

## Religious Archetypes in selected Igbo novels

<sup>1</sup>Okey-Agbo, J. N. & <sup>2</sup>Onuoha, J. A.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

<sup>2</sup>Humanities Unit, School of General Studies, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.

### Abstract

The study investigates religious archetypes in selected Igbo novels. The study looks at how Igbo novels could serve as the vehicle for analysing religious archetypes, evidence in Igbo traditional religion as opposed to its counter part in the modern days' time. The coming of Christianity and civilisation in Igbo land have done more harm than good to Igbo traditional religion in terms of acceptance by many people. The study examines the presence of religious archetypes in Igbo novels as recurrent pattern in works and experiences and how they played out in Igbo pattern of living. The study adopts the qualitative design. The major sources of data collection are drawn from Igbo written novels, namely: *Omenuko* and *Aka Ji Aku*. Materials were gotten from the electronic media, personal and public libraries. The analysis followed the tenets of Carl Jung. The result shows that religious archetypes are present in the selected Igbo novels. These religious archetypes played out in Igbo pattern of living in the form of journey, initiation, rituals, quest and symbols. Then Igbo novels served as powerful vehicles for conveying Igbo traditional religion as played out in religious archetypes studied.

**Keywords:** Religion, archetypes traditions and Igbo novels

### 1. Introduction

Traditional religion is part of Igbo life in Nigeria over the years. The people practice religious activities like rituals, sacrifices, worships, divinations, title taking, masquerading and lots more. In all of their religious activities, the Igbos have increase in the rate Igbo traditional religion is neglected. Some notable attempts towards the fight against neglect of traditional religion include cultural festivals, masquerade festivals, like Onunu festivals, Ede Aro of Abagana etc. contribute their quota in the resistance against neglect of traditional religion.

In the same vein, writers especially novelists strive to speak about religious archetypes as the primitive unconscious contents of the psyche which are captured as recurrent patterns in the works and experiences of some literary artists. Nwadike (2010) defines archetype as a recurring myths in the narrative, symbols, images and character types in literary works. It is through the religious archetypes that religious themes like religious journeys, religious rituals and religious initiations are conveyed by Igbo novelists in their various texts as recurring patterns in works and experiences. On the other hand, Igbo novels are seen here as the novels written in the Igbo language, which are functionally committed to the Igbo worldview and the country at large. Our study is primarily concerned with the investigation of religious archetypes in some selected novels and how they are played out in Igbo pattern of living with aim of advocating for increase in the awareness that these archetypes are present in human activities without human efforts. Ogunjimi and Na'Allah (1991) explain that archetype is the primordial image of a figure, whether a demon, man or process that repeats itself in the course of history where creative fantasy is freely manifested. This observation implies that archetypes are tendencies or instinctive trends in the human unconscious mind, which are used to express certain motifs or themes.

The human society faces numerous problems like war, drought, earthquake, religious crisis, kidnapping, herders' clash etc. however, the society needs to pay a lot of attention on how to handle these problems. In other to solve these problems, there are needs for many novelists to be committed to their society in terms of representing these themes in the society through indigenous languages like many writers have written on different aspects of Igbo life as portrayed in Igbo novels such as infidelity, kidnapping, divorce, murder, religious crisis, archetypal patterns and many more. Despite these themes represented in their works, there are still a slow growth of critical studies in Igbo novels especially as it concerns religious archetypes as primitive unconscious contents of the psyche which are captured as recurrent patterns in the works and experiences of literary artists. Scholars like Dobie (2012), asserts that archetypes appear in our dreams and religious rituals, as well as in our arts and literatures. They are media for telling of our myths which are natural and indispensable. Some people see religious archetype as lack of faith in God, hence the avoidance of this aspect of literary study by many novelists.

As a result of the existing gap, especially with regard to Igbo novels and various opinions on religious archetype, the present study examines religious archetypes in selected Igbo novels. The study sets to investigate the existence of religious archetypes in Igbo and examine the extent Igbo world view are captured through these religious archetypes. Therefore, giving attention to this type of study is capable of promoting Igbo traditional religion.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, some research questions formulated to serve as a guide are:

- a. What are the religious archetypes present in the selected novels?
- b. How do these religious archetypes played out in Igbo pattern of living?

This study restricts its focus to the investigation of religious archetypes in two Igbo novels: *Aka Ji Aku* and *Omenuko*.

Our area of consideration is mainly on the presence of religious archetypes in these Igbo novels and how they played out in Igbo pattern of living. The choice of Igbo novels is borne out of the desire to investigate the rate Igbo traditional religion is neglected. These novels are selected because religious archetypes are used lavishly and prevalent in them.

Jung (1938) observes that archetype is a figure, be it a demon, a human being or a process that constantly reoccurs in the course of history and appears whenever creative fantasy is freely expressed. Jung holds that archetype finds expression in dreams, myths, religion, rituals, and private phantasies and in literature. Its occurrence in literature is in form of recurrent character types or figures, images and/or plot sequence or pattern. In the same way, Dobie (2012) asserts that archetypes appear in our dreams and religious rituals, as well as in our arts and literatures. She further states that archetypes are media for the telling of our myths which are natural and indispensable. Our religion is full of symbols. Some symbols are made to identify one divinity or other. For use in traditional religion, Igbo artists present human and animal figures, ornamental materials and so on. The god for whom the object is made can be identified by the symbols used like Ikenga of a particular family that is usually made of beautiful sticks.

Frye (2006) explains that archetype is a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature. Frye believes that to study the archetype of literature is a logical and not a chronological search for structural/generic principles. It does not insist on the source or origin but on the content, which could be found recurrent.

In this study, religious archetypes refer to those religious images whether human or non-human that repeat itself in the course of history. A pertinent point that could be deduced from the observation made about so far is that religious archetype is present in Igbo traditional religion. The observation is inspired by the aim to preserve Igbo traditional religion. The Igbo world view is expressed both orally and in writing. It is expressed orally in form of oral tradition like folklore, custom and traditions. It is expressed in writing from the perspective of written literature like novels, poetry and drama.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review is discussed under the following sub-headings: conceptual framework, theoretical justification and empirical studies.

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

Religion is the only concept defined in this study. Bellah, (1970) opines that religion denotes a set of symbolic forms and actions that relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence. This means that religion is like a law guiding an individual in the society. Peters (1988) in his own view conceptualised religion as a system of symbols which act to establish powerful pervasive and long lasting mood and motivations in men. In the opinion of Metuh (1992) religion is an institutionalised system of symbols, beliefs, values and practices focused on the relationship between God and man living in society. Lending credence to this, Adeniyi (1993) asserts that religion is a body of truths, law and rites by which a man is subordinated to transcendent being. Ugwu (2002) sees religion as faith and practices involving the relationship between mankind and what are regarded as sacred. Ugwu adds that religion generally includes the belief in the supernatural and a code of ethical behaviour.

Also, Okoli (2013) conceives religion as a human effort to reconcile himself with cosmic forces which he believes to be capable of influencing his fate positively or negatively. Religion to him, is the relationship between God and man. In other words, it helps the individual satisfy his or her spiritual thirst. In assertion to the above conception, Alabi (2013) asserts that religion is a belief in the superhuman controlling power or powers that are entitled to obedience, reverence and worship. In this sense, the Almighty God is the only person entitled to be worshiped, revered and obeyed. He further stated that religion is a set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relationship between human being and sacred or divinity.

African traditional religion is hinged on the traditional beliefs and practices of African people which are handed down from generation to generation. It includes the belief in the supreme creator, belief in spirits, and veneration of the dead. Mbiti (1969) opines that worship, for the Africans took place wherever and whenever they were in need, either asking for help from the gods, deities or living- dead or giving thanks to them for their help.

The African Traditional Religion is the African belief system that has been handed down from one generation to another. Ugwu (2002) opines that African Traditional Religion is seen as a religion full of lives and activities through ceremonies, and festivals etc. Ugwu adds that religion places emphasis on virtues, values and morals. It has dominated the thinking of the Africans that it has shaped their culture, and social life etc. Africans are intimately and inseparably linked to the religion of their forefathers; and there is nothing they do without making reference to it.

Mbiti (1969) holds that, it is obvious that there is no aspect of the African man's activities that is not influenced by this religion. That is why Ekwunife (1990) sees African Traditional Religion as: Those institutionalised beliefs and practices of indigenous religion of

African which are rooted in the past. African religious cultures are transmitted to the present votaries by successive African to rehearse mainly through oral traditions. African Traditional Religion is based on oral tradition for its transmission. It is the religion of our forefathers that believed in the existence of God through worshipping of idols, stones, rivers, animal sacrifice, and smaller gods for their survivals.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

In the analysis of religious archetypes in Igbo novels, the Jungian archetypal theory will be adopted. This theory points to the universality of literary patterns and images that reoccur throughout diverse cultures and periods. Archetypes according to Jung (1939) are innate patterns of thought and behaviour that strive for realisation within an individual environment. It also gives form to countless typical experiences of our ancestors [and are] the psychic residue of innumerable experiences of the same type, of joys and sorrows that have been repeated countless times in our ancestral history.

Jung (1939: 181) opines that myths are "symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious dream of the psyche". In his essay, *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry*, thinks of symbol in terms of "an expression of an intuitive idea that cannot yet be formulated in any other or better way...attempt to express something for which no verbal concept exists". It can no longer be reduced to the desires of the writer the moment it becomes art. Hence "the special significance of a true work of art resides in the fact that it has escaped from the limitations of the personal and has soared beyond the personal concerns of its creator". Man, according to Jung, serves art as soil does to plant: *nutrient medium*.

Jung attributes the reference to or conjuring of primordial images by artists to unsatisfied yearning; a compensation for the inadequacy or one-sidedness of the present. The presence of archetype, he claims, stirs intense emotion because "it summons a voice that is stronger than our own; whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices".

Literature, therefore, for Jung, is one of the many ways by which the collective unconscious is expressed, and archetypes which are contained in this collective unconscious are always available as shaping agents in literature. In analysing archetypal theory, Jung (1939), posits that universal images have existed since the remotest times. Jung describes an archetype as that figure, which repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested. In this case, literature plays an important role in recognition of the appearance of almost identical images and patterns-found in rituals, characters or entire narratives that predispose individuals that are not from the same cultures or background to respond alike irrespective of when or where they live.

## 2.3 Empirical Studies

A number of researches have been done on issues related to this study. Some of such researchers are reviewed here.

Ikwubuzo (1998) did a study on myths in written Igbo literature like *Eke Une*. The objective of the study was to highlight the presence of myth of Iyi Une and Obike's creative inputs in *Eke Une*. The study also adopted the archetypal theory propounded by Carl Jung. The study showed that motifs or themes were discernible in many different mythologies and the recurrence of certain images were noticed in the myths of peoples that were widely separated in time and space. These images, according to Ikwubuzo, tended to have a common meaning or "elicit comparable psychological response, and rendered similar cultural functions". Such motifs and images are called "archetypes" or "universal symbols." The study classified myths into

creative, destructive/redemptive and eschatological/regenerative myths. Under the creative myths, the author examined the creative deities like the supreme god, Ahajioku, the creative principle (chi/akaraka). The woman archetype, originator animals (like boa and tortoise) and spirits were also studied as creative archetypes. His discussion on the destructive/ redemptive archetypes portrayed demon, witchcraft and ghost archetypes as well as destructive and delivering deities. The myth of eschatology contains the fall of man motif, death harbinger bird, reincarnation, *Ogbanje*, rites of passage, paradiacal state, etc. the reading was almost exhaustive in its attempt to capture all the possible myths, motif, and archetypes across the three levels of existence in Igbo philosophy.

Okoro (2001) in his work entitled *Literature and the Archetype of the Azazel* discovers in some literary works, a recurring figure who stood as a sacrificial lamb. This figure he called Azazel or Pharmakos or scape goat. In the work, Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, along with Achebe's *Arrow of God* bear these figures, Eman, Elesin Oba and Ezeulu, the major characters of the above-mentioned works respectively, as Azazel figures. He saw in them the qualities of a scape goat. The figure according to him was meant to suffer or die for the sake of others. No matter how much he tries to circumvent this fate, 'there is no walking away from the wilderness for the Azazel. His discussion of the Azazel recognised two forms: messiahs and pseudo-messiahs. While the messiahs are those whose death or suffering actually brings redemption to others, such as the characters mentioned above, the pseudo-messiahs are those who claim to have redemptive destiny but end up comically. He referred to Lakunle of *Lion and the Jewel*, Professor in *The Road*, Brother Jeroboam of *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis*, and Kongi of *Kongi's Harvest* as such. Although his study did not explicitly mention any theoretical basis, it was inferred from the tilt of his discussions and findings, and his acknowledgement of archetypal theorists/ scholars like Carl Jung, and T.S Eliot and C. H. Holman that it is archetypal.

Okafor (2014) in her study, *The Ominous, Prophetic and Ritualistic Phenomena: Predominant Motifs in Selected Works of Igbo Contemporary Playwrights*, highlights certain superstitious and religion-related motifs as they occur in some Igbo novels. The objective of the study was to find out how the incidences of Omen, prophecies and rituals have helped to enhance and understand the theme of these works. The study adopted myth theory as propounded by Emile Durkheim. In her study, Okafor acknowledges dream as the dominant ominous as well as prophetic incident in the selected plays. Dream which in itself is metaphysical and incites fear in most cases also becomes a medium through which possible future events especially bad ones are foretold. Her analysis also raised, as ominous, thunder and lightning which destroy lives and property in some of the plays. Her discussion of prophetic incidents included prophecies and visions. The spirits and individuals, she opines, prophesy and have visions respectively which for her are messages encoded for humanity against future events.

Chukwujama (2015) study *Archetypal Motifs in Ala Bingo, Chioma and Elelia na Ihe O Mere*. The objective of the study was to ascertain how different types of archetypes in literature are captured in the selected Igbo prose. The study adopted the archetypal theory of Carl Jung in analysing the selected works. The findings reveal that archetypes are of three types namely; character, situational and symbolic and they are well portrayed in the selected works. The character archetypes she notes in the selected novels include: hero, the damsel in distress, the friendly-beast, the wicked fellow, the mentor, the outcast, and the woman archetype. She also recognised some situational archetypes such as father-son conflict, departure and return and the journey motif. She goes on to find out colour archetype as the symbolic archetype in the novels.



She submits in her study that archetypes and motifs such as the ones she identified in the novels make for likeness among works. The fact that a work has one recurrent figure or pattern as present in another work makes for their similarity.

Okwo (2019) critically examines elements of Igbo traditional religious practises in some selected Igbo plays. The study adopts ecocentricism theory to analyse the selected plays. The main objective of the study is to investigate the presence of kolanut invocation, divination and sacrifice in occasions like marriage ceremonies, visitations, hunting expedition, prayer, charm preparation, wrestling, competition, worship and lots more, in *Ojadili*, *Aku fechaa*, *Akpiri Richie Uzo*, *Oguamalam* and *Nwata Rie Awo*. The findings show that there are good number of kolanut invocations, divination and sacrifice in occasions of marriage, visitation, prayer, hunting, wrestling, dispute resolution and lots more in the texts studied.

## 2.4 Summary of the Review

Some literatures related to the study were reviewed and the review shows some scholars such as Ikwubuzo (1998), Okoro (2001) and Okafor (2014) had attempted studies on aspects of Igbo lives in Igbo written literature. Their studies are mainly anchored on symbolic representation in Igbo and recurring themes. They analyse recurring themes through studying particular aspects like myth, and archetypes but they did not go into in-depth analysis of religious archetype in Igbo novels with a view of bringing out their recurrent patterns in works and experiences. The major gap which the present study is set to fill is the realisation of the fact that religious archetypes are present in Igbo novels.

## 3. Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section an attempt is made to examine the religious archetypes as they are portrayed in the two selected Igbo novels used for this study using the features of archetypal theory. The texts are: Nwana's *Omenukọ*, and Nzeako's *Aka Ji Aku*. The archetypes that will be examined as stated above are journey, ritual, initiation and quest.

### 3.1 Journey Archetype

The author of *Aka ji Aku* is able to show religious archetype in journey, under this archetype, heroine. Nwakaego was attacked in the dream and she started shouting Okwuike's name. The community decided or passed a judgement that Okwuike should find solution to Nwakaego's problem. This led them to embark on a journey to a place called 'Ezu'. They faced a lot of problems on their way like coming across a python which was killed after Okwuike's prayers to the water goddess to spare the life of Nwakaego. Okwuike bought a lot of things that they went with, and these helped them in their religious journey as seen in the example below:

...Ọ ga-azụkọta ihe nile fọduru, ma ụzọ akwa asaa. Naira iri atọ na ise, ọkụkọ ọcha, aturu ọcha, na àkwá ọkụkọ asaa bụ nke o wetara n' ụlọ ya...

She went and bought the remaining items, seven types of clothes, thirty five naira, white cock, white sheep, and seven eggs that she got from her house (p.28).

The journey was religious because Ezu was the abode of water goddess where sacrifices were made either to appease her or obtain fortune. The rituals they made contributed in making the journey a religious archetype.

When it was time for the journey, she met with her husband's relatives and the family of Ekwenugwo and they took Nwakaego to the lake.

Nwaanyi ahụ bilie, chiri akwa niile ahụ o chikotara wee wunye n'ime mmiri, wunyekwa ego ahụ o wetara, akwa okukụ na ihe ndi ozọ o kechiri n'akwa. O kpuru aturu ocha ahụ wee tunye n'ime mmiri ma tunye kwa okukọ ahụ wee kuọ aka iji gosi na ihe nile agwuchala.

That woman got up, took all those clothes she gathered and put them into the river and also put the money she brought, eggs and other things she wrapped in a cloth. She took that white sheep and threw it into the river, threw also that egg, and clapped her hands to show that everything had finished (p.31).

This was done to enable Nwakaego to complete the journey they embarked upon successfully. Nwakaego the heroine was asked to come into the river; Okwuike used water from the river to wash her face. After the incident, Nwakaego was led home better than she came. The heroine confessed that when she dipped her feet into the river where she saw many things she was assigned role(s) by the water goddess to work for her. Nwakaego got married and did what the water goddess told her to do in her husband's house. The heroine, Nwakaego became a famous herbalist (Dibia), who heals different diseases according to the direction of the water goddess. Thus, she became wealthy and the saviour of the people. The excerpt in the previous page from Nzeako's novel is a typical example of proliferation of healing/prayer homes in Igbo land. Many young girls have acclaimed to be prophets (Eze nwaanyi) to make money.

The author of *Omenuko* used religious archetype involving journey. The hero, Omenuko was ready to reconcile with his kinsmen after committing atrocities in their land (selling his apprentices), he embarked on a journey with his good friend Igwe. They sent one man to go ahead of them to inform the chief priest that they were coming out rightly. Omenuko had his friend, Igwe, prepared and went to the chief priest's house with a cow, eight eggs, one white cock, eight big tubers of yam and eight small tubers of yam.

In Igbo traditional religion, journey is very necessary in certain situations in order to fulfil some religious obligations. Some of the novelists whose works were studied portrayed journey archetype to bring out some implications of such journeys and what would have happened if they were not embarked upon. For example, in Nzeako's *Aka Ji Aku*, Nwakaego could not have survived her ailment if not that they went to *Ezu* lake. They went there, and it was clear that her healing came from that lake when Okwuike used the water from the lake to wash Nwakaego's face and she was led home healthier than she came to the lake. The items which Okwuike provided such as white sheep, money, and white cock aided them in their journey. The water goddess received those things before granting their request. We have other lakes like the *Ezu* lake in Igbo land. There is the *Agulu* lake where spirits appear and people do not fish there. We have *Iyinsu* at Ezimo in Enugu state where ogbanje spirits are cleansed. There is also *Ezu* at Ikem, Nnando Anambra East in Anambra state where spirits abound.

Nwana in *Omenuko* shows that in Igbo traditional religion reconciliation is very important for co-operation between man and man and between man and the gods. This was made evident in journey archetype when Omenuko and his friend Igwe went to the house of the eldest man with a cow, eight eggs, one white cock, eight big tubers of yam and eight small tubers of yam which the man used to appease the earth goddess for Omenuko's sin. All these years he was

in exile, he had no peace of mind. It was only when he did all these things that he had peace of mind and was reconciled with his kinsmen. It is obvious that when one offends the gods, the person will go to a diviner to know the items he would provide for the necessary rituals for cleansing. This type of reconciliation could be done for a woman who committed adultery in some places in Igbo land. A diviner would be consulted and items for sacrifice bought and sacrificed to appease the land before the person would cook food for the husband to eat and be accepted back into the family. A typical example are some towns in Nsukka zone like Ibagwa-Ani, Okpuje, Orba, Imilike, Enugwu-Ezike etc. In a case like this, the woman's wrapper would be spread at the shrine of the deity to show that the owner of that cloth has committed adultery, offer the sacrifice of reconciliation.

### 3.2 Ritual Archetype

The author of *Omenukọ* portrayed ritual archetype in his work to show how it obtains in Igbo. *Omenukọ*, which is the title of the novel, is about the biography of Maazi Igweegbe Ọdum. Though there are some elements of fictions in the work, it has a lot of real life content. The hero, Omenukọ committed a criminal act against his society. Omenukọ was a successful business man, who lost his goods on his way to the market as a result of the collapse of a rickety bridge. In order to survive, he sold some of his apprentices into slavery. The hero stayed so long in exile before going back to make peace with his people. However, there are some rituals ceremonies that were required for atonement to enable him pass into another state in life as prescribed by the chief priests of the two aggrieved deities. Hence the author writes:

Onyeisi ala wee si Igwe, "Gee nti ihe i ga-agwa Omenukọ. Si ya weta otu oke ehi, akwa okuko asato, otu oke okuko na ji ukwu asato na ji nta asato". (p.60)

The eldest man said to Igwe, 'Listen to what you will tell Omenukọ,

Tell him to bring a male cow, eight fowl eggs, one big cock, eight big tubers of yam and eight small tubers of yam'.

The chief priest of the earth goddess said that, if Omenukọ perform the ritual the people and the spirits would be happy. The next day, Igwe (Omenukọ's friend) met with the chief priest of the earth goddess (Ezemmuo) for another prescription which went as follows:

Onye eze mmuo wee si ya na o di mma, wee malite igu ya si, "otu nne aturu, otu nnekwu okuko, otu oke okuko, na akwa asato na otu akwa obocha, otu abo ji na abo ede, ogbe oji, ogbe ose oji, oji anọ, ugo nzu anọ, mai ike erughị ala, ite mai ngwo, ite mai nkwu, abuba ugo anọ chara acha (p.61).

The chief priest told him that all is well and started to itemise the items saying one sheep, one hen, one cock and eight eggs, one egg of a duck, one basket of yam and basket of cocoyam, pod of kolanut pod of alligator pepper, four kola-nuts, four kaolin moulds, newly tapped wine, pot of raffia palm wine, pot of palm wine, four attractive eagle feathers.

The hero accepted to do all these things and gave out money to his friend to see them done without wasting time. In recognition of the efficacy of ritual sacrifice, Emenyonu (1978) notes:



The bringing back of Omenụkọ into harmony with man and the gods is accomplished through a ritual sacrifice, in the process of which a close friend of Omenụkọ, Igwe, acts as an intermediary between Omenụkọ and his family on the one hand, and the people and their deities on the other. (pp. 44-45).

In the same manner, Nzeako's *Aka Jị Akụ* contains some ritual archetype. The father of the heroine, Nwakaego, Ekwenugwo visited his friend Anịagbọsọ who performed some rituals while presenting kola to him. The host, Anịagbọsọ, presented two kolanuts, kaolin and pepper. He cast the kaolin on the ground and rubbed the pieces of the kaolin on his eye lid and on his right finger nail. Anịagbọsọ passed the kaolin to Ekwenugwo who also cast the kaolin on the ground and rubs it on his eye lid. The host, Anịagbọsọ, raised the kola nut up and began to invoke the Almighty God to come and bless them with good health, child bearing and wealth. This is portrayed in the novel thus;

‘Olisa puru ime ihe niile, onye nwere anya na-ahụ ihe niile dị n’ụwa, onye kere mmadụ na osisi na anụ ọhia na anụ ụlọ di iche iche anyị ekele e gi. Lee ọjị a ka I goziere anyị. Taa ọjị a n’otu, anyị taa ya n’ibe. Ihe anyị na-ariọ gi bụ ahụ ike, ọmụmụ na ụba’ (p. 6)

God Almighty who sees the entire universe, who created man and trees, different animals in the bush and at home, we praise thee. Receive this kolanut and bless it for us. Eat this kola in bulb, while we eat it in pieces. We beg you to grant us good health, Child bearing and wealth.

In Nwana's *Omenụkọ*, the religious ritual done was the only avenue in which the protagonist, Omenụkọ was accepted back by his kinsmen. The chief priest of the earth goddess stated in clear terms that if Omenụkọ performed the rituals by bringing one bull, eight eggs, the people and the spirits would be happy. The ritual brought peace between Omenụkọ and his kinsmen. The use of one bull (otu ehi) is significant because one cannot perform somebody's burial ceremony successfully in Igbo traditional religion without a cow or bull to mark the final rite for the dead. It is also necessary because of his apprentices whom he sold, who died while others came back home alive. The bull served as what was used to accord the dead their final burial rites.

Johnson (2013) opines that rituals and sacrifices are means of maintaining contact with the deity. Whenever there is any break with this relationship probably as a result of sin, the gods demand restoration. The offender must be punished or there will be no peace in the land.

It is clear that rituals manifests in the Igbo religious belief to neutralise the existence of witchcraft and *Ogbanje*. In the real sense, when sacrifices are performed against any of the two, it stands as a bridge or bullet proof for the victim against his or her enemies. It also portrays the Igbo trust in gods for protection against evil forces. Some people have gone very far to prepare charms for protection. We can arrive at a claim that Nzeako is actually pointing at the presence of witchcraft in the Igbo world view which has rendered so many people useless if not checked.

### 3.3 Religious Initiation

In *Omenụkọ*, initiation appeared in the form of reconciliation (*igba orikọ*) which is very important in Igbo traditional religion. It is necessary that if one offends the gods or hurts his

fellow man, one looks for a way to make peace and that was exactly what Omenukọ did and he was forgiven and accepted back. In Igbo traditional religion, reconciliation brings peace between man and God and among individuals.

Initiation archetype is evident in *Omenukọ*, where Omenukọ reconciled with his kinsmen. The reconciliation comes in the form of initiating him into their folk again. That is *igba oriko*. The people killed a cow, a fowl and boiled eggs for the ceremony.

Ihe ndị abụ ihe a ga-eji ekele nnanna anyị ha ka obi wee dị ha uto  
site n'iwere ụfọdụ n'ime ihe ahụ ma ọ bụ nri ahụ e siri, tụtawaj  
n'elu ọfọ ukwu onyeisi ala. (pg. 66-67)

These are items with which to thank our ancestors to make them  
happy by placing some of those things or the cooked food on top  
of the ọfọ ukwu of the head of the land.

It is believed that without the reconciliation, Omenukọ would not have been accepted back into the community because of the atrocities he committed. The ceremony was performed by *Onyeisi ala*, the head of the land. He used uncooked egg to cleanse their mouth and prayed thus:

...Anyị na ha aburukwala nna na nwa. Nnanna anyị ha nurunu olu  
mmadu bu olu mmuo, anyị na ha aburukwala otu. Ihe anyị na-asọ  
ka ha na-asokwa nsọ ugbo a. Ihe anyị na-eri ka ha na-eri ugbo a ...  
(p.67).

Our relationship with them has now become that of father and son,  
our ancestors hear the voice of human which is the voice of the  
spirit. We are now one with them. What we abhor, they abhor,  
what we eat they would eat now. (p.67).

In order to know if the gods had accepted their sacrifice, he rang his bell and vultures gathered. They were happy to see the vultures Omenukọ, thus became a new person and prepared himself for the task ahead. Initiation is a rite of passage showing that a man has actually arrived. Ọzọ title is common in Igbo land today where influential people that have money take it to get positioning the society just as people take the title of knighthood in the Catholic and Anglican churches. The people that took ọzọ titled killed a cow and Omenukọ too killed a cow, for his initiation. One can say that cow is an important animal that could be sacrificed in place of human being in Igbo land.

### 3.4 Quest

In *Omenukọ*, quest archetype is evident. When Omenukọ had done all the necessary things he was asked to do for reconciliation due to the atrocities he committed by selling his kinsmen into slavery, he was received by men and the gods through the priest, Iyiukwa who performed the sacrifice. Hence this excerpt:

“Omenukọ biakwutere unu ka unu na ya riko, ọnu mmadu bu ọnu  
mmuo. Ihe ndị a o wetere di m obi uto, m wee juo unu ma unu  
kwere di ka mu onwe m kwere, unu wee zi m na unu kwere, site  
n'izite udele ka ha bja rie aja dum anyi choro unu, site na nke a,  
arịo m unu ka unu site taa nwee obi oma n'ebe Omenukọ na ndi ya  
no” (p.70).

Omenuko has come to you so that you eat with him, for the voice  
of the people is the voice of the god. I am glad about all that he has  
brought and I ask you whether you agree the way I do and you

showed me that you agreed, hence you sent vultures to consume all the sacrifices we offered to you. Because of this, I beg that as from today, you should have mercy on Omenukọ and his people. (p.70).

The hero accomplished his task by eating with the people after the sacrifice had been performed. Hence,

...mgbe nke a gafesiri, ha wee fọpụ ite ahụ ha siwere n'ọkụ. Ha wee biri sịa anụ atụrụ na anụ ọkụkọ ahụ ha siri esi. Ha ewerekwa ole na ole tụtụ n'ihu mmụọ, wee tawa nke fọduru na-anụkwa mai ngwọ na mai nkwu ahụ, nke ahụ putara na a gbaala orikọ, nke mmadụ, na nke mmụọ. (p.70).

...after this, they put down the meat from the fire. They cut into pieces the mutton and chicken which they cooked. They took some and offered to the gods and ate the rest. They continued to drink raffia palm wine and palm wine, which means that reconciliation has taken place between man and the gods.

The occasion brought peace between Omenukọ and his kinsmen and normalcy was restored.

Nzeako's novel, *Aka Ji Aka*, portrays this archetype, where Nwakaego had to go to *Ezu* river quest for divine assistance before her health condition could be restored. It was also a gate way through which peace was restored in their land. The land of Umukabi was troubled because Nwakaego alledged that Okwuike bewitched her and she felt sick. The woman did not deny the allegation, rather she took Nwakaego to *Ezu* river where she met with the river goddess *Owu* who healed Nwakaego and made her a herbalist in their land to cure many diseases.

In the work of Nzeako, *Aka Ji Aka* portrays the archetype of religious quest as a religious obligation in Igbo traditional religion. There are places in Igbo milieu where religion attaches importance to certain places such as rivers, where the water goddess dwells. Nwakaego's going to *Ezu* river avails her the opportunity to become a healer, a strong and a wealthy woman. She gets her power from the river goddess *Owu* who heals her and makes her a herbalist in their land. The encounter with the river goddess is significant in Igbo traditional religion because Nwakaego had super natural powers; she is no longer human.

The religious quest in Igbo traditional religion made Omenukọ to be restless until he got reconciled with the gods and man. Sometimes, when some people have problems in the society, they run to the diviners to seek solace and whatever they are asked to do, they do it. That is why one sees sacrifices at cross roads, especially those leading to streams. People drop these sacrifices at night to get something from the gods. The departure from their homes to the places of sacrifice represents a religious quest in Igbo traditional religion.

## Summary of Findings

This study is a critical attempt towards investigating religious archetypes in selected Igbo novels in relation to the Igbo traditional religion. They are portrayed in form of journey, initiation, rituals, quest and symbols as objectives that guided our investigation of religious archetypes in selected Igbo novels. The findings show that these religious archetypes mentioned

above played out in Igbo patterns of living. The study adopted archetypal theory of Jung in its analysis.

A number of religious archetypes were seen recurring in the selected novels such as journey, ritual, initiation and quest. The present study shows the use of different archetypal images, figures, patterns etc. in presenting religious archetypes seen in selected Igbo novels. This aligns with Jung (1939) observation that archetype could be a figure, be it a demon, a human being or a process that constantly recurs in the course of history. There are number of evidence of religious archetypes in rituals, journey, initiation and quest. However, it is pertinent to note that religious archetypes are obvious in the two selected Igbo novels reviewed. And these played out in the two novels studied. The novels are like invitation to preserve Igbo traditional religion in the society.

### Conclusion

According to Dobie (2012) in his definition of archetypes which says that archetypes appear in our dreams and religious rituals, as well as in our arts and literature. Dobie recommends recognising archetypes in religious rituals. Hence, we can claim that religious archetypes are present in Igbo traditional religion. Our study of selected Igbo novels show that religious archetype are those religious images, figures or pattern that repeat itself in the course of history over the years.

This was seen through the archetypal patterns like journey, quest, initiation and rituals as addressed in the novels studied. All the selected novels studied in this work showed evidence of religious archetypes in Igbo pattern of living. Again, the study proves that Carl Jung archetypal framework applies also to the study of Igbo novels, just as it can apply in other literary genres.

Our recommendation therefore is for more studies on religious archetype to be carried out in other genres of Igbo literature in general. This is because literature and novel in particular has for a long time, proved as a powerful vehicle for conveying Igbo traditional religion for its posterity.

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