



The Family and the Igbo Novel

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ABSTRACT

Due to Africa's colonial experience and the adoption of European languages as official languages in Anglo-phone and Franco-phone African countries, most modern African literature is expressed in these European languages to the effect that not much attention is paid to literature in indigenous African languages. Beginning from the premise that African literature in indigenous African languages truly exists, this paper strengthens the argument by citing the example of Igbo literature and subscribing to the view of some scholars (Ugonna, 1978, 1982; Maduka, 1981; Emenanjo, 1982a, 1982b, 1986; Uzochukwu, 1999) that what qualifies a piece of creative work as Igbo literature – Igbo novel, Igbo poetry and Igbo drama – is that it must be written in Igbo language. This question of existence of literature in indigenous African languages is further buttressed by showing that Igbo literary works, like those of other societies, address themselves to societal issues, particularly the issues of Igbo world. The paper notes that the Igbo family is among those societal issues that can constitute the thematic interest of the writer. To illustrate this, four novels written in Igbo language by male writers are selected and examined with emphasis on the portrayal of the Igbo family in them. The analysis explores the attributes of the Igbo family as highlighted by each of the novelists in their works and the finding is that the novels depict a good deal of human social behaviour as it relates to the family in Igbo traditional society. Some of the attributes depicted by the novelists, which seem to give the impression that the family relationship in Igbo society is fraught with conflicts, are, however, no longer tenable because modern Igbo society, as at today, has been moderated by western education and other forms of modernization.

Keywords: 'The Igbo family', 'the Igbo novel', 'the Igbo novelist', 'Igbo traditional society'.

INTRODUCTION

We shall begin this paper by explicating some keywords used in it, namely, the 'Igbo family', the 'Igbo novel', 'the Igbo novelist', and then proceed to look at the main thrust of the paper – portrayal of the Igbo family in Igbo novel.

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The Igbo Family

'The Igbo' on whom this study is focused are one of three major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria; the two others being the Hausa and the Yoruba. The Igbo inhabit the whole of South East and parts of Delta state and Rivers state in South-South Nigeria. The people speak a common language, Igbo, which has dialectal variations in the different localities or communities that speak the language. So in this discussion, 'Igbo' refers to both the people and their language.

In terms of its structure and the type of kinship ties it maintains, the Igbo family does not differ much from the conventional family found in any other society. According to Ejiofor (1981), the typical Igbo (immediate) family comprises the father, mother and children. Ogbalu (1981) agrees with Ejiofor but points out that the family in Igbo view is not constituted by the man, his wife (or wives) and children only; it includes the man's servants, slaves and those he feeds for. The father is the accepted head of the family. The traditional Igbo family normally lives in a walled compound, comprising at least two houses: one for the father of the family and the other for the mother (Ejiofor, 1981). The grown-up sons share with their father while the daughters and their little brothers who are still tender live with their mother.

However, in modern Igbo society, no distinction is made between the father's and the mother's houses as a modern house, with a living room and a number of other rooms can serve the entire family. More than any other unit of kinship structure and relationship within the Igbo society, the family maintains the greatest level of intimacy and solidarity among its members. The Igbo view family institution as a very important one because it is the foundation of the Igbo society. Its importance does not only lie in it being an agent of cultural conditioning of the young members of society, but also in the fact that marriage and procreation, which take place at the family level, make the unit indispensable for the continuity of the Igbo race. The family unit is therefore unique because of its vital role in Igbo society.

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African literature is categorized into two: oral and written. Oral literature is mentally composed and rendered by means of spoken word. The written aspect involves written scripts, which could be written in an indigenous African or a European language by an African. African literature in an indigenous African language is distinct from African literature in English or any other non-African language even though such language may be spoken in African continent. Ngugi (1986:4-30) addresses the questions of what qualifies as 'African Literature' in terms of its language of expression. He subscribes to Obi Wali and David Diop's case against the use of European languages as the media of African literary expression, reiterating that African Literature can only be written in African languages. He uses the term "Afro-European Literature" to refer to "Literature written by Africans in European

languages in the era of imperialism” (p-27). His disapproval of the use of European languages as a determinant for what should be regarded as African Literature is brilliantly articulated and reinforced in his following questions:

But by our continuing to write in foreign languages, paying homage to them, are we not on the cultural level continuing that neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit? What is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without European languages? (p.26).

Apart from African literature in European languages or in Ngugi’s words, ‘Afro-European Literature’, there abound volumes of creative works that are written in indigenous African languages: Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Swahili, etc. In other words, African literature in African languages is thriving alongside African literature in European languages. Again, these works of art in African languages are society oriented, meaning that they explore themes that revolve around society, addressing such issues as poverty, famine, economic depression, political upheavals, conflicts, colonialism, ethnicity, racism, and slavery.

In spite of the glaring evidence of the existence of literary work in African languages, discussants of African literature over the years have devoted more attention to either the oral aspect of African literature or the African literature in European languages where the works of Soyinka, Achebe, Awonoor, Armah and others are usually cited as examples. And because discussions of African literature have most of the times centred on these writers who use English and other European languages as media, the impression, especially outside the continent of Africa appears to be that modern African literature is expressible only in European languages. This has indeed led to underrating and neglecting the existence of literary works in African languages in the discussion of African literature (Ogunsina, 1992)¹. As an authentic mode of literary expression, we feel strongly that written creative works in indigenous African languages are too important to be left out in any discussion of African literature.

As has been shown by some Igbo literary scholars (Emenanjo, 1982a²; Emenanjo, 1982b; Ugonna, 1982³; Uzochukwu, 1999⁴; Nwadike, 2002⁵), creative literature in Igbo language exists. Emenanjo (1986:8) points out that:

There exists creative literature IN Igbo and... in repertoire now available, one can find works that are as mature and far reaching as classics in English, French, Afro-Saxon and Afro-French literatures.

Igbo literature as Ogbulogo (1999:126) explains refers to “all literary works written in Igbo language, and which address themselves to the issues of Igbo

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world.” Ogbulogo is right but we need to add that the issues to which Igbo literary works address themselves are not restricted to the issues of the Igbo world. The issues of the Igbo world may be predominant but the literary works also address issues that concern the entire humankind. In other words, there are human concerns and experiences that are universal to which Igbo literary works equally address themselves.

The Igbo scholars we have referred to above insist that what should be taken as Igbo literature must be written in Igbo language even if the author is not of Igbo extraction. The emphasis here is that the language of expression must be Igbo. This writer is strongly in support of the view that African literatures must be written in African languages, otherwise, “they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity and frustration” (Wali as cited in Emenyonu, 1978:190). We also agree with Ugonna (1978:3) that “each language is the best medium of expressing the worldview and the way of life of the people using the language... a people’s thought expressed in alien tongue loses its genuineness.”

This writer is of the opinion that we can however accept the inclusion of works written in non-indigenous African languages as African literature in so far as such works are creative works that mirror African culture, African thought, and African perception of the world, life and existence. To this end, we can identify two broad categories of written African literature, namely, ‘African Literature in European Languages’ and African Literature in Indigenous African Languages’. Furthermore, we can be more specific and talk of ‘African Literature in English’ as it is used in some university Departments of English to differentiate between works that embody characteristic features of African society from those of European society. It is under ‘African Literature in English’ that such writers of Igbo extraction as Chinua Achebe, Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, etc., neatly fall. Being specific will make ‘Igbo literature’ stand out as an aspect of African literature in indigenous African Language, and remove all the confusions and unnecessary arguments, which the issue of language of expression has generated over the years.

A point should, however, be made that those scholars who prefer their works written in English to be referred to as ‘Igbo Literature in English’ may do well to have them translated into Igbo language and also ensure that the content of such works express mainly the culture, ideas philosophy and worldview of the Igbo as Chukwuemeka Ike has done in the translation of his *Porter’s Wheel* into *Anu Ebu Nwa*. Apart from being an Igbo-medium work now, its content without contradiction can also make one now regard it as an authentic Igbo novel. The Igbo novel, as part of African Literature, is imaginative work of art conceived by a native or non-native Igbo speaker and written in Igbo ‘or at least be translated into the language’ (Ugonna, 1982:2). The “significant thing”, according to Ugonna, is that ‘the text of an Igbo novel, poem or drama should be in Igbo.’

The four novels we have selected to examine in this paper - Ubesie's *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala* (1973), Nzeako's *Nkọlị* (1973), Madụekwe's *Uru Nwa* (1978) and Nzeako's *Juochi* (1981) – are all written in Igbo language and therefore satisfy, in terms of their medium of expression, what constitutes authentic Igbo novels. The scope of this paper is, therefore, limited to novels written in Igbo language.

THE IGBO NOVELIST AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

The Igbo novelist is a creative writer who chooses the framework of the novel genre for his literary creation while his environment refers to the general locale or the scene in which the actions in his work occur. For the Igbo novelist whose work is examined in this essay, his environment also refers to both traditional and modern Igbo society and the prevailing social and cultural circumstances that shape his views. The socio-cultural environment in which the literary artist lives, his religious beliefs, political situations, historical incidents and other experiences of human life that affect him, are often re-enacted or alluded to in shaping his construction into a literary piece. Emenyonu (1978:188) is right in stating that “Igbo written literature emanates from Igbo life and language. It embraces the social, political, economic and emotional forms through which Igbo life is revealed.” The family, like any other subject in society, attracts the focus of the Igbo novelist. The structure and attributes of the Igbo family could be pictured in Igbo novel. Family related problems such as divorce, infidelity, co-wives' rivalry and antagonism, different forms of domestic violence and the effects of broken homes, as experienced in real life, are also some of the themes noticeable in the Igbo novel. We shall now examine how the Igbo family is portrayed in our selected novels.

The Igbo family in Ubesie's *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*(1973)

The Igbo family portrayed in *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala* is a moderate and enlightened one, living in the city, Enugu. Chike, the father, Ada, his wife, and their two children, Chukwuma and Obianuju constitute this family. Chike is a successful businessman - an industrialist, and his wife, a civil servant. Their children are still very young.

At first, this family is depicted as one whose relationship is characterized by love, peace and unity. The man is by all standards wealthy and comfortable, loving and caring for his wife as the following excerpt reveals:

Chike ji ego. O nwere moto. O bi n'ezigbo ụlọ dị mma. Oriaku Chike Ada na-aza abughị naanị n'ọnụ. Ọ na-eri akụ Chike kwetakwa na ọ na-eri ya n'eziokwu. Ọ bụ ginị ga-eme ka ya na Chike ghara ibi nke ọma, hụkwa onwe ha n'anya? N'uche Ada o

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nweghi. Ada nwere ihe niile nwaanyi na-atu anya n'aka di ya ...
(Ubesie, 1973:18)

(Chike is rich. He has a car. He lives in a good house. Addressing Ada as Chike's wife is not for nothing. She enjoys Chike's wealth and affirms it. What will prevent her and Chike from living well and loving themselves? In Ada's opinion, nothing will cause that. Ada has everything a wife expects from her husband). The peaceful atmosphere that pervades Chike's family is noticed by other people who wish to be like them. It is said that "Dika ndi no n'akuku na-ele ha anya si hu ha, ha na-ebi n'udo. Ha anaghi ese okwu..." (Ubesie, 19) (As perceived by other people, they live peacefully and do not quarrel). As some men do in some Igbo families, Chike asks his wife to stop working since her salary is too meagre to afford anything, and since he (Chike) is comfortable enough to take care of her needs.

The outbreak of the civil war, which forces Chike to leave the city with his family, brings a reversal of fortune for him because the war disrupts his business. Men restrict their movement in order to avoid being conscripted into the war and this situation in which Chike finds himself begins to impoverish him. At first, Chike wants to enlist in the army but the thought of who to leave the obligation of his wife's and children's upkeep for bugs him. He feels inhibited and drops the idea of joining the army.

One attitude of the Igbo man portrayed in Chike's attitude is that of placing high premium on his family. The Igbo man cherishes his family and considers it dangerous to abandon it no matter how precarious the situation may seem, and how urgent the need to leave may be. He feels very reluctant, as he does not want to shirk his manly responsibilities. To the Igbo, the man is seen as "the bastion of security, who absorbs all shocks and feuds coming on the family from outside" (Ejiofor, 1981:37).

The Igbo man also places priority on his family over material possession. This is illustrated by Chike's reaction when his wife, Ada, decides to use the only seat reserved in their car for their children, to carry her dresses and cooking utensils, when in fact they are fleeing their residence in the city due to the uncertainty occasioned by the impending war. In a sharp reaction, Chike queries her: "Ada! Isi adikwa gi mma?" (Ada! Are you mad?) Ada, in response, asks:

"Nna Chukwuma, olee ka m ga-esi hapu igbe m? Olee ka m ga-esi hapu ite ofe m? Olee ka m ga-esi ...?" (Chukwuma's father, how can I let go my box? How can I let go my soup pot? How can I ...?) Ada does not finish her numerous questions when Chike interrupts: "Gini bu ite ofe gi? Gini bu uwe gi? Ndu gi na umuaka a, na igbe gi na ite ofe gi, kedu nke ka mkpa? Ada, churu umuaka m chulaara m ulo! Hapu ihe ndi a niile na o bu m zuru ha. Ejighi ego azuta mmadu" (What is your soup pot? What is your dress? Your life and that of these children, your box and your soup pot, which is more important? Ada, take these children

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home for me. Leave all these things because I bought them.
Human being cannot be bought with money) (Ubesie, 1973:24).

This is an eloquent testimony of the importance an Igbo man attaches to his family, which is recaptured in this novel.

While men are cautious in their movement for fear of conscription, women have no such fear. Because of the freedom of movement women enjoy, Ada, Chike's wife, engages in *ahia ataaki* (attack-trade⁶) and starts making money. Her business transaction brings her close to the soldiers with whom she begins to flirt. Swollen by her sudden economic power, she begins to disrespect and stigmatize her husband, and can bring male friends into her matrimonial home in the presence of her husband without giving a damn. Later, she abandons her family and goes to live on her own to enjoy her life.

Chike goes to beg for food in Ada's house and to remind her that he is still her husband but Ada retorts: "Di gbakwaa oku" (Ubesie, 115) (To hell with husband"). She later gets evicted from where she lives and she rejoins her husband. Chike and his brother, Okechukwu, strive to rehabilitate her but rather than be mellowed, she becomes more wayward and initiates a conspiracy that eventually leads to the conscription of Chike into the war. As providence would have it, he meets an old friend who helps him.

Chike is an embodiment of a mature and responsible Igbo man. As a husband, he is patient; a man who is ready to forgive and accommodate others. His patience is manifested in a number of incidents when he endures his wife's waywardness. He remains calm and advises her to refrain from her evil ways and accord him the respect due to a husband. Chike speaks in the following manner:

Nne, i mara ugwu ruuru m ka di gi, kwanyere m ya, maka na di nwaanyi bu aka ogori na-ehi n'isi. Nwaanyi hapu di ya, isi eruo ya ala. Ndu nwaanyi enweghi isi ma o nweghi nwoke o ji etu onu (Ubesie, 1973:135).

(My dear, if you know the respect that is due to me as your husband, accord it to me because a husband is the hand with which a woman supports her head. If a woman deserts her husband, she falls. A woman's life has no meaning if she does not have a man she can brag with).

Chike's statement re-echoes the notion of an ideal relationship between a husband and wife in Igbo view. The Igbo believe that a wife is subordinate to her husband. She should be loyal and submissive to the husband. She stands to suffer if she deserts the husband. This view of the traditional Igbo society, no doubt, receives the endorsement of Ubesie, the novelist, as he has presented this story. It is what the feminist critic would describe as the subjugation of womanhood – giving a woman a subordinate position in a male dominated Igbo society.

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Chike no longer sees the socially and culturally accepted norms of behaviour in his wife. Ada's life-style becomes a source of embarrassment to him. Naturally, as a man, he reacts to the embarrassment his wife causes him by hosting her male friends in his presence. Her unrepentant posture makes Chike furiously interrogate Ada one day and beat her up mercilessly because no Igbo man, no matter how patient, will continue to tolerate that kind of insult and relegation from a wife.

Ada's attitude and actions shattered the peace, unity and cordiality that used to characterize the family relationship before the outbreak of the war. Her maltreatment of her husband, her flirting with other men, her abandonment of her children, starving them when she becomes the breadwinner of the family, and relegating her husband to the background to the point of asking him to wash plates and do other similar house chores before she can give him money and food for the children, are all instances of how Ada fails to keep her marriage vow, "for better for worse", thereby breaking her relationship with her husband and validating the prophetic statement, "ma ọ buru na ha abuo ejighi aka ha tosa onwe ha" (Ubesie, 17) (if two of them do not break the relationship themselves) made by a mad man immediately after they were joined together as man and wife by the priest. The novelist also comments on her refusal to have her meal together with other members of the family thus: "Oge agaala mgbe ya na Chike na umu ha na-eriko ihe onu dika ndi si n'ezigbo ezinaulo. Otu ihe kpatara ya ugbu a bu na ọ bu Ada na-eweta ego nri" (Ubesie, 1973:85). (Gone are the days when she, her husband and their children used to have their meals together as members of a good family. Now, the reason for this is that Ada has become the breadwinner). Ada's statement, "I wetara ego garị ka ọ bu ego akpu ka i wetara? ... Di gbakwaa oku (Ubesie, 86) becomes her regular response whenever Chike demands respect from her.

Ubesie, the novelist, observes that the marriage between Chike and Ada lacks all the necessary ingredients that sustain a healthy marital relationship. There is no more care expected of a husband and wife, no commitment, no more love lost; and that their marriage vow has been abused and profaned, as indicated in the following excerpt:

Olulu di na nwunye Chike na Ada ugbu a dika ọ bu mgbere ka ha abuo na-atu. O dighi onye na-elenyere ibe ya udi anya kwesiri na di na nwunye ga na-elenyere onye nke ozo ... Akwukwo ha gbara n'ulo uka tupu onu amalite di ka ọ bu eriri e ji chie ozo, nke e were gbanye nkita n'ukwu (Ubesie, 1973:85).

(Chike's marriage with Ada is now like a mere business transaction between two of them. No one cares for the other in a manner deserving of a husband and wife ... Their wedding in the church before the war broke out is like an ozo rope, which has been tied on a dog's legs).

At last, after the civil war, things take a new turn for Chike. As the war ends, he goes to Lagos to see the White man who was managing his company before the outbreak of the civil war. He is surprised to see that his business thrived while the war lasted and that a large chunk of money has been made and saved for him. He goes back to Enugu with a good amount of money to start a new life. His family rebounds and they begin to live happily again, but without Ada, his wife. While Chike is hosting people to a survival party one day, Ada, who has got wind of his restoration to noble position, reappears with an illegitimate baby on her hand, and looking tattered and hungry. She begs Chike to take her back as his wife. Chike declines, reminding her that he does not eat leftover food, because the palm head that touches the ground has been soiled – *Isi akwu dara n'ala edetula aja*” (Ubesie, 1973:205)

On the whole, we can see that in this Igbo novel, *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala*, Ubesie presents a picture of an Igbo family that a civil war destabilizes, a family whose unity and peace become further shattered by the actions of a wife who is grossly guilty of infidelity, and who in her extreme waywardness, refuses to be tamed in spite of all her husband's entreaties. The story is a depiction of a woman who in her quest for materialism and comfort becomes insensitive to the plight of her family, abandoning them at the time her husband and children need her most. Ada typifies a woman who identifies with her husband only when the going is good and not when the man is facing hardship as encapsulated in the following comment by the novelist: “Mgbe ihe di mma, ihe Ada na-akpo ya bu nna ya ukwu, ma o bu nna Chukwuma. Ma ugbu a, ihe o na-akpo ya bu nwoke a” (Ubesie, 1973:87) (When the going was good, what Ada called him was her “boss or Chukwuma's father”. But now she calls him, ‘this man’), forgetting the marriage vow of “for better for worse”. The novelist reacts further to the woman's attitude by making the following critical statements: O buru na nwoke na nwaanyi abughi di na nwunye mgbe ihe di na mkpa, olee mgbe ha ga-abukwa di na nwunye? ... Di na nwunye buru naani mgbe ihe di mma, o dighi mkpa na nwoke na nwaanyi ga-ekwekota na ha ga-abu di na nwunye (Ubesie, 204) (If a man and a woman are not a couple in difficult situation, when will they be husband and wife?... If being husband and wife is only when things are good, then it is not important that a man and a woman will consent to be husband and wife).

The Igbo Family in Nzeako's *Nkoli* (1973)

The Igbo family portrayed by Nzeako in *Nkoli* is a polygamous one. The man, Ojeuga, his two wives – Ugoye and Ogechi, and their two daughters, Ekwutosi and Nkoli are the members of the family. As can be seen, it is not a large family in contradistinction to the usual large size for which most polygamous Igbo families are known. The Igbo family in *Nkoli* is set in rural

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Igbo community. Various activities and behaviours that are attributes of rural life are manifest in the work.

Nzeako, in this work, projects the problems associated with a typical polygamous Igbo family – the problems of co-wives' rivalry, rancour, mutual distrust, suspicion, acrimony, incessant fights and quarrels between co-wives. While the younger wife thinks their husband loves the senior wife more, the senior one does not like to see her co-wife partake of anything coming from their husband.

Ugoye, the first wife, is shown to have earlier left her husband but later returned when she heard that her husband has married another wife. She is naturally quarrelsome. Her desire to have their husband love her alone leads her to consult a medicine-man to prepare her charms to seduce the man. But the medicine-man declines, warns her against harbouring such evil intention and advises her to go back and make peace with her co-wife who does not in any way contemplate evil action against her. Ugoye is also accused of witchcraft against Nkoli, the daughter of her co-wife. This allegation is, however, later disproved when the real witch, who happens to be her namesake, emerges.

Ogechi, the second wife, unlike Ugoye, is a peaceful woman. Recounting her traumatic experiences to her only daughter, Nkoli, she regrets being associated with polygamy. She blames her misfortune of not having any other baby after Nkoli, on her co-wife.

Ojeuga is a traditional Igbo man who believes strongly in the tradition of his people, the Igbo. His family problems sadden him and give him sleepless nights, but he is never biased in handling issues irrespective of the incorrigible nature of one of his wives. He gives each of his wives fair hearing and verifies allegations before taking action. This is illustrated by his decision to visit Obiogbodu's house after being told that his first wife consults *dibia*. He is a patient husband and makes frantic effort to see that peace prevails in his family.

Having confirmed from the testimony of Obiogbodu, the *dibia*, the allegation that Ugoye visits the medicine-man's place, coupled with her fight with her co-wife, which draws the attention of their entire neighbourhood, Ojeuga gets highly embarrassed and fed up with her, and divorces her. But her departure does not bring any abatement to all the troubles Ogechi, the younger wife, and her daughter are going through. This makes Ojeuga and his second wife decide to send Nkoli out to live with a female teacher in another town. Nkoli's trouble stops but that of her mother back home does not. Due to the persistent attack on his family, Ogeuja, who epitomizes a typical traditional Igbo man, goes to consult the oracle to unravel the cause of trouble in his home.

Ugoye, the divorced wife, while in her father's house gives birth to a baby boy, but Ojeuga does not bother to ask about them. She does not find life easy as a divorcee. While her father's family contemplates what to do about her condition, her friend and namesake, Ugoye Nduka, starts to confess

publicly her atrocities against Ojeuga's family. In her confession, she reveals that she has all along been behind all the woes that have befallen Ojeuga's family and that it is God that saved them from all her evil actions against them. This confession makes Ojeuga have compassion for Ugoye, her estranged wife, and alongside other people, he begins to reconsider his stance on their sore relationship.

At last there is reconciliation and Ojeuga arranges to bring her back to his family. Ugoye and her children return amidst joy. The novelist then presents a picture of a re-united family, which is happy, loving and peaceful. The peaceful reconciliation and re-union ignite greater love and affection in the family to the point that the co-wives whose relationship was earlier marred by bitter rivalry begin to relate to each other as sisters.

Nzeako's opinion about a polygamous Igbo family is not clear because he appears inconsistent. Early in the work, he highlights the problems associated with a polygamous family. While he seems to have not favoured it through the feeling of the younger wife in this family, his reference to another polygamous family and his resolution of the problem in Ojeuga's family suggests his endorsement of the polygamous system of marriage.

In the text, we see Ogechi, Ojeuga's second wife, having a sleepless night and agonizing over her traumatic experiences in her marriage, especially with the kind of treatment she receives from her co-wife. As she narrates her ordeal to her daughter, Nkọlì, she regrets being associated with a polygamous marriage, and vows that none of her daughters will have a similar experience. Yet in another episode, Nzeako shows how Ojeuga's friend, Obiogbodu, the medicine-man who marries six wives, is able to manage his family and make all his wives live peacefully. The man emphasizes that such peace and cordiality prevail, only where the women are humble, otherwise, the husband will be in trouble. Again, through the reconciliation of Ojeuga with his divorced wife and her happy reunion with other members of the family, Nzeako shows how peace, love and unity can be restored in a broken home. By this, Nzeako seems to be of the view that polygamy can thrive in an atmosphere of better understanding, mutual respect, love and peace in the family.

One problem associated with polygamous family, which Nzeako highlights, is seeing co-wives enmeshed in bitter rivalry, with each scheming to have upper hand or to be loved more by their husband. The craving to be loved more can lead any of the wives, as Ugoye does in this story, to take extreme steps, one of which is to consult the *dibija* to prepare a love-inducing charm for her to win over her husband.

Like in the other novels under study, Nzeako, in *Nkọlì* re-captures some of the features of Igbo traditional society, which the family also shares. In Igbo society, a man's kinsmen and his married sisters (*umuada*) get involved in settling family squabbles. Nwaada (married daughter of a family) considers herself as a part of her father's family, and shows interest in the welfare of the family. This is why when Ojeuga's first wife fights her co-

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wife and generates an embarrassing pandemonium in the neighbourhood, Ojeuga's married sister who is equally disgusted with the woman's behaviour, demands from her brother: "Gee m ntị n'olu nke oma. I hụrụ nkịta nọduru n'ezị bụ nne Ekwutosi, o ghaghi isi n'ulo a wee laa. O bụ m kwuru ya" (Nzeako, 1973:24) (Listen to me very well. You see that dog, Nne Ekwutosi, sitting outside, she must leave this house. I say it).

By this statement she vehemently advocates the divorce of the woman. Ojeuga's kinsmen also gather to express concern over the unfortunate incident in Ojeuga's family. Their communal feeling is conveyed in Anako, their spokesman's comment: "O buru na ihere adighi eme ya na ndi ulo ya, ihere na-eme anyi bu ndi umunna ya" (Nzeako, 28) (If he and members of his family are not ashamed of themselves, we, his kinsmen are ashamed). The kinsmen make attempt to find solution to Ojeuga's family problem by deciding to invite him and his wives. Their concern demonstrates the spirit of being one's brother's keeper, which is a hallmark of social relation in Igbo culture.

Ojeuga's in-law, the kinsmen of Ogechi, also wade into the matter by deciding to give Ojeuga some time to do something about the situation, failing which they will have no option but to recall their daughter. Another attribute of the Igbo traditional society, which Nzeako sustains in his work, is the traditional processes of instituting a divorce. After making up his mind to divorce his first wife as a result of her cantankerous and quarrelsome nature, he sends for the man who stood as his witness during the marriage (*onye djiri ya n'isi ilu nwunye/onyeebe*) as well as his kinsmen to inform them of his intention. The parents of the wife (his in-laws) are also invited, and at a formal gathering Ojeuga hands over Ugoye back to her parents with the following statements: "Nwaanyi oma, o dighi nkojo o bu la m na-akwo gi, ma gi gaa ka nne na nna gi doo gi aka na nti. Mgbe i natara ozi m, i loghachi. Ma i loghachila ma i nataghi ozi m" (Nzeako, 1973:49-50). ("Fine woman, I do not castigate you, but go so that your parents can advise you. Come back when you receive my message. But don't come back if you do not receive my message").

The Igbo Family in Maduekwe's *Uru Nwa* (1978)

Maduekwe's *Uru Nwa* is an exposition of a family where the head, that is the man, exercises an overwhelming power on his household. Maduekwe, using this work, exposes what in feminist parlance, is describable as humiliation and oppression of womanhood. In the text, Wogu, the husband sends Ahudiya, his wife, away simply because he sees a male neighbour of theirs greeting his wife. The jealousy of seeing his wife exchange greeting with another man makes Wogu send her packing immediately without any proof of the allegation of infidelity against her. In a furious commanding tone Wogu tells her: "Ahudiya, laa ulo nna gi! Lawa ugbu a! Lawa! O kaara m mma na i noghikwa n'ebe a karija na i no ya na-emeru ya, na i no ya na-emeto ya!" (Maduekwe, 1978:44) ("Ahudiya, go back to your father's house. Leave,

now. It is better for me that you are not here than stay and desecrate it, than stay and make it filthy.”)

This immediate divorce and ejection exposes Ahudiya to the danger of traveling back to her father's home by night through a fear-inspiring forest, abandoning her little baby, Ngozi, and her sister, Adamma. Wogu later marries a second wife, to whom he metes out almost the same humiliating treatment. The day Wogu catches her fighting with one of her daughters (who do not respect the woman as their stepmother), he chases her away with a machet without caring to scold or warn her over her behaviour. He immediately prepares her to go back to her parents the next day. Wogu's treatment of his wives shows how some men in Igbo traditional society threaten or do send their wives packing at the slightest provocation or misunderstanding. Maduekwe also highlights in this work another family where the man, Otikpo, who has two wives, leaves his first wife and her daughter in the village and takes his second wife to live in the town.

The problem in the first family x-rayed in this work, is solved by the novelist through the dogged efforts of Ngozi, Wogu's youngest daughter. She, supported by her sister, Adamma, makes their father denounce the oath he took not to have anything to do again with Ahudiya, his wife. After taking various reconciliatory steps and prevailing on her father, Ngozi is able to bring back her mother to her matrimonial home, and the family begins to live happily again. Though Maduekwe has through Wogu's action against his wife portrayed men's high-handedness sometimes noticed in the family, his pre-occupation in the novel appears to be the enhancement of the status of women, using the feat achieved by Ngozi. The role of reconciling their separated parents is normally seen as the exclusive duty of the male children in Igbo traditional society. Here Maduekwe appears to have used this reconciliatory mission undertaken by Ngozi to stress the importance of the female gender and counter the assumption by some people in Igbo traditional society that the female child is not as important as the male. Ngozi's success at re-uniting her parents and restoring harmonious relationship between them lends credence to the saying that what a man can do a woman can do better.

On the other hand, it can be said that the battered image of women, which Ahudiya's humiliation by Wogu epitomises, is redeemed by Ngozi's bold and dogged stance on the issue of recalling her estranged mother in spite of her father's intractable nature. The prevailing affection in Wogu's home after the return of Ahudiya, the expectations, and the recognition accorded the female child are evident in Ngozi's speech below:

Dika ihe siri kwuru, ahughị m n'omume nna m na o gaghị eleru
anya, bururu nne m ezi di. Aririọ m na-ariọzi bu ka ihe gaara nne
m otu o turu anya o jiri kpebie wee lakwutewe nna m.

Onodu m n'etiti ndi muru m dizi elu. Ha jiri m kporo mmadu. O
dighi ihe ha zuru ime ha na-adighi agwa m. O dighi nwa a na-

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eme mmadu ha adighi eme m. O dighi ihe m choro n'aka ha m
na-adighi enweta (Maduekwe, 1978:133).

(From the look of things, I do not see my father displaying any attitude that suggests he will not be careful to make a good husband to my mother. My prayer is that my mother's desire in deciding to re-unite with my father be fulfilled. My parents now hold me in high esteem. I am recognised by them. They do not plan to do anything without informing me. There is no kind of petting I do not receive from them. They do not refuse me anything I require from them.)

The Igbo Family in Nzeako's *Juochi* (1981)

In *Juochi*, Nzeako presents a picture of two different classes of family that could be found in Igbo society. One is an Igbo family in the rural area where some human tendencies like acrimony, hatred, antagonism, rivalry and oppression typical of non-literate traditional society are exhibited. It is a family ravaged by penury. The father, who is also the only surviving man in his family, dies when his only daughter is just four years old. In his lifetime, he lived in the midst of kinsmen who wished him dead so that they could appropriate his land.

The man, Ekwuigbo, lives a very cautious life, avoiding every close association with people, and abstaining from drinking, taking kolanut and snuff in order to escape the schemes and intrigues of his enemies. Irrespective of all his caution and abstinence, Ekwuigbo suffers from all sorts of infirmities and ailments believed to be the handiwork of his enemies. His incessant calls at different medicine-men's places to cure himself impoverish him further, and as a result, he cannot afford to take proper care of his only daughter. He cannot also afford the luxury of sponsoring his wife to take *inyom* title like other women.

In all his struggles for survival, he is isolated and abandoned by relations, even when he is in the throes of death. Only his wife and daughter are by his side with no other person coming around to console them. His burial is a mere formality as only a few people show up and leave immediately after his interment, which is anything but befitting. Like in his other work, *Nkoli*, what obtains in Igbo traditional society is re-invented by the novelist in the portrayal of the experiences and actions of members of this family. In order to save her life and that of her only daughter from their enemies, Udumma, Ekwuigbo's widow, leaves her matrimonial home to seek refuge among her own people because in less than two weeks after her husband's death, his kinsmen enter his land and start to harvest his palm fruits and other farm products without regard for the widow and her daughter.

In Igbo traditional society, if a woman is sent packing from her matrimonial home by her husband or late husband's kinsmen either on account of quarrels or of not having a male child, her paternal home can provide her succour and protection. So, consistent with the spirit of kinship relation in Igbo society, Udumma's brothers warmly receive and resettle their

returnee widowed sister and her daughter, but not without reminding her that Igbo culture does not permit sharing their father's property with her as a woman, and asking her to fend for herself, and her daughter.

In Igbo family, a woman in this state assumes the responsibility of fending for and training her children just as Udumma does. In order to ensure their survival she engages in all sorts of menial works, supported by the efforts of her little daughter, who herself goes to the bush to pick oil bean seeds, fallen palm fruits, and palm kernels, which she cracks. They sell these after a reasonable quantity has been gathered. People considered to be very poor in rural Igbo communities embark on these activities, which reflect their level of indigence.

Another feature of the traditional Igbo family, which Nzeako recaptures, is the act of parents sending out their child as a servant when the family can no longer cope with domestic demands. Due to the increasing hardship the widow and her daughter face, Eloka, one of Udumma's brothers, suggests that Juochi, her daughter, be sent to serve as housemaid somewhere in order to lessen her burden, at least in feeding. Juochi is later given out as a housemaid but not without collective approval because in Igbo culture, no member of the family is given out either in marriage, or to live with somebody as a maid without the family's approval. Here, we see Udumma's brother playing the role of a father in negotiating the conditions of giving out Juochi.

Nzeako has in the portrayal of this typical Igbo family depicted the experience of a man surrounded by enemies whose desire is to see him dead so that they can take over his inheritance, particularly when such a man has no male child to succeed him when he dies. Both in the traditional and modern Igbo society, family members are usually enmeshed in tussles and controversies over inheritance when the man, the head of the family dies, even when he leaves a will. Some men do appropriate their late brothers' property without regard for the families they left behind. This is common when the deceased has no son. This is why most educated Igbo wives like to procure whatever property they can afford in their names.

Apart from recapturing these features of the Igbo traditional society in his novel, Nzeako upholds those aspects of Igbo culture he presents in his work. For instance, by showing how Ekwuigbo's widow and her only daughter are deprived of their land and its products, and are chased away by his kinsmen, Nzeako uncritically upholds the Igbo tradition whereby a deceased man who has no male child to succeed him loses his inheritance to closest male relations, irrespective of whether or not the deceased has a surviving widow and female children. The Igbo culture of denying a woman the right to share in her father's property is also reinforced in the novel by Udumma's experience in the hands of her brothers. Her father's *okpara* (first son) says to her, "... o bughị omenala na ha ga-ewuru nwanne ha nwaanyi ulo n'ime ngwuru ha, n'ihì na a chowa achowa, o nweghì oke ga-erute ya ..." (Nzeako, 1981:6) (It is not the culture that they build their sister

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a house in their father's compound because in the real sense of it, she has no share ...).

While the Igbo family discussed above has its setting in the rural area as well as all the trappings of a traditional family, the second type of family portrayed by Nzeako in this novel has the features of modernity. A couple, Ikegwuonu and his wife, Adamma, their two children, a boy and a girl, including Adamma's sister and their maid constitute this family. The kind of house they live in the city of Enugu, as described by Nzeako, suggests that it is a duplex, which is well furnished to reflect the family's social class. It is shown to be a comfortable family living in a decent environment where all facilities used in modern homes are provided.

The image of this family will be illuminated further by taking a closer look at the idiosyncrasies of some of its members. Ikegwuonu is the father, the head of the family, dibuolu. Apart from going to arrange for their maid, Juochi, he remains passive and is hardly heard, even when he is supposed to scold his wife or react to her ill-treatment of their maid. His illicit and amorous affair with his sister-in-law who has come to spend her holidays with them, which results in her pregnancy, and his secret arrangement with the girl to marry her, betrays him as a man who is morally bankrupt, a dog that eats the bone hung on its neck, and a man without self-esteem.

In an open quarrel with Ikegwuonu, Adamma, his wife does not hide her suspicion of his double standard on the issue of Oriaku (her sister)'s pregnancy, since he has refused to take any action or make any comment on the matter, in spite of her ceaseless complaint about the girl's misconduct. His wife tells him:

A na-enyozi gi enyo, n'ih na amakwaghị m otu i si eme omume n'oge a. O ruo n'utu mgbe m bjara wee gwa gi na Oriaku arughị oru kwesiri ka o ruo, naani ihe i nwere ike igwa m bu na nke ahụ agbasaghị gi ... Nke a gosiri na anyi bu nwunye di ugbu a (Nzeako, 1981:50)

(You are suspect because I do not understand how you behave this period. When, in the morning I came to tell you that Oriaku did not do the work she ought to have done, all that you could tell me was that it is not your business ... This indicates that we are co-wives now).

Ikegwuonu's owning up to the plan of marriage with Oriaku, his sister-in-law, as his wife accuses him, ignites more aggressive reaction from his wife. The story ends with Oriaku leaving Ikegwuonu's home with her pieces of luggage, but then the damage had already been done in his relationship with his wife. When a man who is expected to take care of his wife's younger sister as her sister-in-law, puts her in a family way, such action is condemned and frowned at in Igbo society. It is considered an act of indignity.

In this story, the man can be said to be the architect of his family's problem. The man's cordial relationship with his wife has been destroyed;

the existing harmony has been upset. Things have fallen apart, and there is the possibility of having a broken home. A little caution and self-control on the part of the man would have saved his family from the mess he finds himself in. At the end, Ikegwuonu leaves his home, when his house is already on fire, and finds solace in drinking. What Nzeako, the novelist, comments is very instructive: "... ma nwoke gbapuru n'ulo ya n'ihikwu na uka, hapuru ihe n'ime ulo ya, n'ihina o ghaghi ino wee na-eche ya" (Nzeako, 52) ("... but a man who runs away from his home because of quarrel, leaves something behind, because it must surely await him).

The most visible member of this family is Adamma, Ikegwuonu's wife. She is made more visible by her assertiveness, arrogance, harshness and high-handedness, especially towards her maid. She is noisy and always heard scolding, deriding or flogging her maid, Juochi, even for an offence committed by another person. All this is evident from her actions and speeches. When, for instance, Juochi, her maid, newly came to their home, she instructs her with deep sense of discrimination, barring her from using certain things in the house and denying her good food. The subsequent maltreatment and deprivation the little girl suffers in her hand further depicts Adamma as a mean woman. Her assertiveness and arrogance re-echo when, while scolding her younger sister for her failure to wake up early to prepare her husband's breakfast and provide him with hot water for bath, she boasts, *Ulo a bu ulo di m, n'ihia ya, o bu ihe m kwuru ga-eme. Ma o di onye nke ahụ na-adighi mma n'obi, ya laa ... Ka m kwuo ya ekwuo n'ulo a. Onye o bu la no n'ulo a aghaghi ime ihe m kwuru, unu nuru ya?* (Nzeako, 1981:44)

(This is my husband's house, and as a result, it is what I say that will be done. If anybody does not like that, let the person go ... Let me say it in this house. Anybody who is in this house must do what I say, can you hear that?)

She is clever and quick to notice the sudden change of attitude in her sister, Oriaku, and interrogates her persistently to know her true state of health when she (Oriaku) attributes her inability to wake up early and perform her morning function to headache and stomach upset. Adamma becomes apprehensive and suspicious that the girl may be pregnant but she least suspects that her husband is responsible for it. However, her reaction and persistent interrogation of her sister when she suspected her is normal. In life situation, there is no wife in the Igbo family that will take lightly or condone a case of such pregnancy in her matrimonial home. In spite of her harshness and high-handedness on Juochi, she maintains a cordial relationship with her husband until the affair between her husband and her sister destabilizes their relationship and home.

Juochi, as shown in this story, is the major victim of Adamma's despicable behaviour. The girl's suffering and hardship early in life are shown at three levels, namely, her home where she is deprived as a result of her father's protracted sickness, her maternal home where she lives in abject

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poverty with her mother, and in the home of her mistress where she is grossly abused and dehumanized. Nzeako reacts to Adamma's inhuman treatment of Jụochi as indicated in the following critical questions he poses:

“Q buru nwa o mutara o ga-eme ya udi ihe ahụ o mere Jụochi? Q buru nwa ya ka mmadu ozo mere udi ihe ahụ, o ga-adị ya mma n'obi?” (Nzeako, 1981:37) (“If it is her child, will she treat him/her in the same way as she treated Jụochi? If another person treats her child in that same manner, will she be pleased?”)

Nzeako is equally critical of the reticence maintained by the husband, the head of the family, as revealed in the questions:

“Q di mma otu di ya siri gbachi nkiti wee ghara ikwu okwu? Ka o putara na nwoke ahụ adighi ahụ udi mmegbu nwaanyi ahụ na-emegbu Jụochi? Ka o bu e buru ozu onye ozo, o di ka e bu ukwu nkụ? (Nzeako, 37).

(Is her husband's silence over the matter good? Or is it that the man is blind to all the ill-treatment being meted out to Jụochi? Or is it that when another person's corpse is being carried, it looks like carrying a bundle of firewood?)

By these questions, Nzeako portrays Adamma's husband, Ikegwuonu, as a weakling who shirks his manly responsibility and does not rise to the occasion when certain things are going wrong in his family. It is Adamma who exerts an overriding authority in the home. The writer no doubt, acknowledges the fact that a man must not be passive and indifferent when things go wrong in his family. He must speak out. Nzeako also depicts Adamma as a wife who abdicates her domestic responsibilities to a maid, an attitude, which is very dangerous, especially when a grown-up female is involved. Adamma leaves her younger sister to attend to the needs of her husband. The closeness resulting from the interaction may have laid the foundation for the amorous relationship that later develops between her husband and his sister-in-law, Oriaku, culminating into pregnancy, the secret arrangement to marry her and the eventual instability in the home.

Oriaku, the agent of destabilization, is like a demon assigned to wreak havoc in her sister's matrimonial home. Adamma's reaction to her sister about her affair with her husband, in the following excerpt, reveals not only the anger and condemnation, which such attitude can provoke but also the likely consequence of the action- planting a seed of discord: “Q bu ihe a ka i biara n'ebe a ime? I biara inara m di m? Q di mma, ugbu a i wetala ihe ise okwu n'etiti anyi wee choo ila” (Nzeako, 1981:51) (“Is this what you have come here to do? You came to snatch my husband from me? Fine, you have caused friction between us, and want to leave”).

It is through her though that the writer solves Jụochi's problem. Jụochi gets out of her mistress's clutches through a secret arrangement Oriaku makes to get her out of that home before she (Oriaku) leaves. The story of this second family in *Jụochi*, like the incident in *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala*, is a depiction of how the stability of a family and the prevailing harmony in the

home can be shattered by the infidelity of any of the spouses. It reveals how a husband's extra-marital affair with a girl and his consideration of marrying such a girl without regard for his wife can lead to a tangle between the husband and his aggrieved wife. The story of the illicit sexual affair between the head of the family and his sister-in-law is an instance of moral laxity of some men, which plague some matrimonial homes in the present day society and of which the Igbo family is equally vulnerable. It is a case of a father, the head of the family stooping as so low to impregnate a maid under his care. The story also portrays the level of dehumanization and oppression some housemaids experience in the hands of their mistresses in the family.

CONCLUSION

We have, in this paper, examined the portrayal of the Igbo family in the works of three Igbo male novelists, taking into account the specific ways the authors handled the subject. Our analysis, done from the perspective of the novelists' depiction of the family, reveals that their works explore human social behaviours that could be observed in the family in Igbo traditional society. In a number of episodes, they do not project what we can describe as a positive image of the Igbo family as they seem to have shown more interest in highlighting the problems that bedevil the family than its strengths or successes. Though they attempt to resolve some of the problems, they seem to create the impression that the family relationship in Igbo society is fraught with conflict and strife. For instance, some characters in the novels are either portrayed as mean, inconsiderate, irresponsible and cantankerous or as the cause of destabilization in the family.

Because three of the works examined were written and published in the 70s, and the fourth one in the early 80s, one could say that, perhaps, the novels portray some observable problems that bedeviled family relationship at that time. But other writers, like the female novelist, Chimamanda Adichie, whose works, though English medium, are written long after this period, in 21st century specifically, have not depicted the Igbo family differently from the perspectives of the three Igbo male novelists discussed here. Adichie's perception of the Igbo family, portrayed in *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), for instance, in fact complements that of the three male novelists discussed here in the sense that they all explore some social problems and the demeaning human behaviours associated with the family.

To illustrate the point made above, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* depicts an Igbo family characterized by turbulence and tension occasioned by domestic violence; a family where religious fanaticism, wife battery, child abuse and other forms of domestic violence prevail. Eugene Achike, the head of this family, is a new convert whose religious sensibility and obsession by Catholicism make him a fanatic who sees every act of his wife and children as a sin that must not go unpunished. When, for instance, Achike frowns at

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Jaja's abstinence from Holy Communion, which in his judgment is a grievous sin, the tension it generates leads to the smashing of his wife's figurine. Again, his wife's objection to see Father Benedict after a mass in defiance of his instruction is interpreted as sin and this makes him subject the woman to severe battery that eventually causes her miscarriage. These and other related maltreatments meted out to his wife, Beatrice, and children, Kambili and Jaja, make them live under perpetual terror and fear.

Apart from the physical and psychological violence he inflicts on his household, Eugene Achike exhibits the character of a despot, a totalitarian and uncompromising religious bigot who always prescribes and dictates for his family what to do and how to do it without any regard to their feelings. His wife and children therefore become victims of his unbridled assaults, incessantly subjected to either physical torture or emotional trauma. This domestic violence which Achike perpetrates eventually claims his life as his wife later poisons him. So, Adichie presents through her novel a picture of a ruined and tragic family relationship precipitated by domestic violence. The novel also exposes the folly of religious bigotry and self-righteousness.

The similarity of Adichie's notion of the Igbo family to that of the Igbo novelists, whose works were written much earlier in the 70s and early 80s than hers, may raise some questions on the mind of anybody who peradventure reads the works: Does it suggest that the Igbo society or the environment in which these stories were set has remained static over the years? Can two writers, using different media and writing at different times have similar perception of the Igbo family? The similar notion of the family problem Adichie projects as the other earlier writers may find explanation in the fact that she, Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie, having been born in 1977 in Igboland, the period and environment in which the other novelists wrote their works, it is possible that she, in her own novel written in the 21st century, might have, deploying her creative dexterity, reminisced about her childhood experience and observation of what, perhaps, transpired in her society at the time.

It should be pointed out that some of the negative attributes portrayed as reflective of Igbo traditional society are no longer tenable in modern Igbo nation as at today because of the influence of western education, Christian orientation, particularly Christian liberation theology influence and modernization generally. We do have Igbo families that are stable and peaceful, with each of the spouses as well as their children playing a vital role. In modern Igbo society, we have men and women who in both private and public lives make positive and significant contributions to the advancement of humanity. We have women who distinguish themselves in various fields of human endeavour, women who are responsible and highly esteemed. So do men. A number of our literary artists today project a balanced view of the image of men and women, eliciting not only their fallible nature but also their virtues, their positive roles, and the positive impacts they make on the family and society at large.

Going by the description of the family in the sociological parlance, as the bedrock of society, the implication is that the stability of any society depends on the strengths and cohesiveness of the aggregate families within that society. If the family is stable and progressive, the society, which it lends supports, will invariably manifest the same attributes. The Igbo family whether at home or in the diaspora needs to be stable to enhance the stability of the Igbo nation. And our literary artists through their works of art should encourage the desired stability by projecting a more positive image of the Igbo family.

ENDNOTES

1. Ogunsina's observation that the Yoruba novel has been underrated and neglected in the discussion of Nigerian literature is also true of literary works in Igbo and other indigenous African languages.
2. Emenanjo's (1982a) and (1982b) are two of his articles where he argued that any work that should be taken as Igbo creative literature must be written in Igbo language.
3. In this article, Ugonna also insists that a piece of literary work to be called an Igbo novel, poem or play it must be written in Igbo.
4. In this paper, Uzochukwu, like others argues in favour of Igbo as the Language of expression of what should be regarded as Igbo novel.
5. In this unpublished paper, Nwadike catalogues existing literary works written in Igbo language.
6. 'Ahija ataaki', translated here as 'attack-trade', is a term used by the Igbo during the Nigerian civil war to describe a risky trade, for survival, embarked upon by courageous women across the enemy line.

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