



NIGERIA JOURNAL OF
GENDER AND
DEVELOPMENT

ISSN 1595 – 7594

AN INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY
JOURNAL

VOLUME 13 NUMBERS 1&2

SEPTEMBER, 2013

NIGERIA JOURNAL
of
GENDER AND
DEVELOPMENT

AN INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Volume 13

Nos 1 & 2

September 2013

ISSN 1595 – 7594

EDITOR – IN – CHIEF: Kayode Animasaun
ASSOCIATE EDITOR – C.O. Ajewole-Orimogunje

EXTERNAL EDITORS:

Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh- Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka
Oha Obododinma – University of Ibadan, Ibadan
Alexander Kure- Kaduna State University, Kaduna

NATIONAL EDITORIAL ADVISERS:

Abiola Odejide – University of Ibadan, Ibadan
M. A. Daniyan – National Universities Commission, Abuja
Miri Angela F. – University of Jos

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL ADVISERS:

Patricia Daniel- University of Wolverhampton, Walsall, U. K.
Samuel Awoniyi – Solusi University, Zimbabwe
Cynthia Carter- University of Cardiff U.K.

CALL FOR PAPERS

For further enquires on subscription and submission of articles for publication, please visit our website: www.gentlenigeria.com or phone – 08073787551

E – mail: gente_devt@yahoo.co.uk

OR

To the:

EDITOR – IN – CHIEF
Mass Communication Department
Faculty of Business and Social Sciences
Adeleke University, Ede
Osun State, Nigeria

Submission of Articles

Researchers willing to submit research findings for publication on any aspects of gender and development issues to GENTLE Journals should mail such to:

The Editor – In – Chief,
The Nigeria Journal of Gender and Development,
P.O. Box 1940
Osogbo, Osun State.

The papers should follow the current APA formula and double spaced. Three copies of the article should be accompanied with a bank draft vetting fee for the sum of Three Thousand Five Hundred (N3, 500), only payable to GENTLE. Nigeria Journal of Gender and Development is a peer reviewed Journal.

For more details please visit our website: www.gentlenigeria.com

NIGERIA JOURNAL of GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Volume 13

Nos 1 & 2

September 2013

ISSN 1595 – 7594

GENDER ISSUES

Gender Issues in African Development:

- A study of Gendered Employment in Nigeria's Informal Sector Aderounmu Busayo* and Soetan Olufunmi** 1
- Gender Equity In Democracy – A Necessary Component Of The Rule Of Law Jade Mohammed 18
- Parallels Of Dance And Plot In *Ogodi* Female Burial Dance Of The Ogbaru Igbo Sub-Group Of Eastern Nigeria Awogu-Maduagwu Edith Abisola (Ph.D) 30
- Gender Equality And Women Empowerment: Imperative For Sustainable Development MRS. KEMI AKINTAYO 41
- Salami's Standpoint On Gender Equality: Implications For Achieving The Third Millennium Goal AGATHA NJIDEKA NWANYA. 51
- Neighbourhood Characteristics And The Education Of The Girl Child: Implications For Counseling OBIAGWU, REBECCA BOSEDE (MRS) 67

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Indigenous Knowledge System in Africa: Issues, Applications and Implication for Educational Planning Yusuf, Lateef Adeyemi (Ph. D).	76
Effectualizing Citizenship Education In Nigerian Polytechnics: Inherent Impediments To Avoid Ijiwole, A.A.	84
Creating Effective Citizenship Through Citizenship Education In Tertiary Education: A Remedy For Nation Building In Nigeria Ijiwole, A. A.	93
Electoral Institution, Elections and Democratic Stability in Nigeria: A comparative Assessment of 2007 & 2011 Elections Adesiyan E.A.	100
The Prevalence Of Drug Abuse Among Nigerian Youths, It Effects And Counselling Implications On Nigeria Democratic System Of Governance OYEWUMI J.O	113
Effects Of Globalization On The Teaching And Learning Of English Language AMOLA, Isaac Olugbenga	124
Accounting Procedure And Management Of Finance In Local Governments: Issues, Problems And Prospects AJEWOLE S.A.	131
Assessment Of Nutritional Status Among School Children ADEDEJI O.C	139
The Use Of Information And Communication Technology In Teaching Accounting: Problems And Prospects Ogunleye, J.K	145
Anglo-British Diplomatic And Economic Relations Since 1960:Issues And Challenges OLATUNJI E. ALAO	153
Nigeria and the problem of food crisis: facts and remedies. OJUKUROLOLA AKINPELUMI OLU	174

PARALLELS OF DANCE AND PLOT IN *OGODI* FEMALE BURIAL DANCE OF THE OGBARU IGBO SUB-GROUP OF EASTERN NIGERIA

Awogu-Maduagwu Edith Abisola (Ph.D)
Email- bismadu@gmail.com, bismadu@yahoo.com
GSM: +234 8032233797, +234 8086231628

Abstract:

Ogodi dance is a funeral dance drama performed among the *Ogbaru* Igbo people of Nigeria to celebrate the lifetime of a deceased, indigenously born woman, (Maduagwu, 2012). This work analyses the inter-play of dance on the one hand, and song lyrics on the other, as plot projectors in the performance of this ritual drama. The work aims to establish the importance of dance dynamics in African religious theatre. It decodes the heavy symbolism which characterizes ritual forms and which poses problems of analysis for researchers in the field. With relatively little documentation on the life of the woman in African society, the non-verbal information encoded in dance is an important source of data on the woman in oral societies such. *Ogodi* dance of *Ogbaru* Igbo people as a performance exclusively set aside for women provides an ideal model and also fills the gap in this area of gender study.

Proceedings of International Conference on Research and Development, Vol. 3, Number 32, p.

Introduction

Ogodin'omulunwa dance is a dance drama which celebrates the lifetime of a woman who had married from within her community or exogamously. The dance is a dramatic enactment of the return of the spirit of the deceased woman to her

kinsmen. This belief is dramatized in a ceremony which is divided into sections symbolizing the stages in the spirit's journey, beginning from her return to her kinsmen and from thence to the land of the community's dead. Ritual drama is seldom verbalized in African theatre and the plots of sacred ceremonies are communicated in non-verbalised media. *Ogodi* dance thus depends on costume, ritual props, music, songs and dance; with dance being the

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 in Aguleri. This will suggest that the Nri people operate the general 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, here being examined.

Ogodi dance is an enactment of the return of the spirit of the deceased *nwada* (singular) to her kinsmen. This belief is dramatized in a ceremony which is divided into sections, each symbolizing the stages in the spirits journey, beginning from her return to her kinsmen, and from thence to the land of the community’s dead. Ritual drama is heavily coded in African theatre, and the plots of sacred ceremonies are shrouded in symbolism. *Ogodi* dance thus depends on costume, ritual props, music, songs and dance, all bearing symbolic messages, with dance being the dominant medium.

Objective

The objectives of this study are:

- To demonstrate the importance of gesturised language, especially dance as a source of data on the role of the woman in Igbo society, using Ogodi dance as a model.
- To fill the undocumented gap of information on the African woman through research of non-verbal symbolisms in ritual theatre.

Methodology

The dance performance is divided into segments, each unit of which signifies in gestural symbolism, the plot of the ceremony. The analysis will employ the technique of the description of kinesics, especially dance; transcription and translation of songs; followed by content analysis of the units.

This work adopts the theory of Symbolic Interactionism which postulates the interdependence of symbolic multimedia in the projection of meaning or content in a given ritual performance. Thus the study employs a parallel analysis of the verbal and non-verbal modes; specifically songs on the one hand; and dance on the other, in the direction of the dramatic plot.

Synthesis of Dance and Song in *Ogodi* Performance

The performance begins with the march of the mourners from the deceased's consanguine family or community. This section is omitted because it is not part of the dramatic enactment. Our analysis, therefore begins with the announcement dance, this being the opening segment of the funeral performance. Each unit is characterized by distinct songs and dances, designed to project the stage in the transitional process.

Section One (1)

The Announcement Dance

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

The Setting: The setting is the open road beginning from the deceased's home and encompassing the nearby environs.

Dance Description: Stamping run-dance with short rhythmic trot along the road. Music is provided by the drummers, (fig.1). There is also body percussion in the form of foot stamping and handclapping.

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!

Song text 2: *Ewo! Agana po!*

Solo: Ewo!

Chorus: Agana po

Solo: Ewo!

Chorus: Agana po

Solo: Ewo!

Chorus: Agana po



Fig.1 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.

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)

Dance Description: Same as the one in song one.

Analysis of Section (1)

Announcement Dance

Song and Dance (a)

The lyrics of **song text 1** immediately indicate the mood of sorrow and mourning of the subjects. The words ‘have u heard that our ada (daughter/sister) is dead?’ is at once information dissemination and at the same time, an invitation to share in the grief over the death of a loved one. The tone which cannot be transcribed here also strongly projects the mood of grief.

The **dance** is a rhythmic, shuffling movement which suggests tiredness and a weighing down of the subjects' spirits.

Song and Dance (b)

The lyrics, 'am exhausted with running', and 'this long road is exhausting me to death' in this second song, further emphasize the message of sorrow in the previous analysis. The dance gestures which accompany the previous song are replicated here. In this section of the performance, the community is welcoming the deceased home to the kindred. This song leads to the next section.

Section Two (2)

The Women's Dance

The women's dance consists of the dance of the *ndiomu* (wives of the community) on the one hand; and the dance of the *ada* (eldest daughter of deceased) and other *umuada* on the other hand.

Ndiomu Dance

Dance Description: The knees are bent in a half squat. Simultaneously, the middle and upper torso is moved in a rhythmic forward and backward flexing gesture. The arms are flung up and down within the same time in motion,(fig.2)

Setting: The village square or the open ground in front of deceased's home (where such a space is available).

Formation: The formation is semicircular. The sitting women audience forms the outer diameter of the semi-circle, while the standing and clapping ones form the arch of the semicircle. The semi circular arrangement of the dance arena symbolises the deceased life cycle which is split in two: one half in her marital home and the other as a daughter of her community of origin.



Fig.2. The Ndiomu dance.

Song Text (1)

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.

Analysis of Section (2)

***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.

Song Lyrics: The lines, 'the broom is an insignificant thing, and yet it takes pride of place in the morning' is a reference to the place of the woman in a patrilineal society. The broom lies dormant and unnoticed all day until day break, when it is used to clean the entire homestead and the environment. It is a symbol of the woman, plays the important role of caring for both the consanguine home and the paternal one, but is hardly acknowledged until her death.

The *Ada* Dance

The performance of the *ada* is the nucleic segment of the ceremony. The props of the dance are items of domestic chores used by the deceased during her lifetime. These include the broom, the paddle, an earthenware sauce pan, an enamel basin used for fetching water from the river, etc. These items are tagged with strips of cloth torn out of the deceased's clothing. The use of these strips symbolizes the presence of the deceased on the dance arena. The *ada* performs the dance to honour the spirit of her mother and is subsequently possessed by that spirit as the dance progresses. She is surrounded by the *Umuada* and *Ndiomu* who clap in rhythm to her dance. During the dance, she picks up the broom and mimes a sweeping motion to the rhythm of the clapping. She does the same with the paddle, and the cooking spoon and pot. The women periodically enter the arena to complement the *ada*'s dance and thus, give her a rest. They also perform the motions of dancing with the props. Having completed the miming dance using the items in the bowl, 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 the meal, the cutlass 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 as she bolts forward in a run dance towards the maternal family compound. This signals the end of the *Ada*'s dance and the commencement of the third segment of the Homebound dance performance.

Setting: The village square or any open field, wide enough to accommodate spectators and performers.

Dance Description: The knees are bent in a half squat. Simultaneously, the middle and upper torso is moved in a rhythmic forward and backward flexing gesture. The arms are flung up and down within the same time in motion, (fig.3)



Fig.3. *The eldest daughter (ada) performing the central dance of the funeral 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!

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.

Analysis of section (2)

Part (b)

The Dance: There are condensed levels of kinetic and verbal symbolisms 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 mounted by the spirit of her mother. By dancing with the domestic items, the 'deceased' is celebrating her chores as a wife and mother and the attendant responsibilities.

The Song Lyrics: The lines, 'wherever you may belong, your mother comes from Ugolo' is a reference to the maternal antecedence of the '*ada*'. She is being made aware of the importance of her maternal ties to the community of mourners. In this way, the inter-action with her mother's people would be ensured, regardless of the demise of the deceased and the subsequent absence from the children's life. This concept of maternal identity is known as *Nwadiani* (maternal kin). The *nwadiani* enjoys all the rights of the paternally related members of the community except that of inheritance. This song demonstrates the special place of the *Umuada* among the Ogbaru people.



Fig.4. A nwada complements the dance of the eldest daughter, thus giving her an opportunity to take the needed rest

Section Three

Part 1

The Homebound Dance

This dance sequence begins when the *ada* picks up the bowl containing the dance props and the head of the slaughtered goat. She bolts forward 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 this brings the homebound dance to an end.

Setting: The distance between the performance arena and the thresh hold of the deceased's paternal home. The distance is designed to allow enough running to generate heat an excitement of other sections of the community.

Dance Description: The dance is a running movement, performed by the *ada*. The spectators sing and clap to the rhythm of the *ada*'s movement as they pursue her along the community road. Her movements are uncoordinated as she runs and makes sudden stops, indicative of spiritual possession.

Song text:

Chorus: *Ewo ada o!*

Chorus: *Iye-iye-iye wo, iyeh!* (repeated severally)

Translation: O, Sister! O dear, o dear!

Analysis:

This dance is symbolic of the deceased severance from the community of the living. The dance to the threshold of the deceased's family house is symbolic of its readiness to join the ancestral community as this dance represents the first stage on that journey. It also signals her contentment with the rites performed for her spirit. In addition, it provides psychological relief for the community of mourners who are now assured of the goodwill of the departed spirit.

Section Three

Part Two (2)

Oge-Ato: *This section of the ceremony is reserved for women who have attained extreme old age, from about eighty years upwards.*

The pall bearers enter the parlor where a mat or bed has been prepared for the final segment of the celebration and places place the casket on the bed. The body is subsequently taken out for internment. Scarves and small clothing items belonging to the dead are placed at random all over the bed as symbols of the presence of the deceased. This signals the commencement of the final segment, that is, *Oge-Ato* (three seasons). 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 in-laws to the deceased's family and members of the community, who had benefited from the goodness of the deceased, donate specified cloth lengths to the mourners. These are placed on the bed. Well wishers begin to sing praises of the deceased, recounting her family lineage, her virtues and the favors she had rendered to them during her lifetime.

Setting: The reception area of the deceased family home.

Dance Description: The 'dance' is individually improvised swaying movements that provide a rhythm and stylistic effects for the praise singing of each person.

Song text:

The praise-singers narrate good deeds of deceased, sung in individually improvised styles. Sometimes, these are loud shouts of the praise names of the deceased.

Analysis of Section Three (3)

The Oge-Ato (three Seasons) is the period following the internment of the deceased. Culturally, this is the time span in which the spirit of the dead is expected to ascend the ancestral realm. However, women do not feature in the rank of ancestors in Igbo culture. It is therefore, not clear why this section is included in this funeral ceremony, which is performed exclusively for women. The three seasons is made up of nine days, each season comprising three days. According to an informant, the first three days symbolize the detachment from the world of the living; the next three, the period spent on the journey between the chasm separating the world of the living from that of the ancestors; and the last three symbolize the arrival at the ancestral realm and acquisition of the ancestral identity.

CONCLUSION

As a medium of plot direction, songs and dances make up the core structure of *Ogodin'omulunwa* dance drama. Consequently, while the performance is punctuated with rests in between various sections, the songs and dances in these sections follow a pattern which cohere with the message of the ceremony and eventually constitute what may be perceived as a plot. An analysis of the non-verbal symbols projected in the gestural, musical, costume and spatial codes reveal the hidden dimensions of meaning in this ritual drama.

More importantly, as a funeral designed exclusively for the woman, it provides an invaluable access to information on the role of the female gender in indigenous Igbo society.

References

- Achebe, N. (2005) *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland (1900-1960)* Portsmouth: Heinemann
- Akinrinade, G.U. (2009) *Umuada women Group and Peace Making Movement in Azu Ogbunike, Oyi Local Government Area, Anambra State*. (M.A. dissertation) Institute of African Studies University of Ibadan
- Beoku- Betts, J. (2005) 'Western Perceptions of African Women in the 19th and early 20th Centuries' *Africana Research Bulletin*
- Burnham, P. (1987) "Changing Times in Analysis of African Marriage" Manchester. Manchester University Press
- Cornwall, Andrea. (2004) "Gender Development and Feminism", *IDS Bulletin*, 35 (4) October
- Drewal, H. and Drewal, M. (1983) *Gelede: Art and Female Power among the Yoruba* Bloomington. Indiana University Press
- 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*
- Harriet-Bond, B. (1975) "Modern Marriage in Sierra-Leone: A Study of the Professional Group" The Hague. Mouton
- 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*
- Imam, Ayesha. (1997) "Engendering African Social Sciences" Dakar: CODESA
- Korieh, Chima. (2010) "Minorities and the State in Africa" African Studies Research and Research Forum
- Lebeuf, Anne. (1963) "The role of Women in the Political Organisation of African societies" in Denise Pauline (ed) *Femmes d'Afrique noire*. Paris. Mouton
- Njaka, N. (1987) "Gender and Sex in an African Society" London Zed Books

- Mann, K. (1994) "The Historical Roots and Cultural Logic of Outside Marriage in Colonial Lagos" in C. Bledsoe and G. Piston (ed) *Nuptiality in Sub-Saharan Africa A Contemporary, Anthropological, and Demographic Perspective* Oxford Clarendon 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 in African Economic Development*
- Mbah, Nina. (2002) *Nigerian Women Mobilized*. Berkley. University of California Press
- Obbo, Christin. (1980) *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence*. London. Zed Books
- Ogundipe, M. (2007) *Indigenous and Contemporary Gender Concepts and Issues in Africa: Implications for Nigeria's Development* CBAA Lagos Malthouse Press
- Olademo, O. (2009) *Gender in Yoruba Oral Traditions*. CBAA Lagos Concept Publications
- Oyewumi Oyeronke. (1997) *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Women and Gender Discourse*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota
- Sudarkasa, N. (2005) "The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies" in *The Strength of Our Mother: African and African American Women and families: Essays and Speeches*
- Uzoka,A.F (1999) OGBARU: OUR PEOPLE, OUR DREAMS.<http://www.ogbaru.net/news>. Ogbaru Association Official Website