

# EXPLORING THE EXISTENCE OF THE SUPREME DEITY CONCEPT IN IGBO PRE-MISSIONARY CONTACT RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS

Jeff Unaegbu<sup>1</sup>

Joy Ezeigbo<sup>2</sup>

1. Senior Cinematographer, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, [lionlordjeff@yahoo.com](mailto:lionlordjeff@yahoo.com), 08035272576.
2. Research Fellow II, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

## *Abstract*

Some studies assert with evidence that the concept of a supreme God is foreign to Igbo pre-missionary contact religious thoughts. They mostly point to western influences on such a “supremacy” concept in both the minds of the early observers of the Igbo and in the Igbo themselves who had been either proselytized or swayed by the proselytization of Christianity, consciously or not. Other scholars confirm the presence of a supreme God in Igbo religious thoughts. Using Georg Hegel’s Dialectic and Uzodinma Nwala’s Radical Interpenetration as theoretical framework, this work presents both views, collecting data through documentary evidence of ethnographic reports and closely examining the perspectives of ethnographic reports in pursuit of any undeniable proof of the existence and extent of structure and popularity of the concept of supreme deification in Igbo thoughts. The evolution of Igbo traditional religious systems catalyzed by migrant knowledge and the adoption and syncretization of the appurtenances of outside cultures were investigated. The researchers came to the deduction that for the pre-Aro adult Igbo, the definition of supreme Deity is different from western thinking today in that a supreme Deity is particularistic or universal in a decentralized form for a given Igbo clan and from the viewpoint of that clan, the deity is the highest among gods in the world (where “world” meant a smaller sphere than is seen today). Before Aro, then, many politically acephalous Igbo clans attributed supremacy to *Ani*, the Earth deity. *Ani* was popularized by the pre-missionary contact Nri (500BC -1500AD) who came from the east (Igala-Jukun-Hamito-Semitic cultures) with *Chukwu* (as a concept, not name), but later saw the importance of controlling the autochthonous Igbo through yam as far as agriculture was concerned. Thus, religious focus was shifted to *Ani*, leaving *Chukwu* in an otiose position. Later the Aro (1690AD-1902AD) adopted the name “*Chukwu*” for *Ibinukpabi*. At the height of the Aro acculturation in most of Igbo land, *Chukwu* came to be widely known again and general cultural processes of adopting Him as supreme in a decentralized form was in progress before the British interrupted. The appearance of a supreme deity in the Igbo religious thought is closely tied to a need for its existence.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **a. Background Information:**

The researchers reckon, based on the bent of multiple pieces of examined academic works, that there was an antithetical wave of reevaluations of earlier works concluded as ethnographic reports of African pre-missionary contact cultures and belief systems. The main aspect of this wave which had its tide from 1970 to 1990 was what Professor Timothy Uzodinma Nwala called the “Great Debate on African Philosophy”. This was because of the “consummate passion, rigor, extensive interest generated and the vast amount of literature that poured out in the process”. (Nwala, 2007:38). Nwala saw the Debate as “part of the discourse on African culture, philosophy and identity, a process of self-reflection among Africans”. (Nwala, 2007:38). The researchers take a larger view of the wave as the whole process of the discourse on African culture and belief systems which includes debates by African and non-African scholars. As part of this wave, much literature in the area of African traditional religions was seriously criticized as westernized in points of view. The observed indigenes, themselves, were not spared. There was suspicion that they had been culturally contaminated by western influences and captured thus in these early ethnographic reports. Early report on the accurate astronomical aspect, concerning the Sirius stars, of the Dogon traditional religion (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1965) sparked off a debate as to whether the report was westernized or whether the native Dogon people themselves were westernized. (Carl Sagan, 1979). (Ian Ridpath, 1978). (James Oberg, 1982). (Van Beek, W. E. A., 1991). The point of whether any African religious thought did have a supreme God was also seriously indulged. Regarding this, early reports which argued for the non-existence of a supreme God (Ellis, 1894:38) (Frobenius, 1913:187) (Young, 1937:44) were reappraised and negated severely by Anyika (1988) who found allies in Mendelsohn (1962:37), Idowu (1973:104,105) and Tempels (1969:21). Anyika (1988:333) charges, “...arm-chair researchers and stay-at-home investigators like A.B. Ellis, Leo Frobenius and Cullen Young distorting African history, claim that Africans have neither a concept nor worship of the one interminable God.” Even E.G. Parrinder who acknowledged the presence of a supreme God in many African religious systems was accused of negating direct worship of the same God by Africans, except in the case of the Ashanti. (Anyika, 1988:334). Some writers acknowledge the worship of gods that are today taken as the supreme Gods of some African ethnic

groups; still, they argue that such gods were not genuinely supreme or universal, but rather, particularistic, in the pre-Christian or pre-missionary contact era. (Agbakoba, 2000:13). By particularistic, they mean that every clan in one ethnic group had their own way of worshipping a given god. And the nature of a particular god or goddess, say *ani* (the Earth goddess in Igbo religious thought), is different for the different clans of the same ethnic group worshipping the same god. Also, a particularistic god, however prominent, has no absolute authority over certain mutually exclusive powers of lesser gods. To Agbakoba (2000:13) “the logical structure of a genuinely Supreme Being did not exist in the pre-Christian era African thought. Therefore, such a being did not really exist”. The use of Supreme Being here by Agbakoba is taken to mean supreme God. This opens up the question of what the definition of supreme god is for all the writers arguing for or against His existence. It may well be that some writers see a supreme god as one that had all the nature and attributes of the Christian God. This study is careful in making some definitions clear as indicated below. Just as with early reports on other African pre-missionary contact cultures, early reports about the pre-missionary contact religious thoughts of the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria faced similar reevaluations. The particular point of a belief in a supreme God was intensely indulged, and the once-hot fire of the debate is just beginning to smolder. The question was whether the Igbo generally had the concept of a supreme God and then believed in and worshipped Him before the coming of Christian missionaries.

**b. Working Definitions of Terms:**

i. **The concept of a Supreme God in a Universal (but decentralized) Sense for the Igbo** (Note the use of capital “G” to echo its use in the works of the ethnographic reports reviewed. The use of “G” does not in any way indicate a subconscious association of supreme God with the Christian God in the minds of the researchers): This idea is sometimes seen differently by many writers involved in the debate, thereby presenting a fundamental problem. When one says, “supreme God in Igbo religious thoughts” what does one mean? A general definition would be that the idea, supposedly for the Igbo, posits that there is a God who created the world and everything in it, including man. He is far above, too good, too powerful, all-wise, all-seeing and all-knowing to be approached directly; therefore He is either withdrawn or immanent. And He created a pantheon of minor deities (*Ani, Agwu, Ogwugwu, Amadioha* etc.) and delegated powers to them so that they act as intermediaries between Him and the Igbo. He governs with a great deal of devolution or decentralization of powers “in which the inferior powers or deities can creatively

chart their own courses, provided it does not conflict fundamentally with the interest and nature of the Supreme Being”. (Agbakoba, 2000:4). Rituals are directed to the lesser deities in the belief that such rituals get to the supreme God (*Chukwu, Chineke, Ezechitoke, Olisebuluwa, Obasi*). The ancient God is not humanized in Igbo tradition belief. Because the Igbo deities *Amadioha* and *Ikenga* are masculine, *Chukwu* is assumed to be male. Sparks of Him supposedly resides in every Igbo person and it is called *Chi* or personal god which returns to *Chukwu* at the person’s death for reassignment. (Nwoga, 1984:15).

ii. **The Concept of the Supreme Deity in a Particularistic Sense for the Igbo:**

The concept of the supreme Deity in a particularistic sense is one in which for a given clan of the Igbo area, a particular deity is taken by that clan as chief among a pantheon of lesser deities (just like Zeus of Grecian mythology. Zeus was chief but he did not create the world). This deity is seen as the last resort and the most powerful amongst the pantheon of deities. In places where *Ani* or any other Deity aside *Chukwu* is the Chief Deity, an agnostic view persists as to the origin and creation of the earth. In places where *Chukwu* is the Chief Deity, He is seen as the creator of the earth.

iii. **Pro- and Non-God Works:** Because the exploration of the concept of “supreme God” and not “supreme Deity” is used in most of the reviewed works, we shall tag the works arguing for the existence of the concept of supreme God in much of Igbo religious thought as “Pro-God” and the works arguing that the supreme God concept is mainly foreign to the Igbo as “non-God” to help clarifications.

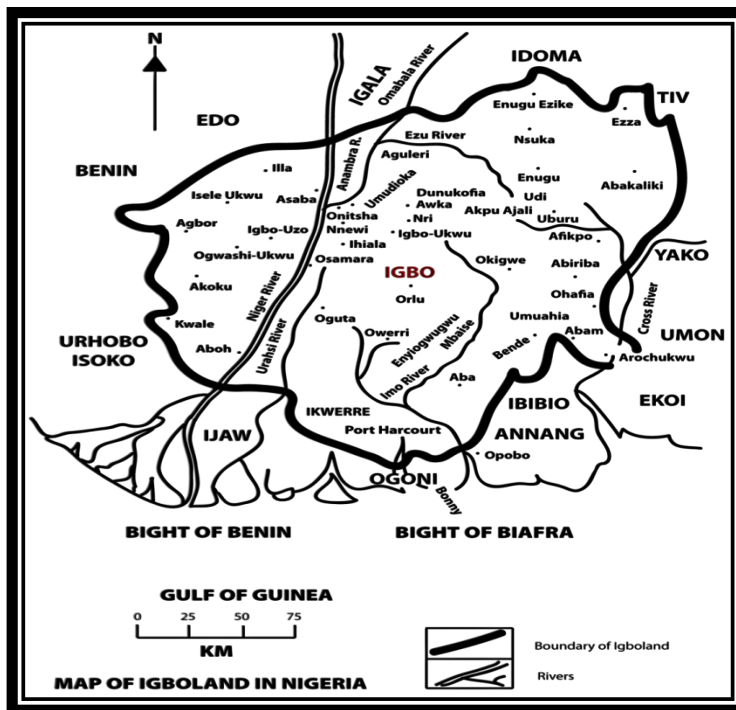
iii. **Pre-Missionary contact:** In this study, this refers to the period before the arrival of Christian missionaries into Igbo land. This distinction need to be made to distinguish the period which is part of a larger period known as “Pre-contact” in this study to mean the period before the arrival of Europeans into Africa (if an African context is implied) or into Igbo land (if it is so implied).

iv: **Culture:** In anthropology, this is the patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes humans from other animals. A people’s culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems. (Bodley, 2009). For Ezeh (2012), “Culture is the sum total of the strategies that society employ to survive.”

v: **Religion:** This is a social construct encompassing beliefs and practices which enable people, individually and collectively, to make some sense of the great questions of life and death. (Barrett, 2001). Unaegbu (2012:6) defines religion as a “social institution of responding beliefs and manifest practices of reverence, worship, obedience and ritual observances fueled by attempts to represent and order, by explaining, senses of a greater being or beings and supernatural phenomenon so as to improve conduct in human affairs and or achieve spiritual improvement and completeness”.

**c. Area of Study**

The area of study is the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria. It is the dominant culture group in the east with a total land area of about 15,800 square miles (about 41,000 square kilometers) lying roughly between latitude 5 and 7 degrees north of the Equator and longitude 6 and 8 degrees east of the Greenwich. (Ilogu, 1974, 2). The Igbo area is bounded on the southeast by the Ibibio people (with Arochukwu as the outpost), by the Idoma, Igala, Igede and Tiv to the north (after Nsukka and Ogurugu towns), by the Ogoni and the Ijaw to the south, by the Bini to the west (with Agbor as the outpost), by the Esan to the northwest, by the Ekoi of Ogoja to the east (after Abakiliki town) and by the Urhobo and Isoko to the south. (Nwabara, 1977: 15) (Nwaezeigwe, 2007:2).



Map of Igboland (Source: Wikipedia: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/archive/b/b3/20081226213859:Igboland.png>)

Igbo land lies in four areas. There are the fertile low-lying deltas and riverbank areas which fall within the mangrove, rain and freshwater swamp forests vegetational belts. They are also flooded during the rainy season. The central Igbo area is on a high plain of derived savanna as do the Udi highlands, which are the only coal-mining location in West Africa. Therefore, as one moves to the north, one experiences a gradual decrease in the intensity of rainfall. The Igbo population grows by the day. A 1921 estimate places the population at nearly four million. (Talbot, 1926:18, 154). The 1963 population census in Nigeria recorded eight million; 1985 estimates put the population at about nine million. (Nwala, 1985:15). By 2010, the CIA World Fact book puts the Igbo population (including the various subgroups of the Igbo) at 18% of a total Nigerian population of 152 million, or approximately 27 million. (“Igbo People”, 2012). It is important to note here that the Igbo were said to have adopted the name “Igbo” just after the Nigerian Civil War (Alaezi, 2006:32). The Igbo were earlier referred to as the Ibo(e), Ebo(e), Eboans or Heebo (Basden, 1938; Lovejoy, 2000:58; Randall, 2002:51; Cassidy & Robert, 2002:168; Equiano, 1794:14; Alaezi, 2006:31).

#### **d. Theoretical Framework:**

This work is hinged on the theory of Dialectic and the theory of Radical Interpenetration. The theory of Dialectic was propounded as the philosophic system of the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Hegel believed that the evolution of ideas occurs through a dialectical process—that is, a concept (or thesis) gives rise to its opposite (antithesis), and as a result of this conflict, a third view, the synthesis, arises. The synthesis is at a higher level of truth than the first two views. Hegel's work is based on the idealistic concept of a universal mind that, through evolution, seeks to arrive at the highest level of self-awareness and freedom. An Igbo philosopher, Timothy Uzodinma Nwala, also arrived at a similar proposition. He postulated the theory of Radical Interpenetration. Nwala (2007:29) writes:

*Radical Interpenetration* is a theory which enables us to see the course and history of human knowledge and civilization as a progressive movement from lower forms of being/ existence to higher forms, in which some of the contradictions either in the existential conditions or epistemic notions are increasingly transformed, where there is no radical boundary between one level of existence or and another, where one sheds into the other.

### **e. Operationalization of Theories:**

This research applies Dialectic and Radical Interpenetration to the evolution of the culture of the Igbo people with a view to finding the extent of penetration of the worship of the supreme God in a universalistic sense, especially the *Chukwu* Deity, and the series of acculturations and adoptions, syncretization or jettisoning of material and non-material culture leading to this belief or higher truth. The researchers investigated direct or remote signs of European and/or Afro-Asiatic (Hamito-Semitic) cultural influences that may have given birth to or fostered this belief *before* the coming of Christian missionaries. Furthermore, the documented evidences of the pro-God works (thesis) are examined. The non-God works (antithesis) are also examined. A verifiable deduction is the goal. This work is like a sieve trying to filter the evidences coming from two debate camps, and seeking to arrive at this higher truth distilled from snatches of unimpeachable concrete facts from preceding literature for and against the point.

## **1. REVIEW OF PRO-GOD ETHNOGRAPHIC EVIDENCES:**

### **a. Reports on pre-missionary contact existence and direct worship of supreme God.**

The reports supporting the existence and direct worship of a supreme God is “overwhelming” (Nwoga, 1984:25). We shall take a select few.

Agbedo (2007:11) reveals:

Communal worship in Olido [in Elugwu Ezike] involves the annual worship of the Arch Deity. The annual worship referred to as ‘Isu Ji’ takes place between February and March. During the worship, every male adult takes with him one tuber of yam, a half gallon of palm wine and kola nuts to the shrine of the Supreme Deity.

This worship of the Supreme Deity (Idenyi Umunaaja) happened (and is still happening, reports Agbedo) at the same time with the worship of the *Ala* deity (Agbedo, 2007:11). We are not sure when this worship of the Supreme Deity began; it would have shed more light as to which religious cultural influence Elugwu-Ezike in northern Igboland fell to in its adoption of the Arch Deity.

Arinze (1982:185) views Igbo religion thus:

The Igbo traditionally believe in God, in spirits, good and bad, and in ancestors. Their worship revolved generally around the worship of the ancestors and the spirits

(incorrectly called gods by some writers), although God was often invoked at prayer and names were given in His honour.

This classification is different from that of Onwuejeogwu (cited in Nwoga, 1984:11) who classifies Igbo religion into *Chukwu* (the Great Creator of all things), *Alusi* (the invisible supernatural beings and/or forces), *Mmuo*, the invisible spirit of the dead, *Uwa*, the visible world, and, *Ike mmadu*, the “power” in the individual that drives him to action. It appears Onwuejeogwu had a different earlier classification of four as is portrayed in Onwuejeogwu (1972:21). F.C. Ogbalu (1960) classifies the Igbo cosmology into God (*Chukwu*), gods (*Chi*), and idols (*arusi*). It appears there are many classifications as there are writers reporting on the existence of the supreme God.

A rare direct prayer, showing belief in a Supreme God, of some of the titled traditional Igbo elders in Ihemboisi as at 1966 was secretly captured by Father RC Arazu and reported directly in Isichei (1977:169, 170):

*Ulaasi!*, that the things we have said, come to be as we have said. Behold *ofo* [sacred staff in nonactive mode]. Behold *ohi!* [sacred staff in active mode]. We beg and beg and beg of you: *Chukwu Abiamayi, Anyanwu-na Eze-Enu!* .... That impending calamities coming from *oyibo* [white man]..., that the mouth of none of those evils ever touches an Ihemboisi skin....

There may have been the influence of Aro’s *Chukwu Abiama* on these men.

Late Mazi Emezi Okor of Umuelem village was the oldest man in Ihiagwa as at 1975. He was said to declare solemnly:

Ihiagwa people were the first people on earth; they were even met in the present spot by the Otamiri” which is Chukwu – God.... Ihiagwa people did not immigrate from anywhere else. Ihiagwa people arrived the earth with ‘CHUKWU’ who had his abode in a shrine ‘Okpu’ at a spot between Iriamogu and Ishiuzo villages of Ihiagwa. He communed with his chosen people of Ihiagwa until they started pestering him with petty domestic matters. When a woman went to the ‘OKPU’ to ask Chukwu to tell her who stole her ‘ogiri’ ‘Chukwu’ felt he had had enough and left Ihiagwa for Arochukwu where he established another habitat among the Aros.

(Ihiagwa Town History, 2012).



The influence of *Aro* is unmistakable in this oral history.

There are other evidences of direct worship of the Supreme Deity. C.K. Meek (1937) showed such instances in the Nsukka belt. W.R.G. Horton (1956) indicated the worship of the Supreme Deity amongst the Nike and the Ibagwa. S.C. Ezeanya (1969), E. Ikenga-Methuh (1981) and R.C Arazu (1981) have also dug up evidences of direct worship of the Supreme Being. It appeared most of these shrines are located in northern Igboland. Ezeanya as cited in Kalu (2002:354) studied the *Aja Ezenu* in the Awka and Nsukka areas. Methuh and Arazu studied the *Ikpa Mkpu Chukwu* festivals in the Ihemposi, Okija and Ihiala sub-groups. Talbot (1926:40) reported that *Chukwu* has cult symbols and personal, family and public altars amongst the Afikpo Edda. Leonard (1906:424) observed that the Igbo approached *Chukwu* when “all other gods, arbitrators, advocates, mediums and mediators have miserably failed”. A plethora of evidences of the worship of *Chukwu* is given in *The Supreme God in Igbo Life and Worship* by Methuh (1976).

### **Reports on the nature and attributes of supreme Deity (ies):**

Onwubiko (1991:66-73) asserts that *Chukwu* or *Olisaebuluwa* is the supreme God amongst the Igbo and he is all-knowing, creator, omnipotent, All-wise, All-knowing, All-seeing, Judge, Immortal and Holy or has attributes similar to the ones pinpointed.

Direct evidence of how *Chukwu* and *Ana* is seen by traditional worshippers as at 1966 is shown in this interview of an Ihemposi elder, Ezenwadeyi, conducted by Rev. Fr. Arazu as cited in Isichei (1977:173):

We look up at heaven: The heavens have been there for a long long time. They are not supported with pillars. But they stay there. And it is said that it is there that *Chukwu* stays. It is said that *Chukwu* is above. He sees us. What every person does, He sees it....

Be it *Chukwu*, be it *Agwu Nsi* [Deity of herbs], be it *Ogwugwu*, be it *Ulaasi* [Deity of nearby streams], be it *Ekwensu* [Deity of sudden calamities, which Christians conveniently see today as Satan], they are all under....(he checks himself). *Chukwu* owns all and sundry: He and *Ana*. *Chukwu* and *Ana* own all.

We can discern that the speaker was cautious in attributing superior power to *Ani* over *Chukwu*, much later though, he says that *Ani* is greater as we will see in another section.

The Chief Priest of the Supreme Deity (Idenyi Umunaaja) revealed to Agbedo (2007:6) that the Arch Deity is a Being of an exceptional nature, possessing attributes “far too noble, far too abstract and believed to have originated from the pristine thoughts of the ancestors, the *ndiishi*”. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. “He is the just and impartial Judge, meting out judgment on the wicked in this world and certainly bringing all men to judgment in the next world”. Idenyi Umunaaja is said to be in charge of all other gods within his jurisdiction. In another section of Agbedo’s article, it appeared Idenyi Umunaaja has a honorary husband called Ugwunokome who “serves as a messenger to Idenyi Umunaaja, who has a hill He named after him, Ugwunokome. Through Ugwunokome, the Arch Deity supervises the hill” (Agbedo, 2007:7).

Here we discern European influence, especially because the interview was happening in very recent times. The nature of the supreme god appeared to be the same as the nature of the Christian God. Looking closely, we see that the existence of a shrine to his honour and the devolving of powers to other gods makes him supreme in a decentralized sense and not a centralized one as to be omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.

Mazi Emezi of Ihiagwa in Ihiagwa Town History (2012) narrates:

[Chukwu] communed with his chosen people of Ihiagwa until they started pestering him with petty domestic matters. When a woman went to the ‘OKPU’ to ask Chukwu to tell her who stole her ‘ogiri’ ‘Chukwu’ felt he had had enough and left Ihiagwa for Arochukwu where he established another habitat among the Aros.

Mazi Emezi went on to say that Chukwu could not forget his chosen people of Ihiagwa. So he later returned to Ihiagwa in the guise of his son, Otamiri, and made his shrine deep in the forest between Ihiagwa and Nekede. On his arrival he sent for the people of Ihiagwa and Nekede for a new covenant. Ihiagwa people as the original people of ‘Chukwu’ understood his message which was coded in semaphores and met Chukwu at the appointed time. A new covenant was established and ‘Chukwu’ now known as Otamiri chose eight priests ‘Ohas’ to represent Ihiagwa in his spirit court. Despite the encroachment of Christianity, the ‘Ohas’ of Ihiagwa still pay the annual visit to their spiritual father for discussion and the reception of decrees and guidelines for the conduct of their affairs (“Ihiagwa Town History”, 2012). This story is also reported in Nwoga (1984:47) and his analysis was that the *Chukwu* referred to was not supreme but has the same equation as the oracular deity of the Aro as it is indicated that He went to Aro. The story of Ihiagwa may be an attempt to put Otamiri before the *Chukwu* of Aro or may be a hint that the god, *Chukwu*, was

worshipped in Ihiagwa before the Aro. If the latter case is true, then this may indicate that their concept of *Chukwu* came from sources older than the Aro, possibly the Nri. The Nri people were said to believe in *Chukwu* and to see Him as Supreme, but then had no shrine in which He was worshipped directly, mainly because they began to focus on *Ala* deity, leaving *Chukwu* in an otiose posture (Afigbo, 1981:9). The Aro were later to use the same name “*Chukwu*” in reference to their god and to have a virgin bush or grove which became His shrine (Afigbo, 1981:252).

## **2. REVIEW OF NON-GOD ETHNOGRAPHIC EVIDENCES:**

### **a. Reports on scarce pre-missionary contact existence of *Chukwu***

Agbakoba (2000:12) asserts:

...the idea of *Chukwu* is very vague in the traditional society as could be seen in the dispute about its nature and its lack of priesthood, temple or shrine cult, festival day(s) etc. Let us also note here that in pre-Christian times, personal names involving *Chukwu* were rare compared with such names today.

As we shall see, the timing of the traditional society in question matters a lot. The period of the Nri hegemony popularized the *Ala* deity, while the period of the Aro popularized the *Chukwu* deity and we have noted that there were shrines for the Arch deities seen as *Chukwu* with various names, Idenyi Umunaaja or Otamiri, in some Igbo communities. It is interesting to note here that a serious researcher, Northcote Thomas (1913) as cited in Nwoga (1984:25) admitted that *Cuku* did appear in the mythology of the Aguku Nri “where *Cuku* is connected with the origin of kingship and of yam”.

### **b. Report on the archdivinity/ supremacy of *Ala* deity, not *Chukwu*:**

Agbakoba (2000:6) reports that “among the Igbo, the source of normativity is *Ani*, the earth goddess”. *Ani* is also seen as “the supreme lineage cult” (Agbakoba, 2000:9).

Ezeh (2009:45) writes, “The Igbo’s central deity is *ani*....” Parrinder as cited in Ezeh (2009:45) says *ani* is “most important ...divinity of the Ibo...., It is more important than any of the sky gods”. Idowu (1973:169) agrees that “among the Igbo, the archdivinity is called *Ala*”.

This is the case if the period of study falls within the Nri hegemony. The accident of the otiose posture of *Chukwu* might have led to a convenient forgetfulness of him since out of sight is out of mind. Yet, when the idea of who owned the world arose, *Chukwu* came to mind if the Eze Nri was asked (Afigbo, 1981:37).

**c. Report on the non-supremacy of any deity:**

**• Evidence of disputes in name, personality and Supremacy:**

Oguejiofor (1996:60) as cited in Agbakoba (2000:5) reports that, among the Igbo, disputes about the name of the Supreme Being is deeper. It is asserted that *Chukwu*, the name of the Supreme Being was actually *Chukwu Abiama*, which was the other name of *Ibinukpabi* (the long Juju) of the Aro people. On the other hand, amongst the western Igbo, the name of the Supreme God was *Olisaebuluwa* (the *Olisa* Deity that carries the earth, or universe or good fortune). Oguejiofor (1996:69-72) also points to the arguments of those who take *Ala* or *Ani* as the Supreme Being of the Igbo.

**• Evidence of the specificity of power of *Chukwu*:**

In the case of *Olisaebuluwa*, Agbakoba (2000:5) thinks:

[He] may well be a deity whose specific task is to bear the world, making it no more supreme than other principal deities; or since ‘uwa’ means both the universe (or the earth) and fortune, *Olisaebuluwa* may mean the god that bears fortune or the god of fortune.

Agbakoba focused on the name of the Deity. It may well be that the numerous duties of a Deity could go beyond the confines of its single-specific name.

**• Evidence of the particularity of power of supposed supreme Deity(ies):**

Although Agbakoba (2000:9) sees *Ani* as “the supreme lineage cult”, nevertheless, *Ani*, the earth deity is also seen as not a universal deity in Igbo land in terms of not having a common priesthood, rites, shrine etc. To Agbakoba (2000:9):

Every community has its own *Ala*, which is believed to be the hallowed presence of the earth goddess, who brought forth their ancestors and support and guarantee the life of their progeny in the present and the future. *Ani* is, therefore, the ultimate lineage cult...that would aid the preservation... of the lineage.... For these reasons the *Ani* of a people provides injunctions and reward (positive and negative) for only members of such a community. It is not binding on outsiders, whether they are Igbo speaking or not.

This particularity of power of supposed supreme deities can be discerned also from direct ethnographic evidence from the same interview of the Ihemposi elder conducted by Rev. Arazu in Isichei (1977:173, 175):

Wherever men are, they worship in their way. Every man just as I am now, I established that shrine there, and call it *Ana*. And it signified where I live....

In every town, whatever the men select, they establish it to be their “spirit”. In every town, something is established. And whatever it is becomes the.... becomes the *Alusi* [deity] of that people. Whatever a people establish becomes *alusi* for them.

We see vacillation in the thought of the man, suggesting uncertainty as to the tradition of other Igbo clans in greater detail, suggesting evidently, just like he said, that every Igbo clan worshipped in their own way.

### **3. PERCIEVED ERRORS OF ARGUMENT:**

Writers have been accused of logical and experimental flaws. Whether this accusation helps in psychologically boosting the sense of correctness in other writers remains to be investigated. A few of them are outlined:

#### **i. Arm-chair theorization and overgeneralization:**

This is a charge that some of the assertions in pro-supreme God works were made as the writers sit at home and theorize without going to the field for direct empirical observation and who when they do theorize, may overgeneralize in their supposed findings.

To Nwoga (1984:20):

Some participants in this discussion reveal the inadequacies consequent on a) overgeneralization, that is, trying to adduce conclusions which cover wider areas than their material should justify; and b) lack of field experience, such that the speculations and arguments are results of logical gymnastics based on the field reports of other scholars. An essay by Charles H. Long entitled, “The West African High God: History and Religious Experience” is an example of such an exercise in generalization and speculation.

Nwoga (1984:20) also charges some studies of having personalized views because of translation problems from Igbo to English. But, somehow, Nwoga may have overgeneralized when he said:

*Until* it is possible to evolve a system that fits *satisfactorily* into the language of the Igbo, *all* that the scholars are doing is evolving individual syntheses and speculations. (italics ours).

This means that whatever contending writers are doing, they are making conclusions that are personal, UNTIL, an English system that interprets Igbo words as close as possible is evolved. Furthermore, Nwoga's argument against the contenders was also written in the non-satisfactory English and deduced from premises supported by "voices of dissent" (Nwoga, 1984:25) whose views were investigated and interpreted with the English language system which supposedly does not satisfactorily fit into the Igbo language.

In our introduction, we cited Agbakoba as asserting that "the logical structure of a genuinely Supreme Being did not exist in the pre-Christian era African thought. Therefore, such a being did not really exist". (Agbakoba, 2000:13). Agbakoba, however, argued in detail from an Igbo pre-missionary contact religious perspective, with lesser examples from other African ethnic groups (Agbakoba, 2000:12) and then made a generalized assertion, affecting all other African religious belief systems.

**ii. Translation Catch:**

There is the accusation of lack of "consistency in the matter of terminology among the Igbo scholars and their European counterparts" (Nwoga, 1984:12). Translation problems are suspected to arise in reportage. And Nwoga points out that these translation problems help in "personalized and therefore tentative nature of the studies of Igbo religion so far". (Nwoga, 1984:12). These are some of the perceived errors in the works of writers arguing for or against the existence of the Supreme God in Igbo Religious thoughts.

**4. QUEST FOR DEDUCTION: Evidences of Supreme Deity in the Evolution and Dispersal of Igbo Religious Culture from Nri to Aro:**

A fitting background to this section would be evidences of how cultures move around and borrow from each other like mixing liquids or colours reflecting their environments. In watery areas, white dresses appear ubiquitous and masks dedicated to water spirits are predominant. In dry zones, forest and land deities appear, influencing dress codes. Interestingly, Reverend Dr. Onyeneke (1984:32) asserts:

If the outer edges of the Igbo territory are taken as a circumference of a circle with center around Orlu, distinctive masquerade patterns appear clearly at the communities closer to the outer edges of the circumference; each pattern begins to water down its

peculiarities, especially by mixing with other traditions, as it approaches the communities at the center.

To Onyeneke, the strong disparities in masking patterns in different parts of Igboland lead to queries such as “whether the masquerade is an original Igbo development or whether it was not derived from culture contacts with the other African ethnic groups who are the Igbo neighbours” (Onyeneke, 1984:33). Religion is also seen as behaving in this mode. And the Nri and Aro seem to have greatly influenced the Igbo religious thoughts.

### **Nri Religious Influence (500 BC-1911 AD):**

Onyeneke (1987:14) observes:

There is a strong opinion that the Awka-Orlu highland region (Nri subcultural region) is the area of strong primary settlement from where subsequent migrations outwards developed. Such a movement went west, across the river Niger, to touch on the Edo people but, recoiled backwards later with the rise of the Bini empire. There was the migration from the Orlu –Amaigbo area southwards towards the Niger delta and eastwards to the areas of the Cross River. Also clear cultural bonds are accepted between the Nri and the Nsukka areas.

The Eri period is estimated from 500 BC to about 1500 AD (Afigbo, 1981:10) (Onyeneke, 1987:47) or from 800AD (Onwuejeogwu, 2002:117). And the Nri (Eri’s son) hegemony began from 900 AD and continued to 1911 AD (Onwuejeogwu, 2002:117). The Umunri are seen as either having migrated from Igala (Nwaezeigwe, 2007:277) or are of the same stock with the Igala, probably Jukun, who themselves came from the east, meaning that the ultimate origin of the Nri must lie in the east (Jeffrey,1956:131) (Afigbo, 1981:39). There is even a suggestion that Eri begot Idah (by a younger wife aside Namaku) from whom the Igala descended (Afigbo, 1981, 59, 60) or Onoja who founded Igala land (Onwuejeogwu, 2002:120). The autochthonous Igbo that the Nri met on their arrival absorbed the seeming superior culture of the Nri and bred out the Nri (Jeffrey, 1956:127). Interestingly, the Nri brought the concept of *Chukwu* as supreme deity (and a theocratic monarch that controlled the earth force, *Ala*, by the use of *ofo*) when they came into Igbo land

(Onwuejeogwu, 1972:44). The Nri culture was pushed outwards and “was felt in all parts of Igboland and beyond to the neighboring ethnic groups” (Onyeneke, 1987:47). Nri influence extended well beyond the nuclear northern Igbo region to Igbo settlements on the west bank of the Niger and communities affected by the Benin Empire. There is strong evidence to indicate Nri influence well beyond the Igbo region to Benin and Southern Igala areas like Idah. At its height, the kingdom of Nri had influence over roughly most of Igboland and beyond. (Muhammad & Hrbek, 1988:254). It reached its furthest extent between 1100 and 1400 (Isichei, 1997: 246-7). There was strong contact with northern Igbo, especially Nsukka (Isichei 1976:4) (Ifemesia 1972:22) (Onyeneke 1987:52). Igala culture, which is said to have come from the Igbo, later influenced the Igbo in a backward contact to Adani, Nimbo, Nsukka, Obukpa, Eha-Alumona, Opi, Anambra-Niger lowlands etc.

“The power and authority of Eze Nri were based on the belief and recognition of many Igbo settlements that Eze Nri had spiritual authority over them” (Onwuejeogwu, 1972:47-8). The Nri gave the Igbo much of its masquerade institution. The masquerades of the northern Igbo have a strong Igala influence (Onyeneke, 1987:52, 53).

The Nri legend of origin began with the concept of *Chukwu* who was said to have sent Eri from the sky to the earth and Eri came down the Omambala (Anambra River) to near the present Aguleri. Afigbo is not sure if it was the Nri that brought the *Chukwu* concept but is confident that they “attained eminence by manipulating that cosmology” (Afigbo, 1981:10, 49). This emphasis on *Chukwu* at the beginning of the Nri era shifted to *Ala*, the earth deity with the growing importance of agriculture, especially by the introduction of yam, cocoyam and palm trees (aside iron technology and Ezeship) by the Nri into Igboland.

Afigbo (1981:9) notes:

It was *Ani* or *Ala* that now became so important to the Igbo that it became one of the most vital functions of the Eze Nri to preside over its worship. This development is in accord with the otiose character of *Chukwu* (the High or Supreme God) in Igbo cosmology, and the domination of the Igbo world by the Earth goddess.... The earlier period was probably the dynamic age of *Chukwu* when he created and dominated the Igbo world. But with the coming of agriculture Igbo gaze would appear to have switched from the skies above to the earth below, with *Ala* displacing *Chukwu* into remote inactivity.



The researchers wonder now where the Nri got yam. This may help to throw more light on where the Nri came from and what was the religious concept there, if they were migrants into Igboland. Logically, if yam came from Igala, then it would have gotten to Nsukka and from there into Igbo heartland without it being introduced ritualistically by the Nri. Yam may have come from the direction of the Jukun, whose neighbours today are the Tivs in both Benue and Taraba States. It is interesting that Afigbo (1981:16) hazards that the Igbo might have come from the Niger-Benue confluence. The Tivs are the greatest cultivators of yams in Nigeria. That the Nri came from the same origins as the Jukun of Taraba State is strongly supported by the indication that cultural similarities finger both the Jukun and the Nri (who gave their culture to the Igbo) as Jews. For example, “sof” or “sofuo” means “vanish” in Hebrew and Igbo languages; “udara” is the same fruit within a variety of the same species and has the same name (“udara”) in both Hebrew and Igbo; “obara” (Igbo word) means “blood” or “bara” (Hebrew word); “ozala” (Igbo) means “wilderness” or “ozal” (Hebrew) etc. (Alaezi, 2006:215). For the Jukun, their feast of In-gathering (Puje) or festival of booths has a strong similarity to Jewish culture. There is a striking resemblance between the Arago custom and the Hebrew seven-day Feast of ingathering. The Puje festival is held in the booths outside Wukari at the close of the harvest, and last seven days etc.

If then the Nri had origins in Israel, then the concept of *Chukwu* as living in the sky and presiding over the affairs of mankind might have come remotely from Israel. Moses of Israel had an ark of covenant made which symbolized the presence of the Israeli God, Jehovah, just the same way the Nri had a shrine made for any god they focused on. Later, the Aro were to make a drum or basket of the creator god called *Obasi bi nelu* or *Chukwu*. The Nri religious influence declined with the rise of newer powers, amongst which was the Aro.

Nwoga (1984:45) sees the Nri concept of *Chukwu* in the Nri legend of origin as sounding “like the Heavenly God of justice till one comes across stories in the Igbo folklore canon that have more credibility as religious and ritual myths”. The question would then be which folklore came before the other, and why only that of Nri had a supreme god posture amongst the stories that Nwoga presented. We suspect that the other folklores Nwoga presented which equate *Chukwu* with the *Chukwu* of the Aro must have come during the Aro religious influence and the mockery form of these later folklores indicates a subtle political protest of some Igbo people against the Aro influence, that is, if the stories were not influenced by the Aro defeat of 1902. Space may not

permit the presentation of these other folklores. A study of Nwoga's *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought* is suggested.

Interestingly, Kalu (2002:354) asserts:

The success of the Arochukwu oracle, and to some extent the Nri ritual network which predated the rise of the Aro among the Igbo, derive largely from the people's conviction about the Supreme Being.

There are numerous evidences of town deities which are Supreme in that the Deities are the personal gods of the founders of such towns and most important for that town. Adherents of such town deities would still note the supremacy of *Chukwu* over all if the need arose. In Inyi of Enugu State, the town deity was and still is *Ajala* whose festival is still celebrated around October. These deities are seen as supreme in a particularistic sense, but soon began to assume a decentralized form as they became famous outside the town. *Igwe ka ala* of Umunneoha, *Agbara* of Awka, *Ojukwu* of Diobu and *Onojo Oboni* of Ogurugu are notable examples (Animalu, Okeke & Unaegbu, 2011:109). There is remarkable evidence of the Nri religious fervor in the mode of consultations by worshippers of these deities. There is a mixture line of the influences of both the Nri "in the west" and the Aro "Chuku Juju" by 1720AD as reported in Talbot (1926:234).

#### **Aro Religious Influence (1690-1902):**

The Aro migrated from the Igbo heartland to displace an existing Efik-Ibibio settlement on the Western section of the Cross River and got mixed up with them. The Aro got acquainted with the *nsibidi* sign writings and Ekpe cult of the Cross River non-Igbo groups. They effectively penetrated Igbo heartland southwards to Ngwa, northwards to Afikpo, westwards to Okigwe, towards the Orrata-Isuama and the Nri-Awka direction. Sufficient Aro migrant groups established Aro towns such as Ndizuogu, Ajalli, Ndikelionwu, Ndiowu, Ndiokpaleke, Ndiokolo of the Ndienyi clan in Aguata area (Onyeneke, 1987:54). Olaudah Equiano (1792, 2007:26), who was enslaved at age eleven in 1756, sees the Aro as "oye-Eboe" (that is *onye Igbo* or *Oyibo*) or "red men living at a distance" who brought "us firearms, gunpowder...They always carry slaves through our land". The Aro are seen as very fair in complexion compared to the rest of the Igbo such that they were taken as French mulattoes who had gone native (Hives, 1930:248).

As to the diffusion of culture, especially the masking tradition, Onyeneke (1987:55) would say, "The adaptive incorporation is easy for one who had something of his own to begin with, and it must have worked to adapt the migrant to the locality to which he has moved".

We see the evidence of the influence of Aro on Ihemboisi and also evidence that the Aro went about borrowing cultures from the Igbo clans they came to just like the Igbo folklore tortoise borrows feathers from every bird in order to fly to heaven! These evidences can be derived directly from elder Ezenwadeyi in Isichei (1977:175):

Umuchukwu [the Aro] came and borrowed a lot about which they speak, and they tell us “*Chukwu* says”; But even that is not outside *Chukwu*’s dominion. There is no other way to say it! It is of the same *Chukwu* that all speak about.

The Aro traveled through Igboland unharmed like the Nri before them. They were unharmed because they entered into *igba ndu* or blood covenants with the leaders of the communities they passed through. Also no one wanted to incur the wrath of the Long Juju (Ijoma, 2002:47). It will not be farfetched to say that they borrowed the *Chukwu Okike* concept from the Nri in that the Aro concentrated in the Omambala area from where the Nri advanced into the Igbo country (Okoye,2002:184, see map). The power of Aro came to be based on the long Juju or the Ibini Ukpabi (Ibibio for “*Drum of the Creator God*”). Ibini Ukpabi came to be known as a place where *Chukwu abiama* revealed Himself and was used to settle cases, particularly those of murder, witchcraft, poisoning and family disputes. The oracle was paramount throughout the Niger Delta; the losing party of a case was traditionally destroyed by the oracle, but the priests of Ibini Ukpabi developed a preference in selling the losing party into slavery instead. As the system continued, it was alleged that the priests of Ibini Ukpabi falsified some of the verdicts of the oracle in order to procure victims to be sold into slavery. Hundreds of people visiting Ibini Ukpabi did not return; their communities usually believed that the oracle had devoured anybody that visited it (Crowder, 1962, 65). Some of the Aro were “full-time diplomats, being their home’s representatives in the colonies, spying on them, and acting as the agents of the great oracle...” (Okoye, 2002:183). Thus their religion diffused among the Igbo people and the concept of *Chukwu* came to be known again. Equiano (1792, 2007:31) notes that his Igbo people as at 1756 believed in “one Creator of all things, and that he lives in the sun, and is girded round with a belt that he may never eat or drink”. This evidently suggested that *Chukwu Okike* was known in his place, since *Anyanwu* was not a creator god but the eye of light.

People began to see *Chukwu* in the same breath as *Ala* and sometimes in a higher reach, depending on the place in question. A clear evidence of subtle confusion of which deity was supreme even in the Igbo traditional worshippers as at October 1966 is evident in the

aforementioned interview conducted by Rev. Fr. Arazu and granted by elders in Ihemboisi as cited in Isichei (1977:177):

Question: And tell me, *Chukwu* and *Ana*, which of the two is greater than the other?

Answer: [*An elderly speaker*] ...when we steer clear of *Ana*, shall we climb to the sky? If we steer clear of the heavens, what can we do? We would say that *Ana* seems to be greater (than *Chukwu*).... [*a younger speaker now*] Our father, *Chukwu* is greater than *Ana*. *Chukwu* will take us back, first, and we go home. The earth (*Ana*) is dug and we go into the Earth (*Ana*). But *Chukwu* it is who will take us back first.

We can discern here that either the Aro or western influence on the younger speaker had subconsciously increased his knowledge of *Chukwu* and for him, *Chukwu* is greater. But his father, who had been influenced by indigenous Igbo culture, thinks otherwise. This shows that *Ala* was more popular than *Chukwu* in the younger days of the older man, at least in Ihemboisi. In 1902, the British destroyed the shrine of *Chukwu* in Arochukwu (Afigbo, 1981:252).

## 5. CONCLUSION:

We have shown that there were shrines to the Supreme Deity in other Igbo areas aside Arochukwu in the review of pro-God literature. The researchers have also tried to analyze the age of one of them with a view to discerning whether it came before the Aro influence. The existence of such shrines is a lasting evidence of the existence of the supreme god concept amongst the Igbo, albeit in a decentralized form. The worship of *Ala* has been shown to be popular, supreme but particularistic in Igboland before and during the Aro religious moments. Its supreme-particularistic nature was demonstrated by the Ihemboisi elder as indicated in the review of Non-God literature. Kalu (2002:365) concluded in his paper that a gradual assimilation of “cross-cultural influences” occurred as the “different segments of the Igbo migrated, settled away from the Igbo heartland and interacted with non-Igbo groups”. The result of such “criss-crossing of cultures, especially on borderland Igbo communities, are evident in variations in nomenclature for certain elements of the belief system”. Having seen evidences of the above statement in the evolution of religious culture amongst the Igbo and having synthesized information from our previous analysis, The researchers came to the theory, open for verification, that most often, when a culture adopts appurtenances of other cultures too fast, some adherents of aspects of the earlier mode of that culture naturally raise an alarm, believing that the baby is being thrown away with the bath water. This indicates that too-much-too-soon is antidotal to cultural identity and that time is needed for digestion, reflection and

consolidation of borrowed appurtenances into the heart of a culture. Culture then is like a colour in a larger river of other colours. It has shallow hues outwards and deeper hues inwards. And time pulls the penumbral hues into the umbral heart. Just like a painter moves his paintbrush to mix a red colour with a green colour to produce yellow, so also two cultures mix to produce a novel hybrid. The more ideas and people move around like the hand of the painter, the more a culture adopts new modes and abandons old ones or allow them to go into desuetude like the colours. In modern times, therefore, the pull for this adoption and abandonment is more intense than ever. At the risk of overgeneralization, there is a global pull towards one large colour or culture made up of a combination of strong and sufficiently exposed umbral hues of other colours or appurtenances of cultures. There is, in other words, a move towards a one-world culture or universal white colour.

## REFERENCES:

- Afigbo, A.E. (1981). *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.
- Agbakoba, J.C.A. (2000). "The Absence of a Genuine Supreme Being in Traditional African Thought, Traditional Ethics and their Effect on Contemporary African Society" Unpublished Mimeograph, Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Agbedo, C.U. (2007). "Deities and Spirits in Igboland: The Elugwu-Ezike Cultural Perspective" *Journal of Religion and Culture* (2007) Vol. 7, N0. 2.
- Alaezi, O. (2006). *Ibo Exodus: The Untold Story, Unheard History*. Aba: Onzy Publications.
- Animalu, A.O.E., Okeke, F.N. & Unaegbu, Jeff (2011). *Biography of the Eminent Pioneer Geophysicist: Cyril Agodi Onwumechili, Professor of Physics*. Abuja: Ucheakonam Foundation (Nig.) Ltd.
- Anyika, F. (1988). "African Traditional Religions and Contemporary African Society" in ITK Egonu (ed.) *Readings in African Humanities: African Perspectives in World Culture*. Owerri: Vivians and Vivians Publishers.
- Arazu, R.C. (1982) "The Supreme God in Igbo Traditional Religion" Unpublished Paper. *Workshop on Igbo Studies*. Nsukka, Institute of African Studies.
- Arinze, F.A. (1982). "Christianity and Igbo Culture" in FC Ogbalu and EN Emenanjo (eds) *Igbo Language and Culture*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Barrett, D.V. (2001). *The New Believers: Sects, 'Cults' and Alternative Religions*. New York: Nepenthes Publishers.
- Basden, G.T. (1938). *Niger Ibos*. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.
- Bodley, J.H. (2009). "Culture." Microsoft® Encarta® [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Cassidy, F. G. and Robert, Brock Le Page. (2002). *A Dictionary of Jamaican English* (2nd ed.). Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.
- Crowder, M. (1962). *The Story of Nigeria*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Ellis, A.B. (1894). *The Yoruba Speaking People*. London: Heinemann.
- Equiano, O. (1794). *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa The African*. Norwich. Eight enlarged edition.

- Ezeanya, S.N. (1969). "God, Spirits and the Spirit World" in *Biblical Revelation and the African Beliefs*. London: Lutherworth Press.
- Ezeh, P.J. (2009). "Traditional Institutions" lecture note, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, UNN.
- Ezeh, P.J. (2012). "African Political and Social Systems", lecture note, Institute of African Studies, UNN.
- Fasi, Muhammad; Hrbek, Ivan (1988). *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century*. London: Heinemann.
- Floyd, E. Randall. (2002). *In the Realm of Ghosts and Hauntings*. USA: Harbor House.
- Frobenius, L. (1913). *The Voice of Africa*. (Vol I). London: Hutchinson.
- Griaule, M. and Dieterlen, G. (1965). *Le renard pale*. Paris: l'Intitut d'Ethnologie (Republished in English as *The Pale Fox* by Continuum Foundation, 1986).
- Hives, F. (1930). *Juju and Justice in Nigeria*. London: John Lane.
- Horton, W.R.G. (1956). "God, Man and the Land in a Northern Ibo Village Group". *Africa*, 26.
- Ian Ridpath (1978). *Skeptical Inquirer Magazine*. Fall Issue. New York: Committee for Skeptical Inquiry.
- Idowu, B. (1973). *African Traditional Religion*. London: S.C.N. Press Ltd.
- Ifemesia, C. (1979). *Traditional Humane Living among the Igbo: A Historical Perspective*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Igbo People. (2012). *Wikipedia Online Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved September 16, 2012 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/igbo\\_people.html](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/igbo_people.html)
- Ihiagwa Town History. (2012). *Ihiagwa.Org*. Retrieved November 13, 2012 from <http://www.ihigwa.com/history.htm>
- Ijoma, J.O. (2002). "Igboland: A Historical Perspective" in Ofomata, GEK (ed.) *A Survey of the Igbo Nation*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers Limited.
- Ikenga-Methuh, E. (1981). *God and Man in African Religion*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.
- Ilogu, E. (1974). *Christianity and Igbo Culture*. New York: Ton Publishers.
- Isichei, E. (1976). *A History of the Igbo People*. London: MacMillan Press.
- Isichei, E. (1977). *Igbo Worlds: An Anthology of Oral Histories and Historical Descriptions*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Isichei, E. A.(1997). *A History of African Societies to 1870*. England: Cambridge University Press.

- James Oberg. (1982). "Chapter 6: The Sirius Mystery", in *UFOs and Outer Space Mysteries: A Sympathetic Skeptic's Report*. USA: Donning Press.
- Jeffrey, M.D.W. (1956). "The Umundri Tradition of Origin", *African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3.
- Kalu, O.U. (2002). "Igbo Traditional Religious Systems" in Ofomata, GEK (ed.) *A Survey of the Igbo Nation*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers Limited.
- Lovejoy, Paul. (2000). *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery*. USA: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Meek, C.K. (1937). *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe: A Study of Indirect Rule*. London: OUP.
- Mendelsohn, J. (1962). *God, Allah and Juju*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Methuh, E.E. (1976). "The Supreme God in Igbo Life and Worship" *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. v.
- Nwabara, S.N. (1977). *Iboland: A Century of Contact with Britain, 1860-1960*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Educational.
- Nwaezeigwe, T.N. (2007). *The Igbo and Their Nri Neighbours*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd.
- Nwala, T.U. (1985). *Igbo Philosophy*. Lagos: Lantern Books.
- Nwala, T.U. (2007). "The Otonti Nduka Mandate: From Tradition to Modernity". Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, March 15.
- Nwoga, D. (1984). *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought*. Mbaise: Hawk Press.
- Ogbalu, F.C. (1960). *Omenala Igbo*. (The Book of Igbo Custom). Onitsha: Varsity Press.
- Oguejiofor, J.O. (1996). *The Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion on the Socio-political Character of the Igbo*. Nsukka: Falladu Publishing Coy.
- Okoye, T.O. (2002). "Urban Life and Urban Development in Igboland" in Ofomata, GEK (ed.) *A Survey of the Igbo Nation*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers Limited.
- Olaudah, E. (1792, 2007). *The Astonishing Adventures of Olaudah Equiano aka Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Norwich (1792), reprinted by Frank Cass (1969), Abic Ventures, Enugu (2007).
- Onwuejeogwu, M.A. (1972). "An Outline Account of the Dawn of Igbo Civilization in the Igbo Cultural Areas" in *ODINANI: The Journal of the Odinani Museum, Nri 1.1*. pp. 15-56.
- Onyeneke, A. (1984). "Christianity and the Masquerade Society in Igboland", *Ikoru*, vol. 5, No. 1 & 2, July, p. 31-33.



- Onyeneke, A.O. (1987). *The Dead among the Living: Masquerades in Igbo Society*. Nimo: Holy Ghost Congregation.
- Sagan, Carl. (1979). *Broca's Brain: Reflections on the Romance of Science*. USA: Random House.
- Talbot, P.A. (1926). *The Peoples of Southeastern Nigeria*, (Vol. IV). London: Humphrey Milford.
- Tempels, P. (1969). *Bantu Philosophy*. Paris: Presence Africaine.
- Thomas, N.W. (1913). *Anthropological Report on the Ibo Speaking Peoples of Nigeria*. London: Harrison.
- Unaegbu, J.E. (2012). "Religion as a Social Institution: A Comparative Study of the Igbo of Nigeria and the Dogon of Mali", Term paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Course IAS 513, Advanced Social Institution, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Van Beek, W. E. A. (1991). "Dogon Restudied— A Field Evaluation of the Work of Marcel Griaule." *Current Anthropology*. Volume 32, Number 2, April, p.139-167.
- Young, C. (1937). *African Ways and Wisdom*. London: The United Society for Christian Literature.