



## **6th International Conference on Igbo Studies**

**Theme: Ozoemena: The Igbo Human Rights Experiences in Nigeria and Diaspora.**

**Dedicated to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Achebe's Things Fall Apart**

### **Preliminary Program**

**April 4-5, 2008**

**Howard University, Washington DC, USA**

Sponsored by the generous support of  
**Howard University School of Social Work, E. Franklin Frazier Center for Social Work Research  
Igbo Studies Association**

Howard University Law School Campus (West Campus)  
2900 Van Ness Street, NW, 3rd Floor, Holy Cross Hall  
Washington, DC 20008

#### **Plenary 1**

**10:30am-6pm: Registration:**

**11:30am: Call to Order: Moderator: Chris Aniedobe, Conference publicity Secretary**

**11:35: Opening Remarks: Ernest Uwazie, Conference Chair**

**11:45: Welcome Remarks**

**Nkiru Nzegwu, ISA President**

#### **Welcome**

**Cudore Snell, Dean, Howard University School of Social Work.**

**11:50am: Chioma Oruh, Howard University: *Igbo Kwenu!* (poetry reading)**

**12-1pm: Lunch**

**1:00-3:00: Plenary 1: Reawakening the Igbo political consciousness & culture**

**Phillip Aka**, Chicago State University, *Echi di ime, Onye ma ihe oga amu: Harnessing the current Igbo movement for independence.*

**Catherine Acholonu**, The Catherine Acholonu Research Center for African Cultural Sciences, Abuja, Nigeria & **Ajar Prabhakar**, UNFAC, Abuja, Nigeria: *The sons of God and the Unshakable generation: Tracing Igbo divine rights through pre-history, forgotten scriptures and oral tradition.*

**J. Akuma-Kalu**, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green: *Enyi Biafra, o laala(Has Biafra, the elephant of nation ceased to exist?): The Lament of a Disappointed Biafran Soldier.*

**Chinedu Ogoke**, Mainz University, Germany: *Igbos in post-colonial Nigeria.*

**Michael Mbanaso**, Howard University: *Resurgence of Igbo Struggles for Self-Determination in the Diaspora: 1990-2008*

Chair: **Kanayo Odeluga**, Igbo League, Chicago

**3:10-3:20: Break**

**3:20-5:30: Plenary 2: Religion and Sharia justice in Nigeria**

**David Smock**, US Institute of Peace: *Religion in World Affairs: Its role in peace making: A Report on Nigeria.*

**Zebulon Okoye**, University of Jos, Nigeria:  
*Why Ndigbo may continue to be prime Victims of Injustice and Human Rights Violations in the Northern States of Nigeria.*

**Eddy Onuoha**, Izu Umunna, Jos, Nigeria: *Structural marginalization in Nigeria: The case of Ndigbo.*

**Akuzamus N.G Anakwe**, Izu Umunna, Jos, Nigeria: *Sharia law in Nigeria: its implementation and effects on non Muslims.*

**Ernest Uwazie**, California State University, Sacramento: *Revisiting Interethnic/Religious conflicts in Nigeria: The need for a national dialogue.*

Chair: **Ernest Uwazie**, California State University, Sacramento

**5:30-7:00pm: ISA Business Meeting**

**7:00-8:00pm: Reception (Sponsored by the Council of Igbo States Americas and Igbo League, Inc.).**

**Saturday, April 5**

**8:30am-6pm: Registration.**

**8:20-8:45am: Continental Breakfast**

**8:45-11:00am: Concurrent Session A: Igbo Human Rights, Language and youth**

**James C. Agazie**, A+ Tutoring & Supplemental Services, College Park, Georgia, & **Maxine Myers Agazie**, Albany State University, Georgia: *Ozoemena: Do Igbo Youth in Atlanta Understand its Meaning?*

**Jude Aguwa**, Mercy College: *Christianity and Human Rights Promotion in Igbo Society: 1885 to the Present.*

**J. Akuma-Kalu Njoku**, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green: *The Neglect Path: A Heartbreak Trail of Igbo Slave Journeys to Bonny.*

**Chinyere Ohiri-Aniche, University of Lagos, Nigeria:** *Annihilation of Ancestral Language as Human Rights Violation of the Igbo.*

**Ephraim Okoro**, Howard University: *Communication and human rights in Igbo society: An analysis of press coverage of issues and events.*

Chair: **John Ukawuilulu**, Bethune -Cookman University, Daytona Beach, Florida

**8:45-11:00am: Concurrent Session B: Igbo culture, women and Human Rights**

**Gloria Chuku**, Millersville University of Pennsylvania: *Human Rights and Women in Nigeria: The Igbo Experience.*

**Godwin Uwah**, College of Charleston: *The existential dimension of Things Fall Apart: Achebe's philosophical scrutiny and universal human rights.*

**Sabine Jell-Bahlsen**, Ogbuide Films, New York: *Failing spirits, crumbling culture, and human rights.*

**Carol Ijeoma Njoku**, University of Nigeria, Nsukka: *Colonialism and human rights violation in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart.*

**Emma Okocha**, AmericaMiDream: *January 15: The phantom of an Igbo coup.*

Chair: **Anthonia Kalu**, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley.

**11:00-11:10AM: BREAK**

**11:10AM-12pm: Plenary 3**

Introduction of Keynote Speaker by **Kanayo Odeluga**, Igbo League, Chicago.

**11:15am-12pm: Keynote Address:** Prof. **Pat Utomi**, Lagos School of Business-Pan African University, Nigeria, and former Presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress, Nigeria: *Ozoemena: The challenge of leadership.*

12-1pm: Lunch

**12:30:** Luncheon Address: **Chudi Uwazurike**, City University of New York: *Think Tanks and Autocentric Development strategies: The 2007 SENECA Report on South Eastern-on power, knowledge and missing links in the Igbo renewal.*

Chair: **Emma Agu**: 3G Media Limited; formerly at Champion Newspapers, Nigeria.

1:00-3:00pm: Plenary 4: *The Igbo world on human rights, origins, language and information*

**William Emeka Obiozor**, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg: *The Pedagogy of Language and Graffiti in Igboland.*

**Paul Onovoh**, Georgia State University Atlanta: *Igbo Anamaudude Uwa. Igbo on the World Wide Web.*

**John Orij**, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo: *The Human Condition & Human Rights in Nigeria: A Global Perspective.*

**Abdul Salau**, Delaware State University, Dover: *Ancient Egyptian Origin of Igbo.*

Chair: **Norma Jones**, Howard University

3:00-3:10: Break

**3:10-5:15: Plenary 5: Religion, the civil war and human rights.**

**Obiwu**, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio: *Ethnic Transportation and American Resistances: Achebe's Things Fall Apart, Global Babelism, and Dephthallicization.*

**John Ukawuilulu**, Bethune-Cookman University, Daytona Beach, Florida and **Ahamefule Nnorom**, St. Richards Catholic Church, Emporia, Virginia: *The Scandal of Marginalization in Ala Igbo and among Ndi Igbo: the Igbo osu caste system revisited.*

**Chima Korieh**, Marquette University: *The Nigeria-Biafra civil war and discourse on genocide and human rights.*

**Anthonia Kalu**, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley: *Religion and Human Rights in Igbo verbal arts.*

**Nkuzi Nnam**: *Colonial mentality in diaspora: The Igbo case(omenenu vs omenani).*

Chair: **Nkiru Nzegwu**, Binghamton University, NY.

**5:15-6:30: Conference summary/Conclusion**

**Conference Resolution:** **Chris Aniedobe**, conference publicity secretary

**Chair: Ernest Uwazie**, Conference Chair

**6:30-8:30pm: Reception and An Open Forum/Dinner: ISA and Igbo Organizations(sponsored by the Nwannedinamba, in the Americas ).**

**8:30-9:30pm: In Recognition of Prof. Chinua Achebe on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his book, Things Fall Apart:**

**Closing Keynote Address: Prof. Uzodinma Nwala**, University of Nigeria, Nsukka: *Fundamental flaws in the politics of the Igbo Nation: lessons and history.*

**An Essay Tribute to Prof. Chinua Achebe by Dede Obinkaram Echewa**, West Chester University of Pennsylvania: *Chinua Achebe and principle of 'AMA'M N'IMAH' in Igbo story telling.*

**Note: Presenters should plan to present their paper in no more than 20 minutes, with additional time allowed for Q/A---after all presentations.**

### **Conference Planning Committee:**

**Ernest Uwazie**, Chair

**Chris Aniedobe**, Publicity

**Mike Mbanaso**, Chief Host

**John Ukawuilulu**, Protocols

**Kanayo Odeluga**, Outreach

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*Special Thanks to*

**Ernest Uwazie**, California State University, Sacramento  
Conference Chair, 2008 ISA Conference

**Michael Mbanaso**  
Howard University, Washington, DC,  
School of Social Work, E. Franklin Frazier Center for Social Work Research

**John Obioma Ukawuilulu**  
Bethune-Cookman University, Daytona Beach, Florida

**Kanayo Odeluga**, Igbo League, Chicago

**Chris Aniedobe**, Council of Igbo States Americas

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# Igbo Studies Association

## MISSION

To promote and encourage scholarship on IGBO history, culture and society in African studies as inaugurated and initiated at the African Studies Association (ASA) Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 8, 1999. 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. and other countries on issues specifically relevant correlated to Igbo studies. To work actively for the promotion of Igbo language with interested organizations and/ or institutions in diverse regions of the world.

## OFFICERS

*Chair: Nkiru Nzegwu, Ph.D.* Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY 13902 607-777-2000  
*Secretary: Anthonia Kalu, Ph.D.* University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639 970-351-1744  
*Treasurer: Gloria Chuku, Ph.D.* Millersville University, PA 17551

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to individuals who are interested in the issues related to Ndigbo. Membership is open to Igbo scholars everywhere committed to engendering and promoting scholarship in all disciplines in Igbo studies.

Registration fees shall be paid annually by all members the Igbo Studies Association. All members will be expected to deposit a \$25.00 contingency fee. Dues are for the membership year January 1 - December 31. The differentiated levels of registration fees due and payable by members of the organization are as follows:

**1. Individuals** — Those persons eligible for membership who pay the annual dues set by the Executive Committee. Regular (Professionals and Scholars) - \$25.00 Members based in Africa - \$10.00 Students - \$15.00 **2. Sustaining** - Those persons or organizations that elect to pay the annual dues for this class as set by the Executive Committee.

If you are interested in renewing your membership or becoming a new member, please send your request with payment to the address indicated below.

**Gloria Chuku, PhD**, Department of History, Millersville University of Pennsylvania, P. O. Box 1002  
Millersville, PA 17551

## DRIVING DIRECTIONS

**From the north (I-95 South):** Take **I-495West**, take Connecticut Avenue exit southbound. Travel for about 4 miles, turn left onto Van Ness Street and proceed until you pass a mini-circle (round about). Continue straight ahead into the Howard University School of Law (**West Campus**). While inside the campus, pass the two brick buildings on your right and bear left behind the new Law Library. Park in any un-marked space behind the Library. Facing the Library, walk towards your left (east of the library) and around the library to the brick building facing the library which is **Holy Cross Hall**. Walk through the glass doors and take the elevator (if out

of order, please use the stairs) immediately on your left to the **3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the E. Franklin Frazier Center for Social Work Research.**

**From downtown Washington, D.C.:** take Connecticut Avenue northbound and go pass the Washington National Zoo. Turn right onto Van Ness Street (see above).

**From the Metro:** take Red Line to Van Ness/UDC Station. Walk southbound on Connecticut Avenue, turn left onto Van Ness Street and proceed to Howard University School of Law (West Campus). Walking time from Metro is approx. 10 minutes. You'll see apartments/condos on both sides of the street

#### **ACCOMODATION**

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## ABSTRACTS

**CATHERINE ACHOLONU**, with contributions from **AJAY PRABHAKAR**: *THE SONS OF GOD AND THE UNSHAKABLE GENERATION: TRACING IGBO DIVINE RIGHTS THROUGH PRE-HISTORY, FORGOTTEN SCRIPTURES AND ORAL TRADITION.*

This project deals with Pre-historic civilizations, forgotten and mainstream Scriptures, ethno-anthropological records of the five continents and the oral traditions of the Igbo and their neighbors in the bid to search out any existing traces of Igbo presence during the early periods of mankind's history. Side by side with the search for Igbo identity is a search for Black African cultural identity. The latter led us to the study of African Rock Inscriptions, specifically the ancient inscribed stones of Ikom Local Government in Cross River State, Nigeria known internationally to researchers as Ikom Monoliths. Suspecting that the bizarre inscriptions on the 300 monoliths scattered all over Ikom Local government are writings, we embarked upon another search – that of decoding the strange inscriptions.

Most unexpectedly, it was within the Bronze artifacts of Igbo Ukwu, unearthed by British archaeologist Thurstan Shaw in the 1960s and, celebrated worldwide as being in a superlative class of its own among Africa's ancient bronzes, that we found the key that led to the deciphering of the monoliths inscriptions. Our work in this regard was published in 2005 under the title, *The Gram Code of African Adam: Stone Books and Cave Libraries – Reconstructing 450,000 Years of Africa's Lost Civilizations*. Our findings on the monoliths, whose geographical location is also the original homeland of the Bantu sub-culture that colonized three-quarters of Black Africa, strongly suggest that the ancestors of the Kwa linguistic and cultural family to which belong the Igbo and most of their native Southern Nigerian (and South West African) neighbors – Yoruba, Benin, Igala, Efik, Ashanti, Akan, Igala, etc., were world colonizers in times immemorial. There are existing treads of linguistic evidence that the ancestors of the Igbo have been the drivers of world civilization from times before and including early Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

While the entire Kwa people were the world's most gifted/earliest smiths and iron workers whose exploits were recorded in Greek mythology, and in Hebrew Scriptures as Qa-in, In-qa (smith, metal worker, the Hebrew name of Canaan in *Genesis*), it was the Igbo who by primogeniture bore the legacy of the first son – hence the name Igbo N-kwo, a modern Igbo rendering of an ancient word In-qa or Qa-in. This research traces the development of the N-Kwa/Nkwo/Kwa phenomenon through global Pre-history, hidden and mainstream Scriptures such as the *Old Testament Bible*, the Hebrew and Chinese Cabbala, the *Nag Hammadi* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* to reveal the hidden truth about the sacred and divine gene called Enshi in the Middle East and Nshi in Igboland, preserved from the beginning of creation and transmitted via the Kwa lineage specifically through the Igbo (the O-kwa-ra of the Kwa lineage) from the *Nwa-nshi* dwarfs, the autochthonous forest (Igbo: *Ugbo*, Yoruba: *Igbo*) dwellers of antiquity (*Ndi-gbo*), hence Ndi-Igbo. Ikom folklore says that the dwarfs which they call *Mong-kom* (and which the Igbo call *Nwa-Nshi*) were the authors of the monoliths, known to the natives as *Akwa-Nshi*. Dwarfs were known in antiquity as adept workers of metal and great magicians. The closeness between the Ikom word *Akwa Nshi* and Igbo word *Nwa-Nshi* indicate that it was the Igbo *Nwa-nshi* that authored the monoliths and invented the ancient sacred script *Nshi-biri* – (which in Igbo means 'Written by *Nshi*') used by the Ekpe cult whose sacred temple is the monoliths circle at Alok, Ikom. This explains the link with Igbo Ukwu bronzes.

Chinyere Ohiri-Aniche : *Annihilation of Ancestral Language  
As Human Rights Violation of the Igbo*

For the past three decades, international agencies, linguists and other researchers have called attention to the violation of the linguistic human rights of many indigenous and minority peoples, as well as the endangerment of most of the world's languages. The Igbo and their language are beset by these twin problems.

Researches show that increasingly, the Igbo no longer use their language, nor do they hand it over to their children, thus steadily leading the language to extinction. For instance, Ohiri-Aniche (2002) found that 8% of Igbo secondary school children in Igboland and 20% of them residing in other parts of Nigeria did not speak Igbo. In 2007, she found that in Imo State, 7% of children aged 6 to 11 years and 9% of them aged 5 years and below do not speak Igbo. For Igbo children residing in Lagos State, the comparable figures are 35% and 52.5% respectively. This dwindling competence in Igbo among the children is not surprising, considering that increasingly, the language of the Igbo home is shifting to English. Thus, in the 2002 study, 19% of Igbo parents in Igboland and 43% outside Igboland conversed with their children mostly in English or a mixture of English and Igbo. In the 2007 study, 50% of parents in Imo State and 80% in Lagos State spoke mostly English or a mixture of English and Igbo with their children.

The failure of the Igbo to hand over their ancestral language to their children, in the first place, constitutes a gross violation of the linguistic human rights of the children as defined in UNESCO (1987) and the United Nations (1994). More importantly, it is the surest way to the extinction of the Igbo language, and ultimately, the Igbo race. What greater violation of the human rights of a people exists than their abolition as a race on earth? If the Igbo wish to rescue their language that now has an estimated 20 million speakers from the league of the 90% of the world's languages which linguists predict would not survive into the next century, then they have to take some drastic actions. The first is to revert to active use of the language and also start handing it over to their children. *Taa bu gboo*; today is early enough, as the Igbo say.

**Chinedu Ogoke:** *Igbos in postcolonial Nigeria*

In a long-standing practice in the colonial era, the fundamental units and organs of Igbo livelihood were pulled down in an ordered manner. The absence of structures familiar to the European conquerors was a dilemma to the latter. In the egalitarian Igbo society the colonialist looked around for loyal church converts whom he appointed as warrant chiefs. The local people themselves were confronted with a series of images that disordered the previous reference points in their values and assessments. For these reasons, the colonial experiment in Igbo land was disastrous. English social and administrative structure was not in league with a classless society like the Igbo society. Contexts where national policies and jurisdiction originated were dislodged. There was decline in the people's participation in their own affairs. The reason is that mutual political bond had been broken. Power was now safely elsewhere. There had been a new development where political authority emanated.

On ethnic grounds, some people endorsed the colonist's attempts to suppress descent in exchange for some benefits. Among the benefits is the control of power at the centre in Nigeria, to the exclusion of the Igbos and some other ethnic groups. It has been established that a society that is rendered politically weak or unresponsive, a society forbidden to use its voice, would hardly find a political platform to support its interests. Such a society will find its attempts in conceiving its past anew, which accordingly will apply to its future, unattainable.

Igbos are paying a grave price for this loss of power. Their predicament in postcolonial Nigeria is manifest in an awful location somewhere in Nigeria. In the said place, beside an expressway, except for motorists who heed their cries and from whom they get foods and other provisions, almost four decades after the Nigeria war ended, ex-Biafran soldiers, who are Igbo, sit out their youth. There, they await slow death. These were young men who went into combat in the late sixties. They are now completely demobilized by the state. They have lost limbs and the ability to compete in a society where opportunities are few. Some of them, who have managed to leave these settlements and have gone into the labor market or to pursue further education, observe discrimination directed against them by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Nigeria has been selective in its maltreatment of its citizens, which is done according to ethnic and religious considerations. For instance, writes Karl Maier, an American journalist, in his book *This House Has Fallen - Midnight in Nigeria*, Nigeria wears down the Igbos. Nigeria is openly, earnestly, clubbing, grinding and rubbing in her displeasure at these people's dynamism. Able bodied men and women of the Igbo ethnic stock must stay away from any national service or employment. Their decaying schools and hospitals can be distinguished from the amenities elsewhere. Driving along their impassable roads can shatter one and drive one to insanity. The last time anybody was seen on any of the roads with work tools, trying to recover any portion of the roads for motorists was about four decades ago. Yet, gas and oil fields abound in the neighborhoods there. Outside their homeland, the blood of the Igbo is used to irrigate the blood thirsty Nigerian political fields. Everything is being taken away from them, even the right to be fairly represented. They must accept Nigeria's mischief else Nigeria overruns their territory like she did in the Biafra war in which millions of the Igbo were killed. Cyprian Ekwensi, the Nigerian novelist and Igbo feels the pinch himself. He poses the question, "When in 1970 we heard of 'No Victor, No Vanquished,' is it true that sixteen years after the war ended, a particular ethnic group still feels underprivileged and discriminated against in major national issues?" Maier's book was published fourteen years after Mr. Ekwensi made this statement. The various Nigerian governments are even further enraged the Igbos have not succumbed to all these pressures. The war was supposed to free the Igbos from the wicked acts being perpetrated by Nigeria. Now, Ojukwu, who led the Igbos in the Biafra war, complains "that the Igbos were so traumatized by the experience that they are caught in a sort of time warp" (Maier 283).

Igbos are not helped by the fact that they are mostly Christians spread all over in a country where religious and ethnic tensions are common. A problem begins as an ethnic problem then develops into a religious war or the other way round. In otherwise secular states of Kano, Niger, Katsina, Zamfara and Kaduna States, the governors, unable to fulfill their election campaign promises, decide religion will be a good food for the souls of their fanatical and hungry subjects. Sharia, the Islamic law is introduced by the governors of these states and some other states in Northern Nigeria. This leads to rioting in the north of Nigeria. Maier describes what follows next: "Like a brushfire carried by the wind," he writes "the violence quickly shifted hundreds of miles to the southeast. Many of the victims in Kaduna had been Igbos" (146).

**Chudi Uwazurike: *Thinks Tanks and Autocentric Development Strategies: The 2007 SENEK Report on South-Eastern Nigeria- on power, knowledge and the missing links in the Igbo renewal.***

In the age of globalization, every group must adapt to changing circumstances. Fanon had it right when he insisted that every generation must discover its mission and fulfill it. Time has taken a toll on the fate of the Igbos and their SouthEast region, along with their neighbors. Recognizing this, several efforts have been made to rekindle a renewed spirit of autocentric development, of the sort witnessed in past decades. None of perhaps half a dozen significant roadmaps from the past has made any impression. But the issues raised by the latest, a comprehensive, widely consulted report on the economic and related development future of the East, is marked by a level of scientific rigor and sociopolitical realism.

In a federation of coeval units, this internally-generated initiative is crucial. In a trilineal process that runs from university academies and formal think tanks to informed gatherings of a group with a history of marginalization, this policy document prepared by the consulting think tank group based in Enugu, is definitely the most comprehensive. But that may not be enough. There is an ideological battle for the soul of Igboland today. A generation after the mayhem of mass massacres and Biafra, people are slowly reattuning to the future.

The larger question then is this: to which category does SENEK Report belong? What are its prescriptions - do they have any chance of being adopted? How would the governors, with their own agendas and ambitions relate to its call for a new region? How does it square with the larger national trends? Where on the globalization spectrum, might we locate this sort of think tank effort in the very heart of 'Dark Africa'? Finally, what role, if any, is envisaged for the Diaspora?

**J. Akuma-Kalu Njoku:** *Enyi Biafra, O laala? (Has Biafra the elephant of nation ceased to exist?)*: *the Lament of a Disappointed Biafran Soldier.*

This paper is written to complement the existing body of literature on the Biafran experiment with nation building and about the social conditions of the Igbo people of Biafra. Since the end of the Biafra-Nigerian Civil War, Generals and other commissioned officers of the Biafran Armed Forces have written about their experiences from many different perspectives and drawing from varying sources. Using transcribed song texts (with music) including *Enyi Biafra Alaala*, which symbolically presented Biafra as an elephant of a nation, this paper will present the perspective of the other ranks. *Enyi Biafra alaala* was one of the most endearing nationalist songs and one that articulated the desires and unwritten wills of the other ranks. But as the war was ending and the dangerous prospect of losing Biafra and returning to Nigeria seemed impending, one Biafra soldier (Njoku BA 7667) found himself singing in a very subdued voice, "Enyi Biafra, O laala? (Has Biafra the elephant of nation ceased to exist?)" Since the end of the war, he has come to realize that many of the songs that they sang as other ranks in Biafra were more of laments than ordinary regimental drill and duty songs. Evidently, the way they sang them with joyous unconcern camouflaged the lament qualities of the songs. A unique part of the paper presentation is that Njoku, himself a leader Army songs and cadences in Biafra will be there to sing three selected songs with audience participation. The author will use a folkloristic personal experience narrative and content analysis method to reveal the ambiguities of the three Biafran songs: (1) "Enyi Biafra alaala," (2) "Agawala m igba mgbo," and (3) "Lee, lee aka m." In the process, he will draw attention to the unfulfilled hopes and neglected wills of

dead Igbo soldiers of the Biafra-Nigeria war, the ignored wounded Igbo veterans of that tragic event in Igbo history, and the continuing struggle of the greater Igbo society in the contemporary Nigerian experience; all that to raise some Human Rights issues.

**J. Akuma-Kalu Njoku:** *The Neglect Path: A Heartbreak Trail of Igbo Slave Journeys to Bonny*

Studies have shown that over 50% of the slaves that came to the United States traveled directly from Bonny in the Bight of Biafra. That is the region that European traders named the Slave Coast to distinguish it from the Grain Coast (now Senegal), from the Gold Coast (now Ghana), and from the Ivory Coast (now Cote D'Ivoire). Contemporary estimates suggest that about 80% of the slaves who left from Bonny and traveled to Virginia and the greater Chesapeake region were Igbo. Uzuakoli, Uburu, and Bende are some of the major slave marts and sources of most of the Igbo slaves from the hinterland of the Bight of Biafra. Yet, today when tourists, among them many African Americans who want to visit the beginning points of the slave journeys to the United States, go to the forts and castles, which the European perpetrators built in Senegal and Ghana as warehouses and processing centers for slaves before shipping them to the Americas. Since there are no forts in the Bight of Biafra comparable to what exist in Goree (Senegal) and Elmina (Ghana) slave journey related tourism development stakeholders have neglected the paths of Igbo slave journeys. My paper will retrace the journeys of Igbo slaves from Virginia to one of their very beginnings in a Cave Temple Complex in Arochukwu. I will present a heartbreak trail that I have self-consciously established from Arochukwu through interior slaveholding quarters and slave markets in Ututu, Bende, and Azumini to the shipping port in Bonny. One of the central arguments of the paper is that the trail if historically preserved and developed could help African Americans of Igbo ancestry to reconnect with their ancestral homeland. It is hoped that such a pilgrimage could enhance reconciliation and forgiveness, and help to bring healing to the deep-seated wounds of the Atlantic slave trade and slavery on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Ernest Uwazie:** *Revisiting Interethnic/religious conflicts in Nigeria: The need for a national dialogue.*

Ethno-religious conflicts remain intractable in Nigeria, with a geo-political complexity. The recent(1999-) Islamic criminal codes and their enforcement mechanisms, or Sharia(h) justice, in certain parts of Northern Nigeria seem to have exacerbated the fear, resentment, and mutual distrust, particularly between Christians and Muslims. The 1999 Nigerian constitution seems conflicted, especially as written and practice; hence a purely legalistic response is bound to worsen the conflict. Although, ethnicity and religion remain Nigeria's stubborn 'political migraine,' they are the bedrock of the country's strength and vitality to be harnessed for long-term peace and development. In sum, Nigeria's future in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be marked by her sincere dedication to understanding of how to manage Nigeria's plural religion and ethnicities; sometimes they conflict(violently), but often they co-exist(albeit on the edge). This paper recommends a national dialogue that advances the current (offensive/defensive) crisis-driven(albeit frequent) discourse on the role/impact of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria's politics.

The paper is part of an emerging project on managing Nigeria's diversity, as a follow-up to a similar program between 1997-99(see Uwazie et al(ed.) on Inter-Ethnic & Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria, 1999). Among others, the proposed national dialogue should have the

principles of reconciliation, mutual co-existence, peace building, cross-cultural/religious educational exchanges, democratic federalism, and nonviolence. Only a thoughtfully developed, carefully planned, well managed/administered national dialogue, with good monitoring and assessment mechanisms, will have the greatest potential to effectively respond to Nigeria's persistent ethno-religious conflicts.

**David Smock:** *Religion in World Affairs: Its role in peace making: A Report on Nigeria.*

Religion has assumed unusual prominence in international affairs. No major religion has been exempt from complicity in violence conflict. Yet we need to beware of an almost universal propensity to over simplify the role that religion plays in international affairs. Religion is not usually the sole or primary cause of conflict.

- With so much emphasis upon religion as a source of conflict, the role of religion as a force in peacemaking is usually overlooked.
- A form of religious peacemaking that is growing in importance is when religious leaders and institutions serve as mediators in conflict situations or in other ways help to resolve conflicts.
- Another form of religious peacemaking is interfaith dialogue. Rather than seeking to resolve a particular conflict, it aims at defusing interfaith tensions that may cause future conflict or may derive from previous conflict. Interfaith dialogue is an expanding enterprise even in places where interreligious tensions are the greatest. Not infrequently the most contentious interfaith relationships can turn out to provide the context for the most meaningful and productive exchanges.
- Given the importance of religion both as a source of international conflict and as a resource for peacemaking, it is regrettable that the U.S. government is so ill equipped to handle religious issues and to relate to religious actors. If the U.S. government is going to insert itself into international conflicts or to build deeper and more productive relationships with other countries around the world, it will need to devise a better strategy for effectively and respectfully engaging with the religious realm.

**Zebulon S.C. Okoye:** *Why Ndigbo may continue to be prime victims of injustice and human rights violations in the Northern states of Nigeria.*

Ndigbo have continued to suffer injustice and serious human rights violations in the North ever since the Civil War ended over three and a half decades ago, despite the various socio-political initiatives to live in harmony as compatriots with their hosts. The violations range from loss of lives and property to frequent ethno-religious riots to denial of certain citizenship rights and benefits ordinarily guaranteed in the Constitution.

The factors responsible for this situation are examined in the presentation. They include the unique way of life of Onyeigbo which inevitably brings him into overt or covert conflict with his host; the culture of religious intolerance of his Hausa/Fulani Moslem host or co-resident, a situation which has worsened with the upsurge of Moslem fundamentalism in recent years; the relatively lower level of development of his Northern host in western education and socio-economy as a consequence of which the latter is a beneficiary of certain affirmative actions/policies to the

detriment of Ndigbo residents; and the increasing nationalism among the ethnic minorities in the North, resulting in their assertion of indigene rights, frequently backed by local and state government legislations and even Federal Government policies, and resistance to continued Hausa/Fulani domination. Evidence in support of the role these factors in the continued violation of Ndigbo human rights in the North are highlighted in the presentation.

**Akuzamus Anakwe:** *SHARIA LAW: Its implementation and effects on non-Muslims in Nigeria.*

Under the Nigerian Legal system the Sharia Law as well as other indigenous laws are classified as Customary Laws. In reality, is the constitution so recognized?

The Nigeria Constitution affirms that this constitution is “*for the purpose of promoting good government on the principles of Freedom, Equity and Justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people.*” In practice is the constitution achieving this purpose in the face of growing assaults on it by the Sharia protagonists?

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom of worship under any religion of one’s choice and that no Citizen of Nigeria shall be discriminated against in any form in any part of Nigeria. In some Northern States of Nigeria this is not so.

In spite of these constitutional provisions some State Governments in the Northern part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have introduced Shari Law and have permitted and/or directed its public servants and agencies to implement Sharia Laws in some cases in its most crude and primitive forms. These primitive implementations of Sharia Laws are now prevalent in spite of assurance of the concerned State Governments that Shari Laws are not for Non-Muslims.

**Eddy Onuoha:** *Structural Marginalization in Nigeria: The Case of Ndigbo*

The Nigerian project of nation building, has over the years had some set backs particularly in the process of mobilizing and fostering unity among the nation’s diverse ethnic nationalities. One of such set backs is the consistent use of structural marginalization in the country. By structural marginalization as used in this discussion refers to the use of either overt or covert policies of government, its agencies or use of social, economic and political control to subordinate, marginalize or covertly tend to deny the members of marginalized groups equal share or equal opportunities that would translate into full participation in the social, political and economic activities of national development. As a weapon, the instrument of marginalization is meant to deal on the psyche of the victims by preventing them from full realization of their potentials which is perceived to be used against other groups in the socio-political and economic community.

Apart from the Ijaw nation and some communities in the oil producing areas who have consistently expressed their reactions and resentments through violence and youth restiveness, the case of the marginalization of Ndigbo has remained silent and the mostly ignored by stakeholder in the Nigerian project. One of the most vivid and pronounced expression was the 1966/67 pogrom that saw the elimination of large populations of Ndigbo and the destruction of their property and life investment in various parts of

Nigeria. When the Nigerian civil war ended in January 1970, Ndigbo were denied their accumulated savings. This singular policy of the government in power meant denial of their immediate social and economic survival and revival. That single case has for the past thirty eight years been a source agony and disadvantage to the growth and development of Ndigbo economy. Indeed the brains of Ndigbo have been drained and their entrepreneurial prowess development denied and as such continues to be wasted. In reaction, many Ndigbo with latent potentials business, education, the arts and medicine have opted to migrate to other economies of Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, where the social, psychological and political environment would lead to the realization of their full potentialities and capabilities.

In this discussion, detailed pieces evidence and data about the phenomenon of marginalization of Ndigbo as victims of marginalization in Nigeria are presented. The implicit social, economic and psychological realities of the history of Ndigbo marginalization in the country are discussed.

**Caroline Ijeoma Njoku:** *Colonialism and Human Right Violation in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*

This study examines Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in the perspective of human right violation as represented using the colonized people of Umuofia. Colonialism is an extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders by establishment of either settler colonies or administrative dependencies in which indigenous populations are directly ruled or displaced and their rights and resources subjected to the control of the colonizers. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the first international statement to use the term "human rights," and has been adopted by the Human Rights Movement as a charter. This body emerged with several conventions, one of which is the convention against genocide. This convention bans acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. The same UDHR in its Convention Against Torture (CAT) prohibits torture under all circumstances while empowering the human person with certain rights and freedoms such as:

- The right to self-determination
- The right to own, trade, and dispose of their property freely and not to be deprived of their means of subsistence...
- The right to life
- The right to liberty and freedom of movement
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Freedom of opinion and expression
- Freedom of assembly and association....

The above declared rights form a paradigm in the evaluation of the circumstances of human rights violation in the text. This opens new vistas in the discussion of Achebe's representation of human rights and colonialism in the text. Instances of religious bigotry, cultural imperialism and political hegemony between colonizers/missionaries and the people of Umuofia form the bedrock of the study. Discourse on these is linked up with neo-colonial experiences in Africa (especially Nigeria) which manifest itself in starvation, human trafficking, marginalization, political dictatorship and misappropriation of public resources. The consequences of these harsh experiences to the postcolonial Nigerian society of today are highlighted.

**Gloria Chuku:** *Human Rights and Women in Nigeria: The Igbo Experience.*

Nigeria has remained a party to major international and continental instruments of human rights either by signing or ratifying them. These instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). These instruments elaborate the international bill of rights or the basic human rights any responsible government should endeavor to create and promote by engendering conditions that guarantee their enjoyment by its citizenry.

From the above instruments and information in existing literature, three distinctive categories of human rights are identified. They are political-civil rights, socioeconomic rights and solidarity rights. A summary breakdown of these three categories of human rights include rights to self determination, life, liberty, security, fair trial, free movement, freedom of worship, political participation, right to work and fair remuneration, adequate standard of living, social security, property and participation in cultural life among other rights. In addition to these individual and collective rights of the citizenry are rights to peace, development, a healthy environment and of the people to freely exploit or dispose of their natural resources.

The primary concern of the proposed paper is to examine the relationship between the above international instruments of human rights that Nigeria is a party to as well as the various constitutional provisions of human rights in the country vis-à-vis their actual implementation especially as they applied to women. The thesis of this paper is that in spite of the constitutional provisions and the ratification or signing of the major instruments of human rights by successive civilian and military regimes in the country since independence, the practice of human rights in Nigeria has remained elusive in guaranteeing the enjoyment of such rights by its citizenry especially the womenfolk. It has remained an uphill battle for some women to overcome patriarchy, poverty, authoritarianism, gender inequity, ethnic marginalization and inhibitive cultural barriers among other forces of human rights violation in the country.

Relying on diverse sources including personal observation, the paper will use the case of Igbo women of southeastern Nigeria to reinforce the thesis argument.

**John Orij:** *The Human Condition & Human Rights in Nigeria: A Global Perspective*

Nigerian newspapers, magazines and human rights organizations report of human rights abuses in the country almost on daily basis. The problem with these sources is that they are largely descriptive, and hardly offer analytic insights into the roots of the human rights crises in Nigeria. This work hopes to adopt a different approach in studying the crises. It will establish a typology of human rights abuses in the country to better understand their varying roots in the public and private sectors, including the universities ridden with cultism. The study will move on to compare in a historical perspective, the Nigerian example with those of the US, Britain and France, as well as developing nations like India and China. It will then hypothesize that there is an interconnectedness between the human condition and human rights. The concluding part of the paper will seek solutions to the problem, discussing how to improve the human condition in Nigeria, including the

strengthening of the judiciary, the police and other institutions responsible for enforcing human rights in the country. Both primary and secondary sources will be used in the study, including my recent oral interviews with some leading human rights advocates.

**John Ukawuilulu & Ahamefulé Nnorom:** *The Scandal of Marginalization in Ala Igbo and among Ndi Igbo: the Igbo Osu Caste System Revisited.*

This paper critically examines the Igbo stratification system. Specifically the purpose of this paper is to add to our understanding of the contradictions that exist when an egalitarian, democratic, mostly Christians and fair minded people practice a closed stratification system or the Osu caste system where a large segment of Ndi Igbo are discriminated against based on the Igbo traditional religion. This paper also presents the problems created by the Osu Caste system for Ndi Igbo in recent times. Finally, this paper offers suggestions on how to solve this albatross of Ndi Igbo. Humphrey (1941) defines caste as "an endogamous status group which places culturally defined limits upon the individual member in terms of mobility and interaction, and on his nature as a person" He further added that in the caste system serious relationship of love or intermarriage between the lower caste and the rest of the community is usually forbidden. At best, the society's contact with the caste group is purely superficial. The Osu caste system is a hereditary and ascribed system. This paper challenges the Igbo who pride themselves as egalitarian and democratic to see the Osu system for what it is. It is the contention of these authors that the Osu system is discriminatory and must be permanently abolished and eradicated. It is a gross violation of human rights. Therefore, we call on Ndi Igbo (the elite and the masses) to come forward and help to remove this scandalous and contradictory evil Osu system.

**Nkuzi Nnam:** *Colonial Mentality in Diaspora: The Igbo Case (Omenenu Vs Omenani)*

In my last book I wrote about colonial mentality in all of Africa and slave mentality in America. In today's presentation I will be focusing on Colonial mentality with the Igbos abroad (outside of the confines of Africa).  
- Colonial mentality is a process through which people who were once colonized continue to behave as though they are still dependent even though they are no longer under any colonial regime. In other words, they behave as if they are physically free while still mentally dependent. Take the Igbo case for example:

1. Igbo Traditional Religion;

The Jews have Judaism. The Arabs have Islam. What do the Igbos have? Is it possible for Igbo culture to have been ordained by God and Igbo traditional religion by the devil? Can we simply pick and

choose? Igbo scholars, elites, intellectual and Christians must explain the reason why they have chosen Christianity over Igbo traditional religion.

- a.) Did the Igbo's worship a false God for many generations before the inception of Christianity?
- b.) Are all of our ancestors, and all the departed Buddhists, Hinduists, Sikhists, Judaists, Muslims, Zoroastrianists etc. in hell?
- c.) What's so wrong with our culture that both our masquerades and even our festivals are considered diabolical by Christians today?

## 2. Igbo Language and Culture

Igbos seem to be the only group of people in the world that are more proud to speak English than the English people themselves. What makes this very egregious is that it is at the expense of Igbo language itself. Yorubas, Hausas, Hispanics, Jews, and even the Poles, on the other hand, are very happy to speak their language. An African-American would do anything to be associated with any language other than English.

We have an Igbo school established in my college for the benefit of all Igbos in the Chicago area. It is 100% tuition free, yet, Igbo families are not proud enough to identify with it They would rather take their children to soccer games and other extra-curricular activities than take them to study Igbo language. This is the worst of all the colonial mentalities. My children, raised and brought-up in Chicago, are more fluent in Igbo vernacular than their cousins in Lagos. The Irony is that they would rather learn to speak Yoruba than Igbo. Nigeria has three most popular languages: Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba out of which Igbo is the only one that is becoming extinct!

I thought of establishing an Igbo school a couple of years ago when I visited London and saw some Yoruba women who were advertising their Yoruba language school on television. I came home eager to establish the same here in Chicago, but it is not working. Why?

## 3. Matriarchy

The Igbos, according to Professor Ifi Amadiume, used to be predominantly matriarchs. That does not mean that men and women were considered equals, it means that women were more assertive than they are today. They fought at wars, served as leaders (queens). They grew all the chief crops with the exception of yams, hence they controlled the economy. A good example is their ability to organize and wage the Aba women's war of 1929. Patriarchy came with the Europeans in Igbo land. Igbo men seem to find it very convenient especially in the diaspora. They travel from here to Nigeria and get married to women half their age, twice more educated than themselves. If they (women) cannot find jobs then they get forced into nursing schools. They work full time plus overtime. They bear children, raise children, cook, clean, and serve their husbands at the same time. Why?

## 4. Igbo Names

Igbos in diaspora not only keeps their English names, they give foreign names to their children. I know quite a number of British individuals who were born and raised at Enugu and none of them has an Igbo name. They are proud to keep their Nigerian girlfriends, boyfriends and even citizenship. The Yorubas keep their African names. The Hausas retain theirs too. The Igbos, on the other hand, answers Michael, Kenneth, Emmanuel, George, Esther, Augustus, Gerald, Assumpta etc. Why is that?

## 5. Igbo Style of Reconciliation

For conflict resolution we assemble the elders of thought within the community to serve as mediators and arbitrators. They listen to both sides of the conflict, confer with each other secretly and render a verdict. Their deliberations are final without appeal. They are very knowledgeable, very wise or prudent. They try to be fair and just since any act of injustice could come back to them, their children and to their children's children as a repercussion.

Today, colonial mentality among Wawa people in Chicago is that a man would beat up his wife who would angrily call the police on him without reporting the incident to the rest of the Igbo community. As their president, I learn about it when the husband calls me from jail and not for reconciliation but simply to bail him out. While in jail he would make up his mind to divorce his wife as soon as he is released.. From this point any attempt to reconcile them would be an uphill battle.

#### 6. Hair Style

Igbo women have hundreds of beautiful hairstyles that they could wear. Instead, they choose to put on wigs (hair from dead people) and straighten their hair with chemicals in attempt to look like white women.

#### 7. Igbo Traditional Medicine

Finally, we have physicians in the audience. How many of you have tried to specialize in the reconciliation of Western medicine with Igbo traditional medicine?

- a. Whereas the Western medicine tends to heal symptoms, a *dibia* would most likely trace cause from effects and vice versa.
- b. Whereas the Western Medicine tries to heal the body, a *dibia* would heal the body with herbs and go beyond to heal the human spirit or soul. With a *dibia*, psychosomatic and somatic-psychic illnesses have a new meaning!

### **Chima Korieh:** *The Nigeria-Biafra Civil War and the Discourse on Genocide*

The Biafra War of Independence is perhaps the best documented conflict in the history of Africa. A plethora of works, including memoirs has been written from both side of the conflict and from international observers. Mathias Anyaogu, a staff of the Fire Brigade attached to the local office in Kano recalls how easterners were rounded up and killed by northern soldiers. After collecting their money, Anyaogu narrates, “they took us to their Land Rover and warned us that anyone who tried to jump out would be finished. They drove us five miles away to Katsina Road, brought us down and started shooting us. I felt my leg shattered and fell down. . . . When they thought we were all dead they drove back to the town. After regaining consciousness, I looked around me and saw that all the people with me had died. I managed to crawl into the bush. I spent three days in the bush—Saturday, Sunday and Monday. I crawled out to a road, I was lucky to see a car driven by a European which took me to City Hospital, Kano. I remained in that Hospital until the Red Cross made arrangements to take me to the East by plane.” In an affidavit sworn at the Provincial Court Umuahia on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1969, Fifty-eight year old Chiefs Ramond Akpan Orok of Urua Inyang village, and clan head of Ika, Abak Division, Anang Province, and Camp Director of Urua Inyang Group of Refugee Camps during the Biafra-Nigeria war described how Nigerian soldiers entered Urua Inyang on 4 October 1968 and killed several refugees. That day according to Akpan, “. . .Nigerian soldiers started firing and mortaring with a machine mounted on one Land Rover. On that day there was a full market in session. They scattered the market with the bullets and mortar bombs. Many people were killed in the market and around. . . .There was a great stampede and the firing was so indiscriminate that many refuges lost their lives and several others were injured.” Frank Chukuma Ibegbu of Onitsha described how Nigeria soldiers entered a church in Inland Town Onitsha were about 500 men and women were worshiping and separated the men from the women before shooting the men. He described how women were raped on the streets before they were killed. The broad outlines of these claims are similar in many cases of genocide throughout the world. Yet there has been no agreement on whether the conflict, which led to the killing of thousands of Biafran, constituted the first black genocide in recent history. To show how the Biafra case meets the threshold of genocide, I shall present evidence from

eye-witness accounts and the report of an International Commission of Jurists, which found prima facie evidence of genocide.

**Anthonia Kalu** *Religion and Human Rights in Igbo Verbal Arts*

This paper will examine the ways in which Igbo religious thought is used to impart ideas about human rights in the Igbo narrative tradition. Using works like Pita Nwanna's *Omenuko* and Leopold Bell Gam's *Ije Odumodu Jere* in Igbo language literature and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* from contemporary works by leading Igbo writers in English, this paper will examine the ways in which Igbo thought about the rights of the individual and the community are expressed, valued and enforced in narratives written in Igbo and English about Igbo life and experience. Exploring issues of human rights in relationships between the world of the living, narrative land and Spiritland, this paper argues that ideas about human rights embedded in Igbo thought continue to illuminate Igbo thought about the Igbo self and community advancement. Of particular interest in this regard is the use of the female principle to enhance discourses about human capacity and action within spaces or cultural frameworks that appear neutral even when they are gendered within the Igbo experience.

**Emma Okocha: January 15: The phantom of an Igbo coup.**

The striking soldiers, the operations and the end game of the January 15, 1966 uprising were by and large influenced by external factors, revolutionary ideals and patriotism. To the leaders of that movement it was the last effort to realign the Army with the people.

In this paper, it is our argument that the January 15 ensemble was not merely Igbos who went on rampage to kill in order to grab power for their selfish interests. This putsch restored order in the conflict ridden Western Nigeria and refused the obliteration of the rioting Tivs in the Middle Belt.

The January 15 coup rather dismissed a federation that structurally favored the Igbos who produced the Premiers of two of the four states that existed in the Nigerian federation at the time.

According to Odi Ofeimun, private secretary to Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and also cited in our earlier findings in the Blood On The Niger, the main purpose of the coup was to release Chief Awolowo from prison and appoint him Prime Minister of Nigeria.

We maintain that it was the Nasserite revolution in Egypt, the deaths of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo and Segun Awolowo in a motor accident in western Nigeria that eventually rallied the boys into the action that overthrew Nigeria's first republic.

### **Williams Emeka Obiozor: The Pedagogy of Language and Graffiti in Igboland**

This paper establishes the place of language and graffiti in the interpretation of family values and the preservation of the culture and traditions of the Igbo nation in West Africa. This mode of creative expression transfers both oral and visual education to documented tradition, for the society to learn and understand and recognize Igbo language and art.

Graffiti as ancient tradition of the Igbos are peculiar and very effective cultural exhibits evident on buildings, on vehicles, on monuments, on body arts, arches, etc., which exposes individual and community skills, creativity, wisdom and linguistic prowess of the Igbo race. There are several disturbing issues relating to language and graffiti expressions around the globe but Igbo graffiti remains a powerful vehicle for transmitting information and cultural education to both young and old people. There's the often neglected salient and relevant aspect of language and graffiti in Igboland despite the role these vehicles play in the education of Igbos, in the preservation of the culture of the people, and their positive effects on social behavior, social values and social acceptance.

### **T. Uzodinma Nwala: *Strategic Flaws in the Politics of the Igbo Nation: The Lessons of History.***

The main focus of this Conference, whose theme is **Ozoemena**, is not just on the declaration and determination to bring to an end the persistent human rights violations against the Igbo people; it is on ***What is To Be Done? in order*** to achieve that goal. With this background, our discourse proceeds on the following premises: -

- That human rights violations are basically political issues which occur in the context of political competitions/struggles for control over men and materials in furtherance of material interests.
- No actor freely grants or surrenders whatever political rights he has acquired to another. Everybody and every group has to struggle for his or their rights.

- The ability of anyone or group to acquire any rights depends both on the nature of the playing ground (historically-determined political structures) and on one's/ group's relative political strength vis-à-vis that of others, but more importantly on their relative political strength.
- Political strength is a function of planning and strategy, since politics is a perpetual struggle, it depends on long-term planning and strategies rather than on short-term strategies.
- That political struggles are not just struggles among individuals but among contending social forces; and In a multi-ethnic society, the most organic and dominant social forces are the socio-culturally and historically situated ethnic nationalities.

Based on the above averments, and in consideration of the lessons of the political and human rights struggles in the multi-ethnic Nigerian Federal State, we conclude that the Igbo nation is politically weak, very weak indeed vis-à-vis other nationalities, hence, their inability to protect themselves politically.

In this regard, we note particularly their failure to appreciate the nature of the Nigerian political terrain in which the major actors are ethnic nationalities; exclusive focus on the structural defects of the federation, ignoring the vital elements of political will power, planning and strategies, lack of self-criticism, weak leadership institutions; abstinence of igbo intelligentsia from politics and their failure to provide the much-needed collective intellectual leadership in terms of strategic planning, abandoning the field to the commercial and contractual class, etc.

On the *Way Forward* or *What is to be done?*, we propose *an institutionalised Think Tank* responsible for Long-term strategic planning; *Political and Legal Defense Fund* to protect the people's rights; a Broad Long-term Economic and Development Agenda that will incorporate *An Invest-at-Home Movement to tap on the genius and industry, entrepreneurial and communal philosophy and spirit of the people.*

**Obiwu:** *Ethnic Transportation and American Resistances*  
(Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Global Babelism, and Dephallicization)

Misrecognition is the shock of communication. American native speakers of the English language have been flabbergasted by Achebean-Igbo concepts of "love," "agbala," and disease of the "swelling." The paper problematizes inter-ethnic, cross-border resistances to linguistic and literary transportations. It interpellates the dis/othered selves of cultural twin-subjects, man-woman (Unoka and Nwoye), spirit-mask and human (Okonkwo), spirit-child and androgyny (Ezinma). It complicates emergent notions of consumerism and dis-ease in cross-cultural discourses of exile, liposculpture, sexuality, and dephallicization. It posits that Global Babelism is a horizontal disalienation of the other.

**Michael Mbanaso:** *Resurgence of Igbo Struggles for Self-Determination in the Diaspora: 1990-2008*

The end of the Biafra-Nigeria War in 1970 was expected to usher in a Renaissance of sorts, as war displaced millions of Igbos worked tirelessly for re-integration into Nigerian socio-economic, and political life. While the Igbos experienced limited participation in decision making roles in Nigerian polity and institutional arrangements following the end of the war, it was not until the mid 1990s that new demands began to emerge among the Igbos at home and in the Diaspora for self-determination with increased calls for Biafran actualization. This paper examines the origins of the new intensity for Igbo human rights struggles in the Diaspora; and the prevailing factors that led to increasing demands for self-determination among the Igbos.

**Phillip C. Aka:** *Echi Di Ime, Onye Ma Ihe Oga Amu: Harnessing the Current Igbo Movement for Independence*

My paper will discuss practical strategies for harnessing the current Igbo movement for independence. It will build on yet go beyond some of my previous scholarship on the topic, including "Professor Ben O. Nwabueze and the Struggle for Igbo Self-Determination," *Slovenian Law Review*, Vol. 4 (forthcoming Fall 2007); "Prospects for Igbo Human Rights in Nigeria in the New Century," *Howard Law Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Fall 2004), pp. 165-266; "Human Rights as Conflict Resolution in Africa in the New Century," *Tulsa Journal of Comparative and International Law*, Vol. 11 (Fall 2003), pp. 179-209; and materials from a roundtable panel on the Igbo Nation in the New Century that I chaired, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Igbo Studies, held April 2-3, 2004, at Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C.

**Sabine Jell-Bahlsen:** *Falling spirits, crumbling culture, and human rights.*

This paper takes a critical look at evangelization. My starting point is the perception of pre-colonial Igbo culture as a basic grantor of human rights, proceeding to examine post-colonial transformations in the age of globalization, evident in select novels by Chinua Achebe, Flora Nwapa, and Chimamanda Adichie, and corroborated by my own long-term field research in the Oguta area 1978-1994. Igbo cultural institutions, such as the extended family, *umunna*, micro societies, and title taking, as well as the associated religious beliefs and values, such as gender balance and respect for womanhood, in addition to language and artistic expressions are important foundations of personal identity and well being. They are under increasing attack by the imposition of an extraneous belief systems, alien values, and foreign economic and political interests. Culture and its religious underpinnings do matter. Their destruction hurts and jeopardizes basic human rights.

**Godwin Uwah** *The Existential Dimension of Things Fall Apart: Achebe's Philosophical Scrutiny and Universal Human Rights*

The thrust of this paper is a consideration of *Things Fall Apart* as a story of human existence and how Achebe's philosophical aversion of any infringement of the universal human rights is manifested in the novel. His stinging attack on Conrad's racist portrayal of the natives in the *Heart of Darkness* will be shown to derive from Achebe's philosophical scrutiny of absolutes and system or belief bordering on a violation or down-playing of the universal human rights.

In the same context, the paper will explore the nature of reality and the existential moment. The cosmic universe of good and evil which produces Okonkwo and where he dominates and the world view that appears to neglect, ignore or even violate the universal human rights of a segment of this spatial cosmic universe will be examined and so will Achebe's dodged refusal to validate some of the practices that define this universe.

How the reality of the complex community of Umuofia provides Achebe a platform for further philosophical scrutiny will be analyzed in the context of choice, human understanding, liberty, action and responsibility or lack thereof. As the Conrad's and Joyce Cary's of the world provide the philosophical underpinning for the colonization and the concomitant inhuman treatment of the colonized person, the physical world and spiritual forces and beings of Umuofia community appear to provide an a podium for egregious violations of some individuals and groups who populate the land. The paper will analyze the nature and degree of Achebe's intolerance of practices of this fictive community which he clearly identifies with.

Concluding, the paper will argue that although Achebe may or may not see himself as an existentialist, he at least in *Things Fall Apart* appears to stress the affirmation of self-awareness and freedom and denounce dehumanizing social structures and belief systems and institutions that inhibit personal freedom and responsibility. Achebe rejects any theory or practice whether deriving from "bloody" racism, assumed superiority, religion, cultural practices or political and/or social convenience which tends to rob an individual or a group of their universal human rights. For Achebe such a theory or practice is an assault on human existence.

The central theme of the paper will be related to the contemporary and current happenings in the socio-political theatre of Nigeria but more particularly, in Igboland.

**Paul Onovoh:** *Igbo Anamaudude Uwa. Igbo on the Worldwide Web*

As the Igbo say (mostly what I have heard in my area of the Igbo nation[s]), *Uwa wara awa. Oru ayi bu ipikwa ya*. This means to say that the world, as seen by the Igbo, is like a shattered vessel, scattered in different directions. To comprehend the world, one has to fit the pieces together. According to a story on the origin of the Igbo world, Professor Anenechukwu Ume in his book *After God Is Dibia* (1997), narrated how the universe came into existence. Man existed with God in perfect harmony in the first world. Chukwu had a secret divine house which he alone enters. No one knew what Chukwu does in this secret four-legged house. The rest of the creatures somehow convinced Komosu, Chukwu's wife to break the rule! Hardly had she cracked the door open than a flaming gold tongue of fire escaped from the divine chamber shattering the monolithic universe

with a loud explosion, killing Komosu instantly. The Igbo universe is indeed shattered and scattered but not battered. It is as beautiful as this universe we behold in awe, adore with wonder and uphold with dignified labor of love. This paper will discuss the efforts of some Igbo intellectuals, Igbos in the diaspora and Igbophiles from around the universe and their labor of love in piecing together this cherished language spoken by several million people worldwide. We will also explore the Igbo the contribution of *Akaraigbo* on *Anamaudude uwa* - the worldwide web and attempt to answer some of the pressing questions on the place of the Igbo language in our times: Who speaks Igbo in the world today? What do the Igbo in the diaspora speak to their children? How important is Igbo in the global economy? Will this language continue to be in use or will it become extinct some day? What efforts are being made to keep her alive?

Ephraim Okoro: *Communication and Human Rights in Igbo Society: An Analysis of Press Coverage of Issues and Events*

As a new democratic era begins in Nigeria, citizens of the country and the global society are expecting a full integration of all the ethnic groups in the political process. This concept of integration includes, among other variables, human rights of ethnic groups, elections, and political positions in the country. Communication researchers state that to achieve and sustain an integrated political and social development in a nation, it is imperative that the structure of communication be crafted to reflect human rights, raise public awareness, and demonstrate ethical analysis of the political process. Further, as an objective, democratic development and ethnic unification in the country can be achieved and enhanced through balanced and ethical communication of issues affecting human rights and interests in all parts of the country. Essentially, this paper will analyze communication and human rights in Igbo society, specifically focusing on press coverage of political and social issues and events.

**Chioma Oruh:** *Igbo kwenu!* (poetry).

I learned my people –

My people!

Walked in the waters

Walked in the waters back home

I learned the said no –

They said no!

To what oppression

To what oppression had to give

Chained and shackled

And yet with no hassle

many Igbo people

hundreds,

hundreds

walked the waters back home

Igbo kwenu!

There is a landing,

the Gullah call “Igbo”

they said my people –

my people

walked the waters back home

It is a legend

of legends

when skin in bondage

decide to let their souls free

Now I see!

Why I've come to this land:

It's for my people –

Our people to walk the waters again

Igbo kwenu!

In all the story books

that have spoken of my kin

they rarely mention

this very potent potion:

We had no queens,

We had no kings –

We are ALL royalty

So when I learned this very story of those

Igbos' landing glory!

I said Igbo kwenu!

My ancestors kwenu!

My kindred kwenu!

Our childred kweswenu!

Cause we'll walk the waters

Again and again and again....