OGODIN'OMULUNWA (THERE IS VALUE IN MOTHERHOOD) BURIAL DANCE OF OSOMALA SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

BY

EDITH ABISOLA MADUAGWU

MATRIC NO: 38525

B.A. (Hons.) English (Ibadan), M.A. Literature-in-English (O.A.U. Ile-Ife)

A thesis in Performance and Cultural Studies submitted to the Institute of African Studies, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

MAY, 2012

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by **Edith Abisola MADUAGWU**, in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

…… ……..

Supervisor's signature **Date**

Oladele O. Layiwola B.A. (Ife), (Ph. D. (Leeds)
Professor of Performance and Cultural Studies
Institute of African Studies
University of Ibadan

DEDICATION

The work described in this thesis is dedicated to

God Almighty

For making this work possible and for giving me

My Children,

Chinedu Mark Bodunrin, and Chimere Louissa Kofoworola,

in whom I continually experience the many joys of motherhood

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work has been made possible by the special Grace and Mercy of Almighty God; my constant guide and source of inspiration throughout the duration of this research. I recognize the love, friendship and encouragement of families and friends too numerous to mention. I begin by extending my gratitude to my husband Professor Emmanuel Ndubisi Maduagwu of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan for his financial contribution.

I am particularly grateful for the expert guidance and direction, patience and understanding as well as the support and openness I was privileged to receive from my ebullient Supervisor, Professor Oladele O. Layiwola, throughout the duration of my research work. I thank you, Sir. A wealth of gratitude goes to Professor I.O. Albert (present Director of the Institute of African Studies), and to Drs. O. O. Adekola and S. Olorunyomi, and to the various past and present sub-Deans, who have fought my administrative battles at the Institutes of African Studies. I am equally indebted to the following members of the Institute for their kind academic disposition towards my studentship over the years, namely: Professor B. Agbaje-Williams, Drs. O. B. Olaoba, I. A. Jimoh, T. K. Adekunle, O. O Ishola, N.D. Danjubo and Dr. F. A. Faleti. To you Dr. K. A. Adeduntan, I extend my felicitations for the useful suggestions and editing of my thesis. Also I would like to extend a well deserved post-humors appreciation to late Professor C.O. Adepegba, who was a father to me whilst he still walked with the living, *'Ema je ekolo l'orun o, baba!'*

In addition, I thank the many mothers and fathers that I have accumulated through the stages of my life. I begin by extending my heart felt gratitude to my kind uncle, the erudite scholar, Professor Tajudeen Balogun (Retired) for his fatherly devotion to my welfare throughout the years of my undergraduate studentship at the University of Ibadan and thereafter; Eng. S.O. Shodeinde (Daddy) for his encouragement; Chief Mrs. Modupe

Lucas, my mother in Ibadan; Prof. (Mrs.) A.O. Faparusi, my mother in Malawi; Professor (Mrs.) Omibiyi Obidike (Retired), my mother at the Institute; Professor B.O.D. Oyebola for his Christian counsel and advice; to my biological parents, Chief Louise C. Awogu for his moral support and constant encouragement and my incomparable mother, Mrs Victoria Shodeinde for her constant prayers.

I also thank my friend, Mrs. Toun Oyelude for her encouragement and Mrs. Patricia Awa Taiwo for her selfless dedication through painstaking criticism and editing. To Mr. Adeshiyan and Mrs. Aderibigbe of the Post-Graduate School, who have been like a brother and a sister to me, respectively, in their concern for the actualization of this work, I cannot thank you both enough. God bless you! Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the support I garnered from all the non-teaching staff of the Institute of African Studies, led by Mr. P. B. Unuofin, Assistant Registrar and Secretary to the Institute.

These Acknowledgements will not be complete without the expression of my unqualified appreciation to the Director of the Institute for the provision of space and other facilities for my work.

Finally, my great appreciation and praise for resilience goes to my jewels of inestimable value: my son, Chinedu and my daughter, Chimere, for their endurance through the many deprivations of maternal care and love, occasioned by the rigours and demands of my research endeavour in the preparation of this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Ogodin'omulunwa dance is performed among some Ogbaru Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, especially among the tripartite brotherhood of Osomala, Odekpe and Okoh towns. *Ogodi* celebrates the lifetime of a deceased elderly woman of with surviving adult children. As a reward to the toils of maternity, it is a positive commentary on the level of social respect accorded the woman of Ogbaru extraction. Unfortunately, this dance faces a threat of extinction as a result of the ongoing state creation that rarely considers the disintegrating effect on culturally autonomous groups. Currently, the Ogbaru towns used for this research are based in two different states resulting from political divisions. This dance is equally not documented in scholarship. Existing literature on dance is scanty compared to other forms of performance, and funeral dances represent a minimal portion of what is available. It, therefore, becomes imperative that this dance be studied to fill this gap.

Data were obtained through primary and secondary sources. The participant and non participant observation of dances, interviews with informants and community elders, and archival documents represented the primary sources. There were also video recordings of *Ogodi* dance. Secondary were gathered from the internet and libraries. Data were subsequently translated and analyzed using the structural system of semiotic analysis; that is, the icon index and symbol. In the absence of a formal notational system for African dance, a descriptive approach was also employed to explicate the content value of gestures.

There are two types of *Ogodi* dance. In the first type, the body is buried after the husband's family had obtained permission from the deceased's relatives. Here, the body is replaced with a bust or photograph of the deceased. In the second type, the body is returned to the relatives for burial, thus featuring the full complement of the dances. *Ogodi* is still appreciated among Ogbaru people as a medium of transition of the deceased to the ancestral realm and also valued as an avenue of moral education the female youth.

It was observed, however, that anti-tradition Christian doctrines are having negative effects on interest in the performance as most indigenes now prefer Christian burial rites for their dead.

Burial dances such as *Ogodi* which contain moral values that have sustained African communities for centuries are on the brink of extinction. Effort should be directed to the research of such forms which reflect the way we think and live to forestall imminent extinction. In view of the fragility of oral tradition, it is imperative that research attention be directed to similar non-verbal performance.

Keywords: Dance, *Ogodi* funeral rites, Motherhood, Ogbaru-Igbo

Word count: 425

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Abstract	vi
Table of contents	viii
List of figures	xiv
Maps of Igboland	xv
CHAPTER ONE	
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem	3
1.3 The Igbo People	7
1.3.1 Present Day Igbo People	7
1.3.2 A Brief History of the People of Osomala	8
1.3.3 Geography and Economy	11
1.3.4 Religious Institutions and Practices of Osomala	13
1.3.5 Ogbaru Culture and the Dance	20
1.4 Igbo Cultural Portrait of the *Umuada*	23
1.4.1 Umuada of Osomala	26
1.5 Research Questions	30
1.6 Objectives of the Study	30
1.6.1 General Objectives	30
1.6.2 Specific Objectives	31

1.7 Justification for and Significance of the Study 31
1.8 Scope and delimitations of the Study 34

CHAPTER TWO
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW 37
2.1 Introduction 37
2.1.1 **Dance** as Art in Western Society 43
2.1.2 Theories of Dance in African Cultures 69
2.1.3 African Dance: The Traditional and Comtemporary Scene 82
2.1.4 Dance as Symbol of Transition 87
2.1.5 Rites of Passage in Contemporary context 89
2.1.6 Introduction to Funeral Dances 91
2.1.7 Catharsis and Resolution in Funeral Dances 94
2.1.8 Funeral Dance as Socio-Cosmic Cohesive Force 101
2.2.0 Theoretical Approach 102
2.2.1 Structuralism and Semiotics 102
2.2.2 Cultural Sub-Codes 105
2.2.3 Communication process in Body Language (Kinesics) 106

CHAPTER THREE
3.0 METHODOLOGY 108
3.1 Study Poulation 108
3.2 Method of Data Collection 109
3.2.1 Library Research/ Internet Search 109
3.2.2 Fieldwork 109
3.2.3 Problems of Data Collection 119

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS 119

4.1 Introduction 119

4.2 Ogodi-n'Omulunwa Dance 124

4.2.1 Situation one (1) *Ikwata Ozu* 123

4.2.2 Preparation for Situation One (1) 124

4.2.3 The Message Process and Items of Presentation 124

4.1.4 Analysis of Message Section 127

4.2.5 Performance Progression 129

4.2.6 Costume 130

4.2.7 The Announcement Dance 133

4.2.8 Musical Instruments 133

4.2.9 The Setting of the Announcement Dance 134

4.2.11 The Women's Dances 143

4.2.10 Analysis of Announcement Dance Setting: 143

4.2.12 Semiotics of *Ndiomu* dance 144

4.2.13 The *Ada's* Dance Items: 146

4.2.14 Semiotics of Dance Props 147

4.2.15 The Role of the *Okpala Ogbe* (Village Head) 150

4.2.16 Ogodi Dance Performance- Preparations 152

4.2.17 Transcription and Translation of Ada's Dance 153

4.2.18 Semiotics of *Ada's* Dance 158

4.3 Oge-Ato (Three Seasons) 161

4.4 Ogodin'omulunwa- Situation Two 163

4.4.1 The Homebound Dance Situation Two (2) 168

4.4.2 Analysis of Homebound Dance Two (2) 170

4.2.3 Functions of Dance in *Ogodin'omulunwa* Funeral Performance 175

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION 180

5.1 Recommendation 180

5.2 Conclusion 182

5.2.1 Dance as a Force for Thematic Cohesion in Funeral Rites 182

5.2.2 Dance as Aesthetic Vehicle in Transitional Rites 183

5.2.3 Dance as Index of Religious Philosophy and Cultural Ethics 184

References 187

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (ORAL SOURCES)
APPENDICES 187

Appendix One (i) Interview with key informant, Chief Ulasi 198

Appendix Two (ii) Interview with Okakwu Isamade of Odekpe 200

Appendix Three (iii) Interview with Oyata Okuona 203

Appendix Four (iv)'omulunwa song Lyrics 205

Appendix Five (v): Glossary of Igbo Words and Terms Used 210

Appendix six (v) Research Questions 216

Appendix Seven (vii) Ogodin'omulunwa Dance Props 217

Appendix eight (viii) Floor Pattern of Ada and Ndiomu Dance 221

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1.1: *Fishing canoes on the river bank of Osomala at low tide* *2*

Figure 1.2: *A canoe arriving Osomala bank, (note the palm trees in the background which provided revenue for Osomala kingdom during the industrial revolution)* *12*

Fig. 3.1: *Guests arriving Osomala River bank for the funeral ceremony* *112*

Figure 3.2: *The photograph of the key informant of the study, The Nnoli of Isiolu village* *114*

Figure Fig.4.1: *His Royal Highness Okakwu Isamade of Odekpe.* *120*

Figure 4.2: *The researcher in conference with the chief's council at the Palace of the Akoh of Okoh town, Delta State* *122*

Figure 4.3: *The Researcher in conference with Oyata Okwuona, the leader of the Umuada of Isiolu Village.* 126

Figure 4.4: *Oyata Okwuona Okwesa, shortly after offerings to her ancestral emblems* *128*

Fig 4.6: *The in-laws disembark on Osomala riverbank 131*

Figure 4.7: *The Ada and Okpala commence the Arrival Dance in Osomala. Note the photograph of the deceased carried by a relative. This will serve as an* **icon** *for the deceased body* *132*

Fig 4.8: *The Umuada and Ndiomu join the Arrival Dance* *135*

Fig4.9: *The costume of the Okpala* *136*

Fig.4.10 *The costume of Ada* *137*

Fig 4.11: *The in-laws approaching the home of the deceased* *138*

Fig. 4.12: *The in-laws dancing on arrival at the deceased's compound* 139

Fig.4.13: *A picture of the special funeral drums used for the announcement dance Note the relatively small size of the drums which makes them light and easy to carry whilst dancing on the move.* 141

Fig 4.14: *The titled chiefs (Ndichie) awaiting the arrival of the in-laws from Okoh* 142

Fig.4.15: *Selection of dance props materials by the Ndiomu* 146

Fig. 4.16: *A piece of cloth belonging to the deceased is shredded and used to tag the Ada's dance props to symbolise thepresence of the deceased.* 147

Fig. 4.17: *A picture showing the preparation of the 'sauce of the dead', made of Okro vegetable or Ogbono (bush mang seeds)* 148

Fig. 4.18: *A Picture showing a pot of Sauce for Spirits in the middle of the wider bowl* 149

Fig 4.19: *The complete assemblage of Ogodi dance props* 151

Fig 4.20: *A picture showing the eldest daughter performing the Ada Dance, the core dance of Ogodi Performance* 152

Figure 4.21: *Ada joined in dance by a young Umuada* 153

Fig. 4.22: *A young Umuada complementing the Ada's dance, with the paddle gesture style (egwu – amala)* 155

Fig. 4.23: *Some Umuada displaying an aspect of Ogbaru dance style i.e. scooping the dance (hulu-egwu)) during the complementing dance of the Ada* 156

Fig. 4.24: *Picture showing the "cooking" the customary soup of spirits* 157

Fig: 4.25 *Photo showing the " cooking'' the customary soup of spirits* 159

Fig. 4.26: *Picture showing a member of the Ndiomu simultaneously playing the Okpokolo instrument and dancing* 160

Fig.4.26 *The deceased family representative consulting the family members for the negotiation price of the ewu-nzuzo goat* *161*

Fig. 4.27: *The deceased's family representative negotiating for the Ewu-Nzuzo* *162*

Fig. 4.28: *The in-laws awaiting the approval of the Ewu-Nzuzo presented to the deceased's family* *163*

Fig. 2.29: *The Ada and siblings discuss the additional cash compensation for the ewu-nzuzo* *164*

Fig. 4.30: *Acceptance and counting of the compensation cash* *165*

Fig. 4.31: *The presentation of the (boundary nanny goat) ewu-nzuzo for slaughter* *166*

Fig. 4.32: *The slaughter of the ewu-nzuz* *167*

Fig. 4.33: *The crowd escorts the racing ada on the Homebound dance, chanting "ewo ada o!"* *168*

Fig.4.34: *The Ada makes the first stop at a relative's thresh hold during the Homebound Dance* *169*

Fig. 4.35: *The Ada approaches her deceased mother's residence, escorted by the Okpala and audience* *170*

Fig.4.36: *The Ada enters the deceased's home and ends the Homebound dance* *171*

Fig.4.37: *The iconic photograph of the deceased used for Situation One* *172*

Fig 4.38: *The Ada singing her deceased mother's praise, during the Oge- Ato* *173*

Fig.4.39: *A woman praise singer recounting the good deeds of the deceased* *174*

Fig. 4.40: *Madam Ogwezi the praise singer in the company of other mourners* *175*

Fig. 4.41: *The Umuada observing the vigil of the Oge-Ato* *176*

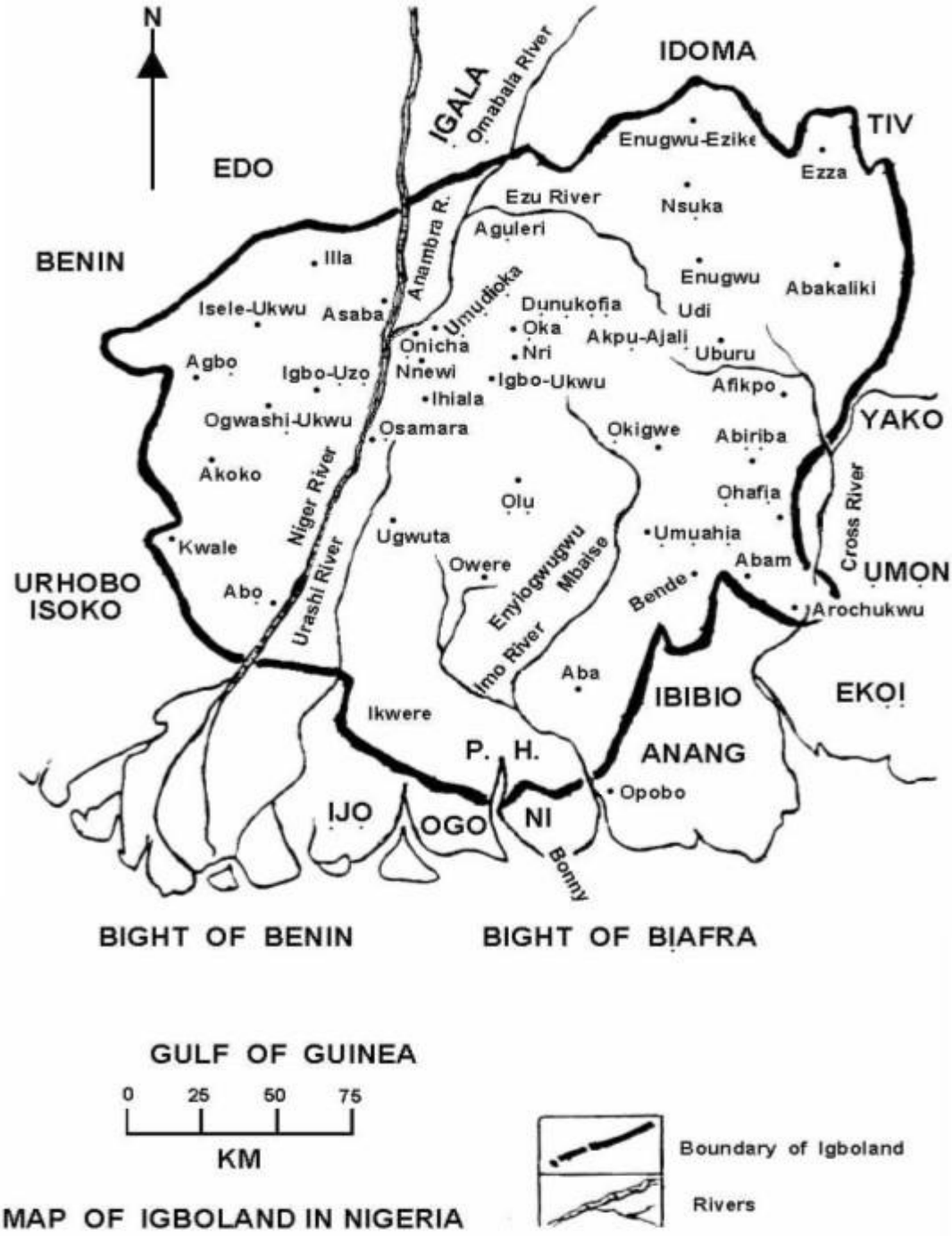


FIG. 0.1. ***MAP OF IGBO LAND. OGBARU COMMUNITIES ARE COLOURED IN GREEN*** **(COURTESY: OKONKO RESEARCH.)**

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

After years of discrimination and misinterpretation, African cultural forms, especially dance is being given attention. This phenomenon is representative of a global shift in values and power. Old values and beliefs are suddenly giving way to radical ones as general spiritual, political and cultural rebirth sweeps across the world, Nettleford (1996).

The latter half of the past millennium was characterized by a master/slave relationship between the European overlords, on the one hand, and the enslaved/colonized Africans in the African diaspora and on the African continent, on the other hand. The consequences of years of assumptions about the cultural inferiority of "lesser races" had remained persistent long after the slaves had received freedom and the colonized had been granted political independence. Unfortunately, years of careful religious indoctrination and language colonization has left Africans promoting the religious, political and cultural heritage of the long departed overlords. The process of decolonization has been painfully slow as self negation thrived among foremost scholars of the arts until the last two decades of the 20th century. Nettleford (1996:xiv)

Following the acceptance of the performing arts as a field of study, the fortune of dance studies had been very uneven through the years following. The interest given to this oldest of the arts was lukewarm and the documents were mostly sourced by Western Anthropologists who viewed it as simply the primitive expression of uncivilized people (Ajayi, 91). Subsequently, the recognition of the dance as an art was not to be until the early decades of the twentieth century. The preceding years had seen the subject of dance variously described as emotional behaviour and at its worst, as the behaviour of people at the primitive stage of development. The period following this era witnessed a slow

progress in the fortune of dance studies until the coming of Structuralist poetics. Structuralism as a language theory takes the credit for the acceptance of dance into the arts as a subject worthy of academic pursuit. The interest in dance at this point rescued it from the earlier status of insignificance.

Fig. 1.1 Fishing canoes on the river bank of Osomala at low tide

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the more recent effort of researchers in the area of dance following its acceptance into academia, evidence shows that the modernizing influences of western lifestyle and rapid social changes are still having alarming effects on performance culture, especially in African societies. Our values and customs, most of which are encoded in dance and music and which were undocumented, have been distorted, some lost and many become extinct; taking with them experiences, insight, methodologies and philosophies which have sustained African societies for centuries. The western agents of the mass media, urbanization and religion have all contributed to further erode indigenous culture. The need to survive in an increasingly mechanized world, with fast paced changes has led practitioners of oral performances to turn to the more urgent need for physical survival. Ideological sentiments cannot survive in the face of pragmatic demands and so the traditional homesteads have been abandoned by young men who would have, in the traditional setting, inherited the art of their fathers. Dance instruments have been abandoned in the goat sheds of family huts, and dance arenas converted into modern tap water sites to lure riverrine communities and attract community votes for artists-turned-politicians.

Friere (1970) has described this intrusion by Western culture on traditional values as a cultural invasion. Christianity, the western moralizing agent, discourages traditional dance in any form and it has been relentless in its condemnation sof dances which feature in religious worship. Particularly in Nigeria, the decline of traditional dance forms goes beyond the loss of the aesthetics and entertainment. As Robert Nicholls stresses,

> Indigenous cultures are functional social instruments which have been developed over the centuries to meet practical needs. In non-literate societies, art forms contained a mosaic of information and skills for coping with a variety of environments many of which are extreme. They serve indigenous cultures and are functional not so much as artefact and as an end in itself, but more as a process, a means to an end. (pg.42)

Citing the *Igede* dance of Nigeria's Benue State, Nicholls notes the effect of modernity on this traditional performance form which is hardly ever performed nowadays because critical social changes are leading to the demise of many traditional customs which engender dance. Experiences, insights, and methodologies preserved in these customs have sustained African communities for generations and could well be lost to future generations because of the fragility of oral traditions. He laments the cumulative negative impact of the so called modernizing agents such as education, mass media, religion and urbanization. These, he believes are responsible for the erosion of indigenous priorities, attributing greater blame to the insensitivity of the mass media which promotes an urban bias against traditional forms. To cap these problems, the adult populations are being lured increasingly to the cities in search of new means of self-sustenance. With patronage and interest diminished, the elders are left with no pupils to tutor as the able-bodied youth have abandoned their dances and drums in the village. The youth, passionate lovers of the new ways and staunch disciples of modernization, promote and emulate the pop culture of western countries and the consequence is self negativism and the imminent erosion of traditional moral values.

Currently, what is available in the national archives are materials that have managed through sheer tenacity to survive the onslaught of modernizing trends and the imperialist control which demanded that indigenes do away with religious art, emblems and practices which were tagged barbaric by the missionaries. Sacred dances were particularly targeted as these proved a threat to Christianity. The missionaries completed their proselytizing task by brandishing the spectre of hell fire at persistent practitioners and the promise of life after death for the converts, symbolized in the crucifix. In the fervour of religious zeal, many traditional dances were denounced and sacred works of arts destroyed in a show of loyalty to the new faith. Ajayi (1996) laments the struggle to preserve religiously coded dances against the onslaught Christianity and Islam. According to her,

> Contact with Christianity and Islam, and the ensuing contest for supremacy over Africa's indigenous religions almost wiped out dance as a means of divine communication, coming with their own cultural bias against accepting dance as a form of religious worship, no attempt was made by the new religions to understand why dance was such an important means of sacred communication in African societies. Rather every effort was made to destroy it. (pg184)

Many of the performances, especially those bearing religious overtones have been affected by modernity and have mostly lost the symbolic message entrenched in the original form. An even greater threat to traditional dances, especially the ritually coded ones is the new crop of African Christian adherents under the Pentecostal denomination who describe traditional performances that feature religious dances as "demonic". This is a great obstacle as one wonders how any objective information on ritual performances can be obtained nowadays, given the fearful spectre of Christian admonition. While this may be a source of concern, it is even more difficult to find scholars who are interested in the study of religious phenomena. It becomes necessary then to view with caution the result of research into cultural practices nowadays.

More devastating is the practice of embryonic divisions of autonomous cultural units currently ongoing in Nigeria which often merges culturally incompatible groups. This phenomenon is a major cause of psycho-social crises, arising from the dilution of cultural identities, and the extinction of cultural consciousness in smaller groups as they are subsequently absorbed into larger ones. The situation spells a bleak future for those performances which serve as a binding cord and a source of cultural pride as well as ethnographic link of groups. According to Nichols, in an attempt to foster national unity, many African countries are making efforts to promote national unity through a showcase of traditional dances. He cites this effort by the Nigerian government in one of the All Nigerian Festival of Arts, the hosting of which was rotated between the states

> in which people of different religions, culture, customs and languages can meet to perform their traditional dances music…and different ethnic groups are merged! (p.46)

The result of this exercise where hundreds of ethnic groups are grouped into incompatible ensembles, all performing at once, impromptu rehearsed pieces in very limited time, is grotesque, not just because of the insufficient time limit but also the disjointed appearance of the whole performance. Due to the pressure on the participants to compete, artists don garish costumes and include outlandish acrobatic displays for some of the otherwise solemn and often religious dances.

Finally, a most urgent problem is the absence of the performance of traditional dances, which used to be synonymous with the end of the school year in the past, and which is almost nonexistent nowadays. Under-funded government institutions and the advent of privately run schools had long drawn away parents and children. In their new European modelled schools, children are discouraged from speaking their mother tongue, tagged vernacular, with the result that the knowledge of their native language is lost.

Parents want high scores in the national examinations, so moral instruction is not on the priority list. With no cultural norms to guide the young, the youth is almost entirely lost to the influences of Western culture.

Arising from the foregoing, it is apparent that of what little research documentation is available in the area of dance in Africa, only a negligible ratio is carried out in traditional religious dances. It is urgently imperative therefore, that the religious unknown be researched, as interest in contemporary form grows disproportionately to the traditional. The present study is a response to these problems within Nigeria. The choice of Osomala town is informed by the store of un-researched performance forms in Osomala and the imminent threat of extinction to these. Besides, nothing exists yet in form of an academic record of funeral dance studies of women such as the one being undertaken in this work in the Ogbaru region.

1.3 The Igbo People

The Igbo ethnic group occupies the lower middle and Eastern Nigerian Region beginning a few kilometres after present day *Bini* town, and continues in an easterly direction across the river Niger at *Asaba* and *Onitsha*; both towns on the western and eastern banks respectively. They are found upstream above Asaba and Onitsha, and spread downstream towards the Niger Delta. From this point on the Niger; they extend towards the eastern upland all the way to just before the lower eastern border with Cameroon. The Igbo who reside on the Niger River banks between Onitsha and the Niger delta share a similar culture with the group being studied here, namely, the Ogbaru. Some of the major riverrine towns in this region which are known as Ogbaru are Okoh, Ogwu, Ogbakuba, Osomala and *Atani* on the Eastern bank. These riverrine towns share a common culture and similar life style influenced by the shared presence of the River Niger. Not surprisingly, they are united by shared beliefs and world views.

1.3.1 Present Day Igbo People

The present day Igbo speaking people constitute the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Located in South Eastern Nigeria between latitudes 5 and 7 degree North and latitudes 6 and 8 degrees East, they occupy a continuous stretch of territory of about 25,280 square kilometers. They are roughly bounded in the East by the Ibibio people, in the North by the Igalla, Idoma, and Ogoja people; in the South by the Ijo and in the West by the Edo. Today, the Igbo inhabit the entire Abia, Imo, Enugu and Anambra states in present day Nigeria while a significant number of them are included in the Rivers and Delta States. Population densities in the Igbo heartland are very high ranging in average from 750 to 1000 per square kilometer. The Igbo number over 20 million in present Nigeria (Ekechi 1989).

Present day Igbo society is what may be regarded as a ‘transitional society’; a society characterized by a discontinuity of cultural perceptions arising out of the

combined influences of attitudes formed by association with external influences and variables. Some of the most pervasive influences on the Igbo people and their society have come from outside Igbo land. These include the Slave Trade, Colonization, and the Amalgamation of present Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 by the British administration. Others include external economic and social relations (trade, missionaries, education), the First and Second World Wars, Independence and the Nigeria-Biafra Civil Wars from 1967 -70. Contemporary Igbo society is undoubtedly a transitional society in the above sense.

1.3.2 A Brief History of the people of Osomala

The people of Osomala belong to the Igbo Sub-group known as the Ogbaru who occupy the lower section of the River Niger between Onitsha in Anambra State, and stretching to *Ndoni* town in Present day Bayelsa State. There are various accounts of the origin of Osomala people. However, there is also a general agreement in all these accounts about their Idah (in present day Kogi State) antecedence. Two major accounts are cited by Olisa (1990), taken from Richard Henderson, an explorer of the 18th Century, and from Ikenna Nzimiro, the modern historian. The first account, which is based on oral tradition is known as the legend of the Warrior Ants and goes thus:

> Osomala was founded by a *Jukun* prince called *Oseme* who resided in Idah of the old Igala Kingdom. In the course of time, war broke out between the *Jukun* and the *Igala* in which the Jukun lost. Oseme, (who had probably assisted his people in the war against Igala people) was expected to pay tribute and homage to the king of Igala, but he refused to do this. As a punishment, the King of Igala subjected him and his followers to harsh measures which were meant to break down their resistance. One of these was the building of a wall round the city of Igala, using a mixture of moulded earth and palm oil, an impossible task. While they were labouring under this task, the king of Igala sent an army of soldier ants to invade and destroy the moulding mortars. Oseme then

> rallied his followers and fled from Idah with his two sons, Adajah and Ideke, following the route down the River Niger by canoes. As they moved downstream, Adaja settled in Okoh, while Ideke founded Odekpe. Oseme then moved further downstream and founded Osomala.

Thus ends the oral tradition account. The other account, known as the objective account, is the one cited by Ikenna Nzimiro:

> According to Oral tradition, the eight groups of Ika, Inyaman, Inoma, Udje, Odekpe, Oko and Osomala originally lived in a part of Idah, the capital of Igala kingdom. They migrated because they were unable to pay their annual tribute to the King of Idah (the Ata), and the official tax collector decided to take drastic measures against them. Each group, headed by its leader, stopped in the course of their downward journey along the River Niger and founded the community which today bears his name. The first five of the above were the first to stop, while the three brother lineages, Odekpe, Okoh and Osomala continued farther down the River. Odekpe stopped and founded the town of Odekpe; then Okoh stopped and founded Okoh town while the Osomala people continued till they arrived, and camped on a sandbank which forms part of their present site. The leaders of the three divisions of Osomala, the brothers, Isiolu, Umuonyeogwu, and Ugolo, crossed to the mainland and met Ndam and Umuchi people who were already settled there. They declared their intention to come and live with them, but the Ndam leaders agreed only on the condition that they destroy both their sheep and their twins because these were taboo for the Ndam people. The Osomala people did so, and when eventually they landed, the Ndam removed and settled at Okpolodum, leaving the Umuchi to take over the right to the priesthood of the land deity *ani*. Umuoga later arrived from Igala and these three groups. Ndam, Umuchi and Umuoga- became attached to the three Osomala descent groups of Ugolo, Umuonyeogwu and Isiolu.

One can see the common agreement on the origin and the motivation for Osomala peoples migration to their present settlement. Nzimiro's account also gives details of the history of Osomala people after the settlement on their new site.

The fame of Osomari extended along the Niger and its history lives in the legends of the heroic activities of its various Kings (*Atamanya*). Osomala was considered the most important and most powerful of the Igala colonies and traded not only with the Isuama Igbo of the Hinterland, but with Igala in the North, and the Abos, and Itepus (Brassmen) in the South. Osomala was an important river port and goods from the interior Igbo land and from the north, such as elephant tusks, mats, and potash were sold in exchange for palm-oil and other forest products. The connection and trade contacts between Oguta and Osomala are in the trading traditions of both towns. When Aboh cut off Osomala from contact with the Delta states, Osomala increased her trade with the Igbo in the hinterland, and with Oguta which was the most prosperous centre due to her favorable position on the mouth of the Ulashi and Njaba rivers.

By using the Ulashi, Osomala people were able to continue their trade with the Niger delta dwellers and thus avoid the heavy tolls levied by Abo for the routes under her control. Nzimiro goes on to narrate accounts of constant warfare between Abo and Osomala in which Osomala claims to have triumphed and the two powers became the Lords of the Niger, hence arose the saying, *Abo Welu; Osomala Welu!, ani nta aha ubu,!* [When Abo and Osomala have made their choices, minor lands struggle for the leftovers].

Nzimiro also emphasizes the importance of Osomala as an important centre for European trading in the 18th century and that there is documented evidence to the effect that Osomala was a trading post of the Macgregor Laird expedition. Osomala's early contact with the outside world is also documented in the accounts of missionaries, most notable of which is Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowder who visited the kingdom in April, 1870. According to him, his visit which had been long awaited by the people was very

pleasant as he was warmly received by the people with joyful cries of *Noan, noan!*, meaning, 'welcome, welcome!'(0lisa, 91)

1.3.3 Geography and Economy

Osomala lies near the edge of the rainforest zone, in the middle of the lower Niger Valley. Its position is approximately 50^0 42N, Longitude 60^0. The river current at her shore is four and half knots. The lower Niger valley region in which Osomala is situated begins at the confluence of the Niger-Benue River at Lokoja and runs for 185 miles. Aboh itself is about 40 miles South of Osomala across the River Niger. Idah town is about 120 miles North of Osomala. Several rivers meander through the lowlands for miles towards Onitsha in the North and then to the *Igala* regions. From Onitsha to the South, the river Niger flows in a fanlike shape all the way down to the lowlands known as the Niger Delta. This region is made up of rich alluvial plains which form after the ebbing of annual tides from the rainy seasons. The lower Niger Valley is dotted with many little islands which served as landmarks for 19^{th} century explorers. Their positions were strategically suitable as market places for which they were famous. The nearest of these islands, known as Ntipia (Bullock Island) belongs to Osomala and is famous for its wonderful and rare fauna.

The forested lowland North of Osomala now known as Osomala Forest Reserve is a swampy region, also famous for its production of high quality oil palm trees. (Figure1.2)

Figure 1.2: A canoe arriving Osomala bank, (note the palm trees in the background which provided revenue for Osomala kingdom during the industrial revolution)
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

The palm oil trees, cultivated at that time by hired labourers from the Isu-Amau region, provided invaluable wealth during the Trans-Atlantic trade, when palm-oil was an essential produce and was the source of energy for the Industrial revolution in Europe. The region is also a source of such valuable hardwood as *Iroko*, Mahogany and Sapele wood trees. This favourable geographic location has been responsible for the buoyant economy of Osomala for decades. For instance, the rainfall averages seventy five to eighty inches per annum w`hile the dry season is just long enough to favour transitional vegetation. As a result, the cultivation of yam tubers, a staple crop, has been especially

prosperous for the people over the years; more especially since it is not only the staple food but is also a major root crop for the region.

This geographical setting is also very conducive for farming, fishing, and for the building of canoes. In the past, men did the trading but with the end of the Slave Trade and the Trans-Atlantic trade, the men have taken to farming, while the women do the trading in fish and farm produce for important market town and still serves many Ibo towns in the region. The rise into prominence of the *Eke-Osomala* was made possible by the Slave Trade, which made so many Osomala men become rich and prominent during the Slave Trade period. The population and prominence of Osomala diminished with the abolition of the slave trade and today, a greater part of the lands occupied by many of her present neighbours to the north were governed by Ancient Osomala kingdom.

1.3.4 Religious Institutions and Practices of Ogbaru People

"*No human society can exist without some form of views of the world… all the senses of perception-hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting and smelling, are open gates for human awareness of Man's own existence and that of the World in which he exists" Mbiti (77).* No doubt, this observation by a foremost scholar of religious Philosophy, expresses a fundamental truth which is relevant to all human societies. For the African peoples in particular, their belief system is a crystallization of their observation and interpretation of the universe. Likewise, Ogbaru peoples possess a system of spiritual consciousness which merge through social and religious experience and is evident as an indivisible entity. Being an oral culture with a limited store of verbal expression, the dance is utilized as the most versatile medium through which these worldviews are expressed. In such instances, the ritual and the secular are merged as the spirits and the living interact in communal celebration. As Mbiti states:

> African peoples look upon the world as a religious universe to live, in which is also a religious experience. This outlook… shows itself in African's attitude toward

> nature and the specifically religious activities that they carry out without drawing a dichotomy between the so called 'secular' and 'sacred or 'physical' and 'spiritual' (pg.64)

Like many African societies, Ogbaru peoples believe in the existence of a supreme being who is regarded as the creator of the Universe. This being, they believe, is elevated, powerful and so far from Man that he cannot be approached directly. Rather, there are deities which are believed to be subordinate to the Supreme One, and who are responsible for various aspects of human activities on earth. It is through these deities that the supreme one is approached through dance. Commenting on the use of dance in ritual theatre, Duruaku, A.B.C. says 'man reasoned that each incomprehensible occurrence must have a superior force that controlled it. Therefore, in order to get a god on his side, he courted that god, tried to please him, and tried to accommodate what he thought would be to the gods liking'. Since he was dealing with awesome and invisible beings, he had to create an appropriate condition that would influence the gods to listen. This led to the use of dances and stylized movements as well as invocative poetry and to attract the attention of the gods. The supreme god is known as *Chukwu.* In translation, the term means [the great Creator]. He is variously referred to as *Chukwu-abi-ama* meaning [the one who discerns all things] and *Olisa-kelu-uwa*, which is 'the creator of the world'.

Another is a lesser deity known as '*Chi'*. This is the personal god who is believed to be responsible for the entire course of an individual's life. The 'chi' of an individual is believed to propel the actions of a person in the right direction as well as offer protection, progress and general well-being for the individual. There are good *chi* and bad ones. Thus when an individual happens to have been especially blessed in the community, people comment on how good his personal *chi* is. Where the reverse is the case, the chi is likewise blamed for the misfortune. The *Chi* of the Ogbaru people is very similar in its concept and function to the '*Ori'* of the Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria. The Supreme Being, *Chukwu*, and the personal god *chi* belong in the class of

deities who have unsolicited influence on the lives of the people, and this distinguishes them from the next class of deities which the people have to approach directly for requests. These consist of ancestral spirits and deities. These classes of deities are attributed with human characteristics. Because of their consciousness for honesty the Ogbaru people are reknowned for their outspokenness. As Akunne Uzoka says again,

> A major attribute of the Ogbaru person is the disposition to speak the truth and stand by what is true. This disposition was fostered by our concern of the family name and also by the fact that our justice system, which was based largely on the Alusi system, made truthfulness second nature. Also, because the of the belief in the Alusi system, Ogbaru discord is rarely settled by homicide but, at the worst, by the recourse to the Alusi -- which is really an arbitration system since the real Alusi practice insists on hearing both parties to a dispute before invocation of the deity. (http://www.ogbaru.net/news)

There are many deities to which the people seek recourse for justice in the settlement of disputes. The first to be discussed here is the *'Iyi-oji Odekpe'*, and the shrine is situated in the town to which its name is appended, that is, Odekpe town. There is a male and female version of this idol. The male, which is discussed, is believed to be a very vindictive deity who tends to be harsh in its remonstrance of the guilty. It is a highly feared deity among the Ogbaru and often acts in a judicial capacity in the settlement of disputes, vindicating the just and punishing the guilty (often with slow death and systematic elimination of the lives of family members and generations.) Alternatively, it visits incurable diseases such as apoplexy, liver cancer, and even madness on victims and their relatives. Its shrine is to be found on a grassy patch by the edge of the River Niger at Odekpe. The site is littered with remains and skeletons of animals such as goats, chickens etc, the evidence of gifts offered to the deity by grateful, vindicated parties. The female version also has a shrine

located further inland. The functions are similar to that of the male but her punishment is often milder, limiting her actions to the guilty individual alone and excluding family members.

The second *iyi-oji* is situated in a town close to Osomala known as *Okpanam*. This performs the same functions as the aforementioned ones with its punishment being more or less the same in intensity. None of the *Iyi-oji* has priests or priestesses and applicants to a case have to make direct supplications to the deities at the shrine. Traditional dance groups often make supplications to these deities if favoured by them.

The other highly recognized religious body is the Ancestral Cult. This is the most singularly powerful body and acts as a judicial body. In cases of land disputes, a party wishing for the intervention of the ancestral cult indicates his invitation of the cult, and also the significance of his ownership of the given piece of land by planting a flag of ownership known as '*Ibe'* on the land. This is seen as a challenge by the contestant who may persist by complaining to the village priest to show his own authority over the piece of land. At this point, the ancestral cult may step into the matter. The parties are then called to swear under oath and their statements are taken as the truth as people fear the punishment of the gods and therefore rarely lie.

Abominations committed against the ancestral cult are the most serious, and punishment could be permanent exile from the community. These include incest, divulging of sacred information of the *ozo* cult, and other crimes considered as heinous. For milder offences such as beating a wife on the Eke market day and fighting during the New Yam Feast, the offender may gain restitution by providing a designated number of cattle to be slaughtered and some bottles of traditional gin. Depending on the nature of the offence, the offender also undergoes some ritual cleansing.

Ancestral cult worship is an important religious practice and this is why funeral rites are taken seriously in this culture. The ceremony at once prepares the passage of the deceased to the land of the ancestors and simultaneously presents an opportunity for the

celebration and the re-enactment of the peoples' historical ascendancy from the Igala Kingdom. According to Olisa Chukwuemeka,

> the 'ofo' is the ancestral cult festival…. It is the feast that reminds Osomala people of their origin. It reminds them not only of their great ancestors from Jukun' (pg23)

At the commencement of this festival, which features ritual dances, the land deity, 'Ani' is approached and sacrifices made to her to help promote an accident- free celebration. The feast consists of three stages. According to Olisa (1980), the first two stages are conducted in a secret grove. After secret meetings are held in these groves, the coded secret music of the '*Ufele'* is played on a special clay flute of the same name and a special meal known as '*Ighe-akwukwo'* is provided. Other religious festivals include the *Okposi* and *Ulo*. *Okposi* is the New Yam festival and is celeberated in August as a fore-runner to the annual harvest of yam, which is the most important staple food of the region. Like the *Ofo* festival, non-indigenes are not allowed to be in town during the period of this festival, which lasts for nine days. The festival begins with a dance known as *ani-madu-baga* meaning '*strangers, do not pass*'. It is said that in the past years of Osomala glory, "the traffic of traders, both African and European was temporarily halted for the nine days within which this festival takes place. Nowadays, strangers are allowed to drive past the town through the highway road (not the central town route) and row past the waterways. The coming of modernity, resulting in inter-communal residency has introduced a softening of measures nowadays.

The next and the last feast to be discussed here is the *Ulo* festival. This is the communal cleansing festival. It begins on the *Nkwo* day of the Igbo four week system. It is also opened with the *ani madu baga* dance. The main ceremony is opened with a dance of young virgins of the town. The dance is known as *Nkwo* and is performed at the beginning of the festival after the *ani madu baga* dance. Next follows the dance of the princes and princesses of the court, known as the *'iha ota'* and *Aligede* dances. After

these, follow the burning of wood. Here, every indigene of the town wakes up at dawn, and bearing a piece of wood at dawn, with a smoldering embers at the other end, wave it in the air, singing the '*agba kulo modo!'* chant. Everyone heads for the river Niger praying that all evil in their homes leave with the burning wood, after which the wood pieces are flung into the river and carried downstream to the sea, symbolically taking along the problems of the participants. After this ceremony, the *ozo* titleholders of individual villages dress up in their best clothes and proceed to the shrine of *Ani* for the chalk presentation ceremony or *Itu-Nzu*. This takes place on *Afo* day. This is concluded with general feasting that had begun from the day of the cleansing ceremony. As in the beginning, the eldest Umuada of each family hosts the *ozo* members with feasting and drinks at her home and at the end receives a token gift of cash and a bottle of local gin on behalf of the household. This brings the ceremony to an official close.

Another religious body to be discussed within the context of this work is the *Ani* deity. *Ani* is a custodian of communal fertility and is responsible for general productivity in the community. It is *Ani* who ensures a good and bountiful harvest; making available moderate rainfall and adequate sunshine and also ensuring that peace and harmony reigns in the community. *Ani* is the symbol of peace, progress and general wellbeing in the community and supplication must be made to her before every dance performance within this culture.

Sacred violations such known *nso* (taboos) and *alu* (abomination) are forbidden by the earth deity. For instance, victims of suicide are taboo to the deity and may not be buried in traditional homesteads but rather in the evil forest. Where such violations occur, propitiation rites have to be carried out immediately to ward of the anger of the deity. It is believed that if these rites are not performed, the deity could visit calamity on the community. Murder is also a major abomination because it involves the contamination of the earth with the act of violent death. Where this occurs, the guilty party would undergo a ritual ceremony which would precede the intervention of judicial authorities. Other

minor taboos are the physical attack against a parent or confrontation with metal objects especially the matchet. These abominations would require cleansing rites to free the individual and the community from the anger of the earth deity.

Other offences which may be classified as *Nso* or taboos include chewing sticks (used as a sort of toothbrush) at night or paddling canoes on dry land specifically because these are done only by orphans and could portend danger for the parents of the offender. *Ani* is worshipped by the titled men of the community and this deity has to be appeased and honored at the onset of every festival as in the case of the *Ofo* festival. The shrine of *Ani* is located at the base of a silk cotton tree in the middle of the town square. Today, with about half of the original Osomala land mass gone with the ongoing erosion of the River Niger lower banks, the tree stands precariously on the razor edge of the town's section of the cliff. The totem of *Ani* is native white chalk, representing her benevolent and motherly love.

The last deity to be discussed here is the *Ohai* deity. This is the deity to which all women in Osomala including indigenous women and wives married from outside the community do obeisance. The devotees meet on designated days to dance and chant in worship to the deity.

Finally, the Ogbaru peoples believe in reincarnation. This is known as *ino-uwa* meaning 'a return to the world'. Where burial rites for the deceased are not completed, the deceased could reincarnate as a sickly or headstrong child. Often, after the birth of a child, a visit is made to a native doctor or divination priest to find out which departed family member from the past has reincarnated in the child. The process is known as *Ima-Agu*. The priest consults his divination instruments having received his token fee of gin and coins after which he comes up with the name of the reincarnated person. The reincarnated could be a relative and, in rare cases, a friend of a parent who had been very close to the family. Rites are performed to appease the reincarnated ancestor and all is well. Where it is a relative, the child is addressed by the greeting name of the reincarnated subject and

the same follows if it is a friend. It has been observed that where the reincarnated subject is a friend, the parent relates to this child as they would with the departed friend, that is, on equal terms. Such children rarely abuse this indulgence and often cherish the special recognition awarded them by behaving responsibly and often with wisdom beyond their years.

1.3.5 Ogbaru Culture and the Dance

In the words of a prominent Ogbaru citizen, Chief Uzoka,

> People who claim Ogbaru heritage and clanship, inhabit the two sides of Niger begining from Odekpe through Adiawai on the Eastern flank of the Niger and on the western frank of the Niger from Oko down to Onya and Ase (i,e the whole of the Ndokwa areas). That is why we have, interestingly, different spellings of the clan name - We have Ogbaru, Ogbahu, and Ogbesu. Ogbahu is the Eastern version, while Ogbesu is the Western (Ndokwa) version. Ogbaru is the government ascribed version! I am sure that none of us here will disclaim any of the variants of the name when we are identified with them! It is important to remind ourselves that State boundaries have not inhibited identifications without Ogbaru heritage - the Ndonis in the Rivers and the Abor in Delta are as staunchly Ogbaru as any other person. It is true that we sometimes claim different origins - some claim emigration from Benin, while others claim Igala origin, and so on. But today, being Ogbaru is a heritage we are happy and proud to claim. Ogbaru people inhabit a very fertile land and therefore are agrarian, concentrating largely on yam cultivation. We also have access to the river and have a fishing tradition. In fact, quite a major proportion of our tradition is river (water) based. And about tradition, we have a rich heritage in tradition - our family and marriage custom, including respect for elders, our work ethic, our festivals, our orientation to life, our belief systems and above all our pride in who we are - these are the elements of Ogbaruness which make us who we are, the progressive aspects of which we should strive

> to uphold and preserve. Because of their orientation to life and their belief systems, Ogbaru people are in fact a distinct people in the way they live, and their behaviour. The Ogbaru person is above all a family and a community person. Concern over the welfare of family and community is a major trademark of the Ogbaru. http//www.Ogbaru.net/news (Feb15 2011)

There are different views of what informs aesthetic values within a culture. In the area of dance, especially on the African continent, style aesthetics are as varied as the great multiplicity of ethnic groups (Primus1996). Among the Ogbaru Igbo, dance is a celebration of life, a storytelling of events and an expression of the ethos which govern the life of a community. As in most of Africa, Dance also expresses personal and community victories and challenges, gratitude to the gods and disappointment with life, the joy at birth and the sorrow of death. The dance embraces all, releases all the panorama of human experience from the earliest times to the present. Dance performances vary and are determined by a given event and categorized by age, sex, occupation and so on. The gestural form and content is influenced invariably by the worldview of the people as well as environmental factors. Thus, many dances of riverrine people adopt the paddling gestures which is a reflection of their occupation as fishermen, and some the soil-tilling gestures as a mime of the farming activities. Many dance experts have attested to the fact that dance reflects movements used in daily activities. According to Rudolf Laban (1944), the dance gestures used in dance by man are *"the same form of movement used in work"*. Nketia (1974), reiterating the same view, observed that the postures adopted in dance are directly related to the way the body is used and moved in daily habits. Says he, "*for instance, in an agrarian community, the tilling of the soil requires a certain rhythmic pattern, which eases the effort of the farmer and simultaneously provides a beat to the songs which accompany the activity"*. As an agrarian community, it is apparent that the tilling of the soil requires a certain rhythmic pattern which eases the effort of the farmer and at the same time provides a beat which accompanies the activity. This confirms the

theory that the positions assumed in dance within a culture are directly related to the way the body is used and moved in daily habits. Hence, the farming communities of Ogbaru utilize movements employed in the hoeing and tilling of the soil. The *egwu-olu* men's dance is one of such performances which predominantly feature farming movements.

The river represents the peoples' source of sustenance and is also a means of transportation to and from neighbouring communities which are situated along the river bank. Many other actions in other contexts simulate the paddling and bathing gestures (in a manner associated with river bathing).In fact, the expression for encouraging joyful dancing is *"hulu egwu*", which in translation, means "*scoop the dance*". The boat regatta of the Kalabari people is a paddle dance in which the participants literarily perform spectacular feats of synchronized rowing on the creeks of the River Niger delta. One of the most popular of Ogbaru dances is *Egwu-Amala*, which depicts river paddling and about which much has been written. The influence of the Niger is such that it invariably features in the dramatic work of artists from this region. Some famous ones are the celebrated plays of John Bekederemo-Clark, titled *Song of a Goat* and *The Raft (1964). The Raft* in particular, the setting of which is a river, relies heavily on imageries of the River and almost all the symbolisms are derived from the association of the people with the River Niger.

Additionally, as a medium of expression of the ethos and religious philosophy of the people, the dance acts as a device for social commentary and control. Specifically, it endorses socially accepted behaviour through dance and song themes that praise noble attributes and disparage unacceptable conduct (Enekwe1991). Judith Hanna (1966) observes that "*dance movements reflect aesthetic feats and unique movements*". For instance, such virtues as cheerfulness, forbearance cleanliness, and humility are admired in the female sex. These are therefore often the themes of songs that accompany many of the dances. For the man in this community, the skills of farming, responsibility for one's family and the in-laws are praised and expected and these virtues are similarly sung. It is

interesting to note that the dance gestures adopted among the women folk is always accompanied by a smile even while performing a physically tasking piece. In the men's dance, similarly, the movements adopted are often vigorous and acrobatic in nature, these reflecting the admired trait of strength in the men folk. By and large, the dance among the Ogbaru people embraces their religious, social and moral values.

In conclusion, Ogbaru dances reflect a high aesthetic concern, and as a reflection of communal life and values, it embodies the ethics and values which make up the structure and content of the dance.

1.4 Igbo Cultural Portrait of the *Umuada* (indigenously born woman)

The notion that women are possessed of spiritual powers which are mysterious and elusive and which confounds the understanding of their men folk is common knowledge in human society. In the African world, with its deep consciousness of spirituality, the belief in this phenomenon is established and taken for granted. Given the gender superiority that a patriarchal society grants the male, the society is bewildered and confused by the lack of understanding of this one area of female autonomy and tag it "witchcraft". In a seminal paper titled *Calling Aje witch in order to hang her* Ayo Adeduntan (2002), comments on the portrait of the female gender in a patriarchal society. Says he,

" *Aje* is, in aggregate or various manifestations, the female supernatural power designed to counterbalance not only the patriarchal hegemony, but also to ensure redress by the woman against human injustice" According to Oyeronke Oyewumi,(1997;2002), in pre-literate Africa, the Yoruba woman "had not been as disempowered as in the west". Buttressing a similar notion on the portrait of the woman in Yoruba culture, Omolara Ogundipe says that in Yoruba culture,

> *the woman or the female principle is seen as a symbol and icon of all life and that which is good. In the language, we say something is female meaning it is good; male, meaning*

> *that which is hard and given to bad luck. We greet people at the turn of the year that the New Year be female, not male. The woman or female principle also symbolizes the whole, city and people. (p.22)*

Oyewumi further states that the negative view of female powers had been engendered by practitioners of Ifa and Egungun who had set the model for the conception of the *Aje* as a force of negative energy. Among the Ogbaru Igbos, the *Aje* of the Yoruba is closely related to the igbo equivalent concept with a slightly less negative social perception of functional terrain. The Ogbaru *amosu* is a loose term, with a flexibility of application ranging from such simple collocations for an intelligent person to someone with psychic gifts. These powers can best be described as psychic because it operates beyond the realm of the physical. To call it 'witchcraft' with the general understanding of evil inclinations would be as risky as discussing the shape of a shadow which depends on several variants for its form and color. The concepts and categories are so complex that they cannot be exhaustively treated in this work, except as it relates to the subject under discussion. A more objective approach would be to attempt an understanding of the *Umuada* and the dynamics of their social significance.

Igbo society generally places a relatively high premium on indigenous women, a fact which is apparent in their involvement in the affairs of state and as religious mediators for the community. Long before the arrival of colonialism women have been powerful part of Igbo society. Though a patriarchal society, there are records of communities where women's associations are strong and contribute to the maintenance of law and order. Umuada is the association of indigenous daughters of a given community. "*Umuada*" is a compound collective noun from "*umu'* and "*ada*" means "daughter"; "*umu*" is a generic term that conveys the sense of many. Although, the term "*ada*" is used in reference to the eldest daughter of a family, (*adaobi*), *ada* generally means a female child. In essence, all daughters of a particular village, clan, or town and whether old or young; single or married; divorced or separated, all enjoy equal rights within the group. Today the Umuada

is a power socio-political setup in Igbo culture and acts as a functional forum for women. The Umuada also take titles within the patrilineal community. Two of such are Nri and Aguleri towns in which women take social titles. One of such titles is the Iyom title, which costs a substantial amount of money and an office to which only the rich can aspire. The title is a mark of industry and wealth and encourages hard work and resourcefulness in the women folk. The group of women known as *Amu Na Uno* contributes to the maintenance of law and order by keeping surveillance in the town against thieves. These women belong to a thirty- strong association known as *Ili Madu Nato*. The group is made up of members who have been chosen and delegated by clans within villages. They also settle domestic disputes involving, for instance, cases of the destruction of crops by domestic animals. In this case, the animal may be seized until the stipulated fine for the offence has been paid. In traditional society

According to Njaka, "the Umuada intrude in the affairs of state and can impose sanctions which may include heavy fines, and other measures. Certainly, the elders will go to great lengths to avoid confrontations with the Umuada and in this way the women indirectly exert a strong influence on affairs of state". However, even at Nri and Aguleri, where women play important roles in the community, the condition for title taking and a role in the running of the community is that the subject Umuada should be both of Nri origin and also married within the community. Women married from outside the community, exogamously, (*Ndiomu)* also enjoy powers which outweigh that of the Umuada who are married outside the community. This will suggest that the Nri people operate the generally system of giving up the patrilineal claim to the Umuada upon the incidence of marriage and this represents a significant divergence from the practice of the Ogbaru towns.

1.4.1 Umuada of Osomala

Like many Ogbaru communities, the people of Osomala esteem the Umuada of the town. This is evident in the degree of involvement of these women in the affairs of the town. In Ogbaru, the children of the umuada are given special regard though they do not belong patrilineally to the community. If they encounter problems in their fathers' home they are welcome to stay with their mother's people, pending the resolution of the issues involved. A case in point is that in Chinua Achebe's classic, *Things fall Apart*, (1958) where Okonkwo, the protagonist takes refuge in his mother's village of Mbanta, after he was ostracized for murdering son. The children of the *Umuada* are known as "*Nwadiani*". The *ada* who marry out is particularly important as they acted as spies in traditional society on behalf of their communities, taking advantage of their position as Ndiomu in their consanguine residence. The Umuada function along a formal and organized system which is based on a hierarchical arrangement. Osomala is made up of nine villages, each of which is headed by the eldest *ada* of the village under the title of Ada-Uku. The roles of umuada may be classified under **Judicial** and **Spiritual** categories.

Judicial duties

The judicial duties of *Umuada* include the settlement of disputes among fellow women and the community, infidelity issues involving offending wives, conflicts involving physical fighting between parties, assault or physical attack of a wife on her mother-in-law, and other issues under these categories which may fall under their jurisdiction.

Living together in close proximity within family compounds has its constraints and friction occurs occasionally amongst household members. These can range from disputes involving verbal assaults where taboo subjects are mentioned in the heat of disagreement, to the abuse of powers by a rival wife to insubordination of a wife to her mother in-law and so forth. The approach of the *Umuada* in each case will depend on the gravity of the given issue. For instance, in the case of an insult directed at a mother in-law's family, this

would attract a stiffer fine from the Umuada than would a fight between two wives within the family. This is because a mother in-law is a revered figure who automatically becomes a mother to her son's wife through the process marriage. A wife is therefore expected to show even greater respect to the mother in-law than she would to her husband. An attack by a wife against her mother in-law in whatever form would therefore earn her a very stiff fine from the *Umuada*.

Cases involving infidelity is an important area of Umuada intervention. However, a meeting is arranged whereby the woman is questioned by the Umuada, after which a verdict is passed. In in the indigenous setup, where a woman had been denied conjugal rights, the fines from the Umuada may be lenient. An offender will have to undergo ritual cleansing in addition to an additional fine. In such cases, which is not common among the Ogbaru peoples, the woman would have to undergo a drawn–out process which is almost equivalent to a re–marriage to her spouse. Depending on the social status of the husband, she will at the end of her spiritual cleansing be expected to slaughter some animal and cook a special meal for her husband as atonement and for forgiveness from *Ohai* deity. A titled chief of the *Ozo* cult might require a goat while a lesser man might require nothing more than a goat, and nowadays, even chickens can be used for this purpose.

Physical violence from a man against his wife, and in the event of which the wife runs away, also requires the intervention of the *Umuada*. In this case, after the customary visit of the husbands family to the parents of the wife to plead for her return, the next process would be to approach the *Umuada* of the estranged wife's clan to appeal so that a fine may be paid to them (as the wife cannot return without permission from the *Umuada*. These are the general areas of jurisdiction of *Umuada* in Ogbaru.

Spiritual Duties

As a group of community women who have vested interest in the welfare of people, the *Umuada* owe allegiance to the visionary deity of Ohai. The Ohai deity is a female deity

responsible for the protection of the community against invasion from enemies. Through this deity, members of the Umuada who are endowed with visionary powers are able to foresee and prevent impending danger in the community. As a clairvoyance media, the Umuada could ward off the danger of an impending attack. Thus, through their constant dance worship at the shrine of *Ohai*, the psychically gifted ones are given a revelation of things to come. An informant recalls an experience as a young child during the Nigerian civil war, when the overall leader of the *Umuada* known as *Ejie*, made an announcement to the effect that no one was to go to the riverside for a given number of days because the river goddess had been violated. Every one stayed away from the river. On the evening of the same day, the decapitated head of a woman was found on the river bank. On the river beyond was her floating canoe. It was later learnt that the victim was a trader from the neighbouring village who was unwittingly travelling to *Osomala* to peddle her wares and had been attacked and eaten by a crocodile. The memory of this incident attests to the visionary powers of the Umuada.

Furthermore, it is believed that the secret war plans of a given community, which could be accountable for victory over a neighbouring one, can be tapped by the psychically endowed *Umuada* of a rival community. This they do through spiritual infiltration of the meetings, where the enemy cannot be seen physically. Being spiritually blind, the men speak freely, thereby divulging tactical secrets. In this way, an entire army can be ambushed, costing the community political and economic control of their former territory. Great kingdoms of the Niger valley have been defeated in the past through the assistance of powerful *Umuada* from a rival kingdom. Where the *Umuada* of a given community is spiritually alert and enjoy the respect of their men folk, it will be virtually impossible for rival communities to infiltrate the precincts of the meetings.

It is the duty of the *Umuada* to bathe the body of deceased female relatives and prepare it for burial. Part of the process of this bathing is the inspection of the body to identify the presence of abominable diseases such as leprosy, epilepsy or any other

forbidden sickness in the communities' female dead, which would make it mandatory that the body be buried in the evil forest. Also any signs of death arising from the oaths taken at the shrine of idols would mean that such bodies cannot be buried in communal burial grounds but would be sent to the evil forest. Such bodies are taboo against the earth deity, Ani and forbidden for burial on communal burial grounds and traditional homesteads (since the body would be considered the property of the given deity and would spiritually contaminate the community).

Yet another occasion, which requires the intervention of *Umuada*, is a situation whereby a woman in the throes of labour is unable to deliver and is at risk of losing her life and that of the unborn child. Because the belief is that pregnancy is a natural occurrence, and that like the seasons, when a pregnancy has reached its full term, the delivery of the baby should occur with ease, it is felt that the reason that could possibly prevent a delivery is a misdeed on the part of the woman. It is believed that after her confession, the foetus would be spared.

The *Umuada* also perform in priestly capacities. For instance, in the normal day-to-day activities of the community, tension degenerates into confrontations that culminate in tragic acts such accidental murder, matricide, incest, and other abominable acts. In such cases, it becomes a matter of urgency to carry out spiritual cleansing rites to conciliate the spirit of the earth deity to whom such acts are directed.

Although it is the members of the ancestral cult who prescribe penalties, the actual cleansing rites are carried out by the *Umuada*. The process involves a ritual cleansing. After the offender has spent a specified number of days in isolation, the sacrifice of an eight-day old chick is made to the land deity. The pattern is more or less the same for all conciliatory rites with minor variations. As devotees of the land deity, specified bottles of local gin are given to the *Umuada* as a traditional fee. The culprit is then made to sit in the shrine where his /her hair is shaved and thrown on the shrine emblems. The women dance

triumphantly around the culprit and the ceremony comes to an end. These activities take about eight days to complete.

The Umuada generally undertake the spiritual cleansing of the community during feasts and festivals and the worship of deities on a day-to-day basis. Other duties include the celebration of the ritual passage of the deceased into the ancestral realm and spiritual cleansing of the community during feasts and festivals. All these sum up the duties of the *Umuada* as spiritual custodians.

1.5 Research Questions

- What is the role of dance in traditional African funeral rites?
- Why do Africans celebrate death passages of the adult deceased with such relative fanfare?
- Why is the burial of women given such detail and importance in a patriarchal society?
- Considering the importance of burial dances in African culture, why is there little documentation of burial dances?

The above are the questions that this work seeks to answer.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to reveal the cultural information and entertainment value found in religiously motivated dances. Research interest is needed particularly in funeral performances to prevent extinction.

1.6.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to document the role of funeral dances among the Ogbaru Igbo people with special reference to the *Ogodin'omulunwa* female burial dance of the Osomala people.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows;

- To document the communication value of dance in rites of passages using *Ogodin'omulunwa* as a case study.
- To explore the potential of funeral dances as a medium of information and preservation of social and moral ethics in the region.
- To expose the symbolic content encoded in funeral dance performances.
- To examine the motivation for the elaborate burial ceremonies performed for women in a patriarchal culture.
- To explore the possibility of reducing the heavy symbolism that has been a deterrent to research into funeral performances, through the application of the Semiotics Theory.

1.7 Justification for and Significance of the Study

Despite the fact that the phenomenon of dance is an intrinsic social and religious event in African societies, the inclusion of the dance in the performing arts as a subject worthy of serious academic study is relatively recent and therefore research input in this area in African tertiary institutions is sparse compared to other performing arts disciplines. Of all the genres that make up the performing arts, dance is still the least researched. This is because accounts of the dance of African societies are subsumed in reports of colonial administrators, the travel accounts of tourists or moralistic missionaries which treat the subject as exotic elements. It is necessary therefore to increase effort and interest in this most popular area of traditional art so that the years of dormancy which has led to the unavailability and distortion of original works on dance, will not lead to extinction of what is left.

More importantly, the effect of political divisions that rarely consider the autonomy of groups is a greater threat to the existence of indigenous forms. Hence, some

Ogbaru towns which perform *Ogodi* dance such as Oguta is now part of Imo state, the Aboh town in Delta state and the Ndoni people in Rivers state. Osomala, the Ogbaru town used as a case study here is currently located in Anambra state, where the people coexist in a culturally incompatible atmosphere with a larger dialectal group. Customs and traditions often cannot compete in this atmosphere and distortion and extinction inevitably occur. Studying the dance of the Ogbaru people is highly unique and essential as this will adequately contribute to academic knowledge. Also, available research in dance studies very sparingly with burial dances despite the importance of this final rite of transition in African socio-cultural experience. It thus becomes imperative that as many as possible of the varied forms of funeral dances be studied.

Moreover, majority of the reports on dance were compiled by individuals who were not ethnologists, dance specialists or even ordinary enthusiasts but by subscribers to the Darwinian theory of evolution which viewed dance as a behavior belonging to the lowest strata of evolution. Malinowski(1936) comments on the reports of missionaries who were too frightened of the dances without ever coming near them and yet were convinced that the dances invariably led to fornication. Unfortunately, the anthropologists, who should know better, endorsed this form of ethnocentrism, describing non-western dances as "lewd ambling" or "imitative fornication". However, more systematic and objective research initiative has recently been going on following the birth of Structuralist theories communication. It thus becomes urgent to focus more on specific cultural units especially in relations to dance in the interest of detailed and worthwhile research.

In addition, it could be observed that the orientation of dance studies especially in the colonies were anthropological in nature before the recent study of the phenomenon as an art. The result is that the bulk of literature and other documented data on dance performance are viewed through the lenses of anthropology. There is a serious handicap in this as logocentricism tends to strive on this manner of approach as Ted Polhemus has

observed. To engender a better understanding of dance in oral societies, a more holistic approach is needed whereby the verbal and non-verbal are studied simultaneously. John Blacking has stressed this need and observes that

> Although music and dance are forms of non-verbal communication, they are always social facts and so they can never be completely free from reality that predominates in different societies. (77)

The choice of the funeral dance is justified by two reasons. The first is the dearth of research documents on funeral dances. While many scholars delve into popular dance performances with great enthusiasm, very few show interest in ritual performances. One of the possible reasons for this paucity is that many ritual ceremonies are wary of the voyeuristic interest of non-indigenous researchers on such forms. This interest is viewed by the owners as a desecration of a sacred ceremony. An interest in documenting such events therefore often meets with hostile opposition. When the occasion is a funeral ceremony, it becomes even more fractious to obtain information through a video recording and the researcher's proposition is viewed as an insult to the spirit of the deceased. It is extremely difficult to convince owners of the ceremonies of the importance of the documentation of these performances for posterity. The burial ceremonies which are popular in the cities nowadays are carried out according to Christian tenets and the dances featured are performed by contemporary professional musicians. These cannot provide the sort of information which we find encoded in the drums, costume, lyrics, shroud ritual items and traditional performance space of original funeral rites. It is very urgent therefore that what little is available of performances that are close to the source be studied and documented.

Finally, although much work is being done to study the role of women in some African societies, not much is available in area of burial rites designed for women in traditional society. Women are the acknowledged mainstay of the home and by extension the society. It is important therefore that data on the roles of the female gender in the

society be made, and dance performances such as those celebrating rites of passage are potential media of information towards this goal. Among the Ogbaru people, special burial ceremonies which celebrate the lifetime of a woman are performed at death. As this is a rare trend in a male dominated society, it becomes imperative that this dance be studied to reveal information on the woman in an African community. The study will also serve as a spring board for other scholars who may wish to take the initiative into this area of gender studies.

1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this research encompasses the description and examination of *Ogodon'omulunwa,* a funeral dance performed for deceased women among some Ogbaru people; namely: Osomala, Okoh and Odekpe towns, these being a group which share common beliefs and traditions arising from their shared ascendancy from the Ancient Kingdom of Igala. Since there are other rites of passage dances, determined by age, sex and social status, it becomes necessary to distinguish the interest area.

As a result of the continuous creation of states in Nigeria by the political leaders, a lot of fragmentation of communities has occurred. For instance the Ogbaru speaking Igbo of the riverine region of Eastern Nigeria is a group which united by shared cultural practices, customs and dialectal ties. Many of the owners also share a common antecedence of ancestral lineage and, in the past, this antecedence was a source of pride and engendered brotherly love among these residents. However, at the commencement of this research, at least three Ogbaru towns were to be found in three different states where their relatively insignificant populations were subsumed within the larger dialectally autonomous groups. Specifically, the Ogbaru town of Oguta is now found in Imo state, the town of Aboh in Delta State and Ndoni in Rivers State. As earlier mentioned, Osomala, town is currently located in Anambra state. Their existence as minority groups in the host states lead to cultural insecurity and eventually 'gray out' as it is absorbed into

larger groups. Customs and traditions of the minority often cannot hold out in this atmosphere and distortion extinction follow inevitably. Thus the study will focus its interest on performance within these groups, especially when one considers the effect of these political divisions and the years of dormancy to which the dance has been subjected and which has subsequently led to distortions and sometimes outright extinction of original forms.

The study is also concerned with the social value of the woman in a traditional Igbo community and how this is communicated in the funeral dances designed specifically for women. For this reason, the work may be seen as both sociological and artistic in posture\perspective. Although the work focuses on the woman, the critical angle cannot be said to be feminist per se, as for instance the works of Babalola Yai and Benedict Ibitokun, mainly because it is not about the place of the woman vis-à-vis that of the man. Rather, it is an objective account of the woman's contribution to her community and how this is communicated through dance dynamics. This is not to suggest that all roles attributed to woman in oral societies are redeeming and all-positive, especially as the work does not undertake a comparative analysis of the sex roles. Therefore, the discursive scopes will encompass the validation of entertainment within a funeral ritual context. For sharper focus, the Ogbaru Igbo community of Osomala will provide the model and also a referential point for the dance culture of the region.

The terminology *Ogodin'omulunwa* 'there is dignity in motherhood' is the name given to the most popular of the dance pieces performed for the deceased. It is the only one which features the exclusive participation of women. This has been adopted by the researcher as an identifying mode for the entire burial dance which is simply termed 'women's burial'. However, whenever a burial ceremony is scheduled for a deceased woman, community members enthusiastically look forward to the performance of the *Ogodin'omulunwa* nucleic segment. Perhaps this is because it allows all-women participation and also possesses a light-hearted and celebrative atmosphere. Most

importantly, in embraces the theme of the celebration in its meaning when translated. ‘There is value in motherhood’

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

What is Dance? 'No art suffers more misunderstanding, sentimental judgement, and mystical interpretation than the art of dancing', (Lange 1953). Myron Nadel describes the phenomenon of dance as 'an art which can hold in itself the essence of spiritual existence and from the beginning of time; dance was an important part of religious ceremony. It is an experience which could uplift the individual, generate spiritual frenzy and heighten unexplainable supernatural states. She is sure however that all dance motion is gesture, or a composite part of gesture and always motivated by expressive movement. Jack Anderson (1974) describes dance as the *"oldest of the art of movement. Dance flourishes everywhere in different forms. Its origins are rooted in the prehistoric past, for long before dance grew to be a complex art early man took pleasure in swaying, turning, stepping, and stamping rhythmically, just as small children do today"*. Aware of the movement of the powerful forces of nature, early man moved in ways he hoped would appease those forces or give him power over them. Hunters danced before pursuing their quarry, warriors danced before battle, tribes danced to exorcise evil spirits and to propitiate the gods. There were dances to bring rain, dances to celebrate the harvest, dances of birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Every great civilization has produced its own dances. They have all made use of the body in motion, but the gestures and meanings have differed because the body can move in so many ways. Thus dance forms have been born and thrived from culture to culture. Those of Africa and Asia are the most complex. Pearl Primus comments on the multi-faceted texture of African dance:

> It ranges from the subtlest and most lyric of movements to the most dynamic; from the most sophisticated choreographed presentation to the simplest; it can defy space in fantastic leaps into the air or burrow into the earth.
>
> It does not limit itself to any one part of the body but employs the use of the minutest muscles. It varies from the slowest and stateliest of court dances to those which move so rapidly the eye cannot hope to register all that is happening. In all, there is the concept of beauty. (Primus 1996: 6)

The complexity of African and Asian dances arises from the fact that, like their art in general, they are religiously motivated. Eastern dance is contemplative in character. This is particularly true of certain styles of Indian dance, an outgrowth of the fact that Hindus believe that the world was created by a dancing god, Lord Shiva. The dances developed in India make use of intricate gestures involving not only the arms but such parts of the body often slighted in the West as the ankles, neck, nose, wrists, and eyes. Over the centuries a number of Asian nations have blended dance with other arts to attain a composite theatrical form. Two of the major styles of traditional Japanese theatre; the fastidious Noh and the more robust Kabuki, combine dance with recitation and singing while native Chinese theatre makes no clear-cut distinction between dance, drama, opera, juggling, and acrobatics.

The ancient Greeks saw, in the formal order of dance, an instance of mind and body in perfect harmony, and as a result dancing occurred at religious festivals as well as at weddings and funerals. The choruses in Greek plays are said to have danced while they chanted, although comparatively little is known about how these performers actually moved. Tragedies contained dignified dances, while there were vigorous and sometimes lewd dances in the comedies.

Despite the scorn of early Christian traditions, dance could not be uprooted. This scorn is responsible for the loss of many dance forms in colonised of Africa. In Western

culture, dance exists both in such international manifestations as the classical ballet and in purely regional traditions. Much admired instances of the latter is the flamenco dance of Spain, famous for its fiery stamping and heel patterns and the *Isicathulo,* boot dance of the Zulu people of Southern Africa. Wherever dancing prospers and whatever bodily movements different cultures favour, there are at least two basic kinds of dance. One exists primarily for the benefit, edification, or amusement of the dancers who perform it. Folk and ballroom dances are examples of this form, which is based on the presumption that dances such as the waltz, may be fun to look at but are even more fun to take part in. The basic kind of dance assumes that its movements can be watched with pleasure; in fact, it exists to be watched. This kind of dance might be called-theatrical dance, and it includes such otherwise disparate manifestations as ballet, modern dance, Japanese Noh and the choric passages in Greek tragedy.

The craft of making and arranging dances is called choreography. Out of all the possible movement combinations that exist, the choreographer selects, edits, heightens, and sharpens those he thinks are suitable for his specific purposes. The gestures in some dances may refer to specific emotional states and their sequence may tell a story. Other dances tell no story, but instead present beautiful images of people in motion, the choreographer believing that pure movement in itself is worthy of attention. Because dance can assume so many guises, the viewer should regard each dance he attends with fresh, unprejudiced eyes. All dance styles are not alike, and some, to the uninitiated, may look decidedly odd.

Usually dances arc accompanied by suitable music, but while a score may do much to emphasize a work's rhythmic vitality or to establish its emotional atmosphere, music and dance are not invariably linked. Some dances are set to sound effects or to literary recitations; others are performed in silence. Similarly, scenery and costumes may contribute to a work's effectiveness, but some worthy dances require nothing more than simple tunics and a bare stage.

However quirky or individualistic a specific work may be, the fundamental appeal of all theatrical dance is that of seeing ever-changing shapes. Dancers inhabit space and time simultaneously, and the interest of a dance derives from the space they use and the time they take, from the positions of their bodies, from their energy, dynamics, and the way their steps are rhythmically organized into units of effort and rest. Dancers may cover great territory or huddle in a corner. They may run, leap, turn, dart, glide, or amble; their movements may seem light or heavy, large or small, taut or slack, quick or languid.

From all this activity and interactivity the dance is built. Whether it tells a story, preaches a message, or conjures a mood, dance communicates because it prompts responses within us. Dance is not simply a visual art, it is kinaesthetic as well; it appeals to our inherent sense of motion. As we watch dancers onstage, our own muscular systems react to the strain or relaxation of their movements. We not only observe what happens, we also, in some empathic way, feel it.

The art of dance is as old as the human race, but specific dance forms are much younger. And viewed in relation to the traditions of the African continent and the Orient, the genres most common in Europe and America, the ones usually referred to as ballet and modern dance, are comparative newcomers. They were conceived only a few centuries ago, but their short history is an extraordinarily eventful one.

In the area of documentation, the earliest research initiatives into the subject of the dance were undertaken by western anthropologist, whose views spelt an uneven future for the study of dance. These are the evolution theory; the cultural trait theory; the cultural personality and culture configuration theory; the problem oriented in complex and plural societies' theory and the focus on dance as a unique phenomenon (Ajayi, 1986). The first phase of the study was guided by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution of the species and postulates that just as humans evolved from simple to complex

creatures, culture is subject to the same system of growth and that dance as a cultural phenomenon belongs to an earlier, primitive stage in social development.

The interest of the anthropologists of the era, then, was to study the dance in oral societies with a view to achieving an understanding of the earlier cultural past of western societies. This theory was racist in nature because it viewed the phenomenon of dance as the practice of people below the evolutionary scale already attained by the western world. The Western societies are therefore perceived as being intellectually superior to oral societies in the cultural schema. The outcry against this notion gave way to the next stage in dance studies (Royce 1977).

The culture trait theory which studies society in relation to culture and environment followed. Here, two schools of thought emerged; the American oriented and the European oriented. In the American oriented theory, cultural areas are arranged in a hierarchy under which dance is to be found at the lower level of the cultural ladder. The leading exponent of the European theory was Sir Radcliff Brown. Once again, the dance of the colonies under the Europeans such as that of the Africans and Asians are underrated. Ajayi (1986: 15) cites this reason for the vast difference in the volume of documentation of American -Indian dances which is relatively detailed and that of the Africans which is extremely scanty in comparison. This era was soon displaced by the next stage which is based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory. According to this theory, the unconscious part of the mind is seen to predominate and indeed dictate the behavioral patterns of an individual, and dance is only important in so far as it affects the psychological state of the given social group.

The problem oriented view follows closely on the heel of the personality oriented view. Attention here is shifted to emerging urban centres and the changes brought about as a result. Later on, under the same view, the focus is shifted to plural societies and to the role of dance as a means of transmission and reception of cultural values. Works that represent this category are Terrence Ranger's *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa* (1975)

and J. Mitchel's *Kalela Dance* (956) both of which address the issue of dance as a centralized and complex reaction to the colonial situation (Ajayi, 1986: 16).

In the last of the stages cited by Ruth Finnegan, known as the phenomenological approach, dance is assumed to be a unique phenomenon. Where before the value of dance had been analyzed as a tool of cultural indication and integration, here, it is appreciated for its intrinsic qualities as an art. Maxine Sheets, the leading exponent of this view, in her publication titled *The Phenomenology of Dance* analyses the nature of western, studio based dances on their own merit. In her opinion a phenomenological approach to dance would necessarily attempt a clarification, deepening and understanding of how the human body dances the world. In the same paper, Sheets stresses the possibility of studying and describing dances as an experience that begins and ends in itself without preconceptions and prejudgments. To this end, a philosophical study beyond metaphysical and aesthetic classification is of paramount importance. This opinion is shared by another dance philosopher, David Best (1976), who emphasizes the relevance of philosophical thought as an essential criticism of dance. He postulates that no single aesthetic formula would be adequate, and suggests that since the vehicle of aesthetic expression is physical movement, an understanding of the relationship between mind and body; and the expression of the mental through the physical, "is directly apparent" (Anya Royce, 1977:19).

In pursuit of the recognition of the uniqueness of dance as a phenomenon, the intrinsic value of dance is realized in the relationship between mind and body with particular focus not only on the communicative properties but also on the aesthetic dimension which has been ignored in earlier studies by anthropologist. Dance anthropologists, recognizing the uniqueness of the dance phenomenon, later adopted a communicative and linguistic model of analysis. The communicative model, according to Hanna (1971) promotes a systemization and explication of what is often 'segmented and implicit"

Giucescu, another anthropologist proposes the communicative theory of dance, considering it as a non–autonomous, non–verbal language but essentially a part of total communication. Yet another theory is presented by Bloch (1974) who employs a linguistic mode; for the purpose of ritual analysis. On his part, he believes that the formalization of dance as a language becomes a form of power coercion. Royce is of the opinion that although dance possesses language- like features, it is nevertheless not language (Royce, 161: 14–8).

David Best remains the exception among anthropologists, by his continued insistence on the view of dance within a social context. His view was seen as hostile by dance artists who view with suspicion any suggestion of dance as a social phenomenon (Royce 1977:43). However, a change in the fortune of dance studies came with the birth of Structuralism in the early years of the twentieth century when the Swiss Linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the philosopher, Charles Saunders Peirce, proposed the theory that language resides in the human sub – conscious and that the verbal utterance is merely a localized symbol of transmission. This theory was radical because, under structuralist poetics, all meaning-making systems including body language, visual communication, musical and oral forms came to be rated as being equal in value to the written text, which had for so long occupied a position of superiority. This development marked the inclusion of dance into the world academic activity, as a subject worthy of study (Elam, 1980: 2).

2.1.2. Dance as art in Western Society

What is significant about the era following arrival of structuralism in the rank of aesthetic poetics is the implication for the study of dance as an art form. Dance came to be seen and appreciated as a creative and serious art which inevitably led to the creation of ideals, standards and aesthetic criteria. Critics of dance emerged and classical ballet which had enjoyed the safe patronage of wealthy social figures came under serious criticism.

With criticism came competition and dynamic growth. The result was the birth of a new form of dance known as Modern Dance.

As Anderson (1974) says, *"The term 'Modern Dance' has never pleased anyone—critics, choreographers, or dance historians. It has stuck, however, and a better name has yet to be found."* No one has come up with a more concise definition of just what modern dance is, although the historian, pressed for a description, might say that modern dance is a form of Western theatrical dancing that has developed almost entirely outside the ballet tradition. This new form was the creation of a number of artists who are believed to be the originators of modern dance. These are Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. While these artists had the common goal of creating a new movement which would serve as a more functional role than classical ballet did, their individual concepts of what should constitute dance reflected some differences. They represented the rebellion against the limitations of an earlier era of dance.

Yet, Modern Dance is not simply a matter of chronology, nor is it a rigid technical system. In essence, it is a point of view that stress, artistic individualism and encourages dancers to develop personal choreographic styles. According to this philosophy, there arc as many valid ways of dancing as there are skilful choreographers, an outlook that was cogently expressed in 1927 in program notes for a concert by Helen Tamiris: *"There are no general rules. Each work of art creates its own code."*

The early days of modern dance; the 1920's and 1930's, were days of adventure. Despite the Great Depression and the bewilderment of audiences, choreographers proceeded undaunted, drunk with the euphoria of recognition in the arts born with Structuralism. They virtually reinvented dance as they went along, a process that began with the rejection o' ballet, which they considered hidebound and trivial. It is perhaps significant that the two nations in which modern dance took strongest hold, America and Germany, were nations that had no celebrated ballet companies, a situation that led

ambitious dancers to experiment with new forms. Their iconoclasm occasionally went to grim extremes, however. Because ballet movements were by and large rounded and symmetrical, for example, modern dancers emphasized angular asymmetries. The result was that early modern dance tended to be fierce; it hugged the ground and was resolutely un-glamorous. Its exponent disdained frills, preferring to look earthy and study rather than conform to stereotyped ideals of grace. Save for Harald Kreutzberg in Germany and Ted Shawn and Charles Weidman in America, most of the modern dance pioneers were women. A public that branded male dancers effeminate- and thereby discouraged many potentially great dancers from entering the field, tolerated female dancers, even while suspecting their virtue. Modern dance gave women the opportunity to proclaim their independence from conventionality, both as artists and as women; and many seized the opportunity. In general, modern dance focused upon the expressive power of movement. So, of course did Isadora Duncan and the Diaghilev choreographers. But whereas Isadora and Diaghilev combined movement with and, in Diaghilev's case with fine art in order to prove that movement may hold its own with the other two, the early moderns minimized the other two arts. Music was frequently composed after a dance had been choreographed and it sometimes consisted only of percussion rhythms. Costumes were Spartan and as a result wags have called this the long woollens period of Modern Dance.

Modern dance developed independently in America and Germany, thriving in the former locale but fading in the latter in the wake of the Nazi holocaust. Before World War II, the greatest exponent of Modern Dance was Mary Wigman who had been a student of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, inventor of a system a sense of musical rhythm, and of Rudolf von Laban, who tried to apply scientific principles to movement analysis. Despite her teacher's intellectuality, Wigman's art appealed to the instincts. A stocky, muscular woman who fitted no one's idea of prettiness, Wigman created sombre, macabre, almost demonic dances that hinted at the primitive drives still lurking beneath

the veneer of civilization. She felt she was in contact with primordial forces that took possession of her as she performed, and she often wore masks in order to escape her ordinary personality and yield herself to these powers. These performances were so awesome that she sometimes became terrified of her the choreography she created. She toured America with her company and her assistant Hanya Holm later opened a dance company named after her with permission from Wigman. Holm is creditedwith the choreography of the musicals, *Kiss Me, Kate* and *My Fair Lady*.

The great iconoclast, Isadora Duncan who is generally given credit for propelling the evolution into what was eventually known as modern dance is believed have to have promoted the concept of natural dance which she interpreted as the dancing that could be done by everyone. She greatly appealed to the yearning of women for freedom in the early twentieth century and stimulated the imagination of fellow women thereby enabling them to realize hidden but hitherto restrained abilities. The uniqueness of Isadora's art lay in her allegiance to natural expressive movement which reflected largely the ideal of Greek dancing aesthetics. Commenting on Duncan's style, Marie-Therese, a former student, describes Isadora as someone who believed that dance in the classical style should be natural in Greek sense- vital, flame-like, vibrant, spirited and radiant. Therefore to dance in this classical style is never a mechanical or sterile imitation of Greek art; nor is it a mannerism or a specially contrived device.

Furthering on her description of Isadora Duncan's connection with the human in everyone, whether trained or layman, Therese continues by stating that neither the natural nor the classical excludes the human, the mundane or the poetic, because they are encompassed by the human spirit. This classical dance then is not without exaltation and depth. 'It is an impassioned gesture, a movement of the soul-the exultant fervour of the spirit. It is an illumination.'(Nadel & Miller, 1978) Duncan, it is believed was responsible for freeing the body and allowing the body to take off its 'slippers' and 'corsets'. According to George Beiswenger, Duncan returned dignity of motion and a common

sense the treatment of the body. By its simplicity and naturalness, Modern Dance endeared itself to modern educators and made its way into the education system, especially in America where the Greek ideals of physical education found a ready appeal.

One can thus say that while Duncan's legacies to dance are many, the most significant is her introduction of dance to formal education in America. Another Modern Dance artist, Jean Selma Cohen writing from a theatrical tradition believes that dance does not and should not portray literal meaning. When this happens, that is, when movement suggests a literal meaning, Cohen states that they cannot be considered aesthetic but rather a mere mime. For her, an aesthetic possibility rests with the choreographer's creation of subject matter of the dance as well as the stylization involved. Cohen does not believe in the ability of the body to convey facts as efficiently as words do and that dance movement deals generally with people and perceptions that cannot be grasped by the eye such as emotional expression and character.

In pursuit of her argument, she says that aesthetics is not equally concerned with all kinds of dancing. The ritual which is designed to ask a favour of the gods and the social dance Gwhich provides enjoyment for its participant may accidentally give aesthetic pleasure. But this is not their purpose nor is it the test of their success. The rain dance succeeds when the rain falls. The square dance goes well when the dancers have a good time. Only theatrical dancing is designed to provide the observer with an aesthetic experience. Cohen's comments are found to have been misplaced considering that her cultural theory was an anthropological one in which the evolution of forms was different and could not be applied to such an unpredictable and dynamic art form. Dance as a form of art could not evolve; it can only express and interpret man's thoughts and needs either for predictabilities or aesthetics. Therefore the dance of a period in the past cannot be described as good or bad, the judgment not being moral but simply being expressive of the time in which it is performed. It is apparent therefore that Cohen was still trapped in

the tradition which dictated ideals, and her theories did not stand a chance against the modern spirits of such artists as Martha Graham.

Martha Graham is the most famous figure of American Modern dance. Graham was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania and traces her ancestry back to Miles Standish. Graham grew up in an atmosphere of Presbyterian rectitude and when her family moved to Santa Barbara because of her sister's asthma, Graham found herself in a less stern environment, and it was in California that she first saw Ruth St. Denis' performance. She knew then that she wanted to dance, but she did not dare enrol in the Denishawn School until after her father's death. The force of family tradition had battled against her personal desires, a conflict that would be reflected in her choreography.

After some years with Denishawn, Graham was encouraged to go her own choreographic way by Louis Horst, who was Denishawn's conductor at the time. Later Horst was to serve as accompanist and father confessor to the whole early generation of American modern dancers. Graham started choreographing programs in which Denishawn exoticism gave way to a strident angularity that caused some observers to compare her to a cube. She also started teaching, taking in a young actress named Betre Davis as one of her early pupils. Among other things, Graham taught Davis to fall down a flight of stairs without injury; it was such a spectacular stunt that Davis got one role on the basis of that trick alone.

Like many modern dancers, past and present, Graham invented her technique as she went along. The kinds of movements she and her company practiced were based upon whatever creative problems were troubling her. Early Graham technique was notorious for its nervous jerks and trembling. Yet it was by no means irrational, for she based it upon a fundamental fact of life: breathing. Graham studied the bodily changes that occur during inhalation and exhalation, and from her observations developed the principles known as contraction and release. She then experimented with the dynamics of the process, allowing contractions to possess whiplash intensity. Unlike classical

ballet, which typically tried to conceal effort, Graham sought to reveal it because she believed that life itself was effort. Eventually her technique incorporated softer, more lyrical, elements, but it never ceased to be a vehicle for passion. Her productions also grew richer in terms of music and scenery, many being collaborations with sculptor Isamu Noguti.

Graham's percussive style enabled her to express emotional extremes. Some of her dances, to the dismay of rationalists, resembled visions of medieval mystics, who could combine flagellation with exaltation. Graham's finest early achievement in this vein is *Primitive Mysteries,* a 1931 work based upon the rites of Christianized Indians in the American Southwest that features a cult of female worshipers trying to emulate the Virgin .Mary, sinking into dolour at the Crucifixion and rejoicing at the Resurrection. After the Depression, many choreographers turned to themes of social protest. Graham, who seldom chose overtly topical themes, did choose during the course of the next decade to examine the forces that helped shape American society. *Frontier* (1935) offered a portrait of a pioneer woman facing the vastness of the American continent, at first with trepidation but ultimately with confidence. *Act of Judgment* attacked the crippling influence of Puritanism, a theme to which Graham returned with *Letter to the World,* in which the New Eng- land poet Emily Dickinson is thwarted by Puritan repression as personified by a terrifying dowager called the Ancestress. In *Appalachian Spring* (1944) a fire-and-brimstone revivalist preacher thunders at a housewarming- for a newly married couple. But the newlyweds' love for each other and the common sense of a pioneer woman triumph over Calvinism. With this resolution Graham apparently made peace with her heritage, for she has never taken up the theme again. Over the years, Graham has repeatedly commissioned works by contemporary composers, the music Aaron Copland provided for *Appalachian Spring* being possibly the best single score of her career.

Since the 1940's Graham has largely concerned her self with dance dramas depicting figures from history, literature, and mythology. She uses these characters as embodiments of psychological traits that are universal to mankind. *Errand into the Maze,* for instance, derives from the myth of Theses and the Minotaur but does not literally tell that story. Rather, it shows a woman shuddering her way through a labyrinth, where she confronts a creature—half man, half beast—who personifies her own fears. *Deaths mid Entrances,* suggested by the life of the Bronte sisters, mingles fancy and fact as three sisters handle objects in their house (a vase, a shell, a chess piece) that trigger memories.

Graham's dances often begin at a climactic moment in the protagonist's life, with the heroine—for they are usually about women—recalling past events as she moves toward her destiny. This retrospective approach is most elaborately developed in the evening-long *Clytemnes-tra,* in which the ancient Greek queen, condemned to Hades, reflects upon her murderous past and slowly comes to terms with herself. Another favorite Graham device is to divide a character into different facets and have each personified by a separate dancer, as in *Seraphic Dialogue,* in which the spirit of Joan of Arc contemplates herself as maiden, warrior, and martyr.

Throughout her career, Graham has prompted adulation and controversy. Some have faulted her for obscurity, others for obviousness; occasionally her work has been called obscene. Yet she continues to choreograph, and no matter how much her style changes, her works share one common quality—total commitment.

Graham was not the only influential early modern dancer. The list also includes Helen Tamiris, for instance. She was born Helen Becker, but changed her name when she found a poem about a Persian queen that contained the line "Thou art Tamiris, the ruthless queen who banishes all obstacles." At a time when many modern dancers favored a gaunt look, Tamiris was flamboyant and something of a hellion. Fascinated by the American past, she choreographed dances to Whitman poems, Revolutionary War

songs, and Louisiana bayou ballads. Her *Negro Spirituals* was one of the first works choreographed by a white to take black culture seriously. As adept on Broadway as she was on the concert stage, Tamiris also choreographed several musicals, including *Up in Central Park* and *Annie Get Your Gun.*

If Graham had a real rival for choreographic eminence on the European scene, however, it was Doris Humphrey, who grew up in the Chicago area where her parents managed a hotel that had a theatrical clientele. She took ballet lessons as a girl and, as often happened in a period when standards of dance training varied considerably, studied with both eminent masters and unbalanced eccentrics. The latter ranged from a Viennese lady who claimed that a diet of gooseberries promoted bodily agility to a gentleman who pinched little Doris as she went through her exercises. Humphrey joined Denishawn in 1917, only to rebel against that method eleven years later. She and her partner, Charles Weidman, thereupon established their own group. Weidman became famous for his deft pantomime, his compositions spoofing silent films, and his mimetic studies inspired by James Thurber. Humphrey, for her part, had more cosmic ambitions. Like Graham, she forged a technique from elementary principles of movement. But whereas Graham had emphasized breathing, Humphrey concentrated upon balance, her key words being "fall" and "recovery".

Humphrey's choreography was based upon the muscular drama of balance and imbalance, the contrasts between giving way to gravity altogether and resisting gravity to regain equilibrium. Conflict is inherent in such movement, and many Humphrey works were monumental explorations of human conflict. *The Shakers* (1931) examined the customs of a nineteenth-century celibate sect that believed one could rid oneself of sin by literally shaking it out of the body. Humphrey's dance, in depicting this process of shaking, hinted that sexual repression was an unacknowledged source of the devotees' frenzy. During 1935 and 1936 Humphrey choreographed the *Neiv Dance* trilogy, her most ambitious treatment of conflict and resolution. The first section, *Thea-*

tre Piece, satirized the rat race of competitive society. *With My Red Fires,* the second piece, castigated possessive love as personified by a matriarchal figure who thwarts her daughter's romantic desires. Having chastised communal and personal failings, Humphrey finally attempted to visualize an ideal social order in which the individual and the group could exist in accord. This finale, called simply *New Dance,* was entirely abstract in form.

Modern dance's stress upon creativity encouraged dancers to go out and organize new companies. Just as Graham and Humphrey left Den-ishawn, so fledglings started leaving Graham and Humphrey-Weidman. Anna Sokolov, for example, left Graham in 1938 and later created works, set to jazz scores, about the loneliness and alienation of life in big cities. A Humphrey-Weidman dancer who headed an unusually successful troupe was Jose Limon. His declaration of independence from Humphrey-Weidman was accomplished without rancour, and until her death Humphrey served as Limon's artistic advisor. The Mexican-born Limon, with his deep-set eyes and hollow cheeks, possessed a brooding presence that suggested an Indian heritage. His dances tended to be strongly dramatic, and his heroes were saints, sinners on a grand scale, and holy fools. Limon's most durable composition has been *The Moor's Perceive* (1949), an adaptation of *Othello* that sustains tension by placing the machinations of Iago and the jealousy of Othello within the strict decorum of old court dances. Maintaining surface politeness, the characters dance out a pavane that finally explodes into catastrophe. By the 1950's, modern dance was recognized as an authentic American art. Lamentably, some of its original energy had been drained away over the years, a factor that led disenchanted younger choreographers to declare that modern dance was so oriented toward drama and narrative that it had become a form of pantomime and had lost sight of movement as something beautiful and fascinating for its own sake. The new choreographers advocated a dance that was abstract, non-literal, and evocative rather than explicit.

Erick Hawkins, Graham's former husband, proclaimed what he called "movement quality" to be the essence of all dancing. The qualities he seemed most fond of were softness, gentleness, and ceremonious-ness—attributes that give his work an almost Oriental serenity. Paul Taylor, on the other hand, is a dancer with a strong, heavy body who can nonetheless move with wit and grace—and those qualities abound in ' his choreography. His compositions include *Aureole,* a lyric dance that has a balletic feeling although its actual steps would astonish Petipa; *Orbs,* a meditation upon the seasons of the year, set to Beethoven quartets; and *American Genesis,* which gives familiar Bible stories American settings, turning Cain and Abel into feuding cowboys, Noah's ark into a Mississippi riverboat, and the Creation itself into the landing of the Pilgrims. Taylor is aware of human frailty but, unlike some of die dramatic choreographers of the 1940's who wrapped themselves in the gloom of Freudian dogma, he makes his social comments with an unmistakable twinkle in his eye.

Alwin Nikolais boasts that he is an artistic polygamist. What he seeks, he says, is polygamy of motion, shape, colour, and sound." A complete man of the theatre, Nikolaou choreographs the dances, composes the electronic music, and designs the scenery, costumes, and lighting for all his productions, which are abstract mixed-media pieces of dazzling complexity. These pieces, surprising as conjuring tricks, could be regarded as contemporary equivalents of the masques and spectacles that delighted monarchs back in the seventeenth century. But if the old masques glorified monarchy, Nikolais's spectacles extol the wonders of the electronic age. He likes to transform dancers by encasing them in fantastic costumes or by attaching sculptural constructions to them to alter the body's natural shape. He then further transforms his dancers by flooding them with patterns of light and shadow so that audiences cannot tell what is dancer and what is scenery; what is illusion, and what is reality. Through these devices, Nikolais hopes to transcend the limitations of ordinary theatre and to extend the possibilities of the human anatomy.

One of the most controversial and influential choreographic experimentalists is Merce Cunningham. His performance style is almost balletically elegant, although unlike ballet dancers Cunningham's dancers seldom try to appear ethereal. Despite their latent classicism, composer John Cage have prompted extremes of rage and enthusiasm. Three aspects of Cunningham's approach have been especially provocative: his use of chance and indeterminacy; his treatment of stage space as an open field; and his treatment of the elements that comprise a dance production as independent entities. Most notably, Cunningham uses chance elements in compositions so that his dances will possess some of the unpredictability of life itself. But he uses them with discretion; his dances are not free-for-alls. For instance, he may prepare in advance a multitude of movement possibilities more than he needs for a work, and then decide by flipping coins which sequences will actually occur in that work. Or he may create works in which a set number of episodes may be performed in any order. It may be asked why, if Cunningham prepares so much, he bothers with chance at all. Advocates of his method will reply that chance can reveal to the choreographer ways of combining movements which his conscious mind might not otherwise have thought of; our conscious minds are, to an extent, prisoners of habit, prisoners of thought patterns that we have been building up all our lives. By utilizing chance in choreography, it is possible to discover attractive combinations of movements that our conscious minds might not otherwise have thought of on their own.

Concern with indeterminacy is only to be expected in an age where live performances are, in a sense, in subtle competition with such mechanical forms as films and television. One characteristic of the mechanical is its fixity: once something has been captured on film, it will stay that way forever, or at least until the film wears out. But every live performance is different, even if only slightly, from every other live performance. Cunningham merely exploits the element of indeterminacy inherent in all theatre.

A second important aspect of Cunningham's approach is his treatment of stage space. Unlike classical ballet, which is often structured around a central focus, usually the ballerina, performing front-and-centre and framed by the ensemble, Cunningham gives equal importance to each area of the stage. The corners and sides can be as important as the centre, and many things can happen simultaneously in different parts of the stage. The spectator's eye, instead of being riveted to one point, is free to wander as it wishes across a field of activity. There is no necessary reason why this should create difficulties for the spectator, since our eyes are regularly used to assimilate situations of greater visual complexity than can be found in most dances—for example, we readily adjust to the sight of pedestrians in the street or crowds at beaches or in bus stations.

Lastly, Cunningham tends to regard the elements of a work; movement, sound and decor as independent entities which coexist together. The dance does not attempt to duplicate the musical phrase. Nor does the scenery illustrate the choreography. Choreography, music, and scenery simply occupy time and space together. Yet, oddly enough, these elements, though separate, manage to give each Cunningham work its own special climate. *Rainforest,* for instance, contains lush, sensuous movement; David Tudor's electronic score chugs gently along like a motorboat going up a river; Andy Warhol's decor consists of floating silver pillows. There is nothing specifically tropical about this piece, yet it is thoroughly luxuriant in tone. To understand Cunningham simply needs to forget the theories and watch the dances with a keen eye and open mind. Gradually, each dance will reveal its personality. Thus *Summerspace* shimmers like August heat; *Winterbranch* is filled with so many suggestions of oppression that it frequently reminds audiences of the horrors of war; *Landrover* eats up space with enthusiastic abandon; and *Suite for Five* is as cool as spring water. Cunningham dances are like landscapes; the separate elements in them cohere to produce an unmistakable atmosphere, just as certain aggregations of people, traffic, and

buildings are, i appearance, "table those of a city's main street or financial district, its parks «r its suburbs Since the 1960's there has been an extraordinary resurgence to modern dance experimentation. During the early years of the decade many dancers performed at New York City's Judson Memona Church, a Baptist church that has long been concerned with liberal one of its ministers once announced that " A praying knee and a dancing's associated with Judson have established independent careers, while still other choreographers have conducted their experiments totally apart from the Judson milieu.

Recent experimentation has concentrated upon two broad areas: the kinds of movements that may be used in a dance, and the space in which a dance may be performed. It now appears that virtually any movement from the simplest to the most complex may be legitimately employed by choreographers. Twyla Tharp has on occasion covered space with intricate webs of nimble, twisting movements. In contrast, Yvonne Rainer has emphasized an athletic roughhouse kind of movement derived from gymnastics and work activities. Several lesser-known choreographers— in a development parallel to minimal painting and sculpture-have choreographed pieces with people assembling and dispersing in geometrical formations and have deliberately cast them with non-dancers so that they will have a realistic appearance. An extreme example is James Warring who has been wildly eclectic. He has combined Bach and 1920's pop songs within a single piece, while other works include florid pantomimes, austere abstractions, tributes to Jeanette MacDonald movies, and romantic ballets. He roams from period to period with a genuine affection that makes him want to revivify the past. He demonstrates that any style can be theatrically valid, provided a choreographer treats it with respect. Other choreographers juxtapose many kinds of movement in dances: Rudy Perez uses movement which seems rich in emotional implications but which he measures out with tight, stoic control; Murray Louis is the master of a peppery comic style;

while Dan Wagoner often plays perception games with audiences. In Wagoner's *Brambles,* for example, a live dancer performs while another person describes him in relation to totally imaginary scenery.

Dances may be given in all kinds of spaces and some popular ones today include churches, gymnasiums, armories, museums, parks, and city streets. And these areas are being used for their own sake, not as second-best substitutes for conventional theatres. Twyla Tharp once produced an event called *Medley* at twilight in New York City's Central Park. Its most striking episode was its conclusion, in which" forty-odd dancers were spread across the grass, some near the audience, others almost as far away as the eye could see. All performed identical steps, but each was told to dance them as slowly as he personally could. Some moved so slowly that it was not always possible to discern if they were moving at all In the fading light the magically *to* life.

Meredith Monk, a relatively young theatre producer has been particularly interested in environmental theatre productions staged on lawns, in empty lots, and in the interiors of museums and churches. She utilized New York's Solomon *R.* Guggenheim Museum for *Juice,* in which dancers moved along the great spiral interior ramp designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Set in the vast nave of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, *Education of the Girl Child* showed the course of life from birth to old age, then reversed the process and unwound life from old age back to birth. In *Needle Brain Lloyd and the Systems Kid,* .Monk filled the Connecticut College lawn with a zany assortment of characters that included croquet players, mobsters, pioneers, and a motorcycle gang.

A form of dance that had attracted much attension is African-American dance, a choreographic amalgam of elements derived from jazz and tap, from conventional modern dance, and from the history and traditions of Africa, the Caribbean, the American South, and the big-city ghetto. The result is a dance form of tremendous

energy, fervour, and rage. Pioneers of black dance include Asadata Dafora Horton, who in the 1930's created dance dramas about tribal life, and Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus, who achieved prominence in the 1940's. Dunham treated Caribbean and American black themes in a series of revues that were exuberant combinations of scholarly research and showbiz flair. Primus's repertoire ranged from recreations of African ceremonies to *Strange Fruit,* which concerned lynching in the South. Both Dunham and Primus are university-trained anthropologists as well as choreographers. Important compositions on black themes created since the 1950's include Talley Beatty's *Road of the Phoebe Snow,* based upon childhood memories of games, fights, and dances along the railroad tracks; and Donald McKaayle's *Rainbow Round My Shoulder,* depicting convicts on the chain gang, and *District Storyville,* a look at New Orleans in the early days of jazz when musicians earned their living by playing in brothels. One of the most popular American dance companies is that of Alvin Ailey which like the New York City Ballet and the Jeffrey Ballet, it is affiliated with the New York City Centre. Its repertoire contains Alley's own rousing *Revelations,* set to spirituals, and an assortment of works by many choreographers, black and white.

No doubt, Modern Dance is volatile and no one can ever predict what the next trend will be, but one can assume there will be constant stylistic changes. Increasingly, modern dance and ballet, once bitter rivals, are regarding each other with cordial respect. Many dancers are now versed in both idioms, and several modern dance works have been taken into ballet repertoires. But even as the innovations of one era of modern dance are being assimilated by the dance world as a whole, new choreographers are breaking fresh ground.

Today dance flourishes in virtually every corner of the world. Most major cities possess companies of some kind, and surprisingly many possess important companies. Dance is an art blessedly free of language barriers, yet each place

where it thrives develops its own stylistic accent. England, for example, can point with pride to several remarkable national companies, led by the Royal Ballet. Interestingly enough, despite its name the Royal Ballet's origins were in fact exceedingly humble. The conditions of British dance early in our century closely resembled those that prevailed in the United States at the time, which is to say that both countries welcomed foreign dancers but few attempts were made to found native companies. Many people, including balletomanes, felt that dancing was best left to the Russians or the French. Fortunately, some strong-minded women disagreed.

One such woman was born in Ireland in 1898. Her real name-Edris Stannus-is resoundingly Irish, but she is better known by her equally resounding stage name, Ninette de Valois. After dancing with the Diaghilev ballet for several seasons, she left the company in 1925 and started teaching in England, where she also became involved with several struggling repertory theaters. These theaters were invariably high-minded; just as invariably, they were poverty-stricken, unfashionable, and situated in remote neighborhoods. No wonder de Valois's mother once asked her despairingly why she always had to work on "the wrong side of the river."

Among the theaters that hired de Valois was London's Old Vic, located on the shabby side of the Thames. Under the guidance of Lilian Baylis, this remarkable center offered drama and opera at the lowest possible prices. De Valois soon persuaded Baylis to sponsor ballet as well. And when the latter opened a second theater, the long-derelict Sadler's Wells, in 1931, de Valois became director of the Vic-Wells Ballet-which, as its name suggests, performed alternately at the two theaters. Later, the Old Vic was used exclusively for drama and the ballet company became the Sadler's Wells Ballet, a name it retained when it moved to'the Royal Opera House after World War II. By the 1950's de Valois's group was numbered among the great companies of the world, and in

1956 it received a royal charter and a new name, the Royal Ballet. Unlike other royal companies of Europe, Britain's Royal Ballet was not founded as a toy for aristocrats. Instead, it was the outgrowth of a genuine community theater movement.

There were dancegoers, particularly some fans of Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe who scoffed at the young Vic-Wells, but the company also had many admirers. In 1933, for instance, the Camargo Society, an organization dedicated to the sponsorship of new British ballet productions, turned over all its funds to the VicWells. The main reason for the company's success was the fortitude and vision of its director, however. Although de Valois's choreographic output diminished as her administrative duties increased, three of her ballets survive. *Checkmate* depicts an allegorical chess game between love and death. Two other extant works derive from British art: *Job,* which is based upon Blake's illustrations of the biblical story, and *The Rake's Progress,* modeled upon Hogarth and showing a fashionable young man's descent into debauchery. When de Valois retired as director in 1964, she was succeeded by Frederick Ashton, who in turn was succeeded in 1970 by Kenneth MacMillan, a choreographer who was trained at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School.

Never a glamorous figure, de Valois has commonly impressed observers as being firm, even prim, in manner, and it has been suggested that if she had not been a ballet director she could well have been a governess or a member of Parliament. Quite different is another great lady of British ballet, the tempestuous Valerie Rambert, whose real name is Cyvia Rambam and who was born in Warsaw in 1888. The daughter of well-read parents, she shares the family blessing of literacy and the family curse of insomnia. Her parents read *War and Peace* aloud when they could not sleep, and Rambert often occupies her own sleepless nights by reciting poetry to herself in several languages. She was a fidgety child, and as she grew up her restlessness expressed itself

in radical politics. Her parents, afraid that her revolutionary sentiments might get her into trouble, sent her to Paris to study.

There, in a roundabout fashion, Rambert was ro become involved with ballet. Her first idol was Isadora Duncan, a significant influence, for Rambert has always been interested in choreographic innovation. Her initial training, however, was in eurhythmies, the method of rhythmic analysis devised by Dalcroze. And it was because of her knowledge of eurhythmies that Diaghilev hired her to help Nijinsky understand Stravinsky's puzzling score for *Le Sacre du Printemps.* Working with the Diaghilev Company, she acquired a respect for ballet. (She also apparently fell in love with Nijinsky, though she did not dare admit it.) Later, Rambert settled in London and opened a ballet school.

Among Rambert's many talents, two have attracted widespread attention. One is an ability to turn cartwheels. Until her seventieth birthday, Rambert turned cartwheels everywhere, including around the Salzburg Mozart memorial and in Trafalgar Square. As an elderly woman, she regrets the loss of this ability and assures skeptics that cart-wheels do wonders to clear the brain. Rambert's other gift—her ability to guide young choreographers—has of course had a more significant influence on dance history. It was Rambert who persuaded Frederick Ashton to choreograph his first ballet in 1926, and it has been Rambert who has developed many new choreographers since the 193O's.

Early in 1931, Rambert's husband, playwright Ashley Dukes, converted an old parish hall into a theater, which they named the Mercury. There Rambert established the Ballet Club the same year that the Vic-Wells Ballet made its debut. The Ballet Club was no Vic-Wells, however, for the Mercury's stage was scarcely larger than a postage stamp. Moreover, Rambert not only lacked de Valois's organizational powers, she also had a fearful temper. Yet somehow she managed to work magic. She was forever encouraging some young talent, and although her proteges eventually left to join companies that danced on larger stages, newcomers would always appear. Renamed

Ballet Rambert, the company outgrew the Mercury. Now one of the institutions of British ballet, it has never been content to rest on its laurels, and, since 1965, Rambert and her latest choreographic discovery, Norman Morrice, have reorganized the group to stress modern dance.

Surely the greatest talents nurtured by Rambert have been Antony Tudor, who choreographed for the Ballet Club before emigrating to America in 1939, and Frederick Ashton, whose ballets reveal much about the English temperament. Although the latter spent his childhood in South America, his works possess a sweetness of temper and a sense of graciousness and decorum that strike critics as typical and admirable English virtues. The 1935 Ashton joined the Vic-Wells, and his choreography matured along with the company. But it was Ramberc who produced his first efforts. An unusually varied choreographer, Ashton has provided serene abstractions *(Symphonic Variations},* pure fantasies *(Cinderella, Ondine,* and *The Dream,* based upon *A Midsummer Night's Dream),* and especially adept comic ballets. Among these last are *A Wedding Bouquet,* which depicts misadventures at a provincial wedding and is accompanied by the recitation of a nonsensical Gertrude Stein text, and a sparkling new version of the eighteenth-century ballet *La Fille Mai Gardee.* One of Ashton's most unusual achievements is *Enigma Variations,* which, combining tenderness with realistic detail, offers portraits of the composer Edward Elgar and his friends. It evokes the Edwardian period so convincingly that one sighs that time has separated us eternally from that placid, secure age.

The ballerina for whom Ashton created many lyrical roles, and the dancer who remains one of the best exemplars of his style, is Margot Fonteyn. She joined the Vic-Wells during the 1934-35 seasons, and during the next quarter-century she was partnered by such British-trained dancers as Robert Helpmann, Michael Somes, and David Blair. Since the 1960's, however, she lias been associated with Russian-born Rudolf Nurcyev, and the combination of her quiet radiance and his magnetic stage

presence has made theirs one of the outstanding partnerships in contemporary ballet. Other major exemplars of Ashton's lyric style include Antoinette Siblev and Anthony Dowell.

Serious British dance, like serious American dance, is a relatively recent phenomenon. In Russia, on the other hand, dance is heir to a long and proud tradition, one that has survived not only changing taste but drastic changes of government. The Russian Revolution of 1917, for instance, inspired wild artistic experimentation. It also encouraged cultural iconoclasm, and this in turn led some zealots, who regarded ballet as a relic of tsarist tyranny, to seek to destroy it utterly. Others, ultimately triumphant, sought to modify its techniques to meet the demands of Soviet society. Considering industrialism as a means for saving humanity from want, several choreographers became obsessed by machines and tried to make human movement imitate the action of pistons and conveyor belts. One choreographer stated, "The Muses have become production workers and dispersed into trade unions." Overseeing the development of ballet was Anatoly Lunacharsky, first Soviet Commissar of Education, who managed to encourage experimentation without ever acceding to the extremists who were demanding ballet's abolition. Two Russian choreographers earned reputations as innovators during this period. The first, Fyodor Lopukhov, combined ballet with acrobatics. His *Dance Symphony* (1923) was an essentially abstract composition that purported to express the splendor of the universe. His cast included the young George Balanchine, whose own taste may have been influenced by Lopukhov. Balanchine also admired Kasian Goleizovsky, who, like Lopukhov, united acrobatics and whose choreography, in its day, was considered highly erotic. Neither Lopukhov nor Golcizovsky ever really dominated Russian ballet, however. Indications of the course Soviet ballet did take may be found in *The Red Poppy,* choreographed by Vassily Tikhomirov and Lev Laschilin in 1927, and *Flames of Paris,* choreographed by Vassily Vainonen in 1932. The latter concerns the

French Revolution, while the former shows Chinese workers being aided by Russian sailors during a popular uprising. *The Red Poppy* has a rousing score by Gliere and one of its tunes, the "Russian Sailors' Dance," still turns up on concert programs. Since the 1930's, the norm of Soviet ballet has been the evening-length narrative, often derived from history and literature and featuring vigorous action ana rative ballet include Rostislav Zakharov's *The Fountain of Bakhshisarai* (1934), taken from Pushkin, and Leonide-Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* (1940), with its distinguished score by Prokofiev. .More recently, Yuri Grigorovich has been praised for choreographing such ballets as *The Stone Flower, Spartitcns,* and a new version of *The Nutcracker.*

Soviet choreography gets a mixed reception outside Russia. Praised for its epic sweep, it is also criticized for a tendency toward overstatement. But on one matter there is almost universal assent: everyone agrees that Soviet dancers can be extraordinary. Soviet style stresses elevation, fluid arms, a strong back, and amplitude of movement. Two ballerinas, both admired in the west typify the styles virtues. These are Galina Ulanova who could easily express characterisation with the slightest move of her body. The other was Maya Plisetskaya, who was famous for her dazzling spectacle and enthusiasm. The instruction method being adopted currently in Russia is based on the pedagogy of the theories of Agrippina Vaganova who was one of the most prominent teachers of the Twentieth century. Despite the official syllabus, however there were individual differences in localities. Two such examples are Moscow and Leningrad; one popular for its theatrical vividness and the other for its purity of line. The Soviet is also popular for the introduction of folk dance companies and adapting them for theatrical production. The resulting dances lose some authenticity during editing but gain in sophistication and therefore entertainment value. Notable among these is the State Folk Dance Ensemble formed in 1937 by Igor Moiseyev which featured dances from Russia and other countries they toured. Anderson recollects that these forms were labelled propagandist for their idyllic presentation of their culture in folklore but

defends them, saying that "*it is abetter form of propaganda than political speeches and economic treatises".* Western ballet was soon introduced to the Eastern sphere when Russia seny her best dancers to China after the Chinese revolution to produce such Western classics as *Swan Lake,* and *Gisselle.* These soon disappeared out the repertoire owing to the Sino-Soviet tension of the times to be replaced by more nationalistic themes built on historical and topical issues and designed to inspire patriotic feelings in the people.

Russia is a country that has successfully adapted its dance traditions for a new era. Other nations have tried to make similar adaptations— with varying results. Italy, though it continues to train line individual dancers, has declined in importance. The Royal Danish Ballet preserves its Bournonville legacy and constantly adds items to the repertoire, but Denmark has never found another choreographer equal to August Bournonville.

As for France, well, as often happens in artistic matters, France constitutes a special case. At the end of the nineteenth century the Paris Opera Ballet sank into a lethargy from which it was roused in 1929 by the arrival of choreographer Serge Lifar. Lifar, a former member of Diaghilev's company, dominated Parisian dance for more than three decades. A strikingly proportioned dancer, a *ban vivant* fond of mingling with high society, and an indefatigable choreographer, he had the knack of being the center of attention, no matter what the circumstances were. As a theorist, Lifar believed that in ballet productions the choreographer was apt to become subordinate to the composer and the designer. Therefore, like the early modern dancers, Lifar proclaimed dance an autonomous art and, on occasion, as with his *Icare* of 1935, lie created his entire ballet in advance and only then noted down the choreographic rhythms and sent them to be orchestrated by an obliging composer. Yet just as certain French vantages do not travel well, so Lifar's choreography is not always to everyone's taste. The qualities

which Parisian balletgoers admire as "stylish" are sometimes considered mannered elsewhere.

Several attempts have been made to develop French ballet beyond the Opera's precincts. Diaghilev's secretary, Boris Kochno, founded Les Ballets des Champs-Elyses in 1945 with the support of Jean Cocteau and designer Christian Berard. Until it was disbanded in 1951, the company delighted audiences with a freshness and chic which suggested that smart stylishness had returned to postwar Europe. Kochno encouraged two choreographers, Janine Charrat and Roland Petit, and Petit's *Le Jeune Homme et la Mart,* choreographed under Cocteau's supervision, was one of the company's triumphs. In this curious ballet, a young man, scorned by his sweetheart, commits suicide. The personification of Death arrives to claim him. Removing her mask, Death reveals herself to be the young woman of the previous scene. Together, the two walk away across the rooftops of Paris. Not the least surprising thing about the piece was its music. The ballet was rehearsed to jazz and it was only on the day of the premiere that the cast learned that the actual score was to be a Bach passacaglia—the nobility of Bach's music serving as ironic counterpoint to the sordid action.

In 1948 Petit founded his own Ballets de Paris, for which he created works audiences found titillating, even risque. The most talked-about was a version of *Carmen* starring his wife Renee ("Zizi") Jeanmaire. Petit has since staged dances for films and musical revues, as well as for French and foreign ballet troupes.

France has given birth to a multitude of companies, each with its own distinctive personality. The most lavish was Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. In the century of the welfare state, this constituted almost an anachronism, for it was a large company run at the whim of a Chilean-born nobleman of Spanish extraction whose wife happened to be John D. Rockefeller's granddaughter. A fantastic, almost improbable personage, the marquis lived in theatrical style, was impeccably polite, dispensed kisses so liberally that local wits nicknamed him the "kissing marquis," and even participated in

some well-staged, well-publicized, and ultimately harmless duels. To no one's surprise, the marquis's company did not long survive his death in 1961. More recent French ballet activities include attempts to promote dance in regional centres. The Marseille Opera Ballet has been especially active, while Ballet Theatre Companies of Angier stresses collaboration with contemporary composers and artists.

Today's most controversial French choreographer resides in Belgium. Maurice Bejart and his Brussels-based Ballet of the Twentieth Century rank among the real phenomena of contemporary ballet. Bejart is known for his beautiful dancers and for productions that tackle complex social and philosophical issues. In his version of *Firebird,* for instance, the title character is not a ballerina but the male leader of guerrilla partisans; *Romeo and Juliet* uses Shakespeare's story to preach a "make love, not war" message; while the Bejart interpretation of *Le Sucre du Prmtemps* is high in both energy level and erotic-content. Frequently, Bejart composes spectacles for vast arenas or amphitheatres, his treatment of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony being a plea for brotherhood, his *Nijinsky* offering a phantasmagorical biography of the Russian dancer. Audience reaction to such works fluctuates wildly: some dance goers admire the physicality of Bejart's dancers, the topicality of his themes, and his pictorially effective groupings; others find Bejart's choreography repetitive and lacking in subtlety. Whatever a viewer's reaction may be, it tends to be strong. Few people are neutral about Bejart.

Although his works in no way resembled those of Bejart, John Cranko also prompted controversy. The South African choreographer's first successes were with Sadler's Wells Ballet, but he achieved international prominence when he assumed the direction of the Stuttgart Ballet in 1960, putting Stuttgart back on the ballet map for the first time since Navarre had been ballet master there in the eighteenth century. Cranko's most frequently discussed productions were evening-long adaptations from familiar literary sources—*Romeo and Juliet, Eugene One gin, The Taming of the Sbreiv, Carmen.* Their

fans admired them for clarity of characterization and swiftness of action, while their critics accused them of being dramatically obvious and choreographically thin. Yet both admirers and detractors lauded Cranko as an astute director, and his untimely death in 1973 on his way home from an American tour came as a shock to the entire ballet world.

Though the Stuttgart is the best-known troupe, all the leading German cities have ballet companies attached to their opera houses or municipal theatres. This German ballet boom has largely occurred since World War II, for before the war Germany favoured modern dance. But modern dance withered during the Nazi years and after the war Germans turned to ballet as one way in which they could rejoin the world cultural community. Performance standards differ from city to city, but several groups are highly competent, and simply because there are so many companies, all clamouring for new ballets German) offers a myriad of employment opportunities for foreign choreographers. For instance, the young American choreographer John Niemeyer has done almost all of his work in Germany.

Until recently, European dancers, teachers, and choreographers would go to America to promote ballet there. Now America sends dance abroad. American ballet has impressed the Continent, while American modern dance, for which most foreign nations have no equivalent, has been influential in England, Germany, Holland, and Israel. One American modern dance choreographer, Glen Tetley, has been so successful overseas that he is almost better known in Europe than he is in his native land. In 1974 he was appointed director of the Stuttgart Ballet, succeeding John Cranko.

Scanning the dance map of the world, one finds companies in Norway and Sweden, and in South Africa and Japan. Prague and Budapest love ballet, as do Vienna, Zurich, Geneva, Amsterdam, and The Hague. Ballet exists throughout Latin America, and the British Commonwealth can lay claim to the Australian Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada, Les Grands Ballets Canadians of Montreal, and, finally, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

It is somehow invigorating to be where there is dancing, even as a spectator. Dancers invariably seem more nimble than other people, just as dance can be more vivacious than most other arts. Dance unites grace and prowess, elegance and strength, body and spirit. Styles change, steps are modified, traditions arc conserved or defied, yet the appeal of dance remains that of watching bodies move in time and space.

Scarcely four centuries have elapsed since Catherine de Medici's and her courtiers sat in galleried halls to watch the spectacles which marked the beginning of the performing tradition that includes ballet and modern dance. In chose centuries dance has moved from the palace to the theatre and, occasionally, out of the theatre and into streets and stadiums. Dancers have worn heavy robes, filmy tutus, toe shoes, tights, and sometimes nothing at all. They have impersonated the gods and conjured up spirits, they have leaped through the air and crawled on the ground, they have explored the darkest corners of the psyche and have at times been content to be nothing more than themselves; beautiful beings in elegant motion.

A lot has happened in four centuries. And yet when compared with drama or poetry, which can trace their histories back for thousands of years, Ballet and Modern Dance are very young arts indeed. They have accomplished much in such a short time, and who knows what they may accomplish in the future. Perhaps their greatest days still lie ahead. The history of dance may have only just begun and greater days lie ahead.

2.1.2 Theories of Dance in African Cultures

According to the great Negro artist and dancer, Pearl Primus (1996: 6), African dance is multi-faceted.

> It ranges from the subtlest and most lyric of movements to the most dynamic; from the most sophisticated choreographed presentation to the simplest; it can defy space in fantastic leaps into the air or burrow into the earth. It does not limit itself to any one part of the body but employs the use of the minutest muscles. It varies from the

> slowest and stateliest of court dances to those which move so rapidly the eye cannot hope to register all that is happening. In all, there is the concept of beauty.

African dance has been criticised for the difficulty of assessing the forms precisely due the speed and variety of movement which described above, but Primus's statement suggest that this quality is what lends charm to the dance from the continent and rather than detract from the beauty of the forms, it becomes the defining identity. Evidently here, criticism is the child of approach, for where the former is limited by complexity for the latter complexity adds interest. Nevertheless, it would be a sweeping generalization to discuss African dances under one aesthetic philosophy. There are fundamental characteristics which are common to performance in Africa as a whole and which may aid an understanding and appreciation of performance aesthetic in this region. Many scholars have documented their views of African dance. For instance, Francis Bebey describes African dance as

> the integral art of movement that is controlled by music, and which is in turn governed by African language.

He opines that the distinguishing element of African dance is its fusion with music and language. He believes that African dance will not exist without the involvement of language and music. Another artist Fodeba Keita (1973) conceives of African dance as a reflector of the total existence of life in Africa. He opines that Africans dance is about everyday occurrence in their lives ranging from war, famine, political, independence, rites of passage, such as birth, puberty, marriage, and chieftaincy; literally anything they consider important enough to celebrate or commemorate. Just as the dance is inspired by a given theme, the style and presentation can also be determined by many factors.

Doris Green (1996) presents her study of the dance of the Masai of East Africa as an example of the influence of environment. The Masai live in the rift Valley of a region which features scanty vegetation with a landscape bare of woody trees which can attract

wild animals and provide safe hiding places. Consequently, there is neither suitable wood nor animal hide to make musical instruments. What they make use of is what Green calls "African's oldest instrument", -the human voice. Masai dances are made up of jumps which are accompanied by chanting. They jump up and down in vertical planes and according to Green; the absence of drums brings a limitation to the development of rhythms and poly rhythms. Among the Ogbaru Igbo speaking people of South Eastern Nigeria, the gestures adopted in the movement of many of their dances is directly influenced by their dwelling by the River Niger valley.

Perhaps the most common influence on the dance style in Africa is the occupational one. According to Emeka Nwabuoku, work movement ultimately becomes the movement of the dance. Culture which employs the pantomime of occupation as dance style abounds on the continent. The fishing dance of the Birnin Kebbi Fulanis of Sokoto and the Ijala hunter's dance of the Yoruba of West Africa are good examples of such dances.

Doris Green also cites many dances on the continent which are based on common place activities. Among these is the dance among the Bete people of Daloa of Ivory Coast. The dance known as Zigilibiti is centered on the subject of maize pounding. According to Bete folklore, a group of women were pounding *bitiko* (which is the word for maize) and it was pounded so finely that it resembled granulated sugar (*sucre*). The "S" in *sucre* was replaced with a "Z" resulting in *zucre*. The word, influenced by the local tongue became *zigli*. *Bitiko* was shortened to biti and a combination of the two words produced the word '*ziglibiti'*. As mentioned earlier, the subject of the song is the pounding of corn till it resembles fine sugar. The movement is characterized by rapid stamping movements of the feet. Rattles worn the around the ankles provide rhythm as they are moved in tune with the music.

Another dance which features common place activities is the *Thie Bou Dien*, also cited by Green as the national dance of Senegal. *Thie Bou Dien* is a dish of fish and rice

which is one of the main dishes of the Senegalese people, the dance gestures feature the movement of the arms and hands as they are used while gathering the rice, molding it into a ball and then tossed in the mouth. The right arm is employed in the eating gestures (as the left hand is considered unclean for such an activity) in many African cultures. One of the most popular and celebrated theme is that of self defense movements in their gestures. In the West African region, the *Korokoro* dances reflect self defense movements in their gestures. The *Ijala-ode* dance of the Nigerian Yoruba is a depiction of tactical war movements. Although the *Ijala* is a dance of the hunters, their dance feature the aggressive movement needed for self preservation in the dangerous woods as well as the war front since the traditional army is invariably made up of Great Hunters. Another form of dance that employs self defense movement is the Zulu-war dance of South Africa. These utilize loud stamping of the feet raised, head held high, and a pantomimed throwing of the short Chaka spear. The dance is a celebration of the prowess of the Zulu national soldiers under their famous legendary general King Chaka, the Zulu. The dance is accompanied by the fearful shouts and forward and backward twisting of the torso in oppositional angles. The Aborigines of Australia is another group which features martial arts movements.

One of the most interesting and attractive influence on the dance in Africa is costume. Green suggests that the costume worn by dancers tend to shape or mold the style of movement seen. If the dancers wear heavy boots, for instance the quality is one of forcefulness. The *Isicathulo*, (boot dance) of the Zulu people, the dances employ the percussiveness of the boots by clicking the heels together and by slapping the boots with their hands to produce distinct rhythms. In the *Takai* dance of Ghana, the dancers carry an iron rod; wear leather boots and a *Betekele* robe. The *Betekele* robe is worn over trousers with an elongated seat. The dancer pivots as the robe and the trousers flow, creating the design of a twirling umbrella. The percussion of the dance is produced by the stamping of the feet of the dancers under the flowing robe and the rhythmic striking together of the

iron rods. It is evident here that waist needs to sway the robe to produce visional pleasure. The waist rattle is therefore not relevant and this illustrates how costume and gestures so hand in hand in African dances.

Having discussed the external influences on African dance, it is necessary to examine the psycho-social basis of forms on the continent. According to John Mbiti, dance is a reflection of the worldview of every given community. This is a factor which is undeniably an influence on performance culture on the continent. The African is a deeply religious being. He sees in everything he does and experiences an intervention or influence of the supernatural. As Mbiti says, *African* people look upon the world as a religious universe in which to live and which is also considered as an abode of the ancestors. This outlook upon the universe as a being religious entity is reflected in African's attitude towards nature and the specifically religious activities that they carry out without drawing a dichotomy between the so-called secular and sacred, or the physical and the spiritual. This implies that the African being a highly sensitive being spiritually speaking, would naturally find expression of these beliefs. The lyrics of songs in Africa which accompany dances reflect this believe in the supreme God who is believed to control all human endeavors. It is no wonder then that daily activities are predicated on rules which are influenced by these beliefs, the violation of which is tantamount to taboo. The dance in many African communities is performed without consultation with ancestral powers or higher gods. The dances therefore often reflect some form of praise or material offering. Dance in this regard performs solicitory and propitiatory roles. Although most dance themes reflect the belief in a communion between the lower beings and the higher ones, by and large, the performance forms which dominantly feature this communion between man and God in Africa are those dealing with the rites of passage and the rites of separation. In traditional African Society, predating the coming of Western influence, the passage dances far outnumbered the recreational ones, as community members are constantly passing from one stage to the

other. On these occasions, dance performances represent the major medium of celebration and are used to give meaning and significance to the rites. As Peggy Harper (1996) points out,

> A child becomes a member of a community at his naming ceremony, an adolescent is initiated into the responsibilities of adult life, a woman moves from paternal home to that of her husband's family an elder receives a recognition for his services in the form of a title, a member of the community joins the world of the ancestors. At none of these times is a an individual left alone to bear the emotions which accompany these critical changes. The members of the community carry him through the crisis with appropriate ceremonies which contain the emotion of the moment in music, song and dance. (pg26)

Other dance critics have noted the role of dance symbolism in rites of passage, especially the palliatory function in rites of separation. Peggy Harper makes this point when she states that "*Dance metaphorically enacts and communicates status transformation in rites of passage death ceremonies. Curative and preventive dance"* Using her study of the funeral dances of the Dogon of Mali, she states that

> Death creates disorder but through the dance,
> humans metaphorically restore order to the disordered world

Similarly, in his study of the Lugbara of Northern Uganda, John Middleton notes the similar trend of disorder and confusion in the community caused by death, and the use of dance as a means of restoration of the upset social equilibrium. According to him, when an adult member or an important elderly man is deceased, the grief is expressed in ways which suggest that the event has brought about a disorder in communal relations. Middleton recalls that "*people say that they are then like children, not because they are*

behaving in a child like way, but because order and the recognition of legitimate authority have been destroyed by death."

On these occasions, dance becomes an ostensible vehicle for the expression of inarticulate feelings and also as a means of bringing about a resolution in the socio-cosmic relations of man and the universe. Underlying the dance dynamics performed on occasion of ritual passage and separation is the communication intent of the dances. It is easy for the uninformed mind and the untrained eye to view in the spectacle a mere theatrical presentation. Theatre is a part of ritual dance drama in African ceremonies but it is only the external factor, as dance movements communicate salient messages to the consumer society of which entertainment is only one. The dance progression is often divided into stages which individually indicate a message and the stage in the given transitional process. Hanna stressed that within a ritual festival, the sequence and character of the component events are determined by purposes relative to the larger world view. In other words, the purpose of a festival in terms of the socio-cultural context, determines the form of the activities. African dance as an avenue of expression is therefore closely related to the themes and purposes of a particular occasion, and is in effect, context-determined.

Hanna continues to stress how cultural purposes which permeate all aspects of a given ceremony and ultimately influences the content and form of the dances which are performed. As Laude (1978) states, dance is the soul of ritual ceremonies and occasions in Africa. In his study of *Gelede* mask dance of the Ketu-Yoruba sub-groups of West Africa, Ibitokun emphasizes this communication role of dance. According to him, the *Oro-efe* or the lyrics of the *Gelede* dance determines the dance dynamics which could be dictating a jovial theme at one time and a tragic at another. The masquerade and dancers respond in each instance to the dictates of the singer and drummer.

Pearl Primus (1996) has noted this importance of dance in African ritual dramatic ceremonies and according to her, dance expresses the very heartbeat of communal living and is an accurate mirror of the psychology of people. Primus states that,

> the true African dance is basic in subject matter, birth, death, puberty, rites, marriage, hailing a chief, discovering evil spirits, detecting criminals, praying for rain, sun, strong children, good harvest, good hunting, victory in warfare, success in love, revenge, protection of the gods, honoring the ancestors and play (pg.15)

Furthering on the notion of dance as a psycho-social tool, we turn to the elements of spirit-possession in ritual dance drama. Building on the function of dance as a social leveling medium through which all classes in human society realize and confront their susceptibility to the common fate of mortality, Victor Turner's view is that in any society where social inequalities, rivalries, and property interests divide people, there exists a uniting human bond or communities to which all are subject, such as the powers of life, death, fertility and the uncertain bounties of nature (Spencer 28). These elements of the cosmos lie beyond the power of individuals and thus serve as a uniting and binding force of their common destiny. They partake in the communion of mortality as they are reduced to a humble role where they survive only as a species and by involvement with one another. In this instance, dance is taken beyond its socially leveling ability, to a higher realm of function which Spencer describes as marginal and anomalous, because it contrasts with everyday life, taking the dancers out of their structured daily existence. The arena of the dancers stretches beyond the immediate social environment and awareness, embracing a higher association with spiritual beings. Michael Onwujeogwu's account of the Bori performance further illustrates the relevance of spirit possession.

> The woman puts on the color appropriate to the spirit and in some cases carries the miniature symbolic object, bow or spear etc, in her hand. If for example, she is possessed by the

> spirit called *Mallam Alhaji*, she walks around and coughing weakly like an old learned Mallam reads an imaginary Koran. If she is possessed by *Dan Galadima* the prince, she acts like a nobleman wearing kingly robes. She sits on a mat hearing cases and people around make obeisance. If she is possessed by *Mai–gangaddi*, the nodding one, who causes sleep and suddenly doses off in the middle of some act and wakes up and sleeps again and wakes up etc. If she is possessed by *Ja-ba-fari*, 'neither red nor white', a spirit that causes people to go mad, she eats filth and stimulates copulation in some cases, she leaps into the air and lands on her buttocks with feet astride-thrice. She falls exhausted and is covered with a cloth. During this state she may foretell the future. (58)

He concludes his narration of the performance noting that anyone who needs a favor from the spirit which possessed her or wishing to approach any such spirit, place gifts and alms on her mat. Thereafter she sneezes, the spirit departs and she returns to normalcy. Throughout this period, she is referred to as the operating spirit and not as herself. As a medium of psycho-social cohesion, Bori dances are especially relevant in moments of communal crisis. (M. Smith 1954). It acts as an avenue of a cathartic outlet during epidemics, resettlements and crop failure. Spirit possession is also found in many dances across Africa. Among the *Chewa* of Malawi, the *Vimbuza* healing dance is an example of the use of dance and spirit mediumship for healing purposes. The Kalabari of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria also feature spirit possession in their worship dances, dedicated to Mammy Water, the mermaid deity as Adelugba documents in the article, "*Trance and Theatre".*

An abiding feature of African dance which belongs to both the external paraphernalia and also serves a social function is the element of audience participation. Across the continents, dance studies reveal that in no performance is the audience totally removed from the performance arena as mere spectators. African dance involves audience criticism and the appreciation of the ongoing spectacle and can go as far as featuring the

appearance of audience members in the dance arena. This makes African dance an all-involving affair.

Finally, the question of what constitute a secular and sacred dance performance is a very pertinent one. While performance forms on the continent may feature a more of the sacred or religious as a thematic identity or secular as the case may be, it is rare to find a performance which is exclusively representative of one or the other. This is because the African is a basically or fundamentally religious being (as mentioned earlier) and as such, almost all activities are consecrated to higher spiritual authorities. Oyin Ogunba(1973pg.16) has stressed the need to view African performance without the inappropriate prescriptive lenses of Western based aesthetic philosophies, but rather to approach the arena of African dramatic displays with the open mind of the noviate and with the primary intention of understanding the performance with its distinctive features. Even in ceremonies which feature a density of ritual elements such the burial festivals of the gods, there are segments for entertainment and more often, a greater part of such ceremonies are set aside for entertainment of the community. Passage rite ceremonies beginning from birth through puberty to marriage are occasions for merry making, celebration, and rituals involving obeisance to the gods in order to invite their blessings and participation in the proceedings. In the case of separation or death rites, the exception where a celebration in terms of entertainment is not featured is in the cases of the demise of children and young community member.

Arising from the variation of styles and of dance on the continent, Dance artists and African practitioners on the continent and in the diaspora have attempted the definition of what constitutes a basic formula of African dance. In black Africa, according to Ossie Enekwe, '*African Dance is movement which is coordinated within the medium of music'*. In other words, dance cannot be conceived without audible music. He states specifically that any movement resembling dance without the accompanying sound of music is symptomatic of mental instability in Africa. Echoing a similar notion, the dance

scholar, Goine (1987: 60) says that dance and music are usually complementary forms and according to him "to dance without music is considered madness" in Africa. Okpoku Albert a major choreographer of African dance has this to say

> Although dancing is common to most people, even in Africa where dance is the major art form…,different communities differ in their dance styles…These differences are the results of environmental or physical conditions, climate and occupation acceptable to a particular social group.

Nketia (1963: 212) says that in African dance, the postures that are assumed in dance are directly related to the way the body is used and moved especially in daily habits. This also relates to the way in which a people conceive of the earth at a metaphysical level both as the abode of the ancestors and as a source of life. For the African then, dance is an avenue of expressing sublime thought and is a recognized and utilized language channels sometimes expressing more coherently what the spoken word cannot.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, African scholars began to show more concerted interest in the subject of dance (Nettleford, 1996: xiv). Their efforts are of inestimable relevance to the study of forms in Africa as it provides an insider's point of view on the subject. This is a view which takes into consideration such important issues as religious, social, political, economic, and ethical principles which govern the forms, thereby making meaning accessible to researchers who are hampered in their study because of their unfamiliarity with the cultural terrain (Nettleford, 1996: xviii). Kealiinohomoku (1974) reiterates the view of dance in Africa as a reflection of the institutions, aesthetics and morals. She states that dance is an indicator of the given worldview. Sola Olorunyomi's work, *Afrobeat! Fela and the Imagined Continent* is an illuminating work on the use of music and dance as a medium of social and political

reform. This work on the philosophy of the iconoclastic Fela Anikulapo Kuti is an example

e of the attempt to severe from the ideologies of the colonial past. Coming from this same region, are the works of such writers as Albert Okpoku, Dapo Adelugba, Meki Nzewi, Ossie Enekwe, 'Dele Layiwola, Benedict Ibitokun, Omofolabo Ajayi, and Olusanyin Esi Kinni, among others. Of particular relevance to the present work is Layiwola's comparative analysis titled *'Gelede: Metaphysics and Gender in an African Ritual play'* and the 1991 article titled *'Establishing Liminal Categories in African Ceremonial Dances'* both of which examine the medium of dance as a contemporary and folk expression. Adelugba's studies of the trance phenomenon in African dances become relevant as it explains the medium of trance in dance experience especially those found within the religious mode (Adelugba, 1981:203–216). Such thesis as "The Nigerian Dance Theatre: Agenda for This Millennium" (Ugolo2007) discuss the growth of dance theatre tradition in the Nigerian experience. Okwesa's work titled "*Egwu–Amala, the Paddle Dance of the Aboh People*" (Okwesa, 1988) provides useful insight into the cultural background of this study but deals with the stylistics of the Paddle Dance. Also, the work of Asabe Iyeh (2008) titled, *"Egwu-Ota Dance as an Expression of Traditional Asaba Value System"* is a study of dance within *omenani* funerals and not specifically for women. However, both theses reflect a similar cultural background with the present one.

In spite of these efforts however, the one issue that has continued to plague African performing arts, especially as it relates to dance as dramatic form, is a definitional one (Ibitokun, 1991 :6). While some argue for the classical model as a universal criterion, others adopt what Enekwe identifies as the relativist position (Enekwe, 108:154). Those who argue for the classical model project Aristotle's principles of the unity of action, time and space. Leading proponents are Michael Echeruo (1981) and Ola Rotimi (1981). Rotimi's play "*The God's Are Not to Blame*" is an attempt to adapt the Grecian model to an African context. But the play as an adaptation of a Greek tragedy cannot be truly

representative of an African form due to the attempt to force the Aristotelian structural model on its form. Similarly, James *Amankulor's* account of the *Ekpe* festival of Igbo land is marred by his apologetic stance for its purity and originality, claiming, in allegiance to the classicist school of thought that the dance-drama "*is in dire need of structural reconstruction to lift it above the level of traditional art*". *Enekwe* argues that the African dramatic experience is not similar to the Grecian one and can therefore not possess a similarity of approach. The opposition to the classical theory is led by Obiechina who debunks Echeruo's argument of the need to tailor African drama to Grecian expectations. He views Echeruo's denial of a dramatic culture among the Igbo, a view represented in Echeruo's seminal paper titled "*The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual*" as an exercise in self negation. Nzewi reasons that Igbo ritual drama does not have to yield its story to satisfy an alien audience. If the consumer community for whom it has meaning can find aesthetic fulfillment, what is needed would be a familiarization with the form by foreigners in order to facilitate understanding (Enekwe, 1981:150).

Moreover, as Ibitokun argues, a consumer society should be the final judge on the aesthetic principles of any form. In his book "Dance as Ritual Drama and Entertainment in the *Gelede* of the Ketu–Yoruba sub–group in West African" he postures the theory of organism, a philosophy, according to him, which accommodates the idea of form/ species growing and developing from within, "there is no monstrous grafting. Relativist might relate rather to the critic than to the form per se" (Ibitokun, 1993: 7).These critical postures are relevant to the present study on dance because Ogodi performance is seen both as dance and as drama by the Ogbaru peoples. The term "*egwu*" is for instance, mutually exchangeable for the dance and play. Also among the Lugbara of Northern Uganda, the term "*Ongo*" stands both for the song and dance. Where the dance is operative, it is specified as '*Ongo–Tozu*" which means, "to step out in dance" (Middleton 1985:168).

2.1.3 African Dance: The Traditional and Contemporary Scene

African dances possess distinctive qualities under which majority of the dances on the continent may be categorised. They employ earthy, vigorous movements with rhythmic stamping, kicking and shaking. However, the common element of dance from the African terrain is that they are functional in orientation and are hardly performed for entrainment alone, though entertainment inadvertently comes in along the way. Edith Enem classifies dance from Afrca and particularly Nigeria into seven types. This is a view which takes into consideration such important issues as religious, social, political, economic, and ethical principles. These are ritual dance, masquerade dance,acrobatic dance, war dance, puppet dance, elders dance and creative/theatre dance. These classifications reveal the governing principles of the forms, thereby making meaning accessible to researchers who are hampered in their study due to their unfamiliarity with the cultural terrain (Nettleford, 1996: xviii). Dance artists and African practitioners on the continent and in the African diaspora have attempted the definition of what constitutes a basic formula of African dance. In black Africa, according to Ossie Enekwe, '*African Dance is movement which is coordinated within the medium of music'*. In other words, dance cannot be conceived without audible music. He states specifically that any movement resembling dance without the accompanying sound of music is symptomatic of mental instability in Africa. Albert Okpoku, a major choreographer of African dance says:

> Although dancing is common to most people, even in Africa where dance is the major art form…,different communities differ in their dance styles…These differences are the results of environmental or physical conditions, climate and occupation acceptable to a particular social group.

Nketia (1963: 212) says that in African dance, the postures that are assumed in dance are directly related to the way the body is used and moved especially in daily habits. This also relates to the way in which a people conceive of the earth at a metaphysical level both as the abode of the ancestors and as a source of life. For the African then, dance is an avenue of expressing sublime thought and is a recognized and utilized language channels sometimes expressing more coherently what the spoken word cannot.

Within the West African sub-region, the critical works of such writers as Albert Okpoku, Dapo Adelugba, Meki Nzewi, Ossie Enekwe, 'Dele Layiwola, Benedict Ibitokun, Omofolabo Ajayi, and Olusanyin Esi Kinni among others have encouraged research on dance from this region. Of particular relevance to the present work is Layiwola's comparative analysis titled 'Gelede: Metaphysics and Gender in an African Ritual play' and the 1991 article titled 'Establishing Liminal Categories in African Ceremonial Dances' both of which examine the medium of dance as a contemporary and folk expression. Adelugba's studies of the trance phenomenon in African dances become relevant as it explains the medium of trance in dance experience especially those found within the religious mode (Adelugba, 1981: 203 – 216). Okwesa's work titled "*Egwu–Amala, The Paddle Dance of the Aboh_People*" provides useful insight into the cultural background of this study since the work shares a similar cultural background with the present one (Okwesa1988). Goine (1987: 60) posits that dance and music are usually complementary forms and according to him "to dance without music is considered madness" in Africa.

In spite of these efforts however, the one issue that has continued to plague African performing arts, especially as it relates to dance as dramatic form, is a definitional one (Ibitokun, 1991 :6). While some argue for the classical model as a universal criterion, others adopt what Enekwe identifies as the relativist position (Enekwe, 1081 :154). Those who argue for the classical model project Aristotle's principles of the unity of action, time

and space. Leading proponents are Michael Echeruo (1981) and Ola Rotimi (1981). Rotimi's play "The God's Are Not to Blame" is an attempt to adapt the Grecian model to an African context. But the play as an adaptation of a Greek tragedy cannot be truly representative of an African form. Enekwe argues that the African dramatic experience is not similar to the Grecian one and can therefore not possess a similarity of approach. The opposition to the classical theory is led by Obiechina who debunks Echeruo's argument of the need to tailor African drama to Grecian expectations. He views Echeruo's denial of a dramatic culture among the Igbo, a view represented in Echeruo's seminal paper titled "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual" as an exercise in self negation. Nzewi reasons that Igbo ritual drama does not have to yield its story to satisfy an alien audience. If the consumer community for whom it has meaning can find aesthetic fulfilment, what is needed would be a familiarization with the form by foreigners in order to facilitate understanding (Enekwe, 1981:150).

Moreover, as Ibitokun argues, a consumer society should be the final judge on the aesthetic principles of any form. In his book "Dance as Ritual Drama and Entertainment in the Gelede of the Ketu–Yoruba sub–group in West African" he postures the theory of organism, a philosophy, according to him, which accommodates the idea of form/ species growing and developing from within, "there is no monstrous grafting. Relativist might relate rather to the critic than to the form perse" (Ibitokun, 1993: 7).These critical postures are relevant to the present study on dance because Ogodi performance is seen both as dance and as drama by the Ogbaru peoples. The term "*egwu*" is for instance, mutually exchangeable for the dance and play. Also among the Lugbara of Northern Uganda, the term "*Ongo*" stands both for the song and dance. Where the dance is operative, it is specified as '*Ongo–Tozu*" which means, "to step out in dance" (Middleton 1985:168).

As it obtains in Western forms, contemporary dance in Africa is a combination of styles reflecting indigenous and foreign gestural patterns, and largely dictated by the individual artist's choreographic interest. In other words, one cannot specifically describe

what movement styles constitute contemporary dance in Africa. Perhaps the one uniting factor of contemporary dance is the very absence of conformity to rules and standards. Rather, individual choreographic artists exercise the freedom to develop movements that adequately express the themes of their dances and this gives free reign to artistic expression of individualism. This eclecticism of contemporary dance is the source of the diversity of styles which has emerged in Post-Colonial Africa. Contemporary dance is tailored satisfy the needs of an urban environment and address themes of contemporary relevance.

However, despite the indefinable form of contemporary dance, there are dance artists who have developed styles which characterise their distinctive forms. Some of these are Omofolabo Soyinka, Dayo Liadi, Qudus Onikeku and Arnold Udoka (Agwu, 2010).

Some choreographers who can boast of prolific works are Segun Adefila, Emmanuel Adejumo, Ojo Bakare, and Vera Ephraim among many others.

Segun Adefila, the founder of Crown Troupe of Africa was born in 1978. His works express the of music and dance, drama, poetry and visual arts. His themes are socially relevant ones and he aims to build a holistic African theatre that will reflect a balance of functional and aesthetic values. Adefila has featured on several public fora some of which are International dance Day; Refugee Day, Lagos; Commonwealth cultural Celebretion Day; Manchester 2002; and several others. Notable works by Adefila include "Eda" and (1997), "Ososu Owo", (1998). While "Eda" is an adaptation of the medieval play, *Everyman,* "Ososu" dramatises the perennial issues of ethnic and sectarian conflict in Nigeria. The message is the importance of unity in a pluralistic society. Using the broom as a symbol, the work demonstrates the ease of breaking a broomstick and the relative impossibility of breaking them in a bunch; thereby signifying the importance of unity. His other work, Mama Africa dwells on the gender issue of the abuse of women and children. He has variously treated such political and social issues in "fellow Countrymen" and

"Aluta". He has many other productions in his repertoire of experience such as "Crisis", "Exodus", "Kaleidoscope", "Digbolugi", "One Shot", etc.

In an interview with The Guardian,(Jan 5th,2005), Adefila says, life starts and ends with the arts such as dance and poetry.

Bakare Ojo, the versatile theatre director, dancer and choreographer and teacher was born in 1959. In an interview with Daily Trust on July 3rd 2002, Bakare opines that "dance is the king of the performative arts" He says that dance is the synergy of the performing arts. He says that dance is polycentric and therefore African dancers should explore more innovative movements by looking beyond the shores of Africa. A foremost vanguard of Nigerian performing arts, Bakare says his father disowned him when he joined the legendary Hubert Ogunde Theatre.

Another contemporary choreographer and dancer of repute is Vera Ephraim, born in 1978. A successful Nollywood actress and television figure, she veered into dancing as a career in 1997 when she joined the Heritage Ambassadors dance company with whom she took a three-month European tour. Her work has provided interaction with contemporaries on the international scene, an experience which she claims has enabled her to evolve her own distinctive style.

Ephraim's goal is to encourage and foster fresh choreography by discovering young talents. She has performed at education workshops amateur and professional dancers where she acted in an instructive capacity. She finds inspiration in her sufferings in life which enables her to empathise with fellow workers, especially women. One of the works she choreographed is titled "Imprint of the Flesh". The dance dramatises the travails of a woman who has to deal with present pain and fears whilst being haunted by agonies of her past. She has several works in her repertoire which includes "Where are you?", the story of two women from different worlds who share a common experience.

There is no doubt that the contemporary dance scene as a newly evolved form and is elective in its movement styles, combining as it does traditional and modern, as well as

individual creations. As Peter Badejo, a popular choreographer opines, "We (*Nigerians*) are just trying to build it….We are building for people to even understand what the medium is in contemporary Nigeria. At the moment, people still see it (*dance*) as a traditional thing that is done at cultural forums of their villages and at weddings. We are yet to understand dance."

Though at the fledgling stage, contemporary dance is gradually being entrenched in the arts for a in Nigerian as a dance for arts sake rather than as a compliment for other media such as drama and music and other forms.

2.1.4 Dance as Symbol of Transition

The employment of dance as a major feature in rites of passage in oral societies is common. Hardly does one find any ceremony beginning from the celebration of a new born child, through puberty rites that is not accompanied by dancing. For instance, among the Yoruba peoples of West Africa, the arrival or birth of a child is heralded with much joy and a special day is set aside for the formal naming and symbolic welcoming of a child into the fold of the family and community. On the day of the event, a traditional music band is hired at the end of the ritual of naming; dancing by family, friends and well wishers begins and continues for the entire day. This dance is accompanied by songs which lyrics suggest that the child had only just been born into the world of the living. Particularly the gestural directions of the dances tend to mine the action of cradling an infant child. Thus, the dance on the occasion is specialized and apart from the entertainment value, also performs the function of a vehicle transporting the newborn from the world of the unborn to that of the living. In the case of the transition from childhood to puberty, Paul Spencer's (1965) study of the *Samburu* people of Northern Uganda is a reference point for importance of dance as a symbol. It is interesting to note that Samburu boys undergo the ritual circumcision which is part of the proceedings before

they are then allowed to perform the special dance which propels them symbolically into the world of the adults and mature community members.

One should note however, that the gestural patterns of the dance performed during these occasions will depend on the rite being celebrated. Also, accompaniments such as rhythm tempo, lyrics, costume and sometimes the musical instruments tend to differ as the occasion demands. All aforementioned rites are subject to cultural ideologies. For instance, while among the Oyo Yoruba group the transition from life to the ancestral world of a departed king feature a high degree of ritual involvement, among the Ogbaru Ibos the dance is more jubilant. In each case the dance movements suggest the speed of the deceased on the transitional journey to the ancestral realm. It is therefore necessary to reiterate what African dance scholars have severally pointed out: that dance as a medium in ritual contexts tell the story of a given ceremony and may be likened to a vehicle transporting the initiates in a given ceremony from the present to a higher social status or to an ancestral height as the event may be.

The Encyclopedia of Death and Dying asserts that dance like other art forms has treated the subjects of death continually throughout history and will continue to be used as a vehicle to express human fascination with this eternal unanswered question. Rituals have surrounded the mystery of death from prehistoric times. Repeated rhythmic movements become dance, and the solace of rocking and keening can be therapeutic. Instances of the employment of song and dance abound in the history of mankind and cuts across cultures. For example the Aborigines are known to perform a dance which is believed to evoke the clan totems of a dying man and after the death; another dance is performed to enable the release of the soul from the physical form. From the African continent, the Lugbara of northern Uganda and the *Angas* of Northern Nigeria feature ritual dancing extensively in the funeral rites. In Nigeria, among the Ibos of Eastern Nigeria and where the present study is focused, dance artists and scholars have reiterated this inclusion of dance in funerals rites as an integral part of burial ceremonies. Layiwola (1990) provides

a critical comparison of the death dances of the Lugbara people and that of the Yoruba of West Africa titled '*Establishing Liminal Categories in African ceremonial Dances*" in which parallels of psychological transition of the community through bereavement and confusion to social equilibrium is examined in two cultures. Furthermore, Ossie Enekwe in his book titled *The Concept of Dance in Nigeria* reflects on the function of dance as a therapeutic device. In his words:

> As a universal phenomenon, dance has a biological base. The possibility it gives to man for both physical relaxation and psychic emotional release has engaged the attention of scientists who have demonstrated that movement is essential to both humans and animals for the release of emotional tensions caused by both joyful and painful events(pg16).

Furthering these assertions particularly in situations of extreme tension, dance enables the pent-up grief of the community of mourners to be released on the participants. The emotional and mental strain is considerably reduced as the muscles relax in dance. This results in the attainment of equilibrium in the psyche of the mourners.

2.1.5 Rites of Passage in Contemporary Context

Solon Kimbali (Spencer 1965) has lamented the neglect of the rites of passage in the life of modern man. According to him, this is due largely to the continued expansion of industrial urban civilization which has produced extensive changes in our social system. Prominent among these changes have been increased secularization and the decline in the importance of sacred ceremonialism. He opines that rites of passage were often, but not necessarily, tied to supernatural sanctions and to the activity of priestly intermediaries. Although such rites focused on the individual, they were also occasions for group participation such as initiation ceremonies and burial or marriage rites in an agrarian community. No data exists which suggest that a secularized urban world has lessened the need for ritualized expression of an individual's transition from one status to

another. Obviously, ceremonialism alone cannot establish the new equilibrium, and perfunctory rituals may be pleasant but also meaningless. One of our problems is that we are lacking the empirical studies of ritual behavior and its consequences for life-cycle crises upon which we might assess the relation between crises and ritual in its current setting.

This deficiency is related to another. The scientific interest in religion of a half-century ago seems to have dwindled in the academia, although a few sociologists are now evincing an interest in the social aspect. Occasional essays on the subject emerge in the literature of social science, but the field has been left almost entirely to the theologians. It would seem that the time has come when theories and techniques which have been developed in the last quarter century might be applied to this subject with rewarding results. Such studies would be concerned not with religion per se but with the nature and function of symbolism and relation to social and individual behavior. Rites of passage would constitute one segment of the problem.

But rites of passage deserve attention within themselves. The critical problems of becoming male and female, of relations with the family, and of passing into old age are directly located to the devices which the society offers the individual to help him achieve the new adjustment. Somehow we seem to have forgotten this-or perhaps the ritual has become so completely individualistic that it is now found for many only in the privacy of the psychoanalyst's couch. The evidence, however, does not bear out the suggestion. It seems much more likely that one dimension of mental illness may arise because an increasing number of individuals are forced to accomplish their transition alone and with private symbols.

Our basic problem may then be seen as that of the nature of individual crisis. If we define it thus and shift our emphasis from description of the idiosyncratic to the cultural and social regularities in relation to individual deviancy, we have the foundation on which many disciplines could cooperate. The theorist, the researcher, and the practitioner from

biology, psychology, anthropology and sociology have an opportunity to work together on this problem.

2.1.6 Introduction to Funeral Dances

Funeral rites vary from region to region and may vary in practice and detail within a single culture depending on the sex, age and social position of the deceased. A study of the data on death rites reveal that the rites of separation are few in number and very simple, compared to rites of transition which have a duration and complexities sometimes so great that they must be granted an autonomy. He also notes that the rites assigned the greatest importance. What this shows is that more societies believe in life after death (reflected in transitional rites) than in death as a dead end literally. They believe that the physically dead continue to exist in some form or the other, which places an obligation on the living to elaborate so much on the transitional rite. Among many societies who believe in life after death, the ceremony reflects a celebrative mood as the deceased is believed to have merely moved on to another state of existence sometimes more powerful than the physical and human state. Many African cultures believe in life after death and the evidence is found in names given to newborns within the cultures. The Yoruba people bear names such as "*Babatunde*" which in translation, means 'father' has returned upon the birth of a male child or the death of a deceased grandfather in the family. The Igbo people give such names as "*Nnenna*" meaning paternal grandmother based on the same believe.

The transitional rite following physical death of an individual is thus characterized by celebration involving dances performances. The uses of dance as a medium of celebrating rites of transition also abound across cultures of the world. Dance like other forms of art has been linked to the subject of death continually and continues to be used as a vehicle to express human fascination with the eternal puzzle and death. Rituals have surrounded the history of death from prehistoric times and many of these involve dance.

Taking example from the eastern part of the world, the aboriginal people of Australia use song and dance to evoke the clan totems of a dying man and two months after death dance a gain, recreating the symbolic animals to purify the bones and release the soul of the deceased. The *Sagari* dances are parts of the cycle performed on the anniversary of a death on the Islands of Malaysia, New Guinea. Among the Korean people, dancing by a female Shaman is an important element to cleanse a deceased. The funeral rites include dances to send back death spirits to the land of the dead.

From the Americans, the *Umutima* of upper Uruguay, south American, possess seventeen different cult dances for the dead. The ghost dance of the plains of North America reaffirms an ancestral tribal continuity following a death and was recently revived following the lifting of the prohibition by the U.S government which deemed the dance subversive. On the African continent, there are documented studies of cultures which employ dance in rites transition. The Yoruba of West Africa perform death dances wearing a likeness of the deceased. The *Dogon* of Mali performs masked dances to confront death and pass on traditions after death. The Lugbara death and pass on traditions after death. The Lugbara people of Northern Uganda and the Angas *of* Northern Nigeria also include dance in their rituals surrounding death. Although the European society had shown an aversion for all dance related activities especially in spiritual contexts evidence shows that until the middle ages, dance was still part of the religious repertoire of the European society.

The *Danse Macabre* of the middle ages was portrayed many times on the walls of cloistered cemeteries as a dance of linked hands between figures of death. The images are impressions made during a period of anxiety and confusion caused by the Bubonic plague which ravaged the continent, killing a large percentage of the population. This fascinating with death was recreated in the romantic period in such ballet pieces as '*Giselle'*; all of which present scenes with ballerinas dressed in white vaporous costumes representing spirits after death floating on their toes or suspended by invisible wires and illuminated by

moonlight fabricated by the technology of gas lighting. These ballet pieces portray dramatic death scenes followed by the difficult illusion of phantom-like, weightless spirituality. Death has been used as inspiration for many dance works in the twentieth century, the most perennial being Mikhail Forcines *Le Cygnet* (1905), commonly known as *Dying Swan*. The piece depicts the noble death struggle of a legendary silent bird who only sand at death by violent, percussive movements as a sacrifice for a second festival in prehistoric Russia.

In Post-World War I, Germany, Mary Wigman, high priestess of *ausdruckstanz*, used expressionist movement and masked ensembles to great effect in *totenmal*, showing the devastating impact of death on society. Another choreographic masterpiece from Germany is Kurt Joss' *the green table* (1932), inspired by the medieval *Danse Macabre* paintings. This work show death himself taking in different ways, the people caught up in the war; in essence, only death is the victor. The choreographer Martha Graham created *Lamentation* in 1930, which portrayed through minimal rocking movement, the anguish and despair of mourning. In this dance she retained a passive face, only rising once from a sitting position, her movements stretching the fabric of a jersey tube, yet producing a profound image of distraught motherhood.

The Mexican choreographer Guillermina Bravo treated the subject of death in several modern dance works, influenced by Mexico's folk traditions. In *La Valse* (1951), George Balanchine, choreographer and director of the New York ballet, created an ominous image of death in the guise of a man dressed in black, offering a black dress and gloves to a young girl at a ball, thereby claiming a victim. In Canada, choreographer James Kudelka exorcised the pain of his mother's death from cancer in his ballet in *paradise* (1983). This piece shows the stresses placed on a dying person by family and friends, and encounter with a guide (nurse, priest, and angel) who leads the protagonist from denial to acceptance. In this work the dancers all wear skirts and the roles are interchangeable, eliminating references vision of an afterlife. The choreographer Eduard

Lock projected prorogated films of the dancer Louise Le cavalier as an old woman on her deathbed in his piece (1995), showing her life cycle from childhood to death.

Since the 1980s many choreographers have responded to the AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) epidemic by making deeply felt statements through dance. After the death of his partner, Arnie Zane, choreographer Bill T. Tones used performers with terminal diseases who recounted their experiences confronting death in '*Still Here'* (1994). Maurice Bejart, choreographer and director of the Ballet du XXienme siècle, after showing *'Cue la Mort me Dit'* (1980), a serene vision of death, presented an evening-long piece ballet for life in memory of the dancer Jorger Donn and the singer Freddie Mercury, both deceased from AIDS-related illnesses.

The list of dance works treating the subject of death is very long, and the symbolic figure of death appears in many choreographic works. Titles like Andree Howard's '*Death and the Maiden'* (1973), Frederick Ashton's dances in Benjamin Britten's opera, '*Death in Venice'* (1974), Erick Hawkins *Death is the Hunter* (1975), Fleming Flindts '*Triumph of Death'*(1997 and '*Death'* by the Indian choreographer and Astad Deboo, are numerous examples and underline the continuing fascination of dance artists for the subject of death.

2.1.7 Catharsis and Resolution in Funeral Dances

The literature on dance frequently emphasizes its cathartic value releasing pent-up emotions. This notion was developed in stages in the writings of Herbert Spencer when he explored the variety of emotions that expressed themselves in muscular action, first in relation to an ingenious theory of origins of music (1857), then of laughter (1860), and then briefly of dancing (1862). He viewed emotion as a form of nervous energy that became intensified when denied its natural outlet, and had to be released through some other channel. The concept of dancing as a safety valve for releasing emotional steam foreshadowed the Freudian concept of the libido of a psychic force that is similar to

craving and which requires some direct or indirect physical outlet. Similarly, Margret Mead (1928) suggested that the informal dance of children provides a release from rigorous repression and subordination by adults in some cultures. One may compare the view of Rudolf Laban as a choreologist, that man feels the urge to dance after the disturbances and frustration of everyday life with Lorna Marshall's comments on the frictions and accusations typical of Kung! Bushmen:

> But the next moment the people became a unit, singing, clapping, moving together. Words are not dividing them. They are doing something together that gives them pleasure they are enlivened in spirit and body by the music they are lifted out of the arduous unremitting search for food and out of the anxiety that fill their days.(pg 16)

It is clear that the notion of a tension release achieved through dance is not just a flash of insight among some recent writers interested in dance therapy as a topic with its own jargon, journal and professional association. It is either a very general experience, or an established metaphor in our pattern of thought, a reflection, perhaps, of the stresses of our own society.

However, this can never be more than a partial explanation. Curt Sachs (1933) made a pertinent point by saying that if dance is a necessary expression of excess energy and the joy of living in all mankind, "then it is only of slight importance for anthropologists and social historians. If it is established however, that an inherited predisposition develops in many ways in different groups of man and its force of direction is related to other phenomena of civilization, the history of dance will then be of great importance for the study of mankind. The intriguing aspect of this assertion is that it is the hub of social anthropology, although Sachs himself belonged to an intellectual tradition far removed from modern comparative social science. Universally shared biological or psychological considerations do not account for the differences between

societies; hence one has to look both at the variety of dance and at the variety of its social context in order to arrive at a fuller understanding.

Certainly with reference to specific examples, the notion of tension release provides a plausible explanation. Hartwig describes pre-colonial as an inter-village competition during the slack dry season that provided an emotional outlet for men in striking contrast to their toil at other times under the stagnation and decay of an oppressive regime. The dance craze during, and following World War I in Britain is sometimes portrayed in these terms. Gluckman's interpretation of the Swazi first fruit ceremony is a release of tension following a period of economic anxiety, and a diversion of potentially rebellious forces against the king; there was an acting out of these tensions in a dance that rose to an emotional climax as the king was first rejected by his followers and then, appearing isolated as a wild monster executing a crazy elusive dance, was reunited with his nation. Lewis' analysis of religious cults associated with spirit possession portrays dancing as a wide spread activity leading to catharsis, as in tarantism in medieval Italy, voodoo in Haiti, *Bori* in West Africa, ; they appealed to the down trodden, sectors of society, notably women.

Gluckman and Lewis are not without their criticisms, these criticisms focus primarily on the nature on the initial tensions and do not seriously questions that tensions exist and are released through dancing. This in itself is revealing, for its demonstrates how plausible the safe-valve hypothesis is on the one hand, and how difficult it is to disprove the other. The problem is that it can sometimes be too glib an explanation that on reflection does not adequately account for the facts.

Suzanne Langer has raised a further point concerning the relation between emotion and dance that at first sight poses a serious challenge to the theory of catharsis in dance. She pointed out that such writers as Duncan, Laban, and Sachs generally assumed that there is a direct expression of emotion in dance, whereas in other forms of art it has been widely accepted that it is image of emotion that is expressed by the artist in a mood of

detachment, raising our awareness of this emotion to a higher plane. She questions why dance should be an exception. According to her, the dance creates an illusion of emotions that are not really felt but only imagined as in a novel or a play or a painting and revealed through symbols. Rather, symptoms of real emotions are expressed through spontaneous gesture. The dance artist thus has symbols of perceived emotion, of will, conveyed by the artist through contrived gestures as he creates a virtual world.

Langer's lateral insight is relevant to subsequent themes especially as it may be noted that her model is based on dancing as an art form and essentially theatrical dancing. She subsequently contrasts this form of dance with a debased form of popular dancing that is pleasure dancing, in which emotion is experienced more directly "in a spirit of romance, an escape, a relief from the burden of actuality, without any spiritually strenuous achievement". Therefore, she accepts the principle of catharsis, while rejecting the more pleasurable form as true dance.

Once again this becomes largely a problem of definition, but it poses another question here; in such instances as the Swazi first-fruits ceremony or the Temiar séance or the Ubakala girl's dances where the form of dancing is over laden with symbolic significance, is emotion truly expressed or released, or do such rituals merely create a virtual world of emotion? Langer herself has a view of primitive dance derived from Sachs and ultimately Rousseau that does not help us here. It is a question that touches on the debate between ritual and sentiment.

Spencer notes however that Victor Turners conception of the role of dance is predicated on the theory of communitas. Turner identifies the paradox present in any society where social inequalities, rivalries and property interests divide people according to some prevailing social premise, yet there is at the same time a generic human bond, a communitas, that unites them all regardless of difference in status. In the final analysis, political power is fragile and all humans are mere mortals, ground down to a uniform condition of life, death, fertility and the uncertain bounties of nature. These lie beyond

the power of individuals and yet are intimately bound up with their destinies. As cosmic symbols, they are closely related to the expression of communitas for they reduce humans to a humble role where they survive only as a species and only by interaction with one another. This leads Turner to suggest two complementary modes of social interaction. It is the structured aspect that dominates day- to- day existence; but when there is some disruption in the normal routine, during periods of anxiety or at ceremonies marking changes in status, boundaries shift, the gaps in the structures are laid bare and the underlying force of communitas rises to the surface. Structure and communitas are mutually dependent as they bestow meaning on human existence. Here the relevance of death becomes apparent as a socially leveling activity and also because it's frequently marginal and anomalous character. Its contrast with everyday life is emphasized as it takes the dancers out of their structured routine '*into a realm of timeless Charm'* (1967). The dance frequently stretches beyond the immediate social milieu to some higher association with spiritual beings, who possess the dancers as in the Bori, or lurk in the shadows as in the Kung! Medicine dance. Speaking analytically, such beliefs provide vital clues as metaphorical expressions of the inexpressible. A case in point is the Bori cult which stood outside the Islamic structure of Hausa society; pagan, unacknowledged and socially deviant.

Yet through their close association with the spirits, members of this cult were in a unique position to express the popular feelings against the contrived move from an old and preferred settlement. They were seen to play a complementary role to the formal hierarchy and to force a concession from the authorities. Only through their dancing, perceived as Bori spirit possession, was it thought possible to breathe new life into a spiritually lifeless community. Victor Turner, elaborating on this theme, considers Robin Horton's analysis of the ritual cycle of masquerade dances among the Kalabari, which is also associated with spirit possession in Nigeria. The virtue of the Kalabari example is that it forms a very clearly defined ideal type, although one suspects that the treatment

may be compared to other forms of theatrical dancing including Western ballet with its emotive themes and ethereal niche in popular cosmology. Spencer adapts Turner's model freely to the Kalabari, contrasting their high regard for achievement, which dominated their economic and political reality, and the masquerade cycle associated with recreation and concerted fellowship. He suggests that in the *Ekine* activities, the submerged spirits of communitas and the notion of struggle and status seeking which dominated this society became mere play, even as the focal point of their acting. Clearly, here, dancing and masquerading are the idiom of expression emphasizing that it was indeed a parody. The *Ekine* example reveals the concern with the dialectal relationship between structure and communitas, inequality and equality, and opportunistic maneuvering and conviviality.

Turner proposes that the *Ekine* example revealed that in the final analysis all men were dependent on the survival of their way of life and were all subject to the capricious forces of chance that lay beyond their power to control just as the forces like spirits lay outside structure. His point is that within a given social structure, the trappings of power and success depended on the universal acceptance of their symbolic worth, and on a consensus regarding the rules that govern their competition. Horton concludes that the *Ekine* masquerade can be regarded as both a mandate to the private ambitions of men and an assertion that in the final resort they were accountable to the community. The vicious forces of competition associated with ungovernable water spirits stood opposed by the power of communitas during the masquerade cycle.

The dance may be seen as a dialogue that maintained the vitality of community existence, while at the same time preserving it from Hobbesian chaos into which untrammeled competition could degenerate. Turner's opposition between structure and communitas is foreshadowed by Glickman's interpretation of the Swazi first fruits ceremony, and from this one can identify two aspects of social solidarity in dancing:[**1**] The solidarity bred of the complementary opposition between groups of people and [**2**]

The solidarity expressed in complementary opposition to a dominant principle of social organization, rather like a competition of ideas.

Finally, there remains a final theme that probes the pattern of dance movement for some hidden meaning. A structuralist view of dance has provided a major topic that characterizes, almost to the point of dominating, recent writings on the anthropology of dance. Parallels have been sought between dance and language: dance in general with its structured set of possibilities and creative potential, dances in particular with their underlying structural form, and dancing as a shared activity with its non verbal mode of communication. Much of the literature appears to lead one to the brink of proposing that the patterns of dance, deep down, form a structural whole within any society; but without adequate illustration. In the final analysis any underlying pattern of behavior or belief that is not consciously perceived by members of a culture may be described as deep structure; and where for instance, some inherent pattern of a particular dance form shines through the superficial changes in fashion like a dominant symbol, this persistence invites a structuralist explanation.

Spencer is quick to point out that this is not to suggest that every nuance of the basic choreographic pattern of all dances must have some inherent meaning or must in some way relate to the wider analysis of ritual leaving no possibility of an independence experience. The fact that so often a dance can be imported from one culture to another, albeit with surface adaptations that in themselves may have a deeper meaning, suggest that what has actually been transferred may be regarded in a sense as an artifact: exquisite in its way and with an inherent form, but no longer the possession of any one culture with a meaningful deep structure. A glance at the mass of earlier literature of the dances of North American Indians leads one to appreciate how suitable the topic of dance is in any unbounded study of cultural diffusion. While still making a case for the social relevance of dance, Spencer acknowledges, albeit reluctantly, the “the structuralist claim that within the pattern of movement in dance there is some hidden code that touches on the

mainspring of social existence. But it is to question any axiomatic assumption that the basic choreographic pattern of every dance must be loaded with an inner subliminal meaning". It then follows that dance may be defined in whatever way seems appropriate to the study of any given field. Dance may be considered within the analysis of ritual action and within this context, one can approach it analytically. As Spencer reiterates, *society creates the dance, and it is to society that we must turn to understand it-* even as art.

2.1.8 Funeral Dance as Socio-Cosmic Cohesive Force

From the onset of time, man has been curious about his environment especially with those phenomena which could not be easily explained. These mysterious phenomena such as the source of life and death and what lies beyond death led to the belief in some powerful forces which could not be seen by man but had some control and influence over the actions of mortal man. According to Duruaku (1997),

> if man wanted to get a god on his side, He courted that god, tried to please him and tried to accommodate what he thought would be to the god's liking .

He states that in order to obtain the favor of the gods, man developed a series of styled movement or dance to attract the attention of the gods. He states that man's need for a suitable atmosphere for the meeting of the human and spirit world, led him to invent religious ritual. According to him, religious ritual is a solemn business on which the future of the tribe probably depended. As earlier mentioned, the phenomenon of death is one mystery which still baffles man to the present day. When a member of a given community dies, the uncertainty as to where the spirit has gone remains to haunt the living. Some communities believe that the deceased transcends the human level and by implication, the physical world and travels to a believer in the benevolence of the departed souls; others believe that they acquire mischievous characteristics and could readily harm the living relatives or community members. Thus, upon the incident of

death, the deceased is absorbed into that unexplainable reason of man's consciousness and the living hastens to appease the dead through either propitiatory or expiatory means.

As a device of socio-cosmic cohesion, the funeral dances is an attempt to do obeisance to higher gods and hopefully avert the incidence of death for a more distant time. This is because despite the awareness that death is inevitable for man, it is believed that it is predicated on the will of the gods. For instance when epidemics occur which claim the lives of a large population of a given community; it is seen as a sign of the anger of the gods. A case in point is the smallpox epidemic in the early years of the 20th century in Yoruba land. So drastic was the effect on the inexplicability of the situation led to the existence of a new god known as *Sopona*. The agony and fear which the epidemic left behind in its aftermath must have led the people to classify death by smallpox as one in a class of its own and the most horrible death imaginable. In this case propitiatory dances would be performed to ward of f the possibility of such an incident. As a device of social cohesion, funeral dances binds the relatives of the deceased and the community in a communion of shared grief.

2.2.0 Theoretical Approach

2.2.1 Structuralism and Semiotics

This research employs the theory of Semiotics as a guiding interpretational Philosophy. As a branch of Structuralism, semiotics is a theory of language which accords equal importance to all communication systems; whether verbal or non-verbal. Under semiotic philosophy, the verbal utterance is subordinated under a pre-existing language system intrinsically buried in the human subconscious. Ferdinnd de Saussure , the semiotician rejected the concept that language is a heap of words amassed over time and used as symbols to identify objects or ideas in the world. Rather he conceives the written or spoken word as only one part of a ywo-way system; the 'signifier', (word or utterance) and the 'signified' (idea or thought being expressed). In other words, the visual symbol of

red colour may represent peace where the accompanying thought is such, while it could mean danger within another context.

On the other hand, Saunders Peirce, the American philosopher's approach to semiotics is more straightforward and practical. It is of particular relevance to this work because his illustration employs basic universal objects, thereby making explication easier. His tripartite typology of signs-; namely: the icon, the index, and the symbol appeals so easily to our common sense perception of different signifying modes that it has become more popular and is most often applied in many fields, especially theatre studies. His typologies of signs which will be used for this work are as follows:

(1**)The icon**: In this instance, the governing principle is similitude; the icon represents its subject mainly by similarity between the sign vehicle and the signified. This is apparently a general law, making virtually any form of similarity between sign and object sufficient to establish iconic relationship. In the words of Pierce,

> An icon is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses... anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual, or law, is an icon f anything in so far as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it (1931;58)

Peirce's examples of iconic signs include the figurative painting since we tend to lose the awareness that it is not the thing but the photograph. Icons are divided into three types.

(i) the images

(ii) the diagram

(iii) the metaphor.

(2) **The index**:

> indexical signs are causally connected with their objects, often physically or through contiguity; the index refers to the object that denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object. The cause and effect signs are thus considered indices based on Piercian doctrine. However, Pierce

himself includes the pointing finger in his category of the index. This relates to the pointed-to-object through physical contiguity. For instance, the rolling gait of the sailor is an index of his profession, a knock on the door indicates a presence behind it, and such verbal deixis as 'your', 'this', and adverbs such as 'here' and 'now' are all indices.

(3) **The symbol**:

in this case, the relationship between the sign-vehicle and signified is conventional and unmotivated and neither similitude not physical connection exists between the two. Simply put, a symbol is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law and is usually an association of ideas. The most obvious example have is the spoken word.

Pierce hastens to add that there can be no pure icon, index or symbol and cautions against the temptation to fall into absolutionism in the process of definition and application of categories.

Pierce creates subdivisions of his typologies, in which many signs maybe at work but the definitions or referent will depend on the contextual situation. Hence, the Christian crucifix while obviously an icon of the physical resemblance could function in the capacity of the symbol of Christianity. In this, case it may be described as an iconic symbol. No place in the arts is the use of the icon more versatile than in the theatre.

Kier Elam makes a good case for the importance of icon in the theatrical semiotics. For instance in the theatrical context, the body is the most apparent indexical item.

Following on the definition of boundaries of the signs, emerged the concept of ostension. Theatre is able to draw from this most basic of iconic signs, because of its simplicity and ready signification. To use Elam's example, in reply to a child's query as to what a pebble is, one simply picks it up and shows it to the child. This obviates the

need to describe the object, an exercise which is fraught with possible misunderstanding and also the necessity to seek the use of the verbal sign-system. Umberto Eco (1979) has stressed this ostensive aspect of the 'stage show' as a distinctiveness which sets it apart from narrative where objects, persons, and events are necessarily described and recounted.

2.2.2 Cultural Sub-codes

The endearing element of semiotics besides its recognition of non-literary signification systems and which are relevant to oral societies is the available tools it provides for researchers to work within culturally distinctive areas. In the interest of order and basic epistemological rules, we must possess a framework of general cultural, ideological and ethical principles which we apply in regular analysis, but there is also a need to distinguish the given theatre, based on social guidelines such as linguistic codes at work, kinesics, musical costume and spatial conventions which dictate the culture's contemporary dramatic codes. In order to achieve this, Umberto Eco proposes that sets of secondary regulative rules, peculiar to theatre and drama come into play to produce specific sub codes, so that a dramatic piece delivered in French language in Paris, for instance, while reflecting the "behavioral, gestural and linguistic patterns characteristic of contemporary French society (or sections thereof), may nevertheless be structured according to prevailing modes of design, posture across-stage movement, voice projection etc"

Peter Brooks (1968) has argued for the initial appreciation of a theatrical text in spatial terms. In his words, the stage is an empty space" and potentially redefines messages visually and acoustically. Elam, endorsing the importance of the stage asserts that,

> the first factor that strikes us when we enter a theatre is the physical organization of the playhouse itself. Its dimensions, the stage-audience distance, etc. the performance itself begins with the information rich

registering of stage space and its use in the creation of the opening image.

Elam concludes that spatial relations (culturally mediated) will continue to prove as constraints and remain primary influences on perception and reception.

In ritual traditional drama, given the role of ostensive systems and parakinesic codes in play, these constraints are reduced to a minimum. A spectator sees the action and follows it both mentally and physically. The space (stage) is thus defined by the physical distance on which the actors and the entire performance take place.

2.2.3 Communication Process in Body Language (Kinesics)

The use of the body on as a communicative vehicle is invariably represented in ritual as well as secular drama. The search for a theatrical tradition which would utilize purely kinetic conventions has been the passion of Antonin Artaud and others in the East European traditional theatre. However, with centuries of denying and denigrating the use of the body in communication, it is proving an almost impossible task to achieve such a dream. The fact that Ray Birdwhistle, the inventor of the term kinesics, could identify only thirty-two facial movement used in America out of the twenty-thousand that he documented from cultures across the world proves how little the use of body language is used in Western society.

Generally speaking, the study of the body in communication has concentrated on the use of the gaze, facial expressions, gestures, space, proxemics, kinesics, posture, body movements and other body actions. However, this study shall utilize the word kinesics as the study of body motion as related to the non-verbal aspects of inter-personal communication. Given the all embracing implication of the concepts, including the comprehensive study of various and specific body parts, it is truly justified in its classification as a structured method. Where the clinical methods proffered by Paul Ekinan (Elam,1983) conduct intensive analysis into gestural types, kinesics employs a

comprehensive examination of various body movements in communication and how these kinesics are able to translate body gestures as a total component in communication rather than little bits and pieces of individual units as is the case with the clinical approach. The most notable of Birdwhistle's interpretation of the kinetic concept is idea of para-kinesics. `According to him, parakinesic statements redefine a messages situation. This signal functions in a theatrical capacity by drawing audience attention in a sequence of interaction between the actor and those present is immediately established. The sign in place here is that of the index as the actor becomes at one and the same time an indicator of "context addresses and the objects discourse".

In trying to establish a non-linguistic model of gesture, Julia Kristeva has argued that the object, and the practice itself in which the gesture is bound is precisely of an indicative but non-signifying kind (Kristeva, 1968). In this view, indication is prior to signification in the 'work' of the gesture. The character of indication found in kinetic and parakinesic signal may legitimately be defined as deictic, since deixis is etymologically a gestural concept (in its origin of Greek grammar) and it possesses the linguistics role defining the protagonist, the addressee and the context, thereby constructing a process of communication. With reference to ritual drama, the deictic gesture indicating the performers and his actions on stage is of absolute importance as the presence and actions define spatial orientation and audience reaction.

In its totality, gesture constitutes the essential mode of body ostentation on the performance space. Through the deixis, an important bridge is created between the gestural and spoken. Artaud's conviction of the absolute polarity between the spoken words and gesture has been realized so far only in mime. Gesture is the prime vehicle of deictic ostension in all theatrical situations.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Population

The study area is Osomala town in Ogbaru region of Eastern Nigeria and two other Ogbaru towns, namely Odekpe in Anambra State on the Eastern bank of the Niger River, and Okoh town on the Western bank and in Delta State. Osomala, which represents the research model for the region, is located in the lower middle part of the River Niger, a few kilometers after the Onitsha town. Some of the major riverrine towns in this region which belong to the Ogbaru diasporas are Asaba on the Western bank and Ogwu, Ogbakuba and Osomala on the Eastern bank. The common ancestry of these people is evident in common cultural practices and similar life style. These people are united by shared beliefs and world views. The Ogbaru community is made up of mostly farmers, producing palm oil, yams and other food produce. This region is also known for the production of high quality wood such as mahogany and Sapele. The forested lowlands North of Osomala (now known as Osomala Forest Reserve), is a swampy region, also famous for its production of oil palm trees.

The trees, cultivated at that time by hired laborers from the *Isu-amau* region, provided invaluable wealth during the Trans-Atlantic trade, when palm oil was an essential produce as the source of energy for the Industrial revolution in Europe. This favorable geographic location has been responsible for the buoyant economy of Osomala for decades. For instance, the rainfall averages seventy five to eighty inches per annum while the dry season is just long enough to favor transitional vegetation. As a result, the cultivation of yam tubers, a staple crop, has been especially prosperous for the people

over the years; more especially since it is not only the staple food but is also a major root crop for the region.

This geographical setting is also very conducive to farming and is the peoples' major occupation besides fishing and the building of canoes. In the past, men did the trading in the farm and river produce, but with the end of the Slave Trade and the Trans-Atlantic trade, the men have taken to farming, while the women do the trading on market days. The rise to prominence of the *Eke-Osomala* (as the market day is called) was made possible by the Slave Trade, which saw many Osomala men become rich and prominent during the Slave Trade period. The population and prominence of Osomala diminished with the abolition of the slave trade. In fact, a greater part of the lands occupied by many of her present neighbors to the north used to belong to Osomala kingdom.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection employed for this research is divided into the following categories.

1. Library and internet research.
2. Field work and
3. Post-field data analysis.

3.2.1 Library and Internet search

This involved visits to various libraries and individuals for consultation of relevant books and thesis on the subject of dance as well internet search on the subject of dance. The reading and study of relevant material helped to provide knowledge of existing literature on the work under study thus provided critical material. It helped to distinguish the focus of this study from existing researches on dance.

3.2.2 Fieldwork

Field-work involved contacts with village elders who are respected for their knowledge of oral tradition and could therefore provide invaluable background knowledge on the subject. In particular, the information gleaned from these elders proved to be useful not as a background to the study but also provided as an interesting amount of historical and religious data which helped as a foreground to the study. The book *"Osomari: A kingdom of Lower Niger Valley"* was particularly useful as a source of the ethnographic account on the Region, especially Osomala.

The oral sources for this work may be divided into interviews, video recordings, still pictures and participant observation.

The collection of research data and materials using the methods as prescribed by the Institute of African Studies was employed. These include:

1. Detailed Interviews
2. Native Informants (or indigenous Informants)
3. Observation and performance
4. Still photographs
5. Audio-visual coverage and performance

The eyewitness observation method was also utilized for this study. As an indigene of Osomala and family member of the deceased, the researcher had the privilege of participation and the opportunity therefore to record procedures and events which would not be easily accessible to a non-indigenous researcher. Hence there was access to photographs, songs' video coverage, notes and interviews containing important coded information seldom divulged to non-indigenes. The academic approach to the work shown allowed for an objective analysis of the performance.

The video recording of the events preceding the dance performances, the performance sequences and events following it were made. This was necessary as it provided records of important procedures which provide a setting for the performance.

Still photographs of important procedures and participants were taken. These include photos of key participants such as the eldest daughter, (*Ada*) the eldest son (*Okpala*) *Umuada* (the indigenous women's cult) the *Ndiomu* (wives of the clan) and the rulers of the major Ogbaru towns which are discussed in the work. Of particular importance are the photographs showing the stages of preparation of the dance props. Also musical equipments, costume and other paraphernalia used for the performance are pictorially recorded.

All information gathered was subsequently collated and analyzed. Interviews with the elders of the study area and from other sources on similar subjects were examined for content similarity differences and points of divergence

These along with the material collected from the book research were then used in the analyses of data for this work.

3.2.3 Problems of Data Collection

There were many problems encountered in the course of gathering data for this research. The first may be classified as technical. This involved the journey made to the study areas in other to gather ethnographic and background information on the subject of this thesis. The journey was made in the rainy season, this being the time of year when the community festivals were held and the men folk were expected by tradition to return early from their farms in other to participate in the planning of the festival.

Moreover, the yam planting period in the month of March was well behind, and the rains were moderate that year, so there was little anxiety with regard to the outcome of the harvest. This was in favor of the researcher, as the informants were in a favorable frame of mind for interviews and discussions. The journey from Ibadan to Onitsha along the Lagos/Benin express road was hazardous. All along the highway, enormous potholes were disguised under muddy pools and the driver dipped in and out and eventually fell into one of these. The passengers had to alight while the driver and a few men from our

passenger group heaved the vehicle out of the cavernous pothole. All this took about an hour. The progress was slow as the vehicle crawled on the line of traffic that stretched beyond the vision into the distance. The drizzle which began at the onset of the journey

Figure 3.1: *Guests arriving Osomala river bank for the funeral ceremony*

(Curtesy: Chief V.I Anyafulu, Dec. 2008)

persisted throughout and we arrived at Onitsha at dusk, exhausted but happy to step out the confining space of the station wagon.The researcher stopped at Uga Junction to board a vehicle heading for Osomala. On arrival at Osomala and having settled into a prearranged accommodation, an attempt was made to make contact with senior family members for guidance on appropriate steps required to obtain the necessary information. The researcher was advised against revealing the purpose of the journey so soon. Instead, she was advised to pay social visits to the relatives and the elders with token presents consisting of a bottle dry gin and a carton of cabin biscuits for each household. It is traditional in this culture that someone visiting from a distant place should bring along some snacks for those at home. The advice was followed with the result that the recipients were appreciative of the protocol awareness of the researcher. Subsequently, they were favorably disposed. All these took about two days. During the visits an appointment was made for the evening of the third day.

Having arrived at the appointed time which was 6pm, with the tape recorder, camera and notebooks, the chief, Ulasi Osai of Isiolu village (**fig.3.2**), requested that the equipments should be put away for the time being. He wanted to know the purpose of the visit, the nature of the information needed, and what it was needed for. When this had been done, the elder, looking greatly surprised, asked, '*do they teach you how to dance in the big schools?'* An attempt was made to explain the importance of studying cultural practices to him. Unfortunately, it was beginning to grow dark as dusk was setting in. He promised to arrange a convenient time for the interview during the week.

It was however, not possible to arrange an interview for that week the key informant, was busy with the arrangements for the *ofo* festival. The evening was spent in discussions with the wives of the clan on their contribution to the general welfare of the community, with very helpful results.

Later on, the same evening, a young man who was recommended as a skilled tour guide came to the residence for introduction to the researcher. According to sources, he

had experience as a good guide and escort. Having been born and raised in the town, he would give advice on how to go about obtaining the information. He turned out to be a cousin and he felt more enthusiastic on learning this fact.

Figure 3.2: *The photograph of the key informant of the study, The Nnoli of Isiolu village* **(**Curtesy: Edith A. Awogu-Maduagwu 2000)

The following day, amidst the constant drizzle which characterize the riverrine regions, and on his advice, we set out for the neighboring town of Odekpe, this being one of the Igala ascendancy tripartite brotherhood. It was the *eke* market day, and the journey which would have taken thirty minutes took two hours as the roads were bad and the driver had to make frequent stops to pick up traders laden with goods. We were welcomed into Odekpe town by a torrent of rain and had to take shelter in a nearby stall while the rain slowly abated to a drizzle. It was a short walk to the palace of the *Okakwu*, the king of Odekpe. A palace messenger led us to the chief who acted as his public relations officer, in order to explain the purpose of our visit. The chief promised to fix an appointment for later that evening. We went to a local canteen to wait for the appointment time.

Meanwhile, while the guide was taking a snack, a stroll around the town provided a view of the swampy topography of the area. The indigenes were very friendly and ready to chat with visitors to the town. There was an infectious sense of excitement in the air as people jostled to and fro. It was later revealed that this was due to the anticipation of the *ofo* festival which was annually celebrated along with Osomala and Okoh towns. Having

Returned from the canteen and joined the guide, we sat and waited for the appointment time. We were there thirty minutes before the time. One hour later, the chief who would present the purpose of the visit was yet to arrive. We waited still until a palace guide told us that the king was in conference with his chiefs for the *ofo* festival preparations. We were finally granted audience and the king, on learning that the visitors were from Osomala decided to grant the interview himself. Okakwu Isamade (fig 3.2) was an educated man and was willing to provide all relevant information. He however, expressed skepticism over the possibility of finding someone to agree that the relatives' funeral record be used for research purposes. His words foretold of the difficulties ahead. We returned to Osomala, satisfied with the progress for the day. The guide checked with the Osomala chiefs' family and we learnt he was still too busy to see anyone. The following day, it was decided that the journey to the Ogbaru Okoh town in Delta State be made.

Okoh is situated on the other side of the River Niger across from Osomala town, [the river was the boundary used by the government]. We waited for transport at the Osomala garage all morning with a dense collection of anxious and impatient passengers until someone revealed that a goods truck had fallen across the road and that it would take at least three hours before any vehicle could be expected.

Other passengers quickly adjusted their luggage for convenience and began to trek. My guide suggested we join them. Upon enquiry on how long the distance was to the point of the vehicle breakdown, a passenger said 'only six miles' (!). The guide suggested that the journey should be postponed for the following day. At daybreak, we proceeded to the park and managed to board an early vehicle to Onitsha. The vehicle, an old, rusty salon car, coughed and sputtered its way along the muddy, uneven road to Onitsha. Having arrived Onitsha, with cramps in the feet, we stepped out the vehicle. From here a mini bus was boarded to take us across the River Niger Bridge to the Delta state region of the Ogbaru towns. Alighting at the bridge head, we took another bus to Okoh town and were received warmly by the palace chiefs. Fortunately, the ground was not quite as muddy as Onitsha. We were given an appointment for the next three weeks by which time the *ofo* festival would be over. We made our way back with more or less the same degree of inconveniences later that evening, but settled down to enjoy the onset of the festival, in the meantime after which the researcher had access to Okakwu Isamade. The set of difficulties discussed here were more or less the same encountered when we set out for Odekpe and Okoh when the *ofo* festival was over. The foregoing exemplifies the technical difficulties encountered in the course of gathering data for this work.

The second was the problem encountered was that of ethical principles governing the subject of death and by association, funeral rites within this culture. Like many African communities, the Ogbaru people revere their dead and the funeral rite is viewed as a sacred ceremony which requires the utmost care in the proceedings in order to please the spirit of the departed. As a result, several respondents were uncomfortable with the

interviews and either displayed an ignorance concerning the subject matter or outrightly refused to comment on the subject of burial ceremonies, especially when aware that the information was to be used for research. The ceremony, though often intoned with a celebrative mood is nevertheless considered sacred. In the recent past, the filming of the proceedings was not allowed, but at the behest of the deceased relatives, this is allowed nowadays. However, to suggest that the ceremony be filmed for research purposes is considered sacrilegious and abhorrent by the community. As people who believe in the existence of the ancestors, they see in this suggestion an insult to the dead, a lack of sympathy for the mourners and at least a sign of insensitivity. It was therefore extremely difficult to find a family that was willing to allow the use of a relatives' funeral record for this work.

It was finally agreed upon that the representative ceremony should be one in which the photograph of the deceased is used as an icon rather than the case where the actual body is made available. The chiefs also wanted to know if the published material would be available to strangers and the researcher admitted that this was going to be the case but she explained the benefits of the research to the community and in particular the attention that would given to the communities' agitation against the ongoing information. Several appointments were cancelled as the informants were called away for one thing or the other and the appointments had to be rescheduled. When it was finally possible to meet with the informants, the interviews took longer than expected. Lastly, there was a difficulty with the recorded performance. When someone volunteered to allow filming, the family spokesperson often objected to the inclusion of the relevant dances or omitting what they felt was non-Christian. Rather, they preferred to film the church service and so such a film could not be used since it would not be representative of needed data. Subsequent volunteers presented the same problems until the material used for this research was finally made available after years of searching for the material. The dance data used for this research was made available from the funeral ceremony of an Osomala princess and

great-aunt, late princess Cecelia Anyafulu (nee Awogu). The children, being conscious of their mother's antecedence were expected to give her the full honors and rites as befitting her status. My observation was that the previous funerals could not include the traditional dances because of the opinion of the church, which condemned traditional performances. This was a strong deterrent to the staging of these dances. For instance, a group of cultural enthusiasts who had expressed an interest in the work suddenly shied away and became reluctant when they learnt that the parish priest who had been away had returned from his trip. In fact one of these people admitted that he could no longer help because he held an important post in the church. The priest eventually paid a visit to the researchers' family accommodation on a curtsy outing, and extended an invitation to the researcher to attend mass (the Catholic service), the following Sunday and the researcher used the opportunity to probe the priest on his opinion about burial rites. He said it was the choice of mourners to adopt their own method but that Christian and traditional burials were mutually exclusive of the other.

In conclusion, there are difficulties that attend the gathering of information for research in sacred ceremonies such as burial dances and similar forms that bear religious overtones. The problem is complicated by the long-standing opposition of Christian doctrines to traditional religion and performance practices that are perceived as threats to Christianity. The other threat highlighted in this work is the Westernising influence of urban lifestyle in post-colonial society. It is an influence which has become endemic and represents the most persistent threat to research of the present form.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

There are two types of Ogodi dance performed in Osomala. However, greater detail has been given to the *Ikwata-ozu* version over the other.

This is because of the availability of unedited video coverage of the performance which has subsequently made it more representative.

4.2 ***Ogodi-n'Omulunwa Dance***

Ogodi is performed among some of Ogbaru Ibos of lower Niger valley of South Eastern Nigeria. In particular the dance is found among the tripartite brotherhood of Osomala, Okoh and Odekpe towns (the migrants from Idah). The dance is a celebration of the lifetime of a woman who had married from within her community or exogamously. The functions of the dance are varied, according to informants. The first is that it serves as a mark of respect for the mysteries of childbirth and homage to the spiritual resilience of the woman who is close to or has reached the menopausal stage.

As a religious medium, the dance is a **symbolic** vehicle of spiritual transition of the deceased spirit from the world of the living to the realm of the ancestors. It is believed among Ogbaru people, that having attained the ancestral position, the now spiritually elevated deceased is able to influence the lives of the living for good or evil. It therefore becomes necessary to attract the goodwill of the dead through the performance of appropriate funeral rites.

Additionally and the practical sense, Ogodi dance serves as a medium of instruction to the female youth of the community who are reminded of their roles as future mothers, and also made aware of the good name which attends a virtuous conduct. In this regard the

dance promotes traditional values and social ethics. For these reasons, it is particularly insisted upon, especially when the deceased had married exogamously, that the body be returned to in order to utilize the performance as an example for the young

Figure Fig.4.1: *His Royal Highness Okakwu Isamade of Odekpe.*
(Curtesy: Edith A. Awogu-Maduagwu, 2000)

community women. The origin of the Ogodi dance is not clear as there are many accounts. According to Chief *Ulasi Osai* of Isiolu village in Osomala,

> In the olden days, when little was known about the distant regions beyond the community dwelling, it was near impossible and always difficult to communicate with daughters of the community who were married to non-indigenous men especially those of distant lands. Once a woman's dowry was paid and the bride taken away, the woman was left at the mercy of the husband and his family relinquishes the right of control once the marriage ceremony is concluded. To put a check on the possible battery and abuse of these women before a bride price was paid, a suitor was always usually given the following conditions: that the suitor's family must inform the bride's parents, if she should become critically ill so that family members can pay a visit; that she should be allowed to visit her parents from time to time especially in the incidence of her parent's illness and death; that her body must be returned to be buried with her family and community ancestors in the event of her death; the practice has since been incorporated into tradition and continues to the present day. (Interview with key informant)

Another account by Okakwu Isamade of Odekpe goes thus:

> Burial ceremonies are performed for all community members. The type of the funeral and the detail will depend on the sex and age of the deceased. This is part of our tradition because we know that the dead travel to the ancestral world to continue existence with other departed family members. If the rite is not performed for an individual, the deceased cannot take the rightful social position in the ancestral community. Such a spirit is therefore unhappy with the living for being denied what is considered a right. Depending on the temperamental

disposition of the spirit, this grievance is often conveyed through dreams, reincarnation, and sickness of the one whose duty it is to perform the rites. This information is often revealed through divination

Figure 4.2: *The researcher in conference with the chief's council at the Palace of the Akoh of Okoh town, Delta State*
(Curtesy: Edith A. Awogu-Maduagwu, 2000)

> and then it becomes necessary to perform the ceremony to forestall the anger of the ancestors. All mature members of the community are therefore given appropriate burial rites. In the case of the burial of a deceased woman, the ceremony is more elaborate because the she had left her family for such a long time, that there is a heightened emotion of joy at the reunion with her people albeit spiritually. Additionally, having played her role as a wife and daughter, she would be swelling the rank of the ancestors of her kinsmen. This is therefore a source of joyful celebration. The suspicion of outsiders who marry from within the Ogbaru community is not the main reason for the performance of Ogodi dance, in my opinion. I believe the reasons I have mentioned so far are the main ones. However, if it is observed that the husband has a record of cruelty to his wife, and also uncaring of his in-laws' welfare, the woman's family is naturally suspicious of the cause when the woman dies, especially if the family members of the wife had not been aware of their daughter's illness. This is why the bodies brought in from outside the community need to be inspected while those married within are not subjected to this procedure.

Two types (**2**) of Ogodi dance performance is practiced nowadays and will be discussed here. The first is the situation in which the deceased is buried with her husband's family with permission obtained from the in-laws. In this case, the body is absent during the celebrations and a photograph of the deceased is used to represent the body. This will be identified in this discussion as situation one (**1**). The second is the situation in which the body of the deceased is returned to the deceased's relatives for internment in the community. This is tagged **Situation two (2)**

4.2.1 Situation One (1) *Ikwata Ozu*

The Ogodi-na-Omulunwa dance should be seen to begin with the death of the woman because this is the initiating factor for the performance. In these days of modern technology, there is frequent interaction between the deceased family and the in-laws. It is also easy to exchange frequent visits with the availability of advanced transportation. Arising from these, some sections of the dance are omitted the dance is often performed nowadays mainly for its entertainment value. In the analyses that follow, it should be assumed that the woman is already dead. This knowledge precedes the message in each section which will be discussed here. The sections of the performance will be separated into stages for stylistic purposes into stages.

4.2.2 Preparation of Situation One (1)

Having received the news of the death of the daughter of the community, the members of the deceased family commence preparation for the ceremonies. This involves the provision of accommodation facilities for the in-laws and well-wishers, the provision of traditional tokens of dry gin, kola nuts, garden eggs and alligator pepper for the *Ndiomu* (married women in the husband's family). Family units within the deceased's clan contribute mats made of swamp reed which had been dried and dyed for the occasion and will serve as seats for the participants. The compound and its environs are weeded of the usual tufts of grass to discourage the encroachment of reptiles such as snakes and scorpions which are common in the region. Food and other provisions for entertainment of guests are purchased and this task is given to the wives of the deceased family, that is, the Ndiomu. It is also their duty to do all the cooking for the ceremony.

On the morning of the appointed day, the younger wives within the family sweep the family grounds, using the brooms to create uniform and beautiful patterns on the sandy earth. Although, it is soon dispersed by the incoming feet of the visitors, the first impression it makes of well-tended grounds is important to the family.

4.2.3 Stage 1: The Message Process and Items of Presentation.

First Visit:

The warning: When a wife is ill, the husband's relatives employ the services of doctors in order to restore her health. In the event that healing does not occur, and rather the situation worsens resulting in her death, at least two representatives are then sent to the family of the deceased woman.

The messengers arrive at the home of the deceased, bearing the following:

Figure 4.3: *The Researcher in conference with Oyata Okwuona, the leader of the Umuada of Isiolu Village.*

(Curtesy: Edith A. Awogu-Maduagwu, 2000)

[**1**] One bottle of traditional gin and, [**2**.] Three, multi-lobed kola nuts

They present the gifts after the wives family must have served them some kola nuts first. They then explain that the purpose of their visit is to inform their in-laws that their daughter is very ill. The in-laws respond by sending their wishes for a quick recovery to her. The messengers then leave the house temporarily and stand outside to confer on the next entrance outside. This brings to an end the process of the first visit.

Figure 4.4: *Oyata Okwuona Okwesa, shortly after offerings to her ancestral emblems*

(Curtesy: Edith A. Awogu-Maduagwu, 2000)

Second Visit:

The second visit commences when the messengers re-enter the house. This time there is no presentation of gifts. They then explain that the illness has worsened. The in-laws respond by asking the in-laws to inform their daughter that they (the relatives) will be visiting shortly. The messengers leave the house once more. This time they remain outside for a little longer for about an hour. This ends the second entrance.

Third Visit:

The messengers re-enter the house for the final visit. Once again a bottle of gin is presented to the family head. He is then given the news that their daughter has passed on. The men then invite the eldest female member of the household and break the news to her. It is her duty to gather those closest in blood to the deceased and also break the news to them. At this point, the wailing for the dead commences, mostly among the women folk. The male members weep more discreetly as wailing is perceived as a sign of weakness in men. The messengers and family representatives of the deceased then move to a distant corner of the deceased compound. The messengers are then given a list of items which will be needed for the burial ceremony. They depart for their community after the family representatives and the in-laws have granted them leave; thus bringing to an end the first stage for conveying the news of the demise of the woman.

4.2.4 Analysis of Message Items

[**1**]Traditional gin: The offer of the gin is symbolic in Igbo tradition of respect for the recipient. This gesture is made by a younger person to the elder as an obligatory gift or token. In all cases, the giver signifies his respect, allegiance appreciation and loyalty to the recipient. In the context here discussed the presentation of the gin is obligatory from

the son in law. On the second entrance, a gin is not offered because the message content does not differ significantly. However, a second bottle is presented at the third entrance.

[**2**] One multi-lobed Kola nut: This is a symbol of hospitality and communion. In this context, it plays the same role as the gin but also stands for cordiality between the giver and the recipient. In Osomala and the towns of Odekpe and Okoh, funeral ceremonies follow the same pattern in both form and content. Thus the dance form being studied here is reflective of the same in the Ogbaru region, especially among the tripartite brotherhood of Osomala, Okoh and Odekpe.

Fig .4.5: *Picture showing the in-laws arriving at Osomala riverbank by boat*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.2.5 Performance Progression

The funeral dance will be divided into stages which reflect the content of activities found in the given segment. These are:

(**1**)The opening dances

i. Arrival dance

ii. Announcement dance

(**2**)The Women's Dance

ii. Ada's Dance

ii. *Ndiomu* dance

(**3**)The Closing dances

i. Homebound dance

ii. Oge-Ato dance

(1) The opening dances

The opening dances function as indices of the activities which are slated for the day. It is divided into two distinct parts. The first is the arrival of the in-laws with the body and inspection by deceased family. The second is the announcement by the male stalwarts of the deceased family. This segment of the dance is not a 'dance' in the conventional sense of "movement within limited time and space" because the participants actually move at a strolling pace. The group is made up of the in-laws, friends and well wishers who are accompanying them to the ceremony. They enter the town and proceed on foot towards the village of the deceased. The eldest daughter (***ada***) and son (***okpala***) of the deceased lead the procession, singing the praise names of the deceased.

As the procession moves along, the *ada* and *okpala* are accompanied in song by members of their group, recounting the good deeds of the deceased. Some members of the procession also interject with the deceased praise names from time to time. Since the family of the deceased has given permission to the in-laws to bury their daughter, a photograph of the deceased is carried along by a member of the husbands' family as they

accompany the children. The photograph is lifted up and held aloft by any one of the well wishers. The procession continues until they arrive at the home of the deceased.

4.2.6 Costume:

The costume used for the dance is the everyday clothes or festive dressing depending on the choice of the visitors. For the major actors, that is, the children; the clothes should be smart and festive in the traditional style.

Ada: (The eldest daughter). Any wax material may be worn in the style favored by the Igbo people of two overlapping wrappers tied over a short blouse usually made of lace. By and large the material and style depends on the wearer's choice and financial means, as long as it is sewn in a traditional style. However the general make up of costumes for the *ada* is made up of the following:

Two overlapping wrappers: One is tied directly on the waist while the shorter is tied loosely over it. The highly decorated material of Indian origin known as '*jioji'* in the Igbo communities is very popular as ceremonial attire. This serves as the wrapper. The quality of what is worn is an indicator of the financial capability of the chief mourners.**A short-sleeved blouse:** This may be made of lace material as is conventional or of any choice of material. The preferred is usually lace material which is very popular because of its affordability and choice of grades and prices.

(iv) ***Ehulu***: This is a necklace of coral beads, a **symbol** of royalty and usually worn for ceremonial purposes. It is a symbol of royalty among the riverrine folk. A uniform set is worn on wrist but never on the head, as is the practice among some other riverrine groups found in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Fig 4.6: *The in-laws disembark on Osomala riverbank*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

*(*iv*)****Otishi***: This is a heavy bunch of horse tail. The handle is tied with a strong chord of cured leather. The eldest daughter holds this in her right hand and swishes it back and forth as she dances. Intermittently, she rests it on her shoulder with the hairy end leaning backwards. This allows her time to rest her arm as the object is quite heavy. The horsetail is symbolic insignia of royal birth, wealth and authority, all these being characteristic of royalty.

Figure 4.7: *The Ada and Okpala commence the Arrival Dance in Osomala. Note the photograph of the deceased carried by a relative. This will serve as an* **icon** *for the deceased body*

***Okpala*: (The eldest son)**:

Short-sleeved tunic: The Eldest son wears a shirt in the style of a tunic [*Odu*], which is popular among the riverrine people of the lower Niger. It is usually made of lace material or any attractively colored fabric. There are a few buttons on the slit front neck but this is optional. The tunic is loosely worn.

(i) Wrapper: A loose wrapper of about four to six yards is tied around the waist. The loose end which makes up more than half of the length worn on the waist is draped over the shoulder in a traditional style worn by the men of the Ogbaru region.

(**ii**)**Footwear**: Any shoe or sandal of choice may be worn. The sandal is favored because of the long trek involved during the processional journey to the venue of the ceremony, otherwise any footwear is allowed.

(**iii**)**A cap**: A pill box cap is worn on the head. Any color is allowed except red, as this is the color insignia of the crown of the king of Osomala. The wearing of the cap itself is optional, but because it lends smartness to the costume ensemble, it is almost always part of the first sons' costume.

(**iv**) ***Azuzu***: This is a wide, circular, leather fan. It is carried in the right hand by titled men during religious ceremonies. The handle, like the *otishi*, is tied with strong leather thread.

The Procession: The members of the procession can wear any clothes of choice. Usually, any workaday clothes would be appropriate. However, children under teenage years or puberty rarely take part in the festivities.

4.2.7 The Announcement Dance

This is the first dance performed by the relatives of the deceased. The membership is made up of males between the teenage years to adults below the ages of the deceased. Non-members of the community cannot participate in the dance.

4.2.8 Musical instruments:

These consist of nine (9) drums used specially for the funeral ceremony. The nine drums used are special types (see fig 4.8 below), utilized for the purpose of religious ceremonial dances.

Body percussion: There is also body percussion in the form of foot stamping and handclapping.

The Vocals: This is made up of a solo who is accompanied by a chorus.

Song text 1: Transcription

The solo: *Unu Anugo? Anyi anuho o! N'adanyi nwulanwu o? Nanyi anuho o!*

The chorus: (Repeats the solo's lyrics)

Translation:

Solo: Have you (plural) heard? We have not heard! That our ada died? We have not heard!

4.2.9 The Setting of the Announcement Dance

The setting is the open road beginning from the deceased's home and the nearby environs. Description: Stamping run-dance with short rhythmic trot along the road, accompanied by the drumming and clapping.

Song text 2: *Ewo! Agana po!*

Solo:	*Ewo!*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Ewo!*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Ewo!*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Uzo teka ntite, ete gbue naka po!*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Ewo!*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Ewo*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Ewo!*
Chorus:	*Agana po*
Solo:	*Uzo teka ntite ete gbuem naka o!*
Chorus;	*Agana po o- o-o-o!*

Translation

Solo:	Am exhausted

Chorus: *Agana po* (meaning not clear but suggests a far destination)

Solo: At this point the dancers fall back with backward foot movements

Fig 4.8: *The Umuada and Ndiomu join the Arrival Dance*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

(Uzo teka ntite etegbue naka o!)

This long road is exhausting me to death

(This is more or less repeated several times)

Song text 3

Transcription:

Solo; *Anyi melu ndia, me ndia, A-ha-ha!*

Chorus: *Anyi melu ndia, me ndia, Ahaha!*

Solo*; Je k'iju wa ife anyi melu wa o!*

Fig4.9: *The costume of the Okpala*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Solo: Go and ask how we dealt with them,

Chorus: We dealt with those and dealt with those, *A-ha-ha!*

Musical Instruments:

The Nine Drums: The nine drums which are used for the announcement dance act as very important symbols of articulation of the message. They are short and stout with roughly hewn texture. The nine drums represent the nine villages which make up the kingdom of Osomala. Each drum is beaten by a representative of a village. They therefore function in the capacity of the voices of the entire community, celebrating the departure of the deceased. The drums possess a masculine identity.

(Fig.4.10) *The costume of Ada*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Oboma: The *Oboma* or gong is a hollowed, conical musical instrument which makes a sonorous sound. It is the instrument of public announcements and information in community. It is a popular instrument in women's dances. Within this context, it represents the voice of the women members of the community.

Fig 4.11: *The in-laws approaching the home of the deceased*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Costume: No special costume is required. Any work-a-day clothes is suitable. However, traditionally, a piece of material of about half the length worn by the eldest son is tied by the men and knotted in front (see figure 4.9) Nowadays, a pair of trousers or knickers is worn beneath the wrapper as a base. Also, performers would dance barefoot in the past as they enjoyed raising the dust and the general atmosphere of excitement which the loud foot stamping generated. Recently, the dancers wear sandals and at least slippers on their feet, though this cannot protect the feet from the dust!

Fig. 4.12: *The in-laws dancing on arrival at the deceased's compound*

Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Semiotics of the Announcement Dance Units

The song's Lyrics, Dances and Setting

Song text 1:

***Unu anugo*? (Have You Heard?)**

This song acts in the capacity of an announcement to the community, of the death of the deceased. In is therefore a symbol of the stated intent of the dancers, that is, to inform the community of this event in a dramatized medium.

Secondly, the dance acts as a mourning preparation. The tone and the facial expression is somber and mournful, thus communicating the mood of the moment. This is enhanced by the shuffling movements of the dance gestures.

At another level, the timbre of the male voices reverberating in unison communicates at once the bewilderment and suppressed anger felt by the relatives upon the reception of the news of the death. The governing principle of the youthful age group of participating members is the cultural belief that in an ideal situation, the death of the older should precede that of the younger. This is a common sentiment in many African cultures. Soyinka dramatizes this belief in his celebrated play, *Death and the King's Horseman,* in which a high ranking chief[the protagonist] initiates the ritual suicide of his son because of his ill preparedness to take the initiative himself[the onus of which was placed on him]. In the cosmology of the play, he [the chief] reverses the relationship roles, and in the land of the ancestors, the son becomes the father, and he the father, the son. Thus, Parents in this culture pray and aspire for their children to outlive them. It is unseemly therefore for the elder to mourn or celebrate the transition of the younger.

At a social level, it is also considered demeaning for the elder to participate in this dance, because the performers are indicating, through their presence in the dance, an acknowledgement of the seniority of the deceased in terms of age.

While the purpose of this dance is to announce the death of the daughter of the community, it also functions as a signal of the beginning of this segment of dance

performances. Specifically, as a sequential marker, it indicates the beginning of the second segment of the ceremonies.

Fig.4.13: *A picture of the special funeral drums used for the announcement dance Note the relatively small size of the drums which makes them light and easy to carry whilst dancing on the move.*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Song text 3:

As the lyrics suggest, the song depicts the aggressive stance of the dancers. The repeated word, 'those' is a reference to offending in-laws who had been penalized for the ill-treatment of wives taken from Osomala. This dance, highlighted by the lyrics of the song is thus a warning to prospective suitors not to maltreat women married exogamously from this community.

Fig 4.14: *The titled chiefs (Ndichie) awaiting the arrival of the in-laws from Okoh*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.2.10 Analysis of Announcement Dance Setting:

The spatial setting of this dance communicates symbolically as the larger human arena of the earth. The community grounds, on which the dancers march through becomes a microcosm of the world which the deceased's spirit is bidding farewell to, accompanied by the relatives. In every given situation of dance, the spirit of the deceased is believed to participate preeminently, though invisible. The community grounds represent the beginning of the ritual passage which the spirit of the dead must necessarily confront on the way to the ancestral realm. The performance of this dance simultaneously represents the return of the deceased to bid farewell to her kinsmen and the commencement of the journey to the ancestral region. The dance functions in a symbolic capacity as a vehicle that enables the community to propel the deceased spirit on this journey.

4.2.11 The Women's Dances

(a)The Wives' (*Ndiomu*) dance

This is the dance of fellow wives married in the same compound as the deceased. Members are all women of the same age range as the deceased.

Specific Setting: Any choice of suitable space within the environs of the general ceremony. A coffee table is placed on the ground and a decorative fabric is used to corner it.

Symbolic Food Items: Such items as traditional gin, kola nuts, garden eggs and alligator pepper cure put in trays and placed on the table.

Costume: The same style by the eldest daughter but a little understated.

Instruments: *Okpokolo* – This is a musical instrument made out of the trunk of the bamboo plant. A section of the trunk, spanning two segments is cut out and a long horizontal section is carved out in the shape of a long rectangle. Thoroughly dried, the *Okpokolo* makes a hollow sound that echoes for miles around. It is beaten with a short,

stout stick made especially as part of the set. The person who plays the *Okpokolo* is a woman. Men do not participate in this dance sequence.

Body percussion: There is hand clapping by the other women while one is dancing.

Formation: The formation is semicircular (**see appendix 8**). The sitting women audience form the outer diameter of the semi-circle, while the standing and clapping ones form the arch of the semicircle.

Dance pattern: One person emerges from the group of women and begins the dance with slow rhythmic steps and then she gathers momentum and gradually worth the energetic and compulsive movements that end simultaneously with the clapping. And then another person emerges and does the same. ***Oga*** (drink server), one of the group members, usually the youngest is appointed to serve the drinks and snacks periodically while the dancers are taking a break.

4.2.12 Semiotics of *Ndiomu* dance

As fellow married women, the *Ndiomu* owe a duty to the deceased to give a befitting farewell to their sister-in-marriage so that the same may be done for them. It is an act of solidarity that demonstrates the cooperation within the caucus of women married from outside the community. The *Ndiomu* dance is performed in a situation whereby the family of the deceased has granted permission to the in-laws to bury their wife in their (in-law) home.

The Setting:

The semi circular setting of the Ndiomu dance arena is a symbolic representation of the fact that the deceased life cycle is split in two: one half in her marital home and the other as a daughter of her community of origin.

Okpokolo: This musical instrument, like the gong is popular with women. In traditional as well as in contemporary dance ensembles, women play the *ogene*, *okpokolo* and *ichaka* [made of a gourd with beaded net worn around it], which is not relevant here as it is not

part of the instruments used in this dance. Here the okpokolo represents the voice of the sisters-in-marriage, that is, wives married in the same family compound.

Dance Pattern: The dance pattern here, in which one after the other, a member of the group enters the arena and performs a solo to the accompaniment of increased clapping from the rest of the company, is symbolic of their individual homage to the deceased.

The Food Items: Kola nut: This is the symbol of hospitality and respect in Igbo culture. It represents generosity, love and a willingness to socialize. An individual who does not offer a kolanut to his guest in traditional society is believed to be either very stingy or resents the visitor's presence. Ordinarily, it is eaten as a snack.

Alligator pepper: This is an oval-shaped fruit which accompanies the kolanut. It contains little bits of bunched up seeds. These are eaten after the fruit had ripened and is dried. It gives a hot sensation on the palate.

Dry gin: This is an alcoholic beverage which is popular among river dwelling people of the Niger basin. It was made popular during the Industrial revolution when the brewing from the palm tree sap was discovered. Like the kola nut, it symbolizes hospitality. It is a favorite accompaniment to the kola nut among the people. The gin is also believed to be a favorite beverage of the ancestors. Therefore, libation in the form of gin is often poured on the earth to invite their presence during important deliberations. At an ordinary level, it is simply a beverage used for entertainment.

Garden eggs: This green vegetable snack is used in modern times as a snack, and has become a more popular accompaniment to the kola nut. This is because; it is not hot like the alligator pepper which often produces coughing fits in persons who are not accustomed to eating.

4.2.13 The *Ada's* Dance Items (see appendix 7):

The *Ada* dance is performed in an arena with her female cousins surrounding her in a circular pattern (**see appendix 8**) and providing encouragement. A basin of medium size is placed in the centre of the dance arena.

The symbolic items celebrating the deceased lifetime are placed in the basin. These are:

(i) A traditional broom

(ii) An earthen ware soup pot and wooden spoon

(iii) A white enamel bowl

(iv) A white china bowl with cowry shells

(v) Steering pole

(vi) A canoe paddle

(vii) A nanny goat

Fig.4.15: *Selection of dance props materials by the Ndiomu*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

A piece of cloth belonging to the deceased is shredded into long strips and a piece wrapped around every one of the aforementioned items to **symbolize** the presence of the deceased.

4.2.14 Semiotics of Dance Props

(i) Traditional Broom

This is a domestic utility used for sweeping the house floors and its environs in traditional settings. In the context used, it is simply an **icon** of the domestic activity of the deceased.

Fig. 4.16: *A piece of cloth belonging to the deceased is shredded and used to tag the Ada's dance props to symbolise thepresence of the deceased.*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

(**ii**) **An earthenware Sauce pot and ladle (**appendix **7;** prop **2&5)**

These jointly associated items are **icons** of the culinary expertise of the deceased. A good cooking skill is very significant in this culture. It is believed that a tasty meal reflects the disposition of the cook. Conversely, if she cooks badly, she would be scorned by fellow women and rival wives within the family compound. Thus, someone who indulges in diabolical practices is described as *'aka n'ete onugbu'* meaning 'the hand that cooks bitter leaf'. The reference to bitter leaf is due to its bitter taste which is also **symbolic** of an unpleasant woman's nature. The soup pot **symbolizes** the personality of the deceased as a generous woman.

Fig. 4.17: *A picture showing the preparation of the 'sauce of the dead', made of Okro vegetable or Ogbono (bush mang seeds)*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

(iii) A White Enamel Bowl:

This symbolizes domestic expertise. In particular, it is an icon of cleanliness as the bowl is used for fetching water from the river for the purpose of laundry, washing domestic utensils and personal hygiene. The circular shape reflects her feminity while the pristine whiteness of the bowl is an icon of her good nature.

Fig. 4.18: *A Picture showing a pot of Sauce for Spirits in the middle of the wider bowl* **(**Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

(iv) A white china bowl with cowry shells

The white china bowl symbolizes beauty and wealth. In the past, china bowls were used as decorative items and often displayed on the living room shelves of affluent homes. It therefore acts as a pointer to, or an index of the deceased's' affluence. The cowry shells which represent the medium of monetary exchange in the traditional past act as a complement to the suggested wealth.

(**v**) **The paddle (**appendix **7,** prop **6):**

The paddle is the instrument which acts as steerage for canoe travel. In the context used here, it is dense with symbolism. First of all, it stands for effort and industry, these being admired traits in women. Among the river rine folk, the river represents, among many, things an important transportation medium. The canoe thus symbolizes man's journey on earth. It is a symbol of the effort of man's struggle against overwhelming odds. It is thus seen as a metaphor for man's journey, in this case, paddling out of life.

The *Ewu-Nzuzo*:

This is the animal required for the ritual sacrifice to perform the severance ceremony. The decapitation symbolizes the severance of the deceased from the relatives and the community at the physical level.

4.2.15 The Role of the *Okpala Ogbe* (Village Head)

It is the duty of the village head (*Okpala* Ogbe) to ensure that the in-laws fulfill the expected duties to the relatives of the deceased. One of these is the customary negotiation of the nanny goat. It is customary to negotiate with the in laws with respect to the value of compensation to the deceased family for granting permission for the burial in the husband's home, (situation one). It is often a long drawn out process, and depending on the disposition of the deceased relative towards the in-laws, the value may be high or

moderate. Where the relationship with the in laws had been cordial, it could be as ridiculously little as one hundred naira, but the process must be carried out as a symbolic gesture.

For in-laws who had not shown interest in the wives family, but had taken good care of their wife, a much higher amount is charged depending on the wealth status of the in law. However, in laws who had been deficient in the care of wife and relatives are not permitted at all to bury the deceased.

Having concluded the negotiations, the Ogodi Dance may then commence.

Fig 4.19: *The complete assemblage of Ogodi dance props*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.2.16 Ogodi Dance Performance- Preparations

Before the commencement of Ogodi dance, it is the duty of the Ndiomu of the deceased family to prepare the dance props for the *ada*. Under the instruction of the elder wives, each dance item is wrapped around with a piece of clothing material belonging to the deceased. Another member is then chosen to prepare the sauce of the dead. This is made of any sauce of slimy consistency. The popular ones are okra or *ogbono*.

Fig 4.20: *A picture showing the eldest daughter performing the Ada Dance, the core dance of Ogodi Performance*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.2.17 Transcription and Translation of Ada's Dance

Song text 1

Ugolo 'mulu Nneyi

Osoyi bulu onye obodo ozo

Ugolo mulu nneyi Iye-ye, iyewo!

Ada hulu egwu o!

Osoyi bulu onye obodo ozo

Ugolo mulu nneyi o!

Ada we dali uku ani!

Figure 4.21: *Ada joined in dance by a young Umuada*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Translation:

Whatever land you belong to Ugolo is your mother's origin

Whoever your people may be, Ugolo is your mother's origin

Daughter, scoop the dance!

Whoever your people may be

Ugolo is your source.

Daughter, lower your waist.

Fig. 4.22: *A young Umuada complementing the Ada's dance, with the paddle gesture style (egwu – amala)*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Song text 2:

Omumu Bul'egwu 'mu

Omumu bul'egwum n'odika nmili o!

Nmili mal'onye o!

N'odika nmadu adiazi o!

Translation:

If the river wills,

let her sweep my song/dance

But when the rain beats one

It is as if the person was never there

[Entire sequence repeated severally]

Fig. 4.23: *Some Umuada displaying an aspect of Ogbaru dance style i.e. scooping the dance (hulu-egwu)) during the complementing dance of the Ada*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Fig. 4.24: *Picture showing the "cooking" the customary soup of spirits*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Song text 3

Transcription:

Aziza abu Ife

Aziza abu ife

Ututu wa 'palaya o

M'aziza abu ife o!

Translation:

The broom is an insignificant thing
But in the morning, it gets pride of place
They say the broom is insignificant thing
But in the morning, they search for it
Yet the broom is an insignificant thing.

***Songs**:*

[1]Ugolo mulu nyeyi.

[2]]Uya nweke ka'nma.

[3]Omumu bulu egwu mu.

4.2.18 Semiotics of *Ada's* Dance

The *ada* picks up the paddle and begins a miming dance to simulate the paddling of a canoe. Next, she picks up the spoon and begins to stir an imaginary soup in the pot in time to the music of the other women. Having completed the miming dance using the items in the bowel, the *ewu-nzu uzo* (ceremonial nanny goat) is presented by the deceased husband or his relatives where the husband is also deceased. Some grass is given to the goat. As it stretches out the neck towards it, the matchet descends and decapitates it at one stroke. This signals the release of the deceased spirit. The eldest daughter seems suddenly possessed by her mother's spirit. There are condensed levels of kinetic and parakinesic indicators in the eldest daughter's dance. The wearing of a piece of her deceased mother's wrapper immediately signals the presence of the deceased in the dance arena. Her mother's identity is automatically superimposed on her personality. This means that she is dancing on behalf of her mother. By dancing in the mummification with the domestic items, the deceased is celebrating her chores as a wife and this dance provides the background for the praise-singing by the accompanying women. The praise singing is by far the most important in the parakinetic signals of this dance. This is because it provides

in narrated account the deeds of the deceased outside her regular domestic activities. For instance, if she was a generous character, those who had benefited from her generosity would recount what she had done for them. Usually, people sing and celebrate positive and the unique attributes of the deceased.

Fig: 4.25 *Photo showing the " cooking'' the customary soup of spirits*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008

Fig. 4.26: *Picture showing a member of the Ndiomu simultaneously playing the Okpokolo instrument and dancing*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

The song's lyrics (see appendix) further highlight the themes of the dance performed by the *ada*. The first dance of the *ada* opens with the song, *Ugolo mulu nneyi*, '*ugolo* is your mother's source'. This song is a reference to the antecedence of the eldest daughter. The singer is reminding the dancer of her responsibility to her maternal relations. She owes a duty to her late mother to visit her relations and also show interest in the welfare of her

Fig.4.26 *The deceased family representative consulting the family members for the negotiation price of the ewu-nzuzo goat*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Mother's people.At the end of this dance, the nanny goat is presented and slaughtered. This action symbolises the separation of the deceased from the living and simultaneously signals the commencement of thr deceased's soul to the ancestral abode. It is also a marker for the homebound dance.

4.4 Oge-Ato (Three Seasons)

The bearer of the photograph enters the parlor where a mat or bed has been prepared for the final segment of the celebration and places the photograph on the head post. Scarves and small clothing items belonging to the dead are placed at random all over the bed, and

as soon as the photo is placed on the bed, the *Oge-Ato* (three seasons) commences. This section is the last stage of the performance. It features the praise- singing of the deceased and the symbolic ceremony known as *itu-Ini*. The family and members of the community who had benefited from the goodness of the deceased begin to sing praises of the deceased, recounting her virtues and the favors she had rendered to them during her lifetime.

Fig. 4.27: *The deceased's family representative negotiating for the Ewu-Nzuzo*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Fig. 4.28: *The in-laws awaiting the approval of the Ewu-Nzuzo presented to the deceased's family*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.4 Ogodin' Omulunwa- Situation Two

The second situation to be considered here is that in which the deceased woman's body is returned to her people. As in Situation one, the funeral dance begins on the day given to the in-laws for the celebrations and is determined by the members of the deceased family. On the morning of the given day, the members of the deceased husband's family arrive at the town with friends and well-wishers. No drumming or singing is allowed to accompany the corpse to Osomala. The convoy stops at the entrance to the town where selected

Fig. 2.29: *The Ada and siblings discuss the additional cash compensation for the ewu-nzuzo*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

members of the deceased family await their arrival. The coffin bearing the deceased is carried out of the vehicle and rested on two banana trunks strategically placed in parallel lines. These are the same as those presented for Situation One.

Although the respondents who provided the information regarding the stages in the performance of the dance had stated that two female members of the deceased family are chosen to inspect the body in private for any signs of mistreatment on the corpse so as to determine the cause of death, this protocol is often omitted nowadays as it often generates a conflict which disrupts the atmosphere of celebration. The in-laws are mostly

contrite and show their remorse by pleading with their hosts for leniency. In the past, they were heavily fined for neglect then left to wait at the town boundary for hours without food or water. Selected members of the deceased family then return later to commence the next step in the ceremony. The visitors then present the required items for the ceremony.

Fig. 4.30: *Acceptance and counting of the compensation cash*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

From this point on the events proceed as represented in **Situation One**, until the point for the negotiation for the ritual goat. In this case, the in-laws are heavily fined for presenting an unimpressive animal, no matter how large the goat is. The point being made

Fig. 4.31*: The presentation of the (boundary nanny goat) ewu-nzuzo for slaughter*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

is that good character is an invaluable asset and cannot be bought with money. Therefore, they remain unimpressed in spite of their efforts to disburse gifts and cash to the decease family members.

The next area in which a difference is featured between **Situation One** and **Two** is in the performance of the Homebound Dance. Whereas in Situation One, the photograph of the deceased is used to represent her presence in Situation Two, the deceased body is available for the ceremony.

The Homebound dance **Two** (**2**) is here discussed because of slightly more detailed differences. This will highlight important gestural symbols within this movement of the dance.

Fig. 4.32: *The slaughter of the ewu-nzuzo*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.5 The Homebound Dance Situation Two (2)

This dance sequence begins when the ada picks up the bowl containing the dance props and running off at a brisk pace led by the coffin bearers and accompanied by the town's people. Bearing the pan on her head, she makes a brief stop at the residence of her mother's relatives. At each stop, the relatives present themselves at the threshold of the house and sing praises of the deceased, bid her farewell and reminds her to protect her loved ones. Some send their greetings to the departed relatives through her. She finally arrives at the home of the mother where she places the pan on the ground in front of the building. She then picks up the soup bowl containing the *Ogbono* soup and flings the contents unto the rooftop. The coffin bearers quickly present the coffin below the roof and collect the dripping remnant by soup on top of the coffin lid. The crowd cheers jubilantly and thus brings the homebound dance to an end.

Fig. 4.33: *The crowd escorts the racing ada on the Homebound dance, chanting "ewo ada o!"* **(**Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Fig.4.34: *The Ada makes the first stop at a relative's thresh hold during the Homebound Dance*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.6 Analysis of Homebound Dance Two (2)

As it obtains in Situation One, this dance is symbolic of the deceased severance from the living. However, rather than the photograph used in situation One, the body is made available. The dance of the ada on the journey to her father's family house is more indicative of spiritual possession as evident in the image of hysteria portrayed by the *Ada's* appearance. Upon arrival at the threshold of the deceased's home, drops the pan

abruptly and is immediately caught by some female escorts to prevent her from falling in exhaustion.

Fig. 4.35: *The Ada approaches her deceased mother's residence, escorted by the Okpala and audience*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.7 Aesthetics of *Ogodi* Dance

It is clear that the environment is a great influence on the dance of the riverrine culture. The river represents the peoples' source of food and also a means of transportation to and from neighboring communities which are situated along the river bank, hence the body in Dance situation one is conveyed via the River Niger. The presence of the river has a great

Fig.4.36: *The Ada enters the deceased's home and ends the Homebound dance*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

impact on the customs and belief of the people and there is hardly any dance especially that of the ones featuring the participation of women such as the data reveals which does not simulate an action or dance style entirely based on the paddling of the canoe in stylized patterns. The use of the paddle in the performance of Ogodi dance is of utmost importance as a symbolic representation of the deceased's journey to the ancestral land.

Fig.4.37*:* *The iconic photograph of the deceased used for Situation One*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Thus the dance movements of the *Ada, Ndiomu,* and that of the men all simulate paddling motions. Many of the dances within this study employ river associated contextual references in describing the vigorous involving segments of the dances. The terminology, "hulu egwu", refers to the scooping motion used in the process of river bathing. In fact, the expression for encouraging joyful dancing is *"hulu egwu*", which means scoop the dance". As a medium of expression of the ethos and religious philosophy of the people, the dance acts as a device for social commentary and control. Thus *nne Okuwa*, the praise singer (fig.-) endorses her narration of the virtues of the deceased by registering her account assertively. In this way, Ogodi endorses socially accepted behavior by praising

virtuous conduct and discourages unacceptable practices by condemning it. For instance, such virtues as cheerfulness, forbearance, cleanliness, and humility are admired in the female sex.

Fig 4.38: *The Ada singing her deceased mother's praise, during the Oge- Ato*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

These are therefore often the themes of songs that accompany many of the women's dances. This is in direct contrast to the social expectations of the Ogbaru man. For the man in this community, physical prowess exemplified in the skills of farming, fearlessness in warfare and responsibility for one's family and the in-laws are praised and expected. It is interesting to note that the gestures adopted in dance among the women

folk is always accompanied by a smile even while performing a physically tasking dance piece. It is interesting that despite the great plurality of African societies and differing sub-groups within ethnic units, there is a similarity in the gestural characteristics required for the dance, such as the smiles on the face of the dancers.

Fig.4.39: *A woman praise singer recounting the good deeds of the deceased*
(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

Fig. 4.40: *Madam Ogwezi the praise singer in the company of other mourners* **(**Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

4.8 Functions of Dance in *Ogodin'omulunwa* Funeral Performance

The stages in Ogodin'omulunwa performance and the songs in each stage of the burial ceremony act as indices of the message content. The gestural directions become ostentive vehicles of articulations of the stages in the spiritual transition of the deceased to the ancestral world. This is particularly evident in the possessive and compulsive movement of the Ada. During the performance of the core dance by the *Ada*, the props attach with little pieces of clothing belonging to the deceased. In dancing with the tagged items the

Ada is believed to be 'mounted' with the spirit of the dead; a fact which is subsequently verified by the sudden frenzy of movement initiated by beheading of the nanny goat. The Ada's run-dance which ends at the entrance to the deceased family house is a frenzied, trance like movement which indicates spiritual possession and is accompanied by the singing and dancing of the crowd all the way to the deceased threshold. It is this run-dance which propels the spirits more or less literarily to the resting point in the family home.

Fig. 4.41: *The Umuada observing the vigil of the Oge-Ato*

(Curtesy: Chief Vincent I. Anyafulu Dec. 2008)

The lyrics of the songs are a single line '*Ewo-ada o*!' which means 'O sister' in a mournful tone. This is followed by the chorus '*Iye-iye-iye wo! Iye!'*. This is a popular refrain of dance songs in the Ogbaru region. It is therefore evident that in the present content, the dances in Ogodi serve as transitional vehicles, spiritually conveying the dead to the land of the ancestors.

On the physical level the dance enables the individual and mourning community members to exercise the emotional and physical tension caused by the death of the woman. By sharing in unison the grief resulting from the death of the woman, the entire community is united by a common fate of mortality and a remainder that every one is subject to death at one time or the other. All are subsequently humbled by this common knowledge of their mortality, confirming Victor Turner's theory of communities. Another point to note in the celebration of this dance is the characteristic fanfare which is evident in the atmosphere. From the data provided by Ogodi it is clear that the death of the elderly is celebrated with much drama entertainment and a joyous mood. As people who believe in the existence of the soul in the afterlife, the death of an individual is seen as merely a stage in transition from one state of existence of another. In this case, the deceased is ascending to the most esteemed state in the socio cosmic order i.e. the ancestral position.

This position is culturally regarded as the most powerful that an individual can hope to attain. Since the dead is believed to be invisible and free of the natural forces to which those in the human state are subject. This immortality set the dead apart from the living, casting upon dwellers of the ancestral realm and invincible aura

A more obvious reason is that which is predicated on the cultural concept of cosmic order. Many African communities believe in a cyclic continuum of existence, a subject which is discussed in Wole Soyinka's myth, *Literature, Myth and the African World.* This implies that the dead retire to a fourth stage of existence, i.e. the ancestral stage from which point an ancestor may re-incarnate as a new-born into the world, in a cyclic pattern. The living therefore celebrates the passage of deceased community

members in a gesture manner much as they would any other such as puberty rites or chieftaincy. The cultural belief is that death initiation a graduation from a lower state to a higher one.

Again, the fact that no one can precisely understand what happens after death, casts a shadow of fear and uncertainty on the nature of ancestral existence. Acting from this mystery, the dwellers of that region are cast in hallowed image much as that of a god. It is believed that the ancestral dwellers of the region are cast in hallowed image much as that of a god. It is believed that the ancestral dwellers posses the ability to visit calamity on the parent community or benevolence at the opposite spectrum. It is believed that one of the commonest sources of disfavor from an ancestral spirit is the omission or inadequate celebration of the funeral rites. The bereaved relatives are therefore anxious to perform befitting rites for the dead in order to forestall the possibility of invoking the wrath of the deceased's spirit. As the rulers of Okoh town says, "we shall one day meet with our departed fathers and mothers and it is important that we give them a befitting burial at their transition so that the meeting may be a happy one."

Another point to note in the celebration of Ogodi dance is the level of social importance that is accorded the female gender within this culture. The respect displayed in the performance of the dance and the participation level of the men of Osomala town is a commentary on the role of the woman in this culture. This is in alliance with Imams theory of the social role of the woman in society. This is the theory that project women's contribution as been distinctively unique and separate rather than subordinate and inferior. For instance, the Ogbaru woman whether young or old is, generally referred to as '*nneanyi'*. This manner of reference projects the image of the woman as the mother of all and also is an acknowledgement of respect for the woman. The very insistence on the return of the deceased Ogbaru woman's body for the purpose of internment with her relatives is a clear indication of the accepted value of the woman in Ogbaru society.

Human society is a reflection of the demands which predicate on the survival of man and the activities reflect the growth or change in these demands. The performance of Ogodi dance similarly has undergone some changes in procedure which distinguish the performance from its original form. As information on the origin of the dance reveals, the dance was inspired from the need to protect the daughters of the community in the days when marriage to a non indigene of Ogbaru extraction could mean a prolonged separation of the married woman from her kinsmen because of the great distance which sometimes prevented contact with her people.

Nowadays, however, the anxiety resulting from the distance created by exogamous marriages is considerably reduced. As a result of the benefits of automobile transport, telephone communication, relatives are constantly in contact. Consequently, many sections of the dance performance are often omitted. For instance, arising from technologically advanced means of preservation, the body of the deceased is often embalmed and sometimes hardly bears a resemblance to the deceased after protracted periods of storage in the mortuary. For reasons of logistics, therefore, the sections featuring the examination of the body is often omitted in modern Ogodi performances.

Other changes in the performance reflect the effect of Christianity on the form. For instance the representatives of the deceased family, who negotiated for the ritual goat with the in-laws, did not participate in the dance because the local parish priest has tactically condemned this dance on a Sunday service preceding the celebrations. Resulting from a sense of guilt and a conflict of interest, the eldest daughter of situation two elected another family member to perform the dance on her behalf. Christian community members, who made up more than seventy percent of the expected participants absent themselves from the open arena of the dance performance and instead, watched secretly from behind their window screens. Excessive omissions tend to lend the performance an uncoordinated progression which leaves it often jerky.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Recommendation

Thus far, great strides have been made in the performing arts as there are now Performing Art departments in many tertiary institutions on the African continent, with robust curricula on Music, Dance, Costume, etc. The challenge for the modern scholar is the discipline based approach which studies entities of performance as autonomous units, rather than as the interrelated components of a common form. As Nicholls (1996) puts it

> *Art Historians, Social Anthropologists, Dance Ethnologists and Ethnomusicologists dissect a culture and extract only that which is relevant to their discipline. A mask in a museum, a musical recording, and a photograph may be interesting in their own right but such fragments cannot realistically represent the holistic experience from which they were derived.*

He calls for the recognition of the fact that in Africa, the dance is conterminous with the accompanying music, costume and other paraphernalia; and recommends that research which demonstrates the interrelationship of dance, music and the visual arts is needed. This of course calls into question the need for a set of suitable criteria for the examination of African Performance as an integrated experience. Underscoring the external features is the need for an appreciation of such underlying determinants as social functions and content which the performance symbolizes. This is a prerequisite to the understanding and analysis of any given performance and therefore aids the documentation of the often complex and deeper meaning encoded in what is simply perceived as “art”. The struggle against racism should be seen to be accompanied by the .

resistance against the marginalization to which African philosophies have been subjected. A self assertive action expressed in the promotion, research, and documentation of African authenticity is needed for the psycho social growth of African Studies in our tertiary institutions.

To this end, this thesis has clearly demonstrated the urgent need to review the state of research in non-verbal communication forms in oral societies. The structural analysis adopted here may have proved sufficient for the visually demonstrative medium of dance, but it detracts seriously from the need for a more detailed appreciation of other non-verbal media employed in this work. As a performed art, dance possesses a close affinity with theatrical arts. Theatre arts itself had suffered neglect in the past, analysis being confined to the written text until the advent of structuralist philosophy. Dance performances as a stage spectacle is still receiving inadequate attention and the symbolically coded forms are particularly vulnerable.

It is therefore recommended here that more concerted effort be made to research other non verbal forms, individually, so that their distinctive features and benefits may be better appreciated and subsequently promoted in usage, and this thesis may well be seen as an urgent appeal for the reclamation of slumbering and fast fading non verbal arts. Finally, with respect to one of the objectives of this thesis, there is an urgent need to study funeral dances in view of the neglect which this particular rite of passage has suffered. As this work has demonstrated, the funeral is an important rite of passage which is still very popular, especially in Africa, unlike many other rites which have become irrelevant to the needs of modern man. This need is highlighted by an even more important reason: the fast disappearing cultural boundaries which delineates the autonomy of given groups and which have come under serious threat as a result of the constant political divisions of autonomous groups. These divisions have resulted in the diminishing of many cultural practices which represent a source of social identity and mental equilibrium in an increasingly insensitive and mechanized society.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The main thrust of this thesis has been to explore the use of Non-Verbal Communication [NVC] systems, especially dance in rites of transition. Using a funeral rite designed for women as a performance model, the thesis demonstrates that the dance performed during funeral rites is often appreciated both as an art and as a celebration of social values in Africa. Dance kinesics as a non-verbal mode has been used because of the popularity of the form in African performance traditions and also because of the special ability of dance to unite all other non-verbal motifs in performance. Using the semiotic approach of analytical philosophy with its relevant focus on the production of meaning in society, the thesis attempts the decodification of dance kinesics along with other non verbal codes ostended in communication. By so doing, the relevance of dance is demonstrated as both an art and as a social science. Dance kinesics, occurring in association with other non verbal motifs is able to reveal a rich store of meaning encoded in the complementary channels.

The communication approach adopted has proved particularly useful in helping to distinguish situations of verbalized utterance in communication from that of body language. The core of this work however has been to demonstrate that funeral rites in Africa, especially for mature individuals is traditionally an occasion of celebration expressed in dance performance and as this thesis has demonstrated, the dances are unique performance forms as well as sources of important information relating to culture of the people. In particular, the density of symbolism is easily untangled with the accessibility to de-codification available in such effective methods as the perspective of semiotics.

5.2.1 Dance as a Force for Thematic Cohesion in Funeral Rites

There is no denying the all involving power of dance dynamics both as a dramatic spectacle and as a communication medium in motion. This is demonstrated in all the performance sequences discussed in this thesis. For instance, at the opening of the first dance introducing the ceremony, the young men break into song and dance. The timbre of booming male vo1ices visualized in the mass of moving, pulsating stampede of bodies, sweating and vocalizing their grief presents a fearful sight and the message is made ostensive through the vigorous dance movements. In this situation, as in others, the dance possesses the kinaesthesthetic ability to unite thematic directions as well as translate cognitively, otherwise impossible-to-understand message situations. In each of the performance context, the thrust of movement is made apparent through dance dynamics. In the section featuring the Ndiomu dance performance, the cultural ideals of good cheer, elegance and humor appreciated in a woman are demonstrated in the gestural rhythms of the mothers' dance.

Similarly, the mime and dance of the ada, the gestural directions provide a clear picture of the personality of the deceased as gentle and loving. The dance reveals through **ostension** the traits with which she was associated in her lifetime. Similarly, in the case of the Homebound Dance, the urgent and frenzied run-dance of the sequence demonstrates the possessive element of the dance. The winding movement of the running ada and the sudden unpredictable stops she makes are elements which characterize spirit possession in ritual dance among riverrine people. Furthermore, dance kinesics dramatizes the message of lyrical direction and symbolic commentary. In particular, the poetic device of praise singing depends on gestural dance translation as a vehicle of meaning. Thus, almost every song, poem, and chant is accompanied with dance kinesics. Again, the additional impact of the body in communication vividly complements and intensifies verbalized messages as aural images, evoked in the songs are made more concrete through visualized body

images. This brings about a melding of various non verbal motifs in unity with lyrics to achieve a coherently attuned meaning in gesture.

5.2.2 Dance as Aesthetic Vehicle in Transitional Rites

The role of dance as a highlight of aesthetic appreciation in traditional performance contexts, particularly passage and transitional rites cannot be overemphasized as has been demonstrated in this thesis. In particular, the funeral performance is a densely symbolic form featuring coded religious information which presents problems of understanding for non initiates and non indigenous researchers. As a visually demonstrative vehicle for gestural interpretation, symbolic items and material props of Ogodi dance such as the paddle, sauce pans and so on are brought into dramatic relief in performance. Additionally, the symbolic import of such channels spatial setting are redefined and brought into sharper focus by the dance gestures. For instance the costumes of the deceased' children are bestowed with unmistakable dignity when they step out in their particular dance style. The okpala's position as one of the main actors of the occasion is communicated in his regal and elegant dance. His dance in the arena of ozo men, swinging the loose end of his wrapper around his shoulders, and occasionally letting it trail in dance, are indicators of his affluence. Within each segment of the performance, dance kinesics is able to enhance other motifs in the communication process. Dance as artistic and social expression becomes the language of cohesion, fusing all other symbols in a compact experience of aesthetic appreciation, richly displaying the overall beauty of the performance spectacle.

5.2.3 Dance as Index of Religious Philosophy and Cultural Ethics

The performance of Ogodi dance is a celebration of the worldview of the Ogbaru people in dance. As a ceremony marking the transition of an indigenous woman from the world of the living to that of the ancestors, the ritual process demonstrates this belief in

the afterlife, suggested in the praise singing and oratory which celebrate the deeds of the departed in glowing terms. Right from the onset of the ceremony, the women of the deceased family compound address the deceased directly as if she was still living. This is because her spirit is believed to reside temporarily in the body while awaiting internment. This practice is another indicator of the Ogbaru peoples belief that the spirit continues to exist at a higher realm, thus reaffirming that ancestral worship must have been practiced, at least in the past of the community, preceding the advent of Christianity. Again, during the '*Oge Ato*', the mourners send tidings to their long dead relatives through the deceased imploring her spirit to be benevolent and protect those left behind when she would have attained the position of an ancestor.

As an indicator of the cultural values placed on the girl child, the dance celebrates the lifetime of the woman. This value placed on women is evident in the dramatization of the deceased social role and the elaborate funeral rites performed in her honor. The lyrics of the first dance, '*Anyi melu ndia, me ndia, aha-ha ha!*' in the analysis of the songs exposes the value of women in the Ogbaru community. Again such names as '*Nwanyibife'* given to the female child in this society are pointers to this fact. Furthermore, through the complement of praise singing, important cultural information on social expectations is verbalized. As the women recount the kindness, generosity, love and humorous disposition of the deceased, the younger women are indirectly influenced to emulate the good character of the deceased. All this information dramatized in dance makes for easier comprehension of the message.

The foregoing confirms dance performance as an integrated art form employed in rites of passage celebrations among the Ogbaru people.. Enhanced by its multi channel attributes, messages conveyed become many times more powerful and lucid than when this is done through a single channel. Evidently, this advantage confirms the dance as a vital aesthetic medium in oral cultures.

More so, the work clearly shows the mediatory function of dance in African social reality with reference to the Ogbaru Igbo and its communication role within this society, especially in relation to life passages. The dance is therefore appreciated both as an art and as a historical document, reenacted in movement. As a universally relevant phenomenon, viewers of the dance need to understand the underlying principles guiding a given dance in context in order to aid an easier and better appreciation of the spectacle.

REFERENCES

Achebe, N. 2005. Farmers, Traders, warriors and Kings: Female power and Authority in Northern igboland. 1900-1960 Social History of Africa). Michigan University Press

Adeduntan, K.A. 2008 "Calling *àjẹ́* witch in order to hang her: Patriarchal definition and redefinition of female power. *Global African Spirituality, Social Capital and Self-reliance in Africa*. Tunde Babawale and Akin Alao. Eds. Lagos: Malthouse

Adelugba, D. 1981 "Trance and Theatre: The Nigerian Experience"In Ogunbiyi,Y.(ed), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical source book* Y. Ogunbiyi. Ed. Lagos. Nigeria

Agwu, D. 2010. *An Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary Professional Nigerian Dancers and Choreographers* M.A. dissertation, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan

Akinsipe, F. 2007. "Obitun Dance of the Ondo People" in (ed) Ugolo, C. *Perspectives in Nigerian dances*

Ajayi, F. 1983. "Dance as Communication Symbol of Orisa Religion" *Proceedings of 2nd World Congress of Orisa Tradition and Culture* Abimbola Wande

Alagoa, E. "The Ju Festival" *Nigeria Magazine,* 11-160

Allman, A. 2005. "Rounding Up Spinsters Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante" in *Journal of African History*

Amankulor, J 1981. "Ekpe Festival as Religious Ritual and Dance Drama" *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source book.* Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos; Pitman Press

Amankulor, J. 1980 Dance as an Element of Artistic Synthesis in Traditional Igbo Festival. *Okike 17*

Animalu, A.O.E. 1991 Analogous Symbols of Thought in African Novels and Modern Physics, Umezinwa W.A & Animal A.O.E., *African Symbols to Physics: The Meaning of The Snake Symbol in African Novel and the Implication for Modern Physics*. Nsukka; 1-27

Argyle, M. (1974) *Bodily Communication* London: Methuen

Artaud, A. (1938) (trans.) *The Theatre and Its Double.* New York: Grove Press, 1958 Austin: Texas University Press

Awe B. 200l Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura. Nigerian women: a historical perspective Ed. Bolanle Awe, Ibadan: Bookcraft

Awe, B. 2005 . "The Iyalode in The Traditional Yoruba Political System" In Alice Schlegel(ed) *Sexual Stratification: A Cross Cultural view.*

Awogu, E. 1998. *Semiotics of Dance in Selected African Plays* M.A. Thesis. Department of English Obafemi Awolowo University

Bakare R.O. 2000. "The Deformed Can Also Dance: Democratizing Dance Practice in Nigeria". SONTA 14th annual Conference Paper Presented at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Bame, K. 1981. *Profiles in African Traditional Popular Culture: Consensus and conflict. Dance, Drama, Festival and, Funerals* New York: Clear Type Press Inc. European archives of Sociology; 15; 55-81

Barber, Karim. 1991. *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town*. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press, International African Institute.

Barthes, Roland (1964a) (trans.) *Elements of Semiology* London: Cape, 1967

Bebey, F. 1975. African Music: A people's Art. New York. Pg 22

Begho, F. 1996. Traditional African Dance in Context *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry.* Ed. Welsh, K. Trenton: African World press. Pp 163-182

Beier, U. A year of Sacred Festivals in One Yoruba Town 1959 Lagos: Nigeria Magazine

Benthall, J. & Polhemus, T. 1975 The body as a Medium of Expression Eds New York; Dulton & Co

Beoku- Betts, J. 2005. 'Western Perceptions of African Women in the 19th and early 20th Centuries' *Africana Research Bulletin.*

Berger, R. 1971. "African and European Dance" *Nigerian Magazine* 87-92.

Best, D. 1976. *Expression in Movement and the Arts.*London: Lepus Books

Birdwhistle, R. . 1971 *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* Hammondsworth Penguin.

_____. 1975. Background Consideration to the Study of the Body as a Medium of Expression. *The Body as a Medium of Expression* Benthal J. & Polhemus T. Eds. 36-56. Hammondsworth Penguin

Blacking, J. 1977. *Anthropology of the Body* London Academic Press A.S.A. Monograph 15.

Bloch, M. 1974. "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation: Is religion an extreme form of traditional authority?" *Archives European de Sociologie*

Blum, O. 1973 "Dance in Ghana" *Dance Perspectives*, 56.

Boas, F. 1972. The Function of Dance in Human Society *Dance Horizons.* New York

Bogatyrev, P. (1938b) (trans) "Semiotics in the Folk Threatre" In Matejka and Titunik (1976), 33-49.

Burnham, P. 1987. *Changing Times in Analysis of African Marriage* ,Manchester. Manchester University Press

Chilowsky, N. 1962. African Dance, *African Studies Bulletin* 2 (May):45-47.

Chukwuemeka, G. 1990. *Ossomari: A Kingdom of the Lower Niger Valley* (1940-1986) Pacific College Press

Cohen, S.J. 1966. Dance as Theatre Art. New York: Dodd, Mead

Duncan, S. 1968. *My Life* New York. Universal Publishing and Distributing

Comstock, T. 1974 The Proceedings of the Third Conference on Research in Dance. New York; CORS Research Annual VI

Cornwall, Andrea. 2004. "Gender Development and Feminism", IDS Bulletin, 35 (4) October

_____ Dancers as Emissaries in Irigwe, *Nigeria Dance Research Journal*, 32-35 Darah, G. 1981 Dramatic Presentation in Udje Dance Performance of the Urhobo. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos; Pitman Press

Doull, A. 1939 Native Dances of Eastern Africa The *Dancing Rimes*: 131-132

Drewal, H. and Drewal, M. 1983. *Gelede: Art and Female Power among the Yoruba* Bloomington Indiana University Press

Drewal, M. 1975 Symbols Possession: A study of movement and regalia in an Anago-Yoruba Ceremony *Dance Research Journal* 17 (Spring /Summer 1975): 15-24

Drewal, M. and Drewal, T. 1975. "Gelede Dance of the Western Yoruba" *African Arts* 8.2 (winter):36-45, 78-79

Drewal, M. 1975. Symbols Possession: A study of movement and regalia in an Anago-Yoruba Ceremony *Dance Research Journal* 17 (Spring /Summer 1975): 15-24

Durkheim, E. 1912. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.*Trans J. W. Swain 1915. London: Allen & Unwin

Echeruo, M. 1973 "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Drama" *Research in African Literatures,* vol. 4 pg. 29-30

Eco, U (1979) *Lector in Fabula: la cooperazione interpretative nei testi narrativi.* Milan: Bompiani

Elam, K. 1983 *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama.* London, Methuen. New Accent Series

Enekwe, O. 1981. Myth, Ritual and Drama in Igboland. In Ogunbiyi, Yemi. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book.* Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos; Pitman Press

Enekwe, Ossie. 1991 *Theories of Dance in Nigeria: An Introduction.* Nsukka, Afa Press

_____ 1981 Myth, Ritual and Drama in Igboland. In Ogunbiyi, Yemi. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book.* Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos; Pitman Press

Enem, E. 1975 " Nigerian Dances*." Nigerian Managing* 115-116; 68-115

_____1984. "*Igede* Funeral Masquerades" African Arts. Pg 17

Finnegan R, 1991 The State of Research on Performance in Africa. *African Studies Review*, 34.3(Dec.): 1-64

Finnegan, Ruth. 1973. Oral Literature in Africa. Oxford; Clarendon Press

Foss, P. 1973 "Festival of Ohwhoru at Evreni" *African Arts* 6.4; 20-27

Frere, P.1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* New York: Herder & Herder

Freud, S. 1922. *Introductory Lectures in Psycho Analysis* Trans. J. Riviere, London: Allen & Unwin

Gaitskell, D. 2005." Devout domesticity? A Century of African Women's Christianity in South Africa" from C. Walter (Ed) *Women and Gender in South Africa to 1945*

Gorer, G. 1996. *African Dances: A Book about West African Negroes,* New York: N. Nortion and Co. 1962. Hall, Edward. *The Hidden Dimension* New York: Doubleday.

Hanna, .W. & Hanna, J. 1971. "The Social Significance of Dance in Black Africa" *Civilizations,* Pg.21

Hanna, J. 1966 "The Challenge of African Dance: Report of the Dance Group" *African Studies Bulletin* 9.3:14-18.University of Texas Press

Harper, P. 1996. *Studies in Nigerian Dances* Ibadan Caxton Press

_____ 1976. Report on Traditional African Dance" *African Notes.* 4.2 ; 44-49

_____ 1968. The Irigwe Dancers of Miango Village on the Jos Plateau. *Studies in Nigerian Dance No 2.* Ibadan: Caxton press

_____. 1991 The State of Research on Performance in Africa. *African Studies Review,* 34.3(Dec.): 1-64

Harriet-Bond, B. 1975. *Modern Marriage in Sierra-Leone: A Study of the Professional Group* The Hague. Mouron

Hawkes, T. 1977. "That Shakepeherian Rag" *Essays and Studies,* 22-38

Hawkes, Terence. 1983. *Structuralism and Semiotics* London: Mettlesome &Co., New Accents

_____. 1983 Structuralism and Semiotics. London: Mettlesome &Co., New Accents.

Hawkins, A. 1964. *Creating Through Dance.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Hodgeson D. and Sherryl McCurdy. (eds) 2001. 'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa. Oxford. James Currey

Hodgeson, D. 1999. "Once Intrepid Warriors Modernity and the Production of Masai Masculinities" *Ethnology*. 21-50

Hunt, N. 2005. "Noise over Camouflaged Polygamy Colonial Taxation, and a Woman Naming Crises in Belgian Africa" *Journal of African History*

Ibitokun, B. 1993 *Dance as Ritual Drama and Entertainment in the Gelede of the Ketu-Yoruba Subgroup in West Africa.* Ile -Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd.

Imam, A. 1997. Engendering African Social Sciences. Dakar: CODESA

Iyeh, M. 2008. *Egwu-Ota Dance as an Expression of Asaba Value System.* Ph.D. Dissertation University of Ibadan

Jakobson, R. (1971) *Selected Writings.* II: Word and Language. The Hague: Mouton

Kaepler, A. 1970. Reflections and Perspectives on two Anthropological Studies in Dance. New York CORD. *Dance Research Annual.* Vii

Kirby, M. (1976) "Structural Analysis/Structural Theory" *The Drama Review,* 20, 51-68

Korieh, Chima. 2010 "Minorities and the State in Africa" *African Studies Research and Research Forum*

Kristeva, J. 1968. *Semiotike*: *Recherches pour une semanalyse*. Paris: Seuil. Lamb, W. &Watson E. 1979. *Body Code: The meaning in Movement.* London: Macdonald and Evans.

Lange, R. 1975. *The Nature of Dance* (London: Macdonald & Evans)

Layiwola, D. 1990 "The Colonial Experience and its Asides: Dance Performances as Historical Indices in East and West Africa" *African Notes*, Journal of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. Vol.15, Nos 1&2

Lebeuf, A. 1963. "The role of Women in the Political Organisation of African societies" in Denise Pauline (ed) Femmes d'Afrique noire. Paris. Mouron

Malinowski, B. 1936. Native Education and Culture Contact

Mann, K. 1994. "The Historical Roots and Cultural Logic of Outside Marriage in Colonial Lagos" in C. Bledsoe and G. Pison. (ed) Nuptiality in Sub-Saharan Africa A Contemporary, Anthropological, and Demographic Perspective, Oxford, Clarendon Press

Sheets, S. 1967. The Phenomenology of Dance (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press)

Mbah, N. 2002. *Nigerian Women Mobilised.* Berkley, University of California Press

Mbiti, J. 1977. "African oral Literature" *FESTAC'77 Handbook*. Africa Journal Limited.

Middleton, J, "1985. The dance among the Lugbara of Uganda" In Spencer, Paul (ed) *Society and the dance: The Social Anthology of process and performance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Mitchel J.C. 1956.*The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Rela*tionships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia. Rhodes-Livingstone papers no. 27. Manchester Press

Musisi, N. 2005. " Baganda Women's Night Activities" in (ed) B. House and F. Ekechi. *African Market Women and Economic Power: The Role of Women inAfrican Economic Development*

Nadel, M. & Miller .C . 1978. (Eds). *The Dance experience: Readings in Dance Appreciation* New York: Universe Books

Nettleford, R. 1996. Foreword. In (ed) Welsh, A. *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.* Trenton: African World Press. Inc, pp. Xiii-xvii

Nicchols, R. 1994. "African Dance: Tradition and Continuity" in *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry*(ed) Kariamu W. Asante. Afrca World Press.

Njaka, N. 1987. Gender and Sex in an African Society London, Zed Books

Nketia, J.H. 1963. *Drumming in Akan Communities in Ghana,* Lagos: Thomas Nelson

Nzekwu, O. "Ibo Dancing". *Nigeria Magazine* 73 Lagos

---------- . "Ibo Dancing". *Nigeria Magazine* 73

Obbo, Christin. 1980. *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence* London. Zed Books

Ogunba, O. & Irele, A. "Traditional African Festival Drama" *Theatre in Africa* Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

Ogunba, O. *Ritual drama of the Ijebu People* Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Ibadan. 1967

_____ 1973"Ceremonies" In Biobaku, S.O. (ed.) *Sources in Yoruba History* . Oxford: Clarendon Press. 87-110

Ogunbiyi, Y. 1981"Nigerian Theatre and Drama: A Critical Profile". Introduction; *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book.* Lagos Pitman Press

Ogundipe, M. 2007. *Indigenous and Contemporary Gender Concepts and Issues in Africa: Implications for Nigeria's Development.* Lagos. Malthouse Press

Okwesa, F.U. 1987. Egwu-Amala: A study of the Paddle Dance of the Aboh People. Ph. D Thesis, University of Ibadan

Olademo, O. 2009. *Gender in Yoruba Oral Traditions* CBAA. Lagos Concept Publications

Olisa. C.G. 1990. *Osomala: A Kingdom of the Lower Niger Valley (1640-1986).* Onitsha: Interlab (Nig) Ltd.

Onwujeogwu, M. 1969. 'The Cult of the Bori Spirits among the Hausa' In M. Douglas and P.M. Kaberry (eds.) Man *in Africa* London: Tavistock.

Opoku, Albert M. 1961 "The African Dancer as a Person" *Impulse*

Oyewumi, O. 1997. *The Invention of Women Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* University of Minnesota Press

Primus, P. 1951. "Earth Theatre in Africa" Monthly Magazine, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences

_____ 1996. "African Dance". In (ed) Welsh, A. *An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry* Trenton: Africa World Press Inc. P. 3-12

_____1979. *To Dance is Human :A theory of non-verbal Communication* University of Texas Press

Ranger, T. 1975. *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* Berkeley: University of California Press

Royce, A.P. The Anthropology of Dance. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Sachs, C. 1933. *World History of the Dance.* Trans.B. Schonberg, London

Seldon R. 1989. *Contemporary Literary Theories.* Clarendon Press

Sorrel, W. 1967. "*The Dance Through the Ages".* New York. Saturday Review Press

Soyinka, O. 1996. "The Dynamics of African Religious Dances". Ed. Welsh, Asante K. *African Dance: A Historical and Political Enquiry*

Spencer, P. 1965. *The Samburu* London: Watts: Routeledge & Kegan Paul

Sudarkasa, N. 2005. "The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies" in *The Strength of Our Mother: African and African American Womenand families: Essays and Speeches*

Turner, E. *The Spirit and the Drum: A memoir of Africa.*

Turner, Victor. 1996. “From Ritual to Theatre”. New York: Performing Art Journal Publications. 1982. Van Tuyi, Maria (ed.) *Anthology of Impulse. Annual of Contemporary Dance 1951-1966* U.S.A: Impulses publication Inc

Ugolo, C. (ed). (2007) The Nigerian Dance Theatre: Agenda For This Millenium. Perspectives in Nigerian Dance Studies. Nigeria Caltop Publications Limited. P.39-49

Umezinwa, W. 1988. “Semiotic Theory of Curvilinear Form in the African Novel” In Umezinwa, W.A. and Animalu, A.O.E. *From African Symbols to Physics: The meaning of the Snake Symbol in African Novels and the Implication for Modern Physics.* Nsukka: Ucheakonam Foundation (Nig) Ltd. 28-47

Uzoka, A.F 1999. OGBARU: OUR PEOPLE, OUR DREAMS.http://www.ogbaru.net/news, Ogbaru Association Official Website

Welsh, K. 1985 Commonalities in African Dance: Aesthetic Foundation in African Culture. *Rhythms of Unity (*Eds.) Asante, M. and Welsh, A. Connecticut Green Press, p.85

Wigman, M. 1966. *The Language of Dance* (trans. By Walter Sorrel) Middletown Wesleyan Univerity Press

Winter, L. 1970 “A Festival of Nigerian Dances” *Africa Arts 3.2.* University of Ibadan

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (ORAL SOURCES)

VIDEO RECORDING

Audio-Visual Record of the Burial Ceremony of Princess Cecelia Adaobi Anyafulu (nee, Awogu)

INFORMANTS	**DATE AND PLACE OF INTERVIEW**
Chief Nnoli Ulasi	June 2002/Osomala
Madam (Oyata) Okuona Okwesa	June 2002/Osomala
H.R.H. Okakwu Isamade of Odekpe town.	July 2002 / Odekpe
Princess (Mrs.) Nkoyem Dibiagwu (nee-Awogu)	July 2002/ Osomala
Members of the Council of Akoh of Okoh Town, Delta State	July 2002/ Okoh
Madam Udogwu	August 2002/Ibadan
Chief Enyikumnazu Antony Obi	March 2004/Lagos
Chief (Mrs.) Justina Umoru	March 2004/Lagos
Mrs. Beatrice N. Mbanefo	April 2004/Ile-Ife
Madam Victoria A. Shodeinde	Nov. 2004/Ibadan
Chief L.C. Awogu	Nov. 2004/Lagos
Mrs. Agnes A. Nwadiashi	April 2005/ Lagos

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE (i)

Interview with Key Informant, Chief Nnoli Ulasi Osai of Isiolu, Osomala

Researcher*:* *Nna anyi, dalu nu o.*	**Researcher**: Greetings, father.
Ulasi: *Nno soo, ada uku.*	**Ulasi**: Welcome, great ada
R: *Obu maka oku nnyaa'fulu ka nji welu bia wo o*	**R:** Am here for yesterday's discussion
Ulasi: *Ohoo, ngwa ka'nyi bido a*	**Ulasi:** Indeed. We may now commence
R: *Ajuju izizi mu bu; ked'etu omenana ibu nata ozu nnwanyi anupulu-anupu na Osomaala si weli bido?*	**R:** How did the practice of returning the body of deceased Osomala women who had been married to non-indigenes back home for burial?
Ulasi: *Obu ife nna annyi wa hapu lanyi.Oge gbo-o-o,ndi oyibo nadi bia, anyi adiho ekwe ka ndi ani ozo nulu umu ada anyi o! Ife di naya bu oku di uzo n'abo; nke izizi bu na ozu Osomala adiho alahu n'ilo.*	**Ulasi:** This is something our ancestors passed down to us. In the olden days, before before the coming of the white man's ways, Osomala never gave their daughters in marriage to suitors from distant lands. In the first place

Nke ibua buna akpolu nwanyi nye onye aninmadu, ma obulu na obodo eye tel'aka, ima ama etu wa si anu aya. Ogo mali na ya yae but'ozu ya ne ne nwunye aya anya. Onwe ife omeli, wa ya bia gwa ndi nwe nnwa. Edozie li we oku.

Osomala dead are never buried outside the town boundaries. In the second place, where it so happens that a wife is given to a distant land suitor, he might take advantage of the distance and maltreat her.We expect our to report involve if he has serious issues with his wife. The two families may then settle the matter amicably.

R: *Kedi ife yae me ma obu na nwoke ne megbu nwunye aya?*

R: What happens if a suitor is abusive to his wife?

Ulasi: *Anyi anali aya nwanyi nu! Ya kpatali na Osomala adiho Eji oke ego eke nwanyi. Anyi Adiho eke nwanyi n'onwu-na-ndu Obu ndi Igbo n'eke nwanyi n'onwu-na-ndu. Anyi n'eke soso na ndu. Ogo tie nnwa anyi ife, dika ocholu igbu eye, anyi akua ngo, kponala ya nwanyi. Mana ike nwan n'oke ego, ima fu ego weli ku ngo. Ya meli eji agwa ndi ogo n'ekeli we Nwanyi soso na ndu. Onwua, wa ebute ozu.*

Ulasi*:* We recall our daughter! This is the reason why we don't charge a high bride price for the hand of our daughters in marriage. Our daughters are wives while alive but must be brought home for burial with their birth families. If a wife is being abused by the husband, we refund the bride price and save her life. For this reason, we let the the suitors know the conditions.

.

R: *Kedi ife meli akwamozu nwanyi ji ekpo oku Sinne?*

Ulasi: Ima na akwamozu nwanyi di uzo n'abo. *Ofu bu ina bata ya n'ije di , si aya nno, ada. Nk'ozo bu izina 'ya ani nmo. Ogodin'mulunwa bu egwu umu ji ekene nne we, si aya mbona Wa ji kwa ya ekene nde nne we. Ima na wa bu nwadi ani.* Mana wa y a na abia n'afu nde nne we ma'wa bia na upo ozu nne we. Wa ma fu zi efu. Ifu ho a?

R: Gini m'eli aniji ho agbakebe zi yabu egwu?

Ulasi: Imana oyibo abia go. Nde uka adiho ekwe zi k'akwa nne we n'uzo omenani. Ife nine k'ana kpozi igo alusi. Olu oyibo emebigo ife. K'ama umuaka y'ebute ozu nne we, wa ebuje Li ndi uka. Ndi ozo eweli ego gbali nne we. Umueze Osomala na lahu zi n'ilo. Obodo Emebi go! Nde uka na fada n'achi zi obodo. Onwezi onye na go nna anyi wa.

R: Why is the funeral for the woman So detailed?

Ulasi: Well, as you know, the burial subjects are three. One is the welcome of the ada back home to her kin.The other is the celebration of her life as a mother. This is important as it demonstrates the children's gratitude to their maternal kin and also honours the spirit of the deceased. They then have to visit their mother's grave and maintain contact with the maternal kin. See?

R: Why are there fewer performances nowadays?

Ulasi: These are modern times as you know and most people want to Bury their dead in modern ways. All our ceremonies are labeled idol worship nowadays. Rather than bring their mother home, They take her to the church or Redeem her body with cash. No One is left to serve our ancestors.

APPENDIX TWO (ii)

INTERVIEW WITH OKAKWU ISAMADE OF ODEKPE[1]

The interview below is followed by the transcription.

Researcher: (Stooping in the traditional greeting style) Okakwu! Okakwu!

Okakwu: Welcome, Ada

R: Our father, can you tell us the origin of Ogodin'omulunwa dance?

Okakwu: *Ozu okwukwa bu ife ana emelu onye obuna n'obodo. Soso umu aka k'ana diho akwa, maka na onwu umu aka bu alu. Etu esi akwa ndichie d'iche. Ka esi akwa kwa nwanyi di kwa iche. Ozu obuna ana kwa ho ofuma nweli ike butali obodo nsogbu, maka na olue ani nmo wa ma nye ye okwa lu l'eye. Obulu onye iwe oku, onweli ike nyebe ndibe eye mobu ndi obodo nsogbu.*

N'ime obodo ogbahu nine, Osomala n'Odekpe n'Okoh na kwa nwanyi ofuma maka n'ada anyi di anyi mkpa. Wa bun ne anyi maka na Umuada ji n'echeli anyi obodo.

Translation:

A proper burial is the entitlement of everyone in Ogbaru. The exception is the death of children which is never marked with any activity because it is an abomination to the land that children should die before old age. The burial of titled chiefs and commoners differ. The burial of women also differs but the burial of deceased married women is particularly elaborate whether married within the community or outside. If the surviving children are mature and capable, they will perform Ogodin'omulunwa to show appreciation for their

[1] The interview with the Okakwu Isamade could not follow the usual pattern of Question and Answers because it was considered disrespectful to interrupt his speech. Therefore one had to let him exhaust the subject at will.

mother's care for them. Our women are very important to us because they are the protectors of our land and therefore our mothers in more ways than simply the biological. The spirit of anyone, whether man or woman who is not given all the burial honors may visit calamity on the family or community, especially if such a one had been known to be quick tempered while dwelling with the living.

APPENDIX THREE (iii)

Interview with Oyata Okuona of Isiolu village, Osomala

Interview	**Translation**
R: Oyata	**R:** (Greeting name)
Oyata: Nno nwam. Nod'ani, so.	Oyata: Welcome, my dear. Please be seated.
R: Nne anyi, acholu mu imali ife eji agbali umu nwanyi ogo-di-n'omulunwa?	R: Mother, I want to know the origin of Ogodin'omulunwa dance?
Oyata: Imana Umuada Osomala Nweli ife wa nalu na lu na Obodo. Ana gba ya bu egwu iji weli kene nne we, si aya mbona. Osomala eji ho Umuada wa egwu egwu o! Ndi nwe Obodo ma na wa ji obodo naka. Ya meli na Osomala adi a hapulu ndi ani nmadu ozu.	**Oyata:** I do not know the origin of the dance. However the dance is performed by children as a mark of respect for a deceased mother. As you know, Osomala places a high value on the Umuada because the security of the land is in their hands. This is why we insist on burying our daughters so that the full honors can be done for them.
R: Kedi gaje ulu ndi ozo dina akwamozu e?	**R**: In what other ways does this dance benefit the community?
Oyata: Okokokoko! Osike nu! Imaho na onyen'enwe ho ezi omume, adiho afu nde yae solu umu aya gbala ya egwu. Nke ozo bun a umu agbo anyi ya na kwadebe inu di n'oge, bia hapu	**R**: Quite numerous! Don't you know that an unpopular woman children will not find anyone to accompany them in dance, especially if the children had neglected their maternal kin. The other

nata ite ime aka. Maka na obu onye mulu nnwa k'anagbali yabu egwu. Ulu ozo buna nwadiani bunete li ozu nne eye yana bia nenete ndibe nne eye. Ozo kwa bunaNwanyi akwali ofuma y'ejikwe nene umu aya anya m'olue ani nmo.

is that our young girls may realize the the importance of childbearing and give up the trend of abortion which has taken over the life of young people nowadays. Another benefit is that the the children will have the opportunity to liase with the maternal kin whenever they visit their mother's grave. Finally, a woman who receives the full honors will protect her children from the land of the dead.

R: *Nke e wani diho agba zi yabu egwu, kedi ife anyi y'eme iji weli kpoci ete ye?*

Oyata: Obu unu je li akwukwo ka nke wo dizi n'aka. Maka na onye an'ebute ho ozu e nuno, emesili eye ike. Aka unu k'odizi.

R: What can be done to revive interest in this performance?

R: That problem is for you educated ones to solve. If a deceased woman is buried outside, you offend her soul.

APPENDIX FOUR (iv)

Ogodin'omulunwa Song Lyrics

(1) Announcement Dance Songs:

Song Text One (1)

Unu Anugo ?:

Solo: *Unu anugo? N'anyi anuho o,*
N'ada anyi nwulanwu o,
nanyi anuho o!

Chorus: *Unu anugo, n'anyi anuho o!*
N'ada nyi nwula nwu o!

Solo*: Unu anugo, nanyi anuho o!*
N'ada anyi nwulanwu o!
N'anyi anuho o!

Chorus*: Unu anugo, n'anyi anuho o!*
N'ada anyi nwulanwu o!
N'anyi anuho o!

Song text 2: *Ewo! Agana po!*

Solo: *Ewo!*
Chorus: *Agana po*
Solo: *Ewo!*
Chorus: *Agana po*
Solo: *Ewo!*
Chorus: *Agana po*
Solo: *Uzo teka ntite, ete gbue naka po!*
Chorus: *Agana po*
Solo: *Ewo!*

Chorus: *Agana po*

Solo: *Ewo*

Chorus: *Agana po*

Solo: *Ewo!*

Chorus: *Agana po*

Solo: *Uzo teka ntite ete gbuem naka o!*

Chorus; *Agana po o- o-o-o!*

Translation

Solo: Am exhausted

Chorus: *Agana po* (meaning not clear but suggests a far destination)

Solo: At this point the dancers fall back with backward foot movements

(Uzo teka ntite etegbue naka o!)

This long road is exhausting me to death

(This is more or less repeated several times)

Song text 3

Transcription:

Solo; *Anyi melu ndia, me ndia, A-ha-ha!*

Chorus: *Anyi melu ndia, me ndia, Ahaha!*

Solo*; Je k'iju wa ife anyi melu wa o!*

Chorus: *Anyi melu ndia, me ndia, Ahaha!*

Translation:

Solo: We dealt with these and dealt with those, *A- ha- ha!*

Chorus: We dealt with these and dealt with those, *A ha ha!*

Solo: Go and ask how we dealt with them,

Chorus: We dealt with those and dealt with those, *A-ha-ha!*

(2) Women's Dance Songs

Song text (1)

Omumu Bul'egwu 'mu

Omumu bul'egwum n'odika nmili o!

Nmili mal'onye o!

N'odika nmadu adiazi o!

Translation:

If the river wills,

let her sweep my song/dance

But when the rain beats one

It is as if the person was never there

[Entire sequence repeated severally]

Song text (2)

Transcription:

Aziza abu Ife

Aziza abu ife

Ututu wa 'palaya o

M'aziza abu ife o!

Translation:

The broom is an insignificant thing

But in the morning, it gets pride of place

They say the broom is insignificant thing

But in the morning, they search for it

Yet the broom is an insignificant thing.

***Songs**:*

[1]Ugolo mulu nyeyi.

[2]]Uya nweke ka'nma.

[3]Omumu bulu egwu mu.

Song text (3)

Transcription:

Aziza abu Ife

Aziza abu ife

Ututu wa 'palaya o

M'aziza abu ife o!

Translation:

The broom is an insignificant thing

But in the morning, it gets pride of place

They say the broom is insignificant thing

But in the morning, they search for it

Yet the broom is an insignificant thing.

***Songs**:*

[1]Ugolo mulu nyeyi.

[2]]Uya nweke ka'nma.

[3]Omumu bulu egwu mu.

Song text 1

Ugolo 'mulu Nneyi

Osoyi bulu onye obodo ozo

Ugolo mulu nneyi Iye-ye, iyewo!

Ada hulu egwu o!

Osoyi bulu onye obodo ozo

Ugolo mulu nneyi o!

Ada we dali uku ani!

Translation:

Whatever land you belong to Ugolo is your mother's origin

Whoever your people may be, Ugolo is your mother's origin

Daughter, scoop the dance!

Whoever your people may be

Ugolo is your source.

Daughter, lower your waist!

Song text 2:

Omumu Bul'egwu 'mu

Omumu bul'egwum n'odika nmili o!

Nmili mal'onye o!

N'odika nmadu adiazi o!

Translation:

If the river wills,

let her sweep my song/dance

But when the rain beats one

It is as if the person was never there

[Entire sequence repeated severally]

(3) **Homebound Dance Song Lyrics**

Song text (1)

Group Singing: Ewo Ada o!

Iye-iye-iye wo-iye! (Repeated severally)

APPENDIX FIVE (V): GLOSSARY OF IGBO WORDS AND TERMS USED

Ada: **(i) Describes** the eldest woman leader of a village or the eldest daughter in the family.

(ii) Also used as the term of identity for indigenous females of the community in Ogbaru region.

(iii) Used as a term of endearment for a lady.

Afo: The second day in the Igbo four-day Market-Week System.

Aligede: A special dance performed only during burial ceremonies of Osomala kings.

Amosu: The context-dependent word for:

(i) witch and witchcraft. In this context there are good and bad witches;

(ii) bad temperedness;

(iii) unusual cleverness.

Anghala: A green tomato like fruit popularly known as garden egg; used as a substitute in the absence of kola nuts in Igboland.

Ani: Earth/Soil; also the name of the earth goddess in Osomala.

Ani-madu-baga: War dance with which the cleansing Okposi Festival of Osomala is opened. It literarily means "strangers do not trespass". During the festival, non-indegenes left town and no one was allowed in for the eight-day duration of the event.

Atamanya: The title of the kings of Osomala and Odekpe; believed to have originated from Idah.

Azuzu: A wide circular fan made of of cow hide and used by men during religious festivals. It produces an explosive musical sound when clapped against the palm.

Chi: The concept of a personal god in Igbo cultural philosophy; similar to the '*Ori'* of the Yoruba culture**.**

Chukwu: The concept of the Greater and almighty God in Igbo culture. Actually two words '*Chi* Ukwu', meaning 'great God'; shortened into the convenient *Ch'ukwu*.

Chukwu-abi-ama: God-the-just-and-all –seeing; one of the names by which God is known. Usually used by supplicants during oath taking.

Egwu: The context dependent word for dance, music, entertainment and play.

Egwu-Ada: The dance of the eldest daughter performed during the burial ceremonies of women and title taking ceremonies in Osomala and the region.

Egwu-Amala: The name of a dance form found among the Ogbaru people. It is a stylised paddle dance which simulates the rowing motion of canoe paddling.

Egwu-Ojeni: The name of a dance form of the Ogbaru people. It employs grace and less vigorous gestures in comparison to Egwu-Amala; popular among elderly women of the region.

Egwu-Olu: The work dance of the Ogbaru people usually performed during the New Yam festival; employs vigorous farming gestures and joyous facial expressions.

Ehulu: A valuable coral bead worn among riverrine folk, especially women and titled men. One of the costumes worn by the ada and okpala during Ogodi dance.

Ejie: The title of the leader of Umuoneogwu; one of the nine villages of Osomala.

Eke: The first day of the Igbo four-day week system.

Eke-Osomala: The market day of Osomala. The Eke-Osomala saw Osomala rise to become a powerful kingdom during the Industrial Age when the Oil Palm became a prized commodity, having replaced slaves as a source of labour in the Trans-Atlantic Trade.

***Ibe*:** A palm frond planted into the ground on a piece of land to signify authority to ownership, and the presence of the ancestral spirit during land dispute cases.

Ichaka: A musical instrument made of a gourd encased in a beaded net.

***Ighe Akwukwo**:* The special meal prepared during the Ofo festival. Practiced by the tripartite Ogbaru people of Osomala, Odekpe and Okoh.

Iha-ota: The process of selection of a delegation to oversee the preparations of the ofo festival. Part of the initial deliberations at the onset of Ofo.

***Ima-Agu*:** The practice of divination for the purpose of identifying a child as a reincarnation ancestor.

***Itu-nzu*:** The ritual of sprinkling kaolin chalk on ancestral emblems during consultation with the spirits and at the beginning of festivals.

Iyi-Oji-Odekpe: A deity which presides over judicial matters in the community It is situated in Odekpe town.

***Ndichie*:** The association of men who have taken the Ozo title in the community. The specific titles which entitles an individual to membership are the 'Igbu' and the 'Agana'

Ndi-ogo*:** The term means 'the in-laws'. Ogbaru people respect in-laws who show interest in the relatives of their; a notion which gave rise to the saying '*Ogo bu chi onye'*, meaning 'the in-law is ones ***'chi'

***Ndiomu*:** The association of married women within the community. This embraces both indigenous and non-indigenous women

***Nkwo*:** The third day of the four-day week system.

***Nnoli*:** The official title of the war general of Osomala. Exclusively reserved for the Osomala villages of Isiolu and Umuoga.

***Nso*:** The concept of taboo. Covers a wide spectrum in order of gravity from such a simple act as using a chewing-stick (traditional method of dental cleaning) at night time.

***Nzu*:** The kaolin chalk.

***Ofo*:** The ancestral worship festival of Osomala.

***Oga*:** The name by which the wine server is known. The oga is always the youngest member in a given group.

***Ogbaru*:** The sub-group of Igbo speaking people who reside downstream on the River Niger, between Onitsha and Omoku on the Western bank; and Asaba and Ndoni on the Eastern bank. Dialectal variations of the name are Ogbesu, used by the Western dwellers; Ogbahu by the Eastern section and the anglicized christening from the colonial contact.

***Ogbondu*:** The canon shell used as a a casing for shells. These obsolete instruments have been converted into musical instruments that make reverberating thunderous sounds.

Ogene: The smaller version of the Ogbondu. Easily carried in one hand and beaten with a metal rod to make music.

***Ohai*:** The deity of clairvoyance and protection of Osomala. Worshiped by only women of Osomala origin, that is, the Umuada.

***Okakwu*:** The official title of the King of Osomala and Odekpe. It is not clear why the ruler of Okoh is known by the title of Akoh.

Okpala: The eldest male member of a village in Osomala;

(ii) The eldest son in a family.

***Okpokolo*:** A wooden musical instrument made of bamboo stem and beaten with a stick. One of the ensemble of musical instruments used for Ogodin'omulunwa performance.

***Okposi*:** The New Yam festival of Osomala.

Olisa-kelu-uwa: God-the-creator-of-the-Universe.

***Ose-Oji*:** Alligator pepper; eaten as a snack and one of the items required for entertainment of guests during Ogodi performance.

***Osomala*:** The town which provides the major model for the present work. Variously known in the region as Osemele by Western Ogbaru people; Osomala by the indigenes; and Ossomari, the anglicized version given by the colonialists when the town was a district headquarters in the defunct East Central Nigerian Government.

***Otulaka*:** The elephant tusk. The insignia of Ozo title membership.

***Ozo*:** The system of title taking which consists Igbu and Agana.

***Uboma*:** A musical instrument shaped like a metal cone. A larger version of the ogene and used during festivals.

***Ufele*:** A musical instrument made out of molded ant hill earth. Spherical in shape with a hole drilled into it and played like a flute; produces a peculiar whistling sound. Also used during ancestral festival in Idah.

Ugo: The Eagle feather which is used by the Ndichie.

***Ulo*:** The Cleansing festival which is held to ritually cleanse the land of impurities. A necessary precedence to the planting season.

***Umuada*:** The association of indigenous women vested with important duties in the community, the most important of which is the protection of the toen os incursion and invasion from enemies.

***Aziza*:** The traditional broom made out of the rib of the palm frond. These are bunched together and tied at the base to produce a fanlike shape. Used for ground and floor sweeping.

***Ogbono*:** The fruit of the bush mango. Used as a condiment for cooking a slimy gravy of the same name; popularly prepared as one of the items for Ogodi performance.

Ofe-Onino: Any gravy or soup of slimy consistency, e.g., okra.

APPENDIX SIX (vi)

Research Questions

(1) Who are the people of Osomala?

(2) History of Origin. Where did they migrate from and who is the founding father of the people?

(3) Discussions of the Concept of Art in Ogbaru?

(4) What is their concept of Aesthetics- especially of Dance Performance?

(5) How are their values reflected in the dance philosophy?

(6) What is the binding element of the people known as the Ogbaru, with particular reference to the tripartite ascendancy group of Osomala, Odekpe and Okoh?

APPENDIX 7

OGODIN'OMULUNWA DANCE PROPS FOR THE ADA

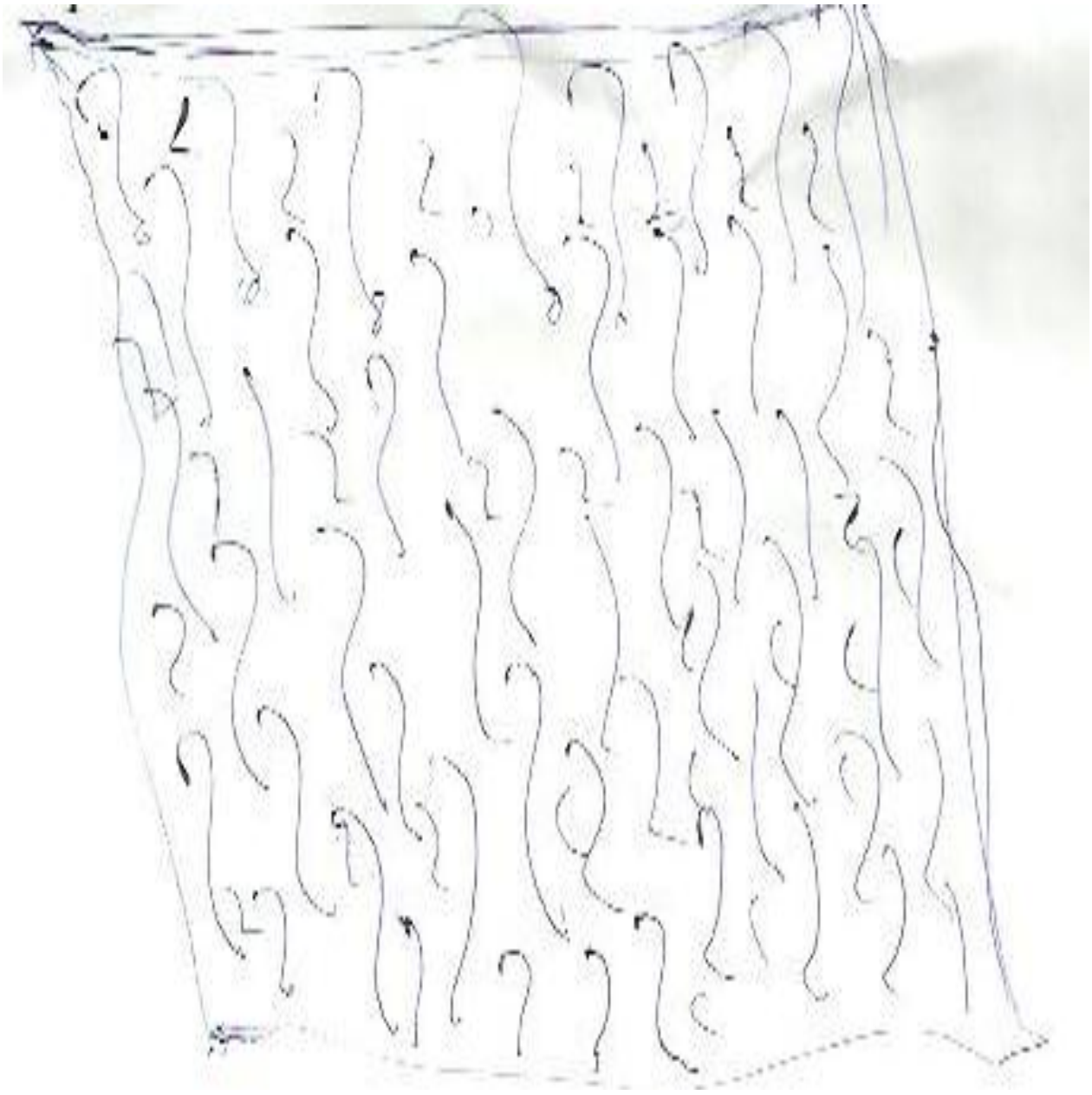


Plate1; prop1 A piece of cloth which is shredded into strips and tied to the dance props

Plate 2

Prop 2:: Traditional wooden spoon used in the Ogbaru region

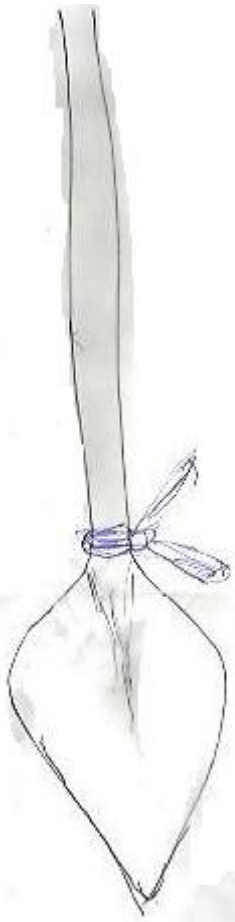
Prop 3: Traditional domestic broom

Plate 3

Prop 4: The special broom used for blending okro soup

Prop 5: The Earthenware pot used for cooking soups

Plate 4

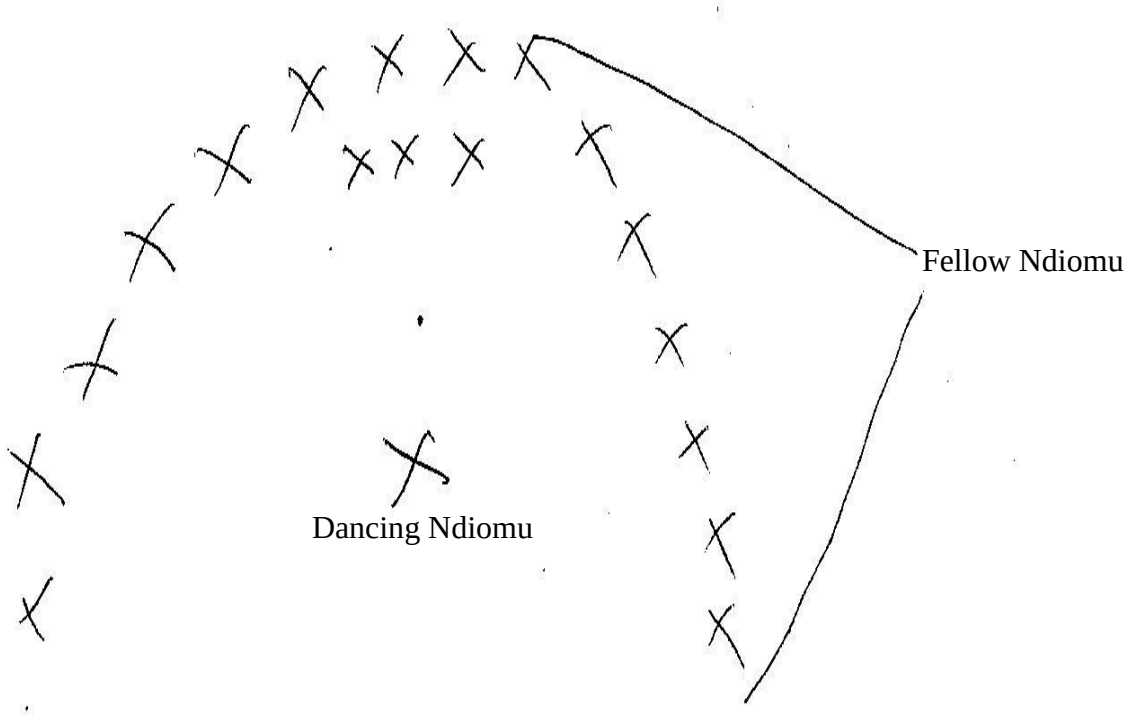


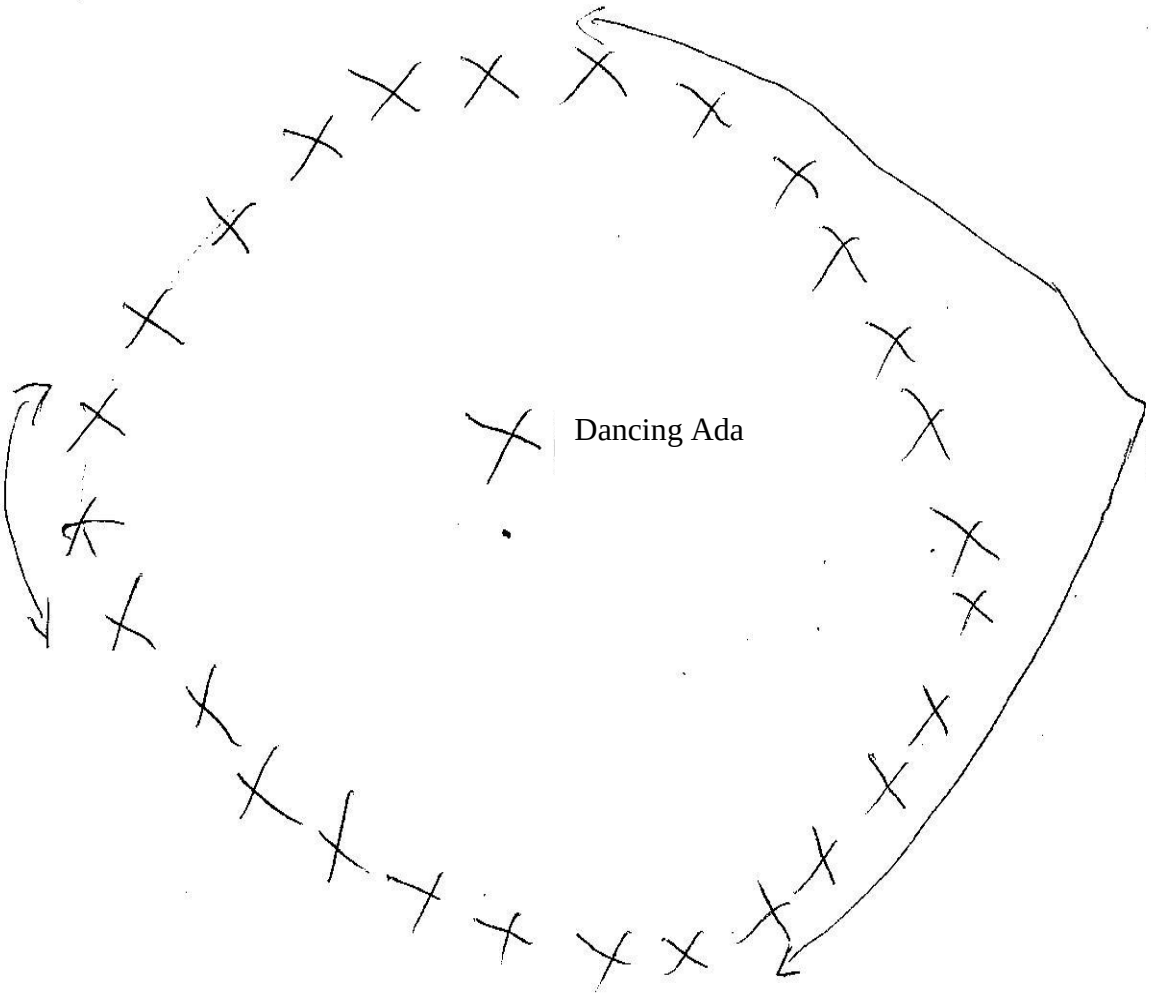
Prop 6: The female paddle.

Prop 7: The steering pole.

APPENDIX EIGHT (8)

Floor Pattern of Ada and Ndiomu Dance




Dancing Ada
Fellow Umuada