

ISA RETURNS TO  
**CHICAGO**  
MAY 12-14, 2016



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**D**ear members:

Greetings! I want to welcome back those in the United States from the summer break and wish our Nigerian brothers and sisters a happy vacation if you have one.

ISA NEWSLETTER: Dr Igwe, our PRO is sending out a call for submission for the next issue of the ISA Newsletter. The Newsletter is an important avenue for publicizing exciting and not so exciting news about the ISA and its members. Consider submitting news worthy items including short research notes, current publications, journal articles, etc.



IGBO STUDIES REVIEW: As you are aware, we have published the ISA journal regularly and on schedule over the last three year. We are accepting submissions for the next issue and we welcome well research papers that have not been published or under consideration elsewhere. Note that the journal is not exclusive to ISA members. The journal will accept papers from non-members. We have initiated the process of listing the Journal with Thomson Reuters. We can achieve that only if we continue to issue the journal on schedule.

2016 CONFERENCE: It is time to submit your abstract for next year's conference if you are planning to attend. The deadline is fast approaching and we would be happy to have an indication of the numbers to enable us plan. Please visit the ISA website for updates on abstract submission, payment information, hotel accommodation and travels.

The conference committee will work hard to ensure that the process of obtaining acceptance letters and visa application will be as smooth as possible. For specific questions regarding the conference, please contact the 2016 Conference Chair, Dr Ogechi Anyanwu.

ISA GOOGLE GROUP: The google group has been providing us opportunity to share information and news about the association and the activities of its members. Although the postings are not moderated, members have largely self-regulated in many respects. This is appreciated. However, there are often news items that are forwarded, which do not have much relevance to the association and the Igbo. We should try to limit the posting of news items that are available elsewhere for a number of reasons—people often delete these emails when they are so frequent and do not provide information of direct relevance to the group.

Ndewo nu!

Chima J Korieh  
President, Igbo Studies Association



Memories from the 13th Annual Conference of the Igbo Studies Association held at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA



**IGBOISM AS A MANIFESTO: REINVENTING OCHICHI, FROM OHANEZE TO OHANONYENDU NDIGBO - Part 2 [Begin on Page 6, Volume 2, Number 2, Winter 2015]**

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**T**he Igbo occupy the entire Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi and Enugu States and parts of Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States of present day Nigeria, geographically located at both Eastern and Southern poles of the country. Indeed, the Igbo are bound together

by several cultural indices including the belief that the human stands at the center of the cosmos.

According to Ekwealor (1990:29) the smallest political and social unit among the Igbo is the family (*ezinauno*). This is followed by

*Umenne* and then *Umunna* or kindred. The *Ogbe* or district comes after, followed by *Ime-Obodo* or village, then *Obodo* or community and so on (Onwuejeogwu, *An Igbo Civilization* 1980:22; *Evolutionary Trends* 1987:1).

However, the Igbo ontology is made up of the physical and the spiritual (Abanuka 1994:16, 24; Unah 2009:268; Edeh 1985:74). The spiritual consists of spirits, ancestors and deities while the physical consists of human being and other realities. These views are also held by Anyanwu (1984:84-101) and Uzukwu (1982:188-209) in their various contributions to *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* journal where they have effectively dwelt on what constitutes ultimate reality in the Igbo world, so we do not intend to revisit that again here. The question we shall however seek to clarify briefly is: are the Igbo just a tribe/ethnic group or do they constitute a race?

My submission is that the Igbo are a race consisting of five ethnic groups and eighteen tribes spread across territories. The term "Race" is a social, political, biological and anthropological concept that is employed to characterize the human stock into large and distinct groups following genetic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and anatomical



demarcations. Historically, according to (Keita et al. 2004), the concept was initially used to refer to speakers of a common language and then to denote national affiliations, and in the 17th century, people started to use the concept to relate to observable physical traits—phenotype. It was actually in the 19th century that the concept was first used in a taxonomic sense to denote genetic differences in human stock (Keita et al. 2004). Some racial categorizations have been geographic and chiefly phenotypical as we now have in Caucasians (European stock), Negroes (African stock), Mongolians (Asiatic tribes). The large movement of world populations since the 14th century A.D made it possible for different stocks to be seen in different continents for example Europeans and Africans in America. To this end, the phenotypical trait of colour variation has come to characterize race differences in today's world. But this is not entirely correct. For example research has shown that the Oceania aborigines though Black like the Africans are actually of the Asiatic stock (Keita et al. 2004: 18). Similarly, one would not describe the light-skinned Mexican as a Caucasian simply because he is light-skinned or describe the Igbo as a Negro just because he has a dark skin. Due to the limitations of phenotype, proper race categorization is better done through the combination of phenotype and genotype leading to the observable and transferable traits. Like the Caucasians and the Mongolians, the Igbo are a race distinct from other races and even the rest of the dark-skinned Negro race. As a race we may designate them as *Eboe*, using the favoured term of the Igbo ex-

slave Olaudah Equiano (Edwards 1963:210). A member of the *Eboe* race may be called *Ibo* the plural form of it would be *Igbo* and not *Igbos* as some erroneously state these days. The language however remains *Igbo*.

It is intellectually interesting that the phenotypical and genotypical traits of the *Eboe* race have been established long ago. Hair: they have "*isi afurifu ede*", "*isi akika ukpo*", or "*isi mgbowa aka*" the first type of hair is slimy and even; the second is uneven, bushy but not strong, while the third is bushy, twisted and strong. These variations are due to the mixture of Caucasian and Negro genetic traits. Colour: light brown, fair and Dark brown, so the appropriate colour designation of the *Eboe* race is Brown (signifying richness) and not Black. The skin colour of the *Eboe* is different from those of say Yoruba, Hausa, Akan, Bantu, etc., who could be described as Black. The *Eboe* race is a clever stock, industrious, wily and egalitarian with powerful jaw-set and identical skull shape (Basden 1921:29-31). The language and of course, the *Igbo* culture demonstrate a mixture of Kwa/Negro (Afigbo 1981: 4) and Levitic/Hebrew/Semitic influence (Basden 1921:30). Ethnographic scholars like D. W. Jeffreys also traced an Egyptian link to the *Igbo* stock (1946). What these suggest is that the *Eboe* race evolved through the combined traits of Negro and Caucasian races. This makes the *Eboe* race distinct from the Negro race despite possessing a dark skin. Many who have described the *Eboe* as a member of the Negro race did so on the basis of their skin [*continue on page 10*].

ISA RETURNS TO

# CHICAGO

May 12-14, 2016



# THE 14TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE IGBO STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Theme: NDI IGBO IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Dominican University, River Forest (Chicago), Illinois, USA

May 12-14, 2016

The Igbo Studies Association (ISA) invites scholars and professionals working on all aspects of the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria to submit paper, panel, poster, and/or roundtable proposals for its 14th annual international conference to be held on May 12-14 at Dominican University, River Forest (Chicago), Illinois, USA. Through this annual event, scholars and experts gather to deliberate on diverse facets of the Igbo experience and explore ways of advancing the rich Igbo heritage. The conference theme for 2016, Ndi Igbo in the Global Context, is timely; it will give participants the opportunity to reflect on Igbo consciousness as well as the numerous economic, social, political, and security accomplishments Ndi Igbo have made and the challenges they still face both at home and abroad.

The place of Ndi Igbo in Nigeria and the world today demands closer examination especially in the face of threats to their lives and wellbeing from xenophobia, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, economic anxiety, human and drug trafficking, investment dilemma, youth restiveness, educational crisis, brain drain, political violence and marginalization, kidnapping, and unemployment. This conference explores how Igbo indigenous cultural values, attitudes, and worldview could serve as a vehicle in constructing a more positive and meaningful relationship among Ndi Igbo and with their neighbors within and outside Nigeria. Panels will engage with a variety of topics including but not limited to:

- Globalization, Language Endangerment, and Preservation
- Ako Na Uche: Understanding the World
- Migration and Xenophobia
- Inter-Ethnic Relations, Conflicts, and Fear of Domination
- Lessons of Indigenous Religion and Igbo Consciousness
- Linkages and Connections: Igbo in Diaspora
- Economic Anxiety, Investment and Human Security
- Illicit Wealth, Drug, and Human Trafficking
- Ogbu Ara Obara: Terrorism, Political Violence, and Safety
- Youth Restiveness and Unemployment
- Educational Advances, Crises and Brain Drain
- Political Evolution, Democracy, and Money Politics
- Social Security and Stability
- Kidnapping, Morality, and Decadence
- Biafran War, Memories, and Lessons
- Social Solidarity and Pan-Ndi-Igbo Political Organizations
- Principles and Practices of Human Rights
- Nka Na Uzu: Science, Technology, and Development
- Sports and Youth Development
- Gender, Class, and Igbo Values

All proposals must be submitted online and submission deadline is October 31, 2015. For more information on the Igbo Studies Association, submission guidelines, membership and other matters, please visit us at [www.igbostudiesassociation.org](http://www.igbostudiesassociation.org).

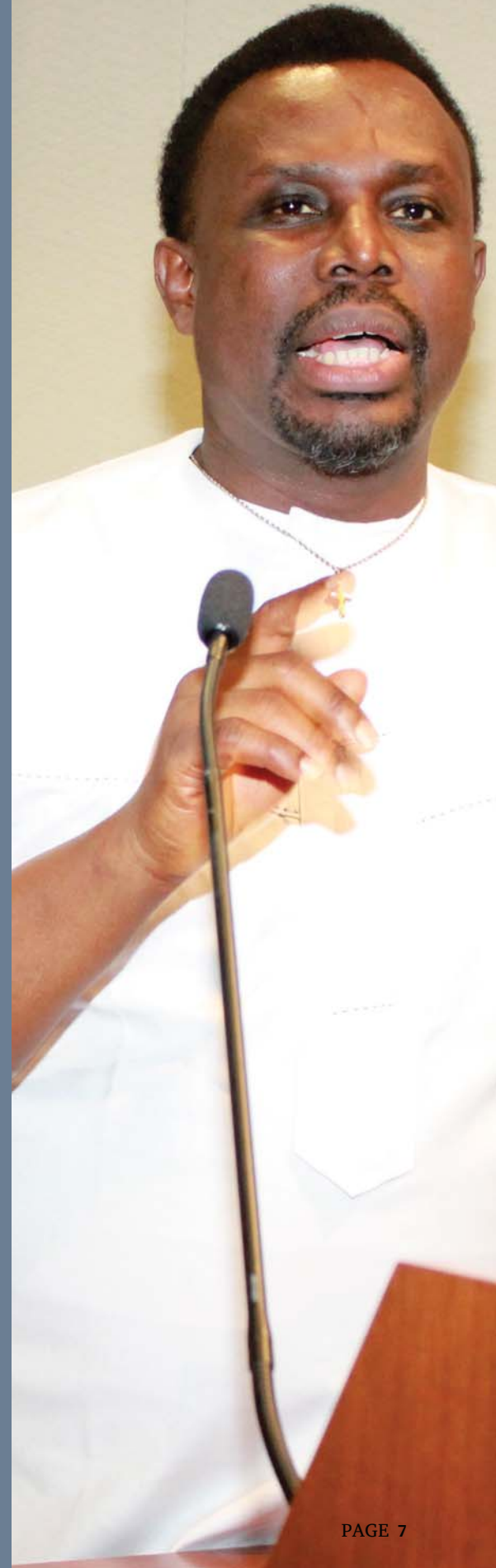




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## REPORT ON THE 2016 CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO

The planning for the 2016 conference is moving along very well. The call for papers was released in May 2015. The deadline for submission of abstracts is October 31, 2015. I am happy to report that many high quality abstracts have been submitted. We hope to receive more abstracts as the deadline for submission approaches. If your abstract has been accepted, you should pay a non-refundable acceptable fee of \$50. You can pay via PayPal through ISA website. If you are paying in Naira, please pay 13,000 naira to this account (Account Name: Professor Uchenna Mariestella Nzewi; Bank: Fidelity Bank PLC and Account No: 6052163125). Please make sure you forward an electronic copy of confirmation to Dr. Ogechi Anyanwu (Ogechi.Anyanwu@eku.edu) and Dr. Ada Azodo (azodo@purduecal.edu).

Remember that guestrooms for the 2016 ISA Conference will be at Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Chicago West O'Hare Airport, 200 S Mannheim Rd, Hillside, IL 60162. The conference rates are: Standard Single King - \$110 plus 11% tax and Standard Double Queen - \$110 plus 11% tax. To be

guaranteed that rooms are available, please make all reservations by April 11, 2016. Thereafter, reservations will be taken on a space & rate availability basis only. I urge you to book your reservation as soon as possible. You can book reservation in two ways. First, by clicking the following Reservation Link - < ISA Conference 2016 >. Please note that when using the internet the dates must be within the exact group dates in order to make a reservation or it might show no availability. If any problems arise please call 708-544-2700 for additional help. Second, by calling 708-544-2700 and asking to make reservations under the group name and dates (Group Name: ISA Conference 2016; Checking In: May 11, 2016 and Checking Out: May 15, 2016).

As always, if you have any questions about the conference please contact me by phone or email at 859-2481394 or isaconference@yahoo.com.

Ogechi Emma Anyanwu, PhD  
2016 Conference Chair



# IGBO STUDIES REVIEW

Number 3, 2015

## ARTICLES

E. C. Ejiogu. Age-old Democratic Social Authority Patterns: The Bases of Igbo Identity and Politics.

Jonathan O. Chimakonam. Metric System in Igbo Thought: A Systematization.

Ifeanyi Ezeonu and Chima J. Korieh. Biafra Memorabilia: De-Upholstering the Silhouette of Silence.

Carol Ijeoma Njoku. Subverting the Myth of Nwoke Luchaa Ogu Nwanyi Enwere Akuko: A Counter-Narrative of the Nigeria-Biafra War.

Daniel Olisa Iweze. Ogbemudia's Regime and Post-Civil War Reconstruction of Economic and Social Infrastructure in Western Igboland, 1970-1975.

Francis Nnamdi Ikwuegbu . Cosmology and Ideological Religious Practice in Idemili Igbo Wall Art: An Appraisal.

Obiora Ann Amuche. Customary Arbitration and the Growth of Igbo Culture.

Ukachi Wachuku. Traditional Female Same-sex Marriage among the Igbo of South-East Nigeria.

Ngozi Ezenwa-Ohaeto. Conflicting Representation of Womanhood in Igbo Cosmology.

Simeon H. O. Alozieuwa. Nigeria's Social Groups, Power Struggle and the Political Economy of Violence.

## BOOK REVIEW

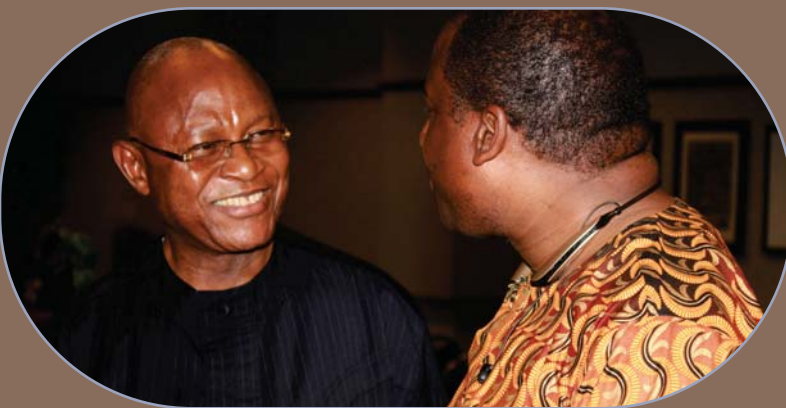
Thomas Bouril. The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World. By G. Ugo Nwokeji. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Obinna U. Muoh. Dawn for Islam in Eastern Nigeria: A History of the Arrival of Islam in Igboland. By Egodi Uchendu. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag. 2012.

Chima J. Korieh. From Freedom to Freedom: Journeying Back to Heal the Wounds of the Atlantic Slave Trade. By Johnston Akuma-Kalu Njoku. Trenton: Africa World Press. 2014.



Memories from the 13th Annual Conference of the Igbo Studies Association held at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA



But a host of other contradictory factors have regularly made the Eboe a difficult stock to study. Adiele Afigbo captured this analogously as the sort of difficulty one encounters in licking a very hot soup (1981:ix). Part of this challenge stems from the fact that the Eboe have lost the memory of their migration owing to lack of an early literate culture and the fact of their statelessness (Afigbo 1981:3-4).

Above all, the Igbo are a diverse people with different dialects but united by common cultural indices. By 1906 their population was estimated to be around six million (Afigbo 1981:1) despite the problem of the slave trade which seriously affected the Igbo. The population grew to about fourteen million by 1970 despite the more than two million Igbo that perished during the Biafran Civil War (Achebe 2013: 312). Forty-five years after, the population of the Eboe race is believed to be well over forty million. Only very few countries in the world today could boast of such population. Nevertheless, our aim here is to show that the Igbo are not just an ethnic nationality but a race distinct from the rest of the Negro race.

To account for their Caucasian origin, new evidences have surfaced that the name Eboe can be a corruption of Ebla. Ebla is the name of a city that thrived some three to two millennia BC near Aleppo in the modern day Syria (Potter 2012: 199). Another name for Ebla according to archeologists (Wellisch 1981: 488-500, p. 488f)

is Tell Mar-dikh which sounds like a corruption of the Igbo name Amar Dike meaning City of Heroes. The account of the immense historical importance of Ebla and its archeological wealth excavated in 1974 simply portray the ancient City as home of heroes (Moorey and Stuart 1991: 150-152). Indeed, historians have declared that Ebla ranks in importance with Egypt and Mesopotamia as centres of ancient civilization (Jack and Roberts 2002: 12; Porter 2012:199; Kidner et al 2013:23; Steiner and Killebrew 2013:284; Lemche 2008:422). Culturally, the people of Ebla also share a lot in common with the present day Eboe. Their languages are of the same family; one often runs into many similar words in both languages such as Immeya, the name of the 18th century King of Ebla. In Igbo, Immeya is a short form for *Imeya-nma* meaning "do good". So it is possible that the 18th century BC king of Ebla took the flamboyant name of king "do good". Ebla people were also efficient in bronze work just as the Eboe of the 9th century AD (Steiner and Killebrew 2013:284). Ebla was finally abandoned in the 7th century AD and the foremost Eboe city of Nri was established in the 9th century AD (Apley 2000). Ebla people were excellent traders and travelers—these are some of the very popular attributes of the present day Eboe. The Ebla religion was polytheistic just as the Eboe traditional religion. In Ebla, women have substantial influence in some areas

especially over men; this is also the case in traditional Eboe societies (Chimakonam and Agu 2013:65). The name of the Ebla king of 2720 BC "Namanu" means in Igbo "Husband marries me well". This is the sort of names women in traditional Igbo societies give to their children to remark their cherished experiences. It is possible that this king was given the name by his mother as is the case in the traditional Igbo. Similarly, the name of the last king of Ebla was Indilimgur 1600 BC (Klengel 82), this seems like a corruption of the Igbo name Idilimuogor or Idirimuogo which means "the adorable one". Archeological excavation shows that this was a popular King that he even had his name engraved in the tablet listing and worshiped probably by his admirers afterwards (Hamblin 239). This also draws attention to the archeological discovery that Ebla people worshipped some of their dead, probably the upright and the outstanding like the kings. This is a strong feature of Eboe life-world which has in the modern time been documented as ancestor worship (Abanuka 1994:36-56). In religion, Ebla people worshiped many gods and this is also the case with the traditional Eboe. Ebla had a goddess called Adamma. In the Eboe pantheon, there is also a goddess called Adamma, both of them goddesses and exactly the same spelling. The difference is that Archeologists were not clear as to the portfolio of the Ebla goddess but for the Igbo, Adamma is the goddess of beauty and love. It can as well be added that the Eblaite Cuneiform writing style is similar to the Nsibidi writing of the Igbo language.

There are many cultural and historical similarities between the ancient Ebla in present day Syria and the Eboe in present day Nigeria. As history has it, Ebla was destroyed three times at about 2500 BC, 1950 BC and 1600 BC. The city never recovered afterwards but existed as smaller towns headed by mainly the former nobles of the third dynasty. However, they were always under threat and domination of neighboring empires like the UR and Akkadia. By the 7th century AD the remaining villages migrated off to other lands having become unsettled due to the threat of Muslims. It is assumed here that a certain noble son of an Ebla priest named Eri and his friends with their house slaves departed Ebla at this point in history as the new religion of Islam began to spread with its legacy of violence. They must have headed South-West and crossed the Mediterranean into North Africa to escape the Muslims from the East and the Romans from the West. It is along the way as they settled briefly by the Nile river that Eri and his friends took dark skinned Nubian wives who bore them dark skinned children. The names of these children were later to become the names of several Igbo towns founded by their offspring. This explains why the Eboe race are dark skinned but of a mixture of the Caucasian and Negro traits. With great crusades of the 7th century AD and the wars between Egypt and Nubia, this band of brothers must have headed down the continent of Africa and it must have taken a century or so before they reached the bank of Anam river in the hinterlands of West Africa where they finally settled around 8th century AD. The bronze artifacts excavated at Igbo

Ukwu in the 1960s date back to the 9th century AD (Shaw 1970; Apley 2000). It is understandable that in passing the lands of the Pharaohs, the Nubians, and warding off external aggression, etc., they evolved a somewhat religious government, the type present in Nri—regarded as the spiritual home of the Igbo today. Eri was the name of this noble man who left Ebla in the 7th century AD with his friends. It is not possible that Eri or even his sons reached the promise land where they settled and established communities in the middle of Anambra river valley. But Eri had two Nubian wives who bore him children. The popular myth that Eri fell from the sky can be explained in two ways: (a) when future generations were unable to trace their ancestry beyond Eri, they simply deified him (b) with the Ebla practice of worshiping their kings, the grand children of Eri decided to elevate him to a godly status by developing the myth. This myth unfortunately, caught up with later generations as historical facts were overshadowed by time. Neither Eri and his friends nor their children reached the present day Igboland but their offspring having grown in number quickly broke off and settled themselves into villages named after their fathers in the expanse known today as Igboland.

The first wife of Eri for example called Nneamaka, bore him five children. The first was Agulu, the founder of Aguleri, the second was Nri Ifikuanim, the founder of Umunri, followed by Nri Onugu, the founder of Igbariam and Ogbodulu, the founder of Amanuke. The fifth one was a daughter called Iguedo, who is said to have born the founders of Nteje, and Awkuzu, Ogbunike, Umuleri, Nando, and Ogboli in Onitsha. As one of the children of Eri, the descendents of Nri Ifikuanim migrated from Aguleri, which was and still is, the ancestral temple of the people, in search of a place of settlement. His second wife Oboli begot Onoja, the only son who founded the Igala Kingdom in the present day Kogi State of Nigeria.

The descendants of Eri were the founders of the clans mentioned above which are the most influential and powerful dynasty of priests, diviners, and civilizing agents in Igboland. The descendants of other noble friends that accompanied Eri were the ones that founded other villages and clans in the vast territory of Igbo land.

#### OCHICHI VS. NDU: CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In its Igbo rendering, *ochichi* correlates with rulership. In the recent time, it has also been used as a correlation to leadership which is of course, incorrect because leadership correlates with *ndu*. This is where a problem arises for linguistic philosophy. Such a problem that prompts the foremost Igbo linguistic philosopher Jerome Okonkwo (2012) to declare "okwu danahu onu, onaghi ekwe ntuuta" which translates to "if word escapes from the mouth, it is impossible to retrieve". It is now becoming harder for Igbo speakers to maintain the distinction between *ochichi* and *ndu* or *ichi* and *idu* as the case may be since they supplant Igbo expressions with choice English meanings. Rather than translate

from one to the other, they prefer to supplant the true meaning in Igbo with a choice (sometimes regular) meaning in English. It is in this way that the normal meaning of some Igbo terms like ochichi have been skewed in their English rendering. Ochichi may now be erroneously taken to mean leadership instead of rulership leading to the loss of rulership and ndu in Igbo syntax. It is in line with this error that the organizers of the 2014 ISA conference eulogized ochichi in its theme as leadership.

The term onye-ochichi refers to a ruler, despot, dictatorial monarch or aristocrat, etc., whereas onye-ndu refers to a leader. It is not in doubt that the Igbo are averse or disinclined to rulers from origin hence, the idea of "Igbo enwe eze". Chiefly egalitarian and republican, the Igbo traditional political philosophy emphasized leadership and frown at rulership (Nwala: 1985). Consequently, the postcolonial Igbo nation, in instituting the colonial-type monarchies in different towns in Igbo land carelessly crossed this thin line of political relations and the creation of "ohaneze" as the apex Igbo cultural body at the inception of the Biafran war by elements who wanted power became the pontification of a socio-cultural crisis that would haunt the Igbo people years after. The creation of ohaneze by power mongers has since crystallized into the abhorable: "from Igbo enwe eze to Igbo ga enweriri eze" meaning "from the Igbo do not have kings/rulers to the Igbo must have kings/rulers". Prior to colonialism, in the years between 8th century and 19th century AD, the Igbo never developed a monarchical system. Even the Nri government was a priestly/spiritual organization. The reason for this is not unconnected with the fact that (a) Eri was a son of a priest in Ebla (b) No royal blood was among Eri's party that left Ebla in the 7th century AD (c) they had seen how dictatorial kings/monarchies could bring destruction to their people and wanted to avoid that (d) during the years of Eboe migration from Ebla

to Igboland, a more efficient and tolerant egalitarian system had evolved which the Igbo chose to sustain after they settled finally in their present day homeland. Chinua Achebe commenting on the same point makes this position clear:

*The Igbo are a very democratic people. The Igbo people expressed a strong antimonarchy sentiment—Ezebuilo—which literally means, a king is an enemy. Their culture illustrates a clear-cut opposition to kings, because I think, the Igbo people had seen what the uncontrolled power of kings could do. There is no doubt that in their history they experienced the high-handedness of kings, so they decided that a king cannot be a trusted friend of the people without checks and balances (Achebe 2013: 246).*

The cognate verbs for the phrase "to rule" is ichi while that of "to lead" is idu. The association of the latter with the former, a rogue legacy of the wartime gimmicks in which Gen. Emeka Ojukwu was granted dictatorial powers has brought about tension in the Igbo polity since the end of the Civil War. The war was lost but the error which was considered expedient at the time was not corrected. The Igbo apex body Ohaneze was never renamed as Ojukwu remained alive and known by the flamboyant title "Eze-Igbo Gburu-gburu" meaning "The King of all Igbo world-wide" reportedly bestowed on him as part of the war propaganda. Some even nursed the hope that he would wedge another secessionist war sooner or later. He was once quoted to have said "whilst I live, Biafra lives" (Meredith 2011: 205). Well then and sadly too, Ojukwu died in 2012 leaving that dream unrealized. Our call in this essay is for the Igbo intelligence to revisit that point in our history where we derailed to re-conceptualize leadership as ndu rather than ochichi and re-christen the apex Igbo body as Ohanonyendu

rather than the present demagoguery "ohaneze". It is in this light that we here clarify the concepts ochichi and ndu. The onye-ochichi of Ojukwu's structure was a Dike who was produced to dictate and to command absolute power, respect and obedience from the Biafran soldiers; and to exude fear and represent terror to the Nigerian adversaries. He was supposed to be ruthless and conscienceless. What mattered to those that crafted him into existence was victory for Biafrans. Thereafter, he could be tamed and disrobed of the dictatorial powers granted him. There was no need to do that as the goal was never achieved. As Dike has failed the Igbo and with the changing dynamics in which the Igbo now live, the era of Dike Ogu (the warrior king) is over, giving way to an era of Odogwu Ezumezu (The Exemplary leader) who would inspire the Igbo to achieve socio-cultural and scientific relevance in the world.

#### FROM DIKE TO EZUMEZU

The Igbo over the ages have placed high uneasy premium on the emergence of Dike as a self-distinguished personage. This uneasiness stems from a concern that he might become domineering and threatening to the freedom of others. But such distinction attracts a premium nonetheless because as it is said "ha bu ndi obodo ji eje" meaning, "they are the heroes of the clan". Dike is a genderless term applicable to either men or women who are distinguished in their field of endeavour. Okonkwo of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was one such hero that wafted an uneasy influence. Ihuoma of Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* was such an uneasy heroine. The lot of the Dike in Igbo world included blessings and curses even to those immediately surrounding them. This is because they remain unsettled in their horizon of influence. Always, at the same time required by the clan to stand out for all and conspicuously monitored to spot any domineering attitude. It is for the latter that they are regularly harangued by their people



most times more than they are eulogized. That the Dike are never adequately celebrated in the Igbo world for the feat they achieve is strictly for this fear that they might become domineering. This endemic fear would be understood if we take cognizance of the fact that the Igbo are largely an egalitarian people who place immense value on free, unrestricted and classless society. The presence of Dike happens always to threaten this ideal for which the tension between the Dike and his people seems to resonate endlessly. For this valid observations and sequel to the demands of modern time to the existence and thriving of the Igbo race, the roles of Dike now appear quite significant. Before modernity, the ultimate goal of the Igbo was survival. Now, their existence as a culturally, historically and scientifically relevant people has become urgent and the Dike has immense roles in actualizing this goal of the race.

However, due to the inherent flaws in the character of Dike, who is at once useful and domineering; relevant and vain-glorious, we here advocate his evolution into Ezumezu. Ezumezu therefore represents a modern evolution of Dike. They are useful and yet not domineering; relevant but not vain-glorious, in short, Ezumezu is a complete humane hero and a moral paragon. The Igbo of the post civil war era are morally broken. The retreating Dike has become a symbol of a

conscienceless generation and a moral-less order. He neither symbolizes a clan nor is desired by any. But the timely evolution of Ezumezu in whom as the name suggests, there is the completeness of beauty, morality, heroism, altruism, originality, creativity and distinction makes up for the dire time. Ezumezu etymologically is derived from two Igbo lexems namely "ezu" and "mezu" each of which does not have a complete meaning independent of the other. Take the first to denote "comp" and the second to denote "leteness" in the English word "completeness". When brought together as in Ezumezu they mean something close to "completenessness". It is this idea of "completenessness" that is captured in mulling together the properties of beauty, morality, heroism, altruism, originality, creativity and distinction in a human entity. Ezumezu therefore is the new Igbo humanism in which distinguished individuals strive to serve their communities with their sublime abilities and recognizing this service as a privilege thereby becoming role models for the young. The Eboe race pummeled by the nemesis of the secessionist war and troubled by the vicissitudes of Nigeria underdevelopment is therefore in search of Onyendu. The Onyendu has to be a young man or a woman of honour, integrity, proper education, wisdom, benevolence, vision and charisma who would inspire the Eboe race into the leadership of

the African continent. The elderly would look up to him/her with hope and the young would look up to him/her for inspiration. He/She would be the face of the resurgent Eboe race aiming to contribute to world history and civilization.

#### CONCLUSION: TOWARD A TRANSITION FROM OHANEZE TO OHANONYENDU NDIGBO

**M**y submissions in this paper are as follows: a) that a new consciousness is needed in Igbo nation geared toward ethnic survival, unity, global relevance and prosperity, b) that a stronger bond of unity is required among Igbo people world-wide, c) that the future of the race and its posterity must be worked out, d) that the identity of the Igbo must be reconstructed to reflect a rich igboness and in tune with contemporary demands, e) that quality and creative education must be prioritized for the young, f) that innovative thinking, creativity and originality must be instilled in the posterity, g) that the Igbo language must be revived, promoted and placed on a path of continuous growth, h) and above all in socio-political angle, that there must be a transition of the apex Igbo body from ohaneze to ohanonyendu ndi Igbo for there to be a functional platform to implement the demands of Igboism.

The Igbo nation should be on the road in search of onye-ndu to clean the mess of onye-ochichi or onye-eze since the Civil War era. The onye-ndu is a conscientious individual whose virtues consist in selflessness, sacrifice to the race, love of motherland, uprightness, unbranded agenda, knowledge, wisdom, courage, foresight, charisma, excellent spirit, perseverance, decisive, healthy, young and simplistic. The era of ndi-ochichi or ndi-eze must now come to an end. Ohaneze as the apex Igbo body must now be transformed to Ohanonyendu and the old elements replaced with fresh uncorrupted ones inclined to ndu (leadership) rather than ochichi (rulership). In this lies the future which the Igbo must now embrace. The Igbo I have stated in this essay are not just a tribe/ethnic group, they constitute a race—dark in skin but distinct from other Negro stock. It is hard to trace the lines of their emigration now, but their ancestors seem to be a mixed race offspring of Caucasian immigrants from Ebla and Nubian Negros with the former having crossed the Mediterranean and married damsels from a thriving Nubian community in the city outskirts. With the threat of the Crusades and the conflicts between Nubia and Egypt, this small Ebla community moved on and for two centuries kept resettling along the coastal lines of the continent until they eventually settled in the present day eastern Nigeria along the Anambra River possibly in the 8th century A.D. In the period of this migration, the Igbo seem to have evolved an egalitarian polity wary of the dangers which absolute monarchical powers portend.

The inclination to those sorts of monarchical powers which saw the creation of ohaneze and the enthronement of Chukwuemeka Ojukwu as the eze Igbo gburugburu or the King of all Igbo at home and in Diasporas was a war time expedience which has now outlived its

promise. Our advocacy in this essay is for a crucial transformation of ohaneze to ohanonyendu ndi Igbo where the dictatorial kings and power mongers would be replaced with conscientious leaders. But amongst this elite class of leaders, there has to be the outstanding one—the first among equals—the charismatic, conscientious, benevolent, visionary and enlightened onyendu! Igboism is the ideology that can propel this mindset.

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# ISA Igbo Studies Association

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The Igbo Studies Association (ISA) was founded on November 8, 1999 to promote and encourage research and scholarship on Igbo history, culture, social movements, linguistic, literary and artistic expressions, science and technology; to forge intellectual links and network with scholars, policy makers, and activists inside and outside Nigeria; to participate actively and collaboratively in continental and global debates with interested organizations in Nigeria, the U.S.A. and other countries on issues specifically relevant and correlated to Igbo studies; and to work proactively for the promotion of Igbo language with interested organizations and/ or institutions in diverse regions of the world.



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