

**An Examination of the Nri-Igbo Concept of  
CHI  
in the Light of Oral Traditions**

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For my father and mother,

Mazi G. C. Agu

&

Nnem Patience Uzonnwa Agu

Nné' gwa m̄-gwa m̄-gwa m̄  
Nnà gwa m-gwa m-gwa m  
Gwa m anunu hapuru ulò  
banye n'ohia?

Nne gwa m-gwa m-gwa m  
Nna gwa m-gwa m-gwa m  
Gwa m odibo Chúkúwú kpuru okwa  
jee gwa mmuo okwu?

Nne gwa m-gwa m-gwa m  
Nna gwa m gwa m-gwa m  
Gwa otu nwoke jere n'ala mmuo  
jee muta okū

Nne gwa m-gwa m-gwa m  
Nna gwa m-gwa m-gwa m  
Gwa m otù nwàànyì si n'útùtù  
jebe ije jekwute Oke-chi

Nna gburu onwá n'ihu-  
O gburu onwa were lee anya  
na mmiri anyim  
Hú ihe ha ka enyi;  
Nne gbara aku n'ahu,  
O bu nkwa ntùtù n'isi were  
lee anya na mmiri  
Wèrè hu ihe ha ka igwé

Anyi were na-eje  
Anyi ana eje...

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Ogonna C Agu  
(October, 1990)

## ABSTRACT

The concept of *Chi* has been one of the most debated in Igbo Traditions, and yet the most ambiguous, enigmatic, and controversial to date. Right from the pre-colonial times, the early European writers who visited Igboland observed the important place this concept had in the lives of the people. During the colonial period the official anthropologists to the British government and some independent scholars in the field called sufficient attention to this concept through their works. To them *Chi* meant various things starting from the Supreme God to the personal tutelary god of the individual. There was the tendency to look at this concept from the view-point of western cultural assumptions. Even with the indigenous Igbo writers themselves, the problem was how to shake the climate of thought already established by the earlier writers.

This study sets out to look critically at these prevailing assumptions of *Chi* from an entirely new perspective. Limiting its scope to the Nri-Igbo cultural range, it brings the study immediately into focus by maintaining that the concept is integrally related to the objective reality of the sun *Anyaanwu* with which it has often been associated. This it has done by relating the subject of *Chi* to an increased context of its verbal use. Starting from this premise of its association with the sun, the concept is seen as the window by which day and night can be explained, and following from them, the mysteries of life and death, individual destinies etc. It goes further to contest the assumption that *Chi* is the supreme God, a latter day development, perhaps, but this after its complexities have necessarily been rigorously analyzed.

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## Chapter 1

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 *Background*

Since 1960 when Nigeria obtained her independence from Britain, studies in Igbo language and culture have developed to include among other concerns the concept of *Chi* as it relates to the people. Evidence of this can be seen in the writings of Igbo scholars who have followed the lead given by the early European explorers and missionaries who visited Igboland in the last half of the nineteenth century leading into the present time. The indigenous writers themselves have more or less continued the debate on the issues raised by the works of these early writers. The observation is that many of the indigenous writers, quite unlike the European writers (who always specified the various areas they had studied), had written using the whole expanse of Igbo culture zone as their range. This perhaps is justifiable since a stage came in Nigerian scholarship for these researchers to project their pan-Igbo outlook as was the case with many other cultures such as the Hausa and the Yoruba.

I have chosen to limit the scope of my study to the Nri-Igbo culture zone partly for methodological reasons and also for the peculiar pressures which this ancient culture had to go through when the British came. It is well known that before the British came the Nri culture and civilisation was well established in this area and even beyond. Records of visitors like G. I. Jones mentioned the immense power which the Eze Nri had, powers that were thought to be ritually sanctioned from *Chukwu* over a whole range of Igbo village-groups; but the British came and put an end to his authority in their bid to create a new socio-political culture for Nigeria. On this note it is interesting that the colonizers realized the power and significance of the place of the divine Nri kings in the lives of the people with whom they came into contact and yet these kings were not accorded their rightful place of honour in the British administration who banned their activities and even appointed inferior chiefs to rule over them (Onwuejeogwu 1981:29).

This has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the eclipse of the culture and civilization of this area, a situation which has created a gap in Igbo studies in general but which scholars have begun to address in different other ways. It is for this reason that we are having to study this culture in order to re-discover it. We are also aware of the new additions in this area to the concept of *Chi* by Nwoga and Ezekwugo. These works and others by indigenous Igbo writers reflect some of the controversies which this concept has generated. Sometimes they are as a reaction to what had earlier on been written on the concept by early European visitors. Besides, most of the studies on the concept have been descriptive; and the problem still remains that while seeking to do this they have sometimes retained certain perceptions already internalized into them from their Christian or western educational upbringing. All this makes notions about *Chi* superficial and difficult to put together into a more coherent and meaningful whole as a system. Writers like Arthur Glyn Leonard, Basden and Jeffreys had written extensively on the concept and in these writings one can see a clear attempt not to tread on certain grounds as seen in the relationship between the sun *Anyaanwu* and *Chi*. Many writers have mentioned this relationship without investigating it as if the relationship stopped there. It is this that made me to be more curious to know about this relationship as it is my belief that if a concept like *Chi* could be all pervasive in the lives of individuals in society then it should be capable of explaining certain mysteries like life and death, personal destiny, man's relationship to the physical world and society and also how these could be linked to the social institutions of the people. It is this that has made me to want to look deeper into this concept from the point of view of the people's culture itself by making use of verbal evidence from the culture which till late has not been the practice in any study of this kind. This, I believe, will help us to discover the particular aspects of the concept that makes it so unique in Igbo thought and psyche.

I am going to look at this more localized culture, the Nri-Igbo culture, because I consider it an important one for some obvious reasons. In the first place, there has been a good body of published works and materials as well as records of British colonial officials who were the first to have any serious encounter with the Nri-Igbo group in a way that had a marked impact on their whole ways of life. The

majority of these writers, most of whom were anthropologists, had talked of a kingdom in the Northern part of Igboland that was ruled by a magnificent line of divine kings and which Professor Thurstan Shaw had gone to confirm in his recent archeological discoveries. Again, it appears that it is among this group of Igbo people that the concept of *Chi* has been developed especially as some writers have identified it with the *ichi* facial scarification performed on men from this area. Thus, the meaning which this concept suggests appears to be larger than what it is generally taken to be, and it is the ambiguities and complexities inherent in the concept that we will be seeking to explore.

Only recently, the anthropologist Onwuejeogwu has done a comprehensive study of the Nri kingdom and hegemony in a book which he published in 1981.<sup>1</sup> It has to be said that apart from this particular writer, many European writers, scholars, and adventurers had written on this same subject of *Chi*, but their approach has been mainly to describe not only what they had seen and felt but also to allow certain patterns of presumptions to override the Igbo thoughts themselves which would have helped to clarify this concept of *Chi*. This is why we think that the terrain covered so far on the concept should be re-examined to identify the extraneous matters overlaying those thoughts and subject them to a new analysis in the light of the verbal materials from the culture. We think that for a more rigorous and systematic analysis of the concept, the use of these verbal materials obtained from the field is not only important but necessary also. This is because as the concept has to do with the people's world-view, certain verbal materials found in this area will be relevant for the views they reflect on the concept. This is what this study will be out to do, as it will help us to discover the notions that had been held by the concept as well as the changing perceptions that are slowly taking place as the culture continues to change. So that by bringing the Igbo materials to the fore and using them to study the concept through a closer look at their varied levels of verbal use, the gaps left by the factors of interpretation and misrepresentations might be filled.

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<sup>1</sup> M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1981, *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony*, Ethnographica Ltd., London. We will depend on this work, which is a comprehensive study of the social, political, economic and religious systems of the Nri, for much of our information on the relevant areas of the study.

This study, therefore, departs from that of the previous scholars, including Igbo scholars themselves, by making the point that *Chi* is an ambiguous concept and should be seen as such. It should have to be looked at from the point of view of the culture which informs it. It recognizes that there are certain conceptual problems when one culture is interpreted from the point of view of another culture and with different conceptual tools that do not fit to that other culture. Here, the problem of language becomes a serious issue: how does one interpret *Chi* in the English language, for example? Is it as God as many writers do, or high God? In any way it is looked at it would suggest assumptions that *Chi* is the same as the Christian concept of God, and it is this problem which writers seem not to consider very much by consciously or unconsciously trying to force Igbo thought into western conceptual schemes that we shall be concerned with also in the study. In this regard also, we would try to present the Igbo materials as they are without classifying them into categories designed by western literary criticism.

This present chapter has so far aimed at explaining our intentions in the study as a prelude to highlighting the Nri-Igbo culture zone in which we would try to identify the particular traits of the culture we have designated as Nri-Igbo. Chapter two will make a detailed survey of the the published materials so far found on *Chi* among the Nri-Igbo group, and assess some of the views in their strengths and weaknesses based on the ground that certain thoughts may be alien to the Nri-Igbo way of thinking and therefore should be criticized. Some of the views of the pan-Igbo writers are also looked at. In chapter three we give an account of the verbal materials to be used in the study in their types, taking into consideration the areas they are drawn from, their potentials for the study and their various degrees of usefulness. In chapter four, the concept of *Chi* will be analyzed in various ways in the light of the verbal materials, using an interpretative scheme derived by analogy between the sun as an object and *Chukwu* as a personage imbued with power. This will then be pursued further in chapter five in which *Chukwu* will be dealt with as a social model. In this chapter also the notion of its sovereignty will be re-examined and re-assessed. Chapter six will then conclude by justifying the goals of the study through the methodological approach we have chosen.

## 1.2 *Scope of Study*

The scope and range of the study has already been referred to, which is the Nri-Igbo cultural zone as delineated by Onwuejeogwu (1981:11). Nri is the cultural and spiritual centre of the people of this area which D. Forde and G.I. Jones have called the Northern Igbo embracing such core settlement areas as Aguleri, Oraeri, Aguukwu Nri, Igbo-Ukwu, Nando, Amanuke and a host of other places. The Nri-Igbo would also include the others within the range of the Nri-Igbo culture and civilisation as far as to Udi and Nsukka in its northern limits, Ogwashi-Ukwu and Issele Ukwu (where traces of Nri lineages can still be found) as far as to Illah in the present Bendel State of Nigeria just across the Niger from Onitsha; and then as far as to Okigwe and east, to the borders of Abakaliki.

The particular subject of *Chi* in all its variant meanings is the central concern of this work, analysed using oral materials drawn from the Nri-Igbo collective experience and traditions. Its religious, social and ecological and environmental significance are particularly stressed as factors contributing to the shaping of the Nri-Igbo culture and ideology, and this by bringing the verbal materials as evidence.

## 1.3 *Aims and objectives*

This study will aim at trying to explain the ambiguity of the Nri-Igbo sky entity, *Chukwu*. It has been noted that confused notions about this entity has led to many writers referring to him as the withdrawn god, or God that can be both venerated and despised. In attempting to point to the fact that as much as this entity is enigmatic, we shall also attempt to show that it is a physical reality that is identified with the sun which is given form and significance as a personage. In doing this, we hope to raise certain pertinent issues such as these:

i. *Chi* has at various times been translated as *Chukwu* and vice-versa; both of which have been associated and in fact, identified as the phenomenal entity *anyaanwu* "the sun". In this study, we will try to find out how consistent this assumption might be by looking for the

scheme or basis for such association between the reality and the objectified form, if possible by way of analogy.

ii. Again, this study will ask the question which it seeks to answer, namely -is the sky-entity *Chukwu* really the absolute figure that it is taken to be by many of the earlier writers and if so, to what extent could it be recognised as such since the writers have come from a particular western background which might have influenced them or raised their expectation of what to meet or see in this area they have come to study?

iii Also *Chi* has been associated with the weather conditions as well as with day and night. Granted that this is understandable from its relationship with the sun, how could such a conception relate to the fact that it is also associated with individual destiny?

iv. One will also want to see how this concept is used to explain the nature of creation and existence. Is it, for example, the god in man or is it outside of a man, persistent as his shadow that never leaves him as his destiny? How, in the course of life, does it help a man to take control of his destiny?

#### 1.4 Verbal materials

I collected the materials in the 1980s. In 1980 I obtained some grants that enabled me to travel around the Nri-Igbo areas collecting these various materials. This specific research project lasted for about half a year. Subsequently I have been collecting other materials as occasion allows. Areas which I covered in my journeys included Nsukka, the ancient town of Nri itself, Aguleri, Amanuke, Enugu-Ukwu, Awka, Awka-Etiti, Nnobi, Nnewi, Ogidi -all of which are within the Nri-Igbo immediate compass.

I was not born in the area of the Nri-Igbo culture zone but at the city of Port-Harcourt in the present day Rivers State of Nigeria. However I grew up visiting and staying with my grandparents at my home town of Nnobi, and at an early stage began to appreciate the Nri-Igbo cultural expressions.<sup>1</sup> I participated in masquerading and cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Nnobi where I come from is one of the village groups with strong Nri influence. In fact a good many indigenes of Nnobi believe that "Nnobi is Nri", a way of

dances and gradually as I advanced in my education I began considering being actively engaged in the culture. I came to know a good deal of the folk stories told about the animals and about the spirits but never reflected on them in any serious kind of way.

During the Nigerian civil war we all returned home from the cities and continued to remain there as our home base. Even though father went back to work in Lagos , having returned from Port-Harcourt, and even though we had all gone to college, the local village continued to be for me a place of inspiration and culture which I did not hesitate to hold fast to. So that when the time came for me to start reflecting on my cultural heritage and traditions through some organised research, I thought of dealing with the intriguing and comprehensive concept of *Chi* especially as I was beginning to develop a mytho-religious sensibility as a creative writer. In the course of being registered to undertake the study, I studied reading and writing Igbo language texts to the extent that I carry out my creative writings in that language and in the Nigerian *pidgin* . The advantage therefore of my intimate contact with my culture is that a good part of it has been internalized in me, and this because in addition to knowing certain basic facts about it, I have actually been reflecting on them. Also, I actually believe in and practice the indigenous religion known as *Agom Mmuo* "Spirit Reverence" in which I see myself playing a role as a priest-healer *dibia*.

**1.5      *The Nri-Igbo Group:***  
***Location, settlement and Extent.***

Onwuejeogwu has delineated the range and extent of the Nri culture zone and influence: Nri, the ancient town itself, is located in the scarplands of south-eastern Nigeria in the present Anambra State. It is situated in the depression of Agulu lake and 40 - 60 feet above sea level. On the map it is located on latitude 6.08N and longitude 6.02E. it

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driving that point home. It is known, however, that there is a group of people, the Umuona, who are believed to have migrated to Nnobi with their "god" Aho from an area around Nri and who have finally integrated with the Nnobi people. It is this group that have authority over rituals having to do with the earth force Ana, from whom the Ezeana "chief priest of the earth cult", is chosen. Nnobi is about sixteen miles from Onitsha by the river Niger and about the same number of miles if not slightly more from the ancient town of Nri.

is about 18 miles east of the commercial town of Onitsha which is located on the bank of the river Niger.

The Nri-Igbo group is made up of the core settlement areas of Nri, Aguleri, Oraeri, Amanuke, Igboariam, Nteje, Enugu-Ukwu, Nneofia, Enugu-Agidi and Awka, all to be found around the ancient town of Nri. To the west, extending even to the present day Bendel State, some Nri settlements can also be traced, and they included such places as Owa, Ogboli, Issele-Ukwu, Ogwashi-Ukwu, Igbouzo, Asaba, Abala, Illah. The Nri-Igbo group would also include parts of Orlu, Okigwe and Nsukka Areas as well as the Udi areas. Particular settlements of the Nri group include such places as Nimo, Adazi, Agulu, Nise, Oraukwu, Neni, Nnewi and Ifite. On expansion it included places like Nnokwa, Nnobi, Isuama, Agbaja, Ezi-owelle, Abacha, Abagana, Achalla, Abatete, Umuoji and Obosi. Many of these places are affected by soil erosion and leaching. The ecological features include forest regions of tall trees and palmgroves and the Anambra watershed which empties into the Niger. The scarpland area is favoured by alternating rainy and dry seasons. As a result of constant use of the land over the centuries, the soil is fast becoming impoverished and the forests have begun to open to easy penetration, exploitation and transportation.

### 1.6 *History and traditions*

Apart from certain oriental hypotheses, the origin of the Igbo people as a whole is still not known. There appears to have been an aboriginal Igbo group dwelling in the forests of Aguukwu and environs before the the Nri came (Onwuejeogwu 1981: 22-29).<sup>1</sup> The historian Afigbo himself is of the view that the Igbo people might have migrated from the area around the Niger-Benue trough, an area which might probably coincide with the area occupied by the present Igala people (Afigbo 1974).<sup>2</sup> If this assertion is anything to go by, then the tradition of the Nri people would appear to be supporting it as it is believed that there had been an extensive cultural and trading exchanges between

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<sup>1</sup> Onwuejeogwu's account of the political history of the Nri shows that it is one of contact at various stages between those he called the Nri and the Umudiani with whom they mingled and united to form one political culture.

<sup>2</sup> See Afigbo's "Prolegomena to the study of the Culture History of the Igbo-speaking people of Nigeria" in *Language and Culture*, 1975, edited by F.C. Ogbalu & Emenanjo, (Ibadan: Oxford University press), p.36.

them and the Igala. One good example is the presence of the ikenga symbol of the right hand which has been identified in both cultures (Boston 1982).<sup>1</sup>

Whatever might have been the case, however, tradition has it that Eri, the primogenitor of the Nri people, canoed down the river to a place now known as Eri-aka where he finally settled and married a local woman. With this woman he raised children who are the founders of the Nri settlements. He succeeded thus in unifying the groups in the surrounding districts (Onwuejeogwu 1981: 22).

Onwuejeogwu identifies three segments of independent aboriginal groups occupying the area before the coming of the Nri elements. These are the *umudiana* "children of the lords of the land", otherwise referred to as the *Adama* "cadre of original landlords". At the time Nri Efikuanim migrated to the place they occupied the area southwest of Nri. The second segment, made up of two groups of people called the Nsekpe and Achalla people, occupied the area around lake Ezu-Idemmili before Nri Namoke and his group came and settled among them. On merging all three became the Diodo. The third segment of the *umudiana* group, the Enuora, integrated with the emigrants to become the Akamkpisi. From all indications, these groups were all independent entities with their separate temples, *obu* ; staffs of oath *ofo* and supernatural beings *alusi*, and their own autonomous political systems. Soon, however, they were unified politically under the Eze Nri "whose power and authority in certain human relationships transcended those of the original groups and other later groups" (Onwuejeogwu 1981). All this manifested in the new ideas they brought such as the *ozo* and new varieties of yam (Onwuejeogwu 1981:24).

There is therefore the general indication that there were already a group of people known as the Igbo (in the sense that they speak this same language, because generally a group of Igbo referred to another group as "other people" until the coming of the Europeans began to bring home to the various communities the sense of common identity which groups of Igbo people had with one another). Having thus unified

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<sup>1</sup> See John Boston, *Ikenga Figures Among the North-west Igbo and Igala* (Lagos: Ethnographica in associations with the Federal Department of Antiquities).

the immediate groups around him, the Eze Nri proceeded to attract other Igbo groups flung far and wide by making them recognise his ritual powers. This he achieved by undertaking ritual journeys, any time a "king" ~~was~~ installed and crowned, to the various Igbo settlements from Nri through Agulu and Nnobi to the river Niger at Onitsha, offering sacrifices to the gods of the places he passed and receiving homage from the people in return and in recognition of his powers (Onwuejeogwu 1981: 87).

In quite recent years, an archaeological discovery at Igbo-Ukwu has helped to throw more light on the political as well as material culture of the Nri-Igbo group. Among the things excavated at Igbo Isaiah and Igbo Jeremiaiah were bronze vessels, iron weapons, beaded objects, pendants and delicately executed ornaments depicting male and female figures as well as a burial chamber of some great king. Chieka Ifemesia, the historian on whom we rely for this information, is of the view that the presence of this burial chamber attests to the fact that there was in existence a monarchy which marked the Nri political culture, and which centred on the Eze Nri.<sup>1</sup>

Another distinguishing characteristic of the Nri Igbo group under study was the presence of a recognisable core of nobility who were distinguished by their *ozo* title privileges which enabled them to carry the sacred iron or *alo* and officiate before the shrine of a deity. These men had as of necessity the *ichi* facial scarification by which they were recognised, itself a religious prerequisite for taking the *ozo* title. The Nri had ritual influence over the rest of the Igbo groups with the result that they regulated, through their agents, controlled, and conferred the *ozo* title on the other Igbo groups. This ritual authority over other groups carried far, extending as far as to the rituals connected with the cultivation and eating of yam.

### *1.7 The Coming of Eri and the rise of Nri Civilization*

As "divine kings", Onwuejeogwu is of the view that the rise of the Nri rested in their introduction of new food types like yam and in

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<sup>1</sup> See Chieka Ifemesia, *Traditional Humane Living Among the Igbo*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers), 1979, p.18. Also see Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd), 1976, pp. 10-16.

new ways of checking pests in the farm. These perhaps might have helped the Nri group to carve out a position for themselves as the manipulators of the rural agricultural world; for it is with them that "myths" concerning the coming of yam and cocoyam and the four market days of the Nri-Igbo week are associated even though the origin of some of these might have stretched far deep into the past. Even in recent times, it is also among the Nri group that epic narratives of the heroic tradition has been found.

Thus, the history of those we refer to as Nri proper will have to do with the genesis of the civilization of the Anambra river basin as developed by the priest-kings of Nri which included Aguleri, Oraeri, Aguukwu and others that have affinities with them. From all available evidence, it appears that the Nri culture started to develop very long ago, at about 800 century AD. This, in fact, was the period referred to as the Eri period. Eri, as it is believed, is the mythical founder of the clusters of lineages that make up the Nri group. He was believed to have come from the sky, even though as we have already tried to show at the beginning, we can immediately relate the events of his coming with current exchanges that must have taken place between the Nri and the people of the Niger-Benue trough of which Igala is of primary significance. This Eri period is said to be the time when the area of land occupied by the people of Nri was fertile and most productive, with easy communication channels by the river Anambra watershed which also supplied the area with rich alluvial soil for growing yam and water for fishing purposes. This is also the time when an autochthonous Igbo group must have inhabited that area.

According to Onwuejeogwu, "Eri was sent by *Chukwu* (the creator) from the sky to rule mankind. Eri came down the Anambra river near the present site of Aguleri". There he settle among the indiginous people, during which time he married a daughter of the land who bore him children. After his death, according to the Anambra history, a series of migrations followed, which led to the settlement of various Nri outposts such as Amanuke, Igboariam, Nteje, Igala, Nando, Umuleri, Aguukwu, Oraeri, Enugu-Ukwu, and so on. We understand that it was from the 9th century A.D. that most of these settlements took place, but from the 12th to the 18th centuries "Nri lineages proliferated

over the Western Igbo culture area, continuing at lesser intensity until 1911 when the British banned their activities. East of the Niger, however, other Nri settlements had also begun to be identified in parts of the Igbo country such as Nnewi, Okigwe, Abatete, Obosi, Udi, Agulu, Nsukka, Adazi, Nnobi, Nise, Awka, Mba Ukwu, Orlu, Ezira, and parts of Ikeduru and Mbaise.<sup>1</sup>

Eri, thus, was believed to have established the Nri line of kingship. His authority over men was believed to have come from *Chukwu*. The important significance of this is that the Nri hegemony was of great age. In time, the Nri culture developed into what Onwuejeogwu has described as the "civilization of the sacred and the divine, because the civilization was based on the philosophy that Eze Nri derives his legitimacy from God, *Chukwu*:"

Onwuejeogwu is of the opinion that Nri civilization reached its peak between 1300 and 1700 A.D., when Eze Nri held sway over "external and internal politics of Igbo settlements, covering half of the Igbo area". The power of the Nri kings over these settlements continued until 1910 when the civilization was liquidated by the British.

Even before the coming of the British, the first signs of threat to the Nri-Igbo culture and civilization came from the slave trade to which it developed a particular attitude. Onwuejeogwu informs us that plainly the "the ethical philosophy and religious dogma" of the Nri "rejected the slave trade". It is said that the Nri rejected it because it spilled blood through constant warfares that were carried out in order to obtain slaves, and the shedding of blood is an abomination in the Nri-Igbo psyche and belief. Interestingly, this coincided with the rise of the Aro who had a great oracle also called *Chukwu*.

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<sup>1</sup> See Onwuejeogwu's *Nri Kingdom and Hegemony*. He also discusses this issue of the relative periods of ascendancy of the two civilizations of Nri and the Aro in his *Ahajioku Lecture* of 1987, pp.25-41. Elizabeth Isichie's *A History of the Igbo People* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd), 1976, pp. 4-6 suggests the antiquity of the Nri culture. She also refers to the Aro history of origin (pp.58-64) and supports it with their involvement in the slave trade. which shows it is only a recent phenomenon.

### 1.8 *The Rise of Chukwu of the Aros*

It is against this background of the history of the Nri-Igbo that we shall have a look at that of Arochukwu where this concept of Chukwu has also been found, or expressed, in order to establish which one came before the other. While the history of the Nri has been shown to be one of great antiquity, it does appear that in contrast the history of the Aro people, and their growth as a State is but a recent phenomenon, having been founded at the rise of the slave trade in about 1700 A.D. as Onwuejeogwu would have it. Onwuejeogwu has described this period of Aro ascendancy as a period that could rightly be called the Dark Age of Igbo history. This is understandable for the obvious reason that it had a telling effect on the civilization not only of the Nri-Igbo but also of all of Igboland at that time. As we have already intimated, with the coming of this slave trade, the Nri civilization started to suffer a series of cracks and set-backs which eventually led to its demise and so caused it to be superseded by the Aro ascendancy.

Information on the Aro comes from both oral and written sources. There are many accounts of the origin of the Aro-Igbo group, but on the surface it would appear that according to one informant, one core of the nomadic Aro groups must have migrated from Akunakuna, an area around the Cameroon mountains. He described them as a wandering group, fair of skin and full of life and energy. They came westwards and met the Ibibio people who were already settled at Ibom, sacked them and to lure the people back and control them, they took over their oracle Ibritam which they came to consult in spite of having lost control of it. Thus this oracle Ibritam, otherwise known as Abasi Ibom, became the chief shrine of the Arochukwu people which they now called Ibini-Ukpabi (corruption of Ibritam?) and which later came to be known as the long juju of Arochukwu. According to this informant, the Aros did not come with their own indigenous gods, but retained Ibini-Ukpabi which they sold to the rest of the people. To consolidate among the Ibibios also, they also called the god *Abasi* which is an Ibibio word. To the Igbo people they used the name *Chukwu* to sell their shrine to them, so that the shrine also came to be known as *Chukwu* of Aro people. Because of this they came to be known as the Arochukwu people, meaning the Aro of *Chukwu* oracle.

We have reason to think that this account does not present all the facts as they are, but at least it points to the nature of Aro diplomacy at the time. Some written sources however, have tried to put a few of the oral traditions together, and we certainly know that the area occupied by the Arochukwu became a melting pot of many cultures such as the Igbo themselves, the Ibibio, the Efiks, the Ekois, and many others as a result of the frequent warfares at the time around this area of the cross river basin as Kenneth Dike and Ekejiuba have tried to show.<sup>1</sup>The Igbo people themselves however had come there earlier than most of the other groups in search of land to expand on, and had in the process to be entangled with the Aro elements who aided them in their bid to expell the Ibibios. Arochukwu came to be the home of these people, the Aro people, which they took over after they had helped to sack the Ibibio at a place known as Ugwu Nkuma. These "outsiders" who Dike and Ekejiuba have identified as the Akpa or the Ekoi were a people with mercantilist interests who "already had contact with the developing trade in slaves on the Atlantic coast". The two historians referred to believe that through the activities of their leader Akuma the Aro were able to establish a centralized State. Even if this is so, it is worth noting that this State was not a divinely inspired hegemony as that of the Nri, so that it did not create stories of origin and of the world of the type we commonly associated with the Nri-Igbo by which they explained their existence. So that whatever stories they told, stressed the diversity of a people "who do not claim descent from one ancestor", and which, as modern stories of the new superstructure in which they found themselves, were mere coteries of economic and pseudo-religious tales.

### 1.9 *Aro kingship Traditions*

A further look at the Aro kingship traditions, even go to reveal this lack of religious basis of the State. Although Dike and Ekejiuba have painted a picture which gives the impression that in his attempt to unify the disparate groups of people into a kingdom, Akuma organized himself as a king with elaborate powers and insignia of office, this is not always consistent with any ability to control the supernatural realms as

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<sup>1</sup> See Kenneth Dike and Patricia Ekejiuba's "The Aro State: A case Study of State Formation in Southeastern Nigeria" in *Journal of African Studies*, Los Angeles, 1978, pp.286-300.

well, and as such we cannot compare the Aro kings in their ability to manipulate ritual power and authority as well as the forces of nature to the Nri kings. The ethnographer, Chike Dike, has informed us that it was in the Aro commercial activities that the "king was a central figure", and that the necessary unifying force which held the "widely varied peoples inhabiting the kingdom together was the Ekpe masquerade cult and not the king"<sup>1</sup>. The king, we are told, must belong to it and be bound by its regulations. Under these circumstances therefore, if in times of their greatest glory the ancient Nri kings used art and religious symbols and icons to express the nature of their divine kingship system, in the case of the Aro kings those material symbols were hardly employed in the same way as they were merely used as symbols of internal and external communication in their commercial and military enterprises executed by Aro merchants, middlemen, and military bands of hired fighters, controlled and manipulated by the king in council.

On the whole, it appears that the Aro did not place any value on spiritual rulers as the Nri-Igbo did. Chike Dike summarises this absolute lack of a spiritual king in the case of the Aro by referring us to the Aro saying that "*anyi ejighi eze mere ihe*" meaning "we do not place much value on kingship". It is not surprising then that this attitude manifests even more visibly in the general appearance and comportment of the "king". We are told that nobody ranging from the king to his councillors are "marked by elaborate regalia. The architectural design of the Eze Aro's palace is said to follow the "normal building patterns of the Aro", and this, in times past, "was a mud structure supported by bamboo sticks" and built by the king himself from his "own resources and to his own taste".

From the relative expositions of the history of the two sub-Igbo groups we arrive at the conclusion that the rise of the Aro is only a recent phenomenon when compared to that of the Nri. The Nri civilization is therefore very ancient and its institutions founded in antiquity. Following from this, the Nri had a coherent world-view which was based on the ecological factors of their existence and this gave rise to, and shaped, the Nri-Igbo culture and civilization which preceded

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<sup>1</sup> See Chike Dike's "Art, Symbol and Authority among the Aro of South-East Nigeria," published in *Nigeria Magazine*, Vol.55, no 2, by the Federal Ministry of Information, and Culture, Lagos, 1987, pp.30-35.

that of the Arochukwu. Also, this civilization generated concepts which we usually associated with the sun-entity *Chi* and others besides, as well as a material culture that is unique when compared to that of the Aro. This being so, the Aro State can therefore be said to be chiefly motivated by slave interests and slave economy, which did not help it to develop the kind of concepts that had to deal with the supernatural powers such as that of the Nri, for explaining their world. Also, even where the shrine of *Ibini-Ukpabi* or *Chukwu* (as it is variously called) could have served them that purpose of cultivating a religious sense of the universe, it was used mainly in the service of the Aro economic interests, having been transformed into a political, judicial and economic institution. In other words, it had no religious significance for the people such as that which produced the divine kings of Nri. From all these facts, it can be said that the concept of *Chukwu* was native to the Nri-Igbo group in a way that the *Chukwu* of the Aro people was not, hence the notion that the Nri-Igbo might have borrowed it from the Aro does not arise as Nwoga had suggested. Rather, the reverse was true, that the Aro appropriated it from the Igbo with whom they came into contact or from those Igbo elements who were themselves also mixed up with them from whom they must have extracted the name for referring to their shrine. Thus, while converting its role in society from one of being a divine being, they succeeded in turning it into an ogre which is seen to have the absolute power of adjudicating on social and economic matters involving their trade with their coastal agents by the sea.

### **1.10                      Occupation**

The Nri-Igbo of pre-colonial times engaged in such occupational activities as farming, trading, arts and crafts as well as iron and wood working. They also monopolized ritual manipulation and control of earth and market forces.

Farming was mainly carried out to satisfy the need for food and so each household unit tried to be self-sufficient in this by having farmlands around the homestead where they grew yam, cocoyam vegetables pepper, cassava, pumpkin, corn and so on. Men had control of the land and also controlled the cultivation of yam, considered to be the major food product or "king of crops" used for ritual and economic purposes as well. The people practised shifting cultivation whereby a

plot of land cultivated in any one year is left fallow in the succeeding year to let it replenish before being made use of again. It is on such plots that crops like cocoyam and cassava are grown as they are then supplied with manure that will become useful in the end when the planting of yams comes. Around the farmlands, and within the compounds of each family unit economic trees such as palm trees, coconut trees, plantain, banana, mango, orange, kolanut as well as breadfruit trees are grown. Often they kept farmlands in the forest areas which they attended regularly as a means of supplementing those at home.

Each family unit kept livestock within an enclosure at the homestead, and these included goats, sheep, local cows, hens and chickens which are exchanged for other goods on big market days. Horses were imported from areas around northern Nigeria presumably from the land of the Igala and used on important festival days.

#### *1.10.1 Trading*

As well as farming, therefore, the Nri-Igbo engaged in trading in which excess food crops obtained from the farm were exchanged for other items such as knives, hoes, ritual objects, clothes etc. The people also engaged in extensive trade with their immediate neighbours and long distance trading was not unknown. It is partly in connection with trade that the four days of the Nri-Igbo week were institutionalized. Hence, every village group had a particular day by which its central market was known which is also the day traders came from far and near to exchange their goods as well as socialize. Apart from this market day, villages carried on local marketing activities at other days appointed for them. The Nri-Igbo bought and sold livestock on big market days; and judging from their extensive use of exotic materials for their pendants and pottery they must have imported copper, beads, bronze and even horses from the outside (presumably from the region around the Igala with whom they are said to have had extensive trading and cultural exchanges (Onwuejeogwu 1981)) in exchange for ivory which they exported in great quantities (Ifemesia 1974). When it comes to slave economy, even though the Nri-Igbo participated in slave trading, it is believed that the Nri philosophy frowned on it. (Onwuejeogwu 1981:26)

### 1.10.2 *Ritual regulation and control*

Onwuejeogwu also identifies ritual functions as one of the major occupations of the Nri people. The *Eze-Nri* himself operated by ritual authority and sanctions, having the power to abrogate or enact taboos relating to market activities (Onwuejeogwu 1981: 88). From time to time he sent out his agents to other parts of Igboland, at times after having been consulted or appealed to, to carry out cleansing rites in other Igbo towns where the earth has been desecrated; or to install an *ozo* title man with a staff of office.

It is in this connection that the arts and crafts as well as the technology of the of the Nri-Igbo flourished. The craftsmen produced ritual spears *alo* carried by the *ozo* titled elders, elaborately carved wooden doors for adorning the gates of the compounds of nobilities, ivory horns *okike* used for the early morning invocations, and beautiful masks, carved objects representing then various gods and spirits in the Nri-Igbo pantheon. It is for these that the Awka wood carvers and smiths are known till this day. These smiths also produced metal works such as the gong, hoes, knives and matchets for farm and domestic duties. But the art of *ichi* facial scarification remained the major concern of the Umudioka group who went about from place to place carrying out major operations.

### 1.11 *Social and religious observances*

The major processes of socialization for the youth are the age-grade, the *mmonwu* "masquerade" society and the title taking systems. The age-grade introduced youths to the ideals of leadership, the *mmonwu* society initiated them into the mysteries of the land of the dead, while the titles taking system affiliated them to the moral order of the living society in which they exist.<sup>1</sup>

When a male child is of age to fend for himself, he marries a wife and establishes his own separate homestead. This usually comprises a walled enclosure within which there is the *obi*, the central place for

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<sup>1</sup> For details of these and also of the kinship and political structures see Onwuejeogwu, 1981.

receiving visitors and keeping the personal and ancestral symbols of religious observances of the head of household unit which the child, now as an adult, becomes. This would include his *ikenga*, connected with his *chi*, and the cult of the right hand for his personal achievements in life. The *obi* would also house his ancestral altar for keeping the memories of his ancestors alive, and other paraphernalia of worship such as the *ofo* "staff of office" (which might be inherited), *oku chi* "one's 'chi' claybowl" otherwise *oku iru* "claybowl kept for the face"<sup>1</sup> - which is actually a claybowl for storing rainwater for washing the hands and face every morning before breaking the kolanut used for the morning's invocations.

Outside the *obi*, but within this same walled enclosure of the compound, he establishes his altar of *Chi* through a ritual performed by "drawing down" the rays of the sun *isedata Chi*<sup>2</sup> and directing it onto a particular spot where the altar is to be established. There he plants four sticks of the sacred *ogilisi* plant which he had cut from the parent one at his father's shrine of *Chi* in the previous compound of his abode. In all this he acts as the officiating priest, or he simply employs the help of an elder from within his *umunna* lineage group if his father was no more alive to take up this role himself. It is also common for the Nri-Igbo to set up other shrines to other deities in the compound such as *Ogwugwu*, *Ana* and so on which they represent with the appropriate symbols. In some cases the shrine of *Chi* might include a symbol used for representing *ana*, "the earth one" usually in the form of a large stone.

In the wife's apartment which is usually behind, separated by a wall from the *obi* in front, the woman stays with the children and receives all her visitors there. Usually by the fireside she establishes her own shrine of *chi* which represents her procreative maternal role

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<sup>1</sup>This is also known as *oku iru* "claybowl used for washing the morning face" but because this is more or less a ritual act that precedes the breaking of the morning kolanut, there is perhaps a sense in which it could be termed an act of ablution. But one has to say that it did not seem that such matters bothered anyone since a strictly religious act that must be adhered to (that is, as a formal attitude of piety to a god) is in fact not one of deliberate design as in organized religions in which such guiding principles are formulated to take care of such things.

<sup>2</sup> See Chinua Achebe's "Chi in Igbo Cosmology" in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (London: Heinemann publishers) ,1975.

*chi omumu* as well as her domestic role in the family. These *chi* symbols are in the form of tiny claypots or *umuoku*.<sup>1</sup>

Every morning, in their own separate ways and depending on their own individual needs, men make petitions to *Chukwu*, commonly known as *agom oji ututu* "early morning kolanut invocation". Besides *Chukwu*, the invocation is also directed to the other entities in the pantheon. In this petition he asks for long life, children, good health, wealth and prosperity. The woman at her own end usually asked for life and good health for herself and her children as well as for protection and peace in the family. A barren woman constantly pleads for a child of the womb. These constitute the major values of the Nri-Igbo society.

In relating to his personal *chi*, a man constantly makes an appeal to it to enable him achieve success in his business for the day and always. He brings any problems that arise to him promising to offer it rich rewards if he succeeds. When all efforts are made and the one still fails, he probably considers removing the particular *ikenga* symbol representing his *chi*<sup>2</sup> and replacing it with a new one which he goes and obtains from a craftsman and consecrates. On the women's own side, if her marriage is suffering a crisis she keeps making petitions to her *chi* to save it. When it fails and she divorces her husband, she removes her *chi* symbols from the home of her former husband and re-establishes in the home of the new one. In some cases she destroys it and goes back to her mother and obtains a new sacred plant which she establishes in her new husband's home.

What has so far been described pertains to the private level of religious observances. On the public level, the individual begins to relate to the mother deity that unites the whole village group together through a series of rights and obligations that are connected with the yearly calender of the town which have to do with her festivals for promoting and fostering the feeling of solidarity, joy and happiness of the people. This is also the level at which he relates to the various public functionaries having to do with varied aspects of life within the

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<sup>1</sup> For *Chi* in female maternal and domestic roles, see G.T. Basden's *Niger Ibos*, (London: Frank Cass and Co.), p. 37ff.

<sup>2</sup> On this, see Basden also, p.37 ff; Northcote Thomas also identifies *chi* with the *ikenga*.

society such as, for example, in matters relating to medicine, when the priest-healer is needed and consulted; psychologically expressed problems, when a diviner is sought after; and prophecy, when a visionary appears and makes commentaries on the social and spiritual life of the individuals and society at large.

### 1.12 *Beliefs and world-view*

The Nri-Igbo talk of the world as having appeared all of a sudden *uwa walu awa*.<sup>1</sup> "the world appeared all of a sudden; the world is broken in pieces". They identify two component parts of the physical world as "the place above" *enu* and "the place below," *ana*. In actual terms they are the two separate domains of the sky and the earth. The category that deals with the *Chi* entities reside in the former sphere, while the *alusi* entities can be found in the latter. *Chi*, which at times can be referred to as *Chukwu*, is believed to be the creator of the world and all that is in it *Chukwu-okike*. Among these are the four days of the Nri-Igbo week, *eke oye afo* and *nkwo*; the trees and forests and hills and mountains down to the physical earth and the living beings found on it. It is common to associate this *Chi* with the sun *anyaanwu*, and *agbala* which has to do with the immensity of its power.

Also there is belief in *Chi* or *Chukwu* that is located up in the sky and which relates to individuals in society, as well as belief in the land *ana* as a spirit force responsible for protecting the customs, *omenana*, and traditions, *odinana*, of the land. In this connection *ana* is believed to be the guardian of the sacred traditions of the land and therefore the chief justicer that ensures that the moral probity of individuals is maintained in society. Several taboos are tied up with the earth force, *ana*, the breaking of which would then call for ritual atonement for redress, failure to do which could result in ostracism or exile. Much of these taboos have to do with eating or destroying any

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<sup>1</sup> One is aware of the various interpretations which have been given to this expression, of which one very common one is that the world is like a claybowl that broke to pieces and is flung far and wide. Even though this might be a valid way of looking at it, we say that the word itself has a number of ways it can be interpreted as a result of its tonality, but it does seem clear to me that it might also be interpreted as something that happened or appeared suddely, spontaneously as morning which "happens" or dawns on the the world all of a sudden from the darkness of the preceding night,

object belonging to the spirits such as the altar of a god, stealing of yams and so on.

The Nri-Igbo believe also in water divinities, many of which such as *Idemmili* at Nnobi, or *Nwocha* at Oraukwu, or *Edo* at Nnewi, are powerful goddesses believed to represent the mother of the village groups that own them. At other places like Nsukka the founding ancestors of the land become the central divinity of a village group.<sup>1</sup> Also particular trees such as the *oji* "the iroko" and *akpu* "silk cotton" are believed to be spirit forces in which certain undefinable powers reside, especially because of their abnormal size; other spirits are believed to be present in nature which cannot be seen or named while others are simply believed to reside in rocks, hills etc; and unfamiliar places or bushes are considered abode of evil spirits *ajo ohia*. Because of this belief in numerous spirits the Nri-Igbo talk of *ohu mmuo na nnu mmuo* "multiple and uncountable spirits" that have to do with various aspects of phenomena.

There is also the belief in the ancestors and re-incarnation of these ancestors. Only those who qualify become an ancestor. This would include all those who were able to set up a home of their own, marry, bear children and accumulate enough wealth to take titles -and above all die at a great age -and more importantly, of natural causes, often referred to as *onwu chi* "natural death".<sup>2</sup> These are the only ones admitted in spiritland among the group of ancestors. All those who do not achieve this status in life, or who died prematurely, are considered as the worthless spirits or *akamogheli*, not able to be reincarnated again when they die (as it is from among the ancestors that people are re-incarnated). Surely women are also believed be reincarnated in female children after they have died but they are never ancestors. This is because the lineage group is patrilineal by descent and their status as such (as ancestors that is) is never defined or emphasized. However it is believed that memorials can be set up for them by both male and female offspring as a way of keeping their mother's memory alive.

<sup>1</sup> In some kolanut prayers collected by Shelton (See Austin Shelton, *The Igbo-Igala Borderland*, Albany, USA, 1971) we see quite a number of cases of invocations to ancestral heads such as Arua asked to come and participate in the eating of kolanut.

<sup>2</sup> See Horton's "God, Man and the Land in a Northern Igbo village-group" in *Africa* 26 (1956) pp.17-28.

The Nri-Igbo believe that *Chukwu* and all the other phenomenal spirits in their cosmology are spirit forces *mmuo*, and this includes those of the ancestors who are regarded simply as spirits *ndi mmuo*. There are both good and bad spirits. Spirits of the ancestors are generally good spirits, but spirits of those who died suddenly before they could fulfil themselves on earth are considered to be restless spirits looking out for something or people to destroy and therefore evil *ajo mmuo*. In some kolanut petitions these spirits are asked stay away, not to come near; but the good spirits are courted and cajoled. Just as there are evil spirits, the Nri-Igbo also believe that there are evil men. Both types of evils, it is believed, can be checked through the use of powerful charms or "medicine" *ogwu*. A priest-healer *dibia* who is one that deals in medicinal herbs and roots is consulted when one needs any one type of medicine, and it is usual for a "healer" to specialise in either the good or evil type. A charm could be worn on the body, incised into the blood, or buried in a pot in a compound. There are also good and evil medicines. Good ones are generally used for protecting oneself from harm and curing the sick, while the bad ones are for causing destruction of other people.

**1.13**      *The modern setting:  
Social and cultural changes*

The Nri-Igbo society of the past has been undergoing a number of changes, some slow, others radical. The more significant ones are those that have accompanied the effects of the slave trade on one hand, and the European conquest of Igboland at the beginning of the present century; effects which, even though adverse, have nevertheless not prevented the culture of the people from moving on till today no matter how much it might have changed in the people's outlook to life, cultural habits and language. The factors of such rapid changes had been western schools, religion and administration which changed the political structure of many peoples of Nigeria as it attempted to weld the different peoples and cultures into one political unit. There is no doubt therefore that these rapid changes brought about by the new socialization processes are doing much to affect if not change some of the traditional values and replace them by new ones. Besides, the rapid urbanization of many of the administrative centres of government are

attracting more and more people from the villages into the cities where they remain to face new sets of social problems that can be quite unsettling and frustrating. In this new setting people are struggling to survive by being both creative and inventive especially as the economy is changing from the agrarian type to that of industrialization and commerce. In other words Anambra State, the homeland of those who we can describe as the Nri-Igbo today and who can be said to be living in their greatest numbers in this place, is a place of growing industrialization and economic development. There is a good network of roads linking the various parts of the state. Some ancient historical towns like Awka and Onitsha have grown in importance lying as they do on strategic points on some of these impressive road networks. Awka has retained its position of strength as a centre for iron and metal working, wood carving and smithery. Onitsha has one of the biggest markets in west Africa and coming next to it in commerce and industrialization is Nnewi which embarked on its programme of rapid economic development only in 1970, after the Nigerian civil war. Other important towns are Enugu, the colonial centre of administration of the former eastern region of Nigeria, and now still the capital of Anambra State. Nsukka became a university town in 1960 when the University of Nigeria was established and has continued to grow to prominence as a meeting point of many roads leading to the northern part of Nigeria. In all these places many industrial buildings and estates have developed and even in the countryside buildings in cement and zinc executed in modern styles and designs are fast springing up.

But the town of Nri, considered to be the spiritual home of the people, has remained a relatively traditional town, unaffected by much of the current changes in technology, commerce and industrialization. However, there are schools and churches there which have catered for a good crop of educated elites of the society. Many of the indigenes have also grown to prominence as business tycoons, transport magnates and merchants whose influence have been felt in the whole of Igboland. The Eze-Nri still retains considerable respect among the people as a ceremonial head, even though his powers have been badly eroded by the historical change and experience brought about by colonization.

### 1.14 *Problems of the Research*

This current situation of the Nri-Igbo society will then help us to state the problematic of this research. One has to say that the collection of the verbal materials for the study, their selection and codification has been quite a daunting one in this age of fast changes when much of the oral traditions are now being replaced by the written word. There would be no problem with this if the oral traditions were collected in the Nri-Igbo dialect and preserved in that form, but the present attempt by the Society of Igbo Language and Culture to promote a common language of expression for all the different groups of Igbo people does not help in this direction. This attempt has resulted in the transcription of some materials that could be termed Nri-Igbo into a standard Igbo form that is somewhat centred on the Owerri-Igbo dialect. What this has gone to show is that the Nri-Igbo world is no longer one that is intact; several changes have come to influence the way the people perceive reality and that resulting from the language issue is important. Altogether one notices three distinct strands of dialectal forms that have been used or applied to this area under study. The first is that which the earlier writers on *chi* had used or relied on while writing down some Igbo words, and which they had in fact formulated or developed individually according to their own styles or ways of regarding how the language is spoken which we are using in this study. That is one sort of external "imposition" that one has to accept as a valid influence. Then there is the Nri-Igbo dialect itself which has been written using the present approved Igbo orthography; and finally the present standard Igbo which the Society for Igbo Language and Culture is promoting which is being used in schools and universities in the Nri-Igbo area, all of which represent valid phases in the development and changes that are taking place in the language and society. Hence we will attempt to make use of all such materials that would be relevant for our study without discriminating very much on the dialectal issue.

The nature of the second type of problem is not quite as the first. This has to do with the concrete materials that had to be sought for in the field. In the face of rapid technological advancement in the state and the growing rate of urbanization, it has become increasingly difficult if not altogether impossible for any group to hope to preserve

absolutely what is their own. This has produced at least three types of situations; either the materials considered to be indigenous are lost, or they have been overlaid by new concepts and ideas about God and religion (in this context Christian concepts and ideas and to a certain extent Moslem) or the old and the new have mixed in a dynamic kind of way to produce something else but still retaining or maintaining its linguistic hue and texture. Again it is for this reason that we have to accommodate to whatever changes that must have taken place.

Perhaps talking of the daily loss of indigenous materials is putting the problem mildly; the effect of western colonizing and missionary activities has also contributed in shifting the people's views of the universe around them. For instance, one of the arguments of latter day scholarship in Igbo studies maintains that the concept of *Chukwu* as the supreme God of the Igbo people must have been an imposition from the west (Nwoga 1984 : 7). Besides, historians agree that it is in Igboland that the impact of this encounter with the west is most marked. With this encounter, there has been tremendous changes in the social, cultural and economic outlook of the people; and even though Igbo borders were not closed to the other cultures around them, it certainly began to open in an unprecedented rate with the coming of the Aro from the region of the Cameroon mountains during the slave trade era,<sup>1</sup> and then to the British who came later on for exploration and eventual occupation. All told, these resulted in the emergence of a new elite group who by their educational background and advantage, became the manipulators of power in current Nigerian politics. They are those who have been educated in the western tradition and who are now using this knowledge as yardstick for evaluating their culture. Their apparent contact with the west (as powerful as it is decisive of the fates of people who find themselves in its hold), has led to a crop of men and women who are confused about their culture, or who are alienated from it and then disgruntled to want to keep or relate to it for its own sake.

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<sup>1</sup> This information comes from one Mr Obasi, a man from Aro who lives in Calabar where he works as an electronic engineer. This view which he expressed appears to be shared by other Aro people.

However, even though the past might have gone in any permanent form, there appear to remain here and there certain icons, objects, places and trappings of Nri-Igbo material culture of religious significance and expressions which more or less can be connected with *Chi* and which might be quite helpful in the investigation being undertaken. But what will surely be of more use are the verbal materials that express that particular concept in various genres of the people. In this regard, one would then turn to those areas where they have survived. This would include the various shrines in many towns and villages where there is still a strong allegiance to the cult. In such cases the priests are still carrying out normal functions such as the priest of Nwocha at Oraukwu, or the priest of *Idemmili* at Nnobi. For example, the priest of *Nwocha* demonstrated that he is still alive to his duty as priest when I visited him. His sacred precinct is quite a large one, with an ante-chamber which is quite removed from the shrine itself where he still carries out some "interior rituals". He keeps an *odu okike* "ivory horn" which he blows every morning while heralding the dawn. He has elaborate incantations for invoking the deities and a rich store of sacred paraphernalia for mediating with the *alusi* "spirit forces established by man". He obtains the *ofo* sacred wand of justice and gives to those who apply for them after duly consecrating them. He is about middle age and quite mentally alert.

The priest of *Idemmili* presents a contrast. His role appears to be one of directing the events and activities of the cult; real authority which comes from those kinds of things for which the chief priest of *Nwocha* is known eludes him. Perhaps it is age, it is often difficult to follow him in a discussion of the basic issues about the religion he practices not because he might not know but largely because he is incoherent; incoherence of the type that might cause one to conclude that he has not actually reflected on them. Under such a circumstance it becomes difficult to communicate or obtain any substantial material of value.

These two examples represent the kind of possibilities and chances that might exist for a researcher. The other places where one can get materials are from some of the women living at home who, though Christians, had some time in the past participated in the culture and in fact seen and experienced much of it to be able to sing a few

songs derived from the performance of events such as child-naming, funeral rites, and moonlight plays. For me in this regard, my mother participated in these effectively as a daughter of a head of a shrine, and she sang many of the chants of their time and offered a few invocations to her *chi* to show me as these were done in the past. Also, children who have grown up at home, or those who have learnt some of the folktales and songs in schools from where they are constantly being propagated as a matter of policy in the educational set-up of today are the other group in whom some of these have survived, and in this connection my wife, now a lawyer, my brothers and sisters, have been very useful. The tradition has also survived in many traditional masquerade dances and plays, long narratives by acknowledged minstrels and bards, cultural dances in which songs, incantations etc are employed and so on. On important festival days these performers come out displaying their verbal arts. Also the tradition has survived in many scholarly researches carried out by the earlier and later writers on the Igbo language and culture where they have collected some of these materials and stored in published or unpublished works. Many of these have been collected by students in the departments of English and linguistics in some Nigerian universities and this is also an important place where these verbal materials have survived.

### *1.15 The Nri-Igbo dialect medium*

It has already been pointed out that there are problems as to what might be considered Nri-Igbo dialect medium today arising partly from the various inputs which have come from the early writers of Igbo words or terms on one hand, and that being brought about by the Igbo standardization committee of the Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture on the other. Both on the radio and in schools the impact of the new Igbo being written today is witnessed and therefore cannot be neglected; so that materials for this study come from the present time and will inevitably include both what might be termed Nri-Igbo as well as the modern Igbo being propagated in the schools and churches and the radio. Hence, it will be necessary to point out the characteristic features of these dialectal forms that we are likely to meet in the collected texts.

The Nri-Igbo dialect is taken to cover the form of Igbo spoken in the area already delineated as specifically covering the Nri-Igbo world and environment. This dialect can be recognised by certain peculiarities and characteristic features of the language, even though it has to be admitted also that these categories may not be so fine to exclude other dialect groups, or in fact to embrace all the smaller units within its compass. With the latter case, this is because the smaller each dialect is taken to be, the "greater the number of dialects distinguished;"<sup>1</sup> so that even within the Nri-Igbo cluster of the Igbo language generalizations on them will still reveal smaller ranges of divergencies. These are those we find in the Nsukka, Onitsha, Agbaja and Nri proper. Examples can be found in the pronunciation of particular words from Onitsha: the use of the soft fricative "f" when compared to the forced "v" of parts of Nri such as Aguleri in the words *ofia*, *ovia* "bush"; *afia avia* "market"; *afa*, *ava* "name" and so on, respectively. This stands in sharp contrast to the aspirated "h" of the Nsukka and Agbaja segments of the dialect and to the great majority of other dialect groups outside the Nri-Igbo culture zone who also use the aspirated "h" in *ohia*, "bush"; *ahia*, "market"; *aha*, "name" and so on.

The homogeneity of the Nri-Igbo dialect is more or less to be found in the use of suffixes which end in *lu* while expressing the past-participle of a verb, as in *o nyelu m ego* in contradistinction to *ere* suffix of the standard-Igbo dialect while expressing the same past-participle of the language viz: *o nyere m ego* "he gave me money". Another standard-Igbo variant of it can be seen in the *ara* suffix even while the Nri-Igbo component is always steady in the sense that it does not change as in this case of the Owerri-Igbo variants. Other comparative examples are as follows:

Nri-Igbo	Standard-Igbo
<i>O cholu okwu</i> "He caused trouble"	<i>O choro okwu</i> "He caused trouble"
<i>O malu mma</i> "She is beautiful"	<i>O mara mma</i> "She is beautiful"
<i>O kwulu okwu</i> "He spoke"	<i>O kwuru okwu</i> "He spoke"

<sup>1</sup> See R.H. Robins' *General Linguistics, An Introductory Survey*, (London: Longmans) 1980, p.40

The Nri-Igbo dialect is further distinguished from that of the standard Igbo in the preponderant use of *-l*, *-n*, in the roots, prefixes, infixes, and suffixes of words when compared to the *-r* element in the standard-Igbo dialect. A few examples here will also suffice:

Nri-Igbo	Standard-Igbo
<i>Okilikili</i> (round)	<i>Okirikiri</i> (round)
<i>Okolo</i> (youth)	<i>Okoro</i> (youth)
<i>Akalaka</i> (talent)	<i>Akaraka</i> (talent)
<i>Alusi</i> (spirit force)	<i>Arusi</i> (spirit force)
<i>Ogilisi</i> (sacred plant)	<i>Ogirisi</i> (sacred plant)
<i>Mmili</i> (water)	<i>Mmiri</i> (water)
<i>Ilo</i> (road)	<i>Iro</i> (road)
<i>elili</i> (string, rope)	<i>eriri</i> (string, rope)
<i>alili</i> (worm)	<i>ariri</i> (worm)

These are the fairly stable types of morphemes. Variables in the use of the elements, *-r*, *-n* and *-h* abound in large distribution in the verbs as can be seen in this examples between the two large dialect groups:

Nri-Igbo	Standard-Igbo
<i>Ine anya</i> "to look"	<i>Ile anya</i> "to look"
<i>Ili nni</i> "to eat"	<i>Iri nri</i> "to eat"
<i>Ilu uno</i> "to build a house"	<i>Iru ulo</i> "to build a house"
<i>Inu ogu</i> "to fight"	<i>Ilu ogu</i> "to fight"
<i>Inu nwaanyi</i> "to marry"	<i>Ilu nwaanyi</i> "to marry"
<i>Ilo ilo</i> "to antagonise"	<i>Iro iro</i> "to antagonise"
<i>Ifu uzo</i> "to see"	<i>Ihu uzo</i> "to see"

The significance of this demonstration is to point to the prevailing state of the Igbo language, not so much to point out their differences as to recognize that the language is changing and therefore must be recognized as such. With these characteristic features in mind therefore, our purpose will be to make use of verbal materials that fall within the description of these two dialect forms, as well as that which we have identified to have come from the writings of the earlier writers on the subject; for even in this standardisation attempt, efforts have been made to match the two main dialect forms in syntax and grammar,

with the overall behaviour of words remaining the same in spite of the changes that have started to take place.

### 1.15.1 *Tones and Meaning in Igbo Language*

As is well known, the Igbo language, like many other African languages, is a tonal language<sup>1</sup>; and it becomes necessary at this point to have a look at the Igbo tonal system -as important as it is in a study of this kind -for the meanings they give to words. Tone has to do with the variations in the pronunciation of a word which tend to give it its value, quality and meaning independent of the context in which the word is used.

The tone of a word can be described syllabically according to the tone bearing units that it carries, and in Igbo language there are three ways in which a word can be described tonally. This is to say, in other words, that three types of tones can be distinguished namely low, mid-high and high tones. Thus, a word like *okike* can mean different things depending on what tones the syllables bear. Hence, when spoken with a mid-high-high as in this marked one *òkíké*, the term would mean "rising sun, shining sun"; but when it is spoken with a three low tones the marked syllabic sound units make it *òkikè*, meaning "creator". These two words, as we have seen, are the same words but they happen to sound differently as a result of the variations in their tones which have altered their meanings even though they have the same intrinsic semantic relationship. In other words, in this example just given, two words which are seen as being the same words have generated two different meanings as a result of the variation in their tones.

Another interesting example is *Chínèkè*. When a low tone falls on the units *-nè* and *-kè*, the meaning suggests that "*Chi* is the creator"; but it could also mean *Chí nà ékè* "*Chi* and *eke*", in which *Chi* and *eke* can be seen as two categories that are essentially the same as creative principles when a low tone falls on *na*, transforming it into the

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<sup>1</sup> See G.E. Igwe's "Igbo, a Tonal Language" in *Igbo Language and Culture* edited by F.C. Ogbalu & E.N. Emenanjo, Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1975, pp. 95-103. Also, see H.C. Ogbonnaya's "Igbo Tones and how to Tone mark them" in same publication, pp.104-113.

conjunction, "and" linking it to the two different terms. In other words, here again we see two words, *Chi* and *ēkē*, that are the same in essence but different in terms. But a low tone can also fall on the syllables *na* and a high one on *ke* as in the marked form *chi nā-ēké* to turn it into an active verb suggesting that "the sun (day) is shining/rising". The term *eke* is also interesting on its own. When spoken with a low tone it means *èkè* "the creator", and thus *Chi na-èkè* becomes the *Chi* that creates. When spoken with a high tone as in *ēkē*, it simply becomes the first day of the Igbo week.

On the other hand, there are words which may be spelt the same way but which have no intrinsic semantic relationship as *okike* does when spoken with both high and low tones. Take as an example another word like *igwe*; its tonation gives it a different meaning when spoken with a high tone to mean "Sky", but which, with a low tone, gives it a different meaning, "iron". Furthermore, with a mid-high tone as in this marked form, *īgwē*, the meaning changes altogether suggesting "a great multitude of people". Therefore it is not in all cases that the variations in tonality of a word can suggest that two words are similar, except perhaps, there is an underlying semantic connection between them as we have demonstrated with *okike*.

## Chapter 2

### 2.0 *Chi*: A survey of published materials

#### 2.1 *The pre-colonial writers (1745 - 1900)*

Much has been written on the subject of *Chi* since Igboland opened its door to western adventures and enterprise. The visitors came for various purposes ranging from trade, exploration of the coastal and inland recesses of Africa; for missionary works and military conquests and occupations, all of which led to the colonial administration of much of Africa as a whole and Nigeria in particular. An attempt can only be made to establish the precise period when this interest in Igbo 'gods' started, which is about the middle of the 19th century, when a part of the European missionary zeal projected to the area interior to the Bights of Benin and Biafra<sup>1</sup>. Of course, when one says interest in Igbo 'gods' one invariably means interest in Igbo culture as a whole since in fact one cannot talk of the 'gods' without referring to the context in which they are located. It does seem, indeed, that the first active interest in this area of culture of the people came from the missionaries purely as a theological concern, till it later developed into matters of intellectual interest and speculations by the subsequent group of writers of the early twentieth century who were not necessarily missionaries. This interest has continued till this day. The major writers are: Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African -the slave boy who was believed to have been taken from his home somewhere in Igboland in the middle years of the 18th century, and taken to the new world (1794). Others are Christian missionaries such as Schon and Samuel Crowther who visited the Niger Igbo area in about 1841; Koelle, the linguist who mentioned *Chukwu* among a host of other entities from his interview of Igbo informants from Sierra Leone; and William Baikie, who was said to have travelled through Igboland in 1854. Of this latter group, their references to *Chi* amount to comments on *Chukwu*, made as a way of justifying the existing structures they found in Igboland or indeed as it may well have seemed also, of

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<sup>1</sup> The Bight of Biafra is now what has been renamed the Bight of Bonny on the Nigerian map shortly after the end of the Nigeria-Biafra war.

confirming the existence of a supreme entity among the Igbo which could also fit their mission of propagating a more universal Christian God.

### 2.1.1 *Equiano, otherwise Gustavus Vassa the African*

Among these other writers, Equiano stands apart as the only independent writer who is not a visitor to his own land and culture, but who, unfortunately, was a culture carrier in contact with other lands against which he was reacting when he wrote his famous work on *The Interesting Narrative of Gustavus Vassa the African*. In it, he gives us a clear picture of what his young mind was still able to recollect concerning that entity that has always been associated with *Chi* known as *Chukwu* in his mother country in Igboland. According to him:

As to religion, the natives believe that there is one creator of all things and that he lives in the sun and is girded round with a belt that he may never eat or drink; but according to some he smokes a pipe, which is our own favourite luxury. They believe he governs events, especially our deaths and captivity.<sup>1</sup>

Thus for Equiano, the one he terms to be the creator lives in the sun from where he governs events. It is also obvious from this that he is the one that determines one's destiny especially in matters concerning death and in his own special case, captivity, both of which would be considered the unfortunate doings of one's *chi*. In other words, by influencing the events of one's life, there is a way *Chi* relates personally to an individual. In Equiano's own special case, his *chi* has led him to be made a captive in a strange land. On the other hand, he goes on to talk of the special relationship of the sun to the cosmological order by which whole groups are involved also. As he goes on to explain-

We compute the year from the day on which the sun crosses the line, and on its setting that evening there is a general shout throughout the land...The people at the same time make a great noise with rattles...

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<sup>1</sup> Olaudah Equiano, *Equiano's Travels otherwise The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Norwich, 1794 pp. 27-28.

and hold up their hands to heaven for a blessing.<sup>1</sup>

There is thus, from this brief literary exposition, the direct relationship between the creator and the sun, by which individual and group destinies can be determined. What is interesting in this exposition is that Equiano seemed to realize the problems of using the term God to refer to this entity. Nowhere in his book did he call this entity God; rather, he chose to refer to it simply as the creator. Besides, he did not mention him by the name that he is known in the land of his people, which perhaps would have been vague to him if not forgotten. Also, this entity is of interest to us because it is associated with, and in fact identified with the sun which among the Nri-Igbo is *Chi*. There appears to be a general attitude of reverence for this entity, which is why the setting of the sun is always accompanied with great rejoicings with rattle, music and gestures of approbation.

### 2.1.2 S.W. Koelle

Between Equiano and the next group of writers there is more or less sixty years interlude. In fact, the name of *Chukwu* started to be heard for the first time among the liberated slaves of Sierra Leone. From Equiano's own account in his book, it is understood that if not for the last major reorganizations which dropped him from the ship that was to bring the freed slaves back to Sierra Leone, he would have been among those freed slaves at the time they were being taken to be rehabilitated in Sierra Leone. Certainly in the years preceding the Niger mission expeditions, Crowther was in Sierra Leone. Thus, the idea of the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu* was not unknown for this was the place where Koelle was to start his seminal work on the *Polyglotta Africana* (1854) which includes a compendium of vocabulary items dealing with the various 'gods' of Igboland.<sup>2</sup> For the first time, one begins to hear of *Chi* as *Chukwu* which he spelt as *Dsuku*. He drew his findings up as a chart (indicating the types of Gods (devils or idols), the place they are known by the names they are given; and the places of abode of such entities) from the interview he had with the Igbos of Sierra Leone of that time. In a place where he mentioned *Chukwu* (*Dsuku*) such as at Isuama,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp.27-28

<sup>2</sup> S. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, (London: Church Missionary House) 1854 pp.74,76 and 78.

*Chukwu* is tabled as living in 'Heaven' as against 'Hell'; but at Mbaofia, he is shown as *Dsuku* that lives in 'Eluegue'.

English:	God	Devil	Idol	Heaven
Isoama	<i>Dsuku</i>	<i>Igwe and Amadioha</i>	<i>Aguisi</i>	<i>Dsuku</i>
Isiele	<i>Agbara</i>	<i>Onyigiri</i>	<i>Udo</i>	<i>Igwe</i>
Abadsa	<i>Abala &amp; Dsigogike</i>	-	<i>Wuisiafa &amp; Isiafia</i>	<i>Dsigogike</i>
Aro	<i>Ibinogbabe</i>	<i>Iguakala (supposed to be in the forest)</i>	<i>Agu</i>	<i>Eligue</i>
Mbofia	<i>Dsuku</i>		<i>Nuebe</i>	<i>Eluegue</i>

(*Polyglotta Africana* 74, 76 , 78)

The point to be observed here is that even in foreign land the Igbo of diaspora still had a faint idea of the entity which they referred to as *Chukwu*. This entity lives in 'Heaven' (the Christian concept of the sky). Elsewhere this entity is designated simply as the sky (*igwe*, *eligue* or *eluegue* for *Elu-igwe*, *enu-igwe*); that is that *Chukwu* is also seen as the sky- entity perhaps by the simple assumption that he lives in the sky. At this point we notice something not quite suited to our study in Koelle's method: By using terms like "heaven", "idol" "devil" and "God" he is prescribing a western conceptual scheme that does not have real semantic equivalents in Igbo.

It appears that the prevailing understanding among the Igbo of Sierra Leone (who happened to have been taken from different parts of Igboland during the slave trade) was that there were various entities that had the same status as *Chukwu* or entities that might be taken for one another, as the various names in the chart suggest: *Chukwu* (*Dsuku*) , *Agbara*, *Abala*, *Chukwu-okike* (*Dsigogike*), and *Ibinukpabi* (*Ibinogbabe*). On the whole, even though differently spelt, all those entities are recognizable ones in the Igbo pantheon. It is obvious however that taken in groups of related meanings, only three distinct entities can be identified namely *Chukwu*, which could be the Nri-Igbo

one that lives in the sky, or the *Chukwu* of the Long Juju of Arochukwu who is believed to live at *Chukwu* (Arochukwu that is) ; then *Agbala* which like the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu* lives in the sky; and then *Ibinukpabi* which is a local name for *Chukwu* of the Arochukwu oracle. It is certain that *Chukwu-okike* and *Agbala* are the common Nri-Igbo forms<sup>1</sup> while *Ibiniukpabi* is specifically Aro. In other words, *Dsugogike* would appear to be referring to *Chukwu-okike* which is the typical Nri-Igbo name for *Chukwu*. As things stand, there seems to be some confusion among the Igbo of Sierra Leone between *Chukwu*, *Agbara*, and *Ibinukpabi* which is understandable under the circumstances. This notwithstanding, it is obvious from the range of entities found in the Polyglotta that that the entities do not always exist in themselves alone because depending on the area where they are expressed, an entity might be one thing in one place and another thing in a different place. Thus, at Abadsa (Agbaja) *Chukwu-okike* is associated with *Agbala* but at Isiele *Agbala* is an entity of its own that is worshipped independently of *Chukwu*. However, the two are shown to belong to the same conceptual frame which points to God, thus suggesting that they shared some common characteristics even though the concept of these entities being God is an imposition.

It is believed that the Nri-Igbo culture preceded that of the Aro.<sup>2</sup> This is to say that the Aro commercial rise to power in the Igbo territories was only a recent phenomenon that can be traced to not more than three hundred years ago. It was the style of the Aro slave dealers to use the religious sentiments of the Igbo people settled in different parts of Igboland to exploit and obtain their slaves from them. Not only the Igbo, also the Ibibio people to the south. Thus they exploited the primordial religious set-up of the Nri-Igbo (an area which supplied them with numerous slaves) by borrowing the idea of *Chukwu* and turning it into an oracle of arbitration for the procurement of

<sup>1</sup> See collected materials Texts 1.(i) - 1.(iii)

<sup>2</sup> See Onwuejeogwu's *Ahajioku* Lecture published by Culture Division of the Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, 1987 pp.25 - 41. Here the anthropologist makes a detailed study of the various movements that led to the peopling of the various culture zones of the Igbo nation. He places that of Nri at A.D. 9th Century - 1911 when it was overthrown with the advent of the British. He notes that the civilization which this culture produced was "one of the greatest events in Igboland" at about that time. He places the movement of the Aro at 18th - 19th Century, which he says is "complex, associated with slave trade and raiding activities" and "flourished in the dark age of Igbo history between 1700 and 1850".

slaves. This oracle, otherwise commonly known as the Long *Juju* of Arochukwu was also referred to as *Chukwu*. In the myth-making process that followed, the Aro people came to be known, or rather preferred to refer to themselves as the Aro-Chukwu people, meaning the Aro of *Chukwu* oracle, and which, in fact, has given rise to the people of Aro (erroneously) being referred to as the children of *Chukwu*.

### 2.1.3 *Baikie, Crowther and Schon*

It is no doubt, therefore, that coming to this troubled part of Africa that was just beginning to recover from the trauma of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the adventurer William Baikie, in trying to explain the term *Chukwu* (which had occurred in the name of one Chukwuma whom he had met) proffered an interpretation which pointed to the fact that *Chukwu* was of Aro origin.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that this man Chukwuma, came from Agbo in the present day Igbo speaking areas of Bendel State of Nigeria, an area that has direct cultural affinity with the Nri group to whom many of the Ika-Igbo group trace their descent. This interpretation by Baikie is then reminiscent of the confusion that is bound to arise from the the two different concepts of *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo and the Arochukwu peoples.

But Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Schon -evangelists who came to this part of West Africa- in fact to Igboland at about the same time as the explorers of the mid 19th century, are of the opinion that when they visited the Niger Igbo area in 1841 they encountered what they called '*Tsuku*' (*Chukwu*). According to them, "the Ibos are, in their way, a religious people. The word "*Tsuku*" - God- is continually heard. *Tsuku* is supposed to do everything..."<sup>2</sup>

The contributions of Crowther and Schon are interesting in another way -which is with regard to a second concept which it projects as a result of the emergence of the the Aro commercial hold on the the rest of Igboland. This goes to confirm what would appear as

<sup>1</sup> See William Baikie's, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage...in 1854*, (London: Frank Cass),1966. p.304

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Rotberg,ed. *Journals of James Schon and Samuel Crowther...1941*, (London: Frank Cass)1970 pp. 50-53 also Quoted by Nwoga in *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought*, 1984 p.53.

two versions of the concept of *Chi* or *Chukwu*. Crowther and Schon were also able to report that in addition to what were generally accepted and expressed views about *Chukwu* of which they had "frequent opportunities of hearing... at Sierra Leone", there is also a *Chukwu* of whom the people were afraid and in whose extensive powers they believed; for as they go on to write:

Another subject in which they are generally agreed but which, I am sorry to say, I shall have no opportunity of pursuing any further -is the following: it is their common belief that there is a certain place or town in the Ibo country in which *Tsuku* dwells, and where he delivers his oracles and answers inquiries...people travel to the place from every part of the country. It is said to be, in the rainy season, 3 months journey from this town... *Tsuku* cannot be seen by any human eye, his voice is heard from the ground. He speaks every language on earth; makes thieves known... He hears every word that is said against him.<sup>1</sup>

It is thus obvious from this writing that the evangelists were referring to the Long Juju of Arochukwu as has been shown earlier. This *Chukwu* decided cases brought to him from different parts of Igboland, and dispenses the appropriate "justice" which in many cases is warped.

Again, writing in 1854, William Baikie suggests this idea that *Chukwu* is native to the Arochukwu and confirms that that is where in fact it is said to be living.

To the northward and eastward of Ndoleki is a large district named Aba-nyim, where the Ibos and people of old Calabar meet for trade. Not far from this stands the noted city of Aro or Arochukwu where is the celebrated shrine of *Tsuku*... The town is always mentioned with great respect, almost at times, with a degree of veneration, and people say *Chukwu ab yama* or God lives there.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Schon and Crowther, (50-53)

<sup>2</sup> Also see Baikie 310-311, quoted also in Nwoga 1984, p.54.

## 2.2 *The colonial writers (1900 - 1960)*

What has just been seen was the works of the earliest writers on Igbo religion, its divinities and their types, but there are others who worked in the period immediately succeeding that former one who in one way or the other were connected with the colonizing mission of the British, besides those who were independent scholars coming to the field. These writers were mainly those in contact with the outside world even though they might have had a spell of actual experience of Igboland. Their writings spread over about fifty years of that latter part of the 18th century. At this time Nigeria, and in fact the whole of Africa was beginning to open up to European penetration through exploration and legitimate trade. By the turn of the century European trading posts were fast becoming strong political outposts of trade and centres of colonial powers which ultimately led to the protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

The writers to whom I have referred as the colonial writers are those who wrote at about this period of European occupation of Igboland. These writers had the advantage of not just visiting Igboland, but also of living among the people for at least some time and thereby making the subject of Igbo culture a matter of active and real interest not just politically but intellectually also. They may have been inspired by various motives, the religious and political ones being the most outstanding. Nevertheless, they make an impressive cast of explorers, military personnel, colonial administrative officers, missionaries, educationists and linguists -each with a specialist training in a particular field, in some cases in theology. Somehow this group of writers is by far the most versatile, the most original and most courageous in their exposition of the concept of *Chi*. There was, for instance, Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, a British army officer and the first to be named among this group of writers on this concept. He was interested in comparative religion, and so undertook to work among the peoples of southern Nigeria (even though a military officer) which included the Igbo. He worked in these areas before Southern Nigeria came under British control. His book which he titled *The Lower Niger and its Tribes*, published in 1906, constitutes one of the earliest sources of materials for those interested in that part of Nigeria. The

next group of writers is Basden (1921), Talbot (1926), Meek (1937) and Jeffreys (1934, 1949, 1954 & 1957): These belong to the colonial period and their works follow in that chronological order. The earliest of this group of writers, however, is Northcote Thomas. Even though what he has to say on the subject is on the whole only broad and incidental, it is nevertheless important. With the exception of Basden who was an Anglican missionary, the writers of this period served mainly as official anthropologists to the British colonial administration. Horton is another writer who was writing at this period but he stands apart as an independent anthropologist working in the field. After him, with the exception of writers like Shelton and Henderson who act as a bridge between the colonial and post colonial writers, the others are mainly the Igbo scholars themselves with a wide range of interests and whose works have appeared after the coming of independence, but these constitute another separate period of writing but not necessarily a different approach to the study.

### 2.2.1 *Arthur Glyn Leonard*

Arthur Glyn Leonard wrote mainly about the Igbo of the Lower Niger which largely coincide with the Nri-Igbo culture zone (1906). He considers *Chi* (which he spells as *Tsi*)<sup>1</sup> as the "Supreme God" or "Creator", both of the other gods and of everything in existence.<sup>2</sup> Thus he is perhaps the first to state that he is the supreme God categorically, even though writers like Crowther and Schon might have assumed it. The pertinent issue here is that the writer is assuming that *Chukwu* is the Nri-Igbo equivalent of God ; and so it becomes a model that coincides with the God he used to know. We think so because we have no evidence that he understood or spoke the Igbo language, even though he might have shown that he understood some words in the language which at times he misinterprets and misrepresents. From this basic premise every other thing falls into pattern, for as he goes on to say, it is from *Chi* that all things, even evil, come into existence. It is said that this supreme one goes by various names such as "*Tsineke, Tsi*

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<sup>1</sup> It has already been noted that the earliest writes did not have the benefit of using a standard Igbo orthography in their writings for spelling the Igbo words which they came across and so the case of Leonard here should not be surprising.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Glyn Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.)1906 p.421.

or *Ci*, *Tsuku* or *Chuku Ekeke*" . For the first time *Chineke* is introduced here, a term which earlier writers like Baikie, Crowther and Schon had not come across hence their use of the term *Chukwu* to refer to this entity. Not even the liberated slaves from Sierra Leone mentioned that this creator who Equiano identified also was known by that term. Again, we now know from Leonard that this *Chukwu* could also be shortened to *Chi*. *Chukwu okike* had been frequently mentioned in earlier times and so the term is not new to us at this point as these other ones. By making the point that these are the various names by which the creator of all things is known he supplies us the name of the entity which Equiano has failed to give. We know this because Leonard also associates this *Chi* with the sun which he considers to be the cause of day and night. Leonard is of the opinion that *Chi* is the supreme being perhaps because Leonard thought it to be the master of the lesser entities. Here again the use of the term master for *Chukwu* is interesting which is used to reinforce his supremacy over all the other powers. He has to be master over all the entities in the pantheon of the gods to be truly supreme; but whether this is so or not will be interesting to see later.

Furthermore, Leonard reports that *Chi* is a distinct and important link in a chain of ancestral associations. What he means by this is not immediately clear until we come to another important aspect of *Chi* which he tries to explain in terms of ancestral linkages. As he says, "the Supreme Deity or Creator was of course originally, as he now is, the family god -the personal being, the father of their fathers, who for all time has watched over and ruled their destinies". Perhaps what Leonard was trying to convey is the way and extent to which *Chi* relates personally to an individual, as a personal god or being. We remember that this is a concept which Equiano tried to grapple with while explaining the role of *Chi* in dealing with events which control the lives of individuals. Where he sees it through its association with the sun as the entity over which people are likely to jubilate when it is departing at sunset, he did not indicate that it is communally worshipped. Besides, he did not state that it relates to whole groups such as the family group to which it could relate through its personal connection with an individual head, as Leonard is now demonstrating. However, it is an interesting idea also that Leonard sees *Chi* as being

conceived not only as the father, but also as the father of a long line of fathers. The observation therefore is that *Chi* is not only seen as a personal god, but also as an ancestral father who "watches over the living and influences their destiny".

On another level, apart from being the supreme father, creator, and ancestor, *chi* is also said to mean daylight. Even though this might be so, Leonard also stresses that it "is also God". Indeed as he says, "it is quite palpable" that such terms as *otsitsi* or *itsitsti* (*ochichii* "darkness" or *uchichi* "night" but both of which he interprets as night); *etsi* (which he explains to mean tomorrow and so on", were used as words which gravitated around the central symbol or root *tsi* (*chi*)".<sup>1</sup> By this assertion Leonard is of the view that there was a distinct or tangible association between *Chi* as the motivator of darkness and daylight which, according to him, "was interpreted as an all night contest between the two contending factors in which the latter emerges triumphant and radiant".

It should be noted that these notions of *chi* as daylight and night and tomorrow come mainly from the associations which the writer finds only through the taxonomy of terms that are of a common root with *Chi*. It is therefore important to note this because of the particular importance which words have in a study of this kind. Elsewhere Leonard talks more of religious events than terms. He says, for example, that there is a religious event known as *ajachi* "sacrifice performed in honour of *Chi*" which involves sacrifices and adoration to the great spirit creator.<sup>2</sup> In this latter instance of the occurrence of the term, one notices that it is strictly within the context of a religious frame of thought and activities by which the people try to give form an meaning to the overall concept of *Chi*.

Also connected with this taxonomy of words is the meaning he gives to the term *otsie* (*ochie*) "the old" but which he interprets as the aged. When this is preceded by *ndi* as in *ndi-otsie* (*ndi-ochie*) he is of the opinion that it means or implies ancient people; or literally put, "god-life".<sup>3</sup> This point is of interest for one main reason, and this is that

<sup>1</sup> Leonard, p. 530-

<sup>2</sup> Leonard, p. 435.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, p. 531.

the term suggests that the individuals are those who have lived to a grand old age, and therefore are ancestors by virtue of the "god-life" they had lived on earth. This, perhaps, is something that has to do with one's *chi* both as a personal "god" that ensures that he lives from day to day till the end of his life. It is at this stage that he could then be said to have lived a successful life capable of being counted as an ancestor fit to be invoked during the morning kolanut petitions.

Leonard also sees *okeke* (*okike*) which is often associated with *Chi* to mean dispenser; hence he talks of it as a symbol that is also identical with the creator. He says that this is "even more so when we ascertain that "*onye-okeke* " is one who distributes, or a distributor". Besides, he is of the opinion that "*okeke*"(*okike*) when unaccented means division and *ke* "divide"; "an interpretation which is much more appreciated when contrasted with the association that existed, as we have seen, between daylight and darkness which subsequently was nothing more than the alternation of supremacy between day and night that ended with dislocation or division"<sup>1</sup> Surely this is one meaning of the term but by no means exhaustive. This is because other meanings could be associated with it which have to do with the shining quality of light, a fact that one would have to grapple with by understanding the tonal qualities of words in the Igbo situation.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2.2 *Northcote Thomas*

Northcote Thomas (1913) is the next in immediate chronological order to write on *Chi*. Like Arthur Glyn Leonard, he wrote on the Nri-Igbo group basing his work mainly on the Awka and Asaba Igbo groups. He also uses the term *Chukwu* (which he spelt as *Cuku*) to refer to this entity, *Chi*. Again using his own words, *Chukwu* is the "Supreme God", being at the head of the pantheon of divinities.<sup>3</sup> This would tend to lend support to Leonard's assertion that *Chi* is the master of the divinities. Also, he is the next immediate writer of this

<sup>1</sup> Leonard, pp. 531-532.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> Northcote Thomas, *Anthropological Report on the Ibo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, (London: Harrison and Sons) 1913 part 1. ii Also see *Law and Custom of the Ibo of the Awka Neighbourhood, S.Nigeria*, 1913 iii and *Law and Custom of the Ibo of the Asaba District, Southern Nigeria*, London parts 3-6. Both areas lie within the Nri-Igbo culture zone.

period to characterise *Chukwu* as God. He in fact states that there is a large number of demi-gods which he refers to as *alosi* (*alusi*) "established forces of nature". This suggests that there is a distinction between *chi* and *alusi*. That apart, the writer is of the opinion that *Chukwu* seldom figures in any creation myths, and here again we get another instance of a writer expecting to get Igbo stories which conform to his idea of what a myth should be. However, he appears to have heard stories at other places which satisfy this his expectation, for as he says, that statement does not apply in a place like Aguku "where *Cuku* is connected with the origin of kingship and of yams". He goes on to say that no matter what the truth might be about the matter, "*Cuku* appears to play a relatively unimportant part in the lives of the people".

Northcote Thomas is certainly talking about *Chukwu* which, as the creator, Equiano identified with the sun. The problem here however is how we can reconcile the point made by Thomas that it is an entity that plays a relatively unimportant part in the lives of the people while a writer like Equiano mentions from experience that it governs events and could determine what can happen to an individual. Equiano's position would suggest a personal role which *Chukwu* plays in the lives of individuals. Even Thomas refers to another category of spirit beings which he suggested to be more or less the lesser entities when compared to *Chukwu*, such as *Agbala*, *Anyaanwu*, *Chi* and *Ikenga*, which he regards as constituting a separate category, being as they are "intermediate between *Cuku* and *alosi*" (*Chukwu* and *alusi*). These he refers to as "the personal tutelary deities". If this is so, then it is as one's personal agent that they have to be seen, in which case it will be important to understand the relationship between them. Thomas seems to be admitting that these entities are inter-related to one another, for as he says, they are all to be found in the personal homes of a man. He makes the important observation that "*Ainyanwu* is generally identified with the sun "and that by that taxonomy" the name means "eye of the sun". He refers to this entity *Anyaanwu* as the messenger of *Chukwu*, which implies that he sees it apart from *Chukwu*. But he identifies the personal *chi* of a man with his *ikenga*; so that *Chukwu* is the master, the sun *anyaanwu* is his messenger and the *ikenga* the personal *chi* of a man. In the event of *chi* being the personal entity of

an individual, how would we then look at the concept of *ajachii*? It becomes an ambiguous concept for we can now ask sacrifice to whom? To the sky *Chi* or to the individual *chi*. Northcote Thomas mentions however that he had not seen anywhere where sacrifice is offered to any entity like *Chi* or for the lesser one for that matter.

Another interesting point is that Northcote Thomas sees entities such as *Agbala* and *Anyanwu* as separate categories from *Chukwu*, being as he goes to state, "intermediate between *Chukwu* and *alusi*", in spite of the fact that he, like some other writers, had identified it with *Chukwu*. So far however, both *Anyaanwu* and *Agbala* are seen as independent entities that can be established as *alusi*.

Besides just seeing *chi* as a personal entity, Northcote Thomas actually states that it is a protective deity which is common to both men and women. In this regard *chi* is seen as the protector. *Chi* would also appear to be identified with a woman's personal god as the regulator of her fortunes and misfortunes in life for as the anthropologist goes on to say, "the woman brings her *ci* from her father's house, often as soon as she has brought home a child. If she becomes a widow the object representing her *ci* is discarded and a new one is made in the house of the next husband". Again, her *chi* would appear to be tied up with her maternal role as a mother to her children and also as wife to the man in a domestic set up, both of which are ideas which define her individuality.

### 2.2.3 *G.T Basden*

Our understanding of this concept of *Chi* is further illuminated by the works of Rev. G.T. Basden, the Anglican missionary whose activities among the Igbo of the Niger area spread over more than thirty years. In fact, Basden lived among the Igbo at Onitsha and Awka during this time. In 1921, he published his book entitled *Among the Ibos*, but this was superseded by another entitled *Niger Ibos* published in 1938 and which is a revision and enlargement of the former.<sup>1</sup> He is perhaps an

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<sup>1</sup> G.T. Basden, *Niger Ibos* (London: Seely Service and Co. Ltd.,) 1938 with the latest edition published in 1966 pp.37-48. It is important that for Basden there is no distinction between *Chi* and *Chukwu*, since as he says *Chi* could refer to the supreme God, and the personal god, and that it is only when the qualifier *ukwu* is

important writer of the time to publish a work in which the meaning of *Chi* is advanced in ramifications other than in relation to it being the supreme entity. Of course, like other writers before him, he is of the view that *Chi* when written with a capital 'C' refers to the supreme God who is "the only one to which direct sacrifice by name is occasionally offered". We have already seen that this sacrifice is *ajachi* (Arthur Glyn Leonard) otherwise known as *ajachukwu* "sacrifice to *Chukwu*". Otherwise *Chi* is said to appear almost as a generic word for "god". What this means is that it is a term that could be applied to any entity that is considered to be divine, whether a *Chi* entity like the sun *anyaanwu*, or the lesser *chi* entities of the days of the week, or even the other divinities like the *ikenga* and the *alusi* ones. Basden goes on to say that when used with a qualifying attribute it becomes a distinctive god, hence with the qualifier *ukwu* it becomes *Chi-ukwu*, meaning the great God. Also, *Chi* is said to mean *Chi-neke* or *Chi-okike*, both of which he says mean the creator. However, he maintains that in the northern parts of the Igbo country it is by the name *Chukwu* that it is known. He mentions *Olisebuluuwa*, - another new concept and usually shortened as *Osebuluuwa*, as another term used for *Chi* in Onitsha area which conveys the meaning of "God who fashions the world". The components of that term are derived partly from Igbo and partly from their assumed Benin connection. *Ose*, which comes from *Olisa*, means god, and in the context in which it appears means "the god which is carrying and supporting the world" which is quite different from Basden's own interpretation. But that apart, Basden is of the opinion that there is no symbol for representing this *Chukwu*.

Furthermore, Basden sees *chi* as a sort of guardian deity deputising for *Chi-ukwu*. A child has a right to have a *chi* set apart for it as his guardian deity, but in general shares that of his father until he is of age to obtain one for himself. Implicit in this is the concept of *chi* as the father and potential ancestor as suggested by Leonard but on the immediate level of a child relating to his father and not on the level of an individual relating to *Chukwu* as the original father.

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applied that it becomes a distinctive God from the others. He is perhaps the first writer to make this point clearly.

Also Basden mentions what he referred to as *mkpulu chi* "seeds of *chi*" said to be tokens of ancestral spirits which a man leaves in remembrance of his departed fathers. Hence, they are associated with the ancestors. They are in the form of pieces of wood cut from the sacred *egbo* tree which are stripped of their bark. A man uses each of these pieces of wood to represent the memory of his dead ancestors. Thus, as one's elders die, so new memorials are set up for them in the form of *mkpulu chi*.

Lineage ancestors are therefore men; in other words, *mkpulu chi* is used in representing a man and not a woman. Even though this is the case, it is nevertheless possible for a man to set up a memorial of another form for a woman, and the *chi* set up by a man for a (dead) woman is in the form of a cone of clay upon which is placed the neck of a water-pot. But a woman may dedicate one such *chi* to her mother's or daughter's spirit as a way of showing due reverence to her on a personal level as a man would do for his father. So that when he states that *mkpulu chi* is only used in representing a man, he means so in the sense that the society is a patrilineal one in which male members are perpetuated through such symbols.

It does appear that *ajachi* which Leonard mentioned has something to do with the personal *chi* of individuals; so that while the sacrifice in honour of the high God is taking place, what is witnessed in actual fact is, for example, an annual festival which Basden tells us takes place in some places like Awka in the fifth week of the month involving everyone in which people offer thanks to their individual *chi* entities, and in which the elderly women place their '*chis*' in front of their houses and invite relatives to attend and assist in presenting gifts to them.

Basden goes on to explain how the *chi* of an individual is made both intimate and personal with a living being. It is said to be often referred to as *chim* "my *chi*"; One would say here that Basden has called the personal *chi* by its formal name, a name which all who invoke it use for referring to their personal gods or agents. A man's *chi* is, furthermore, represented by a tree planted in front of a house, known as the *oha chi*, and taken as the symbol of one's life.

Furthermore, Basden makes the important distinction between *chi* which is worshipped as a god, and that which is used to refer to the days of the Nri-Igbo week. This *chi* which according to him means "day" is the one to be written with a small "c". This means that it is possible to talk of *chi eke*, *chi oye*, *chi afo* and *chi nkwo* respectively, all representing the various gods of the the Nri-Igbo native week. His view that the Igbo deny emphatically that there is any relationship between it and that which means "god" will be contradictory granted that earlier on he had maintained that *chi* is a generic term for god. In other words, the distinction between the two would no longer be tenable because both *Chi* and the days are "gods". This is largely of interest for the simple reason that the same term is employed for referring to the *Chi* which means the sky god, the *chi* which means the personal god, and the spirits of the days even though each has its own distinctive qualifiers; hence, the *Chi* of the sky is qualified by *ukwu*, and the *chi* of the days are qualified by the respective days to which they belong and so on. In all these, the problem still remains the same, namely, how the term God should have to be used for an entity like *Chukwu* which the writer is already assuming that it is equivalent to the God denoted by that English word.

Basden gives samples of expressions in which this term is used for expressing the various times of the day. For instance, on rising in the morning, Basden informs us that the Igbo "salutes the morning with *chi-efo* meaning that daylight has broken". In the evening he says *chi ejirigo* meaning that the day (light) has finished. He links it with the weather when he says that *chi julu oyi* means that "the day is cold". Thus *chi* has to do with the light of day as well as the disposition of the weather of that particular day. Again, as he says, *chi na ubosi ana* means that "light and day are gone". Basden however allows that "at a stretch, it might be interpreted that the sun and day are gone"; perhaps this is what it should be, but it could also mean that both light and day are gone, the light being the light of the sun which informs the day. This is because both sun and light are denoted by the same term *chi*; but he emphasises that the "present day Igbo admit no relationship between the god *Chi* and the *daychi*". But he intimates that the terms might be interpreted as light and, with further effort, sun.

#### 2.2.4 J. Correia

Basden's observations come close to that of Fr. Correia (1921:360-366) who believes that the Igbo practise animism which is the view that the forces of nature are beings with souls that are hidden behind the great phenomena. This writer is of the view that the sun *anwu* is a big and respectable *Chi* (which he too writes as *Ci*). Here his association of the sun with *Chi* is more direct than Basden's. According to him, this *Chi* is the "big life" of which the sun is a manifestation. In other words, *Chi* is life -as Basden has already intimated, but the difference is that Basden talks of this *Chi* as the life giving force that nurtures the life of the plant which a man plants in front of his house to represent him. Like Basden also, Correia identifies this *chi* as "god". From here he goes on to say that trees and rivers and other such forces of nature have their own *chi* which inform them as gods -hence his assertion that "these *Cis* appear to be so well identified with the rivers, the trees, that probably they are only spirits *mwos* incarnated in them in the way our soul incarnates our body; the human soul is *mwo* just as *chi* is, and after death, it behaves absolutely in the same manner as the *anwu* or *agu*".<sup>1</sup> Here Correia raises several points: the first is that *Chi* is the divine essence, or god, which animates all phenomena in which they are incarnated. The second is that these *chi* entities are said to be spirit forces or *mmuo*. It is, besides, the quality of *chi* to give a thing its soul; so that Correia has associated *chi* not only with the sun but also with virtually every other entity that is found in nature and this runs counter to what has gone on so far; in other words, just as it is possible to talk of the *chi* of the sun, one can also talk of the *chi* of the tree, river, mountain and by extension of any object -usually symbolic objects steeped with religious significance in the sense that such an object has *mana*,<sup>2</sup> as having their own individual *chis*. This is of particular interest as neither Arthur Glyn Leonard nor Thomas and Basden have seen it to mean anything beyond the supreme entity associated one way or the other with the sun entity and the days of the Nri-Igbo week. But what remains to know is whether Correia is saying

<sup>1</sup> J. Correia , "L'animisme Ibo et les divinites de la Nigeria " in *Anthropos* vols.16/17 pp. 360-366.

<sup>2</sup> This is a Polynesian word meaning the force residing in a sacred object.

that *Chi* is the same thing as that particular soul *mkpulu obi* (otherwise the person's *mmuo*) which animates all living beings and informs all living things; or whether it is simply a concept that is used to refer to the particular essence responsible for the life of all things that are in existence.

### 2.2.5 P. A Talbot

Writing in about this time also was Talbot (1926). Unlike Basden who worked specifically on the Igbo people and more especially on the Igbo of the Niger river basin, Talbot worked and wrote on many of the peoples of southern Nigeria which included the Igbo, the Edo of Bendel State, the Ijo of Rivers state as well as on some other semi-Bantu people such as the Ibibio, Ukelle and Orri. But on the whole he appears to have devoted much more attention to the Igbo *Chi* as it is expressed in different parts of the Igbo country. In other words, with him one begins to see how the concept of *Chi* is expressed in the culture zones of the sub-groups of the Igbo nation. Among those groups are the Ika-Igbo in the present day Bendel state; Onitsha, Awka, Nkanu, Agbaja, Abakaliki in Anambra State; Owerri, Aba, and Okigwe in Imo State; and Degema in Rivers State. Such a wide range of places have no doubt provided the writer with a melange of materials on the subject of *chi*, so that what comes from him is copious but we will summarise with regard to the Nri-Igbo areas.

One place across the Niger, where the influence of the Nri priestly power has been felt was in the Igbo-speaking areas of Ogwashi-ukwu, Onicha Ugbo, Onicha Olona and a host of other principalities which constitute the present day Ika-Igbo group. In fact, it is now increasingly being asserted that these groups were established by a founding father from Nri, from which they are therefore said to derive their origin. Thus, it is not surprising that Talbot says that among the Ika-Igbo people *Chi* is the name given to the "principal personality in which the group soul materialises on earth", and which is considered as a kind of god-father or god-mother. One does not immediately grasp his meaning but we suppose that like Arthur Glyn Leonard he is talking of *Chi* as it is manifested in a lineage group as an ancestor, so that *Chi* as the principal personality would be pointing at *Chukwu* as the first cause or ancestor. Again, one observes that he has actually talked of

this *Chi* as either a god-father or god-mother; and this would incline one to conclude that *chi*, as an ancestor, is seen to relate to both men and females. On another level it will be pointing to the archetypal belief that *Chukwu* is both, at least initially, a mother as well as a father.<sup>1</sup> This does not sound contradictory since we have been made to realise that in some places memorials are kept for both males and females by which they are remembered as ancestors. In other words, both men and women are capable of being *chi* to several persons when they are reincarnated in newly born children. It does appear that one's *chi* father is usually a living being other than the person's actual father or mother for as Talbot goes on to say, a *dibia* "priest-healer" (one who has specialised in divination) points out who the person may be, who may either be a male or a female but must belong to the same family. Once such a person has been pointed out, he "cannot be changed under any circumstances in his lifetime or after". Talbot is of the view that when such a *chi* father or mother dies, it is believed that the child's real father or mother has died and the man is given a burial appropriate to the father. This is a variation from the one witnessed at Awka in which the *chi* father or mother would have been dead before they can be incarnated in children and before they can be invoked to participate in the activities of the living.

That apart, Talbot talks of what he calls "Oversoul". According to him, *chi* is a kind of transcendental self which "for want of a more suitable name" he had chosen to describe by that all encompassing term. He admits that details of the character of *chi* vary considerably, but certainly this would include the personal *chi* which, as "the essential idea" appears to be "that spark of divinity or monad, which exists in a very high spiritual state with God". Thus, both *Chukwu*, and the personal entity whom Basden has already designated as *chim*, exist in complementary relationship. But Talbot chooses to refer to this entity in other terms as the *Ego* which is an important departure from what had gone on before, being less Christian in interpretation as it "sends down emanations through various planes to the earth"; hence the Igbo belief in it as a kind of "group-self", or "multiplex *ego* that is capable of manifesting "itself in different individualities at the same

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<sup>1</sup> See collected material Text 6.vix. In this song we observe the use of *igwe* 'sky one' as metaphor for *Chukwu*.

moment".<sup>1</sup> If this is so, it is something of a universal largesse in which each individual has a share.

In this Bendel-Igbo area being referred to, one soon begins to have the impression that one's *chi* father is the person who is usually in custody of the *chi* of the individual child. Besides, this *chi*-father is seen as the *chi* of the child; for coming to matters concerning sacrifice to *Chi*, Talbot makes the point clear that a son cannot sacrifice to his *chi*-father himself while he is still alive, but rather to his *chi* (which is personified in his essential *Chi*-father within the lineage that is. This is in fact sacrifices to one's own Master *Chi* or "Oversoul" being overseen by the *Chi*-father on behalf of the child. This way the *chi*-father fulfils the vital role of a natural father who Talbot also tells us has an important role to play on the child's behalf as far as his *chi* is concerned. One understands then that it is this *Chi*-father who has the duty to preserve the child till he is of age to establish his own personal *chi*. It does seem then that his Master *Chi* is invariably the collective *Chi* entity of the lineage residing at the central *Chi* shrine all through the ages. Talbot explains that when the time then comes for the child to have his *chi*, his father gives it to him in the form of a small stick about four inches long which is painted with white chalk, obtained from the central *Chi* shrine of the lineage group. This symbolic object, he tells us, is called *mkpulu chi* which literally means the seeds of *chi*. This stick is given to him to take to his *chi*'s house and place by his Master *Chi* symbol. Thus *mkpulu chi* can be characterised in two ways: the one which an individual creates for himself as representing the memory of his departed father or mother; or the type which Talbot says is given to a child by his *chi*-father to keep as a symbolic object representing his individual *chi* when he is of age to set up his own shrine of *Chukwu* who is the Master *Chi* represented by the sacred plant as Basden had pointed out. Both approaches are valid and recognised by the Ika-Igbo culture of Bendel State; for the piece which the child's *chi*-father has given him represents his personal *chi* given to him now at adult age, the Master *Chi* being the 'supreme' *Chi* represented in the shrine by the sacred plant to which the personal *chi* relates. On another level, *chi* is the memorial which as Talbot goes on

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<sup>1</sup> P.A. Talbot, *Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.) 1926 pp. 279-274.

to say, one leaves for his mother or father when they have died, which is usually a representation of them in clay or wood on which is painted some white chalk and to which he offers a yearly sacrifice as an ancestor. We remember that Basden had also pointed this out with respect to the yearly sacrifice at Awka during the annual festival in honour of the individual *chi* spirits. Leonard had talked of *ajachi* as well as Northcote Thomas and Basden, and at this stage one might also be associating this sacrifice to the ancestral *chi* which Talbot mentioned to be related in many ways to *ajachi* involving as it does the high God and the personal god which are implicitly related to one another. As Talbot says, usually every town holds an annual festival in honour of the various *chi* to whom prayers are offered. Requests are made to them for help in everything. Ideally, everybody possesses a *chi* of his own. One's good fortunes are ascribed to his *chi*, so that *chi* can be seen as having to do with both good and bad fortunes as the case may be. A good *chi* attracts rewards such as sacrifice of a cow or a hen and so on, but an evil *chi* is begrudged any such sacrifice.

Talbot also states that that at times a "*juju*" can be taken as a man's *chi*. A "doctor" suggests this especially when a person is sick and is said to have had the wrong one chosen for him. One way of looking at this is that the sick fellow is seeking for life and hence the conception of *chi* as the particular *juju* that is needed to cure the individual and restore back his health.

It has been noted that *chi* is conceived in a number of places as the ancestor, and Talbot suggests that this is no less so at Onitsha where it is the ancestor that returns as the *chi* of an individual. Here as in a place like Ihiala virtually all that we have identified *chi* with are present. Everyone possesses a *chi* from birth, and the *chi* figure must be of the same sex as the child. Also, the *chi* of a person could be good or bad, depending on what it brings the person, whether this be good health or sickness, poverty or riches as the case may be. Again, a man cannot choose his *chi* himself, as he is a reincarnation of an ancestor; but if he happens to die and become an ancestor he can choose to be *chi* to someone else who has been good to him.

Even in Awka the similarities are no less striking: The child is usually of the same sex as the *chi* who may be someone's father, the

custodian of his *chi* who must not be a living person. In other words, *Chi* is an ancestor as in Onitsha. Again, in time of ill-health, cure is seen in terms of the child's need for a *chi* where he has not yet had any or where the present one he is having represents a bad or evil *chi* which would need to be replaced by another one that might bring him the good fortune of restoring him to health. In this respect *chi* is seen as a medicinal cure.

#### 2.2.6 C. K. Meek

Another writer whose contribution in this field is no less worthy of note is Meek (1937). Meek made a study of Igbo religious and legal systems and this covers the whole of Igboland. Nevertheless, he is able to show when he is drawing from any one area, so that the materials dealing with the northern Igbo tradition are amply demonstrated which shows that on the whole he still drew significantly from the Nri part of Igboland.

Meek states that there is a pantheon of high gods headed by a Supreme being who could also be referred to as Supreme spirit or World Oversoul. This *Chi* he calls *Chukwu* or *Chineke*. It is certainly not with Meek that one begins first to identify this cosmological entity with the word spirit for as Correia pointed out, *Chi* is the *mmuo* "spirit" that is found in all existing phenomena. According to Meek, *Chukwu* is followed by *Anyaanwu* "sun", *Igwe* "sky", *Amadioha* "Lightning" and *Ala* "Earth deity" -in that order. He does not immediately identify *Chi* with any of these divinities but talks of other minor "deities" which are innumerable, ranging from agricultural entities to "spirits which are personifications of fortune, destiny, wealth, strength, divination and evil". Already, so far, we have been associating fortune and destiny with *chi* even though Meek does not. One understands also that there are those who are counterparts of living beings and finally, there are the ancestors who control the fortunes of their living descendants. The acknowledgement of these entities is like confirming a morning kolanut prayer in which all such entities are invoked.

From what Meek says it is not quite clear what he means by *Chukwu* being the Supreme spirit or World Oversoul. Does he mean by that that one is equivalent to the other? It is also interesting that he

refers to *Chukwu* as spirit and not as "God". If so, what is the semblance or difference between spirit and soul. We think that *Chi* could be the essence of a being but not the soul which is the active principle.

However, in his creative aspect, *chi* is known as *Chineke*, or *Chi-Okike*, that created heaven and earth; for he "sends rain, makes crops grow, and is the source from which men derive their *chi* or accompanying soul". Like Northcote Thomas, he is of the opinion that *Chukwu* is distant from men and his personality vague. Nevertheless, he is said to be the ultimate recipient of all sacrifices some of which are seldom offered to him directly. Meek says, for example, that a man may offer a sacrifice to *Anyaanwu* and ask it to accept the sacrifice and bear it to *Chukwu*. This suggests that *Chi* is the master spirit as Talbot intimated. He goes on to say that although *Chukwu* is sometimes said to be the father of *Anyaanwu*, he is identified with it at times. Hence *Chukwu* is also known as *Anyaanwu Eze Chukwu-Okike* meaning "The Sun, the Lord God and Creator" which is a phrase commonly used in referring to his personality. As the father *Chi*, it is mostly portrayed as the protector of individuals in the society.

According to Meek, *Chukwu* is said to have no established place of worship; but *Anyaanwu* has. Meek's inability to see a place of worship for *Chukwu* must have to do with his preconceived notions about God which he expected the Nri-Igbo *Chi* to fit into just as the church is one such place for Christians. It will also have to do with his preconceived view that *Chukwu* is just an abstract entity without any concrete objective form, not even when there are associations of it to the sun *Anyaanwu*. What he seems to be saying in fact is that there are no shrines or cultus symbols for *Chukwu*, but already we have come across symbols like the sacred *chi* plants used for locating the presence of *chi*; and for the personal gods of men and women -the *ikenga* symbol of a man's strength likewise associated with his *chi* and the *omumu* symbols of a woman's fertility also associated with a woman's *chi*. Interestingly enough, the symbols which are said to exist for *Anyaanwu* such as the cutting or branch of *obo*, *opu*, *ogirisi* or *oha* tree, are all the various plants used for marking the shrine of *Chi*. These plants are also the ones referred to as the *Chi* plants which are usually planted outside a hut which serves as the central meeting place

of members of a household unit as well as the recognized place of call before any visitor can enter the compound of the household unit proper.

In places like Awgu and Mkpologwu, it is observed that Meek portrays *Anyaanwu* as the entity that is mostly mentioned instead of *Chi* or *Chukwu*. In other words, it is to *Anyaanwu* that sacrifices and prayers are directed, but the understanding is that putting all the evidence together, this *Anyaanwu* is the one usually referred to as *Eze Chukwuoke*. In every way it is consistent with what has gone before that *Chukwu* is seen as relating to the sun *anyaanwu*. Meek also refers to him as *Obasi* which is interesting as this term is an Efik/Ibibio word propagated by the Aro who came in touch with them during the slave trading era.

Generally speaking, Meek writes about *Chi* as one of the most striking doctrines of the Igbo, for as he says, *chi* is seen as one's agent or spiritual double associated with his personality. Also, *Chi* could be a bad one or a good one depending on one's fortunes or misfortunes. If Leonard also sees *Chi* as the cause of everything evil, then he might not be far from Meek who thinks that he is the cause of evil fortunes, a quality which would tend to link the lesser *chi* to *Chukwu* as a man's personal god when qualified with a possessive *m*.

Apart from persons, animals have their own *chi*,<sup>1</sup> hence as Meek goes on to say "if a hunter misses an animal he ascribes his failure to the animal's *chi*". People can be said to have the *chi* of animals if they behave in some bestial ways, so that *chi* in this case will be seen as having to do with one's individual character.

Beyond all that has been said so far about *chi*, however, Meek considers the *chi*-cult as being to a great extent a fertility cult. Here he is in agreement with Basden who has talked of *chi omumu* which is the *chi* that deals with fertility in women.

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<sup>1</sup> C.K. Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe*, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.,) 1939, pp.55-60.

## 2.2.7 M.D.W. Jeffreys

Another writer whose works come so close to what Basden, Meek and a few others of this period had said on *Chi* was Jeffreys. His study of the Nri-Igbo culture was an intensive one both in scope and depth, and it encompassed the concepts under study. Indeed, one might say that his account of the Nri-Igbo kingship structure, world-view and historical origins is the most detailed of all that had been written so far by writers of his time. In other words, he was the first to carry out a separate study of the religious system of the Nri-Igbo people in which those concepts of *chi* and *ikenga* were given adequate attention and consideration. His publications include *The Bull-Roarer among the Ibo* (1949); *The Winged Solar Disc* (1957) and *Ikenga: The Ram-Headed God* (1954). His unpublished thesis is on *The Divine Umundri Kings* (1934), which to this day has been a seminal work and a vital source of information for those interested in this area of Igbo culture and civilization.<sup>1</sup>

In his thesis, Jeffreys talks of *Chi* as a term that has many meanings and usages, and among those that lie within the religious complex he mentions such terms as *chi-le-chi*, or *chi-lechi*, which bear *chi* in them and which means to take a title. From this association of *chi* with title-taking one would suppose that *chi* plays a role in the event but how this is so is not very clear.

*Chukwu* is the Great Spirit, which Jeffreys also referred to as the Supreme Being. *Chineke* is said to be the creating spirit, which should be seen as the name by which it is known. Beyond this, *chi* becomes "the divine efflatus, the spiritus that animates a human being". This concept aligns it to Correia's view that *chi* is the *mmuo* "spirit" that resides in the souls of all visible phenomena. But Jeffreys uses such terms as "vital spark", "soul substance" and indeed "life" to explain the term.

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<sup>1</sup> See the following: Jeffreys, M.D.W. "The Winged Solar Disk or the Itsi Facial Scarification." in *Africa* 21. 2 (1961): pp.93-111; "The Divine Umundri King". *Africa* 8.3 (1935) pp. 346-354.

Jeffreys also says that *chi* appears in *ndiichie* who are the dead who have taken titles, also referred to as immortals, the ancestors and the four days; so that if like Leonard *Chi* is the first ancestor associated with the sun, the days of the Nri-Igbo native week will be a latter class or set of ancestors. Still in relation to the days, *chi* is said to occur in the expressions: *chi fo* or *chi bo*, meaning "dawn" or "*chi* returns"; it is also there in *chi na ubosi* which means that "*chi* and the day have gone", all of which are consistent with earlier views of *chi* being seen as the sun and light which informs the days of the Nri-Igbo week. This is why expressions such as *chi ejie* will have to do with nightfall when the day has been emptied of its light as Jeffreys had suggested. Finally, *chi* is said to mean shadow of a human being which is generally known in Igbo as *onyinyo*. Jeffreys declares that "it is quite clear that *chi* definitely is used to describe the material object, sun" which will tend to give credence to the fact that *chi* is also seen as a shadow which can be witnessed only in a condition where there is light; but he also states that this "*chi* represents the Supreme Being". According to him, *Chi* means life, so that in taking a title a person is taking life more "abundantly". He is of the opinion that it does not mean that because the Umundri use the term *chi* to represent both the day and the Supreme Being that they worship the sun, "but rather that they identify the sun with the god and refer to both by the term *chi*". He also makes the important observation that a titled man usually sets up a shrine to *chi*, which could be seen as both a shrine to his personal *chi* and to the high *Chi* from which he derives his *chi*. He is also of the view that another shrine is set to either the sun *Anyaanwu* or to *Agbala*; thus one understands why there is no need to establish one for *Chukwu* for since both *chi* and the sun *anyaanwu* are identified as pointing to one another and that "the shrine to *chi* can represent him just as the other shrine may represent either *Anyaanwu* or *Agbala*". It is noted of course that *Agbala* is a relatively unfamiliar entity also associated with *Chi* whose relationship with it will be necessary to know as well. What is certain is that even as Jeffreys further goes on to point out, *chi* is seen to be a tutelary spirit in the sense that it is the personal aspect of *Chukwu* and therefore not a separate and distinct deity as such.

Writing in his article *The Bull-Roarer among the Ibo*, Jeffreys does not give much new insights into the meaning of *chi* but seems to be using the C.M.S. dictionary left at Awka by the evangelists who also wrote on it to consolidate his views on that concept. Here again *chi* is said to be connected with the sun, being as we have already seen elsewhere the "vital spark" which "gives life to the body"; and which we are made to know returns to *tsi*, "the sun". Thus here again both *chi* as vital spark and *Chi* of the sun are the same. The vital spark looks like the *Chi* which Correia talked about as being responsible for the life essence of all concrete phenomena. This would appear also to be the personal *chi* of the individual also talked about by Basden. Apart from this relationship of *Chi* (the source of life and author of death of an individual) to the sun, there is no significant shift in position that can be found in this article that is different from what had already gone on before. However, a number of things are of interest and these are the use of the adjective *ukwu* (at times written as *uku*) meaning "great" to denote *Chukwu* as the great *Chi*; also the use, otherwise, of *(e)ke* meaning "to create" to refer to *chineke*, or the *chi* that creates; so that *chi* could either be *Chukwu* or *Chuku* or *Chineke*. Here once more in the paper, it is known for certain that *chi* is also the term used for referring to "a small tree planted in or near a person's dwelling place to represent his *tsi*". All these, however, are apart from the fact that Jeffreys maintained also in the essay that *chi* is also used to mean the light of day. This conclusion is strong for the writer who discloses that this same dictionary of the C.M.S. at Awka has it that "there is evidence that the sun (*Anwu* or *Anya anwu* meaning "eye" of the sun, lit) was formerly regarded either as *Tsi-Ukwu* or his eye, and worshipped accordingly".

### 2.2.8 *Robin Horton*

Jeffreys wrote as a field anthropologist on the job. But Horton, coming into the field also, and in almost the same culture area of study as the Nri-Igbo culture zone, appears not to have been pressed by any formal official protocol or duty by authority of the colonial office, or missionary zeal. From all indication, Horton seems to be an independent anthropologist working in the field. As a result of this distancing, he was able to see that most of the studies so far carried out on the Igbo as a whole "have been initiated in response to an urgent political

situation" which has "resulted in an emphasis on those aspects of culture of most immediate interest to administrators".<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he admits that a considerable body of religion has been included in those studies but still he is of the opinion that the religious side is a sphere of activity which perhaps has received rather less attention than the others. His work therefore, which is an investigation of the idea of God and man and land in a northern Igbo village group of Nike in Anambra State, is an attempt to fill up the gap that might have been left in our understanding of the Igbo cosmology. According to him, the distinct advantage of his work is that at the time of study the Christian mission influence was not at all developed there.

Horton observes that in the Okigwi area, Margaret Green had written about *Chi* as "the spirit who creates people". Indeed it is here that we learn that this creator spirit whose name is *Cineke*, (*Chineke*) has been taken by Christians to denote the creator".<sup>2</sup> He explains that even Green acknowledges the difficulty in knowing "what the real Ibo significance of the word is", for "*Chi* and *Eke* together create an individual, but each person is thought of as having his own *chi*". What this is also pointing to is that *Chineke*, apart from being a term in which *Chi* is said to be an active spirit that creates, is also a term that is made up of two entities that are similar in character. Horton makes it known that with all this in mind Green is in the long run saying that over and above this there is a serious doubt as to whether there is any conception of a universal *Chi*. In other words, Green seems to be of the opinion that among the Igbo of Okigwi area where she worked, the concept of a universal high God or *Chi* is rather remote or absent altogether, and that it is with the coming of Christianity that the idea of *Chineke* came into existence. Horton observes, however, that contrary to this feeling, there are writers like Meek who worked chiefly in the northern Igbo area who are definite about the existence of a supreme God under the name of *Chukwu*. He says that it is possible to attribute this to mission influence, but on the whole he admits that "it is possible

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<sup>1</sup> Robin Horton, "God, Man and the Land in a Northern Ibo Village-Group" in *Africa* (1956) vol 26 pp. 17-28. Also see "The High God: A comment on Father O'Connell's Paper" in *Man* 42. 219 (1962) pp. 137-140

<sup>2</sup> Dr Green did her field work among the Igbo of that area from 1934 to 1937, spending a year in the village of Agbaja whose culture she described in her book in 1947. See Green, *Ibo Village Affairs*, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson), 1947. p.52,

that the concept of a supreme God may exist in some areas and not in others"; hence it is because of this that his chief concern was to show that in his chosen area of study "the concept is too deeply entangled in the web of the supernatural world to be a recent addition to it".

Horton centres his work in Ibagwa where the supreme God is referred to both as *Chukwu* and *Chineke*. *Chukwu* is said to have some physical attributes, but they are not the subject of very definite assertions. He is usually regarded as a male, but he is not known to have a wife. *Chukwu* is also said to live in a compound known as *ezi Chukwu*. Horton goes on to say that although there is no attempt by the people to picture him in anthropomorphic terms, he is known to have recognisable powers: *Chukwu* created the universe, for which reason he is referred to as *Oke Obiama* or "maker of everything". In creating the universe, he divided it into two parts, Earth (*Ani*) and sky (*Igwe*), and after this he created his two messengers, the Sun (*Anyaanwu*) and the Moon (*Onwa*) "to travel daily across the sky, bringing back news to him of what happened on earth". Horton, it appears, has discovered some kind of myth of creation involving *Chukwu* as the protagonist, and which further complicates into a system: for "*Chukwu*", according to this writer, "sees that the sun travels across the world in the day time to cut it into two, and that the moon travels across it at night to cut it in two; but as sun and moon travel in different paths, so the world is divided by *Chukwu* into four parts". In this sense of being the one who created the world by dividing them up into parts, Horton is echoing what Leonard had said which is that *Chukwu* the creator is also *Chukwu* the divider or sharer

Horton goes on to say also that *Chukwu* created the four days of the Nri-Igbo week namely: *Ohie*, *Afo*, *Nkwo* and *Eke*. According to him, the Ibagwa elders say that *Chukwu* lives "in a compound outside the earth and the sky". Hence, he is considered to be very far away, having his emanations only as *chi* and *okike*, who are in very close contact with the affairs of men. Besides, it would not only be that he is in very close contact with men, he is mirrored here also as a man who lives in a compound with a retinue of adherents or followers whom he created and presides over as master.

Talking about *chi*, he is of the view that it is a portion of *Chukwu* which he sends down as a spiritual double whenever a human being is born. As usual, the relationship between *Chukwu* and the personal *chi* is seen as that between the big *Chi*, or *Chukwu*, and the lesser *chi*; and in this we have seen that one is the other and vice-versa. In other words *Chi* is a common term that could be applied to both the high and personal gods just as the high God could become personalized by the use of a possessive to qualify it as *chi* could also be. Besides, Horton makes us believe that *chi* is commonly regarded as a person's luck or destiny, so that when an Ibagwa man trips over a stone in the path, he says: *Enwelum ajo Ci*, meaning "I have bad luck".

*Chi* is furthermore associated with the heart-soul *mmuo* "spirit" usually thought to be an incarnation of an ancestor. To be clearer, Horton is perhaps saying that the dead ancestors are regarded as *mmuo* "spirits, ghosts" who are reincarnated in the world as *chi* of a person. It then follows that as he says, as soon as the body, *ahu* (which he spelt as *aho*), of a baby leaves its mother's womb it is brought into association with its *chi*. According to him, the *mmuo* is believed to determine the potentialities of the baby, while the *chi* controls their expressions. This suggests that *chi* has immense powers to determine the fate of an individual, whether it is to be good or bad. But Horton talks of it in the sense of having to do with the natural causes of things such as death, for as he says, "when a man dies of what we should call old age or natural causes", the Igbo say that "his death is *onwuci* or part of his destiny".

Like Correia, Horton is of the view that animals also have a *chi*, and that it is possible for *chi* to determine the behaviour of a man when a man is born with the *chi* of an animal. Also, *chi* lays down the broad outlines of a person's destiny which can be irrevocable, but which to a certain extent can be influenced by prayer or sacrifice. It has been observed that another way of responding to such a problem, particularly in matters relating to illness, is when *chi* is seen to be the cure simply by assuming that the ill-health is caused by *ajo chi* "evil luck or misfortune" which needs to be replaced by a fortunate one. Horton mentions the Ibagwa response to this kind of evil influence or misfortune, which would call for the establishment of the cult of *uluchi* "antidote for the evil fortune or *ajo chi*", but which Horton

misinterprets as "evil luck". His translation of it as meaning "evil luck" should be suspected since what is being looked for is not evil luck but a foil that will neutralize the evil already brought about by ill health or other misfortune. But seen as a foil, his interpretation of the term appears in order as *uluchi* would then be like "a sprite which disrupts the rigid determinism" operated by its evil counterpart"and thus provides an avenue of escape from bondage".

There is yet another cult of interest, and that is the cult of *okuke*, said to be as important as the cult of *chi* and *uluchi*. *Okuke* appears to be the local variation for *okike*, meaning creator spirit, since it is also the creative emanation of *Chukwu*. It is also said to be the "object of a fertility cult" since, with the assistance of *Ani* "Earth" he brings about child birth and the maintenance of health. Thus, like *Chi* or *Chukwu*, *okuke* functions as both male and female principle as it would relate to both men and women just as Basden had suggested. Besides, it was also observed that *Chukwu* has been seen as both father and mother. This would appear to be the kind of direct relationship to draw from the concept of *chi* and *Chukwu* and *okike*, which would be its relationship to wives as mothers with procreative maternal roles as we have already pointed out too. It is therefore interesting that as Horton says, "if a wife wishes to leave her husband, her final act is to remove her *Okuke* shrine and take it away with her"; this because her cult of *okuke* has to do with her destiny or fate as a woman with a procreative role to play, so that having to leave her husband without it will be to play into his hands; hence it is a step to ensure that he does not meddle with it and subsequently bring disaster upon her.

Horton finally sees some kind of unity in the concepts of *Chukwu*, *Chi* and *Okuke*, the picture which he paints being that when the supreme Being is invoked, "the people of Ibagwa frequently allude to the trinity of *Chukwu*, *Chi* and *Okuke* with the phrase *Eze "Citoke"* (*Eze Chitoke*) meaning "Lord *Ci*, Creator" ".

### 2.3 *The Post-colonial writers (1960 - present)*

This group of writers are mostly the Igbo scholars themselves. Notable exceptions in the sense that they are not Igbo by origin are Shelton (1971) who wrote on the Nsukka Igbo while Henderson wrote

at about this time also (1972) and specifically on the Onitsha. One finds Henderson's contribution on this subject of *Chi* valuable as it is a concept which is all embracing even though there might be instances of local variations and peculiarities which is the case from group to group. Not only that, Henderson is an professional anthropologist working in the field like Horton, and it is as a bridge between the visiting writers and the indigenous Igbo writers that his contribution must be assessed.

### 2.3.1 *R.N. Henderson*

Henderson talks of Onitsha as a self sufficient system,<sup>1</sup> but of course one notes that this area is within the Nri cultural complex which is the particular context from which her major institutions spring -with the exception, perhaps, of the kingship system which is said to have been borrowed from Benin in Bendel State. Even then, there is evidence that the Nri-Igbo priest-king system pre-dates that of Benin and that in fact, influenced the settlement of the Ika-Igbo areas of the same State. So that coming to the Onitsha kingship structure, this influence of the Nri culture is more than witnessed as the culture of the two areas share <sup>more</sup> common characteristics and affinity than Onitsha culture does with that of Benin.

Therefore, one cannot really talk of *Chi* as a unique and separate incidence at Onitsha but as one whose nature here might contribute to our overall understanding of the Nri-Igbo religious views as in fact, the concept is characteristically Nri-Igbo.

On Onitsha philosophical and religious thought, Henderson first focuses on the idea of *Chi*. Says he: "*Chi* is "life" (*ndu*) or life conceived as an animate self that guides the course of existence". He seems to be of the view that the personal *chi* of an individual is the "most direct manifestation" of this life concept of *chi*, this is what gives rise to the "*chi* in me" as he describes it which, according to him, "is thought of as a spiritual essence that guides and determines the course of that person's life from birth to death". It is possible that *chi* might be a guide in one's life but there appears to be no basis for him to be residing in a man. Henderson appears to be talking about *Chi* here as if

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<sup>1</sup> R.N Henderson, *The King in Every Man: Evolutionary Trends in Onitsha Ibo Society and Culture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1972

it is the Christian God that is often located inside a man. However, he gives an additional insight into *Chi* when he connects it with the Igbo concept of re-incarnation for according to him, it is believed that when an individual chooses "to enter the world" (*inyo uwa*), he makes a pact with a particular essential being (*chi*), selecting his length of life and his future activities; the choices so made are marked by the *chi* on his hand as his *akalaka* (marks of the hand, or "destiny").

The scholar goes on to differentiate between two fundamental expressions in which *chi* occurs by explaining their import through the "implied meanings" which they carry in certain proverbs. But this is in regard to the overall assessment of the career of each individual which is when the prominence of *chi* can be seen, since for a person the quality of his life is measured by the *chi*: so that, when for example it is said that "one who dies without children though he be rich, has a bad *chi*" the people are using it to express his good fortune or *chi oma*.

Therefore for Henderson on one hand, *chi* refers to "a single life acted out by each person", in which case there are as many *chi* as there are living individuals. However, he is also aware that on another level, not only does *chi* have a more general and inclusive meaning as the "essence of life", but that in fact "it is also projected as life essence attributed to the entire universe, a universal self called *Chi-ukwu* or *Chukwu*, literally 'great *chi*'". Here Henderson is markedly different from those who have referred to him as the supreme God by seeing him in terms of his universal application. He too is of the opinion that "this universal self is addressed in prayer as *Chi-ukwu-okike*, "great *chi* the creator"; as *Chi-na-elu*, or "*Chi* in heaven" ; and as *Olisa ebulu uwa*, 'divinity who supports the world'. It is this entity, *Chi-ukwu*, that is said to have created all physical phenomena and endowed them with force and direction: the sky (*Igwe*), the heavenly bodies as "his messengers" and eyes, the earth (*ani*) and the great river Niger (*orumili*). It is also said that it is this *Chi-ukwu* "that sent trees to grow on the land, animals to roam it, men to occupy it, yam and other foods to feed people and various objects as "medicines" (*ogwu*) to help them in the course of their lives." In this connection, he goes on to say that "when a person dies, his *chi* ceases to exist as an independent entity, returning to the great ground of being in the sun or in the sky".



latter sense refers to daylight also. What is significant in all this is that he has carefully avoided using the term supreme God for *Chi*; besides, he recognizes this apparent inter-relationship between the great God *Chukwu* and the lesser god *chi* as relating personally to the individual and not a group focused concept. All said, the problem remains that he is still retaining the term God for *Chi* and *Chukwu* which has obvious western philosophical implications. However by highlighting the semantic structure in terms of their marked and unmarked meanings he had tried to define them which is of interest to us. Hence *Chi* could be an animate, purposeful essence in its unmarked general meaning, then an underlying essence of the individual self in its unmarked narrow meaning, and finally it could be the underlying essence of the universe in its marked narrow meaning. This idea of Henderson is also interesting in another way and that is in so far as it further goes to clarify Basden's notions about the distinction between the great *Chi* and the personal *chi* in which the former is denoted by a capital letter "C" and the latter by a small letter. We observe that Northcote Thomas does not make any such distinctions which we think is important; being content to denote the great *Chi* as *Chukwu* and then lumping *chi* with a host of other entities he termed the personal tutelary spirits.

Coming to the indigenous writers who came afterwards, the picture is not immediately of writers who have made such deep studies of the concept as their earlier European counterparts. The reason may not be far to find; it may have been assumed that being themselves Igbo people by birth, that it was a subject they assumed they knew about by merely belonging to the culture, but which they have never in fact cared to reflect on in depth. Second, their education being largely of the western oriented type, they had been caused to write basing their sources on the works of the earlier European writers without relating them to the material evidence found in the culture itself. Most important of all is the fact that many of these writers have gone through mission schools, and have been indoctrinated in western theological practice which have tended to colour their perceptions so much. The result is that retentions of the orthodox Christian views of God and the idea of the personal god of the Christians have come to influence much of their writings. All in all, therefore, what is witnessed

is a mixed bag of ideas which are either conflicting or simply echoing what had been said before.

### 2.3.2 *Francis Arinze*

The first important writer to consider here is Francis Arinze whose book *Sacrifice in Igbo Religion*<sup>1</sup> is of particular interest especially as he is a Bishop and theologian. He focuses more on the northern Igbo area in which the Nri culture is predominant. Unlike Henderson, he sees *Chi* not as a term encompassing both *Chukwu* and *chi* of a man's personal agent. This, however, does not detract from the fact that he is one example of the indigenous writers who have brought in ideas from the earlier writers. In fact Arinze is himself one with a strong Christian connection, being by training and ideology of Roman Catholic persuasion. This somehow complicates the situation. He does not hesitate to say that *Chi* is the Supreme Being. Hence, he considers *chi* and *Chukwu* as two separate categories even though he still claims to see some threads of connections between them. This Supreme Being he also refers to as the Supreme Spirit. By this he is probably trying to say that the term God will not be suitable to apply to *Chukwu*. What then would his use of the terms "being" and "spirit" be implying? In the first place he is of the opinion that he has three major names: *Chukwu*, otherwise *Chi-ukwu*, which means the Great Spirit; *Chineke*, or spirit that creates; and *Osebuluwa* "the Lord that holds the world". Again, some names are given to *Chukwu* which further complement those three for as Arinze says, the "Ibo" are not content with giving this Great Spirit only three names; hence other names can be found in different parts of the Igbo country also used for referring to it. He gives such names as *Onyeokike* meaning "he who creates", or *Chukwuokike* which he renders as "God the creator" and so on. Here again the fact that Arinze is building on what the earlier writers had said had not allowed him to see other sides of the meaning of *okike* which apart from meaning "to divide" and "to create," also means "to shine".

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<sup>1</sup> F.A. Arinze, *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press) 1970 p.9ff

Arinze goes on to say that personal names are to be seen as names which the Igbo use in reflecting on the nature of *Chukwu*. They are apart from the first set of names in the sense that they are not directly applied to God, since according to him "Ibo pagan parents give them to their children". A few examples of these names suffice here; such names as *Chukwuneme* or *Chukwukelu*, both of which Arinze translates as ("God creates"). Another name among a host of others which he supplied is *Chukwunyelu* which he translates as "God gave" and so on. It is important for Arinze that these names are original Igbo names, an idea that has begun to be contested in the face of the dynamic changes in thought and view-point brought about by the coming of the monotheistic religion of Christianity.

Even then, Arinze is of the opinion that these names are insufficient to establish what he calls "Ibo ideas of God". As such, he points to other areas of activity which the Igbo use while reflecting on life, such as everyday speech, cult, prayer, as well as what he terms "myths", for further insights into the meaning of the term *Chi*. From all these, he appears to come to the conclusion that as far as Igbo theology goes, "God is the Supreme Spirit, the creator of everything. No one equals him in power. He knows everything. He is altogether a good and merciful God and does harm to no one. He sends rain and especially children, and it is from him that each individual derives his personal *Chi*". But many of these are what writers like Leonard and Horton will contest seriously and for our part we can only say that no one writer has been able to be actually free from his prejudices and subjective thoughts on the matter. Leonard for certain would not agree that *Chukwu* is all good and merciful, which is understandably the view of Arinze who is bringing in Christian influences unconsciously or consciously. Besides, if *Chukwu* is thought to do no harm to people, why would Horton consider it necessary that the Igbo would conceive of something like *uluchi* "the foil of *chi*", for removing *chi* itself where it has brought its evil or done its harm. It is in fact Arinze's express view that it is the Supreme Spirit that has made many inferior spirits who are nearer to man through whom man normally offers worship to Him. This also sounds like Northcote Thomas who perhaps was expressing what has become a common Christian habit of seeking

to reach God through other deities, and which is now being continued by some of the writers on this subject.

Like a good many of the writers before him, in connection with the lesser *chi* Arinze is of the view that *chi* is personal to an individual: that he is a person's agent, genius or spirit-double. This *chi* is given to an individual at conception by *Chukwu* and accompanies the individual from cradle to grave. In fact *chi* is said to be so strictly personal that according to one Igbo proverb, it is possible for two brothers to have one mother but not the same *chi* (*Ofu nne na-amu, ofu chi ada eke*). Arinze further points out that a person's *chi* might be a good one, hence the reference to such a person as *onye chi oma* "one with a good *chi*" or simply put, a lucky man. This also means that he could be a bad *chi*, *ajo chi*; but Arinze appears to be silent on this perhaps because this idea might not be appealing to him as it will undermine his argument that, assuming the great *chi* and the personal *chi* mean the same, he is too good to be evil. However, he has argued that even if they relate they are absolutely separate categories which is interesting in this regard also. Other expressions having to do with this personal *chi* are to be found in situations of danger when a person may cry out in fear and say "*chi m ekwena!*" "My *chi*, don't permit this". Arinze is very much convinced that it is common for the ordinary Igbo to regard *chi* as his guardian spirit on whose competency his personal prosperity depends, so that by failing to acknowledge that this personal god has anything to do with *Chukwu* he is suggesting the uniqueness of *Chukwu*. He observes that there are those who have a rather hazy notion of *chi* which has made them to regard it in some vague ways as an emanation of *Chukwu*, but for Arinze this must be a local deviation from what is generally accepted. Therefore, as far as his understanding of it goes, the *chi* of a person is not identified with the Supreme God, *Chukwu*, in the way most of the previous writers had done. The reason is that, perhaps this would mean that whatever evil the personal *chi* might be said to bring would be also associated with the *Chukwu* he is serving.

### 2.3.3 *Austin J. Shelton*

Shelton is an American anthropologist who wrote on the borderland Igbo group of Nsukka area. His book entitled *The Igbo-*

*Igala Borderland*<sup>1</sup> indicates the current of cultural exchanges that has been taken place between the two groups of peoples, and it has been observed that the influence of the Nri-Igbo culture went beyond the Nsukka area into the Igala country where similar cultural artifacts of the Igbo can be found, such as the *Ikenga*.

Talking of the Igbo *Chi*, Shelton is of the opinion that *Chi* has to do with the one that is inside a man. But it has to be noted that this writer based his information on people he interviewed in very recent times and who might largely be Christians or people might have been influenced by Christianity indirectly; for it is with Christians that the notion of God being inside a man is quite often associated. Every person is therefore said to have a *chi* inside him, an idea which has made Henderson also to talk of the king in every man. *Chukwu* is said to have made *chi* because it is he who created man. *Chi* is specifically referred to as *Chi mmadu* "Chi of a person", said to be related to his shadow. In this new development, *chi* would no longer be located inside a man but outside of him. When a person dies, his *chi* is simply said to disappear. *Chukwu* takes it back, for it is his. Again, quoting another informant, *chi* is not part of a man, but merely something that is in a man which belongs to *Chukwu*. This is quite a divergent view to what had gone before indicating that even in this the position of *chi* is still confused and this is not unexpected in interviews where there are bound to be divergent opinions. As he goes on to say, the *chi* of a person does not die; it is said to be too strong for that since it appears to be the basis on which life is sustained. In fact, it is said that without it the powerful things in a man -considered to be his chest (*obi*), and his breath (*ume*) are powerless.

#### 2.3.4 *Edmund Ilogu*

Following in the line of indigenous writers is Ilogu (1974), a canon in the Anglican Church of Nigeria and once a lecturer in religion in the university of Nigeria at Nsukka. He writes like the Christian minister he

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<sup>1</sup> See Austin J. Shelton, *The Igbo-Igala Borderland* (Albany, USA) 1971; also "On the Recent Interpretations of Deus Otiosus: The 'Withdrawal' of High God in West African Religion" in *Man* 64.55 (1964): pp. 53-54 and "The presence of the Withdrawn High God in North Ibo Religious Belief and Worship" in *Man* 65.4 (1965): pp. 15-18.

is and not much removed in his ideas of the term *Chi* from his Roman Catholic counterpart Arinze. What emerges, in the long run, is the impression that he is trying to uphold the tenets of his Christian faith and ideal.

In his work *Christianity and Igbo Culture*,<sup>1</sup> Ilogu states that both *Chineke* and *Chukwu* are terms used for referring to the principal God of the Igbo. According to him *Chineke* literally means "the creator God" while *Chukwu* means "the great God". He mentions that in Onitsha areas the emphasis is on the "creation" act of the Supreme Being for whom the single term *Chineke* is commonly used.

However, it is said that in the other parts of Igboland where the variant, *Chukwu*, is used, people sometimes add the word *Okike* and speak of *Chukwu-Okike* to mean the same idea of creation as is contained in the word *Chineke*. *Chukwu* is believed to be the creator of heaven and earth and also the one that makes animal and plant life to grow. He is in addition the source of human life, and gives to each man at the time of his birth this particular portion of divine being called *chi*. Ilogu suggests that it is this idea of individual *chi* that leads to *Chukwu* as the great *Chi* or Oversoul; in other words, the personal *chi* will be said to be derived from *Chukwu* the Oversoul. Ilogu's use of the term "Oversoul" for *Chukwu* is a clear indication of how far some of the suppositions of the early writers who used it, notably Meek and Talbot, had been carried over by the indigenous writers who sometimes apply it to suit their own purposes. But it is with the sun *Anyaanwu*, as the Nsukka people hold it, that Ilogu talks of as if it is a separate category from *Chukwu*. Hence, he speaks of it as a sun-god that is more prominently worshipped in Nsukka Division of the northern Igbo sub-cultural area, but is it? He notes, however, that he is sometimes worshipped and addressed in prayers as if he were the same as *Chineke*. The problem here is that given the assumption that *Chineke* is a concept that came with the Christians it becomes difficult to see how the sun god would appear to be associated with it rather than with *Chukwu-okike* "*Chukwu* the creator, the divider or shining one". This is because the notion of *Chineke*, in addition to being the creator, is often tied up with God as the father as we shall see later.

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Ilogu, *Christianity and Igbo Culture* (New York: Nok Publishers) 1974

Even though one may claim that by referring to *Chineke* he was also talking of *Chukwu* (as he seems to give the two names as terms for one entity), conceptually this is important to note as it represents shifts in the concept. Often times, he states that this entity, the sun, is regarded as the messenger of the great Creator God, (*Chineke*) "through whom fowl sacrifice tied on top of a long bamboo pole should reach *Chineke*". Here again this assumption falls prey to the same kind of criticism as the one before it. We think this is also the problem with his postulations where he has used the term *Chineke*. Otherwise Ilogu recreates the standard statements with *chi* being a personal *chi* given by *Chukwu* to an individual at birth which then "becomes the spirit double of the man throughout his life", so that "whatever abilities, good or bad fortunes, success, failures or weaknesses possessed by the man" are attributed to his *chi*. Hence children of the same parents can be variously endowed by different kinds of *chi*. Also, through this *chi*, *Chineke* is said to connect himself with all created human beings. What is also interesting here is the notion that Ilogu associates this personal *chi* with the economic well being of an individual which is used in determining the worth of man, and this will be in order if *chi* is seen to have something of the good fortune of an individual which includes the idea of becoming rich and prosperous. However, *chi* is still said to have an important part to play in the life of an individual and as it differs from person to person, it is through the economic and social activities of an individual that one is able to know what kind of *chi* that the one has. While a person is still young his parents help him to discover by divination which ancestor had possessed the kind of *chi* with which he is endowed. It is believed that through "medicine", prayer and sacrifice, especially sacrifice to the ancestors, a man can finish his life more successfully than his *chi* had originally intended, but on the other hand, "if after all such efforts have been expended, the man finally ends ignominiously then his colleagues would acknowledge that he had tried but his *chi* had not helped him much".

Furthermore, it is the view of Ilogu that *Chineke* created the universe; and that this his creation was good. But Ilogu does not associate *Chi* or *Chukwu* with evil which as he says comes in the form of disease, death and atmospheric catastrophe believed to result from the work of evil spirits, including the spirits of displeased ancestors.

The criticism here is how does one explain the fact expressed by the other writers that when something thought to be evil (like death) befalls a man, his *chi* returns to *Chukwu* -a necessary process of birth-death cycle analogous to the active principle of creation and destruction often associated with *Chukwu*. This would lead to other pertinent questions; is *Chukwu* evil by being, in addition to the creator, a destroyer as well; and if he is why do we not say so? Or, if he is all good, does it then mean that death is a good thing? Almost always the latter is thought to be so, but then the question still remains that people still die deaths that are not considered to be good deaths as when they die prematurely from an illness or a violent crisis. Ilogu argues however that as *Chineke* is a beneficent god, man tries to find the sources of his benevolence in order to engage them advantageously through medicine which controls the spirit force within all forms of life -animals, plants, rivers and rocks as well as human beings. This is the nature of the goodness of *Chineke* which is said to be superior to all the evil that might befall a man, again a characteristically Christian posture, and hence all rites, ceremonies, sacrifices and other religious observances "are strenuously pursued towards the one goal of falling in line with the goodness of *Chineke*". Ilogu is also of the opinion that *Chineke* is remote from the affairs of the living and so allows the minor gods and spirits to intervene in their daily lives. If this is so, how then can we explain the fact that *Chukwu* is personal to man through his other dimension found in *chi*?

It is interesting to know from Ilogu that there are parts of Igboland where in addition to the private or personal levels of worship there is also the public level in which shrines of *Chineke* exist for public and private religious observances. If this is so, what remains to be established is if this represents a shift from the tradition that had gone on before the coming of Christianity. He refers to one public shrine found in Ihiala by the name of *Egbo Chukwu* which, according to him means public square of the Supreme God. Here again one has to note the confusion that this is bound to start when one talks of *Chineke* and *Chukwu* as representing one entity or concept, but as has been noted this might be seen as the direction of a new development in the concept in that area. But on the whole while talking of this particular religious activity he talks in terms of *Chukwu*: The important

significance of this shrine of *Chukwu* however is seen in the different ways in which it relates to women on one hand, and men on the other. Usually there is an annual public sacrifice at this shrine which is offered to *Chukwu*. For women, this sacrifice has to do with procreation and other domestic concerns: Women who as mothers have given birth to male children offer cocks, while those who have given birth to female children offer hens at the shrine within the period between one annual celebration and another. Newly married women are also said to be presented at the shrine during the ceremony of *ihibe akwukwa* "the setting up of the hearth" which in fact is the earthen tripod on which a wife cooks her meals, during which ceremony prayers are said to *Chukwu*. But then he goes on to say that for the men, it is common to associate the shrine of *Chukwu* with the *ozo* title holders who erect their shrines to *Chukwu* within their respective households and call it *ihu Chukwu* "Presence of *Chukwu*". Every year, during important religious festivals such as *iro mmuo* "Sacrificial offering to *Chukwu*" and *otite*,<sup>1</sup> sacrifices are offered at the shrines. It is therefore probable that this was the situation before the public affirmation of *Chukwu* at a central location -a pattern, perhaps, that might have been derived from the Aro or from Christianity; but whatever is the case it was seen to serve a characteristically female purpose among other things. Ilogu, who formerly asserted that *Chukwu* was a remote God, nevertheless acknowledges that "although this *egbo Chukwu* shrine is not widespread all over Igboland, yet this evidence at least indicates that both in worship and in thought *Chukwu*, the Supreme God, is not completely neglected". Here his reference to *Chukwu* as the Supreme God is significant as he had mostly talked of that entity as the great God. This is also a standard position derived from those who have written before him. Also he makes the point that women also have their own *chi* which relates to them as bearer of children, but one would include that this was as their domestic roles are concerned as the ones who organised the cooking of meals for which the setting up of a hearth is important. According to Ilogu, before a child is born "the mother offers various sacrifices not only to *ala* and *Ndibunze* 'spirits of the ancestors of her husband' but also to the *chi* symbol of her own mother". All these indicate the casual

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<sup>1</sup> Festival of celebration to the individual *chi* when children take presents to their mothers, which is a consumation of the *iro chi* ceremony.

position of *chi* among other gods which is not necessarily one of superiority or as master as other writers had suggested including Ilogu.

### 2.3.5 M.A. Onwuejeogwu

The other indigenous writer of this period to write on *Chi* is M.A. Onwuejeogwu. He is an anthropologist who for some time now has been working on the cultural hegemony of the Nri people, out of which he has published a number of works. Of particular importance is his book titled *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony* (1981) in which he dealt with the religious, social, economic, political and kingship institutions of the Nri people. Writing on *Chukwu*, he gives the view that according to the Nri belief, *Chukwu* is *Okike*, that is creator, and not the spirit of the dead (*mmuo*), as it is only dead ancestors that are said to be *mmuo* "spirits". What is pertinent to ask here is why *Chukwu* has been said to be a "being" or "spirit" by the other writers; and if also only dead ancestors are *mmuo* on what grounds is the term so different that it could not be applied to *Chukwu*. Furthermore, *Chukwu* is said to manifest itself as light (*Anyaanwu*) and as fertility which, interestingly enough, Onwuejeogwu has referred to as *Agbala*. This latter term seems to be the common binding force that holds together the two terms *Chukwu* and *Anyaanwu* "God and the sun"; and as has been pointed out earlier, implies not only *Chukwu* as a spirit force *mmuo*, but also as a mighty one. *Chukwu* manifests itself as procreation and this he associates with *Chi*. What is not so clear is the *chi* which he associates it with since it is clear that there are categories of it which have to do with the sun itself on one hand, and then with the male and female *chis* that have to do with their respective roles in society. He reports also that the Nri people say that they do not have a special place for calling upon *Chukwu* "because we believe that it is everywhere and anyone could approach it";<sup>1</sup> a position that departs from the one at Ihiala as described by Ilogu. Again it is clear here that Onwuejeogwu is not lumping this particular *Chukwu* with that of the Aro or even with *Chineke* which a writer like Ilogu for example had done.

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<sup>1</sup>M.A. Onwuejeogwu, pp.30-34.

According to Onwuejeogwu, a person erects a shrine of *Anyaanwu* or *Agbala* when it is "ritually manifested" to him; that is perhaps, when it is revealed to him in a dream, or when he is inspired by *agwu* "god of medicine and inspiration"; so that everybody erects his or her *chi*. Even though *Chukwu* is believed to be always present and everywhere, one understands that not much is known about him. Again, as the belief goes, *Chukwu* creates, and since this is so, he is the one that gives people the power to procreate and this power is *chi*.

### 2.3.6 Chinua Achebe

Also coming to this area of religious belief is Chinua Achebe, who has written a good body of novels and essays. His views are interesting as one would expect of a writer of his standing particularly as he brings a more creative and imaginative mind to the interpretation of this concept. Among his novels, two of them stand out as a tribute to the Igbo cultural heritage and to the Nri-Igbo in particular. In these works he brings not only a cultural perspective but also a historical sense that spans those decades that marked the transition from the traditional to the modern ways of life. These novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* deal mainly with the consequences of Igbo contact with the west leading to the break-up of traditional Igbo institutions. Achebe was brought up in what has so far been identified as the Nri-Igbo tradition, having come from Ogidi, a place immediately next to Onitsha by the Niger and not too far away from the ancient town of Nri; so that the particular significance of his works is that through them one is able to catch a glimpse of that society that is fast dwindling into the dim light of days gone by. Achebe has also published a collection of essays under the cover title of *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, (1975) but which in recent times have been superseded by his latest collection of essays titled *Hopes and Impediments*. In these works he discusses among other things a number of pertinent issues affecting him as a writer as well as on the larger issues of society. But it is in his earlier collection that he undertakes to do a study of the concept of *Chi* as he understands it within his Igbo culture.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Chinua Achebe, "Chi in Igbo Cosmology" in *Morning Yet on Creation day*, (London: Heinemann) 1975 pp. 93-103,

Writing on *Chi*, he says that the meaning of the term as it appears in translations is god, guardian spirit, soul and spirit double. All these, one has to say, are terms that have been used before by the European writers who had introduced them in the first place. We have been observing also how these have taken root and from which the indigenous writers have been fed. The problem with this is that they have come from a culture carried by these earlier writers who had to express their religious views in those terms; and also it is a problem that arises from the language in which these are expressed. However, *Chi* is also said to acquire a second meaning when it is used to express daylight as has been constantly acknowledged by almost all the writers. Achebe further maintains that there is a connection between *Chi* which means spirit being and the one which means daylight, and this connection is the one he finds in the relationship between what he calls the Supreme God, meaning *Chukwu*, and the sun, *Anyaanwu*. As it is, Achebe is here absorbing, consciously or subconsciously what had been established before by the other writers. It is interesting also when the writer talks of the personal *chi* of a man being outside of him. Earlier we have noted that Shelton had raised this issue, and the answer had seemed an ambivalent one to him. Indeed, as Achebe goes on to say, the abode of *Chi* is in the sky, and must not be confused with that of the ancestors which is here below at *ana mmuo* "land of spirits". The abode of one other category needs to be stated, which is the abode of the personal *chi* of the individual but which Achebe has not addressed.

As Achebe would say, the common bond of affinity between *Chukwu* and the personal *chi* lies in the practice among the Nri-Igbo of drawing down *Chi* from the sun during the establishment of the personal shrine of an individual. This is interesting since it points to the fact that both *Chukwu* and the personal *chi* are identified with the sun or with the light of day which the sun gives. Not only that, it is furthermore interesting to know that the personal *chi* derives its substance and sustenance directly from *Chukwu* which is directly the sun *Anyaanwu* itself, both of which which are terms that refer to one another. This ritual behaviour has been observed among the Awka people in particular, and is quite widespread in the Nri-Igbo areas as a whole as this plays an important part in the setting up of *Chi* shrines

as I have frequently heard in my home town of Nnobi. But as the writer makes a point to stress, the behaviour does not imply that the Igbo mean sun when they are talking about *Chukwu*, or have it at the back of their mind while talking about him. Here with Achebe we witness obvious echoes of Basden and Jeffreys and this has made the position difficult for Achebe to resolve particularly as he is having to conjecture through the use of the imagination without the use of any empirical evidence to support his case; so that he rather regards the sun as an agent of *Chukwu* since it is the sun that carries sacrifices to him. *Chi* and *Chukwu* being thus related, Achebe then asserts that they "cannot be distant from one another". He suggests that the two entities could be of the same substance, especially as *chi* is seen to be proceeding from *Chukwu*. He however, admits that there is a considerable confusion here (which he has helped to compound) which raises doubts about the concept of *chi*, for he asks if *chi* is an infinitesimal manifestation of *Chukwu's* infinite essence given to each one separately and uniquely, or whether he has a separate existence as ruler over a community of *chi*. Achebe contends that although a number of writers have described *Chineke* as a variant term for referring to *Chukwu-Okike*, "it is nothing of the sort". In making this assertion he echoes what Green had said which is that *Chineke* is a term that includes two separate entities, namely, *chi* and *eke*. Indeed, as he says, this gives the impression of two yoked deities in one. He acknowledges the problem which one is likely to encounter in adopting this kind of view, which has to do with the ambiguities inherent in the tonalities of the language. This is because, as he says, the term *Chineke*, when said with a low tone, the conjunction *na* becomes "and", thereby producing fundamental change in meaning because the term *eke* is no longer a verb but a noun. Hence *Chi-na-eke* becomes *Chi* and *eke*. Although Achebe may be right, the question that arises is whether the term should be so said. We know that the term could be said in such a way to show that light is shining *chi na-eke* ; But whatever may be the case, Achebe is of the opinion that *Chi* and *Eke* are two separate entities compounded in one term. These he says are characteristically related, as they do have the same attributes sometimes. This means that as an entity *Chi* is the one conceptualized as the creator, while *eke* is the entity whose name suggests its essence (which is a creative one). In the long run what is witnessed in Achebe's essay is an attempt to

reconcile the varying positions of the earlier European writers without basing it on any firm evidence but on the dictates of his imagination which he tries to put across in way that suggests that he was merely discussing views of others from the view-point of one who was born in the culture and who as a result is supposed to know what *Chi* is all about.

### 2.3.7 *Emefie Ikenga-Metuh*

Of interest also is Emefie Ikenga-Metuh's work on this same subject entitled "The Supreme God in Igbo Life and worship"<sup>1</sup> which he adapted from his thesis presented to the University of London in 1971. Even by the title he has already assumed without question that *Chukwu* is the supreme God, a trend that appears now to be fashionable among the indigenous writers. In that article however he seems to be more interested in making the point that the high God *Chukwu* is more of a daily participant in the life and culture of the people than that he is distant from men; for he argues that *Chi* or *Chukwu* is a living concept among the Igbo, contrary to prevalent assumptions among a number of European writers of the colonial period that he is a withdrawn God. He brings several pieces of evidence from ritual, linguistic and oral materials to support his case. He refers to the earlier European writers who gave evidence of the presence of *Chukwu* among the Igbo and quoting W. Romaine, a CMS missionary, as saying in 1869 that "this you always find among the Ibos. They never speak of futurity without admitting "*Ahinze Chukwu* " i.e, if it pleases God". He gives instances of the various ways by which the Igbo demonstrate the presence of *Chukwu* through verbal expressions, gestures and prayers. Particularly with prayers, he presents a case which tends to portray the view that they are offered to *Chukwu* through the deities, especially *chi* and *Anyaanwu* "sun". This would mean that to him he sees *chi* and *Chukwu* as two separate entities that do not necessarily relate to one another. Again, he restates what earlier writers had said; for according to him, altars of *Chukwu* are known to exist in various parts of Igboland as evidence from Talbot and Shelton go to show. Usually the shrines of *Chukwu* are depicted by

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<sup>1</sup> See Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, "The Supreme God in Igbo Life and Worship" in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, V, Leiden, 1973. Also Metuh's *God and Man in African Religion*, London, 1981.

the use of such symbolic trees as *ogbu*, and *oha* which are otherwise known as *chi* trees. In some places certain communal shrines are known as *onu Chukwu* "lit. mouth of *Chukwu*" or "source of *Chukwu*" .

On another level, there are rituals which are carried out in honour of *Chukwu*, such as *aja eze enu* "sacrifice to the king of the sky" which is perhaps widely distributed in Igboland.

#### 2.4 *The Pan-Igbo writers on Chi*

This section deals with other indigenous writers who have written on the subject from a pan-Igbo background and they differ from the earlier writers by the fact that they wrote from particular specialist areas of their studies as anthropologists, historians, literary scholars, theologians and philosophers. But they have written, with a few exceptions, generally from the background of what they had considered to be Igbo culture at large. This is especially so when the writers concerned have preferred to deal broadly with the subject under consideration, and have not been able to localise their study of the term in any particular culture zone as many of the other writers have done even if they had not stated so. One has to say that in this study one is primarily concerned with those concepts that are related to the Nri-Igbo culture even though one believes that in a number of ways those concepts are not isolated concepts. Again, these writers appear to be more or less scholars with very strong Christian influences or who are Christian clergymen concerned with the promotion of what they consider their own Igbo concepts of God. One yet believes that through what they have to say, no matter how misleading or suffused with Christian doctrines and theology, something of light is still possible to come from them which could help in the study of the concept.

##### 2.4.1 *Anthropologists : B. I. Chukwukere*

In 1983 another writer, Chukwukere -an anthropologist by training, came up with the assertion that "*Chukwu* rather appears to be the Aro people's name for their "town" deity, which the Aro may well have conceived as a kind of their collective or natural *Chi*, at first peculiar to themselves and later "adopted" by other people, which is understandable in the collective Aro achievement".

Chukwukere, however, insists that there is a difference between *Chukwu* and *Chineke*. He sees *Chukwu* as a name that "was not originally a simple fusion of *chi* and *ukwu*". One cannot say, according to his thinking, that *Chukwu* specifically means the supreme God just as the Christians would conceive of him as the "one and only" Supreme deity. As far as the Igbo cosmological order is concerned, Chukwukere is of the view that -using his own terms -there is more than one "supreme god", each god being supreme in its own sphere of authority, e.g. *Amadioha* "god of thunder" and *Ala* "earth goddess."<sup>1</sup> The position of this writer on this issue of supremacy of the gods is of interest to us in this study as the issue of the sovereignty of *Chukwu* is part of what we are going to investigate.

But of course, Chukwukere was following in the new line of thought being projected by a few of the new indigenous writers such as Iwuagwu whose views on the concept we shall soon meet. Prior to Chukwukere, and writing in the same year (1979) as Iwuagwu, Echeruo, from the "perspective of a literary scholar" came with the notion that "if ever there was a capital letter divinity in Igboland, that entity is *Ala*". According to him, *Chukwu* is a "new name for God", and of the cult of the colonising god of the Aro. If perhaps Echeruo was talking with respect to the Aro culture, it might be so but certainly *Chukwu* is not a new name for God among the Nri-Igbo as various other writers had so far testified by their writings.

#### 2.4.2 Religious anthropologists : Rev. Dr. Iwuagwu

Rev. Dr. Iwuagwu's view (1975) appears to be in keeping with the general trend of thought that had gone on before: He sees *Chukwu* as present in, and represented by the minor deities, "the major of which minor deities are then made manifestations and attributes of the one *Chukwu*". This is very much like what Correia had said earlier which is that *chi* is identified with all those various phenomena that they can be said to be the *mmuo* "spirit" in them which gives them life. In

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<sup>1</sup> B.I. Chukwukere, "*Chi* in Igbo Religion and Thought: The God in Every Man." *Anthropos* 1983 Vol. 78 pp. 519-534. Also see his "Individualism: An Aspect of Igbo Religion." in *Conch* no 3 vol. 2, in *Igbo Traditional Life, Culture and Literature* (1971) pp. 109-117.

another article (1979) titled "The Ritual Functions in Igbo Family", *Chukwu* and *Eze Elu* "king above" according to this writer, are equal or the same in authority, hence the ritual of *aja Eze elu* is higher sacrifice because this sacrifice goes to *Chukwu*, and not to any other lesser entity. It does seem that here Iwuagwu is trying to suggest the superiority of *Chukwu* without saying it. On another level, when he identifies *Chukwu* with *Igwe-ka-ala*, and also with *Amadioha*, the thunder divinity who he says carries the attributes of God's wrath, we have an intimation that he is confusing it with the *Chukwu* of the Aro or the Umuneoha oracle, a perceptible trend in the writings of the earlier writers as could be told from the writings of Baikie and Crowther and Schon down to the testimonies of the liberated slaves in Sierra Leone. The point here is that Christian assimilationist attitudes persist in his article which illustrates this particular grip or influence which the European perceptions of the concept still had on these subsequent writers. One good example of this trend is when he talks of *nso ani* as meaning "things not done", "things forbidden", or "things abominable to *Chukwu*" whom he calls the supreme God, a term that has not been examined in any way but which has continued to dominate discussions about *Chukwu* in this area of Igbo studies; and it is by the same stretch of assumption that *Ala*, whom he refers to as the mother earth, guardian of morality and productivity should be looked at with suspicion. He also talks of the Deity in Igbo religion as a God of "righteous wrath", and one who should show "mercy" to be "just" and right to the "spoiler of the land".<sup>1</sup> What one gathers from the use of those terms is that *Chukwu* is all good and no evil, but we have seen that this has not always been upheld by many writers who think that *chi* has another side to it that could spell evil for the individual unless that evil part of *chi* is changed or foiled. On the whole what we witness is a heavy weight of Christian assumptions and attitudes that have continued to distort views about this concept.

One important point of contention is that the *Chukwu* of the Nri is identified with, or lumped with the Umuneoha oracle *Igwe-ka-ala*. The problem is even more compounded by the fact that it might well be the *Chukwu* of Arochukwu that is being referred to, or mixed with

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<sup>1</sup> A.O. Iwuagwu, "Chukwu: Towards a Definition of Igbo Traditional Religion." *West African Religion* 1975 no 16 vol. 1 pp.26-34.

that of the Nri in the first place, (being an entity which was perhaps borrowed from the Nri-Igbo to validate the long *juju* oracle) and then with that of Umuneoha, together with the attendant Christian impositions that were to follow them. One is aided in thinking so because in as far back as 1922, Fr. Correia had noted this confusion in the Christian attempt in using the word *Chukwu* to represent the idea of the supreme being. According to him, this was not due to the fact that it was a theological term introduced by the Christians. He noted as far as he was concerned, that wherever "*Chukwu* was met among the traditional Igbo, the term referred to the deity touted by the Aro people". This was why, according to him, Protestants had changed to *Chineke* though the Catholics who came later to Onitsha still used *Chukwu*.

#### 2.4.3 *Rev. Fr. Arazu*

Rev. Fr. Dr. Arazu, another writer on the subject, appears to carry the argument further through his essay on "The Supreme God in Igbo Traditional Religion". So far these latter Catholic priests have been interesting in so far as they have been persistent in trying to bring about a new way of thinking concerning this concept, but this is not without hanging on to some of the established assumptions brought by the earlier writers. A notable example is his reference to the supreme God in his title which C.N. Ubah and Nze, (another writer we shall meet), are strongly disputing. Arazu wrote with materials he collected from Ihiala Local Government Area, basing his study on linguistic and ritual evidence. Starting with similar observations on the distortion of Igbo religious beliefs that "it was the Christian missionaries and Igbo Christian theologians who were concerned about finding a supreme God in the Igbo pantheon," that brought the concept of monotheism based on *Chukwu* as the ideal of the new religious beliefs of the people. From his researches however, he was able to make important assertions that tended to destroy these earlier notions of the European writers. For him at least, the interpretation of some of the notions on *chi* must be rejected, such as that the individual *chi* of a man is the person's "particular portion of the divine being" or "a guardian spirit". His point might be that these are based on Christian assumptions which they are. Again, he sees the concept of "*Chi-ne-ke*" as "the creator god" as another imposition on Igbo thought patterns of the Christian category

of the creation: for as he makes one to believe, the "ordinary meaning of the Igbo word '*Okike*' is not to make things out of nothing but to apportion or to divide". As far as he was concerned however, christian theologians have merely baptised the Igbo *Chukwu* into the Hebrew Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.4.4 *Christopher Ezekwugo*

It is in connection with this last statement of Rev. fr. Arazu that Christopher Ezekwugo's work becomes of interest here. Apparently a Roman Catholic priest, he aims at showing the "true" Igbo equivalent of the Biblical God. According to him, the word "true" needs to be emphasised because already it has generally been accepted that *Chukwu* is the Igbo word for God. He maintains that this is an error that must be corrected. His argument, as far as one can discern, is not that he is concerned with the meaning of *Chukwu* which many writers have taken or translated to mean God, itself a vacuous, deceptive term which as he sees it has been taken from another culture and transposed on the Igbo soil with its whole implications when viewed against the background of the Biblical God of Yahweh or the Christian God of Mercy. His major argument appears to be that to the Igbo, there is a God like that of the Jews, but that this god is not termed to be *Chukwu* but *Chi*. Thus he rejects outright, as he says, "any equiparation of *Chukwu* to the biblical God" while upholding the view that *Chi* is the Godhead similar to that of the Jews. He talks of a time when *Chukwu* was in ascendancy, and this the *Chukwu* of Arochukwu. But this deity was dethroned according to the writer, to be superseded by *Chi*.

This position which Ezekwugo has taken is in many ways similar to that of Nwoga who held that somehow both *chi* and *Chukwu* entities are quite apart in their uniqueness and conception, even though he did not relate them in the chronological order of ascendancy. In another development one sees that he is virtually echoing what Nwoga has said in claiming that *Chukwu* never existed until the rise of the Aro. A more sympathetic look at Ezekwugo's book would suggest

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<sup>1</sup>R.C. Arazu, "The Supreme God in Igbo Traditional Religion", a workshop paper for the Workshop on "The State of Igbo Studies", Nsukka, Institute of African Studies held in June, 1982.

that strictly speaking, his rejection of *Chukwu* of the Aro people is in order, and that the *chi* which he is trying to uphold is invariably that of the Nri-Igbo even as their conception of it would go to show. But then the work is lacking in historical sense by the impression it gives that the *Chukwu* of the Aro precedes the *Chi* of the Nri, and also in the denial that this *Chi* is never conceived as *Chukwu*. The extreme he goes is in likening and identifying this *Chi* with the Yahweh of the Jews. This *Chi* he conceives in terms of abstract Christian terminologies such as the concept of *chi* as the ego that has to do with filial love, loyalty and transcendency. He cites both verbal evidences and evidences from western theological works to "defend the view that the Igbo *Chi* is one with the biblical God no matter how suspect these authorities might be". Throughout the rest of the work the attempt of the writer is to show the various areas of relationship between *Chi* and the God of the Jews, Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>

Ezekwugo's views do not help us very much because they compound the problems which we have earlier on noted which is that of enforcing concepts that appear to be of Christian derivations. His direct linking of *chi* to the Jewish Yahweh is absurd in the circumstances of the Igbo cultural perceptions. This ideas of *Chi* and *Chukwu* are also confusing to be of any immediate relevance at the moment.

#### 2.4.5                    *Cosmas Okechukwu Obiego*

In an elaborate study of Igbo religious expressions under the broad title of *African Image of the Ultimate Reality*<sup>2</sup> which, as he says, is an analysis of Igbo ideas of life and death in relation to *Chukwu* - God, Cosmas Obiego (1984) makes his own contribution to the study of the concept of *Chi*. His study is bi-focal in the sense that it aims at dealing, on one hand, with the prevalent thoughts so far expressed by writers on *Chi*; and on the other hand grappling within the context of such thoughts with the mysteries of life and death in the psychological make-up of the people. In other words, the part that deals with *Chi* in this study, has to do with his survey of the existing

<sup>1</sup> See Christopher Ezekwugo, *Chi: The true God of the Igbo People*, 1987

<sup>2</sup> See Cosmas O. Obiego's *African Image of the Ultimate Reality*, Frankfurt am Main: Peterlang, 1984.

literatures to be of immediate interest for us now as this will be merely repeating what has so far been said. However, Obiego's central line of thought is to advance what he calls the God-toward tendency of *Chi*. To Obiego then, this means that by referring to *Chi* as God, guardian angels and many other things which both colonial and post colonial writers have used for him, they are merely trying to recreate it in the image of God of the Christians. He makes the point that to say that everything has a *chi* is to say that the thing has a "share" or "portion" of the big life which is always associated with *Chi*. Obiego would therefore be categorically equating *Chi* with life which each individual is given at birth which has to do with *Chukwu* as author of life and death.

#### 2.4.6 *Francis Anyika*

Anyika's "The Concept of *Chi* in Igbo Religious Thought" (1988) which comes as a response to Nwoga's own work dismisses the works of a number of the earlier writers as distortions which call for "a re-assessment of their contentions", and yet he contradicts this position by utilizing their conceptual matrices for expounding his ideas. Thus, he echoes these writers are saying that *Chi* has something to do with the weather (Basden); *Chi* is the Oversoul (Talbot); *Chi* is the "personalized providence", guardian spirit analogous to the Christian guardian angel (Northcote Thomas, Jeffreys, Chinua Achebe etc) and so on. He draws on proverbs from Ezeanya to illustrate the nature of one's personal *chi* which could be good or bad. But *Chukwu*, which he says is the supreme God, is an entity without blemish since the *chi* of the individual - the go-between between him and Man, takes all the blame for any evil done. Here we notice a conscious effort to explain away the fact that *Chukwu* could be good and bad. If, as he himself even accepts, *Chi* is the short form of *Chukwu* (and even as Basden had earlier said that it is a generic term for god), that entity cannot only be good. On the whole however it is to stress the psychological function of *Chi* that he is out to demonstrate, for which reason he does away with that aspect of it that does with the weather on the grounds that they carry secular meanings which he could not consider. But we think that any concept of *Chi* must not overlook any aspect of it that has some insight to give us, since we have to look at it from its holistic viewpoint. But as Anyika

says, *Chi* also denotes the supreme being when it stands juxtaposed with *Chukwu* in certain proverbs. Hence *Chi* could be both a supreme as well as a personal entity as circumstances demand, which he has mainly explained in terms of Christian referential terms. This is not surprising since he had set out to show the "meeting point" between Christianity and Igbo traditional religion. Thus, we see him frequently using such loaded terms as providence, guardian angel, divine spark, guardian spirit while talking about the personal *chi*; and in his use of supreme God, interminable God, while talking about *Chukwu*. Also there are contradictions: even with his former position that *chi* is a guardian spirit, we ask how *chi* could be guarding an individual while still being destructive to him? Again, *Chukwu* is on one hand separate from *chi*, and yet in some other situations he is the same as *Chi* with supreme powers, as indeed, "it becomes a centripetal force with all the properties of the Ultimate reality". On the whole there has not been a clear demarcation of the various categories as much as there has not been a clear differentiation of the levels of their relationships and interconnectedness. Besides, much of his views are Christian derivations as we have no reason to believe that *chi* can be the guardian angel when it is also destructive; or that *Chukwu* is the supreme being when as he even notes, he can be manipulated by ritual means.

#### 2.4.7 Anthropological historians : C. N. Ubah

A historian, C.N. Ubah, in an ethnographic study of his local community in Otanchara Otanzu areas of Okigwe Local Government mentions that *Chukwu*, also called *Chineke*, is the God in which his people believe. Here again, bearing in mind that this is an area outside our immediate concern, one observes the tendency to write about *Chi* or *Chukwu* as a generally accepted Igbo phenomenon but which has its peculiar characteristic features for the people of this area. What emerges in the long run is the impression that *Chukwu* is not just a withdrawn god, but that he is "practically ignored" and he on his own side, also "neglects the world and its affairs". We have to say that this position of Ubah is only a mere conjecture because the understanding or knowledge of the nearness or distancing of *Chukwu* is not something that can be judged from what Christian expect him to be; for it has often been said that there is a personalized form of *Chukwu* which

relates to an individual on a daily basis and for whom a shrine is established -itself an evidence of the impact which *Chukwu* has on the individual on a personal level. Ubah goes on to repeat the same old saying that as far as the people are concerned, *Chukwu* is their supreme being; there are names prior to the coming of Christianity that bear the name of *Chukwu*, but when he goes on to say that in matters of real need it is not *Chukwu* that is consulted but the other minor entities below him in hierarchy we begin to doubt this his claim of *Chukwu* being the supreme being. On the whole Ubah is strong on the view that *Chukwu* is not only a withdrawn god, but also is a god that is ignored by the people and who, on his own part neglects the people and the affairs of the world. The problem here is that Uba is writing and looking for a "historical" evidence to demonstrate the reality of *Chukwu* among his Otanchara people.

#### 2.4.8 *Philosophers: C. Nze*

For C. Nze (1981), a philosophy lecturer of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, there is no God in Igbo culture. Perhaps he is concerned with the distortions of Igbo religious concepts which arise from the use of a foreign language like English to discuss it as such languages carry with them a whole range of assumptions. If that is so, certainly there is a point in reviewing the whole concept of *Chi* as meaning God. However he seems to be agreeing with Ubah that *Chukwu* is not the supreme being because "the Igbo have no one supreme God being". For him, the Igbo react very much, "perhaps not naively, by personifying various natural forces by assuming the existence of numerous gods", and that these "almighty gods operate in nature". Each of these gods, by implication, is supreme on its own right, being responsible to a particular sphere of activity. Thus, "there is a Supreme Being that created man; there is a Supreme Being that created trees" and so on. In fact, as he goes on to say, "there is a Supreme god of the earth" and "The sun is God". This being so, he blames the "foreign zealots" for coming and imposing the concept of one supreme God over and above all the other gods. Hence like the historian Ubah, he would say that the Igbo do not serve either by sacrifice or worship any Supreme God of the Christian definition. And Nze, in concluding that

his ancestors worshipped gods and not God,<sup>1</sup> merely attempts to drive home this point that *Chukwu* is not the supreme one.

#### 2.4.9 *Literary Scholars and writers: Donatus I. Nwoga*

As has been noted earlier, a good number of the later indigenous writers wrote on the subject from the background of their particular disciplines, relying on the earlier European writers who had based their works on important field researches, except perhaps, a few of them as the studies of Chukwukere, Ubah and Arazu show. We have earlier referred to Echeruo, himself a literary critic and poet and one of the first among literary critics to talk on *Chi*. Of all these, perhaps it is the work of Professor D.I. Nwoga that deserves more serious attention as it is a work of significant proportion and contribution to the idea of *chi* or *Chukwu* in Igbo cosmology.<sup>2</sup> A later addition to the current debate is Christopher Ezekwugo's work titled *Chi: The True God in Igbo Religion* published in 1987. These writers combine both scholarly and practical field research tools in their study of this subject and their views have further contributed to the development of thought on the subject under study.

In his book *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought*, Nwoga argues that the Igbo had a god by name *Chukwu*, which as far as his evidence goes, was the *Chukwu* of the Aro people which the Christians who came to Igboland adopted as their God in their search for a supreme, monolithic entity. If Nwoga is writing on the Igbo culture as a whole, he has not exhausted his evidence when he said that *Chukwu* is the God of the Aro because it is known that there is a God which the Nri-Igbo referred to as *Chukwu* long before the ascent of the Aro mercantilist power and which the earliest visitors to that part of Igboland had commented on as documentary evidence show. On the various views held about this divinity, Nwoga however brings various arguments to support his thesis: starting from the standard statement on *Chi* which came from both the earlier European

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<sup>1</sup> C. Nze, "The Concept of God in African Culture" in *Uche* : Journal of the Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1981 no 1 vol. 4 pp.20-26. Reprinted as "Traditional Concept of God in Igbo Culture" in *Ugo Magazine* 1981)no 1 vol. 4 pp. 33-51

<sup>2</sup> See Donatus I.Nwoga, *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought*, 1984

writers and also from a few indigenous ones, to the voices of dissent as seen in the works of Chukwukere, Echeruo, Ubah and C.Nze.

Disregarding all evidence of the presence of *Chukwu* long before the rise of the Aro commercial hold, Nwoga holds the view that "the biggest oracle which pervaded Igboland from the 17th century was Ibini Ukpabi of the Aro". This was the god which, according to Nwoga, the Aro gave to the rest of Igboland as *Chukwu*, and ultimately from where the idea of the Supreme God was adopted by the Christian theologians to satisfy their craving for a monolithic god for the Igbo. Nwoga was so convinced about this *Chukwu* of the Aros that he was emphatic that :

If Aro hegemony had fully matured into social and political dominance and been allowed to continue, there is no doubt that at some point all other oracles and deities might have been persuaded that they were irrelevant and useless and *chukwu* of Arochukwu would have become the Supreme God of Igboland even if with connotations different from the Sole Creator God of other religions. But the Europeans came and "baptised" *Chukwu* and turned him from an oracle into the Supreme God<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, it will be more correct to say that the idea of *Chukwu* is what the Nri-Igbo gave to the Igbo people as a whole and the Aro in particular since it is among them that there is a coherent world-view associated with it through the stories told about it and his role in the cosmological order of the society. But according to Nwoga, the reverse is the case, from where he goes on to say that that was how it became necessary to reduce the *Chukwu* of the Aro, to use the words of Okechukwu Obiego, to "a God-toward-tendency"<sup>2</sup> by writers adhering to what most of the earlier European and indigenous ones had done in using such descriptive terms as "guardian spirit", "divine essence", "that aspect of God in man" etc. for referring to him. This has

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<sup>1</sup> Donatus I. Nwoga, p.37

<sup>2</sup> Okechukwu Obiego, "An Attempt at Reconciling the Double Role of Chi" in *The Torch* 1980 no 66 pp.6-8, 14. Also see his *African Image of the Ultimate Reality: An Analysis of Igbo Ideas of Life and Death in Relation to Chukwu -God*, Frankfurt am Main, (Peterlang) 1984.

already been noted to be the result of a language carrying assumptions or notions of a concept from one culture to another.

Again, Nwoga sees *chi* primarily as an entity that relates to the individual but which is apart from *Chukwu* itself, being specifically the God of the Aro people. To be clear, he separates the *chi* of the individual from *Chukwu* of the Aro which he sees as two separate categories. Meanwhile, the other category which we have earlier on identified as the *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo has not been acknowledged perhaps because the writer does not know of it or reckon with it. But evidence shows that he does not know of the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu*, hence his misrepresentations of the very idea of *Chukwu*: In the first place, he sees a total interdependence between *chi* and *eke*, and not between it and *Chukwu* because according to him, *chi* became "diluted by the later proverbs that add *ukwu* to *chi*". Here it has to be pointed out that the addition of *ukwu* to *chi* is not a latter day development but has long been there and even as long as the early European visitors came. He makes the point though that *chi* and *Chukwu* translate as God, but this is not necessarily so. He holds the Christians responsible for this addition of the qualifier, for without it *chi* would have stood out as a unique concept on its own, just as *Chukwu* stood out with regard to the Arochukwu oracle. He gives a few proverbs which he uses to illustrate that *chi* and *Chukwu* can be used as interchangeable terms, but maintained that in some of these proverbs it is *Chukwu* of the Aro that is being referred to. In all these, what Nwoga has done is to restrict his scope so much even though he claims to be writing on the Igbo at large. He talks mainly of the *Chukwu* of the Aro which makes his study limited and narrow.

Apart from proverbs, Nwoga also uses names to advance his case. Whereas writers like Onyeidu and Arinze are of the view that some names bear *Chukwu* in them as evidence of the presence of *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo cosmogonic belief system, Nwoga himself claims that the names which bear *Chukwu* arose with the tradition of naming children after the oracle of the Aro people, as it was common with tradition to credit a god or deity whose aid was sought in such matters as child bearing with such an honour. Here again this is too much generalization, because it is known that the adventurer Baikie met a man at Asaba who was known as Chukwuma, which is a common Nri-

Igbo name that does not necessarily bear any semblance to the *Chukwu* names found in the southern parts of the Igbo country adjoining the Arochukwu area. But Nwoga claims that these early *Chukwu* names had to "become mixed up with the tradition of Christian translation into Igbo of Christian theistic ideals". He gives a few examples of names that take after a deity or juju, such as Wachi "the child of *chi*" , and Wachukwu "the child of *Chukwu*" . Here a significant difference can be noticed between the names which Nwoga claim to be derived from the oracle of *Chukwu* and names that are derived from the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu* and this is that the *wa* element prefixed to the name meaning "child" is different from the Nri-Igbo *nwa* or *nwa* which would normally given the name an Nri-Igbo identity.

That apart, Nwoga also believes that even those names that bear *Chi* in them were consciously transformed into *Chukwu* names as a "post- culture contact phenomenon", thereby implying that it is with the Christians that *chi* names became transformed into *Chukwu* names in order to give them the stamp of Christian theistic ideals. If it is understood and accepted that the Nri-Igbo had *Chukwu* as one of the gods in their pantheon, then one can see the distortions in Nwoga's claims because the Christians among the Nri-Igbo group could have given those names to their children which bear *Chukwu* without necessarily transforming *chi* to *Chukwu*. What would appear to be the case in fact is that these *Chukwu* names are latter abridged or shortened to the *Chi* names which is common to do among many people. Nwoga claims that without that transformation, *Chi* alone would have been adequate for explaining the Igbo experience and its management, but then it "was transformed into an extraneous concept of *Chukwu*, the supreme God" -a position he went further to defend through the use of mythic, linguistic and ritual evidence of the Igbo religious practice. Our observation is that Nwoga seems to see a real difference between *Chi* and *Chukwu* to the point that he denies any immediate relationship between them. It is not surprising therefore that his basis for upholding that *Chukwu* is not the supreme one has to do with it not having any linguistic evidence. The question to ask is if the term *Chukwu* has not been in existence among the Igbo as a whole before the rise of the Arochukwu oracle which came to be known by the name of *Chukwu* ? From all available evidence all we can say is

that certainly *Chukwu* was heard among the Nri-Igbo in the period preceding the rise of the Aro mercantilist adventures which this oracle supported as our historical survey shows.<sup>1</sup> What is also of interest also is to know what status was accorded this entity which he terms to be *Chi*, granted that *Chukwu* is alien to the Igbo culture. Besides, Nwoga does not demonstrate how this *Chi* was transformed into an extraneous concept of *Chukwu* which we have seen is an Igbo word, and an Nri-Igbo one for that matter. We think so because any such transformation will have a basis, and a conceptual basis for that matter; and to say that it was simply as a result of the impositions of Christian models is not sufficient. On the whole, whether this is a matter that can be decided by the evidence of myth among other methods which he adopted remains difficult to know especially as Igbo materials cannot readily be explained in terms of the western concept of myth.

#### 2.4.10 *Chukwuma Azuonye*

But it was Azuonye who investigated some of the assumptions of these writers particularly those of Echeruo and Nwoga, and comes out with the interesting proposition that the idea of the supreme God in Igboland evolved as a result of changing interpretations which were given to it by the various visitors to the Igbo country (1987). He carried out his investigations using Igbo folk-tales. He identifies two broad levels of meaning in these folk-tales concerning *Chukwu* which are diametrically opposed. As he says, "in one set *Chukwu* is presented in a positive light as the supreme sky-dwelling Creator and dispenser of life and death, and in some cognate images he features as the withdrawn God (*Deus otiosus, deus incertus or deus remotus*) who nevertheless may be approached through intermediaries".<sup>2</sup> In another "broad set of images, *Chukwu* appears in a negative light as a stupid ogre, a dupe or capricious trickster with a warped sense of justice". He then attributes this to different stages in the evolution of the idea of the supreme God which, as he says, is named *Chukwu* in Igbo religious thought. Azuonye maintains that yet *Chukwu*, as supreme God, is not strictly speaking, a 'stranger' as Nwoga (1984) would have us believe.

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 10-14

<sup>2</sup> See Chukwuma Azuonye's, "Igbo Folk-tales and the Evolution of the Idea of *Chukwu* as the Supreme God of Igbo Religion in *Nsukka Journal of Linguistics and African Languages*, 1987 pp 43-62.

According to him, "the concept of *Chukwu* as Onwuejeogwu (1972, 1981) Echeruo (1979) and others recognize, is an indigenous creation of Igbo theologians which was later adopted and adapted by the Christian missionaries and ultimately fed back into the Igbo oral tradition in bowdlerized, albeit syncretic, form in which it exists today". What is at stake here is not whether there is a *Chukwu* in the first place but whether this *Chukwu* has those qualities and associations which we generally identify it with and which is of relevance to our study. Azuonye however fails to address this issue, but makes the important contribution in pointing out that contrary to Nwoga's claims, the idea of *Chukwu* is not strictly speaking, a stranger, or that it originated for the first time with the Aro. He postulates that Islam played a role in influencing the Nri-Igbo conception of *Chukwu* as a supreme God as it had been an active force in the Niger-Benue valleys for centuries before the jihads in Nigeria. As far as this point is concerned, all we can say is that this is a historical matter as there is no way we can verify this at the moment; it might well be that the concept originated from the environment just as any other concept might have been which has not been directly subjected to outside influences. Azuonye gives the reason that this might have been the case since the Nri "are not only geographically close, but genealogically affiliated, to the Igala (Onwuejeogwu 1981) through which the concept of the supreme God appears to have originated".<sup>1</sup> He contends that Echeruo appears to be mistaken in his assertion that the idea of a universal God originated with the Aro -which is perhaps what had influenced Nwoga to take his stand by shutting off the evidence from the Nri-Igbo that *Chukwu* also existed in that area. Azuonye also contended Echeruo's claim that the *Chukwu* of the Aro succeeded while that of the Nri failed. For him the reverse was certainly the case since the supremacy of *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo preceded that of the Aro as Onwuejeogwu had shown.

#### 2.4.11 *Nnabuenyi Ugonna*

In 1984 Nnabuenyi Ugonna (late), a literary scholar who had worked in all his life to build up the Department of Igbo Studies in the University of Lagos, published his work titled *Mmonwu: A Dramatic Tradition of the Igbo* (1983) In discussing the idea of *mmonwu* "Igbo

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<sup>1</sup> Azuonye, p. 45.

masquerade traditions", he tried to relate it to the Igbo man's spirit-centred religion, which inevitably brings him to the issue of *Chukwu*. According to him, two broad categories of spirits exist among the Igbo: "the pure spirits, that is, spirits that have never had a human body; and secondly spirits of the dead". He associates *Chukwu* with the first category, said to be *onye di okpu na egede* "he who has been from the beginning". Thus he says that *Chukwu* is "the maker of all things, the beginning and the end". Ugonna is of the view that "after *Chukwu* there is the group of spirits known as *chi*" and as he goes on to say, "*chi*, in fact, is in the first order of spiritual beings, since *Chukwu* himself is the supreme *Chi*, *Chi Ukwu*" Then he goes on to say that this *Chi* which he had already identified to belong to the group of spirits coming after *Chukwu* "is a kind of guardian spirit and creative principle rolled into one" for as he says, "each individual has a *chi* and so there are as many *chi* as there are individuals in the society".

Ugonna identifies other non-human spirits as the *arusi* (*alusi*) or "established forces of society". He makes the point that these *alusi* are at times termed to be *agbara* or *iyi*, and these are numerous in Igboland. He includes *Anyaanwu*, "the sun", *Igwe* "the sky" *Amadioha* or *Kamalu* "spirit of thunder", *Ala* "earth deity", *Ogwugwu*, *Agwu*, *Osimiri*, *Uras*, and "every known body of water in Igboland" as belonging to this category of *arusi* entities. Beyond these he talks of the myriad of other non-human spirits that "live anywhere and everywhere in bushes, trees, lonely places, in water in the wind, in valleys and hills" - which he says feature prominently in folk-tales. He also identifies other miscellaneous groups of non-human spirits such as the *ogbanje* spirits who are born to die. Ultimately he then identifies the second category of spirits known as the ancestral spirits. This category of spirits represent spirits of the dead humans *ndi nwuru anwu* from where those other spirits with human bodies (in contrast to the pure ones) are derived or incarnated. (Nnabuenyi Ugonna, 1983:15)

It is interesting that this writer approached the issue of Igbo religion from the point of view of the pure and incarnated spirits which just suits his dramatic purpose. Otherwise, unless his views do not embrace the Nri-Igbo world-view and culture (which is hardly the case here since the *mmonwu* culture which he is expounding is specifically Nri-Igbo), there is an order that is required in categorizing the entities

which he has failed to take into account. This is to say that there are entities that are considered to be *Chi* entities. He identifies these to be *Chukwu* and the personal *chi* entities only, which means that in number the *Chi* entities are as many as the individuals that possess them, but in types they are only two. Could it be so? What is hard to understand, besides, is that only this one type of spirit is said to constitute a group - and we ask: are there other *chi* spirits that should also go to make up this group and if there are, where are they, and what are they? Again, one would like to ask: if *Chukwu* is supreme, over what is he supreme? Over only one type of *chi*, the personal *chi* of the individual? Over several of them? or over all the spirit forces, both non-human and ancestral?

The other interesting observation is that several entities, both those which we associate with *Chukwu* such as *Anyaanwu*, "the sun", *Igwe* "the sky" and *Agbara* "the mighty and mysterious spirit" and those that are outside of it, are considered as *arusi* (*alusi*). This points to two things: the first is the flexible applicability of some of the terms such as *Agbala* to whatever is thought to be an *mmuo* "spirit force" that is deep, mighty and mysterious (as these spirits in fact are, like *Chukwu*); and also the habit of the people to idealize whatever is mysterious without feeling restricted or inhibited by any logic of associations. It is therefore not surprising that Christopher Ezekwugo makes a similar point about *agbara* being an *alusi* and in his own case, stated that it is seen as the devil.

## 2.5 *Intra-Igbo regional variety of Concepts*

On the surface, the preceding views expressed by the indigenous Igbo scholars on *Chi* may appear as Pan-Igbo ideas but in fact they reveal an underlying conflict in the notions of *Chi* among these scholars. These conflicts centre not only around *Chi* but also around *Ala*, and *Chukwu*, depending on the areas notions of those entities have developed, or how they are being projected to support particular "ideological" set-ups of the Igbo (as had even been suggested by the early European writers). The writers also tended to polarize around the great Spirit of their respective areas of origin and culture, whether this is *Chukwu* or *Ala*. This gives rise to two cultural blocks -the Nri-Igbo

and Owerri-Igbo blocks- that have been patterned by their characteristic world-views.

We have seen that many of the earlier writers had acknowledged some connection between *Chi* and *Chukwu*, but many of the indigenous writers whose works Nwoga had identified as the "voices of dissent" do not seem to see this underlying connection. Hence to writers like Nwoga, Arinze, and Ezekwugo to mention a few, *chi* is seen an entity that is separate and distinct from *Chukwu*; but others like Onwuejeogwu, Achebe, Ilogu, are of the view that there is certainly a connection. Here, one sees this two positions as represented by the two different perspectives of the Aro and the Nri cultural ideology respectively. But that is not all. Arinze, who is from the Nri-Igbo culture area, has ideas which go to support that of Nwoga, who we might say is the voice representing the former the Owerri Igbo culture of which Arochukwu is of paramount importance. But this is hardly surprising since the two, being of the same Roman Catholic persuasion (Nwoga trained as a priest of the Roman Catholic Church) might be expressing the same views bordering on their faith in that Christian denomination. But it was Nwoga who denied categorically that *Chukwu* is Igbo in conception originally, by maintaining that it is a concept that grew with the adoption of the qualifier *ukwu* when the European missionaries came to give *Chi* the stamp of supremacy that would make it look like the God they had brought along. But we have tried to show also that this might be an assumption of the writer by maintaining the view that there should have been a conceptual basis for that, which he has failed to supply.<sup>1</sup> We also contended that perhaps Nwoga did not know much about the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu*, hence his misrepresentation and under-representation of that entity. The structure of the term *Chi-ukwu*, and its relationship to the personal *chi*, from all available evidence, indicate that it is a concept that developed from the ecological framework of the Nri Igbo universe which the Nri-Igbo identified and classified using the Igbo language. The way they did this is not within the immediate compass of this study, but we have to point to the common bond of affinity that held the entity, *Chukwu*, with *eke*, *oye*, *afo* and *nkwo* (the days of the Nri-Igbo week) which is the simple fact that they are *chi* "light" entities -that is- that are

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<sup>1</sup> See p.95

essentially the same. It is also here that we see how the Nri-Igbo have used language to classify them. They are *Chi* entities in the sense that they are sky dwellers which are different from the entities inhabiting the earth usually referred to as *alusi*. Again, these entities are classified into the greater *Chi* entity, which is *Chukwu*, and the lesser *chi* entities, which embrace the four days of the Nri-Igbo week. We maintain here that it is to these entities that *Chukwu* stands in comparison, and nothing else, among which it is the supreme entity, the greater and the greatest *Chi* as the Nri-Igbo qualifiers *ukwu* and *ka* would make it. So that, if no such classification exists in the cultural ideology of the Aro-Igbo, certainly it does exist among the Nri-Igbo, which is what makes *Chukwu* a characteristically Nri-Igbo concept. If this appears to be the case (which we have reason to assume it is as linguistic evidence suggests), one would therefore say that it makes Azuonye's claim that the idea of *Chukwu* as a supreme God must have come with the intrusion of Islam to be quite unfounded. We would rather take the view that, as Afigbo quite well put it, it was a matter of "Igbo genius working on its native environment<sup>1</sup>".

The idea proposed by Nwoga that there was an unqualified *chi* of the Igbo (the Owerri-Igbo, or southern-Igbo personal *chi* that is) which was made "great" by the quasi-religious activities of the Aro, is in some ways similar to that of Echeruo who had maintained that *Ala* is the "supreme" God of the Igbo people.<sup>2</sup> These two positions must have derived from the Owerri-Igbo cultural background of these proponents. It has to be noted that both Echeruo and Nwoga come from this southern Igbo region denoted by the Arochukwu culture. Both have also studied the works of the earlier European writers and now wish to make their own statements. They must have been influenced by the urge either to clear the records of the distortions of the missionary writers, or just writing from the background of their own ethnocentricity. Whichever is the silent motive, it is clear that Echeruo's thesis preseded that of Nwoga and perhaps, provoked or influenced him markedly. Using this Owerri-Igbo culture as his background therefore, Echeruo declared that "if ever there is a capital

<sup>1</sup> See Afigbo's "Prolegomena to the Study of the Culture History of the Igbo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria" in *Igbo Language and Culture*, 1975, edited by F. C. Ogbalu and E.N. Emenanjo, p.51.

<sup>2</sup> See Echeruo's Ahiajioke Lecture "Ahamefule" of 1979 pp.17-19.

letter God among the Igbo, that god is Ala". This declaration is consistent with the cultural orientation of the southern Igbo group, and gave Nwoga the greenlight to come up with a *chi* that the Aro developed into *Chukwu* and which they gave to the rest of the Igbo till the Christians came and baptized it to become the supreme God.

It cannot be denied, though, that there was a cultural force behind Echeruo's thought that made him to maintain that position. It is well known that among the southern Igbo group, the figure of *Ala*, the mother goddess of the earth, has more prominence than *chi*, and looms larger than any other entity. Her influence permeates every aspect of life and could be taken as the central force holding the world of the Owerri-Igbo together where this entity is more developed and respected, just as *Chukwu* does in the cosmogony of the Northern Igbo group denoted by the Nri culture and civilization. This is, infact, what has found ultimate expression in the *mbari* art of the southern Igbo groups. Hence, *Ala* is to the southern Igbo group what *Chukwu* is to the Northern Igbo group, each supreme in its own sphere and according to its kind; *Chukwu* over a cluster of other lesser *chi* entities, and *Ala* over a cluster of other earthly *alusi* entities. Perhaps it is from this particular pattern of alignments that the duel between the sky one, *Chukwu*, and the earth one, *Ala*, began to be conceived. Aspects of the two different concepts are reflected in the material cultures of these areas. Hence among the Nri-Igbo, the concept of the *ichi* facial scarification found on the faces of the nobility, and the preponderant stylization of the sun-disk in the art and designs of the Nri-Igbo architectural patterns, door carvings, wall murals and appliques worn by masquerades, denote this preoccupation with the conceptual model of the *Chi* of the sun, or *Chukwu*. Also with the southern Igbo group on the other hand, the proliferation of *mbari* houses would tend to be reflecting the preponderance of the *Ala* cultic ideals as found on the sculptured mud forms of the *mbari* art.

## 2.6 Conclusion

One very perplexing problem arising from this survey of published materials is what one is to make of the various ideas of the writers who have so far displayed a vast range of background and

discipline. It has been observed that writers on this subject range from anthropologists who were both free in the field and also those who were more or less loyal to the colonizing faith which brought them to the field in the first place. There were also priests, both of Anglican and Roman Catholic bias, so that there was no way religious prejudice in whatever form could not have come in. Foreign and indigenous historians, philosophers, literary critics, anthropologists, social scientists and so on were there also -so disparate are these writers in their beliefs, passions, and backgrounds that one would think that their ideas on *Chi* would be one hotch-potch of conflicts and contradictions; and yet we think that, perhaps, the earlier writers -that is the pre-colonial and colonial writers, even though writing under the "spell" of empire building, came near enough to the cultural expressions of the people, no matter how they might have misinterpreted them at places, or misunderstood certain deeper layers of expressions they had met, and in some cases even misspelt and mistranslated some of the terms they had come across. When we look at what Equiano had to say on *Chi*, for instance, one or more of these might apply. We notice that he did not give the name of this entity which he says lives in the sky and feel that he might be justified after all not to. This is because under the circumstances in which he wrote, the names may be vague to him which make spelling difficult for a language whose orthography never existed before. That this problem is a serious one is seen in the way Koelle presented those entities in his *Polyglotta...*, in which their spellings simply aggravated our confusion about the names of these entities and what they are. It is only after a kind of jigsaw puzzle that we are able to understand or identify them as belonging to the Igbo pantheon. The problem with Koelle's interpretative system is no less a serious one, for here we see for the first time an attempt to fit Igbo meanings into a preconceived western scheme of "God" "the devil", "heaven" and so on. It is even here with Koelle that the problem of the confusion between the *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo and that of the Aro started and which complicates with the appearance of the missionaries Schon and Crowther. Before them the adventurer Baikie had contributed to the confusion when he tended to suggest that *Chukwu* was of Aro origin. So that even though Crowther and Schon would talk of *Chukwu* which the Igbo generally believed in as a God, they were tempted to point to the fact that there is a place in the Igbo country

where *Chukwu* is believed to dwell. The force of this argument is such that Baikie also located this place to be a noted "city of Aro" and which has influenced subsequent scholarship on this subject till date as the works of Echeruo (1971), Nwoga (1984) and Ezenwugo (1987) amply go to suggest. It is this controversy and a little besides which go to inform the greater part of the literature of precolonial times and to no lesser extent that of the Pan-Igbo writers.

With the colonial writers the interest shifts to a better understanding of the concept and no longer one of debate between the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu* and the Aro one. Arthur Glyn Leonard gave the lead which virtually all the others followed: He himself also had problems of writing Igbo since there was no orthography yet developed for the language, but his study of the concept was the most comprehensive and imaginative. To him *Chukwu* is many things: Starting from his preconceived notion that he is the supreme God, he mentions that he is the creator who made the world. At this time we begin to hear for the first time the term *Chineke* also being used for *Chukwu*. This is a clear indication that the Christians who came had decided to create a new name for *Chukwu* rather than, perhaps, associate it with that of the Aro which has already been discredited for its nefarious role in slave trading. Furthermore the idea that *Chukwu* is the father of the fathers in an ancestral linkage originated from him which Jeffreys also pointed to; but it was Basden and Talbot that pointed to the ancestral emblems or memorials *mkpulu chi* which has close associations with these linkages. Also, Leonard put forward the notion that *Chi* is connected with the coming of day and night and even pointed to an underlying motivator which Basden and Jeffreys clearly associates and identifies with the sun *Anyaanwu* but which they refrained from terming to be God itself even though they still identified it with *Chi* which is the shortened form of *Chukwu*. For Leonard, *Chukwu* is also the dispenser of all things good and evil.

All this is the standard statement which all the other writers built on in one way or the other as we have seen in the survey. Leonard's study of *Chi* is seminal because it is on his work that all other speculations by the subsequent writers hang. In other words, it is from him that the study of these writers, starting from Northcote Thomas, begin. These other writers also dealt with the personal *chi* entity in a

highlighted and elaborated form. From them other categories emanate such as *ezi chi* "the good *chi*" and *ajo chi* "the evil *chi*" , the names of the actual agents of good and bad fortune which Leonard also mentioned. Basden's emphasis on the personalization of *Chi* through the possessive "*m* ", and Henderson's point that *Chi* has a narrow meaning underlying the personal self are significant for this study and for this reason we wish to distinguish it from the sky entity denoting it with a small letter "*c* ". All other entities considered to be lesser *chi* entities will also be denoted by a small letter such as *chi eke*, *oye*, *afọ* and *nkwo*.

On the whole however, two ways of looking at the materials emerge which we are going to bear in mind as the study unfolds. In the first place the materials show a certain measure of internal logic in associations between certain entities such as *Chi* and the sun *anyaanwu* and *agbala*, while in other instances this logic is simply not there or not recognized. Because this has not been realized before, those who have written on the concept had tended to give the impression that some related concepts such as those of *anyaanwu* "the sun" and *agbala* "the deep and mighty one" are actually separate entities that are unconnected to each other. This might be seen as the confusion that arises as a result of not quite understanding the differences between *Chi* and the *alusi* entities and which makes many writers to follow only one way of looking at the materials at their disposal. One way of solving this problem is by seeing the evidence as it is. The shrine of *Chi* is also the one referred to as the shrine of *Chukwu*. At times it is otherwise referred to as the shrine of *anyaanwu* "the sun". This is the shrine which a household head considers to be his *Chi* shrine. Thus, its applicability is fourfold: it is an altar used for representing the shrine of *Chukwu*; this *Chukwu* could alternatively be referred to as *Chi* which in turn could be seen as personal. Then this shrine of *Chi* is epitomized by the sun *anyaanwu*. It has to be pointed out however that these shrines of *anyaanwu* could be set up as *alusi* "established force" and served in other ways, depending on the locality, in which case it loses its associations with *Chi*. In other words, it becomes like any of the other *alusi* shrines. This is the level in which many writers have considered it. Thus like, for example, Northcote Thomas, they refer to it as the messenger of *Chukwu* -giving it a

separate identity, whereas it may well be integral. The need for this internal harmony is therefore recognized in this study, even though in some cases this may not have been a constant practice in actual situations.

The other way of looking at the materials is to recognize that at times those concepts thought to be related to one another in some way are simply not seen to be so related in actual practice too. This is why a concept like the sun, *Anyaanwu* can be seen to be quite apart from *Agbala* in different parts of the Nri-Igbo area, and in fact, can be assigned more sinister roles as established forces of individual creations. Again, we have noticed four levels of the applicability of the term *Chi*; in many cases these levels are not stated or established, and therefore the materials could be seen or taken as they are.

So far this survey has brought out several aspects of the concept of *Chi* which would require further examination in the subsequent chapters. It does appear that the various writers had various views, some independent, many derived from the preceding ones, others simply repeating what had gone on before. The earlier writers set the scene with a number of concepts which they established perhaps from the background of a set of presumptions that need to be investigated. Again, three levels of the shifts in the concept were identified: the Nri-Igbo stage, leading subsequently to the Aro stage and then to the Christian stage. These shifts have tended to mutually reflect on one another as to make the concepts almost confused in particular places. However, on the whole, a number of recognizable ideas have emerged and we recapitulate them as they have been proposed. First, *Chi* is believed to be the creator, as testified by Equiano and all the other writers down to the post-colonial period. He is the supreme God (Basden, Jeffreys etc); others have viewed him as the World Oversoul (Talbot) or simply Oversoul (Meek) by which he is most necessarily a supreme one. At times he has been referred to as simply as the master deity (Northcote Thomas) and so on. In addition to being the creator, he is also seen as the ancestral father or the first cause (Leonard); *Chi* is both a being and a spirit that informs all living phenomena. He is both the sun *Anyaanwu*, and light, *ife*, not simply of the sun but also of the days which the sun informs; *chi* is also *Agbala*

"the deep and mysterious one"; hence, he is *Okike* -the creator or the source of the days, the distributor of fortunes, and also the luminous one. *Chi* is also good or bad fortune; if good, *chi* brings good things like children, wealth, good health and if bad, it brings evil fortune that does not bring those other goods. In the sense that it could bring good and bad fortunes to an individual *chi* is intensely personal to man as his agent of action. Besides, *Chi* is also the sky; as a person he is king or titled elder. On other grounds he is the father, much like the christian idea of the father, and also *Igwe-ka-ala* "Sky greater than the earth" much like the Aro deity. *Chi* is also seen as life and as the symbols of a man's dynamism; for the woman he is the symbol of female procreative agent and therefore is fertility. *Chi* is the giver of children therefore, of life and death -hence he is both good and bad. *Chi* is also the life of other living things such as animals, trees, and rivers and would appear to be the basis for the explanation of human behaviour. Again, *chi* is the spirit in man, or the vital spark in him which at times is seen as the animus in him, the double companion of the individual. At other times he is the shadow outside of the man. These are what we shall proceed to investigate in the light of the verbal materials available to us.

## Chapter 3

### 3.0 *Verbal Materials*

#### 3.1 *Sources:*

There are two main sources of materials for this study and they are the written sources and the oral sources that have come from the field.

##### 3.1.1 *Written sources:*

The written sources comprise those verbal materials which have been written down and published in books. Of this there are two types; the first has to do with those materials in form of Igbo terms and expressions, traditional and religious sayings, phrases and proverbs etc which the earlier authors had collected and used in the course of their writings; and the second are those we have been able to obtain from the published works of the indigenous writers themselves. The major writers of interest here with regard to Nri-Igbo materials are Arthur Glyn Leonard (1906), Northcote Thomas (1913), P.A. Talbot (1926), C.K. Meek (1931), M.D.W. Jeffreys (1934), G.T. Basden (1921), Horton (1956) and many others who have recorded these expressions as they described or commented on the religious concepts of the Nri-Igbo.<sup>1</sup>

The second range of written materials comes from works collected by indigenous researchers in Igbo language and the Nri-Igbo dialect in particular. These works are from both published and unpublished

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<sup>1</sup> In the writings of these early visitors to the Nri-Igbo culture area, it is found that in writing about the Nri-Igbo, their beliefs, concepts and institutions, they have inevitably actually written some of the oral expressions of the people whether as statements (Leonard, Northcote Thomas, Basden, Meek, Jeffreys to mention a few), or as verses from some of their traditional invocations (Shelton, Jeffreys), or simply as conceptual terms needing to be explained (Horton, Henderson and almost all of the colonial writers). These expressions have been extracted where they are needed for elucidating the concept of *Chi*. They are considered as coming nearest to the Nri-Igbo group at a time when the culture has not yet been too seriously harmed by subsequent social changes in world-views.

sources. They are verbal materials which have been collected from the field covering such vital areas of the Nri-Igbo expressions as songs (of all types), stories, proverbs, riddles, and so on. In this a few notable names are of interest and these are Mazi F.C. Ogbalu, a pioneer in the development of Igbo language and culture, and a few others like Romanus Egudu, Chukwuma Azuonye, Obiora Udechukwu, and B.B.O Eme. Of all these collectors, only few of their collected materials will be of immediate concern and interest to us, and this has to do with only those materials that express the idea of *Chi* as it has been applied in verbal use. The question of their having been translated from the Nri-Igbo dialect to standard Igbo, it has been said earlier, will not arise because almost all the publications in Igbo come in the form of this standard Igbo which the Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture is promoting. This society has undertaken to carry out among other things, researches into the Igbo past in the areas of history, religious studies as well as in the arts and oral expressions of the culture. As part of their efforts to preserve these dying aspects of the culture, they have also undertaken to publish results of their findings, hence the vast collection of verbal materials collected by Mazi Ogbalu himself. But all these materials had to be translated into standard Igbo dialect to conform to the new Igbo being advanced and promoted. As a result, we have to recognize the place of these new changes in the language dialect of the Nri-Igbo which is the one being taught in schools and colleges today even in the Nri-Igbo areas.

Two sources of written materials stand out, however, and which will be used extensively in this study. They are Romanus Egudu's *Poetic Heritage*, which he edited and published with Donatus Nwoga (1971); and the collected epic narratives of the Aguleri minstrels and the Aniocha performers in Bendel State (still within the Nri-Igbo locus) published by Chukwuma Azuonye *et al* in *Uwa ndi Igbo*, edited by Chinua Achebe (1984). These two important sources will be extremely useful as we try to grapple with the subject of *chi* in the Nri-Igbo cultural sphere.

### 3.1.2 *Oral sources*

Finally, I have collected, in the field, samples of the oratures of various genres ranging from *agom oji* "kolanut invocations", *inu* "proverbs" *afa otutu* "praise names" *abu* "chants" and other various types of songs. These have been collected on tapes and transcribed before being translated into the English language. Some of them, however, have been collected in written form.

## 3.2 *Types of materials*

There are essentially seven types of verbal materials that are most relevant for this study in terms of their scope, significance and content. These are names, proverbs and riddles, religious invocations and incantations (including speeches), songs for social, festival and ceremonial occasions; stories: among which are *akuko iho* "stories dreamed and narrated" about animals and the animal kingdom and stories told of creation; then longer narratives of epic proportions that deal with individual responses to their world and environment as many of the minstrel stories go to show as well as some common expressions used in the daily affairs of life and most useful for their "ideological" implications. Among all these, apart from names and some common expressions already referred to, the others are verbally organised materials which can be found useful to a greater or lesser degree in our inquiry. Other common types such as the songs, riddles and folk-tales, one would say, belong to the socially and religiously mediated forms which no matter how sparse in content they are, still merit some of our attention.

### 3.2.1 *Names*

Names are numerous but we have elected to deal with those that express religious ideas. Of these there are classes: the names by which the sky entity, *Chukwu*, is known -which are as varied as the various localities that make up the Nri-Igbo culture zone.<sup>1</sup> The second class of names has to do with certain appellations or encomiums used for

<sup>1</sup> For this see text 1.i of collected materials. These have come both the authors and from what I have actually heard in the field.

invoking or describing *Chukwu* such as *okaaka* "greatest of the greats", *eze enu* "king of the place above" and so on.<sup>1</sup> The third class comprises the names used for referring to *Chukwu* and for describing his characteristic nature and engagements. Some of such names are *ononiigwe* "he who stays in the sky", *odeniigwe* "he whose fame resounds in the skies" and so on.<sup>2</sup> The fourth class express attitudes, beliefs and ideas concerning *Chi*, and these are mainly names which parents give to their children.<sup>3</sup> Some of these names state among other things their positions in life, their circumstances and personal relationship to *Chukwu*. It has to be said, however, that there is a vast range of such names, and for purposes of clarity it is necessary to divide them into categories of their meanings and relationships; that is to say that there are names which bear associations with *Chukwu* in an oblique way, using aspects of it (such as *anyaanwu* "the sun" or *agbala* "the deep and mighty one" etc). But of late these names are increasingly dropping some of these variants of *Chi* while still retaining *Chukwu* in them in a more consistent manner. One can illustrate this by comparing a series of names related in meaning to *Chukwu* such as *Udeagbala* "fame of the deep and mysterious one" which is a variation of *Udechukwu* "fame of *Chukwu*". Another example is *Muojekwu* "the spirit one will decide", or even a name like *Anyaanwu* "eye of the sun", which is a variation of *anyaeke* "eye of *eke* ("day of sunlight"). The fourth class deal with the more recent names that bear the name of *Chukwu* in a way lacking in that creative sense which the earlier people had displayed in giving variations to the concept. Such latter day names are *Chukwemeka* "*Chukwu* has done very well (for us)" (in giving us a child, or in blessing us in this season of harvest and so on); *Chukwudi* "*Chukwu* exists, lives on" and so on. The last set of names may be said to be ordinary names which Christian parents give to their children as they belong to a common pool on which they can draw at

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<sup>1</sup> See text 1.ii of collected materials

<sup>2</sup> See text 1.iii of collected materials

<sup>3</sup> This is of two distinguishable types: those that do not necessarily bear *chi* in them but bears aspects that are connected with *chi* eg. *eke*; terms like *anya* associated with *anyaanwu* "the sun" or *ife* "light" associated with *chi* as sun also - a group that appears to represent names that were given at an age prior to the time of the coming of the europeans: see collected materials text 1.iii(a); the second group of names appear to have clearly modern associations with *Chukwu* as conceived by Christian parents -see collected materials 1.iii(i-iv)

will, quite unlike the earlier types that might have been considered "pagan".

### 3.2.1.1 *Names restricted to Chukwu*

The first class of names are restricted to *Chukwu* proper, so that *Chukwu* is variously called *Chukwu-okike* "*Chukwu* the creator"; variations of it are *chukwu-oke* or *chi-oke* as the case may be, both of which mean the same thing as the first. A more complex type is *Ezechitaoke* or *Ezechitoke*, composed of *eze* "king", *chi* "God, the sun", with or without *ta* "today" and *oke* "creator". The first type in this series, *Chukwu-okike*, is commonly heard among the Nri people themselves, and also among the Enugu-ukwu, Agbaja, Igbo-ukwu, Agulu, Umudioka and Idemmili group of the Nri-Igbo; whereas the latter type is more prevalent among the Nsukka and Udi group of the Nri-Igbo. It does appear that such names as *Chioke* "the creator *Chi*", *Dioke* "master creator" and so on, are also found in the Nsukka and Udi areas, which are contractions of *Chukwu-okike*. Because of the preponderance of these names in the early works of visiting writers one is inclined to believe that they are the names that have the widest distribution in the Nri-Igbo areas. Names like *Osebuluuwa* and *Olisa*, also used for the sky entity *Chukwu* but mainly by the Onitsha people of the Nri-Igbo area, are believed to have originated from western Nigeria -more specifically from Benin with whom tradition had it that they once sojourned before making for their present home in the east.

### 3.2.1.2 *Appellations used for Chukwu*

These are names which are mainly used to establish the status of *Chukwu* as a sky entity. Hence *Chi* is *eze igwe* "king of the skies", *eze-enu* "king of the place above;" and *ojezuluobodo* "he who has traversed the whole country" and so on.

### 3.2.1.3 *Afa otutu "Praise names for Chukwu "*

When not couched in such compound names as above, *Chukwu* is given some praise names by which his very special features, qualities or characteristics can be identified. Thus, for instance, *Chukwu* is *nwoke oghogho anya* "man with a vast eye"; *nwoke ogonogo okpa* "the long-legged man"; *agbala bu anyaanwu ututu* "Mighty spirit that is the

morning sun"; *agbala ji uwa* "the mighty spirit that is holding the world in place" and so on. The hallmark of names of this type is in the concrete images they tend to conjure of the entity by which it is recognised as a living being.

### 3.2.2 *Afa ogugu "Names given to individuals at birth"*

These are names given to individuals at birth by which they are identified. It is common to name a child after seven native weeks- that is after twenty eight days the child was born, during the formal ceremony of *ikuputa nnwa*. Some very common names that are heard today which spring from three or four generations ago before the coming of Christianity are those that bear the names of the four days of the Nri-Igbo native week such as *Okeke* "male child of *Eke* "; *Okoye* "male child of *Oye*; *Okafo* "male child of *Afo* "; and *Okonkwo* "male child of *Nkwo* ". In some variant form of this group of names the male component *oke* is simply replaced by *nwa* -the child component, as in *Nweke* "child of *Eke* " and so on. Daughters simply have the female component *mgba* prefixed to the names of the days such as in *Mgbaeke* " Daughter of *Eke*" ; *Mgbankwo* " Daughter of *Nkwo* " and so on.

The other names that strictly bear *Chukwu* in them appear to have been latter day names that have been generated by Christian awareness of the possibilities of *Chukwu* as a great "God". Such names often bear a qualifying attribute used for denoting his character, nature and place in the Nri-Igbo cosmology. They include such names as *Elochukwu* " *Chukwu's* plan", meaning that *Chukwu* planned the conception very well for the couple to have sent them such a child: *Ufochukwu* " the dawn of the light of *Chukwu* "; *Ugochukwu* " the eagle of *Chukwu* ", *Ogechukwu* "*Chukwu's* time (is the best)"; *Ogochukwu* "The grace of *Chukwu* " and so on. Sometimes the name of *Chukwu*, as an object, is qualified by a verb as in the names *Chukwuma* "*Chukwu* knows"; *Chukwu-di* "*Chukwu* exists". The last group of names introduces the *ka* element found in names like *Chukwuka* "*Chukwu* is supreme"; *Chukwueloka* " *Chukwu* has thought it out very well" and so on. Here the *ka* element introduces the superiority tendencies of *Chukwu*; as a suffix it shows that there is nothing to be compared to him, but when it occurs in the middle it weighs or compares *Chukwu*

with some other idea of power; or simply marks him out as the best of thinkers or planners *Chukwu-ka-elo* ; or states that he is the best of healers *Chukwu ka dibia*. This set of names is quite different from those that mark him out as a good spirit *Chioma* but which can also mean good weather or day. A variation of this is *Chi-di-mma* "Chi (or the weather) is good, while a name like *Chukwu-di-nka* simply states that *Chukwu* is very creative.

The role which these names play as a class of verbal items collected for this study is a very important one as we shall see later.

### 3.3 *Okwu e ji emegha mmuo-ga :* *"Expressions used in ritual situations"*

These are words or expressions that have to do with *chi* and which are used during festival and ritual occasions, during rites of passage and ceremonies of various kinds<sup>1</sup>. Thus, whether during child-naming activities, marriage rites or title taking ceremonies, during obituary rites and so on, these words and expressions come up as vehicles of the particular ritual action that is taking place and which explain the cosmological relation of the event to what the individual is experiencing. For example, when one talks of *igbu ichi*, one is thinking in connection with the ritual which involves a facial scarification. Also, the concept of *oha chi* is in fact connected to the ritual of *isedata chi* "the drawing down of *chi* into the shrine" for sustaining the life of the young shoots planted there. This ritual has to do with the establishment of the shrine of an individual in which either the *oha*, the *ogilisi* or *egbo* sacred plant is planted in the shrine. We have already referred to this practice of drawing down the *chi* of an individual into the shrine of a prospective landlord where it is made to reside as an embodiment of his life as expressed by one's personal *chi* concept.

From the above examples, one can show or draw examples of word-lists or terms that are used to relay some particular information on the religious state of the people's experiences particularly as they are expressed through symbols and rituals. From these, if treated with appropriate care and understanding, one would be able to see how

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<sup>1</sup> See collected materials Text 2.(i)

these conceptual terms could be used to explain certain patterns of the Nri-Igbo cultural behaviours.

Again, in this area of religious concern, certain words crop up as concepts with underlying *Chi* meanings. Basden has referred to what is called *mkpulu chi* "seeds of departed ancestors" (1926:127) but which he described as memorials representing the departed ancestors. An understanding of the implication of the term *mkpulu* would help in further clarifying the meaning of what *Chi* stands for vis-a-vis the departed souls of the mighty dead. *Mkpulu* means seed, and when in relation to *Chi*, might go to suggest that the ancestors are the "crops of creation" of the long lost days, who have been "harvested" by death at the instance of *Chi*. It is no surprise therefore, as the Nri-Igbo belief goes, that when an elder dies, part of the mortuary rites involves cutting a twig of the sacred plant of *Chi* growing in his *Chi* shrine, which is then used for fashioning a memorial of the kind just mentioned. This object is then kept among the other family symbols as an item used for keeping record of the ancestors of the lineage.

Another interesting concept comes from Shelton, in his book titled *Igbo-Igala Borderland* (1971). The anthropologist mentions what the Nsukka people call *onu chi* "source of *chi*". What is of interest concerning this source of *Chi* is that it is an opening -a "window" more or less through which light is admitted into the shrine of *Ezechitaoke*. Thus it is only in a dark grove or shrine, in a circumstance like this one involving a sky entity like *Chi*, , that an opening is necessary through which the majesty of the sky one is witnessed in the form of light. This is why a "window" *onu Chi* should be worked into the structure to admit the sunlight that would chase away the darkness in the sacred place. In this context still, the use of the term *Chi* in close association with the qualifier *onu* "opening, source" has helped in elucidating further the significance of the concept in relation to the day and in the long run, the weather conditions of the place.

Talking of weather conditions, there are also other types of expressions which are not strictly religious but which are nevertheless worth considering since they are still within the compass of this group

of terms with *Chi* meanings used in the daily activities of the people.<sup>1</sup> Such expressions are *chi efo* "day has dawned"; *chi ejie* "night has come"; *chi na ubosi anaa* "light and day have departed" and so on. One special type is contextual in application: *chi ta amaka* "today's weather is very nice"; but *chi amaka* (that is without the *ta* element) might mean that the sky one is good or that the weather is good.

In all the instances just given above, *Chi* is in free association with the other elements of grammar as the subject; but another type of group of words are those in which it is in bound association with other morphemes to express the opposite of day such as *uchichi* "night", *ochichii* "darkness" and *okochi* "season of dryness". What is the significance of the occurrence of the term as a base in this category? Take for example, the word *uchichi* which means "night". This word is made up of the open vowel sound *u* which is bound to the root *chi* in the first instance and then the *i* bound to the second *chi* before and after they have been suffixed to the first component.

Thus day *chi* and night *uchichi* exist in opposing relationship in meaning, but in a rather complementary relationship in verbal expression. Other examples are *echi* "tomorrow" in which the open vowel *e* is in bound association with the *chi* root for daylight to produce another different meaning which literally put mean another day of light; and then *chi-ta* "today".

Also the concept of *chi* has functions in spheres of life that have to do with title-taking and initiations,<sup>2</sup> so that its importance is not only restricted to the use of it in expressing weather conditions and the alternation of day and night. The term, *ndiichie*,<sup>3</sup> for example, can be seen to contain this *chi* root in bound association with the open vowel sound *i* prefix, and then the open vowels *ie* as the suffix. Thus the idea

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<sup>1</sup> See Text 2.(iii); The relation of *chi* to the days and nights and the weather conditions has become of interest since most of the notable writers have made the same point. Arthur Glyn Leonard even makes it an issue of philosophical speculations -see his Primitive tribes of the lower Niger, p.530

<sup>2</sup> See Text 2.(ii) of collected materials.

<sup>3</sup> See Leonard also on *ndi "otsie"* which in modern Igbo is *ndi-ochie* (It is noted that he wrote when there was no orthography yet for the Igbo language); he translates this term as meaning aged or god-life ie those who have lived god life p.531. By extension, these could be those who lived to a grand old age, having seen their last days on earth before dying a natural death.

of "days gone by" begin to get its definition from a transfiguration of the verbal patterns of *chi* through the use of those prefixes and suffixes. *Ichi echichi* "title taking" then becomes a collection of *chi* roots that are bound up with the open vowel *i* as prefix and suffix; and the word title becomes *echichi* (*e-chi-chi*). What is the particular relation of this term to that ritual activity? This is also what we intend to look at in the course of the study.

### 3.4 *Inu-ga* "Proverbs"

The last class of common expressions to be considered are the proverbs bearing the term *Chi* in them.<sup>1</sup> Proverbs are the palm oil with which the Igbo "eat" words, and truly they are vehicles of speech used for enhancing meaning in various situations through their evocative way of conjuring concrete images. Many of these proverbs show great psychological depth of insight which explain the people's world-view as well as reflect on the social, political and economic conditions of life in the society. Not only that, they also try to grapple with this relationship of *chi* with the light of day. One such proverb is a form of admonition which says: *welu efifie cho ewu oji chi eme jie* "seek for the black goat whilst it is still bright in the day lest darkness falls". Here the implication is obvious, because what is dark cannot be seen in the night but only in the day when it is still visible to the naked eye through the reflection of light. On a different note, another proverb has it that *ofu nne na-amu, ma ofu chi ada eke* meaning that it is possible for two people to come from one mother, but certainly their *chi* (fates, destiny) will be different. A third category of proverbs become more symbolic like this one: *oku ibuo ka Chukwu na-akpo mmadu, o kpo ya na nzu, o kpo ya n'ufie* - meaning that *Chukwu* is responsible for the birth and death of an individual, but which can be literally explained through the use into which the symbols of white-chalk (which expresses purity of the white light of *Chukwu* and representing birth and creation), and *ufie* "red dye applied to the body of a dead person to preserve him" ( which represents death), are put. Hence the saying that *Chukwu* calls the individual twice, at birth with *nzu* "white-chalk", and at death with *ufie* "red dye" -illustrates this kind of proverbs that are charged with

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<sup>1</sup> See Text 3.(i) of collected materials

symbolic meanings. In this present case the proverb suggests that *Chukwu* is the author of life and death.

A good number of proverbs are self-explanatory, but they go deeper than meets the ordinary eye in their social and religious implications. This is not to say however that we are concerned with more than those types already pointed to above, which are more relevant to our study. The use of such materials is believed to be a great asset to our understanding of the concept of *chi* in the Nri-Igbo cosmology. They are expressions that are generally in common use among the Nri-Igbo even though they have a wider distribution in many parts of Igboland.

### 3.5 *Igo oji "Kolanut invocations"*

At the dawn of each new day, very early in the morning as the sun begins to break from the sky, the chief householder who is usually the *dibuno* "master shouldering the responsibilities of the household unit" makes it a point of duty to offer kolanut prayers to the sky entity, *Chukwu*, which is usually an invocation also to all the other entities found in the Nri-Igbo pantheon -to thank him for the life of a new day which he has made possible for him and his family to see again. Raising the bowl of kolanut which is at times accompanied by white-chalk, he first presents it to *chukwu* by pointing it in the direction of the rising sun. Then he makes his invocations and requests before breaking it for all to chew. In the petitions he makes he usually asks for long life, good health, riches and wealth as well as for children and peace, food and plenty. All misfortunes are asked to depart.

This early morning invocation appears to be the most important type of petition,<sup>1</sup> even though there are others directed to other entities when consultations are made specially to them. Thus, the kolanut petition can be distinguished from *igo mmuo* "invocations made to spirit entities or *alusi* " which are usually the instituted forces that take care of public concerns. Such *alusi* entities are *Idemmili* at Ogidi and Nnobi, *Nwocha* at Oraukwu, and *Idoto* at Ojoto to mention a few. Like the ones just mentioned, they could be water entities or just the

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<sup>1</sup> See Texts 4.(i) - 4.(viii) of collected materials

collective shrines of the ancestors of a particular community or simply "medicine" that has been established as a protective influence against foreign invaders or enemies. Both the kolanut invocations and invocations to constituted powers are different from *igo ofo* which is a petition made specifically to the earth entity through the agency of the *ofo* "wand of justice" for the earth to seek redress for a wrong done to one. So that while the kolanut invocation is comprehensive and complete by focusing not only on *Chukwu* but also on the other *alusi* entities, petitions made to *ofo* are for the earth entity to mediate, at times in a summary kind of way.

All three types of petitions have positive ends even though typical traditional petitions contain some curses whilst making their pleas. The curses are to ward off evil men and spirits from carrying out their designs. And perhaps it is with the kolanut invocations that the art of the Nri-Igbo poetic utterances is at its best in the people's commitment to their life and welfare at large. Other forms of prayers are secondary to this and deal only with one aspect of the concerns covered by the kolanut prayers.

The performance and verbal content of this kolanut ritual, it is observed, depends on knowledge of what are involved, and an understanding and awareness of the place of the sky-God to whom it is directed vis-a-vis the other entities found in the pantheon. It also depends, on the other hand, on the individual creativity of the performer. To a certain extent what are petitioned for are standard cultural values such as long life, good health, children, wealth and peace. In almost all the invocation petitions, *Chukwu* is the first to be called upon. Knowledgeable performers do not limit their invocation to his name, but go further to flatter him with a series of praise names as in this one here:

*Anyaanwu Chukwu-okike*  
*Agbala Chukwu-okike*  
*Okaaka*  
*Onye kelu igwe na ana*  
*Na ife di ya...*

The sun *Chukwu* the creator,  
 Mighty *Chukwu* the creator

The greatest of the great  
 Creator of the sky and the earth  
 And all that is in it... (Text 4 (xvi)b)

In some other invocations the praises are different but help to make the poetry rich in texture and symbolism. A common characteristic conception of *Chukwu* that is frequently heard in the Nri-Igbo local area is the reference to *Chukwu* as *nwoke oghogho anya* "man with the vast eye"; at some other times he is referred to as *Ojezuluobodo* "he who is capable of traversing all the land" and so on.

When we talk of certain prayers that have a rich store of encomiums used for *Chukwu* we are referring to petitions that have that implicit awareness of tradition in the sense of keeping in touch with the elements of the tradition as a mode, and as such are typical. These are the ones that bring variations to the conceptual assumptions of the figure under consideration. One of such invocations, instead of calling on *Chukwu*, simply used the term *ife* to represent him in the understanding that while talking of *Chukwu* he is in fact talking of, or at least understands that this implies the white light of the sun. Even the four days of the Nri-Igbo week are similarly referred to as *ife* in this same understanding of this kind of relationship between them. Also, these are the types that will follow up with invoking the trees and the sacred waters and hills that inhabit the ecology of the area till they come down to the ancestors before making the petitions and curses.

A good deal of the prayers, whether from secondary sources or from my field research, do not have much of this kind of content. Of particular interest are some that have come from Shelton.<sup>1</sup> Even though it is accepted that at Nsukka, about which he wrote, shrines to the sun *anyaanwu* feature most, in some of the prayers he collected there is no sign of that kind of order that we have just mentioned. At times *Chukwu* comes first, at some other times he is not even mentioned while *Anyaanwu* is substituted. At most other times it is the ancestral father that is invoked first and the line of the subsequent ancestors. Where in some of the prayers it is fairly consistent to request life from *Chukwu*, in some of the prayers collected the ancestors are also requested to give this life, the general impression being that even

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<sup>1</sup> See texts 4(v)a - f

though *Chukwu* is essentially the acknowledged giver of life, this does not exclude other entities that can have a marked influence on the lives of individuals such as the ancestors and even *ana* and the other *alusi* entities that can also have the power to kill or save.

Ultimately one can say that by far the most significant petitions are those from the kolanut invocations obtained from the field. One thinks so because those selected eventually for the study have magnitude and content which many of those from secondary sources do not have; besides, they have come from individuals with varied backgrounds and occupations.

The kolanut invocation, one has to say, has to do mainly with the individual. In other words, it is strictly personal and private in the sense that it does not require a central place for the offering of the invocations as in the case of the *alusi* "divine gods and goddesses of the village groups". A sense of this is felt when one realises that each individual, male and female, keeps his or her own shrine within immediate enclosure or locale of his home where he or she dwells daily. For the men it is at a place just outside the *obi* which is his central place of activities; and for the women at a corner by her *ekwu* "fireside where she cooks". The clear implication of this is that the sky-God, whether as *Chi* or *Chukwu*, is the entity from which each individual derives his share of the lesser entity which he uses a qualifier *m* "my" to personalize. Thus each individual has as his personal *chi* an aspect of the larger *Chi* entity.

At this point, it has to be said that the kolanut invocation is not a fixed form. This is to say that because it belongs to the oral tradition, it is open to an influx of new words and ideas which bring changes in its texture. In other words, its flexibility and spontaneity makes it open to adaptability in new situations and circumstances. For example, it is not often that the kolanut invocation will be preoccupied with the ethics of the ritual, so that when in an invocation the officiating elder states that "that is what the Igbe people are known by/ Anyone you visit / First presents kolanut to you",<sup>1</sup> we see a new addition to the practice. this is because such a cultural norm is always understood, never expressed,

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<sup>1</sup> See Text 4x

but in this instance the elder had said it in order to educate the new breed of children who are usually thought to be at a loss in the matters of culture today. Hence, it invariably begins to function as a tool for educating the young. Also it is because it has this ability to adapt to situations that the same invocation already referred to above, in responding to the purpose of the consultation made to him, says towards the end that "If one tries to see that his father's heritage does not get lost/ His own will not be lost also", another addition that suggests how this old form is being used in a maleable way to achieve immediate ends. Another kolanut petition talks not only of the familiar traditional values, but also talks of other values which have come with the modern dispensation school for as it says, "Let those who go to school try their best".<sup>1</sup> Not only that, it talks of new and modern inventions such as cars and sewing machines and engine oil which the one offering the petition use expressly as an analogy for the supplies of life that need to be lubricated just as it is done with those devices. This particular quality of the kolanut invocation is also seen in the invocations to spirit entities which we shall now turn to.

### 3.5.1 *Ikpo mkpu* "Invocations to spirit entities"

Literally speaking, *ikpo mkpu* is the art of calling on an *alusi* "an established spirit entity, e.g. a river goddess etc" with a loud voice often accompanied with chants and music and the sound of a horn or other musical instruments like the *ogene* "metal gong" or the *ekwe* "wooden gong". Ezenwocha Ezeadirika, the chief priest of the shrine of Nwocha at Oraukwu from whom I first heard of this term also used it to describe some of the instruments which he employed for invoking the water goddess he was serving. Thus for the wooden gong he used the term *ekwe mkpu* "wooden gong used for calling an entity".

In every sense the class of verbal materials referred to as early morning kolanut petitions are, in fact, invocation poems to *Chukwu* and other entities, but they are not necessarily incantations as they are not accompanied by any instruments or singing voice. This is because whereas the kolanut petitions are addressed in the form of speech,

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<sup>1</sup> See Text 4xiv line 66

incantations carry with them the elements of song and music; either the verses are sung in part or as a whole, but then the relationship dovetails; the entities found in incantatory chants are invoked and petitions made to them.

The invocations collected from the secondary sources come from Egudu and Nwoga's *Poetic Heritage* and B.B.O. Eme's *Treasures of Nnobi*, being mainly of the class of the kolanut invocations. But with the other group of invocations to the *alusi* entities that are accompanied with song, the position is not immediately clear in the present day set up of the Nri-Igbo society since adherents of the various cults have abandoned the shrines in search of livelihood in the urban centres, thereby leaving the rituals and ceremonies to die off. However, the picture is not altogether gloomy because there are still shrines to be met where the priests who serve them are still active in their calling. One such priest is that of the great shrine of the water goddess, Nwocha, at Oraukwu already mentioned. His incantations are some of the most comprehensive that I have come across.<sup>1</sup> The occasion was during one of my visits to his shrine to obtain an *ofo* sacred wand of justice from him. I was made to appear before the divinity who was normally invoked as one who "kills and brings". The invocation was on metal and wooden gongs as well as on ivory horn which he played alone in turns after chanting. Interspersed with the chanting are religious speeches and entreaties to the goddess in the form of formal address. At each stage he called her attention to the particular instrument that he was to use.

As with the kolanut invocations, this later group of incantations to the *alusi* entities show a markedly high degree of flexibility and adaptability which make for changes in the form. So that depending on the purpose of the consultation, the priest uses the opportunity of the new situation to make religious speeches that reflect the mood and circumstances around the suppliant. Take for example Ezenwocha's religious speech.<sup>2</sup> He demonstrates awareness of race relations when he says that both whites and blacks go to each other's land to live and work, and therefore implying that I, the suppliant, who was preparing

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<sup>1</sup> See collected materials 5.(i)

<sup>2</sup> See Text 5.i nos.

at the time to come to England and study, would also have no problems in going there to live even if it is for a while.

In this incantatory group, and apart from the longer epics, the verbal rendition and performance of the priest is the longest of the collected materials on petitions and invocations, covering a little above two hundred lines of printed pages. The incantation is primarily addressed to the woman of the waters, *Nwocha*, whom he describes with a number of encomium which opens with a chant like this one below:

*Ogbute obute*  
*Biko gelu enyi gelu onu oo*  
*Gee enyi gelu onu Okagba nwaanyi odu, Nwocha*  
*Odu enyi na-akpo gi agbomma*  
*K'i nyelu mu aka o*  
*Ogbute o bute*  
*Biko bute ife a ga-eli oo*  
*Agbomma oo*  
*Nwocha*  
*Obina mmili awo na-ekelu ojolima*  
*Alusi nwelu mmili*  
*Gee enyi, gelu onu*  
*Okagba nwaanyi odu*  
*K'in nyelu m aka...*

She who kills and brings  
 Please listen to my horn and to my voice  
 Listen to my horn and my voice  
*Okagba*, woman of ivory anklets, *Nwocha*  
 The ivory horn is calling you  
*Agbomma*  
 So that you can help me;  
 You who kills and brings  
 Please bring that which we shall eat  
*Agbomma*  
 Child of *Nwocha*  
 You who lives in the waters  
 For whom the frogs are singing  
 Goddess that owns a river-  
 Listen to my horn, listen to my voice  
 So that you can help me. Text 5.(i) 1-15

The invocation is so she can appear and receive the kolanut being presented to her. Those parts of the invocation are rendered in speech form, with the sung portions occurring at intervals in a repetitive manner. When it appears that the divinity is ready to accept the offering of kolanut being presented to her, the priest then asks her to carry it and present to *Chukwu-okike* who is capable of doing all things. This occasional recourse to *Chukwu* is rendered in chants that are beautifully expressed in images which suggest the nature, might and majesty of that entity. The religious speech which intersperses the invocation chants covers all aspects of experience, work ethics, the need for peaceful co-existence between all peoples irrespective of colour, place of origin or sex. In the long run, it is an invocation and incantation for the goddess to appear and receive the kolanut and white chalk with which she is always appeased on such occasions in which she is adored.

### 3.6 *Ikpo abu "Chants" and Egwu onu "Songs"*

Chants, *abu*, and songs, *egwu onu*, belong to the same group of oral materials but they differ in a marked number of ways. Chants are more intense and charged with poetic feeling than songs, because they concern the more serious aspects of human life like the mysteries of life and death. In the twenties and thirties of this century chanted songs became very popular among various dancing groups of the Nri-Igbo, some of which are now being revived. The chanted songs, because of their extraordinary strength in affecting an audience became known as *egwu umu ogbanje* "songs sung by the children from spiritland", for their preoccupation with the theme of death is too compelling as this portion from a group at Umuoji suggests:

*M jee nke oyili-di ye o...*  
*A si na di ye ghali a naa mmuo*  
*M tie oko-oo ko oo*  
*Nya n'onye nosia n'uwa o naa mmuo?*  
*M wee tie oko-ookoghogho*  
*Nya n'onye nosia n'uwa o naa mmuo?*  
*Ebele umu uwa na-eme mu o*  
*N'ebele umu uwa na-emenu mu o*  
*Igwulube Umuoji nalu ekene oo*  
*O kwo ma gi chilu eze ka mu na-akpo...*

I went to see Oyilidiye...  
 And was told that her husband had left her  
     and departed to the land of the dead;  
 I lamented and cried and said  
 So in this world one can depart after staying?  
 I lamented and cried and said  
 So on this world one can depart after staying?  
 I sympathise with the children of the world  
 I sympathise with the children of this world  
 Crowds of Umuoji assembled here  
     accept my greetings  
 And you too that has taken a title... Text 6.(vix)b

Songs include all the various types such as social songs for relaxation, marriage songs, birth songs, funeral songs, title chants, masquerade songs, praise songs, satiric songs, play songs and dance songs. These songs are perhaps the least in importance of the materials needed for this study since they do not deal with matters of religious concern in which *Chi* is expressed. However, there are very few exceptions, such as those dealing with festivals and title-taking, funeral chants as well as birth songs. A good deal of these have come from secondary sources, from Egudu and Nwoga (1974) and Eme (1987). Some of the songs, without necessarily being religious in content and imagery carry with them expressions showing the various ways the term *Chi* can be put into active verbal use. For example in the song that we have just seen above, the last line talks of *gi chilu eze* "you who have taken a title": from *Chi* one obtains the verb *ichi eze* "to take a title formed by binding the open vowel *i* to it. This is especially important and crucial when one notices the difference between this verb *ichi eze* and the one which talks of *ime eze*. In the first instance, the concept of crowning one king is based on the concept of *Chi* while the later is not based on any conceptual frame. That is to say that the term *Chi* has some significance when it comes to title taking among the Nri-Igbo, and more so when *Chukwu* is also identified as a titled man by the names he is given such as *eze enu* "king of the place above" and *eze igwe* "king of the sky" and so on.

When not useful in this kind of way, songs of certain categories<sup>1</sup> can be useful in other ways. Take for example this play song, usually

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<sup>1</sup> For songs generally see collected materials Texts 6.(i) - 7.(vii)

performed during the moonlight nights which explores a drama of conflict between a girl and her "lover". This girl's *ewu chi*, which is a goat dedicated to her personal *chi*, falls into a well and the girl entreats him in song to dive in and rescue it before it is too late. She threatens to leave him and follow other young men in the village if he did not summon courage to go and save the goat. At each crucial point in the song she unfastens her waist-cover, letting it loose to betray and intimidate him with the lush hair around her pubic region. At such decisive moments the young man would let out a cry of despair, cursing his *chi* for rendering him helpless:

*Emekwai:* (Singing) *Imalius o kwo gi ka m*  
*na-agwa, a si m*  
*gi nekwakwa ewu gutakwa*  
*omeghuma a kpo m umuokolo*

*Imalios:* (Replying) *O chi m ...mhu*  
*O chi m ...mhu*  
*Umi o kwo gi ji ewu chi Emekwai-*  
*Emekwai ogbaluaku selu uzu nwaenu.*

*Emekwai* Imalios, am I not talking to you?  
 I said look at the goat and go and rescue it  
 Otherwise I shall go and call the young men

*Imalios* O my *chi*  
 O my *chi*  
 Behold this very well,  
 Well, are you not the one keeping  
 Emekwai's goat?  
 Emekwai who has so much hair on her body  
 that it caused commotion. Text 6.(i)

Such songs will be useful when compared to the lullabies used for keeping children company *egwu igugu nnwa*; or when compared even to most recreational and relaxation songs *egwu onu* which includes masquerade songs. The same can be said of the songs generally referred to as moonlight night songs. The chief characteristics of these songs are the almost senseless, meaningless sounds they produce at times, being concerned mainly with the generation of words that sound pleasing to children; and then the creation of sounds which, even as refrains, have

nothing much to offer. As a result, these common types of songs are not considered to be of great use in enhancing our understanding of the concept of *Chi*.

Of more immediate relevance however is the role which title songs have to play. Title song, *egwu ozo*,<sup>1</sup> stand apart from all other types of songs because of the deep religious circumstances around them, and more especially as *ozo* title taking is linked to the *ichi* facial scarification. But even these must come from secondary sources since practice of it has been secularised and in fact, Christianised; except in very few places where it is still retained for its own sake. The result is that they lack the religious basis of the culture of the people, and songs collected on such occasions look like the old stock of recreational songs as is with the masquerade songs generally witnessed on such occasions. Even with those title songs collected from secondary sources one has to go through some rigorous sifting of materials as many have been mutilated by the attempt of the collectors to force them into standard Igbo. We have, therefore, concentrated on those songs whose areas of extraction are certain. In this regard, one important source has been used, and that being Egudu and Nwoga. Ogbalu's collection of Igbo folk verses (1974) will also be useful as the title songs relate to the *ozo* title-taking so that our attitude will be that of deliberately sorting out such materials as would help to enhance and illuminate the subject under study rather than to keep such materials out altogether, as the problem of their sources of derivation have more or less been mediated by the linguistic unity that the Igbo language is now beginning to have.

The title song under consideration comes from the Nsukka area of the Nri-Igbo culture zone. Besides, it is a masquerade song with religious implications, with significant merit in scope and content and generally intended to be danced to. The masquerade sings as his chorus reply: *anyi abia n'igodo* "we have come to the shrine of *odo*" Egudu sees *igodo* to be the name of a particular song that is chanted, but judging from the structure of the sentence in which it occurs, it would be, we presume, the shrine where the rituals and ceremonial dances of the *odo* masquerade are taking place. In the opening stanza the masquerade

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<sup>1</sup> See Text 7.(ii)c for title song by an *igodo* masquerade. Others have come from Ogbalu where they indicate that the songs are associated with the *ozo* title-taking in spite of their apparent standard Igbo mould.

exhorts his followers to do the dance "with your feet". It identifies itself as the *odo*, famous masquerade of the Nsukka people, and says that it is he, the *odo*, that is singing this song -he who lives "near the *Ngwu* tree", he who lives "near *nkwo* market".

In the second stanza the masquerade makes known his theme, which is that of a fulfilled *ozo* man. The rest of the verse is a song of praise to the titled one through the use of praise names; for he is the "killer of the famous ram" whose hair is its fame and "whose horn is its strength". It goes on to invoke the musical horn with which it inspires the *ozo* title holder. The invocations are also to the earth entity, the spirits of the hill, and so on, all of which are called upon to take the *ozo*, as to take is to possess truth with which a man would lack nothing or lose his way. Over and above the *ozo* titled elder is the sun entity, *anyaanwu*, the sky and the earth, all of which are watching over him. The rest of the next stanza is an exhortation to his followers to beat the gong and do the dance with their feet. Also, the masquerade is the "son of *odo* living near *Ngwu* tree" and the *uturu* "nightingale" who "am singing/ I with voice better than musical horn". He calls on his followers to thus come out and respond appropriately because-

*Mu bu onu na-ekwuru oha*  
*Obu m na-ekwuo*  
*Mu nwa odo nkwo*  
*O bu odo na-ekwuo*  
*Odumagana na-aguo*  
*Umu Odomagana*  
*Anyi eliwe Igodo*  
*Anyi aguwa Igodo*

I who am the mouth-piece of the people  
 I am the one saying it  
 I the child of *odo* of *nkwo*  
 It is *odo* that is saying it  
 Odomagana is singing it  
 Children of *odomagana*  
 We have started to enjoy the igodo  
 We have started to sing the igodo song  
 (Text 7.(ii)c)

This song has its religious significance. In the first place, the *ozo* title has rituals associated with it that are quite elaborate and have to do with what Jeffreys has identified as the the rays of the solar disk which

are used to scarify the face of a prospective candidate before taking the *ozo*, commonly referred to as *igbu ichi*. One witnesses here therefore the preponderance of such religious symbols and objects associated with one who has undergone such a ritual such as the sun emblem mentioned in one of the stanzas, the great horn of creation *odu okike* also mentioned and so on, all of which are applied here to give the song meaning. There are also references to the *ofo* symbol of justice, the concept of *igo odo* "make petitions to *odo*", invocations to the sun *anyaanwu*, the sky *igwe*, and the earth goddess *ana*. All these help to register the religious import of the the celebration which is also an occasion for merriment and rejoicing demanding the use of a masquerade performance.

Other *ozo* title songs *egwu echichi* have been collected by Ogbalu and they are of immediate interest here: a collection of five of them deal directly with the newly titled one now called *eze*, and characteristically they are sung in praise of the newly titled one as in this one below:

*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Eeee, eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Eze, eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Eeee, eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*O meluka o kwulu*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Eeee, eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Onyinye chi nyelu*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Eeee, eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*

*Eze* plumed outside with the feather of the eagle  
 Yes, *eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle  
*Eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle  
*Eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle  
 Yes, *eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle  
 He who does as he says  
*Eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle  
 Yes, *eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle  
 The gift which *Chi* gave  
*Eze* plumed outside with the feather of the eagle  
 Yes, *eze* plumed outside with the feather of an eagle.

Text 6.(viii)a

In this title song the point is clearly made that the titled one has now become eze, which now permits him to wear the red cap of a chief with four white feathers of the eagle stuck to it. It is also clearly said that this is the "gift from *Chi*". The song consists merely of statements made about the newly titled one with supporting lines of affirmations of the same kind of statements. Two very significant lines stand out, which are, first: the statement in line six which makes the point that the title has been achieved (since the man "did as he said", a practical demonstration that he had been able to lead his *chi* to affirm success - which is the object of the proverb which says that if one said yes his *chi* will have no other choice but to heed). The other significant line is the one in line nine that made the point that the title is a gift from *Chi*.

Another title song makes almost the same point about *Chi* being the one responsible for giving the *ozo* title:

*Ebunu nnwa m*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Ebunu nnwa m*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Nna nyelu m ugo*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu nyelu m ugo*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu chiri m eze*  
*jekwe nje*

*Ebunu my child*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Ebunu my child*  
*jekwe nje*  
 Father gave me the eagle feather  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu gave me the eagle feather*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu crowned me eze*  
*jekwe nje* Text 6(viii)d

In this other song there is again the implication that the titled one succeeded because he had the stubbornness of the ram, hence the reference to him as the ram one which the Nri-Igbo use to signify strength and singleness of purpose of an individual. We remember also

that it is the horn of the ram that is represented in the *ikenga* icon of a man's *chi* of personal achievement and progress. From the song again we are told that it is the "father" that gave him the eagle feather, the symbol of his newly achieved status as *eze*. Later on it comes to identify this "father" with "*Chukwu*" - also said to be the one that gave him his eagle feather. In the last line he clinches this point by repeating it to emphasize that *Chukwu* is the one that has crowned him *eze*.

For a culture in which *Chi* has an important role to play, birthsongs would be a mine of resources from which to obtain verbal materials of relevant value. Yet in our modern setting today, this has not quite been the case as many of the traditions involving child-naming has now been interfered with by new Christian beliefs. Therefore very few primary materials are available mainly because apart from the old stock of songs usually sung on such occasions, the new culture has not been capable of generating new songs that are based on the former religious beliefs.

Our secondary sources have been lean as well, not because there is nothing preserved from the past, but because, judging from our criterion for selecting such materials, most verses found in collections like Ogbalu's *Igbo poems and songs*, like many others found on other subjects, have been transformed into standard Igbo and they have to be taken for what they are. It has to be said however that a handful of some typical birthsongs are fairly well distributed throughout Igboland and these have been collected for the purpose of illustrating certain very special issues about *Chi*. One of these is that no two individuals have the same kind of *Chi*. One birthsong clearly illustrates this thus:

*Aeee, onye na-eme uwa lee*  
*Chi awugh otu lee*  
*Onye na-eme uwa nwanne m oo*  
*Aeee, onye na-eme uwa lee*  
*Chi awugh otu lee*  
*Onye na-eme uwa nwanne m oo*  
*Mgbe mu amughi nnwa*  
*Onye iro m ana-akoghari m onu*  
*Mu ejigh ego mu amughi nnwa*  
*Mu gowa agugo bombom...*

*Aeee* who makes the world to move

people's *Chi* is not the same  
 Who makes the world to move  
 people's *Chi* is not the same  
 Who makes the world to move  
 For when I did not have a child  
 My enemy began to curse me  
 Saying that I have neither money or child  
 And that I should continue to deny that I ever  
 knew any man... Text 6.(v)

In another birthsong the plea is for *Chi* to give the woman her own share of an offspring by not denying her a baby, thereby reinforcing the belief that it is *Chukwu* who "shares out" children as seen in this song below:

*Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa*  
*Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka*  
*Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa*  
*Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka*  
*Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa-*  
*Onye na-adighi nnwa o ji obi adi ya mma?*  
*Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa*  
*Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka*

Our *Chi* create for us our share of a child  
 please *Chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 Our *Chi* create for us our share of a child  
 Our *Chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 Our *Chi* create for us our share of a child-  
 For if one does not have a child will he be happy  
 in his soul?  
 So please our *Chi* create for us our share of a child  
 And do not leave us empty handed Text 6.(iv)

The same thing about the virtual paucity of materials can be said of *egwu onwu* "funeral songs", but we have seen that *ikpo abu* "plaintive chants" cover this category adequately. Quite a number of these have come from primary and secondary sources, and always they have been reflective of the mysteries of life and death. Their usefulness, however, comes in when they are capable of exploring how these mysteries can be explained in terms of their connectedness with the concept of *Chi* under study.

### 3.7 *Akuko "Stories that are told"*

A broad classification of stories is *akuko nkiti* "ordinary commonplace stories about day to day events and people"; but stories dealing with particular moral issues about life and the society are called *akuko iro* "stories dreamed or imagined".<sup>1</sup> Extended forms of this kind of story, if they involve the community, men, the gods and the cosmos at large, become *akuko ita* "long narratives". *Akuko iro* would include stories from the animal world as well as of adventure by men and women in the land of animals and spirits; and more often than not in their encounter with such beings. It would also include stories about the origin of the world and of creation, as well as stories that attempt to proffer explanations about how death came into the world, the conflicts between various spirit forces, and how certain specialised food items such as yam, and certain elements such as fire and water came into the world. This latter type of stories dealing with spirit beings, humans as well as animals, used for making the world a much more intelligible place to live in belong generally to religious expressions; others with moral issues to decide may be the ordinary type of folk-tale and are concerned with trickster types of creatures such as the Tortoise, or oppressors of the animal kingdom like the leopard and the tiger. They also deal with the foibles of these creatures and through the particular ideas projected tell more about the attitudes of the people towards the universe, the sky entity *Chukwu* and men in society at large. Always, the stories attempt to project a view in which men live and interact with spirits and in which there is a constant flow of movement between men, spirits and animals from the land of the dead to the land of living beings or animals and vice versa. A typical example is the story of Ojaadili, a very powerful man who was said to have gone to the land of the living to fight, and from there to the land of animals and then the land of spirits where he wrenched victory throughout from his adversaries, one of which was his *chi*. But even this story would be classified as *akuko ita* "longer narratives", a type that at times can acquire epic proportions.

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<sup>1</sup> For stories see collected materials 8.(a-c)

### 3.7.1 *Akuko iro* *"Stories dreamed or imagined"*

In western scholarship it is common to talk of myths and legends as separate categories of verbal narratives but the Igbo make no such distinctions. Most stories with metaphysical dimension will be classified as either *akuko iro* "stories dreamed or imagined" or *akuko ita* "long narratives" depending on their magnitude and the characters involved. *Akuko iro* often have very strong animal interest as well as of spirits. These are usually narrated during resting and recreation times and always informally organised. They appeal more to children due to their fascination with the world of animals and of spirits. Through them important knowledge is imparted to them as well as the guiding morals of society. Some of these stories are *How Death came into the world* which is also a story of *How Fire came into the world*.<sup>1</sup> In a nutshell, this story has it that some time after *Chukwu* had finished creating the world, he asked the people to choose between life and death, that is, which of them is better to be introduced into the world. The people met and decided that there should be life and not death, and then sent a dog with the message to go and deliver to *Chukwu*. Meanwhile, animals who hated men so badly because they often preyed on them for their food, sent the frog also to run to *Chukwu* and tell him that they have all agreed that death should be introduced. Both the dog and the frog were thus on their way to *Chukwu's* dwelling place to deliver their messages. On the way the dog kept wasting time looking for excreta to eat, while the frog was busy jumping leap after leap to meet *Chukwu* first and deliver the message. Several times he met the dog on the way and eating excreta and overtook him. At last he arrived at *Chukwu's* place and told him what the people wanted, -death. *Chukwu* granted them that and he turned and returned. Then the dog arrived with his message, saying that the people had chosen life. But *Chukwu* told him that it was unfortunate that he arrived so late, that he had granted the people their first plea which was death, which they demanded through their first emissary the frog. This was because he usually listened to the first word, which to him is always the unalterable truth. But he gave

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<sup>1</sup> See Text 8.(i)a

the dog fire to take to the people instead as a way of compensating them.

This is one type of "dreamed story" that attempts to explain how certain phenomena came to be. The other type would be dealing with the theme of creation such as, for example, the descent of Eri into the world from the sky, having been sent by *Chukwu* to come and settle at Aguukwu through the help of an Awka smith; how the messengers of *Chukwu* came on a visit to the world and sojourned with the divine Nri king, leading to the establishment of the four days and four markets; how furthermore *Chukwu* gave the Nri Igbo special food types such as yam and cocoyam by directing the Eze Nri to kill his son and daughter and bury them in separate graves from which those food items grew up and so on, all of which have been well documented by Onwuejeogwu (in his book *An African Civilisation: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony* (1981)). It has to be observed that Onwuejeogwu based much of his study on the Nri on oral traditions in which he disclosed a rich store of the people's folk traditions. Some more relevant stories of this class have come, of necessity, from secondary sources and in the English language<sup>1</sup> from writers like Jeffreys (1954) Northcote Thomas ((1913), a good deal of which I already knew as a growing child.

### 3.7.2 *Akuko ita "Long narratives"*

Whereas the stories we have just referred to are brief narratives explaining the *raison- d'etre* of particular events, places and origins, the other type we have also collected have a scope and dimension that is so expansive that they have been described as epics. Chukwuma Azuonye and Obiora Udechukwu who have collected these materials from the Anambra river basin of the groups that make up the Nri and Aguleri clans have attested to the richness of this epic expressiveness of the people of that area in a relevant study published in *Uwa ndi Igbo* (Azuonye 1984). According to Azuonye, their attention was drawn to the existence of a powerful tradition of oral epic literature among the fishing and agricultural communities of Nando, Aguleri, Anam etc. This type of oral epic has been described as *ita*. Usually the hero of these

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<sup>1</sup> For some of these stories see also Lawrence Emeka's essay: "Eri: The Founder of the Igbo Nation in *Uwa ndi Igbo*, edited by Chukwuma Azuonye, of 1990, pp41-43.

epics is said to be a "gargantua who clearly belongs to the archetypal and mythical age of giants, monsters and magicians" (Azuonye 1984:4) Several of these epic narratives are said to proliferate in this Anambra river area believed to be the home of "many more tall tales of the same kind" which in spite of their extremely fantastic motifs are sometimes offered by their narrators and hearers alike as "true accounts of the doings of heroes in the past (*akuko maka ndi odogwu mgbe gboo*)" (Azuonye 1984:5).

Through the field investigations carried out by Azuonye and Udechukwu, they came across several narrators of the same epic which had instigated the research in the first place, as well as six other epics "some of which are the exclusive property of particular artists while others are common property performed in various localities by two or more artists" (Azuonye 1984:5). So far, as many as eight epics have been discovered, some transcribed and published while some are still being processed. Among those published are the epics of Emeke Okoye as performed by Osita Ajaana, said to be "a non-professional but specialist amateur artist who lives and works as a yam farmer in Illah in Bendel State" (Azuonye 1984:5). There are also the epics of Ozoemene Ndiva as told by Onwuraa Ikem of Abo Ivite Aguleri; Onoja nwa Oboli as performed by Nwachukwu Mmeeze; the epic of Ojaadili Udeoba as performed by Nwachukwu Mmeeze; of Omalima Ndegene as performed by Onwuraa Ikem and that of Edeziuno uwa oba as performed by the late Onyeilo mmadi. Some latter group of epics have been collected either in part or in whole; and some are still to await further fieldwork. Three of the epics, however, have been recorded and these are those that deal with "gargantuan heroes who are born in extra-ordinary circumstances, who grow up precociously, fight monsters, and, as culture heroes, bring civilizing influences to their people before disappearing from the world, often without dying" (Azuonye 1984:5).

These tales are truly tall narratives that take as much as two days to complete. It is even said that at times the stories take longer time to complete; in fact, as much as about a month. Some of the stories have even been described by their creators as the "longest story in the world"; and as far as the recordings are concerned, they have been said to be "epic narratives of great length, with the transcribed text of each running into tens of thousands of lines" (Azuonye 1984:6).

The epic of *Enu-nyili-mba* "the sky one too powerful for the nation" which we have included in our collection of verbal materials is the more relevant of the two chosen for this study because it is a material that appears to express the cosmological ideology of the Nri-Igbo even though the tale is used to explain certain contemporary situations. It is the story of a certain hero, Emeke Okoye who, despite warnings from his parents not to go to the sky place and confront the despot living there who brings only hunger and destruction to the living community, decides to go in order to save his people from the stranglehold of this high-handed ruler. The despot *Enu-nyili-mba* as he is called, had decreed that no living being living on earth should cook anything or eat anything or even as much as crack a nut in his compound during the seven weeks of feasting and celebration which he was having in this sky place. As a result people died in their numbers as there was none to go and challenge him. At last Emeke Okoye took up the mantle of leadership where many had failed. He eventually succeeded in undertaking a painful and tedious journey to meet the sky creature whom he forcibly brought down to the earth to face discipline and eventual condemnation and death.

There is no doubt that this story is modelled after that of *Ojaadili*, the archetypal hero of the Nri-Igbo folkloric narratives said to have traversed the land of the living, animals and spirits where he had gone to fight his opponents. In the case of *Ojaadili*, he was eventually confronted by a spirit who turned out to be his own *chi* which he however defeated. In Nwachukwu Mmeeze's version of the story which he calls *Ojaadili Udeoba*, the artist succeeds in transforming it into "a powerfully dramatic revenge story in which a typical proletarian hero avenges the mindless cruelties of a tyrannical king" in much the same way as *Emeke Okoye* had done. Always, it is towards new reforms and the advancement of the technological needs of the community, so that with *Ojaadili Udeoba*, the hero ends up introducing some new technological changes such as new farming and fishing techniques which are brought into the culture thereby creating what is "decidedly a new social order in which the generality of the masses benefit exceedingly from the idea of mechanised large-scale farming and from the peace and prosperity which reign after the overthrow and enslavement of the Czarist despot and family" (Azuoonye 1984:6). In the case of *Jeveizu*

Okaavo's version, the modern elements introduced are the sheets of papers which fell from the sky, on which the sky chief had issued injunctions to the people. There are also stairs leading to the sky, through which the artist tries to explain the origin of stairs to buildings today. This, in fact, was in connection with the "encounter with the architectural wonder during the hero's dramatic ascent into the heavenly city to bring down the hard-hearted sky dweller *Enu-nyili-mba*". Also the artist attributes "the origins of the moslem Ramadan fast to the general compliance with the decree by *Enu-nyili-mba* that no one should eat or drink or taste anything during his seven week feast in the heavenly city". It has been noted that these are "aetiological motifs woven into the fabric of its plots to infuse a certain amount of reality and contemporaneity into its otherwise far-fetched vision of life" (Azuonye 1984:8)

The *Ojaadili* epic is quite an old one indeed and its survival in the splendid epics of *Emeke Okoye* is a happy one for our study as it will be of use and value as *Beowulf* was for Christopher Brooke in his book *The Anglo-Norman kings*. This historian had used the events in that early English epic in putting together the picture of how the Saxon and Norman kings of England lived, what they did, and how they had acted. In the same way, the epic of *Emeke Okoye* will prove invaluable as we use it to extend our inquiry into the attitudes of the Nri-Igbo towards their *Chi* in the light of oral traditions.

All the materials for this study, it has been said, come from both primary and secondary sources, and expressed mainly in the Nri-Igbo dialect of the Igbo language except in places and circumstances where changes have taken place in the language as a result of the standardization afore mentioned; and also where the Igbo materials have already been transcribed into the English language (as we shall have from Onwuejeogwu). We find that of all the materials, the kolanut invocations *igo oji*, which are quite well represented from the Nri and Nsukka sub-cultural zones; the invocations and incantations to other more public entities *ikpo mkpu*; the epics *akuko ita* and folk-tales *akuko iro*, have the greatest value for us, together with certain core words, phrases and expressions which carry much of the weight of the concepts under study. Many folk songs, we have noted, do not carry much of what we consider as religious or philosophical matter of value

that would recommend them more easily to us even though some chants *abu* might prove useful in some ways where they carry those common concepts and expressions in actual context of some religious situation in which they occur that might be of interest to us. All these materials are more or less communal property, open to all to use in a creative rearrangement of incidents and situations in the interpreting and reinterpretation of the Nri-Igbo world; except, perhaps, where they are products of a individual creative artists as some of the epics of the Anambra river basin go to show.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Azuonye, & Udechukwu (eds.), *Uwa ndi Igbo* (Nsukka: Okike Cultural Centre), 1984.

## Chapter 4

### 4.0 A Critical Examination of the Concepts of Chi

#### 4.1 Basis of Interpretation:

#### *The relationship between Chi and Anyaanwu "the Sun"*

Throughout the survey there have been indicators that there is a very close relationship between the sun *Anyaanwu* and *Chi* (which has variously been translated as God, Oversoul, Spirit Being etc.), and that is what we are going to explore here. Some writers have either associated it with the sun,<sup>1</sup> notably Leonard and Basden, or even directly identified it with the sun as Jeffreys had done. Basden has pointed out that the Igbo themselves deny any association with the sun, but this is not what the evidence shows because a good number of the kolanut invocations refer to him as *Chukwu Okike, Anyaanwu na Agbala* "Chukwu-okike, the Sun and Mighty One", and so it has to be accepted as a recurring evidence from both the oral and written sources. Jeffreys who in fact identified it directly with the sun went further to argue that by identifying it with that body it does not mean that they worship the sun but rather they worshipped the "god". The actual meaning of this "god" is arguable unless we begin to see it in terms of the Nri-Igbo way of seeing it -and that is as an objective entity -the sun, characterized as a person.

Thus, *Chi* is a "god" when he is realized as a personage through the form and powers given to him, but we state here that this god has to be qualified in Nri-Igbo terms as we go further to discuss aspects of it, using our verbal evidence to look into the meaning of the concept.

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<sup>1</sup> See Onwuejeogwu p. 31, and some of the collected texts 4.(xv)a, line 4; and b. line 1. Also see text 4.(ix) line 1. But Northcote Thomas does not directly identify it with *Chukwu* but sees it as the messenger of *Chukwu* which is common with many other writers who have adopted the standard approach of concerning themselves only with the spiritual beings without looking for the underlying connections between them.

It does appear that the practice of giving natural objects this kind of will is a common phenomenon of all religious sensibilities all through the ages. This is what has been referred to as naturism (Leeuw, 1938), which is the process of personifying those spirit entities by the rather simple attitude of giving them human attributes. Even so, one begins to see the significance of this attitude in connection with the Nri-Igbo way of looking at *Chukwu*, believed to be living in the sky. This "god", we have said, is called *Chi*; and the objectified form is what is symbolized by the sun. Indeed, it is the problem of this relationship between the two forms that this chapter is also going to look at, and how this relates to all other situations and circumstances involving them. In doing so, we are not interested in showing a historical development of the concepts as we observe that Africans think in terms of social relationships in which they use human models to objectify a reality. Hence, we are interested in the fact that there are just two dimensions of *Chi* that we are going to consider, namely, *-Chi* as the object *anyaanwu* "the sun" and *Chi* as a person.

From our verbal materials it was seen that *Chukwu* has hands and feet and legs and could wear a wrapper and take titles so that it is realized both as a "god" and as a man. It is therefore given a proper name *Chukwu* to differentiate it from the lesser *chi* entities of the days. The fact here is that clearly two things are involved from evidence, namely: that *Chi* is first the natural phenomenon which is the sun, and secondly that it is the objectified form *Chukwu*. In other words, *Chi* is both a thing (*Anyaanwu*) and a being that is denoted by the pronoun *onye* as in *onye kelu chi nke taa* "he who created the light of this day". He is also the one referred to as *onye okike* "he who creates". Beginning from here, a conceptual framework begins to emerge in which *Chi* of the sun can be placed in parallel position with that of the expressed being *Chukwu*.

#### 4.2 *Chukwu-okike* : "Shining One, Creator and Distributor"

*Chukwu* has been referred to as the creator but the term *okike* which is used to explain this point is quite a complex one. In its shortened form it is *oke* or *eke*, both of which have come to be used as

a derivative of that term, even though they mean different things to different people. In one sense, depending on how the term *okike* is pronounced, it could mean to shine; at times it means to create or to divide. Hence the term *okike* itself commands a semantic field of meaning.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.2.1 *Chi as the shining One:*

We have pointed out that *oke* or *eke*, being the shortened form of *okike*, is an ambiguous term, and here we are going to consider it as a term that carries the notion of *Chi* as light that shines. In one invocation verse for example, *Chukwu* is plainly referred to as *ife* "light" thus:

*Ife! Ife! Ife!*  
*Chukwu kelu uwa cho ya mma...*

Light! Light! Light!  
*Chukwu* who illuminated the world and adorned it...

Text 4.xiv

In another verse, while being invited to come and chew kola, he is invoked three times as *ife* "light" which we still know as a shining phenomenon as seen below:

*Ife, taa oji,*  
*Ife, taa oji,*  
*Ife, taa oji,*  
*Ta bu eke taa oji...*

Light, chew kolanut  
Light, chew kolanut,  
Light, chew kolanut,  
Today that is *eke*, chew kolanut...

Text 4.xiii

Here the luminosity of *Chi* or *Chukwu* has been denoted by the term *ife* meaning "light" which *Chukwu* emits as *okike* when spoken with a high tone, but which, when spoken with a low tones become *okike* meaning to create<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, it is in the nature of religious language to endow an entity with form and will to animate it, so that *Chukwu* is

<sup>1</sup> On use of tones to give meaning to words, see pp. 31-32.

<sup>2</sup> See same on pp.31-32.

also conceived of as *okike* "creator, he who creates". What this tends to suggest is that *okike* is an ambiguous term that suggests both the shining and creative quality of the light of *Chukwu*, and in this sense *Chukwu* and *Anyaanwu* are integrally related in name and essence. It is therefore in endowing the sun entity with form that *Chukwu* is conceived as *okike* "creator". In another related sense it is as the physical object the sun *anyaanwu* that it has been conceived of as the luminous one *okike*. Both these variations of *okike* "rising sun", *eke* "that which shines", and *oke* "the act of shining" have, like the term itself, a *ke* root. Indeed, as the Nri-Igbo would say, *anyaanwu na-eke eke* "the sun shines" and following this, *okike anyaanwu* would mean the rising of the sun. Names like *Eke-anyaanwu* and *Eke-Chukwu* are variations of *Chukwu-okike* and again, depending on how they are intoned, would invariably express the luminosity of the entity *Anyaanwu* as *Chukwu-okike* who shines. This is what is expressed in the term *eke* also, which is the underlying quality of that mass of substance which suggests the brilliance of the light of the sun. It is therefore not surprising that the same name *eke-anyaanwu* has also its counterpart as *eke-Chukwu* "shining sky-*Chi*". When not expressed as *eke* it is *oke* as in *okechukwu* "the shining of the light of *Chukwu*". Another variant of it is *Chi-oke* "*Chi* the luminous one" itself a shortened form of *Chukwu-oke*.

#### 4.2.2 *Chi as the creator*

Confusion would arise with variations of the term *okike* such as *eke* and *oke*, both of which are shortened forms of *okike* (to shine, to create, to divide), but here we are going to look at it as another concept of *Chukwu* which means creator. Virtually all the writers on *Chi* have noted this particular character of the entity. Even in the verbal materials, evidence abound.

The capabilities of *Chukwu* from most common expressions show that they are quite immense ones, beyond the common comprehension of man since he is a spirit being that operates as a personage on a metaphysical level. In the first place, the Nri Igbo tradition has it that he is the creator *Chukwu-okike* "who created the light of this day". Not only that, he created the world and all that is in it, including the human

beings and animals, trees and forests that are in the world for as it is said, *Chukwu* is:

*Onye nwe uwa,  
Onye kelu eniigwe na uwa*

Owner of the world,  
Creator of the sky and the Earth Text 4.(xvi)a

In other verses he is expressly referred to as *Chukwu kelu uwa niine* "*Chukwu*, creator of all the world" (Text 5.(i) line 198. But apart from verses, names are also used to celebrate *Chukwu* as the one that creates. A name like *Chukwukelu* simply states that *Chukwu* created. A variant form of it, *Chukwukeluo*, becomes a prayer and a wish that *Chukwu* should continue to create onto the end of the one's life, or should it be that the days of one's light should continue to shine till the end of the person's life? This is because as another name goes, the belief is that *Chijioke* (*Chi-ji-oke*) "*Chi* holds the work of creation", and here where *oke* is seen as the shortened form of *okike*. Another name which is of interest here is *Okechukwu* meaning "*Chukwu's* creation".

#### 4.2.3 *Chi as the giver of children and money*

Because *Chukwu* holds this work of creation, and also because he it is that gives life, it is to him that petitions are made for the granting of children as is often heard in the morning kolanut prayers as in this one below:

*Ife taa oji  
Ife taa oji  
Ife taa oji  
Ta bu eke taa oji...  
Afia naano  
A ja-enweta ife di mma  
A ja-enweta ikwu na ibe  
Nweta nnwa...*

Light, eat kola  
Light, eat kola  
Light, eat kola  
Today that is *eke*, eat kola...  
In four market days

We shall have good things  
 We shall have friends and relations  
 We shall have children Text 4.(xiii) lines 1-12

In another petition, *Ezechitaoke* is called upon to come and accept kolanut and with the other spirit entities asked to bring forth children:

*Ezechitaoke, bia welu oji*  
*Mmuo niine di ebea, bia welu oji*  
*Wetebe umuaka, wetebe nwaanyi,*  
*Wetebe ego na ife oma.*  
*Ezechitaoke, biko zogide anyi-*  
*Ketebe umu*

*Ezechitaoke, come and take kola*  
 All the spirits in this land, come and take kola;  
 May you keep bringing children, may you keep  
 bringing women (we could marry)  
 May you keep bringing money and good things  
 Ezechitaoke, please keep protecting us  
 Keep creating forth children

(Text 4.iv)c 1-4

The request for women in this petition is to ensure that through them *Chukwu* will continue to bless the household with children. However, in most kolanut prayers the request is for both male and female children commonly referred to as *di ji* "master of yam" and *di ede* "master of the cocoyam" respectively as is shown in this petition below:

*Chineke Ezechitaoke, ekene...*  
*Nye anyi olili na onunu*  
*Nye anyi omumu, di ji na di ede...*

*Chineke Ezechitaoke, greetings...*  
 Give us what to eat and drink,  
 Give us children, both males and females.

Text 4.(v) 1-13

Thus *Chukwu kelu mmadu* "*Chukwu* created human beings". He is responsible to *chi omumu* which is the procreative maternal essence in women, and he decides who should have a child and who should not, so that -

*Onye si Okafo nnwa m amutana*

*Nnwa nke ya amutana-  
Onye si ana be m puo ata  
Nke be ya puo elo*

Whoever says that my son should not have a child  
May his son also not have-  
Whoever says that my compound should be overgrown  
with weeds  
May his own place be covered with mushrooms  
Text 4.(v) 20-23

In this petition above curses are used to drive the point home. Hence the importance attached to having children is one that has to do with continuity and perpetuity of the lineage. One notes the general petition for children, both male and female children; but then in many of these petitions the emphasis is on male children who will stay in the patrilineage group to continue to live and keep their memories alive as the name Afamefuna "may my name never perish" indicates. This petition for male children is seen from this prayer from Asaba in which the petitioner is not just asking for a male child but for a rascally one thus-

*Chi anyi, onye na-azo anyi  
Anyi na-ayo gi  
Ka i nyelu anyi aka n'alo-  
Nwaanyi na-acho ikpa*

Our *Chi*, who has been protecting us  
We are asking you  
To to help us this year  
The woman is asking for a rascally child  
Text 4.(vii)b

In another prayer the petitioner requests *Chukwu* to give them *nnene nnwa ya-ato ato* "a real and proper child that will live long". As this petitioner put it-

*I nye anyi nnene nnwa ya-ato ato  
Nye anyi nnene ego, ego delu ede  
Nde beanyi si na nnwa bu ife aku aku  
ife enwe-enwe  
Mmadu enwere nnwa i malu na o nwere ife obuna  
o nwelu*

If you give us the proper child that will live long,  
 You also give us the proper money  
 that is "well" earned  
 Our people are of the view that child is wealth  
 Anyone without a child has nothing

Text 4.(xi) 16-20

In Ezenwocha Ezeadirika's invocation prayer he asks *Chukwu* to give male children because *onye zasia mister mmadu ka mmadu zabakwa misita ya* "after one might have answered another's name he should have one who should also answer his own".<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.2.3.1 *Chi as the dispenser, divider*

In *okike* we also see the notion of *Chi* as the dispenser or divider of things, and this applies to its variant forms *oke*. *Okike* itself means "to divide, share out" when spoken with low tones; and *oke* is the share resulting from such a division. *Chukwu-okike* would then mean *Chukwu* who divides, and *Okechukwu* would be the share obtained from *Chukwu*, whether of life, or of children or even of money as has already been shown that he is the giver of all those. The sharing is of other diverse kinds, for it is he who separated sky from the earth, *onye kelu enu-igwe na ana*; separated man from woman *onye kelu nwoke kee nwaanyi*; separated day from night *onye kelu chi nke taa*; separated the days of the Nri-Igbo week, separated the weeks *izu* and the months *onwa* and years *aro*; and sharing out fortunes and misfortunes believed to be associated with individual *chi*. Even by the way *Chukwu* has proportioned and portioned out the physical set-up of the visible world goes further to support the fact that he is the divider.

Ezenwocha Ezeadirika, the priest of the great shrine at Oraukwu, in his incantation to the water goddess Nwocha gives us an insight into the philosophy underlining this concept of *Chi* as the dispenser of good fortunes. At a point during the invocation when the kolanut is presented to the goddess, he says to her:

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<sup>1</sup> See collected materials 5.(i) line 164.

*Okagba ekenekwa m gi*  
*Kene ife na-emelu gi ife*  
*Kene nke i na-emelu*  
*Kene akpu gi*  
*kene ngwu gi*  
*kene umu gi niine no n'obodo oyibo*  
*kene ohu mmuo gi na nnu mmuo gi-*  
*Nalu oji,*  
*Nalu oji ka i kee*  
*N'onwenu na-eke*  
*N'o bughu aka ututu;*  
*Nalu oji kee,*  
*Kenye ndi Olu*  
*Kenye ndi Igbo*  
*Kenye ani Olu*  
*Kenye ani Igbo*  
*Bulu nye Chukwu-Okike*  
*Onye pulu ime ife niine*  
*Maka a ja-ama mbu e gosi eniigwe*

*Okagba* I greet you then  
 I greet that which does things for you  
 I also greet those for whom you do things;  
 I greet your *akpu*  
 And I greet your *ngwu-*  
 I greet all your children that are in the white-man's land  
 I greet your multiple and countless spirits-  
 Accept this kolanut  
 Accept this kolanut and share out  
 For it is the owner that shares things out  
 Even if he still retains unwashed hands in the morning-  
 Carry the kolanut and share out-  
 Share out to those at *Olu*  
 And share out to those at *Igbo-*  
 Share out to spirits at *Olu*  
 Share out to spirits at *Igbo-*  
 Share out to the the earth one at *Olu*  
 And share out to the earth one at *Igbo-*  
 Carry it and give to *Chukwu okike* (the distributor)  
 Who is capable of doing all things  
 Because if one wants to throw an arrow  
 He first shows it to the sky...

Text 5.(i) 78-97

In this religious verse above the whole concept of *okike* as "sharer, distributor or dispenser" is made clearer to us. From it we gather the

significance of the kolanut ritual which is primarily designed to thank *Chukwu* for the dawn of a new day, but there is more to it. Each new day comes to individuals as shares from *Chi* or *Chukwu* and results are different for different peoples. Hence as the Igbo would say, *Chi abugh otu* "*Chi* is not the same for everyone,<sup>1</sup>" for some may be fortunate in the day while some may not. *Chi* also signifies life, life that comes from being alive to witness the dawn of a new day and which, if one is in good health, enables him to seek for sustenance that would help him survive for that particular day and if possible, for many more days to come. This is tantamount to long life and a good old age when it is more dignifying to die a natural death *onwu chi*. The breaking of this kolanut is therefore like the breaking of this new day from a pod when each individual receives his share of allotted life from the Universal largess *Chukwu* symbolized by the sun; for by breaking the kolanut and distributing it, life is being dispensed to each and everyone, which is then symbolically eaten. Hence the Nri-Igbo would say that *onye wetalu oji wetalu ndu* "he who brings kola brings life". Also in eating the kolanut, it is life -one's own share of life that is- which is being taken; when the fellow then swallows it he is ensuring that it is safe within him because again as the Nri-Igbo would say *onye a nabakwalu ndu ya noi n'afu* "anyone whose life is about to be taken from him should swallow it into his belly." It is perhaps because everyone considers his own share of life from *Chukwu* as important that the Nri-Igbo would say: *Onye si na oke lulu anyi ama elu anyi/ onye afu nwete nke ya ya tunye n'ohia* "Whoever says that our own share will never get to us, when he gets his own share, let him throw it away into the bush". (Text 4.(xiv). Again, one's share in any matter is considered so important that the Nri-Igbo also say that *a bolu luo na nke onye o noo ndu* " when a goat that has been killed is being dissected for sharing out, anyone whose own share of the meat ( tradition allocates particular parts to particular individuals) is being meddled with, let him swallow his life while fighting for it". This is to say that he must fight fiercely for his rightful share. Thus, denial of one's rightful share is thought to be a negation of the individual which is like declaring him dead, and which he must be alert to prevent if his *chi* is still awake.

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<sup>1</sup> See text 6.(iv)

When we consider how this concept relates to the individual therefore, we find that it is reflected very much in the concept of individual fortune. Individuals do not have equal shares from *Chukwu* in appearance, height, and personal fortunes, and even children born of the same parents are believed to have different endowments and fortunes from *Chukwu* as this proverb goes to explain-

*Ofu nne na-amu, ma ofu chi ada eke*

Brothers may be of one mother, but may not have been created by the same *Chi* and therefore may not have the same share of fortune.

Hence as divider, *Chi* is the sharer of individual fortunes; that is, the dispenser of all that is good and bad. So that in the day one may either be fortunate, having been attended by a good *chi* (*ezi chi*) or unfortunate having been attended by a bad *chi* as the case may be.

The notion of *Chi* as divider has also either been implied or pointed out by the writers. Arthur Glyn Leonard had identified the connection between creating and dividing when he pointed out that in division is implied the act of creativity, a point which Horton developed further in the Ibagwa creation myth having to do with the division of the world into four. It is clear that this division resulted in the four days of the Nri-Igbo week giving rise to entities like *eke*, *oye*, *afo* and *nkwo*. It can in fact also be said that these entities are aspects of *Chi* which split itself, or divided itself, into those four component parts during the act of creation; so that the three concepts of *okike* -shining one, creator and divider are interlocked and unified in one sense as they share a common field of meaning. Looking at the term *Ezechitaoke*, one could see how this comprehensive view has been compounded in one name: The term is made up of component elements of ideas such as *eze* "titled elder", *chi-ta* "light of this day" and *oke* "shining one, creator, and divider of light of *Chi*"; so that *Chukwu* is the creator because as the source of sunlight it divided the days (by splitting -recreating itself?) and sharing out component units of the light from its disk to *eke*, *oye*, *afo* and *nkwo*.

### 4.3 *Chi and Life*

In the preceding discussion we have just seen how *Chi* -in a situation where the kolanut ritual is performed- is used to express the significance of life as a share from *Chukwu* which he gives to each individual; so that just as *okike* commands a semantic field of meaning with light, divide and the creative aspects of *Chi*, so *Chi* itself commands another field of meaning with life and day, and my aim here will be to carry this relationship further. In the first place, it becomes necessary now to draw an analogy between the sun *anyaanwu* as the object and *Chukwu* as the creative will which it informs. Placing the two concepts "creator" and "shining one" side by side and relating them to the object itself which is the sun *anyaanwu* in terms of their immediate interconnectedness, it will be possible to see new shades of meaning of the concept of *Chi*. The analogy is between the two broad divisions of *Chi* -as a luminous entity from the sun *Anyaanwu*, and *Chi* as a Being, personage or "God" endowed with form as the creator. The result is this table of hierarchy following below. It will be seen that the physical entity of the *Chi* of the sun and the nominal one *Chukwu* conform or share common semblances according to their types and nature that at best can be said to be metaphorical coincidences in the way aspects of their categories synchronize.

*Anyaanwu* as the physical object and *Chukwu* as the essence

The Sun  
*Chi*

The Person  
*Chi-ukwu*

shining entity

The Creator(sharer, etc)

*eke oye afo nkwo*  
(*chi* shines to produce the four days of the Nri-Igbo week revealing the universe and living beings)

*eke oye afo nkwo*  
(*Chukwu* created the four days of the Nri-Igbo week as well as the universe and living beings)

Day

Night

Life

Death

*chi oma chi ojo ezi mmuo ajo mmuo ezi mmadu ajo mmadu*  
*good chi bad chi good spirit bad spirit good person evil person*

*chi-ta (light of today) chi m (my chi) ezi ajo*  
*chi eke (light of eke) chi gi (your chi) mmuo mmuo*  
*chi oye (light of oye) chi ya (his/her chi) (good (bad*  
*chi afo (light of afo) chi ha (their chi) spirit) spirit)*  
*chi nkwo (light of nkwo) chi anyi (our chi)*  
*chi ugo (chi of the eagle) etc*

Both from the oral and written sources, there is ample evidence to show that *Chi* is the giver of life but this is a slightly different idea when, like Henderson, one maintained that it is life itself. The first implies that he is a being who "gives" life in much the same sense as the one we had earlier pointed out, that he is the "sharer" or dispenser of life; while the second implies through the use of metaphor that, as an object, it symbolizes life. Looking at our conceptual framework, one can say that *Chi* is to life what *Anyaanwu* is to day, or shall we say that light is co-terminous with life, but we will be looking at this latter relationship in a subsequent section.

We have already noted that just as *Chukwu* is the creator of the universe and all that is in it, so also he is believed to be the giver of life. In other words, he is *onye nwe uwa* "the onwer of the world" in much the same way as he is said to be the owner of life *Chi-nwe-ndu* as one common name has it. Another name in fact states decisively that he is life itself *Chi-bu-ndu* because he alone can permit life *Chi-kwe-ndu*. *Chi* is believed to be the giver of life even as these lines go to show below:

*Chineke nna*  
*K'i gozie anyi na oji i anyi wetalu*  
*Oji a ka anyi welu na-ekene gi*  
*Gi bu nna*  
*N'oo gi kelu ife niine*  
*Kee enu*  
*Kee ana*  
*Kee anyi bu mmadu...*  
*Ifenwa anyi na-ayokwanu gi wu*

*Nnene ndu,  
Nnene aru idi ike...*

*Chineke* the father  
Bless us and the kolanut which we have brought  
With this kolanut we thank you  
You are the father  
For it is you who created everything,  
Created the sky  
And created the earth  
And created us living beings...  
What we are asking of you really is true life  
And true health. Text 4.(x) 1-15

There is a sense, therefore, in which the early morning kolanut invocation is a petition for life, a call on the *Chi* of life to come and accept the kolanut as a sign of gratitude for making one see the light of a new day. Always in these petitions the emphasis is on life:

*Chukwu kelu uwa,  
Ife itoka anyi na-ayo gi:  
Ndu, ndu, ndu.  
I nye anyi ndu, i nye anyi ego  
anyi ga-eji chekwa ndu;  
I nye anyi ego, i nye anyi mmadu  
anyi na fa ga-ebi  
Nke folu ka anyi jee n'afia golu...*

*Chukwu*, creator of the world,  
Three things we ask of you:  
Life, life, life.  
If you give us life, you give us money also  
with which to take care of life;  
If you give us money, you also give us human beings  
with whom we can live  
The rest let us go to the market and buy...  
Text 4.(xi) 1-5

In this section the stress is on life throughout. Other things are requested just to support life. One might note here that in the Nri-Igbo thought and belief system life is likened to a marketplace for as a pertinent proverb goes, *ndu bu afia, nke onye zutalu o welu* "life is a marketplace; whatever one is able to buy he takes". So that *Chukwu* can give life among other things, even though this petitioner has chosen that the central thing that mattered to him is life with which he can

struggle to fight to obtain the rest of his needs which he has used the image of going to the market (of life) to express.

It has to be said that to the Nri-Igbo it is necessary to have life and good health which is the point of the first petition and several others in the collected verses. In some it is merely implied, as it is one of the items which one has to hassle for in the "market of life". So that *Chukwu* is also believed to be the giver of good health; for in one petition, the petitioner associates life with good health and all the other accessories that go with it: *Ya bu, i nye anyi ndu, i nye anyi ahu ike/ I nyekwa anyi ihe anyi ga-eji na-atu ndu mmanu* "That is" he goes on to say, "if you give us life, you give us good health/ and also you give us the things with which to oil the wheels of life". (Text 4.(xiv)) 99-100

In this connection one has to point out that even though *Chi* is generally believed to be the giver of life from all the evidence we have seen, some prayers sometimes focus to other entities for life and this is understandable since there is no standard method prescribed which everybody must adhere or conform to; especially as the individuals making such pleas are subjective people relating to the world only as they understand it. This is mostly seen in the divided allegiance which the people show towards *Chukwu* and the other entities. In one invocation from Nsukka we could see a whole range of entities being invoked alongside *Chukwu* and these range from ancestral figures *ndi nwe ana* to the king of the sky *eze igwe* and known spirits of various days, markets and places, with *Chukwu* hardly mentioned in an invocation thought to be dealing with *Chukwu* of the sun and sky<sup>1</sup>. It might be that in those invocations he is invoked by some other names which the petitioner might be taking for granted as representing *Chukwu* such as *eze igwe* and this is just one evidence of such subjectivity. In another invocation, even though he is invoked with other entities -the ancestors, the earth and other multiple entities, the plea which is for protection does not appear to be directed to any one particular entity but seems to be an appeal to their joint assistance to protect the petitioner. A typical invocation prayer which sets out to ask for life illustrates this particular attitude by the way it calls on all the

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<sup>1</sup> See Texts 4.(iv)a-f.

different entities alongside *Chukwu* as if asking for life from all of them as is shown here below:

*Chukwu-okike,*  
*Igwe na ani,*  
*Anyaanwu Ezechite-okike,*  
*Ndi-ihii anyi:*  
*O bu ndu*  
*Na ihe e ji adi ya-*  
*Aku na uba-*  
*O bu ya ka anyi na-ayo.*

*Chukwu* the creator,  
 The Sky and the Earth,  
 The sun *Ezechite-okike*,  
 Our ancestors:  
 Life is what we ask for  
 And the necessities for living it-  
 These are what we are asking for. (Text 4.(ii) c

#### 4.4 *Chi and the day*

It has been seen that as *Chi* produces the days when it shines, so *Chukwu* is thought to have created the "light of this day", *chi nke ta*. This, in fact, is to say that he created the light of all the days in the Nri-Igbo week: *eke, oye, afo* and *nkwo*. These names, in addition to being the names of the gods of those days, are the names of the markets said to have been established by the Eze Nri after the visit by the traders from *Chukwu* in the sky. As one common *akuko iho* "story dreamed or imagined" from Nri goes, one day *Chukwu* sent the four beings -*Eke, Oye, Afo* and *Nkwo* down to the earth to visit the Eze Nri<sup>1</sup>. Each one was carrying a market basket. When they arrived the visitors were received very well by the Eze Nri in his *obi* "central living place for the lord of a household unit". But night befell them and there was no place where they could sleep. The Eze Nri then offered to let them pass the night in his abode. He asked them their names but they refused to tell him, thereby refusing to disclose their identity not wanting to disclose that they had come from the sky place. Then at night the Eze Nri consulted his *agwu* "spirit of medicine, charms and possession", after

<sup>1</sup> See Lawrence Emeka's "Eri: The Founder of the Igbo Nation" in *Uwa Ndi Igbo*, edited by Chukwuma Azuonye, 1990, pp 41-43

which he decided to send rats to the baskets which the four beings carried with them. At night the rats started nibbling the fish in the basket of one of them, and one of the visitors shouted "*Eke*, is it not your basket of fish that rats are trying to finish?" In that way the Eze Nri got to know that the name of the first of the visitors was *Eke*. The same thing repeated in each of the remaining baskets and in that way the Eze Nri got to know the names of the remaining three to be *Oye*, *Afo*, and *Nkwo*. Then in the morning the Eze Nri called each one of them by his name and they were surprised. They then told him that they had been sent by *Chukwu* to come into the world and establish the four days and four markets. The Eze Nri was happy. He said that that was what they have been wanting to have and have been waiting patiently for it. So that as soon as the four visitors left, he called the people together and told them what *Chukwu* had told him to do, thereby establishing the four days and four markets in memory of the four visiting traders which people still attend till today. Onwuejeogwu also reports this story in his book *Nri Kingdom and Hegemony* (1981:66).

From the above, it is significant that these four traders are seen as beings sent by *Chukwu* from the Sky. Hence they are on the one hand, spirit beings, and on the other living beings. By their visit the greatest economic institution which the Nri Igbo ever had was established, which was the market system. These markets regulated the fortunes of men and women in society, and the success of an individual in the day is like his success in economic matters which enables him to take the *ozo* title, the highest title in the land which the Nri-Igbo believe usually come from *Chukwu*.

Thus there is a sense in which the days also regulate the economic fortunes of individuals; and conceptually also, these markets are linked with the life of individuals in society for if *Chi* is thought to be life, the Nri-Igbo would further say that "life is a marketplace *ndu bu ahia* in which people are constantly carrying out transactions", so that *onye zuchaa o naa* "whoever finishes his business in this world, goes "home" (to his maker) at the end of the day when the market closes".

The relation of *Chi* to day(light) can further be explained from the evidence which some verbal expressions have afforded us, which is also

related to the ritual acts themselves such as the rite of breaking the kolanut already noted. Basden has already told us that the expression *chi efo* means "day has dawned", but usually this dawn is heralded by the blowing of the horn of creation *odu okike*. This suggests that dawn is either conceived of as the time of creation, or is the same thing as creation. In this sense creation to the Nri Igbo might have been understood to be the day the sun first shone on the world to light up everywhere for men to behold the living beings and vegetations and rivers and the earth already there and now becoming revealed from the darkness as dawn started to approach. One would therefore venture to hazard the guess that *Eke*, believed to be the first day of the Nri Igbo native week, was the day the first light of creation might have appeared *iwa awa* ; and which would lend support to the saying that *uwa walu awa* "the world appeared spontaneously". There is a near similarity between *Eke* which when spoken with a low tone means "the one who creates by shining forth its light and also distributes" and *Eke*, the first day in the Nri-Igbo week, which when spoken with a high tone, might go to translate as "the created one, that which has come forth out of the shining or creation of *Chi* "

The last greeting in the day which the Nri-Igbo would say to a person, that is a greeting like the English "goodnight", is *ka chi fo* "may day break". It is an expression which is both a prayer and a wish for the one to whom it is addressed that he should be able to awaken in the following day (of light) *alive* to witness the light of a new day. When the following day then comes and he is awake and alive, he then carries out the ritual of breaking the kolanut to thank the sky entity, *Anyaanwu*, for making it possible for him to see the light of a new day, *chi*, once more. But in his personal relationship with this new day he calls it *chi m* "my *chi*" which immediately gives it a new dimension as a being that is capable of doing things for the person. This being is even made to appear more formal as a god or spirit when a prayer is addressed to it as in this one:

*Chi m,*  
*Chi ugo malu ugo nzu n'iru,*  
*Chi onye anoghi n'izu ma onwu egbuna ya*  
*Nye m ndu mu na umuazi,*  
*I dobe nnoo ndu mu na umuazi*  
*Garube aro, egbuolu m gi okuko*

My *chi*,  
*Chi* of the eagle that powdered the eagle  
 with white-chalk  
 If one's *chi* is not in conspiracy with his enemies  
 Death does not take him.  
 Give me life and also the life of my children.  
 If you preserve us all till the coming year  
 I shall offer you a chicken. Text 4.(xvi)

This prayer is significant in many ways. In the first place, being an early morning prayer that is supposed to be addressed to *Chukwu*, it shows the relationship between *Chukwu* and the personal *chi* of the individual which acts as the mediator between the individual and *Chukwu*. Also, it shows the relationship between *Chukwu* and the personal *chi* which directly influences the individual but which he could manipulate. In manipulating this personal *chi*, *Chukwu* is thereby influenced, foiled or subordinated. So that one is capable of obtaining life from *Chukwu* through one's personal *chi* and not immediately directly. Hence, when it comes to matters requiring that evil *chi* (*ajo chi*) from *Chukwu* needs to be foiled as Horton informs us, man creates *uluchi* by which he tries to foil it, or manipulate it. Besides, it is observed that it is a prayer said by a woman; even now that she is awake and alive, she still asks for more days as line six shows which is for *Chi* to extend her life and that of her children till the coming year. She goes on to promise the "being" an offering of a chicken if he does this for her. By this direct address to the *chi* of day one begins to see how the phenomenal entity is being given form. This is made more clear by the fact that promises are made to it as if it is a person to be cajoled for its favours. Part of the cajoling is the praise it gives it as the "*chi* of the eagle that powdered the eagle with white chalk". White chalk here is symbolic also as it is the ritual object that is used to signify the white light of the sun and the day, and this matches with the white colour of a mature eagle which has caused her to talk of the *chi* of the eagle. On this level then the eagle has a *chi* associated with it, as do many entities that have their own *chi* which they have derived from the particular fortune which the object obtains from its *chi*. For example, the cow that has no tail is also said to have a *chi* because it does not so much appear to be troubled by flies, meaning that some fortunate spirit has been protecting it and guarding it from the torment of flies.

#### 4.5 *Chi and the seasons*

Also in this connection of using *Chi* to express the light of the day, or daylight, *Chi* is also used to express the weather conditions of the day and we can see this in the way this weather is seen in terms of the relative humidity or dryness of the *chi* of the day. Two dominant weather conditions are witnessed in the Nri-Igbo geographical set up, and these are the wet and dry seasons respectively *-udummili* and *okochi*. *Udummili* means "period of wetness of the days", while *okochi* is the "period of the dryness of the days". When we take a closer look at the later term we observe the *chi* base to which *oko* is prefixed. This later term *oko* "state of dryness of a thing, place etc" is derived from *iko*, -"that which is capable of drying", which is used to establish this dryness of the *chi* of the day. Hence the Nri-Igbo would use the expression *ihu chi* "face of *chi* of the day" while talking of the weather condition of the day, which might be rainy or dry as the case may be. Thus, they would be saying that *ihu chi gulu mmili* "the weather is wet, is dripping wet" when they mean to say that the day's weather is a rainy one, or that *chi gulu mmili* "the day makes one to hunger for water, rain" when they mean to say that it is dry and therefore needs to be calmed down by rain.

#### 4.6 *Chi, life and Day(light)*

The invocation petition is a prayer for life among other things and this as the days come and go and one is able to live to see them. Hence the creation of such names as Chikeluo "may the light of *Chi* continue to shine on me till the end of my days". Implied in this is the prayerful wish that *chi* continues to "create" the one steadfastly using the resources of his light *till the end of his days*; so that one can actually say that one implied the other and vice versa since both the shining of the sun and the creative act are in integral relationship from our scheme. Thus, the association has been the frequent linking of *Chi* with the days, so that to appropriate *Chi* is to appropriate a portion of the light of day that gives this life. Hence the symbolic planting of the *oha chi* "the sacred plant of *chi*" at the shrine of the god which is what is most times represented by the shrine of *anyaanwu*. This life is the life

that comes from the light *ife* of the sun, so that *chi* is *chi* of daylight as in *Chi-ife*.

*Chi* is therefore believed to be the giver of life as light is believed to be necessary for it. Thus, to say that *Chukwu* is the creator -that is, the source of light of creation, is to imply that he is the giver of life. In some of the verbal expressions the association is at times between life given by *Chukwu*, and day which he had created and in the lines that follow we have this explicit connection between the two:

*Eke Chukwuoke, taa oji-  
Ka ndu m dili  
Taa bu eke.*

*Eke Chukwuoke, eat kola-  
May my life remain  
On this eke day. Text 4.(iv)d*

Indeed, this is a matter of the *chi* of daylight being synonymous with life, as *Chukwu* is the one asked to ensure life on each day as days come and go. This is to say, in other words, that the request for life is more often than not a request for more days, long life that is, hence this petitioner here is asking *Chukwu* to allow him see more days till the hair on his head turns white:

*Chukwu-okike m, na ndi nna nna m,  
Ekene m unu  
Makana unu melu ka m ji whu uboshi ta;  
Ka m whukwa uboshi ozoga  
Lue mgbe ishi m ga-acha ocha;*

My creator *Cukwu* and my forefathers,  
I greet you all  
Because you made me to see the light of this day;  
May I see other days ahead  
Till my hair turns grey (Text 4.(ii) a)

From the above interconnections between *Chi* and life and day, it is seen that *Chukwu* who gives life is what in the Nri-Igbo sensibility is likened to the day which gives light. The people say that light is life *Chi bu ife*; and whose opposite, night, is death -they would appear to be saying too.

#### 4.7 *Chi, night and death*

Just as *chi* is associated with the light of day, so also it is associated with its opposite, night, which is the period of the absence of the white light of the sun. Hence, we notice the occurrence of the *chi* roots in the term *uchichi* which means night. As the common belief goes, night is the time when people die their natural deaths *onwu chi* when they have completed their stay on earth; so that any death by day can only be a tragic one designed by the evil machination of *ogbunike* "one who kills by violent means". In such tragic circumstances the Igbo say that *chi ewelugo efifie jie* "night has fallen suddenly in broad daylight". Because of this, their greeting to one another at the end of day is *ka chi fo* "may day break (for us to be alive to see it again), which is both a wish and a prayer. Because of this danger of death which the night holds for the Nri-Igbo night has come to be one of the most dreaded elements in the Nri-Igbo psychology when many evil things are thought to happen and when people meet monsters with many heads, a bad time to risk going out without the aid of light.

##### 4.7.1 *Chi as the author of death*

As day alternates with night, so life alternates with death, so that by analogy the light of the sun is to life what the darkness of night is to death. *Chukwu*, the creator of the light of life is invariably the author of death and destruction.<sup>1</sup> Thus living and dying are locked up in the contradiction proposed by light and darkness;<sup>2</sup> so that as *Chukwu* can give life so too he can take it, as he can give light so he can withdraw it. This birth and death of day is what the Nri-Igbo appear to have found in the birth and death of man as this proverb suggests here:

*Oku ibua ka Chukwu na-akpo mmadu; o kpo ya na ndu,  
o kpo ya n'onwu*

<sup>1</sup> See the story of how Death came into the world: collected materials Text 8.(i)a. It is significant that *Chukwu* who is the giver of life is also the author of death: That *Chukwu* gave the dog fire to bring to the human beings show the possible association of the sun with fire and heat as we shall see later.

<sup>2</sup>See the analogy between light and life on one hand and darkness and death on the other hand in the scheme shown on p.151

*Chukwu* calls a man twice in life; at birth when he is born, and then at death when he ceases to breath.

Text 3.(xxiii)

This life is what in some versions of this proverb has been symbolised by white-clay *nzu* while death has been symbolised by the red pigment from camwood *ufie*. At birth a child is believed to be sacred, having come newly from *Chukwu*, and so white-clay is used all over his body. At death while returning back to *Chukwu* red camwood is used all over his body which symbolises his demise. In the former case the use of white-clay can be understood, as it is symbolic of the white light of the sun of creation. It is also common in the latter case for mourners to dress in black -itself the colour of the darkness of night, to indicate the passing of a life that is like the passing of day.

*Chukwu* who is believed to be all good also has the power to kill or do away with the life of anyone thought to be evil. This is what has been conveyed to us in the petition below:

*Ndi ana takwa nu oji aa,  
Oo kwa ndu,  
Ndu nwoke anwuna  
Ndu nwaanyi anwuna...  
Onye si ele anyi si nodu adiro ya mma  
Onye oo-  
N'isi gi-  
O buro m gbulu ya, oo Chukwu gbulu onyeobu...*

Our ancestors, here is kola,  
Life is what we are asking for,  
Let no man die  
Let no woman die  
But whoever is not happy this way we live  
Such a one-  
May it be on his head (ie., let him die)  
I am not the one who killed him, it's *Chukwu*...

Text 4.(xiii) 16-23

At this point, it has to be recalled that after the creation of the world *Chukwu* was able to demonstrate that he had this power to bring about life or cause death when he asked living beings to make a choice between the two. But because the dog (the most faithful friend of

human beings among the animal species) who was given the message by human beings to take to him, delayed on the way, he was overtaken by the frog who instead requested for death for them as a way of curbing their powers over those of them that are animals of prey. *Chukwu* accepted this request which was the first to come to him, and since then has been exercising it even though he tried to compensate human beings with fire which he gave the dog instead to bring down to them in order to solve their energy needs.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is this power of *Chukwu* to kill or bring about death better demonstrated than in this children's song below:

*Gini mebelu onwu*  
*Chukwu mebelu onwu*  
*Onwu gbulu ewu*  
*Ewu nulu mmili*  
*Mmili menyulu oku*  
*Oku lijili mkpo*  
*Mkpo kpowalu ukwa*  
*Ukwa dagbulu Nweke Njehilionna*

What made death?  
*Chukwu* made death  
 Death killed goat  
 Goat drank up water  
 Water put out fire  
 Fire burnt the axe  
 Axe split the breadfruit  
 The breadfruit fell and killed  
 Nweke Njehilionna.

Text 7.(ii)a 12-20

Thus with *Chukwu* the thesis and anti-thesis posed by life and death are as inevitable as that proposed by day and night. To the Nri-Igbo therefore, to live is to die and vice-versa because as the saying goes *onwu adighi ndu ama adi* "if there is no death there will be no life". *Chukwu* seems to demonstrate this view of life amply in one story of how yam and cocoyam came to the people: At that time there was so much famine in the world that the *Eze Nri* had to appeal to *Chukwu* for help. *Chukwu* then ordered him to kill his son and daughter and bury them in separate graves. After *Eze Nri* had done

<sup>1</sup> See collected materials 8.(i)a. This has to do also with the fire which *Chukwu* gave the dog to bring to human beings.

this, from the grave of the son yam grew and from the grave of the daughter cocoyam also grew up, the two staple food types of the Nri-Igbo people.<sup>1</sup> Even though this story operates on a more symbolic level, what is important to note is the death of one form of life which resulted in the birth of another through the involvement of *Chukwu*.

4.8 *Chi and individual destiny:  
ezi chi "good fortune" & ajo chi "evil fortune"*

Anyone who is smitten by a misfortune in the course of the day as, for example, he is smitten by *ogbunike* who causes death by violent means has had *ajo chi* "evil fortune". The same would apply if he were a trader and he lost his merchandise at sea, or he was simply one who was so unfortunate that an aeroplane crashed into his house and destroyed him. But if, on the other hand, he is smitten by some calamity and he was able to escape death, such a one is said to have *ezi chi* "good fortune". Hence, one's fortune in the day in any event or circumstance is determined by the way *chi* is disposed to him, in which case he could have *ezi chi* "good fortune" or *ajo chi* "evil fortune". Thus, among other things, *ezi chi* would be giving life to an individual, while *ajo chi* gives death.

But it is possible to think of *Chi* differently as a concept which the Nri-Igbo devised as a means of controlling their destiny in life rather than it controlling them. Reference has already been made to the concept of *isedata chi* "drawing down *Chi* from the sun" which suggests that man is actively manipulating his *chi* and entering into relationships with it which, depending on his personal drive, he could be master of ; or it becomes master of him. The implication of this is that in drawing down *Chi* he is appropriating his share of the universal largesse on one hand, as well as appropriating his portion of light of the sun which gives life to him through the life of the sacred *oha chi* in the shrine of his personal *chi*. It is this life that is influenced from time to time by the whimsical spirits of the day which come either as *ezi chi* "good fortune" or *ajo chi* "evil fortune". We have also seen how this applies to *ulu chi* which is the antidote used to check the evil influence of *ajo chi* "evil fortune".

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<sup>1</sup> See Onwuejeogwu (1981:64).

#### 4.9 *Chi and chi m "personal god"*

The appropriation of *Chi* of the sun becomes what has been personalized as *chi m* "my *chi*", now a lesser *chi* with which an individual enters into an active relationship and through which he is able to reach *Chukwu*. This is the entity which writers have variously referred to as "personal god", "the vital spark in man", individual genius", "the ego", "the animus", "the shadow" and so on. This, in whatever name it is conceived, is what is constantly controlling or affecting one either as *ezi chi* "good fortune" or *ajo chi* "evil fortune" as we have already seen; and since in character and essence it is a reflection of the superior *chi*, *Chukwu* is also either good or evil. But the *chi* of an individual is attached to him as his shadow, recreating him, or frustrating him as the case may be, and so reflects the force of character of the individual. If he is strong and dynamic, then his *chi* is strong and dynamic, in which case the individual will be manipulating it, telling it what to do and leading it on for as an Nri-Igbo proverb goes, *onye kwe chi ya ekwe* "If one affirms and is determined to say yes (i.e. to succeed in life or any endeavour) his *chi* will have no alternative but to agree and come along with him". But if he is a lazy type with no zest for life his *chi* will take over, frustrating him, controlling him, tormenting him. But in whatever condition one might be in, he is capable of making his existential choice between success and failure. This is the significance of the rituals connected with the *ikenga* symbol of a man's strength or will, for if the *ikenga* is a failure, the one concerned is capable of rejecting the particular object of symbol and re-establish another one that he might hope to do better for him; but after carrying out the appropriate rituals for installing the new one. Where he does not have the will to do something to change his lot, then he continues to grovel in his own self defeat.

Apart from ensuring one's success or failure, *chi* is also seen as the guardian and protector of an individual for in one petition, this personal entity is called upon to be present always to protect the one as in these lines:

*Chi m, taa oji,*  
*Chi m, laa mmanya,*  
*Chi m, zoo mu,*

*Chi m, ekwena ka ife mee mu*  
*Chi m, ndu nwa mu, nyelu m aka.*

My *chi*, chew kola,  
 My *chi*, drink wine,  
 My *chi*, protect me,  
 My *chi*, do not let anything happen to me,  
 My *chi*, the life of my child, please help me.

Text (4.iii) e

Here again, we notice that this work of protection is not the exclusive prerogative of the personal agent because *Chukwu* and the ancestral spirits and the various spirits which live in the land are also called for protection when this is needed. This is illustrated by this petition below:

*Arua, kwuo aka ututu*  
*Kwuo aka ututu Eke*  
*Ezechitaoke, bia welu oji;*  
*Ani nee, o bu oji,*  
*Ani nee, o bu oji*  
*Zigide umu gi niine, biko.*  
*Zogide umu gi niine, biko*  
*Zogide umu gi niine, biko*  
*Iyi Nsukka, bia taa oji, zogide*  
*Umunne Ngwu niine,*  
*Zogide umu Iyioke niine ebe fa jedobelu*  
*Biko, biko ishi gi diba.*

Arua, wash your hand for the morning  
 Wash your hand for the morning, Eke  
*Ezechitaoke*, come and take kolanut;  
 Earth One, look, it is kolanut-  
 See, Earth one, it is kolanut.  
 Keep protecting all your children, please  
 Keep protecting all your children, please  
 Keep protecting all your children, please  
 Iyi Nsukka, come and eat kola, protect  
 All the children of Ngwu,  
 Keep protecting all the children of Iyioke  
 anywhere they might be  
 Please, please may your shrine-head remain.

(Text 4.iv) b1-13

Here in this petition, all the various entities are called upon to come and protect the individual and these include the founding ancestor, Arua, *Eke*, the "head" of the spirits of the week-days, *Chukwu* himself, the Earth one, and *Iyi Nsukka*, the river goddess of Nsukka people.

Like *Chukwu*, the personal *chi* is also seen as *mmuo* "spirit being"; hence those his contradictory aspects, *ezi chi* "good *chi* " and *ajo chi* "evil spirit" can also be referred to as *ezi mmuo* "good *mmuo* " or *ajo mmuo* "evil *mmuo* ". Also, *okwu chi*, the shrine of *Chi* which invariably constitutes the personal altar of the *chi* of the individual through which *Chukwu* is reached, is also *okwu mmuo*. It is also in this sense that all the other *chi* entities *eke*, *oye*, *afo* and *nkwo*, could be seen as *mmuo* entities "spirit beings", hence the Nri-Igbo would talk of *chi eke*, *chi oye*, *chi afo* and *chi nkwo* as they would talk of *mmuo eke*, *mmuo oye*, *mmuo afo* and *mmuo nkwo*. In petitioning the personal *chi*, the individual could also choose to invoke the personal *mmuo* as in these lines below:

*Mmuo m, chebe m ndu*  
*Na egosi m uzo m ga-esi na-aga n'iru*  
*Dobe umu m ndu*  
*Gozie ezi na ulo m*  
*Na egbopuru m ajo ihe*  
*Ekwela amusu bata be m*  
*Ma o bu metu umu m aka.*

My spirit one, protect my life,  
 Keep showing me the way to success,  
 Keep my children alive,  
 Bless my family,  
 Keep warding away evil from me,  
 Do not let witches to enter my house  
 Or touch my children. (Text 4.vii)

Indeed, it is this *mmuo* "spirit force" of an individual, alternatively termed as his *chi*, that is believed to be incarnated in the form of *ikenga* symbol which is the symbol of one's struggle and determination to succeed in life. This being so, there is a sense in which it could be said to represent in essence the individual self by which a man enters into a relationship with his *Chi*, which is another way *Chi* is conceived. Hence, the *chi* of a man is commonly associated with his

*ikenga* as Northcote Thomas and Basden had said. For the women this personal *chi* is symbolized by the tiny small clay-pots called *umuoku*, which represent the procreative maternal role of women in society. Thus, *chi* is conceived as having something to do with various roles of men and women in society which is differentiated along sexual lines. Therefore, a woman's *chi* is expected to relate to her according to her domestic role as wife, bearer of children, mistress of the kitchen place where food is cooked and served -so that all her petitions will have to do with issues of fair treatment to her by her husband and relations to whom she is married. As such, her petitions necessarily have to do with matters of a happy and peaceful domestic home and the good health and protection of the children. For the men on the other hand, their *chi* often has to relate to them in matters that have to do with the economic stability of the household unit as providers for the family, aiding them to achieve progress in life by their ability to accumulate wealth in order to be well disposed to take the highest title in the land which is the *ozo* title.

#### 4.10 *Chi and the "ozo" title*

Talking of the *ozo* title, it was Leonard who had pointed to the relationship of this term to *Chi*. It is usual for anyone taking this title to undergo the *ichi* facial scarification, *igbu ichi*. This involves the practice of tattooing the face of the prospective title-taker with with an emblem which Jeffreys has said is in the form of the winged solar disc, the emblem representing the *Chi* of the sun. In this, stripes of flesh are made on the face of the candidate beginning from the brow to the top of the bone of the nose rather like rays fanning out from side to side of the chin to a point just below the ear. The tattoo itself is called *ichi*.

To take the title one would have passed the various stages of his initiation and socialization to manhood; that is, he would have set up his own abode, instituted his own *chi* altar, married and had had children. Above all, he would have achieved success in life by acquiring political and economic power. All these stages represent stages in his development which is attributed to the fact that his *chi* loves him -*chi ya fulu ya n'anya* ; or that he is fortunate with his *chi* -*onye chi oma* ; or that his *chi* is by his side supporting him him -*chi ya nonyelu ya*.

This is in fact the stage when he must have attained maturity in age, wisdom and emotion, comparable to the stage when an eagle has attained such maturity with the feathers on his body changing from black to white. This white feather of the eagle is in itself the symbol of the man's identification with the white light of *chi* on one level, because he now starts to plume his red cap with four white feathers of the eagle; and on another level he uses it to match his dignity, strength and nobility with that associated with the eagle. The taking of the title also testifies to the kind of individual success of a person which is witnessed in the *ikenga* symbol of his strength and drive to achieve success in life. Above all, it is a *chi* that must have been creating and recreating him to achieve his fullest potentials in life (*Chikeluo*); a *chi* that, in fact, he had more or less directed to bring success to him through his affirmation of his individual will to succeed, and which on top of that had been protecting him and guarding him from harm (*Chizoba*) till he had reached an advanced age without meeting *chi ojo* "evil *chi*" on the way. A typical *ajo chi* is seen when one dies violently before his appointed time at the interference of the bloody one, *ogbuniike*. So that, by taking the *ozo* title, he is at the height of his life when he achieves a union with *Chukwu* of the sun and has achieved success in life through wealth and fame which is the yardstick for perfection as a man; for as one Nri-Igbo saying goes, *ego bu mma nwoke*, "money, wealth is the beauty of a man" This is also the time he is entitled to wear the eagle feather on his cap, the white feather representing this state of perfection and dignity associated with the white eagle. This is what is celebrated in many *ozo* title songs as this one below:

*Eze ozo olooo*  
*Aa-eeee*  
*Eze ozo olooo*  
*Aa-eeee*  
*Eze ozo nke chili echi*  
*I chipugolu chibelu anyi o*  
*Eze ozo nke chili echi*  
*Ogbuehi Odinannwa buru igwe*  
*Okpala eze oloooo*  
*Aa-eeee*

O "king" *ozo*  
*Aa-eeee*

O "king" *ozo*  
 Aa-eeee  
*Ozo* "king" who has taken a title  
 You have taken a title and done it for us  
*Ozo* "king" who has taken a title  
 Ogbuehi who at a young age took a title  
 and became *igwe*  
 Son of a king  
 Aa-eeee.           Text (6.viii) b

Here in this song he is called *eze* "king, distinguished one" who had taken the *ozo* title *ichi eze*, meaning that it is after taking such a title that the one is entitled to append the word *eze* to his name. The title *eze* signifies the highest honour that anyone can aspire to, hence it is as high as *igwe* "the sky place above" which is the ultimate height in the physical world. It has its privileges however, among which is the prerogative to set up a spirit force *alusi* by which he can mediate between living beings and the spirits. In another song he is described specifically as the "*eze* who has plumed the eagle feather" as in these lines below.

*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
 Eeee, *eze tubelu ugo n'ezi-*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi,*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
 Eeee, *eze tubelu ugo n'ezi;*  
*Omelu- ka- o- kwulu*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
 Eeee, *eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
*Onyinye Chi nyelu*  
*Eze tubelu ugo n'ezi*  
 Eeee, *eze tubelu ugo n'ezi.*

*Eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open  
 Eeee, *eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open  
*Eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open,  
*Eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open  
 Eee, *eze* who has plumed the eagle feather  
 He- who- does- as- he- says  
*Eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open  
 Yes, *eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open  
 Gift which has come from *Chi*  
*Eze* who has plumed the eagle feather in the open  
 Yes, *eze* who has plumed the eagle feather. Text 6.(viii)a

Thus, *ozo* title is the stage when the individual is capable of wearing the eagle feather in the open. This is achieved by sheer supreme personal effort aided by one's personal *chi*, hence the reference to the titled one as he who does as he says which is like restating or reaffirming the proverb that if one says yes then his *chi* can do nothing but to accept. Yet in another song this point is emphasized that the *ichi* title of *ozo* has come from *Chukwu*:

*Ebunu nnwa m*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Ebunu nnwa m*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Nna nyelu m ugo*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwukwu nyelu m ugo*  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu chiri m eze*  
*jekwe nje.*

Ram my child  
*jekwe nje*  
 Ram my child  
*jekwe nje*  
 Father gave me the eagle feather  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu* gave me the eagle feather  
*jekwe nje*  
*Chukwu* crowned me king  
*jekwe nje.* Text (6.viii) d

An elder is therefore one who is expected to have taken this title because most titled elders become *ichie* "potential ancestor" in life and which he actually realises in death. In other words, a dead elder (*ichie*) becomes an ancestor, seen as the one capable of being reincarnated in newly born members of the lineage. Any one who dies without attaining this stage of distinction in life died either by mishap or was simply lazy and unable to perpetuate himself by not taking the title. Such a one, if he died violently, is simply *ajo mmuo* "evil spirit" capable of causing harm and destruction; and if he merely lived without achieving anything in life -that is, without marrying and having children to whom

he would be responsible and who will keep his memory alive when he died, such a one is *akamogeli* "a worthless, useless spirit" suggesting the useless life he lived. The *ichie* is therefore a person who has been able to make his pact with his *chi* that he would definitely join the revered assembly of ancestors in spiritland when he dies. Is it any wonder therefore that this *chi* root still persists in the term itself?

#### 4.11 *Chi as the shadow*

Shelton pointed to the interview he had with some informants in which some held that *Chi* has to do with the shadow of a man. This is illustrated by one proverb which says that *onye bulu chi ya uzo o gbagbuo onwe ya n'oso* "one who moves ahead of his *chi* runs eternally". In literal terms this statement means that one's *chi* is stuck to him like his shadow, so that it is not possible that he will ever run ahead of it and leave him behind. What it teaches, however, is humility, and the need that one should not run ahead of his destiny. In this connection therefore, we see *Chi* as the natural shadow cast by the sun, which is stuck to an individual just as the light of the sun that animates him and keeps him alive. This will be suggesting to us that it is a living person that necessarily has a shadow. This shows, in other words, that his shadow is the index of his being alive. Again, it could be seen as one's destiny that is attached to him. If this is so, then the possible location of a man's *Chi* is not inside of a man as "the divine afflatus, or spark" as many writers tended to say, but outside of him. This is because one's shadow is outside of him. Not only that, the *ikenga*, the symbol of one's *chi* self, is also outside of him. But more interesting is the fact that the individual's *chi* shrine is usually located outside his *obi*, the pulsating centre of his household like the heart of man, his *obi*, where the central activity which holds life together takes place. To fully appreciate this point we have to consider the fact that the *obi*, a man's central living place within a walled compound, is the heart-throb of the household unit socially and culturally, just as the heart is the soul of the body -with the *chi* of the individual outside of him just as the *okwu chi* "the sacred *Chi* altar" of the individual is located outside his *obi*. So that even though Henderson could talk of "the king in every man", one begins to see it in terms of the advanced status of an *eze* "king, titled elder" which the individual has acquired through the aid of his

individual *chi*, and not necessarily in the sense that this *chi* resides in the individual as the "divine afflatus or spark" which many writers on *Chi* had tried to suggest.

#### 4.12 *Chi, & Igwe "the sky" & Enu" the place above" etc.*

It is the common practice of the Nri Igbo to raise shrines to *Chukwu* in the form of altars of sacred groves which have grown from four stalks of the *ogilisi* sacred plant, and commonly termed to be *okwu Chi* or *Okwu Chukwu* "altar of *Chi* or *Chukwu*". At least this is the common practice in the areas of the ancient town of Nri and associated settlements. Such an altar will represent the shrine of *Chi* and *Anyaanwu* and *Agbala*. Even here it is also possible to see these shrines as not necessarily combined in one, hence there might be a separate shrine of *Chi* and another separate one for *Anyaanwu* and another for *Agbala*, but they would appear to represent conceptually one field of meaning even though this might have come about by the way the lord of the household has chosen to set them apart from one another. The same rituals that take place in one would also take place in the other, showing that they are rituals that related each entity to the personal *Chi* of the person. In the Nsukka sub-culture area it does appear that the shrine of *Anyaanwu* is more frequently established but which from the invocations we see that they are shrines raised to *Ezechukwuoke*, or *Chukwu*. In the Nike area, the shrine of *Chukwu* is simply referred to as *okuke*. The point here is that *Chi* is variously conceived as different things in different places depending on the angle from which each of these groups see it. For the Nri people proper, it represents this unity of *Chi* and *Anyaanwu* "the sun" and *Agbala* "the Immense one". At Nsukka this unity is not necessarily witnessed in the form the shrine takes but in the form of the name of the entity being served by it. Hence, in *Ezechitaoke* we witness the components of a titled elder signified by *eze*, the *chi* of the sun *Anyaanwu* (which shines) signified by *oke*, and by the *chi* of the day signified by *chi-ta*.

But on the other hand, it is common to see shrines set up to either the sun *anyaanwu* or even to *agbara* which live and function as *alusi* to be consulted by people for help over matters which do not

necessarily have to do with *Chi*. A good example of this is the oracle of the hills and caves described by Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart*, which has the connotation of being a dangerous spirit which possesses Chielo, his priestess. Here we notice that the one who officiates for it is a woman who has no title of *ozo* and who in any case is not entitled to take it since it is an exclusively male title.

This same state of affairs is also to be seen with the concept which associates *Chi* with *igwe*; hence, *Chukwu* is at times referred to as *eze igwe* "king of the sky" or *eze enu* "king of the place above". *Igwe* "sky" and "*enu*" thus remain in complementary relationship with *Chi*. We have seen several references to *aja eze enu* which is sacrifice to the king of the place above otherwise referred to as *ajachi* "sacrifice to *Chi*". One only has to look at some of the petitions which refer to it as *igwe ka ana* "Sky greater than the earth", or to the sacrificial ceremony referred to as *aja eze enu* "sacrifice to the king above". And yet it is possible to see shrines that are set up to *Igwe* which do not bear any direct connection to *Chukwu* or *Chi*, hence it will be possible for Meek to suggest that *Chukwu* is a separate entity at the head of the pantheon followed by *anyaanwu* "the sun" and *igwe* "the sky" and *Amadioha* "lightning", *ala* "earth deity" and so on.

It is true that metaphorically speaking *Chukwu* can be said to be the sky greater than the earth *igwe ka ana*, but this is not to lose sight of the fact that the term *igwe-ka-ala* is the name of the Awka oracle and later of the Umuneoha oracle which operated at the same time as the *Chukwu* of the Aro. Both of these oracles had superseded that of Awka at the time of the coming of the slave trade, and it might have been possible that many years afterwards after the slave trade era the term began to be used for the Nri-Igbo *Chukwu* as has been found in some of the verbal materials. At times the term *Ibini Ukpaabi*, itself a corruption of the *Ibibio Ibritam* which is the express term used for the *Chukwu* of Arochukwu is heard being used for the *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo group. It is also in this connection that the *Ibibio* term *Obasi* has been adopted in many parts of southern Igbo area for *Chukwu* of the Aro and which at times is believed to represent the *Chukwu* of the Nri-Igbo area. What this signifies is that there has been several shifts in concept regarding this sky one between the Aro and the Nri-Igbo groups.

#### 4.13 *Chi and Agbala "The Immense One"*

In one invocation *Chi* was referred to as *Chukwu-okike*, *Anyaanwu na Agbala* "*Chukwu* the creator/shining one, the sun and mighty one", who is seen as "he who created the light of this day (*onye kelu chi nke taa*)"<sup>1</sup> This particular invocation establishes the unity of those terms which stand or reveal aspects of *Chukwu*, even as the common verb-object relations which it shares with *Agbala* and the sun *Anyaanwu* will go to show. In the diagram itself given earlier on, we have tried to separate the object itself from the being or creator. But what of the term *agbala*? Several interpretations have been given to it and following some of the writers like Leonard and Basden, Onwuejeogwu provides a meaning that suggests that it has to do with the procreative aspect of *Chi*. Basden in particular has associated it with *omumu* which has to do with the fertility in women, and Onwuejeogwu has simply extended this to be definitive of the term *Agbala*. There is also the fact that it is also used to apply to the titled elders who are more often than not referred to as *agbala nze* -who are the distinguished ones who had taken the highest title in the land. The implication of this will be found in the meaning of the word itself which will tend to extend the "bigness" of *Chukwu* already denoted by the *ukwu* and *ka* elements often suffixed to *Chi*. Hence, being onomatopoeic, it combines the notions of the largeness and depth of the entity as a personage which is also used to associate individuals of impressive character and personality. These are men who have achieved titles or recognition of some sort that are based on traditional values; but which for women has to do with child-bearing, title-taking and social standing or even sheer gift of size where they are tall and impressive to look at. Ultimately it deals with the highest level of human achievement which for women is counted in terms of their ability to have many children and for men in their ability to achieve the highest title through having so much wealth.

#### 4.14 *Chi, & mmuo "spirit" , & other phenomenal entities*

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<sup>1</sup> See text 4.(vii) of collected materials.

*Agbala* is the immense power behind *Chukwu*, or the particular influence it exerts but which could be also applied to distinguished men and women of the society. *Agbala*, when applied to *Chukwu*, is this unseen force *mmuo*, and *Chukwu* is *mmuo* "spirit being". As one invocation prayer has it, instead of invoking *Chukwu*, the petitioner calls on his *mmuo* which also stands for the personal god *chi m* as we have here below:

*Mmuo m, chebe m*  
*Na egosi m uzo m ga-esi na-aga n'iru*  
*Dobe umu m ndu*  
*Gozie ezi na ulo m*  
*Na egbopuru m ajo ihe*  
*Ekwela amosu bata be m*  
*Ma o bu metu umu m aka.*

My spirit force, protect me  
 Show me always the way to follow to progress  
 Protect my children  
 Bless my family  
 Always chase away evil spirits from me  
 Do not let witches to enter my house  
 Or touch my children Text 4.(vii)a

The same will be said of the lesser *chi* entities, *eke*, *oye*, *afo* and *nkwo*, all believed to be *mmuo* also. There are also river spirits, as well as the spirit of the ancestors. All these constitute *ezi mmuo* "good spirits" but when they exert an evil influence as *ogbuniike* does, -the one who kills by violence, then they become *ajo mmuo* "evil spirits.

All these phenomenal entities, otherwise the established forces by man, are termed *alusi*. These include certain powerful deities that serve the various village groups such as *Idemmili* at Nnobi and *Nwocha* at Oraukwu. They are not related to *Chi* and therefore are not *Chi*. This is because the Nri-Igbo clearly differentiate between entities that are *Chi* from those that are not, especially as these entities play particular roles in a community. Thus there are the *Chi* entities comprising *Chukwu*, and the other lesser *chi* entities such as *eke*, *oye*, *afo* and *nkwo* - with their common shrine known as *okwu Chi*. This shrine is commonly found within the enclosed compound of a man. There is also a different

shrine for the river entities and other communally established forces and this shrine is known as *okwu alusi*; A separate shrine for the earth goddess *Ana* is known as *okwu Ana*, served by the *Eze Ana* "priest king of the earth One"; Also a distinct shrine is set apart for the ancestors within the *obi* known as *okwu ndi ichie*; and finally the shrine that serves priest-healers, with *agwu* as the presiding spirit force, known as *okwu agwu*. One notices however that those who have been distanced from the culture do not understand this categorization and that entities relate to communities and individuals according to their types and roles within those communities. Because they do not understand this, they have tended to see all entities in the Nri-Igbo pantheon as being *chi*, and hence have often applied that term to entities which would otherwise be considered as *alusi*. This is clear from Ifi Amadiume's own use of the term *chi* for *Idemmili* (Amadiume 1986) while *alusi* would be it. In contrast, in the invocation to *Nwocha* we see that the priest serving this deity does not confuse it with *chi* as *Okagba Nwocha* is certainly an *alusi* in status comparable to *Idemmili*. But *alusi*, like *agbala* which is used for *Chukwu* and which in many cases can be set up as established forces as we had already shown before, is *mmuo*.

#### 4.15 *The Chi of other living & non-living things*

Thus, when one talks of *chi Idemmili*, he is not referring to the entity as a *chi*, but rather he is referring to the particular essence that is responsible for its existence which is *Chi*. This is so because *Chukwu* is believed to have created the world and all that is in it, including the *alusi* entities. Hence, in the event that the symbol representing the goddess falls down inadvertently, the people say that *aka mmuo dalu* "the hand of the *mmuo* "spirit" has fallen"; and to express the depth of this calamity one might add that *chi Idemmili egbuo ya* "the *chi* of *Idemmili* has "killed" her". But if, on the other hand the object was saved from falling and breaking to pieces, one might say that *chi Idemmili fulu ya n'ana* "the *chi* of *Idemmili* goddess loves her".

Apart from living persons, *Chi* thus relates to living and non-living objects in the sense that it is used as an idiom to explore states or

conditions of their existence which appears to imbue them with qualities of living beings. So that it is possible to hear of *chi ugo*<sup>1</sup> "chi of the eagle" or *chi* of the cow as the case may be. The term can also be used to say something about a tree, and this according to how it is affected by the events of life. At the other extreme, it could be extended to objects like stones and rocks and other material objects whether natural or invented. In this context, *chi*, when used in connection with these objects, acts as a vehicle for carrying a particular quality of the object and relating it to living experience when they are expressed in proverbs. Take for example the proverb which talks of *Chukwu* as *chi ugo malu ugo nzu n'iru* "the *chi* of the eagle that painted the eagle's face with white clay". In the Nri-Igbo tradition, the eagle is the most dignified of all the birds, and a stage comes in its life when its plumes change to white, at which time it is believed to have attained its height of splendour. Thus, it is thought to be infinitely blessed for its *chi* to endow it with such beauty and dignity, something which anybody who sees himself as blessed with fortunes, children or wealth can claim *Chukwu* has done for him as he has done for the eagle.

Consider again this proverb: *ēfi' na-enwerọ ọdu, chí' ya na-egbúlú yá ìjǐjǐ'* "a cow that has no tail, its *chi* drives away flies for it". This means that whatever limitations one may have in life, there is always a way by which he survives which his *chi* has designed for him. This proverb can be applied to a blind man who has no eyes with which to see but who is able to feel his way through places in life. His ability to do that is ascribed to his personal *chi*.

*Chí'* can therefore provide a remedy for the unfortunate as in the case of the cow which does not have a tail but is not harassed by flies; or as in the case of the coconut fruit at the top of a tall tree so distant from the ground that its *chi'* supplied it with the one it carried to the top. Again, *Chi* does the ultimate good, so that *onye Chí' na-edu adirọ efu úzò* "one who is led by *Chi* does not miss his way"; in fact, *onye chi*

<sup>1</sup> See collected materials Text 4.(xvi) line 2. Also see collected proverbs Text 3.i lines 6 -in which *nwa nza* "the little bird *nza* is said to have a *chi* he called to come and take him after he has overstuffed himself with food; also line 8 for *chi* of the eagle and line 9 for *chi* of the cow. Many of the proverbs quoted here can be seen in the collected proverbs. Also see *chi* of the ndo "chi of the in collected proverbs line 15.

*na-edu amaro afufu ije* "such a one led by *Chi* does not know the pain of a journey". Again, *mmadu ada agbachili onye chi ya agbachirolu* "one cannot obstruct the path (of progress) of a man whose *chi* has not obstructed". *Chi* can also be a good support like *chi ndo na-akulu ndo akwu* "the *chi* of the pigeon which builds its nest for it". He can be so good and protective that *chi onye anoghu n'izu ma onwu egbuna ya* "if the *chi* of an individual is not in conspiracy with his enemies to undo him he will not be killed". Again, *chi* is the ultimate arbiter in matters of life and death because *chi ka dibia* "*chi* is greater than the priest-healer". He is so much greater than the priest-healer that *dibia ada agwo onatalu chi* "the priest-healer cannot cure that which has come from *Chi*". But with ordinary men *oka onye ka chi ya* "one greater than another is greater than his *chi*".

*Chi* is also used to express extremes of fortune and misfortune of an individual. This is because as we know, *ofu nne na-amu man ofu chi ada eke* "two people can be born of one mother but may not have the same destiny". Thus *onye ajo chi kpatalu nku ewu ata ya* "a man with a bad *chi* collected firewood and a goat ate it". Such a person with *ajo chi* also went to collect firewood during the harmattan and rain beat him on the way. He tried to cut down an iroko tree and it fell suspended on the roof of a hut; he tried to drink water and cool his thirst and the water got stuck to his teeth. This is perhaps because *onye bulu chi ya uzo o gbagbuo onwe ya n'oso* "whoever walks ahead of his *chi* exhausts himself to death while running". It is like one's shadow being in front of him and he chasing it to overtake it. This is thought to be a foolish thing to do because *mmadu ada ayo chi ya mgba* "one does not challenge his *chi* to a wrestling match".<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.16 *Chi the father & ancestor*

Arthur Glyn Leonard had pointed out that *Chukwu* is conceived as the first ancestor, the first cause, and this can be seen in a number of ways. One is that it can be seen in connection with those memorials which writers like Basden and Talbot had said were used to represent the spirits of departed elders, women inclusive. In this sense *Chukwu* would not be only a father but also a mother symbol. This is hardly

<sup>1</sup> For the rest of the proverbs see collected materials 3.(i)

the spirits of departed elders, women inclusive. In this sense *Chukwu* would not be only a father but also a mother symbol. This is hardly surprising as it was common in the past to see *Chukwu* at once both as man as well as woman. Thus one song makes reference to him as both the mother and father thus suggesting this dual characteristics of the sky One as an entity even as this song shows below:

*Nne m igwe gwalu m agwa*  
*Nna m igwe gwalu m agwa*  
*Si m ejena n'ite alusi*  
*Na ihe ga-eme na abani ino-*  
*O-o yao*  
*O-o yao*  
*Okpa ogeri abaana ohia*  
*N'ihe emena n'abani ino...*

My mother *igwe* "sky" warned me  
 My father *igwe* "sky" warned me  
 Said not to look into the ritual pot  
 Because something will happen  
     in four days time  
*O-o yao*  
*O-o yao*  
 The maiden's feet have entered the forests  
 And something has happened  
     in four days time

Text 6.(vix)

It does appear that with the rise of the oracles of *Igwe-ka-ala* some very clear distinctions began to be made between *Chukwu* who is now seen as a male and *Ana* who is now a female. What is interesting is that in the verbal materials collected, on being invoked *Chukwu* always goes with *okike* and *anyaanwu* and *agbala*; and when it goes with *nna* "the father" it is only when *Chineke* is being called upon in place of *Chukwu*. In one kolanut invocation, *Chukwu* is thus called:

*Chineke nna,*  
*K'i gozie anyi na oji anyi wetalu*

*Chineke* the father,  
 May you bless us and this kolanut which  
     we have brought. Text 4.(x) 1-2

In another petition he is referred to as *onye nwe anyi Chineke nke m* "our lord my *Chineke* "; and one other petition, in opening its pleas to him, calls him *nna*, and makes the point that *e weta oji n'uno ebe a, mu ga-awa* -that is "if kolanut is brought to the house of the petitioner, it is my place to say the petition and share out". (Text 4.xv) Ezenwocha also, in calling upon *Chukwu* for help calls him *Chineke*. In another petition obtained from Arinze the invocation is made to *Chineke*, who is *Ezechitaoke*. The idea of *Chukwu* as *Chineke*, in as much as it is a new concept coined by the Christian missionaries, appears to have given it an obvious christian stamp of being the father and lord of blessing.

If one chooses to identify him with living beings who had lived and gone, he would be seen to be the first ancestral father. As such it would be logical for the other *chi* entities -*eke, oye, afo* and *nkwo* - which come immediately after him as they often do in many invocation petitions, to be the next set of ancestors. Indeed *eke*, which among the Nri-Igbo is a sacred day, is conceived as the first son of *Chukwu*, or *okpala ubosi* "the first son" among the four quarter spirits that make up the Nri-Igbo week which are also considered to be among the children of *Chukwu*. It is this kind of similitude that one can probably draw between *Chukwu* and the days and the ancestral father of a particular clan or village group. All this is quite different from the idea that he is *Chineke* the father who provides all the needs of the individual as Christians who introduced that concept conceived it. Another difference is that perhaps *Chukwu* the ancestor is seen to be both a father and a mother which *Chineke* is not.

Because *Chukwu* is seen as the first ancestor, other ancestors are usually invoked alongside him as can be seen in this petition below:

*Chukwu-okike m, na ndi nna nna m,  
Ekene m unu  
Makana unu melu ka m ji whu uboshi ta  
Ka m whukwa uboshi ozoga...*

My creator *Chukwu* and my ancestors  
I greet you all  
Because you made me to see the light of this day;  
May I see other days ahead...Text 4.(ii)a

Here the ranging of the entities thought to make up the ancestral lineage is obvious, with *Chukwu* at the head. The petitioner identifies with them by seeking for longevity, which usually has to do with having to witness more light of days in which to live and come to light like a titled elder even as the name *Eze aputa ife* "the king has come to light " implies. *Chukwu* himself is a typical example of this longevity by the fact that he started to live first before every other person or thing as the name Chibuzo also implies "*Chi* comes first, *Chi* is first".

The ancestors have been called upon alongside *Chukwu* in that petition above. It is believed that it is *Chukwu* who in fact created them in the first place, so that on dying memorials are set up to them as *mkpulu chi* "the crops of *Chi* " which he had sown and reaped. Even as the structure of this other invocation verse goes to show, *Chukwu* is called upon as the first among a host of other beings which are called upon as if they are in the line of the ancestral beings as can be seen in these lines below:

*Chukwu-okike,*  
*Igwe na ana*  
*Anyaanwu ezechitaoke*  
*Ndi-ihl anyi:*  
*O bu ndu...*

*Chukwu* the creator  
 The Sky and the Earth,  
 The sun *Ezechitaoke*,  
 Our ancestors:  
 It is life (that we ask)... Text 4.(ii) c

Ultimately, the significance of *Chi* as the first ancestor or the first cause is that all the individual *chi* entities denoted by *mpkulu chi* -the lineage memorial symbols, trace from him. It signifies longevity and continuity of a family lineage, the unending light of existence of the family unit which the Nri Igbo always cherish and ensure by seeing to it that a homestead is kept alive by the male children in it by whom the family line is perpetuated through a chain of successive *chi* linkages. Otherwise the family is believed to be doomed to perish, cold as the ash from a dead fire, overgrown by bushes; and the prayer always is *obi echina* " may my *obi* never be overgrown by weeds"; for an *obi* can be overgrown by weeds, and this only when there is no *chi* factor to

sustain it -that is, when nobody is there again to maintain it and ensure that the flame of existence continues to burn in it.

## Chapter 5

### 5.1 *Chi as a living being*

Already we have seen in the previous chapter how *Chi* has been conceived as a thing *Anyaanwu* "the sun" and a spirit *mmuo*, both of which represent categories of one thing that is capable of creating and distributing good and bad fortunes to individuals (including life and death) and this depending on the way one's individual *chi* is disposed to him. Here in this chapter we are going to look further into other aspects of him as a being personified as a social model. Indeed, it was Horton (1967) who first drew attention to this fact that to understand African theoretical thought one has to see it in the context of particular models that exist in African societies. He sees these beings as "theoretical entities" of traditional African thought who "happen to be people" that "give particular scope for the working of emotional and aesthetic motives" of the society. Hence, according to him, the theoretical systems involving these beings are adjusted to the prevailing facts of personality, social organisation and ecology. All these combine to produce an intensely poetic quality to life.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen from our theoretical model how *Chi* has been conceived of as a being *onye* "he who..." with the proper name of *Chukwu*. Hence from our verbal evidence, *Chukwu* is characterized as the long-legged one *onye ogologo ukwu*; so that as one proverb has it, *Chukwu* is the king who lives in the sky whose wrapper drags on the ground *Chukwu bu eze bi n'igwe ogodo ya na-akpu n'ana*. But speaking specifically, *Chukwu* is a man, and so one of the encomiums used for him is Man with the vast eye *Nwoke owholowho anya*. Thus *Chukwu* has hands and legs and eyes and can wear a wrapper. Besides, he has a mouth, so that if he spits rain starts to fall *Chukwu bua aso mmili ezobe*.

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<sup>1</sup> See Robin Horton's "African Traditional Thought and Western Science" in *Africa* no 1 vol. XXXVII, 1967 pp 159 - 179.

## 5.2 *Chi as an elder and king "eze"*

In the previous chapter we also saw that *Chukwu* is the father who distributes money and wealth to individuals and also the one who protects them, and it is such a person that becomes an elder *ichie*. As an elder, *Chukwu* has taken a title so that he is *eze igwe* "king of the sky above" or *eze bi n'igwe* "king who lives in the sky"; and *eze enu* "king of the place above". As such various encomiums are used for him such as *Odeniigwe* "he whose fame resounds in the sky"; *Oganiigwe* "he who walks in the skies"; *Ononiigwe* "he who stays in the sky". His power is immense, so that if he withdraws a foot people will all perish, which shows that he has a great following who depend on him. As earthly king then, he is said to be *okaaka* "supreme" for he is *eze ka eze* "king greater than all other kings" even as some of his praise names go to suggest.

## 5.3 *Chukwu as the Sovereign*

To the Nri-Igbo, then, such a one as *Chukwu* who has authority over life and death must be an immense power *agbala* and for this reason it is common for them to say that *Chukwu ebuka* "*Chukwu* is too large (to be comprehended fully)". Indeed, there are several bases on which *Chukwu* can be said to be this supreme entity. Various encomiums are used to mark him out as *eze* which have been commonly interpreted as 'king' and which would then suggest that he is ruler over all the universe. But going beyond that, the term would further go to suggest one that is distinguished above all others by virtue of having achieved a title through his ability to control the economy of a rural agricultural world. This is also the stage which one reaches in life to be master of his own destiny particularly by his ability to communicate with the forces of nature as *eze mmuo* since it is only those that are able to take titles can hold such positions that would permit them to officiate before a shrine. So that to use such a title for *Chukwu* is to declare the eminently high position that he occupies among the race of the gods. Also, it does appear that this position is an absolute one as he is frequently referred to as *okaaka* "greatest of the

great";<sup>2</sup> for he is the entity that is said to be greater than kings *Chi- ka-eze* .<sup>3</sup> Other names refer to him as *Chukwu-eze-igwe* "Chukwu, king of the sky", *Ezeoke* "king of creation" and so on. Thus whereas earlier on it had been noted that *Chukwu* is supreme only in so far as the four light entities are concerned, here his supremacy has been extended to include that over men as well as over his creation largely realised through a myth-making process used in realising him as a God. Indeed among gods and men, he is incomparable as some names have it that *Chukwu-ka* "Chukwu is supreme" . Already the *ka* element has been witnessed in *ebuka* , and suggests, when it comes as a suffix, the ultimate power and authority of *Chukwu* which cannot be compared with anything else either in size, magnitude, power or authority.

Other names, strongly suspected to be latter day developments when compared with the *Chi* names of the pre-Christian era, imbue him with human attributes and feelings that are so absolute that the influence of a monolithic Christian ideal is almost to be felt. These names show that with *Chukwu* those human attributes are ultimate and final and some of such names are as follows:

<i>Amalachukwu-ka</i>	"Chukwu's love is the ultimate"
<i>Ngozichukwu-ka</i>	"Chukwu's blessing is the ultimate"
<i>Ogechukwu-ka</i>	"Chukwu's own time is the best"
<i>Ogochukwu-ka</i>	" Chukwu's grace is the best"

Even when one looks at the invocation verses such as the kolanut petitions one finds that *Chukwu* is given the primary attention in the hierachy of the Nri-Igbo pantheon of spirits invoked with him which attests to his sovereign position in the structure of ideas associated with the form. Take for example this petition which is one of the many that starts by invoking the name of the high God:

*Anyaanwu Chukwu-okike,*  
*Agbala Chukwu-okike*  
*Okaaka*

<sup>2</sup> See collected materials 4.(xvi)b line 3.

<sup>3</sup> See collected materials Text 1.(v)(x-xvii) for the *ka* names that express the superiority of *Chukwu*.

*Onye kelu igwe na ana...*

The sun *Chukwu-okike*,  
The immense one *Chukwu-okike*,  
Greatest of the great,  
Creator of sky and earth...(Text 4.(xv)b

In all such invocations, *Chukwu* is the first to be invoked, and at times the invocation is accompanied by images and praise names which signify his immensity, supremacy and nature as creator before the other entities are invoked such as the days of the Nri-Igbo week, the lesser earthly entities and then the ancestors.

In various other situations other than strictly religious, it does appear that *Chukwu* usually has this primary mention before the other spirit entities are invoked. This is observed in this petition given during a marriage ritual which goes thus:

*Chukwu kelu mmadu nalu ocha oma*  
*Mmuo di be anyi, nalu ocha oma*  
*Ndi mmuo di be anyi Okafo nnwa oyi m*  
*bialu ikpolu ada m bu nwakego;*  
*Ndi mmuo di be anyi, unu fulu na ofo aha eshie ana...*

*Chukwu*, creator of man, accept that which is pure  
and white,  
Spirits of our land, accept that which is pure and white;  
Ancestors of our land, Okafo the child of my friend  
has come to take my daughter Nwakego in marriage  
Ancestors of our land, you can see that the *ofo* does not  
miss the path to the earth... Text 4.(xviii)

In this petition also, *Chukwu* is still the first to be invoked, followed by the spirit entities (including that of the ancestors). This is normal or standard invocation practice as far as the kolanut petition is concerned and any variations will be in matter of details and as far as the personality of the individual saying it is concerned. Apart from the verbal considerations, the supremacy of *Chukwu* can be seen from a variety of other ways especially from the structure of the petitions - that is, from the way the petitions have actually been ordered to show the relative importance of the entities being invoked. In this other example from the invocations of Ezeadirika Ezenwocha of Oraukwu,

*Chukwu* is in fact not the primary object of focus but the river entity *Nwocha*, but ultimately when the kolanut is brought to be broken, the priest exhorts the maiden spirit to-

*Nalu oji kee*  
*Kenye ndi olu*  
*Kenye ndi Igbo*  
*Bulu nye chukwu okike*  
*Onye pulu ime ife niine*  
*Maka a ja-ama mbu e gosi enuigwe*

Accept kola and share out  
 Share out to the people of Olu,  
 Share out to the people of Igbo-  
 Share out to spirits at Olu  
 Share out to spirits at Igbo  
 Share out to the earth spirit at Olu  
 Share out to the earth spirit at Igbo  
 Carry it and give to *Chukwu* the creator  
 Who is capable of doing all things  
 Because if one wants to throw a javeline  
 He first shows it to the sky...Text 5.(i) 86-98

The point here is that as the lines of the petition shows, even in situations in which *Chukwu* is not the entity being consulted, he is nevertheless the most important single entity to be called upon to come and break the kolanut for all to share. This is like designating to him the function of the chief householder who is the master mind behind the activities of the unit.

The sovereign position of *Chukwu* is furthermore brought out in some other communal genres such as children's songs. Some of these songs, it has to be said, may not have the same force of seriousness as the kolanut invocations, but anyway they reflect some thought patterns and concepts. One of such songs in its child-like simplicity builds up incidents which go to show that *Chukwu* is the ultimate reference in all matters by which they mark him out as the sovereign. This song starts by pointing out that something has happened to the oil in the calabash and asks what it is: A cockroach has fallen into the oil and the song in a series of dialectical questions states a whole range of things that would happen to the creatures involved in the drama but which is more or less an attempt to demonstrate the relative strengths of the creatures over

one another. So that if the cockroach started the trouble by falling into the calabash of oil due to greed, the fowl will come and carry it off; if the fowl in turn started trouble, the kite will likewise come and carry it off; if the kite in turn started trouble, the hunter's gun will destroy it; if the hunter continued with the trouble, he falls by the bush path; if the bush path started its trouble also weeds will grow and cover it up; if weeds turn out to be the troublesome ones, then fire will burn them; if fire starts its own trouble, water will put it out; if water starts to give its own trouble, the sky will fall on it; and if the sky starts to cause trouble, *Chukwu* will demolish it till finally it comes to the stage in which if one asked what will happen to *Chukwu* if he started his own trouble the answer will be nothing.<sup>4</sup>

There is a certain inconsistency, one would argue, about the characters of this piece of song but there is an underlying logic that is universally accepted. Besides, it would be hard to think that the living creatures and the non-living ones such as the gun and the sky, can be subjected to the same view as animate things but this is characteristic Nri-Igbo way of giving life to both animate and non-animate things. By the logic of the song, each entity has another that supersedes it in ascending order of strength and these come in ascending order of superiority till the ultimate is reached which is *Chukwu* and who can deal severely with the last single power before him. Thus, *Chukwu* is above all those other entities. Here again the relative position of *Chukwu* in the song -that is, in the line of entities as they come is significant and decisive according to the nature of the song. It was mentioned last as the ultimate power whereas in the kolanut invocations it would be mentioned first mainly because they both serve different functions and purposes.

It would also appear that the superiority of *Chukwu* over all the other entities has something to do with his "aboveness" in the physical set-up where he dwells. It has been seen from the children's song that the sky *igwe* comes above "water" and that *Chukwu* comes above the sky; so that, because the position of *Chukwu* is analogous to that of *igwe* "sky", that term is sometimes used as a metaphor for the supreme one. Hence *Chukwu* is sometimes referred to as *Eze-igwe* "King of the

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<sup>4</sup> See text 6.(vi).

sky" or *Eze-enu* "king of the place above" and so on. Thus expressions such as *aja eze enu* would mean the same as sacrifice to *chi* or *aja chi*.<sup>5</sup>

*Chukwu* is metaphorically seen as *igwe*. Thus, by extension, he is *onon'igwe* "he who resides in the skies"; *ogan'igwe* "he who walks the skies"; *oden'igwe* "he whose fame resounds in the skies" and so on.<sup>6</sup>

From the foregoing, it has been seen that *enu* "the place above" and *igwe* "the sky above" connote the same thing when used in relation to *Chukwu* as metaphors for describing him as the ultimate height that can be reached and acknowledged as an entity. They show that they have something in common with the title *eze* "king" also ascribed to *Chukwu* and which is used to show the lofty position he occupies among all other entities and by which his superiority and sovereignty are expressed. A good majority of the writers who wrote on *Chi* have stressed on the *ukwu* element of the name of *Chukwu* which has suggested to them that *Chukwu* is the supreme God of the Nri-Igbo. We have already seen also an overwhelming weight of evidence from the oral materials which seem to justify such a position; but even then, in practice this is not exactly so at least historically. All those are what people say to give him stature as they base him on the social model of a kingship institution. There seem to be an extent to which his authority is limited and there are a number of arguments to advance for this. The first is that it is a sky entity that controls the sky divinities *-eke, oye, afo* and *nkwo* - all of which lie in the realm of the sky where his sphere of influence is; and through them the whole range of complex human relations with the day which regulates their fortunes in life. So that while it controls the realm of the sky, other entities found in the sphere of the earth have control of the society and the mores and traditions of the living communities of men and women and children living in them. This in fact is what the local gods and earth deities do respectively. Linguistically also, any comparison between any two or three items -and in this case -between *Chukwu*, the sky entities and those other entities on the earth's sphere cannot be done on the basis of dissimilarity which is the case here. Rather, comparisons are made on the basis of the similarity between the two objects or entities

<sup>5</sup> For these various terms see collected materials Texts 1.(i) and 1.(ii) on appellations and encomiums.

<sup>6</sup> Also see Texts 1.(ii) on encomiums.

concerned; and hence, as *Chukwu* and the other lesser *chi(s)* of the days that make up the Nri-Igbo week command one field of meaning (by sharing common features and characteristics as the immanent light that comes from the sun), they exist in this kind of relationship. In trying to name this *Chi* entity therefore, to differentiate it from the other lesser entities, it has, perhaps, become necessary to use the qualifier *ukwu* to call it the great *chi* or *Chi-ukwu*; and since in the Igbo language this is used for both the comparative and the superlative, *ukwu* is used to express "greater than" and "greatest". In the case being referred to then, the two categories involved are *Chukwu* on one hand and the lesser *chi(s)* of the days on the other, and *Chi* being the greater one among the lesser *chi(s)*, it has then come to be seen as the greatest. Even so, therefore, when any order of hierarchy is being established, *Chukwu* would be at the head of a category comprising only the four quarter "gods" which have been described as the lesser *chi*; This is made even more complicated by the fact that it is the first to be mentioned in some kolanut prayers before the days and other entities like *Ana* "the earth goddess", *Idemmili* "the river goddess", *Amadioha* "the god of thunder" are called upon, but in actual practice each entity would constitute itself into its own separate category as the case may be, each having authority in its own sphere of influence.

This would immediately lead to another question of relationship regarding *Chukwu* and *Anyaanwu*. It has already been argued, however, that one is the other and vice-versa, in which the "being" is a nominal representative of the "object" -an example of what Cassirer would refer to as "the name being the essence". If this is so, the question that arises then is: between *Chukwu* and *Anyaanwu* which one is the master and which one is the messenger? It has often been said that *Anyaanwu* is the messenger but it might be argued that this is not so since many of the writers have indicated (and following from our scheme of the possible relationship between them) that they are identified with one another.

It is in this connection that the view that *Chukwu* is conceptually seen as an Oversoul or World-Oversoul is of interest to us since it does not, perhaps, carry with it this idea of his superiority over all other entities. Here again one has to be cautious since the language could be

misleading. What is perhaps significant was that the writers who had used those terms must have recognized the problem of using the term supreme for *Chukwu*. This is why its association with *mmuo* "spirit, soul" is relevant. But even though he gives life to the individual, man manipulates his *chi* in a way that suggests that *Chukwu* has no absolute authority over him since it is to his individual or personal *chi* that he directly relates his good or bad fortunes. We have seen how he could do this: he could decide not to have *chi* where the belief is not there and still live his normal life. Even in cases where one has decided to have a *chi* and raise a shrine to him, he does this as a matter of deliberate choice, and can decide to change one symbol of his *chi* with another where he thinks that the one he was having does not bring him a fortunate *chi*. In the extreme, he might even decide not to acknowledge his *chi* and turn to another "god" when he finds himself in a position of great need in which he does not trust that his *chi* or *Chukwu* can resolve it for him.

#### 5.4 *The secular plane: Chukwu as a living being*

As a further elaboration on the question of the apparent sovereignty of *Chukwu*, it has become necessary to look at the epic of *Enu Nyili Mba* which when translated would suggest something like "The Sky one that is so overwhelmingly powerful that the Community could not do anything to defeat him", which is the epic of Jevizu Okaavo of Aguleri. What is of interest in this epic is that it deals with the question of power, and is an example of the on-going evolution of ideas about the society and the cosmos. In this epic, a living man is moulded in the form of *Chukwu* and made to exercise an almost absolute authority even in matters of life and death that he nearly rivals *Chukwu*. On the one hand this would suggest a manifestation of the Nri-Igbo view about power and how the people are trying to explain it in terms of their relationship to it. On the other hand, it is a reflection of power and the people's relationship to divine entities. The appearance of *Enu Nyili mba* further goes to show the Nri-Igbo existentialist choice between *Chukwu* and Man, in which the two are either sharing power or contesting for it, which would suggest further that *Chukwu* is not the absolute entity that we take him to be.

It has already been shown that *Chukwu* is seen as a man *nwoke* who takes titles; so that as an elder he is an *eze* "king, distinguished one". But that is as far as his praise names go in the invocation petitions. A close look at the epic of *Enu-nyili-mba* of Jeveizu Okaavo of Aguleri shows how *Chukwu* is seen in the real world of humans, and we shall use this epic as an index of the communal vision of the Nri-Igbo group and also for showing the kind of attitude they project towards that entity.

This epic narrative is about six hundred and ten lines long and as has been said earlier, is one of the epics that has come out of the tradition of the Nri-Igbo of the Anambra river basin. In scope and magnitude it is cosmological in extent in the sense that the actions take place between the abode of living beings and the abode of *Chukwu* which we have identified as *enu* "the place above" or quite appropriately termed *igwe* "the sky". Here in the sky place a very powerful man held sway and his authority over the living beings on the earth was almost total. One day he just woke up and enacted a decree that no living being should eat or drink water or as much as chew tooth-stick or palm nuts for a period of seventeen weeks when he would be having a feast at his sky abode. Anyone who contravened this injunction he threatened with death, so that for a long time the people were held in awful dread of him as they hungered and died in numbers. This led the brave men of the human community *ndi odogwu* to meet and decide on what action to take. After they had all gathered, they decided to go to the sky city and confront the despot. Very soon they set out, but the dangers on the way were more than many could cope with with the result that almost all of them fell back with the exception of Emeke Okoye, the hero of the campaign. With his bard Obadiegwu, he set out and after three weeks of journeying they came to the place where the sky touched the earth and there they discovered the steps leading to the sky city where the chief is staying. Spurred on by his aid, he ascended the stairs and with the greatest difficulty climbed till he arrived face to face with the man *Enu-nyili-mba* who had been responsible for the suffering of the people. He accosted him sternly, gave him a few salutary blows and arrested him instantly so as to bring him down to the people of the world so that they would be able to see the face of the man that has been responsible for their misery. Very

soon they began to retrace their steps till they arrived back to the earth and then brought the man right to the town and slumped him there at the square where he faced public execution.

Structurally, this is the order of the development of the action:

i           The prologue: This is more or less an introduction to the main tale in which the narrator introduces himself as the one telling the story. He establishes the location of the place where the story is being told, which is "inside Nigeria" and then establishes that he is "that very person /that tells the stories of heroes/ of old" He beats his drum and warns :

*Na onye o bu na-eriko okwu  
aputawo oooo  
Onye no n'ezì baa n'okwu ngwa  
ngwa oooo  
Na onye o bu na-eriko okwu  
aputawo oooo!  
Iduu oooo!*

For that person that weaves trouble  
is out  
Let him that is outside go in quickly,  
For that person that weaves trouble  
is out!  
*Iduu oooo!*       Text 9   lines 16-22

He then goes on to invoke the heroes and introduce them in their various capacities and to have a general exchange of greetings with his audience. He gives some intimation of what is to be expected in the story in order to create suspense; these heroes are about to go to the sky city to confront a foe in spite of mutual admonitions among the heroes that they should not go since there is no road leading to the sky place.

ii.           The beginning: This beginning turns to the house of the sky chief and associates it with something that has to do with the creation story:

*Ka anyi jee be Enu-nyili-mba-  
Nwoke bi n'enu.*

*Neeni ka o si gaa,  
 Obuora Udechukwu,  
 Mbidie bu  
 Uwa a nwa bidolu,  
 Awusali n'uwa  
 Bu iye Chukwu keli.  
 Anokata,  
 Nokata enu, nokata ana,  
 Amaro iye sulu aku ubuli, aku ubili suo  
 onwe nye.*

Let us go to the house of Enu-nyili-mba-  
 The man that lives in heaven.  
 This is how it went.  
 Obuora Udechukwu,  
 Its beginning is this:  
 This world began  
 And people lay about in the world,  
 That is, all things created by *Chukwu*.  
 They stayed like that,  
 Stayed on and on and on.  
 No one knew what planted *aku-ubili*,  
*aku-ubili* planted itself... Text 9.60-70

This section immediately goes on to talk of certain strange sheets of papers that suddenly one day, a day like a Sunday, began to fall from the sky. They "came scattering on the earth/ paper on which something was written". These papers then turned out to be the papers on which the injunctions preventing people from eating anything were written. The subsequent result is that anyone who read the paper would start weeping and asking "what is it that we (the inhabitants) of the world have done". *Enu-nyili-mba* soon implements his action and hunger sets in for as the poet says-

*Aguu wee gbuwe mmadi  
 Ana-anuro mmili;  
 Ana-eliro nli;  
 Ana-ataro aku;  
 Ana-ataro oka.  
 Aguu wee gukata  
 Gukata...onwu gbuve va*

Hunger began to kill people!

Nobody drank water;  
 Nobody ate food;  
 Nobody ate nuts;  
 Nobody ate maize;  
 Hunger pressed  
 And pressed...and death began to kill them.  
 Text 9.115-120

iii. The heroes of the land then assemble to decide what to do. Among these were Obadiegwu, Ntili, the son of Eze Odoodo the hairs on whose body were thunderbolts; Ndum, son of Eze Abo, the one that digs a trench around a town with his feet; Mbaamali of Ikelionwu, the one who uses human thigh-bone as chewing stick, Ojaatu, Oranyeli, the man that lives in the clouds and Ekwudebe-agba-awari -all of them, without exception- assembled and decided to go and confront Enu-nyili-mba.

iv. Problem soon arises: no one knows the way to the house of the despot until Emeke Okoye "jumped out into the arena/ and moved about" indicating that he is the one that knows the way. Mgbafo the mother is worried about this new involvement of the son and continually keeps crying as the son was named as saying that he is the one that will go to the sky place to fight the man who originated the suffering. Okoye explains where the steps leading to the sky city are and a day is appointed for the march to the house of Enu-nyili-mba.

v. On the appointed day the vast array of warriors re-assemble; they soon take off, travel for weeks on end without getting to the place. Many drop back on the way, not able to make it to the place where the stairs start ascending the sky.

vi. Emeke Okaavo keeps faith with his pact to go to the sky place and topple *Enu-nyili-mba*. His companion starts getting weary, but Emeke is determined. His bard inspires him with praise and he moves on, alone, after all the other heroes have retraced their footsteps. They move on until they come to the boundary where the sky touches the earth. They decide to take a rest, after which they mount the steps towards the house of Enu-nyili-mba, running and leaping till he lands just face to face with the sky chief. According to the poet-

*O nwee kpoo nya, "Enu-nili-mba" .*  
*O na-enie anya.*

*O kpoo nya "Enu-nyili-nba" .  
 O na-enie anya.  
 O si a, o kwa gi nyelu oda a...  
 Na olili i ya-eli izu naasa  
 Na eje-etiro aku...*

Then he called him, "Enu-nyili-mba".  
 He stared at him.  
 He called him "Enu-nyili-mba".  
 He stared at him.  
 He said to him, "Was it not you that  
     gave these orders,  
 That for the feast you would celebrate  
     for seven weeks  
 There should be no cracking of kernels...

Text 9.519-530

Before he finishes with him in this initial confrontation he gives him some blows and then arrests him. His friend, an Ikwere man who came to feast with him decamps. Enu-nyili-mba is brought down from the sky to the open square of the living community of people and executed.

vii.           The poet then explains that the story is used to explain how the Abakpa people and Hausa people began to tie up their mouths, and that that was as a result of the order from Enu-nyili-mba.

### 5.0.2       *Characterisation of Enu-nyili-mba*

This sky-figure Enu-nyili-mba, is cast in the image of *Chukwu* as a supreme being with the power of life and death over the living beings on earth; but the fact that Emeke Okoye was able eventually to arrest him shows that there is a limit to his power. This is possible because like *Chukwu* also he is seen as a man with eyes like the vast-eyed one *Chukwu* hence he says that *Na nya no n'enu ene onye avu anya* "he is in the place above looking at that person". This means that anyone he sees disobeying his injunction *nya gbupu e* "he kills him off". Again, like *Chukwu*, he is seen as *nwoke bi n'enu* "the man that lives in the place above" and this place is very closely associated with the place where the sun itself resides for as the lines go:

*Ibe enu nzogo avu di bu ba nrete  
 anyaanwu,*

*Ibe anyaanwu si aligote,  
Nya bu ezi ibe esi eje be Obu-n'enu,  
Enu-nyili-mba.*

The place where those great stairs were,  
was at the horizon,  
From where the sun rises-  
That was the place from where to go to  
the home of the sky-dweller, Enu-nyili-mba...  
Text 9.245-247

Thus this man Enu-nyili-mba is appropriately placed in the same character mould and setting as *Chukwu* is often placed as his abode is in the sky where the sun rises. In this connection, there is frequent reference to that place where the sun rises from and also to the great heat that comes from that place. Hence,

*Agbabu n'ibe nwa anyaanwu si erogote, e  
si eje obodo enu, chili aka bidie...  
O buu na sitempu di a,  
O buu na oku anyaanwu bu agbagote, na  
avuro ka eji ja-emie.*

On reaching the place from where the  
sun rises, from where one goes to  
the sky city, (he) took his  
hands and placed on it...  
And so it was that there were steps  
there;  
And so it was that was nothing  
that could be done about the heat  
with which the sun rises. Text 9.473-475

Another important aspect of *chi* with which this figure is associated is the idea of light which shines in his compound for as it is also told- the brilliance with which the place shone with light as the warriors were about to go to their various homes after the meeting as the celebration was on in the chief's house is told in no less sublime language, for it was all *egwu o, ocha mmuo ocha mmadu* "wonders, brilliance of spirits, brilliance of men" with the horn blowing a flourish in the sky.

So far, this is how the human figure was realised as a man with powers comparable to that of *Chukwu*, and tends to lead to the conclusion that in actual conception the Nri-Igbo have developed ideas which go to show their ambivalent attitude to *Chukwu* on one hand and to despotic rulers like Enu-Nyili Mba on the other; Neither *Chukwu* nor the man appear to have absolute powers; they would even go further to say that if ever *Chukwu* does exercise such absolute powers they would be forced to check him. This is because even though he can be revered and worshipped, like this man Enu Nyili Mba, he could also be brought down from his pedestal of authority and beaten; he can be distant but he can also be very near. To them, in other words, *Chukwu* is a God, but he can also be a man. As a god his sphere of authority can be all encompassing, but also it can be very restricted. Thus the issue of the Nri-Igbo sky God resolves itself only in a paradox of this kind.

## Chapter 6

### 1.0 Conclusion

*It is really a pleasure for us to contemplate the cosmology of earlier men...As their eyes saw it, so their minds conceived it.*

John Stewart Colis  
*The Vision of Glory*

In this study we have set out to make an investigation into the various concepts of *Chi* as expressed and projected by the Nri-Igbo world view. This was done from the point of view of the people's collective expressions which are in the Igbo language. It is not as if there have not been studies on that concept before -certainly there have been as the range of published materials has shown, but most times the study has been mainly speculative without the kind of supporting materials that we have brought to this study from the cultural background of the people themselves. Again, there has not been any elaborate and systematic study of the concept until lately, as much of the works written on it had been done as a side event in the process of dealing with the larger body of Igbo culture. Even where there have been studies of the concept, these studies have been more descriptive than analytical, in which concepts were seen as not necessarily interconnected; but the relationship between *Chi* and *Anyaanwu* "the sun" and *agbala* "the mighty one" which we have tried to highlight has gone to disprove such a stance. This is perhaps because writers have chosen to overlook those interconnections, thereby missing the point that there is an internal harmony of concepts that is hidden underneath the verbal expressions. Hence, the concepts no longer appear to be only isolated ideas but also a system that holds the Nri-Igbo world together in spite of the subjective ways those concepts may have been used in matters of actual religious practice. This is to say, in fact, that whatever way a priest or any other religious observer for that matter might have found this concept useful for his purposes, this depended on his way of seeing or understanding the culture. That such is the case does not necessarily mean that there are contradictions in the concepts which

have been existing in the culture as models for understanding and scoring particular experiences of the people. What I have therefore done is to look at those various aspects of the concept of *Chi* as they are while still exploring the internal and harmonious interconnections between them. This is where this work is new, since writers who had written before on the concept had been content alone to present a general and sometimes superficial explanation of the concept without actually focussing and homing in on the inter-relationships between those concepts holding it together as a unique and distinguishable concept in the processing and production of human thought.

It has to be said, however, that it is only quite recently that attempts have been made by some writers like Nwoga and Ezekwugo to study the concept in some more detail, but they have concentrated more on what it is not than what it is. Besides, they had used the whole of the Igbo culture as their range and often had problems on how to manage and control their materials. But here in this study we have departed by restricting ourselves to one cultural zone and focusing on it in the hope that it will enable us to make more precise statements, even if tentative, that would also apply to the whole of the Igbo cultural group. Hence in the study, we have tried to make the point strongly that *Chi* is an ambiguous concept, and as such requires to be investigated critically in order to understand the various shades of it as it is seen in the culture, and not necessarily as it has been put forward to us by the various writers who had written on it. This required a deeper study to unpack the most that is contained in it. It became necessary to do this because what a particular concept appears to be is bound to be held with suspicion when it is interpreted by others from cultures quite different from the one in which it is expressed, largely because of the prejudices and conceptual assumptions that might be brought to bear on the work. In this connection, there is no doubt that the earlier writers who came to the Nri-Igbo cultural zone to work did so much to develop interest in the concept of *Chi* among other things, but their efforts nevertheless leave much to be desired especially as they came carrying models of their western conceptual thought which they thought to fit within the context of the Nri-Igbo culture. This is what they had tried to do with the concept of *Chi*. Even then, there is no guarantee that the indigenous writers would fare better and in fact they did not. This is

because they continued being speculative even when the materials were there to be used for the investigation. So that once the foreign writers had set the trend, the indigenous writers themselves had to toe their lines with the result that there was no radical reinterpretation of that concept till date. Thus, therefore, they saw, or perhaps, tried to deal with the concept strictly and exclusively within the western religious mould without taking into account the ecological and social implications of that concept. All we see is a metaphysical being, *Chukwu*, who is supreme and good and creative, and who has no intimate relationship with man. Speculations even tended to prove that *Chukwu* is *deus otiosus* -so removed is he that he is even thought to be neglected. The controversies have continued and there has not been a work that can be seen to mediate all the conflicting assumptions. But here we have gone beyond those controversies to demonstrate with living evidence from the verbal materials of the people a perception that is whole and harmonious in spite of certain apparent departures which are understandable in a culture in which people made use of what was there freely without any legislative controls or codes of perception and usage. We have demonstrated also that far from being remote, *Chi* is an entity that is ever so living and present in the lives of individuals in the Nri-Igbo society. We saw that a man's relationship to it is personal, so personal that it does not call for any communal worship. The practice has been to think of certain entities as central in the lives of people for them to be worshipped like the God of the Christians or that of the Moslems -to refer to the two most widespread models of monotheism - but there is no reason for us to think that in some other societies the same would obtain as the case of the Nri-Igbo *Chi* clearly shows. Altars of *Chi* exist everywhere in the compounds of the Nri-Igbo elders who are titled men heading their own family units in which they officiate as their own priests. These altars of *Chi* are often located outside, in front of the *obi* which is the individual temple of the *dibuno* "master shouldering the responsibility of the household unit", and which, paradoxically, are also altars of the personal *chi* of the individual. This is because in establishing them, they had been seen to have derived from the Great *Chi*, *Chukwu*, who could be taken as the first ancestor and and through whom there is always a series of ancestral linkages which the *chi* memorials -the indicators of the personal *chi* entities that had lived and gone are used to symbolize. Hence many studies

have tended to emphasize the separateness of these two entities *Chukwu* and *chi* (Arinze) as if they are quite apart from each other without seeing that this interrelatedness is there for explaining, for instance, the importance which the Nri-Igbo attach to the family unit as the centre of their social existence. Where they have not, they have nevertheless tended to fall short of exploring this relationship by not having to face it (Basden, Jeffreys, Achebe, etc) which is what we have turned to look at in order to understand it. The same applies to other categories that have always been treated as mere entities that have stood on their own simply because we have never thought that they might be related to *Chi*. This includes such phenomena like the sun *anyaanwu*, which produces day and night, and *agbala*, both of which are also seen as aspects of *Chi* as our verbal evidence has all gone to show. Through them we also saw the affinity with the four quarter entities *eke*, *oye*, *afọ* and *nkwo*, also considered to be lesser *chi* entities which writers had failed to see with the possible exception of Jeffreys. Again, this has never been thought of before. Even in this respect also, we saw that these spirits of the day played very important roles in determining the fortunes and misfortunes of the individual as far as his personal *chi* is concerned. They regulated matters of life and death, which, in fact, is a matter of *ezi chi* (good fortune) or *ajo chi* "evil fortune"; they determined longevity and the ultimate "apotheosis" of the individual when he takes the *ozo* title which enables him to acquire easy passage into the ancestral realm from where he can be reincarnated in a new born child. Here, with the concept of *Chi* other areas of the Nri-Igbo social institutions are explained: taking the *ozo* title deals with economic power and spiritual maturity, and in this connection we make the point that the market system of the Nri-Igbo guaranteed this because as one's economic fortune is tied up with the days of the Nri-Igbo week, each market is seen as being under the guardian of one of the spirits of the day.

But that is as far as *Chi* relates to the individual. Taking the wider society at large, the influence of *Chi* is not immediately witnessed as this domain is directly in the hands of the *alusi* entities "instituted forces" such as *Udo* at Awka-Etiti, *Nwocha* at Oraukwu, *Edo* at Nnewi, *Omaluko* at Uke, or *Idemmili* at Nnobi and elsewhere. But these societies are like living organisms in which these entities, as symbols,

are used for giving the village groups (which they held together) their life and coherence. Hence, these spirit-entities also have their *chi* which regulated their fortunes and misfortunes and by so doing regulated that of the society. If this study has contributed to knowledge, it is in trying to demonstrate that all these are integrally related, and that by dealing with say, the individual *chi* of a person, one is invariably dealing with *Chukwu* and the day and by extension, the economic and social systems of the society. This underlying unity of the concept, we have to admit, is apart from the fact that it is common to come across situations in which they are actually expressed as separate entities, (as it is possible to see numerous shrines of *anyaanwu* and *agbala* and *okuke* and so on with various other meanings attached to them by the priests who serve them).

Does the overriding place of *Chi* in the Nri-Igbo cosmology, then, make *Chi* to be supreme to all other entities as many writers had tended to suggest? Or again we ask: Does the sovereignty of *Chukwu* depend on the fact that he is the creator? We have seen the various ways the Nri-Igbo have used language to express the apparent supremacy of *Chukwu*, but in actual practice this is not conclusive or decisive of his supremacy. The first reason, as we had tried to point out earlier, is that the recognition of *Chukwu* has no communal basis since it is the private affair of the individual. This is because there are no communal rituals that are devoted to him -he is recognized as an entity but he is not communally worshipped. The second reason is that every man has a personal *chi* through which he relates to *Chukwu*, given him from birth so that even though *Chukwu* is believed to give life and children and money to individuals and regulate the fortunes of a society, man is still able to manipulate him through the agency of his personal *chi*.

Thus, the tendency to see a hierarchy in which *Chukwu* is at the top is strongly brought to review; it collapses as we go further beyond the relationship between *Chi* and the individual and explore that between it and the *alusi* -the established phenomenal entities found in the society. Indeed, if one were to seek for the deity that had that kind of direct communication with the people as a solid mass, that entity is to be sought for in the various gods and goddesses that were established by the people as this *alusi*. A good many of these are river goddesses,

others are powers that were created and established by the village groups. All these, as symbols, have developed into very strong religious icons and concepts as the mother figures of those places. It is to such deities that communal worship is offered according to the Nri-Igbo way of doing things. The other level in which communal worship is observed is on the level of the ancestral gods who are worshipped by lineage or clan groups.

In the end *Chukwu* emerges not as a supreme being but as one entity among others that are equally powerful, including man in society who is capable of manipulating his personal *chi* in such a way that *Chukwu's* superiority is challenged. In fact one has to say here that there is no reason why the *Chi* of the Nri-Igbo should be a supreme god as the God of the Christians or Moslems; there is no reason why it should be all good and no bad, or why it should not be manipulated by ritual means for that matter.

It was observed that many of the works on *Chi* have been more descriptive than analytical. This is understandable since they are largely anthropological works having more or less to do with the cultures and traditions of various peoples in the past, but the problem goes further in proffering interpretations that are removed from what they appear to be. What we are tacitly saying is that some of the interpretations of the concept are inadequate and lacking in the holistic view which the African world tends to conjure, and which more often than not results in impositions that are likely to come from a different conceptual scheme quite unsuited for discussions concerning studies in African thought patterns. For example, in almost all the writings on *Chi*, associations are made between it and the sun *Anyaanwu*, but no attempt was made to investigate this deeply. Basden, for example, mentions that there is likely a connection between the two, but hastens to pre-empt any thought that it might be seen as a symbol for *Chukwu* when he maintained that the Igbo deny emphatically that it is the sun that they worship. Even Jefferys identified it with the entity *Chukwu* but his approach largely remained descriptive. But we have had to grapple with this matter in all its complexities by going further to seek for the conceptual scheme that links them up. In this lies the basis of the freshness of our contribution on the subject because through it we are able to open up a new window by which the various

streams of the Nri-Igbo culture and civilization could be viewed anew, and also through which we are able to ventilate the old ideas and assumptions to illuminate them more fully. It was found, for example, that the concept of *Chi* permeates through all the fabric of the Nri-Igbo society, uniting man through his ecological environment to the cosmological order. In other words, through *Chi* we are able to explain the individuality of man vis-a-vis his society, the days and the nights and how these are linked to the mysteries of life and death and one's personal destiny. It is in this sense that we can safely say that *Chi* is the overriding concept that permeates a constellation of other ideas in the Nri-Igbo thought of man and the universe.

There was the need, in a study of this kind, to first of all avoid standing on a prejudicial ground by first divesting ourselves of the assumptions already built into the conceptual schemes of the various writers. We chose to refer to *Chi* and other spirit-forces as entities rather than gods or deities just for the same reason. Theories of myths and legends were kept apart for us to see the verbal materials for what they were. Complex theological philosophical terms were avoided also so as to free the language of any impositions in order to let it offer its meanings as they are. Ultimately, we think, this is what studies of this kind will be aiming at if the subject under study will yield its deeper meanings. It was recognized that already there was the problem of the English language but which we tried to contain within limits of our understanding of the language. This then poses the problem which studies in African culture and traditions have while dealing with issues in philosophy namely, the approach to the study. Some writers have tended to write on Igbo culture and traditions or -to say the least, the concept of *Chi*, as if they fitted into the western philosophical conceptual moulds. We have tried to show that this is not a valid approach, and that it is in working with the language that the whole world view can be portrayed.

### 6.1 *The meaning of Chi*

It was found that *chi* has to do exclusively with the sky entities such as the sun *anyaanwu* which produces the light of the day and is therefore regarded as *Chi-ukwu* "Big, Great *Chi*" and the days of the Nri-Igbo week *eke, oye, afo* and *nkwo*, all of which are regarded as the

lesser *chi* entities. Ordinarily, as light entities they are referred to as *chi eke*, *chi oye*, *chi afo* and *chi nkwo*; and whether as *chi* of the sun or that of the days they are commonly known as *chi* entities. All the other entities that are established in the earth's sphere that have to do with other areas of life other than the light of the sun or day are *alusi* (established forces of the river, stream, forest and hills, etc). Hence Ezenwocha Ezeadirika, in his invocation chants for the water divinity Nwocha referred to her as *alusi okagba*. *Idemmili* would also be *alusi idemmili* and not *chi idemmili* in the same sense that *Chi-ukwu* of the sun is, or as *chi eke* "*chi* of the day, *eke*", which also has associations with the light from the *chi* of the sun. If this is so, in what sense then can those entities which have no such associations with the light of the sun be said to have their own *chis*?

From what we have seen *Chi* to be, one can approach this issue from examining the meaning of the term when it is applied to any object on the surface of the earth, whether divinities or not. Thus, when one talks of *chi ndo* one is talking of *chi* of the pigeon and not *chi* the pigeon -that is, as one would say *chi* the light *chi ife*. In a similar way, one can talk of *chi idemmili* in the sense of *chi* of *Idemmili* and not *chi* the *Idemmili*. There is an infinite number of objects and categories that can be so associated with *chi* but only in the sense that those entities or objects are believed to have an essence that is responsible for their existence.

*Chi* is therefore used to explain anything that is in existence in this way, either by natural derivations or invented -or, to be more literal, anything under the sun that has objective existence that is concrete and visible to the naked eye. In this sense, existence is co-terminous with life which *Chi* gives. Following from this reasoning, not only human beings have this *chi* or "life", but also trees, hills, streams, birds, animals, rocks, inventions of man such as cars, tables, bricks - whatever has this objective reality as created or invented thing. It is therefore through this idea of the *chi* of an object that we can refer to certain qualities which are necessary to describe that are unique to particular objects. Life, here, is therefore seen as that "light" or "flame" that is responsible for an object to be seen or felt as a concrete personality and a part of that totality of earthly things. *Chi onye* would therefore be that light or flame -that essence, that makes an individual

to be seen to be alive from day to day to carry out his daily activities. In fact this is what marks him out as a distinct personality. When he dies his *chi* ceases to be for him; in other words, his flame of existence has been extinguished as he will never have any more shadow as a living form.

This concept of *Chi* can also be applied to a living society: One can refer to the *chi* of a village-group as that "light" or "flame" of its existence that makes it an objective reality as a community in existence, or as an organism that has its own life. This is because as an organism it is capable of growth and possible demise, just as a living being can grow and die. And as with the individual, it is common for the fate of the group to be tied up with the fate of the god or goddess that is used to symbolise it.

## 6.2 *The Nri-Igbo Sun-God: An appraisal*

This study has shown that the Nri-Igbo at a certain stage of their development venerated the sun which they saw as a mystery. They then went beyond it to use it as a model which informed their views of man in society, and for explaining those mysteries around them. The close association of the *chi* of the the individual through that of the sky symbolized by the sun *anyaawu* and the days of the Nri-Igbo week suggests this. Through this association, this concept permeated through the daily lives and activities of individuals in the society, determining the emotional, psychological, economic, social and political circumstances of the individual in society. More than everything else, it is one which ensured that man related to the sun through the particular days of the week in which they found themselves alive and active to carry out the activities of life which ensured their successes or failures in life. Success meant that *Chi* is well disposed to the individual, and failure meant that he is not. Success is appropriately seen in terms of children and wealth, good health and long life within which period one was capable of acquiring titles that enabled him to secure an enviable place among the ancestors when he dies. Beyond this, it suggested that it is an assumption to suppose that *Chi* has communal relevance to groups of individuals and for which a central place of worship was necessary. This assumption, we think, is what had caused the earlier writers to claim

that *Chi* is a withdrawn god, particularly as they could not find large places of worship for him as the Christians have or as the Moslems have also. But we have seen that far from this, the Nri-Igbo related to their *Chi* in very intimate ways; so intimate that *Chi*, which they saw as being the same as *Chukwu*, was neither far nor removed, as they sought always by ritual means to draw him nearer to them by setting up shrines to him in their individual compounds. This done, they offered sacrifices to him as occasion demands, and particularly as he is seen to have control over their lives, governing the events that gave meanings to their lives. In doing this, man became aware of his place as master of his fate, which caused him to dictate the pace his *chi* would take if he was a man of drive and strength. Hence from this relationship an individual achieves his goal in life or betrays it as the case may be.

This particular Nri-Igbo attitude to life and their *Chi* is interesting in one other way, and this largely in the way *Chi* can be taken to be both a spirit and a man. As a spirit he is a complex one, the creator and the destroyer of life; but as a mundane man, he could be both noble and well respected; but there have been signs that this his model can be used to portray equally powerful men who could be mean and debased as the epic of Emeke Okoye shows, but this would only represent new changes and shifts of ideas about man and *Chi* particularly while dealing with issues of the tussle for power in such a society.

This Nri-Igbo concept of *Chi* is yet one more addition to the universal concepts of the sun-king which is well known among the various peoples of the world from very ancient times, from the Egyptian Sun-God to the Greeks, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Incas and so on. What has been witnessed in this study is one peoples' characteristic approach to this concept by which their culture has been moulded and shaped from within, and which also have been marked by other equally strong influences from the Europeans as well as other sub-cultures within and outside Igboland.

*Verbal Texts (Igbo version)*

*(Translations of the Igbo texts start with the proverbs to be found on p. 286, starting from text 3.i. that is. These names, terms, etc here remain the same as already translated).*

*1.i For these religious names for Chukwu below, see p.281 for their translations*

i	Chúkwú-òkìkè
ii	Chúkwú-òkè
iii	Chiókè
iv	Ézèchúkwúòkè
v	Ézèchítáòkè
vi	Chí
vii	Òsebulūwà
viii	Olisa
ix	Ézèòkè

*1.ii Encomiums for Chukwu*

i	Ézè-ìgwé	"king of the sky"
ii	Ézè-ènú	"king of the place above"
iii	Òdèniìgwè	"He whose fame resounds in the sky"
iv	Ònòniìgwé	"He who stays in the sky"
v	Òbiniìgwé	"He who resides in the sky"
vi	Oganiìgwé	"He who walks the skies"
vii	Ójèzulu-obodo	"He who goes round the whole town"
viii	Nwóké	oghogho-anya "Man with vast eyes"
ix.	Nwóké	ogonogo okpa "Man with the long legs"
x.	Ágbàlá	bu anyaanwu ututu "Spirit which is the morning sun"
xi.	Ágbàlá	ji igwé "Spirit which is holding the sky"
xii.	Ágbàlá	ji úwà "Spirit which is holding the world"
xiii.	Nwóké	bi n'igwé "The man who lives in the sky"
xiv.	Àmà-àmá	Ámási-ámási "He who is known but not completely known"

1.iii(a) Names given to persons but which do not bear Chukwu in them but other related terms of interest such as mmuo "spirit", eke "Nri-Igbo native day" etc.

i.	Nwéke	"Child of Eke"
ii.	Nwóyé	"Child of Oye"
iii.	Nwafò	"Child of Afò"
iv	Nwankwó	"Child of Nkwó"

iv	Nwankwó	"Child of <i>Nkwó</i> "
i	Okéke	" <i>Eke's</i> male child"
ii	Okōyè	" <i>Oye's</i> male child"
iii	Okafo	" <i>Afo's</i> male child"
iv	Okōnkwó	" <i>Nkwo's</i> male child"

i	Mgbàéke	"Daughter of <i>Eke</i> "
ii	Mgbòyé	"Daughter of <i>Oyè</i> "
iii	Mgbàfo	"Daughter of <i>Afo</i> "
iv	Mgbànkwó	"Daughter of <i>Nkwó</i> "

**1.iii(b) Others: conceptual names**

i	Ányá-ánwú	"Eye of the sun, source of the sun"
ii	Ányá-éke	"Eye of <i>Eke</i> , source of <i>eke</i> "
iii	Ọnú-ńkwó	"Source of <i>Nkwo</i> "
iv	Muojekwú	"The Spirit will decide"
v	Ezeànà	"King of the earth, land"
vii	Chi-ifè	" <i>Chi</i> of light"
viii	Nnàbùifè	"Father is the light"
ix	Muomà	"The Spirit knows"
x	Okpáláéke	"First male creature of <i>Éké</i> "
xii	Udeàgbàlà	"Fame of the deep and mysterious one"

**1.iii(c) Other names given to children at birth today bearing  
Chukwu in them**

**Category 1: Rhetorical names**

i	Àmàogechúkwú	"Whoever knows God's own time"
ii	Àmàũchúkwu	"Whoever knows God's own thoughts"
iii	Àmàuzọchúkwú	"Whoever knows God's own ways"

**Category ii with Chukwu as subject**

i	Chúkwúatuŋà	" <i>Chukwu</i> does not tell lie"
ii	Chúkwúbíko	"O please, <i>Chúkwú</i> "
iii	Chúkwúdaálú	"Thanks be <i>Chúkwú</i> "
iv	Chúkwúdi	" <i>Chúkwú</i> exists"
v	Chúkwúdiegwù	" <i>Chúkwú</i> is wonderful"
vi	Chúkwúdiiké	" <i>Chúkwú</i> is capable, powerful"
vii	Chúkwúdoluem̄	"May <i>Chúkwú</i> preserve me to the end"
viii	Chúkwúdozié	"May <i>Chúkwú</i> resolve"

		the problem"
ix	Chúkwúdùbém	"May <i>Chukwu</i> keep leading me on"
x	Chúkwúdúmaaka	"May <i>Chukwu</i> assist me"
xi	Chúkwúèbùká	" <i>Chukwu</i> is too great and mighty"
xii	Chúkwúèkèká	" <i>Chukwu</i> created so well"
xiii	Chúkwúéìlòká	" <i>Chukwu</i> has thought (it) out very well"
xiv	Chúkwúéméká	" <i>Chukwu</i> has done very well"
xv	Chúkwúfùzùlù	" <i>Chukwu</i> sees it all"
xvi	Chúkwújèkwú	" <i>Chukwu</i> will decide"
xvii	Chúkwúkà	" <i>Chukwu</i> is greater than all, supreme"
xviii	Chúkwúkaanèné	" <i>Chukwu</i> is the one to look up to "
xix	Chúkwúkèlù	" <i>Chukwu</i> created all things"
xx	Chúkwúkaòdìnàká	" All is in the hands of <i>Chukwu</i> "
xxi	Chúkwúaluká	" <i>Chukwu</i> has done very well"
xxii	Chúkwúraà	"May <i>Chukwu</i> release his hold"
xxiii	Chúkwúékèè	" <i>Chukwu</i> has shone out like light"
xxiv	Chúkwúadíká	" <i>Chukwu</i> is very admirable"
xxv	Chúkwúkwe	"If <i>Chukwu</i> gives his consent"
xxvi	Chúkwúmà	" <i>Chukwu</i> knows it all"
xxvii	Chúkwúmbàa	" <i>Chukwu</i> of the nation"
xxviii	Chúkwúnaáfùzù	" <i>Chukwu</i> sees everything"
xxix	Chúkwúnaānù	" <i>Chukwu</i> hears everything"
xxx	Chúkwúnéné	" <i>Chukwu</i> is watching"
xxxi	Chúkwúnòfù	" <i>Chukwu</i> is just present"
xxxii	Chúkwúnonyélú	" <i>Chukwu</i> is by my side"
xxxiii	Chúkwúnwèíkè	" <i>Power</i> belongs to <i>Chukwu</i> "
xxxiv	Chúkwúnweóbò	"It is in the hands of <i>Chukwu</i> to revenge"
xxxv	Chúkwúnweolu	"Work belongs to <i>Chukwu</i> "
xxxvi.	Chúkwúnnyèlùm	" <i>Chukwu</i> gave (it) to me"
xxxvii	Chúkwúzùbèlú	" <i>Chukwu</i> planned it all"
xxxviii	Chúkwúzòbá	"May <i>Chukwu</i> continue to save us"
xxxix	Chúkwúabúká	" <i>Chukwu</i> is extremely admirable"

*Category iii : Attributes of Chukwu*

i.	Ogochúkwú	"Grace of <i>Chukwu</i> "
ii.	Ògèchúkwú	" <i>Chukwu's</i> time" (is best)
iii.	Iwúchúkwú	" <i>Chukwu's</i> law" (is best)
iv.	Izúchúkwú	" <i>Chukwu's</i> plan/ week"

v.	Ugochúkwú	"The eagle of <i>Chukwu</i> "
vi.	Uzòchúkwú	" <i>Chukwu's</i> ways"
vii.	Íkéchúkwú	"The strength of <i>Chukwu</i> "
viii.	Ónyébùchí	"Who claims to be <i>Chi/Chukwu</i>
viii.	Ukàchúkwú	" <i>Chukwu's</i> own matter"
ix.	Ìlechúkwú	"The effectiveness of <i>Chukwu</i> "

*Category iv : Chukwu as Chi*

i.	Chíkwenú	"May <i>Chi</i> permit life"
ii.	Chibueze	" <i>Chi</i> is king"
iii.	Chíbundù	" <i>Chi</i> is life"
v.	Chíbuzò	" <i>Chi</i> comes first"
v.	Chígboò	"May <i>Chi</i> intervene in the fight"
vi.	Chidèbè	"May <i>Chi</i> preserve us"
vii.	Chidèbèlù	" <i>Chi</i> has preserved us"
viii.	Chidíogò	" <i>Chi</i> " is gracious"
ix.	Chidolue	"May <i>Chi</i> preserve us to the end"
x.	Chídubem	"May <i>Chi</i> keep leading me on"
xi.	Chiékekà	" <i>Chi</i> created so well"
xii.	Chiemekà	" <i>Chi</i> has done very well"
xiii.	Chijiofo	" <i>Chi</i> has the sacred wand of justice"
xiv.	Chijioke	" <i>Chi</i> has the share, the work of creation"
xv.	Chíkélúó	"May <i>Chi</i> shine, create to the end"
xvii.	Chikezie	"May <i>Chi</i> create it right"
xviii.	Chíkwèlù	" <i>Chi</i> has consented"
xix.	Chimèlèzè	" <i>Chi</i> made him king"
xx.	Chínagolú	" <i>Chi</i> solicits for me"
xxi.	Chínákà	" <i>Chi</i> is the creative artist"
xxii.	Chínédúm	" <i>Chi</i> is the one leading me on"
xxiii.	Chínàèmélú	" <i>Chi</i> does things for me"
xxiv.	Chínwèorà	" <i>Chi</i> is the owner of the people"
xxv.	Chínwèugwo	" <i>Chi</i> repays one"
xxvi.	Chínwèzè	" <i>Chi</i> owns the king"
xxvii.	Chínyèlùgò	" <i>Chi</i> gave us the eagle/ confers excellence"
xxviii.	Chiifè	" <i>Chi</i> the light/of the light of day"

**TEXT 2.i** *Okpulukpu okwu-ga "Core words, phrases and statements encapsulating a concept" otherwise religious terms for ritual events, activities and ceremonies*

i.	Àjà chí/Chúkúwú	Sacrifice to <i>Chi</i> or <i>Chukwu</i>
ii	Ohá Chí	The sacred <i>oha</i> of <i>Chi</i>

iii	Egbo Chukwu	The sacred <i>egbo</i> of <i>Chukwu</i>
iv	Àjà ézè-énu	Sacrifice to the king of the above
v	Onúchi	The source of <i>chi</i> "light"/ <i>Chukwu</i>
vi	Mkpulú Chi	The seeds of <i>Chi</i>
vii	Ihò Chi	To extract <i>Chi</i> and replace in a new abode
viii	Ilò Chi	Ritual of sacrifice to <i>Chi</i>
ix	Igo mmuo/Chi	Absolution rites offered to the spirits & <i>Chi</i>
x.	Isèdàtà Chì	The ritual of drawing down <i>Chi</i> from the sun
xi	Okwu Chi	The sacred altar of <i>Chi</i>
xii	Ókwá Chì	A wooden bowl used for serving in the morning rites of <i>Chi</i>
xiii	Ihú Chi	The altar of <i>Chi</i>
xiv	Éwu chi	The goat sacrificed to the <i>Chi</i> of a newly married girl
xv	Ónú Chi	The source of <i>Chi</i>
xvi	Ọnwú Chi	Natural death at the end of one's life
xvii	Uluchi	The foil for <i>Chi</i> (evil chi etc)
xviii	Ezi Chi	Good <i>Chi</i> , good fortune
xix	Ajò Chi	Evil <i>chi</i> , misfortune

## 2.ii Terms with *Chi* roots

i	Échichi	"Title taking"
ii	Ichi	"Facial scarification"
iii	Ichi ozo	"To take the ozo title"
iv	Ichié	"Titled elder"
v	Ōchié	"Of old, something of the old days"

## 2.iii *Chi* terms used for expressing weather conditions

i	Chi èfo	"Day has dawned"
ii	Chi-tà	"light of this day"
iii	Chi èjé	"Daylight has darkened, night has come"
iv	É-chi (echi)	"Tomorrow, another day of light"
v	Ū-chi-chi(uchichi)	"Night, darkness"
vi	Chí oma	"Good day, nice day"
vii	Chi ojo	"Bad day, evil day, unfortunate day"
viii	Ihū chi	"The weather condition"
ix	Chi nà ubosi	"Light and the day"
x	Mgbáchi	"Noon time"
xi	Mgbawata Chi	"The breaking of day"
xii	Chi amaka	"The day is very nice"

xiii	Chi' íghā	"The changing of weather with rain coming"
xiv	Chi' jū̀lù̀ òyí	"The day/weather is cold"
xv	Chi' igbānwē	"The changing of weather, of light of day"

*Text 3.i Proverbs with Chi in them*

i	Ofu nné na-amú, ma ofú chí' ádá ékè.
ii	Ebe onye dalù kà chí' ya kwatùlù ya.
iii	Onye ka mmadù ka chí' ya
iv	Onye kwe, chí' ya èkwe
v	Onye òké Chí' gbùulù oji, o jē dakólú n'énú atá
vi	Nwa nzá lijùólù afó sí chí' ya bia welú ya
vii	Onye bulu chí' ya ùzọ ọ gbágbuọ onwe ya n'ọsọ
viii	Chí' ùgò málù ùgò n̄zú n'írú
ix	Éfí na-enwerọ ọdù, chí' ya nà-ègbúlú ya íjiji
x	Chí' onye anarọ akpọ ya òkù ọ si na o jì nni' n'áká
xi	Onye ilo aburọ chí'.
xii	Chí' m̄mádù di abù
xiii	M̄mádù bù chí' onye
xiv	Chi onve adighi n'izu mà onwu egbuna va.
xv	Ngù Chùkwù gbùnyelù ónyé kà ọ jì ekota ífè.
xvi	Ngù Chùkwù gbùnyelù onye kà ọ jì ekota ífè.
xvii	Chùkwù nyelù akú-óyibó mmilí ọ jìlì hógoni énú nyelu ya ndu
xviii	Chùkwù jì jì, jidé m̄mà; onye ọ wányelù o líè.
xix	Ome ífè jídekwa ógù n'ihí na Chùkwù kà dibia agwo ndi oyia
xx	Chùkwù nonyélú eze òrà ènwèé úmé.
xxi	Onwelù onyé jelú Chùkwù dí?

*3.ii Proverbs with Chi expressing weather conditions*

i	Chọ́ ewú oji mgbe chi ka di.
ii	Chi' ejìghì mà ya efòná
iii	Anarọ ani onye na-ákwá nne ya ma chí' ejìghì.
iv	Welú efífié líè ífè na-ekò àfọ chí' eme jíè.
v	Áká na áká ralu, oyi ejie chí'.
vi	Ifé ọma anarọ ejí chí'.

3.iii *Others from Ezeanya*

- i Chukwu nwe onye na-efu ofia.
- ii Onye chi ya kwelu ofufu banyegodu na mbubo  
be o maghu fuo
- iii A chokalia dibia a gaba Chukwu n'ifi na uzo Okeke ma  
na Okafo makwuulu ya
- iv Chi onye adighi n'izu m onwu egbuna ya.
- v A kpo onye oku chi ya aza.
- vi Ebe onye dalu ka chi ya kwatulu ya.
- vii Chi nwa mba na-egburu ya oke
- viii Chi chili ugo ozo, ekwena ka ugo chachue
- ix Onye kwadobe ije chi ya akwadobekwuo
- x Nwata muba enu chi ya achili uche n'aka
- xi Chi gi egbuo gi.
- xii Chi m alaputa m.
- xiii Chi gi na aka gi.
- xiv Chukwu kpoo gi oku /Chi gi kpoo gi oku
- xv Okike kelu onye bu chi ya
- xvi Oka onye ka chi ya.
- xvii Ka onye ha ka chi ya ha.
- xviii Chi ya edulugo ya naba.
- xix O solugo chi ya naba.
- xx Onye ajo chi kpatalu nku ewu ataa ya.
- xxi A gbataghi ajo chi n'uzo olu.
- xxii Chi bulu ilulo onyeilo ekwolu m ya.

*Text 4.i Kolanut invocations*

*From M.D.WJeffreys' Unpublished thesis, SOAS*

i. Anyaanwu na Agbala, taa oji;  
 Chukwu okike kelu mmadu, taa oji,  
 Eke taa oji-  
 Oye taa oji  
 Afo taa oji  
 Nkwo taa oji-  
 Ani ndiichie, taa oji-  
 Nna anyi taa oji  
 Ogwugwu taa oji  
 Ngene taa oji  
 Ochichi nne eze taa oji  
 Ndi ichie, ndi melu mmadu taa oji  
 Ibenne melu ibenne, iru kpudo ya n'ani.

*Text 4.ii*

*From Romanus Egudu and Donatus Nwoga's  
Poetic Heritage, Nwamife, Enugu, 1971*

a. Chukwu okike m, na ndi nna m,  
Ekene m unu  
Makana unu melu m ji who uboshi ta;  
Ka m whukwa ubosi ozoga  
Lue mgbe ishi m ga-ach ocha;  
Meenu ka ogu ghalu igbuji m okpa  
Chebenu m na ezi na uno m  
Kwaalu m nu ajo mmadu na ajo maa;  
Anaghi m evu mmadu obuna ajo obi,  
Ma o nwee onye chelu na m adighelu ndu  
Mee ka onye ahu vulu m uzo malu  
Ka obodo ndi nwulu anwu shi di;  
Eji m owho  
Anaghi ato n'uzo.

b. Ugwu nee oji  
Ani nee oji  
Anyaanwu nee oji  
Ogwugwu nee oji:  
Ndiichie nee oji-  
Vuolunu anyi uzo  
Kpeelunu anyi azu  
Anyi anaghi ata oji n'anya ya  
Anyi na-eli nke mmadu  
Anyi anaghi eli nke maa  
N'enu anya oji unu  
N'enu ibe oji  
Ise-e ... Ise-e

c. Chukwu-okike  
Igwe na Ani  
Anyaanwu Ezechite-Okike,  
Ndi ihi anyi:  
O bu ndu

Na ihe e ji adi ya-  
 Aku na uba-  
 O bu ya ka anyi na-ayo.

d. Gini ka o ga-abu ta?  
 O ga-aga sololo, ka o ga-asu m akwu?  
 Onwu ka o bu ndu?  
 Ha! ideyi anaghi ali ugwu.  
 Onye bu ajo maa nunwa onyinyo ya  
 Na-akwuchili m ezi-okwu?  
 Ejili m ya Owhe.  
 Ebe a, owuwa anyaanwu, ebe ahu odida anyaanwu  
 Ebe a anyaanwu na-awa-  
 Nee ka eziokwuna-abia n'enu aziza anyaanwu  
 Igwe na ani kwukwulu m-  
 Kedu ka ile m ga-eshi di mgbagolo?  
 Isi awo na okwu ashi anaghi adi mma.  
 Mmuo nna-nna m, biakwaanu  
 Kwuyawa nnwa unu.  
 Ka anyi goshi nwa oco-dibia ihe anyi na-eme,  
 Ihe e ji malu anyi:  
 Omekwu onye gbujili ya akaje tufu anyaanwu ada-a  
 Zanu, zanu nwa unu.

*Text 4.iii*

*From Oji Ndi Igbo, published by  
 Ministry of Information & Culture, Enugu, 1978*

a. Chukwu kelu anyi taa oji  
 Chukwu kelu mmadu na-ata oji n'otu  
 Mmadu nkiti na-ata n'ibe n'ibe;  
 Chukwu biko nee anyi anya n'afo  
 Biko enekwana anyi anyan'isi  
 Maka n'anyi amagh ihe isi liri  
 Welu bue ibu.

b. Chukwu okike taa oji  
 Ndi nna anyi bianu taa oji  
 Kedunu ebe unu no?  
 Onweghi ka ijiji ga-esi rikata ihe  
 O ha ka ehi  
 Obialu be onye abiagbuna ya  
 O nakoo mkpumpku apukwana ya

Oturukpokpo ejighi ike ya atupu osisi  
 Ofo ka idei ji atu ana  
 Nwa mmuo emegbuna nwa mmadu  
 Ma nwa mmadu emegbuna nwa mmuo-  
 Ochu okuko nwe ada, nwa okuko nwe  
     nnwenwe oso;  
 Onye si na o bu mu na ya, ya buru  
     okuko uso baa ula.

c. Chineke taata bu gini? Taata bu Nkwo  
 Nkwo umuhu niine-  
 Anyi ga-adi-  
 Ka aku bia, ka a mubaa-  
 Ka ji ruo, ka Chineke nye unu ahu ike  
 Onye si unu adina, ya onwe ya agagh adikwu;  
 Onye si unu diri, ya dirikwa;  
 Ka isi ghalu iwa unu,  
 Ka afo ghalu ilu unu,  
 Ka mpukpa ghalu ikpa unu.

*Text 4.iv*

*From Shelton's Igbo-Igala Borderland, 1971*

Ndi nwe ani, kwo aka ututu  
 Ndi nwe ani-  
 Eze-igwe, kwo aka ututu,  
 Eze ani, kwuo aka ututu  
 One kwuo aka ututu  
 Odagba kwuo aka ututu  
 Oyishi Edo, kwuo aka ututu  
 Nche onye, kwuo aka ututu  
 Nshie one, kwuo aka ututu  
 Ahoke, kwuo aka ututu  
 Idenyi dimodi, kwuo aka ututu  
 Ufu anynyi, kwuo aka ututu  
 Ugwu eze Omada, kwuo aka ututu  
 Ugwu eze Eshugwuru, kwuo ka ututu  
 Ugwu, kwuo aka ututu  
 Odonwa Arua, kwuo aka ututu  
 Osayi nwa eze, kwuo aka ututu  
 Ufu Anyaanwu, kwuo aka ututu  
 Kwuo, unu, kwosi okiro  
 Akwosina mu na nwunye m na umu mu;  
 Omu, kwuo aka ututu  
 Arua Eze, kwelu ekule

Biko, unu ishi, unu diba-  
Ndi nwe ani, kwuo aka ututu.

b. Arua, kwuo aka ututu-  
Kwuo aka ututu eke.  
Ezechitaoke, bia welu oji;  
Mmuo niine di ebe a, bia welu oji  
Ani nee, o bu oji  
Ani nee, o bu oji-  
Zogide umu gi niine, biko  
Zogide umu gi niine, biko  
Zogide umu gi niine, biko  
Iyi Nsukka, bia taa oji, zogide  
Umunne Ngwu niine  
Zogide umu Iyioke niine ebe fa jedobelu  
Biko, biko ishi gi diba.

c. Ezechitoke, bia welu oji  
Mmuo niine di ebe a, bia welu oji-  
Wetebe umuaka, wetebe nwaanyi  
Wetebe ego na ife oma;  
Ezechitoke, biko zogide anyi-  
Ketebe umu, ketebe ife  
Ishi gi diba  
Zogidenu mu, ndi ikenyelu;  
Biko zogide anyi-  
Ekwena ife obuna ga-eme anyi

d. Eke Chukwuoke, ta oji,  
Ka ndu m dili  
Ta bu eke.

e. Chi m, taa oji  
Chi m, laa mmanya  
Chi m, zoo mu  
Chi m, ekwena ka ife mee mu  
Chi m, ndu nwa mu, nyelu m aka.

f. Nde nwe ani, kwuo aka ututu;  
Eke, kwuo ak ututu  
Afo, kwuo aka ututu  
Oye, kwuo aka ututu  
Nkwo, kwuo aka ututu  
Eze igwe, kwuo aka ututu  
Taata bu afo-  
Arua, kwuo aka ututu-

Ani, oji bu nke Arua-  
 Arua ta oji ututu  
 Idenyi Dimuke, taa oji ututu  
 Afo, taa oji ututu  
 Eke, taa oji ututu  
 Oye, taa oji ututu  
 Nkwo, ta oji ututu  
 Asogwa, taa oji ututu  
 Oriye Attah, taa oji ututu  
 Ugwu Idenyi, ta oji ututu  
 Odo nwa Arua, taa oji ututu  
 Egba ikwunne, taa oji ututu  
 Odagba, taa oji ututu  
 Onyili Edo,taa oji ututu  
 Ntiye ngweani, taa oji ututu  
 Ofo, taa oji ututu  
 Umu Ala, taa oji ututu  
 Okwa ndi ichie, taa oji ututu  
 Ofo eze, taa oji ututu  
 Anyaanwu, taa oji ututu  
 Ugwuoke, Ihe Ama, taa oji ututu  
 Taa bu afo-  
 Ndi bi n'igwe, taa oji ututu  
 Ndi bi n'ani, taa oji ututu  
 Di Iyioke, taa oji ututu  
 Amooke Ugwu Iye, taa oji ututu  
 Ugwu di beanyi, taa oji ututu  
 Ezechitaoke, taa oji ututu  
 Onye na-achu okuko nwe ada  
 Idenyi Dimuke, taa oji ututu  
 Ishi gi di be onye nwe ani-  
 Chukwu, ginwa kelu mmadu niine;  
 Ndi e kelun'ututu afo, nuonu mmanya.

*Text 4.v*

*From Francis Arinze's Sacrifice in Igbo Religion,  
 Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1970*

Chineke Ezechitaoke, ekene  
 Ani, ekene;  
 Igwe, ekene  
 Taanu oji;  
 Ogbuefi nna m Ononenyi...  
 Taanu oji  
 Onu kwulu njo gbaghalu  
 Onu kwulu mma gbaghalu

Mmefie adighi mgbaghalu ama adi  
 Anyi na ayio ndu na nka  
 Na ubosi oma, taata bu Eke.  
 Nye anyi olili na onunu;  
 Nye anyi omumu, di ji na di ede.  
 Okafo nnwa m, ka o muta nnwa nwoke  
     kpata ego  
 Ka ndi be ya fekwaa ya ka o si efe m  
 Ka ndi na-ekwulu m mma  
 Ka ndi na-ekwulu m njo-  
 Ife onye na-elolu mmadu  
 Ka Chineke na-elolu ya;  
 Onye si Okafo be m amutana nnwa  
 Nnwa nke ya amutana.  
 Onye si ana be m puo ata  
 Nke be ya puo elo;  
 Obialu ga-egbu m gbuo onwe ya  
 Ochu okuko nwe ada  
 Onye m na-emejoro na-eme m,  
     nya adinlu ya mma  
 Onye si m nwuo,  
 Nya bulu okuko uzo nakpou ula  
 Egbe belu, ugo belu...

*Text 4.vi*

*From Onwuejeogwu's paper on Ikenga,  
 published in African Notes, Ibadan, 1974*

Chukwu okike, Anyaanwu na Agbala  
 Onye kelu chi nke taa-  
 Anyi kpokuo yi ta,  
 Nye anyi ndu

*Text 4.vii*

*From Ogbalu's Mbem Igbo, 1974*

a. Mmuo m, chebe m ndu  
 Na-egosi m uzo m ga-esi na-aga n'iru  
 Dobe umu m ndu-  
 Gozie ezi na ulo m  
 Na-gbopuru m ajo ihe  
 Ekwela amosu bata be m  
 Ma o bu metu umu m aka

b. Chi anyi, onye na-azo anyi-  
 Anyi na-ayo gi

Ka i nyelu anyi ka n'alo  
 Nwaanyi na-acho ikpa  
 Biko nalu oji taa,  
 Anyi ayoo gi.

*Text 4.viii*

*From B.B.O Emeh's Treasures of Nnobi,  
 Enugu, 1988*

Chi Ukwu bi n'enu bia welu oji,  
 Chi abiamala bia ta oji  
 Ana beanyi bia taa oji  
 Ohu mmuo na nnu mmuo bianu ta oji  
 Idemmili Ezenwaanyi bia taa oji  
 Aho nwa isi udughudu bia taa oji  
 Nna anyi-ha nwulu anwu bia taa oji  
 Nne anyi-ha nwulu anwu bianu taa oji  
 Ndi niine anyi na ha na-atakoli oji  
 bianu taa oji.

*Text 4.ix*

*From Nathan Nkala, published in oji ndi Igbo  
 "Igbo kolanut Prayers" published by the  
 Ministry of Information and Culture, Anambra State,  
 Enugu, 1977*

Agbala bu Anyaanwu ututu  
 Bia tutulu ihe oma n'ututu  
 Uchichi, chiruka nri fodulu n'ututu  
 Chukwu-okike  
 Bu nwoke owholowho anya  
 No n'enu na-enezu uwa niine anya  
 Gi bu is sekpu nti  
 Anyi na-akpoku gi  
 Anyi bu umu gi na-amaghi ihe  
 Na-aghu ahu n'afo n'afo  
 Ajaana Nne-Omumu  
 Tubalu nwoke ime n'efifie naabo  
 Anyi tukolu gi aka  
 Igwe, aziza akpaghi aka  
 Ma ya ana-enwu ocha;  
 Welu igiligi ngozi gi  
 Sachaa anyi ihu ututu  
 Ogwugwu, Ngene-oji, Udo-

Onyeobuna bia za anyi oku  
 Uzoma mulu ngodo  
 Ngodo mutalu Ome Okachie!!  
 Izuzu gbezu gbe nu  
 Izuzu gbe zugbe nu  
 Ka unu ha, bu ihe ahughi anya.  
 Ano m n'akuku oshimili nnu  
 Jili ncha na-asa ahu:  
 Unu ekwena ka ncha  
 Baa m anya  
 Ogbuilu nwata nkakwu  
 Ga-enye ya mmili o ji asa aka;  
 Dibuno anaghi ezie  
 Nwa ya ga gutalu ya oku  
 Biakwa halu mmili hakpo ya  
 Izuzu gbe zugbenu!  
 Mee nu ka anyi bu umu unu  
 Umu mmadu na-esonye oku  
 N'ite unu shibelu no obodo a  
 Ghotu/Muta  
 Na akwukwo na-ato  
 Bu na ite eshli;  
 Ibe akpuohu abuo  
 Nkwotoko nkwotoko  
 Ma ya enena nka shigbulu ibe ya  
 O bu ezi na  
 Mkpulu aka ise ahaghi iha  
 Mana o bu ofu aka luta mmanu  
 O zue oha onu  
 Na oji ezughi mba  
 Bu na mvo adghi n'aka  
 Ka mkpulu akuku meelu m  
 Lutelu nwunye di m  
 Ka o ga-abu o ko mu  
 Ka m yoro ya.  
 Oghoro ukpaka ihe omili  
 Ji ukwu ekene ana  
 Onalu nwata ihe ya  
 Wenie aka ya enu  
 Mata  
 Na aka robe ya iro  
 O wetuolu nwata ihe ya  
 Zuzu gbezu gbenu!!  
 Nuo nu nuzuo nu!!  
 Welu nu ogu nzu  
 Tinye anyi n'obu

Ka o ga-abu anyi taa  
 Ka anyi vuo onwe-anyi  
 N'obi, ghalu ivu ibe anyi n'anya  
 Zuzu gbezu gbenu!

*Text 4.x*

*From oral sources collected in the field. This one is from a blacksmith  
 In Awka, collected in 1980. Probable age is about 54.*

Chíneke nna  
 K'i gozie anyi na oji anyi wetalu  
 Oji a ka anyi welu na-ekene gi  
 Gi bu nna  
 N'o gi kelu ife niine- 5  
 Kee enu  
 Kee ana  
 Kee anyi bu mmadu  
 Wee si anyi welu oji a  
 Anyi welu ya na-agolu gi 10  
 Ife obuna anyi cholu iyo gi  
 Anyi welu ya na-ayo gi  
 Ifeanwa anyi na-ayokwanu gi wu  
 Nnene ndu  
 Nnene aru ike 15  
 I nye anyi nnene nnwa ya-atò atò  
 Nye anyi nnene ego, ego delu ede  
 Ndi beanyi si na nnwa bu ife aku-aku  
 ife enwe-enwe-  
 Mmadu enwere nnwa i malu na onwere ife obuna  
 o nwelu  
 Anyi wee na-ayo Chukwu 20  
 Na-ayokwanu Obunaana  
 Na-ayo ya ka nna anyi gochaalu mbu  
 Na ndu kwulu okwu si na ife e nyelu nwata  
 anara aru ya oku  
 Oo ife e ji malu Igbo di ife a  
 Onye obuna i batalu na be ya 25  
 O chegolu gi oji  
 Nya bu ife izizi o ga-emelu gi  
 Nyaa na oji a ka anyi ji na-ayo Odeniigwe  
 O doo ka o dodaluo ana,  
 Ndi beanyi si na ndu azu bu ndu mmili 30  
 Ndu mmili bu ndu azu  
 Nya emena n'Olu  
 Nya emena n'Igbo

- Egwu tulu  
 Oji tulu 35  
 Onye efuna ma nwanne ya efuna  
 Egbe belu ugò belu  
 Nke si ibe ya ebena  
 Nku kaa nya  
 Oo ele Igbo si atu- 40  
 Nya bu na o garo agho anyi  
 Oo ife oma ka anyi na-acho  
 Ife oma chokwalu anyi bia  
 Uwa ga-eli ishi anyi abiakwana  
 Uwa nke anyi ga-eli biakwaalu anyi 45  
 Ife ga-akali anyi, ga-eme ka ndu anyi  
 gbaa kpukelèkpù  
 Abialuna anyi  
 Noo ife ga-eme ka...  
 O doo adi dili anyi 50  
 Doolu umuazi anyi  
 Doolu nne anyi  
 Oo ya ka anyi na-ayo gi  
 Chineke nna-  
 Na-ayokwa Obunààhà 55  
 Ndiichie Mbaeme, biko taanu oji  
 Arinze unu  
 Ndiichie Agulu, taanu oji  
 Ndiichie Oka, taanu oji  
 Biko nna m ukwu Okaafò welu oji- 60  
 Nne m welukwue  
 ...arinze gi  
 Osi-nu fukwonu mu  
 Ufe magbukwee nya onu.  
 Nyekwuolu nwatakili a batalu faa aka 65  
 O ya-abalu ya  
 Onye cho ka ife nna ya gbene efune  
 Nkiye aya-kwanu efu  
 Oo ka o du mma ka anyi na-ekwu  
 Nyaa na ife anyi na-ekwu n'ojinunwa 70  
 Bu ya dili ubi  
 Nya dili anyi  
 O ga-adili m mma  
 Dulu ya mma  
 Dulu umuazi anyi niine 75  
 Dulu ndi nke gi  
 Dulu ndi nke m  
 Nyaa Chukwu gozie anyi.

## Text 4.xi

*From Onuzuluike Dakwesienyi, a local priest  
and farmer. Aged about 67 years. Collected August 1980  
at Okpuno*

Chúkwú kélú ùwà-  
Ifé ito ká anyi na-ayo gi:  
Ndu, ndu, ndu, ndu-  
I nye anyi ndu, i nye anyi egó anyi  
ga-eji chékwa ndu; 5  
I nye anyi egó i nye anyi mmádu  
anyi na fa ga-ébi  
Ifé folu ká anyi jée n'afia jée gólu.  
Gboolu anyi ógu anyi na ndu-  
Ndu anwudona anyi mgba má anyi anwudona ndu 10  
O mee ká o ghalu, o mee ka o dolu  
O ghabá aghabá nya aghágbuné anyi  
O dóbe edóbe nya edógbunà anyi  
Anyi ayaró ejelu ugani ugwo ma ya abialuna anyi-  
Abia fa abia kwáalu fa úzo n'azu unó- 15  
Obialu be onye abiagbuna ya, o nákoò.  
Mkpumkpú apukwónà ya.

## Text 4.xii

*From the Ezeana of Amanuke, in 1980. Aged about 80 years.  
He is the chief priest of the cult of Ana and recorded before the shrine*

Aháá!  
Chúkwú...  
Aná takwáá oji-  
Aná afiá anyi Amanúke táanú oji  
Ookwo egbe béli ugò béli 5  
Onye si ibè ya èbèné  
Nkú káa nya.  
A sikwa na ochòlu nkè ya anaro efù  
Ifé malú mmá di n'ubi, a na-etò Ufejiokú  
A si na ochú okúkò nwè áda 10  
Nwa okúkò ana-atute ofo ya anya;  
A sifá o ghabakwa aghaba ya aghagbune anyi  
O dóbé edóbé ya edógbunè anyi

'A s'ikwà nà ife onye nwelu akarókwa' ya-  
 'Asikwò m Chukwu gi takwa oji' 15  
 'Asikwò m Èké t'aa'nu oji-  
 'Oye t'aa'nu oji  
 Nkwo t'aa'nu oji  
 'Afo' t'aa'nu oji  
 Isioye Aghadiuno unu bia welu oji t'aa' 20  
 'A si gidigidi pukwaa ezi 'odolungwulu bata uno  
 'A sikwa ofufu ya fulu ya ma eskpu esekpuna  
 'A sikwa o daba n'iru na anyi no n'azu  
 O daba n'azu na anyi no n'iru  
 Na anyi amaro ka ife si welu eku umē 25  
 'A sikwa na anyi ga-adifocha oo  
 Na anyi ga-adifocha oo  
 I furo ndi moto na-aganu  
 Moto fa ajamuna nke mmadu  
 Ma nke mmadu ajamuna nke fa' 30  
 Nyekwa fa ezigbo egō-  
 Ego julu oyi  
 Ego okwu na uka kpodokwa onye ezi ezi egede egede  
 Asi m ife oma mekwaaalu anyi  
 Ka anyi dinu oo 35  
 Iyaa!

*Text 4.xiii*

*From Okafo Mgbakwu of Mgbakwu. A local singer and farmer, aged about 70. Recording was done at his hom at Mgbakwu in July 1980.*

'Ifē t'aa' oji  
 'Ifē t'aa' oji  
 'Ifē t'aa' oji  
 T'aa' bu eke t'aa' oji  
 T'aa' bu eke t'aa' oji' 5  
 I tachaa i nye oye  
 'Oye tachaa o nye Afo  
 'Afo' tachaa o nye Nkwo  
 Afia naano  
 A ja-enweta ife di mma 10  
 A ja-enweta ikwu na ibe  
 Nweta nnwa  
 Nweta ife aku-aku  
 Nweta ife enwe-enwe;  
 Nweta nna aa... 15  
 Ndi ana takwaanu oji aa-  
 O kwa ndu-

Ndū nwōké anwūnà  
 Ndū nwaanyi anwūnà  
 Onye si na ele anyi si nọdū adiro ya mma 20  
 Onye oo-  
 N'isi gi  
 O buro m gbulu ya, oo Chukwu gbulu  
 Onye o bu  
 Onye si na ibe ya adiro ya mma 25  
 Onye oo-  
 O ga-anzi nani ya?  
 Onye afu abukwo mmaadu?  
 O bu ewu ka o bu okuko?  
 O bukwo mmaadu? 30  
 Uzondingo, ka unu takwaa oji...

*Text 4.xiv*

Collected from Chike Okpala, at Awka in 1980.  
 He is a school teacher aged about 37 at the time  
 of recording.

Ife!  
 Ife!  
 Ife!  
 Chukwu keli uwa choro ya mma 5  
 Onye na ke ya onye na ke ya;  
 Onye si na ife do mma ama adi ayi mma  
 O sichaa nni ya etiina ya nnu;  
 Onye si na okeli lulu anyi ama elu anyi  
 Onye afunweta nke ya  
 Ya tunye n'qhia 10  
 Anyi sikwa anu enu kpaa  
 Anu ana kpaa  
 Nke si ibe ya akpana  
 Uwa ya chie;  
 Egbeli ugo belu 15  
 Nke si ibe ya ebena  
 Nku kwaa ya  
 Osisi fulu anyi na-atu nkweli  
 Si n'ukwu holukwa, na o si na anaka ya  
 O mechaa o duchikwa. 20  
 Anyi fulu idei ka o na-agba oso  
 Anyi amaho ihe na-achu yanu  
 Anyi na-ayio Chukwu bia tughalialu anyi aju  
 Na o teena o bubelu anyi isi.  
 Odimma so dizie be anyi 25  
 Ka ihu chaa anyi amu.

Anyi nọ ka o ghálu o ghagbùhọ anyi  
 Ka o na-édó ya edógbunà anyi...eh  
 Oo kwọ ndù ndù nka nka  
 Omumù nwòke 30  
 Omumù nwaanyi  
 Ihé akù-akù  
 Ihé énwé énwé -eh!  
 O ná-abu nnwa to nnwa  
 Nnwa atokwa ibe ya 35  
 N'oo ya bu ndù èbè-èbè ah.  
 Onye ejighi ya jide  
 Na anyi si o ko anyi  
 Ya akona onye ga-énye anyi  
 Ma anyi na-ayo ya ya nye anyi 40  
 Na anyi ga-enyebinye ibe anyi  
 Makana mmanu aha agha ikọ  
 N'okù à gwólù ya.  
 Ookwo i wétalu anyi olili  
 Í wétalu anyi olulu, 45  
 A kpata anyi élie  
 A kpata anyi edobe  
 Anyi ama abu a kpata o titaa  
 Emewuna anyi nwakatinkolo  
 Ewu di ndù, mpi ya akpoọ nkù- aa 50  
 Nkè onye na-eme, ya jisikwa ike na ya  
 Nkè onye ma ya malu ya  
 Nkè onye amahọ ya amana ya  
 Anyi sikwọ ukwa daalu m  
 Ya daalu nwunyè di m- aa 55  
 Ibè anyi-nù, ahù ike na odimma-  
 Ogonogo ndù na uba-  
 Nke kacha nkè, ahù iké  
 Na oo onye isi di ndù kà à nwutalu igwu na ya  
 Na oo ndù walu oji 60  
 Nyaa na, ihe anyi zùbèlù anyi ga-eme, di gi mma n'obi  
 Mee ka o gaalu anyi nnoo wéléwélé  
 Anyi sikwò kà anyi ghálu ibu, anyi gbuo  
 Anyi anyalu-anyalu bulu ébulu;  
 Nwa sò petu m- 65  
 Ndi na-agu akwukwo jisie ike,  
 Nkè onye anana-eme nnọ  
 Ya si na ya...(unintelligible)  
 O nwehọ onye a tabili òmé ji ya-  
 Onye kpokonwo ahikia nyá kpolukwa 70  
 O kpochaa o kpozughu o gbaa ya unu;  
 Nkè onye metalu ya ji isi ya bulu

Nkè onye mà ya màlú ya  
 Nke onye na-amaro sokwáá lóó uzò  
 A yagh eji anyi gwo Ana-di-mma 75  
 Umùáká a na-asi ha nye anyi, o honu  
 Nne na nnà zùbá umùáká zùbá zùcháá  
 Umùáká azùbákwa nne na nnà.  
 A síkwà gi nyè anyi nnwà na nwa  
 Na anwàtà ihé ofe- 80  
 Enyenà anyi umù na umù  
 Na amùye ùno òku.  
 Nnwà nke ma nà ya bu nwa  
 Ya bialu anyi  
 Na o ho na a mujulu unò bu mkpa- 85  
 Kwubosi a si gi bia n'ogige ndi uwe ojii  
 Bia gbàlùkwa òtù  
 O wee búlu ma ókwú, búlu mà inú;  
 Pùlù m nwèlu ajáwú énwé,  
 Onye a nàbàlù ndù ya 90  
 Ya noi n'afó -aa.  
 Nna, anyi nà-ayo gi  
 Anyi ayaghi adi ndù isisi akpú  
 O nà-abu onye nyèlu nwàtà nwòké  
 Mótó o yàná-àgba 95  
 Ma ò bú nwaanyi igwè-àkà o yàná-àkwa  
 O nyè ya mmanú o yàná atú ya;  
 O nyeghù ya o taa nchala.  
 Ya bu, i nyè anyi ndù, i nyè anyi ahú iké,  
 I nyékwá anyi ihé anyi gá-éjì na-atú ndù mmanú 100  
 Nyáá nnà, anyi nà-ayo gi si oo  
 Welu afo oma gi na ngozi gi waálú anyi oji à  
 Ka o yà-adi anyi mma n'aru  
 N'ifi Jesus onye nwe anyi.

## 4.xv

From Mrs C. Emejulu, during an interview in which she gave this invocation as she recalls the petitions and rituals her father used to perform during the early morning kolanut petitions. Collected in 1980, at Nnobi. She is aged about 50 years at the time. Occupation: she is a seamstress and dealer in cloths for sale.

Onye nwe ùwà,  
 Onye kelú eniigwé na ùwà  
 Chukwú pulú ime ife niine  
 Anyáánwú Cúkwú Okikè  
 Nna, e wètà okukò n'unò ebé à  
 Mù ga-egbù ya-

E wetá ewú n'unó ébé a  
 Mū gā-egbú ya-  
 E weta ojí n'unó ebe à  
 Mū gā-awá ya-  
 Onye nwe anyi Chineke nke m̄  
 Mū ka o lūlū  
 Mukwọ́ kà o lūlū  
 Mukwọ́ kà o lūlū  
 Mu ka o lūlū

(b)

Anyáánwú Chukwu-òkikè-  
 Agbàlá chukwu-òkikè  
 Okaákà  
 Onye kélú igwé na ànà  
 Na ifé di ya  
 Na ngí kà a na-ebunye iru  
 Onye nwé ùwà

(c)

Agbàlá Chukwu-òkikè  
 Bia taa oji,  
 Igwe-ka-ana, bia ta oji  
 Onye kélú ùwà nà ifé di n'ime ye  
 Onye nwe anyi gi ka m̄ na-enye nsopulú;  
 Ndiichie bianu ta oji  
 Ndi di ndu biakwuonu taa oji...

4.xvi

*From Mrs Patience Uzonnwa Agu, collected at Nnobi. It is a sample of a petition which a woman offers to her personal chi. She is a trader and farmer aged about 44 at the time.*

Chi m̄,  
 Chi'ugò málú ugò n̄zú  
 Chi onye eloghu n'izù ma onwú egbuna ya  
 Nye m ndù mu na umàzì  
 I dobe nnoo ndù mū na ùmūāzì  
 Gbaruge aro, egbuolu m gi òkukò

4.xvii

*This is a second type of women's petition to their chi. It is from Chinyelu Okpala, about 22 years of age and at advanced teachers college. Collected from Nnobi in 1980*

Chi m̄  
 Oo kwo' mbia mbia ka m bialu;  
 Ōbi di' ocha' ka m̄ ji  
 Asi m̄ na mbea m̄ bialu, ōbi di' ocha'  
     ka m̄ ji bia  
 Amaho m̄ ihe' di' be nde'  
 Amahò m̄ ihe di' n'ana ebea  
 Nke onye mà, ya' m̄alù ya'

## 4.xviii.

*This is collected from a written source published in an Nnobi historical bulletin published by Fr. Anyichie, probably the collector of the petition.*

Chukwú kélú mmádù nalu ocha oma  
 Mmuo' di be anyi nalu ocha oma,  
 Ndi mmuo' di beanyi Okafo nnwa oyim  
     bialu ikpolu' ada' m bu Nwakego-  
 Ndi mmuo' di beanyi, unu' fulu' na ofo' aha' eshie ana.

5.(i) *Ikpo mkpu (Incantations)*

*From: Ezeadirika Ezenwocha*

*Occupation: Chief priest of Nwocha at Oraukwu*

*Age: About 54 years*

*Date of recording: 1977*

Ógbuté Óbuté  
 Biko' gélu' enyi gelu' onu' oo  
 Géé' enyi gélu' onu'  
 Okàgbà nwaanyi' odu', Nwocha'  
 Odu' enyina-akpo' gi agbomma' 5  
 K'i' nyelu' mu' aka' oo

Ógbuté Óbuté  
 Biko' bute' nke ife' anyi ga-eli oo  
 Agbomma' oo  
 Nwocha' 10  
 Obinammili' awo' na-ekwelu' ojolima  
 Alusi' nwele' mmili'  
 Géé' enyi, gelu' onu' m  
 Okàgbà nwaanyi' odu'

- K'i nyelú m áká: 15  
 Odu enyi na-akpo gi agbomma  
 K'i nulu-
- Ógbúte' Obúte'  
 Gi gelú enyi gelú onú m  
 Okàgba nwàanyi odù 20  
 K'i nyelú mu áká
- Ógbúte' Obúte'  
 Biko gelú onú gelú enyi m  
 Gee enyi gelú onu m  
 Okàgba nwàanyi odù, 25  
 K'i nyelú m áká.  
 Óbinammili awọ na-ekwelú ojolima  
 Mmonwú bu ọdọgwu  
 Onu-ntu a na-eli egbegú  
 Úkpàkà sili iké 30  
 Agbowọ diké izù  
 O tie mkpakamkpa  
 Ukàdike ee  
 Ezè egwu  
 Nwocha 35  
 Gee onú gelú enyi  
 Okàgba nwàanyi odù  
 K'i nyelú m áká oó
- Alúsi okàgba nee oji-  
 I nùgó kà odù enyi nà-akpo gi; 40  
 Onye nà-agọlu gi ofọ à  
 Bù Ezediriká Ezenwocha  
 Ya bù onye na-eyelú gi ózi  
 Nà akpo gi nke à  
 Ka i nálú oji nke à 45  
 Ka i chekwāā munwà, chekwāā  
 Onye wetálu ojia  
 Kà ichékwiriché chekwálù édè-  
 Nà ichékwiriché chekwasiálù édè  
 O tarọ ede àtà 50  
 Onye nwe ede gwurukwáalù édè  
 Mānà ọ nwerọ ugwo ọ kwulù ichékwiriché  
 Chekwāā anyi etuā  
 Kà anyi niine hálù nọlu n'ebe à  
 Chèkwāā anyi etuā 55  
 Chèkwāā ndi Olu  
 Chèkwāā ndi Igbo

Chèkwáá ndi Ọ́jii  
 Chèkwáá ndi ọ́chà  
 Mākà mmadù niine bu ofu 60  
 Olunà-alu olu n'Igbò, Igbò nà-alú olu n'Olu  
 Ndi ọ́chà nà-alúkwá olu n'òbòdò ndi ọ́jii  
 Ndi Ọ́jii nà-alúkwá olu n'òbòdò ndi ọ́chà  
 Mākà anyi niine bù ofu  
 Nya bù, chèkwáá ndi ọ́jii, chèkwáá ndi ọ́chà 65  
 Mākà nà anyi niine bù ofu  
 O bù nyanwà bu "ègbé bèlú ùgò bèlú  
 Nkè si ibè ya èbèna nku kapu ya"  
 Anyi nà-ayo gi  
 O bulunà onye Igbò eje aní oyibo, ya dili ya mma 70  
 Ndi oyibo biakwa nà be anyi  
 Ya dili ha mma  
 Obialù be onye ábiágbuná ya  
 O nájéé  
 Mkpumkpú apuna ya 75  
 Úkwu onye jili bia be ibè ya  
 Ya wèlú ya wèè nàá, mà ndù bulù isì  
 Okágbà ékènékwáá m gi  
 Kèné ife nà-émelú gi ife  
 Kèné nke i nà-emelu 80  
 Kèné ákpú gi  
 Kèné ngwù gi  
 Kèné umù gi niine nò n'òbòdò oyibò  
 Kèné ohu mmùò gi nà nnù mmùò gi  
 Nàlú ọ́jii 85  
 Nàlú ọ́jii kà i kèé  
 Nà Onwènu nà-èké  
 N'o bughu ákà útutu  
 Nàlú ọ́jii kèé  
 Kènyé ndi Ọ́lu 90  
 Kènyé ndi Igbò Kènyé mmùò di n'Ọ́lu  
 Kènyé mmùò di n'Igbò  
 Kènyé aní Ọ́lu  
 Kènyé aní Igbò  
 Bùlú nyè Chukwu Okiké 95  
 Onye pùlú ime ife niine  
 Mākà a ja-ama mbù e gosi eniigwe  
 E bulu egwu ghaluana ada ano n'enu agba  
 Ugbo nà-efe n'enu fesia, ọ daa n'ani  
 Ekènékwáá m gi. 100  
 Nèkwá ọ́jii  
 O bùòdibò kà m nà-àgbàlú gi  
 Ọ́ burò múnwà bù ginwà bu nwọ́chà

Néé oji kèé.

- Ékénékpó, òbì èlobe 105  
 O nwéé ndi a kporo áfa  
 O ná-èwúte fa  
 Ndi ná-akporo áfa, fá kà à ná-acho kà à kpóó:  
 Òrimilì nèzigbò na àjà nọ n'Omámبالà  
 Bià túlú nzú bia túlú oji oo 110  
 Okágbà nwáanyi mmá, nwócha' oo  
 Óké ngwú arọ náábò  
 Ukpáka sílì íkè ;  
 Idemogu nwachúkwú Òkíkè  
 Bia túlú nzú túlú oji oo, 115  
 Óké nze k'i nyélu mú ákà  
 Òdibò ka mu na-ágbalú òkágbà nwócha'  
 Okágbà mu nwócha  
 Ófo nze osísí k'ólúnkú  
 Mèlu nzú bia túlú oji oo 120  
 K'i nyélu mú ákà oo...
- Ófo lèé kà é sílì gọ ya  
 Á sí m nwoke dí  
 Nwáanyi dí  
 Onye mélu ífè ojòò nyà nálú ugwo ojòò 125  
 Onye mélu ífè omá nyà nálú ùgwó omá  
 Mákà ífè onye ná-alu kà o ná-eli  
 Ifè onye lílì nya k'ọ lùlù  
 Èbè onye ná-alu olú  
 Nyá líé nni'èbé áfú 130  
 Èbè onye ná-elikwá nni  
 Nyá na-alu olú èbé áfú;  
 Ékénélú m órà mmádù niiné  
 Mà ndi bú nze mà ndi bú ókóló  
 Mà ndi bú ákpá, mà ndi bú ìtìm- 135  
 Ibèanyi, kà o dígodùnù étù à  
 Kà m kénékwá Okágbà nwóchá n'òdu ényi  
 Okágbá kà m kéné gi n'òdu ényi
- (Odu àháá onú)  
 Ósébúlúwà Chúkwo ébùká 140  
 Oménchá Emeimò  
 Omémírì mékwa  
 Chi ùgò málú ùgò ñzù n'irù  
 Gekwo ntí gèlu ényi oo  
 Ezèènú ka inyélú m ákà oo, 145  
 Chínèkè ka i nyélu m ákà

N'ókwo òdìbò kà mū nà-agbalu òkàgbà nwòcha'  
 Àlùsì nwélu mmílí.

Mamiwòta mmùó nwe eke nà-ébù ègò  
 Mmùó nwe èké nà-ebu ègò 150

Òje yàwù-yàwù  
 Òké mmànwù  
 Nèké ikpèlè na isi-àná-  
 Odibo kà m nà-agbalu gi;  
 M má átu'okwú úghá... 155

Nwòchá asì m gi jèé fieta onye ji'gi'ugwọ n'Olu  
 Fieta onye ji'gi'ugwọ n'Igbò  
 Mākà ocho nkè ya ádigh ánwù-  
 Nye m nkè m nye m nkè m  
 O ro ya nà-afio? 160

Onye obunà nà-acho kà o nwée nke aka yá  
 Yá bú, ocho nkè ya ánwùnà  
 O bú n'Olu, o bú n'Igbò  
 Onye fée ezé, ezé élú ya-  
 Onye zasia misita mmádu, ka mmádu 165  
 Zákwo misita ya  
 Née ikpèlè neé isianá  
 Ekènékwáá m gi.

Nalu oji'ka i kèzie izùzùgbézùgbé  
 Mākánà oo ngi nwè oji- 170  
 Gi nwè nzù-  
 Mākà onwènu nà-éke  
 N'ò bughu aka útutu;  
 Odibo kà m nà-agbalu gi-  
 Ibèanyi, ofo alusigo nke útutu taa. 175

Ógbuté obuté  
 Bikó nálú oji nálú nzù  
 Agbommà àà  
 N'ofò agwusigo;  
 Mgbilimgbá aküzugo 180  
 Agbommà àà  
 Nwòchá oo  
 Mgbilimgbá aa-oo

Ógbuté obuté  
 Bikó nálú nzù nálú oji oo 185  
 Agbommà àà  
 Nwòchá oo

Màkàná òfó anyi ezúgò  
 Agbòmá áá  
 Nwòchá 190  
 Mgbíímgbá áá óó

Ògàíígwé bikò étufúkwónà òfó anyi  
 K'ò nàá n'efú...  
 Etufúkwónà òfó  
 Kà ò nàá n'íyí... 195

Osebuluuwà Chúkúwú ebuká oo  
 Oméntá emiimò  
 Omémírí mékwa  
 Chi ùgò málú ùgò ñzù n'irù  
 Chúkúwú kélú ùwà ñínè 200  
 Nalukwa nzù nalù ojí  
 Èzèènú-  
 K'i nyélú m̄ áká óó;  
 Èzèènú bikò étufúkwónà òfó mú  
 K'ó nàá n'efú 205

(Mgbíímgbá aháá ónú)

Ò bú mú bú Èzèdiríká Èzènwòchá'  
 Mmuó m̄ nà-egbú, gbúó m̄  
 Mmádú m̄ nà-egbú, gbúó m̄  
 Ife m̄ sì éméná mmádú, ya éméná mú;  
 Ekwe nke à à nà-esu bú nà òbòdò à nà-akpò Oráukwú 210  
 Alúsi a gà-ekene nke à bú Nwòchá n'Oráukwú  
 Nwòchá di n'òbòdò Oráukwú  
 Óké alúsi di nà Oráukwú  
 Kà à gà-èkèné n'ekwé kítà  
 N'ubòsi táata, n'ututú ubòsi táatá 215  
 Bu éké, bú di-okpála' ubòsi;  
 Ngwá, alúsi' okàgbà bu nwòchá'  
 Gélú ntí k'i gélú ekwe à  
 Nòó gi kà à gà-akpo n'ekwe à:

Ógbúte obúte 220  
 Bíkò gélú ékwé nílú ékwé  
 Ogànígwe nwàányi' mmà  
 Odézùlùigbò mmàdìnikpó  
 Okàgbà nwòchá oo  
 Gelu ékwé nílú ékwé 225  
 Okàgbà nwàányi' òdù  
 K'i mee ife m̄ yólú gi'

- Ekene kà m̄ nà-èkéné gi n'èkwe  
 Wée nà-ayo gi kà i nyelu m̄ áka  
 Anà m̄ áyo gi bikò okagba nwaanyi 230  
 Ofo kà m̄ ga-ènye nwataa, wée  
 Gokwuolu ya ofo agoolu:  
 Nwatakiri- a a nà-akpo ya Ogonna-  
 Ya kà m̄ ji akpo gi n'ekwe  
 K'i za m̄ n'ekwe a 235  
 K'i wée gelu ofo m̄ ga-agolu ya  
 Ka i buulu ya uzò, kà i kpeelu ya azu  
 Ka o ga-abu nje di n'iru, k'o nodu n'azu-  
 O di n'azu, kà o nodu n'iru;  
 O di n'aka nni, kà o nodu n'aka ekpe- 240  
 O di n'aka ekpe, kà o nodu n'aka nni-  
 Na mmili ana-ezo, na anwu na-amu-  
 Na oyi na-atu, na okpoofu na -ekpo-  
 N'ochichi gbalu, n'onwa na-eti-  
 N'o bu n'okochi, n'o bu n'udummili 245  
 Ekwekwona kà o jebu, m'o bu kà o zobulu.  
 Ukwu o jili je, kà o welu ya na-ana  
 Nwocha buulu ya uzò kpeelu ya azu;  
 Maka ifi ofo a, na ife nke a  
 M nà-ayo gi, kà m̄ ji enye gi otuto n'ekwe a. 250  
 Kà i gelu ekwe a, nulu ekwe  
 Kà i meelu m̄ ife a m̄ yolu gi  
 Maka nwatakiri a bu Ogonna

( Ekwe ahaa onu)

- Okagba gi gelu ekwe nulu ekwe-  
 Gelu ekwe nulu ekwe 255  
 Okagba nwaanyi mma  
 K'i mee ife a yolu gi..

5.ii Akuko n'egwu

from F.C. Ogbalu's Mbem ndi Igbo, 1974

Nwa nnunu no n'ikpele mmili  
 Kwe m ekele...ekele oma  
 Kwe m oma...oma n'udo  
 Kwe m udo... udo ka opi  
 Kwe m opi... opi ngoro  
 Kwe m ngoro... ngoron uka  
 Kwe m uka ... uka ekwube  
 Kwe m kwube... kwuru gaba

Nye m gaba... gaba Isu  
 Nye m Isu... Isu na mmiri  
 Nye m mmili... Mmili ala  
 Nye m ala... ala Chukwu  
 Nye m Chukwu... Chukwu ndu  
 Nye m ndu... Ndu abiala

## 5.(iii)

Mbe ariba ... Ajambene  
 Mbe ariba ... Ajambene  
 Riba riba riba ... Ajambene  
 Wee rirue... Ajambene  
 Welu mkuru azu ... Ajambene  
 Tunye n'ime akpa... Ajambene  
 O wee si n'akpa dapu... Ajambene  
 Danye n'ime mmiri... Ajambene  
 Mbe arida .. Ajambene  
 Wunye n'ime mmiri... Ajambene  
 Wee choba akwu ya ... Ajambene  
 O hu otu azu ... Ajambene  
 Si ya i tara akwu... Ajambene  
 O si na ya ataghi akwu... Ajambene  
 Mbe wee gaba... Ajambene  
 Gwuo gwuo gwuo... Ajambene  
 Hu azu ozo... Ajambene  
 Si ya i tara akwu... Ajambene  
 O si ya na ya ataghi akwu... Ajambene  
 Mbe ewere nkume tuo... Ajambene  
 Tuta Eme e kwe... Ajambene  
 Tuta mbe n'obi... Ajambene  
 Mbe anaba... Ajambene  
 Naruo be Chukwu...Ajambene  
 Kuo kpam kpam kpam kpam... Ajambene  
 Kuo kpam kpam kpam kpam... Ajambene  
 Chukwu wee si ya ... Ajambene  
 Onye kuru aka-a-nunwa... Ajambene  
 Aka tokwa gi n'uzo... Ajambene  
 Mbe wee si... Ajambene  
 Onye kwulu okwu-a-nunwa... Ajambene  
 Okwu tokwa gi n'onu... Ajambene  
 Otu mkpulu okwu-a-nunwa... Ajambene  
 Ka e ji wee gbu mbe... Ajambene

Onye bokata obo... Ajambene  
Obo to ya n'onu... Ajambene.

6.(i) Abu

*Egwu onwa*

*From Mrs Patience Agu*

*Age about 38*

*Occupation: Farmer*

*Place: Nnobi*

*Date: 1974*

*Imalios:* O chí m̄  
Mhū  
O chí m̄  
Mhū  
I fukwólù umiíninū  
Mhū  
Umi o kwò gi ji ewu chí Emekwayi  
Emekwayi -ogbalú akú sélú úzú  
nwà ènú

*Emekwayi:* Imalios, Imalios ka m̄ na-akpò  
I nukwólù gi nekwákwa ewu gutákwa  
I naghú abà akpó m̄ umiòkolo

*Imalios:* O chí m̄  
Mhū  
O chí m̄  
Mhū  
I fukwólù umiíninū,  
Umi o kwò gi ji ewu chí Emekwayi  
Emekwayi, ogbalú akú sélú úzú  
nwà ènú

6.(ii) *Egwu uno onwu*

*Date: 1980*

O nāá n'udó  
O nāá n'udó-  
O nābagónú ébé o sili bia n'uwà  
Chúkwú nālu mmuó ya  
O nābagónú ébé o sili bia n'uwà

Chúkwú nálu mmùò ya

6.(iii)

Onóniigwé bú Obasiigwé  
 Moníkà mu kenekwáalu gi'oo  
 Ada Moses mu' lota chí m'égwu  
 Igwígiri òkpótanyikoróro  
 Oménkà mu' kenékwálu gi...  
 Ezómòókà na-ámághì ikwu  
 Ezómòókà mu' kenekwára gi'oo  
 Ókèrú òchiorá èkè kèterú okóchi  
 Kèté cho'chò chò nwuru nnà ya òchie  
 O buru ya kéré Igbo niile  
 Kécháá asusu Igbo n'ofu n'ofu  
 Asusu bú oménani Igbo bu onyinyé  
 Chí nyéré Igbo ná mbú  
 Mákà asusu bú oménaani Igbo  
 Chí nyéré Igbo ná mbú

6.(iv) *Egwu nnwa from Ogbalu's  
 Mbem ndi Igbo, 1974*

Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka  
 Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka  
 Chi anayi keekwa anyi oke nnwa-  
 Onye na-adighi nnwa o ji obi adi ya mma-  
 Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka

Nna ezigbo onye di mma  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka  
 Onye kere uwa nye anyi oke nnwa  
 Biko nna mu oo-  
 chi anyi merenu anyi ezi mma-  
 Onye na-adighi nnwa o ji obi adi ya mma  
 Eze nyekwa anyi ezi nnwa, biko  
 agbawakwala anyi aka

Chi anyi keekwa anyi oke nnwa

Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka  
 Chi anyi kenyekwa anyi oke nnwa  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka  
 Chi anyi kenyekwa anyi okw nnwa-  
 Onye na-adighi nnwa o ji obi adi ya mma  
 Chi anyi kekwa anyi oke nnwa  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka

Chi anyi ezigbo nna k'i bu  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka  
 Ononiigwe egbo mkpa anyiri nnwa  
 Biko nna mu oo-  
 Chi anyi nyekene anyiri nnwa-  
 Onye na-adighi nnwa o ji obi adi ya mma  
 Biko nyenu anyi ezi nnwa  
 Chi anyi agbawakwala anyi aka

6.(v)

Aeee, onye na-eme uwa lee  
 Chi awugh otu lee  
 Onye na-eme uwa nwanne m oo  
 Aeee, onye na-eme uwa lee  
 Chi awugh otu lee  
 Onye na-eme uwa nwanne m oo  
 Mgbe mu amughi nnwa  
 Onye ilo m ana-akoghari m onu  
 Mu ejigh ego mu amugh nnwa  
 Mu goba agugo bombom  
 Mgbe mu no n'uwa  
 Onye ilo m na-akoghari m onu  
 Mu ejigh ego mu amughi nnwa  
 Mu goba agugo bombom  
 Onye ilo akokata m na chi m ekuila m nnwa  
 Si mu noro ala mu agala oru  
 Mu buru aku Chi nyere mu o  
 Onye iro kokata m na chi m ekuila m nnwa  
 Si mu noro ala mu agala oru  
 Mu buru aku Chi nyere mu oo

6.(vi) *Egwu igugu nnwa*  
*From Nene Okafo*  
*Age: 18*  
*Place: Nnobi*

Date: July, 1981

ùchichá ùchichá  
 gini mèlù mmanú di n'obà  
 -kwà mbé  
 Uchichá ùchichá  
 gini mèlùmmánú di n'obà  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Uchichá nàbà ùnà  
 Okùkò èbùlú ya  
 -kwà gmbe  
 Okùkò nàbà ùnà  
 Egbe èbùlú ya  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Egbe nàbà ùnà  
 Di ègbe èbùlú ya  
 -kwà mgbe  
 di ègbe nàbà ùnà  
 O dàchie' uzo  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Uzo nàbà ùnà  
 e puó ya nwa-ohiá o  
 Ohiá nàbà ùnà  
 è suo ya nwokú o  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Okú nàbà ùnà  
 Mmili emenyúo ya o  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Mmili nàbà ùnà  
 Anà amitáa ya o  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Anà nàbà ùnà  
 Èniigwé adagidé ya o  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Èniigwé nàbà ùnà  
 Chkwu etikpo ya o  
 -kwà mgbe  
 Chukwu nàbà ùnà  
 O nwelu ife a ga-eme ya o?  
 Oloo!

6.(vii) *Egwu ogu*  
*From Ogbalu's Mbem ndi Igbo, 1974*

Ooooojim jim  
 Oji

ojim jim  
 Oji  
 Kwaa dike kwaa mba ogu  
 Oji  
 Umu Chukwu eze dike  
 Oji  
 Ojiena ka mmiri  
 Oji  
 O bu mmili o bughu mmiri  
 Oji  
 O bu anwu o bughu anwu  
 Oji  
 Anyi bakwuru ha n'ogbo ogu  
 Oji  
 Anyi ejide ha n'ofu n'ofu  
 Oji  
 Dike kwenu  
 -Haa  
 Kwenu!  
 -Haa

b. Agha! Agha Agha!  
 Onye gburu nne mu  
 -Agha agha!  
 Onye ga-eburu m uzo  
 -Agha agha!  
 Ejikwa m ogu eje agha  
 -Agha agha!  
 Ejikwa m ofo eje agha  
 -Agha agha!  
 Chukwu buru uzo kpere azu  
 -Agha agha!

6.(viii)a *Abu echichi (ozo)*  
*From Ogbalu's Mbem ndi Igbo*

Eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
 Eeee, eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
 Eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
 Eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
 Eeee, eze tubelu ugo n'ezi  
 O mere ka o kwuru  
 Eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
 Eeee, eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
 Onyinye Chi nyere

Eze tubere ugo n'ezi  
Eeee, eze tubere ugo n'ezi

b. Eze ozo olooo  
Aaa-eeee  
Eze ozo olooo  
Aaa-eeee  
Eze ozo nke chiri echi  
I chipugoro chipuru anyi o  
Eze ozo nke chiri echi oo  
Ogbuehi Odinannwa buru igwe  
Okpara eze olooo  
Aa-eeee

c. Eze ozo  
Eze ozo  
-Onye na-aga n'igwe  
Eze ozo  
Eze ozo  
-Onye na-aga n'igwe  
Anyi nuru na i gburu ehi na mba  
-Onye na-aga n'igwe  
Anyi wee si ka anyi zolue okpa  
-Onye na-aga n'igwe

d. Ebunu nnwa m  
jekwe nje  
Ebunu nnwa m  
jekwe nje  
Nna nyere m ugo  
jekwe nje  
Chukwu nyere m ugo  
jekwe nje  
Chukwu chiri m eze  
jekwe nje

e. Ndi agbalanze be anyi  
Anyi ekele unu  
-egwu ekwegh ekwe ozo  
Nwata mesie ike ugo acha nze n'isi  
-egwu ekwegh ekwe ozo  
Onye dobe ugo n'elu ikuku eburu ya  
-egwu ekwegh ekwe ozo

6.(vix)a

*From a performance on E.C.B.S Enugu radio station, 1982*

Nne m igwe gwalu m agwa  
 Nna m igwe gwalu m agwa  
 Si m ejena n'ite alusi  
 N'ihe ga-eme nabani ino-  
 Oo ya o!  
 Oo ya o  
 Okpa ogeri abaana agu  
 N'ihe emego n'abani ino-  
 Oo ya o!  
 Oo ya o!

6.(vix)b *funeral chant from a cultural group at Umuoji.*  
*Collected from their recorded performance on the L.P.*  
*Here we have taken only the relevant part which is the*  
*opening movement of the chant.*

M̄ jée nke oyilidiye o  
 A si na di ya ghali ya naa mmuo  
 M̄ tie oko-oo oko-oo  
 Nyà n'onye nosia n'uwà ò naa mmuo?  
 M̄ wèè tie oko-o oko-o-o  
 Nyà n'onye nosia n'uwà ò naa mmuo?  
 Èbélé ùmù ùwà nà-èmé mù oo  
 N'èbélé ùmù ùwà nà-èmenù mù oo-  
 Igwùlùbè ùmùlòjì nàlù èkèné  
 O kwò ma gi chílì èzè kà ódu nà-akpo...

Text 7.(i)a

From Romanus Egudu

Published in *African Studies* 1970,  
 1973 & 1975

Nwata ebezina akwa, ebezina akwa	-Zemilize
Nne anyi gwara anyi ahuwuna oku	-Zemilize
Mana anyi ahuwuo oku	-Zemilize
Nne anyi gwara anyi ekwena anwuru fuò	-Zemilize
Mana anyi kwere anwuru fuò	-Zemilize
Nna anyi gwara anyi ezenà uze	-Zemilize
Mana anyi zere uze	-Zemilize
Nna anyi gwara anyi emena pim	-Zemilize
Mana anyi mere pim	-Zemilize
Nna anyi gwara anyi ahapuna ulo	-Zemilize
Mana anyi hapuru ulo	-Zemilize

Ohi wee zuru anyi	-Zemilize
Ka egbe si ezu okuko	-Zemilize
Uwa wee turu anyi	-Zemilize
Ka nnunu si atu oka	-Zemilize
Ci (Chi) wee jikwu anyi	-Zemilize
N'etiti ehihe ocha	-Zemilize

b. Nwunye nna m, nwunye nna m  
 Gotara udara n'ahia -nda  
 Onu mmiri wee tusa m n'obi  
 Anya m wee sodo udara -nda  
 Mana e jighi anya eri anu -nda

Nwunye nna m were udara racaca -nda  
 M wee kuo ci (chi) m na aka m -nda  
 Ka o kuoro m udara -nda  
 Udara m towe etowe -nda  
 Ka a dighi na nne racaa udara -nda  
 Ka nnwa enweghi ntutu racaa udara -nda

7.(ii)a

*From Egudu*

*In African Studies 1970, 1973 & 1975*

Mkpo kpowalu ukwa  
 Ukwa tigbulu Nweke Njehlionia,  
 E -e, Nweke Njehlionia.

Gini melu ewu?  
 Onwu gbulu ewu  
 Ewu nulu mmili  
 Mmili manyulu oku  
 Oku lejili mkpo  
 Mkpo kpowalu ukwa  
 Ukwa tigbulu Nweke Njehlionia-  
 E-e Nweke Njehlionia.

Gini mebelu onwu?  
 Chukwu mebelu onwu  
 Onwu gbulu ewu  
 Ewu nulu mmili  
 Mmili manyulu oku  
 Oku lejili mkpo  
 Mkpo kpowalu ukwa  
 Ukwa tigbulu Nweke Njehlionia

## E-e Nweke Njehilionna

b. Nwanne m

Nda

Nwanne m

Nda

Onya gi ejide

Nda

O jidelu gini?

Nda

O jidelu nkakwu

Nda

Jee vulu liwe

Nda

Na m anaghi eliko

Nda

Ci m, Ci m

Nda

Jee vulu liwe

Nda

Na m anaghi eliko

Nda

c. Igodo ndi Nsukka

From Egudu in Conch

Anyi abia n'Igodo

Umu odo ukwu ngwu

Metu ukwu n'ani

Nde d'onye na-ekwuo?

Nde d'onye na-aguo?

O bu nnwa odo ukwu ngwu

Odo nkwo na-ekwuo

Odo nkwo na-aguo

Nde d'ihe eji eme e

Anu efi na anu ezi

Ozo gada-gidi ozo

Ozo nwa obodo ngwu

Ogbu ebune ude

Aji ebune bu ude ya

Mpi ebune bu ike ya

Ogbu ebunu ude

Nde d'ihe eji eme e?

Opi ozala gi di ebe

Isi efi gi di ebe?

Isi ezi gi di ebe?  
 Metu onu n'opi  
 Odo nkwo na-awa gi  
 Isi ino na-awa gi  
 Odo ukwu ngwu na-awa gi  
 Metu onu n'opi

Ani anyi welu ofo  
 Welu ofo goba  
 Ugwu anyi welu ofo-  
 Welu ofo gaba  
 Ofo ka anyi ji eme e  
 Oji ofo ato n'uzo  
 Onye ji ofo ji nnemne  
 Onye ji ofo ji nnine  
 Anyaanwu na-enee  
 Igwe na ani na-ene e

Umu okwemgba  
 Metu aka n'ogene  
 Metu ukwu n'ani  
 Okwemgba m no we-e?  
 Kwebelu m igodo  
 O bu onye na-ekwu o  
 Mu bu onye na-ekwu o  
 Mu nnwa odo ukwu ngwu  
 Mu nwa onu odo nkwo  
 Mu bu uturu na-agu o  
 Mu bu onu ka opi  
 Onu m bu onu ogene  
 Okwemgba m kwe-we e

Ndi ogu m kwwe e  
 Kwe we kwe we e  
 Umu odomagana  
 Ndi mu na ha na-agu o  
 Ndi mu na ha na-eje e  
 Anyi ekene ndi nwe obodo-  
 Ndi ozo itenani itenani  
 Mu beu onye na-ekwu o  
 Mu bu onu na-ekwulu oha  
 O bu m na-ekwu o  
 Mu nnwa odo nkwo  
 O bu odo na-ekwu o  
 Odomagana na-agu o

Umu odomagana  
 Anyi eliwe igodo  
 Anyi aguwa igodo  
 Ayi etewe igodo  
 Egbene akwakwaa nu  
 Okwa akpona nu  
 Obialu ije nwe una  
 Anyi efekwa nu  
 Ukwu akpokwana unu  
 Ugwu anyi duwe unu  
 Ani anyi duwe unu  
 Odo anyi chewe unu  
 Chewe  
 M'unu jide ngigo ofo

*Text 8.(i) Akuko iho*

*From Mrs Chinyelu Ogo-Agu*

*Age:22*

*Occupation: Student*

*Place: Nnobi*

*Date: 1980*

a. KA ỌNWÚ NA OKÚ SÌLÌ BIA N'UWÀ

Ndi be anyi, akuko nkeà m ga-akolu unu bu ihe gbsalu onwu. Unu ma na onwu amaho eze; o maho onye ukwu, o maho onye nta; o maho aka, omaho ngwolo; I bu okoke, I bu Okeafu, mbu na mbofi nke gi lukwahaana, i nwukwa. Chukwu ekechana uwa, choo ya mma; nye ndi uwa ihe di mma di niime ya, si ha mebezikwe gini? Ha nwebezikwe obi anuli. Mana ofu ihe bialu mebie uwa onwu. Ihe a wutekata ndi mmadu, wutekata ndi mmadu, wutekata ndi mmadu, e wee ha si na ihe ha ga-emè bu na a ya-ejekwa be Chukwu ka e jee yoo Chukwu ayiyo, ka a mlú na o nwelu ka a ga-esi kpochapu onwu-a-nini, ka onwu ghalu idizinu. Keduzi ka a ya-esi je nyabu ije? O wee bulu na a hanye nkita ka o jee nyabu ije, maka nkita bu anu na-agbata oso nnoo. O wee buluzie na ka umu mmadu na ekwu ihea, awo anuchata ya -maka awo akpokakwonu umu mmadu asi. Awò wee si: Aah! Ei, ei, ei, ei - oo ihe ndi mmadu na-achizi, ka onwu ghalu idizinu n'uwà.. mhuu, n'asi niinea m kpolu ha. Eligidezie ha uwa ligide uwa, uwa asu ha

n'imi, abia m kpólú ha niiné ási. Áwò wée pùò' ije be Chúkúwú. O welu buluzikwéénú na nyabu oşo diili áwò na nkítá -ka e jee be Chúkúwú ka a gwa ya ka onwu ghalu ididzinu n'akúkú nkè nkítá; n'akúkú nkè áwò ka o gbajee gwa Chúkúwú e-e, ka onwu díbá na o fúlú nnóó' ihe na-atu ùmù ùwà n'ónú.

Ewée ha jebé nyábu ihe; nkítá gbagide oşo, gbagide oşo, gbagide oşo -makà nkita bú ánú na-agbata oşo- gbayige áwò; áwò ana -ama kpóm, kpókóm, kpókóm, wélú na-eje nke ya. Mana nkítá, ofú ihe mébílí ya: ókè akpílí ebe nsi di. Nkítá jekata jekata jekata, onu ka a kpókwalú "nwánki nwánki nwánki -gbua, gbua, gbua- ikekwo o bulu nwaányi nnwa ya nyulu nsi, o chóba nkita ya-eli ya-nu. Nwa nkita chighakwa azu, jebe, ebe o nulú a na-akpo ya o jee libekwa nsi. libekwa nsi libe licha, o kpapukwá ije. Nwa áwò ana-awu, na-awukwa. Nwánki jegidekwa jegidekwa o nukwa mbe a kpólú ya "nwánki, nwnki, nwánki nwánki -gbua, gbua, gbua" o lachapukwa oşo, jebekwa, jee libedi nsi. Ihea ka o megidelu -o gakata áwò, áwò agáá ya; O gakata áwò, áwó agáá ya. I makwo oşo áwò ewee bu ya úzò ruo be Chúkúwú; wee ruo be Chúkúwú si ya na ihe ya bialu igwa ya bu ka o mee ka onwu búlu ihe yana egbu ndi mmádu; na eziokwu eziokwu na úmù ùwà zitelu ya si ya bia gwa ya ka onwú díbá, ka o buluihe ebigh ébi, ka onwú na-adi. Oge ruo mgbe mmadu ya-anwu, ka o nwuo. Chúkúwú wee si oo, na o dikwo mma. Isi ya bu na ya anuna ihe ha kwúlú; ebe o bu na ndi mmádu sí na ha chólú onwú, na ya ya-enye ha onwú. Áwò ànáá. Mgbe nkita jili lichazie nsi gbalu oşo jebekwa be chúkúwú jeluo, welu zie chúkúwú si ya n'ihe ya biakwólunu bu ibia gwa ya ihe ndi umu ùwà kwúlú, na ha si na ike onwú agwuna ha. Na o kebelu nnóó ùwà chócháá ya mma, mma ofu ihe o jili mébí ya bu onwu -n'ò bu ka o bia malu na o nwélú ka o ya-esi kpochapulu ha onwu di ya niime. Háá! chúkúwú wee si ya na áwò abiakwónanu ebea zie ya n'ookwonu onwuka ùmù ùwà si ka ha mma, na ya aha, ekwughazi okwu ya ekwugha na nkè áwò kwúlú ebuluná ya úzò luo ya nti; Na eziokwu na ya ekwetana na onwú ya-abuzi ihe yana adi n'ùwà mgbe niine... kama na ebele ya ya-emedobelu ùmù ùwà bú: o fuhó oku-a - yawelu oku wepuzielu ndi ùmù mmádu, ya nyekwuzie ha oku makana ya fúlú na oku bu ihe na-enye ha nsogbu. Ozi ka e zili nkita o jee wetalu ha onwú makà kpílí; na ha ya-anózi n'ùwà na-

ebi ezigbo ndù, mànà oge onwuf ya lukwa, o nwuo, màdù ibe ya akwáá ya.

b. **ÁKÚKÓ KA CHÍ SÌ ÉGBÚ, ÀZÓ**

Ndi be anyi, akúkó ózọ m ya-akọlu unu bu ka Chi si egbú, azó. N'otu mgbe ahú, n'obodo umu anumànu n'efe efe, ka Chukwu kpolu ha oku; o kpolu ha nnoo olili. Mana o wee bulu na umu anumànu na-efe efe, umu animànu niine bu ihe na-efe efe nwelu nku akwadobe ije oku a. Mbe anuchata wee si -hee, na ha na-eje udi ihe a na- ha akpoho ya, na ha lukwaanu kedu onye ga-ekwulu ha okwu -na ha ma na ya ma ka e si ekwu okwu. Na ya nwelu nndó ezigbo akáláká, na chi ya nyelu ya nnoo ochichi n'aka, n'o bu kwo ha emee luo ebe ahu kpokwube akpokwube -olili obu a kpolu ha, e buputazidáá nni be Chukwu

nà ha ayagh ama ka a ya-esi meghe onu welu na-eli. Ayagh ha ama n'o bu ha bido n'utazi, ayagh ha ama n'o bu ha bido n'osikapa -ayagh ha ama nke ha ya-esi na ya bido ebido. Nyaa, n'o bukwonu na ha nwee onye isi, onye-isiáhanini enwee ike isi ha: haa, n'o bu etua ka a anyi ya-esi mee ihe di etua, n'etua ka anyi ya-esi mee ihe di etua...gogo oji, kene Chukwu ekene n'ihe o nyelu ha. Umu anumànu na-efe efe ewee si, hee!, na mbe emekwaa nke ka nke. Na ha kwelu n'ihe o kwulu. Ewelu ha si na ha cholu ka mbe solu ha jebe. Mbe anaa, jee gwa nwunye ya Anim na umu anumànu na-efe efe si na ya na-eso je oku na be Cukwu, ka ya je so ha kwasaa aku. Anim nwunye ya ewe si ya oo, na o di mma. O wee si ya kedukwanu, ebe o bu na umu nnunu si ya duu jee be Chukwu, nya bu mbe enwekwolunu nku o ya-eji wee so ha fegolu. Mbe wee si n'o bukwonueziokwu, wee kukwa ogene, gwakwa umu anumanu, kpoo ha oku. Agbakonwoha o gwa ya bu umu anumànu na-efe efe si ha na ihe o ji akpolu ha bukwa na ha nee anya, n'o bukwo so okpokolo ka o ya nwelu, na ya enweho nku o ya-eji so ha wee fe. Ha asi ya e, n'o bulukwa ya, na ha ya-enye ya nku. Ebido ha -egbe efoputa nku ya, o foputa ufodu nye mbe. Udene efoputa, nye mbe, mbe ekwui. Etua ka ha si welu tukosikatalu ya tukosikatalu ya, tukosichaa, nku ewelu zuo, nke mbe ya-eji welu je. O tukosiba ya tukosia, o dilu ya o mma o welu solu ha fegoo. Ewelu ha jebe nyabu ije, jebe puta n'uzo (maka mgbe e lubeluha

agbakonwokwalū ha n'üzò) Mbe asi ha: "Ọ bu nke a ha na-eje na-asokasi isi, n'o kwesili ka onyeobuna nwee afa, na ọ na-abu ejebe ụdi ihe di etua onyeobuna enwee afa a yana-akpo ya. a kpoọ gi afa a malu n'ọ bu gi ka a na-asi mee ihea. N'ihe o na-ekwu bu onyeobuna nenechaa nnoo holu aha o ya-abu e luo ebe ahu ka e jili ya malu ya. Umu anumanu ahoba afa di ichè ichè hoba hochaa, mbe asi -oo, na nke nyabu onye hoje bu "Unu niine". Na ha luo, na ihe ha yana-akpo ya bu "Unu niine". Umụ anumànù ekwe oo, si na o dizikwa mma -ya na-eduzikwo ha, n'o bu ya bu onye na-ekwuchitelu ha okwu. Èwèè hà luo bē Chukwú, Chukwú ànàbàtàcháá há nnòò, nye há oche, nkè luo o nọdu nnoo, nke obunà nà nwúnyè yà, mànà mbè akpohọ nwúnyè ya. O lu kà e buputàcháálú ihe olilí -e buputaba ihe olili buputácháá, mbè wèé si há kà há judáánú chíkwú nà ndi be ya ajuju: ihea niine e bupuachalu, kedu ndi e busitaalu ha? K'ọ bu e buputachaaha e dobe, onweho onye ana-agwa okwu mà o nwehọ onye na-ajughanu. Umụ anumànù àsí ha! Ọ bukwoonu ya bu ihea a na-ekwu, na inwe uche amaka, na mbè enweka uche -kenebekwa ya. Nya, e wee juo Chukwú si ya: "Iheanini unu dobelu, oneendi nwe ya? Ha! A si umu anumanu na o bu "Unu niine" ka e dobeelu ya, unu niine nwe n'ishi." Eh! O si n'o bu "Unu niine" Mbe etie. "N'o si n'o bu Unu niine -unu elotazikwolu na o bu ya bu gini? "Unu niine", nke gosili na nni niine a e buputàálù na o bu mbe ya-elicha ya. Ihea atoọ mbe, toọ mbe, toọ mbe. Ọ binikwazie ikwu okwu wee si ha na ihe na-atọ ya amu bu na otua ya ha, na o ya-enwezikwa ike ilicha nni a niine nnika ya. Ka o na ekwu ihea, umu anumànù ebidona na-anwu na-ebe ha no; ihe ha feluo bu anaa? Águú agukaana ha ahu. ebidó ha na-atamu. Mbe ejide nni ahù niine libe; o ribe nke a richaa, o rie nke a; o ribe nkea richa, o rie nkea, we jide anu niine tagbado. Richazie anu niine, o tagbadolu ya. Umụ anumànù ndi ahù kalu na-efe efe welu iwe si na ha ayagh eri ihe obuna. Nde umuobebe ike adiho ejee taba okpukpu mbe tafogasili. Oo ho! Ha emechaana kene Chukwú, maka uná eluoná. Ka mbe na-ama ihe, o buzikwa ya ma ihe? Ndi ozo so malu nwobebe ihe; ka a ya-ananu, umu anumanu -maka iwe mbe kpasulu ha, nke luo o si ya "oo, mbe, ya nyekwa ya ugbènè ya oo...oo mbe, ya nywkwa ya ugbènè ya oo". Nke luo o jee falukwa ugbènè ya n'ahu mbe. Mbe chi ya mèèlù ihe oma o jee kọọlu nwunye ya na a si ya solu jee,

chi ya emekwalu ya ihe oma, o jekwa bulukwa ézè ha mbe ahù, kwalibe ihe niine e buputàlù ha, chi ya ana-edu ya. Mana kità, mhu, maka oke aghughò ya niine, chi ya agbaghaluhaana ya. Mbe yata-ato. E..o bu onye alutaghi o na-eli; o bu i richazie nnika gi i bili n'ùdo. Ùmù anumànù anachaaluna ya ugbènè, o zie ofu niime ndi na-eefe efe si ya doo, ebe o bu na o dina etua, o jepuga ya jee gwa nwnye ya Anim ya kwaputachaa lu ya ihe niine esihò ike ha jì bili kwasaalu ya n'èzi, ya daba ka o hapù imelú ahu. Nwa anumànù kwe ya, o mekatazie, udènè bu nke kwelu na ya ya-eje. Udene wee putaluo, kánà o ya ezi Anim si weputa ihe niine ha jì bili di bènèbènè, o si ya na mbe si ya kwapusita ngwongwo niine bu ihe sili ike: ite onaha, onyiike -i maha ihe niine e jì bili unò bu ihe sili ike. Eei, Anim wèé meenu ka e sili gwa ya wee kwsita ihe niine; mbe anodu n'enu, fu ihea a kwasitachalu n'èzi chee n'ò bu ihe di bènèbènè. Hee! Mgbè aha chi ya egbubeena ya. Mbe adazie, dazie ma niine ite ona ma n'iehanini siliike. Mbe wèé kulikoo. Oo kwonu ya ka...o kulikozie, galu inwunu wèé gwa nwūnyè ya si na o hò ihe a ka o gwalu ya, nwunye ya asi n'ò bu ihe e zili ya ka o meelù. Mbosi ahu ka chi mbè laputalu ya. Èem, ihe mezilinu bu e jee kpoo nla, nla, na-adiba n'ohia, nla wee lachikoba ahu ya, achikoba áhú ya lachikochaa. Óó ya kpatalù mbe jili nwee apa apa n'ahu ya oo; O ghokatanà aghughò o chohò idi ùdá olu, chi ya edukata ya dukata ya dukata ya, dugbuo ya edugbuo, na nke ya na ùmù anumànuhà mgbè aha ha jelu be Chúkúwù

c. **ÁKÚKÓ ONYE BULU CHÍ YA ÙZÒ O GBAGBUO  
ONWE YA N'ÒSÓ**

Mkpúlú aku mkpúlú aku oo  
kpalanuma  
Ya tigbùlù ewu Chúkúwù  
kpalanuma  
Ewu Chúkúwù dachapù nwuo  
kpalanuma  
Ka m na-eje  
kpalanuma  
O lie ísí mu m na-eje  
kpalanuma  
Ka m na-eje  
kpalanuma

O lie isi mu m jebe  
 kpalanuma  
 Mkpúlu' aku' mkpúlu' aku oo  
 kpalanuma

Èhéé! Ndi be anyi, n'ihó anyi nke taata ihe anyi geji bido ya nnoo bu egwu, nya kpatalu m ji wee si ka m kpachai nnoo nwoonu m, eweluzie m kòbalu unu.

Otu mgbe ahù-nìni' ka e nwelù ùmùnné' abuo. O wee búlu na ùmùnné' naabò a, na Chùkwú fùlù ha n'anya. Afa umunne naabò a bú: nke nnukwu bu Okeke, nke obele bu Okeafò. O wee di ofu ubosi, Nwokafo bu nke obele welu na-esi nni. Ka o na-esi nni nùhù, o wee búlu na nnwa ewu Chùkwú nyelu ya y nùbè eketa nnoo ighokwazi ewu ajo mgbenye. O wee bekata ihe ahù o bèlù, ihe a ekwehò Nwokafo édi. O wee si nnoo taa ka o ya-ezipu onumà n'ahu ewu ahu. O wee tutunie mkpulu' aku wee welu nnoo ike niine di ya n'ahu wèé máá ya itawà. Nwa ewu welu solu ganàgàna wee nwuo. Haa! Ihe ahu wee wute e, maka o maho na nyabu ihe o malu ya, na o ya-eluzi nke onwu. O si nnoo ka ya maa ya k'ò málù na o ya emechinata onu ya -màna oo-kwonu ihe iwe na-ebute. Nwa éwú ahùnini. iwe e, wee buluzie ya ihe alili. O wee si na ya ya-ebujekwalu onye nwe ewu nnwa ewu. O luzienu, ndi bialu ima ihe gbulu éwú wèé bialuo, o gubalu ha egwu-nuhu m guulu unu, m ji wee bido akuko a:

Mkpúlu' aku' mkpúlu' aku' oo  
 kpalanuma  
 Mkpúlu' akú' mkpúlu' akú' oo  
 kpalanuma  
 Ya tigbùlù ewu Chùkwú  
 kpalanuma  
 Ewu chùkwú dachapun nwuo'  
 kpalanuma  
 Ka m na-eje  
 kpalanuma  
 O lie ísì mu m na-eje  
 kpalanuma  
 Ka m na-eje  
 kpalanuma  
 O lie ísì mu m jébé'  
 kpalanuma

Mkpulú' aku' mkpulú' aku oo  
kpalanuma

Ha! Ihe nuhu wute ndi bialu ima ihe gbúlú nwa éwù. Nwàtàkìrì nwoke ahù bu Nwokeafò wèé jebe be Chukwú ije bujekwalu ya nnwà éwù; wee luò be chukwu wee ria nnò nwánà kòbalu Chukwú ihe melu kòchaalu. Chukwu nabata ya nnò, si ya nnò na ya agbaghaluna ya -unu ma na chukwuana agbaghaluka nnò. O bu na unu ayokwalu ya ayò. O wee bulu na chukwú abialuo wee buputa nni bunye ya na be e; nni ahunini di úzò nààbò: Ofu bu nke di ochà, ofu bu nke di òjì -nyaa ihe o putalu bu na nke nuhu di ochà bu nnò nke a kwòlu aka wélú si; nke nuhu di oji bulu nnò -i maha- nà e siena ma ya bulu nni. Unú makwon oo nnwa nuhu bujelu ewu ya, ewu nwulu anwu be Chukwú bu Nwokeafò -kama o ya-elizi nni nuhu a kwòlù aka welu si, ochigha libe nke na-aghohò ihe. Heghee! O kwò ya ka chukwú biakwalu weputa ihe nke ibuò, si ya na nke a bu na chi ejihina na o ya-alahu alahu, o si ya ee, na ya ja-alahu. O weputa ute bui ye. Ofu ute bu nke bu nnò sò mma -omalicha ute... mbu na nyabu ute, eh, a fudahaana. O buputakwazie nke bu awakachi -nyaa, o dikatana nnò, ike gwu. I makwò oò kama nnwa nuhu ya-eje dina na nke nuhu bu ugonachomma, ihe o mèlù buna o jee na nke awakachi nuhu jee diiluani, mhu, si na ihe o bu bu na ya-ekwesiho -n'ihì ihe ya mèlù na ya ekwesiho idina nnò n'ihè malú mma. Chi efo-nu, o lu mgbe o ya-ana nu. N'útùtù Chukwú ebuputa kpàtì nààbò nnò: Ofu bu -nyaa n'ime akpati naabò ahu ihe di iche iche dichà nnò na ha. O nwehò ihe mmádù chòbalù o yagh afu na ha. Ofu bu nke nnúkwú, ofu bu nke óbélé. Chukwú wee si ya na ebe o bu n'ya anabana, na ya ga-enye ya ihe o ga-eji naa. O wee buputa akpatinaabò ahu si ya: o fukwòlu akpati nààbò ndià, ya hòlu ofu. Kama nnwa nàá ya-ahòlu nke nnukwu, o jeje halu nke obele. Chukwú ewee si ya naba, nya bulu nke ahu o buulu naba. O naluo, tupu o kpoghee ka o weluihe di na ya, nya kpochisibe nnò úzò, ma windò, ma mbe obuna mpio ya-adi. Nnwa nàdàá wèé kwe, wèé sobe nnò ihe Chukwú gwàlù ya, naluo kpochisichaa úzò niine. Eehi, wee mèhezie akpati ahu, ihe o fùlù -omalichá ihe niine di n'ùwà a mmádù n'atudahaana anya...eem -ugbo-àná -o nwehe- uma isaa n'ise, ha ncha niine eh, o nwehe ihe mmadu na-achò achò n'uwàá a yarò áfú na nyábu akpati. Ha! O wee ju nnwa naadaa obi, o wee si: hee!

Oo etua ka ùwà di -gbapu n'obi anùlì 'ya niine nuhu wee webili ihe ufodu si ka ya jekwonu nyebinye nwanne' ya nwoke Okeke ya na ya wi nukọ ēwú. Eehi, i makwo kama nkè ahū ya-analu ya, anyaukwu ekwehe e. O ju na ya aha achò iwe ihe onyinye aha Nwokafo nyèlù e ka chi folù. O julu na ya aya-ewe ihe nwanne ya nyelu ya makana o chòlù ibá ogalanya ka nwanne ya nwoke. Chi ya efo nu o wee pū ije, k'o wèlú bulu ogalanya ngada. O tūtùnìe' o'si'si' wee gbuo ēwú' chùkwú nyelù e nùbè. O gbuona ēwú nuhu eem, kwadobekwuo ije bujelu' e Chùkwú. Ka o na-ebuzejini ewu nuhu, o puta n'úzò o na-agu egwu nuhu nwanne e nwoke gùlù, màkànà o jèlù jùtáchá nwanne e nwoke ka o sìlì je nke aha akochaalu ya. Mana kámà o biazie mbe mkpulu akú di, o tinyezie osisi, na-agu:

Osisi' nu osisi' nu  
 kpalanuma  
 Osisi' nu osisi' nu  
 kpalanuma  
 O kwo ngi gbùlù ēwú Chùkwú  
 kpalanuma  
 Éwú Chùkwú dapu nwuo  
 kpalanuma  
 Ka m na-eje  
 kpalanuma  
 O lie isí' mu m na-eje  
 kpalanuma  
 Ka m na-eje  
 kpalanuma  
 O lie isí' mu m jébe'  
 kpalanuma  
 Ósisi' nu osisi' nu  
 kpalanuma

Nyaa' o wee gucha ihe a nini, o luo be Chùkwú kòbalukwálu ya nnoo ka ya na ihe si wèè je, kochaalu ya Chùkwú wèé mekwalu ya ebèlè; mechaalu' ya ebèlè, wetaalu ya nni. Kama o ya eje halu nkè obele mọbu nke a kwọhọ aka wee si, o jeje hólú nke a kwọlu aka wee si, wee libe ihe nadaa wee lichaa, dachapu. Hei! Chi ana-eji nu, a ya-edinanu ana. Chùkwú ebuputakwaalu ya ute náabo: ofu nkè omalíchá, ofu nkè n'aghohọ ihe. Kama o ya eje hólú nke nuhu n'aghohọ ihe, o jeje hólú nkè a fughu ma si elina. -nyaa, nke nuhu bu so mma - dinakwa na ya. Chi'efogharianu, mgbe nuhu o ya ana, chùkwú ebuputa akpati naabo, ka o si buputakwaalu Nwokeafọ

nwànné ya , si ya ngwa na o biàna n omume -ya hòlú ofu -na ya ya-enyenu ya ihe mgbe o ya ana. Mana nke-nuhu anya ukwu ya ehika; akpírí ya bia hikakwu. Nyaa, o di ya nnoo mkpà kà on ya-esi nwekotacháa ùwà niine. Kámà o ya-eje halu nke obele akapti, o jee halu nke nnúkwú akpáti. O díba nu. Chúkúwú sikwa ya o luo ya kpochisichaa mbe niine ka oghere ghalu idingbe o ya-emeghe nyábu akpáti. O wèé' búlú na o kwe; o kpchisicháa ebe niine, eh, obi ya abulu nnoo n'oo taa ka o ya-ébute ihe. Kpochisichaa wee mehee akpati aha. Hee! O wee bulu na ihe o fulu bu oyà dí íchè íchè. Oya èwèé tu! I maha -nde efe ojii anodu na ya. Nyaa, o ghoziefu onye nga; ufođu fositasia na-apia ya so itali. Umù ánú ohia na-ata ata -agwo-ha, ihe niine, agbasitachaa na-ata a. Ihe niine di íchè íchè bu so ihe ojoo nnoo o fulu n'akpati eweeha megide e ihe. O wèé yádizie; ma opípiá a pialù ya, ma óyia di iche iche tulu ya-nu. O nwúzie. Nyaa, onwuzienu, o nwetahó ihe áhá o na-achó, kà ya baa tà, kà ya rie tà tà baa' tà. O nwehezi nke lulu e aka. Kama ya zi, ihe o mezili bu, o tui isi e. Nya bu na anyaukwu adiho mma.

*Text 9. Akuko ita by Jevizu Okaavo of Aguleri*

*Title: Enu Nyili Mba*

*From: Chukwuma Azuonye and Obiora Udechukwu*

*In Uwa ndi Igbo*

*Date: 1984*

**ENU NYILI MBA**

(Uda ubom naato)

Ehee-e!

Mu bu Jevizu Okaavo

N'okpu Ivite Aguleri

Oo mu na-ata maka Emeke Okoye;

Oo mu na-ako akik'ya

N'ime Naijeria.

Oo mu bu onye avu

Na-ako akuko maka ndi odogwu

Mgbe gboo.

Nya ka m na-eme ka m banaa, 10  
 Ka m kowaa.  
 (Uda ubom naato)  
 Uooo, obodo Oba-na-Idu ooo!  
 Uooo, obodo Oba-na-Idu ooo!  
 Uooo, obodo Oba-na-Idu ooo!  
 Onye no n'okwu aputazina ezi ooo! 15

Na onye o buna-eriko okwu  
 aputawo oooo!  
 Onye no n'ezi baa n'okwu ngwa  
 ngwa oooo  
 Na onye o bu na-eriko okwu  
 aputawo oooo!  
 Iduu oooo!  
 (Ofu uda ubom)  
 Hmmmm! Hmmmm! Hmmmm! 20  
 Hmmmm!  
 Ooooo! Ooooo! Ooooo! Ooooo!  
 Ubosi ndi mmuo jelu ka -egbuo  
 oke ndi odogwu!  
 Mbosi ni Chukwu cholu Ogbugbu  
 oke ndi odogwu nwe eo!  
 Mbosi ni Chukwu cholu ka-eje gbuo 25  
 oke ndi odogwu uu!  
 Mbosi ni Chukwu cholu ogbugbo  
 oke ndi odogwu n'ama ora  
 nzuko oo!  
 Nwa m, ejene ogbugbo oke ndi  
 odogwu na o kwerekweni  
 ogbugbu.  
 N'ama ora nzuko oooo!

Oo kwa Okaavo nwa mmuo si ya  
 ejene, O si na ya ja-eje  
 ogbugbu oke ndi odogwu,  
 ora nzuko oooo

Oo kwa Ojaali nwa mmuo si ya 30  
 ejene, O si na ya ja-eje  
 ogbugbu oke ndi odogwu,  
 n'ama ora nzuko oooo!

Anyi abia, ife ja-eme, nya me-

Nya meli Nduba n'Ikelionwu

- Ikeliionwu,  
Ive a ja-eme eme ka o meli Nduba  
n'obodo Ikeliionwu  
O'ro Nduba n'Ikeliionwu mutali 35  
Ikeliionwu Mbaamali,  
N'oo nya bu na Ikeliionwu  
avuro ka va ji-ja eme Mbaamali  
Ikeliionwu tinyelu iwu n'ime be ve  
Si na kama ogbodu ja-ama mpama  
n'Ikeliionwu  
Ogbodi mali mmanwu, ogbodu  
mali mmanwu,  
O mechee, o baa na mmanwu. 40
- Ogbodu mali Mbaamali n'Ikeliionwu  
O buu na o luruwo.
- Odogwu oo, Mbaamali n'Ikeliionwu,  
nnoo oooo!  
Hmmm, iyo-oooo! oooo-oooo-m!  
Iduu, ekencee m unu! 45  
Ora: Nnoo!  
Onye ita: Hmmm,  
Anyi abanawo. 50
- Mbosi ni odogwu na-eke ogwu  
n'enu e!
- Mbosi ni odogwu na-eke ogwu be  
Obu-n'enu, Enu-nyili-mba!
- Mbosi ni odogwu na-eke be  
Obu-n'enu, Enu-nyili-mba
- Mbosi ni odogwu na-eke be  
Obu-n'enu, Enu-nyili-mba!
- Nwa mu, onye evio, kedu ezi i ja-eji  
li enu nzogo
- Odogwu si na ututu niini ya aligolu  
enu nzogo o!
- Oo kwa Ojaali nwa mmuo si a ejene, 55  
na ezi adiri a, o si ha ya

ja-ejeputie!

Oo kwa Okaavo nwa mmuo si ya  
ejene, na ezi adiri a, o si na ya  
ja-ejeputie nataa!

Nwa mu, ejene be Obu-n'enu, na o  
nwerokweni ezi, o si na ya  
ja-eje nataa!

Odogwu si na ututu niini nya lichaa  
enu nzogo, jechee nataa!

Hmm! Iyo ooo, hoo-oo-ooo!

## II

Ka anyi jee be Enu-nyili-mba- Nwoke bi n'enu.	60
Neeni ka o si gaa, Obuora Udechukwu, Mbidie bu	
Uwa a nwa bidolu, Awusali n'uwa	65
Bu iye Chukwu keli. Anokata, Nokata enu, nokata ana,	
Amaro iye sulu aku ubili, aku ubili suo onwe nye.	70
Aputa ovu mgbe, Dika mbosi uka, Ebebe akwukwo si n'eneu N'ewusi n'ani-	
Akwukwo e deli ede.	75
O si n'enu wusa n'obodo ndi nwa,	
O si n'enu wusa n'obodo ndi nwa,	
O si n'enu wusa n'obodo ndi nwa-	
Ka uwa ra. Ndi maali akwukwo, onye tutunyite akwukwo,	80
Neido, O kwava akwa,	

- Si kedi ive o...  
Ive va bu uwa mezili  
Nwoke bu Enu-nyili-mba bi n'enu 85
- Ji edezili va udi akwukwo nwa?'  
I weli akwukwo gbabaga be nwariibe gi  
bu onye maali akwukwo,  
O neido nya,  
O kwava akwa.  
Ive o deli n'akwukwo 90  
Bu na o kwulu  
Nyaa, nya bu enu nyili mba  
Na nya kali olili nya ja-eli-
- Si na olili avu nya ja-eli,  
Ibe nya bi n'obodo enu, 95  
Na oo izu naasaa ka nya ja-eli e
- Na olili avu nya ja-eli izu naasaa,
- Ive bu ive julu n'ani noonwo bu mmadu  
ekulu ume wee muuta
- Na iwu nya ja-enye ive bi n'uwa nwa bu  
mmadi atulu ime nwe muo, bu:
- E nwero onye je-anu mmili; 100  
Ma o nwero onye je-eli nli;  
Na o nwero onye ja-ata atu,  
Ma o nwero onye ja-ata aku;  
Nya ewee libue olili izu naasaa.  
Ma ovu mmadi chili nti nodu n'ana nwa 105  
nuo mmili-  
Na nya no n'enu ene onye avu anya-
- Nya gbupu e.  
Na ovu mmadi tili aku kpim taa, -
- Nya na-ene onye avu anya, o tie aku  
kpim taa-  
Nya gbupu e. 110  
Na o buro so onye a ka nya ja-egbu,
- Na oo nya bata obodo avu  
Na nya ya-ano n'enu gbuchepuobodo  
avu

- Idu wee gbasazialu.  
 Aguu wee gbuwe mmadi: 115  
 Ana-anuro mmili;  
 Ana-eliro nli;  
 Ana-ataro aku;  
 Ana-ataro oka
- Aguu wee gbukata 120  
 Gukata.  
 Ive bu umuaro eku n'aka, ana-ana  
 mmili, onwu, gbuve va.
- Avulu onye ja-aju ya ese?
- Ibe bu umuaro ana-ana mmili, onwu  
 gbuve ve.  
 Ive bu umuaro na-aga ije, ofuu, onwu 125  
 gbve va,  
 Gbuketezie umuaro gbuve onye kala aru.
- O buu na aguu egbuowo mmadi
- Na asi na aguu ana-egburo mmadi,
- O buu na aguu egbuowo mmadi;
- Na ana-anuro mmili ma si ana-ataro aku 130
- O gba uwa ghali.  
 Avuro onye ja-aju ya ese.
- Anokata, nokata, nokata, nokata, nokata  
 O buu na o mewo izu naato  
 O ji wee likwesi olili ni, 135  
 Izu naao o si we ikwesi olili-  
 Olili nkechi onu-  
 Ka m kachaa nya ava,  
 Na o keiwo anyi bu uwa onu.
- E wee puta ovu ubosi, 140  
 Mkpulu ubosi o meli izu naato,  
 Ive bu ndi odogwu di n'uwa
- We si: tia!  
 'Nyaa na o nwekwuwo onye kali olili  
 Ma si avuro ka-eji mee 145

Wee jee be onye o

Ma su amaro ibe onye avu bi,

Noo n'enu ka o bi

Ma si avuro ezi esi ja-eje be ya

Ma va bu ndi odogwu wusa n'uwa a nwa, 150

Na va ya-ejekweni mitini

Ka va ja kpa a alo

Ka a choo ka eji ja-eme wee je be nwoke

Deli akwukwo, wusali ive nwe.

Onye nwe juo nwaribe a, 155

Si a o maali ibe ezi be a di,

O si a kpa a;

Onye nwe juo nwaribe a,

Si a o maali ibe ezi be a di

O si a kpa a. 160

E wee ve zukoo, bu ndi odogwu:

Obadiegwu n'Ovia;

Ntili nwa eze Odoodo, aji o pulu n'aru

bu agbalaka;

Ndum nwa eze Abo nke ji okpa etiruge

obodo ekpe

Mbaamali n'Ikeionwu ji utaaku mmadi 165

ata atu;

Ojaatu akpo avu na-awu nku

Oranyeli ntu na-ebu ukwa aro, nwoke

bu n'enu ulukpu,

Ekwudebe-agba-awari.

Ive bu ndi odogwu di n'uwa niine

gbam,

Jikove onwe ve 170

Jikolide onwe ve daa,

Jikochee, we puta izu

N'obodo Ameke Okoye.

Wee machie ama pitim,

Machite ama pitim- 175

Mmadi ana-ekwuro okwu, edeli roo

- E wee nokata enu, nokata ana, nokata  
nokata ana  
Onye abu Obadiegwu n'Ovia  
Tili aka nye na nti,  
Livia a: 180  
Nwa mu oo, Obadiegwu n'Ovia!  
Nwa mu oo, ogoogogo n'Ovia  
Obadiegwu  
O ro m gwulu igba kelesime, ma  
anya bu anya.  
Odogwu, Obadiegwu n'Ovia 185  
Elelee, Obadiegwu n'Ovia,  
Odogwu oo, elele-le...eee!  
Odogwu oo, elele-le...eee!  
O bie! kwo-kwo-kwo-kwo!
- Si na ive o bu ahili hmm, bu nya 190  
kalicha.
- O si kedi ive anozu eme,  
N'oo nya ya-ebu uzo ya-eje be  
Obu-n'enu, Enu-nyili-mba,
- Ka-aja vu nya anya.  
Hii'ya!  
Hee-m, Mbaamali n'Ikelionwu si a lipu 195  
nsi:  
Ngi ya-ebu uzo wee je be Enu-nyili-mba
- Ma nya bu Mbaamali nia!  
Ntili nwa Eze Ododo kwonyiri,  
Wuraa akpa akia nnoo  
Oma-agu nali oku 200  
Maka na aji dichia n'aru bu anyu osi  
agbalaka.  
Oma-agunali oku, gbava;
- O debe akia nnoo nwa, anata va.
- O si va unu ja-eje be Enu-nyili-mba,
- Ma nya ebuzi uzo ma unu ebulu. 205
- Ojaadu akpu na-awu nku, puta  
Tuchalia onwie, tuchalia onwie

Tuchalia onwie, tuchalia onwie,  
Si va-aaa ive nwa na-ekpo,

Ka eji ja-eje obodo enu 210  
Onye di maali ibe ezi obodo enu di?

Onye makaali ibe ezi obodo enu di,

Wenyite akia enu.  
Owu nwe o naga onye o di o si na nya  
ja-enu uzo,  
Onye wuuta o si na nya ja-ebu uzo, 215

Onye wuuta o si na nya-ja-ebu uzo,

Si si azozikwanani onye ja-ebu uzo,

N'oo onye mali ka-eji ja-eme wee jee  
obodo enu,  
Onye nwa wenyite aka enu,  
Na nya amaro ibe o di. 220  
edee piii.  
Awusali-  
Wusakata, wusakata, wusakata,

Nnabuluede no n'okpulu oche okwu  
ya-  
Okwu ya bu Ameke Okoye. 225  
Mekete wuuta n'etiti ogbo, kpaghalia,

Nya bu onye abu ya  
Lulu mkpisi aka nye na nti a,  
Suvia:  
Hmm! Hmm! Hmm! Hmm! 230  
Iiee - Iiee - Iiee---  
Hmm! Hmm! Hmm! Hmm!  
Iiee - Iiee - Iiee---  
Mbaago puta ututu, nya na akwa  
na-eme!

Mbaago puta evivie, nya na akwa 235  
na-eme!

Mbaago puta anyasi, nya na akwa  
na-eme!

Obodo juoni Mbaago ive o  
n-akwali nnwia akwa akwacha  
akwacha

O si na nnwa ya na-eke ogwu n'enu  
oo!

Nwa mu ejene ogwu n'enu n ezi  
adirokwania

O si na ya ja-eje ya-a!

Odogwu si na ututu niini nya lili  
enu nzogo-o

240

Akwa vio: Oooooo!

Na Nnabuluede akala ava na o si na nya  
ja-eje n'enu,

Na o tozi uto, o nu inu, ka nya ji je-eje.

Ibe enu nzogo avu di bu na nrete  
anyanwu,

245

Ibe anyanwu si aligote,

Nya bu ezi ibe esi eje be Obu-n'enu,  
Enu-nyili-mba.

Eeee---

M ma-aka nya ava.

*Ndi Nkili:* Ngwa nu.

250

*Onye Ita:* Mgbe ejeideli jeluo n'ibe a  
anunu

Anyaanwu si esi n'ani na-arogote,

O si n'ana o na-aligote

Igwe gudolu n'ana

O wee si n'ana na-eligote.

255

Na ibe avu ka Enu-nyili-mba tiechelu  
sitempu

Tiechee sitempu

O ji ali obodo enu.

Ibe avu anyanwu si aligote

O tiecheli sitempu e si ali obodo enu,

260

N'oo oku di a.

Ebee nii anyaanwu si aligote, itempu  
dichia,

Nya oku di a

tupuu etinyeve sitempu-

Dee ka m koludiwo,

265

Mgbe m kolulie ka m gwa gi ibe sitempu  
si we puta.

Noo ka o ji wee puta

Eji wee vu ka-eji etinye sitempu uno enu  
bu-

Bu mgbe odogwu lulu neevu ka o ji wee  
vuvia.

Hmm eee -oo -oo - hmm

270

Hmm eee -oo -oo - hmm

Nwoke m, eyoni onwu erike elie  
mmuo ni

Nwoke m, eyoni onwu erike  
gwotalali si

Mmadi egunie oku

Eyoni onwu erike elie m gwochali

275

Si mmadi avunia anya

Eyoni onwu erike elie m gwochali

Si mmadi ekwene n'isi

Elie ndo ko elie mmuo obi

Hmm Iyoo - oo - oom.

280

Ndi a kwudiolu.

Iduu, ekenee m unu.

Ora: Iyaa! Nnoo!

Onye Ita: Eee...akwa ni akwachali

Bu ive ni bu Iduu wusa ni, maka na  
aguu na-egbu ve,

285

Agbasaa.

Obadiegwu n'Ovia dulu obodo ve naa.

Ndum nwa Eze Abo dulu obodo ve naa.

Ntili nwa Eze Ododo dulu obodo ve  
naa.

Mbaamali n'Ikelionwu dulu obodo ve naa

290

Una ka ana-agabebe, odu gbuo n'enu,

Tom tom, tom tom

Tom tom, tom tom

Tom tom, tom tom

Oranyeli nwa Odumaga Odo

295

Oranyeli Odogwu koo

Koo koo, koo koo

Koo koo, koo koo

O duia o kawooo! kawoo! kawoo!

Egwu o, ocha mmuo ocha mmadi.

300

O tuo oruru tuo oruru tuo oruru.

I wenyite iru, nee nye anya, i tue nye

"Ntu na-ebu ukwa aro"  
Onye nwe wenyite iru, o tue nye

"Akata isi ebue"

Onye nwe wenyite iru, o tue nye

"Okwu debe agba awari".  
O na-elu na-agbuda 305  
O na-elu na-agbuda  
Nya, nwoke bi n'ulukpulu,  
Nya bu ivee nii...  
Ezi o si bia mgbe avu  
Bu ivee nii na-aga o mekete, o gba nnoo 310  
nwa  
Ibe ana-asi na ogwulugwu gbali n'igwe,

Noo oruru o tulu.  
M ma-aga na-akachi unu ava ive unu  
biali taa.

*Onye nkili:* Hmm, oo nya.  
*Ora:* (Ochi) 315  
*Onye nkili:* Aguleri o!  
*Ora:* Yaaa!  
(Okuku aka)

Onye ita: Ndi dizi ni, naachaa,  
E wee kaa  
Si noo izu nta 320  
Ka eje-eje Obodo-enu  
Be enu nyili mba,  
Ka aja juo nya ese  
Ive kpatali o ji nye nnekwu iwu u,

Si eline ive ma si anuna mmili 325

Ka uwa gwuchazia, ka o bulu aguu  
gbuchali mmadu.

Izu nta waa puta,  
Ive bu ndi odogwu niine we biava.

Ive bu ndi odogwu niine we biava.

- Ndum nwa Eze Abo bia, 330  
 Ojaadu akpulu na-avu nku bia  
 Ntili nwa Eze Odoodo bia,  
 Odogwu anyi bu Oraeri Ntu na-ebu  
     ukwa-aro bia,  
 Emeke Okoye bia.  
 Nwoke agblaka dichia n'aruia, o bia. 335
- Ive bu ka ndi odogwu ra, piti piti piti  
     piti, wee zuchee,
- Wee ghasalu,  
 Ewee si "kedi ka eji ja-eme?"
- Amali ive eje-eme, si kwuo.
- Obadiegu n'Ovia kwuuta 340  
 Si noo nya nwe uzo
- Si si sovie n'azu.  
 Noo nya ja-ebu uzo wee jee n'ibe nrete  
     anyanwu di,
- eje-esi je Obodo-enu
- Be Enu-nyili-mba 345  
 Noo nya ja-ebu uzo, nya bu Obadiegwu  
     n'Ovia  
 Mbaamali n'Ikelionwu puta kwuia n'azu
- Si a na ibe itinye okpa
- Nya etinye so gi.  
 Ntili nwa Ezo Odoodo nua Mbaamali 350  
     n'azu  
 Onye nkili: Na-ewenitekwe onu.  
 Onye Ita: Ndum nwa Eze Abo nia  
     Mbaamali n'azu  
 Ive bu ka ndi Odogwu ra pitim  
 Solide onwe ve daa, wee sopuo.
- Odogwu anyi bi Ameke Okoye kunyiri 355  
     oto  
 Elite nwa Mmalive si nobodo nke ve  
     na-abia,  
 Bialide daa ja nia.

- Hoa!  
 Odogwu anyi bu Ameke Okoye enyiri oto  
 Baa n'ime uno 360  
 Kpoo okwu ia Nnabuluede, o zia  
  
 O si a, ngi jee be ndi na-ete mmia be eze  
  
 Ka i si a va weelie ite agbaja naano,  
  
 Ka va wee nuo mmili  
 Wee jeve Obodo-enu va na-akwaku. 365  
  
 Nnabuluede wupu be eze  
 Ndi na-ete mmia neevu bulu ite agbaja  
     naano bia doo netiti ama ano ivee  
     ni.  
  
 Ebulu vie che n'onu, nurigie  
  
 Deve ite.  
 Ive bu Mbago wuuta 370  
 N'ama  
 Bulu oto  
 Nodi ana  
 Na-akpu elegelede n'ofu uzo  
  
 Lulu aka nye na nti a 375  
 Na-akwa  
 Na-akwa  
 Kwakata, kwakata, kwakata  
 Nnabuluede kpubet  
 Lulu aka nye Odogwu na nti: 380  
     Mbago puta ututu, nya na akwa  
         na-eme.  
     Mbago puta evive, nya na akwa  
         na-eme.  
     Mbago puta anyasi, nya na akwa  
         na-eme.  
     Obodo si juoni Mbago ive o  
         na-akwali nnwia akwa akwacha  
         akwacha  
  
 O si na nwa ya na-akwaku ogwu 385  
     n'enu oo  
  
 Nwa mu; ejene ogwu n'enu n'ezi

## adirokwania

O si na nya ya-ejechee nataa.

Odogwu si na ututu niine nya lia  
enu nzogo - oo!

Oo kwa Okaavo nwa mmuo si ya  
ejene, o si na nya ja-eje

Jee nataa.

390

Oo kwa Ojaali nwa mmuo si ya  
ejene, o si na nya ja-eje

Jechee putaa.

Hmm - iyoooo - oooo!

Obadiegwu n'Ovia tuwapu  
Si na va apua ovu bu ije

395

Ka va jee Obodo-enu.

Va ncha niine pitim tuwaa ije, gava  
Obodo-enu

Galide ije trrrrrr, chi jiri

Galide ije n'anasi, chi voru.

Galide ije, gaa ije izu gbam

400

O burokwonu ezi ka ana-esi

Na avuro ezi aja-esi je Obodo-enu,

Na unu na-anu ka m na-ekwu na avuro  
ezi eje-esi ja-eje.

Izuka agali ije, evivie na anasi

Avuro va ka eji ve ya-elu nrete anyanwu

405

Ibe anyanwu so erogote

Avuro va ka eji va je-eluie

Agamie ve ije evivie mbosi avu,

Gamie anasi mbosi avu,

O buu na asi na izu kweli nnyaavu eji ve  
nyirite ije,

410

Ma va avuro....

Akwado ve ije n'omaagu,

O di ka ibe katapila gali.

Akad ve nrete anyanwu aka

Ka va ji je-eme wee lue Obodo-enu, 415

agakatazie va, Obadiegwu n'Ovia tuo  
ava si na nya ejechekwe,

Na nya na onye omekelie na va ja-ana

A juo nya oo ni?

O kwuuta, si ndi ya-ejeni jevezia

Na nya anawo. 420

Nya na onye omekelie, una

I vuzie ndi odogwu si na va ja-eje be  
Enu-nyili-mba

Ka va ja juo nya ese ive o ji tiew iwu di  
nnoo

Agbazie ve una.

Odogwu anyi yaizie ikpulu ukwu n'ani 425

Avuro ka eji ka-eme.

Okwuia, Ojaadu akpulu na-avu-nku,  
tuo nye, okwuia Odi-ike-di-Igbo-egwu

O zi a, eeh!

O tuo nye Akata-isi-ebuo 430

O zia eh!

Otuo nya Akpala-ewu-si-udo

O zi a eeh!

O tuo nya Anu-nke-nne-anu-nke-nna

O si a na nke nne na nna ... na ovu 435

onye ozo kwulu bu na ikpo ka nya  
wuaalia,

Si a, I nweli okwu,

Nekwe ndi va na va yi eje Obodo-enu

Na anachaakwaani va,

Ka va naakwani

440

Na o kwani nya bu okwu nya nweli.

O wee si a, "O bulu na i je-jero

- Obodo-enu, I navani  
 Na ije nya gaje nwoo bu o tozi uto  
 o nuu inu  
 Ojaadu si a na nya anuwo  
 Okwuia, Okaavo nwa mmuo, tuo nye 445  
 Odi-ike-di-Igbo-egwu  
 O zi a hii!  
 O si a kedi ive i na-elo?
- Ijee nwe ve nulu k uw ji wee di,  
 Wee si ndi mmuo wee bia,  
 Wee si ka va solu gi gaa ijee nwe, 450
- Ka va naakwani  
 Ka o da abukwana n'ezi ka va tolu.  
 O si a, "O buu na i ya-ana, i naa"
- Na nya ya-elu Obodo-enu  
*Onye nkili:* Na-ewenite onu; kama o 455  
 bulu na i na-anu mmia, achoo mmii  
 nye gi.  
*Onye Ita:* Chedokwene ni nti  
*Onye Nkili:* O na-ewenite  
*Oye Ita:* Ive bu ndi odogwu niine wee  
 nakpoo gbam,  
 O buu na anachaa va. 460
- Odogwu anyi wee kwuluoto, wee kue  
 okwuia, Nnabuluede,  
 O zi , eeh!  
 O si a ngi gwakania okwu, ka va mali  
 ibe va ya-esi ya-eje Obodo-enu
- Be Enu-nyili-mba.  
 Na ije a va putali nwoo na nya gwakwali 465  
 gi na o too uto o nuu inu
- Ka va ji ja-eje Obodo-enu  
 Nnabuuede wee mekwuie oku n'ike
- E wee ve bitu oku,  
 Wee gbaa oso izu naato  
 agbabu n'ibe Igwe jedebe n'ana, 470  
 anyanwu si erogote,

Chili aka bedie.

Oso ka-agbalu izu naato n'oma-agu  
Agbabu n'ibe nwa anyanwu si erogote, e  
si eje Obodo-enum chili aka bedie...

O buu na sitempu di a,

O buu na oku anyanwu bu agbagote, na 475  
avuro ka eji ja-emie.

O wee kwulu -

Daa, n'evu, nodi ani.

Nnabuluede jaa nodi.

E zue ve ike daa, zuchesie ike.

Nnabuluede gbavia 480

Gbakatia enu, gbakatia ani,

Gbakatia ani, gbakatia enu,

Gbakatia enu, gbakatia ani

Gbakaia, gbakatia, gbakaia,

O nyiri oto weli okpa bedo 485

N'enu sitempu nii eji eje Obodo-enu

Wee jee be Enu-nyili-mba.

O buu na oku di a nnwoo, ee,

Na anyanwu enyiriwom gafelu-

Ma okudi a nnwoo, ee. 490

Hii'a!

Nnabuluede kuo nye "Okwu mz", O zi a

O si a kedu ka eji ja-eme?

O si a, O kwa nya gwali gi

Noo o too uto, o nuu inu, 495

Si a ngi kwuzie okwu ike.

Aligo Nnabuluede dava.

O wee butu oso,

O wee butu oso, 500

Sitempu avu 'nunu a ja-ali wee lue

Obi-n'enu, di ogu naato.

- O wee butu oso.  
Ovu nji oso ka o ji wee gbaa nya ili  
naato-  
Nyaa ogu n'ili-  
Wua ikpulu ukwu n'enu sitempu, 505  
Na-amawuge onwie  
Anwulu na-adupuia n'aru onwie  
Na-amawuge onwie,  
Anwulu na-adupuian'aru.  
Oso ozo o butuu agbabu n'enu 510  
gbam,  
Agbabu be Eu-nyili-mba,  
Bata,  
O buu n'ama di n'Obodo-enu
- Enu nwa, ama di a, be Enu-nyili-mba,  
mbosi avu.  
Wubata ka o wubatali n'obodo enu, 515  
Agbabu na mbala ezi be Eny-nyili-mba.
- O buu na nwoke Ikwele, ana-akpo  
Avuanya biali Enu-nyili-mba olili
- Eri izu naasaa,  
Nodu n'ime bie  
Odogwu anyi bu Ameke Okoye dachie 520  
ama nii, pitim.  
Eh, m ma-agwaro unu ka o too uto
- Na ive bu okpa ya niine, na o  
manwuchali amanwu maka oku
- O ji li sitempu enu nzogo.
- O wee kpoo nya "Enu-nyili-mba".  
O na-enie anya. 525  
O kpoo nya "Enu-nyili-mba".  
O na-enie anya.  
O si a, o kwa gi nyelu oda a,
- Na olili i ya-ali izu naasaa,
- Na eje-etiro aku, 530  
Ma si aya-anuro mmili?
- O si a n o nya nyelu oda.

O si a, i makwaali na osisi eji kpa esu  
na esu na-ayi?

Na nya abia be gi.

O nwee nya bu mgbadike aanwu nya  
biali be gi,

535

Na oo osisi eji kpa esu na esu ya-ayi,

Na uwa ja-ama gi

Ka amali ive nyili i ike i ji wee nye oda  
na eje-eliro ive,

Lue izu naasaa,

Aguu wee na-egbu mmadi n'uwa.

540

Hmm-eee! hm-ee! hmm-eee!

Mbosi odogwu na-eke ogwu n'enu  
oo!

Nwa mu, onye evio, kedi ezi i  
ja-ejizi je enu nzogo.

Odogwu si na o too uto nu inu, nya  
ja-alili enu nzogo, nataa.

O nwere ive mee ni, noo na o pili okpo

545

Nye Enu-nyili-mba, hmm, ka-tim.

Enu-nyili mba kwurugaszia na-enie anya.

Nwoke Ikwele biali Enu-nyili-mba olili

Mee isi nelem, baa motoie, una,

Si na nya avugo eke je-eno ene.

550

Enu-nyili-mba juo nya, si a kedi ive o,

O si a, o kwa ngi nyelu oda

Na i ja-eli olili izu naasaa

Ma ndi mmadi anuro mmili

Ma si aya-etiro aku

555

Ma si aya-eliro ive,

Aguu wee na-egbusisi mmadi n'uwa!

Pia okpo, nee, nye nye, *tim!* 560

Nya nke ibuo.

Mke ito ka o tizilie, tim,

Magbia, bagbom! bulu tukwasi  
n'ukukubuie

Si Nnabuluede ngwa, na una va elue.

Nnabululede nokolidie.

Ka esi ve gba n'enu sitempu bu:

Gbelegbele, gbelegbele, gbelegbele! 565  
gbelegbele, gbelegbele, gbelegbele!

Agbabu n'ana, jem-  
wuo okpa n'ana, jem-

tukwatia n'ubu ye

Si okwu a, Nnabuluede,

I vukwali ka nwoke nwe si mee ive eji  
eje bie? 570

Gi gelukweenie anya

Maka va analue n'uwa,

Ngi nelukwee nye anya ka i vulu ka o sii  
wee di-

Ezi esi eje n'enu. 575

O bulu nwoke

Agbabu obodo ve, gbam,

Turaa nya n'ama obodo,

A nuna okwu, o bulu bunyili ubom:

Iduu a, odogwu anataa eee! 580

Iduu a, odogwu anataa eee!

Mmadi mee lizeem 585

Kedi ive emeli?

Egbupulu nwoke avu

Nyeli nnekwu oda avu

*Onye nkili:* Hmm?

*Onye Ita:* Egbupulie. 590

N'ebe avu ka sitempu eji alu uno enu si  
wee puta.

Eh, Obuora Udechukwu,  
 O bu n'ibe a anunu ka  
 N'olili a anunu  
 Nwoke avu nyeli iwu aa-

595

Nya ka Awusa no na nkwchi onu ya  
 ive e,  
 Aro gbaa, aro gbaa,  
 N'oo nya ka va no na nkechi onu ya  
 ive e,

Unu anugho nnoo?

Ikechi onu Abakpa.

600

Na Abakpa na-ekechi onu,

Enu-nyili-mba tielu oda avu,

Nya ka Awusa ka no na nkechi onu ya  
 ive e.

(Nnukwu ochi na iku aka)

*Onye Nkili:* Aguleri oo!

605

*Ora:* Yaa!

*Onye Ita:* Ibe anyi, nnoo ni.

*Ora:* Nnool!

*Onye Ita:* Ka anyi debie n'ani,

Ka anyi debie n'ani.

## *Translations*

### *1.i Religious names for Chukwu*

- i Chukwu the shining one, the creator and the divider/sharer
- ii Chukwu the shining one, the creator and the divider/sharer
- iii Chi the shining one, the creator and divider/sharer
- iv Chukwu the king and creator
- v king and creator of the chi "light" of this day
- vi Light/ Daylight
- vii Olisa who is carrying the world
- viii Olisa
- ix King of creation

### *1.ii Encomiums for Chukwu*

- i Eze-igwe "king of the sky"
- ii Eze-enu "king of the place above"
- iii Odeniigwe "He whose fame resounds in the sky"
- iv Ononiigwe "He who stays in the sky"
- v Obiniigwe "He who resides in the sky"
- vi Oganiigwe "He whowalks the skies"
- vii Ojezulu-obodo "He who goes round the whole town"
  
- viii Nwoke oghogho-anya "Man with vast eyes"
- ix. Nwoke ogonogo okpa "Man with the long legs"
- x. Agbala bu anyaanwu ututu "Spirit which is the morning sun"
- xi. Agbala ji igwe "Spirit which is holding the sky"
- xii. Agbala ji uwa "Spirit which is holding the world"
- xiii. Nwoke bi n'igwe "The man who lives in the sky"
- xiv. Ama-ama Amasi-amasi "He who is known but not completely known"

1.iii(a) Names given to persons but which do not bear Chukwu in them but other related terms of interest such as mmuo "spirit", eke "Nri-Igbo native day" etc.

- i. Nweke "Child of *Eke*"
- ii. Nwoye "Child of *Oye*"
- iii. Nwafo "Child of *Afo*"
- iv. Nwankwo "Child of *Nkwo*"

i	Okeke	"Eke's male child"
ii	Okoye	"Oye's male child"
iii	Okafo	"Afo's male child"
iv	Okonkwo	"Nkwo's male child"

i	Mgbaeke	"Daughter of Eke"
ii	Mgboye	"Daughter of Oye"
iii	Mgbafo	"Daughter of Afo"
iv	Mgbankwo	"Daughter of Nkwo"

**1.iii(b) Others: conceptual names**

i	Anya-anwu	"Eye of the sun, source of the sun"
ii	Anya-eke	"Eye of Eke, source of eke"
iii	Onu-nkwo	"Source of Nkwo"
iv	Muojekwu	"The Spirit will decide"
v	Ezeana	"King of the earth, land"
vii	Chi-ife	"Chi of light"
viii	Nnabuiife	"Father is the light"
ix	Muoma	"The Spirit knows"
x	Okpalaeke	"First male creature of Eke"
xii	Udeagbala	"Fame of the deep and mysterious one"

**1.iii(c) Other names given to children at birth today bearing  
Chukwu in them**

**Category 1: Rhetorical names**

i	Amaogechukwu	"Whoever knows God's own time"
ii	Amauchuchukwu	"Whoever knows God's own thoughts"
iii	Amauzochukwu	"Whoever knows God's own ways"

**Category ii with Chukwu as subject**

i	Chukwuatuuga	"Chukwu does not tell lie"
ii	Chukwubiko	"O please, Chukwu"
iii	Chukwudaalu	"Thanks be Chukwu"
iv	Chukwudi	"Chukwu exists"
v	Chukwudiegwu	"Chukwu is wonderful"
vi	Chukwudiike	"Chukwu is capable, powerful"
vii	Chukwudoluem	"May Chukwu preserve me to the end"
viii	Chukwudozie	"May Chukwu resolve the problem"
ix	Chukwudubem	"May Chukwu keep leading"

x	Chukwudumaaka	me on" "May <i>Chukwu</i> assist me"
xi	Chukwuebuka	" <i>Chukwu</i> is too great and mighty"
xii	Chukwuekeka	" <i>Chukwu</i> created so well"
xiii	Chukwueloka	" <i>Chukwu</i> has thought (it) out very well"
xiv	Chukwuemeka	" <i>Chukwu</i> has done very well"
xv	Chukwufuzulu	" <i>Chukwu</i> sees it all"
xvi	Chukwujekwu	" <i>Chukwu</i> will decide"
xvii	Chukwuka	" <i>Chukwu</i> is greater than all, supreme"
xviii	Chukwukaanene	" <i>Chukwu</i> is the one to look up to "
xix	Chukwukelu	" <i>Chukwu</i> created all things"
xx	Chukwukaodinaka	" All is in the hands of <i>Chukwu</i> "
xxi	Chukwualuka	" <i>Chukwu</i> has done very well"
xxii	Chukwuraa	"May <i>Chukwu</i> release his hold"
xxiii	Chukwuekee	" <i>Chukwu</i> has shone out like light"
xxiv	Chukwuadika	" <i>Chukwu</i> is very admirable"
xxv	Chukwukwe	"If <i>Chukwu</i> gives his consent"
xxvi	Chukwuma	" <i>Chukwu</i> knows it all"
xxvii	Chukwumbaa	" <i>Chukwu</i> of the nation"
xxviii	Chukwunaafuzu	" <i>Chukwu</i> sees everything"
xxix	Chukwunaanu	" <i>Chukwu</i> hears everything"
xxx	Chukwunene	" <i>Chukwu</i> is watching"
xxxi	Chukwunofu	" <i>Chukwu</i> is just present"
xxxii	Chukwunonyelu	" <i>Chukwu</i> is by my side"
xxxiii	Chukwunweike	" <i>Power</i> belongs to <i>Chukwu</i> "
xxxiv	Chukwunweobo	"It is in the hands of <i>Chukwu</i> to revenge"
xxxv	Chukwunweolu	"Work belongs to <i>Chukwu</i> "
xxxvi	Chikwunyelum	" <i>Chukwu</i> gave (it) to me"
xxxvii	Chukwuzubelu	" <i>Chukwu</i> planned it all"
xxxviii	Chukwuzoba	"May <i>Chukwu</i> continue to save us"
xxxix	Chukwuabuka	" <i>Chukwu</i> is extremely admirable"

*Category iii : Attributes of Chukwu*

i.	Ogochukwu	"Grace of <i>Chukwu</i> "
ii.	Ogechukwu	" <i>Chukwu's</i> time" (is best)
iii.	Iwuchukwu	" <i>Chukwu's</i> law" (is best)
iv.	Izuchukwu	" <i>Chukwu's</i> plan/ week"
v.	Ugochukwu	"The eagle of <i>Chukwu</i> "
vi.	Uzochukwu	" <i>Chukwu's</i> ways"

vii.	Ikechukwu	"The strength of <i>Chukwu</i> "
viii.	Onyebuchi	"Who claims to be <i>Chi/Chukwu</i>
viii.	Ukachukwu	" <i>Chukwu's</i> own matter"
ix.	Ilechukwu	"The effectiveness of <i>Chukwu</i> "

*Category iv : Chukwu as Chi*

i.	Chikwendu	"May <i>Chi</i> permit life"
ii.	Chibueze	" <i>Chi</i> is king"
iii.	Chibundu	" <i>Chi</i> is life"
v.	Chibuzo	" <i>Chi</i> comes first"
v.	Chigboo	"May <i>Chi</i> intervene in the fight"
vi.	Chidebe	"May <i>Chi</i> preserve us"
vii.	Chidebelu	" <i>Chi</i> has preserved us"
viii.	Chidiogo	" <i>Chi</i> " is gracious"
ix.	Chidolue	"May <i>Chi</i> preserve us to the end"
x.	Chidubem	"May <i>Chi</i> keep leading me on"
xi	Chiekeka	" <i>Chi</i> created so well"
xii.	Chiemeka	" <i>Chi</i> has done very well"
xiii	Chijiofo	" <i>Chi</i> has the sacred wand of justice"
xiv	Chijioke	" <i>Chi</i> has the share, the work of creation"
xv.	Chikeluo	"May <i>Chi</i> shine, create to the end"
xvii.	Chikezie	"May <i>Chi</i> create it right"
xviii	Chikwelu	" <i>Chi</i> has consented"
xix	Chimeleze	" <i>Chi</i> made him king"
xx.	Chinagolu	" <i>Chi</i> solicits for me"
xxi	Chinaka	" <i>Chi</i> is the creative artist"
xxii.	Chinedum	" <i>Chi</i> is the one leading me on"
xxiii	Chinaemelu	" <i>Chi</i> does things for me"
xxiv	Chinweora	" <i>Chi</i> is the owner of the people"
xxv	Chinweugwo	" <i>Chi</i> repays one"
xxvi.	Chinweze	" <i>Chi</i> owns the king"
xxvii.	Chinyeluogo	" <i>Chi</i> gave us the eagle/ confers excellence"
xxviii.	Chiife	" <i>Chi</i> the light/of the light of day"

*TEXT 2.i Okpulukpu okwu-ga "Core words, phrases and statements encapsulating a concept" otherwise religious terms for ritual events, activities and ceremonies*

i.	Aja chi/Chukwu	Sacrifice to <i>Chi</i> or <i>Chukwu</i>
ii	Oha Chi	The sacred <i>oha</i> of <i>Chi</i>
iii	Egbo Chukwu	The sacred <i>egbo</i> of <i>Chukwu</i>
iv	Aja eze-enu	Sacrifice to the king of the above

v	Onuchi	The source of <i>chi</i> "light"/ <i>Chukwu</i>
vi	Mkpulu Chi	The seeds of <i>Chi</i>
vii	Iho Chi	To extract <i>Chi</i> and replace in a new abode
viii	Ilo Chi	Ritual of sacrifice to <i>Chi</i>
ix	Igo mmuo/Chi	Absolution rites offered to the spirits & <i>Chi</i>
x.	Isedata Chi	The ritual of drawing down <i>Chi</i> from the sun
xi	Okwu Chi	The sacred altar of <i>Chi</i>
xii	Okwa Chi	A wooden bowl used for serving in the morning rites of <i>Chi</i>
xiii	Ihu Chi	The altar of <i>Chi</i>
xiv	Ewu chi	The goat sacrificed to the <i>Chi</i> of a newly married girl
xv	Onu Chi	The source of <i>Chi</i>
xvi	Onwu Chi	Natural death at the end of one's life
xvii	Uluchi	The foil for <i>Chi</i> (evil chi etc)
xviii	Ezi Chi	Good <i>Chi</i> , good fortune
xix	Ajo Chi	Evil <i>chi</i> , misfortune

## 2.ii *Terms with Chi roots*

i	Echichi	"Title taking"
ii	Ichi	"Facial scarification"
iii	Ichi ozo	"To take the ozo title"
iv	Ichie	"Titled elder"
v	Ochie	"Of old, something of the old days"

## 2.iii *Chi terms used for expressing weather conditions*

i	Chi efo	"Day has dawned"
ii	Chi-ta	"light of this day"
iii	Chi ejie	"Daylight has darkened, night has come"
iv	E-chi (echi)	"Tomorrow, another day of light"
v	U-chi-chi(uchichi)	"Night, darkness"
vi	Chi oma	"Good day, nice day"
vii	Chi ojoo	"Bad day, evil day, unfortunate day"
viii	Ihu chi	"The weather condition"
ix	Chi na ubosi	"Light and the day"
x	Mgbachi	"Noon time"
xi	Mgbawata Chi	"The breaking of day"
xii	Chi amaka	"The day is very nice"
xiii	Chi igha	"The changing of weather with rain coming"

		rain coming
xiv	Chi julu oyi	"The day/weather is cold"
xv	Chi igbanwe	"The changing of weather, of light of day"

**Text 3.i Proverbs with Chi in them**

- i Children may be born of the same mother, but they may not be created by the same *chi*. (The implication of this proverb is that children of one mother do not necessarily have the same destiny).
- ii Where one falls, there his *chi* has pushed him
- iii One greater than another is greater than his *chi*
- iv When one says yes, his *chi* also affirms with him
- v The great *Chi* cut down the mighty iroko for him, but while falling it got caught in the thatch of a house
- vi The little bird *nza* (*weasle?*) overfed himself and called upon his *chi* to come and take him.
- vii If one moves ahead of his *chi*, he continues to run eternally.
- viii The *chi* of the eagle that painted the eagle's face with white clay.
- ix A cow that has no tail, it's *chi* drives away flies for it.
- x One's *chi* does not call him and he says he has yam in his hand.
- xi. One's enemy is not his *chi* .
- xii. A man's *chi* is two ( These are the good and evil *chi* entities)
- xiii. A man is a *chi* to another man ( Man is god to man)
- xiv. If one's *chi* is not in conspiracy with the others death does not take him.
- xv The *chi* of the sparrow provides it with a nest.
- xvi The hook which *Chukwu* supplies one with is what he uses to pluck fruit from a tall tree.
- xvii *Chukwu* who gave the coconut seed the water with which it to the top of the tree has supplied it with life.
- xviii *Chukwu* has the yam, and he has the knife; whoever he cuts and gives to then eats.
- xix Have a clear conscience, you man of action because *Chukwu* cures the sick more than a *dibia* (priest-healer).
- xx When *Chukwu* is on the side of a king, the people then have power.
- xxi Is there anyone who has gone to the abode of *Chukwu* and still lived?

**3.ii Proverbs with *chi* expressing weather conditions**

- i. Search for the black goat whilst it is still daylight.
- ii. Daylight does not break if night does not fall.
- iii. Not until nightfall, one never endures the lamentation of a person whose mother has just died.
- iv. Eat what would make your belly to swell ( or cause you constipation) whilst yet it is day, (lest night befalls you and you will not be able to go out to the bush to pass excreta).
- v. When two arms are strong, then friendship lasts till nightfall (ie, the friendship lasts for long)
- vi. What is good does not last till nightfall (ie does not last for long)

**3.iii Others from *Ezeanya***

- i *Chukwu* owns the person losing his way in the bush
- ii Anyone whose *chi* has promised that he must be lost, even if he goes into his farm he will still be lost.
- iii When one sets about consulting too many dibias he starts to challenge *Chukwu* because what one dibia knows another knows it too.
- iv When one is called his *chi* answers.
- v The *chi* of *nwa mba* kills rats for it. ( The implication is that *chi* does things for a helpless person thereby ensuring his survival)
- vi May the *chi* that has given the eagle its title not let its white feathers to fade.
- vii When one is preparing to set out on a journey his *chi* also starts to prepare.
- vii When a child starts to climb a tree his *chi* starts to be afraid.
- ix. Your *chi* has killed you today. (One's misfortune has been his tragedy).
- x My *chi* has betrayed me.
- xi Your *chi* and your *aka* (A curse)
- xii May *Chukwu* set you ablaze/ May *Chi* set you ablaze.
- xiii The light that shone on an individual is his *chi*.

- xiv One's *chi* is as big as the owner.
- xv His *chi* has started to lead him home.
- xvi One with an evil *chi* gathered firewood and goats came and ate  
it
- xvii Evil *chi* is never averted by one getting up early to start to  
work.
- xviii If *chi* is the green grass in the fields, my enemy will come and  
root it away from me.

*Text 4.i Kolanut Invocations*

i. Anyaanwu the sun and the Mighty,  
Chukwu-okike, creator of man, eat kolanut;  
Eke eat kola-  
Oye eat kola-  
Afo eat kola-  
Nkwo eat kola-  
Earth of the ancestors, eat kola-  
Our father, eat kola,  
Ogwugwu eat kola,  
Ngene eat kola,  
Ochichi nne eze eat kolanut  
Ancestral ones, those that created man, eat kola  
Brother who commits evil against brother, may he go to  
sleep with his face to the ground (may he die).

**4.ii**

a. My creator Chukwu, and my forefathers,  
I greet you all  
Because you made me to see this new day;  
May I see many more days ahead  
Till my head turns to white.  
See to it that a hoe does not cut me in the leg  
Protect me and my family  
Drive away from me evil men and spirits;  
I do not bear evil in my heart for any one-  
But if there is any one wishing me death,  
See that the one gets to know how the  
land of the dead looks like.  
Ofo is with me, and whoever has an ofo never  
loses his way.

b. Ugwu "hill", here is kola,  
 Earth, here is kola  
 Anyaanwu "the sun" here is kola  
 Ogwugwu here is kola:  
 Our ancestors, here is kola-  
 Come before us  
 And come behind us as we walk along  
     the deep forests  
 We do not eat kolanut before him  
 We only eat what belongs to living beings  
 We do not eat what belongs to spirits.  
 Behold your kolanut-  
 Behold your pieces of kolanut.  
 Ise-e...Ise-e

c. Chukwu the creator,  
 Sky and the earth  
 Anyaanwu Ezechite-okike  
 Our ancestors:  
 It is life, and what we shall use  
     in looking after it  
 -Wealth and prosperity-  
 That is what we are asking.

d. What will it be today?  
 Will it go smoothly, or will it bring me to ruins?  
 Is it life or death?  
 Ha! Flood does not climb the mountains.  
 Who is this evil spirit whose shadow is across my  
     path of truth?  
 I hold up my ofo for him.  
 Here, the place of the rising sun- and there  
     the place of the setting sun.  
 Here where the sun is shining, behold the sun  
     coming and riding on the rays of its light-  
 Sky and Earth are standing firmly by my side-  
 Why must my tongue be twisted?  
 Grey hairs and lies are not good friends.  
 Spirits of my ancestors, please come and stay  
     near your child  
 So that we can show the child of a seeker what we do  
 The things we do for which we are known.

## 4.iii

a. Chukwu our creator, eat kola  
 Chukwu who created man eats kolanut in wholes  
 Living beings then eats in bits and bits;  
 Chukwu, please look on us on the belly  
 And do not look at us on the head  
 Because we do not know what the head ate  
 That made it to grow so big.

b. Chukwu-okike, eat kola  
 Our fathers come and eat kola  
 Where are you all?  
 There is no way a fly will ever eat  
     to be as large as the cow;  
 Whoever is visiting one in his house, may he not  
     visit him to death  
 And if he is going may he not develop the humps.  
 The woodpecker does not peck at the wood with its  
     own strength  
 It is with the ofo that the flood digs the land  
 May the child of spirit not cheat  
     the child of a living being  
 And may the child of a living being  
     not cheat the child of a spirit;  
 Whoever sets out to chase the hen owns the fall  
 And the hen the light feet of flight.  
 Whoever says the matter is between the two of us  
     may he go to roost before the chickens.

c. Chineke, what is today? Today is Nkwo,  
 Nkwo of all Umuhu.  
 We shall live-  
 May wealth come to us, my children come and  
     multiply  
 May the yam do well and grow large in size, may  
 Chineke give you all good health  
 Whoever says that you will not live, may such a one  
     not live as well;  
 And whoever wishes that you live, may he also live too.  
 May headache never come to you;  
 May your bellies not bite you  
 May you not be oppressed by any needs.

## 4.iv

- a. Owners of the earth, wash your hands for the morning

Owners of the land,  
 King of the sky, wash your hand  
 King of the earth, wash your hand-  
 Oye, wash your hand for the morning  
 Head of Edo, wash your hand for the morning.  
 Guardian of Edo, wash your hand for the morning  
 One's own guardian, wash your hand for the morning  
 Protector of one, wash your hand for the morning  
 Ahoke, wash your hand for the morning  
*Idenyi dimodi* , wash your hand for the morning  
*Ufu anyinyi*, wash your hand for the morning  
 Hill of king *Omada*, wash your hand for the morning  
 Hill of king *Eshugwuru*, wash your hand for the morning  
 Hill, wash your hand for the morning  
*Odo* child of Arua, wash your hand for the morning  
*Osayi* child of the king, wash your hand for the morning  
 Sunrays, wash your hand for the morning  
 Wash, all of you, let the water splash on the enemy  
 While washing may you not splash water on me  
 and my wife and children  
*Omu*, wash your hand for the morning  
*Arua* the king, accept my greeting  
 Please you heads, may you remain alive-  
 Owners of the land, wash your hand for the morning.

- b. *Arua*, wash your hands for the morning  
 Wash your hands for the morning eke.  
*Ezechitaoke*, come and accept kolanut;  
 All the spirits in the land, come and accept kola  
 Look, Earth, it is kolanut  
 Look, Earth, it is kolanut  
 Keep protecting all your children, please  
 Keep protecting your children, please,  
 Keep protecting your children, please  
 Nsukka stream, come and eat kolanut, keep  
 Protecting all relatives of *Ngwu*  
 Keep protecting the children of Iyioke  
 wherever their limit is  
 Please, please and may your headship remain.

c. *Ezechitoke*, come and accept kola  
 All the sprits in this land, come and take kola  
 Keep bringing children, keep bringing women  
 Keep bringing money and good things;  
*Ezechitaoke*, please keep protecting us  
 Keep creating/sharing out children, keep  
 Sharing out everything  
 May your headship remain  
 Keep protecting me, and the aged ones;  
 Please keep protecting us  
 Do not allow any misfortune to fall on us.

d. *Eke* of *Chukwuoke*, eat kola,  
 May my life be preserved  
 This eke day.

e. My *chi*, eat kola  
 My *chi*, drink palmwine  
 My *chi*, protect me  
 My *chi*, do not let anything happen to me  
 My *chi*, look after the life of my child, please  
 help me.

f. Owners of the land, wash your hands for the morning  
*Eke*, wash your hand for the morning  
*Afo*, wash your hand for the morning  
*Oye*, wash your hand for the morning  
*Nkwo*, wash your hand for the morning  
 King of the sky, wash your hand for the morning  
 Today is *Afo*-  
*Arua*, wash your hand for the morning-  
 Earth, the kola is for *Arua*  
*Arua*, wash your hand for the morning  
*Idenyi Dimuke*, wash your hand for the morning  
*Afo*, chew morning kolanut  
*Eke*, chew the morning kola  
*Oye*, chew the morning kola  
*Nkwo*, chew the morning kola  
*Asogwa*, chew the morning kola  
*Oriye Attah*, chew the morning kola  
 Hill of *Idenyi*, chew the morning kola  
 Odo, child of *Arua*, chew the morning kola

*Egba Ikwunne*, chew the morning kola  
*Odagba*, chew the morning kola  
*Onyili Edo*, chew the morning kola  
*Ntiye Ngweani*, chew the morning kola  
*Ofo*, chew the morning kola  
 Children of the Earth one, chew ther morning kola  
 Throne of the elders, chew the morning kola  
 The king's ofo, chew the morning kola  
 Sun, chew the morning kola  
*Ugwuoke*, chew the morning kola  
 Today is *Afo*-  
 Those who live in the sky, chew the morning kola  
 Those who live in the earth, chew the morning kola  
 Husband of Iyioke, chew the morning kola  
 Amooke hill of Iye, chew the morning kola  
 The hills of our land, chew the morning kola  
*Ezechtaoke*, chew the morning kola  
 It is the one chasing the fowl that has to fall  
*Idenyi Dimuke*, chew the morning kola  
 May your headship continue to remain with the  
     owner of the land-  
*Chukwu*, you created all men  
 Those created in the morning of *Afo* day, come and  
     drink some wine.

## 4.v

*Chineke ezechitaoke*, greetings  
 Earth, greetings  
 Sky, greetings  
 Chew kolanut, all of you;  
 My father killer of cows Ononenyi...  
 Come and chew kola -all of you  
 We forgive the mouth that says evil  
 We forgive the mouth that says good  
 Because if there is no wrong  
     there will be no forgiveness;  
 We ask for life and longevity  
 And a day that is good, this *Eke* day.  
 Give us what to eat and drink;  
 Give us children, males and females  
 May my son *Okafu* bear a male child, may he also  
     earn the money with  
 which to support life  
 May his family venerate him as he venerates me

Both those that speak good of me  
 And those that speak evil of me-  
 As one is planning for others  
 So *Chukwu* is planning for him.  
 Anyone who says that my child *Okafo* will not  
     have a child-  
 May his own child not have one too  
 Anyone who says who wishes my homestead  
     to be overgrown with weeds,  
 May his own be overtaken with mushrooms.  
 Anyone who comes to kill me, may he kill himself  
 It is the one chasing a hen that has to fall  
 If anyone has come to wrong me when I have done  
     nothing to him, may it not be good with him  
 Anyone who says I should die, may the fellow  
 Be the first to go to roost with the hen  
 May the kite perch, may the eagle perch and  
     which ever that says no to the other...

#### 4.vi

*Chukwu-okike*, the Sun and Mighty  
 Creator of the light of this day  
 We call upon you today,  
 Give us life

#### 4.vii

a My Spirit, protect my life  
 Keep showing me the way to progress  
 Keep my children alive  
 Bless my family  
 Keep warding evil away from me  
 Do not let witches to visit me  
 Or come to touch my children

b. Our *Chi*, our protector  
 We are asking you to help us  
     this year  
 The woman is looking for a rascal of a baby  
 Please accept kolanut and eat  
 We are begging you.

## 4.viii

*Chukwu* who lives above, come and take kola  
*Chi Abiamala* come and chew kolanut  
 Land of our place, come and chew kolanut  
 Multiple spirits in the land, come and chew kola  
*Idemmili* the queen, come and chew kola  
*Aho* -child with the bushy head, come and chew kola  
 Our departed fathers, come and chew kolanut  
 Our departed mothers, come and chew kolanut  
 All those with whom we eat and drink together,  
     come and chew kolanut.

## 4.ix

*Agbala* the morning sun  
     come and pick the good thing of the morning;  
 Night, put away the remaining food from the night  
 And come and take your own.  
*Chukwu-okike*, the man with a vast eye  
 who is at the place above looking at all the world-  
 You are the head that is dragging the ear along  
 We are calling on you  
 We your innocent children who know only to pour water  
     onto our bellies whilst bathing-  
*Ajaana* Mother of fertility  
 That impregnated a man in the broad afternoon  
 We give you what we have.  
*Igwe*, no one has yet touched it with a broom  
 But it keeps on being clean and shining-  
 Wash our face with the dew of your blessing  
*Ogwugwu*, *Ngene-oji*, and *Udo*  
 Let each one come and answer to our call.  
*Uzoma* born of *Ngodo*  
*Ngodo* who bore *Ome Okachie!!*  
 O you multiple and one spirits  
 O you uncountable spirits  
 As many as you are, all of you who are invisible spirits.  
 I am standing beside a salt river  
     bathing with soap;  
 Do not let soap to get into my eyes  
 anyone who gives a child a rodent to carry  
 Should give him the water with which to wash his hands;  
 the master of the household does not ask his child to

go and get fire and go to invoke rain at his back  
 Countless and multiple spirits!  
 See to it that we who are your children  
 that we the children of men who are stoking the fire  
 On which you have set up a pot on the tripod-  
 Make us to understand  
 That vegetables are sweet to eat  
 Because the pot is on the fire cooking;  
 Two halves of flesh between the legs of a woman  
     touch and glide on one another  
 But none crushes the other.  
 It is true that the five fingers of a man are not equal  
 But when one finger takes on palm oil  
 It gets on to the others;  
 To say that the kolanut did not go round the townspeople  
 Is to say that there are no more fingernails to cut them  
     to pieces.  
 Let the seed planted in the soil crop for me  
 Let it also crop for my womenfolk  
 So that when I start to lack I may go to them for some.  
 He who climbs to plucks seeds from the oil bean tree  
 Salutes the earth with his feet foot this her blessing (on  
     jumping down).  
 He who take something belonging to a child  
     and raises his hand up  
     that he may no longer reach it-  
 Let such a one know that when his hand  
     starts to pain him  
 He lowers it down for the child.  
 O multiple and countless spirits!  
 Come and drink all of you.  
 Bear us in mind so that when we eat the kolanut  
 we might grow in mind, and not on the surface  
     which the eyes can see-  
 Multiple and countless spirits!

4 x

*Chineke* the father  
 May you bless us and this kolanut which we brought  
 This kola is what we have brought to thank you  
 You are the father  
 For it is you who created everything-                      5  
 Created the place above  
 And the earth below

Created us living beings  
 And told us to take this kolanut  
 That we should always use it to venerate you 10  
 anything we want to ask of you  
 That we should always use it to make our petitions.  
 That thing which we are asking of you is  
 Real life  
 Real health- 15  
 Then you give us real children that will always  
 gladden our soul-  
 And give us real money, money earned in a cool way  
 Our people say that child is wealth  
 That a man who does not have a child has nothing-  
 And so we are asking chukwu 20  
 As well as she who lives in the ground Obunana  
 Pleading with her as our fathers did before  
 For those who have spoken before had said that what  
 a child is given  
 Does not burn him  
 that is what the Igbo people are known by  
 Anyone you visit 25  
 First presents kolanut to you-  
 that is the first thing he will do for you  
 So that with this kolanut we are begging Odeniigwe  
 So that if things are calming down they should  
 calm down completely;  
 Our people say that the life of a fish is the life of water 30  
 And the life of water is that of the fish  
 May calamity not happen at Olu  
 May it not happen in Igboland.  
 Lets fear what we do not know  
 Let the kola help us to hold the spirits sacred 35  
 May none be lost  
 May the kite perch and may the eagle perch  
 And whichever says no to the other  
 May its wings break.  
 That is how the Igbo would speak proverbially- 40  
 This is then to say that we will not be at a loss  
 ...  
 It is good that we are asking for.  
 May good come and seek us out  
 The world that will claim our heads should stay away  
 But let the world that we will enjoy come to us 45  
 May anything that will be too much for us to handle, which  
 will shorten our life,  
 Maysuch a thing not visit us.

For it is something that will happen for...  
 When things calm down let it be for us 50  
 And for our children-  
 Let it also calm down for our mothers-  
 that is what we are asking of you  
 Chineke the father;  
 We are also begging Obunaana, 55  
 Our ancestors Mbaeme, please eat kola,  
 Arinze,  
 you ancestors of Agulu people  
 Ancestors of Awka people  
 Please my great father Okafo take kolanut- 60  
 Take yours also, mother  
 Thanks, it is for your sake...  
 You tree, if you see me and start your trouble  
 May the wind bend your neck.  
 Please help this child that has just entered. 65  
 Let him gain from his endeavours;  
 If one tries to see that his father's heritage  
     does not get lost  
 His own will not be lost also.  
 What we are saying is that things should be good,  
 So what we are saying in this kolanut offering 70  
 Is may it be good for the farm  
 And may it be good for us also.  
 It will be good for us and  
 It will be good for him  
 And be for all our children 75  
 and your own children  
 And mine as well  
 So, may Chukwu bless us.

#### 4.xi

Chukwu creator of the world  
 Three things we ask of you  
 Life, life, life, life-  
 If you give us life you give us the money  
     with which to live life 5  
 If you give us money you also give us people  
     with whom we can live-  
 The rest let us go to the market and buy.  
 Mediate for us our battle with life;  
 May life not throw us down and may we not  
     throw him- 10

If things get bad let it calm down again  
 If anarchy erupts let it not lead to our deaths  
 And if it starts to calm down let it not take us with it.  
 We will not go to the home of famine to ask for our debts  
 Let famine himself not come to us for any.  
 But if she tries at all to come  
 show her the way by the backyard. 15  
 May he who is visiting another not visit him to death  
 And if he is going let him not develop the humps.

#### 4.xii

Ahaa!  
*Chukwu...*  
 Ana, do eat kola  
 Our market land Amanuke eat kola  
 the thing is let the kite perch and let  
     the eagle perch 5  
 Whichever says no to the other  
 May its wing break.  
 It is also said that he who is seeking for his own  
     does not get lost  
 When a beautiful thing is seen in the farm  
 We start to praise Ufejioku  
 It is said that it is the one who is chasing a hen  
     that has the fall 10  
     and the hen will keep throwing her ofo afar;  
 It is also said if anarchy falls may it not destroy us  
 And when things start to calm down  
     may it not drag us along.  
 It is said that what one owns is not greater than him  
 I say Chukwu eat kolanut 15  
 I say Eke chew kolanut  
 Oye chew kolanut  
 Nkwo chew kolanut  
 Afo chew kolanut  
 Isioye Aghadiuno come and chew kolanut 20  
 As it is said may comotion find its way outside  
 So that he that calms the home may come in  
 Let us see it with our eyes but may it not drag us  
     with it  
 If it is happening in front we are behind  
 If it is happening behind us we are in front  
 For we do not know how things stand to breathe 25  
 We will all live to see the light of a new day

For we shall all live to see the new light of day  
 Don't you see those motorists moving about  
 May their motor cars not collide with that of another  
 And let others not collide with his.           30  
 Give them good money-  
 Cool money honestly earned  
 May money that is associated with evil and trouble  
     catch up with the one away from his home forever-  
 I say may good happen to us.  
 May we all live                                   35  
 Iyaa!

#### 4.xiii

Light eat kola  
 Light eat kola  
 Light eat kola  
 Today that is eke eat kola  
 Today that is eke eat kola                   5  
 When you finish you give to Oye  
 When Oye finishes he gives to Afo  
 When Afo finishes he gives to Nkwo  
 In four days and four markets  
 We shall have good things.                   10  
 We shall have relatives and fellow living beings  
 Have children  
 Have wealth and properties  
 Have father...                               15  
 Those that live in the land have kola and eat  
 It is life that we are requesting  
 May a man not lose his life  
 May woman not die  
 Anyone who says that as we are alive now  
     is not pleasing to him,                   20  
 That fellow, let it land on his head.  
 It is not me who killed the fellow,  
 It is Chukwu that killed him.  
 Anyone who says that he is not happy to  
 see his fellows,                           25  
     That person -  
 will he live alone?  
 -Is he a human being at all?  
 Is he a goat or a fowl?  
 Is he a human being at all?               30  
 Uzondingo, may you come and partake of the kolanut.

## 4.xiv

Light

Light!

Light!

Light!

*Chukwu* who created the world and adorned it 5

Let each one keep to his own

Anyone who says that what is good  
should not favour us also

Let such a one -after cooking, not put salt to the food.

Any one who says that our own shares will not get us

Let such a one, when he gets his own, throw it  
into the bush. 10

We also entreat the beasts of the sky to get what to eat

And let the beast of the earth also get theirs;

Whichever says no to the other  
may his world close up upon him.

May the kite perch and may the eagle perch 15

Whichever says no to the other  
may its wings break.

The tree that sees us and starts to shake, let

such a tree fall from its base, for  
if it breaks from its branch

next time it starts to grow again. 20

We saw a flood racing down the hills

And did not know what was pursuing it.

We are asking *chukwu* to come and turn

the load pad on our heads for us

Because it has been long he left us

in the position of headship.

Let what is good also come and stay in our place

so that our face can shine with laughter. 25

We were there when anarchy fell and it did not kill us

When it starts to calm down may it also

not lead us to our deaths.

It is life and longevity that we are asking for;

To bear male children 30

And to bear female children.

To have wealth

And to have property, we also ask of you; for

It is when a child seniors one

that the one also seniors another 35

-for that is the life everlasting that we are talking of.

May whoever that does not have, have;

For we are saying that if we lack, may the person  
 to give us  
 Not be lacking also  
 But we ask him to keep giving to us 40  
 For we shall also give to our fellows  
 Because palm oil never fails to dry up  
 in the claypot in which it is mixed.  
 We say please, if you bring us something to enjoy,  
 you also bring us job to do; 45  
 When we get, let us eat; and when we get we also keep,  
 for one does not become a wealthy person  
 by earning and throwing away.  
 We will not be like the one who picks palmnuts  
 and cracks them all at once to chew.  
 Do not make us miserable fellows  
 -The goat is alive, and yet the horns  
 on his head are dead 50  
 Whatever anyone is doing, may he know it  
 Whatever anybody knows, let such also know him.  
 What one does not know, let it also not know him;  
 I say may the breadfruit fall for me  
 and fall for my fellow housewife. 55  
 Friends, it is good health, general good  
 and welfare that I am wishing you all.  
 Long life and wealth- but the most important,  
 is good health;  
 for it is from the head of a living being  
 that we can catch a lice.  
 It is life that breaks kolanut. 60  
 So, whatever we plan to do that is good  
 to your mind, make it to happen smoothly.  
 We say that it is not when we kill, we carry  
 on our shoulders and on our heads,  
 Let me also have my share of children. 65  
 Let those who go to school try their best; whatever  
 anyone is doing, indeed, let him survive from there.  
 No one will complain that the tendrils of his yam tuber  
 has been bitten off by another.  
 Anyone who sweeps and gathers rubbish,  
 let him pack it also; if he does not finish packing in one go  
 let him repeat it several times. 70  
 Whatever anyone does  
 let him carry with his own head.  
 Whatever anyone knows let it also know him.  
 The one that he does not know  
 should seek its path in another direction.

We shall not be the ones to be used  
 in making the medicine for curing  
 the madness in the land. 75  
 Even the children we are asking them to give to us,  
 is it not after their fathers and mothers  
 have finished raising them up  
 and giving them their trainings, the  
 children then start taking care of the parents.  
 We ask you to give us a child  
 for a child induces the good things  
 that happen in a soup-pot. 80  
 Do not give us children  
 Because children set the house on fire;  
 Any child that knows that he is a real child,  
 let him come to us,  
 for the important thing  
 is not that we have children that have filled up  
 the house 85  
 And everyday they will call you to the police station  
 To come and bail one;  
 And so, it is both a speech and a proverb.  
 To grab from me that it may become yours,  
 will not happen;  
 Anyone whose life they are trying to take away 90  
 Let him swallow it.  
 Father, we are begging you -  
 Let us not live the life of a cassava stick.  
 It is the practice that if you give a young man  
 a car which he will be driving, 95  
 Or to a woman  
 a sewing machine she will be using,  
 You also give him the oil with which to lubricate it.  
 If you do not give him, the thing gets rusty.  
 That is, if you give us life, you give us good health,  
 and you also give us the thing with which  
 to lubricate life. 100  
 So father, we are begging you  
 and saying: break this kolanut for us with your  
 kindness and blessing  
 So that when we eat it it will be good in our body  
 for the sake of Jesus christ our lord.  
 Amen.

## 4.xv

a. Owner of the world,  
 Creator of the sky and the world  
 Chukwu who is capable of doing all things  
 Anyaanwu Chukwu-okike-  
 Father, if a hen is brought to this house  
 I am the one who is going to perform  
     the ritual offering with it;  
 If a goat is brought to this house I also offer it-  
 If kolanut is brought here I break the kolanut-  
 Our lord my *Chineke* the turn is mine,  
 the turn is mine to die, the turn is mine.. .

b. Anyaanwu Chukwu-okike-  
 Agbala Chukwu-okike-  
 Greatest of the greats.  
 Creator of the sky and the earth  
     and all that is in it;  
 Father to you we do homage,  
 Owner of the world.

c. *Agbala Chukwu-okike*  
 Come and chew kolanut  
 Creator of the world and all that is in it  
 Our master it is to you that I give my respects;  
 Our ancestors come and chew kolanut  
 Those that are living come and chew kolanut also

## 4.xvi.

My *chi*  
 Chi of the eagle that painted the eagle's face  
     with the powder of white clay  
 If one's *chi* is not in conspiracy with others  
     death does not take him  
 Give me my life and that of the children-  
 If you surely protect my life and that of the children  
 When the year turns round again, I will offer you a hen

## 4.xvii

My *chi*  
 I am only a visitor to this place  
 I have come with a clean heart  
 I say that this place where I have come,  
 I have come with a pure heart

I do not know what is in the land of other people  
 I do not know what is in this land  
 Whatever anyone knows, let it know him also.

#### 4.xviii

Chukwu creator of man, accept that  
     which is white and good  
 Spirits in our land, accept that which is white and good  
 Spirits in our land, Okafo the son of my friend  
     has come to take the hand of my daughter  
     Nwakego in marriage  
 Spirits in the land, you have seen that the ofo  
     does not miss ton hit the earth ground

#### 5.i

#### *Ikpo mkpu (Incantations)*

You who kills and brings  
 Pease listen to my voice  
 Listen to my song  
 Okagba woman of ivory, Nwocha  
 The elephant horn is calling you beautiful lady     5  
 So that you can help me

You who kills and brings  
 Please bring for us what we shall eat  
 Beautiful woman  
 Nwocha-     10  
 You who live in the water for whom  
     the frogs are singing  
 Alusi that owns a river  
 Listen to my horn, listen to my voice  
 Okagba woman of ivory  
 So that you might help me:     15  
 The elephant horn is calling you beautiful lady  
 So that you might hear-

You who kills and brings  
 I sing that you would hear my voice  
 Okagba woman of ivory     20  
 So that you might help me

You who kills and brings  
 Please listen to my voice  
 Listen to my horn  
 Okagba woman of ivory 25  
 So that you might help me  
 You who live in the water  
     for whom the frogs are singing  
 Warrior masquerade  
 Heath-fire that eats the palm leaves  
 Strong oil-bean tree 30  
 When war plans are being drawn  
     and the warrior is dropped out  
     He starts commotion  
 Matter that is for brave men  
 King of Terror  
 Nwocha 35  
 Listen to my voice and listen to my horn  
 So that you might help me.  
 ...  
 Alusi Okagba here is kola  
 You have heard the elephant horn  
     calling you; 40  
 The person offering you this kolanut  
 Is Ezeadirika Ezenwocha-  
 I mean the one who carries out your messege -  
 He it is that is calling you so  
 That you may accept this kolanut 45  
 So that you will protect me and protect the fellow  
     who has brought this kolanut  
 As soldier ants protected the the cocoyams  
     in the ground-  
 For soldier ants protected the cocoyams  
 They did not eat them 50  
 Till the owner came and harvested them  
 And they did not ask for any reward  
 Protect us like that  
 All of us who are here assembled  
 Protect us like that 55  
 Protect Olu people  
 And protect Igbo people;  
 Protect black people  
 Protect white people also  
 Because all people are one. 60  
 People from Olu come to Igboland to work  
     and Igbo people go to Olu to work too

White people also work in the land  
     of black people  
 And black people also work  
     in the land of white people  
 Because all people are the same.  
 So, protect us black people and protect  
     white people also 65  
 Because we all are one  
 This is that thing we say "May the kite perch  
     and may the eagle perch and  
 Whichever says no to the other  
     may his wings break"  
 We are begging you.  
 If an Igbo man goes to the land of the white man,  
     may it be good for him 70  
 And if white people also come to our land  
 May it also be good for them  
 Let the visitor not visit his host to death  
 And when he is going  
 May he not develop a hunch-back 75  
 The leg with which a visitor came  
 May he also go home with same, and let life  
     be the first consideration  
 Okagba, you have my greetings:  
 I greet the power that does things for you  
 And greet the ones you do things for; 80  
 I greet your cotton tree  
 I greet your sacred Ngwu  
 I greet all your children who are abroad  
     in the land of the white man and  
 I greet your multiple and countless spirits.  
 Accept kolanut 85  
 Accept kolanut that you may divide  
 For it is the owner that divides  
 Even if he has not washed his hands  
     for the morning cleansing  
 Accept the kolanut and share out  
 Share out to Olu people 90  
 Share out to Igbo people  
 Share out to the spirits that live at Olu  
 Share out to those that live in the land of the Igbo  
 Share out to the land of Olu  
 Share out to the land of the Igbo  
 Carry it and give to Chukwu-okike 95  
 Who is capable of doing all things  
 Because when one is about to throw a javelin

he first raises it up to show to the sky  
 When one wants to dance  
     how can he forsake the land that is carrying him  
     to go and do it suspended in space?  
 One does not dance where his feet cannot stand on.  
 The plane that flies in the sky  
     must surely come down afterwards.

I salute you again 100  
 Here is kolanut  
 I am merely your servant -  
 I am not you who is Nwocha herself  
 See the kola and divide

After saying all the greetings  
     some who still remain unmentioned  
     will begin to be annoyed 105  
 If there are those still not mentioned  
     it keeps hurting them in the mind  
 Those therefore not mentioned before, they are  
     the ones about to be called now  
 Orimili n'Ezigbo na aja no n'Omambala  
 Come and take white chalk and kola 110  
 Okagba beautiful woman, Nwocha  
 Great Ngwu of two years standing  
 Strong oil bean tree;  
     Idemogu child of *Chukwu-okike*  
 Come and take white chalk and kola 115  
 Great elder that you might help me  
 For I am merely serving Okagba Nwocha  
 My Okagba Nwocha  
 Ofo Nze -a strong dry wand  
 Take white chalk and kola 120  
 That you might help me  
 May ofo happen as it was used in the invocation  
 I say let there be male children  
 And let there be female ones too  
 Anyone who does evil let him receive evil for it 125  
 And anyone who does good let him receive good for it  
 Because what a man works for is what he receives;  
 What a man eats is what he worked for  
 Where a man works let him eat there  
 And where a man eats let him also work there; 130  
 I salute the general public assembled here  
 Including those of them that are distinguished elders  
     and those that are mere youths  
 And those that are akpa, and those that are itim 135

My fellows, let it remain like this meanwhile  
 Let me greet okagba Nwocha once more  
     on the ivory horns.  
 Okagba is the one I am greeting on thias ivory horns  
 (The horn sounds again)

*Osebuluuwa Chukwu* is too mighty 140  
 Doer of everything and all things  
 He who does deep things and does them again  
 The *Chi* of the eagle that dabbed the eagle's face  
     with white chalk

Listen to my horn  
 King of the Sky that you might help me 145  
 For I am merely serving Okagba Nwocha,  
 The Alusi that possesses a river.

Mamiwota spirit that owns the python  
     that makes wealth  
 Spirit that owns the python that  
     brings wealth 150

Slow and majestic walker  
 Great and magnificent masquerade  
 My knees are on the ground  
     and my face is bowing low  
 I am merely serving you  
 I will not tell lies 155

Nwocha I say that you should go to Oluand extract  
     your debts from your debtors  
 Go to Igbo also and tell your debtors to pay  
 Because anyone seeking for his own never dies  
 Give me my own, give me my own,  
 Is it not the the cause of all this noise and fury? 160

Everyone wants to have his own personal property  
 So that, may he who is looking for his own not die  
 Whether at Olu or at Igboland;  
 He who worships the king, also has his turn to be king  
 After one has answered Mr somebody,  
 Let somebody 165  
 Also answer his own mister  
 I am kneeling and bowing before you  
 I salute you again.

Accept kolanut and share out  
     to the multiple and ten spirits

Because you are the owner- 170  
 White chalk belongs to you-  
 Because it is he who owns that shares out to others  
 Even if he has not yet washed his hands  
     for the morning

I am merely your messenger serving you  
 Fellows, the *ofo* has finished doing  
     what it has been brought to do for this morning. 175

You who kills and brings  
 Please accept white chalk accept kola  
 Lady of beauty  
 Because our *ofo* invocation is now completed  
 The bell has sounded its last 180  
 Lady of beauty  
 Nwocha  
 The bell...

You who kills and brings  
 Please accept white chalk accept kola 185  
 Lady of beauty  
 Nwocha

Because our *ofo* is now completed  
 Lady of Beauty  
 Nwocha 190  
 The bell is calling us to a close

O you who walks the skies  
 Please do not throw away our *ofo*  
 To be lost in vain  
 Do not throw away our *ofo* to be wasted in vain 195

*Osebuluuwa Chukwu* is too mighty  
 Doer of everything and all things  
 He who does deep things and does them again  
 The Chi of the eagle that dabbed the eagle's face  
     with white chalk

*Chukwu* who created all the world 200  
 Accept white-chalk accept kolanut  
 King of the sky

So that you might help me  
 King of the sky above please do not let my *ofo*  
 To be wasted in vain 205

(The bell rings)

It is me Ezedirika Ezenwocha calling  
 If I am trying to kill any spirit let that spirit kill me  
 If I try to kill anyone let that person kill me  
 What I tell people not to do to others, may it  
     not be done to me

This sound that is being beaten on the wooden gong  
     is coming from the town of Oraukwu 210

The Alusi that we are going to greet  
     is this one called Nwocha at Oraukwu

Nwocha that is living in Oraukwu

A great alusi that is in Oraukwu

Is what we are about to salute on this wooden gong  
 On this day, on the morning of this very day 215

That is Eke, the first son among the days;

Alright, you *alusi* Okagba that is Nwocha

Give ear and listen to this wooden gong

For you are the one being called on this gong:

You who kills and brings 220

Please listen to my gong listen to my gong

You who walks the skies beautiful woman

Famous one that resounded in the whole of Igboland  
     with a beauty yet unsurpassed

*Okagba Nwocha*

Listen to my gong listen to the gong 225

*Okagba* woman of ivory

That you might do for me what I have asked you

Greetings is what I am giving you  
 on the wooden gong

And in the process I am begging you to please listen 230

Okagba the distinguished lady

*Ofo* is what I am going to give to this child,

And then offer petitions with my *ofo* on his behalf:

This child is called *Ogonna*- It is because of him

    that I am calling on you on the wooden gong

So that you will answer me on this wooden gong 235

So that you will listen to the petition

    that I am offering on his behalf;

That you may come before him and come behind him

So that if evil is in front, he would be behind

    and if it is behind him, he would be in front;

If it is on his right hand, let him be on the left 240

And if it is on his left, let him be on the right

Whether rain is falling or the sun is shining;

In the cold or in the heat;  
 Whether in darkness or moonlight,  
 In the dry season or in the rainy season 245  
 Do not let him meet calamity if he is going somewhere  
     or if he is treading on some ground,  
     The feet with which he goes out  
     let him go home with them also  
*Nwocha* do go ahead of him and stay last at his back;  
 Because of this *ofò* and this very thing I am begging you  
     is why I am giving you praises on this wooden gong 250  
 So that you may listen to this gong  
 And do for me what I am begging you concerning  
     this child *Ogonna*

(Wooden gong sounds again)

*Okagba*, this sound is that you may listen and hear-  
 Listen to the gong and hearken  
*Okagba* beautiful woman 255  
 That you might do what you are being asked...

## 5.ii Stories told in song

Little bird standing by the riverside:  
 Answer to my greetings... *Ekele oma*  
 Chorus to my *oma...oma* in peace  
 Chorus to the peace...Peace greater than the flute  
 Answer to the flute ...rugged flute  
 Answer to the *ngoro...Ngoro uka*  
 Answer to the matter...Talk has started  
 Answer to the talk...talk on and never stop  
 Answer to *gaba...keep going to Isu*  
 Answer to *Isu...Isu* by the water water  
 Answer to water...water of the earth  
 Give me the earth...*Chukwu's* earth  
 Give me *Chukwu...Chukwu* of life  
 Give me life...life has come

## 5.iii

The tortoise began to climb...*Ajambene*  
 Tortoise began to climb...*Ajambene*  
 Climb climb climb...*Ajambene*  
 And came to one place...*Ajambene*  
 And took one piece of fish...*Ajambene*

And threw into his bag...*Ajambene*  
 And it fell from the bag...*Ajambene*  
 And fell into the river...*Ajambene*  
 Then tortoise came down...*Ajambene*  
 And jumped into the river...*Ajambene*  
 And started looking for his palmtree...*Ajambene*  
 And saw a certain fish...*Ajambene*  
 And asked it did you eat my palmtree...*Ajambene*  
 It said that it did not eat any nut...*Ajambene*  
 Tortoise started to go...*Ajambene*  
 Swam swam swam...*Ajambene*  
 And saw another fish...*Ajambene*  
 And asked him did you eat a palmtree... *Ajambene*  
 He said he did not eat anything like that...*Ajambene*  
 Tortoise then threw a stone...*Ajambene*  
 And it went and hit "Later on you will agree"...*Ajambene*  
 Got Tortoise on the chest...*Ajambene*  
 Tortoise started to go...*Ajambene*  
 And got home to the house of *Chukwu*...*Ajambene*  
 He knocked *kpam kpam kpam kpam*...*Ajambene*  
 And knocked *kpam kpam kpam kpam*...*Ajambene*  
 And *Chukwu* asked him saying...*Ajambene*  
 Who knocked on the door like that...*Ajambene*  
 May your hand get stuck on the door...*Ajambene*  
 And Tortoise said...*Ajambene*  
 Who spoke this thing...*Ajambene*  
 Let your speech stick to your mouth...*Ajambene*  
 This little piece of talk...*Ajambene*  
 Was why Tortoise was killed...*Ajambene*  
 When one goes on revenging...*Ajambene*  
 The revenge will stick get stuck in his mouth...*Ajambene*

## 6.i

*Imaios:* O my *chi*  
*mh u*  
 O my *chi*  
*mh u*  
 Do you see this very well?  
*mh u*  
 You deep well, you are the one seizing  
 Emekwayis's *Chi* goat?  
 Emekwayi, lady with so much hair  
 on her body  
 That it caused a fight among the youths,

sky child.

*Emekwayi:* Emalios, Emalios you are the one  
 I am calling  
 I say go and pick up the goat  
 And if you don't I'll go and call the youths.

*Imalios:* O my *chi*  
*mhu*  
 O my *chi*  
*mhu*  
 Do you see this very well?  
 You well, you are the one seizing Emekwayi's  
*chi* goat, are you not?  
 Emekwayi, the one with so much hair  
 on her body  
 That it caused a fight among the youths,  
 sky child.

## 6.ii

Gone in peace  
 O gone in peace  
 He has gone where he came from  
 O Chukwu receive his spirit  
 He has gone where he came from  
 O *Chukwu* receive his spirit

## 6.iii (The words left in Igbo here are either obscure names or untranslatable terms)

He who stays in the sky who is *Obasi*-in-the-sky  
 My Monika sends her greetings  
 The daughter of my Moses please remember my *chi*  
*Igwigiri okpotanyikoro* (untranslatable)  
 My craftsman also sends his greetings  
*Ezomooka* that does not recognize his relations  
 My *Ezomooka* also sends his greetings  
*Okeru Ochiora* the creative one that caused  
 dry season to fall  
 Created *Cho cho* that engaged his grandfather in a fight  
 He it is that created the whole of Igboland  
 Created the Igbo language (dialects) one by one  
 Language is Igbo culture which *Chi* gave

to the Igbo people in the begining  
 Because language is the culture which *Chi* gave  
 to the Igbo people in the begining

## 6.iv

Our *chi* create for us our share of a child  
 O *chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 Our *chi* create for us our share of a child  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 Our *chi* create for us our share of a child-  
 Whoever does not have a child  
 can he be happy  
 Our *chi* give us our share of a child  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed

Father you are a good one  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 You who created the world give us  
 our share of a child  
 O please, my father  
 Our *chi* please do for the real good-  
 For whoever does not have a child can he be happy?  
 King give us a real child , please  
 Do not leave us empty handed

Our *chi* create for us our share of a child  
 Our *chi* please do not leave us empty handed  
 Our *chi* create for us a great child  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 Our *chi* create for us our share of a child-  
 For whoever does not have a child is he happy?  
 Our *chi* create for us our share of a child  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed.

Our *chi* you are a really good father  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed  
 You who stays in the sky solving problems  
 O please my father  
 Our *chi* just do and give us a child-  
 For whoever does not have a child  
 can he be happy?  
 Please give us a really good child  
 Our *chi* do not leave us empty handed

## 6.v

Who is that that is completely satisfied  
 with the world  
*Chi* is not the same for everyone  
 Who is that so taunting the world my sister  
 Who is that taunting others  
*Chi* is never the same for everyone  
 Who is that provoking others my sister  
 When I could not bear a child  
 My enemy kept taunting me  
 That I do not have money  
 And that I could not bear a child  
 And so I should keep denying  
 of having affairs with men  
 When I am in the world  
 my enemy keeps taunting me  
 That I do not have money  
 And that I could not bear a child  
 And so that I should continue denying  
 having dealings with men  
 My enemy kept taunting me but now my *chi*  
 has given me a child to cuddle  
 Saying that I should sit down at home  
 and do no work  
 And that I should carry the wealth  
 he has given me  
 Can my enemy still taunt me  
 for my *Chi* has  
 given me a child to carry and cuddle  
 Saying that I should sit down at home  
 and do not go to work  
 And that I should carry the wealth  
*Chi* has given me

## 6.vi

Cockroach cockroach what happened  
 to the oil in the calabash  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 Cockroach cockroach what happened  
 to the oil in the calabash  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If cockroach starts to make trouble

The hen will carry it  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If hen starts to make trouble  
 The kite will carry it  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If kite starts to make trouble  
 A master hunter will carry it  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If master hunter starts to make trouble  
 He falls by the roadside  
*kwa mbe*  
 If the road starts to make trouble  
     a little bush will cover it  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If bush starts to make trouble  
 It will be set on fire  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If fire starts to make trouble  
 Water will put it out  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If water starts to make trouble  
 Land will suck it to dryness  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If land starts to make trouble  
 The sky will fall on it  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If sky starts to make trouble *Chukwu* will burst it  
 -*kwa mbe*  
 If *Chukwu* starts to make trouble  
 Can anything be done to him?  
 Noooo!

## 6.vii

Oooooojim jim  
 Oji  
 Ojim jim  
 Oji  
 Mourn a brave man and mourn a whole nation  
 Oji  
 The children of *Chukwu* king of the brave  
 Oji  
 The day has darkened like rain  
 Oji  
 Is it water or is it not?

Oji  
 Is it sun or is it not  
 Oji  
 We met them in the battlefront  
 Oji  
 And caught them one by one  
 Oji  
 Brave warrior *kwenu*  
 -Haa  
*Kwenu*  
 -Haa

b. Battle battle battle  
 Who killed my mother  
 -Battle battle  
 Who will come before my to the battle  
 Battle battle  
 I go with the *ogu* to battle  
 Battle battle  
 I go with *ofo* to battle  
 Battle battle  
*Chukwu* comes first and he comes last too  
 Battle battle

### 6.viii

Titled *eze* plumed with the eagle feather  
 at the open square  
 Eeee, titled one plumed with the eagle feather  
 Titled one plumed with the eagle feather  
 in the open  
 Eeee titled one plumed with the eagle feather  
 He did as he said  
 Titled one plumed with eagle feather  
 in the open  
 Eeee titled one plumed with the eagle feather  
 in the open the gift of *Chi*  
 Titled one plumed with the eagle feather  
 in the open  
 Eeee Titled one plumed with the eagle feather  
 in the open

b. O titled *ozo*  
 Aaa eee  
 O titled *ozo*

Aaa eee  
 Distinguished one who has taken a title  
 You took a title and took for us as well  
 Distinguished one who has taken a title  
 Killer of cows who from childhood became  
     a man of high status  
 O Son of a king  
 Aaa eee

c. Titled *ozo* king  
 Who is he that walks in the sky  
 Titled *ozo*  
 Titled *ozo*  
 Who is that that is walking in the sky  
 We heard that you killed a cow in a distant country  
 Who is that that walks the sky  
 And so we decided to come and pay you a visit  
 Who is that that walks the sky

d. Ram one my child  
 jekwe nje  
 Ram one my child  
 jekwe nje  
 Father gave me the eagle  
 jekwe nje  
*Chukwu* gave me the eagle  
 jekwe nje  
*Chukwu* crowned me king  
 jekwe nje

e. Revered and respected agbalanze of our land  
 We greet you all -  
*egwu ekwgh ekwe ozo*  
 When a child acts vigorously the  
     eagle feather whitens on his brow  
 -dance of the *ozo* men  
 If one keeps the eagle feather in the open space  
 the wind will come and carry it  
 Dance of the titled ones.

6.(vix) a

Sky mother did tell me  
 Sky father did tell me  
 Said I should not go to the ritual pot

For something will happen in four days  
*Oo ya o*  
*Oo ya o*  
 The maiden's feet has entered the forest  
 And something has happened in four days  
*Oo ya o*  
*Oo ya o*

**6.(vix) b**

I went to Oyididiye's  
 And it was said that her husband has left her and  
     departed to the land of spirits  
 I let out a cry of sadness  
 And asked them so one can depart to the place beyond  
     after staying in the world?  
 I let out a cry of woe  
 And asked so it is possible to depart to the land beyond  
 I sympathize with the children of the world  
 Indeed I am filled with sadness for the children  
     of the world  
 Multitude of Umuloji people please accept my greetings  
 And is it not you too who has taken the ichi title  
     that the horn is calling...?

**Text 7(.i)a.**

Little child do not cry, do not cry  
*Zemilize*  
 Our mother told us not to blow the fire  
*Zemilize*  
 But we have blown the fire  
*Zemilize*  
 Our mother told us not to let the smoke escape  
*Zemilize*  
 But we allowed smoke to escape  
*Zemilize*  
 Our father told us not to sneeze  
*Zemilize*  
 But we sneezed  
*Zemilize*  
 Our father told us not to make *pim* (a noise)  
*Zemilize*  
 But we did *pim*  
*Zemilize*

Our father told us not to leave the house  
*Zemilize*  
 But we left the house  
*Zemilize*  
 Thieves then came and stole us away  
*Zemilize*  
 As the kite carries away the chickens  
*Zemilize*  
 The world then pecked us away  
*Zemilize*  
 as birds peck away grains of corn  
*Zemilize*  
*Chi* (Night) then befell us  
*Zemilize*  
 In the middle of the white-light of the afternoon  
*Zemilize*

b. My father's wife, my father's wife  
 Bought *udara* in the market  
 -*nda*  
 Saliva then dropped in my soul  
 My eyes kept fixed to the *udara*  
 -*nda*  
 But one does not eat *udara* with the eyes  
 -*nda*

My father's wife , my father's wife  
 took the *udara* and sucked it all  
 -*nda*  
 I then called on my *chi* and my *aka*  
 -*nda*  
 That he may plant an *udara* tree for me  
 -*nda*  
 My *udara* then started to grow  
 -*nda*  
 That one who has no mother might suck *udara*  
 -*nda*  
 That the child who has no hairs might suck *udara* -*nda*

## 7.ii Lullabies

a. Axe split the breadfruit  
 Breadfruit fell down and killed *Njeghilona*  
 E-e, Nweke *Njeghilona*

What happened to the goat  
 Death killed the goat  
 The goat drank the water  
 Water put out the fire  
 The fire burnt the axe into two t  
 Axe split the breadfruit  
 The breadfruit fell and killed Nweke *Njehgilion*  
 E-e Nweke *Njehgilion*.

What made death?  
*Chukwu* made death  
 Death killed the goat  
 Goat drank the water  
 Water put out the fire  
 The fire burnt the axe in two  
 The axe split the breadfruit tree  
 Breadfruit fell and killed Nweke *Njehgilion*  
 E-e Nweke *Njehgilion*.

b. My brother  
*Nda*  
 My sister  
*Nda*  
 Your trap has caught  
*Nda*  
 What did it catch  
*Nda*  
 It caught a long mouthed rat  
*Nda*  
 Go carry and eat alone  
*Nda*  
 For I do not want to eat  
*Nda*  
 My *chi*, my *chi*  
*Nda*  
 Go carry and eat  
*Nda*  
 For I do not want to eat  
*Nda*.

c. *Igodo* masquerade song

We have come to *Igodo*  
 Children Great *odo* of *Ngwu*  
 Touch your feet on the ground  
 By the way who is that that is saying it?

By the way who is that singing it?  
 It is the child of the great *odo*  
*Odo* of *nkwo* is saying it *Odo* on *nkwo* is singing it  
 By the way what is it that is used to do it  
 Cow and pig's flesh

*Ozo*, mighty *ozo*  
*Ozo* the child of the village group of *ngwu*  
 Killer of the famed ram  
 The hair of the ram is his fame  
 The horns of the ram are his strength  
 Killer of the ram of fame  
 By the way what is it that is used to do this  
 Where is your horn from *ozala*  
 Where have you kept your cow's head  
 Where have you kept your pig's head  
 Let your lips touch the flute  
 The *odo nkwo* is possessing you  
 Four heads are possessing you  
 The great *odo* of *ngwu* is possessing you  
 Touch your lips on the flute

Our earth accept *ofò*  
 Accept *ofò* for the petition  
 Our hills accept the *ofò*  
 Accept the *ofò* for the invocation  
*Ofo* is what we do it with  
 He who holds the *ofò* never gets lost on the way  
 He who has the *ofò* has the real thing  
 He who holds the *ofò* holds the real thing  
 The sun is looking at it  
 Sky and Earth are looking on too

My chorus singers  
 Touch your hands on the *ogene*  
 Touch your feet on the ground  
 Where are the chorus singers my followers?  
 Sing for me the *igodo*  
 Who is it that says it  
 I myself am saying it  
 I child of the great *odo* of *ngwu* is saying it  
 I the child of the source of *odo* of *nkwo*  
 I am the *uturu* bird that sings  
 I am the mouth greater than the flute  
 My mouth is the mouth of the *ogene*  
 My followers keep singing

My fighters keep singing  
 Sing sing sing  
 Children of *odomagana*  
 Those with whom I sing  
 Those with whom I set out on the journey  
 We salute the owners of the place  
 The *ozo* titled elders of the nine villages  
 I am he who is saying it  
 I who am the mouth-piece of the people  
 I am the one saying it  
 I the child of *Odo* of *nkwo*  
 It is *odo* that is saying it  
*Odomagana* is the one saying it

Children of *odomagana*  
 We have started to enjoy the *igodo*  
 We have started to sing the *igodo* song  
 We have started to dance the *igodo*  
 Do not let the merriment elude you  
 Do not let your feet to strike the stone  
 He who has come on a visit must go home also  
 We do worship you  
 May your feet not strike a stone  
 May the hills keep leading you on  
 May our land keep leading you on  
 May our *odo* keep protecting you  
 Protecting you also as long as you hold  
 the *ofo* of worship

*Text 8.i Stories dreamed or imagined*

a. **HOW DEATH AND FIRE CAME INTO THE WORLD**

People of our land, this story I am about to tell you is about how death came into the world. You all know that death does not know who is a king and who is not; he does not know big or small, he does not know a short man or a cripple; Whether you are Okeke or Okeafa he does not know for when that particular day which he has allocated to you approaches, you still die. *Chukwu* has finished creating the world and adorned it; and then gave the good things of it to the children of the world that they may do what? That they may

start to enjoy and be happy. But one thing spoilt the world which *Chukwu* created -Death. This thing angered people so much, angered people so much, that they decided to go to the house of *Chukwu* to beg him for a favour, to know if there is a way he would make it possible for death to be wiped out of the world, so that death will be no more. How then will they set about this very journey? So it came to be that they sent out the dog to go on this very journey, because the dog is an animal that knows to run. It so happened that as they were discussing this among the humans, Frog overheard them and of course he hated them so much. And Frog said: "Aahhh, ei ei ei ei, is that what the human beings are now planning? That death will no longer be in the world, mhuu, in all this my hatred of them. So that they will continue to enjoy and enjoy and enjoy till they will be intoxicated by life, and I know too well that I hate them". Frog then set out on a journey to the abode of *Chukwu*. And so it came to be that that race is set between the frog and the dog -to go to the abode of *Chukwu* and persuade him that death should be abolished on the part of the dog, and on the part of the frog to persuade him that it should remain for he has really seen one thing that frightens human beings.

They then set out on this journey. The dog would run and run and run and overtake the frog, because the dog really knows how to run; but the frog would keep jumping kpom, kpokom kpom kpokom, as he goes on his own. But one thing spoilt the dog, and that is greed as far as excreta is concerned. When he goes and goes and goes, once he hears people calling him again "nwanki nwanki nwanki -gbua gbua gbua gbua, perhaps it is a woman whose child has defecated-she starts looking for the dog that will eat it. The dog will then retrace his way, looking for the person who called him and started eating excreta again. After eating, he sets out again on the journey. The frog just kept jumping and jumping. The dog will keep going, but as soon as he hears people calling him again "nwanki nwanki nwanki -gbua gbua gbua", he set out again and start to eat shit. This is what he did, after passing the frog, the frog would pass him, after passing the frog, the frog will sooner or later pass him again. Do you know that this state of affairs persisted till the frog first got to the

abode of *Chukwu* before the dog. On reaching there he told *Chukwu* that what he has come to tell him is for him to make it possible for death to continue to kill people; that truly the people in the world had sent him to come and tell him that death should be made to remain in the world. Then *Chukwu* said alright, that such was good. That the major thing is that he has heard what they had said, since human beings had said that what they wanted was death, that he was going to give them death. Frog then went. When the dog had finished eating excreta he ran and continued going to *Chukwu's* abode and when he got there, he also laid the petition of the people before *Chukwu* which is that to come and tell him what the people had decided, which is that they are now tired of death. That he created the world and made it so beautiful, but one thing spoiled it which is death -and that he has come to know if there is any way he can do to clear it off the face of the world. Ha! *Chukwu* told him that in fact the frog had come and told him that death is really what the people of the world really want, and that he does not change from a decision he has once taken and that the one which the frog brought has first gotten into his ears; That truly he has agreed that death should remain in the world for all times, ...instead the only mercy he can show is this: don't you see this fire burning here, he should take the fire down to the people of the world, he should also give them fire so that it might be the one thing he will be giving them since they have problems with it. The dog was sent on an errand and he went and brought death to the people instead just because of his greed; that they should remain in the world and live good lives, but that once it is time for anyone to die, he dies, and is mourned by his fellow men.

#### b. STORY OF HOW CHI KILLS AND SAVES

Fellow country men and women, the next story I am going to tell you all is about how *Chi* kills and saves. Once upon a time, in the land of animals that fly, *Chukwu* threw an invitation to them for them to visit him; he really called them for a feast. But it came to be that all these flying animals accepted the invitation and started

preparing very well. Tortoise heard it incidentally and said -hee, you people are going on such a thing and you did not as much as invite him along; supposing they got there who will be their spokesman, and that they know too well that he is good speaker. He went on to say that he is a very talented one on such matters, and that his chi had really given him leadership qualities, and that he is saying all these lest they got there and started fooling themselves, so that when the food for which they are invited is actually brought out at *Chukwu's* place, they would not know how they would be opening their mouths and eating. They will not know wether to start with *utazi* or to start with rice -in short, they will not know the one they would actually start with. And so, if they have a leader to take them to the place, that person will then have the power to tell them: haa, this is how to do this kind of thing, this how to do that kind of thing...say the kolanut petition, and thank *Chukwu* for all the things he has given them. All the flying creatures then said: "hee, Tortoise has done the greatest thing no one has ever done. That they agree totally with what he has said". They then said that they would like Tortoise to come along with them. Tortoise went, and told his wife Anim on getting home what these flying creatures had said -that he should accompany them to the abode of *Chukwu* where they have been invited for a feast, and that he was going to join them in squandering wealth. His wife Anim then said, alright, it is good. She then asked him and said: but how are you going to manage? Since the birds have asked him to join them, she wanted to know if Tortoise himself had wings of his own with which he could fly with them. Tortoise said that that was really true, and so beat his ogene again, called them together and told them this particular problem. When they assembled, he told these flying creatures that the reason he called them again and told them that why he called them again is to make it known to them that if they look carefully, they will find out that he is mere shells , and that he has no wings with which he could fly. They replied and said: Ee, if that is the problem, they would give him the feathers with which he could fly. Then they started to contribute feathers to him -the kite pulled out some feathers from his wing and gave to the Tortoise. The vulture pulled out some and gave to Tortoise and he plumed

them on his body. this was how they kept contributing until it was complete, which is the wings which the Tortoise would use on the journey. Then they set out, and when they came to a certain place, (because when they were about to get there they converged on the way. Tortoise then told them, is it this way they are going blindly about things that things would move, is necessary that every body takes a name by which he will be called. If you are called then you would know that you are the one being called upon to do this thing. That what he is actually saying is that each one of them should carefully pick a name by which he will be known on getting there. The animal creatures gradually picked new names and in no time completed that business. Then Tortoise said: oo, that his own name will be "All of you". That when they get there, what they should be calling him is "All of you" All the flying animals then said: alright, it is good -that he is the one that will then lead them along, since he is the spokesman.

They then got to the abode of *Chukwu*, and *Chukwu* welcomed them very well, gave them seats, each to his own, with his wife, but Tortoise did not bring his wife along with him. Then the food and the drinks were brought out; and after everything has been brought out, Tortoise then told them and said: let us ask *Chukwu* and his household one simple question and say: All these things you have brought out before us, who have you brought them out for? Or does it mean that after bringing them out and leaving there, they do not say anything to anybody and nobody asks anything. All the flying creatures said: "Haa, this is exactly what we are saying, that to be wise and thoughtful is very good, that Tortoise is a very wise man who thinks", and started again to thank him for his way of handling this matter. So, *Chukwu* was asked: this particular thing you brought, who should have them? Ha! the reply came that it is for "All of you, for all of you entirely". "Eh?, Did he say it is for all of you"? shouted the tortoise. "Did he say it is for "All of you?" Do you remember that I am the one called what? Called "All of you?", which meant that all that food that was brought out would be finished by the tortoise? This thing so pleased the tortoise that he did not know what to do. Then he stood up to speak and said that what is amusing him is that he has

thought and asked himself if as small as he , he could finish all that food and drink alone. As he was saying this, the little animals had started to literally die in their places. Hunger has tortured them in the first place. They started to grudge. Tortoise fell to all that food and started to eat them; he ate until he finished eating, practically tasting every dish, and held all the meat and finished them. All those flying creature then decided that they will not eat anything. The smaller spineless ones started eating the bones which Tortoise remained in the plates. Oo ho, they have finished and thanked *Chukwu* as usual, and since tortise claims to be wise, is he one to be wise now? Others are wise also to a certain extent. As they were about to go then, because of the anger which the tortoise has already enkindled in them, each began to take back his feather and as they did so would say: "Oo, tortoise, he should give back his feather which he has loaned him oo...oo, that he should give back the feather which he has loaned him. Each would come and take back the feather he has loaned to the tortoise. The tortoise whose *chi* made him to go home and tell his wife about the feast, was lucky that his *chi* also did a good thing for him also, and made him to be king among those creatures there, so that he was able to squander all that was brought for them all -andstill his *chi* keeps leading him on. But now, mhu, because of his great cunning his *chi* has abandoned him. Tortoise must now be caught in a trap which he had set for himself. Yes, would one be eating and enjoying where he does not work? Is it after you have finished eating you expect to leave alone in peace? After the creatures had finished taking back their feathers from him, he left a message with one of them and said : please, since things are now like this, when you reach tell my wife Anim to bring out all the soft furnishings and lay them outside properly for me so that while falling he would not break his shell and wound himself. The little creature agreed, but later the vulture was the one that accepted to take the message to his wife. The vulture then got home, but instead to tell Anim to bring out all that is soft, he told him that Tortoise wanted her to bring out all that was hard. Tortoise saw these things from the height and thought that they were the soft furnishings Hee! that was the time his *chi* had killed him. Then he fell, and fell both into a strong iron-pot and in all

those very strong objects. Tortoise then got smashed to pieces. That was it, he got smashed to pieces that he was about to die and then told his wife that this was not the message he left with the vulture, and his wife answered and said that she had done as she was instructed. That was the day the *chi* of the Tortoise betrayed him. What then happened next was that *nla* was called, *nla* that is always found in the bush, and it gradually used his gummy tongue to seal together all those broken pieces of shells. That is why the tortoise shell is so made up of broken pieces of shell that have been plastered together. He has played many cunning games because he does not want to work, and his *chi* has been leading him on till he has led him to his virtual death, in his escapades with the living creatures here when they went to the abode of *Chukwu*

**c. IF ONE GOES AHEAD OF HIS CHI, HE DOES AN  
EVERLASTING RACE**

*Palnut palnut*  
*kpalanuma*  
*That's what fell and killed Chi's goat*  
*kpalanuma*  
*Chukwu's goat fell and died*  
*kpalanuma*  
*As I was going*  
*kpalanuma*  
*If it claims my head*  
*kpalanuma*  
*Let me keep going*  
*kpalanuma*  
*If it claims my head*  
*kpalanuma*  
*Palnut palnut*  
*kpalanuma*

Ehee! People of our land, in this story of today what we shall use in starting it is indeed a song, that is why I decided to pep in my little voice in song, then I start to tell the story.

Once upon a time there were two brothers: It came to be that these two brothers were loved by *Chukwu*. The names of these two brothers were: Okeke for the bigger one, and Okeafo for the little one. Then on a certain day, the little one Nwokeafo was busy cooking in the fireplace. As he was cooking this food, it came to be that the little goat which *Chukwu* gave him to tend turned out to be behaving like that of poor parents. It so cried on that day that Nwokeafo could not endure its being such a nuisance. He then said that this very day he was going to unleash his anger on the goat. He then picked a stone and threw at the goat with all his strength *itawa!* The goat then staggered and staggered and fell, dead. Haa! That thing then pained him so much, because he did not know that that thing he threw at it will result in death. He just decided to throw the palmtree at it to know if it will calm down a little, but that is what anger brings. The anger which the death of that goat caused him soon turned to anguish. He then decided that he will carry the goat back to the owner. He then got there, and when the people who came to know what had happened to the goat also arrived, he began to sing this song for them:

*Palm nut palmtree  
kpalanuma  
That's what fell and killed chi goat  
kpalanuma  
Chi's goat fell and died  
kpalanuma  
Let me be going  
kpalanuma  
If it claims my head I will go  
kpalanuma  
Let me be going  
kpalanuma  
If it claims my head I will keep going  
kpalanuma  
Palmtree palmtree  
kpalanuma*

Haa! This thing saddened those who have come to know what happened to the goat. This child Nwokeafo then started going to the abode of *Chukwu* to send back the goat to him; he got there and calmly narrated to *Chukwu* what had happened till he told him everything. *Chukwu*

received him very well, and told him welcome, that he had forgiven him everything that had happened -you all know that *Chukwu* is very forgiving. The important thing is: were you able to ask him for that forgiveness in the first place. It came to be that *Chukwu* went in and brought food for the child: that food is of two types -one is the white and clean one, the other is dark -so, what this means is that the white one was the one which was carefully and properly prepared, and the other was the one that was cooked any how -you know, the type you will just accept by saying "I know that it has been cooked, and that's all. Do you know that that child that carried the goat to *Chukwu*, that child who killed *Chukwu's* goat whose name is *Nwokeafu*, instead of him to eat from that plate containing the well prepared food, went to eat from the poorly prepared one. Heheeee! Is it not why *Chukwu* went and brought the second thing, and told him that as it is night has befallen him, and that he would like to sleep. He replied and said yes, that he would sleep. He brought out a mat and gave to him. One of the mats was very nice and beautiful -that is , that mat is such that has never been seen before. He then brought out also another rickety one that is the scum among mats, it has been existing to a point that everybody is now tired of it. Do you know that instead of this child to go and sleep on that very beautiful one, what he did was to go to that rotten one to sleep, saying that his reason was that he was not fit to sleep in that bad mat judging from what he had done he was not fit to sleep on a beautiful thing.

Then day broke, the time for him to go has now come. In the morning *Chukwu* brought out two boxes: In one of them many different things can be seen. There is nothing on earth that anyone will be looking for in that one and he will not see. One was the big one, and the other was the little one. *Chukwu* then told him that since he had gone to sleep, that he was going to give him what he would take home with him. He then brought out these two boxes, and presented to him saying: do you see these two boxes, that he should choose one. Instead of that child to go and choose the big one, he went and chose the smaller one. Then *Chukwu* told him to go, and that he should carry that box which he had chosen. On reaching home, before opening to see what is in it, he told him to shut the doors tight, both doors and windows, as well as any crevice or hole from where light might be entering. This child agreed,

and then followed every direction that *Chukwu* gave him, reached home and locked up all doors and windows . Eehi, he then opened the box and what he saw -beautiful things that one can possibly get in this world which no one expected -eem, pleasure cars, there is nothing you will look for that was lacking in that very box. Ha! The boy was filled with joy and he said: hee! Is this how the world is -ran out into the obi with all his joy taking some things with him to go and give his brother Okeke with whom he kept the goat. Ehe! Do you know that instead of that one to accept those things from him he was filled with envy. He refused to accept those gifts which Nwokafo gave him when day broke. He refused to accept what his brother gave him because he wants to be rich as his brother also. Day broke again and he set out on the journey, so that he will also be rich. He picked up a stick and killed the goat *Chukwu* gave him to keep and tend. He has killed it, preparing again to carry it back to *Chukwu*. As he was carrying that goat to *Chukwu*, he came on the way and started singing that same song which his brother sang, because he went and found out everything from his brother how he proceeded to perform with *Chukwu* and he told him everything. But instead when he comes to the part where palmtree is mentioned, he substituted with stick thus:

O stick o stick  
*kpalanuma*  
 O stick o stick  
*kpalanuma*  
 You are the very stick  
 That killed *Chukwu's* goat  
*kpalanuma*  
*Chukwu's* goat then fell and died  
*kpalanuma*  
 Let me be going  
*kpalanuma*  
 If it claims my head I'll keep going  
*kpalanuma*  
 Let me keep going  
*kpalanuma*  
 If it claims my head I will still be going  
*kpalanuma*  
 O stick o stick  
*kpalanuma...*

So, he then finished singing this song, and on reaching to the abode of *Chukwu* started again to narrate to him what had happened; and when he finished *Chukwu* also had pity on him, after which he brought him food to eat. Instead of him to go and start from the poorly cooked food, he jumped onto the very nice and handsomely made dish, started eating it till he emptied the plate. Hei! Night kept approaching, one will have to sleep after all. *Chukwu* brought out again two mats for him to choose one, one was very beautiful and the other was miserable looking; and instead of him to go and select the miserable looking one, he went and selected the beautiful one, and slept on it. Then day broke, that time when he will be leaving the place for his home, and *Chukwu* brought out two boxes, as he did with Nwokeafu his brother, and told him that things have come to the practical matter, that he should select one of the boxes, since he has to give him something he would take home with him. But this very child is very greedy. So, it was important to him how he would get the whole world. Instead of him to go and carry the smaller box, he went and carried the big one. Time continued to pass. *Chukwu* advised him that when he gets home he should shut everywhere so that there might not be one tiny little hole when he will be opening the box.. He then agreed. He locked everywhere, in his mind he felt that today is the day he will get everything in the world. After shutting everywhere, he then opened the box. Hee! It happened to be that what he saw was all sorts of diseases. An epidemic then broke out. Dont you know, policemen were found in it, so he simply turned into a prisoner; some even drew out their whips and started whipping him. Then he fell sick for a long time from the whips and the different illnesses that have been allowed to wander around. He then died. So, he died and did not get that thing he was looking for, to be wealthy today, that he might eat everything today. Nothing was able to get to him in the long run. Instead of that, what he did was to throw in his head too. That is why it is not good to be greedy.

### ENU NYILI MBA "THE SKY-ONE TOO IMPOSSIBLE TO ENCOUNTER

*An Encounter from the Emeke Okoye Epic as Performed by  
Jeveizu Okaavo of Aguleri as Collected & Translated by Chukwuma  
Azuonye & Obiora Udechukwu*

(Three beats of ubom)



go for the demarcation of  
 heroes in the square of public  
 gathering!

Didn't Ojaali, the spirit, tell him 30  
 not to go, and he said he  
 would go for the demarcation  
 of heroes in the square of  
 public gathering!

We've come, whatever will happen, let it  
 happen;

That was the undoing of Nduba of  
 Ikelionwu,  
 Ikelionwu,  
 What will happen as it happened to  
 Nduba of Ikelionwu,

Was it not Nduba of Ikelionwu that 35  
 begot Ikelionwu Mbaamali?  
 Hence Ikelionwu did not know what  
 to do with Mbaamali?

Ikelionwu enacted a law in their land,  
 Saying that lest the novice should  
 know mpama in Ikelionwu,  
 If the novice knows the mask, if  
 the novice knows the mask

Much later he will join the 40  
 masquerade society.

If the novice knows Mbaamali of Ikelionwu,  
 It means that he has become  
 powerless.

O hero, Mbaamali of Ikelionwu,  
 welcome!

Hmm, iyoooo, oooo, oooo-m!  
 Iduu, I salute you! 45  
 Spectators: Welcome!  
 Narrator: Hmmmm.

We've now got into it.

That day the hero was preparing for 50  
 war in heaven;

That day the hero was preparing for  
 war in the house of the  
 sky-dweller, Enu-nyili-mba!

That day the hero was preparing for  
 the house of the sky -dweller  
 Enu-nyili-mba!

My child, you joker, by which  
 route will you (get to the point

from which you will) ascend  
 the stairs?  
 But the hero said that, come  
 morning, he would mount the  
 stairs.  
 Didn't Ojaali, the spirit, tell him 55  
 not to go, for there was no  
 road out there, but he said he  
 could go!  
 Didn't Okaavo, the spirit, tell him  
 not to go, for there was no  
 road out there, but he said he  
 could go and return!  
 My child, do not go to the house of  
 the sky-dweller, for it has no  
 road, but he said he would go  
 and return!  
 The hero said that, come morning,  
 he would ascend the stairs, go  
 and return.  
 Hmmm! Iyoo ooo, ho-oo-ooo!

## II

Let us go to the house of Enu-nyili-mba- 60  
 The man that lives in heaven.  
 This is how it went.  
 Obuora Udechukwu,  
 It's begining is like this: 65  
 This world began  
 And people lay about in the world,  
 That is, all things created by God (Chukwu).  
 They stayed like that ,  
 Stayed on and on and on.  
 No one knew what planted aku- ubili, 70  
 Aku-ubili planted itself.  
 People came out one day-  
 A day like Sunday-  
 Sheets of paper from heaven  
 Came scattering on the earth,  
 Paper on which something was written. 75  
 From above, it scattered on these  
 people's town;  
 From above, it scattered on these  
 people's town;



And he observed that person cracking  
 that kernel *kpim* and eating,  
 He would kill him off.  
 That it was not only that person alone  
 he would kill,  
 That on entering that town,  
 He would wipe out the entire town from  
 heaven.

110

And so, Iduu lay in disarray.  
 Hunger began to kill people!

Nobody drank water;

115

Nobody ate food;

Nobody ate nuts;

Nobody ate maize;

Hunger pressed

And pressed,

120

And, without exception, all suckling  
 babies still in their mothers' arms,  
 Death began to kill them-

Did anyone see who to ask what was  
 happening?

Without exception, all suckling babies,  
 Death began to kill them-

Without exception, all toddling babies,  
 Death began to kill them-

125

Killed the young awhile, then began to  
 kill adults.

And so it was that

Hunger began to kill people.

It is said that Hunger does not kill  
 people,

But there it was that Hunger began to  
 kill people,

For there was no drinking of water and  
 no eating of nuts.

130

The world was puzzled.

Nobody was seen to ask him what was  
 happening.

They stayed on and on and on and on.

And so it was that three weeks passed

Since he began his feast-

135

Three weeks since he began to feast-

The mouth-tying feast.

Let me name it clearly-

For he had tied up our mouths, we earth  
 dwellers.

Then, people came out one day, 140  
 On that day that it turned three weeks,  
 All the heroes in the world, without  
 exception,

Said: *Tia!*

So there is one man who has fixed a feast  
 But no one knows what to do 145

In order to go to the house of that  
 person,

And nobody knows where that person  
 lives ,

That he lives in heaven,

And nobody can find the way to his  
 home,

That they, the heroes, abound on this 150  
 earth,

That they must go and hold a meeting

So as to go and put heads together,

To find out what to do, in order to get  
 to the house of the man

That wrote these letters scattered thus.

If this person turned to his kinsman 155

Asking him, Do you know where the  
 way to his home is?

He would say to him, No!

If that person turned to his kinsman

Asking him, Do you know where the  
 way to his home is?

He would say to him, No! 160

And so they assembled together, they,  
 the heroes:

Obadiogwu n'Ovia,

Ntili, son of Eze Ododo, the hair on  
 whose body were thunderbolts;

Ndum, son of Eze Abo, the one that  
 digs a trench around the town with  
 his feet;

Mbaamali of Ikelonwu, the one who 165  
 uses the human thigh bone as  
 chewing stick;

Ojaatu akpo avu na-awu nku

Oranyeli, ntu-na-ebu-ukwa-aro. the  
 man that lives in the clouds-

Ekwudebe-agba awari;

All the heroes in the world without  
 exception, gbam

They pulled themselves together, 170  
 Pulled themselves together, *daa*,  
 Finished pulling themselves together and  
     came out of consultations  
 In the village of Emeke Okoye,  
 And they filled the village-square pitim!  
 Filled the village square *pitim*. 175  
 Nobody spoke, all remained silent, roo

They stayed on and on and on  
 Then Obadiegwu n'Ovia's bard  
 Put his fingers into his ears  
 Chanting: 180  
     O my son, Obadiegwu n'Ovia!  
     O my son, *ogooogogo* n'Ovia!  
         Obadiegwu  
     O ro m gwulu igba kelesime, ma  
         anya bu anya  
     O great hero, Obadiegwu n'Ovia 185  
     O marvelous one, Obadiegwu n'Ovia  
     O great hero, o marvelous one!

He answered him: *kwo-kwo-kwo-kwo!*  
 And said that all things begotten of the 190  
     birth groan, hmm, that he was the  
     greatest.  
 And he said, what are we waiting for  
 I am the one that shall lead the way and  
     go to the home of the sky-dweller,  
     Enu-nyili-mba  
 To set eye on him.  
 Hiia ya!  
 He-ee-m, Mbaamali of Ikelionwu told 195  
     him to go and eat shit:  
 You will lead the way to the home of  
     Enu-nyili-mba  
 And yet I, Mbaamali, am here.  
 Ntili, son of Eze Ododo stormed up,  
 And hurled his arm thus  
 And the wilderness caught fire 200  
 For the hairs all over his body were  
     thunderbolts.  
 The wilderness caught fire and started to  
     burn.  
 He held up his arm thus and they came  
     back.  
 He said to them, You will go to the

home of Enu-nyili-mba,  
 Without me leading but you leading the way? 205  
 Ojadu, *akpu-na-awu-nku*, came out,  
 sprang about, sprang about,  
 Sprang about, sprang about,  
 And said to them-m-mm, This heat  
 everywhere  
 About how to go to the heavenly city 210  
 If anyone really knows the way to the  
 heavenly city,  
 Let him raise his hand.  
 In this situation where everyone says he  
 would lead the way,  
 Everyone that jumps out says he would 215  
 lead the way,  
 Everyone that jumps out says he would  
 lead the way,  
 Let us no longer quarrel about who  
 would lead the way,  
 The thing is, who knows what should  
 be done to get to the heavenly city,  
 Let that person raise his hand;  
 He himself did not know where it was. 220  
 Everyone felt silent piii.  
 They laid about-  
 Went on lying about, went on lying  
 about, went on lying about,  
 Nnabulede was under the seat of his  
 friend-  
 His friend, Ameke Okoye, 225  
 And after a while, he jumped out into  
 the arena, and moved about,  
 He, his bard,  
 And then put his fingers into his ears,  
 Chanting:  
 Hmmm! Hmmm! Hmmm! 230  
 Iieee-Iieee-Iieee!  
 Hmmm! Hmmm! Hmmm!  
 Iieee- Iieee-Iieee!  
 Come morning, Mbaago is battling  
 with tears!  
 Come afternoon , Mbaago is battling 235  
 with tears!  
 Come evening, Mbaago is battling  
 with tears.

When the whole town asks Mbaago  
     why she weeps without  
     stopping,  
 She replies that her son is preparing  
     to go to war in heaven.  
 O my child, do not go to war in  
     heaven for there is no road to it  
 But he says he must go- 240  
     The hero says that, come morning,  
     he would mount the stairs  
 Weeping broke out *Oooooo!*  
 For Nnabulude was named as saying  
     that he (Ameke) would go to heaven,  
 That if it was not pleasant, it would be  
     bitter, the way he would go.  
 The place where those great stairs were, 245  
     was at the horizon,  
 From where the sun rises-  
 That was the place from where to go to  
     the home of sky-dweller, Enu nyili  
 mba.  
 Yes,  
 Let me spell it out by name.  
*Spectators:* Go on. 250  
*Narrator:* When they went and went and  
     reached the place,  
 Where the sun rises from the ground,  
 Where it rises from the ground  
 And where the sky touches the ground,  
 And from where it rises from the ground 255  
 It was at that place that Enu-nyili-mba  
     built steps ,  
 Built steps,  
 With which he climbed up to the  
     heavenly city,  
 At that point from which the sun rises  
 He built steps with which one climbed 260  
     up to the heavenly city--  
 That place was full of heat.  
 At that point from which the sun rises,  
     there were many steps  
 And it was full of heat.  
 Before steps came to be built--  
 Wait, until I come to the end of the 265  
     story--  
 When I finish telling you everything, I

will tell you the origin of steps.  
 That was how they originated  
 How men learnt how to put steps in  
 storeyed buildings-  
 Was that time when the hero reached  
 there and he saw it.

Hmm eee -oo-oo-hmm 270

Hmm eee-oo-oo-hmm

*(The lines of song following are not translatable)*

*Nwoke m, eyoni onwu erike elie  
 mmuo ni.*

*Nwoke m, eyoni onwu erike  
 gwotalali si*

*Mmadi egunie oku*

*Eyoni onwu erike elie m gwochali si* 275

*Mmadi avunia anya*

*Eyoni onwu erike eliem gwochali*

*Si mmadu ekwene n'isi*

*Eliee ndo ko elie mmuo obi*

*Hmm Iyoo-oo-oo-oom* 280

Let those ones wait awhile.

Idu, I salute you!

*Spectators:* Iyaa! Well done

*Narrator:* Eee...after that cry that  
 was raised-

By every single person that lay in Iduu,  
 because hunger was killing them, 285

The gathering dispersed.

Obadiegwu n'Ovia took his townsmen  
 and went.

Ndum son of Eze Abo took his  
 townsmen and went.

Ntili, son of Eze Ododo took his  
 townsmen and went.

Mbaamali of Ikelionwu took his  
 townsmen and went. 290

As they were on their way home, a big  
 horn sounded in heaven

Tom tom, tom tom

Tom tom, tom tom,

Tom tom, tom tom

Oranyeli son of Udumaga Odo 295

Oranyeli Odogwu koo,

Koo koo, koo koo,

Koo koo koo koo

He blew a flourish: kawoo! kawoo!

kawoo!  
 Wonders, brilliance of spirits, brilliance of men 300  
 He threw a circle, threw a circle, threw a circle  
 If you you raised your face, you looked at him and hailed him "  
*Ntu-na-ebu-ukwa aro*"  
 If that person raised his face, he hailed him  
 "At the mention of his name, one shudders  
 If that person raised his face, he hailed him:  
*"Okwudebe agba awari"*  
 It was gathering and descending 305  
 It was gathering and descending  
 That was the man that lives in the clouds  
 That was that very thing...  
 The path he took to descend then  
 Was that very thing which once in a while stretches thus 310  
 Hence our people would say that a rainbow appeared in the sky,  
 That was the pathway it made.  
 I will go on spelling it all out by name which is what you have come for today.  
*Spectator:* Hmm, that is right.  
*Spectators:* (Laughter) 315  
*Spectator:* Aguleri o!  
*Spectators* Yaa!  
 (Applause)  
*Narrator:* Then each group set out for home,  
 And they scheduled  
 That it was a week hence 320  
 That they would go to the heavenly city  
 To the house of Enu-nyili-mba,  
 To ask him what the matter was  
 Why he handed down that great commandment  
 Saying there should be no eating of food and no drinking of water 325  
 So that when the whole world perished,  
 it would bew hunger that killed off the people.

Came a week later,  
 All the heroes without exception, they  
     began to come.

Ndum, son of Eze Abo came 330  
 Ojaadu akpulu na-avu nku came  
 Ntili son of Eze Odoodo came  
 Our hero, *Orieli Ntu-na-ebu-ukwa-aro*  
     came  
 Ameke Okoye came  
 And that man whose body is full of the 335  
     thunderbolts came  
 The whole congregation of heroes,  
     without exception, piti piti piti piti,  
     all came together  
 And lay about  
 And it was asked "What is it that can  
     be done?"  
 If it is known what can be done, let it  
     be said.

Obadiegwu n'Ovia stood out 340  
 And said that it was him that owned the  
     way,  
 Said that he should be followed behind,  
 That it was him that would lead the way  
     and go to where the rising of the  
     sun was,  
 From where they would go to the  
     heavenly city,  
 To the house of Enu-nyili-mba 345  
 That it was him that would lead the  
     way, he, Obadiegwu n'Ovia.  
 Mbaamali of Ikelionwu came out and  
     stood behind him  
 And told him that wherever he put in  
     one foot  
 He would put his own after him.

Ntili, son of Eze Odoodo queued behind 350  
     Mbaamali  
*Spectator:* Do lift up your voice  
*Narrator:* Ndum son of Eze Abo queued  
     behind Mbaamali  
 All the heroes without exception, pitim  
 Followed one another behind, *daa*, and  
     stretched far.  
 Our hero, Ameke Okoye, rose up. 355

Elite, son of Mmalive, rose from their  
     own town and began to come  
 Came on *daa* and queued up  
 Hoa!  
 Our hero Ameke Okoye stood up.  
 Got into the house 360  
 Called his friend, Nnabuluede, he  
     answered him,  
 And he told him to go to the house of  
     those that tap palmwine in the  
     King's house  
 So as to tell them to bring him four  
     *agbaja* pots  
 With which to drink water  
 Before going to the heavenly city they 365  
     were now preparing for.  
 Nnabuluede jumped to the king's house,  
 Those that tapped wine there carried  
     four *agbaja* pots, came and placed  
     them in the middle of that square in  
     which they were.  
 They lifted them to their mouths, drank  
     round  
 And put aside the pots.  
 That one that was Mbaago jumped out 370  
 Into the square  
 In the nude  
 And sat down  
 Dragging herself round and round in one  
     place  
 Put her fingers into her ears 375  
 And wept  
 And wept  
 Wept and wept and wept  
 Then Nnabuluede crept in  
 Put his fingers into the hero's ears: 380  
     Come morning, Mbaago is battling  
         with tears  
     Come afternoon, Mbaago is battling  
         with tears  
     Come night, Mbaago is battling  
         with tears  
 Let the people ask Mbaago why she  
     is weeping for her child,  
     weeping without stopping  
 She said that her child was 385

preparing to go to war in  
 heaven  
 My child, do not go to war in  
 heaven for there is no road  
 there  
 But he said that he would go and  
 return  
 The hero said that come morning he  
 would ascend the stairs!  
 Didn't Okaavo the spirit ask him not  
 to go, and he said that he  
 would go  
 That he would go and return 390  
 Didn't Ojaali the spirit ask him not  
 to go, and he said that he  
 would go,  
 That he would go and come out.  
 Hmm-iyooooo-oooo!  
 Obadiegwu n'Ovia took off  
 And said that they were going on a 395  
 tough trip  
 Going to the heavenly city.  
 Every one of them *pitim* took off,  
 heading for the heavenly city.  
 They trekked trrrrrr and night fell.  
 They trekked all night and dawn came.  
 They trekked and trekked for one week 400  
 gbam  
 It was not a road that they were going  
 on  
 For they did not find a road to the  
 heavenly city  
 You do hear me say that they did not  
 find a road  
 It was for one week that they trekked,  
 day and night  
 But they did not find how they would 405  
 get to horizon  
 From where the sun rises  
 They did not see how they would get  
 there.  
 They trekked far into the afternoon of  
 that day  
 Trekked far into the night of that day.  
 It turned out that it was a week the day 410  
 before when they set out on the

journey.  
 But they did not find ...  
 When they pushed their trek in the  
     wilderness  
 The place would look like where a  
     Caterpillar had gone through.  
 They aimed at the horizon with their  
     hands  
 Indicating how they would act to get to 415  
     the heavenly city,  
 When they had trekked awhile,  
     Obadiegwu n'Ovia eulogized and  
     said that he was ending his trek,  
 And that he and his supporters would go  
     back.  
 They asked him "what is the matter?"  
 He stood aside, and said that those who  
     wanted to go should continue  
 That he was going back. 420  
 He and his supporter, set for home.  
 If you saw all the heroes who said that  
     they would go to the house of  
     Enu-nyili-mba  
 So as to ask him why he made such a  
     commandment,  
 They all reversed to go home.  
 Our hero then threw his feet on the 425  
     ground  
 They did not see what could be done.  
 His friend, Ojaadu akpulu na-avu-nku  
 Hailed him, his friend *Odi-ike-di-Igbo-*  
*egwu*  
 He answered him, *eeh!*  
 He hailed him *Akata-isi-ebuo* 430  
 He answered him, *eeh!*  
 He hailed him *Akpala-ewu-si-udo*  
 He answered him, *eeh!*  
 He hailed him He-who-does-not-heed-  
     mother-or-father  
 He answered him that that of mother 435  
     and father...as for what another  
     person said, that it was into the  
     bush that he threw such,  
 And said to him, have you any problem?  
 He told him that he had a problem;  
 Behold that all those they were travelling

with to the heavenly city,  
 Had all gone home.  
 They should go home 440  
 That that was he problem he had.  
 He then said to him "If you would not  
     go to the heavenly city, you may go  
     home".  
 For that very journey he was set on if it  
     was not pleasant it would be bitter.  
 Ojaadu told him that he had heard.  
 His friend, Okaavo the spirit hailed him 445  
     *Odi-ike-di-Igbo egwu,*  
 He answered him hii!  
 He said to him "what are you thinking  
     about?"  
 This journey we heard about concerning  
     the condition oo earth,  
 For which we came from the land of  
     spirits  
 So that we would go with you on this 450  
     journey  
 It seems that we sghould go back now  
 So that we would not be stranded on the  
     way  
 He said to him "If you want to go  
     home, go home  
 For he would reach the heavenly city.  
*Spectator:* Do, lift your voice; or else if 455  
     you drink, we shall look for a drink  
     and give you.  
*Narrator:* Listen attentively!  
*Spectator:* He does lift his voice.  
*Narrator:* All heroes without except  
     went *gbam,*  
 It turned out that they had all gone. 460  
 Our hero then stood up, and hailed his  
     friend Nnabuluede.  
 He answered him, eeh!  
 He told him that he should say  
     something, so that they would know  
     the way to go to the heavenly city  
 To the house of Enu-nyili-mba.  
 This very journey they had come out on, 465  
     that he had told you that if it was  
     not pleasant it would be bitter  
 How they would go to the heavenly city.



bitter",  
 Told him to speak in a loud voice.  
 Nnabuluede's voice began to resonate.  
 Then he began to run,  
 Then he began to run,  
 Then he began to run, 500  
 Those steps that must be climbed to  
     reach the sky dweller numbered  
     three scores.  
 Then he began to run.  
 With only one lap of running, he  
     covered three tens of them-  
 That is ten and twenty-  
 And set his feet on top of the stairs, 505  
 And as he swayed his body around,  
 Smoke issued from his body,  
 And as he swayed his body around,  
 Smoke issued from his body.  
 The next spate of running saw him right 510  
     on top, gbam,  
 Right at the house of Enu-nyili-mba,  
 Came in,  
 And it happened that there was a square  
     in the heavenly city,  
 That in heaven, there was a square at  
     the house of Enu-nyili-mba that day,  
 Just as he jumped into the heavenly city, 515  
 He alighted straight on the courtyard of  
     the house of Enu-nyili-mba.  
 It happened that an Ikwele man called  
     Avuanya, who had come to  
     Enu-nyili-mba for the feast  
 Which lasted seven weeks,  
 Was sitting inside his house.  
 Our hero, Ameke Okoye, on falling, 520  
     filled up that square *pitim*.  
 O yes, I will not tell it to make it  
     pleasant,  
 Because every part of his feet, without  
     exception, had been blistered with  
     heat  
 As he climbed the steps of the great  
     stairs.  
 Then he called him "Enu-nyili-mba.  
 He stared at him. 525  
 He called him, Enu-nyili-mba".

He stared at him.

He said to him, "Was it not you that  
gave those orders,  
That for the feast you would celebrate  
for seven weeks

There should be no cracking of kernels, 530  
And there should be no drinking of water?"

He told him that it was him that gave  
the orders.

He told him, "Do you know that the  
stick with which a millipede is  
removed goes with the millipede?

I have come to your house."

That very person that is an *mgbadike*, 535  
it is him that has come to your  
house,

For the stick with which a millipede is  
removed goes with the millipede.

The world will now get to know you,  
To know what gave you the power to  
give the orders that there should be  
no eating of food

For seven weeks,

For which hunger is killing people on 540  
earth!

Hmm-ee! Hmm-eee! Hmm-eee!

On that day the hero was preparing  
for war in heaven,

My child, you joker, by which road  
will you get to the great stairs,

But the hero said, be it sweet or  
bitter, he must ascend the stairs  
and return!

Nothing else happened, only that he 545  
aimed a blow

And gave it to Enu-nyili-mba, hmm,  
ka-tim.

Enu-nyili-mba stood aside and gazed at  
him

The Ikwele man that had come to feast  
with Enu-nyili-mba,

Withdrew his head *nelem* and entered his  
car, for home,

Saying that he had seen a python that 550  
would swallow an antelope.

Enu-nyili-mba asked him, told him:

"What is this?"

He said to him, "Was it not you that  
gave the orders  
That you would feast for seven weeks,  
But that people should not drink water  
And that there should be no cracking of  
kernels

555

And that there should be no eating of food,  
Because of which hunger has been  
killing people in the world!"-

Then aimed another knock *nee*, and  
gave to him, *tim!*

That was the second one.

On hitting him the third time, *tim!*  
He carried him up, *bagbom!* carried  
him and placed him on his shoulder  
And told Nnabuluede, "Hurry, it's time  
for us to go home."

560

Nnabuluede stood by him.

The way they ran on top of the steps  
was:

Gbelegbele, gbelegbele, gbelegbele!

565

Gbelegbele, gbelegbele, gbelegbele!

Descending right down to the earth, jem  
Set feet on earth, jem-

He balanced him well on his shoulder

And told his friend Nnabuluede;

570

"Can you see how this man has built the  
means by which to go to his home?"

Look at it carefully,

In the event of our return to the earth;

Look at it carefully and see how it is-

The way to go to heaven."

575

He then carried that man

And came right to their town, gbam,

And slumped him on the square of their  
town,

Straightaway, the town-crier took up his  
*ubom*:

O Iduu, the hero has returned!

580

O Iduu, the hero has returned!

People surged, *lizeem*. 585  
 What was then done?  
 That man was killed off-  
 The man that gave those orders.  
*Spectator:* Hmm?  
*Narrator:* O, he was killed off. 590  
 It was there that stairs in storeyed  
     houses originated.  
 Er, Obuora Udechukwu,  
 It was from that very place  
 That that feast  
 About which that man gave the 595  
     commandment-  
 The Hausas are still in this  
     tying-of-mouths.  
 Year in, year out,  
 They are still in this tying-of-mouths.  
 Do you people follow what I am saying-  
 The tying of mouth in Abakpa, 600  
 For Abakpa people tie their mouths.  
 Enu-nyili-mba (it was that) gave that order-  
 The Hausas are still there, in that  
     tying of mouths  
 (Loud laughter and applause)  
*A Spectator:* Aguleri oo! 605  
*Spectators:* Yaa!  
*Narrator:* Our people, welcome all!  
*Spectators:* Welcome!  
*Narrator:* Let us leave it on the ground,  
 Let us leave it on the ground. 610

*Some Relevant Nri-Igbo Plants and their Botanical names*

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. Oha-chi      | Erythrophleum guineense  |
| 2. Omu-nkwu     | Elaeis guineense<br>(this is the tender leaf of a palm tree<br>used for ritual purposes) |
| 3. Oji          | Cola acuminat (Ritual Kolanut)   |
| 4. Akpu         | Bombax buonopozense (Cotton tree)  |
| 5. Abosi icheku | Dialium guineense  |
| 6. Ofo          | Detarium senegalense<br>(Sacred wand of justice)   |
| 7. Ogilisi      | (Not known)  |
| 8. Egbo         | (Not known)  |
| 9. Obo          | See egbo (This is <i>egbo</i> mispronounced)   |
| 10. Opu         | See akpu (This is also <i>akpu</i> mispronounced)  |

*Glossary of Igbo terms from the study*

Adama	Title for the lord of the land
Afa otutu	Praise name
Afia	Market
Afo	One of the days of the Igbo week
Agbala	The mysterious one, the mighty one
Agu	Leopard
Agwu	Patron god of healing
Ahinze Chukwu	Thank God
Aho	Forest Spirit
ajaachi	Sacrifice to the <i>Chi</i> of the sky
Ajachukwu	Sacrifice to Chukwu above
Ajo chi	Evil chi
Ajo mmadu	Evil person
Ajo ohia	Evil forest
Akalaka	Destiny
Akamkpisi	Name of a village at Nri
Akpu	A large Cotton tree
Akuko	Story
Akuko iho	Story dreamed or imagined
Akuko ita	Long narrative stories, epic
Alo	A long iron spear carried by the titled nobility
Alusi	Established forces, powers
Amadioha	God of thunder
Ana/Ala	Earth
Anyaanwu	The sun entity
Aro	The people controlling Long Juju Oracle
Chi	Light, spirit entity
Chi efo	Day has dawned
Chi ejie	Night has fallen
Chi ejirigo	Night has fallen
Chi Idemmili	The <i>chi</i> of Idemmili
Chi julu oyi	The day is cold
Chi mmadu	A person's chi
Chi ndo	Chi of the pegeon
Chi omumu	Chi of maternity
Chi ugo	Chi of the eagle
Chineke	Chi who creates
Chita	Today
Chukwu	The Great Chi
Dibia	A priest-healer, ritualist, etc

Dibuno	Master in charge of household unit
Ebunu	The ram
Echi	Tomorrow
Echichi	Title
Edo	River, river goddess at Nnewi
Efifie	Noon
Egbo Chukwu	A shrine of <i>Chukwu</i>
Ego	Money
Egwu nnwa	Lullaby
Egwu onu	songs
Egwu ozo	Ozo title songs
egwu echichi	Songs of initiations
Eke	The first day of the Igbo week
Ekwe	A title for women
Ekwu	A fireplace
Enu	Sky above
Ewu chi	Goat belonging, offered to one's personal chi
Eze	Priest-king, king, distinguished one
Eze ana	Priest of the earth
Eze enu	King of the place above
Eze igwe	King of the sky
Ezi chi	Good <i>chi</i>
Ezi mmadu	Good man
Gboo	Early
Ichi	Ozo man's facial scarification
Ichi eze	To crown a king
Idemmili	Both a river and the name of the water goddess
Idoto	The name of a river and of goddess dwelling there
Ife	Light
Igbu ichi	To undergo facial scarification
Igo mmuo	The Igbo way of spirit veneration
Igo ofo	Invocation or perition to a spirit
Igodo odo	Invocation to <i>odo</i>
Igwe	Sky
Igwekala	Sky greater than the earth; name of a juju
Ihibe nkukwa	To set up a fireplace for cooking
Ihu chi	The presence of <i>Chi</i>
Ikenga	A man's personal <i>chi</i> symbol
Ikpo mkpu	Invocation to a river entity
Ikuputa nnwa	Outing, naming ceremony for a new born baby
Kamalu	God of thunder
Mkpulu obi	The heart
Mkpulu-chi	The seed of <i>chi</i>

Mmonwu	Masquerade
Mmuo	Spirit force
Ndi odogwu	Heroes
Ndibunze	Revered ones
Ndiichie	the titled elders
Ndu	Life
Nka	Art
Nkwo	The fourth and last day of the Igbo week
Nnu mmuo	Uncountable spirits
Nwocha	A river at Oraukwu and the name of the goddess
Nwoke	Man, Male
Nzu	White clay
Obasi	The high Spirit of Efik and Ibibio origin
Obi	A man's central sitting place
Obu	A man's central sitting place
Ochichiri	Darkness
Odeniigwe	He whose fame gets as far as in the skies
Odinana	Traditions
Odo	Masquerade
Odu okike	Horn of Creation
Ofia	Bush
Ofo	Wand of justice
Ogbanje	Child born to die
Ogbuniike	A wayside spirit
Ogene	Metal gong
Ogwugwu	A divinity
Oha chi	Sacred plant for marking the altar of Chi
Ohu mmuo	Uncountable spirits
Ojezuluobodo	He who has traversed the whole world
Oji	Black
Oke	Great
Oke Obioma	Obioma the creator
Okike	Shining one
Okochi	Dry season
Oku	Clay-bowl
Okwu alusi	A shrine of <i>Alusi</i>
Okwu ana	Shrine of <i>Ana</i>
Okwu chi	Shrine of <i>Chi</i>
Okwu mmuo	Shrine of <i>mmuo</i>
Olisa	The high Spirit
Ononiigwe	He who stays in the sky
Onwa	The moon
Onwu chi	Natural death
Ogwu	Medicine

Onyinyo	Shadow
Orumili	The sea, ocean, etc
Osebuluuwa	The high Spirit
Oshimiri	See orumili
Otite	A festival of joy
Oye	Second day in the Igbo week
Ozo	The highest title
Ubosi	The day
Uchichi	Night
Udo	Peace
Udummili	Rainy season
Ufie	Red camwood for funeral rites
Uluchi	Foil of chi
Ume	Breath, strength, etc
Umudiana	Children of the Lords of the land
Umunna	Lineage, children on the same father
Umuoku	Little claypots
Urasi	A river, the name of the goddess dwelling in the river
Uwa	The physical world

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