

MASKING AND MASQUERADING IN ARONDIZUOGU: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Masking is an important aspect of Igbo festivities. In Arondizuogu, it has an ancestral link, and there are steps taken to re-awaken their spirit into active performance. Masquerade is held in high esteem in Arondizuogu, where the mask is totally concealed. Acts of desecration is highly abhorred. Types of masquerades, roles and general dispositions in the society were discussed. Masquerade songs with their deep philosophical meaning were equally divulged. Exchange of charms (Iko-ogwu) and other diabolical practices were brought to the fore. All these activities which gave Ikeji its revered features were fully discussed in this work.

INTRODUCTION

As most communities in Igboland celebrate their cultural festivals, masking is the most popular and most entertaining moments to the public. In Arondizuogu in particular, masking popularly known as *mmonwu* is a very popular feature of its *Ikeji* festival. Supporting the above view, Onyeneke posits that, masquerades are widespread and ancient institution in Igboland and there is hardly any village group where it has not been in practice for at least sometime¹. Most Igbo communities are distinguished by their masquerade patterns. As an example, *Udunkunu* is popular among Item people of Bende area, *Nwutam* by Ngwa, *Nnewi* and some part of Anambra performs *Ijere*. *Odo* and *Omabe* are common with Nsukka area of Enugu, *Ekpe* and *Ekpo* are commonly found among the Cross River/Ibibio and Arochukwu areas.

Masking

The pattern of costume or concealment of Masquerades also, differs from one community to another. In many communities of Anambra, and Arondizuogu, the concealment is total, while in Ngwaland, Ibibio and Nsukka areas, their *ekpo* or *odo* masquerades have their upper and lower limbs exposed. Onuora Ossie Enekwe in support of the above submits thus:

The idea of concealment differs from place to place. In Igbo mmonwu clan, the coverage of all parts of the body is mandatory, but in Omabe and Odo communities the limbs are often exposed. What is common and fundamentals to most traditions of masking is the concealment of the face and head².



Nyikiriputu Pericomo from Ndiogbuonyeoma

Onyeneke affirms the above as he writes, in some Igbo area e.g. the Odo, Omabe regions, the masquerade may have extremities of hands and legs showing, while in other areas such as to the Nri-Awka mmonwu group the figure will need to be completely covered from head to foot³.

Equally, in Arondizuogu, concealment extends to the mouth. This helps to produce a guttural tone for the masquerade to prevent the uninitiated and women from easy identification of the personality behind the mask⁴. This aspect of concealment impacts greatly to the masquerades awesomeness, as it helps to reinforce its image as an ancestral spirit. Emeka Nwabueze affirms the above as he avers that:

In order to disguise the individual and proclaim the characteristic image of the ancestral spirit personified in the masquerade, the groups devise a method of changing the voice of the masquerader to make it sound like that of a spirit⁵.

In the context of the above submission, as ancestral spirit personified in masquerade, Arondizuogu being a highly traditional religious people worshipped several deities and spirits. These include the ancestors, though dead and departed from the mortal world, but are still regarded as members of the family and community. The ancestors represents the living in the land of the dead as well as metamorphosed into masquerade form to participate in *Ikeji* festivals annually. Masquerade thus, become the manifestation of the dead among the living, re-affirming the inter-dependability between the living and the dead. The material world of man is governed by a hierarchy of spirits and spiritual forces, including our ancestors, who have now formed part of the spiritual world. In support of the above, Ezeanya posits that, man lives in an atmosphere controlled by countless invisible powers both good and evil that steer the course of human destiny⁶.

As a community that believes in re-incarnation, there is a constant interaction between the living and the dead. The dead are still regarded as members of the family. They had only transited to the spiritual world to join forces with other spirits to defend, protect and prosper the activities of the living here on earth. The living reciprocates by making offerings and sacrifices to their appeasement. Should there be any problem for the living such as business failures, barrenness or illness, the ancestors were blamed for their failure to discharge their responsibilities over the living. This explains why the ancestors are fondly remembered and carried along during *Ikeji* festivals, as the representatives of their various

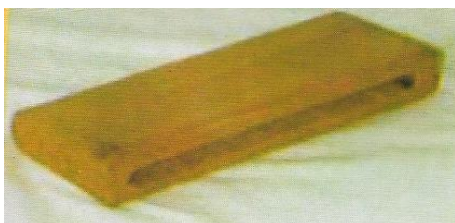
families and communities in the spiritual world. Okafor Ogbaji gave more credence to the above when he submits that the *Ikeji* rituals are only performed for the dead, but by the living. One can only perform such rituals for one's dead ancestors⁷.

It is the belief of Arondizuogu people, that masquerades are dead spirits of our ancestors, who are already asleep and must be woken, through *Onu ahuhu* (ant holes). They must be searched for, through certain intricate traditional practices like pouring of libations and making supplications to the gods. *Icho-mmonwu* through *agu mmonwu* (the roaring lion), in some *Ekwuru mmonwu* eggs were smashed and day-old-chicks sacrificed to the deities. All these nocturnal activities usually took place on *oye egbugbu* night and ensured smooth transition of the dead spirit into masquerade, to participate in the *Ikeji* festival of that year. *Oye-egbugbu* being a highly ritualized night, also, saw intending masqueraders fortifying their *Ogwu* (charms) known as *Inucha ogwu*. This is made possible by making various sacrifices and supplications to their personal chi's and ancestors. Through these acts they obtained assurance of safe-outing. The night also witnessed young boys in frenzy forming themselves into various groups singing masquerade songs, eating and drinking, and visiting one compound to another in anticipation of the *Oso mmonwu* which begins at dawn⁸.

Masquerades having been awakened, through ant holes, following the ritual processes enunciated above, sets the community agog masquerading for the next three market days. *Afo*, *Nkwo* and *Eke*. *Oye* have been explained as the main *Ikeji* day, *Oye-egbugbu*, when sacrifices and propitiations were made to the gods and ancestors. Two separate traditional practices from diverse Igbo communities, *Ikeji* bequeathed by Arochukwu and *Mmonwu*, diffused from Nri/Awka. They became in-separable twins that have taken African traditional practices to its highest height of prestige and honour.

At dawn of *Afor*, the first day of *Oso-mmonwu* (masquerading), *sounds of ekwe mmonwu* (beating of the gongs) were heard from various *ekwuru-mmonwu* (masquerade cult groups) in readiness for masquerades outing. Young enthusiastic lads gathered in anticipation of the days outing and beat the gongs, thus charged the environment into the expected readiness.

It is very imperative at this point to mention the musical instruments that produced the masquerade music in Arondizuogu. They include *Ekwe* (the wooden gong). It has various sizes including the small, medium and giant sizes known as *oke-ekwe*.



Various sizes of *Ekwe Mmonwu*

The *Ogene* (metal gong). It comes in various dimensions including the giant single metal gong. The *Ogene Nkpi*, the small double metal gong and the medium sized double metal gong. The *Ichaka* or *Oyo* (Tambourine), the



Ogene

application of this is quite discretionary to some groups. Some masquerade groups also incorporated *Udu* (musical clay pot), among their instruments. *Oja* (flute), is a traditionally carved hollowed wooden pipe, which is blown to produce musical sound. The flutist had always succeeded in charging the atmosphere into great frenzy and intoxication, through its scintillating sound.



Oja (flute)

Arondizuogu is made up of nineteen villages. As masquerades exits from their various villages to the central arena, most of them paid homage's to their village deity's to obtain assurance of safe outing. Ogbonnaya Ebune in support of the above posits that:

Ajagu was a very powerful and benevolent god, which gave adequate protection to its ardent worshippers as well as its clients. Masquerades which paid homage to it, received certain materials, which protected them against malevolent forces during masquerading. Ajagu being a peaceful deity will only advice them to avoid trouble⁹.

He further opined that materials given out were returned at the end of their performances. These protective items could be in form of rings, stones, feathers, ego *ayoro* (cowries), etc, which were returned with appreciation¹⁰.

Masquerades are usually accompanied by *Umu-nkwu*, (the initiated masquerade followers), who carried the *mgbajara* (canes) and made the soronous enchantments (*Ima-mbem*) to the masquerade. The un-initiated, the *ogbodu* kept their distance and always ready to run for their life's, who equally held their initiated mates in great envy.

The *Umu-nkwu*, produces the noise which announced the arrival or exit of a masquerade from one particular place to another.

Okwa-nu mmonwu – o – o – o

Okwa-nu mmonwu – o – o – o

It is a masquerade – o – o – o

It is a masquerade – o – o – o

Announcing to the expectant individuals the arrival of masquerades. By these chants also, masquerades and its troupes are identified by on-lookers. Such chants as:

Nwa-o-obi-n'ugwu-o-o-o

Nwa-o-obi-n'ugwu-o-o-o

The troupe is easily identified to have originated from Ndiianiche village, having been identified by their pet name *obi-n'ugwu*. Same applied to other villages, as the masquerade emigrate to other places.

Ogbu-o-o, otoludo mgbadike

Oke mmonwu Akunwanta uzo-roo-gwoo amalusite-o-o

The strong masquerade from Ndiakunwanta. No matter how rough the route is, people must visit to pay homage.

Odudu-o-o- odudu-o-o

Okwa-nu Okoro Ugo-ocha-o-o- Ugo-ocha-o-o-o

Iye Jekwe Ama-Edward-Nkwoachi-o-o-o

Odudu is significantly powerful from Akeme village. It is identified with Ugocha the pet name as it was being propped to approach Ama-Edward and Nkwoachi for display.

Nwa ajike n'Ogbuonyema-o-o-o

Oke mmonwu-o-o-o

This confirms to the spectators that the troupe is from Ndi-Ogbuonyema village. Masquerades make easy identification of themselves and villages. In case of emergencies assistance could easily be provided for them¹¹.

The behaviour of masquerade is structured in such a way as to depict it's roles while on display. *Mgbadike* being the father of masquerades behaves in a deaf and dumb manner, very robust and difficult to control. A rattling bell was tied on his waist, as well as a strong rope, pulled by a follower to serve as a deterrent. *Mgbadike* of the old used sharp machete (*Obejili*) or small axe while performing. *Nwabuja* depicts the behaviour of mothers, always willing to provide succour and clownish dispositions as she entertains the elderly women and children. In the ancient time, *Nwabuja* moved about with a thorny walking stick, with which she protected herself from the irrational dispositions of the *Ojionu*'s. The *Ojionu* masquerade represents the youth and its exuberances and extreme excitements associated with the youths. These are group of masquerades that carries and whips canes (*ipia-mgbajara*), make troubles and indulged in fights among themselves¹².

Fights among masquerades was a common feature in the *Ikeji* festival of the past. It was caused by nothing, except youthful exuberances, recalcitrancies and in some occasions some masquerades would want to extol themselves over others, which may be strongly resisted. At this point, it is believed that

masquerades can no longer control their emotion, when the spirit of the masquerade had gone into their heads. Several diabolical practices, such as exchange of charms (*Iko-Ogwu*), fighting, wounding and maiming of people could take place. According to Ogbonnaya Ebune, some masquerades acquired charm (*Ogwu*) known as “*ahu n’ahu ete*” while some possessed “*azu-eru ana*”, among others. By *ahu n’ahu ete*, it enables the masquerade act in a quick and unanticipated sharp manner. As sharp as quick-silver, which make it impossible for its opponents to hold him firmly. The later, *azu eru ana*, is a charm which prevents the masquerades back from touching ground¹³.

Being so highly prepared, most of the masquerades engaged themselves in serious fights. Some seek for trouble as a way to boost their images. Such fights had existed between, *Nkume* and *Ekú Aso-Oku*, *Ebi-Okoludo* and *Atu*, *Nkwankwa Aka* and *Ozu*. Most of the fights spilled over the next years *Ikeji*. On the other hand, following some miscalculation or misinformation or probably mishandling of the situation the villages of the fighting, masquerades could be caught in the web of the fight in defence of their towns masquerade. Such fights had taken place between *Ndi-Aniche* and *Ndi Akunwanta* villages in 1970, which spilled over to 1971, before the elders of the two villages intervened and made peace. For issues that could have been resolved on the spot, but for the frenzy associated with *Ikeji*, it was blown out of proportion, thus, got escalated involving the villages where the masquerades emigrated from.

Such ugly situations or miscalculation has been brought under control following the creation of Association of Arondizuogu Masquerades (ASAM), in 1980, by Arondizuogu Patrotic Union (APU). Okafor Ogbaji asserts that ASAM acted as a masquerade police and infact as a mobile court which adjudicated over masquerades matters and apportioned appropriate sanctions to the offending side¹⁴. Uche Ohia in support of the above, opines that, they ensured that dangerous weapon were not carried, check misconduct by masquerades, monitor free flow of human and vehicular traffic among others¹⁵. With the above development, great order and discipline was restored during masquerading in Arondizuogu.

In Arondizuogu, masquerades can only flog an individual once. Before this is done, the said masquerade must identify the individual before flogging or in the alternative *Imekwaa-mmonwu* (you settle the masquerade). On the other hand, *Ogbajuo dolu*, at the height of demonstrations, when the arena is fully congested with participants, the rule of identification before flogging was not rigidly observed. Masquerades do wild flogging at this point known as *Kulu-ogbodu*, - *kulu nwankwu*, (flogging both the initiated masquerade followers, as well as the uninitiated *ogbodu onu ntu*).

Masquerades do extol themselves when they met an individual that caught their interest. It could be a distinguished member of the masquerade cult group or a prominent member of the community. By this contact, the masquerade used the opportunity to assert its supernatural nature and invincibility. As it reaches out thus:

<i>Mmonwu</i>	-	<i>Okoli Okeke ndimegwu-o-o</i>
<i>Response from Okoli</i>	-	<i>Mmuo</i>
<i>Mmonwu</i>	-	<i>Ima onye mbu?</i> (Do you know me)
<i>Response</i>	-	<i>Ibu mmuo nnanyi ha, madu anaghi amagi.</i> (you are the spirit of our ancestors, no living, can identify (you)
<i>Mmonwu</i>	-	<i>Abum anu kporonku, n’aju onu.</i> <i>Anu – abuba n’afu onwe ya oku.</i>

(I am the dry meet that fills the mouth. The fatty meat that ignites the fire on its own).

Response - *Ekene m gi oke mmuo, unu gadi, anyi ga di, ya gazie-o-o.*
(I salute you, the Great Spirit, you will live and we shall live, it shall be well with us).

The masquerade is hereby settled by the individual, either by cash gift or bottle of hot drink, while masquerading continues.

Arondizuogu masquerades derived their names from wild animals or dangerous insects. Such names as *Ezi ohia* (wild pig), *Agu-iyi* (crocodile), *Ozodingba* (chimpanzee) *Ebi-ogwu* (the porcupine) *Agu enwe oyi* (Tiger that kept no friend), *Akwu-ebu ojulu-ogbaa* (The stinging bee) *Ogbakuru* (centipede) *Erugheru* (soldier ants) among others, are common features. The essence is to instill fear to an enemy or opposing groups as the name had already suggested serious threat or terror to the enemy¹⁶. The fear became accentuated more, as the masquerade followers enchantments (*mbem*) rents the air as follows:

Okwa nu Akwu-ebu-o-o
Akwu-ebu-ogulu-ogbaa
Akwu-ebu-o-o-o

Meaning the stinging bee that stings ceaselessly is approaching, or,
Okwa nu, Agu-enwe-o yi-o-o-o

The tiger that devours easily, it does not harbour any friendship or relationship of any kind. With such renditions in the air, women and children scampered for shelter to avoid the ferocious beast in the masquerade.

One significant masquerade that ardoned *Ikeji* festival in the 1970's and 1980's was the *Okwomma* masquerade, owned by Ndiakunwanta village. The masquerade was communally owned and headed by Mazi Romanus Ikwuegbu (*Omuma egbu ngwu*). The *Okwuoma* cult had about five different masquerades in their troupe, including a special one tagged the "police *Okwomma*". It's responsibilities were to control traffic and create easy access to the troupe in a comic manner. *Okwuomma* was not an annual masquerade troupe like the



***Okwomma* Masquerade Ndiakunwanta**

regular ones, rather, it operated biennially (every two years). One of the sonorous songs with which Okwomma was identified was:

Ya di walu Okwomma-o-o, kachi who-o-o x2
Ya di wa-o-o-o Ya di wa-o-o-o
Ya di walu Okwomma-o-o-o, kachi who-o-o-o
Ntigbu, ntigbu, nzowu, nzowu osere gi n'onye-o-o-o?
Ya di walu Okwomma-o-o-o, kachi who-o-o¹⁷.

By the above song, the *Okwomma* was preaching peace, requesting for every other thing be left till tomorrow. All these threats, intimidations, quarrel, or fights associated with *Ikeji* are quite unnecessary. People should focus on peaceful co-existence, to achieve the maximum benefit associated with *Ikeji*.

With the specialized beating of the musical instruments and scintillating dance steps, the *Okwomma* troupe became the most prestigious and widely acclaimed masquerade in Arondizuogu. The above status and elegance of the *Okwomma*, gave credence to Onyeneke's assertion as he posits thus:

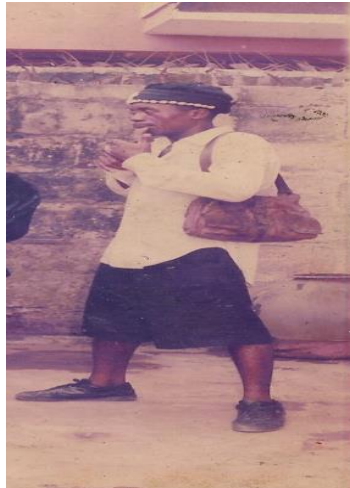
The status of the masquerade does not depend on itself, its size, personal agility and prowess, or even its supposed personal prowess... it lies entirely on the common force of the supporting village community as a male association¹⁸.

Okwomma masquerade were highly feted by notable individuals in the community. Some of whom belonged to the cult group, while others do not, who requested to be visited by the masquerade troupe. As they paid visit during this august festival, gifts of live goats, rams, cock, yam tubers and various types of drinks, as well as money were showered upon them during this auspicious outing¹⁹.



Okwomma Masquerade Troupe

At the heat of *Oso-mmonwu*, some people formed themselves into large groups singing and beating the gong or ogene with their flutist in great fascination.



The flutiest (Raw Cash)

The aim of these groups was to extol strength and valour as well as intimidate the weaker opposition who may wish to challenge them. Several songs were produced spontaneously as the arena became crowded or congested with human traffic. Most of the songs were improvised, made to serve the purpose at hand. Equally most of the songs are philosophically embedded, meant for caution or serve as a deterrent to intended evil doers. At this point, several tones formulated either, to extol themselves, or to intimidate others to submission were sang, such songs as these were sang by various groups.

Buru buru tigbu – o – o – o – o x3

Lift up and kill – o – o – o x3

Meaning lift up whatever obstacle and destroy.

Ebonite ezelu-o-o-o x3

Anyi jaa naa-o-o-o

Lift up and trash on the floor we are done and satisfied

The above depicts that the group has no business fighting, rather they would just lift the opponent in the air and trash him to pieces on the floor, and it was over.

Ane-ji-de agu n'aka? x2

Ana-ghi eji-de agu n'aka, agu-ndu

Can you catch a tiger by bare hand? x2

It is imposible to catch a live tiger bare handed

This group are priding themselves that a live tiger cannot be caught bare handed meaning that a spirited fight must ensue before a tiger was defeated.

Zogbuoro anyi enyi

Zogbu-o-o enyi na n'abia

Zogbuoro anyi enyi

*Trample upon that elephant bare footed
Trample upon the approaching elephant
Trample upon that elephant*

The above song is metaphorical, the group had acquired enormous power that they can trample upon the elephant bare footed.

At the height of *oso-mmonwu*, diabolical practices and wicked charms were being discharged, while people were maimed or harmed in the process. The song below is urging those who believed they have acquired enough power to come forward for contest.

*Ka'nyi je nu n'obi ogaranya-o-o
Ka'nyi je nu n'obi-o-o-o
Ka'nyi je-mara mbe n'abo nke bu oke-o-o
Ka'nyi je nu n'obi ogaranya²⁰.*

*Let us approach the king arena
Let us gather at that arena
Let us determine the male among the tortoises
Let us gather at the arena*

The translated version of the above song is urging who ever that has acquired enough charm (*ogwu*) or who feels indestructible to appear before the designated arena to prove the male among the two tortoises. This is when exchange of diabolical powers are done to prove the strongest among the various groups.

*Om'ihe jide kwo-o-o ugu-o-o- x2
Ima na Chukwu ka dibia agwo ndi oya o-o
Om'ihe jide kwo-o-o-o ugu-o-o²¹.*

*Be justified in whatever thing you want to do. x 2
The Lord is stronger than the traditional healers
Be justified in all your actions.*

The above song is premised upon the fact that man is a mortal that needs to be judicious and up-right in his actions. As he would be required some day to give account of his stewardship here on earth, to his ancestors or gods who controls the activities of men here on earth. Ezeanya, in support of the above submits thus:

Man must deliberately make efforts to do good and avoid evil. He must see himself as a creature who owes his existence to a higher power, from whom he came and to whom he must render account for his behaviour and who ultimately will reward him for his conduct²².

In the same vein, the song below is equally calling for caution to avoid mistakes or dangers.

Ogba mgba kpachara anya-o-o-o x2
Om'ihe jide kwa agu-o-o-o x2
Kama ogba mgba je anwude agu n-a-a-n-a-a
ya mgburu mgba n'iro chieftu n-u-o-o x2
Ebube agu neche agu-o-o-o, neche-agu-o-o-o, n'eche agu-o-o-o
*Ebube agu n'eche agu-o-o-o*²³.

The above, interpreted thus:

Let the wrestler be careful and calculative. Any human action must be justified. Instead of a wrestler to defeat a tiger in a contest, he will fight restlessly till day break. The tiger has a natural defensive aura that made it too invincible to be defeated or caught.

The above song is warning people to be very careful in their actions to steer out of trouble. Not every fight or human action is justified especially when you want to intimidate the innocent. Otherwise, one may get himself entangled into an inexplicable mess very difficult to handle or escape.

Ichie Mezuo Nwankwo Okoye Pericomo, the traditional masquerade music maestro, through his enormous talent contributed immensely in taking *Egwu-mmonwu* (masquerade music) to a higher dimension. He succeeded in releasing series of records smashing hits, such as “*Isi na udo gadi, Ejazuo m uwa, Odeji-gwugwu, Awirigidi, Ogba-aghara, Ekere mgba*, among others. These series of sonorous cultural lyrics released shot *Ikeji* festival to its apogee of popularity and fame. Pericomo, as well, became very synonymous with *egwu-mmonwu* and *Ikeji*, while his *egwu-mmonwu* gave the required hype to *Ikeji* festival. As a mark of recognition many Igbo communities played his *egwu-mmonwu* (masquerade music) during their various ceremonies. Between 1977-2015, of the formation of his group, Pericomo succeeded in releasing a total of forty musical albums. There is no doubt, other communities made masquerades, but Arondizuogu has taken it to its highest point of pride, popularity and acceptability.

Conclusion

Ikeji festival is one among other cultural practices inherited from Arochukwu, while, Ndizuogu masquerade pattern diffused from Nri/Awka region. Both cultures became inseparable twins from different mothers, which has transformed *Ikeji* to a highly esteemed level and the envy of every other community.

Masquerading involves several intricate activities which were encapsulated in this work. Early preparations include waking the spirit of the dead who metamorphosed into masquerade, re-affirming the inter dependability between the living and the dead in other words the ancestors, fortification of charms were all captured. Activities in the arena include improvisation of masquerade songs and the intimidative attitude of masquerade groups were all brought to light.

Arondizuogu is a cultural melting pot, having assimilated several cultural practices from Arochukwu and Nri Awka area. *Ikeji* festival was held tenaciously by the people, which prevented it from being eroded from colonial and Christian propaganda, which led to the extinction of several indigenous cultural practices. Masquerading still remained the most anticipated moment of this festival which has

always brought great joy and relief to both indigenes, friends and well wishers who thronged in to participate and witness the festival of that year.

ENDNOTE

¹A.O. Onyeneke. *The Dead Among the Living: Masquerades in Igbo Society*. (Enugu: Chuka Printing Co., Ltd., 1987), 41.

²Onuora Ossie Enekwe, *Igbo Mask*, (Lagos: Lagos Magazine, 1987), 57.

³A.O. Onyeneke, *The Dead Among the Living: Masquerade in Igbo Society*, 59.

⁴Oral Interview with Livinus Okonkwo (Major), age 72 years, A taitor, makes masquerade costume, from Ndi-Akunwanta Nkwo-Fada, Arondizuogu, 02/01/19.

⁵Emeka Nwabueze, *Visions and Re-Visions, Selected Discourses on Literary Criticism*, (Enugu: ABIC Books and Equipment Ltd., 2003), 91.

⁶S.N Ezeanya: "The Contribution of African Religion to Nation Building", In E.C. Amucheazi, (ed) *Reading in Social Science, Issues in National Development*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co., Ltd., 1980), 324.

⁷Nat Okafor Ogbaji: *Ikeji Festival Arondizuogu, Ancient and Modern*. (Aba: Clearprint Publishing, 2009), 17.

⁸Oral Interview with Robinson Ogbonnaya Okoli (Ogbonnaya Ebune), aged 92 years, a farmer and Community Leader at Ndi-Aniche Ikpeanyi, Arondizuogu on 29/12/18.

⁹Oral Interview with Robinson Ogbonnaya Okoli (Ogbonnaya Ebune), aged 92 years, a farmer and Community Leader at Ndi-Aniche Ikpeanyi, Arondizuogu on 29/12/18.

¹⁰Oral Interview with Robinson Ogbonnaya Okoli (Ogbonnaya Ebune), aged 92 years, a farmer and Community Leader at Ndi-Aniche Ikpeanyi, Arondizuogu on 29/12/18.

¹¹Oral Interview with Livinus Okonkwo (Major aged 72 years, a tailor makes masquerades costume from Ndi-Akunwanta Nkwo-Fada, Arondizuogu, 02/01/19.

¹²Oral Interview with Robinson Ogbonnaya Okoli (Ogbonnaya Ebune), aged 92 years, a farmer and Community Leader at Ndi-Aniche Ikpeanyi, Arondizuogu on 29/12/18.

¹³Oral Interview with Robinson Ogbonnaya Okoli (Ogbonnaya Ebune), aged 92 years, a farmer and Community Leader at Ndi-Aniche Ikpeanyi, Arondizuogu on 29/12/18.

¹⁴Nat Okafor Ogbaji, *Ikeji Festival Arondizuogu, Ancient and Mordern*, 74.

¹⁵Uche Ohia, *Ikeji Festival Arondizuogu, Imo State Nigeria* (Aba: Silverduck Services Ltd., 2014), 37.

¹⁶Oral Interview with Obidigbo Kanu, Age 73 years, Chief Priest Oda deity, from Akunwanta IHEME Ofé Imo, Arondizuogu on 29/12/18.

¹⁷Oral Interview with Okeke Obidike aged 75 years, A farmer from Ndi Akunwanta Uno Arondizuogu on 28/12/18.

¹⁸A.O. Onyeneke. *The Dead Among the Living: Masquerades in Igbo Society*, 64.

¹⁹Oral Interview with Obidike Okeke, aged 75 years, farmer, from Ndi Akunwanta Uno, Arondizuogu. 28/12/18.

²⁰Oral Interview with Livinus Okonkwo (Major), age 72 years, A Tailor, makes Masquerade costume, from Ndiakunwanta Nkwo-Fada, Arondizuogu, 12/01/19.

²¹Oral Interview Okeke Kanu, aged 74 years, Farmer and Community Leader, Ndiakunwanta Uno Arondizuogu. 29/12/18.

²²S.N. Ezeanya, "The Contribution of African Religion to Nation Building, 323.

²³Oral Interview with Livinus Okonkwo (Major), age 72 years, A Tailor, makes Masquerade costume, from Ndiakunwanta Nkwo-Fada, Arondizuogu, 12/01/19.