Ife ama mei	No harm will befall you
All:	Ife ama mei	No harm will befall you
Lead Singer:	Ọlui ga na ga-o	Your work will flourish
All:	Ọlui ga na ga-o	Your work will flourish
Lead Singer:	Ife imena ọga-o	Whatever you do will prosper
All:	Ife imena ọga-o	Whatever you do will prosper
Lead Singer:	Chukwu chebei-o gọziai-o, gọziai-o	May God protect you, bless you, bless you
All:	Chukwu chebei-o gọziai-o, gọziai-o	May God protect you, bless you, bless you

The Dramatic importance of this song is that it encourages individuals to be more disposed to do good for the upliftment of society. Again, the use of parallelism, repetition, and the emotional stress on the vowel 'o' drmatize the people's high regard for goodness. In addition, the brevity of all the songs of criticism, and their quick and repetitive rendering dramatize the impartial judicial nature of the Igbuzọs in questions of uprightness and community building. The high and the low are not spared the scathing force of satire.

Disguise is also employed as a form of satire. Some male dancers wear wigs, paint their finger nails and use make-up on their faces. Some have started 'perming' their hair recently. Wig wearing and hair 'perming' criticise the new social trend among women, that are fast replacing the traditional style of hair plaiting. The use of lip-sticks is also a criticism on the modern woman.

On the other hand, some female dancers wear trousers and ties, and place unlit cigarretts between their lips. This is a criticism on the male citizens of Igbuzọ who imitate European ways. Some of the women criticise drunkenness by staggering before groups of male spectators. Both male and female dancers sometimes speak in strange voices as if talking through their noses. As they do this, they wrinkle their faces, throw the face to one side, and put their hands in their pockets. Those whose clothes have no pockets pretend to do so. This is meant to criticise the pretentious Western educated elites.

All of these are concerned with social transformation. However, the expected transformation is one of rethinking of the already changing social patterns. Disguise highlights the sweeping force of the prevailling social trends, and exhibits it, as it were, for societal assessment. It also juxtaposes historical facts for

analysis. This is exemplified in the plaiting of hair by men. If women should abandone the traditional hair plaiting for wigs and 'perming', then hair plaiting as a traditional style of life is dead. The plaiting of hair by men thus dramatizes social misdirection. Thus, disguise is a call for social redirection and reorganization.

Disguise also serves comic purposes. Men and boys do not only plait their hair; they also fake female breasts. In addition, they wear gowns and ear-rings. Women and girls paint their faces with liquid solution of charcoal and ash, and put on 'necklaces' of snail shells and small iron bells to imitate war dancers. All this is meant to entertain in its humour. It provokes laughter among spectators.

The evening section starts at four p.m. at the special square for Iwu called Ogbo Iwu. The audience forms a long oval ring within which the dancing takes place. The theatrical stations have both dramatic and mystical symbolisms.

In the first place, the cult members and village elders stay in the West facing the East in anticipation of wisdom which the geographical East symbolises. Again, the East symbolises potency, the super-active man that has to go into the passive, recipient woman, the West,

for manifestations. This arrangement dramatizes the people's religious belief that the sun is a god. It is believed that the East is the home of this mighty god. It is also believed that he distributes his blessings to all the world by travelling from his domain to the West each day. This signifies why cult members and elders stay at the West end, awaiting these blessings.

Moreover, the North and the South symbolically watch this daily movement of the sun, and its manifestations. This is why spectators at Iwu occupy the north and south ends. They are passive observers. This is a subtle dramatization of the non-challant segment of the society that does not contribute meaningfully to societal advancement. This is an indictment on them. It is from indictments such as this that audience participation developed. Such indictments urge the audience to demonstrate its communal nature, and become part of the goings-on. Thus stage arrangement is vehicle for plot unfoldment and dramatic progression.

The symbolism of the East and the West portrays Iwu as a search for knowledge and wisdom. It is this symbolism that makes dancing take west/east course. People are forbidden to cross this west/east course via north or south. Such a person as disturbs the current of west/east contact is severely whipped by the Ezeiwus.

The form of dancing is the usual tilling gesture

already analysed in this chapter. However, the Ezeiwus exhibit a form of dancing which looks like a modification of the tilling dance. This modified form and the praise-singing that goes with it, give dancing at Iwu added dramatic importance.

The dance of the Ezeiwus involves hopping on one leg for a while, then on the other. While thus hopping, the Ezeiwu carries his cane up before him, with the hand in level with the right ear. After hopping for a while, he bends down and worships the earth by bringing his left hand from eye-level to the ground. Sometimes, he stays in one place with the legs astride. He raises and kicks them alternately. These gestures have their dramatic relevance.

Firstly, the hopping dance is a dramatization of an Igbuzọ proverb. This proverb says that "a fowl stands on one leg in a new and unfamiliar environment." This portrays caution. Thus, the hopping dance symbolises cautious and diligent search for nature's secrets. This shows Iwu as a re-enactment of an ancient experience whereby man sought cautiously and diligently for the key to nature's secrets for community improvement. The Ezeiwus are impersonators of these ancient sages. Thus the hopping gesture is a communication device in its exemplification of a community proverbial idiom. In this

way, the hopping dance educates. Again, the entire gesture interweaves with the general story line to expound the dramatic plot of Iwu.

Sometimes, an Ezeiwu takes short runs while smiling, and with the arms stretched before him. This, combined with the kicking of legs, portrays the outpouring of his inner joy. He is here responding to the praise-singer's eulogies of him and his pedigree. Here, history is re-enacted. The praise-singer piles praises on the Ezeiwu with the use of vocatives and repetitive words and expressions. This has psycho-social effect on the Ezeiwu. As the praise-singer addresses him, and makes historical allusions to his lineage, he becomes highly sentimental. The result is that the Ezeiwu begins to display greater skill to the delight of the audience. The eulogies are often exaggerated, but they are necessary to encourage the Ezeiwu in his role. The Ezeiwu's performance in turn sustains the interest of the audience.

Praise-singing at Iwu is also a form of communication. The praise-singer often questions the Ezeiwu on the importance of his role, urges him on, and most often advises him to display more some particular styles that the audience likes most. Thus, praise-singing enhances dramatic continuity by reducing boredom to the barest minimum.

his osho.[3] The audience would then run helter-skelter in fear. This action of the audience is a dramatization of the religious beliefs of the people. The Igbuzos believe that the Eze Ebo is a personification of the ancestors and so possesses some spiritual power to harm or heal. It is this belief that makes the Eze Ebo's attendant struggle continually to restrain him. This again strengthens the spiritual content of Iwu.

Again, this interaction of the Eze Ebo with the audience is very humorous. As the Eze Ebo chases the spectators about, the audience would start to guffaw, and mimick his clumsy way of movement. They would also call him funny names like Ohene oli.[4] This would make him turn back to pursue the audience.

This actor-audience interaction offers some comic relief from the serious aspect of the celebration. This is to say that there is an element of tragedy in the celebration. Although Iwu entertains, the whole process is a means of courting invisible powers to make life tolerable for man. This is because man believes himself to be subservient to these powers, and must beg and humble himself before them in order to find peace. It is in this mendicant state of man that lies his tragedy of existence. The hopping dance of the Ezeiwus is a symbolic wary approach towards the gods. When they bend forward and bring down their raised left hand to the

ground, they placate these gods. Therefore, the dance of the Ezeiwus, and the tilling gesture performed by the village dancers are symbolic dramatization of man's tragedy of life. It is this tragedy that is acted out in concilliatory dance gestures that the spectators watch. Therefore, the action of the ohene or Eze Ebo toward the audience relieves the latter of suspense, so that they come back to watch the celebration with renewed interest. Dancing continues till late in the evening when the sun sets. Then comes the dramatic climax.

In the evening when twilight sets in, the Ezeiwus take their 'spiritual shares of blessings'. This time, the scene shifts to the western end. The Enems re-arrange the stage by blocking it half way. Each Ezeiwu makes seven journeys to and seven, from the west end within which the east has now metaphorically merged. The Ezeiwus make these journeys in turns, in order to ask the recipient west for the key that will unlock the door to unlimited knowledge of which it is now an embodiment. All this is a further demonstration of the belief systems of the Igbuzos. These belief systems are re-enacted in order to strengthen the socio-political bond of the community.

The Ezeiwus are given three symbolic objects because of their importunity for knowledge. The first Ezeiwu is given nkpukulu. The second is given akangweose.

The third is given okweọji. The number of these seekers of light, the Ezeiwus is symbolic in its power to make miracles happen. Since the Ezeiwus are seeking for divine illumination, it is believed that their number will make the endeavour fruitful.

The nkpukulu symbolises service. Children use it to fetch water for their ageing parents. It also symbolises the ever presence of children through procreation. The akangweose symbolises humility. Women use it for cooking. It is the symbol of the humble married woman. The pestle is one of the most important gifts parents give to their daughters when they get married. In Igbuzọ social milieu, a woman who cooks regularly for her husband is regarded as being humble. The okweọji stands for wisdom. It also symbolises elders who are repositories of wisdom. Elders, including titled men and medicine men, use the okweọji to serve kola nuts to their visitors. Youths and non-titled men do not use it. If they dare, some spiritually powerful people will cast spells on them to see if they can withstand the effects. Only those who have sufficient spiritual protection by taking titles or belonging to cults use it. They are regarded as wise people because of their possession of earthly, and rare spiritual knowledge.

The foregoing shows that wisdom is a product of

service and humility. It further demonstrates that through hard work and worship comes abundant crop yield. This is the core message of Iwu. The journeys the Ezeiwus make from the west to the east, and back to the west dancing, imploring and adoring the gods, are arduous, and are made with humility. This is why they are given spiritual 'shares' whose ultimate symbolism is wisdom. The symbolic objects are thus instruments of enlightenment. Through their symbolism, the social, religious, and political life of the Igbuzọs are dramatized. Their use becomes a synthetical unification of the various but related themes of Iwu.

After each Ezeiwu has completed his journeys, and has taken his 'share', he leaves the arena with a run. He is accompanied by a few Enems. This final action marks the climax. The Ezeiwu's action is a dramatization of his inner joy of being in possession of rare knowledge. It also dramatizes his intention to guard the knowledge 'jealously'. The second phase ends as soon as the third Ezeiwu takes his 'share', and runs out of the arena.

Third Phase

This last phase of Iwu marks the dramatic denouement. Celebrations take off around four o'clock in the evening. Umueze village, the spiritual headquarters of Igbuzọ, is

the venue of this phase. The celebrants form a procession with the audience and dance to this village. It is here that the farewell dance or Iduna Iwu is staged. Dancing takes the usual turn but without the 'spiritual shares', as explained in phase two.

The farewell dance is a re-enactment of history. It dramatizes the founding of Igbuzọ. It was in this village that Umejei, the founder of Igbuzọ, made his permanent base during the early days of settlement. As a result, Umueze became his political headquarters. Thus, by staging the farewell dance in Umueze village, the Igbuzọs re-enact their foundation myth. Again, the re-enactment is a dramatization of the nostalgic constitution of man. The Igbuzọs like to think of the past so as to relate it to the present for the building of a brighter future. This is why this stage of Iwu is essentially a point of resolution. By juxtaposing the past and the present, man discovers the need to improve the society. Therefore, the farewell dance, Iduna Iwu, is an agent of social change because of its psycho-social impact in man's consciousness.

After this dance, the ritualistic officers go home in a procession, chatting heartily. As the audience disperse, they greet their fellows saying, aka ine, aho ine. This greeting means, may we celebrate this festival 'next year, every year.' It is a form of well-

wish for life and good health till the next celebration. Any body within hearing responds Ise meaning, so be it or amen. This greeting is a measure of the success of the festival. It demonstrates that the community has found fulfilment in the celebration.

B. Ine Festival: Dramatic Extent

2. Themes

The themes of procreation and patriotism are central to Ine processional dance drama. The theme of procreation is borne out of the fact that a large number of people is essential for effective running of the agricultural, political, and military sectors of Igbuzọ community. A large number of people ensures sufficient labour force to man large acres of farm-land for greater food production.

Politically, a large number of people raises the quality of decisions taken at kindred meetings. Ideas from many people are put together to arrive at worthwhile decisions. With a large number, the executive force is intensified thus, making the implementation of decisions more effective. It also facilitates various forms of communal engagements by different age groups. Again, large number helps to subdue autocratic tendencies among the political heads. The Igbuzọs detest usurpation of

power by one person or a group of persons. In an event of such misuse of power, the entire community will rise up in protest. It is also necessary to protect the community's frontiers from external incursion. How this theme of procreation is portrayed in Ine, and how it engenders dramatic progression will be fully discussed under cast and characterization.

The theme of patriotism is tied to the theme of procreation. This theme of patriotism demands that the Igbuzọ people should rally together in peace, or in an emergency in order to forge a peaceful, harmonious, and progressive society. This theme which is ensconced in Ine songs and practices shall be fully analysed under props, and performance.

Other sub-themes like immorality and pretentiousness are portrayed in the celebration of Ine. These sub-themes are linked to the themes of patriotism and procreation as will be shown in the performance of Ine. Thus, the themes of Ine help to highlight the economic, and the socio-political structure of Igbuzọ. These themes and their contextual relevance form the bedrock of Ine celebration.

2. Cast and Characterization, Costume and Props

(i) Cast and Characterization

Ine has two principal characters. They are the

Ezeine who is the male protagonist, and his female counterpart, sometimes called Adaine, who acts as his confidante. They are specially selected through divination, from three adult age-groups in Ogbeowele village. This method of divine selection authenticates the principal characters' ten-year tenor. It also invests them with legal authority to mobilize villagers to work toward the success of Ine.

The legal validity of the protagonist and his confidante is further reinforced by the annointing[5] of the Ezeine by the village Diokpa. This enactment further strengthens communal interest in Ine since it makes the people view the festival as having divine backing. This attitude of the people demonstrates the degree of influence which the supernatural forces have over the Igbuzọs. The political authority of the Diokpa is also dramatized. Thus, the divine selection of the principal actors dramatizes certain aspects of the social, religious, and political life of the Igbuzọs necessary for the dramatic portrayal of Ine.

There is impersonation in Ine. The Ezeine impersonates the positive principle of procreation and regeneration while his confidante impersonates the negative complementary force. Through impersonation, Ine highlights the importance of women in the society. Ine thus reveals that although male chauvinism is entrenched in

the socio-political life of the Igbuzọs women have their special place in community building. They constitute the womb of regeneration. Impersonation thus educates us. It tells us that men and women are important in the society to ensure the continuity of life. This dramatizes the importance which the Igbuzọs attach to very large immediate and extended families.

The orphans form important part of the cast. Ine is often nicknamed Ine nwaogbei meaning, 'Ine for the orphan.' This does not mean that dramatic action centres on the orphans principally. However, they are given prominent attention at Ine in order to fully realise the themes of procreation and patriotism. The Igbuzọs believe that orphans should not be left to suffer. They should be encouraged to progress in the society so that they can contribute meaningfully towards community development. Thus the contextual relevance of group fulfilment is underscored in the belief that every individual in the society has a role to play in the communal scheme of life.

All the members of the community that turn up for the celebration are also actors. This is because they participate actively in singing and dancing. They also wear costumes. Other actors include the drummers, gong

players and the lead singers. Through their music, they enhance dramatic progression.

(ii) Costume and Props

The attires of the protagonist and his confidante are vehicles for the unfoldment of Ine plot. These attires reinforce the chief actors' roles as impersonators of the creative principles of life. The power of the attires to do this is borne out in their white colour which symbolises purity and holiness. This state of mind fosters complete attunement with the forces of creation which the actors personify.

The Ezeine ties, on his waist, a white piece of cloth which reaches down to his ankles. He rubs powdered white chalk on his right hand with which he holds a cutlass. The right hand is the symbol of physical strength which is another attribute of the Ezeine. The cutlass is the symbol of crop production. This gesture of holding a cutlass in the right hand reinforces his role as an agent of procreation, and crop reproduction. It thus dramatizes the vocational engagement of the Igbuzọs. Again, only the Ezeine, and not his female counterpart, holds the cutlass in order to demonstrate the opinion of the Igbuzọs that women play only subsidiary role in farm work. Men are regarded as the main farmers.

This again is revealing of the second class role which women play in Igbuzọ social milieu.

The Ezeine's confidante ties a broad wrapper which covers her breasts completely, and hangs down to her ankles. She holds a long multicoloured stick in her raised right hand. Other participants tie coloured cloths of their choices round their waists by making a strong knot with the upper loose ends on their left sides. The ends that hang a little above the ankles are left loose to give participants easy movement. Underneath the wrapper is a pair of pants or trousers. Participants also wear shirts or blouses. Men can wear caps while women tie scarfs.

Women and children dance with sticks of multiple colours like the female counterpart of Ezeine. The colours have both aesthetic and spiritual relevance. They give colour to the celebration. Thus, they appeal to the sense of sight which in turn intensifies the aesthetic appreciation of the dance drama. The intensified atmosphere thus established increases the participants' interest, and motivates them to carry on with the celebration. The sticks symbolise solidarity, and patriotism. The stick is used to beat someone who has misbehaved. It was also an ancient war implement used

to defend the community's frontiers from aggression. To the women, the stick stands for the pestle which is their symbol of married life. Through the use of sticks the community enact many social aspects of life in Igbuzọ. Thus, the use of sticks dramatizes the people's communal life that emphasizes on collective action and duty to the society. The use of sticks also reinforces the songs of criticism that will be discussed later in this chapter. The use of sticks, therefore, aims at correcting the ills of the society in a symbolic fashion.

Like the Ezeine, every adult male participant dances with a cutlass in his raised right hand. The drummers and gong players fasten the handles of their cutlasses to leather or cloth bands. They tie these bands firmly on their right waists so that the cutlasses hang loosely on their left sides.

The drums used for the celebration of Ine are of various sizes. This is so in order to produce varying rhythms of music necessary at various stages of the processional dance drama. Gongs are also used to produce rhythms that harmonize with the rhythms of drum-beat to produce pleasant melodies. Thus, costumes and props advance dramatic action in Ine.

3. Staging: Timing and Dancing Formation

(i) Timing

Ine Festival is celebrated in January. However, the celebration spills over the month of February. This is because the duration of the festival is more than thirty-one days. The festival lasts for forty days. Each of the ten villages of Igbuzọ has an allocation of four days.

The first village to perform this dance drama is Ogbeowele. On the following day after it has performed, the Ezeine and some elders take calabashes of palm-wine to each of the other nine villages. This is a formal invitation to join in the celebration. This gesture is demonstrative of the in-built sense of community among the Igbuzọs. Such socialization aims at strengthening love, peace and unity among the Igbuzọs. Following the formal invitation, the villages will then perform in turns.

Each village observes the celebration for one local week, from Eke to Nkwọ. The celebration starts at five o'clock in the evening. The morning and afternoon are spent feasting. Persons whose mothers were born in a performing village are expected to join their mothers' village in the merriment and dance. This is because they are regarded as members of the village on their

mothers' sides. They have blood link with the village. This practice of uniting with one's mother's village is a dramatization of the extended family system in Igbuzọ. The people's belief in the potency of blood link has made unity and the sense of community very strong since individuals see themselves as one family. In this way, Ine fosters unity, and encourages patriotism.

(ii) Dancing Formation

During the processional dance drama, children take the lead followed by youths. The Ezeine and his opposite number, Adaine, follow the children and youths. This arrangement subtly demonstrates the procreative manifestation which results from the union of male and female reproductive factors symbolized by the Ezeine and his negative complementary opposite. This reproductive principle can be represented diagramatically:

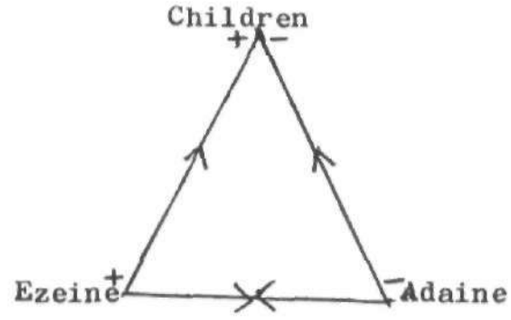




Plate: 4

The elders - men and women - follow the Ezeine and the Adaine. These elders stand for the ancestors who make procreation possible. This again is a dramatization of the cosmology of the Igbuzos. It delineates the people's belief in the world of the ancestors from where children come into the world. Drummers, gong players and lead singers take the rear.

A further dramatic significance of the above arrangement is that orderliness is maintained throughout the celebration. This again dramatizes the people's deep-seated love for order and harmony. Moreover, this dancing arrangement aids dramatic progression. The formation is such that songs raised by the lead singers at the rear are chorused by the village participants in front. This avoids chaotic vocalization of songs thus, enhancing the quality of voice, and the impact which songs, aim at creating. Again, the procession has cathartic effect on the entire community. This is because it gives them the feeling of belonging and well-being which lifts the weight of sorrow and pain.

Ogbeowele village maintains its formation from its western end of the town to Umuodafe village which is at the eastern end. Each of the other villages form the procession from its village to the eastern end of the town and then down to Ogbeowele village. From Ogbeowele

village, they return to their village. The other villages dance without the Ezeine and the Adaine because they are invited participants. Ogbeowele is the chief celebrant, and so has the right to possess the two principal actors.

4. Performance: Announcement, Preparation, Music and Songs

(i) Announcement

Like most dramatic entertainments, Ine is given wide publicity in order to attract a large audience. The date of the festival is officially decided in a village meeting. This act of collective decision reflects the republican political nature of Igbuzọ that forbids a group of individuals to arbitrarily peddle political power. The collective decision also lends greater strength to the authority of the Ezeine. The act will enable him take secondary decisions that will enhance the success of Ine, without any opposition. This is because the community feels bound by the group decision.

Prior to the group decision on a date for Ine celebration, the Ezeine and the leaders of the different age-groups present calabashes of palm-wine and kola-nuts to the village head. By this gesture, the Ezeine and his cohort recognize the political position of the Diokpa.

This recognition is important in order to influence the general will of the people at the meeting. It is this same 'general will' that will determine the ease with which the festival will be organized. The entire village views the Ezeine's gesture as a mark of respect, seriousness, and purity of intentions. In this way, decision-taking adds to the success of Ine dance drama.

There are two methods of diseminating information about the date of Ine. One is through family heads, and the other is through the medium of the village Crier. After the village meeting, family heads go home to inform their wives and children about the date of the festival. In addition to this, the village Crier is instructed by the Diokpa to announce the date of the festival formally. This formal announcement is viewed by all to emanate from the political head. Therefore, they feel duty bound to contribute their quota toward a successful Ine.

(ii) Preparation

There is a one-day period of preparation in Ine. The chief actors and the village participants use this period to rehearse their roles, privately, for the last time. The village age-groups use this period to clear the village streets, and farm foot-paths of grass. This action adds colour to the atmosphere of the occasion.

It has a psychological effect in the minds of the people by putting them in the mood for celebration.

The period is also used to worship gods along the farm foot-paths. Here, the Ezeine and the village elders thank the ancestors for the successful end of the past harvest season, and asks for more help in the current farming season. They also pray for the success of Ine, which they hope will bring greater prosperity to the community. This worship gives spiritual backing to Ine. The community now becomes more enthusiastic about the festival because it is sure that the gods are on its side. Thus, the period of preparation is an aid to dramatic progression in Ine.

(iii) Music, Song, and Dance

In Ine, music is principally employed to direct dance steps, and to harmonize the tempo and rhythm of songs. It is also used to mark the beginning, and the end of a song. To mark the end of a song, the music makers beat out sharp but measured rhythms. These rhythms are left to fade with the fading voice. But continuity is restored thus forestalling a complete stop. This is done by the drummer of the biggest drum who beats out a counter-point as loud as that that signalled a change of song.

Also, music at Ine has aesthetic qualifications. It activates the emotional feelings of happiness generated by the people's love for get-together. It also appeals to the auditory sense. The resultant impact is that man is purged of accumulated stresses and tensions caused by earthly woes. Thus, music makes dramatic progression possible.

Dancing is performed by marching to the rhythm of music. Dancers respond to music by gently stamping the soles of the feet forward, alternately. This method of dancing corresponds with the processional process. The dancers keep their bodies flexible so that there is a gentle rise and fall of the body. As they dance, they hold the cutlasses and the sticks high up in the air. Drumming often heightens to a crescendo in-between lines of songs. Dancers respond according by dancing more vigorously. Through music and dance, the community express their inner feelings of happiness and joy of living. This attitude of mind is necessary for dramatic continuity.

Ine songs are often used to condemn, to admonish, to eulogise, and to inspire goodness in the society. Satiric songs are sung during the dance drama to condemn evil deeds. For example, one of the songs scorn Achala's vaunting. The Achalas claim that no clan can prepare

better dish, and regularly than they. The song goes thus:

Achala esika nni	Achala can cook well
Achala esika nni o-o-o	Achala can cook well o-o-o
Ma nwa Nwangbọ bu ọnu-o	But Nwangbọ's child is starving
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

This is first sung through by the lead singer. It is then repeated by the procession. The song opens with a sarcastic repetition of 'Achala can cook well.' This sarcasm is intensified by the mocking modulation of vocal rendition.

The singers accuse the Achalas of hypocrisy saying that in the background of their feeling of well-being, the poor and the orphans languish in hunger and starvation. Nwangbọ in the song was a very rich man, and thus has become a metaphor for the rich. The satire thus becomes heightened when Achala is told that even the son of Nwangbọ, as rich as his father is, is starving. The ultimate message of the song is that until the orphans and the poor are well catered for, no person should claim to be well-off. This is an egalitarian society in which everyone is expected to have equal happiness. This is because in such a society one person's sorrow or joy is regarded as everybody's. Moreover, what befalls the entire society must warrant the concern of every

individual member of the community. Thus, songs help to re-order the society by changing its unproductive attitude.

Some Ine songs are individualized on deeds because of the egalitarian nature of Igbuzọ. Every individual is expected to live or die for the society. Individual deeds are believed to have positive or negative effects on the entire community. Therefore, individualized songs are meant to warn every member of the society to be alive to his duties and responsibilities. They also warn them to contribute meaningfully to the welfare of the entire society. Such songs include the criticism of Nkwuya, thus:

Nkwuya nwa Obi Egbe	Nkwuya daughter of Chief Egbe
o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o
Nkwuya nwa Obi Egbe	Nkwuya daughter of Chief Egbe
Nkwuya welikwa nwa'yọ	Nkwuya take it easy
Na ogoli ji ọgọ onwea	Because a maiden's honour is in her hands
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

Nkwuya, daughter of Chief Egbe, was the village bele of her time. She was pretty, and proud, and spoilt. She never said no to the advances of men. However, the dancers warn her to make amends to safeguard her father's dignity. But Nkwuya died many years ago, and the song is

ancient. Nkwuya has become a myth and a metaphor for immorality. The song, therefore, is an imitation of a past experience which warns adolescent girls to be respectable. Thus, through songs the society maintains her moral precepts.

There are also praise songs which commend individual noble deeds. They encourage individuals to do good, to uphold societal ethics, and to promote the essence of living. The songs are thus didactic in their power to check evil. These songs include the praise of Odega. It is sung thus:

Odega Nwangbọ o-o-o	Odega Nwangbọ o-o-o
Yaji Ichami bọ egwu-o	Honoured a dance with Ichami
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

This is a praise song in honour of one Odega Nwangbo who presented Ichami to a dancing group in the distant past. Ichami are cowries of three pence equivalence. Odega was regarded as both rich and generous because Ichami were highly valued in those days. Only a few could own them. The eulogy is intensified by musical interpositions. When the singing reaches the second line of the song, the lead drummer of the biggest drum stops abruptly while the other drummers beat out counterpoints in salute to Odega. When, however, the singing reaches the last line; the

drummers once again harmonize. Then the vowel 'O' is vocalised and extended into infinity while the lead drummer of the big drum beats out very loud but calculated rhythms that accompany the fading vowel sound of 'O'. By this, the drummers and singers portray their sincere tribute to Odega. They also dramatize through music the expected standard that society stipulates. Thus, music and songs encourage individuals to do good.

Another praise song is that sung in honour of Ogbechina, a legendary philanthropist:

Ogbechina nwa onye-da-ibe-azọa	Ogbechina son of one-falls-mates-lift-him-up
o-o-o	o-o-o
Ogbechina nwa onye-da-ibe-azọa	Ogbechina son of one-falls-mates-lift-him-up
o-o-o	o-o-o
Ogbechina jikebe na ọgọ onye di echea	Ogbechina, thank you because one's generosity is remembered after him
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

Igbuzọ society values good name more than wealth. Although the society does not frown at wealth, a poor but upright person is long remembered and honoured than one who is rich but evil minded. One-falls-mates-lift-him-up is a metaphor for patriotism and benefaction. Ogbechina

is thus called son of this metaphorical nickname because he possessed these rare attributes. The song is an encouraging call to others to be beneficent.

There is yet an entry song. This is sung as a participating village dances back into its village. This is a joyful song in favour of the poor and the orphans. It makes them feel wanted in a society that is theirs to uphold and build. It goes thus:

Lead Singer:	Ine, Ine, Ine nwaogbei-o	Ine, Ine, Ine for the poor
All:	Ine, Ine, Ine nwaogbei-o	Ine, Ine, Ine for the poor

This song is chorused many times. The dramatic effect is that the orphans dance joyfully in response to the sincere feelings of patriotism expressed in song. Thus, songs help to unfold the message of the themes of Ine.

As the participating village enters the confines of its village, the dancers sing the final song. The song goes thus:

Lead Singer:	Onye ndi si anyi agana?	Who said we should not pass?
	Anyi aga-o	We are passing
Chorus:	O-o-o-ooo ah! Ine-o	
Lead Singer:	Agadi ji mbenukwu ete egwu-o	The old dance with mbenukwu
Chorus:	O-o-o-ooo ah! Ine-o (etc)	

Basically, the song is meant to express the happiness of a participating village for haven completed the celebration successfully. However, if sung in another village, members of that village will fight with the singers. This is because the song is provocative. The implication of the song is that the village within which it is sung is not patriotic hence, the rhetorical question in the song. The song is thus viewed as confrontational and damaging because every village strives to bring improvement to the corporate society. Apart from the fight, the whole town will fine the defaulters heavily. This demonstrates the people's love for peace and unity.

After every village has honoured the invitation to celebrate Ine, each adult male of Ogbeowele village, excepting the Diokpa, contributes three to four yams. These are given to the women in appreciation of their contributions toward the success of Ine. Again, all the gifts of goats, fowls, money and food-stuffs presented to the village by well-wishers are shared among the men-folk. These gifts are meant to encourage the community in their drive toward achieving happiness and unity in the society. The Ezeine then goes to the Diokpa for a ritual bath thus, marking the end of the festival.

C. Ulọ Festival: Dramatic Nature

1. Themes

(i) Social: Ulọ has a social theme. It affords the community the opportunity to come together and recreate themselves after many months of tedious work in the farm. Thus, Ulọ aims at re-establishing friendship, and communal ethos of oneness and unity.

(ii) Educational: Ulọ Festival has an educational theme. It teaches man the lessons of life. This didacticism is portrayed in the symbolic nut, ukpa. This nut is bitter when eaten, but the taste becomes pleasant thereafter. Paradoxically, it symbolises sweetness out of bitterness. This shows that the bitterness of earthly life, especially toil, often pays off in worldly gains. This symbolic nut reminds farmers that the amount of labour they put in their farms should determine the amount of crop yield.

(iii) Religious: Ulọ embodies certain ritual enactments that portray the belief of the Igbuzọs in the power of the immanent beings to influence man's earthly activities. In Ulọ, there are worships through whose media man asks the gods to influence crop productivity. Also, there are ritual enactments through which man asks the gods for remission of his sins in order to prevent calamity in the society. The theme of religion, therefore, has great

dramatic importance in Ulo. It engenders popular participation because of the people's belief in the power of supernatural forces to work goodness through festivals. Thus, the theme of religion aids dramatic progression because of its spiritual backing to Ulo.

2. Cast and Characterization, Costume and Props

(i) Cast and Characterization

Ulo has three principal characters namely, Ezeulo, Onihe and Oduah.[6] The Ezeulo is the protagonist of Ulo. The prefix, 'Eze', means king or leader or chief. Ezeulo, therefore, is the chief celebrant. The people look up to him for the success of Ulo.

In dramatic parlance, the Onihe and the Oduah are foils to the Ezeulo. They set him off by working hard to see that the Ezeulo succeeds in his leadership role. Specifically, the three actors are flat characters. They play conventional roles under stock situations.

The Ezeulo, the Onihe, and the Oduah are property managers. Each of them leads a group made up of age-group mates, friends and well-wishers who function as stage directors. They are assigned the special functions of clearing the arena, and mounting specific posts for the elders and the music makers. They also clear the premises of important shrines, and the farm foot-paths.

Moreover, they provide musical instruments, and the items of ritual sacrifice. Other members of the community who participate in the dance are also part of the cast. Their participation adds to the success of the festival.

(ii) Costume and Props

The costume for Ulọ consists of an under-wear, and a piece of cloth or wrapper tied round the waist. Participants also wear shirts or blouses depending on their sexes.

Drums of different sizes are used to provide varying rhythms. Also, iron and wooden gongs are used. Another local musical instrument called isaka[7] provides jingling sounds that harmonize with the rhythms of the drums and the gongs. The rhythms produced by these musical instruments enhance dramatic action in Ulọ as will be shown later in this chapter.

3. Staging: Timing and Stage Formation

(i) Timing:

Ulọ Festival is celebrated in August. The timing is important because legend has it that it was around the month of August that Ulọ was introduced into Igbuzọ from Okoh.[8] It is also a period of rest from farm work. Ezukwu and Umueze villages celebrate Ulọ. Ezukwu celebrates before Umueze. The celebration always takes place

on an Eke. Eke is the people's work-free day. Besides, the Igbuzọs believe that the gods come down to the earth to celebrate the holiday with man. It is also believed that the earth is more charged with spiritual energy on an Eke than on any other day. Thus, it is easier to manipulate spiritual forces on an Eke.

(ii) Stage Formation

Ulọ has a specific arena called asha-nta.[9] The formation follows the traditional arena staging. The audience forms a ring round the dancers. The formation is such that the dancers have enough room to display their skills. It also enables every member of the audience view the performances clearly. The open air system also makes the theatre wholesome by the constant provision of fresh air. As a result, tiredness and boredom are minimized. Thus, dramatic progression is enhanced.

4. Performance: Announcement, Preparation, Music and Dance

(i) Announcement

There are two principal media through which the impending festival is broadcast. One is through family heads. The other is through the village crier. As in Iwu and Ine, the village head first summons a meeting

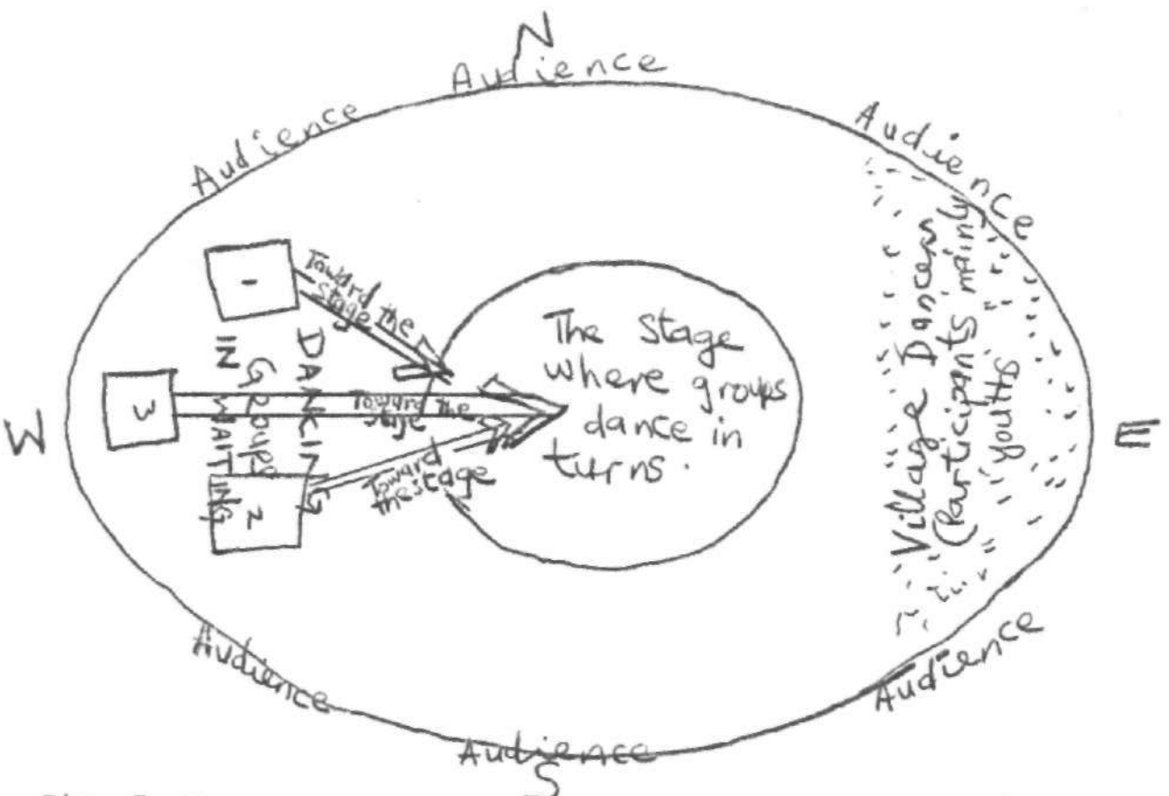


Fig: 7 The Arena Staging of Ulo Festival

in which a decision as to the date of the festival is taken. The family heads then spread the information to members of their families. In addition, the village crier gives authenticity to the news by informing the villagers formally. Thus, Ụlọ, like any other dramatic art, is advertised long before its celebration. This ensures a large turn out. It also allows participants enough time to prepare for the festival. All this adds to the success of the festival.

(ii) Preparation

On an Nkwọ, a day preceding the dance drama, a group of old women from a celebrating village sacrifice at their village shrines. They offer marshed yams, powdered clay, goats and fowls to the gods. They also sacrifice along their farm foot-paths. They thank the gods for their assistance in the agricultural vocation of the community. They also ask for peace, health, and increase in farm yield.

The use of marshed yams demonstrates the importance which the Igbuzọs attach to yams. To them, yam is the chief of all crops. They thus offer this important crop to the gods in order to receive their blessings. The other items of sacrifice are used as a means of appeasing the gods, and warding off evil spirits. This stage of

preparation is important because it relives the religious belief of the people in ancestral worship. The dramatization helps to re-establish confidence in the benevolence of the gods which can be attained through Ulọ. Thus, the entire community is encouraged to participate in the celebration.

(iii) Music and Dance

This aspect of the festival is conducted on the day following the preparatory rites. Dancing starts around four p.m. The morning and the afternoon are spent feasting. These periods are also used to get set for the evening session.

There are no set songs for Ulọ. Dancing groups may decide to fashion new songs, or to use already known ones. The songs are not satiric. They are not praise songs either. They are songs that celebrate the happiness of living.

There is a definite mode of entry into the arena by the three dancing groups headed by the Ezeulọ, the Onihe, and the Ọduah respectively. The Ezeulọ and his group enter first, followed by the Onihe and his group. The Ọduah and his group enter last. This arrangement makes for orderliness. It prevents the situation whereby the spectators will have to mar the stage formation in

their attempt to identify the principal actors and their groups. It dramatizes the people's inherent love for order. The arrangement also enhances a smooth progression of dramatic action. The audience knows without unnecessary effort which group is to enter, or which group is to dance.

Again, the entry arrangement demonstrates an aspect of the political life of the Igbuzọs which attaches importance to age and seniority. The Ezeulọ is the chief character, and is drawn from an age-group which is older than those of the Onihe and the Ọduah. Moreover, the institution of the Onihe far precedes that of the Ọduah. Thus, the three groups enter the arena in turns, and according to the hierarchical positions of their leaders.

Dancing is performed in turns. Each dancing group comes to the centre of the arena to perform. Again, there is no set pattern of dancing. Each group tries to out-dance the others so as to please the audience most. The dancers' feelings of happiness are portrayed in the rigorous manner in which they dance. This demonstrates that Ulọ is a celebration of the joy of living. This joy is underscored by the progress in the farm, and the general welfare experienced in the society.

Music follows the rhythm of the song raised, and directs dance steps. The initial tempo of music is low.

This enables dancers to determine the style that will match the rhythm of drumming. Dancers also use this stage to court the spectators' admiration. They do this by taking measured steps called itu nkwe,[10] by smiling, and saluting the audience through calculated body movements This aspect of the dance increases the atmosphere of the occasion. It increases the audience's interest in the celebration. Their joy is often demonstrated in their smiles, laughter, and applause.

After the "coquettish" dance, the music increases in tempo. The dancers respond accordingly. They dance with vigour in order to share their happiness with the members of the audience. This is a demonstration of communal life in which people are always ready to share what they have with others. Moreover, the happiness which dancing at Ulo establishes among the dancers and among the audience shows that purgation has been effected. This purgation is necessary for dramatic progression, and for harmonious living thereafter. Thus music intensifies dramatic action.

If it is Ezukwu village that is celebrating, the day's celebration often ends after each group has danced its second and third rounds. But if it is Umueze village that is celebrating, the day's celebration ends with a

ritual dance of the very old women of that village.[11] This is another spectacular aspect of Ulo in that the dance is a scapegoat portrayal of the 'mother' factor.

At dusk, as the celebration draws to an end, some selected old women dance half naked round the arena. They play gongs, mutter invocative words, and bend double as they dance along. Their dance involves moving the upper extremeties of the body left and right. They dance round only once, and very fast. At the end of the dance, they leave the arena the way they came. Everybody will then disperse.

This final dance is symbolic in three ways. First, it signifies a cleansing preparation of the land for the blessings of the gods and ancestors. This is a dramatization of the people's religious belief that such rituals are capable of forestalling famine. Second, the circular movement symbolises the continuity of life. This serves an enlightenment purpose. It reminds the people of the three-tier tie of existence. That is, the living, the dead, and the unborn. The circular movement symbolically unites the three realms of existence together thus, ensuring continuity of life. This again dramatizes the people's religious belief in spirits, and in their influence over earthly existence. Third, the dance is

a cleansing of the sins of the community. The old women metaphorically shoulder the sins of the society, and ask the gods and ancestors for forgiveness. The dramatic significance of this is that the entire community is re-assured that the society is wholesome again. People now go about their farm work and other businesses with courage haven been convinced that the old women have cleansed the land. Thus, the dance has a psychological impact in the minds of the people. This psychological effect makes the people resolve to work toward the improvement of their society so as to receive blessings from the gods and ancestors.

Conclusion

Iwu, Ulo and Ine are sources of relaxation and social entertainment. Besides, the festivals re-enact the social, political, and economic life of the people. They also enlighten the people on some important historical events in the society. The capacity of African traditional arts to educate and to entertain is measured in the people's love for, and popular participation in these arts. Festivals enable the people to comprehend the purpose of existence, and inter-personal relationships. This is the basic purpose of African traditional arts.

In these festivals, story line, dialogue and communication are relayed through expressive gestures and signals like dance movements and musical rhythms, observances like the eating of ukpa nut, and ji-iwu, and verbal renditions as in song. All this makes Iwu, Ulọ, and Ine stand any dramatic test.

For one thing, there is a difference between modern creative art with all its dressings of nomenclature, and African traditional arts that are spontaneous, humanizing and lively. While the former is individualistic and egoístic, the latter is communal and depersonalised. It is, therefore, clear that Iwu, Ulọ and Ine have all the elements of drama, and are able to fulfil the functions of the theatre. Therefore, they are dramatic.

Notes

1. Mr T.N. Nkpulu hails from Ogbeowele village, in Igbuzọ. He is well versed in Igbuzọ traditions and culture.

2. Barnet S. et al., A Dictionary of Literary Terms. London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1964. p. 126.

3. Osho is made of the shells of the seeds of a plant called oshosho. These shells are threaded, and sewn through tiny holes made on the flat side of a bat-like piece of iron or hard wood. Each osho contains several lines of bead-like oshosho. It makes jingling sounds when shaken.

4. This is a derogatory name. Oli is a kind of tasteless pudding that sets the teeth on edge when eaten. By calling the Eze Ebo, Ohene oli, the audience means that the Eze Ebo hampers its enjoyment of the festival.

5. This kind of annointment is called Ichi nzu. The village head rubs powdered chalk all over the body of the Ezeine as a spiritual backing to his role.

6. Oduah is a recent title. It came into existence when one Mr Anene refused to entertain Ulọ dancers who came to honour his newly dead father. After the unentertained dancers went away in anger, his dead father appeared, and asked him why he did not entertain him. Immediately, he fell ill. However, he was wise enough to call back the dancers to whom he promised a present of a cow. He recovered as soon as he fulfilled the promise. He then asked to be confered with the title, Oduah meaning, 'one that regenerates.' After his death, another person was confered with the title. Today, Oduah more or less means 'entertainer.'

7. Isaka is made of calabash and beads. The body of the calabash, from its neck to its base, is covered with many threaded beads.

8. Oral tradition has it that Ulọ originated from Okoh and its sister town, Abala. Both towns are situated along the western bank of the River Niger.

9. Asha-nta means mini market. It is at this place that Ụlọ is performed every year.

10. This is very common among Igbuzọ dancers. Onuora Ossie Enekwe also mentions it in his book, Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre, Nigeria Magazine, 1987. p. 51.

11. Umueze is the spiritual headquarters of Igbuzọ. The old women of this village take on the responsibility of shouldering the sins of the community because they are the 'mothers' of Igbuzọ.

Chapter 4

THE DRAMATIC EXTENT OF OGBANJE FESTIVAL: A HYPNOTIC DANCE DRAMA

Introduction

Ogbanje Festival is a hypnotic dance drama. The concept of ogbanje is based on a popular superstitious belief in Nigeria. It is conceived from the traditional African belief in life after death, and in the world of spirits. In Yorubaland, the concept of ogbanje enjoys tribal recognition. This is the case in Igboland, and elsewhere. This African belief has been further popularized in contemporary African literature. This is exemplified in Soyinka's and J.P. Clark's poems, both titled 'Abiku'. Chinua Achebe also portrays this concept in Things Fall Apart.

A person becomes an ogbanje right from birth. It is believed that the ogbanjes are spirit incarnates. In the spirit world, they decide to take human forms purposely to torment their parents. They are born only to die and be reborn by the same parents. This cycle of birth and death continues until a medicine man is consulted, who can then break the evil cycle.

According to Obi Nwaokocha,[1] the ogbanjes choose when to be born, and when to die. This is a secret

they share with their members in the spirit world. Some of them choose to die immediately after birth. Some others die in later childhood. Still, some of them die when they have well reached adulthood, and are about to be of greater use to their parents, and the society. Some female ogbanjes die either during the process of their marriage arrangements, or during the process of childbirth.[2] An ogbanje can complain of a headache, and die a few minutes later. Some of them suffer from protracted illnesses. These die after their parents have spent so much money and time in a bid to save their lives. Some of them choose to die through accidents.

Obi Nwaokocha further identified three main types of ogbanje. They include Umuajoshia or children of the evil forest, Humili or ogbanjes of water spirits, and ogbanje anu or animal types, usually in forms of snakes.

2. The Hypnotic Dance Drama

A. Dramatic Requirements

(i) Cast

Ogbanje Hypnotic Dance Drama has characters. The cast consists of a medicine man, the ogbanje, the drummers, gong players, and the ogbanje's attendant, who may be her mother or a close female relative. These are all flat characters. They do not grow, but have

predictable behaviours. This is so because of the nature of the performance. The performance is not aimed at individual glorification. Rather, it works towards achieving a definite purpose which is the destruction of the evil cycle of ogbanje. The community well knows the expected behaviours of the actors. What they do not know is the outcome of the performance. It is this end that they anticipate. Thus this anticipation forms the basis of dramatic tension.

The ogbanje is the protagonist of the dance drama. She is the principal actress and has to contend with the antagonistic force of the spirit cult of ogbanje. The medicine man is the ogbanje's confidant. There is a mutual trust between the medicine man and the ogbanje. The ogbanje trusts in, and depends on the medicine man for the success of the performance.

The functions of these characters are embeded in the ogbanje plot. Thus characterization becomes a tool in expounding the story of the ogbanje.

Again, the audience forms an active part of the cast in their choric participation. This demonstrates the communal nature of the Igbuzos. Although Ogbanje performance may at first sight seem a personal affair, since it is one person's evil cycle that is to be broken, the community feels obligingly involved. This is so

because group work is enshrined in the socio-political structure of Igbuzọ. "When its performance is successful, the village feels proud and fulfilled, for success is an index of the solidarity and moral health of"[3] the Igbuzọs.

(ii) Costume

The costumes used in the performance of ọgbanje are very colourful, and so appeal to the aesthetic sense. The medicine man's attire consists of a short red and white skirt tied over a pair of shorts. On top of this skirt, he wears a short sleeveless open-neck red and white shirt. On his left upper arm bicep muscle, he ties a charm called agbokili. This charm wards off negative influences like spells that might be directed to him by his enemies or evil spirits.

The celebrant, ọgbanje, ties a white cloth called otogwu. This locally weaved material covers her from the chest, immediately above her breasts, to the ankles. She uses a strong band of cloth to hold the otogwu in place by tying it round the upper end, above her breasts. Another one is tied immediately below her breasts. This attire looks like a long 'maxi'. She may, alternatively wear a red skirt provided by the herbalist, and a white blouse over it.

There is no set costume for the drummers and the

gong players. They dress ordinarily like the audience. The ọgbanje's attendant dresses in white otogwu tied on her waist and a white blouse worn over it.

In addition to the costumes, the medicine man and the ọgbanje use make-up. They rub powdered native white chalk on their eye-lids, arms and insteps.

Apart from the aesthetic significance of costumes and make-up, they help dramatize the people's belief in the combination of colours to attract and make unseen forces work to their desires. Again, since these costumes are indispensable in the performance of ọgbanje, it follows that they are essential agents in the interpretation of ọgbanje plot.

Furthermore, these colourful costumes add to the total dramatic effect of ọgbanje. This is because their evocation of the supernatural, and their aesthetic power contribute towards the ultimate degree to which the enactment of the story of ọgbanje affects the audience. The red attire which symbolizes danger, for example, impresses in the minds of the audience an atmosphere of wierdness.

(iii) Prop

Certain items are required to expound the plot of ọgbanje. Firstly, the ọgbanje has to pay a fee ranging

from fifty to a hundred naira. Other requirements include drums, gongs, benches, a hypnotism pot and a wooden bowl containing powdered native white chalk. Two sets of marshed yam, one of which is mixed with oil, snails, alligator pepper and other herbal preparations are used. Also, native gin and kola-nuts enhance the success of ogbanje dance drama.

(iv) Setting

Theatre-in-the-round or arena is used in the performance of ogbanje. However, there is no set place for the performance of ogbanje. The medicine man determines the locale or arena through divination. This place can be in front of the celebrant's house. It can also be performed before a sacred tree, usually the iroko, or before a sacred place where there is a revered shrine.

In this traditional form of staging, the drummers and gong players sit on benches, in a semi-circle. The audience forms a large ring round the music makers. They create a very wide space for the ogbanje to dance. Although traditional, this arena type serves the purpose of every theatre because it affords space for the enactment of ogbanje story.

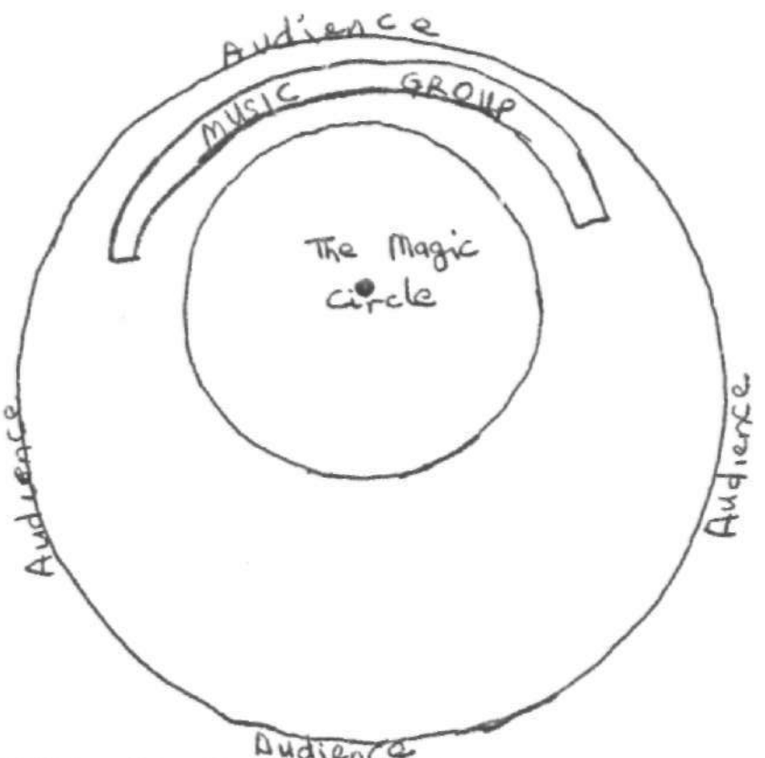


Fig.8: Theatre - in- the- round and Stations in Ogbenje performance

B. Narrative Plot and Performance

The story of ọgbanje is well known among the Igbuzọs. It is a story based on Igbuzo cosmology, which recognizes a strong link between the celestial or spirit world and the terrestrial or the world of form. Although this story is oral, it has valid dramatic progression which spans exposition, challenge, rising action, climax and denouement. These dramatic moments are predicated upon the five main divisions or stages of Ọgbanje Dance Drama. These divisions include the identification of the ọgbanje, the carrying of the hypnotism pot and magic mirror, the stage of hypnosis, the discovery of the ọgbanje symbol, and the destruction of the symbol.

(i) Identification of the Ọgbanje

In dramatic parlance, this stage is the exposition or preliminary situation. Here the person suspected of being an ọgbanje because of her unusual behaviour or constant illness is led by her parents and relatives to a medicine man for spiritual investigations. This consultation dramatizes the belief of the Igbuzos in oracular diagnosis.

During this preliminary stage, the medicine man's house or shrine becomes a theatre. This shrine is decorated with colourful objects like pots, clothes,

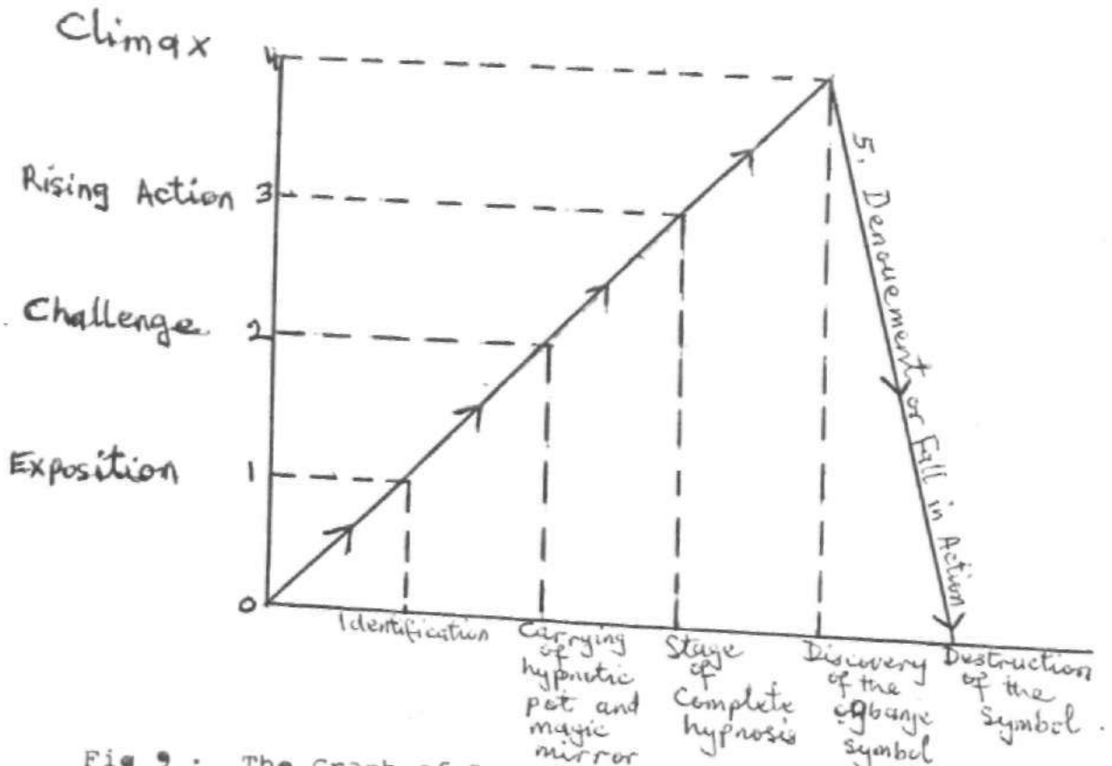


Fig 9 : The Graph of Dramatic progression in Ogbanje Festival.

charms and animal skulls. The medicine man and his client, ogbanje suspect, constitute the actors while the parents and relatives of the ogbanje suspect make up the audience. The medicine man often sits before his shrine facing the seekers.

There are several methods a medicine man can use to identify an ogbanje. They include divination with a kola-nut, divination with the afa[4], and palm and forehead readings. Sometimes, a medicine man uses all the methods at a sitting. If he chooses to divine with a kola-nut, he breaks the kola-nut into lobes, and throws the lobes on the floor before him. He does this several times. Usually, with the last throw, three lobes come together with one resting on the other two as if forming a triangle. He looks at the pieces reflectively. He then points the index finger of his right hand at his client and says authoritatively, "You are ogbanje!' He can as well make this declaration without pointing at his client.

To further confirm his assertion that his client is an ogbanje, he would invite her for palm and forehead readings. Here, as above, monologue is used, and it is spoken by the medicine man alone. This use of monologue dramatizes and sustains the people's belief

in the supernatural. Only the medicine man speaks because of the belief that he alone knows what and when to speak in the presence of the unseen forces. The seekers can only speak if encouraged or rather asked to speak by the medicine man.

The medicine man asks his client to open her palms wide. He examines them carefully, often thumping the outstretched palms with the index finger of his right hand. He often nods his head, and sometimes smiles thoughtfully. He then reads her forehead by gazing intently at it. He says again with emotion, 'You are ogbanje!'

The colourful decorations of the medicine man's shrine, his gestures and emotive words have strong psycho-social implications. This is to say that they impress on the psychology of his client and seekers. The seekers need these demonstrations and authoritative pronouncements to be convinced and above all, reassured. Dramatic catharsis is thereby engendered since the seekers would go home relieved of their problems.

Dialogue is also used at a point in this expository stage. This often happens when the medicine man divines with the afa. The medicine man would sit down with legs outstretched and wide apart. He would then throw his

divining instrument, afa, on the ground several times. Each time, he would have a message for the seekers. He also asks the seekers questions to which they answer. The seekers are also encouraged to ask questions on pressing issues concerning the ọgbanje. The medicine man answers their questions through divination.

The ultimate dramatic significance of this consultation is the unfoldment of the ọgbanje plot. The exposure of the ọgbanje as a member of a spirit cult will result into chains of effects. These include the preparations for the dance drama, which will culminate into the final exorcism of the ọgbanje.

(ii) The Hypnotism Pot and Magic Mirror

This stage marks the start of the hypnotic performance, and corresponds to the dramatic challenge. By organizing the dance drama, the ọgbanje has incurred the wrath of the forces of the spirit cult which will oppose her dissociation. The ọgbanje has to contend with these forces. It is going to be a spiritual encounter, and this is where the hypnotism pot and the magic mirror come in. The hypnotism pot puts the ọgbanje into a superhuman state where extra-sensory perception is possible. She is thus equipped with supernatural powers to confront the antagonistic forces. The mirror reveals

these forces or her spirit members.

However, this stage of dramatic challenge is broken down into divisions, thus:

Division 1: Preparation - Music and Song

This is the period when the drummers, gong players, and the audience make a warming-up performance. There is a lead drummer whose special duty is to mark the end of a song, and the beginning of another. He does this by beating out the tune of the song to be sung next, at a rate higher than the normal rhythm. He knows the particular song for each occasion. When the tune of a song is thus beaten out, the medicine man picks up the song, leading the music group and the audience in chorus.

The preparatory song is ọgbanje ebili or 'ọgbanje the wave'. The medicine man raises this song after it has been drum-beaten, as earlier explained. Then the music makers and the audience join in chorus. The song goes thus:

Medicine man: Ọgbanje ebili ilusia igwam-o ebili-o

Ọgbanje the wave, when you have finished work, tell me, oh! wave.

Chorus: Ọgbanje ebili-o Ọgbanje ebili-o

Ọgbanje the wave, Ọgbanje the wave

This song is repeated several times.

The music and song embody certain dramatic principles. There is an element of communication between the lead drummer and the other members of the music group. The lead drummer does not use words to inform the other musicians of the song to be sung because it will interrupt the rhythm of drumming thus making it dull and incoherent. Instead, he relays his message through a peculiar rhythm of drum-beat understandable by members of the music group.

This music also appeals to human emotions, thus putting everybody in the mood of celebration. It also serves as a means of advertisement. The sound of the music attracts more spectators thereby enhancing dramatic progression.

The song, Ọgbanje ebili, appeals to the aesthetic sense. This effect is achieved through the tonal variations. The song is sung in full volume, punctuated with tonal rise and fall. When the voice rises, especially at the end of each line, there is an emotional strain marked by the 'O'. The song itself is an appeal to the ọgbanje to get ready for the performance. It helps to turn her on. The ọgbanje uses this period to don her costume.

Division II: Break

This is a period of entertainment when men commune

with the gods by offering kola-nuts and wine. Here, the medicine man prays for life, health, and success in the day's celebration over the kola-nuts and gin presented to his group by the celebrant. After the kola-nuts are broken, the medicine man throws some of the pieces to the ground for the gods. The rest of the pieces are then shared among the group. The medicine man does the same with the gin. As he prays, he lets some of the wine in a cup drop on the ground for the gods. After the prayers, what remains in that cup is given to the celebrant to drink. By this, she communes with the ancestors and receives their blessings. The medicine man is served, then other members of the music group are served starting from the eldest.

This method of refreshment dramatizes the people's belief that the gods are the providers of earthly pleasures, and so must be thanked and served first before man eats. Also, the method of sharing from the eldest to the youngest dramatizes the political structure of the Igbuzos. Age is highly respected, and every male citizen is officially registered in his appropriate age group. Therefore, to pass an elder and serve a younger citizen is an abomination punishable by a fine ranging from many goats and money.

Division III: Entry

This is the time when the ogbanje enters into the arena. Prior to this entry, the dibia or medicine man makes a fairly large circle using some of the powdered native white chalk. He does this in front of the semi-circle formed by the sitting arrangement of the music group. He throws some of the two sets of marshed yam to different directions. He does the same with the powdered native chalk. These are meant to appease the gods. Here, the religious convictions of the Igbuzọs in spirits and their relationship with man are re-enacted. The medicine man performs these actions with remarkable agility and great show of confidence that no one is in doubt that he has full control of the situation.

Occasionally, the medicine man puts some powdery grey substance from his onunu[5] on his left palm, and blows it towards the direction of the rising sun. He thus invokes the sun, the symbol of knowledge and spiritual power. This dramatizes the belief in the power of man to coax the elements for spiritual assistance. The medicine man's gestures as he performs the act demonstrate humility and inner conviction. His movements are timed and calculated. His actions are performed with precision. All this depicts his emotional

make up at the time.

Next, the medicine man invites the ọgbanje into the circle. The circle symbolizes protection. It is a dramatization of man's fear of the unseen, and his attempts at conquering this fear by using symbolic rites to protect himself. The circle thus drawn is meant to protect the ọgbanje from harm and impediments by evil forces. While in the circle, the ọgbanje's attendant throws some powdered chalk at her saying, ọzigbo, ọzigbo, bua ka'na. This means, 'quick, quick, find your ọgbanje and let us go.' The attendant here becomes the symbol of the mind of the community, voicing out the thoughts and expectations of the society. The tone of voice is neither too low nor too high. It falls between pleading and command. This dramatizes a fundamental psychological nature of man. No one likes to be unduly pushed around. This pleading tone is necessary to make the ọgbanje co-operate. However, the words are precise, compelling, full of urgency and determination. This urgency is further conveyed in the swift but timed movement of the steps, and the right hand of the attendant as she throws the powdered chalk at the ọgbanje. All this helps to enhance dramatic progression.

Sometimes, the attendant offers sacrifices of

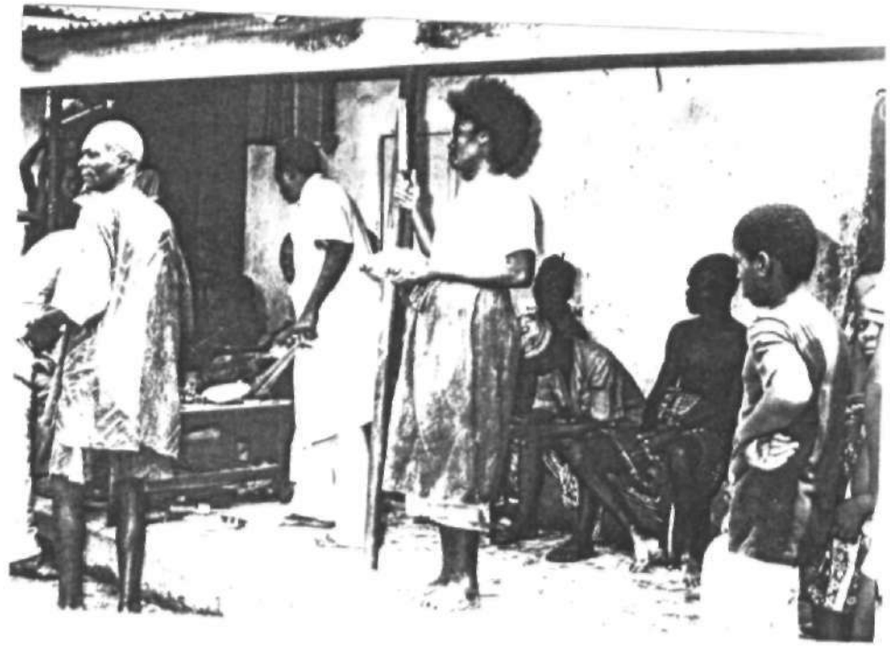


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snails and marshed yam. She makes a shallow hole on the ground, drops a snail in it and cuts it several times with a cutlass. She then puts some marshed yam on the snail and around it. She also throws some marshed yam to different directions. This action dramatizes the people's belief that when evil spirits eat such a sacrifice they become slow-footed, and as dull as the snail. The cutting of the snail incapacitates them. Thus, these malevolent spirits are prevented from disrupting the day's performance. These actions strengthen the people's hopes that the day's performance will succeed. Again if the celebration ends successfully, the people will reflect on the events that led to the success, and then make more inner re-affirmations of faith in their traditional religion.

The foregoing actions of the medicine man and the attendant constitute the first step at inducing hypnosis in the ọgbanje. The next step towards inducing hypnosis entails the putting of some drops of liquid concoctions into the ọgbanje's eyes. The concoctions are prepared with special herbs, flies, alligator pepper, fire-flies and a small quantity of gin. As the medicine man puts drops of this liquid into the celebrant's eyes, he utters the following invocations:

Ijiji mali ebe ife nwu	The fly that knows where something dead is
Mmili adi amanyu ọkunmọ	Rain does not extinguish the fire-fly
Ebu'gọ-o! ga'gwam ife ọbu	Ebugọ! (name of a spirit) come and tell me what it is
Alusi mmili-o! ga'gwam if ọbu	Spirits of the water! come and tell me what it is
Ikuku-o! ga'gwam ife ọbu	O wind! come and tell me what it is
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o

He thus invokes the ingredients, and the spirit agents of his art. He calls on them to prove his art potent.

The dramatic significance of this invocation lies in the emotional rendition of the lines. The medicine man utters these lines while gazing into the sky, with his head slightly bent towards the right shoulder. The sight of the medicine man as he performs this act is awe insipiring. The tonal modulation is so artful that it often sends shudders down the beings of the listeners. One has the feeling of being within the presence of supernatural forces. It thus charges the atmosphere, and reinforces the people's belief in the supernatural. The psychological effect it has on the ogbanje is noticeable in her growing unsteadiness within the circle. She begins to drift into a subconscious state. The invocation is thus a means of plot advancement.

After this invocation, the medicine man engages in a dialogue with the ogbanje. He asks her: 'Have you seen anything? Tell me, have you seen it?" The medicine man asks these questions with a sharp and commanding tone. These commands cannot make the ogbanje rebel because of her new state of consciousness. Again, the movements of the medicine man are so swift and mesmerizing that the ogbanje drifts the more into a subconscious state. Even the audience is emotionally affected by the medicine man's actions at this time. Usually, at the last question put to her, she will confess seeing her spirit members, and her ogbanje. At this confession, drumming, clapping and singing increase in tempo.

The confession is important because it re-affirms the Igbuzo's belief in the concept of ogbanje. Secondly, it validates the medicine man's assertiveness. Thirdly, it portends success hence, the heightened music.

The final step at inducing hypnosis is reached when the ogbanje carries the hypnotism pot[6] and the magic mirror. Prior to this, however, the medicine man utters this invocation:

Amuzo-o!	Those who do not know the way
Bia nuo! Bia nuo!	Come all! Come all!
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o

Alusi mmili-o!	Spirit of the water!
Gbata ọsọ-o! ga enene-o	Oh! run here! and see
Ikoko mmili-o!	Oh, waves of the water!
Gbata nu-o!	Oh, run here, all!
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o
Bia ga ene-o	Come and see
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o
Osi mmili bia uwa!	He that comes to the world from the water!
Gbanata ga ene-o!	Oh! Run back and see!

The tonal rendition, and the effects of this invocation are the same as the previous one. Again, there is the same use of word and parallel repetition. This, and the end line rhymes and assonances make the invocation lyrical. It thus engenders aesthetic pleasure, and atunement with the mood of the occasion.

With this last invocation, the medicine man calls on the spirits of ọgbanje to witness the destruction of the evil cycle of the celebrant's ọgbanje. They are invoked so that they will have no spiritual right to trouble the celebrant hereafter. As the ọgbanje's confidant, the medicine man assists her in countering the spirits' antagonism.

Next is the carrying of the hypnotism pot. The

medicine man asks the ọgbanje to stretch out her arms forward, palms up. In her open palms he rests the pot, counts 'one', and lifts it up. He rests it on her palms again, counts 'two', and lifts it up again. He does this seven times. On the seventh count, he rests the pot on her head, and asks her to hold it. The counting dramatizes the law of numerology. Here he employs the magic power of numbers to enhance hypnosis. The counting is timed, systematic, and low pitched. It further mesmerizes the ọgbanje.

The carrying of the pot indicates that she is a member of ọgbanje, but now wants to dissociate herself from the evil cult. The celebrant is further given a magic mirror. She holds the mirror before her face and looks into it. In this mirror, she sees spirits, who direct her to the place where her ọgbanje is burried.

(iii) The Stage of Complete Hypnosis

This stage marks the rising action or dramatic complication. Here, the protagonist's confrontation with the spirit ọgbanjes is still on. However, the action at this time is progressing towards its peak. There is an element of suspense at this time. Everyone is spell bound, waiting for the outcome of the

ogbanje's encounter with the spirit ogbanjes.

At this stage, the ogbanje reaches a satisfactory state of hypnosis. Hypnosis as used here means that the ogbanje is transported into a supernormal state of consciousness where a two-tier communication is possible. The first-tier communication system is with man while the second-tier is with spirits. However, this two-tier communication system is quite different from that of Bori Mediumship[7] for two main reasons.

Firstly, spirits do not inhabit the being of the ogbanje throughout the hypnotic dance process. Possession is possible before the dance drama hence, the ogbanje's unusual behaviour. However, as soon as the ogbanje enters the magic circle, any abiding spirit escapes from the ogbanje

Secondly, the essence of hypnosis in Ogbanje Festival is not for prophecy, or for discerning any information or code that is beyond mortal wit. Rather, hypnosis is established to incite a spiritual combat. That is, a decisive duel between the ogbanje and the party of spirit ogbanjes. Whatever communication that goes on between them is not of primary importance. What is of concern is the duel, and the

outcome of it. This is a crucial point because the outcome will determine whether the celebration will go on or not. Thus this combat is tied to the linear plot of ogbanje. If the ogbanje emerges victorious then, the celebration will go on. If she loses, the dramatic progression will remain static because she will no longer be willing to continue. In that case, the dance drama is rescheduled.

However, the first-tier communication system is of dramatic importance. There is often a dialogue between the medicine man and the ogbanje. The medicine man communicates in words while the ogbanje responds in mime. She communicates by pointing fingers, nodding her head to mean 'yes', and by shaking it sideways to mean 'no'. Again, this communication helps in the unfoldment of the story being enacted.

The stage of hypnosis can be classified into three groups namely, the combat dance, the transition song, and the triumphal dance.

The Combat Dance

This point signals the stage of full hypnosis. This is portrayed by the dancing behaviour of the ogbanje. At this time she begins to dance like a staggering drunk. She often lifts one leg from the ground and hops round. She would then bring down the raised leg, and nod her

head vigorously. She often bends forward and backward, shaking from side to side. She would stretch out her arms and move them forward, backward and sideways. It is believed that the ogbanje is still contending with the spirit ogbanjes who are angry that she is leaving their fold. It is this struggle at dissociation that is dramatized in the ogbanje's gestures. These gestures also help sustain not only the people's belief in the concept of ogbanje, but more especially the myth of this spiritual duel.

This spiritual combat is also dramatized in the ogbanje's fast blinking, and making of ugly faces. It is believed that her gestures are imitations of the spirit ogbanjes who use such ugly gestures to frighten her. At this stage of face contortion, she may run wildly out of the magic circle, signifying victory over the spirit ogbanjes. This stage of victory should not be mistaken for a climactic point. Rather, it is a prelude to it, In fact, there is a marked rise in dramatic action portrayed in wild drumming.

The Transition Song

The ogbanje's victory is heralded with a transition song. The song changes from ogbanje ebili to ogbanje bulu ugagbe. The song follows:

Medicine man: Ọgbanje bulu ugagbe ọna enyo onwea
Ọgbanje bulu ugagbe ọna enyo onwea
Ébele emea-o

Chorus: Ọgbanje bulu ugagbe ọna enyo onwea
Ébele emea-o

Medicine man: When ọgbanje carries the mirror she looks at herself
When ogbanje carries the mirror she looks at herself
It is a pity

Chorus: When ọgbanje carries the mirror she looks at herself
It is a pity

This song has a psycho-social effect on the ọgbanje. In the first place, the song is a satire. It is a subtle criticism of the ọgbanje's membership of an evil and unproductive cult. The mirror has a social significance in that it is used to examine the human form through the image reflected in it. The song mockingly tells the ọgbanje that what she sees in the mirror is herself, and nobody else. However, there is a hidden factor in the song, an unspoken question. This question asks the ọgbanje whether she likes the form she sees reflected in the mirror. This question is subtly hidden in the last line of the song, 'It is a pity'. The inconspicuousness of the question makes the satire more scathing. This is because the chorus has artfully left the question to the ọgbanje herself. To the chorus however, what the ọgbanje sees is pitiful.

This song embodies societal distaste at evils, and evil doers. The song is therefore corrective and it encourages the ogbanje to take a decision. If the form she sees belongs to an evil cult and is therefore bad to the society to which she is integral, then she has to reveal the symbol of her ogbanje. This revelation is the ultimate end of the dance drama. It is to this end that the song is directed. The psycho-social effect of the song on the ogbanje makes her reveal the symbol of her evil cycle of birth and death.

The satirical intention of the song is borne out of the word and paralleled repetitions in the song. This, coupled with the shortness of the song, makes the effect direct and biting. Again, the assonances, the end rhymes and the emotional strain at the end of the song help to convey the feelings of the society. Thus, the song is an agent of plot advancement.

The Triumphal Dance

The triumphal dance and the transition dance occur simultaneously. The triumphal dance signifies the ogbanje's joy at the victory over the spirit ogbanjes. This is marked by ecstatic shaking of the body by the ogbanje. At this time, she often runs wildly towards different directions, chasing members of the audience.

This dance has two main dramatic significance. In the first place, it is necessary to warrant the criticism of the audience, exemplified in the transition song. Secondly, it offers comic relief.

The stage of the combat dance is a period of suspense. The audience is spell bound as they await the outcome of the spiritual encounter between the ọgbanje and the spirit ọgbanjes. The triumphal dance, therefore, dispels this suspense thus offering relief.

Besides, more comic relief is engendered by the chasing of the audience by the ọgbanje. The ọgbanje chases members of the audience when the magical mirror reveals some of her human members. Any person she pursues relentlessly is understood to be an ọgbanje. Such a person cries because she has been identified with an evil cult.

The identified ọgbanje is brought into the arena. Her mother, or sister, or a close female relative comes in to attend to her by throwing powdered native chalk at her. She dances like the first celebrant with or without the pot and mirror. In the end, she succeeds in having her ọgbanje destroyed with a little cost. Her parents pay a little sum of money to the medicine man. However, they do not undergo the rigours of

identification and preparation. Such an ogbanje is countned lucky.

Another way an ogbanje can identify her human members is by throwing powdered chalk at them. She does this without talking. This, in Igbuzọ idiom, is called itu nzu that is 'throwing of powdered chalk'. Any person so identified comes into the arena to dance, for her ogbanje to be destroyed. Some become obstinate, and have to be dragged into the arena by their parents and relations. Some run away, never to come back to the scene of the festival. Some others watch at a distance, away from the reach of people. They do this because they are ashamed to be identified with the evil cult of ogbanje.

During this period of identification, the audience often shouts, laughs, screams, and runs helter-skelter as the celebrant pursues them. When ever one is identified, the audience would shout with one voice. They are glad that the identified person's ogbanje has been exposed. This shouting dramatizes the communal make-up of Igbuzọ. Igbuzọ tradition recognizes the potentials of every individual in community building. The cult of ogbanje prevents many from exploring their full potentials for general community development as a

result of constant illness, and deviant behaviour towards societal norms. Therefore, any move towards eradicating this cult thus freeing its human members is highly received. This is because such eradication will enable the society tap the full potentials of every individual citizen. Thus, the shouting reinforces the people's belief in the evil of the cult of ogbanje.

There is yet another comic aside during this triumphal dance. Most often a member of the audience whose ogbanje has been destroyed in a previous dance drama, becomes hypnotized. She dances in the usual fashion of the ogbanje even without first being identified. This creates much laughter among the audience. If, however, the person has not previously performed the dance drama, she is brought into the arena to dance. In this way, about three to four ogbanjes end up dancing.

Music has great dramatic importance during this stage of complete hypnosis. This combat dance is a tense period. There is inner tension in the mind of everybody as everyone waits anxiously for the result of the combat. This anxiety is reflected in the rhythm of music. At this time, the rhythm of music fluctuates. It rises and falls in consonance with the gestures of

the ogbanje. When she makes to run out of the circle, hope rises, and so does the rhythm of music. On the other hand, when this rising hope is dashed, the rhythm of music falls with the same rate as the falling hope.

Conversely, the rhythm of music rises to a crescendo as the ogbanje escapes from the magic circle. Again, this rise in rhythm carries with it the emotional ecstacy of the people. There is, therefore, wild drumming, clapping, gong playing and singing.

The lead drummer is the first to portray his emotion through his drum because he should beat out the tune of the transition song. Almost simultaneously, there are counterpoints of chaotic drumming as individual drummers register their joy. In a moment, music assumes a normalized rhythm as drummers take control of their emotions. However, the tempo is high to agree with the damaging force of the satirical transition song, and the ecstatic dancing of the ogbanje. Music thus helps to reveal the mood of the audience, and of the occasion. It's aestheticism also fosters renewed interest among the audience.

(iv) The Discovery of the Ogbanje Symbol

At this point of the hypnotic dance drama, the action rises to a climax. This climax is heralded with



Plate; 6

a prelude of song called Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu. The song is as follows:

Medicine man:	Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu Ọgbanje nwa si na itulu ime ya'na-o-o Elegede
Chorus:	Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu-o elegede Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu-o elegede etc.
Medicine man:	Ọgbanje, child of Onokwu (Onokwu is the name of a benevolent deity) Ọgbanje, it is said that when you become pregnant you go Elegede (This is an onomatopoeic delineation of something very enormous)
Chorus:	Ọgbanje, child of Onokwu-o elegede Ọgbanje, child of Onokwu-o elegede

This prelude of song has grave dramatic significance. In the first place, it offers a momentary respite to the music makers and the audience. Drumming and clapping are greatly reduced. The music makers and the audience use this time to prepare for the climactic point.

Moreover, the song is used to cajole the ọgbanje into making the climax a reality. Some ọgbanjes prove difficult at this stage, and never reach the climax. Therefore, a mixture of kind and frightful words and expressions are used to coax her to reach the climax. For example, the ọgbanje is referred to as a child of Onokwu, a benevolent god. This is pleasing. On the other hand, she is informed that it is said that she will die when she becomes pregnant. 'Death' is implied

in the euphemistic expression, 'you go' which is found in the second line of the song. This is shocking more so when she is told that death is 'Elegede' that is, a mighty and fearful thing. These pleasing and shocking expressions are reinforced by the onomatopoeia, elegede, and by word, and parallel repetitions. The direct address 'Ogbanje' also makes the message more impressive. Thus, this song enhances dramatic progression.

Again, there is a verbal re-enactment of the people's belief that some ogbanjes die when they become pregnant. The song therefore helps to sustain that belief, and to warn the ogbanjes of the consequence of their membership of ogbanje cult.

After a while, this prelude of song gives way to a more vocalised song called Imali ebeodi chua weli meaning, 'If you know where it is, look for it'. The song is as follows:

Medicine man: Imali ebe ọdi chua weli ka'na

Chorus: Imali ebe ọdi chua weli ka'na etc.

Medicine man: If you know where it is, look for it and take it; let us go

Chorus: If you know where it is, look for it and take it; let us go.

The opinion of the people at this time is that it is high time the ogbanje searched for her symbol. This

view is expressed in the song. Again, this is a moment of great expectations. The song, therefore, is quick, urging, and urgent. The tempo is also high. The high tempo of singing is equal to that of drumming and hand clapping, depicting the mood of the moment.

At this time, only the chorus is now repeated in rapid succession. The ogbanje responds to this by shaking her body vigorously, and by darting about wildly. This is in response to the song which asks her to look for where her ogbanje is burried and take it quickly. Next, she runs away from the arena so that the medicine man and his group as well as the audience run after her. This stage ushers in a change of scene from the main arena to sub-locales.

Some ogbanjes can be deceptive. An ogbanje may run to a place and kneel down there. This indicates that her ogbanje lies burried at that spot. But as men make to dig the spot, she runs away and kneels at a different place. At this, hopes are raised and dashed. An ogbanje can deceptively lead people to a far away stream, only to lead them back again. The reason is that she is reluctant to have her ogbanje destroyed with 'little effort'.

When an ogbanje starts behaving deceptively, she is not to be commanded. This is because she might

entirely refuse to show where her ogbanje is burried. Instead, the medicine man pets her. He often says to her: 'Chua weli nwam, onye oma. Akatakpo, chua weli nwam ka'na. This means, 'Look for it and take it, my child, the beautiful one. Great one, look for it and take it, my child, and let us go.' The parents of the ogbanje will then promise to buy beautiful things for her. These might be dresses, necklaces, bangles, or shoes. These kind words and promises will make her go to the exact spot where her ogbanje is burried. She feels that these promises will compensate for the ogbanje which she is going to lose.

When the ogbanje finally kneels at the exact spot where her ogbanje is, the medicine man pours some native gin on that spot. This is meant to placate the gods before digging the soil. It is an affirmative dramatization of faith, and belief in the overlordship of gods. After the offering, young men dig the spot to a radius of about three feet, and a depth of three to four feet.

As earth is dug out of the soil, the ogbanje and some female audience start looking for the ogbanje symbol. They scatter the exhumed earth, in search of the symbol. The exposed ogbanjes who participated in the dance drama also search for their ogbanje symbols at the same place.

According to Obi Nwaokocha Uwashili,[8] ogbanje symbol is transferrable. This means that even if one's ogbanje is burried in a far away town or country, the hypnotic dance processes will 'call it' to the place or town of the dance performance. Again, the pouring of native gin on the spot where the ogbanje symbol is burried, is to prevent it from being removed or transferred to another place by evil spirits. The action also attracts the ogbanje symbols of the other dancers to that same place.

In the search for the ogbanje symbol, it is usually the celebrant who sees it first. If perchance another person finds it for her, she would ask to see if that belongs to her. In either case, the ogbanje makes the final frantic attempt to save her ogbanje. She holds the object firmly in her hand. She is exceptionally strong at this time. Even a sick or a very weak person becomes unbelievably strong and active throughout the hypnotic dance drama. This is because she operates on a plane higher than the physical.

As the audience try to take the ogbanje from her, she struggles, beats her body on the ground, rolls and cries. It takes a fairly long time to take it from her. The ceremony reaches its climax when the symbol is finally removed from her.

The audience's participation in the search for the ọgbanje symbol, and their determination to take the symbol from the ọgbanje, demonstrates the society's abhorence of ọgbanje cult. It also dramatizes the communal nature of Igbuzọ where people work as a team for common good.

(v) The Destruction of the Ọgbanje Symbol

This stage is the dramatic denouement. It is the stage when the dramatic action falls from its climactic point after the discovery of the ọgbanje symbol. This stage is marked by the destruction of the ọgbanje symbol. This final action is performed by the medicine man by putting the symbol in the hypnotism pot.

Immediately the ọgbanje symbol is destroyed, the celebrant begins to cry. She cries because all the extra favours and pettings hitherto accorded to her will be withdrawn. These favours are no more necessary because she no longer possesses the power to die at will. As the celebrant cries, her parents, relatives and lovers console and lead her home.

The dramatic significance of the destruction of the ọgbanje symbol is that it puts the celebrant in a state of resolution. She now resolves to abandon her former cult practices, which, of course, will no longer work to

her favour. Indeed, one remarkable feature of this dance drama is the ogbanje's change of attitude towards life. She becomes, hereafter, very healthy, obedient and dutiful.

The entire celebration has cathartic effects on both the celebrant and the audience. To the celebrant, the effect is one of total purgation of her emotional attachment to the spirit cult of ogbanje. Members of the audience are purified of their emotional feelings of abhorence for the evil cult, and the anxiety that mounted before the climactic point of the celebration. They go homenot dancing or shouting, but solemnly, with the inner feeling of fulfilment.

Meanwhile, the exhumed earth is put back into the pit. This is because some other people's ogbanje symbols might have been dug out. Nobody has the liberty to remove another's ogbanje without her consent, or without her performing the required ceremony. Besides, some of the symbols may belong to dead people. The spirits of these dead people might become aggressive and hostile to the living because their ogbanje symbols have been removed without their permission. Thus, this act of putting back the soil into the pit dramatizes the people's religious nature. The Igbuzos recognize, and respect the relationship among the living, the dead and

the unborn. This three-tier relationship constitutes an important part in the entire cosmology of the Igbuzos. The health of this cosmology must be maintained to ensure the continuity of life, and to avoid a general calamity.

C. Conclusion

In this portrayal of Ogbanje Festival, effort has been geared toward highlighting its dramatic nature. The dramatic elements of Ogbanje lie mainly in performance and dramatic action.

For one thing, Ogbanje Festival is an age old occasional celebration. It is occasional in the sense that it is not annual like most festivals of the Igbuzos. It is celebrated whenever the need arises to exorcise one possessed of the evil spirits of ogbanje. The celebration is a re-enactment of the people's belief in spirits and their influence over man. Here, abstract beliefs are made manifest through action in music, song, dance, and ritual or magical exposition.

The story of Ogbanje is chronological. The plot is broken down into dramatic moments or progression. Thus the story line depicts a beginning, a middle and an end, which give a full realization of the story

which the dance drama re-enacts.

This story that the concept of ogbanje tells is acted out in meaningful patterns that are both entertaining and enlightening. The spectacle offered by the performance entertains. On the other hand, the symbolisms of ritual and its enactment offer information as to the belief systems of the Igbuzos.

The Ogbanje is presented as a female cult. This is because only female ogbanjes undergo the complete hypnotic processes of exorcism. Male ogbanjes are very rare. In fact, they are not real ogbanjes. They are merely termed ogbanjes because of their exhibition of certain behavioural traits akin to those of female ogbanjes. These traits include constant illness, stubbornnness, failure in life, and disobedience to parents, elders, and cultural norms. Consequently, they are regarded as being possessed of evil spirits. The man so troubled by malevolent spirits is taken to a sacred place other than a stream. There a medicine man appeases the gods on his behalf.

The medicine man offers a sacrifice of kola-nuts and wine, and slaughters a fowl or goat. The man is then given some herbal preparations for a ritual bath. In most cases, men possessed of evil spirits join secret cults like the Ogbuu.[9]

Notes

1. Obi Nwaokocha is a medicine man of great renown. He is the chief medicine man in the art of ogbanje in Igbuzo. He is the chief in the sense that he is the oldest and more experienced in the art.

2. This type of ogbanje is believed to have a husband in the spirit world. This spirit husband becomes jealous of the ogbanje's earthly husband, and plots her death. Most often, the ogbanje's death at child-birth was an agreement reached with her spirit husband before being born on earth.

3. Enekwe, Onuora Ossie, Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre. Nigeria Magazine 1987. p. 81.

4. This divining material has been fully explained in Chapter I.

5. This is a small elliptical species of calabash, believed to contain magically powerful preparations.

6. Ogbanje is regarded as an evil burden. By carrying the hypnotism pot, she carries this burden of evil for the last time.

7. Horn, Andrew, 'Ritual, Drama and the Theatrical: The Case of Bori Spirit Mediumship', Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book. London: Pitman Press, Bath for Nigeria Magazine, 1981. p.191.

8. Op. cit.

9. Messrs G. Monu, N. Abuah, D. Okonkwo, Obi Nwaokolo and 'Dr' C.O. Nwanze were in agreement that joining a secret cult like the Ogbuu exorcises one of evil spirits through initiations and other ritual observances.

Chapter 5

CONTINUITY AND CHANGES IN IGBUZO COMMUNAL ARTS

1. Introduction

Igbuzọ festivals have undergone remarkable changes since the nineteenth century. The reason is basically due to the advent of Western culture, which has brought about new educational, cultural, and social transformations in Nigeria. Consequently, there has been major transformations in the sociopolitical structure of Igbuzọ. Modes of performance of the festivals of the Igbuzọs in songs, dances, enactments, costuming, and setting in time, have been thus greatly influenced.

2. Historical Background

Toward the second half of the nineteenth century, European domination had started to influence the political, the social, and the cultural ways of Nigeria. Western religion and literacy were two of the important factors in this colonizing crusade. In the Northern, Eastern, and Western Nigeria, Mission schools as instruments of domination, had been established to a considerable level before the turn of the twentieth century. The Western Ibos also suffered from this domineering influence of the West.

As early as the sixteenth century, trade in slaves was contracted in a large scale between the European dealers and the Ibos of the western coast of the Niger. The Asabas, the Igbuzọs, the Abohs, the Okos, the Ogwashi-Ukus, the Isele-Ukus, the Ilahs, and other outlying towns of the west coast flourished in this human traffic. This was before the Lander Brothers, Richard and John, embarked on the exploration of the River Niger in the first half of the seventeenth century. European contact with the Western Ibos is exemplified in the following lines of Sir Alan Burns:

> The brothers left England in January 1830 and landed at Badagri on March 22nd. On June 17th they reached Bussa... but near Asaba they fell in with fifty large armed canoes, manned by a number of Africans dressed, more or less, in European fashion, and flying flags which were passable imitations of the British ensign... The men in the canoes were Ibos, who were up the river to trade....[1]

During this time, the western Ibos had started to wear European clothes, drink European gin, and smoke European tobacco.

Besides, after the abolition of the Slave Trade in the early 17th century, the Western Ibos engaged in palm-oil and palm-kernel trade with the Europeans. During the late 1880s, "the status of Great Britain in the Niger territories had been recognized by the Berlin Conference."[2] Thus, the Royal Niger Company strengthened its commercial

power along the Niger, including the western coastal and interior towns of Asaba, Okoh, Ilah, Igbuzọ, Isele-Uku, and so on.

However, these interior and coastal towns of Asaba, Ilah, Igbuzọ, Okoh, Isele-Uku, Ogwashi-Uku, and others, opposed the amalgamation of the various trading firms "into one powerful Company."[3] This was because they saw the Company as being monopolistic, and thus disrupted free trade. Consequently, the Western Ibos sacked various trading posts in the interior. Their hostile attitude, however, was returned with British reprisal. "In 1882 H.M.S. Flirt destroyed Asaba and some neighbouring towns which had been implicated in the destruction of the Company's store"[4] in Asaba. After this conquest,

> ... steps were at once taken for the establishment of the usual Government services, with headquarters at Asaba. Courts of Justice were instituted, and an armed constabulary, with British officers, was raised for the protection of the territories.[5]

British domination of the Western Ibos was followed by the introduction of Western education. Churches and schools were established at Asaba. The European missionaries coaxed the Ibos in the interior of the Western Niger to send their wards to school at Asaba. At first, only

servants, adopted children, and disobedient children were allowed to attend Sunday Schools and Worship at Asaba.[6] Later, schools and churches were set up in each of the outlying towns. The free born at first saw the new dispensation as a form of past-time. They attended school on Eke, the work-free day. Later, most of them became greatly influenced by the culture of the West. They thus became more regular in schools and church services.

Consequently, local manners in dress began to change as the Igbuzọs began to wear European clothes, ties, shoes and caps. Again, European gin and tobacco became more cherished than their local substitutes.

As Western education gained grounds, some of the Igbuzọ people began to detest traditional ways of life. They became so inductrinated by the missionaries that they began to look down on traditional rituals and festivals as 'ways of the devil'.

Writing on the colonial situation in Africa, Michael Crowther avers that "colonial propaganda has added legends of the moral and social superiority of European civilization."[7] He further asserts that the colonial era witnessed "a common West African predicament, involving important African initiatives and continuities with pre-colonial African history."[8] This

trend that Crowther mentions resulted in the change in the life style of the Igbuzos who began to cherish European ways.

Church concerts, hymns, and Western films, were regarded as more civilized than the traditional festivals and other folk entertainments. Instead of the usual story telling sessions, converts sing hymns, or watch concerts, or attend film shows. During this period, Christian morality plays and re-enactment of key Christian festivals like the birth and crucifixion of Christ were rampant. These mission-oriented concerts were seen by the Western educated elites as "symbol of status and of culture."[9] These alien ways and some of the elites' attitude towards them began to affect the traditional ways of life of the Igbuzos.

3. Sociopolitical Transformation

A. Age-group System

European contact with the Igbuzos has destabilized the age-grade structure. Most Western educated elites see themselves as superior to their non-literate counterparts. They rarely participate in age-group activities like community sanitation, digging of graves for dead relatives, and other special tasks decreed by the general will. This non-challant attitude has created disaffection

among members of different age-groups who feel cheated and degraded. Again, the pursuit of Western education, and white-collar jobs have resulted in mass migration of people to urban towns and cities. The children of these migrants cannot identify with the activities of members of their age-group. In fact, they don't belong to age-groups.

Consequent to this lack of interest in age-group activities, age-group as a social force for mobilization of labour is at present completely dormant in Igbuzọ. Age-group system is now only a historical topic. The result is that the communal significance of age-group system in terms of community development is destroyed. Community work is now seen and executed as "no man's business."

B. Architecture

There has been a drastic change in the traditional method of building houses. The old method of mud and thatch has been completely replaced with modern brick, or cement block and zinc houses. The old communal free labour has yielded to the modern method of specialized skill and paid labour. As a result of this, the free communal spirit whereby members of the community team up to help their kinsmen to erect buildings has been

killed, What we now have is a destruction of team spirit, and a move towards more highly Western individualistic spirit.

C. Agriculture

Western Industrial Revolution has contributed immensely to the transformation in agriculture in Igbuzọ. This industrial revolutionary trend has encouraged capitalist tendencies among farmers. There is thus a shift of emphasis from subsistence farming to commercial production of food crops. This new commercial tendency is fraught with many problems within the cultural milieu of Igbuzọ.

Firstly, commercialization demands larger acres of farm lands. As farmers scramble for larger acres, conflicts often arise among kinsmen thus, dampening communal ethos. Secondly, commercialization demands new methods of farming including the use of fertilizer and pesticide. The application of these farm tools have resulted in higher crop yield. As a result, there is less dependence on gods to make bumper harvests possible. Most of the people of the Igbuzọs no longer have implicit confidence in festivals since modern implements can perform the work of the gods even more satisfactorily.

Thirdly, the traditional method of voluntary

assistance has been wiped out following the birth of commercial rivalry. It was customary for kinsmen to team up and do voluntary work in the farm of a village head, or a sick or dead relative. Nowadays, the tendency is toward individual, rather than group fulfilment. Selfless service has been displaced by a sharpened sense of egotism and unhealthy rivalry over one's community members.

D. Religion

As Western education gained considerable influence in Nigeria, missionary propagandist machine was set into motion against traditional African religion and its adherents. Traditional African Religion was tagged fetish, crude, and devilish. These name tags which became European slogans of domination were echoed and re-echoed by Christian converts. The result was that most people abandoned their traditional mode of worship for the white-man's religion. However, some of the converts were wont to go secretly to medicine men for assistance in their material and spiritual problems.

Furthermore, there was a national turn of religious events as Nigerians tried to merge Traditional African Religion with Christianity, in the latter half of the

19th century. During the course of Christian evangelism in Africa, some African converts began to assert independence in the conduct of church affairs. This was initially necessitated by the growing discrimination in colonies and churches. White missionaries asserted superiority by occupying top posts. They feared that the emerging African clergy would displace them. Calvin remarks that "the distinction between missionaries and local workers tended to neglect the large place of the African pastors, teachers and evangelists."[10]

However, the African clergy and converts had acquired sufficient experience in the conduct of church matters. By 1873, Nigerian Christians had formed a "Society for the promotion of Religion and Education in Lagos." They were in need of a "native pastorate" as in Sierra Leone.[11]

Furthermore, the Bible had started to be translated into the vernacular. An example was Samuel Ajai Crowther's translation of the Bible into Yoruba. Again, hymns were sung in the local language. Concerts were conducted in the vernacular. Several church proceedings were adapted to suit the tastes of teaming local converts. "Such churches were trying to incorporate aspects of African ideas of worship into their liturgies...." "Sects arose under African prophets who were anxious to relate Christianity to current West African beliefs... which the

Christian missions tended to ignore."[12] According to Calvin Rieber, the African churches "grew up... in response to the desire for a church where Africans may feel at home. This desire also shaped the worship, beliefs, and practices of the traditional churches to make these churches distinctly African."[13] Music and dance form essential elements of the liturgies of these traditional churches.

This national trend of Christian religious changes spread to Igbuzọ, but became more prominently felt immediately after the Nigerian Civil War of the late 1960s. The importance of these changes in the social transformation of Igbuzọ is that many people joined the new African church called Cherubim and Seraphim because of its many attractions.

In the first place, the movement encouraged certain traditional African religious practices like invocation of spirits, fortune telling, preparation of good-luck and protective charms, and so on. Besides, members were free to consult oracles, and to participate in traditional festivals and other communal activities. The result of this open mindedness of the new church is that Christianity, as symbolized by it, existed along side traditional African Religion. In spite of the licence in the new African Church on matters of spiritual practices,

some people show lukewarm attitude towards Igbuzọ traditional festivals, and other communal observances. They feel that the 'new God' can solve their problems more readily than the god of their traditional religion.

E. Politics

Apart from the changes that occurred in the social structure of Igbuzọ, changes also manifested in the political angle. In the political hierarchy of Igbuzọ,[14] the Council of Chiefs called Ndi Eze was the hardest hit by the wave of change. In the early 1980s, some Western educated elites used their financial influence to become members of the Council of Chiefs. It was rumoured that their aim was to usurp the power of the Diokpa, and unseat the iliterate members of the Council of Chiefs. They were able to mobilize some of their literate colleagues in each village, who attempted to influence their village heads to accord these new entrants into the Council of Chiefs the highest respect in the land. Most of these entrants addressed themselves with bogus olinzele[15] titles that give them the aura of great political power. One of them almost declared himself a king, the highest title in the land, which ceased to exist since the crushing of Ezesi's dictatorship.[16]

The actions of these Western educated elite, however, met with great opposition from group of concerned people of Igbuzọ who felt that the unity of Igbuzọ was at stake. As a result of this resistance, hot debates and wranglings ensued between the supporters of a united Igbuzọ, who sided with the Diokpa in Council and the group that supported the Western educated members of the Council of Chiefs. The latter styled themselves "New Igbuzọ", and styled the former "Old Igbuzọ" because of their conservative attitudes.

It took some years, however, to reconcile the two warring factions. Nevertheless, the conflict has worsened the ailing communal unity of Igbuzọ.

F. Justice

In the area of justice, the Ndi Ichie is the highest Court of Appeal in Igbuzọ. If a case proves so tough that it cannot be settled in a village or town meeting, it is referred to the Ndi Ichie for final hearing and judgement. Nowadays, the Police has usurped this prerogative of the Ndi Ichie. Most Igbuzọ people now shun the traditional court, and proceed to make redress in modern courts of law. They prefer to lodge even simple cases with the Police, rather than with the village head. This again has weakened inter-personal relationships

as well as the sense of community, as people are locked up in Police cells for days for wronging their Kinsmen.

G. Language

With the spread of Western educational influence, new lexical items gained entry into Igbuzọ lexicon. Some of these new words have English language origin. They include words like polisi, alimanti, kotu, baliti, siga, and miliki, which mean police, helmet, coat, belt, cigarette, and milk respectively. Some others are ndi ovibọ, ndi ọcha, ndi ami and ndi gomanti, which mean modern people, Europeans, the Army, and the government respectively. There are countless other words which are corrupt derivatives of English words.

Some of these words, like ndi ọcha, are employed to ridicule the pretentiousness of the Western educated class. The usage means, "those who behave as if they are Europeans." Also, the Igbuzọs often describe absurd things and situations with an expression in which alimanti or helmet is the chief word. The expression is alimanti kpu okpu n'isi. This means, "Mr helmet that wears a cap on his head." Perhaps, the strength of the expression lies in the toughness of the object, helmet. Thus the absurdity of a situation or thing is ironically called 'tough' that is, unbelievable. Such

an absurdity is what only a shameless miscreant can perform or indulge in.

The introduction of English words, according to Mr John Ashinze, has weakened the power of language to unite the Igbuzọs. He argues that some Igbuzọ people use these foreign words to insult those who do not understand them. Some others use them to keep some neighbours out of their discussions thus feigning superiority. The result is that a lot of ill-will has developed in Igbuzọ polity thus weakening communal ethos.

4. Changes in Songs, Dances, and Enactments

A. Songs and Dances

Song is one of the forces of communal integration in Igbuzọ. This is because songs, in their wordings, tone modulations and rhythm, convey the people's hopes, aspirations, sorrows, and even fears. Therefore, the changes in the entire polity of Igbuzọ resulted in new songs. Some are confrontational in their denunciation of evil. Some others carry emotional appeal for the re-ordering of Igbuzọ society. These songs are so many, and are often created at the spur of the moment that any attempt to give them individual names and wordings will be misleading.

Again, several musical groups sprang up after the Nigerian Civil War. These groups derived their songs from folktales. There was, therefore, an attempt at resuscitating folk-songs that had faded away with the advent of Christianity and electricity. The songs were meant to remind the Igbuzọs of their past, and to console them on the hardships and sorrows of the Civil War. There were no war songs. Songs were mainly instructive and recreational.

However, the musical instruments used were a mixture of modern and traditional types. Amplifiers, loudspeakers, microphones and others were combined with local drums, gongs and flute to produce beautiful melody. The emergence of these musical groups marked the era of commercial musical entertainment in Igbuzọ. These musical groups are invited, and are paid heavily to feature at burial, marriage and other traditional ceremonies. Moreover, their music has been waxed into records for commercial purposes.

Apart from Iwu, Ine and Ọgbanje, there are no set dancing patterns for festivals and other ceremonies. Everyone dances to the tune of music, and tries to excel others. Thus, there is no remarkable change in this direction.

B. Enactments

Certain changes have occurred in the area of enactments. For example, moonlight tales in which allegorical figures and events are enacted are fast fading away. Moonlight stories and plays are now being replaced with electric-light and television shows.

Certain ritual enactments like ịju-uno or house cleansing, ili iyi ahu or oath-taking for peace and good will, and many others have faded away since the end of the Nigerian Civil War. These activities have been replaced with the Christian holy water for house cleansing, and oath by the 'word of God' or the holy Bible.

An enactor of ritual libation now seldom prays for greater agricultural yield. It is now the fashion to pray for money, the success of his children and relatives in Western education, and in ọlu oyibo or government work.

5. Changes in the Performance of Igbuzọ Festivals

With the introduction of European clothes and manner of dressing, changes in costuming began to occur. Instead of the use of locally woven cloth bands, the Ezeiwus now use modern textile materials to hold in place

the numerous white feathers stuck to their hair. They also use same to fasten their mpe or loin cloth. They use these modern textile cloth bands or scarfs because they have bright colours that add glamour to their entire outfit.

Moreover, village dancers no longer tie locally woven wrappers. They prefer modern textile ones. In addition, they wear trousers or shorts, and tie their wrappers upon them. They also wear shirts and blouses of foreign technology. Some of them even dance with shoes and sandals on, which hitherto was not the practice. They feel that this modern way of costuming is more dignifying than the old.

However, research has shown that these changes are not altogether bad. Some are beneficial while most of them are anathema to Igbuzọ local festivals. According to Mr Ohanugo,[17] the use of modern textile materials, and Western-style clothes pose no problems to the future of Igbuzọ festivals. These things make people look good and more presentable in a fast changing world. However, he is of the view that the use of shoes and sandals while dancing negates the symbolism of dancing barefooted.

Another source[18] welcomes the use of modern textile materials. According to him, it is the tying of the

wrapper that matters. He adds that there has never been do's and don'ts in the type of textile materials to be worn. However, he says that "the ogbanjes must make sure that the clothes they tie are white or red. They must tie them in the approved fashion. The same goes for all village dancers. The clothes they tie must be don in the accepted fashion." Nevertheless, he opines that it will be sacrilageous for the Ezeiwus to change their age-old attire in the name of 'modernity'. Happily, there has never been any change in this direction. Their most important costumes are the mpe or short loin cloth, and white feathers stuck to their hair. These must be adhered to. Any other additions do not daint the sacredness of Iwu.

The function of festivals, especially Iwu, as a means of re-union and mate-selection has been displaced. The Igbuzos now prefer Christmas as a more fitting period to re-unite with their friends and relatives. They now use the occasion of Christmas to select mates and perform traditional weddings.

Again, Western infilteration has affected setting in time of, and massive turn-out at festivals. Many youths have drifted to different towns and cities in search of white-collar jobs. Some of them are in

schools and universities, which are hundreds of miles from Igbuzọ. All this, coupled with the present day high rate of inflation, prevents many of the Igbuzọ people from coming home to celebrate local festivals.

Some Igbuzọ people feel that these local festivals are outdated, or even 'devilish'. Christian converts are threatened with excommunication by the religious leaders of their churches. Consequently, most converts detest the performance of Ọgbanje Festival, for example. They look at it as an unholy fete that should not be performed, or even watched by Christians. Instead, they join spiritual churches like the Aladura or Cherubim and Seraphim where evil spirits can be exorcised through Western-oriented rituals. All this has affected the performance of local festivals in two ways.

Firstly, turn-out for these festivals is very low. Only the elders and school children at home, and some of the Igbuzọs who do not live far away from home participate in the local festivals.

Secondly, timing for some of these festivals has been affected. Elders now prefer to fix the festivals during school holidays in order to record a high turn-out. For example, the Umuodafe village has shifted the setting in time of its Iwu to the Christmas season.

For one thing, all its Ezeiwus and some Enems are civil servants who reside in cities like Lagos. Again, Christmas is the period when the Igbuzọs come home in their numbers. Consequently, the village now celebrates Iwu on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of every December. The result is that Iwu and Christmas are now celebrated simultaneously. This has, in recent times, made the Iwu of the Umuodafes more popular than that of the Ogbeoweles, because of the massive turn-out.

Another area of change is in that of social entertainment. Instead of the use of esimesi or local gin for merriment, modern substitutes like White Horse, Gordon gin and others are used. Again, the Igbuzọ people prefer beer and soft drinks to palm-wine and esimesi during refreshments. However, an anornimous source has opined that there is nothing wrong in the use of modern brew for entertainment and libation. He argues that almost the same processes of fermentation and distillation are followed in the manufacture of local and modern gin. The only difference is that the modern type is sometimes coloured, and is more refined.

Furthermore, the place of enlightenment in the performance of Igbuzọ local festivals has either been lost to, or taken for granted by the present generation.

They have a superficial understanding of Igbuzọ local festivals. To them, only the entertainment side is all that matters. The symbolisms of ritual and social enactments, dance patterns, gestures, songs, items of refreshment like the ukpa nut, and many others are incomprehensible to the present generation of youths. Western culture has created this generation gap between the elders and the youths. The youths are either in Western oriented schools, or far away from home in quest of livelihood. They have little or no time to acquire traditional African education.

6. Conclusion

The foregoing has examined two key areas of transformation in Igbuzọ. These are sociopolitical and the performance modes of festivals. From the analysis, it is clear that the changes in the performance of festivals are predicated upon the changes in the sociopolitical polity of Igbuzọ.

The sociopolitical changes portray how much the sense of community in Igbuzọ has been affected by the inception of Western culture. The result is that communal life is more or less dead in Igbuzọ. The sense of individuality now overrides the sense of community. Emphasis is thus placed on "my own and

family" instead of "our own and community." Communal life, and the extended family system have, in most parts, shrunk into smaller nuclear family groups. The result is increased daily cases of open quarrels, envy, and cases of witchcraft against neighbours. Families whose children are rich have become daily targets of physical and psychic attacks. It has thus become increasingly risky for kinsmen to gather and dine together as of old.

These foregoing developments have greatly affected the performance of festivals. Most communal functions are now performed without group fulfilment in mind. They are performed as a matter of formality, and for selfish interests.

The greatest threat to the future of Iwu has been the acquisition of Western Education. Mr Nkpulu agrees that Western Education is good in order to cope with the social demands of the present world. However, he wonders what will become of Iwu when all the elders have gone to join their ancestors. Most of the younger generation do not know the purpose of Iwu. They don't even know how to take the dance steps.

Although the Umuodafes have shifted Iwu performance to the Christmas season in order to ensure massive participation, a time will come when the growing generation will take it to be a Christmas celebration. By then, the aim of Iwu would have been defeated.

Notes

1. Burns, Alan, History of Nigeria. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972. pp. 92-3.

2. Ibid., p. 158.

3. Ibid., p. 159.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Five people including Mr J.O. Ashinze, Mr Nkpulu and Mr Ohanugo who were interviewed attested to this point.

7. Crowther, Michael, Colonial West Africa. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1978. p. 232.

8. Ibid., p. 233.

9. Echeruo, Michael J.C., "Concert and Theatre in Late Nineteenth Century Lagos", Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book. London: Pitman Press, Bath for Nigeria Magazine, 1981. p. 357.

10. Rieber, Calvin, "Traditional Christianity as an African Religion," African Religions, (ed), Newell S. Booth, Jr. New York: Nok Publishers International, 1977, p. 264.

11. Ibid., p. 267.

12. Crowther, Michael, op. cit., pp. 254-55.

13. Rieber, Calvin, op. cit., p. 269. (He cites the views from one of his seminar papers titled "Distinctive Marks of the Church in Africa," United Theological Seminar Bulletin, LXIII.)

14. See Chapter I of this thesis.

15. Olinzele means chieftaincy, an adjective that qualifies a particular grade of traditional title.

16. Ezesi was the last king of Igbuzọ. He was dethroned by the people of Igbuzọ when he became a dictator.

17. Mr Ohanugo is a herbalist. He is versed in the traditions of the Igbuzọs.

18. The supplier of this information asked to remain anonymous.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis explores the dramatic extent of some of the traditional art forms of the Igbuzọs. In this consideration of Igbuzọ art, it is argued that traditional African theatre is unique in form, content, and purpose. This uniqueness is underscored by the phenomenological experiences of the African. So, an understanding of the moving spirit of African ways, their dramatic limits, and their aesthetic strength to command communal involvement can be identified in the people's entire world view. The bedrock of this cosmology is religion.

Religion and ritual processes constitute the principle root of traditional African theatre. The moment festivals lose their ritual essence, they cease to be aesthetically satisfying, and both the ritual and the social aspects of festivals collapse. This is because the link between the living and the dead is broken. Thus, the community will no longer feel bound by traditional norms to observe these festivals.

It is on the strength of the above that characterization is an insignificant dramatic factor in the Igbuzọ festivals of Ọgbanje, Iwu, Ine, and Ulọ. Characters are often flat. Research carried out in this study showed

that the communal nature of African art forms is responsible for this lack of character development. Traditional African drama was found to be an expression of culture. The community is not there to celebrate individuals, but their collective destiny.

This study also shows that there is a strong element of impersonation in Igbuzọ festivals. Costuming enhances this dramatic aspect. For example, all the actions and costumes of the Ezeiwus are imitations of the actions of the ancient sages, which enabled them to establish closer touch with the unseen forces. In Ine Festival it is not only persons that are imitated, but also forces and symbols of regeneration. The Ezeine and his opposite number impersonate the positive and the negative principles of creation, respectively. The father factor of life and production is supplemented by the negative polarity. The Ezeine symbolizes the sun which impregnates the elements of the soil, symbolized by the mother of Ine, for procreative purposes. Their costumes help to establish a state of holiness which makes this impersonation effective and complete.

This study also shows that certain dramatic elements in Igbuzọ art lie in symbolism. Festivals assume meaningful patterns through symbolic representations. These are

portrayed in food, gesture, music, dance, costume, and other forms of enactments. This work reveals story lines in food and gesture symbols. Ukpa nut and ji-iwu tell the story of the difficulties of earthly life. On the other hand, the journeys of the Ezeiwus tell the story of diligence and perseverance. While simple food items subtly denounce laziness in a predominantly agricultural community, gestures encourage dedication and optimism. Thus, from food and gesture symbols the purposes of dramatic enactments are revealed. These representations have the dual power of entertainment and enlightenment. The festivals do not have aesthetic appeal alone, but they also teach the community moral lessons. These lessons are for those who are ready to learn them. They are not for trivial pastime. This is why the lessons are veiled so that the ardent student of life has to decode the symbols. To understand these lessons makes them impressive and lasting.

Some critics of African drama hold the view that most traditional African art forms are lacking in dialogue. The Igbuzọ festivals negate this erroneous thinking because music and dance are forms of dialogue. They are thoughts, feelings, and words expressed through sensual images for certain dramatic effects. Music directs dance

steps, making them systematic and purposeful. Music also praises, interrogates, and even warns the actors on their responsibilities. The chief actors or dancers respond through symbolic gestures. Thus through the media of music and dance, participants communicate with one another.

This form of communication is dramatically significant in that it quickens dramatic action. The boredom which speech would otherwise elicit is completely avoided. This is one of the reasons why festivals last for long periods of time without creating boredom.

Besides, there are occasions when verbal communication is used during festivals. Here dialogue is timed and executed when it cannot noticeably slow down dramatic action. In Ọgbanje, for example, the medicine man and the ọgbanje often engage in dialogue to produce some dramatic effect necessary for the unfoldment of dramatic plot. The dialogue, however, is not prolonged. Rather it is short, and stops as soon as it has produced the required dramatic effect.

It is also argued that Igbuzọ festivals do not give room for such stricture as found in scripted plays. Festivals allow wide scope of resourcefulness in songs and dances. In the exuberant folk entertainment side of Iwu, for example, dancers are expected to research into the activities of the past few years, to dig up

materials for their songs. Songs of criticism are made for those who have fallen short of the moral standards of the community. There are no special songs in Iwu that attack vices and crimes. Occasion, and the nature of a person's guilt determine the wordings of the songs. Such songs are designed in such a way that their rhythm falls within the normal rhythm of gong-play.

Dance steps may be altered from the set dancing mode, during the exuberant social aspect of Iwu. This often happens when a person is being ridiculed. If it is a thief that falls within the focus of mockery, his nefarious activities are demonstrated in mock show. While music is being played, a participant takes some mocking dance steps to the open. Adhering to the rhythm of music, he goes stealthily to a corner. There he pretends to steal something. He then comes out in the same furtive manner. He looks left and right, and smiles in his cleverness. As he congratulates himself in mock dance, the audience shout 'thief! thief!' At this, he places both hands on his head in 'shame'. The participant's gestures here differ from the normal tilling dance, to create a particular dramatic effect.

In this work, it is argued that festivals follow definite dramatic procedure. In the first place,

festivals are given long periods of advertisement during which preparations are made for the celebration of the festivals. This advertisement is often made through the medium of the town crier. Again, these festivals are properly rehearsed before performance.

In addition, most annual festivals of the Igbuzọs have fixed arenas. The yearly celebrations take place there. The chief actors and ritualistic officers have specific stations within the arenas. However, this is not the case with Ọgbanje which is an occasional festival. The place of the performance of Ọgbanje is determined by a medicine man through divination.

Another noticeable feature of Igbuzọ festivals is that their performances are not restricted to fixed locales. Performances are often carried outside the main arenas. It can thus be deduced that there is complex change of scene in Igbuzọ traditional festivals. Change of scene is 'complex' in the sense that scenes do not only change within the actual arena, but are also located in sub-locales.

However, this complex change of scene does not admit lapses among events. Performances run in one continuous trend. This is the case with Ọgbanje Festival where change of scene is complex, yet the story line

depicts a beginning, a middle, and an end. Anticlimaxes do occur, however, in the exuberant folk entertainment side of Iwu. Anticlimax occurs here when a household entertains dancers. Music and dancing will be suspended while the head of the household addresses the dancers.

Another aspect of Igbuzọ festivals is audience participation. The audience participates in singing and dancing. They also congratulate chief actors with praises, good wishes, and gifts when they dance past. However, it is not always that all the members of the audience are deeply involved in celebrations. There are visitors among the audience, who cannot perform the dance steps. These do not participate. They merely watch. Again, audience participation is sometimes momentary especially when they come into the arena to congratulate actors. They withdraw into their spectator-role soon after such congratulations are made. This nullifies assertions that festivals cease to be drama as the audience becomes integrated into the ceremony because there is no longer an audience to watch the ceremony. It seems, therefore, that audience participation needs a clear-cut definition: Licence to participate, and to withdraw at will.

Finally, this thesis highlights the changes that have occured in the polity and socio-cultural pattern of Igbuzọ community. These changes have influenced the performance of the festivals of the Igbuzọs in many ways. Firstly, there is the area of timing. The original schedule for some of these festivals has been adjusted to suit the changing situation in Igbuzọ community. In spite of this adjustment, turn-out is still low because of the hindrance which European culture has occasioned in religious, vocational and educational pursuits of the people.

Costuming, however, is an area in which European influence has benefited the festivals of the Igbuzọs. Nowadays, flashy textile materials are used for the performance of the festivals of the Igbuzọs. The result is that these colourful materials add glamour to the occasions. However, it is observed that the wearing of shoes and sandals during festivals negate the fundamental principle of dancing barefooted.

It is also argued that these festivals have substantially lost purpose as a result of cultural changes. Western literacy has overshadowed traditional African education, and this has tended to alienate the Igbuzọs

from their culture. As a result, most of the significant lessons and the import of festivals are considerably lost to generations of youths in Igbuzọ.

APPENDIX I

SONGS

Chapter Two Page 71

Lead Singer:	Njeko asoka uso	Corpulation is pleasant
All:	Njeko asoka uso	Corpulation is pleasant
Lead Singer:	Iladi asoka uso	Fornication is pleasant
All:	Iladi asoka uso	Fornication is pleasant
Lead Singer:	Mana uke dia	But there is danger in it
All:	Mana uke dia	But there is danger in it
Lead Singer:	Yaka (name) ji tulu ime na be nna-a	That is why (name) became pregnant in her father's house
All:	Yaka (name) ji tulu ime na be nna-a	That is why (name) became pregnant in her father's house

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Lead Singer:	Onye nwe uno anyi abia	Owner of the house we have come
All:	Onye nwe uno anyi abia	Owner of the house we have come
Lead Singer:	Nwa anyi mucha amucha	A child well bred
All:	Nwa anyi mucha amucha	A child well bred
Lead Singer:	Me ngwa-ngwa na oge na'ga	Be quick, time is running out
All:	Me ngwa-ngwa na oge na'ga	Be quick, time is running out

Lead Singer:	Ife anyi bu eshika	What we carry is enormous
All:	Ife anyi bu eshika	What we carry is enormous
Lead Singer:	Ebe anyi jeko eshika	Where we are going are many
All:	Ebe anyi jeko eshika	Where we are going are many
Lead Singer:	Kọbu icho ka'nyi kwua	Do you want us to say?
All:	Kọbu icho ka'nyi kwua	Do you want us to say?
Lead Singer:	Anyi eje ga ekwu	We want to say
All:	Anyi eje ga ekwu	We want to say
Lead Singer:	Nwai fu osia je da?	That your son/daughter, how did he/she go?
All:	Nwai fu osia je da?	That your son/daughter, how did he/she go?
Lead Singer:	Ndi 'police' bu osi-ali	The police are our witness
All:	Ndi 'police' bu osi-ali	The police are our witness
Lead Singer:	Ndi 'court' bu osi-ali	The court is our witness
All:	Ndi 'court' bu osi-ali	The court is our witness
Lead Singer:	Oshi ngwo-o-o-o!	Bloody thief!
All:	Oshi ngwo-o-o-o!	Bloody thief!

Lead Singer:	Achakpo, kwulu, kwulu, kpa kpa de!	Achakpo, stand, stand, kpa kpa de!
All:	Achakpo, kwulu, kwulu, kpa kpa de!	Achakpo, stand, stand, kpa kpa de!

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Lead Singer:	(Name) iga adi-o	(Name) may you stay alive
All:	(Name) iga adi-o	(Name) may you stay alive
Lead Singer:	Ife ama mei	No harm will befall you
All:	Ife ama mei	No harm will befall you
Lead Singer:	Ọlui ga na ga-o	Your work will flourish
All:	Ọlui ga na ga-o	Your work will flourish
Lead Singer:	Ife imena ọga-o	Whatever you do will prosper
All:	Ife imena ọga-o	Whatever you do will prosper
Lead Singer:	Chukwu chebei-o gọziai-o, gọziai-o	May God protect you, bless you, bless you.
All:	Chukwu chebei-o gọziai-o, gọziai-o	May God protect you, bless you, bless you.

Page 58

Igọ ọha! Igọ ọha! Igọ ọha etc. Dance for all.

Page 104

Achala esika nni	Achala can cook well
Achala esika nni-o-o-o	Achala can cook well
Ma nwa Nwangbọ bu ọnu-o	But Nwangbọ's child is starving
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

Page 105

Nkwuya nwa Obi Egbe!	Nkwuya daughter of Chief Egbe!
Nkwuya nwa Obi Egbe!	Nkwuya daughter of Chief Egbe!
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o
Nkwuya nwa Obi Egbe!	Nkwuya daughter of Chief Egbe!
Nkwuya welikwa nwa'yọ	Nkwuya take it easy
Na ogoli ji ọgọ onwea	Because a maiden's honour is in her hands
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

Page 106

Odega Nwangbọ o-o-o	Odega Nwangbọ o-o-o
Yaji Ichami bọ egwu-o	Honoured a dance with Ichami
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

Page 107

Ogbechina nwa onye-da-ibe-azọa	Ogbechina son of one-falls-mates-lift-him-up
o-o-o	o-o-o
Ogbechina nwa onye-da-ibe-azọa	Ogbechina son of one-falls-mates-lift-him-up
o-o-o	o-o-o
Ogbechina jikebe na ọgọ onye di echea	Ogbechina, thank you because one's generosity is remembered after him.
o-o-o-o-o-o-o	o-o-o-o-o-o-o

Page 108

Lead Singer: Ine, Ine, Ine nwaogbei-o

All: Ine, Ine, Ine nwaogbei-o

etc.

Lead Singer:	Onye ndi si anyi agana?	Who said we should not pass?
	Anyi aga-o	We are passing
Chorus:	O-O-O-Ooo ah! Ine-o	
Lead Singer:	Agadi ji mbenukwu ete egwuo-o	The old dance with mbenukwu
Chorus:	O-O-O-Ooo ah! Ine-o etc.	

Chapter Three

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Medicine man: Ọgbanje ebili ilusia igwam-o ebili-o
Ọgbanje the wave, when you have finished work, tell me, oh! wave

Chorus: Ọgbanje ebili-o Ọgbanje ebili-o
Ọgbanje the wave, Ọgbanje the wave
etc.

Page 144

Medicine man: Ọgbanje bulu ugagbe ọna enyo onwea
Ọgbanje bulu ugagbe ọna enyo onwea
Ebele emea-o

Chorus: Ọgbanje bulu ugagbe ọna enyo onwea
Ebele emea-o

Medicine man: When ọgbanje carries the mirror she looks at herself
When ọgbanje carries the mirror she looks at herself
It is a pity

Chorus: When ọgbanje carries the mirror she looks at herself
It is a pity

Page 150

Medicine man: Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu
Ọgbanje nwa si na itulu ime ya'na-o-o
Elegede

Chorus: Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu-o elegede
Ọgbanje nwa Onokwu-o elegede
etc.

Medicine man: Ọgbanje, child of Onokwu (Onokwu is the name of a benevolent deity)
Ọgbanje, it is said that when you become pregnant you go
Elegede

Chorus: Ọgbanje, child of Onokwu-o elegede
Ọgbanje, child of Onokwu-o elegede

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Medicine man: Imali ebe ọdi chua weli ka'na

Chorus: Imali ebe ọdi chua weli ka'na

Medicine man: If you know where it is, look for it and take it; let us go

Chorus: If you know where it is, look for it and take it; let us go.

APPEANDIX 2

INCANTATIONS

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Ijiji mali ebe ife nwu	The fly that knows where something dead is
Mmili adi amanyu ọkunmọ	Rain does not extinguish the fire-fly
Ebugọ-o! ga'gwam ife ọbu	Ebugo! Come and tell me what it is
Alusi mmili-o! ga'gwam ife ọbu	Spirits of the water! Come and tell me what it is
Ikuku-o! ga'gwam ife ọbu	O wind! come and tell me what it is
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o

Page 139

Amuzọ-o!	Those who do not know the way
Bia nuo! Bia nuo!	Come all! Come all!
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o
Alusi mmili-o!	Spirit of the water
Gbata ọsọ-o! ga enene-o	Oh! run here! and see
Ikoko mmili-o!	Oh, waves of the water!
Gbata nu-o!	Oh, run here, all!
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o
Bia ga ene-o	Come and see
O-ho-ho-o-o-o	O-ho-ho-o-o-o
Osi mmili bia uwa!	He that comes to the world from the water!
Gbanata ga ene-o!	Oh! Run back and see!

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEWEES

1. 'Dr' C.O. Nwanze is a herbalist. He is about 48 years old. Date of interview: 4th February, 1989.

2. Mr D. Okonkwo is a carpenter/farmer. He is about 56 years old. Date of interview: 21st September, 1989.

3. Mr G. Monu is a farmer. He is about 55 years old. Date of interview: 7th March, 1989.

4. Mr John Ashinze is very versed in the traditions of the Igbuzọs. Since birth, he was attached to his uncle who was a renowned medicine man, and village head. Mr Ashinze is about 47 years old. Date of interview: 26th December, 1989.

5. Mr N. Abuah is a teacher. He is about 50 years old. Date of interview: 12th June, 1989.

6. Obi Nwaokocha Uwashili is the oldest medicine man in Igbuzọ. He is a chief and the village head of Umuisagba. He is about 87 years old. Date of interview: 12th February, 1989.

7. Obi Nwokolo is the village head of Ogbeowele village. He is about 86 years old. Date of interview: 19th September, 1989.

8. Mr T.N. Nkpulu is regarded by many as a sage. He is very versed in the traditions of the Igbuzọs. He has been a village adviser on socio-historical issues to subsequent village heads of his village. He is about 70 years old. Date of interview: 14th February, 1989.

9. Mr U. Ohanugo is a renowned medicine man. He is about 70 years old. Date of interview: 8th March, 1989.

10. Many others, including those associated with important secret cults asked to remain anonymous. They were interviewed in 1989.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This reference list contains explanations of literary terms used in this thesis.

Actors: prominent players or enactors of myth or legend on the stage or arena.

Advertisement: a public notice about an impending festival.

Aesthetic appeal: the degree to which performances act upon human emotions and sentiments.

Aesthetic impressions: same as aesthetic appeal.

Aesthetic quality: power of performances to arouse actors and the audience emotionally.

African thetrical arts: Indigenous festivals and performances that have dramatic relevance.

Antagonistic forces: supernatural elements believed to cause harm to man and societal prgress.

Arena: a place of performance of local arts and festivals.

Assonances: agreement of the accented vowels in words.

Attire: Costume don by performers.

Atmosphere: the dominant influence or festive mood that pervades the arena.

Atonement ritual: a traditional rite of expiation.

Audience: town's people and strangers who gather to witness a local performance, and sometimes participate in it.

Audience participation: the volition or right of the spectators to join in the celebration of a festival or any other form of local art.

Beliefs: religious faith, conviction and acceptance of something, place, person or idea as sacred truth or actuality.

Catharsis: purification of emotions.

Cast: assigning roles or parts in a performance

Cause and effect progression: the chronological rise of dramatic action, each action being necessitated by a preceding one.

Challenge: a point in dramatic action when the protagonist confronts the antagonist.

Chants: a melodious composition that is recited rhythmically.

Characters: principal actors in a dramatic art.

Characterization: delineation of the literary profile of a performer.

Chronology: orderly arrangement of dramatic events.

Climax: the highest point of dramatic action.

Clowning: use of gestures, donning of attire, and faking of body parts to amuse spectators.

Comic asides: acts that cause laughter, but which are not strictly part of a major performance.

Comic relief: release from suspense resulting from clowning.

Complication: dramatic rise of intense action following challenge.

Confidant (male) Confidante (female): A prominent participant or actor on whom the protagonist depends for the success of his/her role in a performance.

Conventional roles: Customarily fixed parts acted by performers.

Coquettish dance: body movements exhibited before an actual dance meant to attract the attention of, and court the admiration of the audience.

Cosmic forces: supernatural forces of the universe.

Costumes: attires worn by actors or participants.

Culture: the totality of all the clusters of local ways like vocations, arts, music, songs, dance, customs, traditions, religious practices, belief systems, festivals etc.

Dance drama: performances that embody music, songs, and dance.

Denouement: a turning point or a point of resolution where the lessons inherent in the performance is finally unravelled.

Dialogue: a conversation between two, or among many actors or performers.

Direct address: calling a thing or a person by its/his/her name.

Disguise: faking of body parts and the use of make-up to satirise, and to cause laughter.

Drama: festivals, myth or legend put into action through enactment in an arena. It embodies music, songs, dance, clowning, mime, dialogue, monologue, gestures, histrionics, characters, audience, costumes, props, arena, etc.

Dramatic displays: performable arts that have elements of drama.

Dramatic effect: the degree to which the elements of an enactment affects the human emotion and sensibility.

Dramatic enactments: performances of festivals and other local arts by actors.

Dramatic moments: chronological divisions of events in a performance.

Dramatic tension: uneasiness and suppressed excitement caused by syspense engendered by conflict in a performance.

Eulogy: words, lines, and songs in praise of the living or the dead.

Euphemistic expression: the use of a mild phrase or sentence in place of otherwise an unpleasant one.

Evolutionism: the school of thought that maintains that traditional drama in Africa is in its rudimentary stage; that it has to grow out of ritual and traditional shackles to become drama.

Expressive sounds: musical signs expressing meanings.

Exposition: a preliminary action that introduces a performance.

Extra-sensory perception: ability to comprehend the supernatural world.

Festivals: performances in honour of the gods, and for social entertainment.

Flat characters: characters that do not grow; they play conventional roles.

Folk entertainment: same as social entertainment.

Fortune telling: art of foretelling the future.

Gestures: body movements that express meanings.

Humour: hilarity caused by a funny episode.

Hypnosis: an induced superhuman state in which one can comprehend two worlds - the living and the dead - no matter how vaguely.

Imitation: representation of forms, principles, ideas, forces, etc.

Impersonation: playing the part of another person, force, ideas etc.

Immanent beings: supernatural elements whose influences pervade the entire universe.

Incantations: magical compositions recited with swift rhythm to cure or to cast spell upon another.

Invective: the use of verbal abuse as well as entertainment to denounce in serious terms evil people and non-conformists.

Invocations: appeals to the supernatural for immediate help.

Juvenalian satire: strong denunciation of vices and crimes.

Lampoons: songs or recitations or spoken compositions in verse that attack persons.

Locale: place of performance.

Mimetic action: imitation of an experience.

Monologue: speech by one person.

Mundane forces: human or earthly influences.

Narrative plot: story-telling of the events of a performance.

Numerology: use of numbers to invoke and attract supernatural forces.

Occultism: a mysterious religious practice that employs esoteric knowledge.

Onomatopoeia: sound that suggests an object or action.

Oral tradition: local ways that are passed from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Palmistry: fortune-telling by reading the palms.

Parallel repetition (Parallelism): act of repeating lines in songs, chants and incantations.

Personification: giving of human qualities to things, abstract ideas and non-human forms.

Preparatory rites: religious sacrifices that precede the performance of festivals.

Plot: the order in which festivals are dramatized.

Praise Singer: a professional soloist that sings eulogies.

Profane entertainment: social entertainment

Property Managers: persons to whom props are entrusted.

Props: materials used for the performance of local arts.

Protagonist: the principal character in a performance.

Purgation: relieving of unpleasant feelings.

Relativism: a school of thought that contends that traditional African drama should be examined from the point of view of how it affects and satisfies the yearnings of the people for whom it is made, and not necessary whether or not it satisfies the content criteria.

Religion: an organized method of faith and worship of the ancestors and other higher beings.

Resolution: same as denouement.

Rhetorical questions: interrogations that do not demand answers, but asked to create some dramatic effect.

Ribaldry: vulgar expressions.

Rites: religious customs that are practised in order to bring about a reunion among men, and with God, the ancestors and benevolent spirits.

Ritual: a religious customary observance that is ceremonial, and which involves sacrifices for atonement and communion with the divine.

Ritual drama: a religious observance that is accompanied with music, songs, and dance.

Role: part acted by a performer.

Sarcasm: a sneering statement which is meant to wound or hurt someone.

Satire: a literary tool used to ridicule bad aspects of human behaviour as well as institutions.

Secular performances: forms of art that are not sacred.

Solidarity dance: a dance in which neighbouring villagers participate to encourage celebrating villagers.

Stage directors: persons whose duty it is to arrange the specific stations in an arena.

Staging: to perform a festival or any other local art.

Stations: strategic positions in an arena.

Stock situation: a circumstance that is determined by custom.

Story line: the trends of a story.

Symbolism: representation of concepts by the use of objects, colours, gestures, signs, and other expressive forms.

Theatre: a place of performance of dramatic arts. It also means dramatic performances.

Theatre-in-the-round: traditional arena type in a circular or an oval form.

Tilling dance: a form of dance that depicts the agricultural vocation of the dancers.

Timing: fixing dates for the celebration of festivals.

Tragedy: aspects of traditional African drama that reveal the hazards of existence.

Transferred epithet: the placing of an adjective in a wrong position before another word or noun instead of the noun which it would, in normal circumstances, modify.

Village Crier: an announcer.

Vocatives: direct personal address.

Week of Peace: a period when peaceful co-existence is maintained.