Leopards of the Magical Dawn
Science and the Cosmological Foundations of Igbo Culture

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For Alawualu,

Most Compassionate of Mothers
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(Image source: Nairaland.com)
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Prologue

Igbo traditional life is ritual-centric, quite simply, for Igbo culture is primarily and largely a mystical culture, propelled by a deeply primal awareness of the spirituality of life. Igbo culture gravitates towards an ordered universe of interconnectedness life. Hence, if ritual is the language of the spirit, the language which speaks to the interconnected whole of life, it is only surmisable that, a culture in continuous adherence to its own rituals is a culture in unbroken communication with its own spirit. Given the current state of Igbo cultural consciousness, one is nearly moved to tears in the face of such overt realities. However, the study of Igbo culture and her civilizational antiquity has seen quite a great deal of revival in the last few years. This overly due resurgence is mostly owing to the continued efforts of Igbo scholars, at home and in the diaspora, towards ensuring that the renowned timelessness of Igbo culture never becomes a thing of axiomatic expression. Nevertheless, it still fosters a great unrest to notice the paltry level of interest and resources that go into the appreciation, perpetuation and in-depth scholarship of Odinala.

Ottenberg (1981) have lamented that “considering the size and importance of the Igbo, very little research and publication has been undertaken on them, not only in history but in anthropology and other fields, compared to, say, the Yoruba or Ashanti” (p. 120). It also appears that even when tentative attempts were made in the past to study this primal aspect of Igbo culture i.e. Odinala, the resulting works were either tainted with typical western epistemic notions or betraying the usual lack of depth that characterizes ungrounded ethnographic accounts. The classic case of certain Igbo Catholic priests who often venture into this realm of Igbo studies in fulfillment of their requisite academic and religious interests will do quite a bit in illuminating this phenomenon. This is often the case, even when such persons are asserting their indigenousness to the culture. In view of this, there can be no doubt that much of the back-breaking circumstances belaboring Igbo people today have their roots in the
apparent loss of self-discernment that characterizes our contemporary humanity. On the other hand, the politico-religiously sustained cultural cum economic myopia flourishing among them—as seeded by the old colonial powers has not helped this unfortunate condition either. Even sadder is the revealing fact that, as a result of this dedicated onslaught on the Igbo mind and her timeless cultural values, many Igbo sons and daughters now suffer a total disconnect from their original ancestral consciousness. For many of them today, the effect of the alienation has been so devastating that they no longer comprehend the multidimensional realities embedded in their culture.

More often than not, the direct consequence is that such persons no longer know or have access to the subtle meanings and profoundly empowering elements residing in their sacred traditions. Therefore, they ignorantly castigate such as "fetish", "demonic", "satanic" and every other derisive term made available to them by their largely exploitative, present-day religious leaders. A case in point is the miserable tradition of "confession" practiced in the Catholic Church which has unfortunately eaten into the moral fabric of those Igbo people who uncritically adhere to that religious system. Indeed, it does not occur to such persons anymore that perhaps, someone might be taking advantage of their devout ignorance all the way in Rome. For how can one in their right mind, go to confess one’s sins to another human being who is clearly not the offended, whereas in most cases, the offended person is still alive and breathing? It simply boggles the mind. Even when the sins have being committed against the Supreme Spirit, so to speak, on what grounds does another human being qualify to be another’s confessor? Is there a deliberate attempt by such practices and its wanton architects to bypass some very fundamental principles of morality, all in the name of ecclesiastic mediation? Indeed, if such practices do not represent very devious methods of self-deception and sophisticated avenues of exploiting the gullible, then I don’t know what to call it. One is left in wonder, for instance, as to why an Igbo man or woman who has offended another would ignore the simple but time-tested Odinala practice of approaching the offended with Kolanut (a symbol of peace, communion, hospitality, kinship congeniality etc.), go on one’s knees (where applicable) and
plead to be forgiven. This is in line with the Igbo spiritual principle of *mmadu bu chi ibe ya*. In effect, the continued aversion of such simple yet profoundly effective spiritual principles by Igbo people and much of contemporary humanity is one of the underlying reasons behind the ubiquity of generational curses and suffering in our time. The noble spiritual dictum of *ife kwulu, ife akwudobe ya* will appear to hold very little wisdom for most persons of this day and age. That one thing stands beside another and never alone, a profound law of existence, is truth beyond all human pretense, as perceived by the Igbo spirit. The implied cyclic reality, reciprocity and inherent interconnectivity of all beings and their actions as enshrined in the above spiritual dictum can hardly be overemphasized. Ironically, the much elevated modern and postmodern values cherished zealously by countless innocent persons today—unbeknownst to them—were never truly intended to provide them with any form of sustainable freedom or self-fulfillment. Otherwise, a great number of them would have noticed by now, that the essential keys to their total self-realization have always resided in their fearfully clasped hands. Nwakanma’s (2008) extensive observation in this regards, focusing on the elusive but crucial roles sustained by the branded religions of our time, in the increasingly startling illusion of modernity goes thus:

Religion is connected to the market, to production, to distribution, to regulation, and to the consecration of the rituals of being and transition. Note: wherever the Igbo built their markets, nearby was the central shrine of the land of the people- where their ancestors entered into the covenants that formed and perpetuated their towns. The connection between religion and market, and the connection between who controls the market and power, is so profound that anybody who does not see it is either blind or naive. It is the reason why the British frigates bombed the Onitsha market in the late 19th century. It is the reason why the Eze Nri was the most powerful ritual figure right down to the lands we now call Ghana for many hundreds of years. It is why the Aro almost built a West African empire until the advent of the British. It is why the Brits planned a major campaign called the "Aro" campaign in 1902 to dislodge what they called "the long Juju" because they thought, somehow, it was the controlling force of the Igbo market and political system. It is the question of "ownership" - do you own the rituals of production and distribution; or the means of affirmation of the titular ownership of land? The ancestral rituals. Can an Igbo Christian be the head of the Church of England? Or the Papacy? Or the Church of Christ of Later Day Saint? Could the Queen, head of the
Church of England, be the Eze Mmuo Igwekala at Umunneoha?...But these are questions that we raise, simply to point to the inadequacy of making wild claims about absolute salvation which the Christians and the Muslims impose on the rest of us. It is interesting that Obi Enweze now preaches toleration, but was silent when Christian talibans went round Ala-Igbo, burning shrines, destroying sacred groves, cutting down ancient trees that have been standing for so long that they now are no longer part of our existing species, all in the name of their vengeful god. The intolerance and vehemence, the radical evangelism of the Christians, particularly the fundamentalist, pentecostal sect that came into prominence in Igboland from the middle of the 1980s when hunger, both of the body and of the spirit, ravaged the land, against the peaceful and tolerant practices of our fathers who always said, "ndu mmiri, ndu azu" has basically destroyed the soul of our land, and distorted the landscape. What we now have in Ala-Igbo is such a terrifying frenzy - a location between the death of a culture, and the genome of a hybrid and slave culture: it is "odi ndu, onwu kamma!" A situation of the crossroads. (para. 2)

Accordingly, to remedy this abysmal situation, it becomes a critical necessity that Igbo people would have to, among other things, come to terms with Odinala; the spiritual bedrock of their remarkable culture and civilization. In addition, they would have to re-subscribe to its much practical mystic knowledge systems as was primordially articulated and passed down amongst them, since the times of their forbearers. They would have to seek-out for themselves, a fresh and unbiased understanding of its spiritual realities and initiation-centered socialization systems and the sacred rites and taught wisdoms therein. This is so, for outright or partial abandonment is not the answer. Rather, a total embracement of their true being and ancestral heritage is the key to their highly sought liberation. Needless to say, it is the initial abandonment of their true spiritual principles and practices that have left them where they are today: an utterly confused people, to say the least. Com. Emeka Ajoko (2011) of Umuduruemeruo Umunumo Amandugba of Isu LGA in Imo state has aptly articulated Odinala as:

...the ancient religion of the [Igbo] people that connect mmadu (human beings) to Chukwu (God) through Chi (personal spiritual guardian or providence). It is an ancient sacred science that enables people to live in peace, love and harmony with Chukwu (God), Chi (personal providence) and Arushi (the supernatural forces) on their way back to the eternal. Like all religions, Odinala is the vehicle used by its practitioners (Dibias or priests) and spiritual students
(followers of the religion) to understand their World (called "Uwa"), or more specifically, the part of the World that affects them – which is to say the dry land on which the people live and gather sustenance. I call it "a gifted spiritual route". (para. 5-6)

Thus said, a determined revert to the true spiritual, ecological and harmonious practices laid out in Odinala is highly imperative, whether initiated now or in the nearest future, if the Igbo culture and its unique consciousness is to survive. For it is particularly this vital fountain that has survived their renowned lifeways and, it was still by means of its moral and intellectual light that their forbearers were able to achieve the numerous brilliances that some now consider as stuff of myths and legends. The spiritually inspired primacies placed on such abiding virtues as uprightness (Ikwuba Aka Oto), compassion and love (Ogo na Ifunanya), high conservationism (Kabeonyeadina), sacrelization of truth and justice (Iji Ofo na Ogu), advanced sustainability practises (Echisakara i.e. Echi-Isaa-Kara/Echi-Anyi-Kara/Echi-Mu-Kara - a lifestyle that endorses decisions that are based on the betterment of the next seven generations in the future), imperativeness of self-knowledge and higher spiritual awareness (Ima Onwe na Ima Chi), passionate and practical pursuit of knowledge (Isodo Uzo Amamife), kinship bond (Mmeko Umunne), resourceful intelligence and wisdom (Inwe Ako na Uche), ecology-conscious teraformation (Ime Aladinma – America ruru uno n’onwa, mana fa ejiro ana n’onwa!), humane consciousness and forbearance of all beings (Biri ka Mbiri, Egbe-Bere-Ugo-Bere), attainment of holistic intuitive mind (Ako na Uche Zuru Ezu), ecological consciousness (Nlekwa na Ndokwa Ala), pursuit of high morality (Iso Nso Ala), individual effort and upright industriousness (Igba Mbo), ritual cleansing of abominations and pacification of the Land Spirit (Ikpu Aru na Iji Ala) etc. as enshrined in their customs and original, ancestral ordinances, all such values and many others not noted here, would have to become of critical importance to the Igbos as well as contemporary humanity at large, if we are to survive this turbulent marginal stage (Ijite Uga) in the gradual emergence of our dawning new world age (Uga Anwu). It is thus, highly critical at this point in time that we begin to shift our focus from the erroneous preoccupation of the concluding past age with such trivialities as narcissistic rites of materialism pursued in disguise as religious devotion and instead,
move closer to the higher dimensions of being and higher understandings of self-contentment in nature and one’s destined path of spiritual self-realization. The mystical path chosen by one to explore this purpose is ultimately up to the individual. New spirits are incarnating into the world as we speak, and the ancient spirits are also returning. Our world is at a crossroad of great beginnings. The time is now ripe to begin to re-ponder the universal mysteries, once again, for it is this higher path of the spirit that awaits our present world. The higher realms have been duly sanitized of the accumulated infiltrations that occurred in the last few ages and it is once again, safe to take on great individual and communal spiritual responsibilities, unlike in the past, when incarnating self-sacrificing avatars were needed to do the task of path clearing.

The present intense changes such as the growing sense of revulsion for conflicts and strife, the unfolding ecological shifts, heightening awareness for environmental issues in societies that have exploited the earth mindlessly for thousands of years, noted emergent thirst for higher spiritual realities, mystical teachings and previously overlooked ancient knowledge and traditions, pronounced attempts at paradigmatic shifts in lifestyle and value orientations in youth and mid-adult populaces around the world, increasingly rising interests and loyalty to natural medicine, alternative healing systems and traditional health care delivery practices, the dawning awareness and intolerance for the abusive dogmatisms of religions, the noted returns to authentic cultural visions, expressions and ways of the spirit, the increasing re-embracement of the ancient breath-based meditation systems in many parts of the highly industrialized world etc.—these are all manifestations of this new dawning reality. It is crucial now that we begin to pay great attention to the emergent worlds, visions and changes around us; begin to read our realities by ourselves and get into the process of reclaiming that spiritual responsibility from those whom we overburdened it with. It is also critical that we now reverse our single mind’s eye to nature and find ways to deeply immerse ourselves in her deep bosom as returning prodigals and in so doing, begin to re-enact and craft novel ways to co-exist harmoniously with all the beings of our planet, the universe and beings of all
existential realms. And this process begins by looking inside to see what steps were missed in our great journey of spiritual realization as human beings. By way of re-establishing our highly fractured relationship with nature, remaining deeply in touch with her, understanding that we are not separate from all life in any way, sense or form; becoming highly conscious of the subtle events that unfold in nature, we can begin to retrace our footsteps back to our original state as Chi, as the deserving, undying, pure incarnates of divine consciousness. This deep awareness realized, we can then proceed to manifest our reawakened indwelling God-consciousness (Chi) in novel spiritual and creative heights, generating expanded world visions, as well as realizing universal ways of being and communicating. This is a mission that is inevitable for this age and time. Nwakanma, inter alia, has observed that:

Things that were once sacred - like the sacred bonds of kinship - were destroyed. Our beautiful way of life laid bare. Our festivals; rituals; sacred days; laws so vilely attacked that they basically "upturned" Igbo land and the meaning of what it is to be Igbo. There is something called "Odi be ndi." These have been erased by the Christians. We now risk spiritual enslavement and the roaming in the wilderness from which our people may never, ever recover. For very long, practitioners of Odinala Igbo kept silent, practicing in peace, hoping that some sense would return, but basically unaware that what came into their midst is intolerance, and the effect is the use of rhetorical blackmail to appropriate the land and destroy its sacred mores, and make the final colonization of the Igbo possible, using well-trained "native informers" and agents of the hegemony of the west. But the land belongs to the Igbo and not the Christians, and it is time we begin to confront them with truth: use their same methods of evangelization, and return Odinala to its sacred place, and heal our land of ambiguity- and make it bloom again. Make it that Igbo land that needed neither a standing army, nor a police and prison system for peace to reign and divine order persist. That is the only thing that makes sense. Not which religion is bigger in number now or louder in its self-effusions. Odinala is not just religion, it is the way of life of the Igbo people, the loss of which would mark the end of the Igbo people, Igbo identity, and its civilization encoded in its rituals; its ceremonies; its observances; its naming; its memory of itself encoded in those distinct shrines dedicated to shared ancestorhood. (para. 3)

There is no doubt that some degree of philosophy is inextricably present at the root of every religion and culture. Therefore, the
philosophical underpinnings and not ceremonial or outward aspects of Igbo cultural institutions remain steadfast and superior. Agreeably, over time, the ideal philosophical underpinnings of religions, cultures or traditional institutions are wont to experience layers of corruption and misinterpretations as brought about by the extreme manipulation of the ceremonial aspects by human beings. This has been the case with *Odinala*, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and even as is presently occurring in Buddhism. In the Igbo case, it is worth mentioning that, any clear-eyed observation and analysis of the Igbo condition will reveal that we did not really take our time to study and masticate the history, political undercurrents, theological loops and epistemological intricacies of Christianity before we zealously swallowed it, hook, line and sinker. Otherwise, we could have assimilated it without much harm to our cultural, and by definition, human identity. Today, the typical Igbo-African, who has no interest in such issues and questions is in effect, an acutely confused individual at many levels, worshiping the mythical figures of an alien, long gone Mediterranean people, misapplying the teachings of Christ and Mohammed, caught in the middle of a social system that is clearly at apposition with their primary worldview, an economic system that overtly robs them of their human dignity, a politico-religious atmosphere that sustains itself by emotionally brutalizing them on a daily basis with vices of fear and denial of individual expression, a contrived geo-political system that leaves everyone but a capricious few powerless.

Hence, a conscious and morally backed reform of those institutions of the past and present which were incidentally or strategically influenced by ostentatious living, veiled falsehood, outright gender subversion, economic imprudence, intellectual reticence, unchecked egalitarianism, religio-political exploitation etc. will have to be seriously pursued and where possible, such institutions should be outrightly abandoned for good. Such is not impossible. In all frankness, the elderly men and women of contemporary Igbo society should admit their ancillary roles in the alienation of today’s youths and stop pretending that everything is fine! Such persons of authority should embark on a conscious cultural, spiritual and intellectual
reform of the minds of these youths whilst they still have the opportunity to do so, or stand to suffer the heavily justified curses which the fiery hearts and tongues of these upcoming generations will inevitably place on them in the fullness of time. Without overly stressing the obvious, it should be borne in mind that the much prefigured change which is now slowly but surely sweeping its way through the colossal ocean of the human common consciousness is a destined agendum championed by the youths of today’s world and as such, the need to properly guide them is as imperative as never before.

With regards to the countless abominable deeds which the presently dominant civilization of the occident did to Igbo culture and several indigenous cultures around the world, as we say, there can never be a better time for peace, forgiveness and creative collaborations. For posterity, however, it can only be reiterated that, Oyibo mere Igbo aru! Given the ingeniously malevolent schemes through which modern nations like England partially succeeded in bringing an indigenous civilization and root culture (Igbo) that has seen hundreds of thousands of years of creativity to abrupt halt, it is no coincidence that several hundred years later, the Igbos are still wandering in the scorching wilderness of modernity, in search of their Ikenga – their original cosmic, creative identity. As for those contemporary Igbo folks who are repentant and desire to embrace, refine and uphold the sacred traditions and practices of their indigenous communities, any such mindful retreats may be initiated with the reestablishment of those sacred and timely festivities of longstanding which earlier fostered kinship congeniality in the community whilst inspiring higher spiritual states of awareness. As Odimegwu Onwumere (2013), a prolific writer, visionary and consummate adept of Igbo mystery teachings aptly puts it, “The spirit world is enveloped in electromagnetism that connects with our spirit doubles and all other realities. Universal laws govern the realities and man is capable of transcending all of them. That is what spiritual evolution is about. It is the knowledge of these subtle realities and how to harness them for spiritual advancement that ancient Africans chiseled into the fine art used largely today by the Jews and secret societies” (p. 13).
In the last few decades or so, some pivotal works have emerged in Igbo studies as a result of the dedicated scholarship and concern of diverse scholars, interest groups and visionaries in Igbo life, such as Nnabuchi (1986), Jell-Bahlsen (2008), Aguwa (1995), Achebe (1986), Ifemesia (1979), Onwuejeogwu (1997; 1981), Ugonna (1984), Afigbo (1981; 2001), Ekwunife (1990), Arinze (2008), Okpalihe (2008), Metuh (1981; 1985), Achebe (1975), Amadiume (1987a; 1987b), Smith (2010), Onyioha (1980), Ottenberg (1989; 2006), Ezeabasili (1977), Osuagwu (2006), Iroegbu (2010), Nwala (1985), Ejizu (1986), Korieh (2010), Harneit-Sievers (2006), Azuonye (1987), Cole (1982; 1984; 2012), Umezinwa (1988), Umeh (1998; 1999; 2000), Acholonu (2009; 2010; 2013), Shaw (1977), Animalu (1988), Aniakor (1978; 1982)—to mention a few. Their assiduous efforts have made very stimulating headways into this area of Igbo studies. However, at this point in time, the cogent need to further engage this dimension of Igbo culture indepthly is yet to be realized by the greater majority of Igbo scholars. This disturbing situation comes into even sharper focus, when contrasted with the breadth of scholarship that has emerged in this same field—in the studies of other cultures. On enquiry, an overt generational disinterest in this particular area of Igbo culture appears to be at the root of this condition. Igbo sacred traditions, however, continue to exhibit great potency for research as any observant eyes will note; harboring a profound heritage of both general and transcendental knowledge. As a matter of fact, along with certain other ancient cultures of Africa, the Igbo culture remains one of the few remaining enigmatic cultures whose greater historical and civilizational pasts are yet to be fully communicated to the larger world. It then becomes of great importance to assert that no ardent scholar of Igbo culture will negate the shocking informational vacuum or rather depth of content that exists in this area of the study. At the same time, one cannot deny the herculean efforts of the above listed scholars and others over the years, towards the salvaging of this situation. Accordingly, the present work is yet another tentative effort at mining and documenting this primal area of Igbo culture. Thus said, it should be noted that with regards to Igbo culture, the universal human pursuit of reverencing, exploring and communing with the sacred is a practice that is naturally primordial of time among the Igbo.
Taking into account some of the sublime principles embedded in a number of Igbo sacred rites and rituals (*Igo Oji* for instance; a fruit-oriented ritualization of creation), it becomes clear that the Igbo worldview largely interprets as an internalization and expression of the spiritual, as achieved through the ritualization of the natural or physical. Accordingly, the more obvious realizations of this worldview orientation is well-replete in all Igbo traditional activities and creations. *Odinala* or *Omenala* thus affirms to be a profoundly encompassing term denoting both the primordial laws and sacred traditions undergirding Igbo life and culture, as well as embodying their unique codification of accumulated universal knowledge, practices and wisdom, as passed down amongst them from the earliest days of their journey in this realm of existence. It is again, of utmost importance to remark the diversity of such traditions as exists among the Igbo, often differing from one clan and community to the other; just as it is appropriate to emphasize the unifying points of these traditions. Thus, while the present work will be primarily concerned with the exposition of certain sublime principles embedded in *Odinala*, effort will be made to reference existent sub-cultural traditions where necessary. The nature of this work is essentially double pronged. At one level, it directly seeks to demonstrate through the agency of fundamental Igbo mystic and philosophical principles, diverse oral traditions, cosmogonic and cosmological traditions, spiritual rites and practices, technological and artistic traditions, medico-healing tradition, agricultural and scribal traditions, architectural and architectonic traditions etc. —some underlying precepts that inform the Igbo traditional lifeway. On another level, it expounds on some less apparent cosmological precepts that have anciently informed the Igbo worldview, although now mostly misted with time. The Igbo worldview is renowned for its overt but disciplined egalitarianism. It is also a worldview that articulates reality in a mythopoeic mode of consciousness. Indeed, it will occur to any ardent observer that Igbo people appear to have, through their initiation-centered socialization systems—engaged in a much conscious cultivation of specialized polymath communities, long before the modern appreciation of this cerebral phenomenon. Sabine Jell-Bahlsen (2006), a well-noted scholar of Igbo culture has noted that in this society:
A person can be an elder, a political leader, a priest, a diviner, a healer, an artist, a spouse, a parent, a farmer, a fisher, or a trader, all at once, in different combinations, on different times and occasions, or simultaneously. (p.151)

Thus even as professed agriculturalists, the Igbos were and are still able to produce and sustain a renowned tradition of artistry which continues to awe aesthetic sensibilities all over the world today. Interestingly, this deep-seated sense of a Chi-empowered holistically realizable self as loosely signified by the Igbo expression *Onwe* and ritualized in the Igbo tradition of *Ikenga*—is still evident in the egalitarian proclivities of Igbo people anywhere they are found in today’s world. In the older days, there lived amongst them, several persons of adept agricultural skills whom are equally remembered today for the wonders they performed with the *Oja* (wooden-flute). There were ingenious technologists who also doubled as mystic-healers, diviners, prophets and cultural custodians (*Ndi Dibia*) and accordingly—were in possession of extensive scribal, plant, mineral and rain-making knowledge—among other privileges. In the same vein, there existed and still exists among them, clans of itinerant ritual specialists whose work often took them beyond their original localities, and who were particularly in the practice of proselytizing original, improved or cult-based theologies, which indirectly served to immortalize them in the communal memory of the places they visited. Indeed, it should be noted that the notion of holistic thought as impacted through subtle, concise dictums (*Ilulu Igbo*) and extensive complex narratives (*Iruro na Ita Igbo*) is very central to Igbo sacred traditions.

The art of oratory itself is a very developed and highly respected practice in African cultures. It is one of the key vehicles through which most of Africa’s knowledge traditions are transmitted. Persons gifted with the eloquent, sublime, potent or spiritual mouth are often seen as persons of mystical powers. And rightly so for they can efficiently arouse an entire crowd and in many cases, even inspire them into actions that transcend the human rational mind state. With their potent words, they can cause an unsuspecting crowd to laugh or cry, dance or agitate, engage in deep thinking or even experience realities of great spiritual heights and in rare cases, realize instantaneous
enlightenment. This ability is often described with the notion of "a single wave riding the mighty ocean" i.e. Eze-Owu-Mmili. Typical of several African cultures, proverbs and similar related literary devices continue to be employed as highly efficient vehicles for conveying both general and subtle knowledge. However, it’s also well recognized that proverbs or axiomatic dictums do come in certain graded forms and as such, exhibit varied degrees of subtlety. In their diverse grades, they are expertly employed in instructive, social, mystical, ceremonial, ritual, mediational, clerical and other spheres of human life. Encapsulated in some of them, however, are profound cosmological formulaes of mystic nature, which when knowledgeably applied in the requisite ritual settings, stimulates the forces of nature and the universe into vitally desired actions.

Of such uncanny axiomatic expressions, there are well-known ones among Igbo Dibias such as “nwa aka akwu kuolum dingo, nya bu ozutelu oku nye mmadu” which is a form of chanted riddle, to which the knowledgeable initiate replies: “ije nwa nkita abuho ogu” lit. “the quick pace of the dog does not mean battle”. In the above given response, the allusion is to Abia Nkita, which is both a spiritual and mystic reality known to the Igbo Dibia. In its very basic essence, it stands for the super-conscious, intuitive intelligence of the Dibia which is formally ritualized and symbolized by the mystic, round basket of knowledge and wisdom (Abia Nkita) used by him or her in their multifaceted vocation. The same was also handed to the dog by Chukwu in compensation for its defeat in the mythical journey which it undertook with the tortoise (Mbediogu or Mbekwu Nwa Aniga lit. Tortoise, the Child of the Turtle) to Be Chukwu.

In very ancient Igbo societies, the dog was also known as Di Ngo (Expert Tracker/Meanderer) and Di Ntu (Expert Investigator), both of which qualities—to be sure—it shares with the Dibia, whose full traditional appellation is Di-Abia (Mystic Expert in Knowledge and Wisdom). The acquirement of knowledge is a driven pursuit, thus the mystic saying that ije nwa nkita abuho ogu. Also, the Dibia is also an Ogba-Uta-Agwu (expert troubleshooter/archer of Agwu). In the same vein, one of the very essential mystic practices of the Dibia known as Ume Ano (Four Divine Breaths) which facilitates a super-meditative
mind state called *Somuadina* or *Munachibuofu*, which in turn enables the Dibia to mystically explore the universe without moving an inch (*Akwu Ofu*), an experience that ultimately endows him or her with profound mystic knowledge—is also likened to the deep, reflective short nap of the dog which generates over hundred percent delta waves.

Thus, the mystic dictum, *ofeke amaho na nkita no n’uche we si na ulla ji ya* lit. the less knowledgeable does not discern that the dog is in deep thought and mistakenly took it to be falling asleep. It is in this sense, as demonstrated above, that the holistic, epistemic knowledge of Igbo culture (*Abia Igbo* shortened to *Abigbo*) will be resourcefully employed in the subsequent chapters to illuminate certain subtle and vital principles and aspects therein. Indeed, Igbo people have always maintained that they live in a multidimensional universe and as such, their culture has reflected this cosmological conviction ever since time immemorial.

This complex but accessibly expressed epistemological tradition duly embraces and finely interweaves the spiritual, mystical, intellectual, social, political and other existential spheres of life. The above approach goes to demonstrate the timeless relevance of the holistic approach (*Ezumezu; Omuma-Zuru-Oke*) of weaving and transmitting knowledge. Within such a system, knowledge is chanted, recited, danced, eaten, spoken, written, drawn, worn, crafted, acted, planted, gestured, sculpted, built etc. In other words, the deliberate absence of purely institutionalized education systems in the world’s ancient societies is very revealing of a much higher understanding with respect to the subtle workings of the human mind and its best suited cognitive and learning processes.

In a striking way, such a system does represent a realization of some of the best ways of edifying the human mind, which modern societies are gradually learning is not always the closed-classroom method. As can be observed, the above system finely integrates both passive and active cognitive modalities to produce smooth and memorable learning experiences. The current work is a result of such tradition and likewise, for reasons of holistic scholarship and broader coherence, the
entire effort has been complemented with comparative references. Although this work is primarily presented in the English language, consistent efforts will be made to clarify certain employed terminologies which will be given in the Igbo language. However, given its pursuant depth, readers are equally advised to fairly familiarize themselves with the Igbo language, alongside their engagement of this work. The author hails from Mgbaka community in the village of Ururo-Umu-Dibie in Umunze, as well as the serene town of Eziagu on his matrilineal side, both in Orumba South Local Government Area, Anambra State. In the same vein, the incumbent Queen of Eziagu (Noono Eziagu) titled Oshishi Iwu is his paternal grand-aunty. For reference purposes too, ndi ihe nne mu memakwulu ife okwute na agbala mmili mgbe gboo-gboo, ka n’eme kwu ya ruo tata; anyi bu ndi nwelu ife okwute na agbala mmili na agwu anyi (my matrilineal lineage are renowned specialists in knowledge of minerals, stones in general, gemstones in particular and ancient water-spirit traditions), aka n’emekwu ife Nnerwanyi-Agwu okpu anyi ma nke taa (as of present, our ancient ancestral Agwu order of Nne-Nwanyi-Agwu-Isi-Ajata which predicates the present-day patriarchal Igbo culture is still highly active).

Ndi nna-nnam ghalu mmili, kpukwuo uzu n’mgbe gboo (my patrilineal ancestors were also accomplished Dibia-blacksmiths/technologists and noted rain-makers). Anyi bu ndi eze nka, ndi nwere udude nka na Ohaifa (our lineage is one of very ancient technicians, distinguished craftspeople and technologists of Aguata-Orumba and Isu Ohafia descent, whose traditional artistic pedigree stretches to the dimmest antiquity of humanity). Anyi bu ndi chi ji abia chi eze (we are of the lineage of those whom their Chi anciently distinguished with transcendental knowledge and wisdom in diverse areas of life), ndi ife anaro aga-aga n’anya ka nnam ochie silu kwu (those whose Agwu seldom oversights in the articulation of reality and who excel in diverse pursuits of life as my paternal grand-uncle emphasized), ife Aja Ana na ife Anyanwu tokwulu ato n’ebo anyi eri uwa (earth and solar cultuses are also well-rooted and long-practiced traditions of our clan). Utuagbaigwe iche nnam jikwu ubo ekwele me ife ogo (among other achievements, my paternal grandfather whose Ogbuefi title name
celebrates the ancient blacksmithing, artisan and technological tradition of our lineage, also did philanthropic work with artistic crafts; he crafted numerous traditional Igbo harps and gave them away freely). Mu na onwe mu bukwazi Akpa Agwu obi naabo welu no uwa (I myself have inherited simultaneously of the Agwu of both lineages).

Thus said, as a native and indigenously groomed Igbo, the greater part of the information presented in this work naturally springs from the participatory experiences of the author in both general Igbo life and Dibia work, encompassing both past and present life times. This comprises a broad spectrum of norms, practices, initiations, trials, tribulations, socializations, rigors, family traditional practices, observations etc., which the author progressively underwent in a number of lifetimes and continues to undergo currently in phases, both physically and spiritually. Additionally and more formally, a principal portion of the knowledge also derives from the author’s extensive participatory background in Igbo mystical knowledge (Abia) as a nine times reincarnated Nne-Nwanyi-Agwu-Dibia (Uwa Teghete).

As such, anam emezi ife ogo uwa m i.e. in accordance with divine law, this lifetime concludes my formal reincarnation serial as required on this Earth plane. In this regard, the author is currently in possession of eight spiritual Ofo, an advanced initiate of the Ijite-Ozi-Mgbaka Water Mystical Order of Mgbaka-Ururu, Anyaururu and Ahobulikpa-Ururu-Umu-Dibia Cultus traditions of his patrilineage. He matrilineally descends from a line of very ancient, distinguished and much-travelled Dibias of Eziagu, Ohafia, Ifite Oka and Idemmili ancestries. On the latter assertions, for posterity reasons as well as scholarly accuracy, the following findings made by Onwuegbuna (2013) in his research on the Ogbomma/Okwomma musical tradition of Igbo culture provides some historiographical insights as thus:

Suffice it to say that by 1905, with the aid of the British colonial system of clustering of communities into regions and administrative divisions, the Awka nation had already spread her octopusian tentacles to towns of distant and variant cultures like Uga, Umunze, Nsukka, Ugbawka, Ezeagu, Nkwere, etc. This is the explanation for some homogeneity in cultural practices among these communities (Njoku, 2002; Oformata, 1978; Okafor, 1992; Ozigbo, 1999). Egwu Okwomma and other forms of Ogene (metal gongs and clapperless bells)
music are popular amongst these various cultures up till date. Even though the history of its origin may not be readily available, its survival has been largely dependent on oral tradition and patrimonial systems of transfer. The presence of variations in the name of this musical culture—like Ogbomma in Aguata and Idemili areas—is rather a dialectical case. The etymological study still reveals the same musical phenomenon in its meaning and practice. (p. 3)

Infact, the Igbo Okwomma musical tradition has survived in such faraway places as Papua New Guinea as Kwoma, which is both the name of a cultural group, an art tradition as well as a musical form. The Kwoma are one of the diverse cultural groups found along the Sepik River in Northeastern Papua New Guinea. They have lived on the Peilungua Mountains north of the Sepik River as far as they can remember (See Plates 1a and b). The Kwoma are also reputed to be the most culturally productive group in this geographical area. Encyclopedia Britannica (2013) gathers that they continue to celebrate yam cults as well as Earth Goddess cults, much like Igbo people, in ritual houses that are “…basically roofs supported on posts, without wall. The ridgepoles of the houses were carved with mythical characters, human and animals” (para. 1). In other words, a slightly modified extension or continuation of the Mbari and Obi traditions are what we have here.

Likewise, extant documented sources as generated by diverse scientific disciplines of modern scholarship will be appropriately employed and integrated in the present work. In the same vein, the author will like to emphasize, for the benefit of prospective scholars and researchers in this area, the inevitable extended participant mode of socialization that is necessary for any in-depth acquirement of the caliber of indigenous knowledge herein presented and expounded. Iroegbu (2011) gives us a sense of who the Dibia really is in relation to his/her responsibility, the natural world, as well as the extensive knowledge resources of Igbo culture; accordingly pointing out the centrality of a sustained ancestral background in this practice for all concerned:

The Dibia stands out as a cultural ethical ritual logician who welcomes, directs and provides endogenous means of interactive embodiments and cosmology of life forces as a whole. A Dibia is therefore a master of the land
ethos – offering ancestral wisdom, customs and traditions of being and becoming… I think it is important to recognize the massive authority and power that a Dibia embodies and weighs in the things of the land – calming down (ijiala, ibiala, di-ibiala) – a master who re-authors the land. Entirely, a Dibia for the Igbo is a cosmological engineer – a relational order builder of this world and that world, health and society, descent and blood, kin-people and neighbors, fortune and misfortune, fecundity and expansion…. In other words, a Dibia is to be seen as the existential ground of culture, knowledge system, of the land and all else. (para. 5)

With regards to the original meaning, personality, qualification, status, influence and importance of the Dibia in Igbo society of the dim past, the present, as well as the currently evolving direction of this crucial vocation, Dr. Chidi Gideon Osuagwu (2013) who is currently Professor of Biochemistry and Biotechnology at Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) and who was nominated to UNESCO in 2005 by the Imo State Government as a Living Human Treasure resulting from his work on African Cosmology, himself the descendant of an ancient and renowned lineage of Dibias from Obowu in Imo State – has this to say:

I always tell people that I am from a family of medicine men. In the Igbo cosmology, medicine men are the Dibias, but here Dibia connotes more than medicine and healing, they were the elites and intellectuals who held and guarded the knowledge base of the Igbo people. (para. 1)

It goes therefore to say that, as Dibias are known to have been used by God since the dawn of humanity to reveal crucial knowledge and solutions to many of the ailments, crisis, difficulties and situations that aggravate the human condition, accordingly, there is today, a monumental need for the current Dibias/Dibia lineages of Igboland and the prospective reincarnating ones to fervently and innovatively engage the present-day lifeworld of Igbo people towards an end goal of providing innovative, practical and novel epistemic knowledge, which could lead to the solving of some of the global crisis and issues that currently face Igbo people, Africa and humanity at large. Indeed, as cultural custodians and innovators of pivotal importance in the grand
theatre of Igbo culture, they should realize the strategic need of ardently taking up the existent tools of contemporary scholarship, communication systems, amenities, enterprise, civic provisions as well as the emerging scientific and technological tools and seek out complementary or even novel mediums of bringing the fascinating multidimensional universe of Igbo culture and civilization to the 21st century world. This is a task whose time is overdue.


It is also dedicated to all Igbo people, living and ascended and to all persons genuinely interested in the Igbo way of being, as well as to humanity as large. As earlier stated, if one thing can be asserted with definitude on the contemporary reality of the Igbo world, it is the fact that Odinala and its unfathomable depth and span of ageless mysteries is yet to be stirred or seriously engaged by Igbo scholars of this age and time. However, in the near future, when this happens, there is no doubt that the world will be shocked beyond its wits at the depth and scope of the open secrets that has stared humanity in the eyes for several millennia, unscathed, in Igboland. In writing this book, it is the author’s strongest hope that, with the present wave of cultural revival sweeping its way through all corners of Igbo life and consciousness, a revitalized interest will be sparked in Igbo people, both young and old, towards the appreciation of this primal fountain of their culture. As over the years, we have doggedly succeeded in making headways in the grand task of retrieving and reimplementing our essential history as a people, it also bears upon us to expend similar degrees of that egalitarian energy notable with us, towards the recovery, reinvigoration and ultimate perpetuation of our timeless sacred traditions.

Igbo ga adi!

Odinala ga adi!

Omenala Igbo ga adi!

Udo ga ato-ato n’uwa!
Culture is such a vital force of human existence, so sublimely vital that, we have come to regard it as both a need and obsession. In more than one way, it is a natural human pursuit that has its roots in the primal providence of diversity. If we consider culture to be an identity catalyst, the very creative ocean of social existence, then civilization, which thrives on the equally vital necessities of social cohesion and sustenance—will be the numerous divergent rivers that have their sources in that primal ocean called culture. Ironically, human history thus far has shown that nearly every civilization known to us, began its march or somehow traces its origins to a river valley, sea port or
ocean-sustained environment. Culture is consequently an inexhaustible primal ocean of assorted shades, extracted uniquely by each being or group but ultimately revealing a single purpose: the fermentation of beingness. It is yet another form of the proverbial waters of the beginning which continues to feed the numerous rivers and rivulets of the human experience. Culture is inevitably a process; an ever evolving, ever catalyzing process that sprouts civilization now and then as its seasonal yield. The process itself is infinite in potentials, the product however—is not. Yet, underpinning both culture and civilization within the sphere of human existence is the hydra-headed notion of cosmology, which is at the very center of every human worldview. In turn, cosmology itself thrives on the innate human drive to pierce through the heavy curtain of mystery which so thickly surrounds life and the universe in which life thrives. Prior the expansion of occidental mores and lifeways to other parts of the world, there were a host of indigenous worldviews which, as will be demonstrated in the present work, were underpinned by highly advanced cosmological systems; the intricate workings of which were erroneously mistaken for lofty fancies by many a close-minded outsiders—perhaps, arising from the sheer communicative and adaptive brilliance of their innate knowledge. Obi Nwakanma (2012) who is one of the finest Igbo intellectual geniuses of this day and age has articulated the following with regards to the elusive simplicity that tends to characterize Igbo knowledge systems and lifeways and which can often mislead the less knowledgeable, foreigner or ignorant Igbo person to arrive at the wrong conclusion:

Before Lever Brothers made soap with palm oil, my great, great, great grandmother made soap called "Ncha Obo" from the cured husks of the palm bunch, and made "Elu aki" from the palm nuts – all organic. It took a highly scientific knowledge to process the cassava roots, and remove its cyanide content through fermentation. That knowledge of Chemistry happened at the most basic domestic laboratories - the kitchen. Every village boy knew precisely the kind of bird, its pattern of flight, and calculated the rate of
velocity of its motion simply by listening to bird calls. An awareness of this is at the roots of aeronautical science. In my part of the world, rising just above the outlies of the Niger delta, in its dry plains with dried river beds from years of environmental changes, the people discovered new methods of water preservation by creating artificial lakes which we call, "Iyi Ala" and just around these artificial lakes, were protected forests and herbarium which they called, "Ohia mmo" (the Christians later called "evil forest" or "ajo-ofia"). Until our contemporary scientists take a step back to study carefully the extent and archive of scientific knowledge present in our various social order, we'll continue to dwell in the wilderness. Among the most startling discoveries for me in the last fifteen years of closely studying the Igbo knowledge systems is its energy law connected to its productive systems and to a profound environmental consciousness only now becoming real to Western science. (para. 1-5)

Today, modern science is practically at the edge of mysticism. The ancient wisdom of _aku fechaa odara awo_ (after all its flight and ululations, the termite eventually falls for the waiting toad) is startlingly coming into reality before our eyes. What does this mean for the majority of contemporary humanity who have been taught or are still been taught that the older cultures of the world have absolutely nothing to offer the modern age in these important areas of pursuits? Orindare (2012) has appropriately questioned:

Is there any society that can be said to have no knowledge of science, no matter how underdeveloped? Some decades back, some Harvard scientists used...palm oil to make napalm bomb. If our progress was not altered by slavery, then colonialism, could we have reached the same end (albeit not the negative one)? My answer is in the affirmative. (para. 2-3)

The natural sciences, as of present, are having sleepless nights, seeking for a plausible grand unified cosmological system with which to unify all its divergent disciplines. However, this grand unified system which it seeks is no new idea at all. Infact, it has always existed in the well-advanced, pre-western-hegemony cosmological traditions of the world. The Igbo _Akwa-Nne-Okpoko_ cosmology for
instance, is a highly-developed grand unified cosmological system and so is the *Ulidereuwa* cosmology (See Plate 1c). Dr. Chidi G. Osuagwu (2010) of recent, has also illuminated the highly adaptive network-based *Uwaizu* cosmology, which operates on the organic principle of *Erima* (natural-networking) and which is also a grand unified system from all indications. Likewise, Jonathan O. Chimakonam (2012), whose recent ingenious articulations of Igbo-African scientific and philosophical epistemologies throws great light on our subject—has also stated categorically that:

Africans have long standing scientific practices which cut across astronomy, soil, crop and animal sciences, botany, metrology, orthopedic, chemistry and medical sciences, to mention just a few. (p. 10-11)

Unfortunately, modern scholars and scientists are yet to realize that most of what they have wrongly relegated as myths in these elder cultures were actually innovatively expressed codifications of both quantum and post-quantum cosmologies or world-systems, which were articulated using quantum-level mathematics, as subsumed in the *Ifa, Fa, Aha-Ominigbon* or *Afa Akpukpala* mystic matrix-system of divination/oracularion in the case of many West African cultures. Victor Manfredi (2013), for instance, has aptly captured the basic nature of the *Afa/Ifa* oracle as thus:

Áfa and Ifá are two of many localizations of a farflung West African ‘oracle’ (information retrieval system) whose digital processor keys natural language text to 256 ordered pairs of 4-bit arrays (ordered binary sets). (p. 1)

John Umeh (1999) has likewise described the *Afa* oracle as “a mystic super-computer of limitless capacity as well as limitless retrieval abilities” (p. 68). Accordingly, it is only a natural fact that these extant epistemological traditions of humankind have a profound wealth of knowledge to bequeath the modern sciences, as they gear up to make the proverbial quantum leap into post-empirical reality. Indeed, all extant cosmological systems of the modern scientific establishment of
the occident are articulated using the empirical or basic mathematical system, or what is known as Ogugu (lit. basic counting) in Igbo culture, and expressed in ivory-tower academic jargon, which can be very pretentious and in most cases, often ends up discouraging even a basic understanding of concepts. In contrast with the less known Igbo cosmological tradition, which articulates reality using a quantum-level mathematical system or what is known to the Igbo Dibia as Odu-Afa or Odu-n’ebu-Afa (lit. Odu that "carries" the sacred Afa matrix) and expressed in highly accessible mythological templates, the former will appear to have relegated the purpose of its existence, which is really to enlighten the less knowledgeable and not confuse them. Having said so, it will be observed that in every existent culture and religious tradition of the world, there is always to be found at least, one sacred primordial account that is held by the adherents of that system as their exclusive account of how the universe, life and humanity came into existence. Traditionally, in the older and sustained societies of yesteryears, the literary codification and presentation of these grand events were accomplished in such manners that, the diverse accounts coherently functioned at many levels for the given audience. In addition, throughout the formulation of these accounts, more often than not, two basic rubrics are consistently observed, namely: clarity and concrete symbolism. And in so doing, ancient societies were able to chart their cultural and spiritual origins, as well as prospects, in such a breathtakingly simple way, that modern thought is yet to transcend their genius. The contemporary world, resultedly, is yet to fully grasp the vastly intricate functions which myths had in societies of yesterday. As accounts of primordial, cosmic and Earthly events, varying from the more conventional legends and sagas associated with human heroic feats, myths had a great mystique about them. However, in dealing closely with the essential idea of what a myth is expected to convey in the captured imagination and intellect of its
audience, it becomes important to briefly revisit what exactly is meant by the term *myth*. Ron Cherry (2012) writes that:

Mythology is a fascinating subject that has caught the interest of people from time immemorial. On a superficial level, myths provide colorful stories of interactions between gods, goddesses, people, and nature. Hercules battling monsters, Odysseus returning home, and the Thunderbird swooping down in American skies are examples of dramatic and better known myths... However, beyond providing colorful stories, myths also serve several useful functions. One important function of myths is to explain some feature of life (Leach 1984, Bierlein 1994, Jay 1996). How did my people get fire? Why does a zebra have stripes? Why should I be good? Where will I go when I die? Questions such as these are the subject matter of mythology. (p. 134)

Given the extensiveness of scholarly investigations that have dealt with the nature and function of myths, it can be deduced that myths are readily classifiable for our purpose, into four main types i.e. spiritual cum religious, cosmological, natural and socio-political myths. Eventually forming a synchronistic whole, the functional nature of myths in ancient societies were far more complex than is generally assumed today. To the ancient mind, myths were not some fancy, simplistic narratives of cultural importance to be retained at the backlog of the mind. Myths were very powerful narratives that unfolded the primordial becoming of the world and everything in it. In their truest essence, they were highly innovative, symbolically-laden, world-system-templates which communicated the exclusive worldview of a given culture. As such, they were the metaphysical and intellectual pillars on which the culture and its lifeworld rested and whose pragmatic imports commanded the same regards as are accorded the religious theologies, philosophical traditions, historical records, scientific theories, legalities, national treatises and policies, trade charters, customary edicts, occupational principles and ethics, etc. of our contemporary societies. As highly resourceful agencies of human instruction, organization and ultimately enwisdomization,
myths functioned as multilayered matrixes of knowledge. Indeed, more revered were the cosmogonic myths, as they represented the prime epistemic source of a culture’s sacred traditions and observed ordinances. Accordingly, this particular category of myths were more often than not, designed to symbolically and sometimes directly highlight the major realities, principles, norms and values animating the spiritual, natural as well as civic world of a people. However, even as it was conventional for most members of the society to comprehend the moral, spiritual, social and literary dimensions of these myths, their often recondite, mystical imports were only revealed to initiates, in gradual means, as they advanced in their respective initiatic orders. However, today, with the advent of modernity and varying civic strains in the African consciousness, we are witnessing a gradual change in this approach. It should likewise be borne in mind that in the past, the usual conditions which necessitated the awareness of such sacred narratives were much defined by one’s geo-cultural realities. Unlike today, it was not unusual for most people to be completely unaware of other differing creation stories, as articulated by other cultural groups beyond their immediate locality. In retrospective contrast, the majority of Igbo people today are fully conversant with the creation accounts of the Abrahamic religions, while being completely ignorant of those of Igbo culture. I think it is worthy to offer that, given the profound age of the Igbo as a people as well as their cultural experiment so far, it is somewhat difficult, even for some Igbos themselves, to immediately grasp the deeply lying wisdom embedded in their ways. Perhaps, the notion of Ume Ala comes handy as an explanatory antidote to this situation. As that subtle word signifies, the Igbo will appear to consider the virtue of humility to be embodied in the notion of oneness with the primal Earth Spirit evident in nature to the point of perceiving her life pulsations. For the person who succeeds in perceiving the much subtle pulsations of nature will find it less difficult to perceive the
sublime and calmly pulsating wisdom underlying the Igbo way of life. As such, Igbo culture speaks, but in a quiet voice that has been timbered with great age. It is perhaps, this requirement of combined patience and humility that has made it understandably hard for the contemporary generations of Igbo people to be illuminated with the wisdom of their timeless cultural ways. Consequently, the profound moral teachings, practical and mystical knowledge embodied in many Igbo creation accounts have been impatiently relegated to the convenient shelves of the psyche in many contemporary instances. Such creation accounts include those of Eke na Chi, Nneckukwu, Eze Mmiri na Ezenwanyi Nwe Mmiri, Alawula, Idoto, Igwe, Omaliko, Ikenga, Idemmili, Uto, Odo, Nwayiri-Ugo-Nwanyi-Ijere, Chukwu Ogba, Chukwu Abiama, Chukwu Ukpa Abia, Okpoko na Nne Ya, Oshuru, Agu-Nkwo, Ogbuide, Ele Ushi, Ojukwu, Udude Nka, Kamalu Ozuzu, Iyi Oji, Iyi Afọ, Olisa Ekezu, Agal Aka Okpu, Utu-Udele-Igwe, Iyi Nkwo, Iyi Eke, Iyi Orie, Akputakpu na Uno Uzu, Ogwuala na Asoihe, Ojebogene, Adu Chukwu, Anunuebe Ndi Mbu, Ngwu, Akpu Nwanyi Dibia, Ukpaka Ozo Igbo Ndu, Awolo Igwe na Nkwu Chukwu, Anyanwu na Ubochi, Anyanwu na Eze Elu, Umu Nkwo, Umu Iruro Ogba, Umu Iruro Agu, Umu Iyi, Ora Azu, Eke Nti Oba, Okpoko Nnunu Okpu, Nkenu Nwa Ufeneg, Ihejioku Umu Ala, Eze Ero na Ajadu Eze Ero, Oba Ushi, Ada Amadi, Urashi, Uto Aka, Oma na Ifenta, Eke na Egwurugwu, Oba na Eke, Dinta na Igwe Nkita, Inyom Igwe n’Asaa, Ndi Ushi Aka Asato, Agwu na Umu Anwu, Ogugu Ojemgbaka, Ogwugwu na Udo, Nne Ofo, Nne Arọ, Nne Egbe, Nne Mkpume, Ochie Igwe, Ndi Ije n’Anọ (Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo) etc. For instance, Eneke the house dwelling birds are known to build their nests with such efficiency and durability that it often takes a cutlass or such sturdy blades to get them off the wall or ceiling! This reveals universal consciousness at work, manifested as a heightened sense of determination towards ecological coexistence. Accordingly, mythological accounts that incorporate this ancient bird specie ultimately points to the Igbo age of Uga Chi when nature and human
beings consciously set out to innovate highly efficient ways of coexisting. In fact, it should be noted that most of the birds we see today and take for granted are actually some of the remnants of dinosaurs (*Anu-Nganga-Nkwu*) that have successfully adapted to an entirely different earth. This is an enormous feat that calls for serious investigation; a phenomenon so pronounced that, the future inhabiters of our planet will be greatly taken aback at the level of our general ignorance and indifference towards it. Two American scientists, Jarvis and Chen (2013) in their research trail of seeking to recreate the brain of dinosaurs have made some stirring headways that align with our discourse here. It is noted of their research that: 

To recreate the dinosaur brain, the US researchers first studied the brains of alligators and birds. Alligators (*Oba Mmiri*) came from a lineage that predated many dinosaurs, while the first birds evolved afterwards. On that basis, Jarvis and his colleague Chun-Chun Chen argue that the dinosaur brain should have evolved to be somewhere in between. (p. 7; emphasis mine)

A very ancient and renowned Igbo wisdom on birds/nature goes thus: *uzu ma akpu ogene ya kpuo ka afu n’anya*, *uzu amaho akpu ogene ya nee egbe anya n’odu* i.e. the blacksmith who knows how to fashion the twin iron gong should demonstrate so efficiently; the smith who does not know how to do so should observe the tail of the kite. Even before the inception of the smithing art-technology, the birds taught their knowledge of nest weaving (*etu nnunu si akpa akwu ya*) to women, who in turn employed this in weaving baskets (*Ukpa/Abo*), fishing net (*Ugbu Azu*), mats (*Ute*) etc. As some of the oldest creatures on Earth, birds have a great deal to teach human beings, especially with regards to the knowledge of different states of consciousness and the subtle processes involved in the transformation of consciousness from one state to another. It is very striking that within a time span of 66,038,000 million years, birds have successfully evolved from enormous gliding dinosaurs into compact ether fishes, having mastered to swim in the ocean of ether (air). The next stage in their
evolutionary process will most plausibly involve the replacement of their digestive system with a more advanced one, and an eventual elimination of this system altogether, which will afford them the ability to return back to their original feeding menu of divine food with God, as well enshrined in the ancient Igbo legend of the birds and the tortoise’s trip to God’s house to partake in a divine feast. In the said tale, it should be noted that, the birds are said to visit God’s house (Be Chukwu) frequently to partake in a divine feast and meal. Whilst in this divine abode of God, the birds are had no individual name or identity (Somuadina) and thus, when the food is served out to them, it was presented to them with the collective appellation Unu n’Ile, meaning All-of-You = Universal Consciousness and Universal Mind. They visited this divine abode of God’s house and participated in this divine meal for many ages and kept its existence a secret amongst themselves, until a famine descended on the land of animals. After some time, the tortoise in its intelligence was able to notice that the birds appeared to be unaffected by this famine. On approaching them, however, he was turned down. But after several weeks of solicitation, he was considered. On the decided day, all the birds agreed to donate one feather each to the tortoise and with this, the tortoise was able to fashion an effective wing for himself. The wing was attached to his body with saliva donated by the Parrot, the Kite and the Hornbill. The journey lasted for two days and two nights and on arriving God’s house, a heavy banquet was served to them as usual. But before then, the tortoise did something very strange. Just before the food was ready to be served, the Tortoise announced to the birds that he had a very good idea. He suggested that the idea of not having very colorful names to go with their colorful feathers was very uncool, to say the least. The birds looked at each other and nodded in agreement. He further suggested that they should all take a name with which they will be saluted on been served their food, which will add to their prestige as visitors. The idea sounded quite novel and
harmless and so the birds all began to declare their new names. When it got to the turn of the tortoise, he said that his new name was *Unu Dum/n’lle* (lit. All-of-You). The birds became worried on hearing this, highly aware of the Tortoise’s legendary craftiness. God, on the other hand, had no idea of this new development and still addressed the birds with their original, collective name, which the Tortoise had now hijacked as his new individual title. As the meals were dished out, one after the other, it was presented to the visitors as All-of-You (*Unu Dum*), which now stood for the Tortoise alone, unbeknownst to God. The divine hosts served out all the available food and at this point, the birds realized that things were getting worse. They complained, but were quickly reminded that they were in God’s house and God does not hear the second word = second name, second response, second complaints etc. The birds were devastated. Meanwhile, the Tortoise was busy in its table consuming as much food as its stomach could take. The birds watched on in great shock, anger and confusion at the same time. When it was time for drinks, the same process repeated itself with the drinks been presented to them as All-of-You (*Unu Dum/Unu n’lle*). As the feast came to an end, the birds quickly converged and decided to take away their feathers from the Tortoise, one after the other. They also vowed to never bring along any other non-birds on their subsequent trips to God’s house. With this, they each proceeded to unattach their feathers from the Tortoise’s shell-body. Sad, hungry and disappointed, they all flew off, leaving the greedy Tortoise behind to fend for himself.

After much thinking, recollection and self-admonishment, the Tortoise summoned courage and dived off into the deep sky (*Elu Igwe*). The divine wind (*Ikuku Chukwu*) that emanated from God’s house bore him for a while and so he was able to float his way into the Earth’s atmosphere. But on getting into the Earth’s atmosphere, he suddenly realized how devastating his awaiting fate was. He quickly began to call out to his wife (*Nwunye Mbe*) to bring out all the soft
materials in the house to the front yard. His wife on hearing him from afar, mistook his request and instead, brought out all the hardest things she could find in the house. The Tortoise was out of luck. He crash landed, shattering his once impeccable shell into fragments and tiny smithereens. After many days, his wife was able to piece back what little was left of his broken shell, using the saliva of a generous snail. But ultimately, as a result of his greed, the shell of the Tortoise never completely healed. It hence forth revealed an apparent patchwork of a once shattered shell, thereby baring his early painful encounter with the birds to all and sundry to observe. In shame, whenever the Tortoise is asked by onlookers (by way of touching its shell) to narrate what happened to its patch-like shell, it would deny/shy away from narrating his ordeal (by hiding itself in its shell)!

If we may digress for a moment here, it should be noted that since time immemorial, Igbo mystics are known to keep such animals as forest birds, chameleons, tortoise, turtles, snakes and baboons etc. in their compounds. These animals are always kept as spirit messengers, for they convey the messages of nature more acutely than most, given their highly developed intuitive faculties. As a matter of fact, the turtle (Nwa Aniga) that birthed the tortoise (Mbe-Nwa-Aniga) is the most ancient of the reptile groups of family. Accordingly, the Igbo people have always believed that this reptile is a kind of mobile encyclopedia of the Earth’s extensive natural history, thus its name Aniga lit. Long Enduring.

Its mystic appellation as articulated by Ndi Dibia also emphasizes this and says even more about this very ancient, sea creature: Anu-Ukwu-Ma-Uzo-be-Chukwu/Anu-Ukwu-Jelu-Ozi-be-Chukwu i.e. the great creature that knows the route to God’s abode/realm; famed creature of old that took humanity’s message to God’s abode = unfathomably deep intuitive capability housed in a creature that has lived so long as to master the back-and-forth routes to God’s house = a sacred animal.

It is worthy of note that the earliest known turtle fossils date back to
220 million years ago! This is by far, the oldest known date acquired for any group from the reptile family, making it a more ancient group than lizards, snakes or crocodiles. That Turtles are also classified in modern science as amniotes, along with reptiles, dinosaurs (including birds) and even mammals is also highly remarkable; pointing to the deep layers and great span of knowledge underlying the central presence of the tortoise in Igbo-African mythologies and folktales, especially its illustrious close encounters with human beings. On this, Dibias would readily assert in instances of philosophical exchange that: *O mmadu wu mbekwu* lit. it is the human being that is hidden in the tortoise of Igbo tales. Also, *O mbekwu ka eboro ihe nile mmadu mekolatara, mana o mmadu letere na mbekwu macha were kwe n’ishi* i.e. all the wrong acts done by human beings are heaped on the tortoise in Igbo tales, but it’s also the human being that discovered that the tortoise is aware of this and actually nodded in concurrence. In this sense, *okwu Igbo bu n’ilu n’ilu, o malu uche akpa ya kpazie omimi* lit. Igbo communication is in metaphors and subtleties; it is up to the eager mind to pursue and decipher the meanings of the alluded references in nature. Both the shell of the turtle and the tortoise (especially the turtle) are held to contain every single evolutionary morphology, mutation etc. that have occurred on our planet! In practice of this belief, in the Igbo mystical tradition, the shell of both the tortoise and the turtle have been used by *Ndi Dibia* since very ancient times for several mystical purposes, including the programming of *Afa Akpukpala* divination portals and in a special, highly complex divination technique called *Afa-Otukwu-Gbazulu-Ikwu-Nwa-Mbekwu* (elemental divination that utilizes the shell of the tortoise). *Otukwu* is *Ofu Akwu* in *Afa* = forest–water–mineral elemental world i.e. mind and memory realm of the earth. The bones and salted tongue of the Turtle or Tortoise are also used in this special divination technique which the present author has developed to very advanced levels of application. The tongue of the female turtle (*Ile Inyom Aniga*) is also a
vital component in the preparation of memory retention elixirs (*Ogwu-Echewe-Echeta*). The medicinal applications of the tortoise are as infinite as the sands of the earth. Key applications include nerve related conditions, brain related conditions, optical conditions etc. Thus said, a great deal of the narratives that spring out of the earlier listed oral traditions fall under the Igbo oral literary category of *Ita Okike/Akiko Okike* i.e. creation myths or epics, *Akiko Mgbe Okpu* or *Akiko Ndi Ichie* category (legends of the first times and the ancestors) and the much celebrated category of *Iruro-na-Egwu* (i.e. folktale and songs, but literally, tales and songs that blossom and branch-off like flowers with each telling). Of note, in their telling, both categories habitually incorporate *Mbem-na-Abu* elements (i.e. compact chanted poetry and extensive chanted poetry). Also, the public recitation of compact poetic verses is known as *Ima Mbem* (lit. throwing poetic verses). The key thing to note at this point is that, regardless of what contemporary Igbo penchant conceives of these narrative traditions and their mystic epistemological sources, they remain what they are: the original underlying sources of the Igbo cosmological and worldview modalities. They embody the unwritten corpus of Igbo collective knowledge, wisdom, traditions, moralities, life principles, socio-civic ordinances and observations etc., ingeniously encoded into highly assessable, oral mnemonic forms. Nwakanma (2008) aptly notes in this regard that:

It is true that every religion is constructed around its own myths. Many such myths incomplete and inexplicable. Odinala included. But Odinala is not only religion, it is a way of a people's life: that is the meaning of religion too: why you name a child "Ezejiofo" or "Oguamanam," why you sow at a particular time of the year, and harvest at another; why you bury a child's "alo" under his/her tree of life; why you bury a full man when the sun is going down and not at the bright of noon; why the "ulu" (second daughter) anoints the body of her mother with "elu-aki" before its buried and why the "Ada" (first born girl) gives her father the last ritual bath of cleansing at his death; why the Igbo discuss any meaningful thing at the very early morning, when the day begins
to "open its mouth" and not at the dead of night (considered time for the planning of evil); your idea of time ("oge") or the mystery of the day ("Ubochi"); why you have "izu" and why each is dedicated to some symbolic observance. (para. 1)

Frankly, the level of spiritual and cultural ignorance observed in the Igbo society of our time is such a looming omen that, one cannot even begin to wonder at the wrathful extent of its climax effects in the fullness of time. Fortunately, there appears to be a glint of reassuring light on the horizon, as all over the world, Ndi Igbo are gradually waking up from their slumber of many thousand years and are zealously recovering their cultural memory. In many cases, the significant premises of these myths have been ingeniously condensed into such convenient axiomatic dictums as, 

- *Uwa bu afia, onye zusia onakwulu Chi*: the cosmos is a grand market, after trading one returns to Chi;
- *Uwa wu ntiko-ntiko na obi Chukwu wara awa*: life is a cautious affair as ruled by Creation;
- *Uwa na uru ya n’ine bu atutu Olisa*: the universe and all its manifested aspects are the result of divine thought or mind;
- *Uwa bu Ijele mmonwu, akwuro ofu ebe enene ya*: the world is a grand masquerade, you can’t appreciate its entirety from a single view or fixed point;
- *Uwa bu egwu, onye o daalu o gbaba*: the world is a moving musical cavalcade, if the tunes come your way, you dance along;
- *Egwu uwa wu egwu okoso*: the universe moves in the same way as the Okoso cosmological game;
- *Uwa wu o gaziere onye orie*: the blessed enjoys the world in its fullness;
- *Enu uwa bu olili, onye nosia onaba*: the world is a grand vacation experience, after enjoying it, we return home;
- *Uwa bu ogodo eze enu wa n’ukwu, okike n’ine no nime ya*: the world is a colossal toga on the waist of the Supreme Divinity who resides high up, all created beings are bound within it;
- *Uwa aburo b’anyi*: the world is not our home;
- *Ihe anyi biara n’uwa wu ize mmiri, o mmiri tuo awuru onye no nga ya alaa*: we are in this world like water escapees residing on land that belongs to the waters, thus when the waters throw forth waves in our directions, whoever is caught up in the
waves returns to the source; okike wu nnukwute iyi n’eri oshimiri, anaghi egwocha ya egwocha: creation is an ever expanding body of water that swallows even the ocean of the earth, one cannot swim its entire span; uche wu eze okorotom ohia ana epio ya epio/amamihe bu oke ohia, anaghi epiocha ya epiocha: the one Universal Mind is an infinitely colossal forest of unfathomable diversity, one cannot fully meander through its entirety. Likewise knowledge is a great forest, one can never cover its complete span; ebe ihe mere uwa wu n’ukwu ukpaka: all the world’s ordeal begun at an oil bean tree; Chukwu nyere ala ofo k’onyeruo mmadu: God gave the sacred Ofo staff to Ala the primal Earth Spirit to eventually hand it to human beings; mmadu si n’ala pute: human beings sprouted from the ground etc. As can be observed in one of the above given dictums, the clarification of the Ofo ritual staff as the most sacred of symbols directly handed to human beings by Chukwu is captured in both an epigrammatic and figurative way by the designation of its source as the womb of the Earth Goddess. In effect, one actually observes here, the progression of an essentially spiritual conviction, into a mystical, cosmogonic, cosmological, natural, socio-civic and ritual conventions. Thus, if mythic accounts, as held in most African oral traditions can be logically materialized in such coherent, realistic and practical manners, it ultimately begs the question: how really unreal are these myths? For this reason, it is just as evident that the contemporary erroneous perception of the mythic traditions of the world’s ancient cultures as "unscientific" or "irrational" measures of justification employed by ancient societies in their bid to explain their world is fundamentally an irrational, illogical and hypocritical assessment in itself; one that has outstayed its course in the human common consciousness and is accordingly, experiencing the final pangs of its demise as we gradually observe the subtle merging of modern scientific tradition with the ancient mystic traditions of the world, now anglicized as “quantum sciences”. Thus, as employed in this work, myths are to be understood as the metaphysical
cosmological templates of humanity’s ancient mystic traditions, which inter alia, incorporates all aspects and dimensions of reality (Be Chukwu, Be Mmadu na Be Mmuo) in its investigation, articulation and diverse practical applications. In this very sense, a sharply defined but bridgeable difference observably exists between the latter and the highly limited, reductionist-oriented cosmological templates articulated by the modern occidental scientific tradition, which is yet to encounter, properly discern and articulate the two other complementary zones of reality long recognized by the Igbo mystic tradition, namely Be Chukwu na Be Mmuo or Ani Mmuo i.e. Divine Realm and other higher existential realms, both of which the Igbo cosmological tradition articulates as Uwa-toro-Uwa, Uwa-Okpu, Uwa Mbu, Uwa Nge, Uwa-mulu-Uwa etc. In the Igbo tradition, it is often emphasized that, to articulate the universe in a mythopoeic consciousness is to assume – even if for a moment – the mind of the divine (Uche-ka-Uche/Aka Uche) which transcends all languages, epistemological systems, idealisms and human dualistic constructs. To understand and engage the universe and human existence through myths is to transcend the crippling limitations of individual consciousness. In the epi realm of myths, all beings are primordially unified and inseparable. The mythic motif of the Primordial House (Obi Mbu) which is at the heart of this work is merely one among several metaphysical templates that Igbo people have employed in their comprehensive cosmological tradition. In the subsequent chapters, the latter will be explicitly and extensively demonstrated. However, from the author’s observation and extensive engagement with the Igbo mythic tradition, it appears that at the heart of this tradition are about nine principal, traditional templates adhered by many Igbo oral traditions, regardless of where found. In addition, countless sub-templates also exist as formulated and employed by varied Igbo communities, the listing and study of which will take separate individual volumes to innumerate, but some of these will be
given here. The nine recurrent templates are listed below along with some sub-templates. From all indications, there were probably other now atrophied or lost forms in the past. And as of present, many potential ones are in their early stages of formulation. It should be understood that Igbo culture maintains a sort of fluid epistemological tradition in which world systems are continually created, revamped, modified, abandoned, retrieved as necessitated by the age and proclivities of the extant generation. But as earlier stated, these nine are highly prevalent. As for the sub-templates, there are virtually hundreds of these and probably thousands more have existed in the unfathomable antiquity of Igbo people. In most cases, a complex integration of a few is utilized as pragmatically required.

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<tr>
<th>Igbo World Systems</th>
<th>Associated Traditions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Uwa Wara Awa</td>
<td>Akwa Nne Okpoko, Owuwa Oji, Owuwa Anwu, Ukpaka, Nwachinemelu, Obata Osu, Nne Mkpuke, Obi Chukwu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uwa Puru Ama</td>
<td>Ama Mbu, Ama Okpu, Ama Akwali, Ama Uro, Ama Ogba, Ama Ngwu, Ama Uzu, Ama Okwe, Ama Achara, Ayaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uwa Selu Ese</td>
<td>Oshimiri, Aka Ete, Ebili-Mmili, Osebiliriuwa, Ekwe Nne Iyi, Iyi Ora, Iyi Afor, Iyi Eke, Iyi Ori, Iyi Nkwo, Owumowu Mmiri, Iyi Enu, Ndi-Enwe-Iro, Nnemwanyi Isi Ajata, Eze-Iyi-Eri-Oba,</td>
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<td>Uwa Pulu Epu</td>
<td>Udala Nwa Aka, Nkwu Olisa, Aduchukwu, Mma Adu, Adu Oma, Aka Ululu, Nkwu Ora, Mkp Aka, Oha, Ukwa na Nku Ukwa, Akpu Nwanyi Dibia, Ochi Aba</td>
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<td>Uwa Kwelu Izu</td>
<td>Anyanwu na Ubochi, Izu Igbo, Izu Chi, Uda, Oha, Oji, Uziza, Uga Uwa, Eze-Di-Uga, Ora Azu, Akwu na Obi, Obi Mbu na Obi Uga</td>
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<td>Uwa Atulu Atu</td>
<td>Udude Nka, Otutu-n’aka, Atu-Nnenwanyi-Chukwu, Ulichukwudelu, Ogba Uta Agwu, Ita Atu Oha Dibia, Otutunzu, Ndi Ututu, Atu-tuo-Owuru, Nzuchukwu, Chi Fotelu Uwa, Atu Oma, Ututu Mulu Uwa, Ojionu, Ogbangbada</td>
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<td>Uwa Melu Odo</td>
<td>Ite Odo Uwa, Odo Okunano, Emume Odo, Izu Odo, Oriri Odo, Odo Ogwugwu, Iri Ji Odo, Eze Odo, Okika Odo</td>
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Igbo mythic accounts such as those centered on or incorporating principal Igbo primordial, sacred, cosmic, astral, natural, symbolic, metaphysical and mystical forces and realities as: Anyanwu, Onwa, Kpakpando na Umu Igwe, Nne Ogba, Ikenga, Egwurugwu, Agwu Isi, Eke Nwe Ofia, Oba Mmili, Akuntawaraugbo, Ele-Ushi, Elebuigbo, Oji, Ofo, Obi Chukwu, Mgba Nne Chukwu, Ahia n’Ano, Ubochi n’Ano, Chi, Eke, Uzo n’Ano, Uzo Iyi, Uzo Igwe, Uzo Anyanwu, Uzo Ogba, Mbala Ogba/Ezi Ogba, Izo Mmuo, Ama Mbu, Ije Agu, Ije Agwo, Uzo Nku, Uzo Ikpa, Uno Igwe, Uno Uzu, Azi Igwe, Agba n’Ano, Agba n’Ato, Agba n’Abo etc. traditionally invoke primal space and primal time in the Igbo memory and consciousness. In other words, these are some of the primary notions, conceptions, imageries and symbols with which the Igbos construct their worldview. Hence, among other realities, they also constitute a principal place in the much diverse and extensive tradition of Igbo cosmogony. One of such early Igbo mythic
Looming in the foreground of the cosmogonic tradition commonly known as *Uwa Wara Awa* has ironically survived today in little fragmentary portions in some Anambra and Enugu communities as *Owuwa Walu Uwa, Onwu Nne Ebele, Emume Obi Chukwu, Odachi Dalu Uwa, Odachi Komusu* etc. While it’s powerful *Mmonwu* simulacra continues to be experienced today in the Aguata-Orumba and nearby environs as the famous *Obata Osu* masquerade. It is an ironic twist of fate that, a devastating event which involved the *Obata Osu* masquerade some years ago in Igboland threw some light on the mythic foundation of this particular masquerade. This historic masquerade from the Aguata-Orumba region of Anambra State became dreadfully famous for the major ripples it created at the last pan-eastern masquerade festival (now defunct) that was once a great magnet to this part of Nigeria. The festival was stopped quite simply, because the masquerades saw it as a mere means to show off their mystic strengths, instead of the originally conceived purpose.

During the first outing of the event which was held in Enugu, an Udi masquerade succeeded in silencing the drum sets of the other masquerades through mystic means, until they paid some ransom. So the next time in Aba, they all came prepared. At Aba, the arena and atmosphere was so stuffy and charged with mystic forces of all kinds that even loitering domestic animals were reported to have been helplessly caught up in the highly charged energy-fields and resultedly, got suspended in the air for some time in certain parts of the nearby environ. There was even a startling case of flying mortar and pestle (*Odo-na-Ikwe*) arriving the scene unaccompanied. But fortunately, none of the masquerades succeeded in disrupting the festive accord this time, like the Udi mask had previously done. At the final outing of the event, which was recurrently held in Enugu, the notorious Udi masquerade returned and as usual, attempted its then famous mystic drum-silencing antics but was successfully challenged by the great *Obata Osu* masquerade of Arondizogu. Its drum-silencing
antics had succeeded in muting every other drum set except for the resilient Izuogu group. So it decided to take on the masquerades individually and ultimately, it came face to face with the great *Obata Osu* masquerade. At first, after its powerful incantations it succeeded in its aim of silencing the drum sets, but the Izuogu troupe, notable for their potent *Ogwu* and *Mmonwu* traditions, restored their sets back into full force after “breaking some eggs”. And then, regaining confidence, to everyone’s surprise, the *Obata Osu* of Izuogu set the Udi masquerade on fire through mystic means and every one took to their heels!

Basically, a ritual is the re-enactment of a myth; a mystical drama. Igbo myths are also largely generated from the extensive oracular knowledge of *Afa*. Accordingly, by performing rituals, one brings life to the mythical script underlying it whilst also participating in the myth. And since mythology is but a projection of the deep wisdom of *Chukwu Abiama*, by performing rituals, participating in the myth, one is being calibrated into alignment with supreme wisdom. In this very sense, it is to be understood that, mystical axioms are condensations of universal principles as encoded in mythical narratives. The axioms present a highly condensed version of the mythical accounts; a kind of ingenious summation. Axioms also birth proverbs, which provide the necessary roots for poetry. Poetry, in turn, outlines myths. Myths provide the framework for rituals. Rituals are the connective tissue of ceremonies; ceremonies are the driving force of festivals and festivals facilitate the presentation, experience, embodiment and observation of axioms. Igbo masquerades simulate a great diversity of mystical dramas. Bearing the above given historic event in mind, it should be realized that every Igbo masquerade is traditionally based on one specific mythic tradition or another. As such, they symbolically and theatrically exhibit many of these features in their performances for observing masquerade society initiates to decipher and enrich their wealth of mythic knowledge, and for the sheer entertainment of the uninitiated.
Nevertheless, in rare cases or as often intended, some masquerades go as far as exhibiting the mystic powers associated with their simulated spirit personifications, character, metaphysical reality or mystic principle. In this very case, we have a masquerade whose character and mystic simulation is based on the ancient fire-creation myth of *Odachi-Nne-Ebere* (*Komosu*, thus the name *Obata Osu*) and it apparently exhibited its associated elemental force when provoked beyond reprieve.

One of the longest surviving fire-elemental creation accounts of the Igbo cosmogonic tradition, the *Odachi Nne Ebere* cosmogony roughly holds that, in the epi-creation period, the only state of being that obtained was the monolithic state. Subsequently, this sacred state of being may best be described as one of unparalleled equilibrium, potent inertia or the proverbial epi-creation state of perfection, to which all beings are meant to return ultimately. Depending upon contexts, tradition and other factors, it is cosmologically articulated as *Onu Nge, Akwu, Ijite Aka, Noonoo, Ogwugwu, Ofu Aka, Ukpa Aka, Iyi Afo, Odii Ana, Oshimili, Mmuo-na-Egwu* etc. in Igbo mystical traditions. *Nno* is actually *Nne-Ono-na-Mbu* lit. Mother-Who-Was-In-The-Beginning. In other words, *Nno* is She of timelessness/the earth spirit/mother-of-all-mothers/royal mother/royal high priestess/sacred woman/great matriarch/most noble woman who wields the royal fly-whisk of buffalo tail, which symbolizes final primogenital authority i.e. *Nnenwanyi Okpu, Okpu-ka-Okpu, Oghele Okara, Ofu Oghele or Okpu-Nwanyi-Nono*. From close examination, it appears that the ancient Egyptians were also articulating the same thing as *Nun/Nwn* in their cosmogonic tradition. According to Naba Lamoussa Morodenibig (2011):

The "Nwn" is defined as the primordial waters. The primordial waters, or the primordial soup, are sometimes defined as the undefinable that contains within itself the definition of what exists. According to...initiatic education, the Nwn can also be defined as the state of inertia outside of which the
movement exists. The Nwn is the ocean of inertia that surrounds the island of becoming. The becoming is the doorway through which the existent enters the existence...The Nwn is a state of being. (para. 4-7)

This sacred epi-creation state of being which by default equally indicates an epi-time realm from whence the impending event of creation will ultimately proceed. As already stated, it was identified by the ancient Igbos as Akwu lit. primordial state, primacy, potent stillness, inertia etc. Other surviving mytho-symbolic variants or modifications of this root notion include, Ududu-Nyitelu-Akwu, Udu Mu, Ududu Chi, Igba Akwu, Iyi Atu, Iyi Akwu, Iyi-Eri-Oba (principle of infrasound), Akumtawaraugbo (principle of ultrasound) etc. In the Igbo astronomical, astrological and astrotheological traditions, it is also articulated as Obi Chukwu (House of the Supreme Chi), Obi Mbu (Primordial House), Obi Anwu (Astral Spirit House of the Sun), Obi Onwa (Astral Spirit House of the Ram), Obi Atu (Astral Spirit House of the Moon), Obi Ikenga (Astral Spirit House of the Bull), Obi Nnenwanyi Agwu (Astral Spirit House of the Primal Mother Agwu), Obi Okala Agwu (Astral Spirit House of Agwu’s Crab), Obi Awolo Ofu (Astral Spirit House of Ancient Leopard), Obi Uto Agwu (Astral Spirit House of Uto, Wife of Agwu), Obi Udene Agwu (Astral Spirit House of Agwu’s Vulture), Obi Aka Ete (Astral Spirit House of Aka Ete, Queen of the Sea), Obi Ogba Uta Agwu (Astral Spirit House of Agwu’s Chief Archer), Obi Ogwugwu Udo (Astral Spirit House of Ogwugwu, Consort of Udo), Obi Eneke Agwu (Astral Spirit House of Eneke, Swift of Agwu), Obi Owumowu Aka Ete (Astral Spirit House of Owumowu, Consort of the Sea Queen).

Accordingly, in the multivalent cosmogonic principle of Obi Mbu, the Igbo embedded an astronomical articulation of divine and timeless primordiality. As will be demonstrated, not only is this symbolism both mystically and logically sound, in addition, it proves to have a significant presence in other traditional, mystic knowledge systems of
the world. This primordial structure also embodied the principle of perfect architectural alignment, spatial unison and exemplary moral accord, articulated as *Obi Kwu Uto* lit. The Upright House. Its four corners were joined to the center (*Ime Obi*), where stood a pillared chamber (*Okwu Chi*), in which Chukwu periodically retired in deep privacy to work on a highly undisclosed project.

Chukwu would suavely dance his way in and out of this pillared chamber each time, entering with his back and coming out with his back turned to all and sundry. Needless to say, this was a great source of curiosity for all concerned. From the foregoing, it can be adduced that, the created world is also conceived in Igbo thought as a perfectly staged simulacrum, in which everything and everyone dances (*ono n’ndu bu ono n’egwu*) or has its own dance (*ife obuna nwelu egwu o na agba; ife n’ine bu okike nwelu egwu o na agba*). The former is the Igbo metaphorical way of expressing the vibrational and sequential qualities of life, respectively. In other words, all micro worlds or subjective realities (*Uwa Achiko*) which converges to form a people’s culture cum worldview (*Omenala na Uwa Ndi*), ultimately subsists in one encompassing macro-reality (*Ijele Uwa*), which in turn is the ultimate simulacrum of all simulacrums. The *Mmonwu* tradition is therefore, yet another corporealed extension of the Igbo world system. Ekwulumili et al. (2013) has aptly observed elsewhere that:

> The Mmonwu or ancestral spirit masquerade is not as some erroneously think, mask dancers out to entertain an appreciative crowd. Mmonwu in most of Igboland but especially in Ekwulumili is an integral part of the Ekwulumili [Igbo] cosmological world. (para. 1; emphasis mine)

Thus, as the colossal *Ijele* masquerade is known to gyrate with tact and grace, while heartily returning the greetings of those who hail it by its several title names with graceful energy as well, so does the affairs of this world favor only those who approach it with a fine combination of bravery (*Ika Obi*), strategic proactiveness (*Igba Mbo*) and poised
coolness or what the Igbos call *Ebube*, as well as tact and diplomacy. Secondly, the *Ijele Uwa* notion further encapsulates the Igbo primal observation that, reality is like a dancing masquerade, and to better experience or appreciate its highly assorted facets, wonders, dimensions, temperaments, aesthetics and opportunities, one must also move around in tune with the mobile inclinations of the masquerade. This they encapsulate as “*anaro akwu ofu ebe enene mmonwu*” lit. this world is like a dancing masquerade, if you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place. In the natural world, the ground squirrel also offers the same advice accordingly, “*ulili si na-ejekete ije si tuo nkwo oso maka ihe oso ene mee*” lit. the ground squirrel advices that he/she who walks should sometimes break into a trot in case the need to run arises. Neaher (1981) has written the following on the *Ijele* masquerade:

A uniquely architectonic northern Igbo mask type, the ijele, is the supreme masking tradition of the region, constituting an ostentatious display of the wealth and prestige of its sponsoring umunna. The impact of this massive, fabricated mask—a tableau of tiers of figures and masks from all spheres of the Igbo world—is greater than the sum of its parts. The mask suggests a superhuman entity, endowed with multiple bodies, faces, limbs, and capable of extraordinary powers. In short, Ijele corresponds to a vital living organism composed of the totality of local existence. The myriad forces visualized in the ijele display appear to correspond with Turner's formula for dominant ritual symbols that condense, polarize, and ultimately unify local concepts of social and natural reality (1967: ch. 1). Ijele's affinities with sacred and domestic architecture have already been pointed out...(page. 55)

Originally, the *Ijele* masquerade was based on the myth of *Agwu* as *Agwu-Ishi-Oha*, wherein it is given that one time, *Agwu*—in the same manner as the sacred *Okpoko* bird—had to carry all the other deities and spirits of the Igbo world (*Ohu Mmuo na Nnu Mmuo*) on its head, on a mandate from *Chukwu* to demonstrate the efficacy of its earned name. As the king of all masquerades (*Eze Mmuo – Ijele na mmanwu ozo anaro agba na ogbo!*), the *Ijele* is also reputed to have had all the other
masquerades perform on top of its head, in the Igbo mythical time epoch of Mgbe-Enu-ka-bu-Ana-Osa. There were a total of forty five masquerades, each been an emissary of its own distinct realm of spirit existence. Today, they are all represented by the forty five individual miniature simulacra seen on top of the Ijele masquerade when it performs (See Plate 1d).

In this first mythical world as simulated by the Mkpu Ijele or the upper division of the Ijele simulacra, Chukwu harmoniously abided with all the primordial forces, all of whom essentially constituted Chukwu’s colossal form; just as the body’s several independent parts are harmoniously united by their central hub-spot, the heart (Obi). The symbolic form of the python swallowing its own tail (Eke Ogba Ijele), as seen on the waist of the Ijele masquerade represents the primal timelessness (Oghele Akwu) or epi-time reality of the first world, as well as cosmic or grand time (Mgba Akwu, Uga Uwa n’ano, Okwu na Ukporo – i.e. sacred and mundane time). While, the lower division of the Ijele masquerade (Akukpuru Ijele) represents the created world, the temporal quality of which is well symbolized by the rectangular hanging flaps, signifying Uje na Una Chi i.e. The Comings and Goings of Chi. Its alternative full name is Uja na Una Mmuo lit. The Comings and Goings of Journeys; which is further derived from the full name of the Ijele masquerade, Ije-Ele-Ele lit. Passage of Infinite Potentials, going by the original Agwu mythic tradition of Dibia Ele, the first and ideal Dibia, who was essentially Agwu (Infinite Spark) as Ishi Abia (Source of the Timeless Mysteries). Igbo people also recognize and express that, Chukwu Ebuka lit. the Supreme Spirit is a force of diversity; the Supreme Spirit has infinite manifestations. As revealed in the Odachi Nne Ebere mythic account, it so happened then that one day, owing to her pent-up excruciating curiosity, Chukwu’s feminine counterpart (Eke-Nnechukwu/Eke-Nnenwanyi-Chukwu) finally came to a resolution. It was as thus: to observe the top-secret act of Izu Chukwu being carried out by God inside his sacred pillared chamber known as
Although, the act in itself, she realized, would be tantamount to risking the harmonic state of the First World, it was however, ultimately necessary and inevitable. For as it was, Chukwu had, in the singular act of sectioning out a chamber for himself in the Obi Mbu, inadvertently introduced secrecy into their dealings and so it was critical that the situation be addressed before the worst happens. Eke-Nnenwanyi-Chukwu, whose several mirific names also include Mgbakwocha (Grand Lady of the Mysteries/Venus/Divine Mystic Eye), Nne Ora (Mother-of-the-Sun and of all Illuminated by the Light of the Sun), Nne-Nwanyi-Isi-Ajata (Divine Mother of Long Flowing Dreadlocks/Lady of the Morning Star/Venus = Sourceless Ocean of Dawn and Birth), Ofu-Obi-metere-Oha-Mma (Lady of the Largest Heart, the One Whose Compassion Touches All), Nne Ogbu (Source-Gene-of-All-Genes), Onu-Mbu-Kolu-Ma-Ya-Su (the First One Who Revealed All that Was, Is and Will Be) etc.—thus set out to venture into Chukwu’s secret chamber within this first and only existing edifice (Obi Mbu).

This singular act, which was planned out at Uhuru Chi (evening), set into motion at Ofu-Ndeeri-Akwu-Chi (darkest moment of night) and realized at Ofufo Chi (arrival moment of dawn), at once caused the then monolithic world to break forth (Owuwa) in one gigantic burst (Uwaaaaaaa!) releasing an intensely charged pure golden tongue of fire (Ire Oku) from the said Obi Mbu and simultaneously causing life to come forth into existence. Komosu, who is also known as Eke-Nnechukwu was martyred in the process. In great grief, Chukwu wept over her martyred body and consequently, his salty tears in one intriguing miraculous moment, brought her back to life, whilst purifying her at the same time. Nevertheless, it is said that Chukwu never fully recovered from the great shock of this event. So that, he has since chosen to reside in his solitary chamber (Ozi Obi/Okwu Mmuo) while his counterpart also chose to reside in her own special building called Mkpuke. The unfinished roll of cotton which Eke had
been spinning and the beautiful piece of cloth which she had been weaving before that very point, will be later taken up by the Sacred Cosmic Spider *Ududo Nka*, which it continues to weave till this very day, as *Ududo-Okwa-Nka* (Sacred Spider; Expert Weaver of Thought). In effect, all the created beings that came along with this one event, lost their original pure spiritual state of being and were now in possession of dualistic physical forms called *Obi n’abo* i.e. *Aru na Anu Aru*. Disenchanted with the entire event and already discerning the inevitable spiritual shortcomings that will result from their unwholesome existential state, Chukwu left them all to their own wishes and whims! Thus, ancient Igbo people counseled each other that, *uwa bu ntiko-ntiko na obi Chukwu walu awa* lit. life is a gradual and delicate affair as a result of the primordial shattering of the first world. They also warned that, *ife obuna onye metalu n’uwa, o ga eji anya ya n’abo fu ya, maka Chukwu abaana ime obi kpochite uzo* lit. whatever one does in this life, they will see its repercussions with their own two eyes, for Chukwu the Supreme Spirit has irrevocably entered his *Obi* chamber and locked its door of mercy (*Uzo Ogo*); a replica of this Door of Mercy traditionally adorns the entrance of an *Ozo* titled person’s *Obi*, as a proven exemplifier of high moral, peace and uprightness, ideally. Several fascinating parallels in the Ibibio creation account of *Abassi* (Creator God) and *Atai* (Creator Goddess) who are also paired as husband and wife, as in the Igbo creation account of *Atu-Nnechukwu-Komosu na Chukwu-Atu-Ofu* brings a lot to mind. Kwekudee (2013) presents the Ibibio creation account as thus:

The creator, Abassi, created two humans and then decided to not allow them to live on earth. His wife, Atai, persuaded him to let them, the people, live on earth. In order to control the humans, Abassi insisted that they eat all their meals with him, thereby keeping them from growing or hunting food. He also forbade them to have children. Soon, though, the woman began growing food in the earth, and they stopped showing up to eat with Abassi. Then the man joined his wife in the fields, and before long there were children also. Abassi blamed his wife for the way things had turned out, but she told him she
would handle it. She sent to earth, death and discord to keep the people in their place, and their numbers down. (para. 14)

After the explosive emergence of *Uwa* as a result of this *Odachi*, the four angles (*awata* e.g. *awata aba n’ano* lit. four angles of a rectangle, as they are conceived in Igbo traditional thought) of the house would henceforth exist as *Mgba Aka/Mgbaka n’Ano Uwa* (lit. the four primordial rings of the cosmos) or *Oku n’ano Uwa/Nko n’ano* or *Akuko n’ano Uwa* (i.e. four corners of the cosmos) depending on the context of usage. Much of the complementing portion of this creation account is to be found in yet another Igbo cosmogonic narrative—an Air-creation myth which refers to this phenomenon as *Okpoko na Nne ya, Akwa Nne Okpoko* or simply as, *Ije Chukwu Ziri Okpoko* and which deals with the pre-creation dynamics of *Akwu* (primordial state of potency), the creation dynamics of sound, as encoded in the pun expression *Ube Okpoko*, which is both a fruit and the cry of the sacred *Okpoko* bird. The above substantiates the mystic enunciation that, every language is a temple in which the soul of the people who speak it is enshrined. Rightly so, for even in its other mythic name, the same meaning is encoded in the pun expression *Akwa Nne Okpoko* which simultaneously implies the cry of *Okpoko’s* mother i.e. the first *Okpoko* bird or the egg from which arose *Okpoko’s* mother. This very ancient myth also articulates the post-creation or cosmic realities of Air; with particular focus on its role in the creation of the Sun, Moon and the Earth. This Air-Bird-Egg-Life theorem of creation is also what some have termed as the Primordial Egg theorem in modern times. In the said *Akwa Nne Okpoko* mythology, it is held that when the sacred *Okpoko* bird arrived the world, everywhere was inundated with celestial waters. Chukwu had sent it out to go and see how the great deed of creation was coming along. At first there was no light, no stars, no moon, no land for it to perch on. But far off in the center of this foggy and watery world, it sighted a single upright tree, the *Ube Okpoko* tree, which stood unbent. However given its long distance
flight from Be Chukwu, the bird’s aging mother resultedly died before it could reach this world tree, and on seeing nowhere else to bury the mother, Okpoko buried her on one side of its head. In short time, the father also died and the poor bird equally had no choice but to bury him on the other side of its head. As a result, its head became greatly enlarged (Isi Okpoko). When it finally arrived the world tree, it laid a gigantic egg, the first and finest that was ever laid. This beautiful creation, however, brought grief to the heart of the sacred bird as it thought of how its parents had missed such a beautiful occurrence. So it gave out a loud cry of grief, Nne Mu o!!! Nna Mu o!!! This great cry rang across the entire universe and broke this colossal, gigantic egg, from which miraculously arose its Mother, the golden Sun, in reply to its cry. In great elation, the sacred bird lifted off from the world tree to make towards its mother only to realize that the broken shell had equally miraculously risen into the air and now had the glowing face of its father, the Moon. Their warm, resurrectory embrace (Ibi Oma), miraculously caused the Earth to appear. Needless to say, the Okpoko bird was filled with utter bliss, seeing all this miraculous handiwork of Chukwu. And only then, did it realize that Chukwu had only sent it out to solve the riddle of kedu nke chalu acha, ube enu k’obu ube ana? as held in Igbo sacred science and mystical thought. With regards to riddles and the often unnoticed, subtle extents that they were utilized by our ancestors in their highly creative learning exploits and socialization systems, Emma Umana Clasberry (2012) has aptly articulated the following:

Riddles and puzzles are some of the ancient tools for education that have stood the test of time. Through them, we can learn some pertinent facts about human beings, their physiology and anatomy, their economic and social behaviors, thinking patterns, their vision of the world and the way humans understand life. We can also use them to learn about other animals, plants, the wind, the moon and other elements in the universe...Puzzles and riddles bring to our notice some phenomena which are around in our immediate environment that we are not aware of. They call our attention to some truths
about animals and trees, natural and unnatural phenomena. Like proverbs and folktales, riddles are an ancient science which portrays the people’s vigilance, enthusiasm and keenness in observing, studying and learning about the universe around them and beyond. In other words, they enhance recalling the past, promote keener observation and critical examination of the present, and encourage confrontation of the present and building on it for posterity. As reflected in the riddles, our forefathers, including fore-mothers, took courses in philosophy, botany, zoology, human anatomy and physiology, logic and critical thinking, metaphysics, sociology, humanities and other hardcore and social sciences without knowing. I am sure they were not conscious of the amount of education and the scope of academic fields they dabbled into and became familiar with. They were probably more interested in just enjoying the fun and the humor derived from the riddles and puzzles than in anything else as they informally learned through them. (p. 2)

We may choose to add to the above that, the ancients were, inter alia, aware of two fundamental layers of the mind namely: Obi na Ime Obi. In our modern terms, the closest approximations to these would be the conscious mind (Obi) and unconscious mind (Ime Obi). One realizes, from all indications, that an already innate wisdom in our ancient peoples inspired them to seek deeper understandings of their world from the depth of their hearts (Ime Obi). Somehow this innate wisdom recognized and understood that the conscious mind is ultimately limited in its purpose as a holder of knowledge (Ebum n’Obi-aburo-Ebum-n’Uche). Accordingly, the unconscious mind is the ultimate bottomless layer of the mind where the entire knowledge absorbed through the various Akoro Uche (i.e. the senses as a whole, viewed as places where Uche or Universal Mind strikes its signals in the human body) are refined. Using this inner layer mind to learn is thus a passive modality of learning; one which affords far broader and subtler absorption of knowledge, optimally utilizing the innate mnemonic-based information encoding and storing mechanisms of the mind, more than the temporal, conscious mind does. In contrast, learning with the rationalizing, surface layer mind is an active modality of learning, which has its advantages but is actually highly
limited. The ancients learnt mostly using the passive modality and from the depths of their hearts (*Ime Obi*), following their intuition (*Ogba n’Obi*) just as other creatures, especially the dog who uses it to arrive at hidden things (thus its ancient Igbo name *Di Ntu* - expert tracker and the expert hunter - *Di Nta*) to discern profound arrays and depths of mysteries (*Abia* - just like the dog does discerns with its *Abia Nkita*) and achieve deep knowledge and wisdom (*Amamife-na-Omimi-Uche*) from their applications of the universal principles therein embedded. With respects to Igbo people’s deep knowledge and understanding of the keen abilities of the dog, as seen in such dedicated totemic traditions as the *Agulu-na-Habba-Nkita* of Agulu, recent research results by scientists has noted that:

Their extraordinary sniffing is powered by over 200 million scent receptors in their nose. In comparison, we meek humans have just 5 million. Now, scientists at the University of Life Sciences in Prague have discovered yet another extraordinary sensing ability in dogs: dogs are sensitive to Earth's magnetism (thus, the Dog is also known as *Anu-Ishi* and *Di-Ntunala*)...They study also highlighted that dogs are highly sensitive to small changes in polarity rather than intensity of magnetic field. In other words, the study proves that polarity is biologically meaningful. According to the researchers, the study is important because it could, ideally, open up new horizons in magnetoreception research. (Jha 2014: p. 1-4; emphasis mine)

An ancient Igbo rhetorical axiom captures the mystery of *Obi na Ime Obi* as: *okuko agwugo be mmadu egbe wee buwe mbe?* lit. are hens extinct in human settlements for the kite to begin to carry off tortoises? In other words, the knowledge secured in the inner mind (*Mbe*) is more heavy and potent but less accessible than the knowledge held in the surface mind (*Okuko*) which can be easily accessed, although characteristically shallow in depth. The said kite (*Egbe*) signifies agency, need and purpose which demands the use of the mind by the human being (*Be Mmadu*). Indeed, as the sacred bird (*Okpoko*) later realized, by merely asking it to go and observe how the deed of
creation was coming along, Chukwu had intended for it to be the first witness to cosmic creation and its egg to be the first evidence of this divine act. Even further, because it did not abandon its aging mother and father, but instead cared for them and gave them the most befitting burial (on its own head!), Chukwu crowned Okpoko the emperor of the sky, thus its full name Okpoko Nwe Enu (Okpoko the sky emperor, owner of the sky), while its egg came to be known as Akwa Nne Okpoko and its tree as Ube Okpoko, Ube Olisa or Ube Chukwu. In the mythic tradition of the K’iche Maya (Ka-Iche i.e. People of the Most Uniqueness, alluding to an age when creativity, egalitarianism and uniqueness was the epitome of civilization), the Hero Twins named Hunahpu and Xbalanque (pronounced Chibalanke) are also held to have shot down a proud, Sun-Moon bird that perched on the world tree in the primordial time. Umeh (1999) and Acholonu (2009) have shown very stimulating parallels between the Igbo and Maya (Umu Ayolo Aka/Ayaka n’Abo lit. Children of the Swallow Bird of Creation/Scions of the Two Twins of the Night) epistemological, socio-religious and historical realities. The ancient Egyptian myth of the Bennu bird, in which a mythical first bird is held to have flown over the primordial waters of Nun which existed before creation and on landing atop a Benben stone (note that both bird and stone share nomenclature just as in the ancient Okpoko myth), issued out a great cry which came to symbolize the secret workings of creation is also another striking parallel to the ancient Igbo Akwa Nne Okpoko myth.

As earlier stated, the words Akwa (egg) and Ube (a local Igbo pear tree) as employed in this myth are overt puns on the Igbo word for "cry", again given as Akwa or Ube, as in Akwa Ariri, Akwa Nnunu or Ube Nnunu. In reality, there are also other vast Igbo metaphysical, cosmological, architectonic, socio-political and mystical implications to this coinage, some of which Umeh (1997) has duly pointed out in his work. The words Bennu (a mythic bird) and Ube Nnunu (bird’s cry) likewise demonstrate clear etymological parallels. In the same
vein, a very ancient and sacred tree of Igboland known as *Anunuebe* (lit. birds-don’t-perch-here) likewise suggests linkages of all kind to the aforementioned Bennu and Benben stone phenomenon. Infact, as shown in the image below, the ancient Egyptians even depicted this mythic Bennu bird in a manner that gave it an utter semblance to the large head of the *Okpoko* (hornbill), which clearly didn’t exist in their geographical location, thus giving the impression that the image had to be a deliberate reference to a mythical land, region or geographical space in which the real bird existed and from where the ancient Egyptians apparently came from or trace their roots. In those Igbo myths in which the *Okpoko* bird featured, it was always associated with its tree, the *Ube Okpoko* tree. The inundated world which was covered with primordial waters is also featured in many Igbo myths, needless to say. The Bennu was also associated with the seasonal inundation of the Nile and the primal waters of creation or *Nun*. It is often depicted standing alone on a mound surrounded by isolated rocks, forming a sort of chain of islands on high ground, the mythical island of the first time or *Zep Tepi* (See Plate 2a). The *Nkenu* bird is also another bird used to represent the same principle in other parts of Igboland. Infact, as one will observe, the names *Bennu* and *Nkenu* pose a striking similarity. The basic root word *enu* in both names mean “up/sky/skywards”. Again, it is given that the Bennu bird's cry at the creation of the world was responsible for the marking of the beginning of time. Interestingly, the word *be-nnu* also means “cry forth/cry out” in Igbo language. Likewise, as the Bennu bird was held as the god of time and its divisions of hours, day, night, weeks and years for the ancient Egyptians, so was the *Egbenu* or *Okeokpa* (Rooster), the *Okpoko* (Hornbill), the Hawk (*Agu Nkwo*) and the Eagle (*Ugo*).}

Another revealing fact to add to the foregoing is that, the Bennu bird was often associated with Upper Egypt/southern regions of Egypt. Recent archeological finds in Zinder, Niger in West
Africa by Souley Garba (2012) has posited irrefutable evidence of a Twin Pyramid and Sphinx complex in West Africa predating those of Egypt, indicating that the Upper Egypt of ancient times did encompasses the African hinterlands or what is today known as the Sub-Saharan regions of Africa (See Plate 2d). According to Linsley (2012):

In February 2012, Garba announced his discovery of a pyramid in the village of Dan Baki, 20 km west of the city of Zinder and 2 km north of the village of Tirmini... Garba claims that the pyramid of Dan Baki is 4500 years old. It is in an advanced state of deterioration, but was not open when it was discovered by Garba. The Dan Baki pyramid has a twin nearby and appears to be part of a series of pyramids located in the region of Tanout. All the pyramids in the neighborhood appear to have remained sealed. There is also a sphinx near the twin pyramids and Garba describes it has having a lion shape. Mr. Garba reports that this discovery is the "result of our activities we have been carrying out over 7 years and with a private institute of the United States of America." Garba explained that years of study of the hieroglyphic texts led him to the name of the village where he discovered the pyramid. (para. 6-10)

The two feathers (plume) with which the original enlarged head of the Okpoko bird is recreated may be considered to be respectively referring to the father and mother of the Okpoko whom it buried on both sides of its head. The white crown subsequently alludes to the mythic egg from which they miraculously emerged to become the Sun and the Moon. Hence, in both the ancient Egyptian and Igbo mythic traditions, the bird symbolizes the principle of rebirth or resurrection; that is to say, the Phoenix Bird notion. As the white crown and feathers clearly demonstrate, the myth equally embodies cosmogonic, cosmological and socio-political implications, just as its Igbo parallel. Having narrated the above myth and pointed out some of the embedded, complementary creation patterns and principles found therein, we now return to the primal focus of this chapter, which is the embedded dynamics of creation represented in the Primordial House (Obi Mbu) symbolism as articulated in the Odachi Nne Ebere mythic
narrative. Going further, the four primordial forces each contributed immensely to the stabilization and furnishing of the newly created realm of life (Ogige Ndu). Given its initial "watery" or unstable state commonly referred to as, mgbe ana ka di deke-deke or mgbe ana ka di were-were in Igbo oral traditions, each of the four primordial forces (namely Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo in that order of seniority) applied their paramount skills towards the re-harmonization of this new realm that was being prepared for human beings, animals, plants and other forms of life—yet to arrive the corporeal world. This colossal task was to be completed in fourteen creative phases and required eight days of inspection (segmented into twofold as Okwu na Ukporo) by Chuwku to be finally approved. M. D. W. Jeffreys (1935) noted that “The Umundri [Umu Nri] coronation-ceremony has the twofold object of transforming a man into a god and of recreating the world” (p. 346; emphases mine). With respect to the four primordial forces and their role in the creation of the world which is symbolically recreated in the Nri divine king’s coronation ceremony, Jeffreys (1935) observed that following the ascension of the throne by the king:

The next step is to re-establish the four days. Before the templum, four stakes are driven in line into the ground; each stake, set about six feet from the next, is surrounded by a cylindrical mound of earth; and each stake is connected with the next by white strands made from the young leaves of the oil-palm spathe. In the presence of the divine king a fowl is sacrificed before each stake, which thereupon receives one of the names of the four quarter gods who in prayers are invited to share the usual communion meal of kola and palm-wine. In Igbo, as in English, the days of the week are named after gods. The week is now established. (p. 350)

In addition and incidentally, Jeffreys (1935) also outlined the above noted fourteen divine processes of creation as symbolically, mystically and corporeally realized in the coronation rite of Nri divine kings as thus:
1. The king must have no father or mother. 2. The mounting of a mound of earth or sand. 3. The use of a stone seat. 4. The ceremonial use of whiteness as symbolical light, e.g. the use of white clay including its ingestion as a ritual act. 5. The ceremonial control of water. 6. The re-creation of the earth. 7. The running, or a race, along the royal road. 8. The magical increase of the food-supply, e.g. in the miraculous ripening of crops. 9. The living in booths. 10. The building of a new house and palace for the new king. 11. The making of a new road. 12. The erection of an arch and the sacrifice at this arch of a human being. 13. The personal contact, the maintenance of continuity with the past by contact with some part of the predeceased king, e.g. the skull in the throne. 14. The use of a plastron, e.g. the brass face-mask. (p. 353)

It should be stated here that in line with Igbo sacred traditions, the observed ritual acts, processes, principles, regalia, components, sacred objects, time considerations, observations and other realities that constitute the coronation rite enacted in the above are to be understood as symbolic and mystical recreations of divine, cosmic, astronomical, astrological, civilizational and historical realities of Igbo people and their world. Some of the esoteric realities therein implied and enacted include:

- The divine, unfathomable and primordial link between the king and God (Chukwu), as established by the symbolic and apparent notion of his been “fatherless and motherless”.

- The divine emergence of the king as established by the notion of his “mounting of a mound…” and “the use of a stone seat” which is meant to mirror the primal, corporeal creative phase of the world in which the Supreme Spirit took the initial physical form of a risen mound (Ugwu Aka, Ugwu Adu, Ugwu Mbu, Mkpu Okike). Consequently, the king is also expected to prove his divinity by recreating the world.
• The king’s subsequent cosmic status as the human Sun of his people (Eze Ora) is established by the notion of the “ceremonial use of whiteness as symbolical light” throughout the coronation rite, which noticeably alludes to the primal creation of the Sun by Chukwu whom the king is meant to imitate.

• The noted “ceremonial control of water” and the subsequent procurement of the royal creative mystical orb (Ududu/Odudu Eze) from the sacred waters of Omambala (the lake’s name literally translates as “Oma of the primordial square”) by the king is an obvious allusion to the divine creation of the Moon, from the celestial waters of the universe by Chukwu. Thus, beyond its literal denotation, the Anambra dialectic term, Omambala also connotes the primordial square of the celestial waters of the Moon, for Omambala is mystically praised by Dibia as Nnenwanyi-Nwelu-Awolo-Ijiliji-Onwa and Omelu-Nwata-Mgbe-Uwa-Julu-Ya i.e. Omambala the mother lake who has the aura of Moon dew; the one who intervenes for the abandoned child when the word has turned their back on him/her.

• The notion of “the re-creation of the earth” is also an apparent allusion to the original act which was accomplished by Chukwu as Agali Ofu.

• The king also establishes his connection with the First Ones (Ndi Mbu) in the symbolic act of “running…along the royal road” — an allusion to the cosmic Uzo Iyi along which the above noted first humans or first Igbo people (Ndi Ushi Aka) traveled in their epic journey from Be Mmuo/Ala Mmuo to Be Mmadu/Ala Mmadu to incarnate and populate the Earth.
The notion of “…magical increase of the food-supply…” as realized in the “…miraculous ripening of crops” also harkens to the mystical lifeways of the Subsequent Ancestors (Ndi Egede/Egede-Ana-Egwu lit. Egede, the world that was possessed with music) whose spirits, powers, knowledge, wisdom, countenance and ideals the divine king also embodies. Through this act, the divine king also proves to his people that he is able to provide them with food even at times of famine (implied by the miraculous act) and thus, insuring the natural comforts of life enjoyed by his people before he ascended the throne.

The symbolic act of “living in booths” (Nko) which traditionally lasts for one year is equally an imitation of the first formal mode of habitation practiced by the subsequent Igbo ancestors. This extended act of legitimization further establishes the king’s intimate connection with his ancestors, while equally providing considerable time for the “…building of a new house and palace…” for him. Of importance also is that the implications of this act are both cosmogonic and civilizational. Indeed, the act simultaneously establishes the divine king as a rightful witness of the very primordial house (Obi Mbu), as well as an ancestral witness to the inception of earthen houses (Uno/Obi Uno) among humans (Emume Obi).

The noted “…making of a new road” by the new king is a symbolic realization of the marked periodic adjustments that characterize Uzo Igwe (the Igbo zodiac belt) which is known to astrologically and terrestrially initiate “new” phases in the spiritual and civilizational realities of humankind. This sacred act is also complemented by yet another ritual act of “running” whose references to Igbo astronomy and astrotheology are more pronounced. Of this, Jeffreys (1935) noted that “The next day, he
[the new king], his wife, and a dwarf and a large following set out on the clockwise circumambulation of his sphere of influence. The first ceremonial step on this journey is the mounting of a special white ant hill. He alone mounts this mound and prays to Chiuku [Chi-Ukwu] and to the ancestral spirits” (p. 348). The new king in this very act, seeks to prove that in his spiritual and physical persona is the combination of both the “old” and “new” stars of heaven, which further implies that he is aligned with the primal civilizational forces of the past as well as imbued with the stellar-impacted potency and guidance needed to move his people and their culture forward in the current age and time.

• The ensuing but now reformed phase of the coronation ritual which involved “the erection of an arch” and hitherto “…the sacrifice at this arch of a human being” is a reference to the first occurrence of death in human history as held in Igbo oral tradition; which references such mythical periods in the existence of humankind as mgbe onwu batara uwa (when death first came into the world), mgbe uwa ka no n’ishi (when the world was still engulfed in great dimness), mgbe uwa ka di ohuru (when the world was still new), mgbe uwa ka wu nwata (when the world was still an infant), mgbe ala ka di deke-deke (when the land was still fragile), mgbe okpoko ka na achi enu (when the sacred hornbill was still the ruler of the sky), mgbe ezi ka di n’ukwu ukwa (when pathways where still marked by breadfruit tress/when breadfruit trees still dotted every corner of the earth), mgbe enu ka bu ana osa (when squirrels only stayed on trees and never came down to land due to its fragile and watery state), mgbe oba na eke ka nwe ana (when oba the ancient ancestor of the crocodile and the python were still the owners of the land – implying the days that preceded the reign of the dinosaurs), mgbe ngwere ka di n’ofu n’ofu (when great lizards or dinosaurs still prowled the earth – implied by the “one’s and
two’s”), *mgbe kukunduku ka bu ozo ndu* (when the sweet-potato was everything i.e. before Igbo people began to eat yam), *mgbe agha idu na oba* (during the time of the great war of *idu na oba* which subsequently separated Igbo people "culturally" from the rest of their siblings) etc. Thus said, the aforementioned arch is a symbolic cum physical reference to the mythical rainbow (*Egwurugwu*) which had earlier prefigured the death of the first human being to die (*Ali-Ali* or *Alili* lit. unbearable), hitherto represented by the sacrificial human victim. The same mythic notion continues to obtain among Igbo people, who view the appearance of rainbow as an omen of something spectacular or grave on its way to happening or already occurred. The king is in this act legitimizing his status as a priest-king or the supreme High Priest of his people. In this role, it is expected of him to be in constant communication with Chukwu, the divinities and the ancestors, in other to ensure a minimization of the occurrence of death. He is to further realize this by the practical means of controlling the forces of the land, water and air, as well as offering sacrifices of propitiation to the divinities during sacred festivals.

- The noted “personal contact…the maintenance of continuity with the past by contact with some part of the deceased king, e.g. the skull [*Okpo Ishi, Okpukpu Ishi*] in the throne” alludes to the subsequent practice of ancestralization (*Irunye Okpo Ushi/Irunye Okponshi, Ime Okpo Ushi, Emume Ndi Ushi*) which hitherto did not exist, until after the first death happened to a human being (*Ali-Ali*/Ari-*Ari* or *Ariri*/Alili). In Igbo culture and sacred traditions, an ancestor in the definite sense is one who has died leaving descendants behind. The very first humans (*Ndi Mbu/Nde Mbu*) did not experience death in any shape, sense or form. Each one of them supernaturally retired back to the spirit world after their stay on this earth was complete, for they lived in the primordial first age of perfection (*Uga Aka/Uga Okpu/Uga Mbu*) which is the First Time -
before the first somatically modern human beings ever walked this planet. In reality, this was the actual cosmic age alluded in the Igbo metaphorical time post of “*mgbe enu ka bu ana osa*” i.e. when the electromagnetic force field of the Earth was far more vibrant and the gravity force field less active, thus allowing newly forming solid bodies such as rocks to float freely in the air, thereby forming natural chains of beautiful floating gardens on which human beings and other life-forms happily lived and from time to time, would climb down with ropes to migrate onto other floating rock islands, and much later, onto land to populate the then water-logged Earth. These sky or space based habitations were called *Uno-Enu-Ndi-Mbu* and its mnemonics are enshrined in Igbo oral, ritual, artistic and diverse knowledge traditions as the mythical “house with no roof” or “the house of the leopard”. It should be noted that, at this time when the gravity force field of the earth was far less active, the Moon and other neighboring celestial bodies resultedly often came into astonishingly close view from this planet. During this first age of *Ndi Aka Ushi*, the earth was regarded as a place of vacation (*enu uwa bu olili*), for they knew no suffering (thus, *onye nosia o naba*). This reality is still preserved in such Igbo traditional chants from that age as “*kpu kpu kpu*** ogene...o gene ogenege...onye n’acho ogene...o gene ogenege***. In the latter, the “*kpu kpu kpu***” notion alludes to the *Mkpu* (anthill) through which some of the aforementioned first human beings emerged on the earth at the end of their journey from *Ala Mmuo* or spirit land. For Igbo people emphasize and practice the tradition of *mmadu anaro agba k’ugba* i.e. people don’t emerge from thin air. In other words, there is a source to everything and everyone. There were also those that arrived by water means (*Ndi Owu/Ora Iyi*) while some emerged from their home worlds by mystical means from the several sacred caves of Igboland (*Umu Ogba*). Much later subsequent groups also arrived by astral means (*Oganigwe* lit.
groups of astral travelers). The *Ogene* notion as employed in the above chant metaphorically alludes to its essence as the Igbo symbol of life (*Ogene Ndu*). The chant, “*onye n’acho ogene?*” indicates the sheer buoyancy and vibrancy of life that was witnessed by these first human beings which moved them to ask the question thus “*onye n’acho ogene?*” lit. “who is looking for *ogene* or life?” The earth was at this time, so potent and vibrant with life that one could not be looking for “life”!

- Finally, the wearing of the “brass face-mask”, among other things, alludes to the ultimate materialization of the copper element in the Sirius star system (*Ogbolodo na Ose Otule*), which acts as a cosmic brake system (i.e. *anu kwo nwa amaro oso ogu agba* = *Onyido/Okwado/Aka-Ofu-Okwa-Odii*), regulating the propelling extents of astral life across the universe. By donning this “brass face-mask”, the Nri divine king situates himself in this role as the decisive regulator of his society’s existential endeavors. In other words, their ultimate human guide. To ritually prove his strength in this capacity of *Okwado*, he also engages in a mock fight with his Wife, who initially “throws him” and then he regains his agility and “throws her”. The divine king also throws a young man who is especially selected for this ritual act. However, the young man never throws him. The donning of the “brass face-mask” also alludes to the great mystical, artistic, technological and epistemological heritage of Igbo civilization, which the new king is expected to guard and perpetuate with his life. His predecessors also wore such masks. It is in effect, his life’s work to keep the garden of Igbo civilization continuously watered; ensuring that this unique culture stays flourishing. The technological tradition of metallurgy which was first practiced in Igboland towards the end of the previous *Enu Uga* (ascending world age cycle) and perfected during the preceding *Uga Anwu* world age is particularly key to uncovering the profound global achievements of Igbo culture and
civilization in the distant past. Udobata R. Onunwa (2010) has aptly described these inventive spirits as “bearers of cults and arts, purveyors of civilization and culture” (p. 57). By wearing this mask, the divine king of Nri establishes himself as a legitimate descendant of this great line of culture-seeders (Ndị Igbo) who hitherto, traversed the ancient world, crossing land, space, air and sea to establish civilizational order based on eight principles, namely Chi, Ikenga, Ofo, Ogu, Ili Alo, Iji Ala, Ihi Egbo and Ikpu Aru – on all corners of the globe in their various incarnations as Umu Atu, Umu Chukwu, Umu Anwù, Umu Eke, Umu Orie, Umu Afo, Umu Nkwo, Umu Uto, Umu Ani, Umu Udude Nka, Umu Egwurugwu, Umu Ngwu, Umu Onwa, Umu Agu, Ndị Nka, Ndị Okika, Ndị Okpu etc. Pls. note that Umu Udude Nka incarnations and emigrated clans of Igbo people includes the Totonac (Otutu n’aka), whom recent Mesoamerican scholars have advanced as the most viable candidates, based on cultural and linguistic evidence, with respect to the key pivotal cultural group of builders of the ancient Uga Anwù/Umu Agwu/Anwù cosmic age sacred city of Teotihuacan, pronounced te.oːtiːˈwakaːn (i.e. Odii-Ete-Aka in ancient Afa language). This ancient city which is laid out in the Afia-n’ano-Ubochi-n’ano architectonic and cosmological configuration and the Inyom-Igwe-n’asaa (Pleiades constellation) astronomical alignment of the Mother Goddess also had a Great Goddess as its Supreme Deity, and a male God known as the Old God (Aka Ofu in Afa), as well as a Storm God of justice, which is very reminiscent of the Igbo pantheon in many ways. Scholars of both the Igbo and Teotihuacan cultures have always questioned why it is that, despite their innumerable achievements, these two cultures were not preoccupied with penning down their ideals and stories in scribal forms as other cultures of the ancient world were wont to do. With the Teotihuacans, it has been noted that their culture is connected to the Mayans—known for their great preoccupation
with writing, and yet they (Teotihuacans) don’t reveal any such preoccupations in all their known works. The simple answer to the above query lies in the glaring fact that, the builders of both civilizations (Igbo and Teotihuacan) achieved intellectual post-literacy in very ancient times and as such had no need for writing in the sense that we regard it today. Moreover, like their Igbo relations, the Teotihuacans supremely venerated the Great Goddess (pls. note the Igbo Alawuala lit. Ala the Great Goddess and Ala nwe mmadu nile) and true to type, their city was a noted center of industry, home to countless potters, jewelers, engineers, renowned mystics and teachers, musicians, craftsmen, ingenious healers, traders, seers, highly gifted and accomplished poets etc. The Teotihuacans likewise venerated a deity called the Feathered Serpent who is none other than the ancient Agwu-Isi-Ajata of the Nne Nwanyi tradition of Uga Anwu Igbo world age, whose consciousness is now returning back in our times. Also, Teotihuacans are particularly known for producing a great number of obsidian artifacts, just as their Igbo relations are well known for particularly producing a number of matchless bronze artifacts. It is worthy of mention that an ancient, autochthonous community by the name of Dinka (clan-of-craft-adepts) still exists in Agbaja Mbano in Imo State till this day, signaling the need for great research in these less-studied areas of Igboland. As the inimitable Prof. Catherine Acholonu (2013) has noted, it will appear that time stands still in Igboland. The Eze Nri by donning the “brass face-mask” on his neck (pls. note the earlier “sitting on stone” by the Eze Nri and the sheer profusion of stone-carved “face-masks” all associated with the rulers of Teotihuacan) is therefore indicating his link to this global ancestry of noble and upright spirits who were often praised as Umu-Oje-na-Mmuo all over the ancient world (lit. those who frequently journey to the land of the spirits to
acquire the knowledge and wisdom with which they enriched and civilized the world).

Of much importance is the fact that, the above given coronation rite is strictly handled and only overseen by the Umudiana or Adama priestly elects of Nri. That is to say, the original, autochthonous people whom the Eri migrants met on the land when they arrived there. From them comes the mentioned “dwarf” above. They are the little known kingmakers of the Nri, Aguleri and related satellite kingdoms, although politically marginalized today. Thus, it goes to say that the ancient myths, cosmological notions, forest knowledge, mystic traditions and other elaborate principles undergirding this intriguing coronation rite are fundamentally and properly to the credit of these autochthonous peoples of the Eri-Nri communities. With regards to the primordial deed of creation, the matchless genius displayed by the four primordial forces of Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo in their given task of ordering the world would later lead Chuwku to send them into the human world at a much distant period as fish mongers (Ora Azu, Ndi Ije n’Ano) to introduce the art of trading into human society. When they showed up on Earth, their means of arrival was unfathomable to say the least, signifying their sacred status. In addition, their names and primordial source of origin where also a mystery to all, thus the generic title for them: obialu ije ekwu okwu lit. Visitors that do not talk. This was the case until Agwu, in the anthropomorphic form of Ose Ete (Oke Agwu in demotic Igbo) solved this mystery. These four primordial forces proceeded to found four ancient markets in Igbo-land, which were respectively named after them again as Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo. Ever since, it has also been held in traditional Igbo societies that the four corners of the sacred Ozi Obi structure stood for the "four emptied baskets" (Ukpa Asha n’Ano/Ukpa Abia/Akwu Asha/Aka Asha) of these four fish mongers and hence, must be vertically positioned in alignment with Obi Chukwu. Among other metaphysical realities, this ancient principle (Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo) also encapsulates in its essence, the mystery of Divine Perfection. This is numerically conveyed as the mystic summation of 1+2+3+4=10. As the number ten is essentially another 1 with 0 in its front, it is thus Chukwu’s sacred number as Ofu Ora or Aka Ofu
(Nnaa/Nge/Ofu/Ovu/Ohu/Ose or One). Accordingly, when Igbo men greet traditionally (Iri-Aka-Ito), they dramatize this principle in the "X" symbol (four branches) which their arms form. The Ito (three) in Iri Aka Ito symbolically stands for the male principle or the dynamism of Ikenga. When added to four it gives us seven, the number of the human being in Igbo and African cosmology. Thus the formed "X" materializes Divine Perfection, or the principle of Mmadu bu Nwa Chukwu (the human being is the child of the Supreme Spirit). In other words, the primal unity of God and humans, which is achieved at the number ten or Iri. The cosmogonic pact made between Chukwu and the four primordial forces, the proof of which has been the rising direction of the Sun, is of fundamental importance to Dibia work. In regards to Obi Chukwu, it is observed that both the given name and geometric choice of the rectangle (aba n’ano, mgbatiri ano, ukwu aja n’ano = Four Traingles) for this cosmological notion has remained a characteristic principle of Igbo traditional architecture. But besides its anatomical and aesthetic implications, the ukwu aja n’ano symbolism here also embodies the Igbo sacred numeric value of four (ano, ino, nno) and signifies its primordial role in the sacred deed of creation (Okike). In fact, in this particular setting, ukwu aja n’ano signifies the four primordial forces at work during the immediate first phase of creation, as will be later shown. The Igbo-Ukwu bronze roped vase depicts this particular phase of creation among other things (See Plates 3a and b). It should also be stated here that the Ite Ona as seen above is, indeed, a bright legacy of the ancient Igbo ritual tradition of Oshishi Ite, in which it was held that portions boiled in bronze pots were impacted with the noted enduring quality of bronze (Onali/Ona Oli). This mystery was publicly experienced by all during the Igbo annual festival of Ita Atu, during which the ancient Igbo Sage-King (Eze Atu/Eze Agwu) and his consort, the Queen-Mother Nono-Atu-Mma/Nono-Atu-Nne performed before all the Noble Ritual of Ikwunite-Ekwu-Itenani—lit. Rejuvenation of the Nine Great Mystical Tripod Cauldrons of Potency, which was both an advanced mystic ritual of socio-political cohesion as it was a testimony of the king’s mastery of the elements and the sacred sciences undergirding the culture. This ritual, ipso factum, manifested before all, the Ose (Potency) of Eriwe-Agwu-Agwu (Endless Abundance), which was a means of assuring the
people of their general securities. While this ritual was in the process, the usual chanted response from the crowd in address of the king was as such: *Eze n’esu atikpa, i ga esutekwe nke afuru na anya?* i.e. King of knowledge, alchemical practice and portion brewing, prove your potency by showing the eyes what your mind knows! On the other hand, the Queen-Mother was addressed in chants thus: *Nne-ono n’esu atikpa, i ga esutekwe nke afuru n’anya?* lit. Mother of deep wisdom and expert in alchemical knowledge, reveal through your hands what the mind knows! This mystical feat is in line with the same principle as recorded at the marriage in Galilee in Christian scriptures, wherein it is held that Christ turned water into wine out of Six-Water-Pots.

Equally significant but less well-known is the fact that in its original geometrical precision, the rectangle motif wherever applied in Igbo culture is meant to symbolically convey the ancient navigational notion of the long-basket shaped cosmic vessel (*Ugbo-Nya-Mba-ana-Iyi-n’Asaa*) sailing on the dark waters of the universe. In essence, for the ancient Igbo travelers and sea navigators who were known by many names especially *Ndì-Ukwu-na-Ije* and *Ndì-Oje-Mba-Enwe-Iro*, this cosmological view was a pragmatically lived reality. For them, the entire universe was a sea (*Iyi*) and compass (*Owata = Owata-ezi-mmuo-na-ezi-mmadu = cosmic map; also Odum-eje-ora-mmau-ona-ora-mmadu*) at the same time. Thus, the sailing vessel/itinerant group of travelers embodied the indicating primer or spirit pin (*Ntu Agama – Pointer of Agama*, deity of precision technology) navigating this spirit/cosmic compass system, in which the stars were celestial markers linked to their terrestrial landmarks through subtle, cosmic veins or ladders known as *Ofu Ete* (divine climbing stringed rope) and their mirroring earthly ones, *Akwara Ala* (Earth veins). The meeting points of these two veins/ropes/ladders are known as *Ebe-Egbe-Dalu* lit. Landing spot of the kite. Its symbol is the winged hawk motif variety known as *Ufenege*, which signifies very pure, primordial spirits. The ultimate task was to master the intricate cosmic-terrestrial water-ways or currents (*Uzo Iyi/Mmiri*) and jungle paths (*Uzo Agu/Ikpa/Nku*) of life; a
task which *Ikenga* is said to have accomplished during the Igbo mythical age, earning it the great title of *Owa Ota* (shield breaker/pathfinder/greatest of all adventurers = *Owata* i.e. cosmic compass or map maker). Till today, this adventurous and path-finding spirit is still encouraged in the now mostly ritualized *Uzo Iyi* festival of Igbo people. The rectangle motif is also employed to illuminate the mystic structure of our galaxy’s central sun (*Ose Ora Ugbo*). This star which is of a "spiral-barred" shape was highly regarded and extensively observed in ancient times. In fact, till this day, the knowledge of its very existence and the essential relationship which it shares with our sun reoccurs in nearly all ritualized practices of Igbo sacred science. For the non-Dibia, one of the few instances where its direct invocation may be observed is in the divinatory chants uttered by *Ndi Dibia Afa* during *Afa Akpukpala* divination sessions. Also of great importance to our discourse is the fact that, in the Islamic religious tradition, the Kaaba (Noble Cube) is also known as The Primordial House. According to the tenets of Islam, this sacred structure, its mosque (the Masjid Al-haram) and sacred geographical location constitutes the unequivocal direction that all Muslims must face when saying their prayers. The geographical coordinates of this location and its geometrical, astronomical, astrological and numerological relationship to the Kaaba structure as well as the cosmos entails such subtle, esoteric Islamic knowledge that one must rather leave this up to Islamic scholars to bring forth to the world at their own discretion. However, the clarity of the extant parallel between the Islamic sacred structure of the Kaaba and the Igbo cosmogonic *Obi* is far too profound to be ignored. It is interesting, given the cosmological parallel observed here—to note that multiple parts of the principal pilgrimage (The Hajj) required of Muslims by their religion involves a seven-count circumambulation of the Kaaba in a counter-clockwise direction. As a matter of fact, to every knowledgeable Igbo *Dibia*, the vast ritual and astronomical
implications of the numeric value seven, as embedded in the above religious act cannot be over emphasized. The enshrined knowledge in this seven-count movement as obtains in *Odinala* is captured in two Igbo mystical axioms as thus, *onye gbahinge uno be ya okirikiri, ohu nwe ya* (when one completes a circumambulation of their house, they’ll run into themselves again) and *okirikiri ka ana agba ukwu ose, anaro ari ukwu ose enu* (the pepper tree can only be encircled, but not climbed). In the later, the pepper tree is symbolic of our solar system and its star, *Anyanwu*. Rightly so, this ritualized movement is significant of planetary and stellar circumambulation patterns, their calibration points and nodes of potency. The Earth itself rotates and revolves counter-clockwise, just as the Islamic Hajj tradition requires of its participants. In this regard, the number seven in Igbo cosmology and sacred science symbolizes, among other things—the ultimate mystery of cycles and their completion, which is in direct par with the seven-count circumambulation of the Kaaba. Also, as regards the human dimension of this ancient ritual, the number seven harbors direct implications for the biological formation of human beings. Ongoing research into the phenomenon of human genetic fusion by contemporary science has only substantiated this ancient African principle. In the words of Laird Scranton (2006) who carried out a commendable comparative study of modern scientific, Dogon and ancient Egyptian cosmologies:

> Every human cell includes twenty-three pairs of chromosomes, one of which is responsible for establishing the sex of the individual. Modern science groups the first twenty-two pairs of chromosomes together and calls them autosomes, but it is the structure of the final pair of chromosomes that ultimately determines which sex a person will be. These sex-determining chromosomes are shaped either like an X, with four branches, or like a Y, with three branches, and so they are called the X and Y chromosomes...Dogon mythology takes a similar approach when it organizes the 266 seeds or signs of Amma’s egg...The parallel nature of these descriptions provides us with a new basis for interpreting the Dogon numerological assignments of the number four as female and the number three as male because these numbers
correspond to the X and Y chromosomes of science—the first, with four branches, produces a female child, and the second, with three branches, produces a male. Based on this interpretation, it is completely understandable that the number seven would then be numerologically assigned to the individual because it is the pairing of an X and a Y chromosome that determines the sex of an individual. (p. 113-114)

Moreover, mathematically speaking, it is only logical that 266 when divided by two (man and woman) gives 133, which in itself totals seven again when added up, thus giving fourteen as the mystical sum of 266. Here, we also observe the mystical role of the number two (Abuo) as the universal denominator (duality) of creation and life in general. It should be further noted that the number seven, as held in the Islamic mystical tradition (Sufi), is equally at the heart of many Igbo traditional institutions as well as knowledge systems. Moreover, beyond its earthly ramifications, the number seven is also sacred to the Sun and the cosmos, as earlier highlighted. The noted religious ritual of circumambulation which is originally an astral reality—is articulated in modern astrophysics as the result of the process of angular momentum conservation by astral, satellite and planetary bodies. This is given as \( L = m \times w \times r^2 \) where \( m \) is the mass, \( w \) is the angular velocity in radians per second, and \( r \) is the radius of the circular motion. Thus, due to conservation of angular momentum, if the radius of the orbit decreases, then its angular velocity must increase (as the mass is constant). This accounts for the elliptic motionary pattern of our planet. Better yet, the same notion has been encapsulated by Igbo people in their ancient cosmological principle of Obi-Ada-Ada, which moreover makes further leaps beyond the above given modern scientific efforts to actually account for the catastrophic events that sadly ended the initial Chi-Eji-Eji, Chi-Efo-Efo divine consciousness and atmospheric condition of our planet. Much later, the same event will be articulated by the Abrahamic religious traditions as the eviction of man from the garden of Eden—alluding to a divine atmospheric condition or a far greater penetration and
presence of the higher dimensions of reality in the pristine human and Earthly consciousness of that time, as well as the primeval onerous geographical reality of our planet back then. This is equally the cosmological notion behind the Igbo astronomical principle of anyanwu rie asaa kwuru, ala ejiri ede-uli kwado ya, where the Sun, the Earth, the Uli script and the number seven are metaphorically and astronomically alluded to.

At this point, it is highly important to remark that the Uli inscribing tradition is actually based on one of the several astronomical scripts that Igbo people have utilized in their extensive intellectual antiquity. It is apparently sacred to the women’s secret society across Igboland, for two main reasons. Scholars of human history and culture have over the years, established that the astronomical sciences manifestly have their roots in the ancient observational practices of women in the early days of humanity; activities centered around keeping track of their menstrual cycle and this is heavily substantiated by Igbo mythic accounts. In addition, there is also the apparent reality that Ala (the Earth Goddess) quite simply, embodies the unwavering reference point of all astral quests carried out from and through this planet. All in all, the spirited and intimate cord of motherhood which has always bound the Earth and human beings together since and before their arrival on this plane of existence has unrelentingly been at the heart of the totemic traditions of African peoples since earliest times. Also of note, the term English geometry and the mathematical discipline which it represents in our times, likewise indicates (geo for Earth, metry for measurement) that even the ancient sages who systemized and propagated that discipline, also strove to demonstrate the same point, namely: that our earliest standards of measurement were informed by the natural constants, contours and other spatial patterns that occur throughout the Earth’s physical geography, as well as embedded fractals. The Earth embodies the primal tangent upon which and from where all our calculations and technical ideations naturally proceeds.
Likewise, every human-plant-animal-mineral astrological or astronomical enquiry must primarily proceed from the Earth’s perceptive standpoint as noted above. This principle is even embedded in the full name of the Earth Goddess in Igbo, Alawualala lit. the land which is the ultimate Earth.

In its other name, the Kaaba structure is also known as the Noble Cube. This readily alludes to the universally acknowledged cube of space principle (Ozi Obi) which the precise geometric motif of the Kaaba enshrines. In the Afa language and mystic thought, space is also conceived as Obala or Oba (contraction) and Oghele (absolution). The structure itself wears a covering of black and gold aesthetics; with the areas of gold aesthetics spotting rectangular geometric motifs. The two colors employed here are likewise significant of two cosmogonic phenomena namely, the primordial birth place of the cosmos (Ogbolodo, Ogboro, Oboloto or Sirius B) and the subsequent stars (naturally of a golden-red color) and other satellite bodies (in the Islamic case, the Moon is given primacy of place) that have their origins in the primordial event that took place in that binary star system. The star of reference in this case is our Sun (Anyanwui). The Kaaba is thus at best, a lunar sanctuary. The preference of the House theme in both the Igbo and Islamic cosmogonic traditions is highly sound and reasonable since the appearance of a house on a given horizon basically indicates the presence of a living, breathing entity (ife di ndu n’eku ume) and in this case, an enlightened living entity (Mmadu), within a sacred geometric structure (Obi Uno). In fact, as will be later discussed, the varied sacred dimensions ascribed to houses as "living spaces" in many cultures are strikingly more realistic than metaphoric in nature and purpose. The three holy pillars found within the Kaaba, the precise rectangular geometry formed by the upper surface of the Kaaba when observed from an aerial view, the concentric-spiral geometry that Muslim Hajj pilgrims simulate in their circumambulation of the Noble Cube—all account to obvious astronomical, cosmological and vast occult implications that transcend our present study. In this light, these and other numerous cosmological parallels in both the Igbo and Islamic traditions amount
to one logical insight: while the ontological pillars of both sacred traditions clearly differ, their cosmogonic and cosmological foundations do prove to be highly reminiscent of each other. Indeed, both share the concrete symbolism of a House in their cosmogonic tradition albeit varyingly presented. Secondly, in both traditions, the conceptualization of this Primordial House is also convergent and emphatic on a four cornered, geographically-locked cubic structure. This aside, the linguistic affinity evident in the names that both sacred traditions assign to their central divinities (Ala—the Igbo Earth Goddess and Allah—the Supreme Divinity of the Islamic faith) is rather correspondingly startling. Added to this fact is also the fundamental religious ritual-act of touching the Earth with the forehead as practiced by Muslims during their prayers (Ikpo Isi Ala—in fact, an Igbo transcription of the word "Islam" uncannily relays it as "Isi Ala m" i.e. My ritual obeisance), all of which calls for a serious comparative study of these two traditions. Eventually, when harmoniously viewed from all the given perspectives thus far, Obi Chukwu and Obi-Kwu-Oto represents a variation in perception and articulation of one universal phenomenon as applied in Igbo cosmogony, cosmology, astronomy, astrotheology, metallurgy, architecture, agriculture, divination, daily rituals and sacred festive traditions, scribal and aesthetic traditions, sacred geology, medico-healing practices, oral traditions, architectonics, diverse mystical practices as well as other epistemic traditions constitutive of Igbo culture. The Obi-Kwu-Oto (upright Obi) principle is also central to the Dogon world system. To be sure, entire Dogon villages are structured on this very principle to look like a man lying with his back on the ground, his head to the north and his feet to the south, just as in the Igbo tradition where every traditionally built house should have its head (Isi) to the north (Be Orie), its legs (Ukwu) to the south (Be Afo), its right arm (Aka Nni) to the East (Be Eke or Owuwa Anyanwu) and its left arm (Aka Ekpe) to the west (Be Nkwo or Odida Anyanwu). In the final analysis, the house is concisely said to have a head and stomach (Isi na Afo), just as a human being. Reporting on the Dogon world system, Griaule (1965) notes that:
When the house is correctly sited, that is to say, is open to the north, the pot on the fire indicates the same point, the stones indicating east and west, while the wall, the third support for the pot, marks the south. (p. 94)

Thus, in *Obi Chukwu*, it should be stated that the particular symbolic allusion is to the primordial state of *Akwu* before the occurrence of *Okike* (creation); the emergence of the corporeal from the incorporeal. Today, astronomers of the occident tradition have merely substantiated what the ancient Igbos always knew, which is that our galaxy is of a "barred-spiral" shape. In Igbo cosmology, this same conviction is expressed in several ways, as would be clarified in the next chapter. It should be noted however, that the so called "barred-spiral" shape assigned to our galaxy by astronomers of the Western epistemological tradition—essentially illustrates the fact that it possesses both concentric (spiral) and rectangular (bar) characteristics. Thus, ascertaining the observations of ancient Igbo people that at all levels, the universe manifests both masculine (*Obi*) and feminine (*Akwu*) natures.

The prior state of cosmic primordiality is also referable to as *Ime Komosu* (Cosmic Gestation State or Period), while her birthing of *Uwa* is likened to the explosion of a Supernova, or what the ancient Igbos articulated as *Akwa-Walu-n’Ezi* lit. egg that shattered in the outer reaches of the compound/far reaches of the cosmos; except that the explosion of a Supernova is actually far too minor an event to truly depict the immensity of the actual *Odachi-ka-Odachi*. The very earliest resulting nebulae from this Great Birth are known as *Ula-Abani-Uta* in Igbo astronomy, while other subsequent nebulae resulting from much-later astral events are known as *Ula-Abani-Uzu*. It should be stated at this point that, the traditional natal rituals observed by Igbo women following childbirth are perfectly simulated, miniature scales of cosmic events and as such, enshrines a great deal of Igbo cosmogonic and cosmological knowledge. To better depict this, once
again, it is necessary to revisit some portions of the Igbo mythical account of Odachi Nne Ebere. Ogbolodo na Ose Otule (Sirius A and B) are also regarded as the "Duo of Creation" (ora n’abo) in Igbo astronomy. Cosmogonically regarded as the place where Komosu gave birth to her colossal child (Uwa), this occurrence and its awareness have primordially informed the traditional Afa term for the second star, namely Ose Otule which means "happiness" in demotic Igbo; childbirth is synonymous with happiness. Actually, there are four stars altogether in this stellar system, the last two and most sacred and recondite been Ose Ogwute and Ose Ofu. Their respective colors are blue, white, red and black. These are also the colors of Eke (Oji, Nji, Idu, Kpuukpuu, Odii, Abani, Ochichii, Uchichi - black), Orie (Obara-Obara, Mmee-Mmee, Uhie – red), Afo (Ocha, Ucha, Ichavaa, Chivaa/Shivaa – white, bright), Nkwo (Alulu Igwe/Alulu, Nru Onwa, Nda - blue). All together, the four stars are thus known as Kpakpando Umu Inyom (the star of women) or rather "the birth star of the cosmos". The Pleiades star cluster which has been very sacred to women since very ancient times is known in Igbo astronomical and mythic traditions as Inyom Asaa or Inyom-Igwe-n’Asaa (seven women of the sky/the seven women who live in the sky). This star cluster which is located in the constellation of Taurus (Atu-Nwnanyi-Okpu) and its primordial sacredness to women continues to provide further evidence on the issue of the origins of human culture and civilization, as associated with women and the domestication of the Bull. The Orion star system which is also known in Igbo astronomy as Umu-Nne-Ito (the three siblings) is the star of men, technologists, blacksmiths, warriors, crafts people, artists etc. The sacred numeric values embodied in both are apparent. In Oka tradition, the Orion constellation is merged with their ancient war and technology deity called Okika na Ube, which is represented with a spear in his right hand. There is also the very ancient and more prominent Akputakpu na Uno Uzu which is the present Oka deity of artisans, technologists, blacksmithing and
engineering. Of great importance is that the term Akputakpu harbors the word Puta, to be sure, which is the name of the ancient Egyptian deity of artisans, crafts and technology known as Ptah (Putaaa/Futaaa in Igbo), not to mention the uncanny skillful tradition for which both civilizations are renown. Furthermore, according to Master Blacksmith, Dibia and priest of the Akputakpu na Uno Uzu deity housed in the Ngwuru Imoka enclave, Nne Uzu Okechukwu Nwude of Umuokpu Oka:

*Akputakpu na Uno Uzu bu ife okpu.* This blacksmithing vocation you see is a very ancient mystic practice whose result is technology, contrary to what modern people ignorantly assume. It came out of very ancient Igbo mystic traditions. The world should know that Oka traditional blacksmithing is not dead. If anybody wishes for Akputakpu na Uno Uzu to go extinct, may the Earth Goddess dish out the greatest form of extinction on such a person. Oka blacksmiths are still here in good standing. Akputakpu na Uno Uzu can never die. Our ancestors practiced it on this very spot I am standing and we continue to practice it today and will keep doing so forever. They practiced it all over Igboland, Yorubaland, Igalaland, Warriland, Edoland, Hausaland, Ibibioland, Jukunland, Tivland, Jappaland, Nupeland, Jarawaland etc. and all over Africa and even Obodo Oyibo (overseas). Yes Oka blacksmiths travelled all over the world in the ancient times. Let it be known. (From an interview during the 2012 Imoka festival in Oka town)

It should also be stated here that the four Igbo diurnal divinities (*Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo*) are among other things, astral and cosmic beings. As such, they are also incarnated in the Sirius star system. The root vowel sounds produced when their names are pronounced (É, Ó, Á, O) likewise embody deep mystical and astronomical implications, for these are the primal sounds of creation. These same sounds are produced by human beings, animals, plants, insects, birds etc. during copulation. On this note, it should be mentioned that the O (Om) sound is the sound of the heartbeat of the moon, while the Ó (Om) sound is the sound of the heartbeat of the Sun. All four sounds (É, Ó, Á, O) are sacred rhythmic sounds (*Ngede Egwu*) and are meant to be
pronounced in that exact manner to produce the very necessary high-energy vibrations that should accompany and potentiate early morning invocations and other Igbo ritual functions. The special class of _Ogene_ used by Dibias, priests and priestesses in their ritual works (_Ogene n'di Dibia na Eze Alusi ji agbado mmuo_) known as _Ogene Ike, Ibugbo_ or _Akuebesi_ are also employed appropriately to produce these sounds. The Sirius star system is also hailed as _Aka Ete Iyi/Nne Iyi_ (ancient vibration of the primal celestial waters) or _Ete Ofu_ (first cosmic vibration) in the Oka tradition and is the center of the much celebrated _Imoka_ festival which is done once every year in that part of Igboland. One cannot help but note the stark parallel evident in the terms _Aka Ete_ (Oka) and _Akhet_ (ancient Egyptian)—a term that also signifies a festival as well as the first season in the calendars of both civilizations. Infact, like the Oka/Igbo people who refer to themselves, contextually, as _Umu Aka Ete_, the ancient Egyptians called themselves “Children of Isis”. Thus, Khemet is _Umu-Aka-Ete/Aka-Mu-Ete_ – Children of the Lady of the Black Land. Since very ancient times, the Agbaja (Wa-Wa clan) people are appellated by other Igbo clans as, _Ndi ji mmili wee me ife n’ine_ lit. the ones who owe their breakthroughs to the water spirit (creativity). Till this day, the greatest deity in Oka is _Imoka_, an ancient Water Goddess. Of importance also, in ancient Egypt, _Akhet_ was also associated with Sirius (_Sopdet_), the Goddess Isis (_Aset_), the Nile River (_Hapi_), soil fertility, farming, skill/crafts and construction work – to be sure, all of which are themes that are embedded in the said _Imoka_ festival and Oka cultural heritage itself, as well attested by sources (2013) in the following surmise:

The Imo-Oka festival is a week-long festival of masquerades and dances held in May at the beginning of the farming season in honor of a female deity who it is hoped would make the land fertile and yield bountiful crops. The festival starts with Awka people visiting the community of Umuokpu with masquerades and it ends with a visit to the Imo-Oka stream on the final day which is heralded by a heavy rain that falls in the late afternoon. There are four major events performed during the festival, the _ede-mmuo, ogwu_
oghugha, egwu Opu-Eke and Egwu Imo-Oka. Egwu Opu Eke is a rich cultural dance performed by female worshipers of Imo-Oka shrine which includes priestesses and ordinary women alike decorated in colorful costume dancing in the market square in honor of the deity controlling the shrine. (para. 37-38)

The slaughtering and offering of cows or bulls (Efi Imoka) is also a great part of the Imoka festive tradition, which rather recalls the sacred Hapis bull cultus tradition of Memphis (Emume Efi/Atu). In Umuoji town of Idemmilli North Local Government Area, this same festival is celebrated as Emume Uzo Iyi (lit. Festival of Water-Ways), a very colorful festival which ushers in the new farming season. Most interesting to watch are its uncanny simulacrums of some now extinct animals that once prowled the ancient rain forest terrain of Igboland. In Aguata and Orumba locales, the same festival is also celebrated as Ikwa Uzo Iyi (Festival of Rival Path Maintenance) or Mbomuzo (Festival of Community Highway Maintenance) and is also used to usher in the new farming season. Indeed, as Ogbolodo embodies the totality of all universal mysteries, it obtained as the most perceivable leading landmark to Chukwu’s divine realm (Be Chukwu) in many cultures of the ancient world. In this light, one of the very ancient divine appellations of Chukwu as given to the author by his maternal grandfather (Nze Onyekwere Ikeh alias Ebube Eziagu) and which throws great light on the mystery of Be Chukwu is, Ijite-Aka-Akwu-Mechiri-Uzo-Anyanwu. A tentative translation of this divine name is given as “The divine primordial source of beingness, eternal one who sealed the spirit door of the Sun from all beings”. The name thus alludes to the great mystery of Be Chukwu i.e. the realm of the Supreme Spirit; a most arcane knowledge which the ancient Igbos believed to be in their possession as Umu Anwu i.e. Children of the God of Light. John Urama (2013) of University of Nigeria Nsukka has presented an astronomical interpretation of this belief among Igbo people as well as other African peoples below:
Africa still has access to a good portion of dark skies... Also, we have access
to the center of the Milky Way galaxy, where you have lots of interesting stuff—
star-forming regions, for example. In the northern hemisphere, there are a
number of places that don’t have good access to that region of the sky (para.
10)

The ancient Igbos also appellated the Sun as *Ite-Chukwu-Shinyere-na-
Mbara-Igwe* lit. the divine boiling pot perfectly set in the sky by the
supreme spirit. Therefore, it was the steaming fire/heat (*Oku Ite*)
surging from this divine pot (*Ite Chukwu*) which is undying (*Anwu*)
that gives physical, intellectual and spiritual light to the whole world
(*Ihe Chukwu*). In the same tradition, the Moon is praised as *Oku-Ocha-
do-n’Igwe* lit. pure white divine bowl of Chukwu resting in the sky.
The conclusion thus goes that, *o wu oku ite Chukwu shiwere na mbara
igwe ka ihe ji di, o wu ya du uwa eje* lit. light as we know it is a radiation
from the divine boiling pot set in the sky by the supreme spirit; it is
this light that guides all created beings. In this sense, they referred to
*Chukwu* as *Oshi Ite Okpu* and *Aka Shiwere Ite na Mbara Igwe*. The deep
mystic implication in the latter been that *Chukwu* is an *Achikwu-Igwe-
Teghete* lit. unfathomable dweller in the deepest and highest heavens
(ether-spheres). For posterity reasons, it should also be noted that
“Ether” is *Ete Ora* i.e. Primal Energy.

Of key importance is that the *Achikwu* is a night-spirit-medium and
thus, sharply differs from the day-time-operating masquerades of
Igbo tradition. Among other profundities, the operative principles of
this night-spirit-medium tradition clearly reveals that music is an
etheric record that can always be resurrected at any time-point from
the ether-fields of the cosmos, employing the proper combinations of
natural elements, atmospheric conditions, lunar phase and mystic
voice commands that match the harmonic frequency desired to be
resurrected. An *Ovuvuu* mystic axiom encapsulating this principle
goes thus, *otele m nyawara akpa ndi nwuru anwu* lit. I have for long held
onto the bags of deceased people/life forms. In the above, the alluded
bags of deceased people refer to energy-bodies or souls or dispersed-life-forces and primordial place-vibrations of all deceased life forms that once thrived on this planet. An exceptionally brilliant masquerade form, the *Ovuvuu* in its well-recognized simulacra of mostly indigo = night/space/sky and white = time/spheres/moon colors, symbolically alludes to itself as a mere mystic representation of the Earth’s Morph(ogenetic) field; the subtle energy field invoked with the syncopated sound of the *Ogene* the silent bird that collects all experiences and rebirths creation endlessly with a single sound of life = *Nnunu-kwatelu-okike-n’ofu-nkwa*. *Ovuvuu* further reveals that the Earth’s morphogenetic field is in turn immersed in the super-ether fields of the universe, embodied in the characteristic silence of the Ibis. In the foregoing context, this wise ancient bird thus alludes to its extensive age as a custodian of all the knowledge, wisdom, deeds, sounds, moods etc. of all life so far, which its curved beak (*Otutu*) releases forth in one sound (*Atu*) as the creator God, or as the fluidic natural pattern (*Uli*) left all over the Earth’s surface by its timeless mystic footsteps (*Udi*), in its essence as the Divine Scribe (*Aka Ofu/Aka Ovu* lit. Solitary Hand/Hand of the *Ovu* Ibis bird = Sacred Beak). A long-living bird, the African sacred Ibis species can live for over 20 years; thus the popular Igbo aphorism associated with *Ojionu/Ovuvuu* masquerade thus: *O teka mu na ife/Otego mgbe ihe na ihe mewere*.

Arising from the foregoing reality, music in the Igbo sensibility is understood as all sonic harmonies emanating from the subtle, spirit vibrations occurrent in creation, including those consciously produced by human beings. The Igbo people and their culture long realized that for one to truly penetrate into the higher realms of creation, a higher form of language must be employed to that effect. Such a language cannot be of words, but rather of pure energy and pure spirit sound. As preserved in the structure of the Igbo mystic bronze bell, *Ikpo-Nwa-Ude* often worn by the *Ikpo Ulaga* masquerade during its performance, these two components (pure energy = *Ikpo* i.e. the bell’s outer shell
and pure spirit sound = *Otawara-Ikpo* or *Mgbirimba-tawara-Ikpo* i.e. the bell clapper) engage in an endless interaction of silence/potential energy (*Ogbi-gbalu-nkiti-ma-okwu-julu-ya-onu*) and sound/kinetic energy (*Egwu-ya-na-mu-na-chi-yi-bia-uwu*). As with all polarities in the universe, all of which are identical in nature and differ only in degrees—sound and energy ultimately prove to be one and the same; of a single essence. Creation actually occurs somewhere in-between this subtle, but intense interaction of sound and energy. In human terms, the high frequency vibrations released by this mystic bell, travel as sound waves and are captured by our ear as ringing. This is creation. Thus the ultimate Igbo mystical Law of Sound, *Ude mu Ude Mmuo* lit. the sound of *Mu* is one with the sound of Spirit; sound heard and deciphered is spirit demystified. The higher the refinement of sound, the higher the consciousness streaming it; the deeper the knowledge, wisdom and message therein encoded. The *Ikpo* mystic bell is creation as articulated in a sound-template cosmology and symbolized as such. In this sense, the Igbo people make it very clear that, the search for the hidden realms of the universe, must be propelled by sound, pure sound = ultrasound (*Ude/Ngede Egwu*) and a multidimensional cognition modality that can comprehend, improvise and fluidly merge sound with energy (*Ike*), whilst transcending the infinity of vibrational frequencies (*Be Chi*) that comprises existence; effectively communicating the perceived vibrational frequencies in applied harmonics (*Ete Mu/Otite Egwu/Egwu Agwu/Ekpili Agwu/Egede Agwu* = mystical music) as well as all other communicable sounds, be it as chants, teachings, whistling, prayers, oracles, prophecies etc. These are further converted into the matching 3rd dimensional consciousness framework or culture and signature sound vernacular or language and interpreted according to the existing situations, conditions and availing knowledge system of that human group. Thus said, the *Achikwu* is also known to perform countless mystic feats, especially those associated with the subsequent Igbo ancestors (*Ndi*
In this very sense, the ancestral spirits utilize the Mmonwu mystic simulacra to transmit cultural norms, messages, wisdom, traditions, lore, foster harmony, as well as to enforce cultural ordinances, rules, customs, penalties etc. in a given community. Whereas, the Achikwu tradition is the original mystic and very advanced form of what later degenerated into necromancy practices in many parts of the ancient world. As such, it is purely a night-spirit-medium tradition. Both of these are central to the Igbo ancestral cult institution. The Mmonwu is made corporeal for many reasons and is thus visible to all and sundry, but the Achikwu is invisible to none except for those initiated into the ancestral cult of the community. Its sounds can be heard and its movements and presences felt, but only initiates can actually see or identify the feats it performs. Some masquerade and night spirit-medium types from the Orumba culture-area include: Ogaligwe, Icheoku, Akataka, Mgbediike, Nhe Isulo, Ovuvuu, Gbuovute, Ebilidadaa, Ezete, Achikwu, Ogba Agu, Onyekurume, Nwa Nza, Nwa Ayaya, Nwa Okwu, Agaba Idu, Otenkwu, Adamma, Ulaga, Ome n’Ikoro, Otagbu-Nne-n’Umu, Obata Osu, Ometaravuru, Oku Okwe, Ngbokwocha, Ovuivu, Ugwuagbada, Izaga, Olo Nkpuruakwu etc. Among these, the Ovuvuu which is a member of the Ojionu masquerade character family, simulates a diversity of mystical dramas related with the ancient Igbo Creator God Atu, who communicated often with the early Igbo people through Ovu/Obu, the ancient Ibis species that once thrived in large numbers in the Igbo ecological region. Originally, the Ojionu masquerade is conceived as a water-spirit character (i.e. spirit of intense creativity). It is represented by headdresses of mostly striking aquatic creatures and certain birds. On the whole, its major attributes include intense, creative non-stop dancing and mystic feats achieved by means of varied utterances, such as shrieks, whistling, high potency incantations, songs etc. as well as offering deep mystic insights in its endless reel of proverbs and chants. Ojionu masquerades vary from those that simulate only the voice-based
attributes of this mythical form and also exhibit its superior mystical powers to those that dance predominantly with minimal voice features and possess less mystical powers. Ovuvuu is generally praised as Ovuvuu-Tuturu-Oji-Kwe-l'ishi lit. Ovuvuu, the spirit that cut down the Iroko tree with its mouth/single utterance/word and nodded in satisfaction; an allusion to the nod-like gesture made by the Ibis whilst consuming its choice meal of snakes. As a matter of fact, the Ojonu/Ovuvuu performers actually mimic the walking steps of this bird and all the mystical cum natural feats associated with it, including the eating of snakes; now performed symbolically with the relentless flinging of both arms by the performer, simulating the dilemma of a live snake caught in-between the beak of the Ibis. Ovu is mostly a silent bird that only speaks (i.e. bird call) once in a while with a single guttural sound (Ovuvuu). Since creation began with a single sound which is mimicked by the human heart beat (Obi) following a prolonged period of Divine Silence (Akwu), the ancient Igbos put it that, Ovu is a bird that truly speaks for God. For it only makes a single sound whenever it talks to break its long silence, hence mimicking creation. It is the one bird that only speaks to talk about God and this earned it the ancient praise name, Nnunu-koro-aha-Chukwu lit. the one bird that named God. Infact, like most Igbo words, Atu – the name of the ancient Igbo Creator God whom the Ovu bird named—is actually an onomatopoeic replica of the sound made by this usually silent bird during its regurgitative digestion. Thus, Ovu is Atu in bird form! This Atu sound is a short, piercing tympanic rumble, which even the ancient Egyptians observed and incorporated syllabically in the name of their earliest lunar creator god, Djehuti/Thoth. Infact, one of the well survived appellations of Djehuti is Atu-Khemmenu (Bull of Khemmenu) and Agwun'etugofenenu (Agwu that grants the eagle feathers of wisdom in flight). This ancient bird is further encapsulated in a Dibia mystic axiom dealing with the principle of animal ritual immolation as thus, Ovu si na ya na okuko
Igbo bu nwanne lit. the sacred African Ibis said that the local Igbo fowl is its direct sibling. Based on the above, the Dibia thus accepts a fowl as one of the institutionalized rewards of his/her work, for Ovuvu is also the sacred bird of Agwu as Obala-Otule-na-Evu-Obala-Akwu lit. Messenger; Ancient Mouthpiece of the Creator; One Voice that Speaks Many Tongues; Mystic Light in Human Form Transmitting On Behalf of the Primordial Light. The bird’s complete name, Ovuvu-Nwa-Nnunu-Aka ultimately surfaces in the ancient Afa name for God, namely Aka Ovu/Ofu (Primordial One = Ono-na-Mvu-Uwa). It is also an oral mnemonic encapsulating the Air-elemental, cosmogonic and cosmological tradition of the Agwu mystic tradition; dealing with the higher roles of Agwu as Messenger of the Supreme Creator and the Dibia as a scion of this Divine line of Messengership, operating undercover in human form. The mystical communicative gifts of the Dibia have been adapted towards many purposes in African cultures and civilizations since time immemorial. It is to be noted that, in the Temple of a lunar creator deity such as Djehuti, who is a Chi of time and communication among other things, services of universal communication were rendered on a daily basis, just as the Dibia Afa does today in his/her Obi Agwu temple. For the ancient initiates of the Cult of Djehuti, the temple was a mystic universe made manifest by the lunar creator god, Djehuti, whose physical form gave forth subtle reverberations of knowledge and wisdom as absorbed from nature. The temple was thus, alive and enlivening, standing on the birthplace of the universe, the House of the Moon, the House of Life, in which rests the Ka of Djehuti, who is the All-Knowing (Ishi Oha) the indwelling Chi of diviners, scribes, master teachers, healers, polymaths, visionaries, grand adepts in any field of knowledge, adept artists, seekers etc. In other words, Djehuti is the incarnating Chi of those whose intuitive abilities are naturally highly developed or have been deeply honed as a result of their relentless seeking of knowledge and diligent application of it thereof. The result of such is that, the
works of such people reveal a pronounced sense of fusion, which manifests as a unique coalescing and refinement of vast knowledge sources into a universal stream of communication called wisdom. In this sense, the Spirit of Djehuti (Intuition) encourages one to become familiar with the entry symbol of the House of Life (Ulwa) - which is the Ankh (Spirit of Resolution and the Inner Longing to Grow in Life and Wisdom). Within this mind space, one naturally instills into themselves, a gradual state of calm resolve. In the ancient temples, as an inception test for the potency of the said mystic communication abilities, which will be further honed to enable one expand their uses in the deeper realms of nature during private seeking sessions (Mgbazo/Ida-Ana-Oshimiri/Itu Uche), the following exemplary technique may be used as a launch off into the higher realms. One visualizes themselves standing in a small courtyard set amid a vast complex of sacred buildings and buoyant natural life (Ama Mbu):

Ahead of you is a small low building, which is reached by an inclined ramp of stone. You make your way towards its open entrance. As you place your feet upon the path, you see that an Ankh has been inscribed into the stone. The loop within the Ankh’s handle fills the entrance. As you approach the threshold, be aware that every step has meaning for it carries you closer towards the House of Life. You pause as you stand at the threshold and contemplate your motive and intentions at this time. When you are ready to take the next step proceed across the threshold and enter the House of Life. At once you realize that you have stepped into the depths of star studded space. Before you, suspended in the heavens hangs a great Ankh which is called the Key of Life. It glows with a soft golden light and it exerts a pull upon you which is both magnetic and yet gentle. You are invisibly drawn towards the Ankh. As you stand before it, the Ankh, seems to exert a powerful and unexpected living aura. You pause and allow its dynamic force to enter you. Allow your energy field to open like a blossoming Lotus (Iruro-Nwa-Nduri) and receive the energies of life in the House of Life. When you feel that the embrace is complete, settle yourself and wait. Looking into the center of the loop within the handle of the Ankh, let your gaze extend as far as you are able towards the stars beyond. As if following your intentions, feel yourself being
pulled through the loop. Instantly you are transported to a realm that is no longer set in starry space. All here is quiet and a sense of complete bliss prevails. Using your expanded senses look about and know that you stand at the center of an energy vortex. You realize that pulsing energies are travelling close by on pre-ordained paths. Tracks of light hang in space like vapor trails marking out these flashing orbits. Your consciousness stands aligned within the atom, you have become aligned to its central heart. You know instinctively that deeper mysteries and wonders exist here too. Rest in thus creative space until you feel ready to leave. To depart recall the surroundings in which you were at the outset of your journey. Affirm your intention to return to it, and at once feel yourself slipping back through the loop. From there you may stride back across the threshold and return to a state of ordinary consciousness. Collect all your thoughts and impressions. Record these as soon as you are able.

The Dibia is of the *Uwa Agwu*. In this sense, there are *Agwu* beings of energy form, of human, of plant, of water, of land etc. manifestations. The *Akpu* tree, for instance, is known as *Akpu-Nwanyi-Dibia*, which indicates that this plant is of the *Agwu* realm, however it has taken form only at the plant level of existence. The same for *Agu* (leopard), *Ururu* (the ground squirrel), *Anunuebe* tree, *Ogirishi* tree, *Ovuwu* bird, *Ikwikwi-Nwa-Abani-Agwu* (owl) etc. There exists also *Agwu* of the day and night, month and year, sun and moon, land and air etc.

The important thing to note is that *Agwu* always comes as a dual, indivisible, harmonized spirit in one being, true to the primordial, androgynous state of life from which its consciousness stems and which it represents as *Odii-n’abo-Agwu*; in contrast with subsequent elemental beings, in whom one side of the duality is dominant over the other. *Agwu* is thus *Nne-na-Oke/Ada-na-Okpara*. As *Olaraiche*, the consummate *Dibia* who is truly of the realm of *Be Agwu* possesses a unique ether-composed energy body (*Akpa Agwu*) that functions as a mystic link to his/her home realm’s vibration frequency, and which is utilized for works of high mystical importance, such as *Izu-Afia-Mmuo, Ipu-Ije-Mmuo, Igba-n’Izo-Mmuo, Ikwu Ekiri, Iita Atu Agwu, Igba*
Ota Agwu, Iku Ume Ndu etc. This distinctive energy body type enables him/her to fluidly shift into any chosen mental, emotional, corporeal or spiritual form in a subtle creative process called Oshishi Agwu. Observation then indicates that, the ultimate chemical import of this frequent interdimensional shifts is that the Dibia’s corporeal form precipitates several million microscopic crystallites and on this fact, Dibia’s maintain clearly that: anyi bu onwa, anyi anaro etigbu ji nke ji etigbu ede i.e. we are like the Moon, our rays do not harm yam, neither does it harm cocoyam. The context of the yam and cocoyam in the later is expanded to include humans (Ji) and spirits (Ede), as well as man (Ji) and woman (Ede) etc. In reality, the above mystic axiom also captures the fact that, given these often interdimensional shifts, which comprises both chemical processes (high metabolism, intense perspiration etc.) and alchemical transmutations (advanced fusions of subtle energy and consciousness), an immensely potent diversity of crystallite boundaries form throughout the corporeal body of such a being. These are interfaces where crystals of different orientations meet and coalesce into powerful fusions, ultimately merging with the subtle energies of their host being to intensify their magnetic potency. Following the death and burial of a Dibia or persons of highly advanced consciousness and high spiritual purity, these erstwhile accretions of diverse and potent crystallite galaxies achieve complete fusion with the dead person’s energy bodies and enter into a state of great perturbation under geothermal pressure. To this effect, they are forced to discharge and radiate an intense magnetic energy that polarizes (Ikwaze-Ike-Agwu-Anî) the erstwhile energy state of the land/environ, thereby magnifying its original vibrational frequency. One senses a kind of ethereal flush in such an environment, which usually leads many to term such a location as holy ground or apparition spot. Thus, crystallite boundary areas contain those atoms that have been perturbed from their original lattice sites; dislocations and impurities that have migrated to the lower energy crystallite
boundary. With regards to the process of *Oshishi Agwu* and other forms of *Oshishi* (transmutation), it should be noted that, the high interfacial energy involved and the relatively transient, bonding force (i.e. *Egwu* = to dance is to gently flux into the spirit realms) in the crystallite boundaries is the key potentiating factor that makes the boundary regions (*Agu Mmuo*) preferred sites for the onset of corrosion of solid states, and for the precipitation of new phases from the solid. The science of alchemy, which was well known and practiced and still practiced in Igbo land by Dibias and priests/priestesses, in actuality, predates humanity. What the Igbo Dibias observed as *Ijite-Ana-na-Ijite-Kpakpando* and adapted into the mystic astral traveling modality of *Ikwu Ekiri*, which takes off after a base nine mystic configuration of fire (*Oku/Obala*) and static-energy charged sounds/incantations (*Egede Komosu/Egede Ikuku*), as well a base nine alignment of sand/star seed/fallen star (*Aja-Ana/Ogodo Komosu*) and its correlating stars in the sky (*Kpakpankpa-Ndu/Aja-don’Enu-Ukwu-Ogodo-Komosu* i.e. sands in their becoming process, still hanging on the Cosmic Wrapper of Komosu, awaiting to be flung off onto land as *Aja-Ana*)—the following knowledge is now being uncovered by modern scientists. Nassim Haramein (2013) has aptly articulated the following in this respect:

We are stardust. Literally. The average human has approximately 100 trillion cells and each cell is made of approximately 100 trillion atoms, each of which were originally created in the center of a star. The atoms that are in your hands may have been created in a different star than the atoms in your feet, so by definition, we are galactic beings because the very structures that make up our bodies come from across the galaxy. (para 1)

*Ula Komosu* (atmospheric matter) surrounds her elemental skin-matter (*Enu-Ogodo-Komosu*) which in turn, covers the subtle layers of her composite tissues (*Ime-Ogodo-Komosu/Dark Matter*), in which is enmeshed her blood system (*Ete-Obala-Komosu/Dark Energy*). Beyond this, there is *Ete-Ijite-Komosu, Ete-Ululu-Komosu, Ete-Okala-Komosu, Ete-*
Obi-Komosu etc. Ultimately, she harmoniously reclines on the Cosmic Mat of Ute Komosu (Ete-Obi/Strings), beyond which is Ete-Aka-Ora-Komosu, Ete-Aka-Aturukpa-Komosu etc. In this light, it is often said of the Dibia that, *Dibia bu mmonwu n’eti onwe ya* i.e. the Dibia is a spirit masquerading in human body; the human body functioning as the Dibias Awolo Mmonwu (the spirit costume/aural body). Also, *Dibia wu Aghara* lit. the Dibia is a highly creative spirit eluding and transcending all human set categories. Till this day, *Ovuvuu/Ojionu* masquerade is still performed with the carved head of an Ibis, even though the bird is now hardly sighted in Igboland. *Olo-Nkpuruakwu* (Swallower of Palm Seed) dramatizes the early encounters of prehistoric animals with the very tough Cycad plant, arguably the oldest plant/palm specie on our planet etc. The dramatizations are highly extensive and will require several volumes to properly list and analyze. Ekwulumili et al. (2013) have further clarified that:

> Mmonwu is the physical manifestation of a medium between the spirit world and the human world...This spirit medium actually comprises three gradations with slightly varying roles. The Mmonwu, which is the ancestral spirit masquerade, emerges and operate in the daytime hours. The very mysterious spirit medium that is never directly encountered by non-initiates is the Ajukwu, and the Oganigwe, which only emerge and perform at night in complete darkness. Whenever the nocturnal ancestral spirits are resurrected, there is complete curfew all night long as well as a ban on any sources of light, artificial or natural, except for moonlight, all through the villages where they appear. (para. 1-3; emphasis mine)

Thus said, *Chukwu Abiama* is equally apppellated as *Odii n’Akwu* lit. the unfathomable one who resides in unfathomable primordiality. The appellation here again refers to the primordial state of the universe (*Akwu*) which was characterized by a deep, unfathomable midnight-like darkness or what the ancient Afa-speaking Igbos called *Odii* and today’s Igbo call *Nderi/Ndeli*. This *Ndeli/Odii* or primordial darkness which initially engulfed the first uncreated world consequently
preceded cosmic existence as we know it. As such, it naturally prefigured the first emergence (Owụwa) of light (Ora/Ihe/Ife) and the first sprouting (Opụpu) of life (Ndu). The same notion is furthermore expressed as Abani-Okpu-Uwa which literally translates as "primordial night-like darkness of the first primordial world". Moving on, in the Igbo astronomical and metallurgical traditions (which go hand-in-hand), Ogbolodo is also known as Onu Okpo ho (ravine of copper) and held to be the original and universal source (Onu lit. ravine) of copper (Okpo ho) and much later, iron (Igwe). It should also be noted that even this most common African name for manilas Okpo ho (also Ego Igwe) is evidently an Igbo word. And indeed, before the mining and smelting of iron and gold, Igbo people had mined and smelted copper and bronze; sourcing their iron ore mostly from Ironstone (Nne Igwe/Ogbi Mkpu me) deposits found in many parts of Igboland, as well as working several other gem stones, such as carnelian, African jade, coral stones, bronzite, ocean jasper, blue sapphire, tourmaline, aquamarine, pyrope, topaz, almandine garnet, among many others. With regards to the subtle knowledge of stones and their workings, it should be said that, one of the core principles of Igbo crafts tradition encapsulates: okwa nka si na ife no n’aka nokwalu n’uch e, ife no n’uch e nokwalu na aka lit. the expert artisan advises that, the material of work should also be one with the mind of the craftsperson and the mind of the craftsperson should also be one with their material/medium of work. When the above stated law, which underlies the mystic state of Anyi-bu-Ofu (Universal Consciousness) is achieved between the artisan and their chosen material of work, regardless of the work conditions and kind of tools in use, genius expression is achieved. One may ask, what is going on here? The simple answer is that, in a state of Universal Consciousness, the Chi of the said artisan and the inherent Chi of their chosen material harmoniously merge into one and brings forth Eke, the inherent creative genius in both Chi manifestations. The traditional Igbo artisan/artist is keen on the
creative process of becoming and not on the final product itself. For the latter is largely dependent on the degree of one-pointed keenness (Mgbado Anya/ Igado Anya), determination (Nshikpo Onwu/Ishikpo Onwu), the level of union with one’s material or medium of work (Iluma Nka), ability to remain calm for extended periods of time (Itogbo/Iwusa Ahu) and overall kinetic energy injected into the transient moment/process of creation (Ike Aka/Ike Nka). Hence, it is the guiding force(s) behind the hands utilizing the tools that is ultimately going to determine the degree of refinement, precision and vision to be achieved on the material and not necessarily the tools/technology, artistic skillset or knowledge availed to one, although the latter remain of value. The highly realized artist/artisan is one whose spirit is in harmony with life and the tremendously creative universe in which life thrives; one who has, consciously or unconsciously achieved mystic oneness with the guiding forces of their chosen vocation by merging with their chosen materials of work, embodying the sublime qualities of the natural realm in their own being, becoming of one mind with the process of creativity and the medium of creativity. As a result of this, a deeply productive and energized relationship is manifestly achieved as the expressed ability to guide the structural will (Okuka) of the material directly from the now merged, super intuition of the two unified Chi. It is thus given in Igbo sacred traditions that, the distinctly skill-gifted/artistic individual is one who has received Chi Okuka/Chi-nwelu-Nka/Chi-ketalu-Nka as their personal Chi. When the mystic state of Anyi-ku-Ofu is achieved in a creative process, the ordinary nature and role of the employed tool/technology of work as a bridge between the creator and the created diminishes, giving way to an intense exchange of energy between the two interacting Chi. In this energy exchange vortex lies the creative force called Eke, whose perceived potentials at that particular moment in time is then expressed by the artisan/artist utilizing their skill set, technical wits and expanded consciousness, as
intuitively guided. Resultedly, this elevated state of awareness naturally reaches for and brings out the most refined vision of that material/medium, whilst also achieving the highest possible impression of one’s artistic ideals upon it (i.e. *Ikama Nka/Igbuma Nka/Ikwama Nka*). The eventual final product is merely a symbol, an elaborate souvenir of yet another intense moment in the creative relationship of both interplaying *Chi*. With regards to gemstones, it is noted that Nigeria—particularly middle belt and southern regions of Nigeria—is among some of the world’s highest untapped gemstone deposits. Nigeria is also reputed as the one important gemstone producer in Africa that is not located in the Mozambique Belt. The Orion star system is given as the primordial foundry (*Uno Uzu*) where the original first metal was forged by *Nnechukwu* as *Nne-Mu-Uzu* and much later as a result of patriarchy, she was referred to as *Di-Mu-Uzu* and much later as, *Eze Uzu*. The universe was also articulated by many smithing Igbo communities variously as *Uwa na uzu ana eme* (the universe is an endlessly active furnace), *Chukwu bu eze uzu makana okike bu ife uzu* (the Supreme Spirit is the Supreme Smith, for the process of creation was the first and original act of smithing), *Okike bu uzu mbu* (creation was the first accomplished work of smithing), *Uwa anyi bulu uno uzu aka, anyi bu mmadu abulu umu odinaka uzu* lit. if our universe is the first and original mystic furnace, then we human beings are inheritors of the mystic smithing hand of creativity, *Uwa bu igwe/Obodo bu igwe* (the universe is densely spirited as iron/the world is as tough as iron), *Uwa gbajulu aguju, dolu adolu ka igwe* lit. the universe is highly teeming with activity/dense with energy and firm in its place like iron etc. With respect to the latter assertions of Igbo people, modern chemistry has also delineated that, iron has the most stable nucleus of any element. Moreover, its electron arrangement also makes it highly attractive to magnetic fields (i.e. making it magnetic) just as the Igbos rightly articulated in the following axiom: *Igwe anaro ako ako n’anya* lit. Iron never escapes the eyes. Also, *Ife uzu kpulu anaro*
ezo ezo lit. the works of the smith’s hand are so profuse that one never has the need to go looking for them.

Oka Dibias and blacksmiths across Igboland appallate Sirius as Uno Igwe (House in the Sky/House of Iron), which when reversed will be Onu Igwe lit. Ravine in the Sky/Sun Hole/Star Hole/Ravine of Iron. Also, Onukwu (Onu Okwu/Onu Akwu i.e. Ravine of Flowing Waters/Ravine of Creative Inertia). The deliberate pun on the word Igwe in the above name, stresses Oka’s ancient and world renowned smithing, technological, engineering and general artistic traditions. Indeed, since the earliest antiquity of human beings on this planet, the existence of Ogbolodo (so called “white dwarf-star” of the Sirius stellar system, which is actually the birth canal of the universe) and the intimate relationship which it shares with the teeming life forms that populate our planet is a knowledge so well established that, even children participated in games designed around its lore. Infact, the cosmic sound produced by it as the mystic tide of Chukwu (as Ose-Biliri-Uwa) continues to penetrate it still resonates throughout the cosmos as the harmonious Om sound. This calm, reverberating sound is heard even underneath the waters of the Earth, for it is the perceived vibratory resonance (mmmm) produced by water. For reasons that are unfortunately beyond the scope of this work, the Igbo word for water (Mmiri), beauty (Mma), mother (Nne, Mma), know (Mara), human being (Mmadu) etc. all take their root sounds from this natural sonic resonance respectively, which is also the original template of the ancient cosmic language of Afa once spoken by humanity. Klieman (2003) provides us with evidence that the Bakongo cosmology parallels this cosmogonic view in the following striking assertion, “the origin of all things is water, which is also life. As all comes from water, all will live in water...the cry of the toad (i.e. wind/air) in the pond evokes the universal song of coupling because it is in water that the mystery of reproduction operates” (p. 149). By all means, the great explosion that initiated the creation of the world is
synonymous with the birth of a child, as enshrined in the Igbo sacred traditions of Nnechukwu-Muru-Uwa. The previously swelled-up womb of the delivered mother perfectly replicates the swelling-up or expansion of Ogbolodo (as it "took in" the other stars orbiting it) during its final stage of gestation, before to birthing Uwa. The ancient Igbos estimated that the equivalent of Ogbu-Uwa-Teghete (nine previous births of universes i.e. nine prior periods of rest and motion) preceded our present universe, which is consequently called Uwa Nta (small world). This was also viewed as been in alignment with the average duration of time (Onwa Teghete) that it takes for a human child to develop in their mother’s womb. The human mother herself is a microcosm of Nnechukwu (Universal Mother Goddess). Consequently, the gestation laws underlying the development and eventual birth of the human being are replications of the higher universal gestation laws that underlie creation at the cosmic level. It should be noted that this birth of the world is unanimously held by both ancient and modern observations—to be an external event and not an internal one. Following this primordial birth, Sirius B (Ogbolodo) has also remained in its essence as a dense, metallic star. Correspondingly, in traditional Igbo societies, the delivery of a child never took place inside the house. It rather took place outside the house and specifically behind it. As soon as the child was delivered, both mother and child were taken inside to stay on the Ogwe bed for the next Izu Asaa (seven Igbo weeks). And like its astral counterpart (Sirius B), the Ogwe maternity bed is specifically fashioned out of a hard, heavy piece of timber. Thus, in this fascinating chain of post-birth rituals, one is actually presented with an expertly mirrored reproduction of the original phases of creation. Umeh (1999) also noted the following in this regard:

During that time, ukwa (breadfruit tree’s wood) – a tree whose Ogbe ukwa or big fruit is analogous to this earth at least in its physical roundness and sphericalness and reenacts the first falling into space of this earth after the
original Odachi ka Odachi arising from Ora naabo (i.e., greatest accident from the escape of fire creation). There, at the ogwe, the soot from the breadfruit firewood (Ntu nku ukwa) will be applied to the otube (umbilical cord) left on the new child until it falls off and is ritually buried by the father of the child (or his appropriate agent if he is not available) at the foot of a palm tree or kola nut tree dependent upon the sex of the child. A female child whose umbilical cord is so buried is owns that palm tree for as long as it lives and is called her Nkwu ana. (p. 24)

Umeh has in the above, crystalized what would have been a lengthy account of how our planet was created or "fell" into this solar system, as articulated in the Igbo cosmogonic tradition. The ancient Igbos also held that the Earth and the rest planets of our solar system (collectively known as Ekwe Teghete or Ofo Teghete viz. ofo teghete na agbahinge ukwu ose okirikiri lit. nine Ofo encircling the solar pepper tree) along with the countless stars, galaxies and assorted satellite life forms that populate the cosmos—all constitute Ogodo Nnechukwu, the corporeal form of Chukwu’s feminine counterpart. A strong parallel is clearly observable in the later and the ancient Vedic cosmology of Maya and Brahman, where it is understood that on the physical plane (Enu Uwa) all beings constitute Maya, while beyond the physical plane (Ana Mmuo), all beings are holistically part of Brahman. The inherent unity of both is captured in the Igbo divine principle of Chi-Adi-Eke which literally translates as "Chi is indivisible". In other words, non-duality. Indeed, the cosmos as a grand dance (Egwu Okoso) between Shiva (Eze-Ukwu-Eruana/Chi Ora/Ocha-Vaa/masculine solar creative force) and Shakti (Nnenwanyi-Ama-Mbu/Chi Aka/Alulu-Nwanyi-Enu/feminine solar creative force) is made manifest as the eternal mysteries of consciousness and the awareness generated by consciousness, thought and action, being and becoming, time and infinity, manifestation and withdrawal, inquiring and discovering, asking and answering, rest and motion, learning and teaching, wonder and revelation etc. On this, an Igbo mystic axiom encapsulates that, ekere oru okike eke lit. the work of creation was
originally shared. So that, chi-kpalu-nku-okike, eke-chuo-iyi-okike lit. Chi fetched the Sacred Firewood of Creation which later became the Ofo that resists Fire and Eke fetched the Sacred Water of Creation that later became the Inu Iyi of Oat Swearing - which hence extinguishes the indwelling Fire of Life that is under abuse by the revealed culprits, haven subjected themselves to the mystic laws of the Onunu Iyi ritual judicial system/court and its deity-charged law enforcement powers. Thus, the Supreme Being originally polarized into Oke (male/son/student) and Nne (female/mother/teacher) in other to manifest into creation as Ofake na Omalu and continue the eternal grand mysteries of Ora Uche na Ora Ajuju. As Aka-Ofu-n’ebu-Ora-n’abo, the Supreme Being also set out to play the grand cosmic Okoso game of Utwa Okoso (spinning motion and resting potency). The cosmos as a grand playground (Ama Olili/Ama Egwuregwu) and its extensive contents as Okwe, Ncho, Okoso, Ube Okpoko, Mkpsi, Ngu, Para, Achiri Mgba represents Divinity separating from itself to play the Great Game of Okala-Ijite-Ora (Ipu Egwu Onwa = Inwa Ose Ijite) with itself and delighting in the play of returning to itself to resume its previous state of Akwu Ofu as Mgba-Nne-Chukwu or Eze-Onwekodo-Okike. This play of seeking (Ima Atu/Ima Ogu/Ibo Ebi/Igba Afa) and finding (Ita Atu/Iri Aka Ito/Ilo Chi/Emume Uzo Alusi/Ikwa Uzo Iyi/Iri Ji) embodies the ultimate Divine act of cosmic reintegration in the Great Ocean of the Beginning and the renewed setting out (Opupu Mmuo = subsequent creation/manifestation) of Chi all over again into yet another Ama Mbu to initiate another, unique round of Okike. Hence, the Supreme Universal Being as God (Chi) and Goddess (Eke) hide from each other, and then ask each other the fundamental questions (Ora Ajuju) that form the basis of all subsequent mysteries, sciences, religions, ethics, laws and philosophy. It is rather unfortunate that till today, some Igbo Dibias have continued to maintain the heretic view that Eke-Nnechukwu as Komosu never resurrected following the Odachi-ka-Odachi. On the later, it should be noted that just as women naturally
bleed at childbirth and thus, symbolically sacrifice their life force to ensure that of the awaited newborn’s, so did Komosu sacrifice her own divine life force in other to usher in creation. However, just as women survive miraculously following the intense bleeding and labor of childbirth, so did Komosu resurrect to live with renewed force following the birth event of Uwa. Accordingly, women embody the beginning and end (pregnancy and birth) of all mysteries in their being. As Komosu, Eke-Nnechukwu is both the divine self-inseminator of the primal, potent creative thought-seed (Atu Chukwu) that set creation into motion i.e. Onu ofu koro ma ya su, as well as the divine sower of the first, terrestrial, vegetal life-seed (Adu Chukwu) that set natural life into motion. In Igbo astronomy, her miraculous resurrection event is associated with Venus (Uto Nne/Uto Ana/Uto/Nnenwanyi-Isi-Ajata/Ishtar).

In the expression above, we see: Koro-ma-ya-su, which later became Komosu/Aru Uso/Ana Uso (body of the goddess) in Igbo scared tradition and Ma-ya in the Vedic religion of India. She is also the central focus of the Onwa-Ede-Mmuo annual festival, for Cocoyam represents Venus, the Planet, as well as Ani, the Earth Goddess in Igbo cosmology, astronomy and astrophysics. Venus is the one who is said to have been "killed" to bring cocoyam in Igbo agrarian myths; her male counterpart Arobunagu was also "killed" to bring yam. In other words, the pronounced Igbo egalitarian, creative tendency and travelling propensity, both of which are captured in the essence of Ede-Okike/Venus as Eke-Nnenwanyi-Okike (Chi-Ketalu-Okike = a share of imagination and creativity of the highest level, making it nearly impossible to be deeply fazed or fenced in by external domination/difficulties) and Chi-Ikenga/Arobunagu (Chi-Ketalu-Ije-na-Okpukpu-Aka = a share of the egalitarian, travelling and industrious spirit, making it hard to settle in one place for a long time as well as assuring fearlessness and profound leadership abilities) -- these two original traits of the Igbo people were curtailed at one point in time!
What happens to be a misuse of energy and mind at so many points in their journey make this very understandable, yet convincingly unnecessary. This group of people, having developed and thrived in an egalitarian society which remains the highest known political development ever realized by humans, naturally, must have gone a long way in every other area of human endeavor. This was achieved with the introduction of agriculture, which made them travel less and settle more, as well as the institutionalization of title systems, making them compete for ranks, instead of seeing themselves as equal in Chi. On the other hand, as a people who have seen so many existential frontiers and accomplished greatly at many levels of life, it will appear that, perhaps, giving in to the profound loneliness that naturally comes with visionary pioneering, Igbo people gradually began to regress into conformity.

To the ancient Egyptians, both stars (Ose-Otule-na-Ogbolodo) were also regarded as the Sisters, Aset (Isis) and Neb-hut (Nephthys). The first was associated with the Seat of Life and the other with the House of Life. As it is, the traditions of the people of Nne-Okwa (Mother Throne/Seat of Life/Seat of the Goddess/Mother of the Bush Fowl) revolves around the mysteries of Isis, while that of the people of Nne-Obi (Mother House/House of the Mother/House of the Great Goddess/Mother of Houses/House of the Beginning) revolves around Nephthys, the sister of Isis, who was also depicted as her midwife in ancient Egyptian mythology. In reality, however, Nephthys and Isis are one and the same. Thus said, following her delivery, Aset was considered to be eternally seated on the Throne of Life (Sirius B—as the Ogwe/Okwa Mbu represents) with the child (Heru, Agu Nkwo, Ochinanwata, Ihu, Iru, Nwa Elu, Iru Elu, Ihe Elu, Face of the Sky, Light of the Sun, Traveling Light, Light from Far Heights) who was the outcome of that great explosion occupying her lap, symbolizing the universe and the infinite planes of light characterizing it. It should be noted at this point that Ogbolodo (Sirius
B), the Igbo maternity bedstead (*Ogwe*) and the sacred throne said to be occupied by Aset following her delivery (*Nne Okwa, Okwa Nne, Okwa Mbu, Okwa Omumu*) are all congruently emphatic of "heaviness". In addition to this, the phonetic sound of the word *Uwa* is meant to reflect the first cry of a new born as it emerges from the mother’s womb (*Uwaaaa-Uwaaaa*). Among other significances, this principle is equally epitomized by the Egyptian word for life *Ankh*, which is also symbolized as such. It is no surprise that on stressing the first letter of the word (*Aaaaaaankh*) one is readily presented with a phonetic variation of the same newborn’s cry. When united with its Igbo equivalent (*Uwaaaaaankh* lit. this world) the sound is even more penetrating, both sonically and in its embodied meaning. Naturally following the emergence of the child from its mother’s womb is the ritual of cutting the umbilical cord (*Alo, Uforo Nwa*). And just as its source point on the child’s body (*Utume/Utube/Otube*) is expected to heal with time and take on a rounded shape, so did the source point of *Uwa’s* umbilical cord (*Utume Uwa, Otube Uwa*) eventually heal into one spot as well (*Ikenga Igwe/Uno-Uzu-Aka* or Orion’s belt constellation). The resulting Igbo ritual of burying this birth residue (*Ili Alo*) likewise mirrors a cosmogonic ritual which the Yukatek Maya varyingly refer to as the ritual of “Raising the World Tree”. Quite precisely, this ritual reiterated the original burial of the cosmic umbilical cord at a location variously given as *Ama Mbu, Ama Alo, Izo Okpu* or *Ebe-Eliri-Alom-Uwa* in the Igbo oral tradition. This is the star constellation of *Eke-Ona* lit. Treasure-Swallowing-Python or Draconis. In time, this umbilical cord grew into a cosmic tree (*Nkwu Ora*). This tree became the Milky-Way (our galaxy) and till today, it continues to serve as a grand memorial of creation to all. In fact, as modern astrophysics has tentatively surmised that the age of our galaxy most probably goes back to the origin point of creation, it only provides further evidence to buttress the position of the ancients in their symbolic association of the Milky-Way with creation. The symbolic
association of our galaxy’s structure with the spiral geometrical motif of the palm tree’s leaves and the embedded designs of women’s brass anklet (Nja) by ancient Igbo people is also startlingly accurate (See Plates 4a, b and c). It is also worthy to not that, just as Chukwu is specifically credited with the responsibility of performing the Ili Alo ritual for the newly birthed Uwa, so was it held in traditional Igbo societies that the father (or an assigned male substitute of his) is to perform this ritual for the newborn child. The very choice of the trees for the burial of the umbilical cord (the Palm tree for the female child and the Kolanut tree for the male child) has always followed the same Igbo cosmological principle of Ora n’Abo. Till today, in varying parts of Igboland, one finds that either of both trees still obtains as the oldest in the plant kingdom. It typically takes about four days for the umbilical cord to fall off, after which the said ritual is then performed. The tree so ritualized, henceforth became an extension of the child (Epum/Alom/Osisi Alom) and must not be tampered with in anyway. It was transformed into a living memorial of the individual and, as Uchegbue (2010) aptly puts it “…will become fruitful in proportion to the fame of the child’s subsequent achievements as an adult” (p. 158). Succeeding this naval or natal rite is the Ibi Ugwu (circumcision rite) which is traditionally done on the eighth day of birth i.e. ubosi mere ya izu n’abo/ubosi asato ka amuchara nwa/izu n’abo nwa biachara uwa. This is in turn followed by the Ikpu Isi Uwa na Ibe Mbo Uwa rite (cutting of the hair and nails brought to earth by the child) traditionally carried out with a sharp Igbo native blade (Aguba di nko) of triangular shape around the 20th - 24th day of birth. Four days after this comes the Igu Aha (child naming rite), which takes place after seven native Igbo weeks (Izu Asaa) or twenty-eight days following birth. Lastly is the Ipu Eze (first cutting of teeth) which is not ritually celebrated among the Igbo, except for the tradition of gifting a hen to the child who has just cut their first teeth (inye nwa nwolu eze okuko), which is customarily the responsibility of the first person to behold the new teeth. It should be
stated that this is simply an act of establishing life-long affinity with the said child and involves no sacred activities. Uchegbue (2010) has also given a splendid description of the little documented Igbo natal rite of *Ikpu Isi Uwa na Ibe Mbo Uwa* as thus:

The Igbo believe that most, if not all children, are reincarnations of departed members of their family or of some *alusi*. Every child, therefore is believed to be leading some kind of life in the spirit-world before coming into the world. So when he is born, the hairs on his head and the nails on his fingers and toes are regarded as sacred or as spiritual hair and spiritual nail (*isi mmoo/mbo mmoo*). They are therefore cut with some accompanying rituals. Some food items and a dish of yam fufu is prepared. A cock for the male and hen for the female is bought with which the ancestors and other spirits are appeased and evil influences warded off. Other little children of the compound are gathered to sing and clap while the child is being shaved. An old woman is invited, probably the grand-mother from either the paternal or maternal side to carry out the shaving with the local blade – *aguwa*, while the grandfather (where the direct father is a young man) does the little sacrifice. Part of the food is thrown into the bush or into the stream to appease any spirits that are against the child’s stay on earth and the hair is buried in the child’s father’s compound. It is believed that the shaving of the child liquidates his membership in the spiritual world and makes him a number of the living community of human beings. The nails are also cut and buried with the hair. Afterwards, the children are fed with the major part of the food amidst singing and rejoicing as they welcome the child into their group. From this time on, subsequent shavings and nail-cuttings of the child are no more treated with any ritual. (p. 160)

Without venturing too deeply into this much interesting topic, suffice it to say that one can notice from simple observation that even the fruit (*Mkpuru Akwu*) of the oil-palm tree (*Akwu*), when eventually ripe takes a slightly darkened, yellowish-red color and hangs in wholesome heads, right under the tree’s fan-like leaves. In addition to this fact, an aerial view of a palm tree’s top will readily reveal the entire leaf-network to be naturally arranged in a spiral pattern. These two qualities readily single it out as an essentially feminine flora, for
the wholesome bunches that eventually grow to ripen right atop the tree’s trunk reflects the blossoming breasts of a young damsel, as they emerge on her chest. Although in many parts of Igboland today the umbilical cord may be buried at the foot of any economic tree owned by the parents of the new born, it should be stated here that since ancient times, there has always been a clear and solid cosmological principle behind the ritual choices of the said tree. Some native Igbo trees such as *Udara* (starfruit), *Ukwa* (breadfruit), *Ube* (native Igbo pear), *Ogede* (plantain) are also used in some localities. Beyond this anthropoplantae impression and broadly speaking, geometric veracities have always abounded which better ascertain this natural principle or what one may call *gendered manifestation*. Indeed, the spiral geometric form (*Ije Nwa Agwo*) and its concentric variant (*Ngwugwo*) as conceived in Igbo cosmoogy are both emphasized in an Igbo mystical axiom as such *okirikiri wu ije agwo* lit. spiral is the movement of the snake (See Plates 5a and b). But in its proper esoteric parlance, this dictum, quite frankly, encapsulates some of the most profound principles employed in Igbo sacred science. Among other things, it is a mystic summary of the cosmic-time phenomenon and the divinely channeled, unique streams of energy that influence its precessional phases. Observing the spiral-wave movement of the snail (*Ije Nwa Njina/Ejuna*), its characteristic spiral-shaped shell (*Okuko/Ikoliko Ejuna*), as well as integrating a vast body of knowledge that arises from several thousands of years of both passive and active observations of their world, the ancient Igbos were able to establish a string-wave model of the universe (*Uwa Okoso*), which they symbolized as such (See Plates 6a and b). The Igbo people long realized that the spiral-concentric motif is such a dominant phenomenon in nature and the universe, so much so that they encapsulated this in one of their didactic mystic axioms as such: *ofeke si na ya mazuru uwa, aru! mgba nne Chukwu enweru mgbacha!* lit. the ignorant person professes to know all there is, an abomination! The
mysteries of life are incomprehensibly infinite; the primordial spiritual creative womb of the Mother of God which gestates all existent reality is eternally fertile. Accordingly, for human beings, there exist dully accorded levels of granted access to this spiritual womb of creation, commonly called imagination. The actual faculty responsible for this undertaking in the human being is the intuition, which is actually an intrinsic part of *Uchechukwu* or *Ose Ora* (Divine Mind/Universal Mind). Thus, the *Ako* or intellectual faculty exists to decode the successive intuitive striking received from this One Universal *Uche* via the individual *Akpa Uche* (pineal and pituitary bodies). However, it should be stated that, the degree to which one may access or even successfully decode the aforementioned Divine Thought Streams of God (*Atu Chukwu*) eternally channeled through the Divine Universal Mind of God (*Uchechukwu*) is much dependent on the combined purity of their heart, body, actions and desires. Some of the symbolic resources that were employed in codifying the primary structure, principles, modalities and precepts of the *Uwa Okoso* cosmology includes, the snail (*Nwa Ejuna/Ejula/Ejule/Njina*), the turtle (*Nwa Aniga*), the python (*Eke Nwe Ohia*), the small brown ant (*Danda*), the grasshopper (*Ukpana*), the mother frog (*Nne Mbara*), the millipede (*Esu*) etc. Intensive observation will reveal that the natural dispositions of these animals are intimately married to the spiral, string, concentric and wave phenomena, respectively. For instance, the gastropod family in which the snail belongs is known to propel themselves by contracting tiny muscles in their foot in sequence, generating a wave that moves from front to back. Accordingly, as the wave moves back, different parts of the foot take it in turns to grip the ground and pull the animal forward. Gastropods are also known to have a characteristically simple nervous system and this contractile sequence is hard-wired, therefore there is no mechanism for reversing the direction of the wave. The latter observation excellently corroborates the Igbo people’s assertion that, *Mgba Nne Chukwu*
enwero mgbacha! As the snail’s shell symbolizes the expansive nature of knowledge, reality and the infinity principle in Igbo cosmology, it goes to say that, even as the snail itself cannot reverse the flow of its own energy, neither can any creature do so! As such, the primordial circle or womb of the Mother of God which embodies all reality known and unknown – is ever creative or can never be fully encompassed (back and forth), for it increases infinitely! The snail can only succeed in expanding the natural wave or path (Ijite/Owa) of its energy, but never to reverse it. Indeed, moving backwards would force the snail to drag itself over dry ground, which would reduce grip and increase abrasion damage to the foot. Such an act is against its nature (Onataluchi). Today, the emerging String Theory physical model of the universe as articulated by physicists of the occident can be said to be a tentative rehashing of the Igbo-African Uwa Okoso model of the universe, which emerged when the divine mind-force or dark energy (Atu Chukwu) in the guise of a sacred spider (Ududo-Okwa-Nka) spurn the first cosmic cotton (Ete Ofu/dark matter) into a grand spiral-string egg (Akwa Ete lit. spiral-string egg) which subsequently broke to form a web of infinite string patterns or particles (Ete Oghele) as propelled by the Okotelu-Agba-Oso divine principle of creation, shortened to Okoso or concentric energy/cone. Among other realities, the Cosmic Spider is also an ancient Igbo mythological mnemonic metaphor for the Milky Way Galaxy which actually possesses the shape of a gigantic spider when viewed from an aerial position (See Plate 6c). The conical Okoso geometrical structure is also the original model of the Ogene, the hour glass and the Igbo circular pyramid (Akwu-Agali-Ofu) used to corporealize creative/feminine energy which is naturally concentric. There are a number of systems and techniques for achieving whole ontological-spectrum interdimensional teleportation among consummate Igbo Dibias. By this, we mean full presence of one’s corporeal and mystic energy bodies in their peak functionalities and independent of the
source Chi. The various bodies of the human being are given as their composite Ikenga, while the animating essences of one’s being are given to reside in the Chi. Other partial spectrum presences are known to be common feats, which even ordinary individuals often achieve unconsciously in their sleep states. The two most ancient systems used to achieve full-spectrum ontological presences (Igba n’Izo Mmuo lit. manifesting fully in the common square of the spirit realm) are those of Igba-Uta-Aga-n’Abo-Ikenga as achieved with the Ogene cosmological principle and well-dramatized by Omagba and the Ikwu-Ofu-Otule-Ete as achieved with Akwu-Agali-Ose pyramidal cosmological principle and simulated by the Onyekurum night spirit mediums. When the Ogene is straightened from its curved shaped, what emerges is the geometrical blueprint for an active space-time hyperloop (wormhole) or what is called Ijite Oghele in Afa. When it is closed, we have Okala Akwu or a partially activated hyperloop gate. During some critical Afa divination sessions, Igbo Dibias often use a special kind of rattle Ogene that is actually unbent unlike most ordinary Ogene. Following its mystic consecration for Afa purposes, this special Ogene Agwu/Ichaka Agwu serve as portable space-time hyperloop generators. By rattling them for a defined period of time while reciting the appropriate mystic voice commands (incantation), one can effectively generate temporary space-time hyperloops that can then be used, either as additional mystic energy channels for receiving information from available spirit messengers or as mystic launching pads for interfacing multiple interdimensional gates. It is important to note that, the latter can be achieved both as a full or partial ontological spectrum operation, as prior defined, and with regards to the critical state of the situation at hand. The mystic Ogene principle is central to the cosmological worldview of both the ancient and present day Igbo peoples. As a culminating symbol of life, Ogene stands for synergy of motion and fusion of polarities. To the first Igbo people and their present day scions, spirit permeates energy and is deeply subsumed
in energy. Equally, energy is spirit in motion and life is a continuum of several patterns of motions accomplished by spirit. Thus, all relationships are but synergies of prior motions of spirit at specific points in that great continuum of motions. Consequently, they maintain for instance that, the *Dibia* (mystic/healer) who longs to penetrate the deeper realms of nature must brace themselves and be ready to achieve higher and higher states of Oneness with nature throughout their life. The *Okwanka* (artisan/crafts person) who wishes to achieve subtler refinements in their craft must be prepared to achieve higher spiritual awareness states so as to properly convey the subtleties of the Spirit world in their work, without over emphasizing the outer corporeal forms. The *Diji* (yam farmer) who truly yearns for advanced insight into the unexplored, potential realms of his occupation must be ready to achieve unending Oneness with the yam specie-kingdom, through sustained agricultural rituals that facilitate natural immersion into that particular plant realm, from which experience one can discern original cosmogonic knowledge to advance and even amplify their occupational success. Life is but a network of relationships. Thus, all knowledge are but relationships discerned and articulated. All life dances in an ever expanding web of interconnectedness, constantly restructuring and realigning itself and ultimately seeking finer bonding states. Synergy is a fundamental dynamic of creation; proceeding from the spiritual realm and made manifest as the continuously evolving network of motion expressed in nature as diversity. The *Ogene* twin iron gong for instance, produces two sounds/motions or energy waves, known as *Tan* (Om) and *Kom* (Om). These two are a synergy stemming from a prior spirit motion known as *Aka Ofu*, which precedes the duality motion of *Tan-Kom* (*Okike*). In a very practical sense, what is revealed in the above is that the Igbo culture highly regards proactiveness. Yet even more regards is given to spiritual activeness (*Ofu Agali*), as made obvious in the structural corporealization of this principle in the unique circular
pyramids (*Akwu Agali Ofu/Oda Omumu/Oda Okike/Akwu Ala*) embodying concentric/feminine energy, erected by Igbo people and ritualized to birth spirits of high creativity into the community, whilst absorbing and transforming destructive energy in the same process. This very cosmological model which goes back to the earliest days of Igbo people is further miniaturized into the childhood game of *Okoso*, which is usually played by young boys between the ages of four and eight for obvious reasons. The main device used in playing the game is a funnel-like cylindrical metal object, fashioned in the same shape as one-half of an hour-glass. The material is traditionally sourced from a light metal. Akamnonu (2008) accurately observed that:

> The game was usually played between two or more boys. It involved the twisting of the okoso between the thumb and middle fingers and, having suddenly released the spinning okoso, hooking the latter with the index finger at the pointed base to invert the device and make it rest on the wide and round open end. After the spinning and tilting, a score was achieved if the player succeeded in inverting the okoso to rest on the wide open end rather than on its side. Whoever succeeded first in attaining ten inversions after each player has had an equal number of trials, that player would be taken to have won the game. The price for the winner was usually one or two ube (pears) or roasted groundnuts, as must have been agreed upon and contributed by the participants. (p. 29)

As noted above, the game is initiated when the *Okoso* is thrust into a spinning motion by the snapping of the thumb and middle finger holding it. Prior the snapping, while the *Okoso* is still held in hand, both fingers form an upright cone-shaped pyramid, on which the *Okoso* device rests. In fact, if one should substitute the *Okoso* in this position with the left thumb and left middle finger, the miniature space observed in between the four fingers will naturally form the Igbo cosmological *Agbata Ino* or *Izu* symbol (four boundaries). This merging point is where creation began, hence its name *Izu*, which means coalition, or to deliberately/productively merge. The *Okoso* game also incorporates the Igbo fundamental *Akwu na Obi* principle in
its structural design. The observed spinning and tilting qualities, as well as the scoring rules of the game are encapsulated mystical, cosmological, astrophysical and astronomical knowledge. At the higher level, for instance, the base ten scoring principle is evocative of the mystic Akwu-Asha-Iri (ten spiritual dimensions or levels of consciousness) of Afa Akpukpala divination; while astrophysically, it designates Nderi Uwa/Igbudu Uwa/Idu Uwa (deepest night of the cosmos/unknowable source/deepest realm/beyond the origin point) from whence the Okoso initially emerged following the snap. The prize reward or the resulting product of the spinning as noted above is a local pear (Ube i.e. pun for the “sound” produced by the snapping of the finger) or roasted stringed nut/groundnut (Okpa i.e. pun for the spreading of stars into the cosmos following the snap as in kpa-kpa-nkpa-ndu). Both agricultural yields evidently possess the geometrical outlines of the primordial particles as the images reveal and as such are symbolic resources utilized in depicting the aforementioned primal particles in the Igbo-African String-Wave cosmology and associated narratives (See Plates 7a, b and c). Moreover, the spin motion created by the Okoso device, inter alia, is a replica of subatomic spin activity observed in corporeal energy as well as the vortex activity of astral black holes (Ete Ose). It also projects a mnemonic image of the etheric structure of interdimensional portals (Ofu Ete Aka) utilized by the first Igbo people to emerge into this existential plane of Afia-n’Ano-Ubochi-n’Ano as well as countless knowledgeable Ojenamnuo Dibias who frequent the spirit world without altering their biological form (See Plate 7d and e). The African recreational game (lit. to mimic creation) of Ikpa Owu Aka (string hand game) is also another miniaturized mnemonic resource of the African-Igbo String-Wave cosmology (See Plate 8). As revealed by the “kpa” signifier, the stringing activity is symbolic of star formation. A close observation will reveal the mostly starry patterns produced by African children whilst engaging in this recreational activity. To continue, the great
antiquity of the *okirikiri wu ije agwo* mystic principle is such that one is highly tempted to designate it as one of the earliest principles formulated by the human mind in the pursuit of mystical knowledge. Indeed, as the Cosmic Serpent, it symbolizes the unity of the subtle and transcendent consciousness which births wisdom (snakes are profoundly wise creatures), keen spiritual alertness (snakes do not have eyelids! i.e. *uche/nche aha egbu agwo, mmakpu aha egbu awo*), the elimination of ignorance (snakes shed their skins periodically), the procreative energy of the universe (snakes give birth to several offspring simultaneously) etc. As the spiraling Sacred Python, it represents the Great Motherly Earth Goddess (*Alawuala*) in one of her more striking zoomorphic forms as *Eke-Nwe-Ohia*. Among other metaphysical, spiritual and mystical connotations, it also encapsulates the universal principles of existential continuity of life for all sentient beings (*Ndu dugandu*), divine order and tranquility (*Udo*), infinity principle of beingness, mind and enlightenment (*Atu-Agwu-Agwu, Uwa-Ebi-Ebi, Oshimiri-Uche-Agwu-Agwu*), the supreme divine potency of God (*Irechukwu*), cosmic/cyclic primordiality (*Mgba Akwu*), procreation and fertility (*Omumu*) etc. Thus said, the spiral pattern revealed in the natural arrangement of the palm tree’s leaves is highly indicative of this tree’s feminine essence; as the spiral geometry mystically and cosmologically denotes a concentricity of life-force (centripetality), which is the fundamental quality of feminine energy. There are other Igbo cosmological principles that go into the explanation of this principle—but whose nature unfortunately transcends the scope of this work. Yet suffice it to say that the essential nature of all that is created is ingeniously encoded in their outermost geometry and often, one need not search too far for these clues. Dieterlen and Griaule (1986) notes that the Dogon people similarly encapsulated this primal conviction perfectly well in their own cosmological dictums:
The sign is and walks about in the mind and the head. The words of the drawing are in the body...The sign is the drawing that walks about...(p.98)

In his work on Igbo medicine and traditional health care delivery system, Umeogu (2012) attested to this principle as observed in his fieldwork among Igbo Dibias as thus:

Another example of the principle of the Igbo African medicine in being natural is in the treatment of a woman’s breast. Mostly the roots or stems that are used for the treatment are those of the plants whose fruits resemble the breast in terms of the shape. Such plants among others include the following: paw-paw, orange, coconut, apple, cucumber, lemon etc. generally, Igbo African medicine and pharmacy imitates nature. (p. 6)

In this sense, those who know how to look will equally see the slightly elusive shape of the male scrotum manifested in the pod-like arrangement of the Kolanut; which when eaten, naturally produces a bitter taste, while that of the palm tree is well known for its lush and slightly syrupy oil. Additionally, Umeogu (2012) has noted the vital use of the Kolanut pod among Igbo Dibias in the preparation of the male fertility elixir below:

The Igbo medical practitioner after diagnosing a male patient of infertility with a very mystical look on some medical equipment may not go straight away to prepare a blend of kola pods, ike nwoke, raw eggs, okro seeds, crushed root of ogirisi tree (Newbouldia laevis), honey and other things, which to be sure, is the male fertility drug. (p. 9)

Interestingly, there was the widely held taboo in Igbo societies of old (still active in certain parts today) which restricted women from climbing palm trees. It should be said that this very significant, gender-centric taboo was actually based on the ritual relationship which women enjoyed with the palm tree since earliest antiquity. Put in another way, since the palm tree is where a female child’s umbilical cord is traditionally buried, it was only natural that the tree should be sacred to women. In other words, when it is said that a woman should
not climb palm trees, the actual ritual connotation been pointed out here is that, she cannot "climb" herself. She is the tree of life itself. The palm tree is another culminating symbol of life. Nothing from it goes to waste. It bleeds oil to keep the human body integrated, vitalized and refined; offers its life-force as wine to ameliorate the agony of humankind; delivers its leaves as roofs over our heads; lays down its trunk for the extrapolation of fiber with which we create many vital household objects; yields its nuts and husk for the making of invigorating cosmetics; offers its seeds and roots for the curing of diverse health ailments etc. It is probably the single most utilized tree in all of human civilization. Thus, its other name, the Tree of Life, for it is an intensely creative vegetal spirit i.e. of feminine nature. Divinity expresses itself infinitely through creation, hence, life. The palm tree is a profound manifestation of Divinity in vegetal form. It offers unreservedly of itself for the sustenance of all. A distinguished priestess (Ezenwanyi) of the Imoka cultus of Oka (Awka) even has the illuminating mystery of the palm tree encapsulated in her title name as Nso Nkwu Enwer Nsocha. When greeted by folks as Nso Nkwu Nwanyi, she would reply: Adi Nsocha! A most interesting parallel that may also interest readers is that, the priestesses and priests of the diverse Water Mystical Orders of Igboland are collectively known as Ndi Enwe Iro (Those With No Enemy) from the ancient Igbo expression, Iyi Enwe Iro. Poignantly, one of the most successful and ingenious songs by the legendary musician, visionary, social critic and cultural icon, Fela Anikulakpo Kuti—was titled Water No Get Enemy! The exact same meaning of Iyi Enwe Iro! Hence, as shown thus far, the various rituals that undergird and surround child birth in Igbo culture are ingeniously linked to the primordial mysteries of the universe. Again, in an occult sense, it should be understood that a child can only rightfully emerge into this world after its mother has ritually "died"—as signified by the presence of blood at child birth. Hence the occult principle that a woman "dies" and "resurreccts" each time she
gives birth. Such "deaths" can only be regarded as sacrificial in nature—considering the redeeming results that are typically associated with them. The child’s subsequent emergence is the only occurrence capable of restoring its mother "back to life", in the absence of which she will be literally torn apart in a death-like grief, until the child is finally held by her. This natal theme is also true of any Igbo Dibia initiation rite; in which the former, ordinary personality of the candidate ritually "dies" in anticipation of the new one that will also ritually emerge, i.e. the Dibia. Similarly, the dominant presence of blood in the entire rite cannot be overstressed. The tragic case of women who pass away at child birth likewise sheds a lot of light on the literal and esoteric implications of this kind of "sacrificial death". It is quite interesting to note that the Dogon of Mali also refer to a similar scenario in their cosmogonic accounts. According to Griaule and Dieterlen (1986),

The trace of blood flowing from the placenta formed a straight north-south line called illi ozu, “path of the blood.” [when transcribed into the Igbo language, this expression literally means “place of burial” and by connotation, “place of transformation”]. The track of Amma’s walk parallel to it, called “Amma’s path,” is present in the sky. Together they make up the Milky Way, yalu ulo, “bounds of space,” the evidence of which is the star yalu ulo tolo…The blood then flowed from the center to the south, to a place called illi yalu tege, “place of dripping blood.” At the very end, in this same place, yazu or Venus was born in obia position…”[Consequently, whenever this special “birth-blood” ventured out from the body/sky, it was equally accompanied by the arrival of a new life—or rejuvenation/cleansing of an already existing star, on the larger cosmic scale]. (p. 259-313; my emphasis)

Thus, as any knowledgeable Igbo Dibia would know, the many mystical occurrences that herald and surround child birth can aid the physical sciences in their pursuit of understanding the “natal universe” and, how it is that the cosmos came to be dominated with triangular and spiral geometries for instance—if only these modern disciplines would investigate these things from the right angle. So
said, *Uwa* at once formed was in a state of *Deke-Deke* or *Were-Were*, as equally echoed by the Judeo-Christian account, the world was without form and void and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. However, it must be emphasized here that the waters referred to are not the conventional waters that sustain life on Earth. Rather, this form of water is a celestial kind generally recognized as Ether (*Iyi Enu, Iyi Odii, Iyi Ora, Azi Igwe, Abani Uzu*), and as well as been present in all life forms (most evidently in the blood system – *Owa Obala*), it is also easily observable at night when one stares into the night-sky! Modern consciousness have identified this phenomenon and all it entails with the very loose term "space" (properly articulated as *Elu Igwe* in Igbo language and cosmology) and much recently, they have begun to associate it with the phenomena of "dark energy" and "dark matter". But in all honesty and with due respect, this can only be the result of erroneous observation, for any proper examination of the universe would truly reveal that there is no such thing as "material space" within an enormously animated universe. On this very issue, Igbo spiritualists readily affirm that, *Chukwu wu ogazuru uwa n’ofu nje* lit. the Supreme Spirit is omnipresent in creation. In the last century it has been discovered that physical matter is not really solid at all. It has been proven to be made of molecules and these molecules in turn are made of primary atoms, which are themselves constituted of 99.9% empty space. Infact, the little bit of matter that does exist in the heart of the proton and neutron, is now thought to be principally vibrating energy, at least according to the yet primitive findings of String Theory physics. Indeed, reality is becoming more and more ethereal just as the first and very ancient Igbo people of *Uga Aka* (Age of Pure Divine Consciousness) and *Uga Chi* (Age of Profound Self-Realization) world ages or human consciousness cycles, experienced and communicated it. These ancient Igbo people also said they were fed by God in the beginning with "divine-food" which they said was not corporeal and
came from the sky. They spoke of a time when the ether content in our atmosphere was much more abundant, far more refined and the air supply much purer than it is today. As a result of this, people needed no solid food but simple pure, rich air to thrive. In other words, they were unceasingly energized by this atmospherically delivered ether-abundant air, in addition to the super refined solar radiation that streamed in from the central sun of our galaxy. This "divine-meal" was much later recorded in Igbo oral tradition/myths as Azi Igwe (lit. sky-substance/sustenance). However, there was also an emphasis on the non-solidity of this special sustenance. They also encoded it in the folkloric narrative of Osa na Nne Ya (The Squirrel and Its Mother) wherein it is given that the squirrel's "Mother" (the Galactic Central Sun) would often throw down a rope (the solar accompanied expansion of the cosmic etheric field into our atmosphere) for the "squirrel" (humanity and all earthly life forms; rodents such as squirrels, grass-cutters etc. birth in multiples and were used in ancient narratives to symbolize the Mother Goddess who thrives on diversity and births in multiples) to come up and eat to its fill (to bask in divine consciousness, fulfillment, contentment, harmony, bliss etc) after which it will go down (descend into dark ages) and dwell among other animals who were suffering from the "seasonal" (cosmic ages) scourge of famine (low consciousness) which was sweeping through the land. From other ancient Igbo oral accounts, it is also discernible that the first human beings actually had no intestines; there was simply had no need for them! Nature only provides one with what they truly need. These first ancestors fed directly from the menu of divinity, a wholesome menu that consisted of just one meal, namely: the breath of life (Ume Ndu). According to Igbo traditions of morning invocations, it can be adduced that initially, human beings existed in the first, pure Aka consciousness of Odii Aka. As such, they were at Godhead, knowing all and experiencing all that the Supreme Being experienced. Their ontological form at this point was of Ete Ofu (pure
vibrations). They fed directly on the primal dark light (Okwu Mbu i.e. the First Word) which later manifested in the visible, corporeal world as the intense energy of the Moon and its light which lits the Earth at night, in recall of the primal First World that was engulfed in unfathomable darkness (Odii Akwu). This phase of the human story in divine time is captured in the important Igbo morning invocation ritual of Itu Nzu. The least number of lines that is drawn with the Nzu is four, which is the number of Chi as Odii n’Aka/Uchichi/Abani/Chi Ojiji (night) and Ora n’abo/Okike/Ututu/Osisa Chi/Chi Ofufo (day). Four also stands for stability, wholeness, the female principle and the primordial waters of the First World. Thus, before viewing themselves as Umu Anwu in this outer realm of Uwa Nta and its archetypal Afia-n’Ano-Ubochi-n’Ano cosmological framework and consciousness, it is evident that human beings and Igbo people in particular, viewed themselves as Umu Oma (Oma’s Children/Children of Primal Night/Lunarians); an epithet which they extended to this present realm by ascribing it as a name to their first anatomical human mother Oma, who was also a Lunar-Water Spirit incarnation. With creation, human beings were to emerge first as Umu Aka/Anwu (Children of Aka/Anwu, the Eternal First Day of Creation). At this point, they possessed forms but these were still etheric energy forms vibrating at very subtle frequencies, yet to condense into the plasma density state which characterizes our present plane of existence. They were naturally of a universal cosmic consciousness. Igbo sacred traditions represent them as Ora Azu, Ndi Akwu Asha n’Ano, Ndi Afia Azu n’Ano, Ndi Afa Chi, Ndi Aka Ose etc. As Ora Azu, they are the Primal Water Beings whom emerged and dwelled in the First Waters (Ether/Iyi Enu) and only fed on highly refined, cosmic light radiations known as Iru which later manifested into condensed vegetal forms as Umu Iruro (flowers i.e. Umu-Iruro-Eze-Enu). As Ndi Akwu Asha n’Ano and Ndi Afa Chi they are the Primal Four Beings of the First Eternal Day. In time, these first human beings began to transmigrate into the 3\textsuperscript{rd} density
state as *Ndi Aka Ushi, Ndi Mbu, Umu Izizi Ana, Umu Oma* etc. They first materialized on the Seven Circled Mountains of the Moon (*Asaa-Ugwu-Nzu*) and after many eons of civilization there, which served as a kind of preparation station for their eventual incarnation here, they emerged on Earth, through the mystic *Ofu-Ete-Aka* energy ladder of God, accompanied by their *Ogene* music. When they got here, they asked each other, *Onye n’acho ogene?* i.e. who is looking for *Ogene*/life – life that was once highly buoyant and pronounced on their previous home, the Moon, their Mother Planet, *Oma*. This was also a response to the potential and manifest life they met on their arrival here. Their initial corporeal forms at this point were only partially adapted to the then supercharged magnetic fields of the Earth. In response, they metamorphosed into what later became the bilocation consciousness of *Umu-Abani-Agwu* i.e. beings operating in full consciousness in two parallel planes of existence. Subsequent creatures such as Fireflies (*Mmumu*), Bats (*Usu* – their sacs are symbolic of the first womb = *Odii Akwu* i.e. epi-cosmic/cosmic darkness), Owl (*Ikwikwii*), marine glow planktons (*Okwolu Iyi*) and certain specie of snails (*Ejune Mgbede*) etc. are among the noted *Umu-Abani-Agwu* of our planet (night beings of the *Agwu* realm/nurturers). A sub-group of these creatures are also known as *Umu-Abani-Ijite-Agwu* i.e. the creatures that emerged at the twilight periods (*Ijite-Abani-Agwu*) of life formation on Earth; such as those that emerged as a result of the primordial periodic contacts of our planet with Mars (*Ikenga-Nwa-Ojeluputa-Ngwu* lit. *Ikenga*, Son of *Ojeluputa Ngwu/Jeluputa/Juputa/Jupiter*). Accordingly, these distinct primordial twilight periods in the formation of life on our planet are called *Odii-Ijite-Aka* or *Ijite-Abani-Agwu*. Strikingly, it is noted in the research carried out by Professor Paul Davies (2009), a physicist at Arizona State University that:

Our planet may harbor forms of "weird life" unrelated to life as we know it...This "shadow life" may be hidden in toxic arsenic lakes or in boiling deep sea hydrothermal vents...We don't have to go to other planets to find weird
life...It could be right in front of our noses - or even in our noses...It is entirely reasonable to expect we will find a shadow biosphere here on Earth...The descendants of this "second genesis" may have survived until today in a "shadow biosphere" which is beyond our radar because its inhabitants have biochemistry so different from our own...All our microscopes are customized for life as we know it - so it's no surprise that we haven't found microbes with different biochemistry...We don't quite know how weird life would look. It's as wide as the imagination and that's why it's really hard to look for...If it exists, weird life could be based on DNA and RNA - but with a slightly different genetic code or different amino acids. At the other end of the spectrum, we could find creatures which have more drastic differences...Maybe one of the elements life uses - carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus - could be replaced by something else...For example, most of the jobs that can be done by phosphorus can be done by arsenic...Arsenic may be poisonous to humans, but it has chemical properties which might make it ideal in a microbe's machinery...The question would be whether this life was truly different, or whether there was a common precursor a deep branch on the main tree of life...Also, how do we know we are dealing with separate Earth genesis and not a Mars genesis?...We know rocks do get traded between the two planets, and life could hitch a ride. (p. 1-34)

A highly volcanic planet at the time, the Earth’s physical topoi during these early periods also manifested the Agwu consciousness (two extremes in a singular plane), with an abundance of emergent natural life sitting side by side with streams of volcanic plasmas (Osusu Ogwugwu) that would later cool off, giving way to the sea and its deltas (Iyi-Oshimiri/Iyi-na-Ndem/Iyi-na-Owa-Iyi). At this time, the planet Mercury (Ijite Agwu) was the waxing sun of our solar system. Earth was then, merely recovering from its previous burnt-out state as a sun, the fifth sun to become a planet in our solar system, the first been Ete-Ofu-Ora (Akwa-Nne-Okpoko). Infact, our present sun is the youngest incarnating solar form so far, in the history of our solar system. Before it, several older suns, now transformed into planets, lead our community of vessels on myriad cosmic musical journeys (Ekpili-Ora-Ugbo). Their ability to remain conscious of their original
etheric bodies enabled the first human beings to achieve what was called Flight of the Rainbow Python (Njeleke Egwurugwu) at the end of their stay on Earth. Much later, this term would be contracted into a short form used to designate the rainbow, which inter alia, is still believed to emerge at the demise of important personalities in many African cultures. In time, Egwurugwu also became a word used to refer to ancestors and ancestral masks in parts of Igboland. In this age, Igbo people were of great solar consciousness (Solarians). As time progressed and the gravity force field of the Earth became highly active and clearly pronounced in its influence, the erstwhile ethereal atmospheric conditions of the Earth correspondingly went from extraordinary subtle refinements to slightly lesser refinements. Human beings and other Earth-destined creatures began to incarnate/metamorphose into the distinctive somatic forms that we have encountered so far in paleontological studies. This is called the age of Ilo Chi i.e. Fall of Chi into denser forms/subsequent incarnations or reincarnations of Chi. This acquiring of denser bodily forms by Chi began with organs first, just as we witness it today in the formation of embryonic life. The source of sustenance was Ume Ndu (Breathe of Life) which came as Azi Igwe (ether-rich air) from the lower Nda-Iyi-Azi-Ete-Ora streams that still penetrated our cloud ways (not the Enu-Iyi-Azi-Ete-Ora i.e. higher cosmic ether streams), which were best accessed in high ranges (Uno Enu). These high abodes were made easy by the emergent, strong gravity fields of the Earth which, through its natural suspension effect, created many hanging caves of flowing waters (Ogba Igwe/Ogba-Iyi-Enu), magical gardens (Adu-Mu-Aka), mountains (Ugwu-Aka-Mu) etc. in certain parts of the Earth that are now held as sacred grounds. Many of these pronounced wonders and planetary miracles of the Uga Aka age gradually vanished as the Uga Chi age fully set into motion. It was in this age also, that death emerged in the world, making it evident that divine harmony was officially distancing the planet. The Igbos also viewed themselves as
Umu Atu during this age. With this inception of death, human beings became obsessively conscious of the afterlife. Uga Chi was consequently the age when sacrifice emerged as a mystic means of replacing human death with that of other creatures, as well as gain favors or defer harm. It was also an age dominated by high abundance of advanced mystical adepts and diverse teachings, mostly centering on conciliation, the afterlife and advanced breathing techniques as principal medium for transcending consciousness while in the present life. In other words, humans were mostly Breatherians in this age, seeing the act of breathing as divine and the highest form of sustenance available in life. The consciousness of this age is enshrined in the Igbo group memory as the diurnal invocative ritual of Igo Chi which is a key aspect of the comprehensive daily rite of Isa Chi (lit. Rite of Coming Forth into Day). As the environment further transformed into lesser and lesser conditions of refinement, humans grew deeply conscious of the waters (Umu Oba, Umu Iyi) and began to watch its activities and migrate along with it. This age of the world birthed an infinity of water cults and practices associated with liquids. In this age, Igbo people were also Umu Nkwu, thriving mostly on the varied mythical life giving nectars of Igbo mythologies. Humans were Liquidarians in this age. The daily ritual act of libation (Itu Mmanya) and its well-known mystic invocation: ndu mmiri, ndu azu and its axiomatic form of: o mmiri bu ndu azu (the waters should survive so that the fishes can equally survive; water is the life of fish) are all profound testimonies to this. Eventually, the age of Umu-Udala-na-Umu-Oji dawned on humanity and Igbo people became Fruitarians, thriving on fruits and scouting great expanses of forests for them (i.e. Ohia Akpaka/Ikpa/Agu). The morning ritual act of Igo-Oji-Ututu (onye wetere oji wetere ndu lit. one who brings Kolanut brings life), as well as the cherished Igbo children’s activity of Itutu Udala among several other ritualized practices attest to this age and its characteristic consciousness. In the same vein, the era of Umu Adu was when Emume
*Ihejioku* (celebration of the vegetal spirit) peaked as the second highest celebration in most Igbo communities. *Ihejioku* and its cultus celebrations ushered in an emphasized vegetal vision of cosmic order. This unique stream of consciousness attributed to *Eri*, the apparent founder of the *Umu-Eri-na-Umu-Nri* clan is largely responsible for the gradual decline of several ancient Igbo cults and rites associated with *Kukunduku-na-Ji-Nwa-Nnunu* (sweet potatoes and related vegetables). On the other hand, the introduction of the tradition of deity owned groves also emphasized the same vegetal vision from a unique perspective. The *Ihejioku* vegetarian vision would be mostly prescribed, however through the practice of yam-based economy. The system eventually succeeded in elevating yam and cocoyam as dominant crops and choice food sources of Igbo people with time. Feasts and sacrifices involving yam were believed to bring fertility, success and good fortune to its participants. This highly subtle effort at vegetarianism (*omalu neta maluzie ebe mmili si we baa n'opi ugbogulu*) has survived today in generally ceremonial form. Its traits are also revealed in the omnivorous consciousness of subsequent and present day Igbo people, whose folktales abound with episodes of famines, conflicts and wars involving farming land (*Agha-Idu-na-Oba/Ugani/Aguu/Iriju Afo/Ikwu Aguu/Umu Agwo/Umu Umu Agu* etc.)

Thus, the acquisition of corporeal body by human beings, a process that created enormous impediments in the original structure of and developmental process of the human is one that successive religions have failed to explicitly expound for their congregations, resulting in a general deception that human beings are hopeless beings of matter (born in sin) and can only escape that condition by the prescribed practices of these religions. The overt fact however is that human beings are spiritual beings who initially only had etheric bodies (*Aka Mu*) and lost consciousness of that body not to any religious original sin, but the first consumption of corporeal food, following which process they fell asleep for the first time (their consciousness and
original subtle energy bodies shrunk and embarked on an unanticipated existential route), as encoded in Igbo oral traditions. The process itself, would appear to be lesson-laden in the greater scheme of things, but ultimately, it was not indispensable at all and could’ve been overridden by subsequent human beings, had dogmatic religious creeds not been given central authority in most human societies, leading to the devious, theological creation and fostering of a deep inferiority complex called sin or principle of impurity in the natural human psyche and the invention of several thousand, insubstantial, fraudulent, exploitative practices, supposedly aimed at ridding this complex. It should be made clear that matter is just a corporealized form of spiritual energy. Existence in the realm of matter is not very unique to existence in the higher realms of matter or spiritual realms; thus, the Igbo practical convictions of reincarnation, ancestral afterlife, negotiable spiritual intervention, the law of Karama-Karama, the law of Mnadu bu Chi Ibe ya, the high potency of Ofo na Ogu among other similar principles. The granted existential privileges of each realm as marshaled out and regulated by divine law are the only ultimate differences in all realms of existence; everything else is left to the manipulation of humans and other beings of creation for their own developmental interest. Creation is a cosmic school of learning, life is the embodied process of that learning experience, nature is the ultimate teacher in that process and the planets are but classrooms of learning, each with its own specified subjects of focus. Death is simply a celebrative roll-call to defend what one has learned in that prolonged learning experience called life and reincarnation is but a higher, cosmic process of continued education. It is a colossal shame that those who invented the devious religious practices keeping humanity from realizing its true identity has continued to ensure their egotistic legacies by further aiding their human mannequins with increasingly subtler manipulative doctrines and destructive technologies with which to enforce them, whilst an
unsuspecting humanity suffers in vain. In other words, the dogmatic religious industry which thrives today in many faces all over the world has its roots in the suppression of the true origins and capabilities of the human being and the only practical way to escape this overdue cycle of deception and regain our truly harmonious, original divine consciousness is to tune-back into our original way of being, spirituality. It should be stated that, with the gradual and eventual loss of our planet’s spatial proximity to the central galactic sun, the consciousness level naturally began to decrease and accordingly, the ancients came up with a number of ingeniously simple but effective mystic breathing techniques (e.g. *Ume Ano*, *Ume-Nza-Asato*, *Ume Nwa Agu*, *Oso Nwa Ngwele* etc.) that could align individuals to this expansive ether field of the cosmos. This occurred as the earth and our solar system moved increasingly further away from the galactic mother sun (*Ete Ora/Ose Ora Ugbo*) and its bottomless ether hole (*Ogwugwu-Ete-Ora/Onu Anwu/Onu Akwu*).

Interestingly, scientists have made some startling discoveries that further evidences the truth of these ancient peoples. In a research project carried out recently at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor that exploded some years ago, a robot was sent into this nuclear "plant" where ironically, no life form is supposed to be found, let alone thriving. However, to the utter amazement and embarrassment of the concerned scientists, a thriving life form which actually feeds on the supposedly harmful gamma radiation emanating from this reactor was discovered, alive and intact. Secondly and even more startling is the finding that, the discovered fungi life form uses melanin—a chemical responsible for pigmentation in human skin cells and which is found in greater abundance in people of color e.g. Africans—in the same way that plants use chlorophyll. In other words, radiation is a form and source of sustenance for life forms even given the worst of conditions. Thus, if micro life forms such as fungi utilize melanin like human beings to absorb radiation (solar radiation in the case of
human beings/early Igbo people) by way of using it as an active chemical shield for transforming highly potent radiations (when gamma ray lands on the melanin molecular shield, its chemistry is transformed into life-sustenance energy), it will then appear that when the ancient Igbos assert that they were fed with "divine food" from the sky, indeed, they were right! As science clearly demonstrates, the radiation-feeding fungus needs no "corporeal" food source to survive and until its recent discovery, it has thrived competently on this source of sustenance alone! Infact, researchers at the Albeit Einstein College of Medicine (AEC) set out performing a variety of tests using several different fungi, in a quest to determine the nature and implications of this peculiar fungus trait. According to Melville (2007):

Two types [of fungus] – one that was induced to make melanin (Crytococcus neoformans) and another that naturally contains it (Wangiella dermatitidis) – were exposed to levels of ionizing radiation approximately 500 times higher than background levels. Both of these melanin-containing species grew significantly faster than when exposed to standard background radiation. Just as the pigment chlorophyll converts sunlight into chemical energy that allows green plants to live and grow, our research suggests that melanin can use a different portion of the electromagnetic spectrum - ionizing radiation - to benefit the fungi containing it…Investigating further, the researchers measured the electron spin resonance signal after melanin was exposed to ionizing radiation and found that radiation interacts with melanin to alter its electron structure…an essential step for capturing radiation and converting it into a different form of energy to make food. Interestingly, the melanin in fungi is no different chemically from the melanin in the human skin, indicating that melanin is also a source of energy to skin cells. (p. 3-6; emphasis mine)

These recent findings are empirical affirmations of very ancient knowledge embedded in some *Dibia* initiation rites and even some now less observed early morning rituals of Igbo people. The ritual of *Itu-Oba-Anwu*, for instance, which the *Dibia* candidate observes every morning during the intense four days of his/her initiation rite is practically a ritual of “bathing the body in the potent radiations of the early morning sun” after the body has been wholly and extensively
smeared with Nzu (white clay). The emphasis is to fully expose the initiate’s outer and inner bodies to the resuscitating energy of the early morning sun. The smeared Nzu heightens the purity of the individual’s soul - serves as an aura cleanser, filtering the rays of the sun into the melanin-rich skin cells, which in turn, merging with the high spiritual energy and mystic sound vibrations generated by the incantations of the officiating group of Ndi Dibia—instantaneously transforms the absorbed rays from the sun, from ordinary photonic-energy capsules into active, past-life-memory-gene-resuscitating-pods (Oba-Tutelu-Nwa-Anwu i.e. mystic energy-potion that resuscitated the child of the sun = being of cosmic consciousness). Hence, the name of the rite: Itu-Oba-Anwu. The former will, inter alia, gradually but effectively arouse and sustain in the biological body and consciousness of the initiate, the expression of the erstwhile dormant Akpa Agwu genes which will naturally prime the senses towards the desired expansion of consciousness beyond ordinary perceptions. To the untrained eye, the rite is a very simple one. But its high potency is such foolproof that one can never be the same again after experiencing it. Likewise the principles underlying it are sound, clear and uncomplicated. For instance, the emergence of the first sun at creation (Anwu) sparked the conscious awareness in the first human beings - Oma na Ife Nta who were androgynous in nature - of their indwelling quota of divinity as Umu Anwu (plural form of Nwa Anwu). They further recognized this perceived divinity in the expression Chi and themselves as Umu-Chi-Ukwu (plural form of Nwa-Chi-Ukwu). Accordingly, just as the sun initially ignited our individual consciousness at birth, equally so does it awaken it in us on a daily basis. Likewise, as the sun performs the fundamental task of transmitting consciousness to all natural life forms on this outer-world realm of Uwa Nta, so does its spiritual energy perform the same task on the inner-world realms of Ime-muru-Uwa. What does all this tell us about the assertions of our ancient peoples with regards to the way
they lived, many of which come across as mythical or dreamlike to us today? In fact, if humanity in this present age cannot succeed in fathoming the super-mystic consciousness of the *Uga Chi* people, then fathoming the God-consciousness of *Uga Aka* people will be the equivalent of trying to understand what it feels like to live in a dream, a mythical time of perfection and divine harmony, when cosmic intelligence and communication was a commonality and all creation knew and experienced absolute oneness with God. To these first people, God was not some out-there, distant, impersonal being. Rather, God was humankind and humankind was God! Non-duality was the mantra and harmony was the way of life.

The *Uga Aka* people lived in a true golden age when given the pristine atmospheric conditions and high ecological stability of our planet, the cosmic ether field had better penetrative access into our atmosphere resulting in tremendous access to better, much purer air and high energy vibrations all over the Earth. Naturally, such a pristine ecological state of living would enable the prolonged sustenance of increasingly expanded consciousness states, the sort that we can hardly experience in this age given our present ecologically abject living conditions, but one from which we can surely learn a great deal!

Even the regular, diverse cosmic energy radiations transmitted to us from the central sun of our galaxy must’ve been experienced in more subtle and highly refined forms by the ancients, in contrast to our own experience today. In reference to our opening assertions in this chapter, it is this same ethereal character/etheric flow of activity which also characterizes the earliest period of life in our universe that these early Igbo people experienced and accordingly communicated with such mythological mnemonic time-posts as *mgbe iro ka di gbuduu* (when this outer world was still immensely alive with mystery = the first beginnings of life, a time of great unspoken mystic
communication and reflections). Moreover, it should be stated these first peoples also enjoyed the privilege of unrelenting direct access to dual solar energy sources, namely, from the sun and the central sun of our galaxy; a condition which, again, given the pristine ecological state of our planet at the given time, effectively kept them in increasingly higher states of consciousness. Even the high-radiation sustained fungus has given us foolproof of this fact. As noted earlier, samples of these fungi grew in significantly faster rates when they were exposed to gamma radiation at 500 times the normal background radiation level.

In light of the above and given the privilege of such natural living conditions, it should be observed that contrary to what modern scientific establishment is announcing to the world, the first Igbo-African/human ancestors were a highly intelligent, super-conscious, multitasking, immensely skilled and mystical people whose physiology were also highly developed and evolved beyond levels that modern scientific inclinations are yet to admit. As a matter of fact, the present body occupied by human beings in this current consciousness dispensation is a gross physiology that decries the original, intended human physiology.

The Igbo artistic tradition precisely depicts these first peoples as spirit-beings with bright faces, long necks, possessing emphasized mystical powers, sublime aural vibrations and deep aesthetic sensibilities. They were a highly sociable and transparent people of mind-based communication (obi maluzie ife ude sulu); a given factor that explains the natural Igbo inclination towards this communication modality (uche bu akpa, onye obuna ko nke ya), as well as their mostly mystic dispositions with speech-based communication (okwu igbo wu n’ilu n’ilu). It is no wonder then that, to these first peoples, the greatest joys of life were derived in the living process itself and not in accumulated possessions or in one’s societal status; two factors that
have become ruinous obsessions for their present descendants. Profundity, for them, resided in a single breath of air, a single moment in the light of the sun. Thus, no other joy surpassed that which came from the candid celebration of life and its endless interconnectedness; a philosophical view captured by them as *Eriwe-Agwu-Agwu/Emume-Agwu-Agwu*. These First Ones (*Ndi Mbu*) unceasingly celebrated life through music, rites, dances, mystic chants, endless stories, poetry, arts, crafts etc.
• *Ogige Ndu, Uwa Nta, Ibeji Akwu, Enu Uwa, Be Mmadu*

The ancient Igbos asserted in their characteristic succinctness that *Uwa awu otu* lit. existence/worldviews/opinions/reality is never a limited or confined phenomenon. In other words, there exists an infinity of worlds and possibilities in the ultimate reality and many more worlds are set into motion as dawn and dusk continually take their turns. This profound expression may well be considered an all-time summary of the multidimensional reality of existence. As such, in its other name as employed in Igbo oral traditions, the observable universe (the cosmos as such) is also referred to as *Obi Ndu* (House of Life). As *Obi Ndu*, the subject of a Primordial House is once again evoked here but this time, only as a phenomenon of corporeal nature (*uwa afuru anya* – world of matter and anti-matter) that is to say, the resurrected remains of *Komosu* following the *Odachi-ka-Odachi*, which includes all the galaxies, stars, meteors, gases, planets, satellites etc.
that characterize the cosmos. For the very presence of the word *Ndu* (life) equally signifies the existence of its other pair *Onwu* (death), further establishing this tangible world as a particularly finite phenomenon; although in a state of constant flux or exchange with the spirit world (*Ala Mmuo*). It is the mystery behind this liminal state of flux and how to master its “various methods of bargaining” that Igbo proverbial tradition concurrently alludes to in such expressions as *Uwa bu Ahia*. Indeed, this mystic vocation and its unusual, recondite tools and techniques of means remain the specialty of the Dibia. In complement, the corresponding liminal persona of the Dibia should come to mind. Hence, in *Obi Ndu* and *Obi Chukwu*, the duality of the epi-corporeal world (*Uwa Okpu/Uwa-Toro-Uwa*) and the cosmic world or world of corporeality (*Uwa Nta/Uwa-Afuru-Anyaa*) is astronomically and symbolically articulated. Henderson (1972) in his comprehensive work on the Onitsha clan of Igboland pointed out the following with respect to the forgoing:

For example, the sun (*ányanwụ*) and the moon (*ónwa*) are regarded as “messengers” (*ńdi-ózi*) of the great god; they traverse the sky (*igwe*) over land (*ani*) in intersecting paths which divide the earth into quadrants associated with the four days (*ékè, óyè, àfo, nkwó*) of the Ibo week and with markets. Thus a conceptual linkage is made between time and space, for each Ibo [Igbo] day is identified with a particular market place held in a particularly community and associated with a particular sector of earth. All these phenomena—days of the week (often represented as four women carrying market baskets or as a four-faced person), sun, moon, and land, are thought to be imbued with spirit. (p. 114; emphasis mine)

In this very sense, *Eke* is *Eke-Ketere-Ubochi-n’Aka Okpu*, *Orie* is *Orie-Di-Oku-Ori-Ihe-Oma*, *Afo/Aho* is *Aho-Hotere-Chi-n’Igbudu-Chi* and *Nkwo* is *Nkwo-Ovu-Akwukwa-Mmiri*. The two doors of the Sun are given as *Uzo Eke* (eastern door) and *Uzo Nkwo* (western door). Some Igbo communities use *Iyi* instead of the door concept and thus have *Iyi Eke* (eastern water portal) and *Iyi Nkwo* (western water portal). The mystic
door to the spirit world is also known as *Eke-Izo-Mmiri-Mmuo/Eke Mmuo* in Igbo cosmology and as such, was ritualized as a night-only market where the living and the living-dead converge to carry out transactions, in line with the Igbo mystic and cosmological principle of *chi na ewete ihe oga eke na mgbede dewe, ututu awuru okike* lit. Chi brings what it wants to create at dusk, while dawn commences creation/reveals the creative act. *Eke* is also hailed as *Okpara Ubochi* or *Eke Okpara* i.e. scion of *Ubochi* – the diurnal deity. This is one of the sacred appellations that *Agwu* initiates employ in saluting the early morning Sun. Interestingly, in ancient Igboland, people would literally go to sleep with the Sun and rise along with the Sun. Indeed, of great importance to our discourse is *Khepra* or *Khepri* the scarab beetle, which was highly venerated by the ancient Egyptian, who saw it as the early morning manifestation of *Ra*, the Egyptian Sun divinity. On carrying out a careful etymological analysis of the word *Khepra*, it proves to harbor some serious Igboness. For a fact, the ancient Egyptian verb *Kheper* from which the name *Khepra* was gleaned means to "develop" or "come into being", just as its Igbo equivalents *Kepere, Kehere, Kehee, Kepee*—all of which offers the following congruent meanings, ‘to open, to untie, to blossom, to be unsealed’. Thus, in *Khepra*, we have *Ora Khepere* (Ra, Unfold!, Ra Unfolded!, Ra, Emerge! etc.) or *Khpere Ora* (Unfold, Ra! Beetle of Ra! etc.)

With regards to the Igbo word *Ke* and its deep associations with the Sun and by extension, the mysteries of creation (*Okike*), one notices that to this day, Igbo people can still be heard habitually uttering such expressions as, "*anwu na amuke*" or "*anwu na eke*", both of which respectively translates as "the Sun is gleaming". Another intriguing evidence on this matter is that the original Egyptian hieroglyph for the name *Khepri* has among its comprising symbols, what appears to be a lump of white-clay, of the very specimen still used today in the traditional Igbo morning ritual of *Itu Nzu*. An image of the Egyptian falcon deity *Heru*—whom John Umeh (1997) aptly identified as one of
the ancient Egyptian manifestations of the Igbo deity Agwu who is often theriomorphized as a cosmic kite (Nne Egbe) or hawk (Agu-Nkwo) is also included among the symbols. In many cultures of the world, the falcon or hawk is still held as a harbinger of the morning Sun, and this was indeed, one of its many roles in ancient times. In this parlance, such Igbo names, prefixes and titles as Ekeanyanwu, Iwueke, Ekemma, Nwanyieke, Mgba Eke, Umu Eke, Ekeoma, Okoro Eke, Nwaeke, Eze Ora, Ochi Ora, Ofu Ora, Oramma, Okwuru Ora, Okwara Ora, Onu Ora etc. are all indicative of a much misted time when Igbo life, culture and society consciously revolved around the phenomenon of the Sun. These strings of evidence posit themselves centrally in support of the much needed investigation into the shared links between the Igbo and ancient Egyptian epistemological realities.

As can be observed, a relationship is hereby noted between Eke—foremost of the Igbo diurnal divinities; Okike (creation); Khepra—the morning manifestation of the ancient Egyptian Sun divinity, also a creation archetype; Agwu Ishi Oha—the Igbo personified deity of medicine, divination, healing, artistry, mathematics, prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, writing, astronomy, astrology and a host of other mystic practices and who is also theriomorphized as a cosmic Kite, Ra—the ancient Egyptian Sun god (also known as Ora in Afa), Nzu (white-clay), Agu-Nkwo (the hawk form of Agwu hailed as Agu-Nkwo-Eze-Ututu lit. great kingly hawk, conqueror of the mornings), and the Igbo mystic dictum of "nkwo aha ebubana" lit. the hawk does not carry off the ground!

Moreover, as my maternal uncle Okereke Ezedie titled Agbacha Izu, who was a fully initiated Dibia in the Eziagu tradition brought to my notice, "Agali-Ete-Ora" inter alia, also refers to the eastern door of the sky (Mgbawata Eke/Mgbo Eke/Uzo Eke/Owuwa Anyanwu/Aka Nni) from whence the Sun is pulled into vitality each morning by Eke in its essence as Okala Ora. Eke is also the foremost messenger of the sun
and as such is hailed as *Uku Anwu*. On the other hand, the ancient Egyptians held that *Khepra*, the scarab beetle which was seen as a sacred manifestation of *Ra* the Sun god, laid its eggs in dung balls by way of rolling them towards the direction of the eastern horizon. In this manner, Khepra was also believed to roll the disk of the morning Sun over the eastern horizon at day break. Wilkinson (2003) has attested that:

Khepri was connected with the scarab beetle (*kheprer*), because the scarab rolls balls of dung across the ground, an act that the Egyptians saw as a symbol of the forces that move the sun across the sky. Khepri was thus a solar deity. Young dung beetles, having been laid as eggs within the dung ball, emerge from it fully formed. Therefore, Khepri also represented creation and rebirth, and he was specifically connected with the rising sun and the mythical creation of the world. (p. 230-233)

So far, as regards these four primordial forces, it is also important to note that they originally come as dualistic pairs (*ora n’abo, mgba n’abo, nne na oke, di na nwunye*) and are commonly held as the archetypal eight-fold emanations embodied in such Igbo cosmological principles as *okwu na ukpolo, ukwu na nta, ashia n’ano-ubochi n’ano* etc. Yet another Igbo mystical axiom further expresses this dynamic principle differently as thus, *ahia n’ano na uzo n’ano ka Igbo ji biri* (the Igbos follow the tradition of four market-day cycle and four cosmic paths). The above expression aptly alludes to the space-time phenomenon as articulated in Igbo cosmology, where *ahia-n’ano-ubochi-n’ano* (i.e. 4 market holdings = space, 4 diurnal cycles = time) mystically denotes this 4-dimensional plane of existence known as *Be Mmadu*. The Igbos also maintain that each of these dimensional realities was fenced in by *Chukwu as Aka Nge* in the beginning of this universe (*Udu Nge* i.e. first sound—which produced what the Igbos call *Eko* or *Ude* which modern science calls echo!) with an invisible screen, which they referred to as *Mgbugbo Oge* (Time-Fence or Fence of Time). They proceeded to articulate the four guardians of these four fences of time
as: Aho-Mgbo (Nucleonic Strong Force), Aho-Bilagu (Photonic Electromagnetic Force), Aho-Ele (Bosonic Weak Force) and Aho-Ekwe (Graviton/Gravity Force). We thus have two male and two female forces. In the Igbo mythic tradition, it is given that the very last unmentioned one (Aho-Mfu) was eliminated by his first sister Aho-Mgbo in a duel which is said to have taken place in the Great Forest of Uga Trees (Ohia Uga – a symbolic allusion to the epi-reality of cosmic time). In the final analysis, the ancient Igbo Dibias who were also highly advanced mathematicians, mystic-scientists, alchemists and cosmologists in their own rights, stated that, resulting from this great primordial duel in which Aho-Mfu was eliminated therefore: mgbugbo oge Igbo du ino, nke ise shi ezuru ya l’oshi lit. the Igbo time fence is four as the fifth one was "stolen" or "eliminated". This principle is thus practically applied in the calibration and codification of calendars by Igbo Dibias, priestesses and priests. As is observable, the term Aho-Mfu is a combination of two words, Aho (divine time keeper of the Igbo annual calendar) and Mfu ("stolen" – from the word Mfunara/Mfunari/Mfulu/Mpulu). Also, the Ano/Ino or four is of great importance because, in this context, it denotes the 4th dimension (Agu Mu) of Aho-bi-na-agu-mu (Aho that dwells in the wilderness plane of Mu), which is the dimension of time and which collates all the knowledge that is accumulated in the preceding worlds or dimensions. Agu Mu (Wilderness Plane of Mu or Spirit Plane of the Body’s Double) is merely one of the seven “spirit wildernesses” that must be crossed during Dibia initiations. It is the very threshold (Ijite) linking this corporeal world with the primordial world (Uwa-toro-wo wata lit. older world or worlds operating beyond the reaches of temporal reality). Among Agwu initiates in the author’s locality of Umunze, these four primordial forces are also referred to as Ndi Ije n’Ano or Ndi Ahia Mgbe and in the appropriate contexts as, Ndi Aha Chi. Umeh (1999) has equally pointed out the following in this regard:
Like the Igbos, the Incas have four brothers and four sisters as the product of early creation by God of Light which the Incas call Viracocha, a terminology that has clear Igbo root in Nwokocha/Ifenta. In some areas Evuruocha white Ram-like Creator Ikenga is used. The Igbo brothers are afa Chi (Chi’s name among the Igbos). Similarly for Igbo sisters. (p. 83)

The Igbo principle of duality can be further observed in the early morning invocations of Igbo spiritualists, for instance as employed in the following, ndu mmiri ndu azu (the continuity of water also assures the continuity of fishes), mmiri atana ma azu anwu na (waters dry not, fishes die not i.e. cosmic reciprocity), uzo mmiri ka anayo, n’obuho uzo nku (the path of water is what we ask for, not that of the bush), ejide ogu, ofo adi ire (with the possession of Ogu, then Ofo can be potent) — among countless others. It surfaces in the traditional Igbo naming tradition where both male and female persons bear the aforementioned Aha/Afa Chi names, with the typical differentiating praenomen of Mgbe or Mgba for females and Nwa or Oke for males. Their elemental rendition is as thus: Anwu—Fire (Oku, Plasma, Odo, Obala n’abo, Sense of Sight), Ani—Earth (Ajani, Solids, Oji, Odii Ijite, Sense of Touch), Agwu—Air (Ikuku, Gases, Ogiri-Ishi, Obala Ijite, Sense of Smell), Iyi—Water (Mmili, Liquids, Nzu, Aka Ete, Sense of Taste). The precedent to these four is Iyi Akwu—Ether (Ovu Obala), which penetrates these four and is the next density realm (5th world) beyond ours, where these four elementals also exist along with all life forms but as subtle, refined energy expressions/manifestations. Beyond this 5th world, an infinity of worlds exists and each operates under slightly different existential laws from the preceding one. At each of these levels of existence, the incarnating spirit takes on the appropriate form corresponding to the existential laws of that realm and its consciousness level. All the same, as the Afa language is a language of divinity, thus, the language of Spirit, which permeates all existence and all realms of being, accordingly, in the Afa mystic thought, the apex existential realm is given as Akwu Ofu/Ovu = Uwa Nge (Source
World of all Existent Worlds) and the apex existential ontology is
given as Aka Ofu/Ovu = Chi Ukwu, whose manifestation form is All-
Forms and who transcends All-Senses, All-Realms, All-Entities, All-
Time, All-Intelligences and All-Individuations. For Chi-Ukwu is both
the Perceived Unity in All, the Sole Unifying Force of All as well as
the Unfathomable Sole Source of All. In The design of the Akupe Ona
hand fan incorporates both circular and rectangular motifs, as
delineated. Whereas the circular shape of the inner part is symbolic of
Ngwugwo-Oge-Igbo (the Igbo cosmic time-band) and the super-
centripetal/feminine polarity of the universe, the outer part in
rectangular motif embodies the Igbo conception of the cosmic
terrestrial plane (Enu Uwa) and the four cardinal points therein (Akuku
Ano Uwa). The innermost part, depicted in silver/white color and also
of circular motif, is symbolic of Ogbolodo in Igbo cosmology and
astronomy. Collectively, these four primordial forces are articulated as
Izu in the Igbo astronomical and calendrical tradition and ritualized in
the Kolanut custom (Emume Oji/Iwa Oji) for which the Igbos are well
known. One key characteristic of the Izu principle is the inherent split
i.e. Owuwa-walu-uwa, giving rise to four independent paths (Owa
n’ano), four rooms/houses (Uno n’ano) four corners (Akuku n’ano/Nko
n’ano) and four forces each with four faces (Mgba-na-Oke-Afa-Chi). The
Kolanut is thus categorized by the Mgbawata Oji principle as in oji
ghalu ino, oji ghalu ise, oji ghalu ibuo, oji ghalu isii, oji ghalu asaa and the
Igbo days as Mgba Eke, Mgba Orie, Mgba Afo, Mgba Nkwo. Both are
based on the same principle of four (stability-wholeness) as enshrined
in Afia-n’ano-Ubochi-n’ano and as observed in nature/creation (See
Plates 9a and b). Osuagwu (2010) has extensively noted that:

When observers state that the Igbo cannot do without Kolanut; cannot stop
talking about it, the mean that the Igbo are bound to the African world;
understand it, discuss it more than any other people on Earth, celebrate it in
the Kolanut ritual whenever they meet, live by it. Though all Africans have
this symbol, most at the ritual level, the Igbo talk about it at the popular and
mass level; are the custodians of it. The Igbo world is *Uwaizu*, the African World...A careful consideration of the Igbo concept of boundary as *Oke*, a coupling point (ebe na-agba-agba), reveals the Igbo and African world as network Universe; a Cybercosmos...Igbo language is the repository of Kolanut (African archetype) lore. *Igbo is the repository/custodian of the African World System, Uwaizu*...We see four real circles, each representing a quarter of all reality, coming together to generate the pure abstraction *IZU* (Whole, Union, Cosmic). One notes right away that the Archetype is the basic foundation of 4-day week calendar of the Niger-Congo peoples, whose cultural confluence is Igboland. *Izu also means period*. The monthly menstrual-cycle of women is called Izu. The Igbo also call the four-day cycle week Izu. *Eke*, the premier day, is the sacred and rest day of the four-day week. The abstraction of this symbol and its promotion to an autonomous existence as the African world symbol, the African Archetype, *IZU*, establishes one fundamental element of the Igbo and African World system: synergetics...The African Archetype objectively symbolizes the African paradigm of HOLISM (matter, energy and space constitute the whole of the physical universe. *time* is a byproduct of their interaction...(p. 16-18)

The four primordial forces are also greeted as *Owa n’ano du uwa eje* lit. the four paths that propel the world. Another equally interesting mode through which the Igbos expressed their cosmic mysteries was through their leisurely games. The Igbo-African board game known as *Ncholokoto* or *Okwe* (*ncho* for short; *Ayo* in Yoruba) readily stands out in this category. It must also be noted that it is a game that accommodates nearly limitless variations in the way it is played. For instance, Uchendu (1965) noted the following variation of theme in the execution of this prodigious game among the Igbo:

A game of beads which requires one board with two rows, each having at least five pits (called “houses”). The minimum number of players is two. The ten houses (sometimes more) contain ten beads each. Each player “owns” the five houses facing him. He plays by distributing all the contents of one house (except one bead) consecutively in an anticlockwise direction, dropping only one bead at a time into each house. Which house a player distributes depends on his strategy for winning the game. In one form of this game, all houses starting with the terminal house (the one in which the last bead was dropped),
containing odd numbers below ten (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) may be won (or in Igbo idiom, “eaten”). (p. 62)

Although largely played for entertainment purposes, traditionally, the Ncho board game was designed to illustrate—among other things—the key ensuing processes that transpired in the course of the creation and ordering of Uwa. In each of its usual twelve holes is provided four smooth seeds (mkpuru ncho) symbolic of the four primordial forces or elements (Okike n’ano) at work vis. Ikuku na Ndu (Air and Life), Mmiri na Ndu (Water and Life), Oku na Ndu (Fire and Life), Ala na Ndu (Earth and Life). In its original role as a cosmological game, Ncho actually encouraged the players to thus emulate Chukwu in calibrating their present Uwa (the ncho board in this case) for the reward of owning houses or Uno (the holes), which stood for budding stellar systems (stars) at the cosmic scale. Thus, with their movements across the board, the players simulated the chaotic, creative activity that occurred in black-holes i.e. fermenting vortexes in the celestial ethereal waters/dark energy (Ogwugwu-Iyi-Akwu/Ofu-Akwu-Oghele/Onu Ishe). The rotational movements of the players’ hands across the board duly mirrored black holes in their fermentation state. Accordingly, when Onu (hole/sun hole) is spelt backwards we have Uno (house/life house), revealing a careful pun of words by ancient Igbos. Both are enclaves of life, one for astral/water life or gestation of life (womb, ocean, water, cosmos etc.) the other for solidified life or life in form (body-forms, corporeality, human beings, animals, plants, entities etc.) The game of Ncholokoto was considered over, when one of the players succeeded in clearing most “houses” of their seeds to reveal the original circular holes; in other words, revealing the birth of a star. As with many African games, variations of this astrophysical scheme exist. But hardly ever do they totally deviate from the cosmological theme thereof. For instance, among the Dogon people of Mali, Griaule and Dieterlen (1986) reported the two following patterns at work in the same game:
The ark is also represented by the rectangular wooden box for the game of *i* (fig. 169). The game symbolizes the union of the sexes and the proliferation of the human species. The pebbles that are moved about are the totemic covenant stones, *dugoy*, or the clavicular seeds. Their motion also corresponds to that of the stars and of God the creator, Amma. The entire game reproduces and facilitates the march of the universe through space and time: a month is attributed to each cup-hole. (p. 481-482)

It is equally essential to note that even this game is also embellished with the circular/curvilinear and rectangular geometric motifs. The actual board itself traditionally takes the rectangular form, while the “seeding-holes” (or *Uno/Ulo* as they’re specially referred to in this game) take the circular form. Even the two usually provided spaces at both ends of the board for lodging earned seeds are also curvilinear in nature. As well as being challenging, this is also a very unique game, in that it is one of the few Igbo games where the initiated (*Omalu*) and the uninitiated (*Ofēke*) might actually engage in a cosmological bout of ordering the universe as Chukwu accomplished at *Okike* (creation) without the *Ofēke* actually being aware of this fact. The Igbos maintain that, “*atuolu omalu omalu, atuolu ofeke ofenye isi n’ofia*” lit. when idiomatic phrases, proverbs, gestures, mystic axioms etc. are communicated to the initiated, they decode and comprehend the subtle layers of meanings therein conveyed. But when the same is given to the uninitiated, they are overwhelmed and cowardly stagger away in ignorance. The beauty and genius of the *Ncho* game, lies in its effective infusion of cosmogony, cosmology, socio-civic principles, ethics, mathematics, astronomy, mysticism, art, technological ingenuity, sacred science, philosophy and other existing features of Igbo culture into the game and its playing process. It is indeed, no coincidence that its other complementary game of *Itu Aku Olisa* is also played with the *Ube Okpoko* or *Ube Olisa* seed, which is also curvilinear in shape. Each game, however, embodies a unique but commonly related template of the Igbo cosmogonic tradition. There are also other cosmological games embedded in Igbo life and culture, for the
observant eyes to discover, such as Kpuukpuukpo Ogene, Oso Uzo Iyi, Akpakoro, Oyo, Egwu Okereke, Egwu Onwa, Aka-Nwa-Ngwere, Igba Okoso, Itutu Okpa, Onye-na-Aga-n’Iro, Ichichara Mgba, Kpakangolo etc. But the game of Ncho is especially unique, as already made clear here. Particularly in its potential of uniting all persons of the society regardless of their affluence or vocation, sex or association etc. given that it is not an age-based game, unlike Itu Aku Olisa or Ikpo Uga, both of which were reserved for little children and young girls, respectively, in traditional Igbo societies. Eventually, this orientation helps to explain the continued survival of Izu Ncholokoto (playing Ncho) as a traditional Igbo activity in the face of the relentless bouts of cultural genocidal efforts daily perpetuated on the African mind by its antagonists. Also of note, the Sun (Anyanwu, Eze-Anya-Ofu, Anwu-Anwu, Nnenwanyi Agwu, Aka Ofu, Mmuo, Ora, Ofu mkpuru aka rutara mmanu zuru ora) and the Moon (Onwa, Nne Nzu, Nnenwanyi Igwe, Oma Mulu Igbo, Nzu Ora, Nzu Chukwu, Onye Enu/Onwa-n’ibu-Enye-Enu, Nwanyi Ihu Oma) are both held to be the messengers of Chukwu in traditional Igbo societies, as attested by Henderson (1972). The sacred paths through which they traverse the sky (owa anyanwu na owa onwa) have been observed by the Igbos since earliest antiquity. In their daily celestial journeys, the Sun and the Moon were believed to marshal out a quadratic path in the sky (Owa n’Ano/Ijite Ino/Uzo n’ano Igbo ji biri). From this observable astronomical pattern, the ancient Igbos were able to establish another solid reality of the mystic number four; substantiated this time by the two prime celestial messengers of Chukwu. This unrelenting divine celestial ritual also validated the dominance of the duality principle even in the complex motionary course of celestial bodies. For just as both celestial bodies unite in their divine responsibilities of sustaining and supplementing life (on Earth and across the solar system—for the Sun), so does the Earth (Ala/Iyi Ana) and the Sky (Igwe/Iyi Enu) unite in their divine responsibility of enabling and shielding Earth’s innumerable life forms.
By the virtue of this paternal role, the Sky’s physical essence (Urukpu/clouds) also suffices as a kind of suspended reservoir, providing the Earth with rainfall during farming seasons and droughts; just as the Moon takes on the role of a suspended Light House and provides the Earth with light at night time—that which it has absolved from the Sun. As Klieman (2003) observes, this cosmological principle also obtains among the Bakongo people, wherein it is held that “….rain comes from mбу…the suspended ocean above our heads…” (p. 149). Thus, in regards to their worldview, it is no surprise that traditional Igbo societies perceived and continue to perceive the Moon as a kind of ultra-refined emitter of the Sun’s naturally exacting energy. However, that quality of refinement/potency present in her light also means that a considerable dose of the Moon’s mysterious brightness can promptly intoxicate. One only need step outside on a full Moon night and stare into the face of the Moon to observe the subtle light-headed feeling that is quickly registered in the psyche. In far off India, the moon is known as “Soma”. Needless to say, this term clearly demonstrates deep linguistic affinities with the Igbo Oma—a term that also refers to the Moon. Yet, the most interesting aspect of this parallel lies in the Sanskrit meaning of the word “Soma” which is given as “intoxication”. Indeed, one could easily present an Igbo version of this word as Usoma which plainly translates as “pleasant taste” or “sweet pleasure”. It is naturally complemented by the mystical Igbo notion of Usomii/Utomii which connotes “deep taste”, “deep pleasure” or more practically, the deep cosmic taste that Igbo people have anciently ascribed to salt (Nnu). Thus, the Moon’s role as an ameliorator of solar heat, melancholy and stress is evidenced in the Moonlight Play tradition of Igbo people which rather “intoxicates” the youth and adults with “Usoma”. The evident symbiotic relationship manifested in the interactions of the Sun and the Moon cannot be over emphasized. Likewise, it is important to remark that the celestial
positioning of these two bodies, as articulated by the Igbo—retains a significant role in their cosmological worldview. For instance, *Azuka* continues to be a widely borne name and philosophical expression among the Igbo. And this follows a profound principle of Igbo cosmology as will be shown shortly. Isichei (1994) made the following observation in this regard:

In Igbo gnosis, the back is considered the most important direction. *Azu ka*: the back is greater. “*N’obu azu ka…n’obodo ihie du n’uwa, n’obu azu tokalili ayi*”\(^1\), which translates as “the back is greater, in the [whole] world, it is sweeter than all.” Arazu also writes that “a man’s offspring is his back, *azu*, that which he leaves behind when he dies.” An extension of this concept of leaving the back, *azu*, behind when one passes away, is that in Igbo gnosis, time is perceived as flowing backwards. The lineage or umunna of an ancestor or ndiichie extends behind him or her. For a continuum to be maintained, therefore, the back must be protected. (p. 72)

As indicated by the text, a literal translation of the expression “*Azu ka*” will come across as “the rearmost is the best”. Obviously, most persons will naturally find it uneasy to validate such a philosophical orientation without first grasping its pragmatic origins. However, with regards to cosmological realities, if one were to be presented with an 8D-scale simulation of the Earth (or the cosmos for that matter), it will quickly become clear why the ancients made this profound remark and even went further to celebrate and perpetuate it in the given names of their children. To begin with, in traditional Igbo societies, a day was originally conceived as the time-span (*Mgbe*) that lay between one evening and the next. And rightly so for the Moon is the original harbinger of time as far as human beings and their civilizational activities on this planet are concerned. Hence, the path along which the Moon journeys through the sky is considered as much sacred. This conception of time immediately comes across as cyclic and among other things, reveals time to be a flux-like, rear-oriented phenomenon in Igbo consciousness. Symbolically captured,
time is thus seen as a rainbow python (*Eke Egwurugwu*) emerging from the primal cave-womb of the Supreme Mother Goddess (*Ogba Nne Chukwu*) on the divine day of *Eke* to swallow the sun and moon (*Nnu na Mmanu* lit. Salt and Palm Oil), both of which are perceived as spinning celestial jewels (*Ona Igwe*) that illuminate the sky, leaving a huge spiral celestial path behind which is known as *Owa-Eke-Ona* i.e. Path of the Treasure-Python. In result, the *Eke Egwurugwu* “vomits” the traditional Igbo days of the week, vis. *Eke, Orie, Afor, Nkwo* which are given as *Eke* (the sacred python initiates creation), *Orie* (the celebration of life is officially set off by the sacred python under its watch), *Afor* (the sacred python institutes the first world system for human beings), *Nkwo* (the sacred python transforms into a hawk and returns back to the sky as a rainbow, promising to return again). The Sun (*Onye Ije*) can only take off for its journey after the Moon (*Onye Enu*) has completed its own. In this order, the Igbos say that *Amata akara onwa, amata akara anyanwu, adiri-matatu-chaa, onara onye?* lit. Observing the Moon and the Sun This primordial pattern is only altered during eclipses; when it is said that *Onwa jelu i neta di ya* lit. the Moon has gone to visit her husband. However, presented with this nearly, unyielding cosmic order, the ancients persevered even deeper in their quest to untangle the unapparent basis of this symbiotic pact between both celestial bodies. In time, they rightly discovered that even though the Moon is of undeniable importance to the nourishment of life here on Earth, even though it does not scorch the Earth’s life forms as the Sun is naturally prone to do, and even though it precedes the Sun in the broadcasting of time, however, without the Sun it wouldn’t be able to do any of that. Quite honestly, without the Sun, there is no Moon. Consequently, in light of this profound truth, while acknowledging the immense benevolence of the Moon Divinity and her unfailing sustenance of fecundity in human beings and other Earthlings, the ancients still declared that *Azu ka*. In other words, the Sun’s position is still the best; for the very simple reason that it is the
source of the Moon’s great power. One is better off associating with the source of a thing than the thing itself—where it is possible to do so. Thus said, the Igbos would still give their children names like Ihuoma (Oma’s face; fortunate face), Ifeoma (pleasant manifestation; manifestation of Oma), Oma Nnem (Oma my mother—in the case of reincarnated persons) all in veneration of the divine Moon spirit. All this, whilst maintaining that Azu ka. In addition, Oma is also held to be the first woman created by Chukwu in Igbo cosmogonic tradition and here, her association with the Moon spirit comes across as rather logical than mythological, since the Moon regulates the fecundity cycle of women—in the same way that a mother’s genes are practically behind most of the biological traits of her daughters. In any case, since Igbo people have long established themselves as travelers of great renown since time immemorial, it is only natural that they associate with the greatest of all travelers, the Sun. This is in tune with one of their very ancient names, Umu Anwu i.e. Children of the God of Light. As should be obvious by now, the universe, according to the Igbo cosmological tradition, can be rightly alluded to as a House—complete with its own specially carved door (Uzo Ogo) and household objects (Ngwo-Ngwo-Uno/Ife Eji Ebi n’Ulo). The "door-way" in this context alludes to the "watery" cosmic portal-path (Uzo Iyi) of our galaxy. Its other complementary symbolic form is known as Nkwu Ora (cosmic palm tree of life). Particularly, the oil-palm tree (Akwu) remains an economic tree in Igboland and obviously, its nut-like fruit (Mkpuru Akwu) shares both phonetic and etymological affinities with the earlier stated Akwu, which means potent stillness, primordial inertia etc. Oil-palm trees in Igboland are classified according to the unique characteristics of their fruits. The four major varieties are Ojukwu, Osukwu, Mkpuda Nkwu and Mkwekpuru. The Ojukwu specie, which may come as the Mkwekpuru or Osukwu specie is known for its highly intoxicating wine, among other things. The Osukwu specie typically produces sweet fruits with kernels (Aki) that can be easily
cracked with the teeth. The *Mkpuda Nkwo* are particularly young fruits, often without kernels yet and produces very sweet juice, while the *Mkwekpuru* is known to produce sweet fruits but with very tough kernels. The palm tree is the most recognized Igbo symbol of the Milk-Way. However, in its symbolic mode as the Tree of Life, the regenerative essence of the Milky-Way also initiates yet another aspect of the Igbo cosmogonic tradition, i.e. agricultural cosmogony. In many parts of Igboland, the palm tree is held as the first tree created by *Chukwu*, just as the Milky-Way embodies our best proof of the primordial emergence of *Uwa*. Interestingly, both phenomena are geometrically characterized by the spiral nature of their physical forms. Besides this fact, considering the nearly inexhaustible ways in which the palm tree serves the Igbo in their very multifaceted life, ranging from the highly mystical to the basic mundane needs of everyday life, the pragmatic realization of this tree’s essence cannot be over emphasized. Hence, a very ancient Igbo proverb states that, “*enwero ife si na nkwo n’anu n’i’yi*” lit. “there is no part of the palm tree that goes to waste”. A pun of words can also be observed in the above given proverb, where *Nkwo* and *Iyi* are elusively united in a different context, further buttressing their cosmogonic cum cosmological implications in Igbo thought. It is in this same vein that, outside of its daily uses in Igbo life, the same Palm tree is symbolically transformed to represent the primordial *Uzo Iyi* of Igbo astronomy. The presence of the Milky-Way theme in varied mythic traditions of the world, especially the cosmogonic myths cannot be overemphasized. However, not much commentary exists as to the higher spiritual significance of the symbolic notions and ritualized activities associated with this sacred astronomical theme. From the stand point of Igbo spirituality, which is a unique, holistic and largely unencumbered system of self-realization, enhanced by a diversity of profoundly potent mystical and physical sciences many of which predate our present universe of life and whose techniques and
wisdom-principles are mostly encountered in the experiential dimension of one’s practice, as expounded by its practitioners i.e. *Ndi Ogo Mmuo*), according to this system of experiencing life, the true essence of life is observable in the underlying harmony of its more apparent, dualistic but illusory form. Accordingly, the palm tree remains one of the earliest symbols of this universal principle in Igbo thought. Essentially, it is known for two main produces: a fluid (elusive, intangible, transparent, spirit, water, primordial) and a reddish shelled fruit (tangible, shaped, created, creation, fire, blood-colored, life). Primarily, the tree is known for producing two kinds of fluid, namely: palm-oil (*Mmanu Akwu/Mmanu Nri*) and palm-wine. The wine is also of two kinds namely, *Mmanya Nkwu* (sourced from the palm tree proper i.e. *Nkwu*) and *Mmanya Ngwo* (sourced from the raffia palm tree i.e. *Ngwo*). *Nkwu* is also of two types, namely: *Nkwu Enu* (Up Wine) and *Nkwu Ana* (Ground Wine). The color of the oil usually ranges from a thick red to bright orange to brownish gold, while the wine is of a milkish color. Typically, the wine is tapped after the fruits have been harvested. It goes therefore that, while one can clearly observe the palm fruits hanging in wholesome bunches (*Isi Akwu*) on the tree, the wine fluid on the other hand is not seen, as it resides within the tree itself and yet, this is actually the sweetest produce of the tree. The tree’s observable oil fruits (*Mkpuru Akwu*) merely gives off little amounts of the sugarish quality that is found in greater extent in the wine. What do we have here? Two clearly defined essences in one tree! Therefore, in Igbo mystic thought, the notion of the palm tree symbolizing the principle of all created forms as *Nkwu* in a state of *Akwu* (creation as the process of spirit taking corporeal form – fluid to solid; created forms under the influence of their creator; created forms as loyal agents of their creator; created forms in a state of aloofness regarding their source; the Milky-Way as a celestial proof of Divinity etc.) is a profound codification of the principle of *Ife kwulu* (spirit, creator, invisible) *Ife Akwudobe Ya*
It is the Nkwu (fluid, elusive) taking form as the Akwu (fruit, shell). The milkish color of the wine represents water, while the reddish color of the oil fruit represents fire. The harmonious, spiritual bond biding the creator with the created is thus attested in such Igbo nomenclatures as Nkwu Ora (cosmic palm tree, palm tree of the Sun, communal palm tree) and Nkwu Olisa (God’s palm tree). The principle is thus one of unification, than bifurcation. Accordingly, the palm tree symbolizes the universal principles of cosmic primordiality, life, harmony, knowledge, consciousness, fertility, openness, uprightness etc. and more importantly, creation as evidently manifested in the Milky-Way. In this light, the four cosmic directions delineated by its fan-like leaves equally reveal the four spiritual responsibilities of humanity as embedded in Odinala. These are, ritual pacification and engagement of the Sacred Force of the Earth (Iji Ala), humane and upright stance in every engagement with all Sentient Beings (Iji Ofo na Ogu), candid pursuit of self-knowledge, purpose and spiritual growth (Emume Chi) and the perpetuation of divine order i.e. harmony across the universe (Emume Udo). At the center of this Four Primal Paths of Sentience is the Eternal Mound of Ugwu Ogo, which embodies and emanates divine love and kindness as water from a wellspring. Interestingly, among the Yukatek Maya of Yucatán Peninsula as cited earlier, a similar ritual of Iji Ala (pacifying, fixing or cooling the land) is observed. Iji Ala implies reapplying the mystic brakes or "balances" of a given land as applied primordially by Chukwu following the massive incidence that birthed uwa. It is a ritual process which incorporates several mystical sciences of the ancient world, especially sacred architectonics, many of which are now of less importance to "modernized" Igbo people who claim to be contented in the terrible way they live out their lives today. In Igbo culture, a land that needs to be fixed or pacified is regarded as Ala n'anu oku (lit. heated land). This spiritual cum physical condition experienced by the land is
perceived as an out-of-control spiraling of the sacred Earth-force in that particular locality, resulting from the violation of the sacred laws (Nso Ala) of the Earth Spirit. And so, for order to be reestablished between the violated land and its inhabitants, the appropriate degree/form of Iji Ala ritual must be performed on the said land. This can range from the erection of some number of appropriately scaled pyramid or mounds within the said vicinity or even the complete and immediate vacation of such a land, if a Dibia or priestly official had been murdered therein. In cases of severe abominations such as murder and suicide, customarily, the Nri priests are the ones imbued with the responsibility of performing this special ritual. Describing a similar experience among the Yukatek Maya, Hanks in Freidel et al. (1993) have quoted Hanks as such:

Hanks describes how Yukatek shamans use their crystals, their “stones of light,” to discern where evil is located in the domestic space. Called a “solar,” this space includes all the buildings and grounds inside the family’s stone-walled enclosure. First, the shaman “fixes earth,” hetz luum, because it is the earth that is in need of treatment, irrespective of the location of the afflicting spirit within the yard.16 (p. 130-131)

Consequently, in respect to the Igbo cosmogonic House of Life, the very last of these four divine obligations was well substantiated by ancient Igbo mystics and architects, when they ritually aligned the Earthly Obi to its cosmic counterpart; affording the inhabitants of such house an enhanced mystic alignment with the celestial etheric Waters of Life known as Iyi-Enu//Iyi Mbu/Iyi Akwu/Iyi Odii/Isi Mmili. With this singular act, the Igbos architecturally realized yet another tangible proof of their essential worldview. Precisely in this case, they substantiated the Igbo cosmological and architectonic principle of Ana-Enu-Kwudo, fully given as Anakwudo-ma-Enukwudo lit. Earth support, heavens support.
In so doing, the residential house was thus transformed from a mere clay-based structure to a terrestrial complement of the Primordial First House. Likewise, just as the emergence of life (duality) is synonymous with the primal *Uzo Iyi*, so does the Igbo hold that, *onye puo obi o nuo nwanyi* i.e. when one is matured enough to leave their parent’s home, then they are also due for marriage. It should be noted that the act of *Inu Nwanyi* or *Inu Di* congruently comes with recognizing what the nomenclatures *Nwanyi/Nwunye* and *Nwoke/Di* indicates in this very context. To set out, for the man, the operative term *Inu Nwanyi* is meant to be a subtle counsel on the fact that *umu nwanyi nyilu anyi* (women are highly sophisticated beings). Thus, they are often regarded as *Onyilu Nwoke*. To gain the heart of his wife which the man naturally finds difficult to untangle, he is advised to always make her happy. Thereby ensuring that she remains in her essence as *Nwa Unye* (wife, naturally joyous one, one of high spirits, one of high emotions, one whose natural demeanor makes all happy). In the same vein, the operative term *Inu Di* is meant to counsel the woman on the need to exercise patience (*Ndidi*) in dealing with her husband for *umu nwoke n’eme ife n’oke n’oke* lit. men tend to act in sequences for they are driven by the spirit of order (*Ululu Obi*). Genuinely unified and inseparable, they are *Di na Nwunye*. If a woman fails to understand this, she will inadvertently see her husband as slow, assertive, rigid, inflexible etc. And should the man fail to understand this, he will apparently see his wife as overly demanding, overly emotional, insatiable etc. where none of this is actually the case! Therefore, as a preventive measure, the woman’s nature as *Nwa Unye* (*okacha n’unye* - naturally gravitating towards elation – *Oghele Akwu*) should equally be watched by her through the exercise of wise and disciplinary patience towards herself, her desires, her children, life in general and particularly her husband, so she doesn’t end up getting frustrated over the man’s natural pace of life and operative demeanor for *onatalu chi nwoke bu ike* (*Okala Ora* – centrifugal energy). Likewise, the man’s nature as *Nwa Oke* (i.e. *ome
n’oke – naturally gravitating towards restraint) should be watched by him through seeking subtler and deeper ways of communicating his intents to his wife; ways that transcend the apparent and fixed, for onatalu chi nwanyi bu unye! (Akwu Agali – centripetal energy). For the man, this awareness naturally reveals the true purpose of expressing his energy or Ike Nwoke in more transcendental, liberating and practically enlightening ways. On the other hand, the centripetal energy of the woman or Ike Nwanyi represents the already lit primordial pyramid of light (Akwu Ora), as enshrined in the mythical golden yolk of Akwa Nne Okpoko. It is an ironic twist of fate that the ancient mythic narrative of Akwa Nne Okpoko startlingly reveals some of the despicable manipulative acts that were carried out by some Igbo people of antiquity in their malicious motive of stagnating the cerebral powers of Igbo women, as well as the many privileges they hitherto enjoyed in ancient Igbo societies. Below are some particularly striking realities encoded in this mythic narrative which has been presented here in writing for the first time and which apparently suggests that, at some point, some persons did carry out some degree of doctoring work on the conventional versions of creation myths that currently dominate the Igbo psyche of this day and age. These findings are as following: Chukwu’s original first born was a female (Ube Olisa) not male (Oji Eze Enu) as strictly symbolized by the said egg-laying Okpoko. The demotic Igbo word Akwa or egg is made up of two Afa words namely Akwu and Ora lit. Nest of the Sun or Light, in reference to the golden yolk nested in the white shell (Nne Okpoko’s spot of resurrection) which symbolizes Ogbolodo – the brightest star in the sky - or the birth star of the universe. Another Afa variant for this first Sun of the universe is Aka Ora (Ancient Sun) or Ora Odii (Concealed Sun). Secondly, this primal first Sun was much later accused of throwing the ancient world into imbalance by way of equally designating it as “the female violative impetus” that caused the original monolithic world to break into pieces in the Uwa Wara
Awa mythic paradigm. Thirdly, at the inception of this Uga Azi world age, the Akwa Nne Okpoko myth and related matriarchal mythic traditions of Igbo people were slowly but surely replaced with outright patriarchal mythic paradigms by the subsequent male-dominated Ozo nobility order, utilizing the agency of key oracular cultuses such as Igwekala and Agbala Oka. As was strategically intended, these patriarchal mythic paradigms came to dominate much of Igboland with the successful institutionalization of the men’s secret society and male-only blacksmithing cultuses. It should be noted that, the emergence of the heretic Igwekala cult is not unconnected to the rise of the iron technology industry (Oka-Igwe/Nka-Igwe) and its various technocrat cultuses across Igboland. It was the unjust manipulative activities carried out by these high titled technocrats who were fully out to establish a total technocracy across Igboland that lead to the shift of authority in the iron smelting craft from the women’s circle to the men’s circle. Accordingly, whilst it may be said today that the old Igbo patriarchs succeeded largely in establishing their male-only oracular cultuses and priesthoods throughout many parts of Igboland, on the other hand, their ultimate religious scheme of establishing a purely, male-oriented Supreme Spirit under the guise of the Igwekala theology was fiercely opposed by the fully conscious Igbo people of the time, who were evidently inconvincible on the supremacy of Ala (the Earth Spirit) and her cosmic form, Eke (the Supreme Creative Spirit) over any such lesser spirit forces. As such, the famous Igwekala technocratic and religious campaign was a partial success. Of note also, there are other cases of later-day degenerate practices that gradually surfaced in Igbo culture, some of which have their roots in ignorance, corrupt ambitions and in many cases, overt greed. The well-known case of the corruption of the very ancient Osu institution, one of the most efficient and brilliant traditions bequeathed to us by our ancestors is an important case in point. That it now suffers from the noted onslaught of ignorance, alienation and
religio-political corruption observed in the Igbo society of our time is an immense tragedy. Osuagwu (2005) in his notable paper on the *Ihejioku* institution, which is the prime Igbo traditional agricultural institution—has noted the following on the original conception, proper roles and importance of the *Osuji* and the *Osu* generally in Igbo culture:

The top technocrat of the system is the: “ONYE-OSONDU OHIAJIOKU” or “OSU-OHIAJIOKU”, which is further contracted to “OSUNJOKU” or “OSUJI” or “NJOKU”. The “Osuji” or “Njoku”, as the Obowu people commonly call him, was the human repository of agricultural knowledge and practice. He was a ‘library and archive’ as the Igbo, originally, conceived the OSU to be. (p. 9-10)

Returning to our earlier thread, it should be noted then that, for the woman, by naturally exploring her primordial spiritual essence of *Akwu Ose* (brimming depth of spirit), she comes face to face with her own intense powers but also, her weaknesses. As *Akwu Ose*, she naturally manifests creativity divine. But the transcendental extents of her creative powers have unfortunately been psychologically stunted in our time by the deliberately propagated and limiting notion of mere human fertility. To put it succinctly, as *Akwu Ose*, the woman discovers her brimming spiritual powers by merely seeking to center her being through the principle of guided caution. While as *Ose Obi*, the man builds up his dynamic spiritual powers by candidly seeking to experience them in self-enlightening ways. Also, the struggle for the man in this act is not really a struggle in the pure, literal sense. It rather represents a sustained movement (*Obi*) towards a higher, morally refined state of consciousness and the eventual release of the intense psychological repressions that often accompanies his socially inherited instinct of obsessing over the shaping of providence. In the final analysis, the Igbo wisdom tradition holds that marriage is *aka nni kwoo aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwoo aka nni* lit. “the right hand washes the left hand, the left hand washes the right hand”. In other words,
complementarity is the ultimate Ogwu (elixir) to the sustenance of the union of man and woman. Thus said, the ancient Igbo cosmogonic cum marital principle of “onye puo obi, o nwo nwanyi” is to be understood as conveying the following: an Uno Obibi similarly witnesses to life as a dual phenomenon (marriage and the procreation that naturally follows it), just as its sky counterpart continues to testify to the primordial event of creation; an equally dualistic event which involved the principle of Akwu na Obi. In this manner, the events of human life were harmoniously attuned to the stars and all life’s activities were deemed to trail after a certain divine rhythm. Unfortunately, many of the deeply magnificent rituals once tied to this sacred astronomical tradition are now mostly lost. Apparently, there is a shared affinity between this Igbo sacred tradition and the ancient mystic edict of “as above, so below” and its Christian version of “thy will be done on Earth, as it is in heaven”. It is further understandable then, that this unification aspect of the four primordial tasks was ultimately anchored in the expected union of man and woman in marriage; as both stepped out of their individual, monolithic “houses” or consciousness. This being in line with the ultimate unification of all creation with Nnechukwu. So while the esoteric implications of this supposedly simplistic, Igbo architectural tradition might not be apparent to every Igbo person, yet by merely adhering to it (as ritually lived), they consistently substantiated a fundamental aspect of their sacred traditions, namely, the spiritual internalization/appreciation and Earthly manifestation of Uwa Nge—the harmonious, precosmic realm—in this outer realm of existence.
4

Obi Ulo

The Earthly House and the Institution of Civilization

• Ulo, Uno, Obiri, Uno Obibi, Ebe Obibi, Ngwuru Ezi na Uno

From the basic cosmogonic principles of Akwu na Obi, the ancient Igbos were able to further delineate a vast range of universal precepts, a good number of which continues to underlie traditional Igbo architectonics and architectural practice. One of such sacred encompassing principles of Igbo architectural thought, as earlier stated, is encapsulated as Anakwudo-ma-Enukwudo (Earth support, heavens support). Indeed, the ancient Igbos uniquely established both a sacred and secular architectural tradition, in which the Obi temple structure served as a unifying locus on both spectrums of the architectural tradition. Accordingly, in traditional Igbo communities, one readily finds the appropriate variation of the Obi structure in both sacred deific complexes (Owo Mmuo, Owo Arusi) and the traditional family court (Ngwulu Ezi na Uno). Properly so, the actual Igbo word
for "temple" is Obi and those who have witnessed the activities of an authentic Igbo Obi in their lifetime will readily attest to the ritual-centric nature and purpose of this structure in Igbo life. Appropriately so, there still obtains two basic variations of this architectural edifice, namely, Obi Mmuo (spirit temple/spirit residence) and Obi Uno (family temple); with the later been inclusive of Obi Ndi Ichie in its conceptual essence. Regarding the first variation, one readily finds the following in their appropriate settings today across Igboland: Obi Agwu, Obi Ala, Obi Udo, Obi Imoka, Obi Urashi, Obi Idemmili, Obi Anyanwu, Obi Igwe, Obi Ahobinagu, Obi Amadi, Obi Uga, Obi Ikoro, Obi Aho Mgbo, Obi Ogugu, Obi Ekwensu, Obi Ogwugwu, Obi Iyi Afo and so on.

It should also be noted that the Obi and Iru of a deity are not the same thing. For within any Igbo sacred deific complex or temple, the various aspects of the indwelling deity are usually represented appropriately such as the Iru, Umu Ukwu, Ikenga, Agwu etc. Here, Iru literally translates as "face" and properly so, for in Igbo architectonics, the term denotes an altar (Okwa Mmuo/Igbulu Mmuo) and not the sanctuary or shrine sub-structure (Okwu Mmuo/Okpu Mmuo) within the Obi superstructure. Each layer of the structure is meant to correspond to a respective plane of existence in the universe, such as Igbulu Mmuo for Be Chukwu (Divine Realm of God the Creator), Okwu Mmuo for Be Mmuo (Spirit Realm of the Divinities) and Obi Mmuo for Ani Mmuo (Underworld Spirit Realm of Afterlife), the officiating priest/priestess (Eze Mmuo/Ezenwanyi) embodies in their being, the totality of the human cosmological cum existential realm (Be Mmadu).

So that ultimately, four planes of four interwoven dimensions are represented in the meta-structure of an Igbo temple edifice: the Obi contains the Okwu which in turn contains the Okwa and the Ululu or potentiated deific statue. This does not, of course include the sacred court (Owo Mmuo/Izo Mmuo/Ngwuru Mmuo/Ezi Mmuo) which is a pertinent part of the whole complex. In some Igbo localities were the
venerated divinity does not require a temple or where the community is yet to gather the requisite resources to erect one, the sacred divinity court or divinity ring is usually marked with the appropriate ritual leaves, mystic symbols and objects as is required. The indigenous Igbo architectural and architectonic traditions are clearly not isolated from other areas of Igbo life. It is rather observed that both traditions enjoin in the interwoven process of forming and sustaining the unique identity of Igbo culture and its worldview. Indeed, the Igbo cultural universe represents a dynamic organism that lives, breaths, absolves, discerns and constantly responds to the energy of its enactors. It is a conscious, organic whole that is constantly creating and recreating itself, evolving and hibernating at its own pace, ultimately maintaining its own unique consciousness, creative pattern and befitting network of ontological realities. Supporting these ancient observations of Igbo people is the modern architectural cum philosophical conviction that architecture ultimately materializes identity. According to Ikebude (2009):

> Architecture is capable of expressing identity because the structure of a building, its appearance, and where it is located in a society provide useful information relating to the general worldview of those people, the social status of individual members, and the balance of power in the society in which it is built. (p. 3)

Uche Isichei (1994) further clarifies that:

> Architecture can be construed as a "material manifestation of a culture's symbolic system ... a quantification, graphically and formally, of the system of values inherent in a culture". (p. 6)

Indeed, if one thing is generally observable amongst the numerous cultures of Africa, it is the holistic and cyclic nature of their worldview. In which case, the characteristic elements that primarily constitute a culture is experienced by its members holistically—as one unified, cultural spirit. Accordingly, the Igbo culture is a spirit and a deified one at that, with an actual priesthood in parts of Igboland till
this day. Furthermore, Umeogu (2012) has noted that “Life is an organic whole in Igbo African understanding” (p. 2). Therefore, it goes to say that any understanding of the structural modes of Igbo architecture also necessitates an appreciation and understanding of Igbo cosmogonic and cosmological principles, and by extension, the Igbo universe. It has already been established that the Igbo traditional residential house (*Obi Uno*) is merely an Earthly counterpart of the primordial one. In other words, a ritualized reflection of *Obi Chukwu*, as astronomically marked-out by the appropriate stars. In Igbo life and thought, the residential house denotes a private structure for shelter, rest, ritual activities, entertainment, contemplation, negotiation etc. It simultaneously conveys notions of kinship, wealth and sanctuary. On the architectural makeup, the essential materials needed to construct a typical Igbo residential house are readily acquirable from their natural surroundings. In this regards, Iroegbu (2010) writes thus:

The so-called Igbo traditional house is made of clay (*aja*), stone (*okwute*), and thatched roof with sticks and raffia leaves (*arara* and *ngwo*), Indian bamboo (*achara*), and wooden beams (*osisi*). They are raised with trodden lumps of clay or mud, being flattened by means of wooden implements and smoothed over, sometimes with cow dung (*nshi ehi*) and crushed banana or plantain stalks, *unere na ogede* (cf. Talbot 1968; Meek 1937; Ifeanyi 1989). The raffia palm species or *Raffia vinifera* (*ngwo*) is preferred for roofing because it is more resistant to water and perceptive to the climate conditions. The raffia leaves (*ngwo*) are worked into a mat structure called *okpu ngwo* or *okii* (raffia sheets) ranging from 1 to 2.5 meters long. Well-made raffia sheets (*okpu ngwo*) have the durability of a minimum of one year and a maximum of two and half years before being replaced with fresh ones. (p. 161)

In addition to Iroegbu’s detailed description, one should also add that the original roof structure of the Igbo traditional house (*Okii, Okpu Ngwo, Ata Uno, Ata Obu* etc.) was pragmatically modeled after the uncanny, scaly formation of the skin of *Mkpakala* (Pangolin). While the rest of the bodily structure was modeled after the caved-anthills (*Mkpu Ogba*) of Igbo antiquity. The eco-centeredness of Igbo architectural tradition is apparent. Even as one may observe today
that many Igbo people have mindlessly abandoned this eco-centered architectural tradition, it can still be noticed however, that some of them have devised a way to marry their traditional and modern proclivities by engaging their architects to include a kind of souvenir-like *Obi* (in this case, denoting a reception house) in the general construction of their residential compounds. Even as mere aesthetic statements, this double-edged pursuit among Igbo people represents a major shift in their consciousness. However, this is not to say that the intrinsic genius of Igbo architectural and engineering traditions is to be fully realized under this sort of split pursuit.

A well-structured and ritually aligned *Obi*, complemented by the kinship congeniality, healthiness and spiritual uprightness of its inhabitants is usually likened to the primordial First House, *Obi Mbu*—in which *Chukwu* existed in perfect congeniality with all the spiritual forces. However, following the occurrence of creation, the perfect harmony of the House was altered. Yet, given Chukwu’s infinite wisdom, it was made known that through the observation of sacred living across the cosmos and the extensive rituals that comes with it, the Primordial House can be restored once again, to its perfect harmonious state.

In this way, it is at once easy to understand the almost obsessive devotion of the ancients with cosmic cum astral alignments. Etymologically, the word *Obi* entails a host of meanings and further illuminates certain underlying elements that crosscut Igbo culture. Initially translated, it conveys the idea of “existence in motion” in its sacred *Afa* meaning—*Obi na Akwu*: motion and stillness. And then it denotes “a living space”, “a divine-king” and when pronounced slightly different, “the heart”, “it/he/she lives here” etc. It is also important to note that in the Yoruba language, the Kolanut (*Oji*) is also called *Obi* (pronounced exactly as “*obi*: the heart” in Igbo language).
The common thread, it will appear, in all given translations is the **motionary** manifestation of life. This is better observed in the vast presence of this term in many Igbo words that describe the presence of the divine or sacred such as, *Obinagu* (a very ancient forest and wildlife deity), *Obi Chukwu* (divine house, divine heart), *Obi Ndu* (house of life), *Obi Oha* (communal temple, generous heart) etc. It is etymologically clear then, that in addition to its other connotations, the word *Obi* (dynamic energy) denotes the sacred or the divine in motion, while the complimentary *Afa* word, *Akwu* denotes (latent energy or the source of expressed energy itself i.e. *Akwu Agali*). In reality, the observable biological functioning of the heart reveals it to be a kind of central hub spot, regulating and connecting the other units of the body and their varied activities. Particularly, it ensures the healthy refinement and distribution of blood (*Obala/Obara*) throughout the body. The sacred communal gathering space of a given community i.e. the *Otú Obodo* or *Otobo* or *Ama Obodo*, which traditionally incorporates the *Obi Mbu* structure is ever in service, as a congenial spot for the dynamic articulation of community affairs, as well as a seeding ground for innovative precepts, ideas, laws and policies to be later disseminated among the rest of the community by a town-crier (*Di-Ube/Di-Ozi*). In this sense, it exactly mirrors the functions of the heart and as such, they both stand for the same principle. *Obi* thus proves to be a very, self-revealing word. This further arights the essence of a residential house in Igbo thought, as a place of shelter, revitalization and emotional centering (*Ulo Obibi*). Elsewhere, Umeh (1999) has pointed out the following in regards to the mystical, cosmogonic, cosmological as well as cultural implications of the Igbo traditional homestead to Igbo sacred science,

> As a matter of fact, every Dibia knows the implication of *ezi ama* (*mbala obi* and *ngwulu ezi na uno*) made up of *mbala ezi* and *uno* while *mbala ezi* itself is split into *ihu ezi*, *nko ezi/mgbu uno*, and *azu uno*. The house or *Uno* itself has, among its most important components: *Mgbago isi Uno*, *Mkpochi onu uzo*, *Mbala uno*,
Resolvedly, the residential house for the Igbo conveys an expertly orchestrated simulation of the primordial heavens here on Earth. For instance, the Ezi Ama, Aja Ezi Ama, Mbala Obi and Ngwulu Ezi na Uno as Umeh pointed out are wholly significant of the fourteen-fold mysteries of creation, the eight-fold manifestations of Uwa Nta, the primordial origins and mystical dynamics of our solar system, the four Igbo diurnal forces, the human microcosm, traditional Igbo temple architectonics, the primordial origins and mystical dynamics of the earth, as well as the undichotomized reality of the universe as one unified entity. In this regard, Iroegbu (2009) has rightly attested that “an Agwu shrine comprises the most vital live trees and plants representing the layers of the Cosmos” (p. 9).

Moreover, in the long course of inhabiting this symbolically staged enclave, its inhabitants successfully ensouled it with their individual spirit essences; through the ritualization of their life’s fundamental phases and definitive moments including birth, natal rites, festive rites, initiation rites, marriage rites, vocational rites and rituals, other relevant family rites and rituals, as well as the ultimate accompanying rites and rituals of death. Therefore, with each activity largely mirroring the very primordial phases of the universe itself, one witnesses the continuous advancement of the family microcosm as harmoniously ordered from the deep, arching skies above. This conscious act of ensouling a simple residential structure through the ritualized activities of one’s life, is in great resonance with other aspects of Igbo culture as will be later shown. To this end, it is a well-established wisdom in Igbo culture that what happens in the world is merely a reflection of what happens in the family. Thus, when the
family (Ezi na Ulo) is in harmony, the larger world is prone to be in harmony as well. In the past, it was also customary to allow the houses of certain deceased persons to collapse on their own, as such houses were not to be occupied again. Thus in its truly realized form, a house is eventually transformed into a living entity of some sort, resulting from the instillation of those appropriate or spiritually prescribed experiences into its ritually-simulated space. For instance, upon entering into a religious structure or environ, people will instantly feel its sacred or high-energy ambience as a result of its continuous instilment and or reception of that particular nature of ensouling ritual, among other reasons.

In contrast, this feeling will greatly differ from that experienced at the point of stepping into a beer parlor. One is also reminded of the fundamental Igbo concern with morals and humane conducts as sanctioned by Ala (the Earth Goddess who is also the paramount custodian of morals) on whose physical form the house itself is built. Properly ensouled, a house emerges as an outlet of the Earth Goddess herself; as will be noticed by the impeccable moral standards of its inhabitants. The body itself is ensouled at birth and exited at death and the house is expected to undergo the same process. As noted in the research result of Sharpham Trust (2007), even in faraway mountainous Tibet—a land whose very ancient Uga Chi cultural practices (pre-Buddhist Bon traditions of Tibet) resonates Igbo cultural practices of that same age—one finds the same ancient Igbo architectonics principle at work as thus:

Traditionally in Tibet, divine presences or divinities would be incorporated into the very construction of the house making it in effect a castle (dzongka) against the malevolent forces outside it. The average Tibetan house would have a number of houses or seats (poe-khang) for the male god (pho-lha) that protects the house. Everyday the man of the house would invoke this god and burn juniper wood and leaves to placate him. In addition the woman of the house would also have a protecting deity (phuk-lha) whose seat could be found within the kitchen usually at the top of the pole that supported the roof. (p. 5)
Hence, a house in Igbo thought, entails a "living space" in a direct and cosmological sense of that expression. For it is conceptualized to mirror the dynamic nature of the primordial house from which it was originally sourced and continues to exist in. It is also in the internal space of the residential house that the above mentioned cosmological symbols are more vividly embedded. Writing on this, Umeh (1997) stated the following:

Each house may contain some curvilinear forms. *Ogwe Eke*, for example, which is the Royal Python’s bed—an important internal component of a traditional Igbo house—is a long stem of palm tree hollowed to a curvilinear form. This provided a bed and resting place for our very important totem *Eke*, the Royal Python. *Mpio Okuko* which serves as an access for domestic fowls is a circular motif. (p. 8)

Equally of importance, the bed (*Akwa*) is traditionally of a rectangular form, along with the doorway itself—and other basic Igbo household objects, like the long basket (*Ukpa*), the table (*Okwa Nni, Ndokwasi*) etc. Graiule’s (1965) account of Dogon traditional architecture also reflects some parallels with that of the Igbos. For instance he states that:

The above is in tune with the traditional *Mpio Okuko* (chicken hole) which as Umeh (1997) aptly noted above is of circular shape. On the cooking area or kitchen, Iroegbu (2010) has aptly pointed out the following:

In this domestic domain, the cooking place or the kitchen (*usekwu, ekwu ato nwanyi*: literally, the tripod of woman) is situated separately from the living room, bedroom, toilet, and bathroom. The woman’s cooking place (*usekwu*), that is, “the kitchen,” “the hearth,”…or “fireplace,” metaphorically refers to the mother’s womb. It is where things are both fermented and cooked in ritual idiomatic connotation…In the Igbo house, the three stones of the hearth stand like “father, mother, and son, and are united via the pot” (which) they uphold. The tripod stand (*ekwu ato*, usually of hard earth blocks, stones, or iron) reflects a weaving together of the primal life force linked to the earth as opposed to the open male space linked to height (*elu*). The intricacies involved in the controllable and uncontrollable spaces are expressed in the gender-
space boundaries. Perhaps that explains, in one way, why women in Igbo traditional society are forbidden to climb economic trees, especially the palm tree that produces wine with which the food made in the house is eaten and drunk. (p. 144)

Among other realities, the trio-centric hearth or "Three Stone Place" as viewed among the Yukatek Maya and other Mesoamerican and South American cultures is equally one of the principal cultural traits of the Kwa people of West Africa. As a side note, it is important to point out that the Yukatek Maya and the Toltecs constitute a decent portion of the surviving descendants of the Olmecs—one of the most prominent civilizations of the first Uga Chi world age. Umu Anwu are noted for their pronounced all-seeing eye (Ose Ora/Mind Abilities/Visionary Minds/Masterminds), the symbols of which they have left in their endless trails all over the world since ancient times and even continue to do so today under our very noses. It has also been observerds that:

A new picture of the universe is emerging, one of a vast cosmic interdependence and connectedness. From first cosmos to last electron, the whole universe is a complex of coils within coils, spirals within spirals, magnetic fields within magnetic fields. The stars are interconnected to each other, exchanging particles and gases constantly, all flowing down the magnetic field lines or arteries of the galactic body. Scientists now feel it’s very likely the galaxy’s coiled field lines diverge into intergalactic space where they may ultimately be connected to other galaxies. Are these tendrils of energy the nervous system of the galaxy, relaying information from star to star, galaxy to galaxy, on and on? One can only wonder. (St. Denis 2014: p. 21)

With respect to the anticipated achievements of the newly dawning Uga Anwu age, Eunice Oviawe-Jones (2014), mystic extraordinaire, intellectual of profound heights and a great friend has articulated the following:

The great secret of speed lies in organization. When things are organized, action can be executed faster with less errors and probability of crashing. The same goes in the organization of information. The evolution of the future is higher and higher speeds of information transfer and communication. At some point, knowledge can be downloaded directly into the human consciousness, instead of needing to go through to slow process of reading and learning. For that to happen properly, the knowledge must be in its perfect form. Therefore, the hardest and most important part of the work is in the beginning stage of organization. In the later part, things become easier and faster. This is why
God needs to send beings of super intelligence and super genius to do this part of the work of organizing knowledge and knowledge integration. At this crucial stage of humanity, only the best of minds must be used for the job. Such people are way ahead of others in intelligence and understanding, because the work they do will set the path for the future of human intelligence and knowledge processing. (personal communication)

Accordingly, it is to be noted that the erstwhile new generation of human beings predicted in esoteric literatures around the world as born mystics, great multi-taskers, hyper-intelligent, highly creative and energetic spirits are here; we only have to open our eyes and ears and recognize them in our midst. For instance, as strange as it might seem, the so called ADD symptoms purported as the indicators of a larger generational disorder in the incarnating children of the new generation proves to be one of the greatest medical frauds in recent human history! All over the world, consummate mystics recognize these children as emergent waves of the presently occurring universal transmission of new creative spirits into diverse realms to set the stage for the much awaited divine plans of this cosmic age. They are noted to possess a unique thirst to experientially uncover the much courted evidences to the erstwhile mystic knowledge traditions accumulated by human beings in the previous ages. And yet modern medical practice considers them as victims of a disorder? It should be realized that such children are incarnating into our world with the emerging cosmic Agwu winds of Uga Anwu. Bearing the latter in mind, the so called typical ADD symptoms, such as pronounced restlessness and insomnia, multiple personality indicators, hyper-sensitivity etc. are the early developmental signs of what will be later acknowledged by future humanity as the cosmic consciousness of Umu Anwu. These impulses have their roots in something more subtle. They are simply nature’s ingenious ways of resuscitating the erstwhile dormant senses in human beings and it is not a new event in the history of human beings. As such, these children should be wisely handled, as they can easily become a massive problem for society or a profound blessing. For a fact, the children of this new generation are mostly coming to us from the future and we ourselves are connecting with them in a present that we inherited from our ancestors. In this light, we are merely their bridge to what has been and ultimately, they will have to observe and see if what we tell them
matches what they see on the ground. It will then be up to them to
discern and remember from the future what the necessary things are,
which they have been assigned to accomplish in other to get things back
to the appropriate state in this realm. These children are not insane or ill
in any way. It is our present illusion of a modernity-inspired empirirical
understanding of life and nature that is severely ill and dangerously
insane. The above noted “impulses” are simply nature’s subtle ways of
carrying out her work of spiritual resuscitation in our children. These
children need to be taught in a new way – a way that matches their
highly awakening sensibilities, capabilities, talents and creative genius.
The rate at which they absorb information is highly advanced compared
to the people of the last 6,000 years. Their gifts call for a more thoughtful
humanity; a humanity that will understand that learning is not only an
active activity, but also a passive activity. These children are here to
learn directly and largely from nature and very little from our human
institutions. Uga Anwu is hence the age of energy and an expanded,
insightful understanding of energy. Accordingly, in this age, the
universe will be mostly understood and interfaced as an infinitely
potent sphere of energy (i.e. dark matter and dark energy). In contrast,
in the subsequent age of Uga Chi, human beings will develop and
achieve a deeply transcendental view of the universe, far surpassing the
conceptual realms of energy. In Uga Chi, a vision of the universe and all
life as a single unified, infinitely potent and diverse field of
consciousness will emerge among humans. Of present, our untiring
obsession with the sourcing and exploitation of energy, as well as our
relentless preoccupation with the means to generate even more power
without deeply bothering to clean up the hazards we have created from
our mindless consumptions so far—are all signs that in this age, energy
will be both our gift and our curse. But in the far future, this thirst and
enthusiasm will deepen and expand to great extents to factor all life and
we will once again come to realize that when we take from the earth
mindlessly we also harm ourselves mindlessly, for our energy is one
with the earth and all life in the universe. With this understanding and
the great mindfulness which it will generate in the subsequent human
beings, we will begin the process of regaining our erstwhile latent
mystic abilities for which Uga Anwu and Umu Anwu are known. We will
move en-masse to re-establish deeper relationships with nature and the
universe, seeing all as an interconnected super-web of energy, expressing an infinite, harmonious call and response in the vibratory activity called life; the process of which is further discerned as creativity. In the future, such abilities as pre-cognition (for example, being able to sense prospective activities in a place of zero-to-none/unnoticeable activity – sensing that a geographical location will be a future city merely by smelling human transactions in the air etc.) will become a common ability. Creatives, visionaries, women and innovative souls will come to occupy several powerful positions presently occupied by dogmatic and greed-driven individuals throughout the world. The present notion of mass/solidity as a cosmological factor will eventually become so obsolete and outmoded that those who continue to hold onto its tenets will be seen as living in the dark age.

With regards to the Igbo tripod stand, Iroegbu (2010) observed accurately when he stated that this tripod stand is usually fashioned out of hard earth blocks. Strikingly, Linda Schele in Freidel et al. (1993) notes that among the Yukatek peoples, the same hard earth material obtains in the fashioning of the hearth (note that the word "hearth" is rather a combination of the words "hard" and "earth"). She also noted that this sacred fireplace is ritually and astronomically represented in the Mayan skies, which strikingly resonates with the Igbo astronomical representation of the sacred hearth as Ikenga Igwe in the Orion constellation and which is held to be the source place of the cosmic fire channeled to the Earth and the other planets through the generous Sun and occasionally experienced in its purest, most potent form as the brilliant lightning (Amuma Igwe – i.e. omalu ene nya neta Igwe k’ona egbu amuma bari-bari) known to accompany the colossal thundering voice (Egbe Igwe) of Igwe/Kamalu, Igbo deity of thunder, sky, lightning, rain and justice. In most Igbo oral traditions, this constellation goes by the name of Umu Nne Ito i.e. "The Three Brothers" or Di Nta (the hunter). Interestingly, the same name and implied meaning also obtains among some cultures of the aboriginal Australians. In this light, Freidel et al. (1993) has observed the following parallel traditions among the Yukatek Maya:

When the Milky-Way was in this Cosmic Monster position at midnight on Creation night, August 13, the Three Stones of the Hearth appeared next to
this heart of heaven in the eastern sky. Here the stones emerged to take their journey to the center of the sky for the miracle of First Father’s rebirth. The appearance of the Three Stones in the sky marks the beginning of our Creation, an appearance that conjoins with the shifting of the heart of heaven, the Ol, from the western to the eastern side of the sky, from the side of death to the side of life. (p. 217)

Candidly, the historical implications of the parallels expressed above are too profound to be enumerated in this concise work. It is however important to rephrase that the hearth or "fireplace" as Iroegbu (2010) stated, “…metaphorically refers to the mother’s womb. It is where things are both fermented and cooked in ritual idiomatic connotation” (p. 114). In other words, things are cooked here both in the nutritional sense (food) and biological sense (life). What is ultimately missing from Patrick Iroegbu’s description of the hearth includes its mystical and astronomical implications in Igbo cosmology and sacred science. Beyond the physical plane, the “fireplace” as characterized by its specific triadic quality, is what Igbo Dibias allegorically refer to as, “mmadu n’abo n’anu ogu, onye nke ito bata ogboru ha ya bu ogu” i.e. when two people are fighting, the third person on meeting them proceeds to bring them to order. This very recondite, metaphoric expression is indeed, an ingenious condensation of profound Igbo mystical knowledge dealing with energy on a cosmic scale and the primordial materialization of this force on the physical plane—as still applied in Ogwu practices and Dibia mystical feats. In this particular case, what we have here is a concise codification of the operative principles and stages of the materialization of the hydrogen atom. In regards to the underlying mystic physics of Igbo sacred science, Chimakonam (2012) has properly identified two major schools of thought among Dibias or mystic-scientists namely, the transcendentalists who attribute the first cause of creation to Chukwu Abiama as a direct initiator (Atu Mmuo) and the mechanists (Ndi Mekafunanya) who attribute it to Akara/Akala Mmuo i.e. Divine Sign-Propellant, which they consider to be an indirect emanation of Chukwu as the Aka Ofu, who assigns Akara Aka (destiny or purpose, but lit. individual hand-borne signs) to all created beings. Thus for example, we have Ibo Akala, which in daily Igbo quotidian context means “to discuss” but in the deeper mystic context literally means, to reveal the signs of a particular being, entity, object,
life-form, physical location, existential plane, existential state etc. or *Ikpa nkata* which has the very same quotidian meaning as the former but esoterically connotes the mystic act of weaving primal elemental matter and energy into a solidified basket or form. Chimakonam further noted that in both schools, every life-force-form (*Ijele*) is said to consist of *Ezumezu, Izumezu* and *Izuzugbe*. Accordingly, if an *Ijele* is created with more quantities of *Ezumezu* (positive force) and less quantities of *Izumezu*, it is called *Ike* (active force). Likewise, the one that has more quantities of *Izumezu* and less quantities of *Ezumezu* is called *Apia* (passive force) while the one in which the quantities of *Ezumezu* and *Izumezu* is identical is called *Idedu* (inactive force). As he rightly noted, all these are sub-particles which are in themselves not empirically given to human senses. For those who prefer the conventional jargon of modern science, in the earlier given *Ogu-na-Udo* outline, the nucleus of an atom proper is symbolized by the term *Ogu* (fight, conflict, crisis, bout etc). Likewise, the two fighters symbolize the proton (*Ike/Okala Ora* – active force or positive charge) and the electron (*Apia/Akwu Agali* – passive force or negative charge), while the neutron (*Idedu* – inactive force or zero charge) is the *Ogboo Ogu* (bonder or restorers of harmony i.e. *Ome Udo, Onye Udo, Udo, Di Udo, Di Odo*). Eventually the struggle is brought to order with the arrival of *Ogboo Ogu* and thus, completing the physical formation of the Hydrogen atom (*mmuo awalu ogodo*). At this point, it is then said that, *ife bia n’ito oto* lit. all things get stuck at three. For at the universal plane of three (*Agali Ofu*), primal energy/matter takes a structural form (*owalu ogodo*) and life as we know it is achieved. The choice of the fireplace for this particular representation is only natural, for Igbo cosmology equally holds that *mmadu bu oku na mmiri* lit. “the enlightened human being is fire and water/human beings are a synthesis of fire and water” and “*mmiri bu ose ndu*” lit. “water is the primal stirrer of life”. Among other basic and mystic usages, *mmili* is also employed in Igbo expression as an effective metaphor for emotion and emotionality (*Obi-ilo-mmiri*), silence (*Ida jii/Ebe Iji dalu* lit. where a flood has nullified or pacified the environment, *Ida-owu-ka-mmili/ebe owu dalu* – to observe ocean-like silence), equilibrium (*Ida juu* – as in “*iwe gi daju*” lit. calm your anger for even the ocean calms its tempestuous tides), emotional energy (*Ikwo-ka-mmili/Itu-nkwu-ka-ebili-*
mmili), delicate of heart (Obi di ka mmili), sublimity (Idi-ka-mmili/Idajuu-ka-mmili) etc. Oku on the other hand is also employed to portray cerebral energy and similar or associated realities. Yet, as is characteristic of Igbo thought, in a stance of rhetorical satire, it is also posed that “nkata ana ekute mmili, ikwu nwa mbe ana aru-aru?” lit. “Does basket fetch water? Does the tortoise shell ever really roast?” Both mystic assertions subtly allude to the aforementioned Oku-na-Mmili principle in a reversed logical sense. Therefore, the "basket" is shown to defy water (with all its power) and the "tortoise’s shell" equally shown to defy fire, by resisting roasting. In other words, while the Igbo mind truly recognizes the established power and universality of these two elements, they likewise went further to demonstrate their vulnerability to human manipulation. The same Igbo mystic tradition also has it that mmadu bu mmili esinyelu n’oku lit. human beings are like water-holding pots placed on a fire stand. On this, they further emphasize that: nya bu mmili suo, o choba uzo osi apu n’ite lit. when that water boils, it naturally seeks to escape its holding pot. In reality, the activity of the fireplace does demonstrate the principle of mmadu bu oku na mmiri, because in reality, although both elements are known to harmoniously coexist in both sexes, nonetheless, fire is characteristically masculine, and as such, could only be successfully intimated (brought to equilibrium) by proper acclimatization with its other elemental counterpart, water—which itself must equally be present in considerable amount in anything that is to be cooked by fire to avoid it getting burnt! Thus, complementarity does prove to be the nature of life. This is also corroborated by the synchronistic relationship observed between such diverse realities as height and base, rain and dust, land and sea, sun and the moon, space and time etc. Interestingly, elsewhere, this cosmological paradigm is also found in the astrotheological creation symbolism ascribed to the Three Stone Place among the Yukatek Maya of South America. Moreover, the underlying numeric specificity and the choice of a stone in the conception of the hearth in both cultures, calls for serious scholarly attention, as this has remained a strong tradition in both the Igbo and Mayan cultures till today. The Yukatek Maya and their several other sibling communities also conceive the Milky-Way in various forms that strikingly mirror those of ancient Igbo people, as well as today’s
traditional Igbo society. Indeed, to the Olmecs and their much later Yukatek progenies, the Milky-Way was at the same time, a World Tree, a Crocodile Tree, a Cosmic Jaguar, the Maize God, the Cosmic Monster, the Three Canoe Paddlers and other symbolic personifications. These metaphorical representations startlingly parallels the Igbo conceptions of this same celestial phenomenon as Ube Okpoko (Okpoko’s Tree or the ancient Igbo’s World Tree), Nkwu Ora (Cosmic Palm Tree or World Tree of today’s Igbo people), Iyi-Ora-Ugbo (Stream of Cosmic Ferriers), Awolo Iyi (Leopard of the Cosmic Stream), Oba Eze Elu (Crocodile of the Sky-King), Uzo Iyi (Water-Way/Stream-Way/Water-Path) etc. This much evidence, indeed, calls for a critical scholarly investigation into the apparent epistemological source of the traditions expounded by these two cultures. The consistency of certain numeric and geometric patterns in the internal space of the Igbo residential house is not to be taken merely either. Indeed, one is apt to notice an obvious interplay of symbolic forms within the Igbo living space, generally dominated by the concentric, triangular and rectangular motifs. As mentioned earlier, the rectangular motif is all the more important in Igbo thought for its geometric realization of the number four; a highly important ritual numeric value in Igbo cosmology and sacred traditions.

It is chiefly sacred as the embodying number of the Igbo traditional week (abali n’ano ana eku izu, ubochi ano ana eku izu) which is made up of four great days and four small days (Izu Ukwu na Izu Nta). The circular motif is equally sacred as the geometric realization of the primal state of equilibrium known as Akwu. It was from this state that Obi (motion) initially emerged. Simply stated then, the circle is symbolic of primordial unison, perfect stillness and divine potency. Likewise, when this specific geometric motif is evoked in Igbo arts, the feminine principle is being referenced. One must also point out that, even the two housed curvilinear forms mentioned by Umeh (1997) are directly linked to the domain of feminine essence. For instance, the presence of a dedicated space for the sacred python readily evokes the presence of the Earth Goddess as the owner of all who lives in the house.
To this fact, an ancient Igbo dictum affirms that, *Ala nwe mmadu n’ile* (the Earth Goddess owns everyone). Similarly, the circular opening for the mother hen and her chicks obviously alludes to the feminine domain too. There are also complementing representations of the masculine essence within the house, such as the bed (*Akwa Ula*), the seating mound (*Oche Mgbidi*), the regular or titled-person’s carved-door (*Uzo Ogo*) etc—all of rectangular motif. Eventually, there is the gradual realization of the finely woven complementarity of the Igbo living space. But far more important is the recognition that one is here presented with an open-space simulation of deep cosmic principles in a mere residential house. Thus as mnemonic forms, these symbolic structures contributed to the holistic edification of their residential “students”. In this very sense, Igbo culture and society successfully made the quantum pedagogical leap from consciously trying to impact the mind with often overwhelming, extensive instructions or knowledge, to intuitively guiding the mind towards its own fitted and refined ways of understanding, meaning and being. One may further say that, in a connotative sense, these mnemonic forms functioned as silent tutors in every traditional Igbo house. It will however be a great understatement to attempt to limit the presence and application of these motifs in Igbo life and thought to only their architectural purposes. But as easily assessable geometrical embodiments of complex cosmological principles, the circle and rectangle motifs are unarguably vital to comprehending the Igbo worldview and knowledge systems. Similarly, the presence of other dynamic geometric forms throughout the tangible domains of Igbo culture cannot be overemphasized.

Indeed, as contemporary science gradually comes to grips with some of the knowledge that ancient civilizations had earlier shown profound mastery of, one of the puzzles that will certainly regain investigative center-stage is the dominance of the triangle (*Aba n’Ato*) in the cosmological and mystical traditions of ancient societies. It is worth mentioning that this geometric preponderance in earlier civilizations is not exclusive to Igbo culture. All the same, the triangular geometry (*Aba n’Ato, Ekwu Ato*) and its more complex materialized form, the polyhedron pyramid (*Akwu Agali* lit. Nest of
Energy shortened to *Akwali*) is highly ubiquitous in Igbo culture and fundamental to its sacred traditions. In this regards, writing on the Igbo cosmological and astronomical principle of *Izu*, Kalu (2007) has stated thus:

> If one recognizes that the “IZU” symbol is presented in two-dimensional space, an object on top of the structure would generate the square pyramid. The square-pyramid is employed in the building of Pyramids; stools and display of crops for sell by Africans. And one object on top and another below the plane would generate the octahedron. The octahedron is the most stable structure in all nature. It is the structure of diamond. It is also central to the structure of important natural substances, such as water, the hemoglobin of blood and chlorophyll in leaves etc. (para. 1)

It should be noted that the number three (*Ato, Ito*) is a highly regarded, mystical and ritualized number in Igbo culture and cosmology. It also happens to be the numeric value of this geometry; for a polyhedron is essentially a geometric solid in three dimensions. Accordingly, Ikenga is held in Igbo sacred science and mystical numerology, as the king of the number three (*Ikenga ome n’ito* lit. Ikenga the doer at three) representing the actualizing power of the will over energy (*Mpi Ikenga* - the Ikenga horns), energy over the hands (*Aka Ikenga* – the right hand) and the hands over solid matter (*Okpo Ikenga* – the skull held in the left hand of Ikenga). It also represents the transformative quality of energy, as observed across the extensive, cyclic ebbs and flows of time at the cosmic level. Indeed, energy plays a fundamental role in the furtherance of human existential reality, civilization, natural as well as cosmic life. In reality, the ideal human community is also first and foremost, an efficiently woven network of sublimated energy. The ancient Igbo cosmological principle of natural network is captured in a well-known Igbo axiom as thus, *eriri ma ngwugwu, ngwugwu ma onye kere eriri* lit. the rope knows the knot, the knot knows the person who tied it. *Erima* embodies a multidimensional relationship dynamic encompassing all realities, known and unknown. Indeed, according to this original principle, the earliest Igbo social structure had the Matriarch-Healer-Mystic addressed as *Nnenwanyi/Ezenwanyi* (later divested of that position with the creation of ritual-kingship or *Eze Mmuo/Agbala*), her
son, the clan leader (Okpara/Okwara/Opara – later divested of that position with the creation of title institutions) and matrilineal-traced clan members (Umunne – later transformed into Umunna with the inception of patriarchy in Igbo culture; a dualized form of both remain operative today) as its initial dynamic socio-organizational structures. In other words, a social structure based on the mother-and-child bonding process was at the heart of the original Igbo socialization model.

The *Erima* principle is not only evident in the complex but well-operated personal, family and community relationship dynamics of Igbo culture. At subtler levels, the knotted energy metaphor refers to the infinity principle, while the rope or string symbolizes finite (*Okpa Ani*) and infinite (*Ube Chukwu*) forms of particle life. The knot also refers to the bonding process of life at the atomic (*Oku/Ofu Ogodo = Life in plasma form*) and molecular (*Mmili/Ogodo n’Abo = Life in liquid form*) realm and the subsequent creative activities of these two elemental energies in terrestrial life. The last part of the axiom refers to the “hand that tied or created the knot of creation” (*Aka-Kelu-Ngwugwu*) i.e. Chineke, the Supreme Divine Creator. The infinite complexity of the knot of creation is also a testimony to the divinity and supreme intelligence of its creator. Kalu (2007) continues thus:

Animalu has shown that at the heart of the African curvilinear system is the Z-cobra, equivalent of the triangle, basic ELEMENT of universal structure, and tetrahedron basic structure of all nature8. The Igbo symbolize tetrahedral structure in two-dimension by “ekwuato” (tripod), its triangle-base, and symbol of ERIMA, the Igbo ideal of the organic community. Of interest is the Igbo word for the number three, 3, “ATO”, contained in the term “ekwuato”. It comes from the verb “ITO”, to be stuck. If we follow a number system in which one (otu/olu) implies loner, two (abuo) means split, three means stuck, four means stable and five (ise) means extra (that is stable plus one) etc, we realize that “stuck” implies structure formation. A relevant Igbo expression holds that “ihe ruo ato ya-ato na-anya”9. That is to say, when a process gets to three, it locks into place. “Anyà” in the expression means, literally, eyes as the Igbo call openings like the keyhole of a padlock ‘eyes’. Three makes structure! Three-sided structure, the triangle, is the first or primary structure of the African World system. (para. 2) The triangular three-cusped hypocycloid is the primary element of structure of the African world system as Animalu had deduced from the African archetype and derived Z-cobra. It can easily be
shown that the “ekwuato” appears to be, in the first instance, to the ordinary eyes, ‘half’ a four-cusped hypocycloid. And for a world system that believes in complementary-binaries, that important natural structures come in complementary pairs (e.g. upper/lower Egypt in the Nile valley and Ikenga/Ihitte community structuring among the Igbo in the Niger-Congo basin), it would be logical for us to expect such an important structure as the IZU to be constituted of a binary...These two most fundamental structures in nature are also, therefore, the most fundamental structures of the African world...Just like the triangle is the most fundamental element of structure in both nature and the African world...These two structures are each exploited for African constructions; from the pyramids of the Nile valley to the “mpata”, the octahedron and “Oche-nze”, the ‘dioctahedron’ and Noble’s stool in the Niger basin, to children’s games, testing ability to destabilize stable structure, as “Okwensirim” game. (para. 2-4)

Other applications of the triangular and pyramidal motif in Igbo culture, particularly in the traditional Igbo house includes: the tri-legged cauldron (*Ite Okpa Ito/Ite Igwe*), the tripod light-stand (*Nkwa Oki*), locally molded salt pyramids (*Okwu Nnu*), locally molded white clay dual-pyramid joined at the base (*Ogu Nzu*), the iron tripod (*Oshi Ite, Akwukwa n’Ato*), the traditional wrapper of the cooked oil-bean (*Ngwugwu Ukpaka*), the traditional wrapper of *Ogiri* (*Ngwugwu Ogiri*), the tri-legged waterpot stand (*Akwukwa Udu Mmiri*), the tri-legged medicinal pot stand (*Akwukwa Udu Ogwu*), locally molded *Odo* pyramid (*Okwu Odo*), the triangular roof of the traditional Igbo house (*Ata Obu*), the lunar stationary pyramid (*Oda Nzu*), the solar stationary pyramid (*Oda Anwu*), multipurpose geodetic stationary pyramid (*Akwu Ala/Ani/Ali* lit. Earth’s Nest, compare with *Akwu Nnunu* i.e. Bird’s Nest), traditional Igbo triangular hand-fan (*Akuphe*), the tri-stone fireplace (*Ekwu Ato Nwanyi*), the mobile mystical pyramid (*Ekwo*), fertility pyramid (*Akwali Omumu*), special pyramid for attracting mystical knowledge, powers, herbs, roots, plants, minerals, medicinal animals etc. (*Oda Ogwu*), wealth and goodwill attracting pyramid (*Oda Awele*), special spirit-forces attracting pyramid (*Oda Mmuo*), rain-making pyramid (*Oda Mmili*), among countless others. Bearing this in mind, it is important to note the much encountered pervasiveness of the triangle or pyramidal polyhedron across the external universe itself; a knowledge that several ancient civilizations were deeply and expertly aware of. As
polyhedron simply means “many faces”, it is rather interesting to note that the far reaching technological and mystical successes achieved by many civilizations of antiquity—are today, most strikingly detectable in the pyramidal structures and motifs that have survived them all over the world. So that ironically, this rather invokes the “many faces” of the pyramidal polyhedron, as the ancients must’ve practically perceived it. Indeed, till this very day, there are more pyramids around the world (both above and below water) than there are bridges and similar monumental construction and engineering feats on the planet. In reality, even the modern mathematical pursuit of trigonometry owes it roots to this very knowledge; as the original Greek translation of the word “trigonometry” offers its meaning as, the measurement or study of the triangle (tragōnon “triangle” and metron “measure”). This linguistic evidence is in perfect harmony with the now emerging awareness in some academic quarters, that much of the scientific or technical knowledge that we would readily attribute to “modern rationality” ironically have their roots in the mystically-oriented civilizations of yesteryears. These are cultures that express their vision of creation and the principles of life as observed in the universe, as perceived and experienced in a mytho-poetic consciousness.

Moreover, as the accumulating results of both archeological and anthropological inquiries around the world continue to testify, the more ancient the civilization, the more proficient and profound its knowledge and mastery of universal principles proves to be. In this sense, the deliberate applications of the pyramidal polyhedron and other geometric motifs in Igbo culture, added to the renowned mastery of universal principles as embedded in their much advanced cosmology, their subtle understanding of human bio-chemical and energy dynamics as existent in their priesthood traditions, not to exclude the metallurgical expertise and high aesthetics preserved in the Nok, Igbo, Ife, Fon, Dogon, Benin, Bambara, Ewe, Mende artifacts etc.—are all indicative of high culture and the existence of technically advanced societies in the age when those civilizations achieved the cultural peaks we still revel and ride on today. Osuagwu (2010) has clearly specified that, the Igbo are very ancient people if not the most ancient branch (Ndi Mbu) of the
human family, and proof of this is that there is found in Igboland, archeological evidence of continuous human habitation and activities from the stone-age, through the iron-age, to the present. In his word:

*The Great Yam Experiment* of 3000 BC (Osuagwu, 2001) has established the Igbo as an agricultural civilization (Okigbo, 1980). The *Ugwuele* archeological findings established that Igboland has been continuously settled by humans since *Stone Age* up to the *Iron-Age* (Anya, 1982) that established the *Iron technopolis of Oka-igwe* (Okigwe). One notes that in the three age system of the archeologists (i.e. Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age), sub-Saharan Africa is reputed as one place where the people had leaped from the stone-age, by-passing the bronze-age, to the iron-age...Igboland is the experiential proof of this thesis; Ugwuele, with its stone-axe factories and Oka-igwe, the ancient Iron technopolis, are located within the same twin communities of Uturu/Okigwe, near the headwaters of the River the Igbo call “*The Ancient River*”, *Imo (Imo-mmiri-ochie)*. (p. 14-15)

On this very note, one may digress here to offer some crucial knowledge on the scribal and *meta-scribal* traditions of Igbo culture; a most important heritage of Igbo people and their civilization – which is somewhat the crux of this chapter. Much has been written on the factual existence and use of writing and other mystic or meta-writing systems in Igbo culture and antiquity; with much focus on the body inscribing traditions. However, it should be said that the application of scripts and symbols in Igbo culture and antiquity transcended the realm of body aesthetics and even cult communication, as prospective works by this author will demonstrate.

For posterity, it should be emphasized that Igbo people have efficiently practiced and continue to practice numerous uncanny techniques of writing since the onset of their highly aged civilization, some of which are not even intelligible to some Igbo people of this day and age. Some of these advanced writing systems include those done with/on/in mystically imprinted water (*Izu Mmili*), specially-treated and inscribed palm fronds (*Ukara Igu*), lozenge-shaped clay tablets (*Ebeju Izu/Ebeju Nko n’ano*), mystic yellow-chalk (*Izu Odo = Izu-agbalu-n’Odo*), knotted raffia ribbons (*Izu Ekwele = Izu-agbalu-n’Ekwele*), specially perforated spirit-cocoyam leaves (*Izu Ede Mmuo = Izu-agbalu-n’abubo-Ede Mmuo*), diverse patterns of cord knotting (*Izu Eliili*), certain combinations of wood and certain graded burnings made on wood (*Nku Izu = Izu-agbalu-na-nku*),
knotted palm-leaf fronds (*Izu Odu Igu*), white-clay grading and drawings made on the ground (*Itu Nzu/Otutunzu/Arima Nzu = Izu-agbalu-na-nzu*), hollow rock/stone programming or communication system (*Ekwe Mkpane*), mystic combination of palm-nuts and other varieties of seeds-objects (*Izu Okwe/Mkpsi Izu*), mapped calibration of colored stone beads (*Izu Mkpulu Ako*), mapped combinations, ties and formations of leaves (*Akwukwo Izu*), inscribed mystic clay-pot communication (*Ite Asha = Izu-agbalu-n’ite-asha* – this form was highly prevalent among ancient Igbo nobilities, priesthoods and diviners), countless forms of syllabic and glyphic writing traditions (collectively known as *Okika, Akara, Ukara, Udude, Nderi, Ederi* or *Izu Nkara*), mystic mapping and printing of sand particles with the potent clairvoyant eye (*Izu-anya-ato-na-ana*), mystic programming and combinaton of *Ugiri Agwu* pods (*Ikwu Afa* i.e. *Igba Afa = Mystic Data Mining*) among several others.

The inimitable Ozo Peter Nwakashi Chidebe of Umu Ogbu Oka alias Ozo Agbadi Julu Eju, has stated categorically that, for a fact, Igbo people did write on clay tablets (*Ebeju Izu*), in ancient times (*ndu be anyi ji ebeju gba izu na mgbe okpu* – in his own words). They did so with special iron pellets (*Mkpilishi Igwe*) crafted for that particular purpose by blacksmiths. In light of this fact and its central importance to the preservation and perpetuation of Igbo culture, the author has gathered some identified ancient, presently utilized and new metacommunication systems and scripts of Igbo people and have with much caution, listed them below alongside their place or areas of origination and influence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacommunication Systems and Scripts</th>
<th>Area of Origin/Usage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akwukwo Mmonwu</td>
<td>Pan-Igbo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akwukwo Afa</td>
<td>Pan-Igbo/Oha Dibia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akwukwo Odo</td>
<td>Oha-Odo communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uri Ala Ngwa</td>
<td>Ngwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uri Ifite Ana</td>
<td>Ifite Ana Oka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uri Aniocha</td>
<td>Aniocha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ede-Ana Ugbogiri</td>
<td>Pan-Igbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ede-Ana Oru</td>
<td>Oru Igbo</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ede-Ana Ihembosi</strong></td>
<td>Ihembosi</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ede-Oballa</strong></td>
<td>Ede-Oballa-Nsukka</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ima Ogu</strong></td>
<td>Pan-Igbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Itu Nzu</strong></td>
<td>Pan-Igbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ukara Ji</strong></td>
<td>Oru Igbo</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nshibiri</strong></td>
<td>Now Pan-Igbo</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aka-Umubeogene</strong></td>
<td>Ojebe-Ogene clan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aka-Nwaichi</strong></td>
<td>Umudioka clans</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aka-Nwauzu</strong></td>
<td>Ancient Oka blacksmiths</td>
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<td><strong>Aka-Umuokwa</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Aka-Udide</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aka-Umuagbara</strong></td>
<td>Owerri/Okigwe environs</td>
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</tbody>
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Most of the above listed scripts and meta-communication systems all under the classes of mystic mediation medium, object-based medium, graphic script medium, phonological script medium, syllabic script medium etc. In the same vein, all of them are post-literate by default and in function, while some even go back to the pre-Stone Age days of humanity such as the **Ede Ana** and **Ogu Ama** scripts. It is rather unfortunate that the priceless intellectual gems embedded in many of these scripts (all potential civilizational agencies in themselves for each incorporates aesthetic, philosophic, mathematical and mystic dimensions in their essence) are yet to be seriously engaged by the contemporary Igbo mind. In conclusion, the residential house in Igbo culture and thought is thus a concrete symbolization of the human ontology as well as civilization itself, with vast metaphysical and transcendental implications. Accordingly, it denotes a human-constructed dwelling space, architecturally embellished and equipped with both commonplace household items and mystical object-symbols and ultimately geared (among other essential functions) towards their inhabitant’s cultural cum spiritual edification. In other words, their primal longing of realizing **Uwa Nge** (The First World) here on Earth, based on the metaphysical principles of **Ebe onye si bia uwa na akpo ya oku mgbe nile** (the primordial realm from which one came into this physical world never stops reaching out to them) and **Ebe onye bi k’ona awachi** (wherever one finds one’s self in this life, there they strive to perfect or sustain).
Realizing *Uwa Nge* or bringing heaven to earth, so to speak, pragmatically entails the achievement and perpetuation of upright living, kinship harmony, love, high morality, prosperity, high spiritual consciousness, kindness, self-actualization, honesty, purity of heart and mind, creativity, industriousness etc. in this *Be Mmadu*. In addition to the observance of these eternal virtues and principles, one strives to maintain a conscious ritualization of their life’s determinative phases within their *Obi Uno* and surrounding dwelling space, as well as the guided reinforcement of these same virtues and principles in the local community. Yet, given basic human proclivities, abilities and individual destinies, the extent to which an individual will achieve this spiritual goal for themselves or if they will even achieve it in a given lifetime is largely dependent on their Chi’s *Ikenga* (lit. their spiritual will-power). On this, Igbo people say that *Chi-Awu-Otu* lit. all *Chi* are unique and as such uniquely created, and *Akara-aka di n’iche n’iche* lit. all beings have unique destinies and as such are uniquely endowed. Consequently, what one *Chi* may accomplish in one lifetime, another will accomplish only after four or five reincarnations. Likewise, the spiritual and mystic attainments which will take one *Chi* four life times to attain, may take another seven life times. Both principles are in line with the divine law (*Iwu Chukwu*) of *oke Chukwu kere envero mgbanwe* lit. Whatever allotment of *Chi*, temperaments, gifts or unique abilities that one receives from the divine is definite, suited and irreplaceable. Alternatively, however, one may pursue a path of self-improvement (*Igba Mbo*) and self-realization (*Ilo Chi/Ubara Chi*), both of which must first be initiated and practiced from one’s immediate home/household and heart (*Obi/Obu*) before extending outwards to the larger community (*Ora/Oha*) and ultimately, to the rest of the world (*Uwa*). For as Igbo people also say, *ana esi n’ulo mara mma puta iro* lit. beauty is first and foremost recognized or perfected at home/on the inside, before been recognized by or projected to the public. Finally, in all that one does on their life’s journey towards realizing self-perfection, the Igbos offer the following succinct advice, *Chetachi* i.e. Remember God; *Chukwu a naro elozo onye O kelu, kama onye elozena Chi kelu ya* lit. the creator is ever aware of all that he created and so should all creation remain in the awareness of his existence and presence.
Obi Chi

The Somatic House and the Prime Human Microcosm

The Igbos believe that the human being is a child of primordiality (mmadu bu nwa aka), for according to them, human beings emerged simultaneously (mmadu so uwa senite; anyi so uwa bia) with the created world. Thus the saying for instance that “o nwero onye ma mbido Igbo na Igbo so uwa bia” i.e “no one truly knows the origins or roots of the Igbo for they emerged simultaneously with the universe and thus, their being transcends the created world”. Indeed, as ongoing and future research on the topic of Igbo origins will come to reveal, their ultimate source transcends this Be Mmadu. For long before its existence, they already knew a harmonious primordial existence in Ala Mmuo or Be Mmuo or Be Mu (lit. Mu’s realm), from whence they incarnated into this realm as corporeal beings to seed the first primordial Earth and initiate what is called Omenala or Earth-culture. It is also an established notion in Igbo thought that each one of us (human beings) is firstly an “mmuo no na ndu” lit. spirit entity experiencing temporal physical existence. On the same
hand and more practically, they’ve ancietly maintained that, *mmadu bu oku na mmiri* lit. the enlightened human being is a synthesis of fire and water. Accordingly, Umeh (1999) shed some light on this ancient Igbo mystical principle when he pointed out the following:

> *Mmadu,* which in Igbo means the enlightened human being or the enlightened one, is also a term used generally and applies to a male or female human being. Water which means what it says, is also used for liquids as a generic type. Similarly, fire which means what it says, is also used to cover energy as a generic type. Because a human being is water and fire, it means that when any or both generic type components change in quantity or quality, then something becomes wrong with man until redressed. (p. 113)

It should be stated that the deeper mystical conviction which resulted in the above cosmological precept have always stemmed from the fact that, as both elements (*Oku na Mmiri* – fire and water) are cosmic in nature, so therefore are human beings at the core of their primal being and beingness. Briefly, the phenomenon of human beingness as articulated in the Igbo ontological tradition, entails the possession of a timeless, deathless individual spark of divinity (*Chi, Aka Nta*) as found in all life forms (proof of divinity), an incorporeal astral double of the corporeal body (*Aka Mu*), an incorporeal etheric-energy double of the corporeal body (*Agu Mu*), an individualized energy consciousness (*Ijite Mu/Ikenga Mu/Onwe*), a biological or corporeal body-vessel (*Okpo Aru/Okwu Aru/Anu Aru*), an appropriate quota of the universal mind-intellect (*Ako na Uche*), life invigorating force as located in the anatomical heart (*Mkpuru Obi*), a properly aligned shadow (*Ibeji Mu/Onwe*) and ultimately, a befitting name (*Afa Mu/Onwe*)—all of which imbues the primal, unindividualized human-spirit (*Adu/Ijite Aka*) with the requisite abilities to consciously partake in physical existence (*Ndu*) as a full-fledged Ono-na-ndu (*Mmadu*) with all the benefits therein (*Uru na Adu ya*). Remarkably, this last aspect is what the Buddhist tradition has articulated as “the sentient nature of being” (*Adu*). Therefore, the Igbos (forest dwellers/first people) who indeed, germinated from the womb of the Earth as *Nfunala* are the true, mythical seed people (*Umu Adu/Umu Isu/Umu Afo Ala* – thus for them, *Ala wu Otu* i.e. the Earth is their Onerous Mother and accordingly, they are spread out all over her surface) of the world’s mythical accounts, from whom came *Mma Adu* i.e. the subsequent humanity
created in the already manifest image of the Creator in the first seed people (*Adu*) whose God-consciousness (*Ijite Aka/Ijite Chi*) truly mirrors the First Time that preceded Time. Hence, one of their most ancient appellations goes thus: *Igbo-bi-n’ohia-aka-adu* lit. the Mystical Forest Dwellers of the Divine Primordial Forest that Preceded Time = primordial human beings who witnessed the creation of present human beings. It should be noted that all the earlier mentioned ontological aspects of the human being are finely and intricately interwoven and are holistically given the mystic name, *Okwu Mbu* by the ancient Igbos, which is further dualized into the broad categories of *Aru na Anu Aru/Ahu na Anu Ahu*. The subtle secrets of their individual units and the inherent corporeal nodes that facilitate their interpenetrations has been captured by Igbo mystics in an ancient Igbo Dibia mystical axiom as “*ibeji agu na egwu no agu n’okpa bu ofu*” lit. both the shadow and the perceived bodily dance of the leopard are one and the same. For the purposes of Igbo medico-healing and mystical practices, however, a pragmatic but undichotomized distinction has since been made between the mundane *Okpo Ahu* (physical aspects and bodies) and the more subtle *Ahu* (spiritual aspects and bodies). So that experientially grasping the intrinsic oneness of these two interpenetrating modes or paths of being (*Owa Mmuo na Owa Mmadu* lit. spirit-path and human-path), subsequently weaving and manifesting the divinely inherent potencies in both—suffices as the prime mystical riddle of a human being. Osuagwu (2010) has rightly articulated that:

The Igbo composite personality is *Ikenga*, where *Ike* = Force, *Nga* = Motif; *Ikenga* = Force Motif; Driving Force). The chi supplies the *vision*; the onwe supplies “*will*”, but only righteousness can sustain the union and guarantee success. Igbo ethics is anchored on the need to avoid unrighteousness that could divorce the “*onwe*” from the “*chi*” and dissolve the Ikenga; the chi as a spark of God avoids the possibility of pollution by evil deeds. (p. 14)

As can be observed so far, human beingness, as articulated in the Igbo ontological tradition is highly emphatic on a spiritual origin to human existence more than it stresses the physical dimension; and not that the latter is completely viewed as irrelevant. In fact, on the contrary, the potentials of the human physical entity and its much-welcome role
In society and civilization is well-celebrated in the Igbo cultus tradition of Ikenga. Of importance to our unfolding discourse is the fact that, among the Bakongo people, the traditional cosmogram through which they have always expressed their cosmological, social, spiritual, political and various cultural notions is known as Dikenga. Commenting on the deep parallel that this system shares with many other African cosmological traditions, Imhotep (2011) has observed that:

In African societies, there is no ultimate death inside the infinite universe. Energy can only change form and perpetual evolution is the law within the infinite. The living sun (the human being) is on an eternal spiraling course that is forever rising and setting in the upper and lower worlds respectively. The cycle of life...is inspired by the “apparent” movement of the sun around the earth. [which mirrors the Igbo principle of “okiri kiri ka anagba ukwu ose, anaghi ari ya elu”] It would appear that all major African spiritual systems are rooted in this concept...The circle [cosmogram] is divided into four primary demarcations (n’kama), each representing a major stage in the development of material and world systems: the nseluka (“sunrise”), kunda (“zenith”), ndima (“sunset”) and n’idingu-a nsi (“midnight” or “depth of the world”). These stages are represented by geometric “Vees” that represent living pyramids in motion...These stages of development are not only associated with human life, but with all political, spiritual, communal and cosmic life cycles in the universe. Anything that has a finite existence follows this path...(p. 80-81; emphasis mine)

In the above commentary, it is observable that not only are there near-perfect linguistic affinities between the Igbo language and the Bakongo language, but also the stated notions and precepts can readily be at home in the Igbo cosmological tradition of Ikenga; a highly developed system which deals with the principle of Ike (energy) with respect to the human, social, natural, spiritual and cosmic ebbs and flows of this force, as will be later discussed. The Igbos long knew that the Sun does not really rise or set, but rather, it is human beings and the planets that rise and set in accordance with their synchronized movements around the Sun (okiri kiri ka ana agha ukwu ose). Infact, with regards to human beings been on an eternal existential course of rising and setting as the Sun, an ancient Igbo proverb encapsulates this as “uwa wu aridachaa agbagowe kwa, eto juo, eke waa” which literally translates as “existence is a process of
descending to rise again continuously; when we reach the bream of growth, we divide again”. Continuing on the Igbo conception of the human body, Umeh (1999) has stated the following fundamental distinctions thereof,

On the human body itself, Igbo Díbias have, among others, two major classifications, namely, Ahu (spiritual body) which incidentally the ancient Egyptians called Sahu. The physical or the material is called Anu ahu [also known as elu ahu or okpo ahu] which is also referred to as Ogodo or cloth. In traditional Igbo society, when someone dies, clothes are borrowed from the villagers with which Uno Ogodo (House of Cloths) is constructed...(p. 233; emphasis mine)

At this point, I would like to delineate and clarify some essential notions from the above given material. Indeed, the human body is simultaneously referred to as both Uno and Ogodo in Igbo cosmology for profound reasons, although not made obvious by Umeh. For Mmadu (enlightened being) is Uno aja Chukwu wuchara yewe ya oye. As such, when the breath of life ceases to animate the physical body, it is said that onye ahu anwuru go, owusa la ogodo, o kubigo, o wusa go owa etc. It’s important to note that the word “anwuru” reveals itself to be a partial pun on the Igbo word for smoke, which is held as “anwuru oku” or “anwuru” for short. Igbo proverbial tradition clearly maintains that, “be mmadu bu ebe oku na enwụ” lit. “the house of mmadu (the enlightened human being) is recognized by the presence of lighted fire” and “ebe oku n’enwụ ka ana afu mmadu na oku na ndu kwụ” lit. “where you find fire, you find human existence for fire and life are one”.

Thus, in effect, with the occurrence of death and the observance or performance of the necessary burial and funerary rites, the actual spirit-essence inhabiting the somatic vessel that is the human body as Oku (light/fire/energy) is holly transformed back into what the ancient Egyptians called Akhu and the Igbos still call Chi or Aka Nta. In other words, the person returns back to their Chi essence (onye afu anakwulu chi/onye afu ebunagalu Chukwu isi ya). Indeed, the direct consequence of this trigger process is that the said person, from the point of death, ceases to be an Mmadu Nkiti i.e. mere human or even an Okala-Mmadu-Okala-Mmuo i.e. half human, half spirit and fully
becomes an Mmuo (disembodied spirit entity). Specifically, the said individual, if titled whilst alive (Onye Echichi/Chiri Echichi) would thenceforth be addressed as Ichie (blessed ancestor of titled nobility) and in contrary cases, as a mere Onye Mmuo i.e. mere disembodied spirit entity or Akalaogheli/Ajo Mmuo (evil spirit) if they were wicked and evil persons during their life time. Furthermore, the resulting corporeal residual of this transformation, quite similar to when something has been burnt out, is symbolically referred to as Ntu and in physical terms as Ozu. So Umeh’s statement actually denotes far deeper issues in terms of the body as a house than is readily perceived. Indeed, it even highlights the ancient practice of “itikpo uno onye nwulu anwu k’enichalu ya” lit. “bringing down the house of the deceased after they’ve been buried” which is seldom practiced in Igboland today for obvious reasons, except in very few areas and rarely so. For in ancient times, there was the much held tradition of burying titled persons in their own house at the time of death; a tradition that is not entirely unique to Igbo culture. Symbolically then, the ritual act of collecting clothes from members of the deceased person’s village to be used in constructing the Uno Ogodo structure, equally connotes a ritual simulation of the dead person’s relationship and experiences with members of the community—whilst they were alive. In this light, the Uno Ogodo structure denotes “the former physical house/body of a being that has been transformed”.

Thus, the above exposition not only highlights the transformation of a human body from the Uno state (inhabited clay) to the burnt out Ozu state (uninhabited clay) but in a comparative sense, it also prefigures the Christian funerary incantation of “ashes to ashes, dust to dust…” even when the said dead person has not been physically cremated in the actual sense of that word. Consequently, the statement rather points to the fact that, the physically deceased has merely transmigrated from one state of being/world to another, and as a result, their Okpo Ahu or Ogodo quintessentially got "burnt out" in that process and thus became an Ozu, which is why it begins to deteriorate from the inside right away, even before been interred. Umeh (1999) also specified considerably that:
The Igbos have several planes of existence, ranging from Be Mmadu (human world) to Be Chukwu (God’s place or divine plane of God). Each of these planes has for man its appropriate body. The important thing to note is that in respect of body, for example, while the physical body (anu ahu or ogodo) can die, be shed off, or get injured or destroyed, the spiritual and astral bodies cannot. The Material and astral bodies are normally locked together in a single unit, the one interpenetrated by the other. (p. 234)

The primordial human spirit (Manu), by the reason of its divine purpose, thus continues to incarnate itself into the natural world of man (Be Mmadu) as materialized, individual selves (Chii) through the auspices of human sexual intercourse (Mmeko Nwoke na Nwanyi) and subsequent childbirth (Omumu). In considering the forgoing, it becomes rather apparent that the phenomenon of human beingness as an ontological reality is yet another tangible proof of the infinite ability of the Supreme Creator (Chineke) to incarnate uniquely but universally in the natural world of life. For there is also divinity in the astral world, plant world, mineral world, water world, animal world, bird world, insect world, bacterial world etc. In the final analysis, human beings are therefore not so much of “unique beings” after all. With respect to the foregoing however, it is imperative to state that there exists no strict perceptual dichotomy, between the spiritual (or that which eludes the senses) and the physical (that which the senses naturally perceive) in the Igbo worldview. For the ancestors eloquently made it clear that ife kwulu, ife akwudobe ya. Given this timeless conviction, one’s divine spiritual essence (Chii) was always seen as eternal and sacred, and by extension, it’s embodying vessel or house (Obi Chi, Okpo Ahu, Ogodo) was likewise treated as such. The human being as a life-form, was considered very fortunate by the ancients. Indeed, in many Igbo cosmogonic myths, the place of the human being in the totality of cosmic existence was always highlighted to indicate this great privilege of place. However, this same tradition also made it known that, “ngene ayaro ekwona azu makana amulu eze” (lit. the river will not reverse its flow because a king is born). So that in the end, the privilege of being born human, is rather one of custodianship than one of exclusive supremacy. To further perpetuate this spiritual conviction, the ancients additionally embedded it into the generic word for “human being” in Igbo
language, Mma Ndu lit. “the crown of creation”. Osuagwu (2012) has noted that:

Man is MMA NDU - the crown of creation, the beauty of life, and the glory of creation. Conceiving man in this highly romanticized way, the Igbo granted him the greatest possible right to autonomous existence. Hence the Igbo concept of the self is ONWE, a contraction of two words “ONYE NWE” The (own) possessor “OWN LORDSHIP”. The Igbo sees a given human being as “ONWE YA” a lord unto himself. To lose freedom to the proper Igbo is, therefore, a logical equivalent of death. (para. 1)

Given the forgoing, it is rather contradictory that the study of the somatic body in these modern times has succeeded, albeit with grave consequences, in completely ignoring the microcosmic bearings (Uwa Nta) of the human body in relation to its macrocosmic source (Uwa-Mulu-Uwa/Uwa-Toro-Uwa). Without overstressing the point here, one can very much observe the heavy tow that this deliberate act of ignorance is ultimately taking on contemporary humanity; particularly in our modern health care delivery system. As Iroegbu acknowledged in his research, the human body is essentially a wholesome unit constituted of several specialized and complementary parts. Since the advent of human societies and civilization, this comprehensive bio-form has been defined and analyzed through the prism of varied intellectual traditions. Among these, several African cosmological traditions readily weigh in. In Igbo culture alone, at least five comprehensive cosmological models of the human body are recognized. This excludes, of course, those models whose core precepts are now less propagated—given their achieved familiarity since ancient times; such as the very ancient model of Atutu Onya Nwa Ududo lit. the Formation of the Spider’s Web.

Interestingly, the closest breakthrough in modern science which posits a yet primitive parallel to this very ancient Igbo cosmological world model-system is as embodied in the String Theory cosmology of modern particle physics. In the last few centuries, two among these five surviving models have been slowly gaining ground in the Igbo thought-stream as the characteristic cosmologies of the human body. Among other subjects, Iroegbu (2010) considerably discussed these two in his much welcome research on the Igbo medico-healing
tradition. Other scholars who have slightly touched upon these two models include Aguwa (1995), Jell-Bahlsen (2008) and Okoye (2011). While Edeh (1985) and Umeh (1997) have addressed the second model in their respective scholarships. It should be noted that in reality, these two models are not necessarily viewed as detached from each other; and the same applies to the rest existent models as well. Rather, it is within the context of their pragmatic applications in Igbo medico-healing practices, socialization processes, relevant institutions and practices, political traditions, conventional thought, social life, mystic, artistic and technological traditions etc. that their uniqueness obtains. The first of the two models articulates the body as a fortunate fruit of creation, bound to the sacred laws of nature and the universe. In other words, the body is viewed as a sacred template upon which the laws and intents of the Supreme Creative Spirit (Chineke) are made real, through the agency of the incarnated individual spirit (Chi). Among the basic precepts of this tradition are the conceptions of the principally divine human being and the equally sacred human body as a primal hill (Ugwu Aka), seed of divine potency (Adu Chukwu), competent sailing vessel of the great sea of cosmic existence (Onalu-Ije-Obialu), sacred earthen bowl of life (Okuku Ndu), sacred wooden slit-drum (Ikoro Chukwu) among several other views. In the later is encapsulated the particularly striking dictum that, mmadu wu Ikoro Chukwu ji hiwe okike lit. Mmadu the enlightened one is the sacred Ikoro wooden slit-drum with which the Supreme Spirit consolidated all creation. As such, Mmadu was and is viewed as Nwa Iwu amongst all creation which is why human beings continue to feel the need to exercise the responsibility of custodianship; a primal right inherited from their primordial mother, Ala (the Earth Goddess). Therefore, it really goes to say that, in the Igbo traditional consciousness, no matter what kind of religion, spiritual practice, vocation, position or station which one finds themselves in life, if they do not uphold the sacred rules and laws of the Supreme Earth Goddess, they are merely digging their own graves, which by the way could be a physical, spiritual, financial, mental, societal, civilizational, religious, natal, intellectual or even marital grave. In Igbo spirituality, all laws are ultimately onerous in essence i.e. Iwu Ala or Nso Ala (Laws of the Earth Goddess). One should make no mistakes on this issue, for the
Earth Goddess prescribed laws are ultimately universal laws of existence which transcends all life, as their source of manifestation is the All-Loving, All-Giving, Mother-Goddess-Creator (Eke-Nnechukwu-Kere-Uwa). Consequently, as the Eke and Chi nature of the Supreme Being is indivisibly one (Chineke), these laws are subsequently Iwu-Chukwu-Nyere-Ala-Nyeroo-Mmadu (divine laws emanating from divine source, primordially handed to humanity through the divine Earth Goddess). As such, when one earnestly keeps the laws of the Earth Goddess (which may be tentatively summarized as the observation of utmost morality and the upholding of unprejudiced truthfulness and equinimous justice, to one’s best effort), such person will walk with the Supreme Spirit. The Igbo understanding of universal moral ethics is crystalized in what the contemporary world refers to as the golden rule vis. "do onto others as you wish to be done onto yourself". This they give as, egbe belu ugo belu, nke si ibe ya ebena nku kwaa ya (kite perch, eagle perch, if any of the two insists on not allowing the other its rights of being, let its wings be broken). Igbo spiritualists maintain that a consistently pure heart (Obi Ocha) will naturally strengthen one’s access to the Divine Universal Mind (Aka Uche/Uchechukwu/Uche-ka-Ako/Uche-ka-Uche), solicit immense Divine Blessings (Ngozichukwu), impact a deeper understanding and universal expression of love in one for all beings (Ogo-na-Ifunanya Chukwu) and ultimately bring one closer to the Supreme Spirit (Amarachukwu). As a rule, none of these can be achieved without earnestly adhering to the sacred universal laws of existence as primordially prescribed by the grand wise, generous and loving Earth Mother Ala, who is precisely an incarnation of Nnechukwu Okike (Supreme Mother Goddess Creator).

The same tradition makes it perfectly clear through the principle of Nnunu Anaro Echezo Akwu Ya (a bird never forgets its nest) that no matter where one may find themselves in the scale of creation, the ultimate reality remains that, it is from the divine womb (Akwu Ofu/Afo Mbu) of the Supreme Mother Goddess (Nne Muru Uwa) that we all emerged and continue to emerge, particularly as Umu Afo Ala Igbo lit. nobly cultured children of the Earth Goddess who rightfully emerged from her Primordial Womb through the Igbo soil, or Umu Oma i.e.
Children of Oma, Mother of humanity. To be born of Oma in the Igbo sense, first and foremost, means to have a navel (Utube) which is thereby connected to Utube Oma (lit. Oma’s navel/Earth’s Omphalos). Likewise, Oma, the first human woman and the mother of humanity continues to live (nzu anaro eri ana, nke ana na eri nzu) as the Moon spirit whose pure glowing light/aura relieves humanity each night with its cleansing powers. In the same sense, Igbo people maintain that all peoples who customarily bury umbilicus (Ndì n’Èli Alo Nwa) where ever they may be found on this planet and beyond are children of Oma. Returning to our original concern, whereas in the second tradition, the body is presented as a most important proof of divine order in the physical realm (Ogige Ndu). It is literally believed to hold all the primal secrets that could aid human beings in their sole task of achieving a ritualization of their physical existence i.e. the internalization and expression of divinity whilst in corporeality. In this tradition, the body is conceived as an embodied temple (Obi Chi), small throne (Okwa Nta), life-attracting pyramid (Oda Ndu), sand-filled earthen pot (Ududu Aja), yam-tuber of the sky king (Ji Eze Ealu), life-bearing basket (Abo vu Ndu) etc. Regarding the first model, Iroegbu (2010) has noted the following:

Dividing the lines of the body and mapping them up in space, the Igbo seem to work out the body shape in comparison with the physical world and the unseen. For example, the head (isi) is conceived as the above or upper limit of the body and associated practically with things coming from above (elu) to feed the other middle and lower zones. Here, dimensions like soul and force are associated with the upper part. The chest and abdomen (obi na afo) are viewed as the central or middle part and are associated with things on the earth’s surface (etiti, uwa, ala). Things like food and various daily activities having physical body contacts are talked about. Finally, the lower part of the body referring to the down part (mgbada, okpuru) consists of the waist and legs and serves their purposes. Here, common things like sex, adventure, and game are regularly discussed in association with the lower body parts. There is a direct intertwining of the body and cosmos in terms of upper, middle, and lower domains... (p. 167)

Furthermore, in the later cosmological articulation of the human body which we shall be focusing on, there are nine inseparable dimensions recognized as a whole; which also corresponds to the nine basic levels of consciousness granted to all created forms in this physical plane of
existence. While in this body, however, it is typical of man to consciously partake in only three of these nine primal modes of perception as Okike Toro Ato i.e. corporeal beings. Still, this does not necessarily impede the average human being from genuinely expanding their consciousness beyond these basic levels. Most Dibias however utilize the more prevalent seven-based consciousness system to articulate the human body. Indeed, in certain Igbo initiation traditions in which candidates are first brought into union with their incarnate divinities, there is usually the metaphoric allusion to a crossing of seven forests and seven rivers. These are to be understood as states of consciousness, at best. Moreover, as one advanced in their mystic union with these divine forces and by extension, nearing a state of union with Chukwu, further initiations will typically entail the traversing of seven lands, seven seas, seven wilderness, seven lands, seven dens, seven caves etc. as dictated by the purpose, principles and divine forces guiding the initiation. Therefore, as earlier mentioned, the number seven among other profundities, embodies the mystery of cycles and their completion (i.e. birth and rebirth both at the macrocosmic and microcosmic levels). Oha (2010) has given us a succinct, deep, mystical and poetic articulation of the implications of the number seven in Igbo culture as thus:


Commenting on the general and symbolic significance of numbers in Igbo culture, thought and oral tradition, Nwachukwu-Agbada (1991) has also offered the following extended observation:

One internal characteristic of the Igbo narrative tradition which enhances the level of its symbolism is numbering. The significance of certain numbers in Igbo rituals somehow finds a similar expression in folktales. The most recurring numbers are two, three, four, and seven...Seven is a crucial number in Ozo title-taking, about the highest title in traditional Igboland. Igbo folktales in which spirits are characters would always refer to those spirits with seven heads, whose abode is seven seas away from the land of human beings, and who visit the human world once every seven years. Spirits with
seven heads, in contrast to those with fewer heads, are usually thought to be dastardly and resilient. It is common to hear in Igbo tales about a hunter (Dinta) who has seven hunting dogs and who crosses seven seas, climbs seven hills and in the end comes home with seven games...clearly, the numbers two, three, four, and seven hold particular meaning in these tales; indeed Igbo tales cannot be fully understood without some account taken of the significance of these numbers. (p. 31)

Aniakor and Cole (1984), writing in their seminal work on Igbo art has made the following extensive observation on the fundamental numerical importance of certain numbers in Igbo culture and art:

The rhythms and cycles of human life and nature are important aspects of Igbo thought and have several artistic manifestations. Certain numbers have their own valences and are normally cyclical. "Things are two, two," Ihe di abuo abuo, refers not only to dualistic ideas but to the centrality of "four". Four is completion (represented by four-headed figures in every diviner’s kit, ezumezu), auspiciousness (four-lobed kola nuts), and geographical directions. Most important, of course, is four as an endless cycle of days and the parallel cycle of markets. Most buildings have four sides, and some mbari houses have four doors, one in each of the four walls of the inner core, a reference to the "four rooms" created by Chineke in the Owerri story of the world's origin. There are four-headed masks in the northeast [region of Igboland], and Ijele have four sides; large four-headed sculptures in wood and clay are occasionally seen, while small ones abound. Ritual chalk marks and rituals gestures (with Ofo or rattle-staffs) occur in fours, as do many dances and song choruses. It is clear that two and four underlie much thought and action. Seven, too, is a prevalent symbolic number though it is encountered less frequently. The way seven is used suggests hierarchy; "World today, world seven," Uwa taa, uwa asa—the eagle’s seven killings as counterparts of the seven grades of Ekpe and the ascending ranks in title societies. (p. 220; emphasis mine)

A mystic numeric value of high regard in many African cultures, seven thus embodies the principles of regeneration and ascendancy; an essential and much ubiquitous principle across the universe as well the human microcosm. Therefore, building on this principle of regeneration and its cosmological implications to the fore stated seven-centric conception of the human-microcosm, another Igbo mystical principle holds that "mmadu bu mnuo loro uwa", lit., "human beings are incarnated spirits". The human body presents itself in this context as a wholesome, solid channel through which the resident
divine spiritual essence (Chi) expresses its divinity for a given lifetime. In this very stance, the human body in Igbo cosmology mirrors the ultimate purpose of the universe itself, namely, the sole expression of Divine Mind (Aka Uche, Uche Chukwu or Ose Ora) for a given period of time; after which it will fold-up and go into a monolithic spiritual state in preparation for another creation cycle—ad infinitum. This is rightly so, for the phenomenon of creation and its innumerable physical results assures us that all created forms fall within the realm of time and space, and exist in their proper cosmic planes. Consequently, all forms that dwell within this existential perimeter are equally bound to a corporeal, existential end. To this fact, an Igbo mystical principle holds that “uwa na aga na mgbawata-mgbawata” i.e. “the universe experiences ever-arising and ever-diminishing cyclic phases”. The human body subsequently, follows after this regenerative principle of gestation and birth as in Ime na Omumu. For a human being, the journey of self-edification begins right at birth; just as the boundless universe promptly initiates its own process of edification as the creation phenomenon, with the principal notion of determined intent empowering it throughout its extensive period of existence. The self-defining and empowering Igbo social rite of "acquiring an Ikenga" as one comes of age, more than anything signifies a conscious realization of this need for "determined intent". For want of focus, our interest at this point will be directed towards seven key areas of the body, namely, the head (isi, ishi), face (iru, ihu), the hands (aka, ahka), the heart and belly areas combined (obi/obu na afo/ahwo) and the pelvis area and legs (ukwu na ije). Since very ancient times, Igbo people have been in the practice of studying and deciphering the inherent secrets of the human body and transmitting such knowledge to generations after generations of Dibias. Infact, some Igbo people don’t know this today, but traditional Igbo medicine and healthcare delivery system is so advanced that it was already practicing many of the so called "newly arrived" practices of modern Western medicine including but not limited to organ transplanting and genetic engineering, ever before the first white man set foot on Igbo soil! Also, in Igbo medicine, every aspect of the human body is cult and as such, has its own dedicated or specialized cosmology, precepts, traditions, symbols, sacred language etc.
Following this tradition, we will proceed to delineate certain cosmological and functionary parallels that occur between the human microcosm and the greater universe of life; as conceived in the sacred traditions and medico-healing practices of Igbo people. In this regard, Igbo cosmology precisely maintains that “nnadu bu nwa enu uwa” lit., “humanity is a terrestrial inhabiter” or “human beings are inhabiter of the terrestrial plane”. Accordingly, the somatic body is held to be in alignment with the cosmological principle of Obi, and indeed, the heart (Obi) is the first organ to be developed in the fetus stage of the human being; thus substantiating the very ancient Igbo mystical principle which holds that one’s primal spirit (Chi) essentially enters the body through its leftward side (Akwu Ahu lit. the body’s primal division or Ibe Aka Ekpe in contrast to Obi Ahu i.e. the body’s peripatetic division or Ibe Aka Nnì). Moreover, the principle of Obi also posits that the body in the ultimate analysis, is a mobility-driven agency for experiencing life (Ndu). It does not fall under the Akwu state of being unlike trees and rocks for instance. Indeed, trees, mountains and water bodies do move but mostly by subtle means. However, in contrast with the human body which moves exponentially, their movements are rather rudimentary in nature. The body is thus conceived in this tradition as Okwelụ Ije lit. Assenter to Movement. In a varying tradition from Ohafia, the body is also conceived as Okwa Ndu (rectangle-shaped-life-bearer), while in a rather complementing tradition from Nsogwu Umunze, the body is conceived as Ugbo Aku Ndu lit. vessel of life’s wealth. Of importance also is that ancient Igbo mystics conceived life as been synonymous with light. Complementarily, they equally conceived the human body as Nkwu Oku (light-bearer).

In this sense, the body was cosmologically fitted into four geometric triangulations for mystic diagnostic convenience. The spinal column and its inherent spirit-fluid known in Igbo medicine as Mmanu Ndu, together with the subtle energy centers and DNA structure of the human being formed the light body. These subtle energy centers are conceived in this holistic, ancient medico-healing tradition as Ora Egbenduru or Uta Egbenduru (Omalu atu ya tuta obu-akika-ndi-enwu-oku-n’isi, no obuho ndi npulu chi uwa) while the energy centers (Icheku
Oku/Umu Oku/Umu Uta/Ndi-Ovu-Akika-n’Enwu Oku-n’Isi) were respectively conceived as Ngu Oku, Ozi Oku, Mpio Oku, Ire Oku, Odu Oku, Ogwe Oku, Uje Oku, Una Oku, Ete Oku. As Okwu n’Abo i.e. proof of dualistic beingness, the human body is a onerous fusion of two complementary polarities. And on this cosmological orientation, the Igbo mystical tradition maintains that, onye furu mmadu, afugo ora n’abo or in the plain Igbo version, onye furu mmadu afugo uwa ka oha i.e. the one who sees a human being has seen the universe in its entirety and profundity. A related axiom encouraging observational learning and attention to nature/one’s environment goes thus: Anya furu ugo, kiri e ugo na ada afu ugo kwa mgbe, kwa mgbe lit. The eye that beholds the Eagle, should admire the eagle. You don’t see the Eagle daily. Thus, life is not permanent; one who comes into life should take advantage and observe/appreciate it to the fullest. The former axiom, onye furu mmadu, afugo ora n’abo continues to stand as one of the most concrete proofs employed by the Igbo in substantiating the human microcosmic principle/reality.

Observably, the human body is constituted of two fairly defined sides, joined together at the head and as such, corresponds to the Igbo cosmological cum creative principle of Ofu Aka bu Ora n’Abo. A varying Igbo-Afa rendition of this same principle in riddle form readily gives it as, “aka nta, o nozi ebe bu ululu obi ikwo je ora n’abo?” lit. “small aka, where is the ululu obi for which you journeyed to ora n’abo?”. To this query, the expected answer will be along the lines of “aka nta azuchago afia ora n’abo” or “aka nta emechago ife ora n’abo”. In a serious sense, this is a monumental query which every individual Chi must answer Chi-Ukwu before qualifying for admission into the sublime spiritual realms of Be Mmuo, pursuant to Ubara Chi (higher or advanced existence on the appropriate, merited spiritual planes) haven achieved Ujuchi (holistic self-realization) at this Uwa Nta level of existence through successive reincarnation cycles.

Indeed, among other qualifications, such a Chi must have attained the spiritual hallmarks of wholesome purity (Ocha Ime Mmuo na Mkpulu Obi) and holistic self-knowledge and wisdom (Ezumezu Uche) especially, with respect to the essence of their manifest nature (Osinachi Onye), in addition to haven accomplished their assigned,
individual destiny (Akala Aka na Ife Uwa) satisfactorily. While the former is an inseparable constituent of their divine Chi essence, the later was literally handed to them by the Eke essence of Chukwu at the point of departing the spiritual world to be born as a human being. To put it succinctly, they must have achieved an enlightened liberation from the illusory and dichotomized consciousness of Mu na Onwe Mu that reigns supreme at this Be Mmadu and refining such into the onerous primal consciousness of Munachibuofu (Mu and Chi are One), encapsulated in the ancient Igbo solar symbol of Mgba Aka (See Figure below). This is mystically and succinctly put as Ezumezu (oneness, fully realized, holistically balanced, achieving universal consciousness etc.) and this is definitely not an easy task! Thus Igbo people naturally empower each other at all points with the sublime and piercing commendation, Jisi Ike! (Thrust On!).

Essentially, Igbo mystics in line with the ancient mystical tradition of Igbo culture reiterate the universal mystic conviction that, this corporeal life is a dreamlike experience of leisure and learning (enu uwa bu olili). Life to the very ancient Igbos can be likened to a Great Dream or Great Celebration, thus their common designation of all Igbo traditions simply as Emume Chi (Celebration of Chi), arising from their natural penchant for ritual festivities (Emume/Mme-Mme). In this tranquil consciousness which naturally prompted the celebration of life, they rightly called the earth Ama Mbu, in their characteristic concise diction, which translates as Primordial Square, which actually connotes a common space for communal gathering, rejuvenation or collective celebration. The only difference is that while, the Igbos of those primordial times were fully aware of this profound reality and acted out their lives in line with the necessary principles that will enhance their experience in the afterlife, when they eventually awoke in the primal first world (Uwa Mbu), the Igbos of today are mostly ignorant of this subtle fact. They just know that there is another world but know virtually less about its reality, in contrast to their ancestors. It must be stated that the ancient Igbos as well as today’s Odinala adherents i.e. Igbo spiritualists - upholders of the ancient upright spiritual ways, emphasize that akwa k’anyi ji abia uwa mana una anyi bu n’onu lit. we all arrive this outer world (Ama Mbu) in tears, but our
eventual return is in joy. They maintain that, *anyi bialu igba mbo na uwa* lit. we are here to live out our lives in the most productive ways as possible. For in a limited existential setting which exhibits fluttering tendencies (as characterized by the vital principle of change) and which offers each a rather brief, dreamlike duration of activity, accordingly, one will do themselves a great amount good to not dwell on the passing frivolities of this life! Therefore, the ultimate goal and concerns of the traditional Igbo culture and its society of noble, enlightened men and women are essentially those of values and principles; while the given delights and pleasures of life are indulged with great tact and wisdom. In this sense, the Igbo wisdom tradition emphasizes that *uwa anyi bu uwa alahusia eteta* (this our world is a temporal zone of reality, much akin to a sleep experience, from which one eventually awakens onto a higher and greater reality). Likewise, they state that, *onye no na ndu bu onye no na nnkwute ula* i.e. anyone in this temporal reality called life is actually experiencing a kind of “super-deep-sleep” in the realm of *Be Chukwu*, where their Chi or Highest Self resides unpolluted.

Indeed, we all come here fully aware of the many short comings that characterize this *Be Mmadu*. As such, the Igbo wisdom tradition holds that we are all here to fulfill the individual divine pacts made with Chukwu, which involves the contribution of our Chi quotas towards the unending vivification of universal consciousness; by incarnating and reincarnating into this *Uwa Olili* (External World) as *Mmadu*. It is worth mentioning that in the above given *Afa* riddle, *Ora n’abo* esoterically alludes to *Obi na Akwu Aru* (the primal/left side and peripatetic/right side of the body). While the *Aka Nta* is the Chi or divine spiritual essence inhabiting the body and using it as its vessel of experience and enwisdomization. There is even a kindred in the Agulu village of Ifiteani that still goes by the name *Umuakanta* lit. “Children of *Aka Nta” till this day. Even at the cosmic level, the intertwined principles of *Okwu n’Abo* and *Ofu Aka* are manifestly present. So that the central star of any solar system is classically perceived as its head or tree-top in several cosmological traditions of the world and even in the case of binary star systems, one still notices the often reversed, orbital primacy of one star (*Ofu Ora*) among the
two (*Ora n’abo*). Iroegbu (2010) has also noted the following corresponding notion in his work on Igbo medico-healing episteme and health care delivery practices:

A psychosomatic illness in which the symptoms are real to a patient but show no observable organic basis is something that cannot be invalidated in how biomedicine relies on mind-body dualism. The body in this realm cannot be understood as a vast and complex machine, rather as a microcosm of the universe. (p. 165)

In addition to Iroegbu’s view, it deserves mention that the body is not merely or solitarily symbolic of this delineated microcosmic essence; but as articulated in the Igbo cosmological tradition, it pragmatically realizes this microcosmic essence in its diurnal, somatic workings and structure. As such, the body both figuratively and somatically substantiates its sacred essence as *Obi Chi* (house of one’s divine spiritual essence), much as the cosmos itself is also held to embody in Igbo thought. Indeed, Igbo mystical traditions have primordially maintained that “*ahu wu obiri chi*” lit. “the body is the temple of one’s divine spiritual essence”. Iroegbu (2010) has also noted the ancient Igbo conviction that “the body is the house of the universal mind” (*ahu bu ulo uche*), although another contrasting Igbo mystical axiom holds that “*uche n’abia abia*” lit. “the universal mind is a visitor”. In any case, both traditions explicitly and subtly converge on the symbolic reality of the body as a “house”, within and through which the destined will and potentials one’s *Chi* is ultimately expressed. Briefly, the four triangulation schema of the human body is utilized in the same manner as a map to delineate the vast, interconnected energy nodes that occur throughout the body and subsequently, in locating the most potent centers of this energy—the same is also true with our planet and the cosmos. This geomancy-enabled technique of mapping out the human body is known as *Igbazu Ahu*. It is mostly in use today by traditional Igbo bone-setters. In popular parlance, one of the well-known surviving applications of this mystical science in our times is as applied in the healing art of acupuncture. On possessing such an holistic, cosmological map of the human body, one need not dissect the body (as modern biological science is prone to do) in other to investigate its inner workings and anatomical gamut; for all that
particularized detail can be easily grasped by means of mystical visualization of the patient’s body, prior or post-treatment by a knowledgeable Dibia. Taking the head as an example, at the macrocosmic plane, the role of the Sun as the central fireplace of our solar system readily corresponds to the role of the head as the inherent fireplace of the human body system. Moreover, as with the rest of the Earth’s physical geography, the rest of the body becomes water-dominated as one goes below the head. Together, as *oku na mmiri* i.e. “fire and water”, the human head and the rest of the body then materializes the "*chi na ubochi"* principle at the biological level of life. As such, the resulting aesthetic symbolism of red (*uhie, mmee-mmee, obara-obara*) for fire and white (*ucha, ocha*) for water, has continued to obtain as one of the symbolic meanings of the attires of Igbo Dibias, title holders, Priests, Priestesses and Priest-Kings, who often dress in red and white.

The conception of the head as the central fireplace of the body is indirectly attested in yet another time-tested Igbo mystic axiom thus, *o anu bu ona n’isi ka dinta so achu nta abani* i.e. the night hunter is guided by the one animal that bears precious stone on its head. In the later, inter alia, the serpent is symbolic of energy and its diverse channels of manifestation. It is also symbolic of the human quest; the hunter is the human being in search of direction, self-fulfillment and meaning in a world much darkened by the veil of confusion; the said precious stone borne on the head by the serpent, the light of which guides the hunter is wisdom as embodied in the Moon at night, the Sun in daytime and nature at all times. Igbo names and appellations such as *Ona, Nwa-Ona, Alumona, Onaocha, Onaedo, Iruona, Ezeona* etc. are testimonies to Igbo people’s preoccupation with the natural realm of precious stones and their wide-ranging connotations. On the other hand, all life forms are electrically charged in varied degrees. This electrically charged energy (electron activity) in turn, has its source in the inherent electromagnetic energy of our planet, which it directly inherits from the Sun—the central source of electromagnetic energy (*Orie Dioku*) in our solar system. So that even the perception of light (an end result of the process of photon polarization – *Nliwata Oku*) through the agency of the pupil (*Mpio Anya*), is equally dependent on the fluctuations of
this electrically (electron) charged energy regulated from the human brain down to the toes of the feet. All this, leads to the subtle culmination of form-color communication among the senses. In the same way, the distinct processes of sensing sound and smell, as well as perceiving taste and held objects all involve a very subtle interface of the human energy system with that of the perceived object or phenomena. So that, the body is continuously in the process of information transmission in the form of energy (Ike) between itself, the sensed object and the human perceiver’s mind (Ako-na-Uche). This consciously circumscribed tri-process of perception, analysis and expression embodies the very catalyst essence of life, no matter where found. Interestingly, this Igbo cosmological wisdom is also deeply embedded in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of Dzogchen (Great Perfection). Indeed, it remains one of the most observable traits of life, occurring across its many kingdoms and as such, reveals life to be a transformation-centered phenomenon.

Yet, permeating this undichotomized, spirit-soul-mind-body interaction process, and regulating its perceptual modalities and limits within cosmic existence, is the agency of time. That one factor which keeps all life in the state of impermanence and yet manages to remain consistent itself. It is equally the fourth known feature of the terrestrial plane (enu uwa). As conceived in the Igbo cosmological tradition, this fourth feature of the cosmos is known as Mgbugbo Oge, i.e. “the fence of time”. The key thing to note at this point, is the intimate relationship indicated so far between the mind, the human brain, its perception of time and light—through the eyes—as well as the Sun and the electromagnetic force that is transmitted from that very star to the rest of the planetary bodies of our solar system (Ekwe Teghete). This candid observation establishes the head as the central time-perception "station" of the human body. Moreover, although modern science has been very conservative in admitting it, the concept of time and its perception also reveals to be a mind-reinforced phenomenon that can be consciously bypassed by any human being—if they so wish it and with considerable effort as well. This practically applies, since the primordial reality of space-time continuum in this four dimensional existential plane of ahia n’ano, ubochi n’ano equally
betrays the transient nature of this two intertwined phenomena. In which case, our primary perception of them through the agency of our senses can only be transient in nature as well; except where ritually reinforced. So that even in our everyday dream experiences, there is no such thing as space-time dichotomy as we conventionally perceive it, or even space-time exactitude to begin with. On the other hand, there is the ample evidence garnered from the behavioral patterns of newborns, who will only begin to adapt to the culturally defined space-time constructs of their community, following the parental introduction of certain culturally defined rituals that are geared towards this goal. Prior to this, all newborn children naturally operate from the primal consciousness of their *Uwa Omumu* planes of existence; in other words, their archetypal universal planes of origin—until eventually absolved into the cult-based or culture-centric consciousness of this existential plane as achieved through the appropriate natal rituals. It should be noted that the culture phenomena is not unique to human beings at all. As strange as it may sound to the modern ear, plants, insects, birds, animals, fishes, microscopic life etc. all have cultures and their own fitted civilizational modalities which are nature based unlike those of modern humans. The essence of most natal rites and rituals entails the inculcation of a new existential awareness or rather, the awareness of a different cosmic paradigm; especially of the grade that survives the regimented, cultural world of human activities (*Uwa Mmadu/Uwa Omenala*) in which human activities thrive. For what is culture but a uniquely but collectively arrived simulation of reality by a specific group of people? In other words, their own exclusive articulation of the universe. Likewise, at the cosmic level, one observes that the same natal program is at work. Thus, the stars, planets, galaxies and other celestial bodies that populate the universe, tend to venture into space in the same unrestrained, untidy manner typical of newborns, only to be brought into order by the law of gravity, and by extension, the cosmic influence of space and time. At this point, we may also comment on the functional parallels that unite the human head with that aspect of the universe itself. Firstly, there is the spherical shape of the head (*Mgba Isi/Ishi, Ogbe Isi*), which is where an individual’s natural star (*Onatalu Chi*) is spiritually stamped. On this, Igbo people
state that *onatalu chi no n’ihu, akala aka dolu n’obe aka* i.e. “one’s nature is spelt on their face, while their destiny is literally heaped on their palms”. Indeed, a person’s head is the seat of their destiny, for quite simply, “*onye nwelu isi ji Chukwu ugwu nghota*” i.e. “any person with a fully functioning head owes God the task of discernment”. In this line, Igbo elders are also heard often asserting with all seriousness that “*o kwa ako n’uche bu na mmadu amaka!*” lit. “it is the exercise of wisdom and intellect that epitomizes the beauty of being human”. As can be seen here, the Igbo cosmological tradition clearly articulates the universal conviction that, the head is synonymous with sensibility.

In other words, to be human is to be sensible and enlightened, and to be sensible requires having a head (*Inwe Isi*). And so children must also come out "head-first" from their mother’s womb or stand the risk of been considered “headless” or "insensible" according to Igbo natal laws. Of course, the ethical practicality of such a law remains debatable. Yet, the fundamental principle underlying it cannot be denied either. Beyond the function of sensibility, the head also holds the epistemo-semiotic role of a social, ideational mediator. Thus, within this context, it becomes a most important form of symbolism; serving to impact both general knowledge (*Amamihe*) and transcendental knowledge (*Abia*). Ultimately, the head is also the initiative cradle of procreative deeds. For human procreative undertakings ideally takes off as highly-charged sensual ideations expressed through bodily acts, whose roots, regardless of how physically convincing, still points towards the deliberate mental arousals earlier conjured-up in the heads of the procreative participants. Partly for this imperative role, the head is praised as *Odu Nwata Eje* lit. “the one who leads the child”. For indeed, it is the spinal fire which it sparks by way of supplying the highly potent, fuel of thought that initiates the procreative act itself. Furthermore, as established in the sacred traditions of Igbo people, the tutelary deity known as *Agwu Ishi* is of great importance in substantiating the place of the headship symbolism in Igbo thought. The primary fact that *Agwu* is the personified spirit of the Igbo medico-healing tradition (*Ogwu Igbo*) further buttresses this point. For the gift of healing—which encompasses both the knowledge of and ability to properly
identify medicinal trees, fruits, herbs, roots, barks, leaves, minerals, sacred emanations, sacred places, sacred time alignments etc. by the Dibia is largely a task accomplished through the spiritual agency of one’s Agwu (i.e. Chi Dibia or the God given Chi of the Dibia), by way of the Dibia’s ultra-sharpened sensory abilities and ever advancing consciousness state. Agwu is also known in a very ancient appellation as Odue-Uwa-Agwu-Agwu lit. Custodian of the infinity principle. The later principle is central to the mystic process of controlled, transitory soul transmigration achieved by Dibia’s in their occasional anthropomorphisation ritual of Ikwu-Afa-Mkpuru-Uche-n’ime, in which Igbo Dibia’s transform themselves into certain animals such as the turtle, tortoise, baboon, chameleons, leopards, owls, crocodiles, sharks etc. to journey back into the beginnings of the universe and in so doing, decipher/rediscover certain forgotten secrets of nature, with which to enhance the life and activities of their communities. This later is made possible and arises from the reality that Agwu is also a personified spirit-energy-form of Divine Mind, encompassing the mystic Light of Knowledge and Wisdom, both of which are indispensable to the Dibia’s mystic vocation as a healer, scribe, teacher, artist, mediator, diviner, multidimensional communicator, cosmologist, philosopher, scientist, technologist, community guide, etc. Also note the following relevant names and appellations: Mmaduagwu, Ogoagwu, Ebereagwu, Dikeagwu, Nzeagwu, Inyom Agwu, Oguguagwu, Eboagwu, Uzoagwu, Izuagwu, Oma Agwu, Mma Agwu, Nono Agwu, Obala Agwu, Atu Agwu, Uga Agwu, Okoro Agwu, Ada Agwu, Okpara Agwu, Ola Agwu etc. The Supreme Divine Mind (Aka Uche/Uche Chukwu/Ose Ora) is perceived by the Igbo sensibility as an infinitely colossal, infinitely deep, coalescent force with individualized, embodied access portals or links called Ako, through which specific information/knowledge are channeled to specific beings, in alignment with the distinguishing degree of their existential state (Udidi Mmuo na Udidi Okike), their conscience-clarity (Ocha Ime Obi/Ime Mmuo), individual perceptual abilities (Anya-Ime-Mmuo), understanding/interpretive abilities (Ikike Nghota), decision making abilities (Ikike Nkpebi/Okike), as well as their general moral decency. In recognition of this reality, the Igbos maintain that uche n’abia abia
n’obiros ebi lit. the Divine Mind is a visitor to all and does not permanently reside in all life.

To experience or operate with this infinity consciousness of Divine Mind at any level of life (i.e. to possess a dualistically amplified access or mind-share of the Divine Mind) equally requires the possession of Agwu (Inwe Agwu) which is the matching Chi force with the corresponding share of Ako (intellect) that can aptly attract, sublimate, integrate and emotionally sustain the characteristic chaos underlined energy state (Ikenga Agwu) that inevitably typifies this existential state/realm of reality. This role is in perfect fulfillment of the essence of Agwu as Obo Ebi i.e. the revealer of mysteries. Thus an Igbo mystic axiom encapsulates that, O wu Agwu gbara ukpa asha n’anwu n’aka odii lit. Agwu who exposed the Ukpa-Asha-n’Anu/Ukpa Abia/Akwu Asha/Aka Asha long basket of infinite universal mysteries posed to all by Chukwu Okike at the onset of the universe. To have Agwu is to be, among other realities, possessed by this divine light-mind force-personified, as recognized and interfaced by one’s earliest genealogical bloodline. Thus, the Dibia mystic dictums, Agwu anaro echezo umu ya i.e. Agwu seldom forgets its offspring and Agwu wu ihe di na agburu lit. Agwu resides in the genes. Also, Agwu wu ihe ogbutor-oogbu lit. Agwu is a legacy of the earliest, primal emanations of cosmic/natural life. In other words, Agwu symptoms (Aghara Agwu/Owuwuwa Agwu/Okpukpa Agwu), which are conveyed by the Agwu mystic light propulsion (Kpakpankpa Agwu) are actually manifestations of the genealogical expressions from life’s earliest androgynous/dualistic era. This is also to say that, an individual that has Agwu as their Chi ultimately comes from the primal spirit realm of Be Agwu, which is one of the nine spirit realms mapped in the Igbo cosmographical scale of Uwa-Achiko-Teghete-Mnmu i.e. Nine Spirit Realms Holding the Infinite Spherical Worlds. These realms are as following: Be Agwu, Be Uto, Be Ngwu, Be Ogwugwu, Be Udo, Be Kamalu, Be Ezenwanyi, Be Ikenga and Be Oma. In turn, these realms birth infinite worlds or universes within them (Uwa Achiko) which are all interlinked with each other and all that be in other respective realms and universes. Our realm (Be Mmadu) is regarded as an outer realm (Ndi Iro/Uwa-Ezi-Ama) that is fenced in by time (Oge/Ogige Chi). While
our particular world or universe is regarded as Uwa Nta (small world/young world) and also by its other name, Ogige Ndu. These other higher realms on the other hand are regarded as inner realms (Ndi-Ime-Obi/Ndi Odii/Uwa-Ime-Obi). They exist outside of time, while we in this realm, exist in time. Each realm has its own specific frequency of vibration that is native to it and so does all the various universes birthed within it and their respective life forms. Beyond this, in the Igbo cosmographical scale of Iyi-Ezeonwekodo-Okike (lit. Divine Water Spheres of the Supreme Spirit, Owner of all Worlds of Creation), the nine individual spirit realms collapse into a combined super-spirit-realm called Be Mmuo. On this scale, there is only Be Chukwu, Be Mmuo na Be Mmadu. Here, human consciousness partakes in the Supreme Mystic Odii Ora or Ime-Obi-Chukwu, which results in the ultimate merging of the two lesser realms of Be Mmuo na Be Mmadu with Be Chukwu. The prior individual realms dissolve into a single, boundless, super-consciousness vibrating in total pitch darkness (Odii-Ete-Ofu-Aka) from which they frequently journey as dark energy forms to incarnate the lower realms and worlds. They are escorted on the first lapse of the journey by the mystic Ududu-Ete-Ofu-dupulu-Chi-n’Agu-Mmuo all the way to Agu Mmuo - which is the Spirit Wilderness of the realm where they are to manifest in new forms/vessels. From this point on, they are then escorted by Ikenga- Owa-Ota, the path finder, all the way to their designated universe and ultimate form/site of manifestation. On arrival, they are duly identified as a manifest Chi (spirit-consciousness) in accordance with the particular vessel or bodily suit in which their now rested propellant force/kinetic energy (Ike-Nga) is thus housed as Ndu (i.e. Ato, Nodu Ana, Ihe Sike Ala = stabilized by gravity). This propellant energy (Ike) and the original, incarnating spirit-consciousness (Chi) of the vessel now merge to form a partial, temporary union that will be expressed as the sole characteristics, mannerisms, features etc. of the embodying vessel or creature, in combination with the inherited life forces of the male and female uterine lines of that creature. This third union births a coalescent third force that will be housed in the Agu Mu (third energy body) of that individual, being or creature, and which is then expressed through the heart-mind of that creature as its Mkpuru-Obi-Mu (Fruit of the Union between the Heart/Chi and Mu/Ike = the
individual Soul or the distinguishing qualities of that spirit-consciousness). Here, the Dibia emphasizes that Mmadu subsequently results from this partnership of Oku (Fire/Energy/Ike) and Mmiri (Water/Spirit-Consciousness/Chi), which archetypically births Mu-bu-Mmadu i.e. Mu, the enlightened human being.

The fourth union instantly occurs at the actual physical arrival of the individual/creature into the world of human beings. This union occurs between Chi Mu, Ikenga Mu and Alawuala. The subsequent benefit of this agreement is the grant of access to Ume Ndu/Ume-ji-Ala/Iku-Ume-Ndu, which is a specially refined form of the actual Ete Ora or Ikuku Chukwu that comes from Be Chukwu (i.e. ether) by the Earth Goddess, for the optimal survival of the vessel or bodily suit that one must wear to carry out their assigned activities (Ime-Ihe-Uwa/Akara-Aka-Onye) on this specific planet. Daily or limited access to this specially refined air is otherwise called, Idi Nd i.e. To be immersed momentarily in Life or Ijuputa-na-Ndu lit. To be filled at once with the force of Life. It should be noted that this is not the same thing as extended access to this special air, which condition is called Idi-Ogolo-Ndu (Extended Life Force/Extended Access to the Special Air Refined by the Earth Goddess).

Initial access to this air, requires that one first assents to the sacred laws of Ala, the Earth Goddess (i.e. Ikwete-Iwu-Ala) whose bodily form is the planet, Aja-Ala. However extended access to this special air requires that one expand their observation of these sacred laws to include the spiritual and total wellbeing of all beings that thrive on Aja-Ala and beyond it (i.e. Idobe-Iwu-Ala/Iso-Nso-Ala). The initial agreement at birth between the individual/creature and the Earth Goddess is solemnized with the burial of their umbilical cord (Ili Alo) underneath a particular special tree and the violation of which laws (Imeru Ala/Imebi-Iwu-Ala/Imeto-Ala/Imete-Nso-Ala) may result in the gradual, spiritual withdrawal of the Earth’s Ikejiala (the force of gravity which binds all the creatures of the Earth to the Earth) from that individual’s spirit-energy force-field (Ogige Chi/Ogige Ndu), as well as the gradual withdrawal of the individual’s Ikejindu (i.e. the graviton energy that feeds the force of gravity which keeps all life bound to the earth’s gravity force field). The third process will be the
gradual secession of the individual Chi from its earlier liaison with the being’s Ikenga, at which point one will begin to notice key signs of either, ill health, depression (decrease in spiritual energy), unanticipated or unnecessary weakness, intensely negative dreams etc. When the first two processes sets into motion and is not noticed or remediably addressed, one can leave their house and easily end up losing their lives to the slightest of accidents which they have always survived, haven been released from the stabilizing force of the Earth, on which they walk, live and thrive. A great deal of fatal accidents result from this, as a matter of fact. There is a great need for modern medical science to retrace its footsteps to the portals of physics and energy studies. An individual whose acts of violation of the Laws of the Earth Goddess (i.e. the Sacred Laws of Cosmic Order, Balance and Harmony which regulates the Reciprocation of Energy on Planet Earth) negates all attempts of remedy, solicitation or propitiation—ultimately begins to experience the third process of dissolution of the earlier ontological relationships, which constitutes their being. At this particular point, they come under the influence of all sorts of ill spiritual winds and are regarded as onye ikuku onwu n’ebu/buje (one who has come under the influence of the ill winds of death) or onye nozi odi ndu onwu ka nma (one who is still alive but is better off dead). Beyond this, if things are not remedied, the fourth and final process of dissolution sets into place. Here, the Igbos say that: mbosi chi onye kwetalu onwu, orinagodi n’ime ana, onwu ga akpo ya ihu n’ime ana lit. On the day that one’s Chi agrees to leave this realm in death, even if they hide themselves in a catacomb/hole under the earth, death will meet them there on arrival. This fourth and final stage is that of Nkubi or Ikubi n’Onwu, which is when the will power (Ike) to breath in, hold breath and excel breath (Ike-Iku-Ume-na-Ike-Ikpado-Ume) is revoked by the Chi from the body in a subtle process called Inalu-Ogodo-Ike-Ikute-na-Ike-Ikpado-Ume, which results in the cessation of Ikute-Ume-Ndu = air of life = oxygen dispensed freely to the individual through the trees, the respiration valves of the Earth. The latter will ultimately result in the premature repossession of the individual’s somatic body by the Earth (i.e. Inwu-Onwu-Ike/Mmadu iba ala n’eke ya eruhu eru). Following the breath cessation incidence, the individual’s vibration frequency accelerates to a much higher rate to match the equally
increasing frequency of the now receding Chi, already on its way to totally merging with Chi-Ukwu; while the Aka Mu, Agu Mu and the Mkpuru Obi still remain inter locked with each other. The latter will only resolve their bonds after the Chi has successfully merged with Chi-Ukwu at Olisa Chukwu and given the order for them to do so, which process occurs twelve hours after the point of breath cessation. Each of these aspects of the individual continues to exist after this point as disembodied energy copies Aka Mu/Ka Mu of the now ascended Chi, whose holistic personality, mannerisms, experiences, behavior, qualities, features they continue to represent and retain as indelible etheric records and which can be caused to reappear on invocation, though now possessing none of the proactive or reactive abilities of the original Chi itself.

However, through these etheric energy forms, one can also establish a communication line with the Chi (now Ichie, which could be an Ichie-Nne or Ichie-Nna/Okpu-Nne-na-Okpu-Nna) who is then supplied renewed, active, proactive and reactive energy (i.e. Ikenga force), invoked into an Okpo Ushi statue dedicated to the said Ichie through the slaughtering of a ram, seven Kolanuts, three pyramid shaped Odo chalks, three roosters and four jars (Udukwu) of palm wine, if it’s a male ancestor. In the case of a female ancestor, one will need eight hens, seven Kolanuts, four round Nzu, a red clay pot and six jars of palm wine. In the latter, the slaughtered hens are drained of their blood on the Okpo Ushi and on an erected earthen circular mound (Oda), which can either be erected at the family temple’s altar or at the western corner of one’s living compound. At the foot of this mound, the red clay pot is half-buried, leaving its inside open. A local crafts person is contracted to make a befitting Okpo Ushi, prior the ritual and ceremony. Traditionally, the Okpo Ushi for the female ancestor is to be sourced from any feminine tree growing in one’s ancestral community, such as Akpu, Ukwa, Ukpaka, Ugba, Udara etc. while that of the male ancestor can be sourced from the masculine trees such as Ngwu, Orji, Ahaba, Achi, Oko etc. A Dibia officiates throughout the entire ritual and all present will partake in the meat and the prepared food for feasting. The female ancestor figure is to be finally placed in the half-buried clay pot and offered, solicitations and libations with
water, palm wine, food, meat or mineral drinks, during family feasts, festivals and daily prayers, respectively. In the case of the male ancestral figure, the ram and the three roosters are to be slaughtered and their bloods drained on the Okpo Ushi and after the ritual ceremony, the statue is placed in the altar of the family’s sacred Obi temple and offered supplications and libations with hot drinks, palm wine, meat, food etc. during family feasts, festivals and daily prayers, respectively.

However, if the appropriate propitiation rituals are pursued and carried out in time by the right priestly official for the culprit, the consequences may of the prior premature death may be reduced, transposed, postponed or even eliminated. Yet, as this process is one of solicitation, it’s not always granted. Thus, the Igbo wisdom dictum: ejim ofo ka ogwu i.e. clean and upright hands is always far more effective than all mystic solutions. At death, all the earlier series of agreements or relationships that bonded the various ontological bodies constituting the individual, creature or being is dissolved and rendered null and void by Chukwu Okike. The Chi is escorted by its Ikenga back to the Spirit Wilderness of its realm of incarnation or reincarnation, and from here, it is then escorted by Ududu-dutelu-Chi/Ududu-dupulu-Chi-n’Agu-Mmuo (i.e. Sacred Pot of the Two Sounds of Creation that leads Chi to the Spirit Wilderness of its Realm of Manifestation) all the way to Be Mmuo, from which point it continues on its own to Be Chukwu in the process of Ina Olisa Chukwu/ibunagalu Chukwu isi. Chi is associated with the Ududu Chi, while Ikenga is associated with the Igba-Mu-Chubalu-Dike-Ofia-Uwa (the drum of Mu/Ikenga that chased Dike the master of energy/brave human being into the forest of human life.

The concluding cosmographical scale is realized as the Supreme Consciousness of Mgba-Nne-Chukwu, in which there exists no individuation of realms. At this level, there is only One Super Realm of the Supreme Mother Spirit (Nne Chukwu) within which, all that Is, Was and Will Be exist. All the prior realms of the cosmic divinities, forces and spirits, eventually course into this Source Mother Realm. Nothing exists outside of it. Their realms are birthed here and exist in it, and the worlds in turn, birth and thrive with their life forms within
it. At this level, there is only one Supreme Primal Square (Ama-Mbu/Ama-Nne-Chukwu) where all the beings exist in perfect harmony with the Supreme Creator, beyond time, suffering, death, pain etc. in perfect harmony, contentment, love and happiness. It should be noted that, the rites, rituals and varied sacred practices associated with a particular Agwu order are embodiments and personifications of mystic principles, wisdoms, knowledge systems, philosophies, totemic institutions, ethics etc. of a particular family, lineage, spiritual group, which are solemnized with naturalistic elements into a unique genealogical-consciousness pool of inheritable abilities accessible to the scions of that particular lineage, group or spiritual order. The above is a very ancient sacred science of self-perpetuation (Agwu wu ihe ndudugandu) whose mystic depths and potency our present age may never fathom.

For those who understand, this system truly represents one of the most efficient amongst literally hundreds of consecration-interface formulas (Igo Mnuo/Ime Chi) that superbly maintained the ancient world and continues to do so for our present world in many cases. It is however mostly original to Igbo spirituality for reasons, too many to be listed. Each of the alluded consecration cum interface formulas embodies and preserves the natural legacies of specific eras, ages, events, time-points in the unfolding of life, creation and human beings in the universe. Most of these have further grown into formalized mystic orders, sometimes losing or betraying their original purpose, but always maintaining aspects of their unique consecration-interface formula. Accordingly, for those Ndi Dibia who understand the fundamental working principles of this system and its sacred science, they are aware that Agwu-consecrated forces are never to be worshiped (an existential modality alien to Igbo culture) but simply interfaced (Igo Agwu) and the functions served are ritualistic, personal and vocational in nature. Agwu ranges from the individual kind to lineage and entire community kinds. Each person, lineage or community etc. will have their respective rites (Oruru Agwu/Ihe Agwu), rituals (Emume Agwu/Ime Agwu), mystic portal personifications (Ihu Agwu), ritual laws (Iwu Agwu) and other practices associated with their respective Agwu. Thus said, Agwu is not the Supreme Divine
Creator and as such is not to be held in any form of Supreme spiritual preeminence, surpassing the Supreme Being. This is equivalent to someone finding themselves in a post-apocalyptic planet Earth and having no real understanding of what a nano-engineered supercomputer is, on coming into contact with one, they give up their God-given intelligence and will to explore life and instead, succumb to worshiping the nano-engineered super-computer system which aptly responds to the intelligence level of the interfacer, without necessarily unfolding is higher capabilities to him/her.

Whereas alternatively, a driven person could have easily dedicated their time, energy, resources and mind-power to properly seeking out the original pre-apocalyptic knowledge that avails the higher methods, programming languages and commands for interfacing with the supercomputer system, and as such, will achieve what will seem like magical results to the former person. The same analogy perfectly applies to the Agwu mystic system, which in many ways is a sacred, highly efficient, low-cost, sustainable, multidimensional super-intelligence interface system; a true genius legacy of golden era African civilization and the ancient world in general. A process that involves the reformatting, reassigning, synchronization and reprogramming of the elemental particle structures embedded in the organically sourced and engineered materials used in erecting the multidimensional and multipurpose Agwu super-interface portal (Ihu Agwu) is one of the key components of a neophyte’s initiation rites (Irunye Agwu) into the Agwu Mystic Order. Subsequently, the consecrated mystic super-interface system is carefully and ethically applied in energy-based medico-healing procedures to holistically realign and balance the extremely fluctuant-energy states of the initiate, refine their endlessly streaming cognition-speed and avail them a system of self-evaluation, mystic investigation, marginal transcendence regulation, and higher-dimensional multitasking modalities—all woven into a holistic vocation that aligns with the nature and purpose of their Chi.

On this matter, the Igbo wisdom goes thus: O mmadu wu Agwu na akpa onwe ya lit. Agwu is the human being and the human being is Agwu; indeed, for Agwu is Chi-ketalu-Dibia (the God given Chi of the Dibia)
and *Onye obuna na Chi ya yi* i.e. every being and their Chi are one and the same! *Agwu* is a mystic messenger of the Supreme Being and so is the *Dibia*. In this sense, *Agwu* universally exercises the role of a personified spirit of Divine Light and Mind-force of God; knowledge revealer and mediator on behalf of all Chukwu’s creations, thus the name *Agwu Ishi Oha* (*Agwu* the head of all), often shortened to *Agwu Ishi*. Corroborating this notion is the primary fact that, the Igbo mind has always perceived the human head as a symbol of beginnings/source. In fact, the word *Isi* or *Ishi* is also used to denote “source” in Igbo language, such as in “*ga na mbido ishi*”. Accordingly, in this primordial role, the head shares in Chukwu’s role as *Ishi Mmiri* “water source”. Even at the socio-political level of Igbo society, the headship symbolism continues to feature greatly. For instance, it is embedded in the names and titles of leadership positions that avail in most Igbo socio-political institutions. Such headship designations as, *Ishi Ala* (land/territory head), *Ishi Mmuo* (High Priest), *Ishi Mba* (multi-village head), *Ishi Ogbe* (clan head), *Ishi Obodo* (village head), *Ishi Mmonwu* (masque society head), *Ishi Uke* (ceremonial age-grade priest), *Ishi Obi* (extended family head), *Ishi Ulo* (family head) etc. are hereby brought to mind. In reality, the intrinsic functions of the head notion in Igbo thought cannot be overemphasized. Yet, the essential functions delineated so far, serves to illustrate the macrocosmic as well as microcosmic primacy of this human somatic feature. We now turn to the face (*iru, ihu*). It is worthy to note that the face is such a highly held feature of the body in Igbo thought, so much so that it also has its own dedicated cultus; an extension of the Ikenga cult. The face is mystically praised as *oma uma eme ogo* i.e. Charmer of mindful benevolence. As noted by Iroegbu (2010), in Igbo culture, “when people refer to good luck (*ihu oma*), or bad luck (*ihu ojoo, azi-gba*), the human face is evoked as a model for keeping in balance the good versus bad luck, the forces that increase good chance versus setbacks, worries and the hampering of good life” (p. 183). Various symbolic notions are associated with the face in Igbo thought; many of them harboring mystical connotations. It is held, for instance, that “*ihu ogba uta wu ochi elu eze k’oma echute*” lit., “an arrow shooter’s face fetches only shallow laughter”. In this highly encompassing axiom, it should be noted that the face is being contrasted with the meticulous stoicism
of an arrow shooter. Often in the public arena, people of great repute
are better singled out by the stoic impression of indifference that tends
to engulf their face. This is typically an instinctive response on their
part to shield their cherished emotions from public probe. However,
the deeper point being underscored by the axiom is the fact that, the
human face is merely a microcosmic version of deep-space. And as
such, it naturally puts on a mysterious veil until effectively penetrated
by the appropriate mind, mystically-doctored vision or adequately
charged emotions; in the same manner that the sky (Igwe) or deep-
space (Elu Igwe) will remain mysterious or simplistic to an onlooker,
until the necessary observational expertise or visionary powers
needed in deciphering its open secrets are acquired or exercised.
Infact, the Igbo reverence for the mystical and assertive powers of the
face was taken to the utmost height in pre-modern times in the
practice of facial scarification amongst the Nze na Ozo nobility and in
some areas, among sun cultus devotees (Ndi n’eme Ife Anyanwu). As
regards the age of this practice among Igbo people, Jeffreys (1951)
rightly noted that “internal evidence indicates that the practice is
much older, because it is intimately connected to a sun-cult which
shows signs of great antiquity” (p. 102). It is quite reassuring to note
that this very ancient practice is still carried out today in parts of
Anambra state. Perhaps, a better way to demonstrate the much held
significance of the face notion in Igbo cosmology and sacred traditions
is to point out the role of “Iru” in the larger network of a deific
complex, grove or temple. It is note-worthy that in the process of
erecting or consecrating such complexes (as the case maybe), the
innermost section of such a structure or complex must be perfectly
aligned to the eastern part of the sky, from where the Sun rises. The
mystical notion behind this being that, the world is only truly awake
when the Sun is equally awake. Thus, as most Igbo deities are
traditionally associated with one or more planetary body, the practice
of aligning the Iru of an Arushi (deific form/front of a supernatural
force) with the forces of Anyanwu na Ubochi (our solar system) is
fundamental to securing the potent early morning rays of the Sun and
other spiritual forces for application in mystical, socio-civil, medico-
healing, occult and other pragmatic purposes. The oldest of these
deities (Eke, Nne Iyi, Ala, Nne Atu, Nono, Inyom Igwe, Okpu Nwanyi,
Idemmili, Udo Ekwuru, Anyanwu, Igwe, Oshuru, etc.) some of whom at some point in very dim antiquity actually served as representations of the Supreme Spirit for the Igbos subsequently had their soul essences or offspring represented as their Agbara or Agbala (e.g. Igwe gbua Ala onye Agbala lit. when the Sky copulates with the Earth, the result is an Agbala or deity). In light of this, the Igbos make such expressions as Anyanwu na Agbara (the Sun and its offspring), Onwa na Agbara (the Moon and its offspring). There is also the divine universal mind propellant known as Agwu Isi Ora (e.g. Agwu Idemmili, Agwu Urashi, Agwu Njoku, Agwu Amadi, Agwu Ogwugwu, Agwu Ojukwu, Agwu Omambala etc.) Accordingly, these deities also have their respective energy propellants or Ikenga (e.g. Ikenga Ala, Ikenga Anyanwu, Ikenga Agwu, Ikenga Kalu, Ikenga Udo, Ikenga Ogwugwu, Ikenga Ide, Ikenga Urashi etc.) While their sacred animals or totems are conceived as their children (Umu Agbala). Infact, the Iru of a deity is so revered and sacrosanct in Odinala that, only the High Priest/Priestess of the concerned deity is allowed to approach it. Anyone of questionable purity (carnal or spiritual) may not even attempt to near it. Typically, the consequence will be instant blindness. The face or innermost sanctuary of a deity is where its Obala Akwu (divine consciousness) "anchors" (Ullulu Ya) on descending in a given consecrated setting. It is usually the most potent spot within any sacred enclave or temple, for it is from there that the specific degree of divine consciousness anchored in the deific form "streams out" to encompass the rest of the complex. Accordingly, the generic term for this most sacred spot is given as Okwu Mmuo, which is derived from the metaphor of "rushing waters" (i.e. mmiri na ekwo ekwo) in allusion to the supernatural vibrancy of presence that typically characterizes the arrival of these divinities. In their original incorporeal forms, these divine forces are known as Ijite-Ete-na-Aka-Ete (Creative Forces of the Primal Realm, Primal Square and Primal Waters or Ndi Odii Akwu/Aka. In demotic Igbo, the single generic nomenclature for these Afa terms is Mmuo. Subsequently, on this physical plane, their symbolic manifestations or corporealized forms as appropriately identified, interfaced and ritualized by Igbo Dibias, priests/priestesses are known as Akwu-Ullulu-Ushi, which translates as "Primordial Manifestation of Divine Potency". As with most primary Igbo words, the ancient transition
from the original *Afa* tongue to the demotic Igbo language of today brought about a great deal of loss in inherent original concepts and principles encoded therein. The mostly deliberate but ultimately justified efforts at dialect formulation among successive groups of Igbo people did not help the matter either. It should be stated that most of these dialects as spoken today were consciously formulated contrary to what modern linguists have posited about the genesis of intra-linguistic variation in many African languages, especially in the Igbo case. For instance, it is such circumstances that generated the need for some groups of Igbo people to relegate the original *Alulu/Aruru* concept and word in place of a more contracted term, *Aro*. The problem is that, while *Alulu/Aruru* naturally embraces the complex scope of the originally encoded concept, the word *Aro* inevitably confines it to a mere vibratory phenomenon. Its other demotic meanings aside, such as cobra, arrow-tip, an Igbo cultural sub-group etc., the word *Aro* as consciously chosen and applied by some Igbo dialect groups in the term *Aro Ushi* subsequently gives its meaning as "Point of Ancient Vibration". As can be observed, a whole world of meaning is hereby jettisoned from the original *Afa* derived term, *Akwu-Ululu-Ushi*. Although spirit is truly manifest in the vibratory nature of reality (*Ijite Ete*), yet one cannot say that a thing’s nature is ultimately the totality of that thing’s essence. An essence is indefinable, thus unlimited. It is clear that vibration is *Ete* in *Afa* language and the "stringy" palm-climbing rope used by Igbo palm-wine tapsters in their art is a deliberate, visual and pragmatic realization of this principle by ancient Igbo people. In climbing the palm tree, the knowledgeable and experienced palm-wine tapster moves the horizontal rope vertically-up first, then moves his vertical body into the horizontal balance of the rope next. The process is continued until he reaches the top of the palm-tree. On coming down he maintains the same technique, moving the rope down first, then his body next. The activity itself is akin to a journey (*Ije*—from the *Afa* word, *Ijite*). As such, the tapster is demonstrating the principle of *Ete-Obi-Ijite-Ofu* i.e. spirit-movement or vibration precedes matter-movement (biopetality). The former is represented by the horizontal principle, while the latter is represented by the vertical principle. The rope itself is circular in shape, constructed from "strings" of very
sturdy palm-fiber, while the said palm-tree is of a spherical column shape in the semblance of the letter "I" with its upper part (Isi) in the semblance of the letter "X". Correspondingly, when one launches into mystic vision, it will be clearly observed that vibration is indeed, a stringed phenomenon which prefigures the movement of matter in every way, shape and form. The spirit itself is not necessarily "seen" in the literal sense of the word. In fact, should any human being perceive or experience divine force in its full-spectrum manifestation while still in this realm of corporeality, they would quite simply, be dead. Any full-spectrum manifestation of divine presence will be far too overbearing for a human being and will naturally engulf such a person into the intense mystic energy field, in which case they will cease to exist corporeally. Thus, for the most part, it is the vibrational presences (often as totemic apparitions) which are essentially traces of the supernatural movements of these higher forces that are seen. Hence, vibration is not spirit. It is rather a characteristic feature of spirit emanation. As such, it will be stating the obvious to remark that the use of the limited term, Aro Ushi (Point of Ancient Vibration) instead of Aruru Ushi (Primordial Manifestation of Divine Potency) in denoting the divine spirit forces or sparks of God is absolutely unfavorable for the Igbo language, culture and sacred traditions. As one will expect, with time, historic circumstances and usage contracted this original term from Akwu-Ululu-Ushi to Alushi or Arushi. It should be further noted that, what Igbo Dibias, priests and priestesses accomplish in their genuine efforts to harmonize, heal, regulate, monitor, develop, align, guide and ultimately ensure the smooth functioning of society and life in general is to essentially corporealize aspects of the erstwhile ever-moving divine spirit emanations of God and as such, channel their divine potencies towards the above stated priorities of human life and society. Given that the original practice of corporealizing deities is a tradition that surfaced in Igboland at a time when abominations were newly emerging and people were slowly becoming possessed by the creeping pull of vicious emotions, the ancients were highly taken aback from such incursions and tactfully sought to put an end to such by instituting supernatural monitoring forces, interfaced with mystic technologies to regulate law enforcement. Therefore, it is only natural
that in time, this practice deteriorated and spiraled out of control and resulted in the crass profusion of all manners of deific instituting practices, many of which were driven by envy, overt greed and gender exploitation. Hence, besides its original Afa meaning, the functional meaning of the term as given is Aru-Si/Alu-Kwu-Si/Aru-Kwu-Shi (Abomination Terminator/Communal Mystic Law Enforcement Portal). Toward this task, they primarily created a suitable material space for these divine spirit forces to inhabit and this is what we call Ululu Mmuo (Spirit Anchor) or sanctuary, whose larger accommodating structure or complex is respectively called the Obi Mmuo (Spirit House or Temple) or Owo Mmuo (Spirit Court or Enclave). With time, some ancient Igbo Dibiass also developed other deific mystic interfacing technologies which aided positively in solving many other necessary societal issues, such as infertility, technological production, agricultural work, long distance traveling, medicine and health care delivery, mystic propulsion, divination, astronomy, mineralogy and mining tasks, hydrology and ecological conservation, architectonics and mystic structural modeling, iron, copper and bronze smithing, multidimensional and smart material engineering, sustainable settlement facilitation etc.

Indeed, beyond the 5th dimension of etheric reality, spirit ceases to have any kind of quantifiable form. In other words, it nullifies the total 94 senses with which we navigate and identify energy in 4th and 3rd dimensional reality. It nullifies these 94 senses to the point of absolute non-description and resultedly, our vocabulary for it is exhausted. It defies all set templates of articulation obtaining in this Be Mmadu, thereby giving rise in the human consciousness, a fluid epistemology. Messages transmitted in this mystic cognition mode are expressed in what the Igbos call Ude (sound utterances) and are much laden with meanings. In the Igbo context, we find this in the wide-ranging word Mmuo, used to denote this ontological reality. However, in our common neurolinguistic contexts and waking state consciousness, this word may not articulate the entirety of ultimate capabilities inherent in its referenced ontological order. This is so because, the word has its roots in Ude, which are intensely charged sounds produced by human beings and all creatures whilst in highly
emotionally engaged, subconscious cognition modes. Infact, this word Mmuo is an onomatopoeic Ude sound produced by the ocean, whilst in the referred super charged state. Accordingly, if one utters this sound in a mystic cognition mode, it is an indication that they are now in an ocean state of consciousness; in a super charged, infinite subconscious mode, thus an interpreter must be emotionally absolved to get to the depth of the message’s meanings. For those who know, from that point of perception onwards, everything else encountered may only be communicated as mystic articulation at best and the experience of the said reality is the only means to rest whatever doubts one harbors on its veracity. Such is the paradox of the mind phenomenon and the human ontology in general. Indeed, at this level of reality, empirical explicitness (Mekafunanya) is negated (Odaa Iyi Akwu). On this, the Dibia Afa will state that, Mmuo anaro anu okwu ikpeazu lit. the spirits/spirit world do not hear the "second word" i.e. spirits are not under the dualistic laws which regulate this Be Mmadu plane of existence; they do not accept lies according to the principle of Eziokwu bu ndu, Okwu asi bu Onwu lit. Truth is life, Falsehood is Death. As can be observed, falsehood came after truth which is Ofu Ora in Afa. As such, it is of this dualistic world of Mekafunanya. The said dictum also connotes the fact that spirits do not "hear" the demotic Igbo language froth with many Mekafunanya concepts. If one is still demonstrating skepticism, the Dibia Afa, in one stroke of conclusive dictum, will state that Okwu izizi erugo be Chukwu lit. The First Word or Answer (Ofu Ora/Eziokwu) from the lips of the Dibia has been assimilated or vocally programmed into Universal Consciousness. In other words, he or she has told you all there is on the issue. Any other proof demanded will have to be experienced by the seeker. Accordingly, the original Afa word Ete is applied in demotic Igbo expressions to denote restlessness and similar notions. Indeed, spirit is eternally in motion.

Thus the mystic dictum, okiri kiri bu ije agwo – circular pattern is the movement of the snake i.e. Spirit. In a pragmatic sense, the word is used to describe specific activities that naturally demand specially coordinated body-mind-spirit motion such as, Ite Egwu (to dance i.e. to move in the air), Ite Nkwu (to tap palm wine i.e. to move in the air),
Ite Ofe (to cook soup i.e. to manipulate water, fire and earthly condiments in a pot stand resting in the air) etc. One may also hear an anxious Igbo person utter such expressions as, Aru n’ete mu ete (my body is restless). The important thing to note is that, all these examples denote instances or activities that often catalyze the average functionality rate of the body and mind as a result of the equally catalyzed vibratory activity of the spirit in the spiritual realm. It should be stated that, in Igbo cosmology, medico-healing tradition and thought, it is well established that the average human has upwards of 360 senses. The ancient Igbo mystic axiom on this, as articulated in the Umunze tradition is given as: Nne egbe kpara imirikiti nku iri ogu l’ato vii nwa ya, ajuo ya shi o ozuwe hu? Ya shi mba, shi o wokwuru ogu nku ishi l’ato oji ja ete ohe ede mmuo ya! lit. The Mother Kite that bundled 300 pieces of firewood and loaded it onto its child, and returned into the bush to gather some more. On been asked whether it was not enough, she said no, that it only remained three extra bundled-heads of firewood with which she will cook her spirit-cocoyam soup. Of these 360 senses inherent in the average human being, 46 are utilized in this immediate plane of Be Mmadu, another 48 for use in the marginal Agu Mmuo/Offia Mmuo/Agu Mu plane, while the rest 266 are for use in the higher planes of Be Mmuo. All this and several other worlds of knowledge are encapsulated in the above mystic axiom! In addition to this, current research results by scientists have now determined that the typical human brain has an estimated storage capacity of 256 Exabytes/256 Billion Gigabytes which is the equivalent of 1.2 Billion Average PC Hard Disks. What comes to mind on realizing this is what Afa Akpukpala calls Obi Ete i.e. Okuku Agwu (Agwu Mystic Memory Bowl) and the associated mystic axiom: Ako-bu-Elili-Kwukolu-Afa lit. intellect-memory is the “rope” on which Afa is stringed, which automatically brings us to the 256 basic binary codes of the Akpukpala oracle and their linking 266 mystic elemental gates of the Afia-n’Ano-Ubochi-n’Ano plane, also known as the 266 elemental particles. What this indicates quite clearly is that, human beings and all biological life in general are the most advanced technology existing in the universe. One is left in wonder then, realizing how much our ancients knew and how little we ourselves know today, in our belligerent ignorance. Infact, if our ancient peoples were not some
super intelligent beings, then one is at loss of what to say. Returning to our original discourse, the human face is indeed, no mystery to one who can read it. For instance, it is expected that an experienced and competent psychologist should be able to discern and interpret the non-verbal cues or even inherent expressionlessness of a given face. Likewise, only a truly gifted and competently trained diviner (Dibia Afa), priest and priestess (Eze Mmuo/Ezenwanyi) or the equivalents of such sacerdotal officials can successfully decipher and interpret the mystifying expressions on the "face" of diverse entities, spiritual and corporeal. A Dibia Afa who has been trained in the use of the Akpukpala oracle for instance, is particularly skilled in using this medium to read and interpret the unobvious expressions on the face of the Earth (Ana), the face of the four Igbo cosmic diurnal forces (Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo), the face of the Sun and the local planets (Anyanwu na Ubochi), the face of the Moon (Onwa), the face of the ancestral mothers and fathers (Okpu na Ichie), the face of diverse divinities, spirit entities and human beings (Ora Mmuo na Ora Mmadu), the face of the sky itself (Igwe), deep-space (Elu Igwe), the underworld or spirit realm in general (Ana Mmuo), the Igbo cosmic time band (Ngwugwo Oge Igbo), the face of the stars (Kpakpando) and everything else in-between as well as beyond.

 Appropriately, the process of deciphering such mysteries is seldom accomplished in the same mundane manners employed in our daily encountering of those same realities. Thus, as alluded in the earlier given proverb, it is expected for instance, that one who seriously seeks to draw out laughter from the stoically shielded face of the regimented arrow shooter, must go extra miles to accomplish such a task. In other words, they must possess extraordinary wit, agility, psychological competence and unwavering determination. A very ancient Igbo mystical axiom captures this principle in the Aguata-Orumba dialect as “Ishi ja akanka, ya harakwa ka Ikenga” lit. “a head that longs to be efficacious should correspondingly assume the quality of Ikenga”. It is also important to note that, for purposes of Ogwu practices, the face is divided into two parts in Igbo sacred science. The first part, from the eyes (Anya) upwards to the forward head (Egedege Ihu) is designated as Etu Oba while from the nose (Imi) downwards to
the jaw (Agba) is designated as Atu Oba. The broad ranging implications of this mystical classification are beyond the scope of this work. Yet suffice it to say that in this particular cosmological context, Etu Oba refers to the ocular/visual dynamics of Ogwu, while Atu Oba refers to the sonic/vocal dynamics of Ogwu. The utilization of the face symbolism in encapsulating this mystical principle is in order, since it is typically from the eyes and mouth that potent mystical charges are more acutely directed from a human being (in the form of charged mystic syllables, staggered thought patterns, diverse energy emanations, mind-charged object-symbols etc. all of which are embedded with the desired command of their dispatcher). As regards both the social and transcendental powers of the face, the Igbo make it very clear that “abata n’ogbo, o ihu ka ana acho” i.e. “when in a public space, it is the face that one usually seeks out first before any other part of the body”. Going further, they will tell you that “emewe elu, anyanwu ka ana akpo” lit. “in rituals and sacrifices directed towards the Supreme Being, it is the Sun that is naturally called upon”. In their cosmology, it is also established that the light of the Sun (ihe, ive, ife) in its consciousness transmitting capacity as “chi” and revitalizing capacity as “oma” is deeply symbolic of life. The Igbo filial act of Ibi Oma (affectionate embracement) as practiced among the Igbos is actually a realized form of this belief.

The traditional upholders of the Iru cult will likewise tell you that “ife n’ine mmadu ga abu no n’iru; ekwube, no iru kacha” i.e. “all that one will be resides on their face. In the final analysis, the face is the greatest”. From such convictions naturally arose well-known Igbo names as Iruka (face is supreme), Irudumueje (Propelled by the force of the face), Iruogu (war-front/warrior-like-face), Irudi (Face force exists), Iruanwu (Sun-face/eternal face/new face/youthful face), Iruoma (Oma’s face/fortunate face), Iruaku (face of wealth) etc. In another Igbo mystical axiom, an even subtler association is made between the face-force, the light of the Sun and the notion of completeness: ezumezu anwu no ya n’ihu lit. the wholesomeness of the Sun’s force is detectable on its face”. In other words, one need not look beyond the face of the Sun to recognize the wholesomeness of its blazing force, as it is all over its face! Appropriately so, this shimmering and overwhelming
quality of the Sun’s face has been mystically tapped and utilized by Dibias since time immemorial in the preparation of countless powerful Ogwu and in the coronation rites of kings, queens, Dibia initiation rites, priests and priestesses ordination rites, as well as titular rites of high Ozo nobilities. Infact, this same force is utilized in the consecration of the Dibia’s sacred iron rattle-staff (Oji, fully known as oji-kwanitelu-nwa-Dibia-dagbulo-ofekel!). As functionally intended, when the Oji is struck into the ground, instantaneously, it creates a highly charged magnetic field around itself, which readily absorbs all the static energy radiations around into its radius or energy influence field, thereby nullifying their potency. The Egret (Ugbana/Ichekereke) is also associated with the face in the Oru (marshland/riverine) areas of Igbo land, for its dazzling white form which corresponds to the Igbo mystical association of spirits with brightness and flight. Thus, in rituals of cleansing, this principle is incorporated for the Egret gains its clean and bright appearance from the constant bath it takes in the rivers/oceans. Accordingly, the Igbos enjoin: O malu sa abu kene oshimili makana o na abu Ugbana wusia okene oshimilli lit. an enlightened person who has taken bath in the ocean (wisdom, granted vision, cleansing etc.) should show their appreciation, for even the Egret is always grateful to the sea after taking its bath. Similarly, when the face is highly charged in the appropriate lunar ritual milieu and properly washed with salt water (preferably ocean salt/Nzu Okpu) whilst intoning the above mystic chant—ever before departing from one’s house/home space, the same effect of Iru Oma/Iru Ugeleoma is readily achieved in the public sphere. The same principle is at work in the following: onye saa chi, o kene okike lit. when one is granted the privilege of waking up to behold another day, they should thank the supreme creator. As if in final, resolute attempt to perpetuate the striking importance of the face notion in Igbo thought and consciousness, the ancient Igbos also enshrined the term Iru as the generic name for the mask-simulacra worn by their masquerade figures.

When in full effect, the tremendous magnetic pull and surrounding mystique of Igbo masquerades remains a living testimony of this conviction. Thus, it goes to say that Iru is everything. Iru is beauty
(Mma), influence (Ikanya), fame (Ude) and power (Ike). It is the Enyo Chukwu (God’s mirror) of Igbo mystical and cosmological traditions, particularly with respect to the human microcosm. On this note, the etymological parallel between the words Ihu and Ihe is hereby highlighted. The kite (Egbe) or sometimes the hawk (Nkwo) is also the archetypal animal associated with the face in Igbo cosmology and mystical thought. From all indications, the well-renowned ocular powers of the kite (Anya Egbe) corroborates this mystical articulation. Infact, as early as 1951, Jeffreys noted that:

The Ndri [Nri] scarification includes signs representing the moon, sun, and hawk’s tail. All that is required is that the rest of the scarification should represent wings and then assembled on forehead and face are the symbols of a winged lunar and solar disk. (p. 105)

When he got to Agbaja, he also noted that “the Agbaja pattern, which is more extensive than the Ndri, exhibits the wings of the ugo [eagle] or sacred vulture...(105)”. Here, the motif in reference is that of Egbe-Daa lit. Kite-in-Descent or Udele Igwe i.e. the cosmic vulture, one of the several deities in the entourage of Anyanwu, the Igbo solar divinity and solar cult as such. Kalu (2007) has aptly articulated the following with regards to Anyanwu:

In everyday colloquial terms the word ‘anyanwu’ refers to the sun. In standard lexicon, the word is made up of two conjuncts ‘anya’ (eye) and ‘anwu’ light. This literal translations “the eye of light” construes the sun as the eye of light. The questions this raises are, Whose eye is the sun? And to whom does it belong? The logical direction of these questions alerts us: a) that more is being asked than can be answered by our everyday framework; and b) that the meaning of the standard lexicon must derive its intelligibility from elsewhere...John Anenechukwu Umeh discusses how the everyday meaning of ‘anyanwu’ (the sun) is parasitic on the underlying esoteric framework of Igbo metaphysics. On this framework, ‘Anya Anwu’ is the “Eye of the Lord or Divinity of Light,” which is also the Supreme Force of Chu Ukwu (the great being/God) of anwu or light. Umeh describes Anwu (Light) as another name for Agwu, the Holy Spirit that is a part of Chi Ukwu. According to him “[a]s Ose Obala, Agwu is God of Light (Anwu) whose Eye is the Sun (Anyanwu). At times Agwu is also regarded as Anyanwu, the Sun God.” On this metaphysical scheme, Agwu, the Holy Spirit, is a female force “Nne Nwanyi (the Old Lady of God, i.e., the Divine Lady Mother Spirit)” as well as the Supreme Force of eternity and the ruler of everlastingness...the “Spirit of
Light and of the Rising Sun,” who is both Agwu and the Divine Old Lady of God...Anyanwu asserts in deep metaphysical language that bringing women into the political process augurs well for the future of the (African) continent. (para. 18-25; emphasis mine)

It should be stated here for posterity that Utu-Udele-Igwe as known in the Ogu (Awgu), Nsukka and the Agbaja area generally, is a deified force representing the super-ocular powers of the Sun, as well as the equally super-penetrative abilities of the Sun’s subtle energies, with vast mystic ramifications. In Agbaja community of Enugu State, he is apppellated as Anu-Ukwu-Ana-Eku-Utu-Udele-Igwe or Udele-Igwe-Ana-Eku-Utu-Oshimiri-Atu-Nnu.

The nomenclature Utu/Utukuru/Uturu is both a pun and direct reference to the phallus but, also on the Igbo notion of drilling through i.e. Itupu/Irufu/Itufu/Utu/Utu/Otutu as the Sun is very well known to do with its light. The above notion reveals a key knowledge with regards to the earliest origins of iron smithing activities on this planet. The ancient Igbo people show in the subtle layers of pun embedded in the word Udele Igwe, that they so thoroughly grasp the anatomy of the vulture (sky-earth-cosmos) to the point of knowing that its stomach (cosmic gas regions - replicated in the smelting furnace) was acidic enough (profuse with hydrogen) to the extent of having the capacity to break down metal! Basic organic chemistry demonstrates this, for in a compound, hydrogen alone causes an acid to occur like in HCl (hydrochloric acid). Hydrogen is a catalyst element, but when dissociated, for example, in a case where HCl is broken apart into H and Cl, the H has a positive (+) charge and the Cl has a negative (-) charge. The positive charge on the H in this case is known as the hydron-ion and causes the solution containing it to become more acidic. Thus, the more H+ a compound is, the more acidic! Quite clearly, the foregoing is foolproof that Igbo blacksmiths and Igbo metallurgical tradition in general possess incontrovertible scientific knowledge that transcends contemporary scientific understandings in zones such as chemistry, biomedicine, physics, astronomy and materials engineering/alchemy; knowledge that avails the manipulation of elements at cosmic scales, as evidently shown in their deliberate miniaturization of this operative knowledge in the
furnace structure itself. *Udele Igwe* which is actually a form of *Agama-Gadolu-Uzu*, the Igbo personified force of smithing technology, is thus a personified catalyst spirit (the transformative force of hydrogen) that eats metal and regurgitates tools; thereby proffering technology and higher knowledge for dynamic reordering of society/civilization. In this stance, *Udele Igwe* shares in the essence of *Agali n’Abo/Ikenga, Agwu* and *Eke* respectively, as *Chi Nka*.

*Udele Igwe* was also known as *Agu-Nkwo, Egbe-n’Uveneke, Oti-Nku, Egbe-Daa, Egba-Ma, Udele-Ugwuezeugwu-Oshimiri, Okpoko-Nwe-Enu* etc. in the past and still so in some parts of Igboland. As with Horus of the ancient Egyptian pantheon, *Agu-Nkwo* is often praised as “*Ululu Anwu*” lit. Terrestrial Manifestation of the Sun. Interestingly, one of the most famous gods of the ancient Sumerian civilization was a god called *Utu* or *Utukku*. Coincidence? We don’t think so. Infact, Sumerian mythology has it that *Utu* was the ancient Sun god of pre and post-deluge Sumer. According to Kasak and Veede (2001), the word *Utu* means “Sun” in Akkadian, Sumerian and Assyro-Babylonian. Utu is also reported to have been the god of justice, application of law, and the lord of truth, usually depicted as wearing a horned helmet and carrying a saw-edged weapon not unlike a pruning saw. It is held that every day, Utu emerges from a mountain in the east, symbolizing dawn, and travels either via chariot or boat across the Earth, returning to a hole in a mountain in the west, symbolizing sunset. Likewise, each night, he descends into the underworld to decide the fate of the dead. Utu is also depicted as carrying a mace, and standing with one foot on a mountain. His symbol is sun rays from the shoulders, and or sun disk or a saw (See Plates 10a and b).

It is worth stating that while conducting his research into the *Ichi* cult tradition of Igbo culture, M. D. W. Jeffreys made some excellent observations, but many of which he had no indepth knowledge of their meanings or implications as a foreigner in Igboland/culture, and thus failed to illuminate them as such. However, he did note that the *Ichi* facial scarification tradition has been a central feature of the Igbo sun cult, ever since ancient times. In the image below, the winged-pattern which is clearly denoted as the Agbaja pattern is that of *Utu-
Udele-Igwe whom, Jeffreys incidentally also identified as the “the sacred vulture” (See Plate 10 c). In line with the forgoing discourse, Meek (1970) also noted as early that:

In the Nsukka division, every householder offers regularly sacrifice to Anyanu [Anyanwu] (the Sun), but in Awgu division there are no sun-shrines, though a man may occasionally hang up a chicken in a piece of cleft bamboo with a prayer to Anyanu that he will receive it and convey it to Chuku [Chukwu]. Incidentally, the peoples of Awka [Oka] are known to those of Awgu as “The children of the Sun”. (p. 210)

Jeffreys (1951) accordingly notes in this regard and with respect to the scarification patterns (Ichi) which the Mgbuluichi sun-cult nobles wore, “The names “Sun” and “Moon” for parts of the scarifications are reasonable ones among a people with so highly developed a sun-cult” (p. 105). It goes therefore to say that, when the ancient Sumerians whose African origins have been extensively and thoroughly argued by Hermstein (2012) and Acholonu (2013)—reveal through their mythological traditions and recorded literature that their Sun god is Utu, whose father is En-zu, the Moon god (Igbo = Nzu Chukwu i.e. Divine White Clay of God or the Moon) or Nanna (Igbo = Nnanna i.e. Great Elderly Father or Grandfather), it clearly goes to show that not only were they historically and linguistically related to the Igbos and their culture, but beyond that and more strikingly, it demonstrates that both cultures also share undeniable epistemological and ontological heritage. For a fact, in Igbo culture, the Moon is associated with the beauty, fertility, healing, calendrics, mathematics, agriculture, writing, water, women, creation, white-clay, wisdom, astronomy and Dibias work, among other realities.

It is very important to note that in very ancient times, the Igbo solar cult utilized this piercing or penetrative powers (Utu) or attribute of the sun (Anyanwu) in many breathtaking ways that would easily be mistaken as magical to the Igbo people of this day and age. Today, the solar (astronomy) cult of the Lejja community of Nsukka has its main sun temple-complex within the same vicinity housing the Utu deity, and other ancient astral deities such as Ada-Ada (Venus also known as Ada Uto, Uto Ani, Ana, Ala, Okpu Nwanyi Nono, Nono etc. Pls. note that the Virgo constellation is known as Be Uto), Oshuru (the Sun and
Moon table), *Onu* (the Sun’s bottomless pit), *Odegwo* (the sun’s mound/the primeval mound) – all of which are rightly located within the *Otobo/Ama* or town square, in line with Igbo traditional civic planning design. Suffice it to say that the very potent energy of the Sun (*Ikenga Anwu*) and its rays (*Ire Anwu* lit. tongue of *Anwu*) constitute the most competent, precision efficient and ecologically sustainable forces utilized by the ancient globe-trotting Igbo itinerant technologists and artisans (the *Wawa* peoples of Igboland including *Ndi Oka*, *Ndi Nsukka*, *Ndi Agbaja*, *Ndi Nkanu* etc. also known in ancient times as *Igbo-na-Afu-Mba*, as well as *Ndi Nri*, *Ndi Oka-Igwe*, *Ndi Umudioka*, *Ndi Nkwere*, *Ndi Ogunka*, *Ndi Agulu*, *Ndi Nneni*, *Dinka Agbaja Mbano*, *Ndi Nanka* among others) in the vast architectural, technological and technical feats they achieved around the world, most of which are unsung today. The *Agu-Nkwo*/Egbe-Daa/Udele-Igwe mystic motif as worn on the face of consummate initiates of the Igbo mystic solar cultus of *Mgbulichi* or *Ndi-Nze-Mgbulichi* is one with immense implications to ancient Igbo history and civilization. It should be stated that the *Nze* title itself is fully given as *Nzere/Nzelu-Ihu*. As the etymology of the title reveals, it actually incorporates the notion of the inherent powers of the face in its conceptualization.

Besides, it is also observable that the much striking power of the face is not unconnected to the eyes. A mythic account of the *Egwu* mystic tradition propounds this as thus: a powerful ancient King called *Ezeanya* once desired for super-vision. So he approached the wisest of his counsellors, who further advised him to look up to nature for his result. Particularly, he was advised to look to the kingdom of birds. In due time, the king queried nearly every bird that existed across his land, offering to give the most beautiful of his daughters in marriage to the one bird that can in exchange, offer its powers of super-vision to the king. All the birds repeated the same mantra on their refusal, thus: *omalu neta bu onatalu chi nwa nnunu* lit. vision is but a nature of the bird, thus it cannot be exchanged. The king’s request was absurd to say the least and the birds made this clear to him one after the other, to the king’s mounting frustration. Finally, after it seemed like he had approached nearly all the birds, in his land, on a damp day, following a heavy rain, he came across a very strange looking bird whilst taking
a brief walk along the banks of the river. This strange bird was the *Ugbala-Nwa-Nnunu-Mmuo-n’afu-Mkpa-Mmuo*, a spirit bird that had come to feed on its choice meal of earthworms following the heavy rain. Gaining a sense of rekindled courage, the king approached this bird and repeated his request. To his greatest frustration, this bird too refused blatantly, but this time stating an even obscurer reason for doing so: *aha achota ife nmuo na be mmadu* lit. one does not find things that belong to the spirits in the land of humans! The king was overtly stupefied and disappointed. Sensing this, the wise strange-looking bird consoled him saying that, human beings and animals only exist to complement each other and not to replace each other. The desire to hunt down and dispossess another creature of the visionary powers with which it naturally sustains itself is but an indirect desire to extinguish that creature from existence. This profound truth however, did not help the king’s condition one bit, for he had become totally consumed with his obsession for visionary powers. Finally, in great pity, the bird agreed to help the king but only on two conditions. First, he must allow the wise bird four days to converge with fellow spirits so as to properly prepare the “new eyes” for the king. Secondly, he must not seek help from anywhere else. The king agreed with boundless joy and both departed.

On the fourth day which was an *Eke* market day, the bird arrived, flying down from the sky with a green palm-frond wrapped parcel hanging in its beak. The king also arrived with his entourage and his beautiful first daughter *Akwaugoeze* striding beside him. An air of intense surprise and tension possessed the atmosphere. The bird *Ugbala-Nwa-Nnunu-Mmuo-n’afu-Mkpa-Mmuo* finally flew down and marched stoically towards the king and announced to him that, the new eyes will be his as soon as he hands over his daughter to him as promised. The king did so and the bird left him the parcel and flew away with the king’s beautiful daughter as swiftly as it had landed. The king sensed betrayal but was quickly reminded of his promise of not asking for help from anyone else. When he opened the parcel, he found four white eggs in it. The king consulted with his counsel of sages. He was duly advised to keep the eggs safely and watch what will happen, for the spirits do not break their words. After eight
market days of great anticipation, the king woke up one morning and realized that the eggs had cracked open. In a mixture of joy and pensiveness, he collected the eggs from their safe place and was on his way to convey them into his Obi, when to his greatest surprise, the eggs began to crack and gave way to four Oturukpokpo chicks (Woodpecker) who wasted no time to pounce into his both eyes and pecked them out pitilessly, taking bits and pieces of them in their beaks as they flew off.

The king was in indescribable pain and agony. Immediately, an old Dibia Afa was sought and brought in to ascertain from the spirits what had gone wrong. The results were a shocker. The wise old seer, after consulting with the spirits, proclaimed that nothing was wrong with the king, but he was only experiencing the initial onset of great visionary powers! The old seer reminded the king of his quest for visionary powers. He told him that the eyes with which we see this world are not used to see into the world of the spirits. Thus, the four woodpeckers have taken his old eyes in fragments and will scatter them to the four corners of the world. So, whenever he feels a pull or irritation in his eye sockets, he should know that the spirits have left him a message at one of his four “super eyes” located at the four corners of the world. In this way, he can see all there is in this world as well as, all that the spirits do and convey. It is only by putting these fragmentary messages together as received from his super-eyes that he would emerge with great visions with which to prosper and save his kingdom from all perils. Finally, the old seer advised the king to be content with his gifts and live a life of patience. But, alas this great king who was hence forth known as Eze-Any-

The summarizing Igbo axiom on this encapsulates that: Oturukpokpo si na azu o gbanyeulu uwa bu ka o bechaa ogwe welu fu iru igwe anya lit. the Woodpecker said that its turned back on the world is merely resulting from its effort to gorge out appropriate hole in the Ogwe underworld tree from which to see deeply into the face of the sky. The omniscient universal eye, which is manifest in diverse forms, is thus referenced
(See Plate 10d). The symbol of the *Eze Anya* principle (*Anya Ofu*) is the same as the *Anya Ahomgbo/Eze Aro/Eze Aho* and the ancient Egyptian Eye of Horus mystic mathematical symbol/mnemonic. In this light, Igbo names, titles and appellations such as *Ezeanya* (king of eyes/kings of vision i.e. hawk), *Ugwuanya* (esteem of the eyes/vision), *Anyaugo* (eagle’s eye), *Anyaoma* (Oma’s eyes/benevolent eyes) etc. are all testimonies to this conviction. In the relatively recent past, it was traditional for every achieving Igbo person of age to possess two important votive statuettes in their family’s *Obu* (temple).

Briefly, these are *Ihu Chi/Okwa Chi* (Chi’s face/head) and *Ikenga Chi* (Chi’s right hand/corporeal body of Chi). Other votive statuettes such as *Okuku Chi, Agwu, Ukwu na Ije, Mbata Aku, Umu Oku, Ihejioku, Omumu* etc. may be acquired as spiritually or vocationally merited, inspired or required. The sacred ritual practice of potentiating and aligning the prime somatic constituents of the human being with the corresponding spheres of their life-world is a deeply rooted tradition in many African cultures. According to Chesi (1985) who has nicely documented the *Voudoun* traditions of Benin and related environs:

People say that in former times all men carried a share of the gods in them, and vice versa. The task of the ritual is to activate and to intensify these shares so as to enable man to be divine for a certain period of time. (p. 7)

Griaule (1965) also notes that in Dogonland:

The sanctuary is also a smithy…the two hemispherical alters in the sanctuary, the priest’s personal alters, dedicated the one to his head and the other to his body, are the pots of the bellows. (p. 102)

Among the Igbos, this highly ancient practice has survived as *Igo Chi* or *Isokwa Ndu Oku* (*Isokwa Ndu* for short). As implied, it literally means “tending the fire of life”. Going back to the earliest antiquity of Igbo culture, this practice has its root in the fundamental mystical conviction that, every single unit of the human body is an embodied consciousness (*Aka Nta*) unto itself. In other words, as individual constituents of the human microcosm, they are archetypal spirited sparks of life that must be ritually interwoven, experientially refined and fanned into intensity in order to realize their optimum potentials. This process also extends to the emotional, mental and spiritual
bodies. As known to any Dibia worth their salt, the same principle readily applies in the mystic feat of potentiating leaves (*Iwake Ogwu*), roots, herbs, barks, water, minerals, animal parts and organs, sacred ritual effigies etc. However, it must be stated that it is the possession of *Onu Atu* (spiritually potent mouth) by the Dibia that makes this feat possible. Thus, as seen here, the practice of ritualizing one’s face (*Irunye Ihu Chi*) is a potentiating act with enormous benefits. As the term *Isokwa Ndu Oku* implies, when the face is ritualized, one is essentially fanning the potent embers of the spiritual face (*Ihu Chi*) into a heightened level of consciousness and performance. As a side remark, it should also be noted that this practice and others like it are actually life-long variations of such situational *Ogwu* solutions as *Ihu Oma*, *Uzu na Ude*, *Aka Mghere*, *Ebube Agu n’echi Agu*, *Ire Oma*, *Onu Uto*, *Dike Ato na Mba*, *Ite Awele*, *Echewe Echeta*, *Agwo Eke Mbe*, *Agwo Atu Mbe*, *Ugo Ama Ujo*, *Ogugu-ana-Nka*, *Onumu-ana-Nka*, *Oje Mba Enwe Iro* etc. among others. Thus said, it is clear from the foregoing that the face notion/symbolism is a highly recognized and represented element in Igbo culture and sacred traditions. As such, it is one of the chief somatic features of the body that has been deeply explored and celebrated in the cosmological traditions of Igbo people since earliest antiquity. We now turn to the next somatic feature as outlined, namely, *Aka* (hand). It should be observable at this point that the Igbos are much prone to according a set of specialized, symbolic importance to the most physically exacting parts of the body. Thus, they have such direct and figurative somatic taxonomies as: *Ose n’Abo* (clairvoyant eyes), *Ike Okwu* (mouth of oratory), *Ire Ufo* (prophetic tongue), *Ike Aka* (creative/industrious hands), *Ike Anya* (influential eyes), *Onu Atu* (spiritually potentiating powers of the mouth, such as applied in *Iwake/Imachaa Ogwu* i.e. potentiating *Ogwu*), *Obi Ike/Ikata Obi* (resilient heart) etc. It should be noted that these are all individual *Onatalu Chi* (incarnated potencies/one’s nature/the nature of a thing) in their own rights. However, it will not be an exaggeration to mention that, in many cases, when Igbo people refer to power (*Ike*), the hand notion is almost mentally utilized to demonstrate this somatic cum existential feature.
To really illustrate the deep importance of the hand notion in Igbo thought, it is imperative to bring to the reader’s attention, two Igbo cultus traditions namely, the Ofo cult and the greater Ikenga cult—where the hand notion plays a highly central role. Within the Ofo cultus for instance, the hand is praised as “achara iyi kwaturu nkwu nochiri uzo, konye ya ete n’olu” lit. “the stream-side bamboo that fell the obstructing palm tree and left the palm-climbing rope around its neck”. From the above mystical appellation, the spiritual and judicial role of the Ofo ritual symbol in Igbo life and culture, as well as the ritualized sacredness of its wielding hand (Aka Ji Ofo) can be observed. It may be helpful to also state that among the Igbo, the Ofo ritual symbol is a sanctified staff of spiritual, judicial and political legitimacy. Ejizu (1987) captures the importance of the Ofo ritual symbol in the following words:

The unique importance of Ofo stems from its rich conceptualization and its intricate involvement in the dynamics of traditional Igbo thought and life. Ofo is a male symbol [in essence, but not in ultimate praxis; women held Ofo in ancient Igboland and still do so today in many cases] that primarily represents ancestral power and authority and the key values of truth and justice. (p. 457; emphasis mine)

Thus, an Aka Ji Ofo in Igbo culture and thought simultaneously refers to an individual who possesses a given class of Ofo which automatically legitimizes their position of office, as well as alludes to the inherent power of such an Ofo and by extension, the potency of its wielding hand. This fairly goes to illustrate the principal role of the hand notion-symbolism in Igbo culture and thought. It should also be noted that as far as this universe of life is concerned, Ofo Chukwu is the highest and most potent existent Ofo and as such is only held by Chukwu and not by any claimant clan of Igbo society; although some are making this audacious and ignorant claim today. It is subsequently from this primal fold of Ofo that both human beings and the divinities and other spirits beings are handed their respective Ofo. Indeed, some very ancient Igbo proverbs have uncannily captured the colossal significance of the hand in Igbo thought. Among these are four favorite ones, singled out for their articulate precision and broad-reaching wisdom. They include, “Aka jie agu, mgbada abiara ya ugwo”
i.e “when the leopard suffers a weakened hand, the deer will come for it’s payback”, “Aka aja aja n’ebute onu mmanu mmanu” i.e. “the hand that has known much toiling will eventually know much feasting”, “Aka kpara esekwu udene, okoo mmuo chiri ya ozo” i.e. “when the touting vulture is finally in hand, it will prove its titular legitimacy”, and lastly, “Nma egburu n'obe aka, akwowa aka echeta ya” lit., “the knife-cut that was made on the palm of the hand is remembered when ones ventures to wash the hands”. In the above given proverbs, the considerable significance of the hand notion in Igbo thought is indeed made obvious.

As earlier stated, the Ikenga cult tradition is yet another Igbo institution where the hand is of central significance. Although aesthetically symbolized in Igbo mystical thought with the ram head, Ikenga actually represents the spirit of the right hand. It should be borne in mind that Ikenga is fundamentally a cosmic being or force with direct roles, emanations and implications in the human world. As such, his universal plane of origin is given as the sixth plane of consciousness (agali n’abo – as symbolized by the two horns of 3+3=6), descending from Be Chukwu. Ejizu (1991) has rightly observed on this issue that:

As a cosmic being, Ikenga is believed to liaise with and co-opt the active support of one’s spiritual double known as Chi, and other supersensible entities intricately related to different aspects of human personality, including Ukwu na-ije (the cosmic force of traveling), Ufo (the cosmic force of one’s name and fame), and Ihu (the cosmic force of one’s face). This coordinative function of Ikenga at the mythical realm, which the actual commissioning and ownership of a physical symbol object is meant to acknowledge and validate, is an essential aspect of its major role as a success-generating force. (p. 243)

Ikenga is hence the cosmic incarnation of the primordial creative energy of Chukwu as Ofu Agali. To put it succinctly, Ikenga is Ike-Eji-Ke-Uwa or Ike Chukwu. It is better emphasized in such invocative appellations of Chukwu as Okike Kere Uwa i.e. the creative force that created the world or Ike Ji Uwa lit. the sole energy that survives the universe. Accordingly, on the plane of human activities, this creative force trickles down into several forms with nearly infinite ramifications. At the social dimension of Igbo life for instance, Ikenga
symbolizes the spirit of personal as well as collective achievement; while at the bodily dimension, it symbolizes the spirit of determination and industry as embodied in the right hand and expressed as raw, kinetic energy in physical activities. As noted by Okeke (2005), Ikenga refers to:

A symbolic spiritual material or place. It is associated with chi and is actually the temple or an icon representing the chi. If it is a place then that is where one performs his libation. (p. 16)

Discussing the socio-human dimension of Ikenga in relation to its ritualized symbolism, Onwuejeogwu has also stated that:

The two ram horns mean that the owner of the Ikenga must go ahead in his business with the stubbornness of a ram. The knife in his right hand means that he must cut down any obstacle on the way and the skull in the left hand means that he must always take the lead in order to succeed. (p. 92)

Moreover, other scholars of African culture have also noted the presence of the Ikenga notion and tradition in other Nigerian cultures. It should also be stated that in most areas of Igboland where the Ikenga tradition obtains, its cult is also referred to as the “cult of the right hand”. Indeed, as the given name, numeric value and characteristic ram spirit indicates, the potentiating sacred science of Ikenga involves a symbolic, somatic and ritualistic synchronization of a specific polarity and state of primal energy as divinely condensed in the human being and accordingly, affording an individual with the privilege of empowering their life’s activities with this ritualized force. Commenting on the greater metaphysical and mystic significance of the Ikenga ontology and notion in Igbo thought, Ejizu (991) has rightly observed that:

At the more abstract level Ikenga, as a core Igbo religious symbol, encapsulates multiple meanings related to different facets of experience: mythical aspect, social relations and individual life. It primarily represents the sacred and mythical realm and the fundamental relationship that is believed to exist between human beings and the supersensible [spiritual] order. It is worth recalling that for the indigenous Igbo the fortunes of human beings and the general well-being of their world depend greatly on the tenor of that vital relationship (Kalu 1978: 41). Specifically, the physical ritual object called Ikenga stands for a supersensible being of the same name. And it manifests itself as a
dynamic cosmic force essentially connected with success and achievement in any and all life’s pursuits leading to enhanced status and distinction in one’s society and a sure hope of a blissful existence in the after-life as a glorified ancestor. This is the primary thrust and signal import of *Ikenga* symbolism, the pre- eminent motif underlying its cult as well as the central theme of its major iconographic adornments. (p. 243; emphasis mine).

For a fact, Igbo people believe that all persons naturally inherit one form of Ikenga or another from Chukwu, but until ritualized or spiritually activated, they would never experience the ultimate triumph of “standing out” in the competitive arenas of their life-world. In other words, the spirit of the “industrious vanguard” is what Ikenga essentially represents. Moreover, the right hand is regarded in many cultures as the creative hand; that is to say, a fitting bodily channel for dispensing creative energy. Therefore, on the human microcosmic level, the Ikenga notion embodies the boundless omnipotence of Chukwu, as localized and manifested in the right hand (See Plates 11 a, b and c). In this very regard, Umeh (1999) has pointed out that:

The praying mantis is also said to be armed with knives on both hands by God (Chukwu) who also is the Lord in one’s right hand of achievements and endeavors and is in that capacity, *Ikenga*. (p. 80)

Interestingly, the key anthropomorphic depictions of the Dendara temple relief, together with the general impression of a potential, kinetic activity, as well as other recognizable human poses, gestures and varied symbolisms therein depicted—closely mirror certain traditional precepts still existent in the Igbo Ikenga cult of the right hand. It should be remarked that, at the heart of this ancient cult tradition is a rich, kinetic energy-centered cosmology. In fact, as the image aptly depicts, the baboon holds not just any knife, but the *Nma Ekwu* or *Nma Ji* (connected to the *Ike Ji* principle of *Njoku Ji* - the Igbo deity of Yam), which is the exact kind of knife wielded by Ikenga figures in the Igbo artistic tradition. Thus in certain contexts, this knife is also known as *Nma Ikenga*, which is appropriately held in one’s *Aka Ikenga* (right hand). An ornamental form of this knife is also among the chief symbol-objects that must be owned by any authentic *Eze Ji*
title holder in traditional Igbo society as an indication that they have ritually and legitimately acquired their Aka Ji or Yam-Wielding-Hand.

Moreover, Umeh (1999) noted the following, while illuminating certain rudiments of ancient Egyptian and San cultures found in the oral, artistic and cosmogonic traditions of Igbo culture, “...I-Kaggen is a slight distortion of Igbo Ikenga, the Igbo and ancient Egyptian Ram-Headed Deity” (p. 79). Quoting Arthur Cotterell, he also pointed out that, “Kaang was provoked by the disobedience of the first men that he made. So he sent to the earth both destruction and death, removing his own abode into the top of the sky...Up till now, the Igbo Ikenga is still carved with knife held on His right hand and human head held on the left hand, reminiscent of Ikenga's (Kaang's) destruction of disobedient human beings” (p. 79-80). Thus far, one continues to note the consistency of the “raised knife” symbolism in its mytho-aesthetic context as demonstrated in the Igbo, San and Egyptian oral traditions; as well as the epistemic precept underlying it. Better yet, Meiler (2001)—an initiate of the Egyptian indigenous knowledge tradition—also has the following to offer on the baboon relief at the Temple of Hathor (Het-Heru) in Dendara:

Many authors have attempted to interpret these reliefs, such as Joseph Jochmans and Moira Timms, but none has had complete access to the indigenous tradition. Hakim states that what is shown on these reliefs was not knowledge of electricity known to the dynastic Khemitian priests who had them carved, but a previous understanding of energy known to the ancient Khemitians long before the dynastic periods. He further stated that the baboon, a companion symbol of Djehuti, Thoth, the Neter of wisdom, was holding the knives as a warning. What was being shown was a knowledge of energy known to and utilized by the ancient Khemitians that could be, and had been, abused and misused. (p. 165)

The fact that this particular depiction appears within the Temple of Hathor (Het-Heru) at Dendera is no coincidence at all, for it should be noted that Hathor was one of the earliest goddess of the ancient Egyptian pantheon. Her Dendera Mammisi temple, however, was built by the last native Pharaoh (Ofu Ora) of ancient Egypt, by the name of
Nakhthorheb. According to ancient Egyptian traditions, the Mammisi is where the Pharaoh’s Ba (soul) is born. In other words, it was the sacred architectural equivalent of a royal Oda Omumu. The function(s) of the Hathor temple complex mostly revolved around the mysteries and festivals associated with the yearly cycle of the sun, the New Year and the jubilee festival of the Pharaoh known as Sed (Ofala in Igbo = Ofu Okala = celebration of the first half of reign). The later points to the centrality of Ikenga, the Igbo deity of time and year in the establishment and renewal of the king’s reign in ancient Egypt and in Igboland. But more importantly, the Mammisi (Mama-Isi-Mmiri in Igbo) structure tells us that this sacred complex is also associated with Isis; therefore birth, water, rebirth and matrilineality as the source of royal legitimacy are themes of profound importance here. The cult of Ikenga traditionally consists of king makers. Even though several Igbo communities no longer place primacy of royal legitimacy on matrilineality, evidence abounds that it was originally the Umu Okpu Ala (Order of Mothers of the Ala cult/community) that extended authority to such male community leaders, as mere leadership figureheads; while the final authority resided with the Umu Okpu Ala/Umu Ada, after the divine primordial consciousness and tradition of Nnechukwu na Chukwu Abiama, Ezenwanyi na Ezeoke, Nne-Iyi-na-Nwa-Iyi, Nnenwanyi na Okpara, Oma-Nne-na-Nwa-Adu-Oma, Nnenwanyi-Agwu-na-Oke-Agwu, Agu Nne na Umu Agu etc. This social order is so thoroughly infused with checks and balances that it took thousands of years of persistent conspiracy to subdue it. Yet, its much proven efficiency has resulted in its long-standing survival in Igbo culture, albeit in dimmed status. It has been observed that the matricentric Hathor cult developed from the local pre-dynastic cow and bull cults of the Nile Valley, as in several African cultures. Infact, Hathor or Het-Heru, appears to be none other than Atu-Nnenwanyi-Chukwu (note the Ezechitoke tradition which alludes to the male aspect of God as in Oke), the ancient Supreme Creator Goddess still worshipped today under numerous names and recognitions by Odinala adherents all over Igboland. As Nnenwanyi-Chukwu, Hathor is thus the combination of all the assigned tutelary goddesses and their capabilities rolled into one super being. She is hence the primal Supreme Creator Goddess of source-less, time-less, omniscient and unfathomable essence.
Observably, the once highly influential cult of this Goddess and the sacred practices therein instituted have also survived in the Igbo cultural stream as those traditional, ceremonial rites, feasts and mysteries involving the sacred bull (Ogwugwu Atu, Emume Atu, Ogbu Atu, Atu Ora, Atu Oma), still buoyantly celebrated in the Idemmili communities and other Anambra environs, as well as Emume Efi/Ehi/Eshi (cult of the domesticated cow) which is still very much alive throughout Igboland. Elements of this heritage include, for instance, the still existent tradition of deity-owned cows (Ehi Arushi) and the ritual tradition of slaughtering cows for Igbo deities (Ogbugbuefi), among other ancient practices centered on the domestication of the cow. It should be said here that, this cult and its traditions have actually preserved some of the earliest practices that are universally recognized as the foundational cornerstones of human civilization. Till today, the high priest of a deity in Igboland is still referred to as the one who slaughters cow for that deity (Onye n’Egburu Mmuo Efi eg, Ogbuefi Ide, Ogbuefi Imoka, Ogbuefi Ogwugwu, Ogbuefi Ala etc). In other words, the one who “wields” the knife of that deity. This individual is the Ishi Mmuo, and as such, they are Ofu-Aka-n’ebu-Ora-n’Abo. Thus said, it can be gleaned from the foregoing that, the “raised knife” not only alludes to danger, but also to the knowledge and antiquated use/misuse of energy by human beings in very remote antiquity and for which they dearly paid with dear lives in the hands of Ikenga/Kaang, as corroborated by all three sources so far. The consequences included ecological, geological and even astrophysical disruptions. Subsequently, the raised knife alludes to the origins of the tradition of slaughtering of animals for deities in the long-survived grand mystic effort at spiritual pacification and relinking of humankind back to nature through blooded communion. The notion of use/misuse of energy likewise hacks back to the beginnings of the fall of matriarchy with the inceptive agricultural practice of animal herding/domestication. It also alludes to the great consequences of very early mining and smithing technology on the planet. The original San mythic account in which this evidence is embedded proves highly imperative and has been fully cited here as such:
People did not always live on the surface of the earth. At one time people and animals lived underneath the earth with Kaang (Käng), the Great Master and Lord of All Life. In this place people and animals lived together peacefully. They understood each other. No one ever wanted for anything and it was always light even though there wasn't any sun. During this time of bliss Kaang began to plan the wonders he would put in the world above. First Kaang created a wondrous tree, with branches stretching over the entire country. At the base of the tree he dug a hole that reached all the way down into the world where the people and animals lived. After he had finished furnishing the world as he pleased he led the first man up the hole. He sat down on the edge of the hole and soon the first woman came up out of it. Soon all the people were gathered at the foot of the tree, awed by the world they had just entered. Next, Kaang began helping the animals climb out of the hole. In their eagerness some of the animals found a way to climb up through the tree's roots and come out of the branches. They continued racing out of the world beneath until all of the animals were out. Kaang gathered all the people and animals about him. He instructed them to live together peacefully. Then he turned to the men and women and warned them not to build any fires or a great evil would befall them. They gave their word and Kaang left to where he could watch his world secretly (rendered in Igbo oral traditions as Chukwu Balu Uno Kpochite Uzo). As evening approached the sun began to sink beneath the horizon. The people and animals stood watching this phenomenon, but when the sun disappeared fear entered the hearts of the people. They could no longer see each other as they lacked the eyes of the animals which were capable of seeing in the dark. They lacked the warm fur of the animals also and soon grew cold. In desperation one man suggested that they build a fire to keep warm. Forgetting Kaang's warning they disobeyed him. They soon grew warm and were once again able to see each other. (Fahs and Spoerl 1960; p. 6)

Among other revelations, this San mythic narrative reasonably explains the presence of animal symbolism as depicted in the Dendara relief of Hathor’s temple, whilst also substantiating the great continuity of African cultures and their oral traditions in the face of adverse religio-cultural contentions through the ages. Thus, the ancient Igbo and San visions of Ikenga in the anthropomorphic form of a praying mantis with “two knives” and the “two-knives-holding” baboon imagery from the Temple of Hathor in Dendara, is a parallel too obvious to be mistaken for a coincidence. Not only for the breathtaking, unbroken span of antiquity which it evidently represents, but likewise for the highly important epistemological evidence which it provides on the antiquity of human thought. The
cited baboon motif also brings to mind the very ancient Igbo cosmological motif of *Adukwu-Aka-n’Ano* lit. Four Sacred Primordial Baboons. In Igbo Dibia invocations of the cosmic Agwu forces, they are frequently saluted as *ndi aka n’ara, umu anwu, adukwu aka n’ano n’echeko mgbaka n’ano uwa, ndi akwu ose, ndi obinagu odii, ndi oji-na-mkpa ngwugwo oge igbo, ndi obu ikoliko mgbe, ndi achiko okpu ndili ito oge igbo, ndi ekumeku oge, ndi mpulu chi uwa* (note the knife-wielding baboon and *Ikenga* – the Igbo deity of time and industry). These mystic appellations respectively translate as: ancient souls of the sun, rightful children of the sun, four sacred primordial baboons, overseers of the four sacred primordial ringed corners, primordial ones who gathered at the very beginning of the world, primordial residents of the unfathomable cosmic forest of time, noble presiders over the Igbo cosmic band of time, primordial haulers of the ever-revolving shells/phases of time and seasons, primordial overseers of the thirteen Igbo cosmic gates of time, primordial announcers of time, primordial eliminators and regulators of the cosmic diurnal *Chi* force and primordial residents of the horizon of time. Such uncanny match of ontological and epistemological evidence only points towards the obvious, as Umeh himself demonstrated with lexico-oral evidence in his work, *Igbo People: Their Origin and Culture Area*, namely, that Igbo culture among other things, shares a very intimate epistemological relationship with the San and Nile Valley cultures respectively, as well as those of several other Africans; in addition to other far flung cultures of Asia, Australia, the Pacific and the Americas. Indeed, this important piece of evidence makes it difficult to uncritically overlook the work of such early scholars of Igbo culture as M. D. W. Jeffrey who was quite convinced of the ancient Egyptian cultural elements extant in Igbo culture, traditions and general mannerisms. Ultimately, in Igbo cosmology, the human body is held to operate under the same duality law (*mgba n’abo*) that underlies all creation.

On enquiry, any knowledgeable Igbo person would emphasize that the quintessential human being is an *okala-mmadu-okala-mmuo*. Thus, fundamentally, the Igbos conceive that, two complimenting energy states empower the human form. As proof, they will point out and expound on the Igbo principles of *Chi* and *Ikenga*, both of which are
held to animate the human being, albeit signifying varying essences of incarnated divinity. The Chi actually resides with the Creator in the Divine Realm of Be Chukwu, whilst animating and carrying out its destiny in the lower realms through the agency of its Ikenga. In this light, the upper part of the body (mgbago ahu, ugwu ahu, oda ako na uche i.e. from the shoulder upwards) is regarded as “aba mmuo” or “oda mmuo” depending on the context of usage, while from the chest downwards is regarded as “mbada ahu”, “ndida ahu” or “omumu na ije”. Thus, one is wont to hear elderly Igbo folks counter each other in casual conversations with such witty but sharply piercing aphorisms as “nwoke m arikwanam ugwu na amu m anya” i.e. “my friend don’t try to clamber my being because I am much alert”. In the following statement, the reference is to “ugwu ahu” which denotes “oda ako na uche” or “pyramid of intellect and universal mind” as manifested in the human being. Indeed, in Igbo culture, the sacred pyramidal polyhedron wherever erected—is mystically referred of as Akwu Agali or Ugwu Aka, though generically known as Oda. As a matter of fact, one of the initial streams of knowledge transmitted to every Dibias following their first initiation is that of the mystery of Nzu (mystic white clay). This knowledge entails several layers of orally transmitted information dealing with vast ritual formulaes, spanning literally hundreds of chambers of the Igbo mystery system and the highly pivotal relationship shared between these knowledge systems and Igbo civilizational antiquity. Without directly saying a single word about it, in the process of transmitting this vital stream of knowledge (pls. note that Nzu symbolizes dawn, beginning, creation, water, purity, peace etc.), it is revealed with clarity to the new initiate that, although physical traces are now scarce to locate due to the Igbo existential principle of Anaro ebu ana ebu makana o ya nwe mmadu n’ine (lit. no one carries off the land or permanently dominates it, for it owns all and sundry – it ultimately swallows all civilizations, thus Igbo people originally built their worlds with materials that can be absorbed back into the ecosystem while retaining its memory in that system), the first Igbo peoples achieved and instituted several high-level civilizations in far distant galaxies, star systems and satellite bodies, especially on our Moon, all ever before arriving this planet to populate it as Umu Oma (Children of Oma the first Igbo woman, who
was in reality, an avatar of the Moon Goddess also apppellated as *Oma-Nne-Muru-Igbo*). Likewise, in addition to their present commendable strides, the Igbos also achieved the same high level advancements in several bygone eras in their present geo-ecological region/location, as well as several other locations spanning our entire planet; on land and in the powerful empires of the deep ocean. Infact, the mystery of *Nzu* is so dense and important that, it is only revealed before the break of dawn and at no other time! The Igbo people refer to the Moon (*Onwa/Oma Nne/Nzuchukwu*) as the first Igbo woman, among other things, because, actually, the Igbos first lived on the Moon in their early days before this planet was formed. *Ugwu Agbada, Ugwu Nzu, Ugwu Oba, Ugwu Adu, Ugwu Edo, Ugwu Ogba, Ugwu Ukpana, Ugwu Aka, Ugwu Omagba, Ugwu Ele* etc. are some of the Igbo geo-astral cum mystical traditions that preserve and dramatize this knowledge of great Igbo antiquity. The *Mmonwu* institution is the Igbo cult of the ancestors. The two fundamental arms of this cult (*Mmonwu* and *Mmonwu Abani*) also depicts the Igbo categorization of their human ontological ancestry as *Ndi Ushi Aka* (immortal first ancestors who communicate through *Mmonwu Abani* i.e. night-spirit medium) and the *Ndi Ushi Egede* (subsequent ancestors who communicate through *Mmonwu* i.e. masquerades of the day-time). As such, in the *Ugwu Agbada* and *Omagba* ancestral spirit traditions for instance, both of which deals with the trooping down of the first Igbo people from the Mountain of the Moon (*Oma Aba* i.e. Pyramid of the Moon/Mystic Triangle of *Oma*) as pure, ether-sustained spirit beings (thus the Igbo masquerade greeting: *okwu aru m, akaa-aka* i.e. my fellow spirit body from the realm of *Aka*) to incarnate as *Ndi Uga Aka Ushi* (lit. those who saw the earth form and those who first lived on it), *Ugwu Agbada* further incorporates the migratory nature of this event in its simulations, sheer etymology and the intense lunar-centric rites that precedes its outing.

Given the above presented information, suffice it then to say that, the *Omagba* spirits are clearly communicating to the present day Igbo people, that their ancestors were on the Moon several million years preceding the formation of planet Earth! As a matter of fact, Igbo astronomy and astrological tradition, as well as the Igbo people in
general, count the Moon and the Sun as planetary bodies that were once inhabited by human beings. Beyond mere assertions, there are several clans in Igboland today that clearly trace their origins to our present Sun (the Fifth manifested Sun of Agwu in this plane of Afia-n’ano-Ubochi-n’ano), with piles of material evidence to substantiate this claim. On the same note, the Omagba spirits are also reminding the Igbo people of this day and age, that their ancestors clearly foresaw their present existential conditions and its circumstances, and to that effect, left them timeless knowledge and clues all over the planet as well as on the Moon itself, if they happen to make it there, on how to transcend those inevitable conditions. These messages are conveyed in such foolproof details, such as revealed in Omagba/Omaba/Omabe lit. Oma’s home—the Moon is the home of the first Igbo people/the first human beings/the first woman. In the Anambra town of Ogbunike, the same tradition exists with slight variation, where the ancestral mother known as Omaliko is said to be Omaliko-ndelu-Uno-onwa lit. Omaliko that has a mansion on the Moon. The Omagba spirits are thus sensitizing today’s Igbo people on the fact that, there are actual human-built pyramids on the Moon (also known as Aba Oma/Aba Igwe/Ogbe-n’Igwe lit. sky pyramids or sky caves); a reality which this author has personally confirmed through more than a dozen Igbo astral and mystic water-screen divination techniques. Moreover, in line with the higher operative principles of Igbo sacred science, pyramids of this kind generally function as human-erected memory-banks (Akwali Ijite), employing the appropriate mineral stones that possess high-memory capabilities (Ako Mkpume) and incorporating the Nzu-Oba-Nyilu-Agbada, as well as the mystic Aba-n’ano-Kwunitelu-Okike-n’ano principle, which is fundamental in the erection of all Igbo pyramidal structures. All over Igboland, several knowledgeable Ndi Dibias still erect these memory-bank pyramids (Akwali Ijite), which serve as literal time capsules for the accumulated knowledge of the lineage which they wish to enshrine for posterity. As a matter of fact, their preponderance is only exceeded by Akwali Omumu/Oda Omumu (fertility pyramids) in this very sense. Besides, it is important to note that the Omagba possesses its own special mystic language, images, symbols, oral accounts, mystic rites, chants, songs etc.—all of which revolves around the Moon, hills, pyramids, Nzu, emphasis on giant
ancestral spirits, mystic chants featuring extraordinary lunar knowledge, high-frequency Ogene music, among other realities. Omagba is known for such mantras as Aro dooo!, Ana dooo!, Enu dooo!, Iyi dooo!, Odo mu o!, Udene dooo!, Uwa Adiro Egwu!, Ogene! Ogene!, Ana-Enu-Kwudo!, Eko! Eko! Eko!, Ogini! Ogini! Ogini!, Eze-Nwa-Ilooo!, Aya Nma nu o!, Oji-Nwayo-Abia-Ije!, Oduodu Atu o!, Omagba-Gada-Gidi!, Anyi-Ababa-Ana-Eke!, Idu Nna meeel!, O Nweke o!, Igbu mu o!, O mu o!, Kwa-Nwa-Okwa-Nma-o!, Igbo-Nwe-Mmadu-nile o!, Obi-na-Eze doo! Eze-bi-n’Uno-Nwa-Ilo-n’Ekwu-n’Agha-Eselo-Ogu!, Ora Eze-kachaa-nu!, Anyi-ka-Nma-nu!, Mgba-Di-Uga-nu!, Mbbi dooo!, Onye Mmbi dooo!, Chaa-Kwuruuu!, Kiiaa-Haaal!, Une mu o!, Ama-Ana-Iche doo!, Uzu-Kpulu-Ogene-Emeena-Obi-Ifa!, Mmmbruuuu!, Agu Iyi dooo!, Odogwu mu o!, Nwata-jido-Oku-jido-Nma-Ofu-Ife-ga-eme, Obi-di-Nma-Akona-Obidoo!, Uzu-Kpulu-Ogene-Echuona-Nwoke-Ula o!, Onu-ghala-Ikwe-ya-Suon’Ana!, Onwu-Amana-Uke-doo!, Odogwu-Mu-Uba!, Eze-Nwa-Oba dooo!, Egwu-Adiro nu o!, Ijite mu o!, Ikpa Chi!, Ka-Odinu-k’Ana-Eme-Uwa-Nma!, Awutolo dooo!, Egwu-bu-Ite-Wala-Awa!, Mba-Ana-Abara-Agu-nu!, Aja Ana dooo!, Ofo nwa Odo!, Eku o mu Nna mu o!, Nwa-Okike-Nwa-Ukpo-Ejee-Gboo-Gboo-Okike!, Eze-Nwa-Obi o!, Eku-Kwe-mu-Nna-mu-Mulu-mu-Ya-bia-Melu-mu-Obelu-Oji-Jido-Agu-na-Aka-Idu-Ozo-n’Ama-Ngwu!, Obi-Azucharo-na-Obi-Anana dooo! and so on. Omagba ancestors are also known for their highly advanced knowledge on Arobinagu, who is actually a deified form of Earth’s Electromagnetic Energy represented as a Cobra with a rearing head, forming sacred paths (Akwara Ala i.e. Ley Lines) utilized by ancient peoples, birds and other creatures to migrate. This sacred serpent is also represented as a python (Eke-Nwe-Ohia) in parts of Igboland. Its manifestation as the cave is represented as Eke Ogba. As the sacred Cobra, it is diversely represented as Aro, Aho, Arobunagu, Ahobilagu, Ahobinikpa, Afo, Obinagu, Obinikpa, Ubini-Ukpabi, etc. Its multiple heads manifest as geodetic nodes across our planet, known as Ishi Aho/Ishi Aro/Ishi Eke. The Ishi Aho/Afo/Aro found beneath the Earth’s waters are known as Ishi-Iyi-Afo, while such waters are known as Iyi Afo/Aho. The ones in the caves are called Ishi-Eke-Ogba. As a matter of fact, in very ancient times, the Anunuebe tree (a tree-avatar of the Earth’s electromagnetic energy) grew on these geodetic node points and served as natural geodetic markers for the ancients. With the passage of time and inception of oracular
priesthood tradition, these geodetic node locations were consecrated, transformed and used as natural Oracle Temples. The Omagba ancestors are also renowned for their advanced applications of the Ogene cosmological principle. Vestiges of this are encapsulated in the eight based Uche-Anaro-Egbo Agwo-Mmakpu-Anaro-Egbu-Awo principle of cosmogony, which has survived today in that mystic axiomatic form. The latter reveals the Omagba ancestors as Adepts of Serpent Consciousness (Umu-Eke-Ocha, Umu-Eke-Ogba, Anya-Aro, Umu Agwo, Obodo Agwo, Ndi-Obi-Agwo) and unmatched scientists (Oma-Abia-Agba lit. those who are experts in divining/unstringing/investigating Abia mysteries or mysterious phenomena in general). The Omagba insist that mmono wu kaa nka onaa n’abia i.e. when a masquerade or a civilization ages and eventually fades into anonymity, its accumulated knowledge, ways, wisdom, deeds etc. is preserved as Abia in Ose Abia. Also, onye bu uzo k’egwu n’eso, ikpe amaro Odogwu (Odu Egwu) i.e. the one who goes first is the one that music follows; blame not the brave for choosing to go first. In other words, creation came along with a sound, which is the Ogene Ike (great sound energy that accompanied creation), later celebrated by Igbo people as Egwu Ogene, the highly energetic music of Ogene played with the Ogene. Ogene is thus, a very ancient Igbo symbol of creation.

The Omagba night spirit mediums respectively demonstrate with highly vivid and audible evidences that, the countless proofs of presence which the primordial first Igbo peoples left on the Moon, including a boundless catalogue of rock paintings and inscriptions, leftovers from mining activities, diverse pyramidal structures, geo-spatial maps, temples, memorial mounds, interdimensional gates, rock-hewn totem poles etc. are all still there! Likewise, their massive underground structures, remain untouched and undisturbed on the Moon till this day. This much is enshrined in the underlying operative knowledge of the juxtaposed Nzu pyramid structure employed by the Dibias in lunar rituals of high importance. Among other realities, ancient Igbo Dibias further established that primal energy characteristically swims into the human body from the left side and is naturally stepped-down and creatively conveyed into human activities through the right side. Accordingly, the heart is located on
the left side of the body, while in most ancient societies and some cultures of this day and time, the right hand remains the accepted hand that one uses in daily activities and in the public. There is a very intimate relationship between water, health, fertility, life, wealth and the right-hand. As primordially illuminated in the Afa language and its mystical thought, the positive-right polarity of the human body is also known as Obi, whereas the negative-left polarity is Akwu.

As earlier stated, Ikenga as a cosmological principle in Igbo sacred science, mystically articulates and concerns itself with the kinetic dynamics of energy or will-power (Ike) on the physical plane (Enu Uwa), the primordial source of that energy (Akwu Agali), the divine mystic rhythms of that energy (Ngede Egwu) and the pragmatic applications of that energy to human life and civilization (Uru na Adu Ya). Ike literally means strength, power or energy, while Nga means place or source. Ikenga consequently denotes the source of the active energy principle manifested in creation. A thorough grasp of such subtle matters and principles points to the degree of knowledge and universal mastery that is traditionally expected of an authentic Igbo Dibia. Such sacred energy dynamics, when accurately observed and proficiently recreated at a chosen scale, must be able to achieve for the individual, what one may refer to as a mystically-refined synchronization of their life’s various energy paths or activities. As with the Irunye Ihu Chi ritual potentiation process (Imachaa Ihu Chi), the Ikenga potentiation ritual (Imachaa Ikenga) essentially entails an activation of one’s spiritual right hand, which the Igbos call Aka Ikenga; while the ordinary, corporeal right hand is referred to as Aka Nni. An individually owned Ikenga figure is thus, a ritually activated contact portal for one’s spiritual right hand; for without the ritual activation of an Ikenga figure, it would remain but a delightful piece of art. In achieving the mystical feat of Irunye Ikenga (installing an Ikenga portal), a Dibia masterfully applies a variety of the esoteric disciplines that are in his or her disposal as the quintessential Nwa-Eze-Enu. This includes mystical acoustics, anthropocentric botany, geomancy, gestural symbolism, incantatory arts, somatic alchemy, astrotheology, aesthetic and numerological codification, occult astronomy and other forms of mystical disciplines that are privy to
the Dibia. For the consummate and natural born Dibia is a polymath (Nwa Anwu) - a multigenius (Agbara Mmadu). He or She is a true wizard in the original sense of that word, blessed with the possession of a precision-obsessed-spirit and a highly creative mind ever before being born into this plane of consciousness. Consequently, the rather uncanny result achieved in this synchronization of the human-cosmic interface encapsulated in the Ikenga principle is what Afigbo (1983) has aptly described as thus:

From the very name and symbol there would appear to issue vibrations which induce in the average Igbo man the will to make efforts of the kind that can magnetize success in life’s different professions. (p. 1)

Accordingly, it is in this sense and in light of the spiritual, socio-political, technological and medico-healing traditions of the Igbo—all of which evidently incorporates the Ikenga notion—that its essence further entails the sacred energy dynamics of the universe or the knowledge of it thereof. This meaning also extends to encompass the equally mystical (as in subtle or elusive) workings of this energy in the human somatic system, with precise regards to the motion-dominant right side of the body; given its universally familiar role and long-observed influence on human civilizational activities. Indeed, it should be borne in mind that, among Igbo people, Ikenga is well-noted as the spirit of commerce and industry, both of which are primary constituting elements of civilization. Of note also, the left hand (ordinarily known as Aka Ekpe/Aka Ikpa) is regarded as Aka-Njiputa-Uwa or Aka Chi in Igbo mystical thought. For reasons that unfortunately transcend the scope of this work, it is also regarded as Odu Ayaka i.e. “director of Ayaka” and remains the prescribed hand of use in Igbo secret societies.

In its three-fold capacity as pathfinder, warrior and civilizer, Ikenga was regarded as Owa Ota in ancient Igboland. Note that Ogun, the Yoruba god of Iron and smithing also has his headquarters of worship in the Ogun state town called Ota. Similarly, as “ozuru ulo, zuo mba” Ikenga was praised as Odum-Ije (greatest adventurer) and Obu Uzo (the vanguard/spirit of time). The important thing to note at this juncture is that, all these appellations are indirect references to the boundless activities of energy (Ife ike n’eme erika), specifically, the
industrious energy of the hand (Ike Aka). Of note, there are also other arcane Ike notions (energy combination formulae, operative dynamics and mystic ingredients employed in Ogwu as such), including Ike Aja, Ike Uba, Ike Mmili, Ike Ofo, Ike Ude, Ike Nwanyi, Ike Nwoke, Ike Ji, Ike Ede, Ike Obo, Ike Odo, Ike Nzu, Ike Mba, Ike Uma, Ike Obi, Ike Ntu, Ike Oja, Ike Ubi, Ike Afia, Ike Ndu, Ike Egbo, Ike Nta, Ike Mgbe, Ike Egwu, Ike Otutu, Ike Mgba, Ike Uzu, Ike Mkpa, Ike Nka, Ike Ogu, Ike Ala, Ike Agwu, Ike Ngwu, Ike Oha, Ike Nche, Ike Agu, Ike Enyi, Ike Ele, Ike Uje, Ike Una ad infinitum—whose respective deeper Afa, Aja, Ogwu, Ululu, Arima, Ofo, Ilu, Ita, Iro, Egwu etc. implications we need not go into here. Thus far, it is unmistakably clear that the hand notion and symbolism has always had a major presence as well as extensive purpose in Igbo culture and consciousness. As such, till today, it continues to obtain as a subconscious, dynamic symbol-notion of entrepreneurial venture and potency (Aka Afia) with broad connotations in Igbo thought. We now turn our attention to the chest and belly areas, together held as Obi na Afo. In this area of the body, the most prevalent parts include the heart (Obi), the chest proper (Ngugu), lungs (Mba), ribs (Nkpisi Ngugu), stomach (Akpakwuru Afo), umbilicus (Utume), intestines (Mgbirima Afo), duodenum (Osoje Akpakwuru), pancreas (Anyinya), liver (Umeju), the spleen (Apupa), gall bladder (Akpa Inu) and the kidney (Akuru). Our particular focus will be on the heart (Obi) and stomach (Akpakwuru). The Igbo word Obi is actually an onomatopoeic expression of the sound of the human heart beat or pulse (Uda Obi) which actually goes Obi..Obi..Obi. The ancient Egyptians also had a variation of this sound as their word for the heart which they called Ab. The heart is praised in Igbo mystical thought as Ome na Nne kwulu (the one who acts according to the laws of the Mother), Ijiliji Ndu (dew of life – given its shape which it shares with water drops), Aro Ndu (arrow of life – again, given its arrow-like shape), Oche Ndo (source of shade/revitalizer), Ogbede Nwa Oma (Ogbede child of Oma) etc. all arising from its enlivening and revitalizing essence which it duly shares with the Moon (Onwa, Nne Nzu/Onwa-diri-afon’igwe).

Thus, in expressing their understanding of good naturedness, kindness, niceness, generosity, pleasantness etc. which are all vital
virtues of life, Igbo people naturally allude to the intimate relationship between the heart and the Moon as in Obi Oma (good hearted/Oma’s heart), in contrast to Obi Ojoo (evil hearted) or Obi Okwute (stone heart/unfeeling heart). Also, among them, a person of zero sympathy is often described as onye riri obi ya n’onu (lit. one who has consumed their own heart) or onye folu ntutu ya taa (one who has pulled and ate their own hair – implying grave extremism). Such expressions are often employed to describe very unfeeling and unsympathetic persons. The consummate scholar and philosophical giant Theophilus Okere (1996) has nicely articulated the Igbo notion of the heart (Obi) in the following words:

To take care of a whole variety of functions and emotional and moral attitudes the Igbo use the concept of obi--literature the heart. It is the psychological center of emotions, sensation and sympathy. Obi kara aka, lit. a heart that is mature or ripe, means a brave heart. Obi mgbawa means a heart break. Onye obi miri (of a watery heart) means a weakly, sentimental person. Beyond the psychological role it plays, the Obi has also moral relevance and function. Obi kporo nku (lit. a heart dry like firewood) means a wicked one. Obi nwayo (lit. a quiet, soft heart) means gentleness, meekness. Obi ike (a strong heart) means heartlessness. Obi oku (a heart of fire) means a hot temper. Obi ojoo (a bad or ugly heart) means wickedness and cruelty, while Obi oma (a good or beautiful heart) means kindness. Obi ebere (heart of pity) means a sympathetic, merciful and pitying heart. For all practical purposes, Obi is the seat and center of virtue and vice, of conscience and morality. (p. 154)

The heart ultimately, is viewed as a primal locus of emotions as observed in such Igbo expressions as Obi Nnwa (motherly affection, motherly kindness) and Obi Nwanne (the emotional bond of siblings). It is thus a universal symbol/notion of oneness (Ofu Obi). In other contexts, it obtains as an embodied force of firmness (Obi Ike) or bravery (Obi Agu lit. heart of leopard). The leopard was also known as Awolo in some Igbo societies of the dim past as well some of today. An Igbo proverb in this light notes that, “onye gburu awolo ziri onwe ya idu” lit. the person who kills a leopard has indirectly sent themselves to Idu kingdom. As this ancient proverb actually hacks back to the Igbo age of prior Ogu Idu na Oba, it should be noted here that the Idu in reference is not the much later Ado n’Idu kingdom, but the very ancient Idu Ime Mba n’Asaa confederacy (lit. Idu Ime Allied Empire of Seven Great Sections/Kingdoms) which was made up of Igbos and most of their now scattered siblings located in the western, northern
and southern parts of today’s Nigeria and even beyond. During this time, the caste system was the most prevalent system of social organization and, the historical uniqueness of the great Idu Ime confederacy is still remembered in the very sophisticated priestly castes which it maintained for hundreds of thousands of years with no pronounced disputes. The Idu Ime confederacy may be compared with the great Mande confederacy for better understanding. However, the gradual tragic fallout which ended this ancient confederacy was also the prime impetus behind the creation of the masquerade institution in West Africa and eventually, the notion of cult languages (Olu Mmonwu) which strategically replaced the more prevalent, ancient and original Olu Afa (Afa language) that was spoken during the several thousands of years that this great priestly confederacy was in existence. These cult languages slowly became dialects and eventually developed into full blown languages of their own as people moved further and further from the center of the confederacy to create their individual, cultural kingdoms. However, like the Igbo people, many of these people still retain some of their original Idu Ime Mba n’Asaa traditions and mother tongue, which is the Afa language but which is now spoken only by Dibi-as, priests, priestesses and similar persons of spiritual, intellectual and socio-political status in these cultures, interestingly. In digression, even in those very ancient times, political power as we perceive it today in Igbo culture was actually in the hands of matriarch-high-priestesses (Eze Nwanyi/Lolo) whose positions and privileges were much later usurped by the subsequent patriarchal deity priests of today (Eze Mmuo/Agbala). With the large and powerful city states came equally large and powerful monarchs. Although, many Igbo monarchs of recent are mostly men, in the olden days most communities had women as their monarchs. These priestesses/priests officiated at communal temples which were so powerful and potent that they were dreaded even by the rich. Infact, these spiritual officials were actually the ones that shaped the traditional practices of each Igbo community. Today, some of the last authentic remnants of the original traditions of ancient Idu confederacy as found among the Igbo peoples are to be found among the so called Ndi Agba Enu peoples of Igboland. This includes the present Igbo-Ukwu (Nkwo Igbo/Igbo Nkwo) kingdom whose king still goes by the title of Idu. The high prevalence
of the Ogbuagu (leopard killer) surname and title in Igboukwu is also at the heart of this reality. Going further back in time, the leopard (Awolo) also known as Agu Oji (Iroko leopard) and Agu Owu (lit. the leopard of mystery, the mysterious leopard) was also a key totemic animal of Igbo people during the Uga Aka world age.

Igbo oral tradition narrates that, in those first days, when the clouds gathered in anticipation of rain, the skies were said to assume the stormy eyes of Awolo Igwe (sky leopard). The thick movements of clouds across the skies were merely those of this prowling feline in its essence as Agu Owu (leopard of mystique), as it ranged and marauded through the thick rain forest jungles of the then ancient Igboland. The first brief sparks of lightning were its flashing eyes of fury which it cast at those who dared to watch it perform its secret dances of transformation (Oshishi/Ishite Agu/Ishi Agu/Ishite Oma/Ishiri-Adu/Oshishi-bu-ife-Agwu). The sustained lightning sparks were its shining claws tearing through the skies and the thunder was its primordial voice, reminding all of the onye aghala nwanne ya spirit. As well, the pelting rain were its potent spots descending on the ground to give life to the forest and all its children (Umu Agu), while its jaws led to the great underworld rivers that ultimately swallowed back all the rain into the belly of the great leopard. Thus, the affirmations by the ancient Igbos that, Awolo bu Eze Igwe, Agu bu Anu anaro aga aga, Awolo-gbuzulu-ichi-ka-iru-ha, Aha-Acho-Agwa-Acho-n’Ofia-Awolo etc. The ram was also associated with the heart in ancient Igbo thought. Infact, the tradition of ingesting a ram’s heart (Ino Obi Ebune) continues to be a central part of Dibia initiation rites in some parts of Igboland till this day. Some ancient Igbo societies also believed that the heart was rather the Sun embodied in the human form and that the cells of our body (Ogbalundu/Igbekundu/Okala-Akwu-Ofu/Ulupiondu) were merely the stars accompanying it in its internal journey in the human microcosmic universe (Obiri Chi/Uwa Nta). The primordial bond which exists between the pure, benevolent and life giving Moon spirit (Oma) and the heart (Obi) is one of very deep implications. It should be noted here that all persons naturally embody this shared essence of purity of heart (Obi Ocha) at birth, as the heart is the first organ to form in the human fetus. Indeed, Obi
Ocha implies innocence or a spotlessly clean heart, which is what children are known for (Obi Umuaka). Infact, among human beings, primordial truth can only be heard in the mouth of infants which they express as their birth cry (Uwaaaaa). Rightly so, only a child utters the truth effortlessly for they know nothing else. On the issue of the heart’s essence as the resolute embodiment of truth, the Igbos holds that, obi anaro awo nna ya ochie uka lit. the heart does not withhold information from its grand-father (i.e. the self). In other words, the self is privy to any information which the heart has. Indeed, an ultimate somatic substantiation of this principle lies in the fact that, the body itself automatically begins to degenerate once the heart stops beating. Nothing can be further from the truth. Thus, the heart’s faithful, non-stop respiratory motion (Obi), from the very moment we are born to the final moment we cease breath poses a dual reminder of both the principled constancy and inevitability of truth in all given aspects of life. The heart is the sole refiner and discharger of blood (Obala - biological life force) to the rest of the body. Its functionality naturally determines a person’s mortality chances. Arising from this observation, Igbo people encapsulated thus that, Ike di n’obi i.e. the strength, energy, survival abilities or mortality chances predisposed to a person ultimately lies in the resilience level of their heart. Accordingly, it is a natural thing amongst Igbo people to extol bravery (Ika Obi) over cowardice (Ujo). In the same vein, blood itself is life (Obala/Mmili) and just like water, we naturally desire it, because mmili anaro echu eze (water does not blemish the teeth, no matter how much one drinks it). Blood also sees to the explicit expression of life’s inherent qualities (Obala anaro atu asi). Life itself is air/breath (Ume Ndu/Ughere/Ikuku), while blood is energy in fluid form as Ikemnilindu, and it transmits consciousness as Iyijeluchindu. The belly (Afo, Ahwo) on the other hand is mystically praised as Owa Nne Oku (lit. the path of the mother of fire i.e heat). The primary allusion is to the characteristic hotness of the entire belly area. In Igbo medicine, the several parts and contents of the belly are also referred to as its children (Umu Afo). Igbo mystical tradition equally recognizes seven parts of the human belly (Ngwugwo Asaa), seven layers of the skin (Akpakpo Asaa), seven types of heat emitted by the body (Ufufu Asaa), seven types of fluid secreted in the belly area (Mmili Asaa), seven
aspects of the eyes (*Mpio n’Asaa*) and seven modes of speech (*Ekwe n’Asaa*). With respect to the stomach (*Akpakwuru Afo*), Igbo medical thought views it as a sort of refinery (*Okwu Mmacha*) for food, medicine and all kinds of fluids that humans ingest. Thus, it is praised in an ancient Dibia proverb from Nsogwu Umunze as thus, *onye shi ya hu amahu shi akpakwuru muru okwute,* ona wu nnu k’oji egbo aghuri? lit. the person who says they aren’t aware that the stomach also birthed stone, what has it been using to process the monitor lizard (*Ngwere Aghuri*) meat that such a person have been consuming?

Moreover, the stomach is cosmologically associated with fire/heat (*Oku/Ufufu*) as earlier alluded, and partially with water. But not just any kind of fire, particularly, the meteorite-like kind of fire (*Igbeku Oku*), which is also present in other life forms. The stomach in all species is naturally shaped like a seedlike-stone. This very principle has been deeply utilized by countless Dibias since time immemorial, especially in extracting dangerous mystic objects from the body of clients. A popular Igbo proverb dealing with the belly maintains that, *egwu adi atu afo obulu uzo* lit. if the belly is not afraid, then it should take the lead. The above truly says it all about the intrinsic role of the stomach in the human anatomy. An Igbo mystical axiom which incorporates the mystery of the stomach or generally the belly, and its relationship with stone and heat goes as thus, *ogazi loro okwute juwa nne ya ma awo ala acha ya oku* lit. the guinea fowl swallowed stone and began to question its mother if her belly is exuding heat. Surely, the said guinea fowl knows it cannot digest a stone. Thus, in its dilemma, it resorted to asking its mother whether she was experiencing hotness of the belly, indirectly indicating that it is harboring an uncomfortable "secret" in its own belly! A subtle assertion is thus made by the ancient Igbos in this mystic axiom, on the relationship between the stomach, the heart, conscience, truth, fire/heat and stone, among other realities; as well as the medicinal use of *Obi-Nwa-Ogazi* (heart of guinea fowl) in motion operative *Ogwu* preparations. Accordingly, an Igbo person
overwhelmed by a situation readily expresses that, *Obi awunaam n’afọ* lit. my heart has jump into my belly!

Thus said, Igbo cosmological thought conceives the pelvis area and the legs together as *Ukwu na Ije* or *Omumu na Ije* i.e. leg and journey or procreation and journey. Of note is that the Igbo word *Ukwu* is a contraction of two Afa words, namely: *Ululu* and *Akwu*. While the word *Ije* is also a contraction of another Afa word, *Ijite* which means road or road-path. *Ululu*, among other things actually denotes the principle of gravity, anchoring or pinpointing in the Afa language. While in demotic Igbo, the same notion of gravity is articulated as *Ikejiani/Ikejiale/Ikejiana/Ikejiala* etc. depending on dialectic variation. The pelvis area is conceived as *Omumu* and as such, it incorporates the following areas: extended back region (*Ugwu Azu*), the hip joint (*Achi*), the groin (*Agbata Ukwu*), the pubis (*Ikpu/Onu Agbata*), the vagina (*Otu/Ikpu/Ohu Nwanyi*), the clitoris (*Ire Otu/Aku Otu/Utu Nwanyi*), the uterus (*Akpa Nwa*), the fallopian tube (*Onu Akpa Nwa*), the ovary (*Akpa Akwa*), the penis (*Utu/Amu/Onoko*), the scrotum (*Akpa Amu*) and the testis (*Mkpuru Amu*), all of which have very deep and extensive, cosmological cum practical implications in Igbo medical and sacred traditions, the full analysis of which will deter our focus in the present work. Suffice it to say, however, that the Igbo nomenclature of *Omumu* for this area of the body is precise and in adequate order, as the area is dominated by procreative activities. Downwards, we have the thigh (*Mpata Ukwu/Utakwu/Onoko*), the knees (*Ikpere/Egedege Ukwu*), the calf (*Afo Okpa*), the sole (*Obe Okpa*), the heel (*Ikiri Okpa*), the upper calf tendon (*Ata*), the heel tendon (*Ata Okpa*), the foot proper (*Okpa*) and the toes (*Mkpisi Okpa/Ukwu*). The leg is conceived as a two-pronged corporeal carrier (*Ukwu Obi*) of the human microcosm. Cosmologically, it is assigned the function of an anchoring force (*Ike Nkwu*) and thus ensures the stabilization and angular orientation of the larger human somatic system. This is not an easy task and as such, Igbo wisdom teaching and proverbial tradition recognizes and praises
the natural purpose of the two legs in the following axiom: *o wu akwaa-akwuru k’ukwu ji karicha n’nkwu* i.e. it is for the efficiency of its balancing purpose that the human legs are distinguished in the general category of legs in the natural kingdom.

Just as the human body is generally tasked with incarnating the spirit-life-force (*Ilo Chi*), so are the legs tasked with stabilizing and orienting that spirit-life-force (*Ikwuwa Chi*) on this terrestrial plane of existence. This embodies the origin of the Igbo expression, *Ikwu Chim!* i.e. standing thoroughly firm or stabilized. The leg notion-symbolism is also associated with valleys (*Ndida/Ukwu Ugwu* lit. legs of the hill) in Igbo thought. For instance, a very ancient Igbo mystic axiom encapsulates that, *aria ugwu n'asaa, erie nri n'asaa* lit. when one climbs the seven hills/seven mystic heights, they will be rewarded with seven meals/attain higher states of consciousness. Other Igbo nomenclatures, notions, realities, expressions etc. that incorporates the legs include, *Ukwu-Ala* (legs of the earth deity), *Ukwu-Agwu* (legs of the *Agwu* deity), *Ukwu-Ide* (the legs of the Idemmili water deity), *Ukwu-Nta* (hunting legs; in reference to one who possesses particularly toughened, forest-experienced legs from sustained hunting), *Ukwu-Aja* (mud walls of a house enclosure – as such its legs), *Ukwu-Ata* (the name of a stream in parts of Igboland), *Ukwu-kwelu-Nja* (in the olden days, a young girl who has reached the age of wearing the *Nja* leg-bracelet) and so on. Thus far, it should be noted that these delineations and expositions of the complex, human microcosm as articulated in the Igbo cosmological, mystical and varied sacred traditions – have been prioritized to better maintain the principal focus of this work. As such, in subsequent efforts by the author, this same subject will be dedicatedly revisited with greater expanse and engagement. In this work, our journey so far has consistently shown that the people who call themselves Igbo people today do not truly know who they are. Infact, it can now be safely said that, in the very beginning there once existed a single homogeneous human culture and civilization, which at some point in antiquity reached such an advanced state of creativity and achievement that it simply began to fragment, thus the ancient Igbo dictum, *Ona abu*
etojou ekewaa! i.e. when a people or civilization reaches its spatial-temporal zenith, they/it will diffuse into fragments. Accordingly, the Igbo people of today hold that uwa fa walu awa i.e. their present world is a broken world, which alludes to knowledge of a once homogenous world with one homogeneous culture, and which spoke a single universal divine language called Olu Afa, later called by different names such, Ifa, Fa, Ava, Iha Ominigbon, Aha, Sanskrit, Medu Neter, Sumerian etc.

It will also appear that the shocking antiquity of this people and their culture is perhaps, one of the last imminent puzzles waiting to be unraveled by humanity at large. Why? The answer is simple. The Igbo people call themselves Umu Anyanwu and claim that they predate the present universe. Modern science has shown through the auspices of String Theory that there should exist a multiplicity of universes in the higher dimensions of space. But it is yet to find the material proof to this Theory, whereas the virtually unscathed cultural traditions of Igbo people is pulsating with infinite proofs of this and many more intriguing things, such as new technological ideas and sustainable living techniques. It has been emphasized earlier in this work that Igbo bu Mmuo i.e. Igbo is a spiritual reality expressed as the observable cultural consciousness also known as Igbo. This can be experienced in the intense and highly condensed vibrations of beauty, simplicity and precision radiated by Igbo art and Igbo humane principles of living. Aniakor and Cole (1984) have articulated the following with regards to the mystic intricacy of Igbo art:

The dynamism, multidimensionality, and nonlinear character of Igbo thought and aesthetics make them difficult to explain in writing, which by its nature is linear and cumulative. Some sort of verbal hologram, not yet invented, would more effectively explain the interpenetrating simultaneity of many factors which comprise the holistic Igbo world view and its expressions in visual art. (pg. 216)

As such, when one proclaims the two syllabic word Igbo, it should be noted that they are not just calling into consciousness, the Igbo egalitarian (Agali n’abo or Ikenga) spirit, but more specifically, they are invoking a host of cosmogonic and cosmological traditions, high cultural ordinances, cycles of life, specific periods and points in
cosmic time, mythologies, songs, tales, early socio-human advents, primeval landscapes, moralities, mystic principles, philosophies, ethicalities, intellectualities, symbols, sounds, artistic traditions, technological traditions, specific clothing and architectural patterns, diverse and assorted vocational practices, rich and extensive medicinal culinary tradition, colors, specific sensibilities, wisdoms, animals, reptiles, birds, diverse trees, multitudes of plants and vegetation, insects, rivers, streams, hills, springs, valleys, caves, deities, spirits, women, men, children etc., in short, every single spec of reality that have partaken, is currently partaking and will be prospectively partaking in the grand, Igbo cosmic cultural sphere (Uwa-Ndi-Igbo), which is, inter alia, uniquely encoded in the super-consciousness of the universe as Afia-n’ano-Ubochi-n’ano and whose people are universally known as Umu Anwu, Umu Oma and Ndi Nwachinemelu. Indeed, all these realities are simultaneously invoked at the proclamation of those two syllabic sounds, Igbo! Civilization is a masquerade that comes and goes. Accordingly, the present Igbo people should discern this profound truth and begin to reenter their ancestral Obi, begin to relink themselves with their Chi, repossess their Ikenga and manifest their unique Udude Nka creative spirit. Perhaps, in due time, a new masquerade may emerge from the Igbo spirit house to enchant our troubled world with new songs again.
Plate 1a (left) — An Ozo titled man (circa. 1941) holding his Alo sacred iron staff in the right hand and his Odu Nze elephant tusk in the left. On both ankles, his Elili Ozo white cord of purity can be spotted. To the right of the picture is his Oche-Nze-na-Ozo stool. 1b (right) — Wooden cult stool (circa. early 20th century) from the Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea. Stools of this type were only used by high-ranking cum titled officials, typically affiliated with the village council, much like the Nze-na-Ozo institution is known for in IgboLand, indicating for a fact that both cultures do share a very ancient and explicitly expressed primordial root that transcends space and time. The above stool is held as an exceptional and very rare older example of Sepik River culture and craftsmanship. Unfortunately, items from this period are getting increasingly difficult to come by. Image source: Ancientartifax.com
Plate 1c — *Ulideduruwa* or the *Uli* cosmological and aesthetic vision of the Igbo Universe as depicted on an Odinala Temple in Nimo. The extensive symbolic depictions above portray the Igbo universe according to the cosmological vision of traditional Igbo *Uli* artists known as *Aka n’Ede Uli* i.e. Igbo women who are the originators and sole scribes of *Uli*. Their deep cosmic vision depicts extensive astral and natural life in abstract forms. *Uli* art involves a process of creatively codifying and integrating multiple layers of indigenous Igbo knowledge to create a graphic parallel world of aesthetics and value. Such knowledge encompasses ecology, astronomy, medicine, pharmacopeia, mathematics, architecture, material science and engineering, calendrics, physics, biology, chemistry among several others. Image source: Nairaland.com
Plate1d—Ijele masquerade as performed in Enugu State, Nigeria. Traditionally, the Ijele depicts the two principal realms of the Igbo world, namely Be Mmadu (Mkpu Ijele = the Upper World/Enu Uwa) and Be Mmuo (Akukpuru Ijele = the Underworld/Ala Mmuo). Ijele also represents the Igbo solidarity spirit. It is known for its highly diverse aesthetic features, all of which are integrated to form the colossal Ijele structure. The whole simulacrum is a grand unification of multiple Igbo mythical figures. This colorful amassment of spirits emerging to dance in the human realm invokes a multidimensional world, the world of Igbo people. When the Ijele formally emerges with its musical convoy (Umu Ukwu Ijele) to dance at the village square or anywhere else for that matter, beholding its colorful, grandiose spectacle is equivalent to experiencing the original emergence of the physical universe from the primordial realm—fully formed—at the moment of creation. Image source: Nairaland.com
Plate 2a—*Odegwoo*, the conical fertility mound of Lejja community Nsukka can be sighted in the inset of the image above. As can be observed, the structure strikingly parallels the mythical Primeval Mound (Ben-Ben) of ancient Egyptian mythology and cosmology. Image source: Asabamemorial.wordpress.com

Plate 2b (right) — *Okpoko* the sacred Hornbill of Igboland. 2c (left) — the mythical Bennu bird of ancient Egyptian cosmology. Note the parallel feature of an enlarged head in the depiction of the primordial Bird of Creation in both mytho-cosmological traditions.
Plate 2d—The circular step pyramid of Dan Baki Tirmini, Zinder, Niger, West Africa in advanced state of degradation. The pyramid is estimated to be around 4,500 years old according to Mr. Souley Garba, the Niger-born researcher who discovered the structure after several years of extensive studies in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts.
Plate 3a—The Igbo mystic number four (Ano) located rightly at the "foot" or base of a bronze ornate vase (Ite Ona) employed for mystic ritual purposes in ancient Igbo-Ukwu (Igbo-Nkwo). This roped vase of fluidly woven network of strings and knots enshrines aspects of the Igbo-African String-Wave cosmology. For instance, the spherical pot (Ana/Earth) is held in place by the nets (Ikejiana/gravity) and is part of a larger community (Ora) or network (Erima) of vessels residing in a galaxy (Ora Ugbo) which revolves around a central Star called Ose Ora Ugbo. When the word Ona (Treasure), which in ancient Igbo mystic thought references the sacred deed of creation, among other realities such as the astral spirits, the innermost mysteries of a cult, a body of revealed ritual knowledge (Odu/Okwu/Amuma/Ona) etc. – when this word Ona is reversed we have Ano (four). The placing of the symbol at the foot-area of the roped vase is meant to signify Ukwu-Aja-n’Ano-Okike lit. Four Clay Feet of Creation, which is also an astrophysical reference to the reality of the Milky Way galaxy, as well as other vast mystics imports of Igbo Sacred Science (Odinani).
Plate 3b—An ancient Egyptian roped vase discovered at the Step Pyramid of Saqqara and dated to the 2nd Dynasty period. The vase is balanced on a typical African tripod stand known as *Ekwu n’Ato* in Igbo parlance. The three unified legs of the tripod signify solidity and by extension, creation at the physical plane. Both vases depict basic symbolic motifs of the African String-Wave cosmology. Note the striking structural and aesthetic similarity with the Igbo-Ukwu type. Image source: Diaa Khalil.
Plate 4a—The Milky-Way (our galaxy) with the Sun highlighted.

Plate 4b—Brass anklet (*Nja*) once worn by young Igbo women depicting the structure, life forms and astronomical workings of our galaxy in abstract designs. Image source: British Museum.
Plate 4c—Aerial view of a coconut/palm tree revealing its natural spiral geometrical configuration which it shares with the Milky Way galaxy.
Plate 5a (right)—The *Okirikiri wu ije agwo* principle as represented in African art. 5b—The Armadillo lizard swallowing its own tail.

Plate 6a (right)—The *Okoso* universe of Igbo cosmology as depicted in Igbo-Ukwu bronze shell artifact, revealing the seven higher realms of *Uwa Mu*, below which exist the seven lower realms of *Uwa Nta*. 6b (left)—A modern artistic portrayal of the physical universe based on String Theory cosmology of the occident. Image source: Omtimes.com
Plate 6c—The Milky-Way galaxy in its aerial Cosmic Spider form as *Udude-Eze-Enu*. The Orion costellation is also known as *Onu Udude*.

Plate 7a—A primary chart of the primordial particles according to emergent String Theory cosmology. Image source: Pdgusers.lbl.gov
Plates 7b and c—Local Igbo edibles, Okpa (left) and Ube (right) both employed as symbolic resources in the articulation and depiction of primordial particles in the Igbo String-Wave cosmology and artistic tradition. Note the geometrical similarity between both edibles and the primordial particles as given above.

Plate 7d (left)—The ancient African mystic principle of Ora n’Abo/Enuri-Ara-rie or Ana-Enukwudo as electronically modelled by theoretical modern physicists. It will practically take a separate dedicated volume to enumerate the deep knowledge embedded in this structural form. Suffice it to say that it enshrines the vital “unities” as articulated in the
Igbo-African worldview. Such as the unity of the creator and the created, unity of space and time, energy and consciousness, law and harmony, heaven and earth, spirit and body, light and sound, truth and justice, individual and community, woman and man, family and stability, life and afterlife, wealth and health, solid and non-solid, life and divinity, wisdom and knowledge etc. As the shape reveals, it is the mystic forerunner of the earliest pyramid structures (conical), the hour glass, the *Ogene* and the *Okoso* game device. — a highly artistic rendering of the same principle on an *Oche-Nze-na-Ozo* stool. Image source: Igbonomics.wordpress.com

Plate 8—The African string hand game; one of the most common mnemonic resources of the Igbo-African String-Wave cosmology. Note the angular loops and the starlike geometry implied in the string’s shape. As the cognate in the word *Ikpa* signifies, players endeavor to create the vibrating strings that form the basic energy patterns of stars. The same principle is evident in the word *Nkata*, where the word for art/skill/technique is employed to signify a sustained, stringed alignment of energy/thought/sound/emotional exchanges expected to mature into a desired action (*omume*) or solve a particular problem (*mkpa*). Image source: Dine.sanjuan.k12.ut.us
Plate 9a—Igbo artistic rendering of the four folded mystic baskets of creation and energy (Ukpa Asha n’Ano) made manifest as Afia-n’Ano-Ubochi-n’Ano on an Igbe Agwu (Agwu Mystic Chest). Image source: Hamillgallery.com

Plate 9b—The Izu symbol and its source, Oji (Kolanut); two central elements of Igbo cosmology. Image source: Chidi G. Osuagwu (2010).
Plate 10a— *Ichi Agbaja* pattern showing *Agu Nkwo* (Leopard-Hawk) or *Utu Udele Igwe* (*Utu* the Vulture of the Sky). Image source: of M. D. W. Jeffreys (1951).

Plate 10b— *Onu Oshuru* (lit. *Oshuru* Bottomless Pit), one of several structures found at the Lejja communal sacred solar plaza, Nsukka. *Utu-Udele-Igwe*, a solar-tree deity of justice in this locale is said to rise from the pit each day. Image source: Acholonu and Davis (2013).
Plate 10c—Agu Nkwo/Udele Igwe depicted with bull horns (Mpi Atu) as represented by the crescent Moon motif. The Odigbongo mystic motif, which symbolizes sunburst or the blinding intensity of the sun’s light, is seen beneath as the “teethed-saw” of Utu-Udele-Igwe. Image source: M. D. W. Jeffreys (1951).
Plate 10d — Nebulas are regarded in Igbo cosmology, mythology and astronomy as one of the countless composite eyes of Eze-Anya-Ofu, the Omniscient Supreme Spirit. The nebula seen above is of the Ula-Abani-Uzu category (residue from later divine cosmic smelting). The Igbos also believe that Nebulas are results of the holes gorged out by the cosmic Woodpecker (Oturukpokpo Aba) on the Ogwe world tree of the underworld, in its effort to see deeply into the face of the sky. Accordingly, Ndi Dibia utilize this principle in the creation and consecration of mystic water divination pots known as Ite-Inyoga-Afa used in Afa-Ite-Mmili/Afa-Inyoga-Iyi-Azi-Igwe, which aptly reproduces the same dense, gaseous condition of nebulas on a compact scale using the process of controlled microbial fermentation, then mystically transforming the specially generated molecular cloud into a mystic screen/divination lens through which one can see deeply into the “face of the sky” from the convenience of their house, just like the mythical Woodpecker did. Image source: NASA.gov
Plate 11a—Okongono/Osuokpo/Ngelengele the Mantis of Ikenga with erect horns or proboscis, exhibiting the two-sharpened-knives also known as Onataluchi Ngono with which it was by armed by its Chi (Agali n’Abo). 11b—Ikenga horned figure holding knife and horn.

11c—Relief from the lower crypt of the Hathor Temple in Dendara, Egypt. The baboon of Djehuti (deity of time) is seen on the extreme right holding up two knives, much like the “armed” mantis and the Ikenga (Igbo deity of time) figure above.
References


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Our present world, with its blunt identity of a hyper technological age—is finally gearing up to make the leap into the great, primordial ocean of spirituality. This occasion has seen to the resurgence of the ancient spiritual sciences of indigenous cultures, as well as creating room for the revelation of new streams of higher knowledge, meant to assist humanity in her return to the primal state of clarity and spiritual liberation. Accordingly, Africa’s unique knowledge systems are quietly regaining the center stage of interest for investors, thinkers, teachers and innovators all over the world. The Igbo people and their unique culture represents a mercurial bridge of time, with potentials of linking the contemporary mind to the mystic realms from whence original knowledge of the human phenomenon can be profoundly grasped and brought down to earth for practical applications of many vital interests. In this work, Nze Chukwukadibia E. Nwafor, a reincarnated Eze Dibia of Umunze descent, distills the knowledge, wisdom and experiences of nine life-times of intense spiritual work, culminating in a unique exegesis of Igbo reality and cultural phenomenon. Infusing his elucidations with an almost acute awareness of contemporary realities, Nwafor expounds on the very heart of an original African culture and associated practices, dating back to the earliest periods of humanity’s journey.
Nze Chukwukadibia E. Nwafor (Omenigbo-Nwa-Anwu-Ushi-Odirimatachi) is an Igbo writer, philanthropist, Dibia and advocate of African knowledge systems and indigenous spiritualities. A life-long learner and advanced practitioner of Igbo medicine and sacred teachings, he is also a fully-investitured culture bearer and spiritual lineage holder (Eze-Aka-ji-Ofo-Odinala) of Ururo-Umunze descent. His dedicated strides towards the total awakening of Igbo contemporary humanity have propelled him to introduce and teach the first comprehensive cyber course on Igbo cosmology. His general publications on the intellectual and mystical traditions of the Igbo are widely read. *Leopards of the Magical Dawn* is his first book and it was relased into the public domain to be accessible to all, free-of-charge.