



Journal homepage: <https://ssarpublishers.com/ssarjms>

Abbreviated Key Title: SSAR J Multidiscip. Stud

ISSN: 3049-2041 (Online)

Volume 2, Issue 3, (May-Jun) 2025, Page 94-103 (Total PP.10)

Frequency: Bimonthly

E-mail: ssarpublishers@gmail.com



ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 21-06-2025 / Accepted: 29-06-2025 / Published: 30-06-2025

MAJOR THEMES IN OGBA SATIRICAL AND PANEGYRIC SONGS: A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

By

Corresponding author: **Dr. Ben-Fred Ohia** (ORCID: 0000-0001-9288-4541)

^{1,2}-Department of English and Literary Studies, Rivers State University, Nkpulu-Oroworukwo, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria.

Co-Author: **Dr. Ndubuisi Davidson Ogbuagu**

ABSTRACT: Oral poetry in all cultures could generally be said to be song. In introducing BEOWULF, the longest surviving old English poem, the first great English work in the oral primary epic mode, the reciter describes it as song. In fact poetry, even in the written form, cannot exist outside music, melody and rhythm for the musical impulse often forms the base of poetic composition. Oral literature is a pleasurable form of communication communally owned and orally transmitted in a face-to-face contact. On this premise, this study explores a corpus of thirteen satirical and praise songs. Relying on Dennis Tedlock's and Dell Hymes' ethno poetic theory, the paper examines the literary perspective of the qualities and social relevance of the songs. The paper reveals that occasion and performance are the hallmark of Ogbia satirical and praise songs through which the rendition of these songs serve for the purgation of pent-up emotions. The paper further provides taxonomy of Ogbia oral literature which will enhance the understanding and appreciation of Ogbia oral literature. The paper concludes that Ogbia satirical and panegyric songs will serve for commemoration of events in Ogbia kingdom. The paper recommends the use of the songs in the rural communities in order to instil moral and ethical behaviour in the society. Sequel to the social significance of the songs is the huge contribution to scholarship.

KEY WORDS: Major Themes, Satirical, Panegyric, Literary, Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The preoccupation of this paper is to examine the literary perspective of Ogbia satirical and panegyric songs. The paper presents the taxonomy of Ogbia oral literature and reveals existing literature in the area of focus. It also examines a general survey of Ogbia satirical and panegyric songs, discussing the major themes, literary qualities of the songs and the social

relevance of the songs. The three broad genres of literature are drama, prose and poetry. Similarly, African oral literature has three broad groups of (a) what is spoken (prose), (b) what is sung (poetry) and (c) what is performed (drama). Scholarly works abound on oral literatures especially on the major ethnic groups of Nigeria

such as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, but that of Ogba is yet to be studied.

In African oral compositions of poetry especially words and music are inseparable the same is akin to Ogba oral poetic composition. This is because words, even as they are carriers of thought, are so chosen, and arranged to provide sound, the orderly arrangement of which constitutes music. (Onuekwusi 119) notes that “much of what is recognised as poetry in African oral literature is designed to be performed in situations where songs and music are important props of emotion”. Written in verse, a song essentially is a text that contains poetic devices such as repetition, rhythm, imagery, rhyme, diction and symbols, songs are the commonest forms of oral literature in Africa.

The abundance of songs emanates from the fact that it is a natural tendency of man to express thoughts, and feelings, be they of joy, sorrow, wonder and fascination in songs. In Ogba, as it is in many African communities, people sing when they fight, work, love, marry, hate, when a child is born and indeed when someone dies. Song in

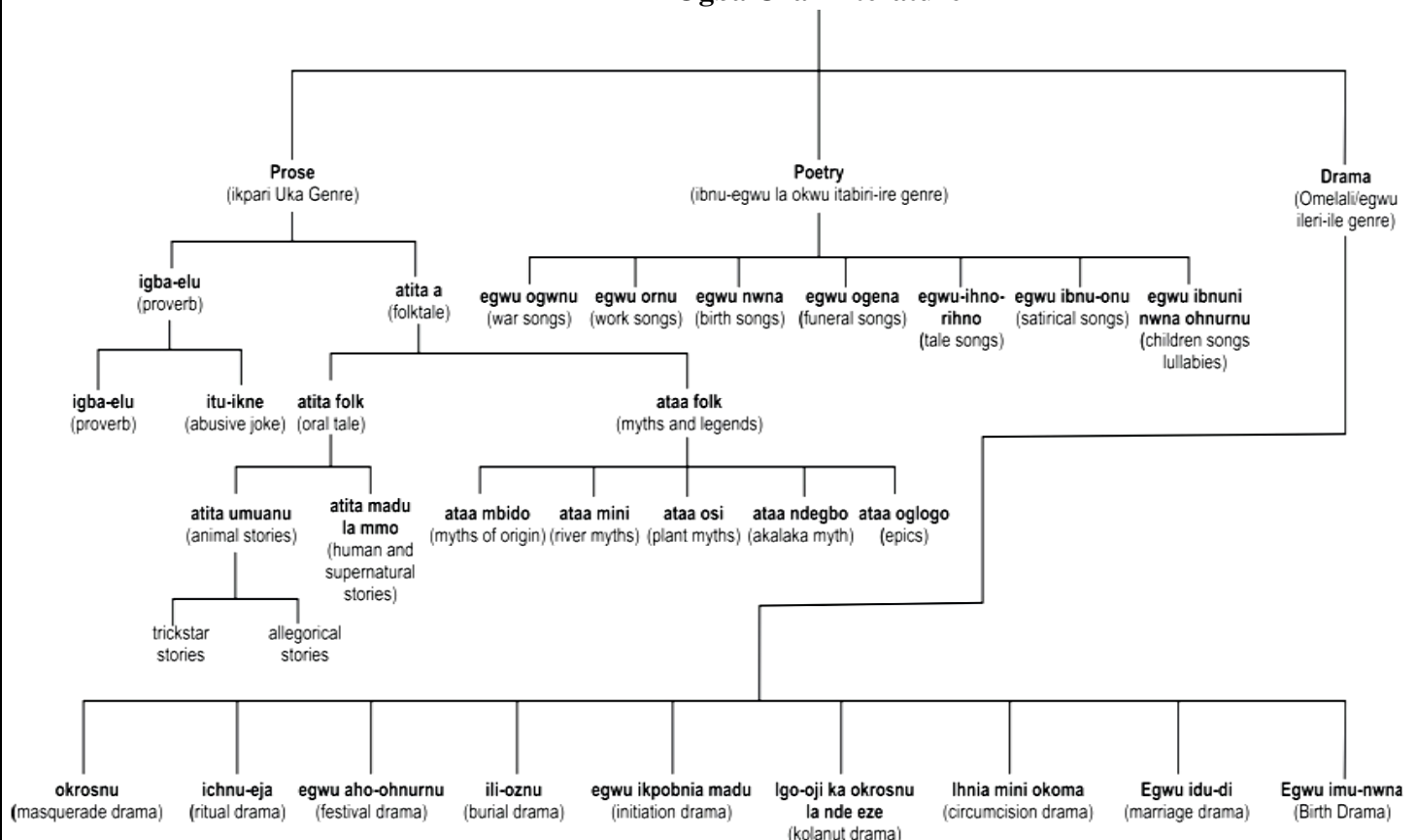
Africa, especially in Ogba land is marked out by its shortness and its repetitive nature. Repetitions could be of words, stanzas and verses that state the central contents and refrains that emphasise the theme. Songs are differentiated from prose because of their greater verbal specialism. Song as an oral poem is therefore a compendium of profound resources of language for expressing feelings, thoughts, beliefs, philosophies, values and histories. All these aspects are expressed in Ogba satirical and panegyric songs.

Taxonomy of Ogba Oral Literature

Ogba is endowed with rich cultural heritage, especially oral literature, yet there is a dearth of scholarship on Ogba oral literature. Ogba oral literature is categorised into three distinct groups as in the written form namely: (a) Ikpari uka, genre (prose-narratives), (b) Ibnu-egwu/okwu itabiri-ire genre (poetry) and (c) Omelali/ileri-ile genre (drama). Despite the diagrammatic presentations of the various genres, the aim of this paper is the detailed literary perspective of the song genre, with emphasis on Ogba satirical and panegyric songs.

TAXONOMY OF OGBA ORAL LITERATURE

Ogba Oral Literature



The purpose of explaining Ogba oral literature via the taxonomy presented is because it has not received any serious scholarly attention irrespective of its richness in both content and form. The few works in existence are mainly on the history and origin of the Ogba people with a few focused on Ogba oral literature at the micro level. They include Victor Obowu's *The Fundamental Laws and Customs Of Ogba Land Or Omelali Ogba*, Ibra Ojenike's *The History of Omoku*, Dixon Ogranya Ewoh's *History and Custom of Ogbaland*, Francis John Ellah's *Ali Ogba: A History of Ogba People*, Ben-Fred Ohia's and Henry Onyedibia's *The Ogba Nation 1460 – 2003 Vol.1*, Ben-Fred Ohia's *Content, Style and Aesthetics of Ogba Funeral Songs*, *Uchay: A Novel in Ogba Setting*, *Ogba, World Myths, Mythologies and Legends* and *Ibido Olu Ogba Nwnaohnuna* among others.

In Ogba literature, there are several genres as made explicit in the taxonomy. It is interesting to note that while focussing on the song genre, the paper deals specifically with Ogba satirical and panegyric songs. Indeed, in Ogba oral literature, the song genre is very rich as it incorporates materials from the other genres. For instance, it is a known fact that every activity in Ogba land such as masquerade dance and festival, marriage, chieftaincy title-taking, births and sacrifices are rendered in songs and mime. The paper copiously examines the satirical and praise songs as a means towards not only opening scholarship in Ogba oral literature, but also of appreciating the literary and social relevance of the songs. The paper adopts the qualitative and objective methodology to source materials for this study for both primary and secondary sources of the materials used.

Theoretical Framework

This paper relies solely on Dell Hymes' Ethnopoetic Theory as the most appropriate approach since its major thrust is on the aesthetic and literary structure of oral art. Ethnopoetics is a particular method for analysing the literary linguistic use and structure in such form of oral literature as poetry, myth, prose-narrative, folktale, ceremonial speech and other forms of extended utterances in stylised register. Its description is in a way that pays particular

attention to poetic structures within speech. Since its origin in the United States, ethnopoetics has evolved two strands of perception by two proponents namely: Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes. They emphasise on the study of the oral nature of texts and performance; including fieldwork stressing that the researcher must collect and transcribe all the materials. Ethnopoetics is adopted in this paper because of its implication with cultural issues. Naturally, therefore, this will aid the appreciation of the songs as cultural products of the Ogba people. In addition, the theory will aid the examination of the aesthetic and literary structure of the satirical and praise songs as oral art.

The Concept of Satire

Satire is a literary genre in which human or individual vices, follies, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule derision, burlesque, irony or other methods, sometimes with the intention to bring about change in human behaviour. It is used in graphic arts and performing arts as well. Elliot notes that "although satire is usually meant to be humorous, the purpose of satire is not primarily humour but criticism of an event, an individual or group in a witty manner. Satire usually has a definite target, which may be a person or group of people, an idea or attitude, an institution or a social practice. It is found in many artistic forms of expression, including literature, commentary and oral songs. Often the target is the hope of criticising the object of ridicule into reform. A very common, almost defining feature of satire is a strong vein of irony or sarcasm. Also, parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison and analogy, are devices frequently used in satirical speech and writing.

Survey of Ogba Satirical and Panegyric Songs

The purpose of satire is to criticise an object because it falls short of some standard which critics desire that it should reach. Inseparable from any definition of satire is its corrective purpose, expressed through a critical mode which ridicules or otherwise attacks those conditions needing reformation, in the opinion of the satirist. The same is the purpose of Ogba satirical songs. Satirical and praise songs are prevalent forms of

Ogba oral literature, and they are performed by both men and women to condemn anti-social behaviours such as theft, adultery, fornication and murder; praise or eulogise the achievements of a person such as bravery, fecundity and politics respectively. Ogba satirical and praise songs have a bipartite structure involving the verse and the refrain or chorus. Their performance is characterised by the call and response pattern of most traditional songs in Africa. The verse is sung by the lead-singer of the group, while the chorus is sung by the rest of the group. The chorus is often a repetition of the exact lines by the leader, or an entirely different line.

Writing on this two-part structure, (Chukwuma 109) avers as follows: “structurally one is incomplete without the other. The verse line introduces the rhythmic motif which is picked up and concluded by the refrain”. Ogba satirical and praise songs are structured in an antiphonal pattern. The songs exemplified in this paper have this dualistic pattern. The songs are topical and ephemeral and their subjects vary. At times they sing panegyric either of the living, the dead, his ancestors, or dead relatives. The styles of Ogba satirical and panegyric songs are simple, repetitive and straightforward. In the performance of the panegyric songs, the performer creates various names of the personality to address him. He also showers encomiums on the person’s good character and attributes. Speaking on Ogba funeral songs, (Ohia 207) explains that “through the songs as is evident in the themes, Ogba funeral songs are avenues to praise and/or abuse human and non-human subjects. The human objects could be long standing heroes, and accomplished professionals, and those worthy of emulation”.

Major Themes in Ogba Satirical Songs

Some of the major themes in Ogba satirical songs are: illicit love, theft, murder, drunkenness, adultery, fornication, laziness, failure, shabbiness, flippancy and selfishness because they aim at the negative traits of humans, satirical songs 1 and 2 examine the themes of illicit love, unwanted pregnancy and theft respectively.

Song 1: “Nwna Aka ka tu po ewho ime mnurima” – A Teenage girl was impregnated and gave birth to a baby”.

L: Nkani bu kini umu ibewa ali ukwu sei
Oju la me eyina umu ibewa kiye

Ede nwna aka ka tu po ya ime mnurima

O ba mu la la onu, o ba mu la le eka shim o?

Bia ahnu nwna Akaka tu po ya ime mnurima

R: Whne wnuyna ju la mu eyina, whne wnuyna ju la mu eyina

Translation:

L: It is surprising and shocking brethren of Ibewa town

Where a girl child was impregnated and gave birth to a baby

Will she give birth through the mouth or through the hand?

A girl child was impregnated and gave birth to a baby.

R: It is surprising and shocking, it is surprising and shocking.

This song narrates the illicit love of a teenage girl that results to pregnancy that places people in doubt whether she would be able to give birth at her tender age. Song 1 is composed to condemn the abominable act and caution teenage girls against unwanted pregnancy.

Song 2: “Erende meni la ye, erende” – We are happy, we are happy”.

L: Erende meni la ye erende

Ahoada nwna ka Ahiakwo bu po oyne osni erende

R: Erende meni la ye, erende

Ahoada nwna ka Ahiakwo bu po oyne osni erende

Translation:

L: We are happy, we are happy

Ahoada, the son of Ahiakwo is a thief

We are happy

R: We are happy, we are happy

Ahoada, the son of Ahiakwo is a thief

We are happy.

Happiness in the text is ironical because the victim is stripped naked, snail shells wound round his neck and waist and his body painted with charcoal. The happiness in this context is the fact that he was caught in the act of stealing. He is forced to dance round the town amidst drumming and clapping of hands; and constrained to pay a stipulated amount of money and a goat as fine to appease the gods of the land. These punishments serve as deterrent to others.

Murder is another social evil castigated in Ogba satirical songs. Song 3 explores this theme in order to demonstrate the people's abhorrence of evil.

Song 3: "Ezeh Ka Kingdom Ezeh Nkita" – "Kingdom's Teeth Is Dog's Teeth".

L: Ezeh ka kingdom bu ezeh nkita

R: Ezeh ka kingdom bu eze nkita

L: Ka ngile kpusi a okpu eze

Ka Oko kpusi a okpu eze

R: Ezeh ka kingdom bu ezeh nkita

Translation:

L: Kingdom's teeth is dog's teeth

R: Kingdom's teeth is dog's teeth

L: Let rabbit crown him king

Let rat crown him king

R: Kingdom's teeth is dog's teeth

This song refers to a murderer king in Ogba. His teeth are metaphorically referred to as dog's teeth because of their sharpness. In a chieftaincy tussle, the king fought and bit his opponent to death. The song was composed to commemorate that event, though he later ascended the throne, the event is evergreen in the memory of Ogba people. The song is used to condemn that despicable act in the history of kingship squabble in Ogba.

It is pertinent to point out that in almost all the genres of Ogba literature are interspersed with the song. In Ogba myth for instance, the narrative performance is often a total act that involves song and dance as well as story; the audience may in some occasions welcome an interlude of songs as a refreshing break from the traditional demands of the story itself. The audience participating in the story-telling events creates a comic relief and relaxes the suspense at some points of the narrative. (Finnegan 20) asserts concerning performance in oral literature: ...with oral literature, there is the additional factor that members of the audience can take direct part in the performance. This is obvious in the case of a participatory audience or in the fairly frequent situation where a basically specialised solo performance is supplemented by the audience joining in the refrain.

In consonance with this assertion, the method of performance of Ogba myth is directed by the storyteller leading and the audience following in response. (Ohia 3) admits that "most times, the story will involve a song in which the narrator

automatically turns to the lead-singer. He sings the song in verse line while the participating audience turns the chorus by picking up the refrain".

Major Themes in Ogba Praise Songs

Panegyric or praise songs called *egwu itnu ewhna/itu-eka* examine various thematic concerns. They extol kingship, heroism, generosity, good professionalism and non-human subjects such as God and the deities. Royalty is praised in Ogba panegyric songs as is evident in song 4 of this paper "Eze Iyoho" – "Accomplished King"

L: Eze

R: Iyoho

L: Eze-O

R: Iyoho

L: Eze Ekala Bu

R: Iyoho

L: Eze Ododo

R: Iyoho

Translation:

L: King

R: Iyoho

L: King-O

R: Iyoho

L: Accomplished King

R: Iyoho

L: King with Royal Regalia

R: Iyoho

This song showers encomium on the king and his dress pattern. This may be sung for any accomplished person that died as he/she may be metaphorically referred to as king because of his/her good character when living. Another theme is bravery and heroine. A praise song could be performed for a man who accomplishes a great feat in wrestling, hunting in the killing of wild animals such as buffalo, gorilla, tiger and lion. Song 5 showers praises on wrestlers in the following words.

Song 5: "Ogbamgba eru ali ya bu la oyne? – Who is the undefeatable wrestler whose back has not touched the ground?"

L: Iye le nyeowuru-o iyelenye

Ogbamgba eru ali ya bu la oyne?

Ogbamgba eru ali ya bu la oyne?

R: Iye le nyeowuru-o iyelenye

L: Esisraese, esisraese ka oksposi

R: Iyelenye, iyelenye

L: Luke-e, luke-e bu agninkwo chei

Paul nwna Elieta, Paul nwna Elieta

Bu agninkwo, agninkwo adna ga la ali gba eka

R: Iye lenye owuru-o, iyelenye

L: Ogwu mu gwo ka ma la Ijebu-ode

Eje nwnayna ru la mu nso

R: Iyelenyeowuru-o, iyelenye

L: Nde mgbā nde di ya Ogbā e

Oyne anu ewna ga ka odi ya ubadini ozo

R: Iyelenye, owuru-o, iyelenye

Translation:

L: Iyelenyeowuru-o, iyelenye

Who is an undefeatable wrestler?

Who is an undefeatable wrestler?

R: Iyelenye owuru-o, iye lenye

L: Benneth, the son of ibewa

The hero of Ohiauga

You an undefeatable wrestler

R: Iye lenye owuru-o, iyelenye

L: Esisraese, esisraese of Okposi

You are an undefeatable wrestler

R: Iye le nyeowuru-o, iye lenye

L: Luke-e, Luke-e, Luke is a kite chei

R: Iyelenyeowuru-o, iye lenye

L: Paul who comes from Elieta is a hawk

The hawk does not fall on the ground empty handed

R: Iye lenye, owuru-o, iyelenye

L: The potent charm which I prepared in Ijebu-ode, a wicked woman has neutralised it

R: Iyelenye, owuru-o, iyelenye

L: All the wrestlers in Ogbaland

Anyone whose name was not mentioned should wait until another day

R: Iyelenye, owuru-o, iyelenye

This song which is composed and sung by Pop Ogbu (Oga Nwna Ibewa) praises wrestlers from various communities in Ogbā land. During wrestling contest, these songs are sung as a stimulant to encourage the wrestlers especially young ones.

Literary Devices in Ogbā Satirical and Panegyric Songs

Literature has its unique features. This accounts for why literature is described as a pleasurable use of words for knowledge, information and entertainment. In the words of (Agovi 292), “it is the beautiful and pleasant manner of expression

of words that distinguishes literature from history, sociology, journalism and other aspects of scholarship that thrive on words. ...Literature whether written or oral, is an imaginative and beautiful creation in words which provide enjoyment, entertainment, experience, education, information and excitement to an audience”. Distinguishing literature and other subjects, (George 209) observes thus: “literature is different from other subjects specifically because it has two unique modes of expression: firstly by a deliberate exploitation of the resources of language and secondly, by its fictional and even exaggerated rather than purely historical reference to social reality”.

It is important to note that works of art cannot be appreciated purely at the surface level. Literature is more than speech, discourse or writing as its vehicle (language) is couched with deep connotative meaning that does not lend itself wholly to ordinary interpretations. Sequel to the above statements, literature, especially poetry, makes use of figurative expression to communicate meanings to its readers. Through these poetic devices beauty is created and ideas are developed. These figurative languages include personification, apostrophe, alliteration, simile, metaphor, paradox, euphemism, rhetorical questions, oxymoron, repetition and allusion to mention but a few.

It is important to commence with the explanation of the formula used to begin, punctuate or close the performances for satirical and praise songs. The formula below is the opening formula for Ogbā praise songs.

L: Kwo

R: Ho

L: Edeni

R: Nye la di a

Translation:

L: Kwo

R: Ho

L: Everywhere

R: We are present

The lead-singer uses this formula to inform the audience to get started in the praise song performance. He stretches his hand to the four cardinal points of East, West, North and South to signify the commencement of the performance. When he wants to change a song, he also uses

this interruptive formula to communicate to the audience of his intentions.

The text below is the opening formula for Ogba satirical songs:

L: Okrobia wele

R: Wele

Translation:

L: Boys get ready

R: We are ready

The opening formula is used to enliven the audience for satirical performance. The lead-singer appeals to the audience to rise up to the occasion and also uses the formula to punctuate the songs when he wants to change his rendition. In Ogba, as in other ethnic nationalities, repetition is prevalent in satirical and praise songs. Commenting on repetition, (Chukwuma 159) remarks as follows:

“It is important to note that repetition as a form of emphasis is a direct carry-over from speech norms, where the number of repetitions enhances importance, enormity and seriousness of a fact complemented by the tone of articulation. Repetition also is used for stylistic effects as in the proverb where attention is drawn not only to the semantic but also to the phonological aspects of the words”.

Repetitions are present in almost all the songs used in this paper. It also has a mnemonic value in order to enhance remembrance because the songs are not written down to be recited at will. In some songs, the entire stanza or verse and refrain are repeated throughout the duration of the song. Satirical songs 2 and 3 elicit this feature.

Another figure of speech found in Ogba satirical and praise songs is rhetorical question. Regarding rhetorical question, (Acholonu 209) comments thus: “in this figure of speech, a question is asked that no answer is expected, such a question is rhetorical and used for its effect in the passage”. Satirical song 1 exemplifies this feature.

L: Nkani bu kini umu ibewa ali ukwu sei?

Bia hun nwna Akaka di poyi meh sei?

R: What is this Ibewa kingdom sei?

Come and see a pregnant child

This question is rhetorical and does not require a direct answer. The performer wonders how a pregnant child would be able to give birth to a child, whether she would vomit the child or give

birth through her hand or what process? This song’s abhorrence of teenage pregnancy in Ogba land is very much extolled. There are rhetorical questions in praise song 5 – “Ogbamgba eru ali ya obu oyne?”

Personification is another prominent feature in Ogba satirical and praise songs. Commenting on personification, (Barnet, Berman and Burto 259) note that it is “the attribution of human characteristics or feelings to non-human organism, animal, objects or abstract ideas”. This is seen in satirical song 6 “Eghari hasi” with the phenomenon of misbehaviour personified as though it is a human being.

L: Eghari hasi

R: Eghari hasi ma mu eka la ukwu

L: Nwna Ezukum madu mnu rnu hasi ma egharigha

R: Eghari hasi ma mu eka la ukwu

L: Oyne ewno uche

R: Eghari hasi ma mu eka la ukwu

Translation:

L: Misbehaviour, misbehaviour

R: Misbehaviour leave me alone

L: The child of a responsible man

R: Misbehaviour leave me alone

L: A senseless child

R: Misbehaviour leave me alone

The song addresses “misbehaviour” to leave the person alone. Misbehaviour is personified as a human being holding the leg of the persona.

The Social Relevance of Ogba Satirical and Praise Songs

Scholars who have studied African satirical and praise songs virtually have come to more or less the same conclusion that the songs play important roles and are socially relevant to society. Praise songs are performed at social occasions to extol the virtues of individuals who have distinguished themselves in many fields of human endeavour. On the other hand, satirical songs are rendered to condemn the occurrence of anti-social behaviour such as adultery, fornication, incest, murder, theft and other vices. In the same vein, (Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa and Madubuike 39) observe as follows: “African orature is important to this enterprise of decolonising African literature for the important reason that it is the incontestable reservoir of the values, sensibilities, aesthetics

and achievements of traditional African thought and imagination outside the plastic arts”.

Concerning satirical songs, (Okoh 295) observes as follows: “Whether the occasion is called Ineh, Ogba-nigbe or Iwaji, satirical songs for example, which constitute a well known genre of oral literature, are not only in circulation, but are also exploited fully to the benefit of society. They provide one unique opportunity to attack those who have violated the social norms, or engaged in one form of anti-social behaviour or the other”. In the same vein, Ogba satirical and praise songs portray the Ogba perception of social norms and anti-social acts. The analysis of these songs in the literary perspective in accordance with Ogba sensibilities has contributed to fuller understanding of the meaning of anti-social behaviours. The social significance of these songs is perceived in their relevance to the society. The songs also serve as an unwritten code that any person who is caught stealing would be stripped naked and made to dance shamelessly round the town. Another social relevance of the songs is that the families that participated in the Ogba/Aboh wars are recounted for the interest of posterity. Praise song 7 “Oyne la oyne? – Who and who?” is a clear attestation of the veracity of this assertion.

L: Oyne la oyne?

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Ownu bu ownu

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Agwolo Dikne

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Isoma ori agha

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Nde mrne kwure

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

Translation:

L: Who and who?

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Death is death

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: They killed and accepted

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Powerful Agwolo family

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: Brave Isoma family

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

L: They killed and accepted

R: Iyoho oje iyoho

This is a war praise song purely sung to eulogise those families which fought the famous Ogba/Aboh war. All the families in Obakata quarter did not participate in the war and the worst of it is that they did not ask after their slaves that were victims of the war. As a punitive measure, they are not admitted into the revered Igbo (killers or hunters society) in Omoku, neither are they allowed to participate in Ogudu (mock war) festival. Hitherto, in any occasion in Omoku, when the native drink overflows the cup and pours on the ground, such drink must be given to any Agwolo man among the people. In the absence of Agwolo person, alternatively the drink will be given to any man from Ihiukwu family. This practice is in recognition of the prowess and valour of the two families in the Ogba/Aboh war.

A very significant aspect of the songs is the role of the choruses. The choruses are sources of entertainment. Many people participate in satirical songs not necessarily to condemn the abominable act committed, but to enjoy themselves in the various renditions, which are melodious and didactic. Apart from their entertainment value, Ogba satirical songs are also didactic. Through the songs invaluable information is passed on to posterity and knowledge is gained. Using African literature as a method of teaching Africans, (Irele 23) posits that “in practical term this means that we may have to develop our criticism only for a while, as a method of teaching adapted to the need and level of our public”.

Conclusion

This paper concerns itself with Ogba satirical and panegyric songs (seven in all) were collected, transcribed, translated and analysed. The literary perspectives such as literary devices, social significance and other aspects used in the rendition of these songs were examined. Due to the orality of the songs in this paper, the structure retained on paper is the oral rendering. This shows that formulae spice up the performance as the songs are composed on general patterns of lines, stanzas, and refrains. The core poetic devices which are identified as the poetic features

include repetition, personification, apostrophe, alliteration, rhetorical question and others. The paper discovers that Ogba satirical songs are rendered as response to certain antisocial behaviour of individuals like adultery, murder, incest, theft, patricide, matricide and many other vices. Praise songs on the other hand are rendered during the coronation of traditional rulers and chiefs and in ceremonies extolling bravery such as the killing of wild animals. They are also deployed to honour an illustrious son or daughter who has distinguished himself/herself in his/her professional career. The above suggests that like other forms of oral literature, Ogba satirical and praise songs are occasional art-forms.

The work demonstrates that Ogba satirical and praise songs serve other social functions such as documentary to some societal activities and also help to preserve the community's history through "the families that participated in the famous wars between Ogba and Aboh; they are recognised and immortalised". Some satirical songs also advice people on the need to live a responsible and fulfilled lives and to avoid dishonourable ways of life. It is part of the findings of this paper that the songs were clad with sumptuous imagery and powerful symbolism. The inclusion of these images is a way to condemn anti-social acts among individuals in the society.

Recommendations

In the light of challenges in the foregone exposition, there is need for a positive change of attitude towards the revitalisation of Ogba cultural heritage. Government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), cultural organisations and relevant agencies should endeavour to collect, collate and preserve these songs for posterity. Other recommendations include the followings: Lecturers of oral literature should place emphasis on field research; students of oral literature should be encouraged to go to their various backgrounds to collect oral materials such as recording of songs, folktales, various dramatic performances in masquerades festivals, marriages, chieftaincy coronations and festival performances for transcription, translation and literary analysis and finally, the youths should be encouraged to participate in the effective rendition of Ogba satirical and praise songs.

Works Cited

- Acholonu, Amadi. *A Guide to Unseen Prose and Poetry*. Heinemann, 1980.
- Agovi, R. Johnson. "The Aesthetics of Traditional Oral Literature". *Research Review* vol. 10, no. 03, Pp. 88-114. Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, 1982.
- Barnet, Samuel, Berman, Matthew and Barto, Christopher. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Constable Publishers, 1980.
- Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa, Jemie and Ihechukwu, Madubuike. *Toward The Decolonisation of African Literature 1*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.
- . . . *Igbo Oral Literature: Theory and Tradition*. Belpot Nig. Co Ltd., 1994.
- Elliot C. Robert. "Satire" Retrieved 25th February, 2017 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/satire>.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in African*. Oxford, 1976.
- Garuba, Ashiwaju and Tshiwala, Regina-Amadi. *Nigerian Magazine*, 1981.
- George, Karibi T. "Kalabari Funeral Songs" An M.A. Thesis, University of Jos, 1987.
- Hagher, Iyorwuese. "Performance in Tiv Oral Poetry". *Oral Poetry in Nigeria* eds. Uchebulam, N. Abalogu.
- Haris, Robert. "The Purpose and Method of Satire" Retrieved 27th June, 2017 from <http://virtualsalt.com/satire.ht>
- Irele, Abiola. "The Criticism of Modern African Literature". *Perspectives on African Literature* ed. Heywood, Christopher. Heinemann, 1979.
- Ohia, Ben-Fred. "Content and Styles of Funeral Songs from Ogba in Rivers State". A PhD Dissertation of the University Of Calabar, 2009.
- . . . *Content, Style and Aesthetics of Ogba Funeral Songs*. Abbey-Tech Printing Press Service, 2017.
- . . . "Major Themes and Literary Styles of Performance in Ogba Funeral Songs". *Innovative Research Journal of Sociology and Humanities* vol. 01, no. 01, Pp. 05-10, 2024.
- Okoh, Nkem. *Preface to Oral Literature*. Lamson Publishers, 2014.

Onuekwusi, Jasper Ahaoma. *Fundamentals of African Oral Literature* Rev. ed. Alphabet

Nigeria

Publishers,

2013.
