



THE PLACE OF ORAL TRADITION IN SELECTED IGBO LITREARY TEXTS

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Abstract

This study examined the place of oral literature in the selected Igbo novels. Igbo oral literature and Igbo written literature are the literature of Igbo people. Oral literature is transmitted orally through the word of mouth, while written literature is written down in books. Many people failed to realize that oral literature provides a source of materials, to the writers of written literature. They do not know that modern literary writers draw their inspiration from oral literature. The proverbs, folktales, riddles etcetera which the literary writers use to beautify their works, are from oral literature. This is a survey research. The theory adopted was readers- response theory. In this study, three texts were analyzed to showcase the place of oral literature in the selected Igbo novels. The novels include; *Uwa Ntogo* (2001) by Onyekaonwu, *Mkpokpta Oru Nka Onyekaonwu* (2014), *Anu Gbaa Ajo Oso* (2001) by Ofomata and *Aka Ekpuchi Eziokwu* (2010) by Okafo. This study revealed the examples of oral traditions in selected Igbo literary texts such as use of figurative language, the traditional ways of storytelling, Belief and Culture of Igbo People, the use of songs and retributive justice. All these are the product of oral traditions. It was concluded that modern writers have succeeded in using oral literature in their literary works, to discuss about many issues in the contemporary society and it is a way of preserving Igbo culture and traditions.

Introduction

The Igbo, like any other society had its own system of education which ruled heavily on oral tradition .Oral performances is handed down from generation to generation through the word of mouth. Oral tradition refers to the body of oral rendition that passes from one generation to another .Epuchie, Epuchie, and Amaechi (2009:150) opined that oral tradition embodies the way people perceive the world around them, superstition, beliefs, marriage, death as well as attempts to explain and give meaning to certain natural phenomenon .In the olden days, children grow up under the language of their mothers. Usually, after the evening meals children gather around the fire-place listening to traditional stories/folktales.

Oral tradition according to Akparobaro (2001:33) “is the totality of verbal expressive forms and beliefs evolved in traditional societies for social entertainment and for the ordering of society, and passed on orally from one generation to another”. Akparobaro notes that oral tradition of the people is their belief that has been with them for generations.

The oral tradition is of the ancient and of the archives, as the name implies, is opposed the modern tradition. This study tries to examine the truth of oral tradition in the written Igbo literary work .The incorporation of the traditional into the modern has manifested itself in the works of



prominent Igbo prose writers and the impact of this(negative or positive)on the overall development of modern Igbo prose fiction.

Obviously, the traditional culture and ethics of the Igbo are steadily undergoing some changes as a result of the impact of foreign culture. Notwithstanding, the elements of the culture in which one has been genetically born and nurtured continue to dominate that person's thoughts, imagination and consciousness .From the above observation, one sees a clear picture of the relationship between the Igbo writers and the Igbo oral tradition. Obiechina, (1967:142), in Nnyigide (2010:635) says "oral village story-telling as well as the other forms of oral tradition is a living reality and helps to inform and direct their attitudes and values".

From Obiechina view, one observes that the writers are bound to be influenced by the Igbo oral tradition. In some of the literary works, elements of folktales, legends and myths are employed and in their expression, proverbs, anecdotes, and other Igbo verbal arts are freely applied. Oral tradition can be seen as the body of Igbo folklore .Ekwealor (1998) says,

Literature whether oral or written is culture bound; and
While written literature draws its materials from people's
Culture. Oral tradition is an integral part of that culture
And therefore a basic material for the written form.

What Ekwealor means is that oral and written literatures are culturally based .In addition, oral tradition is an integral part of the culture and, at the same time, a raw material for the written literature. According to Obi (2002:2) in Onuigbo (2012:149);

Apart from *Omenuko* by Peter Nwana, which is recorded
As the first Igbo novels that D.N.Achara in his *Ala Bingo*
And *Elelia na lhe O Mere* uses oral literature especially
Folk narratives as his writing aids. As a result of this, his

Works can be seen as a chain binding oral and written
Igbo literature.

In addition, the Igbo literary artists apply oral traditional materials in their novels so as to show that the write-up is meant for consumption by the Igbo people .In view of this, Okodo (2005:50-65) in Ogbalu (2012:149) states that 'the beginning of every development has culture as its basis, as well as every facet of development is a matter of culture. We talk of political culture, technological culture, linguistic culture, farming culture and food culture. Okodo emphasizes that culture is indispensable with language.

Reader-Response and Reception Theory

Another critical approach that has proved widely congenial since 1980s is reader-response theory, with roots in earlier thinkers such as Husserl. The role of the reader or audience of a literary work or performance has been recognized since classical times. Many classical and medieval writers viewed literature as a branch of rhetoric, the art of persuasive speaking or writing. As such, literature had to be highly aware of the composition and expectations of its audience .According to Dubie (2011:268) Romantic theories stressed the powerful emotional impact of poetry on the audience, and various later nineteenth century theories such as symbolism and impressionism stressed the reader's subjective response to literature and art. Marxism and feminism have longed acknowledge that literature, necessarily operating within social structures of class and gender, is always oriented toward certain kinds of audiences, in both aesthetic and economic terms.

Reader-response theory is concerned with the relationship between texts and reader and reader and texts, with the emphasis on different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise in the relationship. Thus, reader response theory is also concerned with the reader's contribution to text, and it challenges, with varying degrees of



plausibility and conviction. Cuddon (2013:589) says a “text, whatever it be (poem, short story, essay, scientific exposition), has no existence until it is read. Its meaning is in potential, so to speak. A read completes its meaning by reading it. The reading is complimentary; it actualize potential meaning”. Reader does not have a passive role, as has been traditionally thought; on the contrary, she is an active agent in the creation of meaning. By applying codes and strategies the reader decodes the text.

Reader-Response criticism opposes formalism, seeing the reader’s interaction with the text as central to interpretation. Unlike formalists, reader-response critics do not believe that a work of literature exists as a separate entity. Instead, they considered the reader’s contribution to the text as essential. A poem, short story, novel, or play is not a solid piece of fabric but rather a series of threads separated by gaps that readers must fill in, drawing on their own experiences and knowledge. According to Kirzner and Mandell (2007:2085) readers “approach a literary text, they contribute their own interpretations. As they read one sentence and then the next, they develop expectations; and, in realistic stories, these expectations are generally met”. Reader-response theorists believe in the importance of recursive reading-that is, reading and rereading with the idea that no interpretation is carved in stone. A second or third interaction with the text may well produce a new interpretation. This changing view is particular likely when the rereading takes place significantly later than initial reading.

The reader’s primary purpose is fulfilled during the reading event, as he fixes his attention on the actual experience he is living through. This permits the whole range of responses generated by the text to enter into the center of awareness, and out of these materials he selects and weaves what he sees as the literary work of art. The significance of the work, then, does not lie in the meaning sealed within the text, but in the fact that meaning brings out what had previously been sealed within us. When their own lives intersect with the text, that text takes on vitality.

Dobie (2009:132) notes that “reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particularly mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition”. A reader’s experience is determined by these and many other elements. The effect is not limited to the understanding of a text, however. It extends to the understanding of the self as well. Because reader-response criticism calls for introspection and on one’s own values and beliefs. It can lead the reader to deeper personal knowledge and greater cultural awareness.

The Literary view of Igbo culture and Tradition

Given their education and the historical environment already described, what indigenous culture do to the Igbo literary writers. The literary appears to be more interested in recreating in the reader’s mind a whole traditional way of life, bringing out with varying degrees of realism, and different shades of attitude, its triumphs and failures. Frequent allusions are made to the people’s customs, traditional ceremonies, community festivals, beliefs and rituals, mainly in order to demonstrate their importance to the community, but occasionally to show the effect of external influence on traditional culture.

In these literary works, Igbo culture and tradition are presented with details which illustrate local variations. Many writers reflect in their writings specifically Igbo culture, although most of what they write about will be valid for other parts of Nigeria. Umeasiegbu (1969) in Taiwo (1976 :29) He discusses the significance of community festivals and other items like the breaking of kola, the use of cohise chalk, the worship of idols, the place of women in society, the birth of twins, wrestling, the functions of the tribal priest and the responsibilities of a titled man. One common feature of these literary is the constant recourse the writers make to oral traditions – riddles, proverbs, myths, legends and folklore. They draw a great deal on folk sources to localize the content of their works. Practically every one of these authors shows some skill in the African verbal art of conversation and



attempts to enrich his work by the appropriate use of oral tradition. These oral tradition deal with all aspects of life and are usually employed to convey effectively moral lessons and advice.

Synopsis of the literary works used in research

Uwa Ntọọọ By Onyekaonwu(2014)

This drama revolved around Ebubedike of Isingodo, a warrior, who got missing after fighting for his village Isingodo. There was a fight between Isingodo and Umuagada village. Ebubedike was fighting for his community, at a stage, the war became tough, their opponent Umuagada people chased Ebubedike and his men, seeing what was about to happen, Ebubedike and his men stopped fighting as a group, rather every one of them ran away to different direction to save his life, Isingodo men ran home safely except Ebubedike who was not found after the battle.

The villagers were confused on what could have happened to Ebubedike. A native doctor (*dibia afa*) was consulted who told the villagers that Ebubedike is dead. After the native doctor's declaration, funeral date was announced on Ebubedike. On the day of funeral rite of Ebubedike, surprisingly he returned and realized that it was his funeral rite that was taking place, Ebubedike cried bitterly because it is an abomination to perform a funeral rite of someone that is still alive. Ebubedike was asked what happened. He told his people that he came across a leaf (*ahihia nju ohia*) and he lost his consciousness. Agamevu one of Ebubedike's kinsman and a friend who planned to marry Ebubedike's wife, Onukwube vowed that Ebubedike must die. Agamevu poisoned Ebubedike on the day of Ogumaalam's dedication that is Ebubedike's son. After Ebubedike funeral rite, Agamevu married Onukwube irrespective of what Ebubedike told her when he was about to give up the ghost. Ebubedike told his wife not to remarry. After many years of Ebubedike's death. Ebubedike's spirit revealed himself to his son Ogumaalam and later killed his wife Onukwube who disobeyed him and remarried after telling her not to do so.

Anụ Gbaa Ajọ Ọsọ by Ofomata (2001)

This text is about Ikpendu, the son of Ogadimma and his wife. Ogadimma and his wife have notorious behavior when they were young. Ikpendu resembled his parents in nefarious behavior. When Ikpendu was young, he always stole his parent's money, food and other things. Ikpendu stole his teacher's money, including other ill character of his that made the headmaster expelled him from school. Now that Ikpendu was expelled from school, he started going from village to village to steal and to commit atrocities. Villagers and his kinsmen after a meeting concludes that Ikpendu must leave the village or they will kill him. Ikpendu refused to leave the village but later left. He went to Onitsha where he joined armed robbery. He was killed in a robbery attack in Onitsha. Since Ikpendu's death, his spirit was not at rest. The villagers including men, women, and children normally see him. His kinsmen was summoned to look for profound solution to the problem. After the meeting, his kinsmen told his parents to consult a native doctor (*dibia afa*). After consulting the native doctor, the native doctor told them what to do and they stopped seeing Ikpendu's spirits.

Aka Ekpuchi Eziokwu Okafo (2010)

Obiekwe and Ezeji are brothers. They are having land dispute. Obiekwe took kolanut and a pot of palm wine to their kinsmen (*umunna*) and reported the incident to them. Their kinsmen tried to settle the dispute but could not because of injustice. Obiekwe later reported the matter to their *Igwe* (king) about the land dispute with his brother. The *Igwe* and his cabinet looked into the matter and shared the land. The way it was supposed to be. People thank the *Igwe* how he settled the land dispute between two brothers wisely and sang to him in appreciation of his kind gesture towards villagers.

Examples of Oral Traditions in Selected Igbo Literary Texts

The selected Igbo literary texts are: *Uwa Ntọọọ* by Onyekaonwu, *Anụ Gbaa Ajọ Ọsọ* by Ofomata and *Aka Ekpuchi Eziokwu* by Okafo. Modern Igbo literary writers have realized the significance of



oral tradition and its preservation for the future generation. As a result of this, they make use of oral tradition in producing their literary texts. Some of the oral traditions used by these authors are:

Use of figurative language

- .Traditional ways of story telling
- .Belief and culture of Igbo people
- .Themes of the story
- .Use of songs
- Use of Retributive justice

1. Figurative Language

Figurative language or expressions are statements which must not be taken literally. When a word is used in a way other than in its literal meaning in order to produce a special effect, it is said to have been used figuratively.

According to Umegbolu (2009:38) “figures of speech heighten and elevate the effects of words .that is to say, they are used for freshness, lucidity, and effectiveness” Figurative language is the bedrock of a literary and stylistic success. These authors make profuse use of figurative language in their works. Examples are;

.Ewu ataa m igu n’isi, izuzu m zuru ezu atalaa m n’isi (Onyekaonwu 2014:97).

Agameevu used this proverb to show when his first plan to remarry Onukwube, Ebebedike’s wife failed because Ebubedike was still alive.

.Awọ anaghị agba ọsọ ehihie n’efu .(Onyekaonwu2014:99)

This proverb shows how moody Ebubedike is, each time he remembered that it is an abomination to perform the funeral rite of someone that is still alive.

O ji ngwere haa ngwere na ọ bughị anụ. Onye kwechi ya ekwe. (Onyekaonwu 2014:102) This proverb shows how Ebubedike isolate himself from village gathering and meeting since his funeral rites took place. His married sister Ekeubu was trying to console him to forget about the past and cheer up.

Ọ na-abụ e nye nwata ihe karịrị ya, ọ jụọ onye a siri ya wegara.(Onyekaonwu 2014:109) This proverb shows when Agameevu killed Ebubedike using poison. He made first attempt of telling late Ebubedike’s wife Onukwube how he is going to remarry her. Ebubedike’s wife was surprise at Agameevu’s comment.

Ọ matara ka ya bụ mmiri siri baa n’opi ugboguru, (Onyekaonwu 2014:112). This indicates when daughters of clan (*Umuuada*) heard that Onukwube late Ebubedike;s wife was about to go back to her father. *Umuada* tried to intervene but Onukwube insisted, she is acting on what Agameevu told her to go back to her father’s compound so that he can marry her. When Onukwube refused to listen to *umuada* plea not to go, rather to remember what her late husband told her, *umuada* now told her that she knew what happened to Ebubedike.

Onye ụlọ ya na-agba ọkụ ọ gaa na-achụ oke, Onyekaonwu:119 .This shows when Ebubedike’s spirit revealed to his son Ogumaalam that it was his mother’s new husband Agameevu that killed him. These incident happened when Agameevu was away. When he came back, He saw Onukwube lying lifeless, he asked Ogumaalam what happened. Ogumaalam told him how Ebubedike killed her. Agameevu started chasing Ogumaalam and Ogumaalam ran to Umuinwere his village. Ogumaalam told his father’s kinsmen what has happened, Ebubedike’s kinsmen was planning to retaliate when Ogumaalam told them not to do so.

Agwọ nọkwa n’akirikiri. Onyekaonwu (2004:121). This shows when one of Ebubedike’s kinsmen Inweregbu leaked the secret to Agameevu. Ebubudike’s kinsmen planned to kill him because he killed Ebubedike.



I marakwa ebe I na-etinye isi, tunye gi bu oke agbalaghi odu eree ya oku. Onyekaonwu (2004:121). Here, Inweregbu used this proverb to tell Agameevu to run for his life before it is too late.

Other proverbs is include;

Nku onye kpapa n'okochi ka o na-aga anya n'udummiri. Ofomata(2001:2)

Onye nwe ozu na-ebu uzọ. Ofomata.(2001:3)

Okwu daghararia kwaghararia onodu Ofomata (2001:5)

Ukwu nnekwu okuku zoro nwa ya anaghi egbu ya. Ofomata(2001:10)

Anu a na-agba egbe, o na-ata nri Ofomata (2001:23)

Agaghi ekworo mgbagbu ghara ogu Ofomata(2001:31)

Awo na-akpo ibe ya wokuru Ofomata (2001:33)

Onye mara asu ya suo n'ikwe, onye amaghi asu ya suo n'ala Okafo(2010:12)

O nwere ihe mere ede jiri n'bee nurii Okafo(2010:20)

Uto ka a toro tota ihe Okafo (2010:27)

Ka ihe tara n'abalị buru anuwunta Okafo (2010:29)

Idiom (*Akpalaokwu*)

- *Ajo chi* Onyekaonwu (2014:117)
- *Anaghi ata nti ya ata* .Ofomata (2001:1)
- *Ogonna ha na-eme aka nabo* (Ofomata 2001:i)

This shows when the author is explaining the character of Ikpendu's mother that made Ikpendu to resemble her.

- *Isu aka n'ala* Okafo (2010:25)
- *Iri aka azu* Okafo (2010:47)
- *Ikpu mmiri n'onu were kwuo okwu* Okafo (2010:48)

Onomatopoeia (*Uda uda*)

This is a device in which the sound suggests the meaning of words or expressions, because the words are formed by imitating the actual sounds associated with the thing concerned. It is also referred to as the sound echoing the sense it portrayed. For instance

Nne ya nwuchie ya chiim Ofomata(2001:11) *kporokpotu kporokpotu* n'isi.

Parii parii. Ofomata(2001:39)

Waam Ofomata (2001:87)

Metaphor (*Ndika*)

Ikpendu dika mkpi. Ofomata (2001:1). Ofomata used this to show how ugly Ikpendu the protagonist is.

Kporopu anya ka isi ehi. Onyekaonwu (2014:115).

2. The traditional ways of storytelling

In Igboland, there are traditional ways of storytelling. Stories like folktales have introduction section, narrative section and the concluding section .In *Anu Gbaa Ajo Osọ* by Ofomota (2001:5). It has an introductory part as the following;

Okwu Mmalite

Nwa, bu ihe onye obula na-ekpe ekpere ka o muta. Mana udiri nwa onye ga-amuta bu naaani chineke maara. Ma o ga-abu ezigbo nwa, ma o ga-abu ajo nwa, naani Chineke Nna bi n'eligwe ga-akowa. Ma na ndumodu kacha ndumodu bu ka onye obula choro ighota mkpuru oma gbaa mbọ kuo mkpuru oma na ndu ya.

Otu nwaanyi na amutabeghi nwa na-aju chi ya ihe o mere ya o jighi kwe ka o gbaa aka ahia. Onye nke mutara ajo nwa na-aju chi ya ihe o mere ya o ji nye ya nwa ahụ. Na o kaara ya mma na o mutaghi chaa. Ha abuo, kedu onye ka ibe ya mma?



Onye mụtara ezigbo nwa were na-asị na ọ na-ata ahụhụ n'izu nwa, ya jekwuru onye mụtara ajọ nwa ka ọ hụ ihe bụ iyi eze echipere ala. Ọ bụ ya kpatara ndị Igbo ji were kwuo okwu sị na onye mụtara ajọ nwa na ume omumụ bụ otu. Kama onye chi ya nyere nke o nyere, were obi umeala nara ya. N'ihi na ọ bụ ndidi na-emeri uwa. Onye na-eme nke ọ na-eme chetakwa echi ka ọ ghara iburu chi ya ụzọ, were gbagbuo onwe ya n' oso. Onye nwee nti, ọ nūrū, Onye enweghi nti, o were anya ya hụ maka a tuorọ omara, ọ mara., a tuorọ ofeke, o mee ihe eji etu ya ofeke!

Concluding section (Okwu Mmechi)

Onye hūrū agadi nwanyị ka, ọ na-eri akpala okukū napū ya maka o bute ukwara, o zuo oha. Nwanne awọ gbatia ya ukwū ka nwanne nkapi bebilata ya onū maka ọ hapū ha, ha amuo oyiri ha. Onye chorọ ihe oma mewe ihe di mma n'ihi na ọ bụ mkpūrū onye kūrū ka ọ ga-aghorọ maka a chowa isi ochū a gaa n'uzu.

Ndi be anyi, ọ bụ ihe onye turu n'ahia ka a ga-azutara ya maka a gbachaa egwu. o laa n'ukwu. Ndi Igbo kwetara na ihe onye obula na-eme n'awa a, na ọ ga anatariri ugwo ya, ma ọ bụ nke oma, ma ọ bụ nke ojoo. Ọ buri na mmadu akwughi gi, chi gi akwu gi ugwo ya. Mgbe mmadu abuo a na-akuru aka n' ihe ojoo luru di na nwunye, kedu udi mkpuru ọ di gi ka ha ga-amita? Mee elu, mee ala, agwo anaghi amu ihe mkpumkpu maka ihe nkwo muru ga-eburu okuko!!.

In Uwa Ntooo (2014:96), Onyekaaonwu used traditional way of telling story. When Ebubedike returned, his brother asked him to tell him what happened, that caused him to stay in the forest for many week.

Ekwegbara Kooro anyi, olee ka ihe a siri mee?

Ebubedike Mgbe ogu siri nnukwu ike, ndi Umagada chuuru anyi chubanye anyi n'oke ohia di n'lkpaebu. Ka anyi na-abata n'oke ohia ahụ, m jiri anya okenye ji achọ ihe n'akpa wee mata na ya bụ ekele agafeela isi nku aka; na ya bụ osimiri ataruola, m wee gwa ha ka onye obula chowa ụzọ ula. Ka anyi dum gbasajuru oke ohia ahụ, na-achozu ụzọ ula; ejeere m puta, metu akwukwo osisi di na otu obere ukwu osisi aka, amakwaghi m ụzọ opupu, ọ dikwaghi onye m huziri n'ihi ndi iro imata ebe m no, o nyekwaghi m onu iti mkpu. m wee malite gaghariwa

3. Belief and Culture of Igbo People

In Igbo traditional society, they exist different kinds of belief and culture which formed their ways of life. The literary authors always used these beliefs and cultures in their literary works. Some of them are as follows:

a) Belief and culture of Igbo people about Kinsmen (Umunna)

Uzochukwu (2012:53) says “the rancor and acrimony in our body politic will perhaps be minimized if we adopt the home bred type of democracy practiced in Igbo traditional society as typified in the decision-making process carried out in Igbo village squares”. Today this sort of governance has partially survived through the establishment of development or improvement unions in autonomous communities throughout Igboland. Because this form of governance is indigenous in Igbo and is devoid of monarchical dictatorial tendencies Uzochukwu (2012:52) says “it has led to adage, *Igbo enwe eze* (the Igbo have no kingship). Apparently this sounds opprobrious for it suggests that the Igbo have a disrespectful disposition to instituted authority. But far from it. The adage merely underscores the republican nature of the Igbo. Nowadays, even in Igbo communities where kingship is accepted (or is it imposed?) Important decisions are still arrived at by consensus in the town assemblies with an elected president presiding with members of his executive imposition by fiat is never entertained.

In Igbo culture and tradition, if a man wants to take any serious decision, he must involve his kinsmen. This is because Igbo people believe that unity is strength. In Onyekaaonwu (2014:118) when Agamevevu wanted to kill Oguamaalam after the death of Onukwube, Oguamaalam ran to his village *Umuinwere*. He told his father's brother Ekwegbara how his father Ebubedike revealed



himself to him. How his father Ebubedike told him who was responsible for his death and how his father Ebubedike killed Onukwube for marrying Agameevu that killed him. Ekwegbara after listening to Ogumalam, did not take decision alone rather he summoned his kinsmen and they agreed to kill Agameevu for killing their brother Ebubedike..

Umunna, echighi m na okwu a rijuru afo, si aguputa

Okorobia ise aka kara aka, tinyere mu onwe m

Uchichi taa, na riomriom abali, anyi ga-aga n'ulo ya,

Toro nwa ahụ anụ ohiya gbufuo. Ebe a ka m kwu. Nke a

Na-eme, si na-eme ya oso oso na ije di m n'ukwu. Onyekaonwu(2014)

In *Anu Gbaa Ajo Oso* by Ofomata (2001) since Ikpendu's death, because he died a bad death, he was burnt alive by eye witnesses who caught him while stealing. His spirit was not at rest. The villagers including men, women, and children normally see him. Ikpendu's father Ogadimma instead of taking decision alone, he summoned his kinsmen (*umunna*) to look for a profound solution to the problem. After the meeting, his kinsmen told him to consult a native doctor (*dibia afa*). After consulting the native doctor, the native doctor told them what to do and they stopped seeing Ikpendu's spirit.

In *Aka Ekpuchi Eziokwu* by Okafo (2010). When Obiekwe and his brother Ezeji are having land dispute. Obiekwe took kolanut and a pot of palm wine to their kinsmen (*umunna*) and reported the incident to them. Their kinsmen tried to settle the dispute but Obiekwe disagreed with them. Obiekwe later report to the *Igwe* about the land dispute with his brother, the *Igwe* and his cabinet looked into the matter and shared the land the way it was supposed to be. People thanked the *Igwe* by singing to him and people were happy.

b Significance of Kolanut in Igbo Culture and Tradition

Ndi Igbo celebrate brotherhood, unity and love using kolanut. The full impact of the place of kolanut in Igbo socio-cultural life can only be appreciated if one understands the myth of the origin of kolanut among the Igbo people. According to Echeanyanwu (2011), kolanut came from God, just like the Igbo people were created by God in the place where they are found today

While explaining the origin of kolanut, Madu (1998) in Apakama (2012:37) says; According to the myth, an Nri man went to Chineke for a

Visit. On getting to heaven, Chineke received him

Happily. He took him to his garden and showed him all

The fruit tress therein .He took him to a corner of the

Garden and showed him a tree which he termed special

Kolanut tree. He plucked a pod out of the tree and both of

Them went back to God's house. He opened the pod and

Brought out a nut with which he played host to the man.

As the man was going, he gave him a nut of the pod

And told him to plant it when he got home. He get

Instructed to use the nuts to host his guests when the

Tree starts producing. But, he was told that before he

Eats it, he should invite him (chukwu) through prayer, in

Order that he would symbolically come down to partake

Of the kolanut in.P.165

The man went home and carried out God's order religiously, and thus kolanut originated among the Igbos. Dike (2010:36) in Apakama (2012:38),while discussing the origin of kolanut and why it is so important in the Igbo world and peace-keeping says;

Mr Igbo visited God and was entertained with so many



Edible things. When Mr Igbo wanted to go, God asked
Him to wait for a parting gift for which he would be
Remembered. God gave him room for choice and
Mr Igbo requested for the fruit that had bitter and
Sweet taste. God was happy and uprooted the young
Kolanut plant and asked him to go home and plant it

In *Uwa Ntooo* by Onyekonwu (2014), Ebubedike invited the villagers to inform them about the naming ceremony of his child Oguamalem. When the villagers gathered, he thanked them for coming and brought kolanut for them which they pray with, bless and shared among themselves. After eating the kolanut, Ebubedike now told them his intention of inviting them then, naming ceremony now commenced. Ebubedike said;

Onukwube wetere anyị oji

Onukwube eburu oji bata.

Ebubedike ebunye ya nwanne

ya nwoke bụ Ekwegbara.

Ekwegbara ogo oji si.

Qha Mmadu: Ndi mbu na ndi egede.

Ekwegbara: Oduma, agbara anyi

Qha Mmadu: Oduma, agbara anyi

Ekwegbara: Ogbuoogebe mutara Ezeanyim

Qha Mmadu: Ogbuoogebe mutara Ezeanyim

Ekwegbara: Ezeanyim mutara Ebubedike

Qha Mmadu: Ezeanyim mutara Ebubedike

Ekwegbara: Leenu nwa biara unu uwa;

Qha Mmadu: Leenu nwa biara unu uwa;

Ekwegbara: O jewe ejewe lawa alawa;

Qha Mmadu: O jewe ejewe lawa alawa;

Ekwegbara: Ka ukwu ghara ikpo ya.

Qha Mmadu: Ka ukwu ghara ikpo ya.

Ekwegbara: Ka o nokaara anyi nka.

Qha Mmadu: Ka o nokaara anji nka.

Ekwegbara: Wee zuo nna ya na nne ya.

Qha Mmadu: Wee zuo nna ya na nne ya.

Ekwegbara: Di ka ha ga-esi wee zuo ha,

Qha Mmadu: Di ka ha ga-esi wee zuo ha,

Ekwegbara: Ala lsungodo, o buzinu ofo o!

Qha Mmadu: Iyaa.

Ebubedike: Ebubedike, olee aha unu nyere m nwa a? Oguamalam

Ekwegbara: Oguamalam! Ogu o ga-amanu uma ma anyi. Ndi be Anyi unu anunu o!

Qha Mmadu: Oguamalem anyi o o o o! Aha nke a aburu ya o!

Oguamalem: Umunne, ndeewonu. Akuko m adighi ogologo.

So in Igboland when kolanut is shared among friends, it is used to entertain visitors in times of bitterness (death and sorrow) and at happy occasions. In Igboland during kolanut prayer, God is remembered as He is praised and favor is asked of Him upon the people.

Ch.)Igbo Culture and Tradition about Death

This term usually describes as death of a young man through an accident and this makes a person not to accomplish his duties; hence, he has to finish his work and settle the creator. This sudden death is seen as an abomination and sacrifices are performed

Igbo traditional funeral rites are based on what kind of death a person had, and to the status that the person had on earth. As Thomas (1917:181) in Udezue (2012:86) opines that “rites of burial vary



according to the age, sex and importance of the deceased. More sacrifices were necessary for a man who is married and has children than a young man who have not taken a wife". Not all death were regarded by the Igbo people as good death. Some were seen as bad, such as violent death by accident, suicide, or death caused by lightening, leprosy, small pox or by stealing, etc. These kinds of death were believed to be as a result of sin, atrocity or incest and in such cases, the deceased person was not buried or mourned in the community. The type of death also determines the kind of funeral one will be given in the community, and one's spirit status in the afterlife.

Igbo people believed in life after death, they believed that the dead partakes in affairs of the living. In *Uwa Ntọọ* by Onyekiaonwu (2014) Oguamalam saw his dead father who told him the following;

*Bụ ebe m gara ihiota nku ka m hụrụ nna m nwurụ
 Anwụ o wee kpọọ m, gwa m na ọ bụ Agameevu
 Nyegburu ya na nsi, ụbọchi a na-eme mmemme igu
 M aha. Ka m lotara na-akoro nne m ihe m huru,
 Onyinyo ya putakwa ọzọ, ka nne m hụrụ ya,
 Onyinyo ahu juru ya ihe wetara o jiri lugha dī
 N'agbanyeghi okwu ya gwara ya. Ka nne m mere ka
 Ọ saa, ọnụ dara, kpuo ihu n'ala nwụọ. Ka nke a
 Na-emecha, Agameevu batara, ka ọ hụchara ihe
 Mere nuchaakwa ihe m kọrọ ya, chọputara na mụ
 Amatago na ọ bụ ya gburu nna m wee miri mma wee
 Chụwa m ọsọ. M wee gbapụ, gbalatawa.*

Again, Oguamalam, when he finally died, he saw his dead father Ebubedike in the spirit world and he said the following to him;

*Onyinyo Ebubedike: Oguamalem!
 Oguamalem!
 I lakwutela m, nnọọ
 (Oguamalem atitigharia na mmụọ, were nwayọ
 bilite soro galagala gaa jide onyinyo nna ya aka)
 Nwata rie ihe ọ na-amụrụ anya, ụra atụwa ya. Ma
 Nwa m, agha a kara aka ọ na-eri ngwuro? E kwuo
 Ma a nughị ataala isi gị. Ihe riri ụtara wee rachakpọọ
 Ofẹ nri. Uwa ntọọ! Nwa m nnọ, nnọ, nnọ
 I hapurula ha ụwa-ụwa wara awa;
 I larutego, nnọ, nnọ, nnọ, nwa m,
 Uwa ntọọ!
 (Ekwe ọnwụ na opi agwụ na-ada ngharịta n'azu
 Nkwago; ọchịchiri jiri nwayọ na-agba.*

In *Anụ Gbaa Ajo Ọsọ* by Ofomata (2001) since Ikpendu's death, because he died a bad death, he was burnt alive by eye witnesses who caught him while stealing. His spirit was not at rest. The villagers including men, women, and children normally see him. The Igbo man's ontological worldview concerning the concept of death, which is the unavoidable end of human life, supports his belief in reincarnation. For the Igbo, death is not just the end of a person's sojourn on earth. It has a deeper meaning than that. They see it as a transmigration from the mundane world to another world where the spirit of the deceased assumes a new life. The Igbo compare death with a situation where a person has left his house for somewhere else from where he is capable of coming back later.

d.) Igbo Culture and Tradition about Divination

Afa divination itself is one of the oldest institution of the Igbo. It is a consultative institution which attempts to discover events that affect human beings (for good or evil), but are beyond the control



of the ordinary man and are believed to have supernatural, mystical or other non-human cause. Thus the ordinary man sees the *Afa* priest as one living in two worlds the human world and the spirit world. According to Ekwealor (2012:56) "he is seen as a wise and intelligent man, who has the solution to almost all human problems. Thus the public expectations of the *Afa* priest are so high that the society demands that his training should be very elaborate one, if he must live up to these expectations".

In *Anu Gbaa Ajo Oso* by Ofomata (2001) when Ikpendu died and his spirit was disturbing his parents and villagers, *dibia afa* when consulted told them what to do in order to stop the situation. In *Uwa Ntooo* by Onyekaonwu (2014) when Ebubedike was not found after fighting with Umuagada people, *dibia* was consulted by his people who told them what to do about the situation. The Igbo generally believed in cause/effects relationship. Hence they always say "*ife eme na nkiti*" Nothing happens without cause. Thus in such situation *dibia afa* is consulted to find out the cause of such misfortune.

4.) The Use of Song

Like in folktales, the three literary text used in this research, their authors made use of songs in their narrations. For instance, In *Uwa Ntooo* by Onyekaowu (2014), during the Ebubedike first funeral rite before he finally returned, one of his kinsmen started singing to show damages caused by death. He also called upon all and sundry in Isungodo to be patience in this time of mourning their hero Ebubedike.

Nwunye Ebubedike bu Onukukwube no n'ala n'akuku ulo, yiri afe mkpe; umu ndi nwunye di ya nonyeere ya okirikikiri; ndi egwu odachi ngwa egwu ha noro ebe ahụ ma ha amalitabeghi kuwa egwu; ndi okenye ole na ole nochakwa ebe ahụ, ufodu na-akpari uka, ufodu na-anu mmnya. Ka a nokataziri, Onwudiegwu wee kulie:

Onwudiegwu: (malite mawa mbem)
Okokooko o, Okokooko o, Kokooko!
Kokooko o, Kokookoo, Kokooko.
Isungodo na Ala Ngodo, ala mu anyi;-
Ngodo e! Isugodo muru ebu muo mfu;
Obodo wuuru n'ogidi mkputamkpu;
Nga iyi na-achi owa na-asu n'ike n'ike

In *Anu Gbaa Ajo Oso* by Ofomata (2001), after the death of Ikpendu, his two friends Chima and Chukwuka continued with stealing. One day, after robbing from Onitsha marketers, the markers decided to confront them singing song.

Ha niile were iwe kpochichaa ulo ahia ha niile ozigbo, ozigbo, were mja mma mma, ma opio, ma egbe, guru egwu ugu gawa ebe ahụ Chima na Chukwuka bi:

Nzogbu, Nzogbu,
Enyimba, enyi.
Zogbuo Chima,
Enyimba, enyi
zogbuo Chukwuka,
Enyimba, enyi.
Zogbuo umuaka ha,
Enyimba, enyi.
Zogbuo ndi ohi,
Enyimba, enyi.
Zogbuo ndi ama ha,
Enyimba, enyi.
Nzogbu, Nzogbu,

Enyimba, enyi



In Okafo (2010:49) the author used song to showcase how excited people were, when Igwe Ogbajiligwe settled Obiekwe and brother's land dispute wisely..

Otutu mmadu biara inuru ikpe si n'ime obi puta gbaa Obiekwe okirikiri na-ekele ya, na-anu onu. Mgbe o na-ala, o na-akoro ndi ya na ya na-aji na mma ihe e kpetara. Onye o kororo o puo kororo onye ozo. Etu a ka akuko siri gazuo ebe niile. Ndi niile na-emere ya ebere wee gbara na-abia be ya na-agu egwu na-enwe onu ma na-etokwa Igwe Ogbajiliwe. Otu n'ime egwu ndi ha na-agu bu nke a:

Ogbaji! Ogbaji! Ogbaji ka anyi ga-eso oo

Ma o na-eje eje ma o na-ala ala

Ogbajiliwe ka anyi ga-eso oo.

5.) Use of Igbo Oral tradition and Retributive justice

In oral tradition, the primary objective of the storyteller is to set up memorable situations, a folktale is never without a direction and purpose. This is so in the respect that all the various incidents – characterization, and action are carefully tailored to a common end, in terms of a basic principle. This is a moralistic principle that is commonly referred to as the principle of Retributive justice. According to Akporobaro (2001:120) what is meant by this is that unlike what generally happens in life, the wicked characters in oral tradition never go scot free. At the end, they are often victims of their excessive cunning, selfishness and malice. By being presented in this form, the oral tradition becomes a moral force that aesthetically directs the consciousness of the community towards the lore and cultivation of what is good and desirable.

In *Uwa Ntooo* (2014) by Onyekaonwu, Agameevu remained in exile because he was afraid of being killed by late Ebubedike's kinsmen. Onukwube died a premature death for marrying Agameevu that killed her late husband Ebubedike

In *Anu Gbaa Ajo Qso* (2001) by Ofomata, Ikpendu who refused to stop robbery even when his parents and his community were against him, was later burnt alive by group of people that caught him stealing in Onitsha

In *Aka Ekpuchi Eziokwu* (2010) by Okafo, Ezeji was known as a corrupt rich man in his village, for bribing his kinsmen to judge land dispute in favour of him against his brother Obiekwe.

Conclusion

Oral tradition provides a unique and invaluable insight into the cultural life-beliefs, customs, values and aspirations of the Igbo race. Authors of the modern literature have understood crucial role, oral tradition plays in lives of Igbo people. They therefore incorporate oral tradition in their literary works as a way of preserving the cultural heritage of Igbo people. Finally, this paper recommends that further researches have to be carried out from time to time on the relevance of the Igbo oral tradition in the present day study of Igbo literature. This will help in preservation of the Igbo oral tradition for the future generation.

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