

CHAPTER 6

POETIC ANALYSIS OF IGORU TEXT AND THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE THEMES

6.1 Transcription and translation of text:

The texts of eighty seven Igoru songs, amongst those so far collected, have been transcribed from recordings for the purpose of this study. The transcription follows a poetic pattern, as much as possible, since the composers have conceived them poetically for the songs. We have therefore structured them in some verse forms. In doing this, we tried to follow the sequence of thought that the composers assumed in constructing the poems. That is, within the train of thought that forms an entire length of any given poetic song, we looked for the lines that marked the end of a segment or sequence that establishes a portion of the message to map out the verses. Some of the songs that are short are, however, not versified, but considered to be a single verse poem, particularly if the thought pattern is punctuated with series of non-final ending phases with the period coming only at the end.

We have stated earlier that the songs were not all collected from the same source and as a result, songs collected from a single performer have been written in poetic verses without indicating the lines of solo and chorus. In other cases, the lines of the soloists and chorus refrain have played major roles in determining line length and poetic metre in the various verses and poems. The lines sung by the soloists and chorus in most of the poems have therefore been indicated as such. Most of the satirical themes attacked and referred to specific personalities who were represented in narratives with the real names of the victims. In all negative references, we have adopted fictitious names to replace the real names for ethical considerations. But where the composer refers to himself and some identified persons positively, we have chosen to retain the real

names, for historical purposes. In similar dimension, names that reflect the significance of names have been retained with some sort of modifications to disguise the real names. The modifications were carefully shaped, both in sound and length, and in meaning, leaving no room for readers to guess aright and easily identify the real persons involved. We have used Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1997) model of poetic analysis of text as primary model to explain the literary interests of Igoru music lyrics. Although this model helps us to analyse the various poetic aspects of the texts, interpretations of the texts derive from the Okpe culture and the Igoru musicians.

In consideration of the various events and historical development that characterise and influence Igoru music, past and present, the poems have been classified into four periods for this discourse. The first period c. 1100 – 1900 covers the time that the territory known as Okpe was first occupied by the founder and his subjects. It also covers the reign of Esezi I, the renowned despot Orodje (king) of Okpe who was assassinated as discussed in chapter three. The period includes the enlargement of the Okpe settlement, contact with neighbouring communities and first contacts with foreign explorers. The period seems large, but only a few songs could be memorably linked to it amongst the Igoru songs so far collected.

The second period 1900 – 1945 covers the period of interregnum in Okpe, slave trade, colonial and missionary activities in the area, World War II, land dispute between the Okpe and Itsekiri, and reformation processes through the activities of the Okpe Union in Lagos and London. The third period 1945 – 1970 covers the reign of Esezi II, the Orodje of Okpe (John Deveno Mebitaghan a. k. a. Osakpa).

The period also covers the Nigeria civil war and all the effects and influences of the two [World and Civil] wars, as well as the missionary activities. The fourth period 1970 – 2005 covers the reign of Orhoro I, the Orodje of Okpe (Dimingo Omojaele Ejinyerien) and the decline of Igoru performances. These periods have been discussed in some historical detail in chapter four.

6. 1. 1 Song as oral poetry and text; poetry as speech and song:

Song, text, speech and oral poetry are terms used often in the discussions of certain literary and oral communication arts. Song in its simplest definition is packaged information put together in various sound forms that involve a combination of sounds in melody, often with words that centrally dominate the communication role. Poetry as opposed to prose, is an organized form of communication whereby words are skillfully and wittily put together in manners that only few words may cleverly be used to express a body of ideas. Speech is normally an organized use of words in spoken language to communicate feelings to an audience. Words [without musical sounds] carefully put together in prose or poetry form to intimate an audience with a body of information, on the other hand, may generally be referred to as text. But more significantly in this context, text refers to the words that in a song communicate thoughts, expressions and experiences. There is however a link between these terms, (song, text, speech and poetry), because there is normally a combination of the forms and it may therefore be difficult to discuss one without the other. In Igoru music for instance, the performers sometimes open a performance with an introductory speech. The information in this speech is usually not sung to any melody, but spoken directly. It informs the audience about the background of the song or songs to be performed and prepares them toward the experience. This is evident in the *Egboto Isinio* ensemble performances.

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 63 and 64) present the concept of poetry both as speech and as song, arguing that:

Poetry as speech. Even when it is written down – printed on a page in a book – a poem is essentially an oral communication, spoken by the poet and heard by his audience. Often, indeed, poetry is *song*: words communicated musically (p 64)...Poetry is memorable in a way that prose is not. After we have read a novel, for example, we may well remember characters, incidents, descriptions of places, but we are unlikely to find that words or phrases or whole lines have lodged in our memories. After reading a poem, on the other hand, we often find that chunks of it have stuck in our minds. After repeated readings, we are often able to recite from memory most or all of the poem. In the truest sense of the expression, we have learnt it by heart, and with little trouble. And this memorable quality derives very largely from the fact that poetry has a firm shape – a *pattern* of sound – imposed upon it by its maker (pp63-64)...Remember always that poetry is speech, poetry is music – and its subject is life (p 72).

The foregoing indicates that poetry involves both elements of speech and of song. These elements make the songs memorable. Igoru songs, whether short or long, are memorable; thus several Igoru songs are performed by various practitioners in different parts of Okpe without distortion of coherence and meaning in the messages communicated through the songs. The variety we have found so far in some of these songs collected from different parts of the Okpe country are mere results of choice of words, where the performing musician/poet might insert new words that mean exactly the same as those they replace. The performer of song 5 (A1 – 6), for instance says “young lady, you’ve carried fever; young lady you’ve carried a bundle of wood; you’ve carried great trouble and dangerous uterine prolapse upon your head, you don’t know”.

In song 6 (A1 – 11), another performer of the same song says exactly the same thing, but swaps the first two lines, changing a word and adding brief information. While the first performer uses the word “*okere*,” the second uses “*ukọ*” for the expression of “great trouble” as in this context. The second performer adds that the subject took the trouble so expressed with him/her to Lagos, information that was not suggested by the first performer. Long as the song is, the poetic nature by use of strictly worded lines, sequence of thought and sound patterns make it memorable that other performers amongst the audience could easily memorize it and re-present or perform it with the content intact. Mark Booth (1981: 5) comparatively argues that:

A song consists of, for one thing, a-not-very-long stretch of music, which may or may not be strophically repeated but which does have a distinct closure after it sets a moderate number of lines of verse; and for the other, a certain quantity of song verse...Outside the borders and not bound to share the nature of song are words merely recited to music and words sung in recitative or in liturgical or other chant. More difficult to map is the important area where song verse and lyric poetry that is not song meet. (p 5)...Where the song properly exists, where it is words for the singing voice, it has possibilities not recognized among poems for reading (p 6)...The existence of songs in sound, in time, is the simplest distinction between them and written verse (p 7).

Since generally oral poetry in Okpe is not recited, except in story-telling forms, Igoru poetry does not exist as mere recitation, but in proper songs, structured into melodies for the singing voice to communicate. The songs are either short or long, in some thorough composed narrative and varied verse forms. The simplest Igoru songs are composed in very short melodic sentences. Often, these short songs serve as preambles, mere introduction of the idea to the narratives. Only handful short songs really exist. Thorough-composed songs of moderate length

are structured in not very short melodic forms. They are rather composed in series of melodic phrases that keep the narrative word-phrases moving till the last line is given the required period and perfect cadence. Single verse songs of nine to fourteen lines long are often composed in a melodic stretch that is continuous to the full length. An eight-line or fourteen-line song, for instance can be structured into two equal verses, where the melody is composed to the length of the first half and the second half is sung to the same melody. But this is not the case with songs of this length in Igoru music. Songs within this range of length are considered and structured into single melodic progression.

Ashenafi Kebede (1982: 6) discusses the relationship between text and music in oriental Africa, presenting an argument that:

The performer communicates ideas to his listeners through music. Purely instrumental music, because of its illusive and intangible nature, may be harder to comprehend than vocal music. Meaning in vocal music is often direct, as long as the text sung is constructed to convey ideas and it is directly integrated with the melody. Sometimes melodies are primarily used to convey the message of the text; in this case, the text is considered more important than the melodies. This applies to the vocal music of oriental Africa. *Vocables* are also set to melodies, in which case the melodies are considered more important than the text.

Igoru music is vocal form and not instrumental, though accompanied with some instruments already discussed in chapters four and five. It communicates to the audience through the texts or poetry enhanced by the use of mellifluous melody. The text and melody play complementary roles in the communication process. Neither Igoru musicians nor the audience consider the poetry more important than the melody, or the melody more important. When they speak of the messages of Igoru music, though principally conveyed by the poetry, they say

“the songs speak to us and teach us values” (Idisi Adibo, oral interview). This indicates that the two are considered equally important in communicating messages.

Mark Booth (1981: 16) further examines the similarity and difference that exist between song text and poetry; as well as the association between audience and performer. He then argues:

Notice that in the case of narrative song we do not identify with a character in the song, but with the teller, with his implicit attitudes or his projected state. Tear-jerking narrative song gives us the experience not of the suffering character but of the sympathizing teller (p 16). Song text is poetry; then again song is not poetry as we usually understand poetry, but rather a collateral descendant from a common ancestor. To examine and write about written text is suitable for the critic of poetry; the appropriateness of such an approach for the student of song is not so clear. Certainly to study song exactly as we study the superficially similar forms of written lyric poetry leads to gauche mistakes...What the modern reader most wants to find in poetry is the poet's personal encounter with reality, fixed with subtle rightness in a unique construction of language. It should be clear that songs almost never answer to this expectation. Songs give us, for matter, something we can recognize; they present it in language sparing of surprises, consisting for the most part of well-chosen phrases rather than well-chosen words (p 23-24).

Igoru composers give emphasis to good choice of words and wise sayings. Phrasing and word selection both play important roles in the songs. Words that have roots in human experiences, some of which the composer might have had personal encounter with, and others based on the experiences handed down from past generations provide basis for philosophical constructions. Proper understanding of Igoru music depends much on the poetic structures, use of

linguistical elements that all have bearings in the philosophical thought processes and wisdom embedded in the culture. Different forms of association between the audience, the performer and the narrative character exist in Igoru music, depending on the perspective. The narrative performer is normally not a sympathizer, but one who exposes the evil deeds of the characters derisively and satirically; judging and condemning unworthy acts. The songs provide the audience the experience of the character descriptively, in such a way that the audience could be stimulated to imagine what pleasure or pains the character goes through as a result of his/her deeds. If the events narrated are however pathetic, the audience could become sympathetic with the character, and if the narrative is of an abominable act, it has the propensity of stimulating the audience to want to dissociate from the subject in the society. The audience's association or identification with the performer mostly lies in relation to the entertainment and information he/she provides. The study of Igoru songs as poetry is illuminating to the content and context of the performances.

6. 1. 2 Language and language import:

The principal language of Igoru music is Okpe, but some Igoru poets briefly insert words from other languages like English, Urhobo and Itsekiri, known to the people, to create some effects and sensation. We refer to the use of these foreign words as language importation in the context of this discourse. In song 31 lines 28 to 33 (A1 – 48), for instance, the poet employs the Urhobo language to stimulate the sense of curiosity in listening to a different language for a moment, and in this connect various ideas together. He/she uses Urhobo and Okpe to complement one another. Within the few lines where this importation occurs, the poet-composer makes a short statement in Urhobo and expands it in Okpe before finally concluding the song in the home language. The poet in song 44

lines 11 and 12 (page A1 – 72) imports both English and Urhobo languages to contrast the Okpe language in expressing a point as follows:

- *Imoko re rie isi,*
Parrots that travel overseas,
- *Tetiyin avwa vuę inene,* (Urhobo)
Inform grand mother when you get there,
- *Ohoro mę ọbẹrẹ hin, ehware ikongo oma ọgbaye-e* (Okpe).
My vagina is torn, because love making with soldiers was beyond my strength.

In the first line, the poet uses only one English word ‘overseas’ represented as ‘isi’ while the second line contains entirely Urhobo language and the third Okpe. The combination of these languages together in expressing ideas that could be expressed in only one language, not only show the diversity of language exploitation skills of the poet-composer, but stimulate a sense of cultural integration and assimilation. In song No. 49 line 7 (A1 – 84) the poet imports an Urhobo epigram to complement an Okpe phrase in making his/her point. He/she expresses as follows:

- *Osi vwe mi sio* (Urhobo)
It pulls me and I pull it,
- *Rọ ha otọre na* (Okpe)
That is on ground.

The persona uses the above expression to describe a complex situation, suggesting that there is great trouble awaiting the subject. This does not however mean any danger, but implies that the problem on ground that demands resolution is not an easy one to cope with. In song No. 50 line 1 (page A1 – 85)

the poet imports the name of an inanimate object 'Pillow Case' from the English language and uses it as personification to represent the persona who is an Igoru musician. The Okpe name for pillow case is *owen osurhomu*, which syllables are not equivalent to the name in English. But the Okpelized version of the English name as in the beginning of verse two, 'ipilokesi' having being influenced by the local patois is only one syllable lesser than the Okpe name for the object. The one syllable difference could have been adjusted by use of elision and or truncation in linking the two parts of the name together to enable it fit into the melodic phrase perfectly. We can not then say the poet used the English name because of syllabic balance with melodic phrase. We therefore have to examine the concept of the name 'pillow case' in the first instance. The pillow case serves as a cover for the pillow itself and protects it from dirt, and considering the lines that follow, we then come to understand that the poet implies that though, the Igoru musician might seem to be powerless, he/she invokes the powers of the ancestral deities to give him/her protective cover to shield him/her from every evil attacks.

Tanure Ojaide (2001: 24) adopts the term neologism to describe the various coinages of words that have their roots in English language and other African languages:

Udje dance songs have impacted on the Urhobo language. As with every other language worldwide, poetry helps it to grow. There are neologisms such as "helimeti" (helmet), "sati" (sardines), and "chapini" (captain) from English...The neighboring Ijo also have their influence on the language. Many words are no longer in fashion, such as "babotu" (prostitute) and "ajakpa" (tortoise).

Igoru poets-composers have, in similar manners, adopted some other English and non-English words, apart from those already mentioned above, in new

coinage or neologism patterns. These coinages are only used for expressions that would create some kind of multi-lingual effects and excitement on the listeners and not that the Okpe do not have words equivalent to them in meaning. Some of these words include *prisi* (preach, song 4, page A1 – 5); *itisha* (teacher, song 8, page A1 – 17); *ukoba* (kobo, song 15, page A1 – 27); *ibangoro* (bangle, song 16, page A1 – 29), *ibriji* (bridge, song 18, page A1 – 32); *govumeti* and *imoto* (government and motor car, song 22, page A1 – 35); *imeba* (member, songs 23, 25, 44, 48, 66, 79); *ijita* (guitar, songs 27, 56); *iminiti* (minute, 34); *isodja* (soldier, song 39); *ibroda* and *ati* (brother and aunty, song 42); *ifoto* (photograph, song 43); *ipaseja*, *ishu meka*, *kapita*, *brasimeti*, *repiera*, *itiubu*, *ijini* and *aropleni* (passenger, shoe maker, carpenter, black smith, repairer, tube, engine and airplane, song 44); *pilo kesi* (pillow case, song 50); *ikipi*, *olokpa*, *paredi* and *ipoda* (chief, police, parade and powder, song 62); *aleluya*, *Amereka* (hallelujah and America, songs 66 and 67); *ipreya* and *blaki* (prayer and blacky song 67); *bagi* and *ofisi* (bank and office, song 68); *isini*, *yuni* (senior and union, song 70), and *ishoshi* (church, song 82).

Apart from the above Okpelized English words, Igoru musicians have names by which they refer to some of their neighbours and foreigners. These names are not in any way derogatory, but we are yet to see any members of the ethnic groups and race so represented by these names addressing themselves by the same names. These include *Ihwo* for the Ijaw, *Irhobo* for the Itsekiri and *Oyibo* for all whites. Others are those in a way Okpelized, like *Ephron* for Effurun and *Ausa* for Hausa.

In song 52 lines 2 and 3 (page A1 – 87) the poet uses the Urhobo language to complement Okpe, saying: "The alligator cries so loudly in the river; then how

would the crocodile in the river cry? Oh no, we members do not know". The expression is proverbial meaning that those who have gone out of the way of God, who would not be certain to gain his (God's) support, if they prepare medicines and believe in their efficacy, how much more would the Igoru musicians who believe in their functional roles that follow after the standards of God. This implies that most traditional medicines require the backing of God to become effective. In lines 11 and 12, the poet expresses a consultation of the powers of the God of their fathers. He/she says '*Adane Okpe, otore ljeddo me vbaa re*' meaning *Adane Okpe* and the land of Jedo, I consult you.' '*Ada ene Okpe*' is a representation of the four ancestral quarters and thereby the God of Okpe. The land of Jedo in this context also implies the God of Jedo community. We have discussed this concept of community worship in chapter three earlier.

The word '*evbare*' conveys meaning beyond consultation in this context. It implies invocation of the powers to come into action, to kill those who would attempt to use medicines against the musicians. The poet in fact presents a reported dramatic dialogue that ensued between the persona and the imaginable assailants or subjects. He/she says the enemies said that the Igoru musicians should die in the rainy season and the persona objected to it, saying the earth would be too soft for burial and it would not be proper to die in such season. Then the enemies said they (the musicians) should die in the dry season and the persona replied, the earth would be too hard for burial, it would not again be a good time to die. The persona concludes that the enemies should please leave them alone, meaning no one wishes to die before the time destined for him/her. The use here is dramatic, because it establishes an argumentative wisdom based on the dialogue between an Igoru performer, representing other Igoru

musicians, and their enemies. By enemies, the poet means the victims of Igoru satirical narratives who wished and in fact practiced sorcery to ensure that some prominent Igoru musicians fall dead in the period when the tone of satire in Igoru music sounded most offensive.

In song 54 lines 3 and 4 (page A1 – 90) the poet imports the Itsekiri language to illustrate his/her point. The poet expresses that the Itsekiri have some curses they project on offenders, implying that some Okpe had begun to imitate them to invoke those curses. He/she represents the curses as they are invoked in the Itsekiri language. See appendix I for details. The poet of song 79 in line 3 (page A1 – 145) imports the phrase '*odje eya kpo*, one who sends wives packing' from Urhobo to succinctly make a point. The performer, Omaromwaye Igbide explained that the subject of the satire was a woman of authority who used to find faults and send her brothers' wives packing. This expression suggests that Igoru musicians in Lagos observed that this was not a healthy practice in the society. Every woman has rights in her husband's house and it is absurd for a fellow woman, a relation of the man, to intrude or obtrude to send any sisters-in-law packing from their matrimonial homes. It implies that though she had done that several times with her sisters-in-law, she certainly could not send Igoru musicians packing from Lagos because they performed a satire against her attitude.

6. 1. 3 The poet, composer, performer and persona:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 9) define the term 'persona' as a useful word that is employed to describe a narrator or a character who in a poem speaks in the first person. They argue that the persona is not the poet, but functions as a mask or disguise that the poet puts on for the purpose of enacting

a poem in a narrative form. The persona is a common and prominent feature in Igoru poetry. It appears in the first person pronoun such as 'I and we'. Igoru composers use either of these personas to narrate events that took place, as if they were right at the scene of the incidents, in order to make it look real and more effective at presentation.

In song 16 (page A1 – 29), Egbikume Azanọ uses the persona in two different forms to create various effects. He uses it in lines 1 and 2 to portray the narrator as an observer and reporter of an event that took place between two characters. In effect, he introduced the narrative in this disguise “I got to Ugbamugbose, yea, and I saw Takpevwiere lamenting greatly.” He continues the narrative with subtlety such that in line 4 he uses the third person pronoun ‘me’ to suggest and transform the character of the narrator from being an observer to being the protagonist who is involved in the encounter. In an ironical manner, he adopts the persona again in lines 8 and 16 to reinforce the latter role.

The composer of song 58 (page A1 – 94) also presents the narrative in the guise of the persona that changes roles. The opening line presents the narrator as an observer and reporter, but subsequently transforms to the protagonist who was narrating the story of her own experiences. This change of tone by which the narrator assumes the position of the protagonist in disguise, is a poetic technique adopted to create the mood and effect of a jeremiad being narrated by the affected person. It is often intended to arouse emotions that could stimulate sympathy, in order to make the message of the poem gain more ground or have more effect on the audience.

The composer of song 33 (page A1 – 55) also used the persona in a similar manner. In this song, the narrator presents a very painful incident as if it really happened to him. He states that he found a young lady to befriend as concubine and it was his blood relation that reported the bigamous activity of the lady to her husband. This implies, of course, that the moment his brother/sister had reported the young woman, he was already implicated, because he was involved in the ill act. He tries to evoke the kind of feelings one has when a very close relation does something grievous against him/her. The persona was employed here to show that it could have been less painful, if a neutral person in the community made the report, instead of a close relation. Omaromwaye Igbide, in song 43, also adopts the persona at the opening of the poem to represent the narrator who revealed himself/herself as a counsellor and an observer who encountered, discovered and is narrating the consequence of his/her client's disobedience. He establishes this position firmly between lines 1 and 8 saying: "Yea, I advised Ibebeka to return from Ikeja, and Ibebeka refused...On a certain day, I travelled to Ikeja, and I found Ibebeka fallen in the street; she was in pains and was very weak".

In rare cases, the poet uses the first person pronoun to refer to himself, both as the narrator and the poet. In Igoru music, this very often occurs when the poet wants to drive certain messages home, particularly when he is much involved in the context. In song 8 line 10 (page A1 – 17), Unugbrogodo Ekure uses 'I' to refer to himself directly, being involved in the very context of the song theme. He was in fact contesting the views of the community members concerning a musician. As an Igoru musician who had encountered some reactions from the public, he decided to be personal in this approach. He contends as follows, using the persona:

Unugbrogodo sings (performs), and the world, call him a
vagabond; yeah, you said so and we've heard you. But

what the eye sees, the mouth will say to the audience. How one becomes a vagabond is numerous; yes, public, I will educate you.

He states, in fact, his real name at the first line of the song poem to make clear that the subsequent first person pronoun refers to him as both the poet and narrator, as opposed to other cases where he might use the persona to represent the narrator while his role is understood simply as that of a poet and performer. In some Igoru songs, the composer changes the roles of the characters in the narratives. The song may start with the antagonist appearing to be the persona or narrator. Then it progresses to quote and present the speech of the protagonist or subject. In song 31 lines 28-30 (page A1 – 48), the narrator presents the subject's expression verbatim in quote instead of reported speech form. In the following songs, similar quotes were inserted into the narratives to distinguish the position of the performer from that of the subject. They include song 32 lines 17-21 (page A1 – 52) and song 47 lines 5, 10, 27-29, 33-34, 45 and 47-49 (page A1 – 78).

In song 32 (page A1 – 52), the quote is incomplete, but is consummated by a line that follows it in reported speech manner. The lines read: 'And he said, "you've got to accept my decision, and one thing that is left, I shall give you a rule; your tax this year is payable to the Orodje of Okpe; and any Itsekiri citizen who flouts this order," he said, should take up his boat and row to Lagos'. We have earlier pointed out that our translation in the appendix had not strictly followed the intricacies of expressions in the Okpe language. Reading the poems in the local patois therefore gives us more impressions of the manner in which these expressions are made. This is so, because we have considered the simple readability of the poems in the translations. In the above quotation, however, we

observe that the first part is presented in quote and the second part in reported speech form. This then presents a kind of swap between the position of the narration performer and the persona. While in the quote the performer assumes the position of the involved character, the unquote part of the statement represents the narrator as an observer only.

In song 46 (page A1 – 78), the quotes represent the changing characters involved in the narrative. The first quote represents the speech of the impostor who comes to invite the protagonist for a mission. The second represents the performer (not the persona) challenging the ensemble chorus and audience to respond to the song at appropriate entry points. The third represents the complaints and disagreements of the protagonist, having discovered the guile of the impostor. The fourth represents the lament of the protagonist and the fifth represents the speech of the intervener. These quotes all function in making the presentation dramatic, interspersing the narratives with dialogue.

In song 58 (page A1 – 94) the composer presents the topic sentence to suggest that the narrator is a witness who narrates an event he/she had witnessed and suddenly changes position to assume the role of the character involved. He/she narrates the whole story using reflective pronoun that all suggest he/she was deceived by his/her peer to separate from her spouse. One then wonders whether the satire is an attack against the narrator or the person who deceived him/her. The performer, however, interprets the mood and intention of the composer that the song is a satire against a lady customary chief who practiced socio-moral vice and led the protagonist regrettably into it.

6. 1. 4 Symbolic communication circle in poetry:

Nzewi (2002: 368) argues and examines the components that are interwoven into the internal frame of musical products as follows:

Music is the sonic perception of the methodical manipulation of certain mathematical and acoustical principles. The mathematical principle computes, in time dimension, the organisation and duration of beats/notes to plot the rhythm of a musical product...There are other constants in creativity which are needed to qualify a rationalized synthesis of rhythm and tones in music. Foremost is the human constant: music is the product of a humanly performed or intentioned activity. The second constant is an evidence of patterned rhythmic configurations in a single or multi-lineal plane. Thirdly, there also needs to be evidence of conscious selection and sequential manipulation of tones and pitches, or spectrum, thereof, (called notes) on a rhythmic base. And, fourthly, there has to be an acoustical medium designed and manipulated to resonate this union of rhythm and tone/pitch according to rationalised degrees of sonic intensity. The presence of these constants of a musical intention...are not music specific. But they are fundamental to a musical process.

Igoru composers undertake several processes of selecting and permutating different elements from the language and linguistic phenomenon of the Okpe culture, as well as those of music. These elements unify in the process and become a product that transmits several messages to the public in symbolic forms. Nissio Fiagbedzi (1985: 41-45) *On Singing and Symbolism in Music: The Evidence from among an African People*, re-visits the symbolic theory of interpreting music phenomenon advanced by Langer (1967) and reinvents the argument as follows:

She holds that the human brain, as a great transformer, continually converts sense-data into symbols; that these symbols are, in turn, our elementary ideas; and that symbol-making gives rise to speech, an observable human

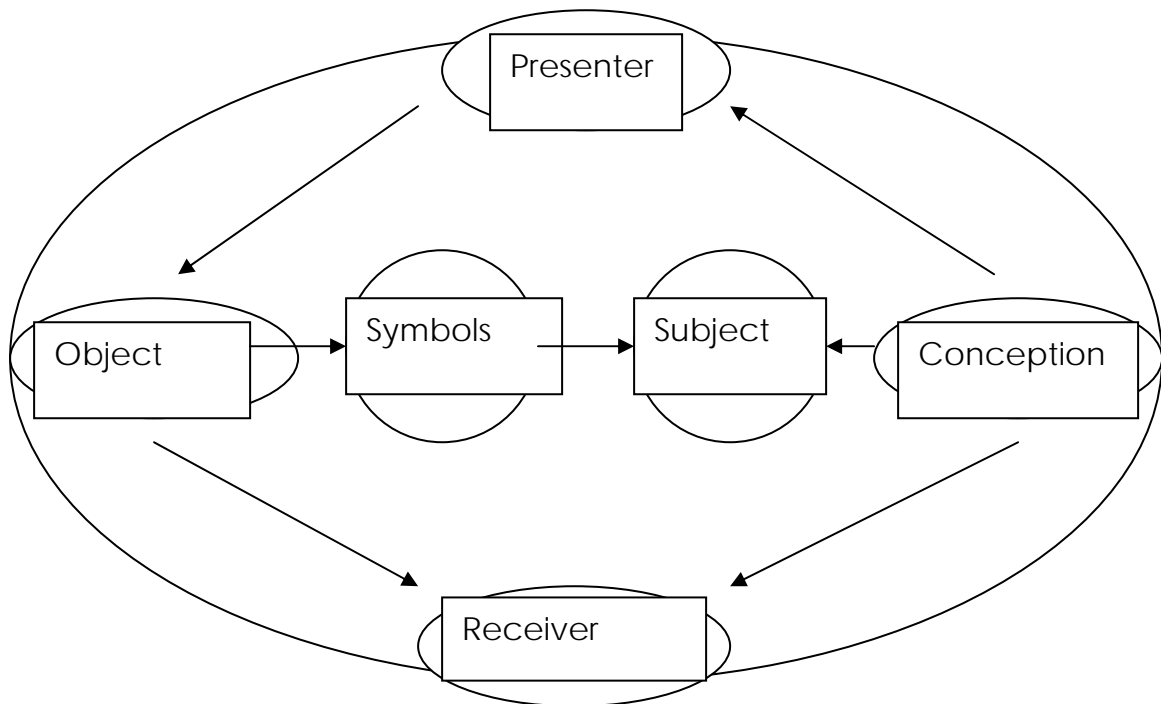
function whose main vehicle is language (p 41)...unlike language, music is an “unconsummated” symbol, which lacks denotative function. Therefore, music having no fixed conventional reference has import only as an articulate whole. Any significance may be assigned to music as long as it fits the logical image of the music...In signification, for instance, the relationship is a straightforward one. The sign induces the subject or individual to take direct and immediate account of the object or event it represents. Thus, on hearing a piece of music, a person may identify it as music and, from a previous experience, relate it to a specific musical type. Or he may place the performance within its sociocultural context (p 42)...It would seem, however, that there are other possible patterns of thought in using symbols. Three alternative sequences suggest themselves: first, that of subject → object → symbol → conception (p 44).

Purely instrumental music may be seen debateably as unconsummated or incomplete and imperfect symbol, but since Igoru music is vocal and word-based, it presents its symbols in skilled language that employs figures of speech, imagery and other poetic elements. It is the use of these language techniques put together in tones and tunes that assist in conveying the messages that make the songs symbolic. Messages may not therefore be presented directly and in such details demanded by speech. The messages are rather fragmentised and presented in manners that require the listener’s further reasoning in order to deduce the full meaning of the songs.

In the above argument, Fiagbedzi identifies the subject as the individual member of the audience, the object as the song he/she listens to, the symbol as the type of song [named], and conception the meaning derived from the song. In our discourse of the communication network in Igoru music, we shall adopt an alternative formula as follows: presenter → object → symbols → subject → conception → and receiver. In this alternative, presenter means the composer-

performer, object music or song, symbols the technical language it employs, subject the character in the narrative or the person who is attacked by the content of the song, conception the meaning of the song text and receiver the audience – her sensitivity and response.

Figure 6 – 1: Symbolic communication circle in poetry



The presenter, as in oral poetry, is often the poet and composer who poise the poems and songs at performances in the person of the persona to both the subject and the audience. The presenter, as composer, draws experience and knowledge from observation and deep philosophical thought to conceptualize the themes that form the object [poems and songs]. He/she represents the conception in symbols packaged in the object and presents it at performance. The object at presentation conveys the symbols to the subject and audience and the latter duo conceptualize the meaning therein. As the presenter derives his/her messages and meaning through conceptualization, so do the subject and audience, because the knowledge of truth is in part and in whole, depending on how it is conceived, deduced and presented. This implies that the composer may not set all details in the songs, but the fragments of information put together provide the subject and audience basis for further efforts to tap new knowledge intellectually.

These relationships are significant in Igoru music, because the songs are not just for purely entertainment purposes; but are directed to specific persons as well as the audience. Of course, the subject is sometimes a member of the audience, but in several cases, the subject may not be present at the scene of performance. If the subject is absent, it is sure any member of the general audience would get to inform him/her in the community after the performance. Whether the subject is present or not, does not really matter, since the symbols contained in the songs are not meant to communicate to the subjects alone, but to the entire audience. It is expected that every member of the audience should take in some lessons that would be relevant to him/her and others. In the traditional society, the roles of elders are expansive in such a way that all elders are responsible to train and pass the values of the society to younger ones through counselling during contacts in the community. Mark Booth (1981: 14) argues that:

As the flat eyes in a painting or the finger of Uncle Sam point at the observer, undirected spoken words direct themselves straight toward any listener...We have the same impulse with sung words, attending to them as if they were spoken, and spoken to us in particular...the song is not mistaken directly for a message to me, although it plays on my tendency to take it that way. It is a performance for me-and-fellows (p 14)...the singer's words are sung for us in that he says something that is also said somehow in extension *by* us, and we are drawn into the state, the pose, the attitude, the self offered by the song...The individual member of the audience enters into a common pattern of thought, attitude, emotion, and achieves by it concert with his society. When we hear song, we are the concert (p 15).

We have argued that Igoru songs are topical and are mostly directed to specific persons among the audience. There are but very few Igoru songs not directed to specific persons. The songs have the power to communicate reflectively to all members of the audience, whether they are directed to individuals or not. Even the ones directed to individuals possess instruction, information, and verdict that each member of the audience draws a lesson from, as applicable to him/her within context. The Okpe generally hold the view expressed proverbially that "where death snaps out life from one's mate, is where he/she examines him/herself". Where an Igoru song publicly condemns an evil act committed by a specific person named in it, other members of the audience would normally apply the situation to themselves and choose to refrain from similar acts to avoid public disgrace and flee from Igoru music.

6. 1. 5 Tone, diction, intention and meaning:

Meki Nzewi (1997: 28) argues that without the cognizance of musical intention any analytical conclusions about traditional musical manifestations would be an incomplete and unreliable of the nature and genius of the content or text of the musical creation. He further argues that:

Cultural phonic preferences, psychical tolerance and musical intention [italics in original] constitute the three crucial factors implicit in musical meaning. Any analyst or theorist needs to be aware of these in order to analyse with em-etic discernment any musical fact or musical context before attempting theoretical inferences. This is especially so in the African traditional music matrixes... *Musical meaning* is “central to theoretical and terminological propositions about African music. It could be regarded in part as the significance of a musical product not only in its own terms as a culturally approve-able phonofact (musical sense) but equally in terms of how it communicates or transacts and elicits para-musical notions and responses respectively. So, musical meaning starts with making musical sense and ends with effective and affective communication (presentation) i.e. achieved musical intention”([Nzewi 1993a] Nzewi 1997: 28).

Cultural sound preferences in tone and tune by use of poetic utterances and proper rationalization of these implicate the composer’s intention and meaning. Poets and composers of Igoru music use various sound forms and effects to communicate their messages. Sometimes the messages are presented proverbially or in parables and wide gaps are left for the audience to fill. That is to say that the composer may not present the messages directly or in full details. Therefore the audience has a part to play in deriving the intended meanings of the songs. Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 7), *African Poetry in English: an introduction to practical criticism* argues that:

In poetry, just as in everyday speech, *how* something is said is as important as *what* is said. *How* affects *what*. *How* is part of meaning... You must often have heard somebody say, ‘Oh, it wasn’t *what* he said that mattered, it was *how* he said it...’ In poetry, tone is not always a simple matter, but it is always necessary for the reader to ‘tune in’ to the poet’s tone of voice (the way in which the poet says what he says). Unless the reader is sensitive to the poet’s tone

he will misunderstand what the poet is saying and why he is saying it. The poet provides 'signals' to help the reader to understand his tone of voice, but he expects the reader to be alert. His signals are subtle: they are hints rather than obvious statements.

The poet's tone is very essential to the understanding of Igoru music. The tone and diction suggest the meaning of what the poet intends to communicate. The poetic content of song 28 (page A1 – 42), for instance, could puzzle the listener as to the intent of the composer. But a careful study of the poet's tone against the background of the context would however make the poet's intention a bit clear, yet not without an understanding of the traditional beliefs in the culture. The poet narrates:

The great philanthropist raised his voice, "I'm not your only beneficiary; the whole world was your beneficiary". It's a pity, Riemurugbe, great philanthropist. He died at outskirts bifurcation, and no one buried you. The women folk raised their voices; Riemurugbe raised his voice also. "I'm not your only beneficiary; the whole world was your beneficiary. It's a pity, Riemurugbe, great philanthropist. He died at outskirts bifurcation, and no one buried you.

The tone of the poet in the above song suggests a lamentation and defence. The tone at the beginning and the end of each verse cleverly states the defence of the living why the deceased could not be given a befitting burial. In the Okpe culture, an honourable burial is a rite that must be accorded to the dead adult, particularly those who are elderly and have children. If the deceased is considerably old and generous, his burial is expected to be well celebrated. The celebration culminates in burying him/her indoors in his house. Dishonourable burial, on the contrary, involve those buried outdoors and most dishonourable are those buried in the bush. The tone of the poet indubitably suggests that the dead, Ariemurugbe, was a philanthropist who was greatly and dearly loved by the

people of his community until his death. He was benevolent and had many beneficiaries, who would all have contributed to celebrate and conduct a befitting burial for him.

But the Okpe believe that human beings commit evil in various ways, either in the broad day or at night, in the physical world or in the spiritual world. A man might therefore seem honest and innocent in the real world, but might commit great havoc through spiritual means. The belief includes that a just man can never die in the bush, no matter what happens. If he dies in the forest, he is therefore suspected for grievous evil deeds that were unknown to men, but discovered by the ancestral spirits and God of the land who might have killed him/her or let him/her into the hands of danger unprotected in the bush. He must then be buried dishonourably in the bush, instead of a befitting burial in his home. It is also believed that if a man is not properly buried and given all the necessary rites, his soul does not depart the environment of his home for the actual home beyond.

The tone of the poet therefore suggests that the soul of the deceased hovers around; feels uncomfortably perturbed and thus disturbs the children and close associates and relations, for denying him/her the due burial rites that would enable him/her sail smoothly into the world beyond. This is evinced in the first line which remarks that 'The great philanthropist raised his voice,' implying a query from the dead. The tone from line 4 – 6 presents an explanation that the deceased's philanthropies were well acknowledged by the community, for which he would certainly have had a befitting burial. It further shows a lamentation that the place where he died and the belief surrounding such an event did not permit any body to give him the expected honourable burial rites. The tone, as is

suggested in line 12, shows that the dead did not query only his children, but all those who benefited from his philanthropic scheme in the entire community. This included both men and women groups who now had to defend themselves before the dead. The tone implies a wishful response to the fact that the community would certainly have given the philanthropist a well-deserved honourable burial, but had constraints as a result of the spiritual implications of such violations as burying a man who died in the bush in the town.

Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1997: 11) offer counsel to their readers, here applicable to all poem lovers who would at one time or the other read or listen to poems, that frantic efforts are requisite for discovering the meaning of poems as is intended by the poet. They emphasize that we are to pay much attention to what the poet says and how he says it, in order to discover his intentions and share in what he says. In the same passage, they suggest that we are not concerned with whether the poet is right or wrong in his beliefs, but more significantly that we should situate our minds to tap from his intentions rather than attempt to read our own meanings to what we might assume he wants to say. In this study we attempt to draw meaning from the intention of Igoru composers by careful examination of their tone and diction in the various presentations. Ray Pratt (1990: 5) argues that:

It has long been a matter of debate whether the intentions expressed or “encoded” in any song are received by those hearing it. The ways any musical performance, song, or recording functions politically is a complex matter of analysis and attribution growing out of its essentially interactional character. The meaning of any song, indeed any artefact in popular culture, is determined by the multiplicity of uses it receives. Popular music speaks to wider publics who may experience the information, feelings, and situations in it as their own, may accept only

part of what they hear, or may reject or largely reinterpret the song to accord with their own belief systems...There is what Stuart Hall has termed a “double-stake” or dialectic in popular culture. On one side is an effort to contain the interpretation of meanings to those encoded into any element by its creators while simultaneously on the other side is an effort by those receiving it to invest that element with meaning that may “resist” that encoded by its creator.

Igoru musicians are very vast in the knowledge of the Okpe language. They make use of several figures of speech, forms of imagery, sound effects, idioms, parables and proverbs that require serious thinking and one’s vastness in the language to fully comprehend. As masters of the language and ideals of the Okpe culture, we actually have no problems with their thought patterns and beliefs, because they are not contrary to those of their forefathers. Igoru musicians, indeed, have drawn their poems from various spheres of life, reflecting the religious, economic, political, social and moral norms of the Okpe people. We have had to listen patiently to the poetic songs and some explanations of the poets themselves to enable us understand a lot of the messages they were passing across to the audience.

Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 26) comment on the use of tone and diction as they contribute to the implicit and explicit meanings of every word or a group of clustered words that a poet selects and puts to play in his/her poems. They argue that:

A poet chooses his words within strict disciplines imposed on him by form and length. He cannot waste words. His diction has to work hard, bearing a compressed weight of meaning and suggestion. He tries to trigger his reader’s imagination by combining absolute accuracy of diction with the associative power of language... The meaning of a word varies according to the context in which it is being used; again, a word may be employed either figuratively or literally... Words – especially in poetry – are often endowed with *associative force* [italics in original]. The poet

harnesses this force, packing his poems with multiple meanings and suggestive power.

In songs 23 and 24 (pages A1 – 36 and 38), we observe the careful use of figurative words with powerful associative meaning. The two poems belong to the same song as performed by two different Iguru musicians. They communicate the same meaning, but possess variation in poetic expression. Both refer indirectly to the Itsekiri who between 1941 and 1943 had land dispute with the Okpe in Sapele. The Itsekiri, in the history of their migration, came from Benin through the water ways to their present settlements, thus they occupy mainly the River sides. In the course of time, they migrated to various parts of Okpe like Sapele, Elume, Amwokpokpo, Elume, Ikeresan [Orhorhomu], Ugbukurusu [Ugbikurusu] and Obotie which are bounded by Rivers. The Okpe, in their usual magnanimity, allowed them to co-habit in these communities. But alas, the poets of the two songs present the subsequent developments figuratively that *Havbaren* called on Oloku to give it a place to occupy in the River, and when its roots became strong, it began to contend lordship with Oloku.

Havbaren is specie of mangrove tree that grows on the riverside. It is known to spread its roots wide to occupy a large space on the river bank, even into the water. It is also remarkable that as its roots spread, it could grow new stems over time. The Okpe, on the other hand, believe on a masculine deity who possesses the River and control most of the things that happen therein. This Deity is known as Oloku already discussed in chapter three. The poets suggest that the Itsekiri came to these Okpe communities as aliens and neighbours who needed, requested and probably acquired some pieces of land where they built, leased, rented, and lived. In procreation, they gave birth and grew in number. Not only

so, they had a son who worked closely with the colonial administration. Then they began to contend the ownership of the land of Sapele.

Since according to historical facts the Okpe, Urhobo and other ethnic groups in Nigeria resented sending their children to school in the colonial era, assuming their children would be mentally and morally enslaved by the colonial masters, the Itsekiri who did not mind such considerations had advantage receiving Western education early. This advantage also gave them the opportunity to be appointed leaders of some sort by the colonial leaders. Obaro Ikime (2005; www.urhobo.kinsfolk.com) intimates that the British began penetration into the Urhobo [and Okpe] region from 1896 and sought for assistance of persons who knew about the people and the land. "They found some of these among the Itsekiri who live at the coast," and who have had early contact with European explorers. "It was in this way that a few Itsekiri British-appointed political agents found their way into Urhoboland [and Okpeland] during the establishment of British colonial rule".

Ikime intimates further that Chief Dogho, an influential Itsekiri assisted the British who "mounted combined naval and military expedition" against the opposition of the famous Chief Nana of Itsekiri and defeated him in August 1894; for which he (Dogho) was given several appointments in appreciation. He was appointed as the President of the Benin River Native Court in 1896, British political agent in c1897, permanent president of the Warri native Courts of Appeal in 1914, and Native Authority for the Warri Divisional Province which included most of the Urhobo, Okpe, Isoko, Ijaw, Ukwuani and Aboh. Ikime adds the following vital information:

In 1908, the British colonial government acquired 510 acres of Sapele land. The lease which gave the land to the British was signed by Chief Dogho 'acting for and on behalf of the Chiefs and people of Sapele.' He signed similar lease for land acquired by the British in Warri. We do not know exactly why the British asked Dogho to sign these leases, especially that of Sapele, Sapele being decidedly Okpe land. The most obvious guess is that because Dogho was the British political agent, he was made to sign for the people. The British Government paid an annual rent of £100 for the Sapele land. The Sapele land owners took £60 and gave Dogho £40 --- evidence of the way in which Dogho and indeed all those who held office for the colonial regime in those early days flagrantly abused their offices and enriched themselves. Even if Dogho was the Orodje of Okpe and had signed the lease as such, he could not expect 40% of the annual rent for himself.

In the 1920s Dogho began to collect full rents for land plots in Agbassah [Urhobo]. And by 1925, the Urhobo of Agbassah in Warri took Dogho to court, challenging his rights for collecting rents in their own land, but lost the case. By extension of the same act, Chief Dogho instructed the Itsekiri in Sapele to stop paying rents to their land lords, arguing that Sapele land belonged to the Olu of Itsekiri whom he claimed to represent. Although Dogho died in 1932, the Sapele case went to court in 1941 and the Okpe won. The Itsekiri appealed to the West African Court of Appeal, where the Okpe again won the Sapele land case in 1943. This was exactly what the poets meant to imply with the figurative expression that the mangrove tree requested a small portion of the river from the Deity, and when its roots were strong, it began to contend lordship with him. The expression goes further to prove that they were contending with the true owners.

These figurative impressions created about the crafty attitude of the Itsekiri by Igoru musicians in the 1940s have remained true observation about their use of political powers in achieving selfish aims; the reason why they have consistently

fought wars with their hosts and neighbours, the Okpe, Urhobo and Ijaw who in the past gave them permission to co-habit in their territories within the Niger Delta region. For instance, Peter Ekeh (1999; www.waado.org) writes that:

“On June 4, 1999, there broke out a local fight between Urhobo and Itsekiri youths in Okere, Warri. It was immediately flashed, in the evening of that memorable day, in the influential and instantaneous medium of cyberspace as a joint operation between Ijaws and Urhobos in an effort to wipe out the Itsekiri. The Itsekiri Survival Movement, which had just made its first public appearances few days earlier, directly accused Urhobos of engaging in “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” – two deadly and unforgivable sins of our international age... Ugbajo Itsekiri, an aristocratic club of the Itsekiri in the United States, released in the internet and cyberspace the text of a letter it had presented at a “Meeting at the State Department,” inviting the United States to intervene in the crisis in the western Niger Delta. Its account of the crisis completely misrepresented the status of Warri... We took advantage of the internet to work and ... sent ... the Urhobo response to the State Department.

This is why the composers of the above cited songs 23 conclude that it was the colonial administration (which in the present day includes the European pattern of administration) that gives the Itsekiri much liberty and boldness to contend for land that does not belong to them. The poets adopt the use of euphemism as a figure of speech, in lines 14 and 15, to express the point that the Itsekiri merely tried to take advantage of the colonial administration to rob the Okpe of their land. Reference to the colonial administration became an important issue to the poets, because the case was taken to the law court, instead of traditional courts or resort to warfare to prove one’s mettle, besides the Itsekiri leader’s position in the colonial administration.

6.2 Philosophical thought processes:

We find Bernth Lindfors's remark on Wole Soyinka's creative literary ability and function suitable for Igbo musicians, in terms of astute inventiveness and functionality of the creative essence. Bernth Lindfors (1999: 51) *The Blind Men and the Elephant: and other essays in biographical criticism*, writes:

Let me begin by stating that I regard Wole Soyinka as one of the greatest writers Africa has produced. His work is of consistently high quality, and he appears to be so abundantly gifted as to be able to achieve without visible effort virtually any literary effect he desires. Intense creative energy bristles beneath every page he writes, charging his words with the kind of intellectual electricity that only true genius generates. A high-voltage literary dynamo, he possesses magnificent power to shock, stimulate, agitate, ignite, activate, enlighten and all the while entertain his audience. He has got what it takes to move men and set them thinking.

Music as a product requires raw materials or elements of unity between it and other arts. Igbo music in its nature, practice and context, adopts the use of these elements that altogether become unified product and ability to co-ordinate these resources and to reform them into a holistic product is essential. Igbo musicians have shown remarkable virtue of vastness in poetic configurations and musical creative impulse, an import of creative power in employing language and sounds to stimulate, agitate, expose, ignite, remind, educate, enlighten, praise, shock and at the same time entertain audiences. David Elliott (1997: 10) examines music as a product and argues thus:

According to Reimer, the praxial philosophy denies and denigrates the existence of pieces, products, and works of music: "Music cannot be conceived to be a product, Elliott argues"...Elliott wants to "demonstrate that music is a process rather than a product...Reimer's claims are absurd. MM (*Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music*)

Education) states clearly that musical products are central to the nature and significance of music..."each musical practice produces music in the sense of specific kinds of musical products, musical works, or listenables"...The blueprint I develop and diagram ...to investigate the nature of music *combines* musical practice, products, processes, and contexts.

Igoru music, more than being a process of social communication, is a product of the art itself. As a product, it exists to provide certain functions and as well serve as reference source in the society. There is a clear indication that Igoru shows remarkable interrelatedness of fields of learning such as Languages, linguistics, literature, religion, sociology, history, philosophy and music; where they meet and unite to fulfil certain functions in the society. These fields of social, moral and spiritual experiences influence the philosophical thought processes of Igoru musicians as they take cognisance of the cohesive art of communication. The knowledge of these various fields of learning embedded in the Okpe culture is therefore necessary for the understanding of Igoru songs as philosophical oral poetry.

6. 2. 1 Synthetic philosophy and concept of names:

Synthetic philosophy is the original and traditional method by which human beings reach the knowledge of truth through reasoning, often referred to as rationalism (Paul Ajah 2004:16). With some past experiences and synthetic approach, the older generations have passed down some values on the meaning of names in Okpe culture like in most other African cultures. Igoru musicians then follow and apply this synthetic philosophy in ascertaining truth about the meaning of names as they manifest in the lives of people in the society. In song 45 the narrator presents the stupid act of a subject and thereafter examines the meaning of the subject's name, raising some questions about it at the end of the

narrative. The name “Aseagerhe” means “women bend;” thus, the narrator remarks that the female subject had ‘bent’ [lost] wisdom in the streets of Ikoyi Lagos, an indication that the meaning of the name given her by her parents became manifest in her life.

The composer of song 56 (page A1 – 91) also examines the life of the subject in line with the meaning of her name. The narrator presents the name of the subject as “Ogophori” which means a low land. In the Okpe farming system no one really wants to farm on a low land where the experience often encountered in such areas in the Delta region is unpleasant. Anybody who cultivates on the low land must calculate the rainy seasons carefully in planning the planting and harvest seasons. Once the calculation is wrong the rains would flood the farm and destroy the crops when they are yet too tender to survive any flood. The composer begins this narrative with a kind of personification, and gradually transforms the figure to represent a physical human subject. He/she suggests that the subject got into the commercial sex business, ‘planting in low land’ where no yield turned out fruitfully.

In song 60 (page A1 – 99), the narrator also examines the events that unfold in the life of the subject against the background of the meaning of her names. He/she presents the name as “Akparukpe” meaning “The year is deferred”. The narrator expresses that the subject had an opportunity of living a comfortable life, but lost the chance; implying that she had been destined to live all her life in poverty, according to the names given her by her parents. In a form of hyperbole, the narrator then concludes that the subject had swallowed the year (of her prosperity). The composer of song 64 (page A1 – 109) also examines the life of the subject in accordance with the meaning of the name. We have disguised the

real name in the text so that nobody can decode the actual person; and we present only the meaning which is relevant to this discourse. The subject's real name means "We shall see a lot of amusement". The narrator presents this name at the beginning of the song and remarks that "the meaning of an evil name surely follows the bearer".

Another way by which Igoru musicians use names is by inserting their own names into the songs, particularly when they feel the content concerns them. The composer of song 8 composes the song about himself. The public had referred to him as a vagabond and he composed the song as a response to educate and enlighten the public. The composer did not clearly examine the concept of his names in the song, but implies it implicitly. Quite rightly he uses his real names, Unugbrogodo, meaning a wide mouth. And he says in the song that whatever the eyes see, the mouth must talk about it. This implies that since his parents had named him "A wide mouth" he is destined to perform journalistic roles in the society and he would not do any less than that function.

In song 67 line 11 (page A1 – 116), the composer inserts his name to reinforce the point he is trying to communicate to the audience. In the performance critique against the Christian church, the composer says, he Udogu had investigated to find that the church could not actually heal all manners of disease and affliction. We have discussed in chapter three the concept of 'Udogu' meaning Okpe Supreme Council. When the composer/poet says he (Udogu) had investigated the Christian faith, it is just as if the Okpe leadership had done so, given the meaning of his name.

6. 2. 2 Axiology:

There are several writings and discourses on values in traditional societies. Some questions have also been raised over and over again about who sets the values and the norms. These arguments stimulate further enquiry, in this context, into the values and norms that Igoru musicians have tried to protect through their journalistic musical performances. Paul Ajah (2004: 137) presents the following argument on axiology:

Axiology is the branch of philosophy that has to do with value or what is called valuation. Therefore, this branch of philosophy is normally referred to as “the theory of value”. Here, the concern is on how human beings place their values of this life...In this way, people are able to sacrifice the satisfaction of one need or another in order to pursue or satisfy the one they have chosen to pursue. This shows that there are some things which people, or an individual can value more than other things that may equally be important...However, I think that a person who does not have a sense of values cannot see any reason for life because it is value that makes you have or see the reason to live. Therefore, it is the sense of value that makes life meaningful to the given individual.

On how values are determined and who really determines it, AJah reinvents the views of Geisler and Feinberg (1980: 354 and 355) that “the person who has the power is the one who should decide the value, and whatever he decides, that is the value, there must be.” He presents another shade of argument by other philosophers who hold that “the community is the measuring rod; whatever value they attribute to a thing, that is the value for such a thing” while others contend that “man is the measure of all things” implying that every individual is capable of attributing value to the things that appeal or appear to be satisfactory to him/her (Ajah 2004: 144 and 145).

Igoru musicians follow after the philosophical thought that value is put in place by the Ultimate or Absolute, in the first place. The Ultimate is normally a supernatural power who determines what values are according to his/her position and satisfaction. Igoru musicians refer to the Ultimate in four ways: as *Osolobrughwe* (the Almighty God), *Ehọ* (Spirits and spirit-manifests), *Ọrhan* (powerful spirits represented in molten images) and *Irimi* (ancestors and ancestral spirits). These are all spiritual powers that cannot be questioned by anybody in the society. They decide what things could be done and what things could not be done; what things are satisfactorily right and what things are to be considered wrong in the society – things that require adherence. Igoru musicians believe that the values handed down by their predecessors have been fixed by the Ultimate beings. They therefore compose their songs to uphold these ethos already established and passed on from generation to generation as values that must not be breached, believing that such would have adverse effects not only on the culprits, but on the entire society. They would often conclude in some of the songs that the subject who is addressed has committed an offence against the Almighty God or ancestral spirits and they (the spirits) would therefore judge and punish the offender. They never referred to any offences or evils as being committed against the people or laws of the land as established by any political authority, like the king or community heads.

Alan Sinfield (1983: 60) whose study incidentally coincides with the third period of our Igoru study, the period after the Second World War – examining the aftermath effects of the war, argues:

As an institution the family has been jealously guarded; to suggest that something was inimical to family life was to condemn it. The family was seen as the indispensable unit for emotional stability, mature psychosexual development

and responsible citizenship; it helped to ensure the survival of all that was best in a culture, and was a powerful mainstay against the corruptions of the modern world... The far-reaching social, economic and ideological changes in which it participated after the war therefore aroused considerable alarm.

There were several main factors. A more open attitude to sexuality gradually developed; its enjoyment became more permissible... and there was some acknowledgement of female sexuality... There was an increase in the availability of contraception and contraceptive advice. Female chastity became less important, and fashion eroticized the body more explicitly. Divorce increased and in the process lost some of its stigma... More and more women were entering paid work. Teenage children acquired greater economic independence.

In Okpe culture, marriage is honourable and parents expect their female children to fulfil this social value that sustains some moral values in relation to sexuality. The values of sexual sanctity have long been established in the culture and they are checked by the ancestral spirits. If the spirits check and punish violations of these moral values that concern sexuality, then the values have great spiritual significance in the society. Igoru musicians note that the ethos of marriage and the question of morality are issues that concern both the human society and the spirits. They observe too that the white man's culture wrapped into the colonial administration offered inordinate freedom to people such that grownup children seek their own independence economically and socially from their parents improperly against the ethos of the land. It is not as if young adults do not have some level of independence from their parents in Okpe, but full independence begins when a man or woman enters into his/her marital institution properly according to the laws and customs of the land. Igoru musicians attempt therefore to condemn all contrary behaviours and acts that followed colonialism and the wars into the Okpe society. They note that the role of the family is very important

in implanting the values of the society into children and wards. This is evident in song 41 (page A1 – 68) where the composer-narrator communicates a query to the mother of the subject for allowing her daughter to get into the commercial sex trade seen as a taboo against the ethics of the Okpe society.

Tenure Ojaide (2001: 13) writing about the *Udje* dance songs of the Urhobo, discusses the poetic features and intimates as follows:

So also is flirtation of women. In this patriarchal society, men's flirtations seem to be largely overlooked... Breaking sexual taboos is a constant subject of songs. For instance, one should not make love with a blood relation. Among the Urhobo, incest is perhaps the most hideous offense that a man could commit. There is suggestion that Barakporhe in the song of that title committed incest, hence he is compared to a goat. Sex is also forbidden in the bush and even at home during the day...Men have been sung who dragged their wives to bed as soon as they came back from the farm to make love. This type of song attacks the couple's lack of self-control.

Men and women who are oversexed are also abused. One of the most poetic expressions...means "murderous sex man,"... However, women tend to be more abused when it comes to being oversexed. Ijiriemu is called a prostitute for making advances to men, rather than waiting to be courted or chased by men. Her case illuminates the fate of women's sex life in a patriarchy – after all, men compose the songs.

As Ojaide observes in Urhobo, the Okpe forbid sexual affairs between blood relations and near kins up to the third cousin or more, depending on the family head. It is very rare to find men and women breaking this taboo in the society. What could be sparingly found is love affair between first and second cousins and this is never approved by parents and family elders. Against this ethos (forbidden affairs between close relations) we have not found any critique of

Igoru music. This shows that it is not a common offense, because community members make conscious efforts to keep to the norms. Making love to a woman in the bush is also regarded as a sin against the ancestral deities in Okpe, and we have not also found any Igoru critique on this subject, meaning that it is a carefully avoided offense. There is no theme in Igoru music that suggests advances of women to men, though some of the songs suggest that some travelled to towns and cities where they could make themselves more attractive and easily accessible. There were however themes that centre on, and criticize the oversexed. The fate of women's status in abusive Igoru songs does not lie in the hands of male composers, because both male and female compose and perform Igoru songs. They all tried to follow the norms of the society in their compositions until the middle and late 20th century (cf. chapter 8).

6. 2. 3 Logic: deductive and inductive approach:

These three are all processes of reasoning philosophically. Deductive approach is a process of syllogism (sort of reasoning) that evolves a compelling proof or authentic truth in a conclusion reached through major and minor premises. Inductive approach is a form of argument that involves a scientific method and otherwise known as such. It follows the four laws of agreement, difference, joint and concomitant variations. This means that conclusions are to be drawn only when inquiry has established physical and practical evidence of a thing, its presence and effects (Paul Ajah 2004: 31). Paul Ajah (2004: 24) in the same writing argues that:

The study of logic gives one another fine opportunity to understand the nature of philosophy. Strictly speaking, logic is not one of the branches of philosophy in the sense in which epistemology, metaphysics, axiology and ethics are. Yet the study of logic is the study of philosophy itself. Logic is the method that philosophy uses and is, in fact, the

language of philosophy...Put simply, logic is the technique of reasoning. It is the study on how to reason correctly...logic instructs on how to really discover truth and combat falsehood.

Igoru musicians adopt both the deductive and inductive approaches under the domain of logic to construct their musical-poetic messages. The composer of song 1 (page A1 – 1) presents inductive theory based on a practical experiment that seems scientific. The persona of the narrative says that “when I call *nene* [grandmother], my lips do not touch one another, but when I call *baba* (father) my lips flap to hit one another; then I knew that father is greater”. Children in Okpe call their fathers *baba* and mothers *mama*. Grand father is called *ibaba oduado* and grand mother *imama oduado* or *inene*. In this inductive approach, the use of father and mother equivalents in Okpe would not have produced the proof the composer wanted to establish. He found that grand mother is mostly called *nene* than the long form *imama oduado*. Then he/she experiments the pronunciation of *baba* and *nene* and found difference in the movement of the lips and upon this established a theory to prove the long established patriarchal system valid.

Song 9 (page A1 – 19) presents the philosophical process of deductive reasoning. The song was originally composed by Unugbrogodo Ekure whose aims were to educate and enlighten the public about the erroneous views they hold about musicians. A female Igoru ensemble of Deghele adopted the song and performed it to fulfil the same functions in their own community. The deductive approach here derives from the two premises that the public call Unugbrogodo a vagabond, because he is an Igoru musician. Members of the ensemble are also Igoru musicians, therefore, they are also referred to as vagabonds and they had to defend their position as well.

6. 2. 4 Metaphysics:

We have discussed the God and deities the Okpe worship and revere in chapter three. Often times, man tries to ask questions about the beings that control the affairs of the universe and of human beings. These questions lead to deeper thoughts and philosophical reasoning in attempts to ascertain some truth about the belief system and practices of a people. This is not uncommon in Igoru music. Paul Ajah (2004: 89) argues that:

Metaphysics is normally captioned as “the theory of Being.” This means that all subjects of metaphysics are brought together and captioned as Being – the search for Being which interprets the meaning of life and existence...We can say that basically metaphysics does not deal directly with the physical universe but with the meaning behind it, whatever it is, and these meaning borders [bother] on the extra-physical. That is why the subject of metaphysics lends itself easily to religious thoughts and the use of extrasensory organs or powers to know or understand.

Igoru musicians adopt metaphysical approaches in getting to conclusions in the messages they communicate to their audiences. They attempt to examine the Being, particularly the existence and manifestations of the Ultimate through sensitivity to some features that characterize the appearances of the Being. Udogu Olocho, for example, examines in songs 66 and 67 (pages A1 – 133 and 116) the manifestations in the practices of the strange Christian religion, and compares such to those of the Okpe traditional religion systems. He observes and draws conclusions that the Ultimate Being (God) did not differ in character in both religions. Under various systems and operations, the Being leads the Okpe priests and oracles to sometimes speak in tongues as well as heal and cure diseases in the society through herbal and spiritual means.

The composer states that the Christian God is given the same characteristics and manifestations, that is, the converts speak in tongues too. As stated earlier in this discourse, the composer raises doubts about the ability of the Christian God to heal all manners of diseases. He reasoned beyond this limit that the features of spirit possession might not even exist in the Christian church in America from where the missionaries came to Okpe land. If indeed the God the Americans came to introduce was different from the Ultimate known to the Okpe the features should have been much different, the composer implies. He therefore sees the portrayal of Christian worship as the only worship of the Supreme God to be misleading and calls for admonition of the followers who have abandoned their traditional religious heritage.

6. 2. 5 Realism and idealism:

Paul Ajah (2004: 15 and 16) reinvents Plato and Aristotle's arguments that though the latter was a student of the former, they had diverse views to the issue of reality. While the former argues that the sense of reality stems out of idealism, the latter holds that the essence is realism. The first theory, idealism suggests that reality is the thing pictured by the mind before it is seen manifesting in real life situation. The second theory, realism, states that one must see a thing in life situation, before it can effectively appear in the mind.

Most of the themes in Igoru music are derived from the sense of realism than idealism. The songs being quite topical had to be realistic than idealistic in tendency. They are normally composed, more or less, as reactions or responses to the realities that unfold in the society from time to time. They therefore had to follow and reflect the things that had occurred, which the musicians had seen or heard. After they had been seen and or heard, they reflect in the mind and form

images and impressions that further stimulate reactions, leading to the compositions. This could be positive or negative. Amereka Emakpo's example quickly comes to mind. He was only a boy whose first composition "*Iruo ame irheri* (The job we have perfected)" shows the effectiveness of realism as a philosophical thought process. He heard about the events of a musical competition in which his community Igoru featured and emerged winners, and this experience reflected suddenly on his mind, resulting in this beautiful composition. We have discussed details of this elsewhere in this study.

6. 2. 6 Essentialism and progressivism:

In learning processes, the theory of essentialism (also known as fundamentalism) argues that the values that the adult society holds should be transferred to the learners; while the theory of progressivism contends that the learners be allowed to discover the values on their own (Ajah 2004: 20). In Okpe tradition, the two philosophical theories apply. There are some values in tradition that the child grows into. He does not need to be instructed formally about them, because they are regularly practiced ritually, religiously and socially in the society; and within the practices and observances certain values are expressed and established. The child learns some of these through observations, participation or by intuitive awareness and consequent enquiry for clarification.

There are however some very important knowledge of values that parents feel are essential to a grownup child and these would have to be passed to him/her by instruction. Igoru musicians believe that the adult member ought to have acquainted him/herself with the values of the society, but if there are failures in one or two individuals, it becomes therefore necessary to instruct such persons through music. Basic values that keep a community healthy and happy as well as

keep the individual and the society living without fear of plagues and untimely death become very essential subjects/themes that Igoru musicians focus upon, in order to edify members through musical instructions. It should be understood that musical instruction in this context does not refer to the training of musicians, but to the education and enlightenment of community members on societal values through musical compositions and performances.

6. 2. 7 Conceptual analyses of Igoru themes:

Paul Ajah (2004: 17) intimates that conceptual analysis is a more recent approach in philosophy, which deals with the use of words as concepts. The method focuses attention on given words and attempts to determine what they really mean to avoid ambiguity and vagueness. The comprehensive understanding of the concepts of words makes messages of statements very clear to listeners. Igoru musicians make use of words that are sometimes suggestive of double or multiple meaning and these conceptual words often form basis for the themes and sub-themes of the songs. Words that have multiple meaning normally assume their specific meanings in the context of their usage. We shall briefly examine the concepts of some words often used by Igoru musicians as basis for their themes. These words have been given conceptual analysis under the various headings where the themes have appeared in this chapter. We shall only give a skeletal analysis here as preparation to the details found in the latter discourse:

1. *Igberadja* (prostitute)
2. *Aleluya* (the Christian church)
3. *Qlaragha* (vagabond)
4. *Qrieda* (witch/wizard)
5. *Kongo/Boma* (Soldiers)

Oyibo (white person)

6. *Ọtokpen* (miser)
7. *Uhu* (death)
8. *Ọgbeghele* (great philanthropist)
9. *Orọmo* (marriage)
10. *Ọse* (concubinary partnership)
11. *imizu rephan* (blood relations)
12. *Erhumu Okpe* (Okpe progress)
13. *Okpe agbamwa eni* (Okpe, an elephant)
14. *Okpiten* (innuendo communicator)
15. *Orodje* (king)
16. *Osolobrugwe* (God)
17. *Irimi* (ancestors and ancestral deities)

When Igoru musicians present themes on prostitution, the question often comes to mind about who is a prostitute. And to understand this properly the concepts of marriage and concubinary partnerships need to be made clear according to Okpe tradition. The listener of audience of Igoru music would like to know whether any sexual affair outside marriage automatically represents an act of prostitution or not. As is customary in Okpe, levels of acceptable, honourable, permissible and tolerable marriages and partnerships exist in Okpe. The most honourable marriage is that which requires due payments of dowry and family/community celebration according to native laws and customs. Other acceptable marriage involves an agreement between two adults who wish to be partners of a kind; the one referred to as concubinary partnership (*use*). Family members and the public may know about it, but are not really involved. This operates at advanced adult age. The tolerable marriage is that which, among young adults, results from

premarital pregnancy leading to proper co-habiting of the couple. It then means that any young lady who does not associate in one of these forms, but involves in relationships with more than a partner at a time is regarded as prostitute. Although polygamy is allowed to the men, all the wives are expected to be properly married; that is the man must pay the dowry of them all. The man who goes about having temporary affairs with several women without putting them into the family way legitimately is also referred to as *ovbofarhien* or *igberadja* (a promiscuous person).

The concept of *olaragha* (vagabond) in Okpe generally refers to lazy persons who gallivant about the streets doing nothing profitable, particularly with reference to economic activities. The individual goes to public places to play games or play away time day by day, instead of engaging in any form of rewarding labour. This act of irresponsibility itself is known as *olaragha*; while the person who does so may also be referred to by the same term. When the term is therefore used in Igoru music, we would then want to know who is actually a vagrant, hobo or vagabond as the term suggests. The public up till early 20th century used the term to refer to Igoru musicians. This is not to say, however, that Igoru musicians in that period were truly vagabonds who did not engage in rewarding labour of some sort. One valid construction of thought amongst the people then was that a good standard of living depended on farming and a successful farmer could not afford to be performing music in various functions, particularly in the day when he/she is expected to be in the farm working. Although Idisi Adibo, remarks that Igoru musicians gained fame through their performances in that period, but were not greatly rewarded economically in the society, other evidence prove that the reason went beyond this.

Amereka Emakpo intimates us that some Igoru musicians were successful farmers, businessmen and women themselves. According to him, some Igoru musicians and the subjects who were satirised as prostitutes in Lagos were very successful business tycoon of local and international reputation. He adds that some of them travelled to several African and European countries for business adventures. Although many of them were not very rich, they were not altogether poor, but lived average lives according to the standards of their communities. When an Igoru musician is called a vagabond, we can then understand that it has more connotative than denotative meaning, as public reactions aimed at discouraging them from performing satires. Idisi Adibo's example is a good case evident in song 10 (page A1 – 21), the song composed by his ensemble members, stating that the public called him a vagabond and prostitute, because he is a renowned Igoru performer.

Qrieda (*erieda* pl.), meaning witch/wizard (witches/wizards) is a term that has multiple meaning and classes. The term indeed has two primary classes as follows. One who belongs to the spiritual secret cult instituted by those who possess powers to do extraordinary things from the spiritual world to control and affect the physical world (positively or negatively) is a witch/wizard. The second class includes all who seek and practice any form of wickedness against humanity in the physical world. The activities of the latter category could also be secret, but are all performed in the physical world. And though may invoke some spiritual powers to effect the evils intended, the person does not have to travel spiritually to acquire the powers. In the context of Igoru music, these two concepts apply. The term 'death [*uhu*]' in Okpe has dual meanings too; the death where human beings give up the ghost and stop breathing and the death which signifies that one is living wretchedly and hopelessly. The Igoru elegy (song 68,

page A1 – 118) on the death of the Orodje (king) of Okpe, Esezi II refers to the real death, while the death implied in song 77 (page A1 – 143) as “smoking away of one’s life as in the smoking away of cigarette in the holder” refers to the second meaning.

The terms *kongo* and *boma* are associated connotative words that represent the character of scamps, rascals and radicals who are very troublesome. The term *boma* has its roots traceable to the Pidgin English of Sapele. It is often used to refer to any members of the society whose activities are usually in forms of terrorism. The term suggests that the person so described is an inimical vermin who is fearsome. The origin of the term *kongo* is not so certain. But some Igoru musicians suggest that some of the soldiers who came to the Okpe country during the World War came from Congo Republic. The term represents oppressors and unquestionable cheats. But in the context of Igoru music, the two terms are used interchangeably to refer to soldiers whose activities in the society are seen as troublesome and fearsomely oppressive.

The term *oyibo* is used to describe or discuss any white person. The colonial masters in government and other sectors of Nigeria’s economy, before independence, were seen to be affluent that could make their followers great. But Igoru musicians present themes that suggest that even the young ladies who had affairs with the white people had made no remarkable profits. This is evident in song 34 (page A1 – 56) where the narrator raises questions such as “What had the white man done for you?’ with the provided response from the subject that the white man had affair with her and gave her no money. Cathe (2003: 11 [Internet]) writes a similar account of undue advantages on young women in South Africa:

Saartjie Baartman was a twenty-one year old South African Griqua woman employed as a servant on a farm near Cape Town. She was already past the traditional age of marriage among her people, and had few, if any, prospects of improving her condition, when a visiting English surgeon, Dr. William Dunlop, promised her fame, fortune, and freedom in a far away land. Baartman readily accepted his offer, and travelled with him to London by ship in 1810.

...Fascinated by her elongated labia and large buttocks ...Dunlop chose to exhibit her in the nude in front of large crowds of Londoners, who paid one shilling each to gawk at the “Hottentot Venus” from Africa. Whether Baartman herself received any of the profits of her exploitation is doubtful. Without family or friends, or the linguistic and socio-cultural background that she needed to fend for herself in Europe, she later turned to prostitution in order to survive. When she died, abandoned and alone in France, only six years after leaving Cape Town, her body was dissected, her skeleton was removed, and her brain and genitals were pickled and displayed as curiosities in the *Musee de l’Homme* in Paris for the next 160 years ([Davies, 2002] Cathe 2003: 11).

Cathe (2003: 11) further re-invents Marquis (2003: A3) that there was a surge of publicity that accompanied an official request by then-President, Nelson Mandela, to have the remains of Saartjie Baartman returned to South Africa in 1994, remarking that her story might be the most notorious case of African trafficking with bitter experiences of recruitment by deception and cross-border transportation for sexual exploitation uncommon to millions of women and children worldwide. In the case of Igoru music, there is no record or evidence of trafficking and cross-border transportation of young Okpe women. All incidents accounted for in Igoru songs took place in Nigeria.

6. 2. 8 Proverbs: The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2001: 1136) states that proverb is “a short well-known statement that contains advice

about life generally.” Rose Brandel (1984: 49) writes on the use of proverbs in the music of Lokele of Belgian Congo as follows:

The messages used for telegraphy are really traditional sayings and proverbs, highly stylized for transmitting purposes and not characteristic of everyday speech. Such proverbs usually constitute the “classic literature” of the tribe, belonging to the treasured heritage of folklore, legend, and general accumulated wisdom that is passed on from generation to generation in a quite poetic medium. Unfortunately, some of this specialized language is dwindling today and going the way of all things acquiring the label of “archaic.” Where the successes of modern civilization have penetrated the wild forest, new methods of telegraphy are rapidly gaining and replacing the older, more elemental ways.

The Okpe culture is richly vast in the use of proverbs both in speech and songs. Indeed the Okpe believe that an eloquent orator and musician is known and honoured for his use of proverbs, because in proverbs issues are raised and a multitude of counsel is given in brevity. Considering the use of proverbs as essential elements in communication, the Okpe have a saying that:

Uphrophro emro ata r' omuvbię,
It is half a statement that is said to a freeborn,
orho t' oghwa, nọ haye rhe ọsoso.
When he/she gets home, he/she turns it to a whole.

Avorgbedor (1990: 224) observes that:

Song texts are full of proverbs, proverbial sayings, riddles, gossips, euphemisms and personifications: endless examples can be cited to illustrate these linguistic manipulations and proliferations. Apart from being artistic and poetic devices, alliteration, assonance, and parallelism all help in creating pleasurable effects that are necessary in the comfortable and easy reception, recollection, and involuntary evocation of the text. These poetic devices are special forms of word and sound patternings, and, united

with the appropriate music and gesture, they appeal to and leave lasting impressions on the minds of the listeners.

In Igoru music, this belief has very high recognition and strong impact to the extent that some Igoru musicians establish a short theme and develop it with series of proverbs without making strict reference to the very issue that forms the bases of the theme. The implication is that listeners are expected to draw diverse, but contextual meanings from the proverbs through imagination and deep philosophical thought. Proverbs are normally very contextual in that they could mean different things in different situations. This means that the listener must relate and associate the proverbs to the context of the performance, and interpret them as applicable to the aspects where they affect him/her. We have synthesized all the proverbs found in the textual transcriptions in a list to enable readers go through at a glance (see page A1 – 159). The poet of song 48 (page A1 – 82) establishes its theme in the first two lines that become the recurring refrain. Over this thematic refrain, the lead singer weaves series of proverbs to which the refrain is a response.

Within this short song, we identify nine successive proverbs that can be interpreted in different ways. To give the poems meaning in the appendix, at least to enable readers make some meaning from them without having to read the analysis, we have translated them interpretively. But for this discourse to make sense, we give a kind of transliteration here to enable readers comprehend how the proverbs function in speech and songs. The first proverb in this song translates well (that the subject has stepped on excreta) and means that the subject, Onanughe, has deformed her image for going out of the socio-moral standards of the society. Literally, stepping on excreta is something repulsive to

human senses and proverbially in the context of this Igoru song the expression means that the person in question has lost her reputation.

The second proverb translates that 'the prostitutes lived and threw away,' implying that such a practice meant ruin and loss, in that the effects of it could lead to sexually transmitted diseases (STD), some abortion and consequent barrenness in which there is no gain. The third proverb would translate that 'Jeddo young men have lived and taken,' implying that they had led a morally disciplined life that is profitable. The fourth one translates that 'too much water does not kill a little fish.' This refers to the fact that the composers and performers were aware that their subjects get angry and imprecate curses upon them after performances of Igoru satire. It suggests therefore that they were not only used to such implications, but that they had confidence in the powers that protect them from evil attacks. Taking the world as a large sea, given the generations past, Igoru musicians believe that the living performers no matter how old they are in age are a young generation that remain under the sacrosanct protection of their ancestral Gods and therefore have no fears of the numerous spiritual attacks.

The fifth translates that 'Waka's peers have lived and passed over or lived and won (pass the test of life).' Waka in the first instance is a member of the ensemble and the word peers therefore refers to the entire membership of the ensemble. Living to win victory (overcome or living to pass the test of life) then suggests that members of the ensemble have conducted themselves in agreement with the ethos of the society; hence they had the guts to criticize the deviants. Beside this, the proverb means that a morally disciplined life gives one a non-blemished image in the society, and this is considered an achievement.

The sixth translates that 'much as the raffia palm is envied, it continues to yield its wine.' This suggests that Igoru musicians proved to be un-fearful, but assured themselves of continued performances irrespective of the anti-satire secret movement and attacks.

The seventh implies a meaning that is similar to that above, drawing from the practical experience that the goats normally feed on the leaves of the plantain sucker thus destroying it often, yet it grows to maturity and yields its fruits. This suggests again that Igoru musicians believe they would survive whatever sorcery attacks launched against them for performing Igoru satire, because their ancestral spirits who from time to time reinforce and lead the society to uphold socio-moral values would naturally protect them to ripe old age just as by nature the plantain sucker survives all attempts to destroy it. The eighth is a reinforcement of the first, to create further effect of repulse on the moral behaviour so criticized in the song. The ninth suggests that the commercial sex trade of the moral deviants yielded no financial dividends as expected. The poet implies and pre-empts that those who indulged in the ill-practice were influenced into it with raised hopes that they would make wealth out of it, and observes that such result had not been fulfilled. All these suggest that the poet intends to persuade any members of the audience who is into such a practice to turn away from it.

In song 7 lines 14 – 16 (page A1 – 16), the poet used a proverb common to the Okpe. He/she says 'the rattle that falls into water retains its pitch of vibration when it comes afloat from the depth. This proverb like many other proverbs is a short saying that is true to practical reality and analogous to other situations. *Ugherighen* is the smallest of all rattles, made of metal with very small seed

inside it. It is not of wood, membrane nor cotton material that could be badly affected if it drops into water, so if it is picked up from the pool of water it would certainly keep its pitch. This suggests that no matter what happens Igoru musicians would continue their performances unequivocally and more essentially unremittingly.

Another proverb comes as a counsel in song 10 lines 6 and 7 (page A1 – 21). The poet states that *omọ rọ chẹ oja akpọ ovbo te ẹdẹre-e* meaning, the child who reacts to the world's provocation never measures with his peers. The expression 'oja ẹchẹ' in Okpẹ can mean to avenge or to do something because one feels insulted, derided, humiliated directly or indirectly. Igoru musicians in their wealth of experience as those of other elders in the society raise observations that one who reacts to every sort of insult, derision or humiliation does not prosper in life, because some of the reactions could make one lavish his hard earning unnecessarily. In this context however, the poet counsels Idisi Adibo, the leader of their Igoru ensemble that, though the public call him a vagabond and a philanderer, he should not stop performing.

This implies that there are always people in the society who would try to provoke those who are making efforts to prosper, so that such provocation would cause distraction to them and make them lose focus of their lives, and consequently become failures. A child who is doing well and ranking well with his mates, if suddenly he loses focus and fails; he/she would come behind his/her peers eventually. The Igoru ensemble led by Idisi Adibo was doing very well in performances during the period when these accusations were leveled against him and the ensemble felt the need to encourage their leader by use of this proverb.

The poet of song 11 presents a proverb in lines 2 and 3 (page A1 – 22) that ‘the white chick does not hide from the hawk.’ This is a common literal experience that though the hawk captures both black and white chicks as prey the white one is likely to be more conspicuous to its view and therefore be more easily attacked. This literal meaning could be misleading if one examines it outside the context of its use with particular reference to all other words surrounding the expression in the song/poem. In the circumstance of attacks on Igoru musicians during the period, mid-twentieth century, one could misconstrue that Igoru musicians in public performances could not escape from those who sought after them. But this is however not what the poet means. He/she rather suggests that the public have much liking for Igoru music to the extent that whenever the drums and voices of the musicians sound the public would hasten to the scene to watch the performance. The expression ‘we have come again’ following the proverb immediately indicates that the performance was just beginning and the poet was announcing this to the audience expecting a large turn out.

Song 12 as in song 9 (page A1 – 23) uses nine identifiable proverbs. All nine proverbs could mean different things in different contexts, but in the context of Igoru music, particularly in this song, they all make innuendo to the Itsekiri who scorned the Okpe at the time of her long interregnum before Mebitaghan was crowned king in 1945. The first proverb refers to the Okpe belief in clairvoyance that if anything evil is about to happen, one who is sensitive in the spirit would be informed by his clairvoyance. The concept of clairvoyance in Okpe culture covers a number of patterns by which information about the coming event is known. To some people, seeing the double-headed snake connotes good or bad omen and to others seeing a rabbit in the day time, as well as the sound of certain birds or some unusual human feelings could give similar pre-science. The poet of this

song therefore implies that though the Itsekiri did not confrontationally scorn the Okpe, the Okpe got informed that the Itsekiri rejoiced somewhat that the Okpe could not crown a king for such a long time in history.

The second and third proverbs in this context mean the same thing, suggesting that the Okpe settled in the territory and had a king before the Itsekiri. While the second implies that the Okpe occupy a larger territory and have greater population and sense of organization from the beginning, the third suggests that they had rulers much earlier, but for the circumstances of the despot king's assassination. The intention of the poet is that it is no pride for a people who had their first king many years after their settlement to scorn another who had kings several years before. The fourth proverb suggests the scorner would certainly come to honour the scorned when eventually they come back to glory as was hoped. The fifth suggests that though the scorner could rejoice and be proud of her position at that time, the scorned was sure to recover and assume its rightful position eventually.

The sixth suggests that the Okpe as a people are empowered in unity, though the assassination of the king brought about some disagreements between the ruling quarter of the late king and the other three in Okpe. The poet implies that the unity that once marked the greatness of the Okpe was sure to be regained powerfully and a new king would be crowned. Like the fourth and fifth, the seventh suggests that the position of leadership that the Orodje of Okpe had had in the region was not contestable, in that as soon as a new king is crowned he would be accorded the same honour and position. Drawing allusion from the common experience that one can never build a fence against a river to stop it from flowing, the poet implies that no condition or circumstance could stop the

Okpe from having a king subsequently. The literal interpretation of the ninth proverb is that love potion does not stop one's mouth from attempting to woo a woman in confidence that he has a love potion that could perform the magic. In other words, one does not resist the use of his/her mouth in attempting to win the love of the opposite sex when it becomes necessary. The poet implies here that though the Okpe had no king at that time, it could not stop them from defending their political position and territory.

Song 13 (page A1 – 24) presents two other proverbs “The rat that lives long, cracks the head of the cat, and the needle punches only a hole and not two at a time”. These two proverbs were a reply to the innuendo of the Uvwie (Effurun) people in Lagos. According to Ikoru musicians, as already discussed in chapter four, the Uvwie insulted the Okpe in Lagos that they could not compose and sing songs in their language. This prompted the Okpe to compose this song with these proverbs that suggest that the Okpe had existed as a people for a very long time and therefore could not be assumed not to have songs or the concept of musical performance in their culture. The first proverb suggests that age matters in life as it yields a wealth of experience, which in this context does not exclude music. The second implies that Okpe musicians perform beautifully whenever performances are deemed necessary according to context.

Song 20 (page A1 – 34) is one of the short songs that Ikoru musicians perform as the figure of identity or what may be called signature tune that often begins and ends the performance of a long narrative or a circle of songs. This poem adopts a common Okpe proverb that ‘We do not stop a child from going out; rather it is the outside world that stops him/her.’ This simply means that if a child is going the wrong way to form any bad habit on the influence of peer groups and

if the child fails to accept counsel from home to stop associating with such bad friends, some day, he/she would live to rue the repercussions of those habits. In this context, the poet implies similar meaning, suggesting that any grown member of the society, male or female, who practices evil or imbibes very bad habits that have ill implications on him/her and the society, and fails to take counsel from the performances of Igoru musicians, would certainly live to regret in the end.

In song 21 lines 12 and 13 (page A1 – 34) the poet employs two proverbs to express his message. He/she says “Let the great rain maker place containers to gather the water, and the flower that goes on a procession does not get missing in it”. The first proverb tries to create awareness on evil doers and socio-moral deviants that such attitudes and practices do not go without their retributions. In this context, it implies that they should get ready to face the Igoru satire as a kind of social reprisal or retribution as well as to be ready to face the metaphysical consequences. The second one refers to the performer himself that he is fully prepared for the performance. This self-assured preparedness implies that he is sure of the powers, particularly of the ancestral spirits that are behind him for protection. The poet of song 25 (page A1 – 39) introduces it with three successive proverbs, then proceeds to a parable. We here discuss only the proverbs since the parables have been discussed under the appropriate heading in this chapter. The proverbs are “The eagle’s feather keeps it ever fresh; half of a canoe and the whole canoe are never equal; what do you think a chick can offer its mother hen?”

In chapter three we discussed the attributes of the Okpe in some detail, stating their level of unity and in this chapter we have seen several references made by

Igoru musicians to buttress the point. The first proverb above suggests again the Okpe unity, while making an indirect statement to the Itsekiri who scorned them during the protracted interregnum. The poet simply implies that as the eagle's feather does not let it fade, but ever renewed and refreshed, the unity of the Okpe would lead them far. The second suggests that when difficulty is experienced among a people, they could seek help from their neighbours. As Obaro Ikime (2005: www.waado.org) writes, Mukoro Imowe, the leader of the Urhobo in the 1940s assisted the Okpe at the time the Colonial administration attempted not to recognize the Okpe king who was crowned in 1945, while the Itsekiri scorned. We have discussed this in chapter four.

The poet of this song therefore implies that the Itsekiri are undependable people who even depend on the land of other peoples for survival. The third implies a similar meaning, suggesting that the people who are lesser in population could not be comparing themselves with those who have larger population as the case is between the Itsekiri and the Okpe. Song 31 is another poem directed to the Itsekiri not as an innuendo but an open statement employing only two proverbs as follows: "It's the sun that gives verdict to the water, and the butterfly briefly sharpens (knife), but never cuts".

The first proverb implies that it is the creator, the Almighty God that decides the fate of everyone and that if one wishes his neighbour perpetual failure or humiliation, God could decide otherwise. The second suggests that the Itsekiri are not a people to take seriously, even in trying moments. All these imply that eventually the Okpe had successfully crowned a king to break the late Orodje's (king's) curse that led to the interregnum as discussed in chapter three. In song

41 line 8 (page A1 – 68) the poet uses a proverb that ‘the water in the pit would indeed be sufficient for the frog to play in’. This implies that the subject had no body that could really instruct her properly and instill moral discipline in her. Other lines of the poem suggest that the subject’s mother did not bring her up together with her father. In other words, she was brought up in a broken home. This suggests that her mother met her father who according to the poet is an Igbo man, had pregnancy and gave birth to her without formally or finally living together with him in matrimony. The poet implies that a child with much liberty could do anything and could become a deviant, but the consequence of every bad habit he/she forms would certainly teach him/her a lesson.

In song 49 lines 9 to 11 (page A1 – 84) the composer/poet uses a proverb that ‘the thing that shakes the water, if it doesn’t leave the water, the water cannot be still. He/she addresses the song to a young lady who separated from her husband abruptly and travelled to sojourn in Lagos. As custom demands, she and her parents had to pay back her dowry and divorce claims to her husband. In this context the poet implies that if one is indebted he/she would not be free until he/she settles the debt. The composer of song 50 (page A1 – 85) makes use of three other proverbs to develop the theme in such a way that only those who can interpret them could comprehend the message completely. “Narrating the cripple’s medical-spiritual power is endlessly amazing; the white yam goes to barn with its head; and the smokes of burning bush do not kill *Egodi* (a bird of prey) are the proverbs.

Eghase is Okpe ethno-medicine with much spiritual powers, known for two or more actions. There are two kinds, the one that moves through the air and the one that moves through the earth. It is prepared and kept in front or behind the

house at the veranda to defend the owner and his/her family from spiritual attacks and return such attacks to the senders. It could also be used to send spiritual attacks to one's enemies. It normally goes by fire at night and could be seen moving through the sky in some kind of flames to drop at the residence of the victim it is directed to. Its movement is fast and brisk and when it drops downwards, it leaves no trace of movement and physical appearance. But as soon as it drops the victim would either fall dead or paralysed, except he/she has one that can return it to the sender or at least defend him/her from harm.

The cripple on the other hand is normally seen to be helpless, in the world of the able and disable persons who live together with unequal capabilities. The poet in this context therefore implies that the Igoru musicians are aware that their human powers are as limited as those of the helpless cripple when spiritual forces become used as sources of attack against them. As a result, they do not perform without the consciousness of consulting and requesting the ancestral powers to defend them from all spiritual attacks. This means that they prepare as much as possible to have protective powers behind them, because the victims of their satires were often offended and sought for avenues to strike as we have discussed in chapter five. The second and third proverbs follow to strengthen the point that the Igoru musicians were ever at home assured of the powers that shield them from all attacks, therefore all the curse and attacks their subjects would attempt invoking upon them could by no means kill them.

In songs 52 and 55 (pages A1 – 87 and 90) the composers present three proverbs each. The first proverb could literally be translated that 'all we labour to acquire in this world, we put them into the world,' meaning that everyone on the surface of the earth is a voyager who someday must depart to join the ancestors

taking nothing with him/her from this physical world. This implies that Igoru musicians could not yield to the fear of spiritual attacks and consequently death, at the expense of their social-moral obligations in the society. The second means that as a broken tree trunk would normally not fear the storms, Igoru musicians would not fear threats and intimidations that could limit their functional performances. The third proverb requires very careful examination, because it could mean many things in different contexts.

The term '*aghwala*' means either a seed rattle (pellets) or a piece of wrapper tied like a pair of knickers. The pellets might be used as body appendages in dance performances and could also serve as the principal divination apparatus of the oracle. In traditional Okpe culture, women are allowed to occasionally tie their wrapper in the verisimilitude of a pair of knickers to do very active jobs and games that require vigour and agility. But no woman plays the roles of '*obo epha*,' the divination oracle (priest) that uses the pellets to conduct inquiries, seeking information from God, deities and ancestors about the present and future events. This therefore suggests that the poet intends the second meaning for the use of the term in this context. It implies therefore that no one would be able to kill Igoru musicians who put their trust on the ancestral spirits for absolute protection. It implies further that beginners must learn to be careful in the performance of Igoru satire and not hasten into it, because of the imminent attacks. They could rather begin with forms such as those of elegy, epic, praise or common themes that would not stimulate strong reactions from the public/victims. It further implies that the experienced performers apply much wisdom in setting their poems, rather than unwary direct attacks against subjects.

The fourth proverb suggests a warning to young entrants into Igoru performances, that it does not only come with fame, but could attract spiritual attacks from enemies. The fifth proverb literally means that whatever happens in the absence of the barren, even if it affects her directly might never be reported to her. It merely complements the earlier proverb. Other lines surrounding it add to its meaning that fresh Igoru musicians may not be aware that their subjects take offence and design evil plans against them. The sixth proverb comes from a common experience drawn from fishing activities. There are various forms and sizes of fish cage that men and woman normally set for fishes in the streams. The bear is an animal that is warm and cold blooded like the frog and crocodile, able to adapt easily to land and water. It is carnivorous and feeds on fish as well as other animals. In the seasons when fishing flourishes as discussed in chapter three, the bear always seeks for fish cages that have caught fish. It tears them and eats up the fish. It is an experience that is always painful to the fisher, because it is disappointing to find that one had not only lost his/her catch, but had lost the fish cage, to buy and produce new ones or amend the torn cages.

In this circumstance the fisher would invoke curses upon the bear, but the bears are always there to repeat same destructive actions over again. They seem not to die as a result of the curses from the fishers. The bears have been created as carnivorous animals and as such must feed on some other animals or fish. The poet implies that since this is a normal order, the fisher's curses no longer have effects on bears, because the God who created them to be carnivorous would have to shield them. This therefore means that curses could never kill Igoru musicians, because their roles to expose mis-deeds in the society are natural, thus they are surer of supernatural protection.

In songs 57 line 4 and 58 lines 15 and 16 (pages A1 – 93 and 94), the composers/poets use a proverb each, that “It’s the cup that calls or identifies itself as cup, and if a piece of stone does not hit the bird, it would chase it from the plants”. The first proverb literally means that the moment the cup is not a piece of art work to serve the purpose of decoration alone in the home, it identifies itself as an object that anybody could use to drink water. This implies that the cup cannot limit the number of people that would use it to drink, but if it were an aesthetic object only, its use would be limited to the position where it is placed for appreciation and only a few persons [the owners] are likely to touch and move it to different positions occasionally. In this context, the poet implies that his/her subject voluntarily made herself available for commercial sex duties that gives several people the opportunity to come into her life, instead of being settled with a spouse in a home where the value of her services could be higher and better appreciated in the context of values within the Okpe traditional society.

The literal meaning of the second proverb is very clear. Common childhood experience proves that the stone that is slung or cast to kill a bird, if it does not strike it, it would certainly chase it away from its position on the plant. In the context of this Igoru song, the poet also made the meaning very clear in the lines that subsequently follow the expression. The poet narrates the story of a protagonist who was deceived by a lady customary chief. The deceived followed the deceiver into the practice of commercial sex work and the husband of the former had to divorce her at the law court. She had no money to pay the divorce claims and there was no one that could pay for her, thus she became ashamed and fled the village for the township through the bush paths. The poet therefore implies that though the divorce claims could not stop her from participating in the

commercial sex work, it made her to depart for a place where she would not be easily identified and scorned for the inability to pay the divorce claims.

In songs 59 lines 36 to 42; and 61 line 52 (pages A1 - 96 and A1 – 101) the poets present some proverbs: “It’s the tree nearby the stream that understands what the fishes say; if a man makes a box (safe), it’s the thief who steals it that sees the inside; it’s the greed of the squirrel that makes it build its nest by the roadside; and the river dried up, leaving the fishes bare”. The first proverb above means, in this context that everyone has problems, and these problems, either by nature or as consequences of some unhealthy practices, hurt one physically or emotionally. It also suggests that we all live together in the community, and with time we have come to discover and understand the problems of one another. It implies that if we have to expose and insult one another, there can be no one who would be free of blemish. The performer [not the poet] of this song remarked that she participated in one of the earlier performances of the song and they inserted names of one another into it. She said others pointed at something about her and she pointed at something about the others. The second proverb suggests that one could think no one sees what he/she does in the secret, but this may not be true, because someone might have seen him/her without his/her notice. It implies that one could be surprised when his/her ills are exposed, if he/she assumed earlier that he/she had no blemish.

The third one is a direct reference to someone who built his/her house by a small market called Eyeogbe near Ugbokodo. The place was a very small farm settlement where nobody built a permanent residence earlier. People went on voyage to the place on fishing expedition and lived in small temporary tents for a number of days/weeks or months and returned home to town. The poet therefore

implies that the person, perhaps the first to build a permanent residence in the place was greedy. The fourth proverb suggests that the subject followed the soldiers in commercial sex work, and she was not well recompensed. It suggests further that at the time of this composition, the soldiers had been drafted back to barracks after the war and the business had crumbled. It implies too that the subject contacted STD before this time and had cause to regret her participation in the sex commerce. The proverb finally suggests that the subject was already advanced in age, a disadvantage to marriage possibilities and child bearing.

Two proverbs found in song 70, lines 10 and 11 (page A1 – 126) and song 84, lines 44 and 45 (page A1 - 152) come from the experience in traditional religion. Several deities in Okpe forbid their followers from killing and eating the snail. Egba, the God of Ikeresan and Ugborhen, for instance, instructs the members and all followers, through the priest, that the snails are his children and are therefore to be protected as he protects them (his subjects). Other deities in Okpe forbid their followers from the snail too. It is therefore possible to pick the whelk and its young ones as meat, but never to pick the snail. The first proverb then suggests that the snail climbs the tree very gently unafraid, because it is peaceful in the first place and most people have also been forbidden from killing it. The opening theme that often begins the performances of the Egboto Isinio ensemble 'Entertainment, entertainment, gently, gently the snail climbs the tree' therefore marks the group's resolve, aimed at performing praises and positive information about people in carefulness to avoid the attacks against Igoru musicians in the 1950s to the 1970s. The second proverb suggests that no one would pick the young snail, but the young whelk has chances of being picked up. In the context of its usage, the poet implies that the subject the theme addresses was very ugly at infancy.

The proverb in song 71, lines 19 and 20 (page A1 – 132) suggests in the context of that Igoru song that the king (Orhoro I) and Chief Edwin Ayomano both possess good human qualities, thus they could work together with maximum cooperation. 'Night and day cannot meet' implies that an evil man cannot work successfully with a just person. The next proverb from the same song, at lines 28 and 29 provides the position of the ensemble that it is not the putting together of several compositions and performances that matter, but the application of wisdom in those performances to avoid causing chaos and uproar in the society. The same song, in lines 59 and 60 uses a metonymy, a part of the human body to represent human being, expressing the point that whoever wishes his neighbours well would certainly have things go well with him/her too. This implies that rather than working in opposition with constituted authorities, particularly those who are serving their people selflessly, one needs to give them support in order to gain similar support and success in his/her own time.

The next proverb found in song 72, lines 1 and 2 (page A1 – 138) suggests that since creation several things have happened, some before the present generation was born and others in the contemporary times. The strange and mysterious things that happened before the present generation, if they happen again after very long time, could be oblivious and the contemporary society could say they had never happened before. The poet therefore implies that whatever happens in contemporary times had happened in the past somewhat; thus any seeming strange and mysterious occurrence that is beyond the knowledge of the contemporary man, if it is claimed to be the first, then was probably not created by God. In the context of this discourse, the poet means that whatever reactions that might come from the public against Igoru performers would not be strange,

they might have happened in the past; thus they could not stop the performances.

The proverb in song 74, line 1 (page A1 – 140) is a form of expression found among the Jeddo in Ighwresa Division of Okpe. The expression ‘the cricket does not fall oddly or quietly’ simply means, in this context, that Igoru musicians would never come out without communicating important and meaningful messages to the audience. Three proverbs are found in song 75, lines 3, 7, 8, 20 and 21 (page A1 – 141), which imply that the older Igoru musicians relaxed performances to observe younger performers for a while, to re-surface later, still to maintain the standards. They all suggest that some of the latter performers soon fizzled out of the scene, while the older ones remained for a longer period, in spite of the attacks against them.

Two other proverbs found in the same song (lines 9, 10, 24 and 25) convey the same meanings, but were expressed in different ways that seem contrasting. One says the sun does not leave the place where it rises and the other says it remains right there. This suggests that the early Okpe might have attempted to study the nature of the sun, whether it moves from its spot, or some objects around it such as the earth move and make man assume that the sun does move. The two proverbs however literally mean that the sun does rise, from a constant position daily and imply that Igoru musicians remain unequivocal and their voices unremitting.

The next three proverbs in song 76, lines 4 and 5 (page A1 – 143); song 79, line 1 and 2 (page A1 – 145) and song 80, line 12 (page A1 – 148) are drawn from man’s religious experiences in the culture under investigation. The expression ‘when dry season comes, the stream deities return home’ suggests that the water

deities come to land to be nearer the people and depart for the streams/rivers when the temperature becomes hot in the dry season. The poet in this context however implies that when all the conditions surrounding a practice cease to exist, the practice itself has got to stop. That is, the practice of commercial sex that existed within the second and third periods under investigation was associated with the coming of the white colonialists/explorers on one hand, and the soldiers during and immediately after the Second World War and the Nigerian Civil War on the other hand. After Nigeria's independence and the Civil War, though some white men remained in the oil-rich Niger-Delta and the commercial City of Lagos; the soldiers had gone back to the barracks, though soon seized power and came into government. Igoru musicians expected commercial sex activities to come to a natural end during this period.

Ahwobisi, as discussed in chapter three, is a God that inhabits the body of a particular tree. He destroys every other tree and they dry up around it, except the small red-substance tree called *uwara*. The poet who employed this proverb implies that since curses are normally invoked by the names of God, deities and the ancestral spirits, God is trusted to protect Igoru musicians, particularly those who hold unto truth in their performances. They believe that God would draw them nearer for protection rather than respond to enemies' imprecations to kill them. The next proverb expressed that the water deities are ever exempted from curses, suggests that no human being dares invoke curses in the name of the water deities in vain. This follows the belief that the water deities cannot be taken for granted at any time. They are ever active and responsive in that if one does an evil and invokes the names of the water deities to pretentiously exonerate him/her, the deities would kill him/her. The poet therefore implies that even if the

ancestral spirits would kill anybody in the society, they would exempt Igoru musicians for the sake of their functions in helping to keep sanity among mortals.

The proverb from the oil palm farmer's experience suggests that whatever product man invents can always find replacement or substitution, but human beings as God's creation cannot be replaced by human efforts. In the context of the Igoru song, the poet implies that his/her subject was old and should have stopped taking part in strenuous activities such as copulation, but continued and often fainted in the process. The last proverb on the list literally means that the birds do not fly above the heavens, and though human beings on earth do not see their backs when they fly, God whose abode is higher sees their back. This implies that whatever evil anybody commits or plans against his neighbours would not be unknown to God; even if it is unknown to human beings.

In the context of the above song and proverbs, we need to examine the tone and meaning of the other lines of the poem to comprehend it properly. The persona says in the preceding lines that the day he/she would give birth, he/she alone knows the name to give to the baby. Following this assertion the persona adds that a certain woman had three children and each of them was a great dancer of '*panya*' music. This is another name for *ikpeba* music which we have discussed in chapter three. The dance is vigorous and not so amorous, but the poet employs the term here to suggest involvement in troublesome activities. In some families, we find parents giving very proverbial names to their children, and in Okpe tradition there is the belief that the meaning of names manifests in their lives when they grow. The poet suggests that the names of these three children do not mean anything relating to prosperous living. It implies that none of them lived well; they constituted nuisances to the society as the expression suggests.

The expression implies too that the children were from an honourable and responsible family, thus the experience is so pathetic. In the premise of this background the proverb then means that the evils of these three children were known to Igoru musicians.

Song 42 lines 3 and 4 (page A1 – 70) presents a proverb that addresses a subject who migrated from the village to Sapele town. The poet expresses that, the subject might assume he/she is far away from home and his/her deeds would not be easily known to his/her people. But the composer proverbially reminds him/her that ‘if someone dies, the earth would hear,’ meaning that Igoru musicians would get information about her subjects irrespective of distance. The short satire aims at a description of the subject’s practice in a manner that is shameful so that the audience could feel the sense of ridicule and avoid breaching societal standards.

7. 2. 9 Idioms/epigrammatises:

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2001: 706) defines idiom as “a group of words with a meaning of its own that is different from the meanings of each separate word put together.” Epigrammatic saying is a dwarfish and concise statement that is very witty and though very short, contains a derivable full meaning. In song 7 line 1 (page A1 – 16), the composer uses an epigrammatic expression to suggest that the prospect and fame one achieves while on earth are manifestations of one’s destiny that had been decided from heaven. He states this as ‘*urhому erhome eki rhom’ ode,*’ meaning ‘good luck comes before good name.’ Short as the statement is, it carries much meaning in the context of this song. The composer intends an implied meaning that the

subject refused a worthy offer, because he/she was destined not to live a comfortable life.

In song 17 line 2 (page A1 – 31), the poet/composer packaged a lot of information in an expression, saying ‘*ona akpo na no ghe ne be ruo* (summarized as *Onakpoberuo*), the craftsmanship of this world is very difficult.’ This epigram is derived from two sources, an age-long proverb and a person’s name. The proverb is normally expressed as *eghele akpo ‘be ruo* meaning that help in this world could be a difficult thing to render, or *ona akpo obe ruo* which also means that it could be difficult to assist one do a thing, particularly on his/her behalf because where one thinks he/she had done well to help and please another person, could be where he/she displeases and dissatisfies him/her. In the context of this Igoru song, however, the poet named his subject by the short form of this epigram and used it to describe his/her unsuccessful sojourn in Lagos.

It implies that Lagos is a commercial city and a centre of attraction where many people think prosperity lies. This impression about Lagos exists to the present day. Many youths from rural communities often assume that whoever goes to live in Lagos could become wealthy through one sort of business or the other within a short period of time. The poet suggests that a sojourner needs to examine the opportunities that abound in a place he/she desires to sojourn in and assess his/her abilities and qualifications for the identified chances before embarking on the journey. He/she suggests further that one must equally evaluate or gather information about the cost of living in the place where he/she intends to sojourn before living his/her home. In those days and up to the present time, many Okpe including many Igoru musicians lived and still live in Lagos. A good number of the sojourners made progress and returned home to build houses in Okpe land. The

poet therefore implies that his/her subject did not look well before leaping, thus the plan to make wealth in Lagos and return to build a house at home failed. In line 9, the poet used another epigram '*akpo Eko no phieghi me*' meaning life in Lagos began to 'swing me' that is 'toss me about.' This latter epigram reinforces the former to drive the point home.

Another epigram appears in song 18, line 1 (page A1 – 32) where the poet expressed that '*Abada oda inyo biomu oma*' meaning 'Abada spoilt his/her [self] body with drunkenness.' The poet though went further in the short narrative to describe a particular incident where the subject became naked at Apapa Bridge, Lagos; he/she implies that drunkenness has adverse effects on human beings and these could bring about public disgrace. In song 38 line 2 the composer uses another epigrammatic idiom that more or less functions as euphemism. The expression takes its bearing from line 1 which is also idiomatic. The two idioms can make a simple sentence each, but they have together formed semi-compound structure. The first idiom says "Ukonbo wants to leave the town" while the second follows that "he sought for someone who could take his place." Denotative translation would mean that he sought for someone he would use "as exchange for himself." In traditional Okpe society, there is the practice where some people used ethno-medicine to ensure long life.

Two types of medicine existed. One is *osurhomu*, preserver of life and the other *owenurhomu*, exchanger of life. Some people prepare the former in a hurricane lamp or a trap and position it in or around the house where even if other persons see it, they might not understand the very function it plays. The one in a lamp, for instance could be kept in a man's room and it is constantly fuelled to ensure it never goes off. No matter how sick the man could be, if the lamp does not go off,

he/she would not breathe the last. Some people normally place the one of trap behind the house as if it were for any animal, but it is often positioned where even domestic animals might not easily get to interfere with it. If the owner of the medicine becomes gravely sick and he/she considers that his/her family has suffered much for his/her survival to no avail, he/she would finally instruct his children to put off the lamp or unset the trap so that he/she could breathe the last.

For the person who has the second medicine, he/she could use it to re-direct the death to someone else, usually one of his people who come close to look after him in the period of his/her sickness or whenever he/she has the signs of the death. The idioms used by the poet in this song therefore suggest that Ukonbo was about to die (expressed as 'about to leave the town') and he sought for someone he could re-direct the death to (expressed as 'one to take his place for an exchange'). The line following it suggests that the real subject of this song was the wife of the medicine man described above. It further implies that the man was sick at the point of death during the period and a sudden illness attacked the woman in that same period, an indication that the man wanted to have her die in his place, thus the transfer of illness. The question whether the two of them had the same kind of illness is unnecessary, because in tradition, it could never be the same. The more they are different, the less suspicious it becomes. In line 4 of the same song, the poet uses another idiom 'sacrifices have gone home'. This can be literally interpreted to mean that sacrifices were offered plentifully to have the woman spiritually redeemed to live, but to no avail.

The narrator of song 26 at lines 21 and 22 (page A1 – 40) presents an epigram, saying "If you follow fish and get missing in the creeks, it's nobody's fault." This

expression simply implies that the Okpe who harbour the Itsekiri in their communities better be careful so that they would not outrun them and take over their lands. In song 36 line 5 (page A1 – 59), the composer presents an epigram that lacks concise English translation. He says the subject presents him/herself in an erroneous manner, implying that he/she tends to attempt feats that are impossible for him/her to achieve. Song 51 line 8 (page A1 – 86) features an idiom saying the subject would ‘beat or kill sleep’. The words put together in this expression mean different things, but in this context imply that the subject would not be able to sleep well. The composer presents two idioms in song 30 at lines 7 and 34. The first says “*Edje ayi Mare na f’igidabo* – people of Mare’s category now raise their shoulders high. The key words employed by the composer mean different things. For example, *edje* means peers and *fi* means to throw; but the two terms come together to serve a single function of meaning in the context of the usage. The first refers to the subject directly and not to his/her peers; while the second ‘throwing shoulders (raising shoulders high)’ suggests he/she was very proud. The second idiom says ‘the Okpe did something with that one’, suggesting that they killed the person in question for committing a crime.

In song 52 line 8 (page A1 – 87) the poet uses an idiomatic expression that carries double meaning. ‘*Ari ghwere oma*’ simply means ‘you should prepare (or come out boldly) to prove your worth.’ In this context, the poet uses the expression to inspire the Jeddo Igoru musicians to prepare for performances without fear. The composer in song 67 line 12 (page A1 – 116) uses another idiomatic expression that ‘Hallelujah could neither kill a tsetse fly nor a house fly.’ The term ‘hallelujah’ in this context represents the Christian church. One of the early churches that found roots in Okpe was this ‘Full Gospel Ministry’ that became commonly known as ‘Hallelujah’ in the area. At the coming of this church

and her missionary activities, emphasis was laid on healing through prayers and laying on of hands. The narrator expresses that people with diverse health problems were taken to the church for healing and the cripple could not walk, the blind could not see, the impotent and the barren remained in their conditions. The poet therefore reacts to the prayer and missionary activities of the converts that their preaching and prayers day and night are mere disturbances to the community.

In song 77 line 1 (page A1 – 143) the poet uses another idiomatic expression that the commercial sex work had become cigarette holder. He/she adds another idiom to complement the first that his/her subject had ‘smoked his/her life away.’ The cigarette holder is a device that smokers use. The cigarette stick is inserted into it and the smoker draws in the smokes, exhales them through his/her mouth and nostrils and stub out the cigarette. The two idiomatic expressions then mean that commercial sex work is likened to the cigarette smoking experience, which consumes the cigarette stick by fire. This implies that the subject had lived a wasteful life, like a cigarette stubbed out, indulging in a practice that did not profit him/her.

6.3 Sound elements, rhythm and effects:

Sound effects in poetry arise from expressions made in certain organised order and clever use of words that would sound in some desired forms. The poet deliberately organizes words, syllables and lines in patterns that will generate similarity in sounds; create audile sensitivity and stimulate more curiosity and emotionality. He/she creates images in the imagination and minds of the audience by imitating and representing sounds of objects and characters so described in order to stimulate emotional responses from audiences. This is

achieved by use of some sound elements and verbal techniques that appear in various forms of repetition, parallelism, rhyme, etc, to enable the poet present his/her witty ideas with great effects on the listeners. The effects then make the poetry or songs more easily memorable, both to the performers and the audiences. Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 99) write that:

At an altogether higher level, we can all summon from our own experience couplets, quatrains, stanzas, whole poems which, after only one or two readings, have lodged for ever in our memory. We value the pieces that in the truest sense of the term we have learnt by heart, for their crisp and witty expression, their wisdom, their solace, their sheer beauty, or for a combination of these and other qualities; but it is their patterned structure that makes them readily and permanently memorable.

Poetry in Igoru music is usually packaged with these sorts of qualities that enhance the memorability of the songs. Since no one holds an individual copyright reserve to the songs, even if he/she composes a number of them, memorability enables Igoru musicians to perform some songs commonly in various locations of the Okpe society. To discuss these sound effects, we shall use the following excerpt from song 2 as example and make reference to some others subsequently:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 10 | 'Muorhoja <i>ro mwu</i> Ireka,
'Reka <i>orho mwu</i> Omuorhoja;
'Muorhoja <i>ro mwu</i> Ireka,
'Reka <i>orho mwu</i> Omuorhoja | 'Muorhoja captured Ireka,
And 'Reka captured Omuorhoja,
'Muorhoja captured Ireka,
And 'Reka captured Omuorhoja, |
| 15 | <i>A' i mwu</i> Omuorhoja,
<i>Egbane, gbane ob' Egbeda,</i>
<i>Wu rhe t' ekete 'rhe kpe</i> Omuorhoja,
<i>Imeba, ono gb' are unu.</i> | They captured Omuorhoja,
And held her bound at the coven,
If you get to the scene where they
beat Omuorhoja,
Members, you would be astonished. |

The composer of the above song recycles the theme in order to fix both the names of the characters and the principal ideas firmly into the minds of the audience. The two names in the song end with the vowel 'a' to produce a masculine sound that would emphasize the theme of a dreadful capture. The names are interchanged within the lines. One name begins a line and the other ends it each time. While the names create internal rhymes within the lines, they also form end rhymes that make the lines sound similarly at the end. Sounds of words, when they are properly organized, create rhythm and accentuation that give strong effects in tone and movements. Laura Arntson (1998: 494) writes about sound effects and rhythm as follows:

Heightened speech, a primary characteristic of praise singing, involves rhythmic and dynamic elements that are not a part of everyday speech, whose primary function is communication. The poetic or musical qualities of speech that are out of the ordinary are self-conscious and performative in nature. The nonphonemic accentuation that occurs in such speech, rhythm and accentuation serve an aesthetic value over communicative function, and the use that "rhythmic impulse makes of language for its own ends" (Preminger et al. 1974: 669) is the subject of literary prosody. For "poetic" forms, then, the prosodic "structure" of speech becomes a subject of considerable interest.

In Igoru music, while the rhythm and dynamics of these sound elements play aesthetic roles, they also perform communicative function. No word is wasted in Igoru music; they are all aimed at communicating specific messages, proverbially, idiomatically or directly to the audience. Several sound elements that create sound effects in poetic music are discussed under various headings below.

6. 3. 1 Alliteration and assonance:

Alliteration is the use of two or more words in close succession, in order to repeat the sound of a particular consonant letter within a line of a poetic verse, while assonance is the use of same or corresponding vowel sound closely within a line. In line 10 of the above excerpt (*Muorhoja ro mwu Ireka*), the poet-composer creates alliteration by repeated use of the consonant “m” within the same line. While the first begins the name of the subject, the second begins the key-word of the verse. The name ought to start with vowel ‘o’ but the vowel is here omitted to realize the effect of the alliteration. The correspondence of consonant sound between the name and the key-word creates certain emotional mood that stimulates sympathy as the sound agreement enhances the expression that the subject is captured. The alliteration in line 15, created with the effect of double consonant ‘gb’ strengthens the expression that portrays the use of force against the captive who the persona says was being tied. The use of this alliteration and the interchange of the characters emphasize the power tussle between them until one supported by other members of the cult overcomes the other.

Line 11 (*'Reka orho mwu Omuorhoja*) presents visual and sound assonances with the vowels ‘u, o and a’. The five ‘o’ that appear in the line have the same sound except one. While the third ‘o’ has the sound of a dotted ‘o’, the others have the sound of an ordinary [undotted] vowel. Since the third has a vowel sound different from the others, when the poem becomes written, it creates visual agreement and a slight sound difference. But the others create a strong effect of assonance that shows where the stronger force lies in the contest between the two characters. It sensitizes the imagination of the audience to the feeling that, though Omuorhoja captured Ireka first, the powers of the latter and

his/her supporters seem stronger to overcome. Several other assonance and alliteration exist in the songs presented in appendix I.

6. 3. 2 Rhetoric questions:

One common technique in Igoru composition is the use of rhetoric questions. These questions are asked as a way of making statements, and answers are not expected from the audience. Sometimes, however, the questions change form and demand answers from the ensemble in solo and response order. We shall list some of these questions below and have a closer look at them:

- I say, who shall we call upon? (Song 3 line 11, page A1 – 4)
- How do I kill him? (Song 5 line 41, page A1 – 6)
- Is this the body by which you manifest witchcraft? (Song 5 line 64)
- What child [sex] had Meni? (Song 6 line 29, page A1 – 11)
- Who would contend the River with the Crocodile? (Song 12 line 15-16, page A1 – 23)
- Who builds a fence against a (flowing) River? (Song 12 line 18)
- What story has he to tell? (Song 12 line 19)
- What has he to say? (Song 12 line 20)
- Do you seek or want your husbands' demise? (Song 15 line 23, page A1 – 27)
- Can you imagine? (Song 16 line 5, page A1 – 29)
- Who would avenge this cause? (Song 23 line 12, page A1 – 36)
- What do you think a chick can offer to its mother hen? (Song 25 line 3-4, page A1 – 39)

- Who are the Itsekiri that you associate with? (Song 26 line 6, page A1 – 40)
- What is the matter with you? (Song 34 line 17, page A1 – 56)
- What have you come to do? (Song 39 line 7, page A1 – 62)
- Is it the pregnancy of Garri that you've conceived? (Song 39 line 40-41, page)
- Is this a frog? (Song 39 line 49)
- Where had she landed? (Song 42 line 6, page A1 – 70)
- Who is Aseagerhe to have sex with white men? (Song 46 line 2, page A1 – 78)
- Is this how you're beaten and striped naked here? (Song 46 line 45)
- What is "women bend"? (Song 46 line 53)
- Is this what you'd do to pay your husband's divorce claims? (Song 49 line 5-6, page A1 – 84)
- This "pull me I pull you" that lies there? (Song 49 line 7)
- I say, are you asleep? (Song 52 line 3, page A1 – 87)
- Would you perform this Igoru? (Song 52 line 4)
- How then would the Crocodile cry in the River? (Song 53 line 3, page A1 – 88)
- Or, public, can't we say so? (Song 53 line 23)
- How long can we mourn him? (Song 68 line 21, page A1 – 118)

Some of the questions receive their answers in the song as the narration progresses. When a question is raised in a line, the following line or lines may provide the answer either directly or indirectly by way of explanations. Sometimes the answers are also provided in proverbs or in some idiomatic

expressions. In the indirect order, the narrator goes ahead to narrate what happened next in the event and implicitly fix the answer therein. When an answer, on the other hand, is provided directly, particularly in solo and response style between the lead singer and the chorus, a dramatic effect is created with the dialogue. In some other cases, the persona asks these questions and provides the answers of the subject. This also is dramatic, because it stimulates the feeling of a conversation going on between two persons [cf. Appendix I].

6. 3. 3 Repetition:

Joshua Uzoigwe (1998: 20) examines the use of repetition in song texts and writes as follows:

As repetition of musical phrase is one of the most important compositional features in *ilulu nkwa*, it often serves as a useful means by which the soloist emphasizes and projects to the listening audience the principal idea or ideas of the particular song. Thus, in *ilulu nkwa* song-performance it is the phrasal idea or group of ideas with the greatest number of occurrence that usually constitutes as the main theme.

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 115-116) similarly write that repetition is a powerful, forceful, rhetorical and expressive device skilfully employed by poets to hammer key words home, in order to implant dominant emotions in listeners or readers' mind. In Igoru songs, repetitions often appear in forms of chorus refrain or a frequent return of the narration to the principal idea at strategic intervals (see song 8, page A1 – 17). There are two dominant ideas in

the above song. The ideas are expressed as labouring without being able to amass wealth and the description of one who fails economically as vagabond. The poet-composer builds climax gradually by mentioning the various professions that exist in the society and educating the audience that every unsuccessful professional in any field or occupation could then be called a vagabond, if he, an Igoru musician is so called a vagabond for the reason of low income. We have discussed details of this under educational function in this chapter. Our concern here is the repetition technique and the essence of it.

Kobo and ½ kobo are the least denominations that appear in coins in the Nigerian currency. They have been demonetized (no longer in use) unofficially in the present day Nigerian society, owing to the devaluation of the Naira in the international exchange market. Since economic success is measured by the amount of money one has in his safe, the poet reiterates the least denominations to depict the level of poverty that brings about derision in the public. The conception of the Okpe public then being that farming was the predominant occupation that could bring wealth; there were attempts to discourage Igoru musicians from performance to full-time farming. The emphasis given to the two principal ideas through the repetition technique helps to build the necessary defence that Igoru musicians would continue to perform with contentment. Musicians are known to be content with their resources; otherwise, this kind of value system where wealth determines one's personality in the society could lead to corrupt practices. But there had been no report of such practices among Igoru musicians.

In song 16 (page A1 – 29), the composer adopts this kind of special repetition where the dominant idea is expressed in the last two lines of each verse. The

poet-composer builds the narrative and its climax gradually. Each verse has a new development of the events that are narrated sequentially. But after each new development, there is a return to the principal idea that the subject had inflicted much distress or emotional pains on him, the persona. Song 26, verse 3 (page A1 – 40) also presents a chorus repetition that comes after every new line to emphasize the main idea or message intended for the audience. The composer cum narrator in verses 1 and 2 express the feelings of pity for the Okpe who keep relationships with the Itsekiri in fresh fish trade. But the third, which is the last verse, is given a one-line refrain that provides the principal reason why this close relationship is to be discouraged. This line becomes recurrent as response to every other line that comes after, in order to implant the dominant idea into the minds of the audience.

In song 4 line 5 the poet repeats an idea that seems very significant within the line, saying “Edion, please save us, save us”. This does not appear however to be the principal message in the song, but it helps to drive the main ideas home. In song 5 lines 27 and 28 a major idea “Meni became joyful” was repeated successively in the two lines. In song 6 lines 76 and 77, the poet uses a form of repetition where the noun that ends the preceding line begins the following line. He/she uses it as a simile in the preceding line and transforms it to a metaphor successively. In song 15 lines 28-31, the poet repeats every other line in which the statement expressed in two lines is repeated in the following two line to create not only phrasal balance, but to implant the idea of those key-words. In song 16, the composer uses repetition in a different form. The point that touches the poet most in the narrative is expressed in two lines that come to end each of the four verses in the song except the last verse that changes to a fable.

In song 21 (page A1 – 34), the principal idea is established in three lines and to begin the performance, the performer presents the theme repeatedly expanding it to six lines before the receiver soloist gives the call. The call comes in with new ideas stated in one or two lines each time, but the main idea in three lines only now forms the recurring refrain. In song 22 (page A1 – 35), the composer presents the major idea in line 1 to precede and of course form part of the topic sentence. He/she says “I’ll go home, I’ll go home; Government wrote to us that all goats suffering from dermphytosis should depart the city.” In song 28, the performer employs the technique of repetition in a cyclical order to present the narrative. An unwary listener would conclude that the performer repeats the same ideas. True, main ideas are repeated, but new information is introduced at one time or the other; thus the verses are unequal. While the first verse consists six lines, the second has five lines and the third seven.

In song 29 (page A1 – 43), the composer repeats the key word ‘*ikun* – story’ at the beginning of three successive lines coming immediately after the first line. This is a deliberate attempt to inform the audience that the story contained in the narrative is a very important one to pay attention to. It therefore prompts the audience to be more attentive. At a certain point in the narrative of song 31, line 55 (page A1 – 48) to be precise, the composer repeats an expression “This is great suffering, it is great suffering” to heighten the climax as it approaches the final cadence. The form of repetition that exists in song 32 lines 39-46 (page A1 – 52), is a kind of verbal remark often performed by a humorous member of a performing group or of the audience at the end of every impressive section of an on-going performance. Here, the poet employs it sarcastically with the use of neologism. The expression ‘do do do do’ in line 39 of the same song is a stimulating verbalisation that normally opens this brief performance. It normally

spurs the audience to give a rousing ovation that leads to a general dance session between performers and audience. In this context, the poet-performer employs it only to induce members of the ensemble to deride his/her subjects further in verbal codes.

In song 38 line 4 (page A1 – 62) the poet exchanges the key word in the expression with a new word to stimulate a fresh drive even in similar idea. The first word is *egbe* and the second in the next round of repetition is *amwɛrhiɛn*. The first word in this context means ‘to practice’ while the second literally means ‘to press’ and derives the same meaning as the former connotatively in the context. This form of repetition occurs again in song 43 line 3 (page A1 – 71), but this time the composer uses two different words that also have different meanings. In the first round of the performance, he/she uses the word ‘singlet’ and in the second round introduces a new word ‘file.’ The two words though denote different things, however suggest the same idea the poet intends to pass to the audience. This form exists again in song 59 line 9 (page A1 – 96) where in the second round of the verse, the former words of that line are replaced with new ones. Instead of ‘a long mouth,’ we find ‘parrot’s claws.’ The general form of this song actually is recycling poetically. The melody spans within the range of five-line verse; but the composer-performer lengthens it to eight verses containing different information with the ninth verse concluding it in only four lines.

A common practice in Igoru music is observed in song 43 lines 11-12 and song 59 lines 35-37 (page A1 – 71) where the performer concludes the performance of the song by repeating the principal idea that marks the climax. Just as we have topic sentence that begins every paragraph in English grammar, this form

creates what we would in reverse order call closing thematic sentence in Igoru music. That is, the theme is established and developed; then the principal theme is reframed to mark a perfect cadence, and this is again repeated to reaffirm the theme and cadence. Song 42 would normally have ended at line 9, but this technique of restating the theme extends it by two lines. Song 59 would also have ended with line 35, but the closing thematic sentence extends it by the repeat of the last two lines. In song 44 beginning from line 50 to 66 (page A1 – 72), the composer presents a revolving idea, using different names and professions to illustrate the point and drive the message deep down into the minds of the audience (cf. appendix I for details). At the end of the long narrative, the composer turns the principal idea into a refrain in a new frame of language and gives the call subsequently in two lines every other time.

In song 53 (page A1 – 88) the composer repeats the main theme at different intervals. From line 5 to line 20, the key words ‘kill and die’ keep recurring to impress the idea into the psyche of the audience. In song 61 (page A1 – 101), the composer introduces the narrative with some form of repetition. The first four lines successively state a segment of the theme and the next four lines recycle the second segment to prepare the audience’s attentiveness before the actual commencement of the full content. Various kinds of repetition that contain recycling ideas are also presented in song 68 (page A1 – 118). The first pattern begins at line 18-30 where the theme is established after the introductory speech. The theme is repeated after the receiver-solo states the call in four lines. In the first pattern, the words contained in the verse, apart from the speech interjections, remain unchanged. But the second pattern uses similar melodic phrasing with changing words. In song 70 (page A1 – 126), the composer

presents the full narrative and adopts the last two lines to establish a refrain for the subsequent solo call that feature changing words that build up the climax.

6. 3. 4 Homophonic doubling of words:

This is another kind of repetition that occurs in a form wherein a word is doubled to express an idea. Homophonic doubling of words is a common feature in the Okpe language. It is often used to describe objects in negative manners, though some positive forms sparingly exist. In song 6 at line 73 (page A1 – 11), the composer uses this kind of expression. He says “*We rue urhumu hworhẹ hworhẹ* – with your bald head (like heaven’s piece of calabash.” The expression *hworhẹ hworhẹ* which either means bald or very clean will make a different meaning if the word is not repeated. One word *hworhẹ* will on its own be completely meaningless, or suggest another word that has a vowel elided from its beginning. Listeners could assume it is “*Ahworhẹ* (sponge)” with the ‘a’ omitted. Within the same line of this song, the narrator presents another form of this homophonic double word, “*kpeghẹ kpeghẹ*”. While the first form means ‘bald’, this other form means ‘flat’ or very old. In the context of this song, it however assumes the first meaning, describing the head of the subject as flat.

We find another pattern of this in a compound form in line 76 of the same song. Here the expression is used as a noun. The poet calls the subject *kurekure* meaning dwarf. In song 23 line 3 (page A1 – 36), the composer uses the double-word expression to describe the life of the subjects. The expression ‘*farhiẹn farhiẹn*’ can be interpreted to mean ‘rough and meaningless’. But only one word ‘*farhiẹn*’ would mean ‘going astray or absconding in disobedience’. The composer however intends the first meaning. The expression in song 48 line 1 (page A1 – 82) ‘*riẹriẹ*’ is another compound form of the double word phonemic. When compounded, it means smooth, but singularly ‘*riẹ*’ would suggest a

different meaning, 'go home' when the 'e' is undotted, and 'to him/her or straight' when the vowel is dotted as the case is in this example.

6. 3. 5 Parallelism:

Parallelism as opposed to repetition is the use of words that convey the same meaning within two or more successive lines, but are not strictly a repeat of the preceding line word for word. Tanure Ojaide (2001: 22[Internet]) comments on the use of repetition and parallelism as devices for memorability in *udje* songs of the Urhobo:

Mnemonic devices fill the songs so that the obo-ile [unitalicized in original] and other singers do not forget the details of their song...Repetition is the most frequent device used in the songs. The repetition is usually of "breath spaces," segments of the song, or the whole song. I am using "breath space" to indicate a poetic line, which in *udje* appears at a pause for breath...Closely related to repetition are parallelism and chiasmus, structural devices that add musicality to the songs and also help the singers in remembering their piece. In *udje* a breath space is a unit of sense.

The case in Igoru differs somewhat from that of the Urhobo *udje*, because repetition and parallelism do not seem to have significance tied to the memorability of the songs. Very long chronological narratives are composed with limited repetition and parallel devices. The performers have developed themselves as professionals and have acquired the skills that enhance the ability to memorise the songs. We have observed that shorter songs have larger repetition and recycling devices than long narratives. Parallelism features in several Igoru songs as observed in songs 6, 7, 10, 28, 32, 44, 52, and 64 among others, but we shall take only two examples. The following excerpt from song 28 (page A1 – 42) illustrates the use of parallelism as a device of the poetic

development that has some key ideas like 'The great philanthropist raised his voice, I'm not your only beneficiary; He died at outskirts bifurcation, and no one buried you' repeated in different words to convey similar or same meaning.

In the above example, parallelism occurs in the first two verses. Between lines 2 and 3 of the first verse, parallelism appears where the persona expresses that he/she is not the only beneficiary of the deceased, but the whole world. Line three is a recreation or recycling of line two, because the two lines invariably convey the same meaning. Since line two says the narrator is not the only beneficiary, it already implies that many more people had benefited. The third line adding that the whole world benefited only re-emphasizes the idea in different words. The second verse contains double parallelism that occurs between four successive lines where every other line is a recycling of the preceding one. The first of these parallelisms states the same idea of 'raising the voice to query' and changes only the characters in the two lines, to avoid strict repetition. While the first line says the women raised their voices to give the query, the following line says the dead 'Ariemurugbe' raised his voice to also query. The second form of parallelism in this second verse is the repeat of the parallelism presented earlier in verse one.

The second example is taken from song 44 (page A1 – 72) where key ideas like 'Night is already fallen over you; It's again dawn before you... The married abuses her husband, and the married denies her husband' recur. The expression occurring at lines 19 and 20 is a kind of parallelism. The two lines following one another express the concept of time in the life of human beings, specifically of the character in the narrative. The parallelism of the same idea is however presented in a kind of metonymy. The key words that suggest time in the two

lines 'night and dawn' appear to be contrary in meaning, but are used to make the same point and same meaning in the verse. The narrator simply means that the prime hey-day of the subject is past and only little luck is left. Lines 23 to 27 present series of parallelism, where all the lines use different words each to express the same point that is finally made more explicit in the last line. If the married abuses and denies her husband as well as practices adultery openly, it already suggests she is fed up with the marriage and wants a chance to be let free from the marriage bond. The composers present these forms of expressions to stimulate the audiences' philosophical use of syllogism to deduce full meaning from the themes.

6. 3. 6 *Ēgbaren emro*, similitude of spoonerism:

Mary Barber (1970: M35) writes that spoonerism is the accidental transposition of words that have same sound in a manner that allows a line rhyme with the preceding line word to word – a pattern named after Rev. W. A. Spooner. We call the pattern of this rhyme, which in Igoru music is not exactly as Spooner's scheme, *ēgbaren emro*. There are two sets of *ēgbaren* in the first verse of song 60. In the first two lines as in the excerpt above, only the first and last syllables differentiate the rhyme scheme that exists in sound and visual forms between the words. In the third and fourth lines, the first vowels beginning the first two lines which do not rhyme are elided so that only the last syllables differentiate the rhyme scheme. Between lines 5 and 8, we find the second set of *ēgbaren*. All the syllables between these four lines rhyme with one another, except two syllables towards the end. Another *ēgbaren* exists between lines 10 and 11 of song 68 (page A1 – 118). There are seven syllables in each line and only the second syllable falls short in the rhyme scheme. The reason is that when two vowels follow one another between two successive words, the sound of the latter vowel

normally dominates the former. In line 10 therefore, the words “*Ọga Okpẹ*” would then sound “*Ọg-Okpẹ*” (He served Okpẹ). We have not elided the ‘a’ of the first word in the appendix, because we consider easy reading and comprehension very important.

6. 3. 7 Foundation vowel, round-off and nasality:

Kenichi Tsukada (2001: 163) reinvents the following argument on the use and meaning of vowel and consonant sounds:

French’s survey of various experiments of sound symbolism (1977: 311-312) shows that the high-front-unround vowel /i/ is generally associated with what is bright, small, angular, hard, fast and light, in contrast to the back-rounded vowels /u/, /o/, /ɔ/, /a/, associated with dark, large, round and soft. Kobayashi (1976: 254) suggests the possibility of associating the consonant /m/ with something soft and round, /k/ with hard and angular, and /l/ or /r/ with smooth and fluid...Sound symbolism could be considered as the basis for the generation of phonaesthetic expressions and VR as their “extension”. The difficulty lies in the fact that since many studies on sound symbolism are based on data from the West, the findings of those studies cannot easily be applied to either the Japanese or the Fanti data. An exploration of the VR systems from a phonesthetic perspective must stand on culture-specific data from the particular society concerned.

The vowel ‘e’ plays a lot of roles in Igoru music. It serves as interjection or exclamation; affirmation, emphasis, round-off and as base. This is why we refer to it as a foundation vowel in this discourse. In several cases, we have not included it in our translation, particularly where it appears rapidly frequent within a verse. We have done this for two reasons; to allow the English version flow intelligibly, and to avoid monotony and boredom to the English reader. Those who would read it in Okpe, however, would enjoy the use of this foundation

vowel. In song 1 at line 1 (page A1 – 1), this vowel begins and ends the line. At the beginning, it functions affirmatively and at the end of the line it acts as interjection. The vowel is dominant in songs 4 (page A1 – 5) as follows:

<i>E, Ediḡon biko gbe simi ame,</i>	Oh Ediḡon, please protect us,
<i>E, ame h' urhomu ame r' Ediḡon more ne (oye);</i>	Yea, we've given ourselves to Ediḡon;
<i>E, ẹdebi ro sa na,</i>	The day preceding our next worship,
<i>Ami ne prisi lele amwao.</i>	We shall preach around the town.

In the above excerpt from song 4, the vowel plays a tripartite role. It functions in the first line as an interjection; at the second line as affirmation and in the third line as emphasis. In all cases above, the vowel begins the lines, setting foundation for each statement coming after it. More often than not the vowel attracts a slur of two or three notes in the melody. Since Igoru music is not melismatic, it does not require more than that length of slur. Most lines, verses or songs begin with this vowel in several other Igoru songs and this suggests that it has other roles different from those listed above. While we interpret it in the above light, we also observe that it serves as a test tone in some other cases. That is, when a voice raises a song that begins with this soothing vowel sound and it is hoarse, it would be evident that the voice is not yet ready for singing. Often, the performer would repeat the musical sentence to ensure that the voice produces sounds smoothly, before continuing the narrative. Let us examine the role the vowel plays in the excerpt from song 33 (page A1 – 55) below:

<i>E, me tare vẹrhẹ o,</i>	Yea, I predicted earlier,
<i>Me mẹr' ugbahian re mi ne mwuo,</i>	I found a lady to befriend,
<i>Re me rh' oye gba su oma lalọ,</i>	And we took blood covenant;
<i>Ẹ,</i>	Yes,
<i>Orhọ mẹr' obo ro no ru mẹ, ọvbọ ta mẹ,</i>	If she foresees evil, she informs me,

- 15 *E, vbi lele yo mi rhe ghwaren,* Yea, so that I would be cautiously wise;
E, Yes,
Qwọ nọ nya ugbahia ero kpa 'e męę, Let no friend gossip me about,
E, Yes,

The vowel again functions affirmatively in the first and sixth lines above, but in the seventh and ninth lines, it is rather an inducement to encourage or challenge the narrator to continue the narration onward. It appears like a truncated statement such as the following: “Yes, go ahead to give us more details”. It further makes the narrative dramatic, because it comes as a response from the ensemble chorus to the lead singer’s narration.

Round-offs are vowels most preferred to end phrases, lines, verses or songs. Apart from words or syllables that end nasally with the sound of the consonant ‘n’ coming after a vowel, Igoru musicians always chose to end phrases and lines with a vowel. Going through the eighty seven (87) songs, we find that only few lines end with the consonant sound ‘n’ and all others end with one vowel or the other, or even a group of vowels. Any vowel therefore can possibly end a line; but the vowels ‘o’ and ‘e’ are most preferred even when they do not belong to the last syllable. When the last letter or syllable in a line ends with a vowel, we find often that Igoru musicians would still add the ‘o’ or ‘e’ to round the sound up and this is the reason we describe it as round-off. In the use of the vowel ‘e’ at the end of a line, some Igoru musicians would prefix it with a consonant ‘n’ to emphasize it. We shall examine the following excerpts to illustrate this:

- Qna ne (avwaran) otu Irhobo,* The (there) Itsekiri,
Irhe dumu irhorin ne. Invoked a curse:
“Ayelala gba mu o, “Eyelala will kill you,
Ibrikimọ 'dumu ne”, Ibrikimọ will save you”.
5 *Qna n’odę irhorin ohu o,* This is a kind of curse,
Ri ‘Rhobo ivwori o, The Itsekiri own,

Raye 'dumę ne.

And invoke.

The above is an excerpt from song 54 (page A1 – 90) wherein these features are evident. In line 1 the last syllable has the vowel 'o' and there was therefore no need duplicating it. It is a good round-off sound on its own, occurring naturally. Line two ends with the consonant 'n,' but a round-off sound is created after with the vowel 'e' prefixed with an 'n'. In spoken language, the line would have ended with the word 'irhorin'. The 'ne' round-off scheme appearing after it and again appears at lines 4 and 7 are only to provide the end of the lines with the round-off preference. Other lines end with the round-off 'o' even when the lines end with the vowels 'u' and 'i'. The next example is drawn from song 48 (page A1 – 82. In this example, we find more consistency of the use of the round-off sound. Almost every line has it. Where the round-off sound 'o' follows another vowel, the performers connect the sounds smoothly and if elision of the vowel preceding it would not create distortion of meaning, they would skip it to give emphasis to the round-off. In the case of words that end nasally as in line 27, the 'n' sound is avoided in order to connect the preceding vowel with the round-off.

6. 3. 8 Elision, truncation and word-link:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 116) defines the term linking in poetry as a variety of repetition in form of a word or phrase that ends a line and reappears at the beginning of the line following it. In Igoru poetry, we shall examine the term in relationship to elision and truncation. Elision is the process of eliding or leaving out a letter often a vowel in a word; while truncation is the process of shortening a thing, in this case a word. In Igoru music elision and truncation of words are techniques employed in developing poetic lines, in order to link sounds together meaningfully. These techniques take into account the

possibility of changing vowel sounds as they link to one another and of fusing two vowel sounds between two successive words to fit with a single melodic tone. The words so connected could exist within a given line or between two successive lines.

Deidre Hansen (1993: 57) asserts that singing in *xesibe* gives more emphasis to vocal sound effects at the expense of communicative meaning:

The singing is forceful, even explosive and nasal, and is in strong contrast to the forceful, but open-voice singing of the rest of the group. In *gwaba* singing the words of song-texts undergo distortion: the ultimate syllables of certain words are replaced by vocal sound, effect and contrast, and thus grammar and meaning are sacrificed so that a satisfactory musical and vibratory effect is achieved.

The Okpe language, to an extent, is nasal principally with the silent sound of the consonant 'n' which often is not fully sounded, particularly when it is necessary to link up a word that ends with it to another word that begins with a vowel. The attempt to link words together in order to realize certain sound effects does not in Igoru music undermined the meaning of the words that are connected. Words are elided, truncated or connected meaningfully in manners that create the desired effects and as well retain meaning. The lines in song 22 (page A1 – 35), explicitly illustrates this. The last vowel of the second line is connected to the first vowel of the third line in such a way that the sounds are linked up with a modification of the preceding vowel sound. The two words involved 'rhe' and 'otu' are independent of each other. But the link between the two vowel sounds changes the form to 'io' [*rhio*], modifying the sound from 'e – o' to 'i – o'.

The same pattern of word linkage occurs between lines 7 and 8 with some difference. This time the first vowel sound 'e' is simply elided for the second vowel 'o' to gain more emphasis. The first pattern of modification follows a form that is obsolete in spoken Okpe language. In the old fashion, elders could say 'aye rhi ne' (they have come) while in present day one would say 'ayi rhe ne' or 'aye rhe ne' (they have come). The statement in the song can therefore be reframed as 'oya iwe rhi ne' (he/she has written a letter to us) or in the modern form, *oya iwe rhe ne* meaning exactly the same. We note however that the former form cannot exist in simple past tense such as *oya iwe rhi* (he/she wrote a letter to us), because this will sound oblique and ambiguous; *oya iwe rhe* is proper. The modification in the song thus was necessary, to avoid distortion of meaning in the position where the words involved appear in the verse.

When a word ends with the vowel 'o' and the following word begins with the same vowel, and both have the same sound of an undotted 'o', the composer changes the sound form while linking them together. In song 16 line 8 (page A1 – 29) this feature occurs as follows: "Me ni 'bi emro r'-osoro me so Otebele – Just see the little dispute I had with Otebele." In fact, various forms of word-link exist in this statement. The second word is truncated from 'nighe' to 'ni' either forms meaning look at or see. The third word ought to have the vowel 'i' (*ibi*) as a prefix, but the vowel already exists in the preceding word, therefore it is elided. The fifth word should have been 're' but elision takes place again in order to link it with the following word. The conjunction 'so' and the noun *Otebele* appearing at the end of the line are linked with sound modification, because the connecting vowels are homophonic. The representation above is in readable form; it would otherwise be written thus 'su-Otebele' according to the sound modification in the word-link.

This is not however uncommon in spoken Okpe language. A village for instance is called 'oko' and when it becomes a name often compounded with the name of its founder, it changes form. This is also evident in Igoru music as we observe in song 37 at line 1 (page A1 – 60). The composer-performer presents a narrative about his village known as Okwovu. The name ordinarily would be 'Okwo Ovu – The village of Ovu,' but in well-connected pronunciation, it changes form to 'Okwovu.' This also appears in song 29 where the narrator refers to 'Okwo Ukpokpogri – the village of Ukpokpogri'. In the song we hear Okwukpokpogri. In this form of connection, the sound of the first vowel 'o' (in the link) changes to a modified consonant sound 'w' in order to differentiate between the two vowels. We say the consonant 'w' is modified in sound, because it is nearer the sound of 'u' than actual 'w'. In the first example, Okwovu could better be pronounced as Okuovu. But for uniformity, particularly for the sake of villages like the latter example that would create double 'u' if this form is adopted, all Okpe villages that have this form of connection are spelt with the 'w' replacing the elided 'o'.

In song 2 line 1 (page A1 – 2), the composer links up a bisyllabic word with a connecting monosyllabic vowel. As we argued elsewhere in this discourse, greater number of words and names in Okpe begin with vowel than consonant. The vowel 'i' then often serves the function of prefix to several other words. In this line, the composer says 'ayi mwu Okmuorhoja – they captured Okmuorhoja.' The first word is 'aye – they' and the vowel 'i' ought to be a prefix to the following word or better still, stay alone to connect the two words. The composer then elided the last vowel of the first word, replacing it with the connecting vowel. This is a common feature in several Igoru songs.

An example of truncation exists in song 12 at line 5 (page A1 – 23) in a form not shortening a word, but a statement is shortened to a phrase. Taking its root from line 4, the composer says ‘You’re only trying to destroy our image; he hears his clairvoyance.’ The above statement sounds as if something is missing. It does not seem to make a complete sense. But it does make sense, because the composer has merely truncated the statement. The two parts of the statement make a complete sentence each, and the composer expects the audience to deduce the missing link. He/she intends to imply, in the statement, that ‘the person whose image is piqued in an innuendo [indirect communication], gets informed by his clairvoyance.’

7. 3. 9 Onomatopoeia:

This refers to the use of words that imitate the sounds of things they are intended to represent, describe, express and suggest. In song 2 line 2 (page A1 – 2) the poet uses sounds both in repetition and continuity to imply a demonstration of sounds that could have resulted from the incident he/she narrates. Line 2 in this poem suggests two different meanings. The first is its literal meaning which takes bearing from line 1. The poet establishes that Omuorhoja was captured by the witches and wizards at the coven. The word *egba* means to tie, implying that the captive was tied after the apprehension. Line 2 itself ‘*Egbane gbane ob’ Egbeda*’, translates to mean ‘had been tied, had been tied at the coven’. The repetition and continuation of the ‘*gb* and *n*’ consonant sounds and the ‘*a*’ and ‘*e*’ vowel sounds create both the effect of the tying process as well as the imitation of the sounds that could have resulted from the anticipated struggle and the very act of beating. The poet employs this figure in sound representation to stimulate and heighten emotions amongst his/her audience, who by the process of listening to the representative sounds would be imbued to imagine the scene where an innocent

soul was being tortured. Ruth Stone (1998: 131) writes the following comments on the effect of onomatopoeia in music:

Key moments within the Woi epic use the ubiquitous Kpelle love for onomatopoeia. "Squirrel-Monkey has come out, *kil, kil, kil, kil*." Contrast that with Yelelawo moving to battle, "*va, va, va, va*", or "Woi's wife was pregnant, *kpung-kung*." These moments build on proverbs and extracts. Such nuggets, by their particular positioning, embody much, lead to many associations, and raise the audience to new heights.

In song 39 line 33 (page A1 – 62) the poet uses a sound to represent the screaming action he/she attempted to describe. He/she expressed that the stroke of a hard thrust and the excruciating pains of excitement that resulted from it made his/her subject to scream '*un*.' The poet of song 41 at lines 27 and 28 (page A1 – 68) expresses that his/her subject has an Igbo father, though her mother is Okpe. The subject speaks Okpe very well, but to reflect and inform the audience that a child belongs more to the father side according to the Okpe tradition, the poet suggests that the subject is more an Igbo than an Okpe. He/she therefore expresses that when the Igoru ensemble members greeted the subject, she responded in another language suggested by the applied onomatopoeia (*nwa nwa nu na nwa nu, nwa nwa nu n' okorobia*) to be Igbo. The Okpe do not begin any double consonant with '*n*,' but the Igbo do in a number of cases, thus the double consonant '*nw*' were predominantly employed by the poet to represent the language spoken by his/her subject.

In song 43 line 8 (page A1 – 71) the poet uses sounds that have resemblance with the intonation of the Itsekiri to mimic an expression. The poet says that orgasm stimulated the subject to scream in a strange language called Itsekiri instead of Okpe and this language was represented by the following

onomatopoeia '*oluku mi jolo gba mi to mi.*' In song 46 line 43 (page A1 – 78) the poet uses an interjection that in this context functions as onomatopoeia to create the sense of imaginative sight. The expression '*idedekuma*' suggests something that is bigger than expectation or larger than life. In Okpe language, the syllabic forms such as '*puma, tuma and kuma,*' all suggest and allude to things that are big, and the size so described might be imaginable from the context of its usage.

In song 64 lines 9 and 10 (page A1 – 109) the poet-composer uses onomatopoeia to create the imagery of incantation in order to represent the kind of tongues that divination priests and oracles recite in Okpe. The incantation is normally in tongues that the ordinary man cannot understand or interpret, except the oracle. The composer represents this as follows: "*Onana ohu orha, onana ohu oghori* – "Is it going to be well, or it's going to be ill?". The preceding lines in the song suggest that the oracle used divination pellets (seed rattles) to consult with the ancestral spirits. In Okpe the oracle normally has a long curved tooth of animal that he uses to strike the divination pellets on the floor as he makes consultations using incantation. He speaks his queries and directs his clients to do same into the animal tooth, then uses it to strike the pellets, as the process of communication between him and the ancestral spirits and reads the information provided by them from the surface of the pellets in the tongues so represented by the poet. Other lines of the poem suggest too that the poet means to imply that his subject had problems of impotence, thus consulted the oracle to seek assistance from the ancestral spirits. The narrator suggests that besides this consultation, the subject had a molten image by his earthen bedside, representing some deities to whom he offers sacrifices for long life, potency and power to procreate.

6. 3. 10 Structural poetic form, Scansion:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 76 and 77) write that the study of poetic forms could be divided into two branches viz a viz: scansion and versification under which we could have other sub-divisions. They further state that scansion “involves the division of lines into their component metrical units, known as ‘feet’...The basis of the scansion of poetry in English language is stress”. Each metrical unit or foot commonly contains at least one stressed syllable with arranged stressed and slack syllables into patterns (of metre). By this use “a poet achieves tautness in his lines – the tension that remains one principal means whereby poetry communicates to its audience an excitement that induces a ready response to the particular moods and emotions that the poet tries to evoke.

J. O. Hendry (1990:21 and 22) writes that the metre of a poetry line is named according to the type of unit or foot that is most prevalent in the line and the number of feet found making up the line. He identifies six types of feet and six types of metre respectively. Mary Barber (1970: M32) writes about a “choriambic” metre, which we add as the seventh form. And though she did not name it, we shall refer to it as heptameter in this discourse. The patterns of feet in lines are normally identified and marked with signs that indicate the stressed and unstressed syllables to show the feet-scheme. These include the following:

	Foot	Foot-Scheme	Metre
1.	Iambic	v /	Monometre
2.	Dactylic	/ v v	Bimetre
3.	Anapaestic	v v /	Trimetre
4.	Trochaic	/ v	Tetrametre
5.	Amphibrachic	v / v	Pentametre

6. Spondaic / / Hexametre
7. Choriambic / v v / Heptametre

Only a few samples of the Igoru songs have been taken for scansion in this study, in order to give us some insight into the placement of accent and unstressed beats in the compositions. Amongst the above foot scheme, we have found that Igoru musical culture favours choriambic, iambic, dactylic, and trochaic feet over the others. The following example from song 59 illustrates:

v / v v / / v

Abotete n' Oghwara, (choriambic and trochaic)

v / v v / v v / v / v

Igoru ame, 'na t' urhomemro ne, (dactylic and trochaic)

v / v / v / v v

Ame na suo Abotete, (amphibrabic)

v / v v / /

N' ekete ose rho, (choriambic)

v / v / v / v

5 *N'oran ami na ha ne* (iambic)

6. 3. 10. 1 Versification, strophe or prosody:

The three terms, versification, strophe and prosody are used interchangeably by different writers to refer to the arrangement of verse in songs. Mark Booth (1981: 8 and 9) argues that:

Song verse shares some of the characteristics of true oral poetry – and also differs from it in important ways. Song belongs to both nonliterate and literate cultures, having originated in the former and been naturalized in the latter. In a literate age songs are written down before they come to an audience. They are a species of script. Although

some song is composed today without writing, most is composed with its help; and even when no writing is directly involved, our songs are made by people who *can* write, a crucial distinction from “primary” orality (p 8)...Oral poetry has a relatively lower density of information per line than written poetry can have. The units are more familiar; or, to put it another way, they are larger: the audience recognizes phrases more often and less often cued by the subtle surprises of individual words (p 9).

We argue differently here, that oral poetry is not lesser in density of information than written poetry, with regard to the context of Igoru music. Following the philosophical thought processes of Igoru musicians, we find that words, images, proverbs and figurative expressions that may appear even in very small fragments are often pregnant with meanings. Only one or two lines can speak volumes when interpreted. In Okpe, not only the knowledge of language is required for the understanding of the Igoru poetry. The knowledge of the culture’s philosophy, religion, medicine, linguistics, and history, are all necessary for the understanding and interpretation of the songs. Booth’s latter argument corroborates that “The analytical understanding of it (song) promises cultural and psychological insight into the life in which a song has its place. Song text has a documentary value that has not been fully appreciated (Booth 1981: 26)”. This is the reason, as we argued earlier in chapter one, why chapter three of this study is devoted to the background of the Okpe culture to enable readers follow the discussion better.

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 88) argue that poetry is timeless and a poem could not be considered ‘better’ or ‘worse’ for being written in regular feet and stanzas nor could it be considered more or less ‘relevant’ for being written yesterday or today. “The form chosen by the poet succeeds not because it has

(or has not) an identifiable stanzaic pattern. It succeeds if it helps to communicate the poet's meaning and intention and if it persuades us to enter into the offered experience." They intimate two forms of verse, the regular and the free verse also known as *vers libre* and further argue that "The experiences offered by traditional verse and song remind the critic that poetry is a participatory art form, demanding an active response from its audience. To appreciate, we must join in, as traditional audiences have always done" (Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield 1979: 72).

In Igoru music, versification stems out of two premises. Verses may occur in refrain and solo forms or in strict narrative form. In the solo and refrain form, the lead singer presents the refrain and takes a solo then cues the chorus in to repeat the refrain. Some times the refrain is a recycle of the solo with use of some new words appearing within the versified development. If the subsequent solo verses do not differ much from the chorus, the soloist at liberty creates new ideas and adds more information to the verse scheme each time he/she takes a turn until satisfaction is achieved. Other times, the verses may be developed in call and response pattern with a cue solo of a shorter verse in-between the call and response verse. This form is evident in song 1, page A1 - 1. The opening is a short song that functions as one of Igoru signature tunes or formulae as discussed under vocal organization in chapter seven. This appears in a four-line verse. The song is presented after in call and response of eight lines followed by a cue-solo of three lines that returns the ensemble to the eight-line call and response.

Igoru favours the use of the free verse over regular verse form. Even when the sequence of thought can be equally grouped or divided into some regular

number of lines, the lines differ considerably in length and feet. Songs 8 and 58 appear to be the most strophic forms that follow same melodic structure. But even with this tendency of regularity, the numbers of syllables that form the various lines of the verses are still slightly unequal. In song 8 (page A1 – 17) for example, there are five verses with the scheme 6-4-6-6-4 lines each. In song 59 (page A1 – 96) we have nine verses of five lines each, except the concluding ninth verse that has four lines only. We shall further examine Igoru versification system under the following headings.

Single verse stanza:

Greater numbers of Igoru songs are composed in single verse form. The diversity of length ranges from three lines to fifteen; but of all these the nine-line single verse has the highest frequency, followed by the five-line verse often called limericks in poetry. Next to these are songs in only six, seven, ten and eleven lines that appear to have equal frequency. It should be noted that there are no fixed rules of length followed by Igoru musicians in composing their songs. But the frequency in which a pattern occurs informs us about the thought coordination and organization. See the table of distribution below:

Table 1: Length of single verse

Length	Frequency	Songs	Page (A1)
3 lines	1	78	145
4 lines	1	20	34

5 lines	3	36, 47 and 76	59, 82 and 120
6 lines	2	11 and 73	22 and 40
7 lines	2	54 and 57	90 and 93
9 lines	4	18, 63, 80 and 83	32, 109, 148 and 151
10 lines	2	38 and 51	62 and 86
11 lines	2	49 and 74	84 and 140
14 lines	1	52	87
15 lines	1	85	156
Total	19	19	19

Duple, triple and multiple verses:

Agawu (1984: 48) observes and remarks about the non-prosodic character of Akan and Ewe songs as follows:

In general, there are no strophic songs in either Akan or Ewe traditional music. The present instance uses strophic in a somewhat loose sense. The absence of strophic songs in traditional music is due to the fact that, given the ever-changing patterns in the sequence of speech tones, melodic construction presents enormous problems in matching these patterns with a single, unchanging melody.

It is actually difficult to group Igoru music into strophic or prosodic forms. The songs are composed in free style of continuous melodic flow that often runs through the entire length of the poetry. Apart from a few cases where a short song-sentence is transformed into a lengthy narrative such as in song 29 (page A1 – 43), most of the songs are elongated single verses. Duple and triple verses however exist in some forms of regular and irregular length. Some of these two to three verses bear the same number of lines, though the lines themselves may be unequal in length. In song 4 (page A1 – 5) for instance, the second verse is more a recycle of the first, thus the length equality is determined by the melodic length in slightly modified form. The slight modification is as a result of the modification in the second verse, since it has some syllables omitted and some phrases repeated as opposed to the first.

The two equal verses in song 7 (page A1 – 16) appear so only in thought, but according to the melodic flow, they run into one another without any perfect cadence between them. We have only followed the poetic line of thought and the pause between them to structure the writing into two verses. This is the factor we have also used in dividing songs 10, 17, 25 and 26 (pages A1 – 21, 31, 39 and 40) into two verses; otherwise, they are melodically single verse forms of different length respectively. The duple verse form in song 13 is quite unequal, though short and could have been a seven-line single verse. It is a short song of five-line sentence with a two-line solo-call that brings back the first five-line song as refrain. This kind of song normally turns to multiple verses as we observe in song 48 (page A1 – 82) where the song-sentence is established in only four lines and the lead singers develops it with series of two-line solo calls. The first four lines then serve as the refrain while every other two-line of new text forms new verses onward.

6. 3. 10. 2 Rhyme:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 89-90) argue that rhyme contributes to the effects of sound in poetry as well as it is a part of a poem's structure, helping in holding it together as powerful agent of communication. Mary Barber (1970: M26) argues that:

The poet's intensely individual music is played on the age-old instrument of metre and rhyme, and the better we understand the instrument, the keener will be our enjoyment of the poet's skill and genius. Even verse that cannot be called poetry—verse that is mechanical, uninspired, lacking that intensity of insight and expression that we recognise as poetic—even this mediocre verse can teach us something of the poet's instrument.

Rhyme is a device adopted by Ikoru composers to create powerful effects of sound within lines or between lines of a verse. It is a creation that brings words that have similar sounds close to one another for a sort of agreement that stimulates heightened sense of hearing (aural perception). There are different kinds of rhyme which include the internal, end, half and full rhymes. The internal rhyme occurs where two or more words that sound alike appear close to one another within the same line, while the end rhyme is the agreement of sounds between the words that end lines that are close to one another. The half rhyme is a partial agreement in sounds between two or more words that appear close to one another, either within the same line or between lines that are near one another. The full rhyme, on the other hand, occurs where words that sound perfectly alike come close in agreement within or between lines. Besides this classification, there are various kinds of rhyme under which we examine Ikoru poetry. The rhyme scheme is represented with letters that designate the various forms.

Couplet and internal rhymes:

Couplet rhyme appears in two forms, where the last word-sound of the first line agrees with that of the following line or the third line. The scheme is usually a-a-b-b. Couplets are not so common in the songs we have collected. Where some couplets appear in visual forms, the sounds could make a difference, since some of the vowels like 'e' and 'o' have two forms, the dotted and the undotted. The use of the round-off sound is often effective in realizing the effects of couplets and at the same time it could neutralize the effects of couplets. An example of this is found in song 18 (page A1 – 32) as follows:

E, Abada ɔd' inyo biom' oma, [a]

Qrhɔr' ohoro (Edele) yi o, [b]

'Vwo rho ru isara o, [b]
Osiye ibriji vw' Apapa, [a]
Otu Iwenemu ra nya sa, [a]
N' ughe ohoro yi, eno yi aye ene, [c]
Ado, 'Bada, se wu phoph' oma o, [b]
Omọ re Ibaba ovbiere, [d]
Okorebe ob' otore Eko. [b]

The scheme actually comprises two forms of rhyme, the couplet and alternate. The first four lines suggest alternate rhyme scheme, while lines two to five show clearly the couplet form, b, b, a, a. This appears in a kind of reverse order; instead of a, a, b, b, we have the retrograde version, because the first rhyme was interrupted by two lines coming in-between. An internal rhyme exists between lines four and five. The word '*isara*' that ends line three is given a round-off vowel that moves the word inwards in the line. When the rhyme following it '*Apapa*' then appeared at the end of line five, it no longer seems to rhyme vowel to vowel. This is described here as internal rhyme. Other forms of internal rhyme exist where the sound of the last word is repeated by use of similar words in the following line.

Quatrain or alternate rhyme:

The rhyme that occurs between two lines that have one or two non-rhyming lines in-between them is known as alternate rhyme. The scheme is a-b-a-b or a-b-b-a. Alternate rhymes exist in Igoru music; but this is not to say that the rhymes are set together for visual aesthetics as we some times find in written poetry. They are put together to stimulate and appeal more to the sense of hearing. The use of

word-link and round-offs assist to build the rhymes in the various verses. We shall examine the following quatrain in the excerpt from song 3, page A1 – 4:

Ba Umogu osiyẹ oghwa, [a]
Otu erieda irha ‘obọ ghwo liẹ, [b]
Umogu mi rhe vbo eda, [a]
Gbe me kpe mẹ, [b]
Ejo, mi rhe vboo, [c]
Gba nya ji mẹ vbo, [c]
E, ame imeba ‘me t’ọnana, [a]

There are two patterns of rhyme in this verse. The first form is quatrain appearing between lines 1 and 4, and we can clearly see the reason why this kind of rhyme is also called alternate. The rhyme scheme consists of alternation between the ‘a’ and the ‘b’ lines. That is, rather than line one to rhyme with line two, it rhymes with line three while line two rhymes with four. The rhyme scheme between lines four and seven can be described as an interrupted rhyme, because another rhyme form exists between it. Instead of a, b, a; a, c, c, a; or b, c, c, b, we find a, b, c, c, a. Either of the three forms appearing within that elongated scheme is interrupted. A different kind of alternate rhyme occurs in verse two of song 5 (page A1 – 6) as follows:

E, Ame ihrun ohuan Igoru ame, [a]
Kpahen otọre, [a]
Ọmọ r’ ohimi aro, [b]
Ọgbọ mọ kpa riẹ, [c]
En’ ame mẹrẹ, [c]
Ọriọmerhan r’ ojegbamudu, [d]
Ọro hi maro, [b]

Nọ yọ rọ kpa re rię o. [b]

This scheme a, a, b, c, c, d, b, b, is quite technical and unique, in that the alternating lines do not appear to create much contrast or interruption between the rhyme forms. It is therefore not an alternation between two different rhymes, but a variety of rhymes alternated with single varied lines. The third line marked 'b' is alternated by three successive lines before it receives its rhyme. And the line that rhymes with it has another line forming a rhyme immediately below it. We shall describe this as deceptive rhyme, because one would rather consider the last two as rhyme and not link the interrupted one to the others since the interval between them appears to be wide. One little puzzle none-Okpe readers may find is the difference between the set of rhymes labelled 'a' and 'c'; after all the two forms end with the letter 'e'. The reason why they are labelled separately is that the letters do not have the same sound in the two cases. The 'e' dotted sounds differently from the one undotted.

Triplet rhyme:

When three lines end with words that are homophonic it is called triplet rhyme. The scheme for this rhyme is a-a-a, b-b-b. In verse eight of song 5 we find a triplet rhyme existing in-between the first three lines. The last words in these three successive lines differ from one another in spelling, but possess the same vowel sound at the end. An example of triplet rhyme is found again in song 18 (page A1 – 32) presented below:

E, abọ Abada na ba ra, [a]

Ne ka męre ukpe re mamiwọta; [a]

Ọmọ rọ ghwọl' ada nya, [a]

Okuku orho mwu, ọvbọ ghwọl' ukpeę o, [b]

E, ari *dje Urhomu ri Apapa*; [a]
 Abada ese, [c]
 Meba, abada ese. [c]
 Abada oko' baro hi ne, [c]
 Okuku orho mwu, arha ghwol' ukpe re o. [b]

In the above example, the scheme is interrupted somewhat. Instead of a, a, a, b, b, b, we have a, a, a, b, a, c, c, c. The b and a coming in-between the proper rhyme scheme make the difference, but do not stop the existence and effects of the rhymes.

***Iserho ene* or quadruple rhyme:**

Some very short songs within the limits of their length contain this four-line rhyme scheme even more than the long narratives. This scheme that could have been impossible to achieve within songs of short length, is normally assisted with the use of the round-off occurring at the end of the lines. The example in verse one of song 21 is one assisted by use of the 'o' round-off sound. Without the round-off sound however, all the six lines of the verse would in fact have rhymed visually with one another. It would no longer have been a quadruple but a sextet. A careful examination of the lines again inform us that the six lines would still have been reduced lesser, to a four-line rhyme, because the sound of two 'e,' the letter that ends all the lines, is dotted while the others are not. In song 13 however, only one of the alternating lines is assisted with a round-off sound that eventually give the quadruple rhyme its character. See the excerpt from song 13 (page A1 – 24) as follows:

E, Aramoghwa r' ojiri otore,
Ovbọ gbẹrhiẹn urhomu Ologbo,

*Oromo ogi rhe o,
Okpe rhe ijoro,
R' aye na je so?*

***Iserhọ isiorin* or quintet rhyme:**

The term quintet suggests five, and all rhymes that exist between five successive lines would be described as such. In song 6 verse five (page A1 – 11), a quintet rhyme is found as in the excerpt below:

*Di die ọmọ Imeni ovbiẹ re? [a]
'Hworhare Imeni ovbiẹ re; [a]
Di die ọmọ Imeni ovbiẹ re? [a]
'Hworhare Imeni ovbiẹ re; [a]
Oma ọmerhe Imeni ne, [a]
Ọye ogi ji vbiẹ ọmọ, [b]
Ro no gbe Igoru; [c]
Ọriọmerhan ote avbaran, [d]
Do, vb' Ọkọkọ n' efian wa mọrọn, [b]
Ọmọ na otob' Igoru rẹ, [e]
Ọmọ mi na 'a re ikara, [d]
Egbukpe ọnana wo na meriẹ. [e]*

The quintet rhyme is created by use of the repetition and parallelism devices followed by a short complementary statement.

6.4 Imagery:

Imagery is a technique in poetry adopted to create pictures in the minds of the audience in order to stimulate their imagination of the objects and subjects described and represented, and to arouse their responses. Dorian Haarhoff (1998: 84 and 88) argues that:

Images are phrases or word clusters that reach our readers through the holes in their skulls, through their sense organs. They are word pictures, sound pictures, smell, taste and touch pictures. Images electrify the words an author uses so we see and smell the cluttered alley or the little finger of the lover they are describing. They stimulate our imaginations and allow our bodies to respond physically to a text...Images evoke an ongoing conversation (p 84).

Images are strongly related to the idea of voice in a text...When I use a metaphor in my writing, one I borrow from common speech, there is a sense in which I am at that point no longer writing in my own voice. I'm using packaged frozen vegetables. Someone else picked them and I get them from the writer's supermarket. I'm relying on convenience and perhaps being lazy too. I need to fresh pick my vegetables (p 88).

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 43) argue that imagery is often used in everyday speech both in common sayings and proverbial expressions to arouse the impressions of the various human senses. They clearly state that:

A poet strives to use language that is fresh, bright, new minted: language that conveys clear thought and delicate perceptions. The clichés of time-worn imagery are of little use to him. The vivid sense impressions that he seeks to arouse cannot be stirred by stale words and hackneyed comparisons... There are no 'rules' that the poet must obey. When considering a poet's images and the use that he makes of them, the only test that the reader should apply is the test of appropriateness (Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield 1979: 44).

In Iguru music, several images are created by the composers to act as symbols that represent the themes of the songs and how they feel about the characters they describe. Very careful study of the images is necessary to enable us tune our minds to the composer's intention and communication wavelength, in order to

enhance sensitive and balanced interpretation. We shall do this under the following headings.

6. 4. 1 Visual image:

This sort of imagery is such by which expressions are made to stimulate the sense of sight. In song 18 lines 5 and 6 (page A1 – 32), the poet uses such expressions that suggest the sense of sight to stimulate the listeners' imagination of the incident he/she tries to narrate. On the occasion where a drunkard became unconsciously naked, the poet says that 'the crafty passers-by began to look at the victim's nudity. The poet of song 19 (page A1 – 33) also uses expressions that evoke the sense of sight. He/she in this case says that Abada's hands were red enough to give light and that any child who wants to go out whenever it is dark needs not search or seek for a lamp, but could simply send a message to Abada in Apapa and the moment she comes in front, her hands would provide light.

Three senses of sight are implied here by the poet. The first is the normal physical sight of a scar on the hands of the victim; the second is the imaginative sight of a mermaid's lamp and the third is the kind of light provided by a lamp source. In song 26 (page A1 – 40) the poet creates the sense of sight saying 'when we see our children with fresh fish on the streets, we feel sorry for ourselves.' This expression carries a lot of meaning, suggesting the kind of relationship that grew amongst the Okpe and the Itsekiri between 1930s and 1940s. The former are mainly crop farmers as discussed in chapter three, while the latter are fish farmers.

Both in the period of trade by batter and in later periods when formal legal tender came in vogue, the two peoples have had inter-ethnic trade around the riverside villages and towns over the years. The poet however suggests that the people who pay kindness with evil are not a people to associate with. The expression 'seeing children with fresh fish' suggests the trade between the Itsekiri and the Okpe which the composer implies should be discouraged. The implications of this warning are discussed in chapter eight. In song 38 line 8 (page A1 – 62) the poet uses the expression '*oke otuero ose ruo jiri*' meaning 'the blind man's darkness blindfolded you too long' to stimulate the sense of vision as it implies in this context to poor or simulated civilization and its associated practices.

In song 39 line 22 (page A1 – 62) the poet uses another expression that evokes the sense of sight, but in a euphemistic manner. The poet states that no one had heard (known) that the subject had seen 'body,' but she (the subject) was already pregnant at the time of the incident persona narrates. The expression '*mere oma*' in the poetry can mean different things in different contexts. It can mean the meeting of two persons, to suffer retribution, or to see a body (nude). In Okpe, elders prefer the use of this expression to refer to sexual intercourse rather than use the direct word for the activity. The use of this image in this context therefore implies that her pregnancy was only beginning to develop that no one had observed it. Another visual image follows this closely in line 23 where the poet says a military boat arrived Apapa wharf, Lagos. Lines 26, 28 and 29 stimulate further sense of sight, where the poet says a soldier saw and proposed to the lady, became unclad ready to make love to her. He further describes the size of the soldier's penis as extra-large. All these arouse emotion and stir up the imagination and curiosity of the audience to begin to see the pictures of the scenes in the sequences of their manifestation.

In song 44 lines 6 to 8 (page A1 – 72), the poet evokes the sense of sight, describing an incident that he/she met as the persona at Ikeja Lagos. He/she states that the subject was fallen down in the street, so weak and in great pains. The expressions suggest how the subject looks in that condition, either in real life situation or in an imagination. In song 61 the poet creates several images to stimulate the sense of sight. The poet states that the personas travelled to Oshodi, Lagos and found twenty members of the commercial sex workers association at a meeting planning a musical performance. The narrator states that the personas entered Abada's compound, suggesting that she is the leader. He/she describes her (Abada's) attire as one tying a wrapper skirt and having feathers fixed to her headgear, sitting on a chair. The audience is stimulated by all these descriptions to imagine how the subject's compound, house and attire could look. The narrator went further to describe the category of people who were in the membership of the Association to spur listeners into further imagination. He/she says the group of followers like *Ọsọsọ* sat on one side; the learned, the chief and the spokesperson sat in various positions while the whips referred to as the police were parading on one side. He/she brought the visual imagery to climax saying that Abada took a set of pellets, (stimulating imagination of how the instrument looks) and gave instructions to her followers.

6. 4. 2 Audile or auditory image:

An audile image is that expression that evokes to the sense of hearing. In song 39 line 38 (page A1 – 62) the poet expresses that the team of people who were with the traditional mid-wife to assist the subject who was in labour expected the placenta to burst so that the baby could come out. The Okpe verb '*va*' means to tear apart or explode as in fruits or elastic objects. In the case of fruit seeds that tear apart to disperse the seeds in reaction to climatic conditions, the explosion

normally produces sounds that are audible. The poet in this context however does not imply that the placenta could produce such loud sounds.

In song 42 lines 1 to 4 (page A1 – 70) the poet evokes the sense of hearing, expressing that members of the ensemble heard what his/her subject did at Sapele. Reinforcing this sense of hearing, the poet follows the expression with a proverb that ‘if someone dies the earth would hear.’ Outside this context the proverb would mean that if someone dies he would sure be buried in the earth, but in the context of this usage, it implies that Igoru musicians were all ears always to get information about hideous activities in the society, no matter the distance between where they reside and where such things happen. In song 44 lines 37 to 39 (page A1 – 72) the poet uses the expression ‘Ebibada got to the scene and burst into laughter, saying they thought they could emulate me. Is this the love we make and receive loud ovation?’ Two prominent words in the expression, ‘laughter and ovation’ relate with the production of sounds and thus stimulate the sense of hearing in the song-poem. The composer of song 46 at lines 25 and 32 (page A1 – 78) uses the expression ‘*obunu*’ meaning he/she raises alarm (crying out for help). This stimulates the sense of hearing that imbues imagination in the audience about what is happening to the character.

Song 62 (page A1 – 105) begins with several visual images and moves to audile images. The persona expresses that the chairperson of the Association of commercial sex workers discussed above, at a scheduled meeting, took a rattle and called Ogbotigoru to sing songs of divination so that she would offer sacrifices on behalf of the body. Taking up the rattle suggests that she shook or played it rhythmically to accompany the traditional worship songs. The audience is then stimulated to cultivate the sense of hearing the sounds of the rattle and of

the singing voices imaginatively. The persona did not only suggest that the group sang, he/she actually sang the very first song performed by the association, which became part of the narrative composition. He/she also imports a representation of the divination incantation in line 39 into the narration. The narrator of song 6 at line 63 presents an emotional expression that the protagonist cried out loudly and sorrowfully, having lost her young baby so mysteriously and suddenly. The image is capable of moving the audience to sympathize with the character.

In song 27 at line 4 (page A1 – 41) there is an image that practically heightens the sense of hearing. The composer expresses that ‘the world’ i.e. crowd of people, raised a loud ovation for the Mereje *Ukiri* (drum). That of course, is the use of a metonymy. *Ukiri* is the drum type that forms the instrumental section of Igoru ensemble. Rather than say the Mereje Igoru ensemble performs, the narrator says the Mereje *ukiri* sounds. The narrator’s remark that the audience raised a loud ovation for the performers, and the verbalization of the ovation ‘*ije*’ is intended to stimulate the imaginative sense of hearing the loudness of the ovation. The expression in song 32 lines 37-38 (page A1 – 52) is also capable of stimulating the sense of imaginative listening and hearing. The narrator says ‘The day you call the sons and daughters of Mereje, the great ancestral spirits will answer you.’ The audience could then imagine how loud and fearsome the voice of ancestral spirits would sound and where the voice(s) are likely to emanate.

6. 4. 3 Tactile and thermal images:

This involves the use of expressions that suggest the feeling and sense of touch, including those of temperature that arouse the sense of heat and cold known as thermal images. In song 5 line 6 (page A1 – 6), the narrator employs a tactile

image that describes Igoru repertoire as a well-packaged heavy load. He/she says “We have packaged our Igoru load and laid it on the ground; whoever is bold should come and carry it before our very eyes”. The image is presented as if Igoru songs could be felt by the sense of touch. The composer of song 30 at line 2 presents a thermal image. The narrator says “The fire of our Igoru has come upon us”. Fire is a hot substance, (often in flames) that produces heat and can burn. If one is cold and the heat is mild, getting close to the fire can provide comfortable warmth. But if the fire is wildly intensified, and one is too close to it, it has the tendency to burn. This imagery in this context suggests the inspirational force that comes upon Igoru performers during performances, a force that imbues them to perform limitlessly. What this implies is that the mania has taken possession of the performers and any community member who fails to conduct him/herself properly could then become the subject of attack during the performance without fear or favour.

At line 13 of the same song, the narrator creates another tactile image, complementary to the former. The persona has identified an offender, therefore changes the term from a general remark to address a specific person. He/she says if the subject puts a finger into the eyes of the ensemble members, he/she would suffer for it that year. Human eyes are very sensitive to any objects coming close to them. An imagination of a finger coming into one’s eyes could stimulate rapid and momentary blinking spontaneously. In song 39 lines 9 to 15 (page A1 – 62) the poet creates the sensation of a certain kind of touch. He/she presents these tactile images to suggest accidental knock of a foot against a stone or any other object. The term *kprọ* (knock against) however is more connotative in this context than the literal sense of it. The term ‘*Kọkọ*’ is a fictitious name often adopted to address a young woman in Okpe. Some people in those days gave it

as real name to their female children. But in the context of this Igoru song, the poet uses it as an equivalent of the English 'young lady'. The image so orchestrated above takes bearing from Okpe traditional belief that if one is going anywhere and incidentally strikes his/her right foot against an object before he/she gets there, it is an indication of blessing and positive results of the mission, while in the contrary, striking the left foot indicates unpleasant events or unsuccessful mission; more or less a bad omen.

The poet suggests that the story he/she narrates is an event that took place in Lagos, where the subject undertook a journey from the then Western Urhobo Division to Lagos. He/she suggests too that the lady and the host in Lagos were into a relationship at home before the man left for Lagos. The image then implies that the lady became pregnant and there was little doubt whether her partner in Lagos was responsible for it before he left Okpe land for Lagos or not. The poet suggests that the doubts raised were not founded on evidence, but warns that the ancestral deities do not tolerate adulterous living. As is evident in Okpe traditional society, the ancestral deities normally inflict refractory ailment on the woman or more often cause her to experience difficult labour so that such a helpless condition would force her to confess if she ever committed adultery, particularly in the period of her conception. The poet later suggests that Meni had encountered such a bitter experience earlier, hence the metaphoric example so stated in line 14 as warning for the present victim (the subject).

At lines 31 and 32 of the same song, the poet uses other tactile imagery. He/she suggests that the soldier who made love to the subject of the narrative had very big penis, that when he made a thrust the subject felt the strike at the waist. In lines 48, 49 and 53 the poet uses similar images that suggest the sense of touch.

The first two lines state that the mid-wife placed her hand on the belly of the woman in labour to feel the pulse of the womb and the following line adds that she angrily inserted her hand into the vagina to take hold of the baby inside. In song 43 lines 10 to 14 (page A1 – 71) the persona presents expressions that stimulate the sense of both physical and emotional touch. He/she states: “Yea, master, please, thrust it well for me; my brother, thrust it down for me; my aunty, please press it well for me”.

The sensation created by the expressions such as ‘thrusting and pressing down’ stimulate the sense of contact between two things that meet to give a kind of excitement. The poet suggests that the screaming and spluttering of these words were as a result of the contact created by the thrusting itself. In song 43 line 1 to 5 (page A1 – 71) the poet creates the sense of body contact, saying idiomatically that the subject’s genital organ ‘gets stuck to the male organ.’ The lines following this expression give more meaning to the information the poet intends to pass on. First, the poet raises an observation that a new file (device for sharpening knife) or a new singlet is often like a piece of photograph that stimulates one’s curiosity to want to behold it or make use of it at once. Second, he/she implies that the subject is very young and possesses the qualities that serve as attraction at a young age, but this by functional implication leaves caution behind for the subject.

In song 51 lines 1 and 2 (page A1 – 86), the poet uses an expression that suggests both thermal and motile images, sense of movement and touch. He/she says ‘the storm of Igoru arrived at the river side.’ Storm suggests a wild wind that brings cold with it and could in nature be destructive to lives and properties where and when it strikes. Riverside is also often very cold; thus strengthening the notion of low temperature, which touches on human flesh, could cause

uncomfortable feelings. Subsequent lines of the poem suggest further that Igoru performances created fear in the hearts of community members those days, just in the way the coming of storm would cause fear.

The poet expresses that such a fear gripped two members of the community when they gathered that Igoru performance was coming up and no longer could come out of their homes. He/she says that one of the two explained that, though he/she is handsome or beautiful, if Igoru musicians would perform a satire to describe him/her, he/she would not be able to sleep, meaning he/she would be emotionally distressed. This implies that Igoru performances built restraints in the psyche of community members, which functioned as a check on social-moral behaviours in the society. This does not mean that community members indeed were not coming out to watch Igoru performances, but that the satires made members to be more conscious and careful with all that they do in the society, so that Igoru musicians would not find reasons to perform satires on them.

6. 4. 4 Olfactory image:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1997: 59) define olfactory image as such an expression that arouses and refers to the sense of smell. The expression in line 9 of song 26 is an example of this image (see page A1 – 40). The narrator says “Ibobo burnt love portion and smeared [spread] it here”. Whenever a concoction of a kind is burnt, for medicine or other purposes, a certain kind of strong smell is expected to fill the air to be perceived, though the purpose of the burning is not for production of smell. In song 46 lines 16 and 17 (page A1 – 778), the poet creates similar imagery that stimulates the sense of smell. He/she says the subject had invitation from an Hausa man who played the character of a

middle man in the narrative, promising to take her to a white man to establish a relationship.

The subject, in preparation for the mission, then sent her maid to the market for shopping. The persona says that at the time they were ready to embark on the journey the Hausa man put 'kaolin chalk on himself.' Line 18 adds that they both applied the ornament. The term 'kaolin chalk' is a kind of understatement that suggests a perfume applied on their body for good fragrance. The reason for creating this image was later revealed by the persona, that the Hausa man did not actually mean to take the protagonist to a white man, but to deceive her to a quiet place where he could take advantage of her. This implies that he applied the perfume so that he could stimulate attraction through the senses of appealing fragrance. The protagonist applied the perfume in her own case so that she could attract the white man she hoped to meet.

7. 4. 5 Gustatory image:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1997: 59) write that gustatory image is that kind of expression that stimulates the sense of taste. In song 37 line 17 (page A1 – 60) the poet uses a figure that suggests the beauty of Igoru music as a thing that produces the sense of taste. He says 'we packaged Igoru and began to cook it.' The things that we cook normally are spiced to give them flavour and taste. The poet uses this figure to suggest how well their Igoru ensemble prepared for a competition they won at Warri as discussed in chapter five. The narrator of song 6 at lines 39 and 45 (page A1 – 11) presents an imagery of taste, expressing a vow to use the sister's new born baby as meat to eat *Akara* (beans cake). This does not mean that the Okpe are cannibals, but suggests the belief of the people about some spiritual activities of human beings in the society.

The idiomatic expression in song 7 line 8 (page A1 – 16) creates this kind of image, saying “You are licking the dirt on our body”. In this context, the expression simply means that whatever the public says and does against Igoru musicians would not matter to them; because they are resolved to continue with their performances irrespective of what the public calls them – vagabond or lazy men and women. The composer of song 13 at line 2 (page A1 – 24) presents a proverb expressed in a gustatory image. He/she says “The rat that lives long will crack the head of a cat”. We have discussed the meaning of this expression under proverbs in this chapter. We only wish to state here that cracking the head of a cat implies the sense of taste. Song 30 line 27 presents an expression that “Ogiso put his finger into his mouth” signifying a depth of anger and very bitter regret. Apart from the connotative meaning, whenever one puts a finger into his/her mouth, a sense of taste is stimulated.

The composer of song 44 at line 29 (page A1 – 72), in an idiomatic statement, says “You, children, suffering will touch your mouth”. This expression is presented as if we taste suffering or pains in our mouths. The term ‘suffering’ in this context is not connotative. It actually denotes real suffering which is an experience that often affects human emotions. The experience can be a kind of taste of life, but not the taste that is assessable in the mouth. The expression “You carried or took a year and ate it up” in song 60 at line 4 (page A1 – 99) is another image that stimulates the sense of taste. Here the narrator implies that the subject has wasted his/her years unprofitably. Details of this account are discussed under conceptual analysis of names above.

6. 4. 6 Motile or kinaesthetic image:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1997: 59) state that expressions, which appeal to the sense of movement, are motile or kinaesthetic images. And images of this kind are prevalent in Igoru music. The poet of song 5, in verse two, employs a motile image, earlier cited in this discourse, to describe the Igoru repertoire. He/she states in the verse that the Igoru ensemble had packaged her repertoire as a load and that whoever considered him/herself brave should attempt to carry it. In the Okpe culture, there are many things that constitute load, some of which include a basin loaded with cassava from the farm; a bundle of fire wood tied together, a pot, pale or large bowl of water, box of clothes, etc.

Whatever package is considered to be load arouses the concept of something weighty and heavy to lift up and the process of lifting a thing up itself is kinaesthetic involving movement of a sort. Often in cultural rhythm, one might not carry a package of load and remain in one spot with it. The process involves series of movement, from the ground to the shoulder or head where the load is often sustained in balance and taken from one location to another. In verse three, the poet reinforces the image with a categorical statement that Oriomerhan who was overbold to carry the Igoru load had dared to carry a bundle of fire wood. The poet implies through this imagery that anyone in the community who dares to carry out evil deeds had dared to challenge Igoru musicians to compose and perform satire.

The expression in song 17 line 9 (page A1 – 31) stimulates the sense of movement. The narrator says life in Lagos began to swing the subject about. Prior to the advent of modern day swinging equipment in recreation centres and schools, children in the villages used to climb big orange, cocoa, mango and

cherry trees in the neighbourhood to tie a rope on a branch at the top and tie a stick to the rope at the base. Then they take turns sitting on the stick, holding the rope firmly and other members of the peer group push to set the rope swinging for the game to begin. The expression though is figurative; a sense of swinging movement is suggested. By implication, however, the composer implies that the subject on certain condition either moved from location to location in search of job and accommodation or generally in search of greener pastures from one career engagement to another. It practically suggests both locomotive and economic instability.

The composer of song 31 at lines 23-24 (page A1 – 48) presents some motile image. He/she says the slave (the subject of the song) walked into the compound and passed by. Then he came backward and made some attempts to commit a vice. The expression that describes moving back and forth induces the audience to imagine the difficulty normally experienced in every attempt to do evil. Simply put, evil is not an easy thing to do. The proverb employed by the poet in song 21 line 13 (page A1 – 34) also arouses the sense of movement. The poet says 'the flower that goes on a procession does not get missing in it'. The expression itself is a personification describing the flower as if it were a person going on a procession. In the conceptualization of the performance practice that involves the fixing of feathers and flowers in performers' headgears in Okpe traditional society, the expression then suggest that the performer who carries beautiful flowers on his/her head (implying Igoru musicians) cannot die or be harmed for performing Igoru music. In song 22 (page A1 – 35) the poet employs several expressions to create the sense of movement. He/she says that government wrote a letter directing that every goat that suffers from dermphytosis (ringworm) should leave the city. He/she expressed further that the category of Abada who

were well dressed, getting ready to board the van, and the category of Sisi who had packed their properties into the van began to sing as they drove on:

Yes, I'll return home, I'll return home,
Government wrote a letter to us,
That all the 'goats' suffering from dermphytosis,
Should leave the city.

The above expressions all suggest that even the government of that time was worried about sexual abuse as much as the society did worry about it. This is however a hyperbole, even though government could be worried about such things, there has been no written account that the Nigerian government in the period under investigation promulgated any laws or decrees to this effect. In song No. 39 lines 54 and 55 (page A1 – 62) the poet creates the sense of movement, suggesting that the mid-wife, having inserted her hand into the expectant woman's reproductive organ, began to pull the baby out. The act of pulling stimulates and arouses the sense of movement. The composer of song 40 (page A1 – 67) again creates the sense of movements, saying that a public pond arrived Ogbe Street, Obalende, Lagos and invites all commercial sex workers to come to deplete it. This poem makes clear that it is one of the songs performed by the Mereje Igoru musicians in Lagos.

Ogbe is a street in Mereje town of Okpe local government area of Delta State and there is no street called Ogbe, though Obalende is in Lagos. The term pond gives the impression that the arrival is that of a boat, the boat of the soldiers at the water side. Mereje is a town that has a river and a street by the water side called *Udumu Urhie* (Riverside Street). The Ogbe Street in Mereje is at the centre of the town, but with several roads leading to the community market by the

river side. To make clearer suggestions, the poet qualifies the pond to be the public pond of a market typology. This implies that the military boat arrived at the waterside in Victoria Island, Lagos, and all commercial sex workers in Obalende were attracted to the scene. In song 41 lines 1 and 2 (page A1 – 68), motile imagery exist in the expression that those who were travelling to Adeje should take a query to the mother of Abebe why she should allow her only daughter to go into commercial sex activities. It suggests movement of messengers or travellers from one location to another.

In song 45 lines 3 and 4 (page A1 – 77), the poet-composer employs a kinaesthetic imagery to describe the Igoru performance. He/she says that the subject should be informed that the boat of the ensemble's Igoru would soon arrive at his/her point. The image creates the sense of movement, but implies that the ensemble would soon compose the subject's satire. It serves as a warning to the subject that he/she should stop whatever ill practice he/she is involved in, otherwise the next performance of the ensemble would compose and present his/her satire. In song 58 verse 4 (page A1 – 94) the poet uses imagery of movements to create climax as follows:

	<i>Ohuan mę re kele ri,</i>	The divorce suite and claims against me,
	<i>Ole (ri) mę n' amwa;</i>	Chased me away from the town;
	<i>Are irhe te Ijęddo,</i>	If you get to Jęddo,
20	<i>Are a męre męę,</i>	And you don't find me there,
	<i>No b' ọbẹlẹ mi na nya;</i>	I would go through the bush path,
	<i>Me nya ọr' ọbẹlẹ fi Egborode,</i>	I shall go through the bush path to Egborode,
	<i>Me nya ọr' Adeje fi obo Orerokpẹ,</i>	I shall go through Adeje to Orerokpẹ,
	<i>Ob' Urhiapẹlẹ me na nya o.</i>	Then, I would go to Urhiapẹlẹ [Sapẹlẹ].

The poet uses the earlier road network in Okpe, alluding to them as bush paths to suggest that new roads by this time had been constructed and these former roads cut off, have become less functional. The imagery of movement from one

town to the other shows a gradual migration from the rural areas to the urban centres like Orerokpe and Sapele. The song attacks a specific lady chief in the 1940s. In Okpe tradition, Chieftaincy title is not given to anyone who does not meet with the socio-moral standards of the society. As discussed in chapter three, an intending chief must have a stable economy, good moral standing and a good reputation. This sense of judgement is transferred to every form of representation in government, that the customary chiefs, in the period under investigation, were expected to possess the charismatic comportment that corresponds with the norms of the Okpe society. The poet expresses a disappointment that a lady customary chief undertook a wrong practice and equally deceived a fellow woman to follow the same paths. He/she (the poet) presents the poem as expressions of disappointment from the deceived that is poetically represented in the song as the narrator.

In song 62 lines 4 to 6, earlier cited, the poet creates another motile imagery, saying visitors no longer met the subject at home, because he/she joined other business men and women who hastened to the scene where the military boat arrived. This imagery stimulates the audience's imagination to picture the boat that did set off some where, travelling some distance to arrive the scene he/she describes. The audience imagination goes further to picture the subject who likewise moved from home to the scene as well as his/her visitors who came several times to meet, but his/her absence.

6.5 Figures of speech:

Figures of speech refer to expressions that are made to describe persons and objects in manners that present connotative and suggestive meanings. The words used in these sorts of expression are often not direct, but they imply viable

information that could be deduced from them. Igoru musicians have used such figures of speech with great effects, to represent one thing as if it were another, and create greater stimulus to imagination amongst audience than use of common expressions would ordinarily do. These figures of speech have always been illuminating, though they are very crisp and short. They are expressed in brevity to prompt the audience to think beyond what is presented before them and derive all intended meanings from the short available framework. Often, they are used to create pictures in the minds of the audience in figurative styles that may be comparative or descriptive. They could appear in forms of understatement or overstatement, in order to heighten emotional excitement, contemplation and comfort. Heart-breaking information may then be presented in such ways that they appear mild, while trivial issues may be expressed in manners that make them look very serious. These figures of expression are discussed below under the following headings.

6. 5. 1 Simile:

Simile is a figure that likens one thing to the other in order to create certain effects. Tanure Ojaide (2001: 20) writes on rhetoric, allusion and simile figuration in *Udje* songs as follows:

There is a rhetorical piling up of comparisons in many songs. An example is “Echa Ekrabe” [unitalicized in original]. This is to effect a reinforcement of attributes. The subject of abuse is either linked to or directly described as something. The songs have many allusions to the fauna and flora of the Niger Delta area. There are comparisons to different types of birds, animals, and plants. The goat,

arthog, fowl, hawk, cat, mouse, leopard, lion, snake, tortoise, vulture, horse, monkey, gorilla, chimpanzee, parrot, iroko, and akpobrisi tree feature in the metaphoric milieu of udje dance songs (p 20)...Since udje dance songs are performed, the performance consideration affects their composition. The liveliness of the songs is reflected in the use of many rhetorical questions...The rhetorical questions establish a connection between the performing group and the audience.

Igoru musicians make use of simile, drawing images from the natural resources in the environment to describe their subjects in a number of cases. Egbikume Azano, the composer of song 16 uses simile in lines 19 and 20 (page A1 – 29) where in the narrative he remarks that the life of Takpevwiere is like that of the kingfisher (a kind of bird). He made an analogy that the subject was as helpless as the kingfisher that lost all its properties in the deep of the river and could only fly to perch on the root of mangrove observing the loss and could not dive into the water to redeem the perishing properties. In song 19 lines 1 and 2 (page A1 – 33), the poet uses simile to describe the scars on a victim's hands as the mermaid's lamp. The verse is indeed made up of two figures, simile and metaphor. In the former, the poet says Abada's hands give light like the mermaid's lamp, while in the latter he/she says that anyone who wishes to go out when it is dark should send for the victim and her hands would provide light for movement. We have discussed details of this earlier; our only concern here is figures used in the description.

The expression '*na bara*' in line 1 has dual meaning. The verb '*ebare*' from which the above phrase is derived can mean change in colour of fruits from green to yellow when it becomes ripe, or change of the human skin from dark to red or milk colour as a result of wounds. It can also mean lighting up in flames, of fire or

as in lamps. The first line of the poem in this context suggests the condition of the victim's hands now having scars after being burnt. This is quite literal as the Igoru performer (not the poet) explained that the victim in the early 1940s went to the salon to style her hair at the time hair driers came in vogue, and electricity fault resulted to flames that burnt her hands and left the scars. Latter lines however suggest that the poet intends to describe the cicatrices on the victim's hands as lamp light, thus using the figure of simile to liken it to the mermaid's lamp. The poet implies that African ladies need to be content with their natural hair and such African styles of plating and weaving, because they remain beautiful in their Africanness and do not need to attempt to transform their hairs to look like those of the white.

In song 27 line three (page A1 – 41), the poet uses another simile that the *Ukiri* (drum) of Mereje sounds at the outskirts like the guitar. This simply means that the Igoru musical instrument called *ukiri*, in performances, sounds very appreciable. The composer in the first verse of song 34 (page A1 – 56) uses a group of positive and negative simile to describe his subject. The phrases 'you are not like' is a negative case while 'you are like' is a positive case simile. The poet says his subject is neither like the world nor like the heaven, but like a carved image presented as sacrifice at a three-path junction. This suggests that the subject is neither beautiful nor ugly, but subsequent cluster of words used by the poet, imply that the subject was not attractive. Songs 34 and 35 are versions of the same song as performed by two different Igoru ensembles. While the first performing group employs the word such as 'the world and the heaven' the second uses 'bird and animal' to draw the figure of comparison.

6. 5. 2 Metaphor:

Metaphor is a figure of speech used to describe something as if it were indeed another. That is one thing is referred to by another name or is given an image which it is not in practical term. Keith Swanwick (1999: 9) re-invents the following argument:

Initially all metaphor contains an element of novelty arising from potentially dissonant relationships, though we can easily come to overlook such anomalies. For instance, when we say 'the wind is biting' we do not usually intend to suggest that the air has sharp teeth or a strong muscular jaw. What we are trying to do is to find a way of describing the distinctively painful kind of gripping coldness that we are experiencing... In ordinary conversation we may... speak of the 'legs' of a table, 'attacking' an argument or 'grasping an idea without any consciousness of the metaphorical history of these expressions (Mac Cormac c. 1985) p 10. A set of new relationships is created out of images we already thought we knew. The effect of bringing together different entities at the same time... (Koestler 1964). He does not use the term metaphor but calls the process *bisociation* and finds it at work humour, the sciences and the arts (p 11).

In traditional Okpe society, metaphor and some other figurative expressions indeed have become commonplace that we may not know their origin. But the association of words that describes incidents, persons and objects in extraordinary ways is still clearly understood as figurative. The composer of song 6, between lines 78 and 82 (page A1 – 11), uses a series of simile and concludes the harmony of descriptions with a metaphor. The poet maintains a sequence of counterpoint between the use of these simile and metaphor in the poem-song. He/she describes the subject's head like heaven's transverse piece of calabash and describes the length of his/her hands and legs as those of a dwarf.

Then he/she describes the subject further as one having sunk buttocks, suggesting that the shape of the buttocks protrudes heavily, leaving a deep spot of depression on the central upper part of it. In between the sequence of simile, the poet introduces metaphor to suggest that the subject was short enough to be considered a dwarf. The poet further describes the depression on the buttocks by use of technical metaphor that it had turned to a public pond that could contain water instead of calling it a pond at once. In the Okpe nation, species of dwarf are uncommon; we therefore understand these figures as some kind of hyperbole (exaggeration), though one of the Igoru musicians confirmed that the subject was actually very short.

In song 21 line 2 (page A1 – 34), the poet uses another metaphor to describe his subjects, saying '*eghware ogba r' ilebe ne*' meaning 'the assembly is packed full for the pigeons.' He implies that the audience had come together to listen to his Igoru performance, expecting to hear the latest news about the common subjects. Instead of a direct word for the category of people he refers to, he employed a metaphor to call them (the commercial sex workers) pigeons. The figure is not an easy one to understand, because the character of the pigeon is peaceful and diligent, except that they often sleep in cages outside the home in some few places where they may be found reared in Okpe. Deduction from the latter part of the pigeon's life style however corroborates the impression so suggested by the poet, because the Okpe often express with dismay that any grown man or lady who takes pleasure with women or men and not settle martially 'had gone out' of the standards established by the ancestors. This is often expressed as '*oro ada ne*' (he/she has gone out to the streets) or '*oro akpo ne*' (he/she has gone into the world).

In song 22 at line 3 (page A1 – 35), the composer uses a metaphor to describe his/her subjects as '*ekaragban*' meaning 'goats that suffer from dermphytosis.' The name *akaragban* (singular) normally refers to any goat that has some kind of ringworms all over its body. While this, of course creates a sense of repulsive sight, the poet uses it to suggest that all acts of immorality are detestable in the society. To give the expression more effect, he/she uses the expression 'plagued goats' as if real goats were the true subjects he/she addresses. The composer in line 3 of song 49 (pages A1 – 84) used metaphorical expression to describe cake (*moi moi*) as meat (*aramo oyibo*). *Moi moi* is a kind of beans cake prepared with red palm oil in Nigeria, while *aramo oyibo* in Okpe may either mean 'pig' or the 'white man's meat.' This is not to say that pig is referred to as the white man's meat in Okpe. In this context, the poet simply describes the beans cake as a sort of meat, implying that the white man admires such light foods. Since the beans cake is not one of Okpe's original foods, the poet implies that it is a strange sort of food that the subject was selling in Lagos. Subsequent lines suggest that the poet wonders how much money one could make from such a business, considering the fact that the subject needed much money to pay her husband's divorce claims.

The composer of song 37 at line 24 (page A1 – 60) employs a metaphor to describe an event that took place in the past and the subsequent reaction from the subjects and concludes that the subjects are but chick that can do no harm to anyone, no matter how grieved it could be (cf. appendix I for details). In song 52 (page A1 – 87), the poet similarly uses a metaphor to describe the subjects of Igoru music as the storm that rages and threatens to cause destruction to the performers. He/she expresses that the storm rages and threatens the Jeddo Igoru ensemble members whether they could still perform music. He/she raises a

question if the Jeddo Igoru musicians were asleep amid the rage that was on. This implies that Igoru musicians were aware of the threats from their enemies and that the poet then encourages the members of the ensemble not to be afraid, but be courageous in the performances.

6. 5. 3 Metonymy:

Metonymy is a figure that uses an associated thing or name to describe or refer to another without mentioning real names directly. In songs 38 line 23 and 43 line 14 (pages A1 – 62 and 72), as well as several other songs, Igoru poets used metonymy to describe the soldiers. In the former, the poet uses the term *boma* and in the latter uses *kongo*. The origin and meaning of these two terms have been treated under conceptual analysis earlier in this chapter. In song 43 line 31, the poet uses an associated name to refer to the snake. In Okpe, instead of the direct name of the snake (*obodirin*), elders refer to it by names associated with it, particularly in the night or when one is eating. It is believed that the direct name of such a dangerous creature is not mentioned at night; otherwise one of its kinds could be invoked to come around. It may be called *ison* meaning excreta; *ojadana*, the careless thing, or *eghwobi*, crazy thing. In the tradition, any thing or being that inflicts sorrow and pains on human beings is given names such as these. In this song, the poet informs the audience that the husband of his/her subject had just passed on as a result of snake bite and shortly after the subject began to have indiscriminate affairs with other men within the community and subsequently in Lagos. He/she uses the term '*eghwobi*' to refer to the snake in this narrative.

6. 5. 4 Synecdoche:

Synecdoche is a figure that uses the name of a part of a thing to refer to its whole or the name of the whole to refer to its part as the case may be. In song 3 lines 12 and 13 (page A1 – 4), the poet proverbially uses a synecdoche to drive his/her message home. He/she says that *iti obo r'obọ 'soro, ye urhomu olele* meaning 'it is what the hand causes that the head follows.' The hand and the head are parts of the body employed to mean the entire body respectively. The poet implies that if a person (the hand) commits evil, he/she (the head) would certainly pay for it, most likely in death. The hand and the head represent the same person.

The poet of song 4 also employed the same figure of speech in line 2 of the poem. This was in reaction to the growth of Christianity in the Okpe area predominantly in the early 1990s. The poet says *Ame h' urhomu ame r' Edion more ne* meaning "We have giving our heads to *Edion* for safekeeping.' *Edion* is another name for God as already discussed in chapter three. The figurative expression, giving the head to God means that the entire people of the community have resolved to follow and trust the God of their forefathers who they believe is capable of giving them safety and protection.

Igoru musicians use the names of an area where an overhead bridge exists to refer to the bridge. It is normal for instance to refer to the bridge in Ikeja as Ikeja Bridge and to simply call it "Ikeja" would then be ambiguous. But Igoru musicians use the name of the whole area to represent the specific spot where the Bridge exists. This is not because there is no word equivalent to the English term "bridge" in Okpe. The Okpe word equivalent to it is *Agbarha* which the composer simply avoids as a technique to avoid cluster of words within line. One example of this expression is found in song 38 at line 2 (page A1 - 62) where the

composer omits the term bridge, but precedes the name Ikeja with the descriptive word *otore*. Here, the composer's intention and meaning induce the listener to cast his/her mind back to previous experience, without which, it could be difficult to comprehend the concept of the place described. This is so because the preceding word is a kind of pun that has double meaning. *Otore* can either mean 'land, under or meaning'. When the narrator says '*otore* Ikeja' it can then mean 'the land of Ikeja; the territory of Ikeja or under Ikeja'. But in the context of this Igoru song however, the composer means under Ikeja Bridge.

In song 58 line 1 (page A1 - 94), the composer uses a part of the subject's body to refer to her as a name. The name presented, Ogberaghwe means 'one with deformed legs'. The narrator says he/she saw 'the one whose legs are bent (deformed) getting lost in the streets'. The reason for this expression is that two distinguished characters are involved in the narrative, one a chief in the customary court and the other a follower. The composer simply wants to communicate to the two subjects indirectly. He/she cleverly did not use any real names, but the audience and the performers know those to whom the song is directed in the community. By the expression 'one with deformed legs,' the composer means the more reputable character that deceived the other into a vice. The act of following deceit foolishly is also suggested by the composer's use of the terms (deformed legs).

6. 5. 5 Personification:

Personification is a figure that represents an inanimate object as if it were a person. In song 15 at lines 9 – 11 (page A1 – 27), the poet uses a figure that is partially a personification saying: "These are men who spent their money to marry wives into the home". The word '*gbẹ*' in the song is a verb that literally

means to have sexual intercourse. Instead of saying the men used their money to marry women into the home, the composer expresses that they used their money to copulate the women into the home. In song 56 lines 5 and 9 (page A1 – 91), the poet uses another personification, drawing concepts from the farming experience as cited earlier. He/she says Ogophori cried out that we could refer to the year we do not farm, but there is no year that we do not eat food. The expression in lines 9 and 10 adds that Ogophori continually shook its head (signifying regrets). We have discussed *ogophori* as a low land that has a high level of flood risks, by which process crops planted in it could be destroyed.

In song 3 lines 8 – 11 (page A1 – 4), the narrator describes death as if it were a terrific human being. He/she says ‘Death that people see and run away, you seek it with your own hands, and when death comes, to whom would you cry for help?’ Death is believed to be an invisible spirit-being nobody can see. It does not approach or come in a physical manner like a fearsome human being from whom one can flee or cry for help. The expression above which represents death like a person therefore is regarded as personification. The narrator of song 5 figuratively at line 3 personifies the streets, saying it is only the streets that can stop a child from coming or going out. Parents and guardians normally do not feel comfortable when their children and wards go out to stay with their peers for almost the whole day, avoiding all jobs or profitable assignments they can do to help their parents and guardians or themselves at home or in the farms, shops, etc, as may be directed.

Parents get worried about the kind of friends they might meet outside and what kind of influences they might impact on their children and wards. For this cause they would often want to stop or restrain their children and wards from going out

frequently of for most parts of the day. But for stubborn children, no matter the efforts parents and guardians would make, only the troubles they subsequently encounter outside could often limit their desire to go out and mix with terrible peers. This normal experience of life in human society is inferred by the composer of this song. The streets here personified represent the troubles that may confront a child who would always leave home to spend most of his/her time with peers outside daily. The composer implies that no matter how much they perform to condemn the ill practices of some members of the society, and no matter how much counsel they give to them, the stubborn ones might not stop until they face the painful consequences of their deeds according to natural law of retribution.

Song 31 lines 36-37 (page A1 – 48) personify the cat like human. The Okpe believe that human beings decide their destiny with the creator before they are born, and live according to such destiny. This is not known to be a feature amongst animals. But the composer's expression "The destiny of the cat never came to life with it" suggests personification. It implies however that the subject has poor destiny to live an unprogressive and unprofitable life. The narrator in song 40 line 2 (page A1 – 67) personifies the sex trade. He/she says "A marketable public pond arrived" and the commerce oriented people ran to the scene. The narrator of song 65 at line 14 (page A1 – 11) personifies the heaven, expressing that "Heaven took him from us and killed him". While heaven here suggests death, it and both are abstract nouns; the effect it creates in the song is that of personification that is capable of stimulating imagination amongst the audience.

Song 26 line 6 (page A1 – 40) personifies water, expressing that “Water would soon swallow you” as if water has mouth to swallow. This personification, as we argued earlier, is so age-old that it has become a commonplace expression. It hardly now can be seen as personification, because it has become an everyday language in the society. Although there seem to be no other way swallowing by water can be expressed in Okpe language than this, and therefore the expression in all circumstances would then be seem as formal, in this very context, it functions as personification.

6. 5. 6 Paradox:

Paradox is a figure that expresses ideas in a manner that seems contradictory or absurd and requiring careful listening to comprehend its appropriateness. Song 3 line 2 makes use of such an expression as follows: *Otu erieda irha 'obọ ghwo liẹ*, the witches and wizards sought him/her with their hands, as if by grope action. There is a common conception among the Okpe that witches and wizards meet normally at the witchery grove by night. Normally too, if one searches a thing at night, he/she would likely grope with his/her hand in the dark. The poet employs this expression however as is commonly used in Okpe to imply and suggest that one unjustly troubling a peaceful man. It is believed that if one seeks to destroy someone who is peaceful, the ancestral deities would avenge and the culprit would be incurring the anger of God to his/her own doom. The poet, on a general note, was commenting on the various attempts made by some Okpe to dethrone the despot king whose tyrannical acts were discussed in chapter three.

The seeming contradiction was that the king who gave orders and issued death sentences on his subjects was still considered to be a peaceful man by the Igoru composer. The poet intends that a king in the perception of the Okpe is a ruler

who represents God, the deities and the ancestors. He mediates between them and his subjects, and therefore needs to be well revered and honoured in high esteem. This implies that attempting to fight with the king is like attempting to fight God and the ancestral spirits of the land, a battle one could never win. Our deduction from this figurative expression is that even if royal fathers punish the people they lead, it is believed it could be for the reason of their own transgressions against the ancestral spirits; thus the composer condemns the attempts made against the king and tried to exonerate himself.

In song 5 lines 59-62 (page A1 – 6), the composer presents an expression paradoxically. He/she says “O God, we do not kill people unjustly. Whether it’s Oriomerhan who killed my son, I do not know”. The expression literally means that the protagonist only suspects the person she names to be responsible for the death of her son. But the following lines prove that the expression is affirmative and not just speculative. It had been concluded that the subject was actually responsible for the death of the child. What the expression then means is that the protagonist does not have the right and power to execute the suspect, but implies that judgement and vengeance belong to God Almighty.

Song 60 (page A1 – 99) presents ideas in the figure of a paradox; ideas that seem to be contradictory to the conceptual context of Igoru music. The poet expresses that the subject went on in commercial sex practice, actually seeking for contemporary young men of her age grade. Then a man came from Warri who gave the subject money, soliciting for her companionship. The poet expresses further that the subject refused the offer, and describes the refusal to be the result of a destiny to poverty. Igoru music had criticised young women who follow men for the purpose of making money from them, and not for

legitimate marriages. There is little wonder why this Igoru musician should criticise this subject who had refused to follow a man that offered money to win her love cheaply. In Okpe, a man who had lost their wives at old age usually seeks to engage another woman who might also be a widow or a divorcee to have companionship with him, either as a wife or concubine, to help look after the welfare of his home. The theme presented by the poet then suggests that the man who came from Warri was an old man and the subject a very young lady. The poet seems to be defending an old tradition while the subject was reasoning along contemporary realities that such companionships would not depend on money only, but also on emotional satisfaction.

6. 5. 7 Antithesis and pun:

Antithesis is a figure of speech where two contrasting ideas are set together in a line of verse or line of thought. In song 44 lines 19 and 20 (page A1 – 72) the poet uses antithesis to address his/her subjects, saying ‘night is already fallen over you and it’s again dawn before you.’ The poet precedes this expression with a proverbial saying ‘if night doesn’t fall against a greedy person, rain would drench him/her in the farm’. The proverb is not antithetical, but it provides the audience a background to the understanding of the antithesis that follows. We have discussed this earlier. Pun is a figure that is used to express double meaning at the same time and in song 47 at line 2 (page A1 – 82) we find an expression of this kind, ‘the children yawn freely’. This expression would normally mean that the children are privileged somewhat and therefore live a free life unquestionably. The second meaning suggests that the children undertake certain practices without caution. In this context, the poet implies that the subjects lead an incautious life, because they have found a ready excuse to give should they fail and have serious problems in life. This means that since the

Okpe believe that evil forces exist and can cause failures for human beings on earth, some people no longer take simple and necessary precaution that they ought to take in like or seek to apply wisdom in their living. If in the cause of time a mischief happens, even as a result of the practices they indulged in, they would then blame it on the evil forces (the ready suspects). The five-line verse therefore contains hidden counsel that one should take necessary precautions and not practice those things that can naturally result to failure, pain and sorrow in life, taking for granted that the evil forces are always there to blame. It implies that this assumption would not profit the victim (accuser) either.

In song 59 (page A1 – 96), the poet uses the word '*oghwara*' as a pun. The term literally means 'castrated male.' But in the context of its use here, the poet employs it to refer to both the impotent male and the barren female. The poet further employs and develops the theme to include all failures, deformations and hideous offences that affect both male and female. It is a satire that briefly narrates and describes the problems of several personalities, suggesting that everyone has one kind of weakness or the other, irrespective of his/her sex. If the weakness is not deformity, it could be sickness or socio-moral behaviour. Verse two, for instance, alludes to long mouth; verse three sex in a community hall; verse four the behaviour associated to a community; verse five leprosy; verse six prolonged menstrual flow; verse seven multiple navels; verse eight stealing; and verse nine greed.

The expression in song 84 verse 1 (page A1 – 152) is a kind of pun in the images it evokes. The poet says his/her subject should cover his/her ugliness inside a box. Ugliness is an abstract noun treated as a concrete noun by the poet, in order to stimulate very high imagination of the subject's appearance. The images

created here are both of sight and of touch, though we can imagine or behold the appearance of persons, it is not possible to feel it by the sense of touch. Covering one's appearance, of beauty or ugliness, inside a box then seems to be contrasting. In song 29 line 19 (page A1 – 43) the expression “If it were to catch a child, Orichedje would have caught one for Orogho” has some possible interpretations. The word ‘catch’ has several connotations. It could mean to catch, as in catching animal or bird by use of traps; to catch fish by use of hook, line, net or cage; and to abduct a child as in covetousness. The expression, however, implies that it is impossible to abduct a child, since it is a taboo to do so in Okpe land. It further implies that to have children does not depend on human efforts, suggesting that the subject did his best attempting all that is humanly possible, yet could have no child.

Song 39 lines 40-41 (page A1 – 62) consists a pun in the following expression “Is it the pregnancy of garri you have?” Garri is a sort of West African staple food processed from cassava. Its equivalent in the South African society is pap (maize meal). The narrator presents the expression derogatorily that the subject ate much garri that made her belly swell. This statement literally means that the public doubt is the subject was truly pregnant. But the composer simply means that something was seriously wrong with the subject's inability to put to bed without the unbearable travail she went through. Song 80 line 6 (page A1 – 148) presents an expression with the word *kako* meaning wither. The narrator says that the subject's muscles had ‘withered’ signifying that the body tissues, veins and muscles now have become dysfunctional as a result of old age. But all these suggest that the body is now too weak to undertake any active physical activity.

6. 5. 8 Pathetic fallacy and allusion:

Pathetic fallacy is a figure that creates impressions that nature objects have feelings as human beings do. The expression *Akpọ na orhie unu firhọ ne*, the world has opened its mouth, in song 1 line 5 (page A1 – 1) is a kind of pathetic fallacy employed by the poet. It describes the world as if it were a living creature that has mouth like human beings. But it does not in any case stimulate any imagination to seeing this physical world as a living being that has a mouth to open, to eat, to swallow or to speak. It is rather to be understood as signification of a free world which gives everyone opportunities to develop and make advancements. It suggests further that though every adult member of the society has a considerable amount of freedom to live his/her life the way he/she wants and make as much progress as possible, it could still be very difficult for some people to prosper, due to many factors that determine success and prosperity. In this context, the poet intends to prove a point that children must learn to be obedient to their parents and pay particular attention to the counsel they give as this goes a long way to enhance their levels of wisdom and success in life.

Another proverb, appearing in song 12 line 6 (page A1 – 23) presents a similar pathetic fallacy. The expression “Lion contests growth with the Elephant” suggests an experience of a kind of feeling and attitude possessed by human beings. The Lion is known to be very strong and powerful; the Elephant is known to be mighty, big and strong too. But in growth the Lion would not measure as much as the Elephant. This fact does not however mean that the two animals could then challenge one another like human beings would do. And if they do, the Lion would certainly not contest growth but strength. Since they are non-human, they do not possess this human character. Details about the meaning of this expression have been discussed under proverbs below. The composer of

song 41 at line 6 presents a proverb that has a kind of figurative expression. Here the composer describes the earth as an object that hears information whenever human beings die.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2001: 35) defines allusion as 'something that is said or written that brings attention to a particular subject in a way that is not direct.' In other words, it is a reference to other works or fields of knowledge, in order to make a point in another context. Igoru music draws several allusions to the Christian religion. References are made to the preaching and the prayer patterns of this new religion that were all strange and contrary to the Okpe traditional beliefs. In song 82 (page A1 – 150) for instance, the poet made allusion, quoting from the Holy Bible, and saying 'the prophecy of the church has come true, that the first shall become last.' The poet uses this allusion simply to draw a closer attention to the theme of the composition and not to give the passage its religious meaning. The composer expresses an experience where a very dear and close blood relation became the persona's greatest enemy, particularly in lines of envy and oppression as he/she suggests. The persona expresses that the blood relation he/she thought was very kind, who used to welcome and honour him/her warmly, turned around to do wicked things against him/her. The poet implies that such a pretentious brother/sister must be feared. In other words, deeper understandings of relationships come with experiences that unfold day by day.

In song 6 lines 42 and 55, (page A1 – 11) the poet uses a very short allusion to traditional religious practice, suggesting that the subject of his/her narrative did not delay attempting to execute her evil plans. He/she says '*Ọriọmerhan ọrhọ bọ ze re*' meaning that Ọriọmerhan did not dawdle. In traditional Okpe society, to

'bo' means to consult the oracle and to 'ze' is to sacrifice. The process of divination and sacrificing sure takes some pretty time, but this is not what the poet suggests in this song. It is rather an expression that when an evil doer has an evil plan to carry out, he/she would not delay in going about it.

6. 5. 9 Bathos and climax:

Bathos is a figure of speech that appears to be an anti-climax where a statement suddenly moves from a lofty height to a trivial thing, while climax is the building of figurative expressions that gradually rise from low to high. In other words, for the latter, each new line increases the tone and degree of expression higher than the preceding line. In song 1 lines 7 – 12 (page A1 – 1), the poet cleverly builds the climax of the song with a rising tone and experimental illustrations that prove a theory that is true to life. We have discussed this theory elsewhere in this chapter. In song 43 verses 6 and 7, the poet employs some techniques of repetition and sequence to build up climax. In lines 49 and 50 of the song, the poet repeats the name of the subject's audience in the following line to create effects of sound in beginning the building up of the climax. He/she systematically builds further with such technical names as the shoe maker, carpenter, and blacksmith and hits the climax with the bicycle repairer to conclude the point. In the last verse he/she uses importation of English words such as 'tube, tyre and airplane' to further heighten the climax. Metaphors and simile such as 'It's a tube, tyre and fish net;' 'it's like the engine of an airplane,' function complementarily to increase the climax and bring the narrative to a close.

6. 5. 10 Hyperbole:

Hyperbole is an expression that is deliberately used to exaggerate an idea or incident in order to create some desired effects on listeners. In song 5 line 51 (page A1 – 6), the poet uses an exaggeration that lacks an effective translation in English. He/she says the subject “Arose with bulged eyes” and went home to prepare for an evil deed. Since the narration says the subject attended a meeting with evil forces over the night, seeking for enabling powers to carry out the evil plan, this figure therefore implies that the subject’s eyes, though are wide open, are evident of restlessness and tiredness. It also suggests a kind of feeling of guilt about the evil he/she is about to execute. The expression in line 65 of the same song is an attempt to exaggerate the stature of the subject. We have translated it simply as “She’s short, with a very small body,” but the meaning goes a little beyond that. The bid for the exaggeration made the composer to employ a bi-lingual approach. He/she uses Urhobo and Okpe languages together, saying *Oma ye ọkrẹkrẹ kpẹbuẹbuẹ*. *Ọkrẹkrẹ* in Urhobo and *kpẹbuẹbuẹ* in Okpe mean but the same thing, “he/she is short, as in the former and “very short” as in the latter”.

Song 6 lines 75-77 (page A1 – 11), being the same song as song 5, performed variedly by different performers, presents the above figurative expression differently. This second performer rather than say the subject is short, puts it that his/her hands and legs have equal length and finally says he/she is a dwarf. In song 5 lines 69-73, the composer goes on to exaggerate as mentioned earlier that the dwarf’s upper buttocks have a deep depression like a pool that is capable of sustaining water over time. The narrator of this song did not state the duration of the pregnancy conceived by the protagonist of the narration. But the narrator in song 6 says the protagonist carried the pregnancy for three years

before the travail for birth (delivery). The narrator though subsequently suggests that the new born baby is the only male child, perhaps the first and only child of the protagonist, the hyperbole that the woman carried the pregnancy for three years strengthens the case that the antagonist had done a most grievous evil killing such a significant child.

Song 11 lines 4-6 (page A1 – 22) present another form of hyperbole saying that parents no longer recognize their children whenever the ensemble comes out to perform. It is understood from this expression that the composer means, as soon as the Igoru ensemble comes to stage for performance, there would be a massive turn out of audience. In song 15 lines 13-14 (page A1 – 27), the composer exaggerates that the subject is so miserly that he/she could neither buy anything worth half a kobo, nor anything worth one kobo; using the least Nigerian currency coins (denomination) to describe the level of the subject's value for money. We have discussed this narrative in detail elsewhere in this chapter.

Song 17 line 13 (page A1 – 31) presents another hyperbolic figure that the subject, owing to the economic situation in Lagos began to count years like months. This expression tells much about life in the city of Lagos in Nigeria. The city was the metropolis of Nigeria before the capital moved to Abuja in 1991. Lagos is a commercial city and a lot of people make wealth there. Those in the villages then think that the moment one enters and lives in the city he/she is sure to be economically successful. But the city life is like a coin with two sides. If one is lucky to find some job or business, he/she would profit and prosper much; otherwise he/she would not even be able to pay the expensive house rents. Some dwellers or sojourners might even have to lie under the overhead bridges

for a period of time, until they are able to find their feet. Contemporary popular musicians in Lagos still reveal this structure of Lagos life in their albums.

The composer of this Igoru song therefore suggests the kind of expectations the subject had and the subsequent disappointment he/she meets in Lagos. The narrator exaggerates that the subject did put on a skirt, and carried a bundle of clothes with her (see song 34 lines 15-16; page A1 – 56). The narrator states earlier that the subject was invited to Ikoyi Lagos for a sex job. The possibility that a young lady visiting a proposed lover she would have affair with for the first time would carry a bundle or bag of clothes with her is doubtful. But this is the kind of expression the narrator uses to suggest the excitement and hopes of the subject. In song 60 at line 24 (page A1 – 101), the composer exaggerates by use of a plural case to qualify a singular object; instead of 'genital organ,' the narrator says 'my genital organs'.

Song 71 lines 49-54 (page A1 – 132) feature another form of hyperbole. The narrator here says Chief Edwin Ayomano devoted all his time to assist the Orodje of Okpe to the extent that he could no longer remember his wives and relations. The persona emphasizes that he comes to the Orodje's palace by night and departs at dawn. Any man is expected to go about his business by day and at night be with his wife or wives. The impression created by the narrator is that the Chief goes about his business by day and goes to the king by night and therefore has no time for his wives. In true situation, no Okpe Chief would allow sense of commitment to push him into any such acts of irresponsibility to his family. Even the Orodje would call such a Chief to order, if it ever happens. Part of the requirements for traditional Chiefs in Okpe land is that an intending Chief must be well established, because he/she is not expected to farm or do any odd jobs

after installation. He/she must have full-time attention for royal activities and his/her family.

Song 74 (page A1 – 140) is short and in brevity expresses that the women who were going to the market and those going to their lovers, all have abandoned their primary missions, simply to watch Igoru performance. For the latter, it would seem possible, but for those going to the market, it is unheard of, because it seems more difficult to stop going to the market or farm when the family survival depends much on it. This expression is best understood, however, that the narrator simply means Igoru music has such power of attraction that whenever people hear sounds of the performance, they would turn out enmass to watch. In song 44 line 34 (page A1 – 72) the poet exaggerates that his/her subject's body had torn through. *Ebẹrẹfi* means torn from one end through to the other, particularly in the manner of a hole borne through an object. The poet however does not employ this expression in its literal sense, but suggestively to mean that the subject had a urinary tract infection leading to urine incontinence (condition of passing urine frequently).

6. 5. 11 Euphemism and Litotes or meiosis:

Euphemism is a mild or gentle expression employed instead of a more apposite, but harsh word or statement. Litotes and meiosis are interchangeable terms used for expressions made in form of an understatement rather than the use of the direct form. In song 18 lines 2 and 3 (page A1 – 32), the poet employs a euphemism to describe an incident. He/she says '*orhoror ohoro (edele) yi e ru isara*' meaning 'she took her genital organ (great thing) and offered it as sacrifice.' This figure derives from an Okpe idiom '*oha ohoro ru isara*' meaning 'she offers her genital organ as sacrifice.' The two expressions appear to be the

same, but they mean different things in different contexts. While the latter means that the subject gives in to any man that comes her way, the latter in the context of this Igoru song implies that the subject unconsciously exposed her nudity to onlookers. Two words particularly mark out the figure of euphemism in this expression. At a repeat of the verse, the poet chose the word in bracket '*edele*' meaning 'great thing' to replace the earlier word to avoid calling the vagina by its real name. The second word that functions as euphemism is '*isara*,' (sacrifice), which also avoids the use of a direct harsh word for public nakedness.

The expression in song 39 line 22 (page A1 – 62) is euphemistic. The narrator of the song, for example, puts the expression this way: When no one had discovered that she saw body...the day for delivery soon became fulfilled. The use of this expression is quite customary to the Okpe culture to speak of sex in such manners that do not mention the very act directly, but speak about them in some kind of understatement. All ethics concerning sexual activities and marriage are seen as sanctity in the culture, thus these kinds of understatements are formal. The Okpe would normally use terms like *oma emere* (seeing body); *omerhen* (sleeping) or *ughen* (a more advanced term) that refers to the sleeping together between husband and wife, without mentioning the act sexual intercourse directly. In all the above expressions the poet means that the partners involved had seen one another's nakedness (having had copulation together).

Song 14 line 3 (page A1 – 25) presents litotes. The narrator sends a message through some travellers to the Northern Nigeria (Hausa land), requesting them to 'congratulate' the subject who killed a relation before going to the North on a kind of self exile. The expression "Tell her, we congratulate you" is merely an

understatement, the meaning of which is but a curse. Lines 5-8 of the song suggest very clearly that the narrator feels bitter about the evil act. The narrator of song 44 at line 4 (page A1 – 72) presents another litotes which the Okpe normally use as an alternative to a direct statement that refers to sad events. Instead of the expression “Do you know what happened to her”, the narrator rather says “Do you know what touched her body?” The expression implies an event that most often could affect one’s emotions strongly. It can as well refer to what happens to one’s flesh, but in a broader sense it is more encompassing, since what happens to one’s life or his/her flesh would certainly have effects on his/her emotions.

In songs 5 and 6 (pages A1 – 6 and 11), the poets make use of litotes and meiosis in lines 34 – 35 and 39 – 40 respectively. In the former, the poet expresses that the witch remarked that the child she intended to kill would not get to perform Igoru music, but she would sacrifice him during the coming feast. The narrator of the first chose the understatement ‘sacrifice’ instead of using the word ‘kill.’ But the poet of the latter expresses the same concept by use of another form of understatement that the witch said she would use the child to eat *akara* (beans cake). To sacrifice any animal requires that it would be slaughtered; and to eat any sort of food with meat implies that the meat would have been slaughtered as well. In each of the above understatements, the point is made that the witch simply meant she would kill the child, though avoided the use of the direct word.

6. 5. 12 Innuendo, oxymoron and irony:

Innuendo is a figure used to address a person or thing that is not openly or directly stated. Irony, on the other hand, is an expression that means the direct

opposite of what is said, while oxymoron is the use of two contradictory words in an expression. In song 4 line 3 and 4 (page A1 – 5), the poet uses an ironical figure to suggest that the Christian proselytes were indulging in strange practices. He/she expresses this by saying that on the market day (*Ẹdebi*) preceding the traditional worship day (*Ẹdeghwọ*), they (the worshippers of *Ediọn*) would go through the streets of the town preaching. In Okpe society, priests and followers of traditional religion do not preach to win new converts. It is believed that God knows how to get the people to follow him.

In real practical cases, deities can coerce children of their subjects to follow and worship them after the manner of their fore fathers. If a child refuses to follow and worship the God of his/her fathers, he/she could be afflicted with temporal insanity or refractory ailment. In several cases of insanity, the affected would be normal during the dry season, but become insane at every coming rainy season. This kind of condition that often resists various attempts of cure, and creates fear of future recrudescence and shame brings subjects to follow the God of their fathers in Okpe. The poet therefore implies that if the Christians are certain that their God is that powerful, they need not preach through the streets to win converts.

The poet of song 5 also uses irony in line 48 of the narrative (cf. page A1 – 6). He/she tells the story of a witch who sought to kill the only son of her friend and relation. The witches prepared a medicine for her and instructed her to put it into her mouth at the time she would visit the friend in pretext to congratulate her and to name the baby. Then she would name the child 'Akpoyovihine' meaning he has prospered already. But at this declaration, the opposite result was expected. That is the child was expected to die and not live or prosper. The narrative went

on, of course, to state that as soon as the witch named the baby after the manner prescribed by the evil forces, the child gave up on its mother's laps where it fed with water. The poet employs this ironical figure to express the pretentious attitude that wicked people normally put up as well-wishers in disguise.

Two versions of this poem appear in appendix I. It is the same song, but performed variously by two different Igoru performers in two different locations. The second performer developed the theme more than the first. The first five lines of the first version is a normal opening theme that Igoru musicians perform before beginning the real songs of the repertoire. The second performer did not start the same way, thus omitted the formal five-line opening theme. In spite of this, the first version records 80 lines, but without the first five lines would become 75 lines; whereas, the second, even without the formal five lines has the length of 84 lines. This indicates that it provides more information, one of which is the point expressed in lines 17 and 18 that the woman described as the witch was a close relation and friend to the other woman she killed her son. This detailed account was necessary to this poet, because it enables the listeners understand the level of pretence expressed by the above irony.

The composer of song 32 at line 33 (page A1 – 52) employs an oxymoron, the use of two contrasting ideas to describe an object/subject. The narrator says the subject became old at very young age. The contrasting ideas put together “young-old” do not actually describe an advanced old age. It merely suggests that incidentally the subject who is seen here as a young lady, possesses a certain feature associated with old age (that is she had lost some of her teeth). But beyond this meaning, the poet communicates an innuendo directed to a people not directly mentioned.

6. 6 Oral poetic form:

Oral poetic forms, in this context, refer to the various forms of narration in Igoru music; the forms of poetic-song composition and presentation, with reference to the sort of accounts the songs record, and transmit. As opposed to structural forms, these forms are about the length of the songs and the various images they employ in the art of communication. This concerns the manner of presentation as well as the kinds of characters and themes that the songs address.

6. 6. 1 Allegory and parable:

Mary Barber (1970: M36) writes that an allegory is “A description or story which has a second and deeper significance below the surface. The characters are really personifications, usually representing some vice or virtue”. In song 25 lines 8 to 14 (page A1 – 39), the poet makes use of a parable that they filled a sack with sand and the sack stood up erect to insult them later on. He/she says they would pour the sand out of the sack so that it falls down and rot. The Igoru performer (not the poet) interprets that the Okpe gave the Itsekiri land to inhabit and they became the people that were contending the ownership of the land with them as well as laughing them to scorn that they had a long interregnum. The expression that they would pour out the sand from the sack implies a warning that the scorners would be sent packing from the Okpe land if they continued to contend the ownership of the land. Another performer of the same song intimates that it refers to the Uvwie (Effurun) people as well.

In song 77 lines 7 to 12 (page A1 – 143), the poet quotes a parable from the Urhobo language and concludes it in Okpe language, saying: “We brought house help to look after a child. If the child dies, house help then leaves. Soldiers departed, and Arire still continues in sex trade”, The house help employed to look

after the baby in [University of Pretoria's Department of Oral \(2006\)](#) who the narrator suggests is a commercial sex worker. The death of the child signifies the return of the soldiers to the barracks after the Wars; while the departure of the house help suggests the implications that the subject should have stopped the commercial sex business afterwards. We have discussed earlier how the soldiers contributed or influenced the commercial sex business. They were real stake holders in the business and Igoru musicians generally had thought that their withdrawal to the barracks would mark the end of commercial sex trade, but to their greatest surprise it did not, at that time put an end. This is exactly the disappointment the composer expresses in the above parable. But apart from being an expression of disappointment, it provides advisory information to the subject, that she better realize it was time to stop the business.

6. 6. 2. Epic and biographical praise:

Mary Barber (1970: M36) defines epic as a very long narrative poem, usually consisting splendid deeds of some heroes of history or legend and often relate to warfare. Laura Arntson (1998: 488 and 489) writes:

Praise songs most often compliment an individual (or individuals) present at a performance; yet the vehicle for praise, and advice or challenges offered in the guise of praise, take the form of a song in praise of a historical or mythical person from past. Praise singing offers more than mere praise: it invokes the heritage of Manden and its lineages; in addition, it publicly musters social roles and expectations related to this heritage, and to contemporary contexts (p 488)...The texts of praise words include proverbs or references to proverbs; a brief narration or description of the current situation; commentary, advice or criticism; bits of text, drawn from a much longer narrative, to which the praise song alludes at that moment (p 489).

The poet of song 29 (page A1 – 43) narrates the biography of a couple. He/she tells the audience that Orichedje (male) hails from Okwukpokpogri and Ɔrogħo (female) is from Egborode, both of Mereje area. The two became legally married and for several years had no children. The poet tells the audience how much the

man felt concerned for the patience and love of his wife to the point that he would have been prepared to buy at least a child for the family in order to keep his wife comforted, if it were possible. In traditional Okpe society, as in other cultures, women are normally more worried about having children than men and often, other members of the community could easily persuade them to try elsewhere. This is often expressed as “trying one’s leg elsewhere” meaning that she should break off from the relationship to marry another man; perhaps she could have her children this way.

In this biography, the poet suggests that the woman’s husband was aware of all the possibilities of his wife breaking the marriage, leaving him alone, particularly if he were much older. But as she remained with him even in the face of emotional pains and distress that normally grip a barren couple, she had to be rewarded. A thought about the Okpe culture that gives the right of inheritance to one’s children at his death made the man become more worried that his inheritance would then fall to his relations since they had no child. In other words, if they had children together and their children inherit his properties, through the children the wife partakes, because she would direct her children and the properties together.

The poet mentions the villages where these partners come from for two reasons. The first is to prove the truth of his/her narrative and the second to suggest that women from the Egborode community are worth seeking for lasting marriage relationships. Prior the advent of Christianity in Okpe land, men used to conduct enquiries about the family and community where they or their sons intend to marry before getting involved in it. Elders in Okpe those days, even till date, particularly those who follow after the manner of their forefathers and their God,

normally have signs that informed them of their death before it occurs. The poet then suggests that the man had signs of his death, and assembled his family to lay down his will orally before his death occurs. He told the family members that his wife had suffered much with him and directed that all his debts (accruing from the *egbedi* loans he gave out) be given to his wife as inheritance.

Egbedi is a large container constructed of wood for storage of palm oil those days, prior to the advent of metal drums which now serve the purpose today. Great business tycoons who traded on oil palm products normally gave loans to the farmers who paid back in measures of the product. The poet therefore implies that the man gave out loans worth several (*egbedi*) large containers of palm oil in the period. About three days after presenting the will, the poet went on, the man died and according to the Okpe tradition, the wife was assigned to one of his relations in marriage. The wife objected and maintained that she could no longer marry another man after the death of her beloved husband. The poet concludes suggestively that the high moral discipline that marks the woman's attribute was well commended in the community, thus the Igoru musicians blessed her.

Song 70 (page A1 – 126) is a chronological biography of Oromo I and Julius his brother. The poet states the title of the song as '*Otu re gba re, Joro Orodje, Assembly, Song of the King*' and in lines 1 to 9 presents an opening speech that the *Egboto Isinio* ensemble did come to the studio to perform Igoru music in praise of Julius. The poem however expresses the mutual relationship that existed between the two brothers. In verse two, the narrator informs the audience that Julius and the king are brothers who lived in sweet harmony. The term '*imizu rephan*' means brothers or sisters of the same mother, who may or may not be of

the same father. In this context, the biological relationship between the King and Julius was that of same mother but not same father.

In Okpe several people, particularly women hold the view that half brothers or sisters who are of the same mother but not of the same father are of closer blood relation than those of same father and not same mother. Better understanding and mutual relationship is therefore expected from children of same mother than those of same father. Since sometimes brothers could still be envious of one another and seek for one another's failure in life, irrespective of birth relationship, the narrator then commends the subjects of the song for conducting themselves well as blood brothers. He/she says that Julius wished his brother Dimingo Mojaele Ejinyerien well, thus he called an assembly of Okpe elders together and announced his aspiration to become king.

The elders accepted the presentation and Julius travelled to Lagos, then capital of Nigeria, taking the report to Okpe Union and the then Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, who also accepted the recommendation from the Okpe elders. Julius returned to Okpe land bringing reports to the elders that the Okpe Union and Gen. Gowon accepted the candidature of D. M. Ejinyerien; then the elders blessed Julius for taking all the trouble and going the whole hog to ensure that his brother was crowned king. The poet implies that such a good relationship between half brothers, existing without envy or hate was something to commend. He/she finally announces the blessings declared upon the two brothers that from everlasting to everlasting, criticism could not ruin them. The term criticism here implies that when people are into mutual relationships, some envious persons around them almost always want to interfere to see how they can break the tie through gossips. The poet implies that no one could put asunder between the two brothers.

Song 71 (page A1 – 132) is another biographical praise centred on Chief Edwin Ayomano and the king, Orhoro I. The speech introducing the song says that Edwin was very humble and dedicated to the king. The second verse, though shorter says ‘We raised alarm that Nigeria’s money has got to our hands; it’s joyful, for precious things would soon come to our hands.’ This statement is not directly related to the theme of the song. But it suggests that wealth played a great role in the relationship between the two subjects.

In verse three where the narrative actually began, the narrator informs the audience that Edwin lived in Urhiapele [Sapele] and of course all Okpe readers would understand that the king’s palace is in Orerokpe which is quite some distance apart. The poet means that Edwin was able work effectively with the king, frequenting the distance as often as required and necessitated by demands and responsibilities, because he was a rich man. It follows that the availability of money among the rich, and its proper channelling as Chief Edwin Ayomano had done would give rise to more development in Okpe. The narrator states that Edwin was always in the company of the king in the palace to assist him draw up plans for the development of the land. The poet concludes by wishing the principal subject, Edwin, more progress and prosperity in his own life. This was expressed proverbially that ‘the mouth (person) who seeks what is good, would certainly find goodness.’

Song 31 (page A1 – 48) is a chronological narrative that gives a biographical data of a subject. The narrator intimates that the subject did something that peeved the Igoru musicians, hence the narrative to expose him/her. The narrator states they had not forgotten the origin of the protagonist’s migration to Okpe land. He/she traces the history, how the father came as a slave to one Ogiso of

Okwabude and how unfaithful he was as servant who impregnated the master's wife and paid the price by execution. He/she adds that no one also knows how the mother of the subject came to Okpe, suggesting that she might have come with her husband as a slave too. The narrator stressed that the coming of the white missionaries and colonial rule in the area then, which abolished slave trade thereby freeing the slaves, had made the protagonist forget his/her history or origin, which to the African (particularly the Okpe) is very important to the question of identity and sense of belonging.

6. 6. 3 Elegy, ode and monody:

Mary Barber (1970: M36 and 37) writes that an elegy is a lyric poem of lamentation for the dead. Ode is equally a poem of lamentation, while monody is an ode sung by a single voice to mourn the dead. Song 64 is an elegy for Ikiki Eyenruja of Onyeke who was the leader of the Igoru ensemble that existed in the community during his life time around the 1920s and 1940s. The poet says the subject lay dead and Isodje his brother began to weep, and he called him, but the deceased could no longer hear his voice. He/she expresses that 'heaven is too deep' otherwise Ikiki was a man who deserved not to die. The narrator expresses further that Ikiki departed and left them, the Igoru performances behind and hit the climax with a rhetoric question 'what can we do?'

The poet's expressions suggest that the subject was a very nice fellow among them, both in the Igoru ensemble and in the community. They wished he lived longer, but death struck and they became helpless. The expression that 'heaven is too deep' implies that death and the home of the dead are too mysterious to contend with. The poet implies that though the Okpe believe that the dead live around us and see the living; and can do anything for and to the living, the living

cannot see nor do anything to bring them back to life once death has taken them away. In other words, the poet means exactly that if the dead, for instance, are grieved by the evil deeds of close relations, they can cause the culprit's immediate death so that he/she comes over to join them in the great beyond. But the living, if they desire that worthy fellows should not depart the earth so soon, cannot do anything to resurrect them.

Song 68 (page A1 – 118) is an elegy for the king, Ezezi II who reigned from 1945 to 1972. The song begins with an opening speech, where the narrator expresses that the Orodje (king) served Okpe very well, thus his death was equally very painful to the people. The narrator assumes the position of representation where he/she expresses the lamentation on behalf of the ensemble and the entire Okpe people. The first verse of the main song (verse three of the entire poem) expresses that there was no amount of lamentation that could be enough to evince the depth of grief the king's death caused the Okpe. The interjection inserted by a voice in spoken language, saying 'he is not dead, he is still living' implies that the king's works would certainly be remembered after him. The following verse is an expression in a thermal imagery created from a climatic experience. The narrator says 'these issues on ground are real hamattan that has lasted three months, oh, when will it end?'

In traditional Okpe society when someone so dear to one's heart dies, particularly in a sudden manner, the grief is expressed as something very cold. The affected persons (close associates) would normally say '*uhu na ọkpa eririn*' meaning 'this death caused much cold.' The poet implies therefore that the death of the king had caused the sorrow that would last a very long time in the land. The expression goes further that he would ever be remembered, because in all

the occasions and places where he used to be found, he would no longer be there. The poet alludes to the Okpe assembly and council meetings; the visit of the Oba of Benin and other dignitaries to the palace, as well as visits to the homes of his close associates where he used to be found. All these point to the fact that there were many events that could remind the people of the king's death for long. These expressions reinforce the earlier rhetoric question; 'for how long can we mourn the king?'

The poet concludes the elegy with a counsel to the chief mourner of the king, Chief Biokoro, the *Unu* (often misrepresented as *Qota*, spokesman) of Okpe. This is not to say that the Okpe do not recognize the position of the king's wife as the first lady of the land, but the poet in this context represents Okpe and of a necessity addresses the second in command in the traditional institution. He/she counsels that death is not a taboo, but a necessary end; therefore the spokesman should mourn awhile and comport himself to carry on the leadership responsibilities that now befall him, pending the election and installation of a new king.

6. 6. 4 Fable and memoir:

Fable is a very brief story designed to teach some moral lessons. The characters of the story are often animals, birds, or insects, which converse like human beings. Song 23 (page A1 – 36) is a fable directed to the Itsekiri as discussed under innuendo in this chapter. Our concern about it here as a fable is to examine how the poet employs nature object and supernatural beings to display human attitudes, engaging in some conversation and developing some kind of relationships as if they were real human. The poet represents the Itsekiri with specie of mangrove tree called *havbaren* and represents the Okpe with the

supernatural being, Oloku (Merman). The fable contains some lessons for, not only the Itsekiri, but the whole audience, that if a kind fellow or group of people accommodates one; one should not seek to rob the benefactor. Another fable is found in song 25 (page A1 – 39) where the narrator uses personification to describe nature object such as sand inside a sack like a human being. He/she says they filled the sack with sand and it arose, standing upright to insult them. The sack of sand conversing and insulting the men that empowered it to stand represents a people we have discussed earlier.

Memoir is a record of events of which the author has some personal experiences (Mary Barber 1970: M37). Song 16 is both a memoir and a fable, more or less; it combines these two poetic elements together. Greater part of the poem is a memoir telling a story in which the narrator seems to have had a personal experience. It takes only careful study to understand whether the poet actually narrates his personal experience or not, because the composer sets the poem with great wisdom. We find three characters involved in the narrative. The topic sentence at the beginning of the song tells us that the narrator met Takpevwiere lamenting at Ugbamugboshe, Lagos. He thereafter personalized the story as if he was Takpevwiere, the one directly involved in the case. He claimed, taking the place of the protagonist (Takpevwiere), to have had dispute with Otebele.

The narration suggests that Ufo is the wife of Otebele who had just come with pregnancy from Urhobo land. She was then probably persuaded by the narrator's enemy, to allege that he was responsible for the pregnancy. He became a victim of circumstance who spent all his earning to exonerate himself from the law suit. The story suggests further that the lady, Ufo was simply used to fabricate a lie about the pregnancy, in order to commit the victim because of the dispute he had

with his enemy earlier. The concluding part progresses to use the kingfisher (bird)

to illustrate how much pain the victim grinned and bore. He expresses that the kingfisher took all 'his' belongings into the rowboat, rowed to the middle of the river and had it capsize. The kingfisher flew and perched on the root of a mangrove (tree) to gaze at the deep, and could only shudder, shaking 'his' head helplessly. To determine the significance of the song, the narrator began the memoir and fable with an advice that might have come at the end of the song. He says to the entire Okpe that one should not be interested or involved in disputes, because they could wreck one's life.

6. 6. 5 Satire and lampoon:

Satire is a poem or prose that attacks "folly and vice" (Mary Barber 1970: M38) in the attitude and deeds of human beings in the society. Lampoon similarly is a short satire that attacks an individual. Songs 14, 17, 18 and 19 are lampoons. The first attacks someone suggested to have possibly confessed the killing of a relation before travelling on a kind of self exile. We have discussed details of this satire earlier. The second and third songs attack an unsuccessful sojourner and a drunk in Lagos respectively; while the fourth attacks one who had fire accident in the hair dressing salon. Song 22 (page A1 – 35) attacks all Okpe commercial sex workers resident in Lagos, inserting the names of individuals one after the other. Song 85 (page A1 – 156) is a lampoon that attacks a subject directly, in that it mentions real names (here substituted with a fictitious name), but gives only a figurative description leaving the audience to imagine much more than is contained in the song. The composer remarks that his/her subject earlier challenged the Igoru ensemble of his/her community to prepare and hold the broom of *Ohworho*, another typology of Okpe traditional music.

The 'broom' symbolises the music typology, because in its performances, the performers hold a small bundle of broom each, while in Igoru performance, members hold either a fan or handkerchief. The poet announces that the Onyeke (his community) Igoru ensemble had come to confront the subject for the challenge he dared to utter. He refers the subject to the performance practices of the two typologies, that male performers put on shirt when they perform Igoru, but remove it or wear only singlet when performing *Ohworho*. He therefore challenged him to remove his shirt for the contest in the performance of the latter typology. He implies that the subject's body has skin diseases and therefore look rough and repulsive, that he would be ashamed to leave his body uncovered before the public.

Song 83 (page A1 – 151) is another lampoon focused on the same subject, but expressed in idioms. The poet describes the subject as one who is wrecked in abject poverty. The first idiom expresses that the subject's poverty had begotten a grand child, while the second says if he finds anyone to cut his hair, that would be the hat he has found to wear whenever he travels. The first idiom actually builds upon the second as a kind of summary of the message intended to be communicated to the audience. The hat is one of the cheapest things to buy as part of a man's dressing in Okpe. It implies that if a man cannot buy a hat, then of course we do not expect that he would be able to buy wrapper, shirts, walking sticks and shoes or other forms of wears. The expression that his poverty now has a grand child is to suggest that he is greatly impoverished.

Songs 34 and 35 (page A1 – 56 and 58) are lampoons that attack certain individuals. They employ metaphorical descriptions using animal, bird and this physical world as well as the spiritual world to discredit the being of the assailed

subjects. The two songs are actually the same song as performed variedly by different performers. Song 42 and 43 (page A1 – 70 and 71) are also lampoons attacking an oversexed individual, describing the emotional excitement and verbal response stimulated by the act he/she had taken pleasure in. Song 49 (page A1 – 84) is a derisive lampoon directed to a subject who separated from her spouse and travelled to sojourn in Lagos. We have discussed the details of these songs elsewhere in this chapter.

Song 57 (page A1 – 93) is a very short one that attacks a subject, reminding him/her how stupid he/she had been that a friend could deceive him/her into a vice. The composer, though did not mention any specific vice, suggests it as the reason that exposed the subject to this lampoon. The suggestion is subtle, because one could think that the expression “Ukorewa has deceived you into Igoru” means the subject was deceived to perform Igoru music. The poet employs a personification in a proverbial manner, saying “It is the cup that calls itself cup” as if the cup were a human being that could identify itself. Song 63 and 76 (page A1 – 109 and 143) are other lampoons already discussed.

Song 79 (page A1 – 145) is a lampoon that attacks a specific person, employing the images of supernatural beings, the deity that inhabits a tree and the deity that inhabits the waters. The song approaches the narration of a vice very succinctly; details of which have been discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Song 38 (page A1 – 62) is a short one that attacks two individuals whose names are specifically mentioned. The poet describes the state in which he/she met the subjects under Ikeja Bridge in Lagos. The narrator’s reaction in the poetic expression suggests that the appearance of the subjects, which is a portrayal of the vice they are

involved in, is repulsive or detestable. Song 44 (page A1 – 72) though is not quite short, is one of the most serious attacks on an individual subject amongst the Igoru songs so far collected for analysis. The poet suggests in very clear terms that they counselled the subject earlier and she failed to take heed; thus the satire was necessary, particularly as the subject now suffers the consequences of the vice as implied in the song.

6.7 Thematic use and function:

Alan Merriam (1964: 210) draws a line of difference between uses and functions of music. He argues that the two terms, though have been used interchangeably in discourses, do not mean exactly the same thing:

When we speak of the uses of music, we are referring to the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice or customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities. The song sung by a lover to his love is being used in a certain way, as is a sung invocation to the gods or a musical invitation to animals to come and be killed. Music is *used* in certain situations and becomes a part of them, but may or may not also have a deeper *function*. If the lover uses song to woo his love, the function of such music may be analyzed as the continuity and perpetuation of the biological group. When the supplicant uses music to approach his god, he is employing a particular mechanism in conjunction with other mechanisms such as dance, prayer, organized ritual, and ceremonial acts... “Use” then, refers to the situation in which music is employed in human action; “function” concerns the reason for its employment and particularly the broader purpose which it serves [*italics in the original*].

Igoru music has served several functions in the Okpe society, ranging from social to moral, and religious to political. It has functioned so much in entertainment as

most members of the society were normally intrigued to watch the performances. We have discussed in chapter five how much the audience was often excited to watch the performances that even some young people take much risk in climbing a coconut tree around the performance venue just to be able to view the event properly. It has served the purpose of correction, education, counselling, enlightenment, etc.

Donald Reiman and Sharon Powers (1977: 485) re-invent Shelly's defence of poetry arguing that:

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other bond of connexion than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature.

Igoru songs, though they have historical facts connected to time, place, events, vice and effects, are not just narratives of detached facts that are functionally ephemeral. They are songs whose poetry focus on, and employ nature and metaphysical imagery, as well as wise sayings and inveterate philosophical wisdom of common experiences to the Okpe in particular and other cultures that are capable of fixing congruous ideas into the minds of listeners. Laura Arntson (1998: 503) comments on the functions of music in the society, arguing that:

Performance as entertainment can make people happy. Songs in the *tulon bolo* repertory "can make people forget about death and fighting"; ...Others will enjoy hearing the

bala and the words because it reminds them of past times and of other occasions for praise singing... Because, in part, praise singing occurs during parties, celebrations, or other events that call for entertainment, a *jeli* carries a certain immunity from blame, and can therefore criticize and advise others, all in the guise of praise.

Igoru music does not aim at providing just temporary happiness in entertainment. It does not give momentary joy that makes people forget about realities of life. It rather presents issues of the moment and provides stimulus to re-thinking about behaviours that are contrary to the norms of the society and such vice that could even be dangerous to those who indulge in them and the society. It prompts members of the society to examine and address facts about reality. Igoru music deals with frank issues of life, and there is no hiding in its practice. When the composer-performer means to criticize, he/she does so directly and when it becomes necessary to praise he/she does so frankly. We have not found in this study that Igoru music could make people forget about the reality of death, and as such take to be trivial. We have not also found criticism under the guise of praise. Maurice Djenda (1996: 18) argues as follows:

My second point concerns music as a medium for achieving a change in the state of consciousness. In our ethnic group, Mpyemö, the music has two functions: the primary function is recreative, entertaining, but a more momentous function of music is to be found in ceremonies during which one tries to reach another, enhanced state of consciousness, for example in one ceremony called *gbana*. By playing music intensively one can reach another state, such as trance. For some musicologists this is difficult to experience.

Igoru music is capable of elevating the spirit of the performers, as well as taking the audience to higher levels of consciousness about societal values. Although we argued earlier that performance inspiration force could come upon the

performer and he/she could feel like performing endlessly, it is not a practice in Igoru performance that any performers in the group are expected to be possessed and fall into trance as may be found in other traditional music typology.

6. 7. 1 Education and enlightenment:

Where one's mate dies is where he/she thinks of him/herself (Okpe proverb).

The above proverb implies that where an Igoru satire or lampoon focuses on a particular subject, is where other members of the society are enlightened and educated, as many take the opportunity to learn from the experiences so expressed before them. Igoru musicians have played significant roles in educating and enlightening the Okpe public through their musical performances. Most Igoru themes are educative either by use of direct statements or by use of idioms, epigrammatise and proverbs that are poetically structured to stimulate further reasoning and realization of meaning through deduction. The theme of the song, 'father is greater', for instance, is proverbially educative. It implies that though the world is free one, one needs to thread carefully and peacefully in it, applying the wisdom of hard work and good planning in order to be successful living in it. The real meaning of the song does not follow the literal suggestion that appears to be a logical attempt to prove a theory that 'fathers are greater than mothers' in patriarchal societies. The theory, however, stirs a debate on gender issues which is not part of this discourse.

In song 5 and 6 (page A1 – 6 and 11), the poet adjudges an incident where a subject killed the first son of her sister and friend by use of evil powers. Though

the narrator did not inform the audience how he/she knew that the subject was responsible for the sudden death of the child, the discussion in chapter three informs us that such culprits are often dealt with by the ancestral spirits and they are forced to confess their evil deeds with their own mouths, without any human pre-emption and coercion. The poet did not, in this case suggest that the subject had faced the retribution for God, but reminds him/her that even the Almighty God was certainly going to pay her for her evil. By this verdict, the poet builds up a lesson for his audience, who are to learn not to incur the wrath of God in their life time, but be careful to avoid doing evil against their neighbours.

Song 8 (page A1 – 17) provides enlightenment to the general public about the perception they had on Igoru musicians in the society. The poet, Unugbrogodo Ekure, categorically states he would educate the public that Igoru musicians are not the only category of people in the society that could be regarded as poor. He understood that the perception of the people that Igoru musicians are vagabonds arose from the fact that many Igoru musicians those days and even in his time were not rich. He educated the public that whoever could not amass wealth through his profession, whatever the profession, is poor and if poor musicians are regarded as vagabonds, then all other poor people in the society are equally vagabonds. He gave the audience food for thought, so that each person would examine him/herself whether he/she is rich or not and draw conclusions whether he/she would consider him/herself a vagabond as a result. Yaya Diallo and Mitchell Hall (1989: 94) write the following:

You do not have to perform acts of charity to benefit your society. Become yourself one less problem to your parents and neighbors, and this will be your greatest gift.” Naturally, the translation cannot reproduce the rhythms, rhymes, and plays on words of the original. The important point here is that in my culture art is allied with morality.

There is much wisdom in the above statement, yet not everyone may know that when he/she is no problem to his/her parents and neighbours he/she is already contributing much toward the development of the society. This is where the role of public enlightenment and education is very important to Iguru musicians. Song 45 provides enlightenment to the public concerning the giving of names to children. Being a direct satire to a specific person, we have replaced the name with another that gives the same meaning as the real names to enable readers comprehend the discussion. The subject's name, Ase-agerhe, literally means 'female bend,' which in the context of its use in this song means that female act stupidly. The narrator informs the audience how the subject was easily deceived and made to look really stupid in Lagos, because she could not reason properly to know that the invitation she received was not authentic. It should be noted that the Okpe do not consider their daughters stupid. In fact they believe that they take care of parents at old age more than male children.

The narrator then enlightens parents who are still procreating to always examine the names they give to their children, because the meaning of names can determine how a child lives when he/she grows. Song 47 (page A1 – 82) also provides enlightenment to the young adults in an implied manner. It says the children (youth) had lived unprofitable lives and they have come back to blame it on the evil forces. The poet intends to enlighten the young adults that they need to be careful and focused in their day to day living, in order to be successful; because the moment they succeed and prosper, they would have no need to put blames on anyone. This enlightenment is significant in the society, because very often, it is parents who suffer the blame and consequent attacks from their children and wards.

Song 60 has didactic significance, though it is a satire not directed to any specific person. The poet presents an analogy that anything made by man is replaceable if it becomes spoilt, but the things that are of nature (God's creation), particularly the human body, cannot be replaced. This analogy stimulates further reasoning amongst the audience so that each person takes caution on how to use his body in any form of work. Even farmers have a lesson to learn from this, because those who work in the farm daily, from early morning till late at evening (some till night), could fall gravely sick or pass on untimely.

6. 7. 2 Caution and counselling:

Mitchel Strumpf (1999:119 and 120) writes about the function of music in warning members of the society:

Mganda songs generally focus on relationships between men and women of the community. One popular *mganda* song, "Chidindo cha Jombo" (footprints of boots), tells of a jealous husband, suspicious of his wife, who demands to know the identity of the man who left footprints around his house. He believes this man is going about with his wife although she says the footprints were merely from a visitor searching for beer (p 119)...Songs accompanying *chimtali* are frequently directed toward a specific individual. One, for example, talks about a girl named Nasiwelo whose manfriend, the people of the community are warned, is a traitor to the state (p 120).

Igoru musicians warned and counselled their audiences against some wanton attitude and practices that could result in painful experiences. Some of the warnings and counsel are directed to individuals, communities and the entire Okpe nation. In traditional Okpe society, life experiences are shared, whether sweet or bitter, painful or joyful. Things that are capable of causing pains and grief to families and communities are therefore issues of concern to the

musicians. Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 11) re-invent the ideas of a poet as follows:

Wilfred Owen, an English poet who was killed in the First World War, wrote: 'All a poet can do today is warn.' Our second reading of R. E. G. Armattoe's poem showed us that we were faced with a warning by an African poet – a warning addressed to his fellow Africans. We realised that he was trying to awaken his own countrymen to dangers that were threatening their society. He believed that some of his countrymen were forgetting their high ideals, and his love of his country commanded him to speak uncomfortable truths to his people.

In the theme of song 3 (page A1 – 4), we find a warning from the poet to Okpe citizens. He/she expresses that some people were seeking to do evil against the royal father and certainly the ancestral spirits would avenge fearsomely. The poet therefore warns proverbially that 'it is what the hand causes that the head pays for.' The warning is clear that the penalty in doing evil against the king is death, and members ought to take precaution. The theme of song 25 (page A1 – 39) suggests another warning concerning the Itsekiri who contended the Sapele land with the Okpe in the 1940s. The poet says 'we shall pour out sand from the sack that we filled, which turned to insult us, so that it falls and rot there.' This decisive position of the poet appears to be a persuasive warning, calling on the leadership of the Okpe to order that the Itsekiri be dispossessed of all Okpe land they inhabit before they come back in warfare to contest the ownership again.

Song 26 (page A1 – 40) is also a warning to the Okpe who harbour the same people in various communities, and continue to have trade with them in the riverine areas. The poet queries 'do you associate with the Itsekiri?' and warns that 'the water would swallow' the hosts, if they do not take caution. The

implications of these warnings that manifested several years after are discussed in chapter nine. The theme of song 40 suggests that the subject and her mother were counselled concerning the paths the subject was following morally. In community life, Igoru musicians take part like any other members of the society in counselling clients and the reactions or results form bases for subsequent compositions. Other cases are where some other members give the counsel and in informal discussions inform the musicians about the outcome.

Ken Goodwin (1982: 44-45) *Understanding African Poetry: A Study of Ten Poets*, analyzes the poems of Christopher Okigbo in which counsel is offered as follows:

‘Elegy for Slit-drum’ and ‘Elegy for Alto’ are companion pieces, one in imitation of the chief African instrument, the other in imitation of the jazz orchestra (the alto saxophone). Both have Okigbo as poet (‘mythmaker’) and citizen within them... But even in ‘Elegy for Slit-drum’ the imagery is of melancholy import. ‘One tongue full of fire/one tongue full of stone’ balances enthusiasm for a new political spirit against the bleak political conservatism of the old order. The ‘panther’ of the coup has delivered only ‘a hare’ in the administration of General Aguiyi-Ironsi. The ‘elephant’ of the old order has been supplanted by the ‘mortars’ of the new military regime, which will presumably be more independent of British imperialism (Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa having been a close friend of the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson). But Okigbo is fearful of reprisals, of old scores that may yet be settled, so the motif throughout is ‘Condolences’ and he ends with advice to forget the details of the coup and be merciful.

Parents and guardians in the Okpe society normally send messages to instruct their children and wards to return home if they hear ill reports about their activities wherever they sojourn. This happens because of the concern they have for them, wanting them to prosper in their struggles and not involve in riotous

living or suffer under certain ill conditions. They believe somewhat that if they are close to them at home, they might be able to control their excesses and render some forms of assistance. In song 44 (page A1 – 72) the narrator presents a report that they counselled the subject earlier to return from Lagos and she refused. The narrator implies that if the subject had taken heed to the counsel and returned home life would have been better for him/her. He concludes that the subject continued in unhealthy practices and contacted a painful disease that had to be cured stressfully.

Song 67 (page A1 – 116) provides a warning to the Christian converts who began to transform the manifestations and characteristics of traditional worship into Christianity in new forms. The poet drives the criticism to a frantic point, arguing and recommending that a letter be sent to the missionaries in America to find out if the God they brought to Africa does possess them in similar manner in their land. He stresses the argument that whatever comes to us strangely as a new phenomenon or practice, if it over-thrills us, we need to examine it very well before taking it seriously. At the first instance the poet's criticism and caution suggests that the converts were trying to practice two religions together, implying that they had abandoned their own God, but could not leave out some of the usual practices of the traditional worship. He contends that they were leading themselves and others astray and had to warn them against such.

Song 80 (page A1 – 148) gives a counsel to the subject of the song-poem. The poet suggests that the subject was old and needed to have stopped meeting with any man. In the traditional society, when a woman loses her husband at old age, she could decide to remain in her husband's property or return to her parent's home. If she remains in her husband's residence, she continues with the

marriage bond and no man would find it easy coming around her, except the man's relations, particularly the one assigned to look after her welfare. But if she returns to her parent's home, she could then decide to have a concubinary partner if any comes around. The poet suggests that the subject was in the latter category and she was counselled to be conscious of her age and the resulting weakness in strength, but failed to take heed. The subject was found to often faint as a result of this strenuous exercise she ought to have stopped. The poet therefore implies that failure to accept counsel would always lead to painful and often shameful results and experiences.

Song 84 (page A1 – 152) is a warning to a subject who challenged an Igoru ensemble to a performance contest. The poet then suggests that one needs to examine him/herself carefully before throwing up challenges to others. According to the poet, the subject was not a handsome man, and such a challenge to prompt the opposing ensemble to compose a satire on his physical appearance in a manner that would deride him was seen to be funny. The warning provides a general provision from which others could learn quite a number of lessons. Those who are weak in physical strength, for instance, do not have to challenge those who are stronger to a fight, and those who are poor need not attempt to challenge the affluent, but hide their weaknesses in peaceful quietness.

The Onyeke Igoru ensemble in song 10 (page A1 – 21) counselled Idisi Adibo not to be worried about the criticism and accusations that were levelled against him as a musician. Members of the ensemble understood that those unkind critique and accusations were attempts to discourage the lead singer from Igoru musical performances and to defame him in the society. The ensemble, in this performance, stated that the lead singer performs music and the world calls him

a vagabond and philanderer. They had to counsel him proverbially that anybody who is destined to be great need not mind critiques and accusations, because enemies of progress are always there to bring up such inglorious issues that are capable of bringing one's downfall. The performer, Idisi Adibo, informed the researcher that this solidarity composition and public performance that offered counsel and encouragement really soothed his heart in those days of trials and he was indeed encouraged to keep up the spirit of Igoru musical performances.

6. 7. 3 Criticism and correction:

Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 10) remark that "In all countries – African, European, American, Far Eastern, alike – most poets are idealists. Their idealism makes them sensitive to the faults that they see in their own nation and quick to condemn those faults. They resent bitterly any failure to achieve the high standards that they value." Alan Waterman (1998: 483) writes on Fela Anikulapo Kuti referring to music as a socio-political weapon:

Fela's early recordings included love songs ("Lover"), risqué songs in pidgin English ("Na Poi"), and Yoruba songs based on proverbs and tales ("Alujon jon ki jon"). In the mid-1970s, Fela composed increasingly strident lyrics, attacking the excesses of foreign capitalism and Nigerian leaders. It was then that the textual content of Afro-Beat clearly separated from the mainstream of Yoruba popular music. Fela's political goals – shouted by his trademark slogan, "Music is a weapon" – led him to compose more in pidgin English, to reach a wider international audience.

Igoru musicians believe that everything that any human being does requires moderation, even if it is permissible within the ethos of the land, thus they made efforts through their compositions and performances to criticise and correct some excesses of some community members. The habit of drunkenness was criticised in song 18, page A1 – 32). In Okpe, though the locally brewed gin plays a major

role in both ritual and social activities, one is expected to drink moderately and remain conscious. To correct and build restraints into the psyche of the audience regarding excess intake of alcohol, the poet structured the poem in a repulsive description.

Deidre Hansen (1993: 55-56) examines a satirical music typology in the Southern Africa and argues that:

Xesibe *indlavini* groups had a reputation for wildness and elusiveness, and for their general disrespect for tribal elders, which was often expressed in songs of ridicule and protest. Certain xesibe headmen and sub-headmen were however, tolerated by xesibe *indlavini* groups, and it was due largely to their co-operation and basic goodwill that the district proved to be one of the most productive areas, research-wise... Even community members who were the targets for many of their songs... admitted to me (albeit grudgingly) that *indlavini* were great (*-khulu*) musicians (*abavumi*)... A broad sampling of common themes includes: financial problems, (e. g. the obligatory control of *indlavini* wages by tribal elders); difficulty in obtaining girls; problems with raising bridewealth; grievances about the abuse of power by persons in authority... Songs with these themes were aimed at deflecting changes in the behaviour of 'erring' persons, at alleviating and even removing perceived social injustices, and even crystallizing demands which might bring about such changes.

Igoru musicians were frank in their criticism, but there is no evidence that they were disrespectful to authorities. Oral accounts available to us reveal however that they turned out their critique without fear or favour, thus amongst the customary court chiefs of the 1940s to 1960s, only a few who performed well in accord with the societal ethos of justice and equity to fundamental human rights were exonerated from Igoru satire. We discussed earlier in this chapter one of

the songs composed as a satire of a lady customary chief whose activities were found falling short of the societal values as an example.

Deidre Hansen (1993: 59) writes about the critique of Christian religious activities by African musicians:

The following walking song is an example of their effective use of *-gwaba*. It is titled *Sambulal' ugogo* (Let's kill grandmother), the same words constituting the full text of the song. Major targets for ridicule and even lampooning included Roman Catholic missionaries and matriarchal elders, notably grandmothers (*omakhulu*), who were regarded by *indlavini* with contempt. A major occupation of *indlavini* was looking for girls. Within the *indlavini* groups, sexual attachments were strictly controlled by laws (*imithetbho*) which were made known to all members on joining the group... This was not being strictly observed, nor was it being enforced, since the girl friends of *indlavini* rebelled against the custom. They also rebelled against the traditional physical examination by older women – usually of grandmother status – to ascertain whether or not virginity was intact, after *imitshotsho* dance parties.

Song 4 (page A1 – 5) is a criticism of the Christians, particularly those of the Kingdom Hall Society, who go about on Sundays preaching from street to street and house to house. Rather than approach the critique in a direct manner, the poet took an indirect approach saying that they had given themselves to Ediḡ, the God of the land and would preach this through the streets the day before the traditional worship. The poet could have said they would preach on the traditional worship day, but according to Okpe tradition, it is a holy day and worshippers are not expected to go to farm nor loiter about in the streets but be present at the worship arena. This implies that preaching through the streets does not conform

to the available practice in the culture, and therefore seems absurd, thus the critique.

In song 41 line 7 the poet uses the name of a town in its correct form. As already stated in chapter two, Sapele was originally, and is still known by the indigenes, as Urhiapele, but wrongly spelt by the colonial masters who did not understand how to represent the Okpe double consonant 'rh' sound in writing. This usage in effect serves as a sort of correction for the Okpe audience, particularly the young ones who might not know the correct name of the town and its meaning.

6. 7. 4 Chronological reference:

Ruth Stone (1998: 133) writes her views and those of Dale Eickelman (1977:44) concerning chronological references in Africa, where events are mainly linked with earlier natural events:

Fundamentally, the activities of the agricultural cycle may impinge. During periods of heavy work, events are less frequent. Around harvesttime [not separated in original] in many African communities, after the work is completed, events proliferate... The latter situation becomes more tied to the calendar and less to the social activities that serve to anchor life ... Events are sometimes remembered as occurring "before the sunset (prayer)," "at dawn," or "just before the market," but they are not ordered in a more abstract chronological sequence. Events like "Almed's death," "the famine," "the day the airplanes chased us," "before the Mahzen (government) came," "the sunup," "Hammu's wedding," and when Sharef was small" are...largely unintelligible to outsiders since they can be translated only awkwardly into lineal concepts of time (Ruth Stone 1998: 133).

Our discussion does not follow the first part of the above argument, but the latter part of it. The Okpe oral tradition calls events to remembrance by referring to

other natural events that happened around the same time. Chronological references are therefore made to death, eclipse, marriage, birth, war, etc, whenever events and histories are traced in Okpe. In Igoru, there are direct and indirect chronological references. The direct ones refer to specific events that evoked certain reactions, while the indirect references refer to such events without mentioning them. The Igoru song 'Edion, save us' is an example of indirect chronological reference. The composer merely remarked that they had given themselves to the God of the land for protection and the day before the next traditional worship they would go about preaching through the streets of the town. Since preaching through the streets is not customary to the Okpe traditional religion system, one deduces the reference chronologically to the 19thc period [around 1852] and early 20thc when Christianity came to Okpe land and converts were sought through door to door preaching. Deidre Hansen (1993: 76) argues that:

In the absence of written sources, and given the potential fickleness or bias of individual informants, lyrics are thought to provide reliable insights into the doings and concerns of rural people, since these lyrics are likely to be retained only "if they express popular attitudes and opinions" (Harries 1987: 95)... To isolate lyrics as sources of "true" historical data – about opposition to domination, for example – is thus to deny both their embeddedness within the performance context and the capacity of performance itself to alter, influence between text and context... Writers like Clifford (1988) and Barber and de Moraes Farais (1989) accuse some such studies of limiting their idea of context too much to the microdynamics of performance situations and to the immediate conditions surrounding such situations, and thus of ignoring the broader socio-historical conditions within which performances are embedded (pp 76-77).

The various songs that made reference to the conception of the Okpe people about Igoru musicians are found to be indirect chronology, since they inform later generations that some years ago, musicians were generally considered to be vagabonds and lazy people. The short profiles of some Igoru musicians who composed and performed these songs and the song texts provide us with information that this conception lasted awhile for reasons we have discussed earlier in this chapter. Some of the songs that made references to the coming of the Itsekiri to sojourn in some parts of Okpe land and the subsequent contention for the land of Sapele are all chronological. They inform the younger generation that the Itsekiri are aliens in Okpe land, particularly with reference to the Sapele land case that was won by the Okpe in 1943. Igoru songs also refer to the period of the extremely long Okpe interregnum and the consequent scorning from the Itsekiri neighbours.

Other chronological references are made to the political processes and subsequent crowning of Esezi II in 1945 and his death in 1970. The process that brought Chief Dimingo Ejinyerien to the Orodje (king) stool in 1972 was also referred to by Igoru musicians, as well as the cooperation he enjoyed among his relations and chiefs. Igoru musicians drew references to the Second World War and the Nigerian Civil War which occurred in the 1940s and 1960s respectively. They inform the audiences about the misdemeanour that came in vogue during and after the wars, as they were contrary to the Okpe ethos. In one of the songs, the poet drew reference to taxation which was introduced in Nigeria in 1927. The poet though did not mention the advent of tax payments and the people's reactions to it, the idea and memory of its dread in history is alluded as he/she remarks that the Okpe now have a king and the scorners would have to pay their tax to the Okpe king that year. Igoru music also made references to the

sojourning of several Okpe in Lagos from the 1920s to the 1950s. References were also drawn to the reactions of the public to Igoru satire in the 1950s and 1960s.

Song 37 (page A1 – 60) consists of a historical account on the period around 1917 when the Okwovu Oduado community Igoru ensemble won an Igoru music competition over the Jeddo at Warri. This history is remarkable, because the narrator remarks that Jeddo had been known to have had great masters of Igoru music. The poet expresses that ‘We have been hearing the fame of Jeddo that they own Igoru music,’ meaning that they have had the greatest masters of the music typology. It therefore meant so much to this community that at this time in history they won Igoru competition over the great masters of Jeddo community. Song 74 (page A1 – 140) is a short one collected from Jeddo, where the narrator acclaims that the Jeddo Igoru attracts great audience at all times. The narration employs a metaphor drawing allusion from the experience of nature that the cricket does not fall down quietly; it must cry and people would hear. Although this assertion seems to be self-esteem, it corroborates the acknowledgement of the Okwovu community cited above. This therefore suggests that at certain time in history, the Jeddo community was known to have produced the ‘best’ Igoru musicians in Okpe. We note in this study, however, that the Mereje and Elume Igoru musicians as well as Ughwoton, Okokporo and Ugborhen Igoru musicians were also very skilled performers.

Song 39 (page A1 – 62) is in two folds. In the eleven-verse song, the narrator performed two narratives together. The two have similar theme and therefore link one another. The narrator presents the first narrative in the first two verses and uses the third to introduce the next. The narrator’s expression, “We have finished

this narration, we are now going to sing of Nabutete” suggests the historical practice of Igoru music that Onabutete had just come in sight, arriving the scene of performance. We have discussed earlier that Igoru musicians focus on subjects who are present or absent at the performance venue and where the subjects are present, they point fingers to identify them amid the crowd. The narrator, in this performance, gives a historical account that Onabutete was pregnant for Ovbravbra’s son of Obalende Lagos and when nobody had been aware that she was pregnant, a military ship landed Apapa wharf Lagos and Onabutete ran to the scene. One soldier then proposed to have a relationship with her and she agreed.

The narrator goes on with the story and finally suggests that the ancestral spirits were angry with the adulterous practice; thus made Onabutete to experience very difficult labour at the time of delivery. In Okpe culture as stated under tactile imagery above, if a woman commits adultery before or during pregnancy, the ancestral spirits would cause her to die in labour or cause the baby to die in her womb before or during hard labour. And if she dies during delivery, she had to be buried dishonourably in the bush at the outskirts of the town. The narrator here suggests that the baby died in the womb of the subject; thus the expression “As much sex as you had that killed the baby in your womb, come to confess it”. The historical value of this narrative is that it addresses and documents an event in the life of a particular person and lays bare before younger generations that ancestral spirits react fearsomely to such vice in the Okpe culture.

6. 7. 5 Entertainment, restraint and drive:

Deidre Hansen (1993: 59) argues that xesibe *indlavini* protest songs are not intended to have any entertainment value. This is contrary to what happens in

Igoru music. Even when the songs are satirical, the composers still consider the value of entertainment very important. They ensure that the text of the songs and all other musical and extra-musical elements that are capable of stimulating a good sense of humour are contained in the songs. Listening to some of the songs could make one, even a researcher, suddenly burst into laughter at some points when the performance is in progress. This is possible because of the witty wording of the songs in manners that create some great fun, though jesting. It is indeed evident in track 22 of the attached audio CD where the researcher and some members of the audience and performing group burst into laughter at a point during the narration. Mary Barber (1970: M18) writes:

There is no short cut to the enjoyment of poetry. The only approach is an attentive reading, [and listening, mine] poem by poem, remembering always that the poet is attempting to express personal *feeling* through a pattern of words, in which their order, their associations, and their verbal music are all of the utmost significance...the artist's task is to translate the inarticulate cry into significant images, patterns and forms which convey their import with precision and beauty...We must remember first and foremost that poet normally uses words not literally, but with a figurative meaning. He loves to speak of one thing as if it were another.

Igoru musicians use several figures of speech, imagery and sound effects as discussed earlier in this chapter to thrill their audiences. Even the very critical critiques of socio-moral behaviour directed to specific persons were well received as forms of entertainment to the audience, because though real names could be used, some imagery were normally created to criticise one thing as if it were another. It was this aspect of the entertainment that charged the audience to always come together to enjoy themselves in the satirical oral narratives. Until the abuse of the true use of satire which later brought about conflict between

innocent victims and Igoru musicians, both performers and audiences used to be joyful finding real entertainment in the performances of Igoru. As we have stated earlier, this entertainment essence made young men to climb to the top of palm and coconut trees to view Igoru performances. Holroyd Burton and C. J. Chacksfield (1979: 70) remark that:

Traditional poems and songs in all countries tell stirring stories, or express strong emotions such as love, hate or jealousy, or depict intense states of mind such as adoration, ecstasy or despair. The strong rhythms of the verses are most effective in communicating experiences of this nature. Excited by the insistent and reiterated beat, the hearers are receptive to the tense atmosphere that is created. They enter eagerly into the world opened up by the poem.

Igoru music tells stories of political development, love affairs, dedication, faithfulness, drunkenness, envy and miserly activities to stir up emotions and despair among the audience. The derisive aspect of the performances, entertaining as they seem, built two kinds of restraints in the audience later on, particularly when the use of Igoru satire became abused. The first level of restraint was positive in that members led a wary life to avoid getting involved in those behaviours that go contrary to the ideals of the society, and to avoid becoming a subject of Igoru public satire.

The second level is the restraint that comes with fear of being an incidental victim of the satire in situations where one might be derided for the things he/she knows nothing about, or on the features of his/her appearance. This kind of restraint was revealed in song 51 (page A1 – 86) as the poet narrates that two subjects were worried about the satire and could not come out of their rooms. The poet states that one of the subjects complained that, though he is handsome, if Igoru

musicians perform a satire against him, he would not be able to sleep. Igoru narratives as stated earlier are always a report of events that unfold in the society, therefore, this song gives the audience information about the dread of the satires. This aspect of the restraints was unhealthy to the emotional balance of community members. Norbert Nowotny (1993: 105) writes that:

The soul music of Aretha Franklin and Percy Sledge which reached South Africa in about 1967 was experienced spiritually and understood as a “glorification of (the) unique musical and social qualities of Black people”. A performance by the Inne Laws at Baragwanath Hospital “sent the audience sprawling on the ground, some sat shaking on the floor, some lay prostrate on the floor and shook violently, some stood still with tears streaming down their cheeks when they played their popular *Soweto Soul Music* [italics in original].”

There are oral accounts that the severity of Igoru satire pricked the emotions of some victims sharply that they wept openly in the public during the performances. Others went to their homes downhearted, ruminating over the satires that were composed and performed about them. All these made members of the communities to be careful not to do funny things that go against the values of the society. Alan Merriam (1964: 190 and 193) examines the use of song texts, particularly those with vulgar tendencies, in driving zeal and will in human beings by creating some kind of fear in the psyche of the listeners who are expected to take certain actions:

Margret Green reports for the Nigerian Ibo that the women of the village occasionally come together in order to judge a woman suspected of stealing from another member of the group. In doing so, they gather at the home of the accused; Green notes that in order to summon all the women to the judging the group sang a song on a particular occasion she witnessed: “Women who will not come out in this place, let millipede go into her sex organs, let earthworm go into her

sex organs.” Green comments that “such things would be said on no ordinary occasion to a woman, but were used here to induce the women strongly to turn out in force” (p 190). What is important in all the cases cited above is that song itself gives the freedom to express thoughts, ideas, and comments which cannot be stated baldly in the normal language situation. It appears, then, that song texts, because of the special kind of license that singing apparently gives, afford an extremely useful means for obtaining kinds of information which are not otherwise easily accessible (p 193).

Images in Igoru music as discussed under imagery have assisted the composers in building fear and restraints into the psyche of their audiences to give them increased sense of consciousness about the ideals that must be kept in the society. To some degree, human beings need some kind of forceful approach to check their excesses, thus the idea of satire is a relevant feature in human societies and in Igoru musical culture in particular. Some inimical activities that people often get involved in, particularly for selfish reasons at the expense of others require a check, in order to keep a safe and healthy society in place. Ordinary words of counsel are never sufficient for some people to draw lessons from, but when they see that expository public reproach is attached to it they could be forced to stop getting involved in them. Igoru music has been a useful instrument in this form.

6. 7. 6 Praise and commendation:

Alvin Peterson (1993: 121) writes that: “The tradition of praise singing is an important one in many African states, most notably, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger (Nketia 1975: 199) and South Africa. They are oral [praise singers] historians, the preservers of culture”. Igoru music performs the functions of praise and commendation to deserving members, in order to encourage such persons

who are doing well in the society to continue in their good deeds, as well as stimulate others to emulate them. Igoru musicians from various quarters of Okpe comment that all the traditional and customary court chiefs who were perverse in deciding cases that were brought before them were criticised through Igoru performances, while the few who did well were commended, though only few of the praise songs could be remembered today. Okro Okobabala of Ugbibidaka, for instance, was said to be most kind, generous and straightforward among the chiefs in Elume Division that Igoru musicians in that area, particularly Unugbrogodo Ekure, sang to praise him and exempt him from the satires. The researcher demanded for this song and the present day performers could not remember it.

The narrative on Orichedje and Orogho, which we have discussed earlier in this chapter is however a good example of commendation in Igoru music. The composer commends the marital faithfulness of Orogho to her husband throughout his life time, in spite of the fact that they did not have any children. The poet did not only praise her, but blessed her with good wishes that in her next world, in the line of reincarnation, she would re-marry the same husband who cherished her love and faithfulness and they would have nine children. In song 28, we also find a posthumous acknowledgement of a generous indigene of Mereje, Ariemurugbe, who unfortunately died mysteriously. The poet states that the man was philanthropic to many members of the community and it was therefore sad that he died in a manner that prevented his beneficiaries from giving him a befitting burial. Another posthumous commendation is found in song 64 where an Igoru musician, Ikiki Eyerunja of Onyeke was acknowledged for his kindness to both members of his ensemble and other members of the society.

The composer remarked that, because of his generosity, he deserved to live perpetually and not to die.

Songs 70 and 71 (pages A1 – 126 and 132) are also songs of praise and commendation. The first is a commendation to Julius, the brother of Orhoro I (the Orodje of Okpe) who selflessly stood for him, Chief Dimingo Ejinyerien to become king. The poet narrates how he laboured, travelling to places to see, inform and persuade all the people that matter in the process of king making in the Okpe culture and the Nigerian political setting. This acknowledgement was considered necessary by the musician, because some brothers would not run around their relations who aspire to great heights, but would seek to work against them and ensure they fail. The second was a praise song dedicated to Chief Edwin Ayomano of Sapele who was also very supportive to the king (Orhoro I). The poet narrates how the subject was always in the company of the Orodje, both in planning and in execution of plans, as well as travelling around to ensure success in the administration. Song 68 (page A1 – 118), though a dirge, is also a posthumous praise stating that the king (Esezi II) who died in 1966 served Okpe very well that his death was therefore lamentable, while the memory of his good works would last indelibly a long time.

6. 7. 7 Defence and immunity:

Commenting on some functions of music in the society, Laura Arntson (1998: 503) argues:

Performance as entertainment can make people happy...Others will enjoy hearing the *bala* and the words because it reminds them of past times and of other occasions for praise singing... Because, in part, praise singing occurs during parties, celebrations, or other events that call for entertainment, a *jeli* carries a certain immunity

from blame, and can therefore criticize and advise others, all in the guise of praise.

Igoru musicians, in their performances, defended their political system, their territorial land mass, traditional religion and themselves from various attacks. Many Igoru songs make reference to the political institution, where the issue of the traditional ruler [the king] was central. In the first period of Igoru music, the musicians did not support the assassination of the king, though he was reported to be a great terror even to his own subjects. This is evident in song 3 where the poet sought to exonerate him/herself while defending the king in his rights. The composer states that the king was peaceful in his palace while the forces sought to do evil against him. The expression 'witches and wizards' can be understood here to mean all who planned any evil against the king, physically or otherwise.

We recall that the activities of the Okpe Union in Lagos, a Union which had all the Igoru musicians who were resident in Lagos as members, were channelled toward the process of reinstating the Okpe political system that collapsed as a result of the assassination of the despot king who reigned centuries ago. One of the ethnic groups around the Okpe area, the Itsekiri, scorned the Okpe for not having a king for a long period of time. Igoru musicians and others took the matter seriously and finally when a new king was crowned in 1972, the musicians celebrated and performed a rejoinder to inform the scorners that the Okpe now have a king. Igoru musicians were also much concerned about their cultural status and survival amongst their neighbours. The performers took up the challenge of the Uvwie (Effurun) who remarked in Lagos that the Okpe had no musical culture. Igoru musicians came together to compose and stage several performances in Lagos from the 1920s to the 1940s; those resident at home and those who returned from Lagos later sustained the performances.

Igoru musicians also kept the spirit of defence in relation to the issues of their landed properties. The musicians reacted to the Itsekiri invasion of Sapele in the early 1940s. They composed songs that reminded the invaders how they were ushered into the land in magnanimity and how unfaithful they were becoming to their hosts. We also find the musicians defending the Okpe traditional religion through their performances. The composition earlier discussed which calls on Edion to protect his people and those that condemned the prayer and preaching practices of the Christian worship all evince reactions in defence of the traditional religion. The musicians tried to suggest how effective, powerful and dependable their God and ancestral spirits are in the various songs that make reference to these features. Deidre Hansen (1993: 59) argues that;

The use of *ukugwaba* was not for purely musical reasons, as I had previously concluded. It served to intensify the musical expression of protest and criticism, levelled at such an eminent personage-the Xesibe Paramount Chief. To have lodged a formal, spoken protest with the Chief would have been to invite his anger and that of his councillors, and also incur a heavy fine. By singing their protest, the *indlavivni* were able to voice it in a most effective way without incurring Royal wrath and punishment. And the use of *ukugwaba* was also a very expressive and effective means of sharply criticising an important person, without actually articulating those criticisms in so many intelligible words. It is for such reason that the Xesibe *indlavini* employed *-gwaba* for virtually all their songs of protest, ridicule and even insult.

Igoru musicians also defended themselves in several ways, particularly when they were regarded as vagabonds in the early period. We have not found any account of direct physical attack or confrontation against Igoru musicians for performing satire. The evidence before us is referent to spiritual attacks instead and to this Igoru musicians provided defence in their songs. Unugbrogodo Ekure,

for instance, composed a song to defend himself as a musician. The women Igoru ensemble of Deghele Elume also adopted this song (see song 9, page A1 - 19) to defend the music profession. Just as the composer puts it, they reiterate that, though the public call the great Igoru composer/performer, Unugbrogodo Ekure, vagabond, they had all heard that description, but would not stop telling the world about the things they had seen going wrong in the society. In the context of that performance, the named musician represents all the Igoru musicians in Okpe, thus the defence becomes general. The same ensemble composed and performed song 7 (page A1 – 16) in proverbial themes to defend the Igoru music profession, stating that the Igoru musicians are talented people who brought their gifts with them from heaven and would surely survive, irrespective of envy and contempt from the public. They blessed Unugbrogodo and themselves, implying they blessed all Igoru musicians to prosper in their performances, thereby encouraging them to be undaunted keeping up the profession.

6. 7. 8 Socio-Cultural identities:

Lara Allen (1993: 1) writes that people living through periods of fundamental social change generally suffer deep crises of identity. “Their search for a way of making sense of their existence manifests in cultural forms such as musical style”. Music generally as an aspect of culture, functions in identifying cultural and ethnic groups, and in the spirit of performers-audience participation creates the sense of belonging to an identified group. This is not an exception in Igoru music. In fact, the Okpe in Lagos took Igoru music as mark of Okpe ethnic identity, thus it was selected amongst other music typologies of the culture to represent it, both in social and political-oriented activities. Historically as in chapter four, at the time the Uvwie abused the Okpe that they had no songs they

could perform in their language, the challenge brought Igoru music to foreground in marking the identity of the Okpe people in Lagos.

Lara Allen (1996: 54) remarks further on similar roles of South African *kwela* music as follows:

For its creators, *kwela* was also an expression of personal and collective identity. Prior to Spokes Mashiyane's recording success, pennywhistling generally fell into John Storm Robert's category of 'personal music, in which one or maybe two people play largely for their own self-expression and amusement'. Occasionally musicians attempted an expose of their social circumstances: typically this took the form of short cameos in spoken introductions, or in titles reflecting aspects of township life (P 54)...

However, the most interesting relationship between *kwela* and identity developed in retrospect. As part of the political mobilisation of the eighties, 'the people's roots' once again became primarily important... *Kwela* was re-articulated with this romanticised view, and the pennywhistle became, not only "one of the symbols of black South African music", but an emblem for the whole decade and all its idealised possibilities (p 58).

Both in the corporate activities of the Okpe Union in Lagos, Sapele and elsewhere, and in individual efforts towards identity, Igoru music served as a vessel for expressing the feelings of common quest and interest. The characteristics of the music enabled it function in enhancing assimilation of human relationships and objectified goals. Association with one another to identify with the needs, problems, aspirations and prospects of every member was an achievement in Igoru functional essence within the ensembles and the Unions under which some of the ensembles operated in the urban centres. Robin Wells (1996: 67 and 69) in his investigation of the relationships between styles of music and the notion of identity writes:

I wish to explore some of the shifts in the styles of Sesotho music-making that have occurred in recent years and to study the way in which modern identities are reflected in current modes of musical expression. It is my contention that style is inextricably linked to notions of identity and is mobilised as a means of objectifying values in form or performance. As such, the study of musical style can provide a valuable insight into the aspirations and values of a social group. (p 67).

...The train then became assimilated into the repertoire of the song-subjects, and assimilated in a manner typical of Sesotho poetry, that is, through analogy with the natural world (p 67)...Music then is a vessel in which we invest experiential values and aspirations. As such, it is a constantly transforming means by which we define our equally transforming social identities (p 69).

Igoru music does not only seek to identify the people's culture, it further upholds and checks the socio-moral values that identify the society and the people. The themes centre on issues of socio-cultural practices and events that manifest around them.