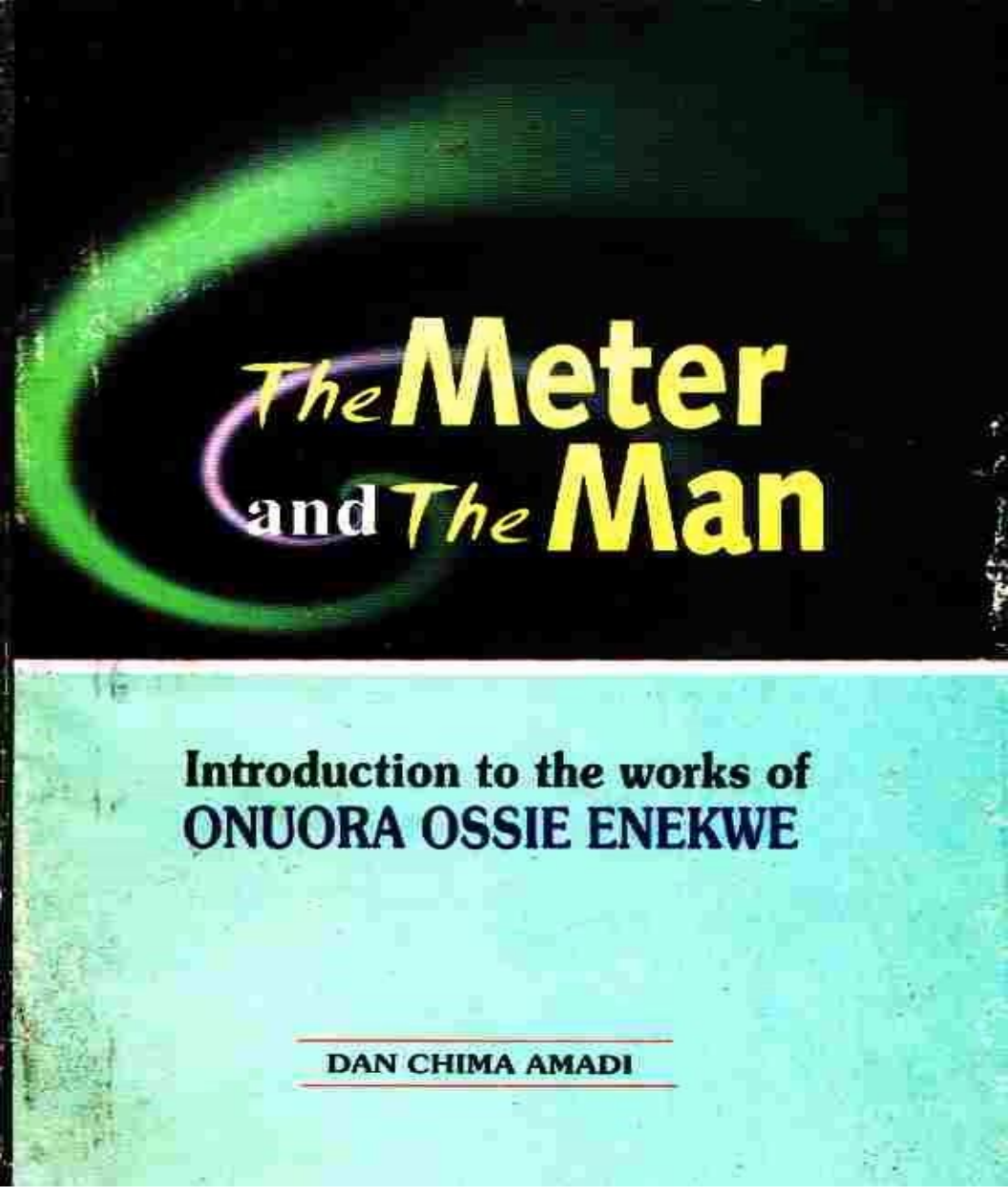


THE METER AND THE MAN

Introduction to the Works *of* ONUORA OSSIE ENEKWE

BY

DAN CHIMA AMADI

TREASURE BOOKS
SKILLMARK MEDIA LTD
OWERRI, NIGERIA

First published in Nigeria in 2010 by
SKILLMARK MEDIA LTD.
18 Kagha Street, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.
Tel: 083231511, 08036690084, 08051090040

ISBN: 978-978-49165-4-9

TREASURE BOOKS
are Designed, Printed & Published in Nigeria by
SKILLMARK MEDIA LTD

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to

Yiu Yiu, Buchi and Goodluck

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I will like to thank in a special way Professor Onuora Ossie Enekwe for his favourable disposition and all the assistance that made this publication possible. At a time when I knew I was putting him under pressure, he was calm and fatherly. His own schedule was so tight that it needed no further intrusion; yet he gave his time and assisted so much with materials. I cannot thank him enough.

My gratitude goes also to Nobert Oyibo Eze who gave all his time to read over and edit the work. He brought his sound critical mind to bear at very critical periods. I knew he was offering advice in an area he had a good knowledge.

My special thanks go to Professor M.J.C Echeruo for the very useful materials he sent all the way from the United States which gave me a balanced knowledge on the chapter on dramatic theory and criticism. My gratitude goes also to him on materials for my PhD thesis. I remain indebted though with regret that my work may not broker peace in key areas. I hope my future endeavour will be able to attempt that.

Finally I acknowledge the fact that there might be errors in the course of writing this book. I humbly accept them as mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Onuora Ossie Enekwe is a robust Nigerian artist, scholar, dramatist and musician, chronicling the ills of his age and cast in the artist-critic frame. In each area of specialty, he is at home, weaving through each complexity with great ease. In chronological order, he belongs to the second generation of African writers after the individual African nations' leaders have put behind them the clamour about the evils of colonialism. Since independence has been won, many are preoccupied with making their mark and improving the lot of their various countries. Enekwe's consciousness took a new turn during the nation's civil war after the new leaders had failed their people in many parts of the continent and military rule was gradually becoming a permanent feature of the people's life.

In considering the works of Enekwe, scholars are likely to take a longer time commenting on his poems, because of his sensitive use of language, the beauty of the poems themselves, his choice of theme and the grace with which they flow. The theme of war reverberates throughout his work, for the devastation they cause, the disquiet they generate and the hope which they foster and crash daily. Born on 12th November, 1942, at the peak of the Second World War, in Affa, Enugu State, Nigeria to middle class parents, the theme of war

which heralded his birth would remain through his thirty year work as a writer.

As a child, Onuora Ossie Enekwe led a colony of boys, many of whom were quite older and bigger than himself, to wage war at the growing Coal Camp, a rising part of Enugu where pipe borne water was a valued commodity and he appointed himself to the beat. There he sought and maintained order to the great admiration of his peers. This militancy led him into the Nigerian civil war during which he served as intelligence officer at the now defunct Biafran Rangers. N.F. Inyama rightly captures the mood of Igbo writers in war literature, although he seems not to want to comment on Enekwe's personal past, when he states in his review of one of his collections, The Last Battle and Other Stories that:

> *War, for instance takes a prominent position in the collection. Anyone who knows anything of recent Igbo history would, of course, understand why this should be so for an Igbo writer like Enekwe. Nothing except perhaps creation itself, has had as profound an impact on the Igbo mind and world as the Biafran War, which lasted from 1967-1970. But again, Enekwe is not writing history, neither is he really interested in describing battle scenes and other such martial common places. Rather, events are*

presented in terms of the distinctive revelation they offer with regard to the significant core of human character. In war, bloodletting is simply taken for granted. But when does a war transcend its physical illness of carnage and become an object of lesson in the ways of men? (99).

Enekwe, like many other genuine African writers, suffered late recognition. Those writers who passed their works mainly to friends for appraisal paid dearly for it, as they remained known to only those few. Kalu Uka who also suffered this fate complained of late publishing. In an interview he granted to Enekwe, he said:

So I think one reason for the delayed recognition is that I had always circulated among friends who didn't see their job as carrying it beyond that little circle, or I had always tested out my ideas among students or people, who were not yet in our own kind of evaluation, regarded as big enough critics to be listened to (33).

This is not completely true of Enekwe. He is not an artist for a show-case and critics, especially the eurocentric ones are not through with the works of Achebe, Soyinka and Clark. His is gradually gaining momentum. He has appeared in over thirty anthologies worldwide and his works have been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Serbian,

Hungarian, etc. While Enekwe has tried out with students and close friends, he is also very much quoted by eminent scholars, especially in his works on dramatic theory and criticism, dance and the relationship between ritual and theatre.

It is hardly necessary to separate an artist from his works: and this speaks volumes about Enekwe's art.

His nature is sharp, delicate and sensitive and these he has transposed into his works. One permanent feature of Enekwe's art is the manifestation that he is a conscious artist. He knows the rules, so much so that he is almost afraid to break them. Therein, then you might say is the limitation of art. But Enekwe is clever, for art could violate rules, but theorists and practitioners want to dictate to artists. Theodore Shank makes an immortal statement in his *The Art of Dramatic Art* when he posits that:

> *The critic or theorist has no significant place in the creation of artistic works; he serves a different function. In some periods, he has some degree of influence in what the artist has created, but other forces have been far more influential-the pressures, tensions and conflicts of the country and period in which the artist lived, his social and political milieu, and most important, his creative ability. The artist does not look to the*

theorist for guidance in his attempt to express what he understands of human feeling, to convey his conception of the human condition. He does not use principles or theories as recipes in the creation of a work of art, although he may feel compelled to acknowledge some restrictions. They are not concerned with fulfilling definitions (1).

Enekwe had his primary education in colonial Nigeria: St Patrick's School, Ogbete, Enugu, 1949 - 52; Holy Ghost School, Ogui, Enugu, 1953; St Mary's School, Uwani, Enugu, 1954; St Patrick's School, 1955 - 57. From 1958-62, he was educated at Trinity High School, Oguta. Two years later, he entered University of Nigeria, Nsukka to read English. He graduated with Honours and served as a junior research fellow in the same university. With a writing fellowship from Columbia University, New York, USA, Enekwe, in 1972, enrolled in that University and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Writing, Master of Philosophy and Ph.D in Theatre Arts. Back in Nigeria, Enekwe served in many panels, like National Panel of Competent Experts of Community Theatre for Social Mobilization, member, Federal Government Planning Committee for International Symposium on African Literature in honour of Wole Soyinka

(1987 - 88), Chairman, Governing Council, College of Education, EhaAmufu, etc.

His publications include: *Broken Pots* (Poems), *Come Thunder* (a novel), *Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre Theories of Dance in Nigeria, "The Betrayal", in Two Experimental Plays, The Last Battle and Other Stories, Marching to Kilimanjaro (Poems), Trail in the Mines* Biography, among others.

As an artist, Enekwe seems to owe a little of his creativity to oral tradition. He seems to be in agreement that the old Africa is fated, as a crumbling, moribund and receding world. When he cries out about cultural violations, it is without any bitterness and he sees this as inevitable in a changing world. In his short stories, novel, plays and poems, this is very noticeable. But as a scholar and critic, Enekwe idolizes culture and prays for its retention. In his *Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre*, he tries to show the place of culture in Igbo society and why it should be allowed to survive.

For his sources, Enekwe depends largely on new Africa, in growing cities, the social changes sweeping through them and the efforts of the inhabitants to keep pace with urbanization. Moral decadence, war, restlessness of youths, helplessness

of parents in the control of their children are some of the attributes of the growing cities and urbanization which Enekwe tackles in his work. He sees man essentially as the cause of his own misfortune.

CHAPTER ONE

PROSE *(Short Story)*

Enekwe's interest in the short story form is immense. He finds the medium a ready weapon to prosecute his war against decadence in his society. *The Last Battle and Other Stories* which contains ten short stories of varying lengths is his first collection in this regard. Between 1973 and 1994, the stories in this collection appeared in local and international anthologies and journals. In his review of the collection, Olayiwola Adeniji says:

> *Onuora Ossie Enekwe's The Last Battle and Other Stories is the latest addition to what in the nation's literary patrimony is now referred to as "Civil War Literature". But this might be too quick a conclusion to make because a more careful reading will reveal that the civil war though forms the context of some of the stories, the collection performs a bigger function. Enekwe uses it as the origin of the recurring vicious circle of pain, disillusionment, desperation and destruction that is continually unleashed on the national psyche by forces, inimical to social growth. This is in consonance with the*

school of thought which believes that literature must be an organic function of a nation's history (29).

Since the collection made its debut, there has been a growing controversy which should be given more prominence: the full length novel or the short story form. Some scholars have tended to occupy themselves with which of the two forms that is more demanding to write. In his foreword to the collection, E.N. Obiechina tries to explain the deception inherent in the art of short story telling. The underrated pot always puts off the fire, he seems to say:

The reason is clear. The short story makes a lot of demand on a writer's concentration and skill. Whereas more elaborate forms of narrative can admit of areas of excellence mixed with those of relative weakness, the short story, by the fact of its brevity cannot admit of such weakness. For example, a short story cannot spread and sprawl without it suffering permanent damage, since it does not have a great deal of flesh to cover its deformities with. It requires a neatly drawn structure, a unity of design and execution and a concentration of effect to give it power and penetration (1).

Obiechina anchors his opinion on the submission of Edgar Alan Poe, one of the greatest short story writers, who states: "In the whole composition there should be no word written of which the tendency direct or indirect, is not to the pre-established design".

Chinua Achebe tries to reconstruct the exact date of short story telling:

> *Literary historians tell us that the English novel preceded the short story by a hundred years or thereabouts. In Modern African literature events happened differently. The short story came first - a far more logical development, if one may presume to say so. And we did not, of course, have centuries but decades to play with. (African Rhapsody 1).*

F.N. Inyama does not agree with Obiechina. In his review of *The Last Battle and Other Stories*, he argues that Enekwe has overcome the limitations of the short story form by "concentrating on, and illuminating truths of existence which we would ordinarily not be conscious of" (*Okike* 98)" Enekwe's success notwithstanding, Inyama still believes that "by its very form the short story can only bear a limited

amount of thematic exploration or deep analysis for profundity" (98).

Some Western critics, like F.J. Pedler, believe that writing in a second language has greatly inhibited the expressive power of African writers. Writing in 1951, Pedler believed that this limitation would be overcome in future because of patriotic zeal and desire to communicate or mirror their own age. It is rather strange that one who could deliver a full length novel will find the art of short story telling a more difficult medium. Nothing except perhaps mere reluctance or the desire to pursue the other art form can account for this. On the face of it, using a foreign language to express a unique experience, and using a new art form as we are more used to the oral tradition, African writers individually make their choice. African writers do not just write to fill a vacuum. Many want to communicate individual experiences, and not out of nationalistic or patriotic zeal. The process of gradual graduation or transition from oral tradition to short story telling then to the novel is a wild assumption. The creative world is a free zone and a writer established or emerging will find himself useful in any medium of his choice. The full length novel is not necessarily a more satisfying medium as longer prose. The literary landscape is wide and each serves a unique and satisfying function. "Just write a damn good

story", the Americans will say. Achebe agrees with Duke Ellington that if it sounds good, it is good! Time available to the writer and the socio-political condition where the writer functions can determine the medium he uses. Achebe elaborates:

> *Short story gave us a convenient bridge from oral to written literature. Amos Tutuola's episodic 'novels' attest to this as does the fact that Cyprian Ekwensi preceded his novel with short fiction in traditional settings. But short stories are not choosy about who writes them or how. They are versatile and will consort with all manner of people especially with those caught in tight and nervous conditions and desiring to unburden themselves. I recall one of my colleagues from South Africa saying some time in the sixties that their political situation did not permit them the luxury of novels like us West Africans but had pressed them into the guerrilla, hit-and-run practice of the short story. At the time, I thought to myself: yeah, right! Later, when I was embroiled in the Biafran catastrophe, I began slowly to understand the predicament I had been smug about. My next novel took twenty years to*

come. And we are not out of the woods yet (African Rhapsody xi).

THE LAST BATTLE

Like the last plane that will leave Ulli airstrip, Lt Joe Ume, in the "Last Battle", leads his weak, ill-clad and disillusioned army into battle. In the buttocks of Lt Ume are two long bullets, his stomach has once been torn with ferret wounds and a bullet quickly removed could have deprived him of a permanent use of one of his eyes; he goes to battle almost sure of defeat. Each of his men has six bullets only with a bolt action rifle, also known as cock and shoot. Despite his false sense of hope which he tries to instill in his soldiers, the situation looks grim enough for his men not to be deceived. With no place to hide and the pang of hunger choking the soldiers, they advance towards the Federal troops and are surrounded and captured.

In what seems like an indictment of the Biafran authorities in continuing an already lost battle, Enekwe in many ways condemns the use of warfare to settle differences:

> *Lt Ume stood there and watched them shuffle along like people who had never drilled before. Only two or three of them had boots on. But those boots were worn to the sole (74).*

To fight in an already lost battle could have been reasonable if the authorities could confront the enemies themselves. But this is not to be. The half naked soldiers pay for a cause they did not incite, while their leaders wine and dine at the safety of the rear. Enekwe describes their fate in this language:

> *These boys were like waifs waiting for extermination. These boys were afraid of the world. The world had treated them badly. They were full of bitterness and inexpressible feeling was eating deep into their hearts. They were the boys who won and lost battles. When they were well led by good officers, they fought. If not, they ran. They were used to being kept at camp for rest which was meant to keep them available for new attacks. And so they were afraid of new officers, new signals and new movements (70).*

Biafra is not a match for Nigeria, Enekwe says. "This is a disastrous war", says Ume full of premonition. "We are doing the impossible, like throwing pebbles at a man armed with a spear" "And on top of that, hunger", added Ofili *(86)*.

During the war, the morale of the officers reaches the nadir. As the rebel side loses one battle after

another, posting from one sector is usually not well taken. It means "another hot sector". Lt Ume wants to know why and the authorities must show cause:

> *"I must be told whether I alone caused this war. How can I be moving from sector to sector like an armoured car, whereas other officers, those that have god-fathers, remain at the rear attending parties (69).*

Enekwe also suggests that the management of the war is defective. The true position of the armour is never stated. Instead, brash officers keep the few with them and then send innocent soldiers into battle to face the fusillade of the federal troops.

"As soon as the objective is secured at least five hundred troops will arrive from other sectors to help. Lt Umeh, ... I'll allow you to draw your plans and choose your men. You have ample ammo"

> *"Yessir"*
> *"Any questions?"*
>
> *"Yessir. Please, can I have some automatic rifles for my men?"*
> *"There are no automatic rifles. As you were"*
> *"Yessir" (88).*

But the same C.O. had driven in with a landrover and six soldiers brandishing automatic rifles a few minutes before. Enekwe wants his readers to see that the commanding officers' safety is more important than the main battle itself. Six automatic rifles are a rare privilege and for the commanding officer to send his men into battle with bolt action rifles while he keeps six automatic rifles is a callous act. Enekwe sees this as selfishness, one of the causes of the failure of the secession.

No wonder then that Lt Ume decides to become a saboteur. When he reaches the battleground, he decides to use his number six. Instead of putting his men before enemy troops to be slaughtered, he offers to surrender and be captured as prisoners of war. Enekwe's description of the scene of the last battle is both masterful as it is dramatic:

> *When they marched about a hundred yards, he pulled a dirty handkerchief from his pocket, stuck it to his bayonet and said "Make una drop your guns. Raise your hands. We are surrounded". They obeyed easily enough. From where they lay with their guns at the ready, Federal troops watched in amazement as the platoon marched towards them with*

their hands raised over their heads (75).

One of the integral parts of Enekwe's art is the use of apt and picturesque language to bring home his message. The use of pidgin like Lt Umeh asking his soldiers "make una sing me a song" defines the various levels of the characters and the appropriate use of form. Similarly, the Biafran war songs and their appropriate application transport the reader.

Enekwe has been criticized for the use of individual characters to correct the ills in his society. This individual effort, it is argued is more difficult to sustain. Olayiwola Adeniji believes that "Evidence abounds in history that societies have progressed not only through individual exploits but more through the collective push of the people" (29). Although this argument has some merit, there are instances in history where individuals pushed their ages beyond limit, like the story of Adolf Hitler and Napoleon Bonaparte.

The author's attention to details and the high quality of production singled out *The Last Battle and other Stories* as a major literary success. Enekwe's simplicity of language and his choice of words will move the book from print to print.

A BAND OF AMAZONS

With "A Band of Amazons", Enekwe begins to analyze the clash between Africans and the colonial authorities and its main collaborator: The Missionaries. It is one of the artist's attempts to analyze the evils of the past by using women, a clearly dominated gender to fight an autocratic system: the colonial authorities. The story brings back the memories of the Aba women's riot of 1929, when women tried to avoid a move by the colonial masters in Eastern Nigeria to impose taxes on them. But that is the much the comparison can go. While the Aba woman attacked the colonial officers and many of them were mowed down by the colonial police, the women in "A Band of Amazons" do the same and go scot-free; so the story makes us believe.

What is refreshing about "A Band of Amazons" is the use of a collaborator to fight an unjust system. Enekwe shows his resentment of the two systems in the women attacking both Rev. Wilson and Mr. Mark. The author sees Rev Wilson as an accomplice in the oppression of blacks in Kaltunga. Rev Wilson lives with his wife, Janet, his daughter, Carol and son, Frank in the exclusive white area. His criticism of the colonialists is merely cosmetic and not effective because he associates and enjoys the same facilities with other Europeans. Thus:

The European section at Kaltunga was a quiet and clean area, full of smooth avenues, shaded by guava trees and flanked by well tended flower beds. Its bungalows were made of concrete, and had each at least six large rooms. The little fields around them were deep and clustered with flowers that blew many colours into the warm African air (31).

Compared with the African section less than a mile away, we see squalor and inhuman condition. This is more repulsive when one sees that the segregation is done on an African soil. The copper miners live in abject poverty:

From the distance it could be seen sprawling and tumbling down the valley like a heap of junk. The houses were tiny, brown and rugged like a cluster of enormous ant-hills. Life here was hollow and dreary. There were no taps. The women and children usually trekked to an isolated part of the lake Kaltunga to fetch water. While moving, they usually moved in a wide arc in order to avoid the European quarters which were reportedly infested with dangerous dogs. Death rate at this community was very high - for the

children it was fifty percent. There was only one clinic which was understaffed and poorly equipped (32-33).

The segregation of blacks goes on even in the church. For this, blacks see an unjust god in churches presided over by whites or anyone brought by them. They therefore decide to keep away from white churches. Rev. Wilson is a contrast, though in a world ridden with inequity. Blacks want a practical Christianity, not a white washed-one. Rev. Wilson is fighting a lonely battle as even his family abandons him. He writes the British President in protest and gets no reply. As a further punitive measure, the copper mine manager, Mr. Mark decides to sack all the striking miners and replace them with new ones which he knows he can easily employ from the millions roaming the plains because they have lost their lands to the colonizers. The decision of Mark infuriates the miners who now refuse to vacate the mines.

One day, after dinner, Reverend Wilson cleared his throat and said to his wife: "Mr. Tale thinks it's the trouble in the mines that debars the Blacks from attending services as usual". She said nothing, though she wondered why he doesn't leave these natives and their trouble.

"We whites are creating a nuisance in Africa", he continued in a tone that startled her. "So you are bothering about them", she shook her head and sighed. "Oh", he lamented. "Look at these poor miners toiling endlessly like moles and not receiving anything reasonable"

"Sordid as their lives are, I can't help thinking that it is not the business of the church to get entangled in trade disputes"

"Trade disputes!" he interrupted, alarmed at her bold impudent tone. "Yes, what else is it?" (34).

What makes Mr. Mark's action odious is his wicked attitude to the copper miners when in his private life, he messes up with them. He is not only a drunk but runs after black women. Mr. Mark brutalizes, not only the miners but his cook and steward as well. For this reason none remains with him for more than three months. The same attitude makes his wife leave him.

The physical attack of Rev. Wilson by Mr. Mark is the attack of colonialism on the church. It shows a clear parting of ways between a collaborator and

an oppressor. The mob rains abuses on Mr. Mark and other white people. Here Enekwe is not just telling a story. He is here sending a signal that nationalism has already begun which will eventually lead to the winning of independence by Blacks.

The women get emboldened and when they begin their assault, they leave in their trail destruction of properties. The beating of Janet and Carol is the battery of the collaborators of imperialism. The destruction of the properties of the Copper Mine Manager and that of Rev. Wilson represents the violent smashing of colonialism in Africa. The rioters do not make any distinction because they have the same white face, only operating differently. The escape of the two men symbolizes the freedom of the people from oppression and bondage.

LUMBER

Lumber is a satirical piece: perhaps borne out of a real life experience and meant to show the hell Nigerians and other Africans go through to earn a living in the United States. At the end of the day, they come home empty-handed, despite the fact that they strained themselves to the point of exhaustion. While the outside society is harsh, the Employment Officer is worse: exploitative and merciless; though seeming to care and protect the

an oppressor. The mob rains abuses on Mr. Mark and other white people. Here Enekwe is not just telling a story. He is here sending a signal that nationalism has already begun which will eventually lead to the winning of independence by Blacks.

The women get emboldened and when they begin their assault, they leave in their trail destruction of properties. The beating of Janet and Carol is the battery of the collaborators of imperialism. The destruction of the properties of the Copper Mine Manager and that of Rev. Wilson represents the violent smashing of colonialism in Africa. The rioters do not make any distinction because they have the same white face, only operating differently. The escape of the two men symbolizes the freedom of the people from oppression and bondage.

LUMBER

Lumber is a satirical piece; perhaps borne out of a real life experience and meant to show the hell Nigerians and other Africans go through to earn a living in the United States. At the end of the day, they come home empty-handed, despite the fact that they strained themselves to the point of exhaustion. While the outside society is harsh, the Employment Officer is worse: exploitative and merciless; though seeming to care and protect the

Blacks. Through this story, Enekwe stands on top of a platform to pull a lever on the capitalist system, its inhuman face and its vicious circle.

Mark, the hero and narrator, goes to the lower Fifth Avenue in search of work through the employment office. The owner of the lumber house is assisted by a paid staff and equally an exploitative wife. The triumvirate sees that Blacks earn their pay through the hard way. The exploitation begins with one of the men in the Lumber yard asking for one of the two remaining sticks of cigarette which Mark has as reserve. He gives it to him. But the handover will begin the series of surrender he has to make.

With only twenty dollars left in his account, Mark fills the form. The owner of the lumberyard, sensing that he has no experience, lures him into the lumberyard:

> *"Would you like to go to the lumberyard?"*
> *"How difficult is it?" I asked suspiciously.*
> *"Quite easy, you know, kind of medium".*

Mark yields and is in for real trouble. The author describes the lumberyard as "a fortress of wood". The job turns out to be one where before an

assignment is finished, another is given in rapid succession. He moves from carrying planks to lowering of square poles. Later, he is asked to go to the cutting room. Throughout his assignment, orders are not given humanely but released in harsh tones: "Joe keeps coming with fresh orders, never letting us relax even for a second". Thereafter, he is asked to load lumber into a waiting station wagon. He is shown the way it is done, but the lumber is as heavy as a corpse.

> *I do as he says, all my muscles as taunt as a crane's cable, my biceps solid and round as cannon balls. I lower the door into the open back of the station wagon. I am sighing, even though I do not want to do so. When I return for the second door, I realize that the previous one has wrecked my tensility. Joe notices my reluctance, and offers to help. We hurry the wicked door to the back of the car. I look at my watch. I have been here only for two hours, but I am already exhausted. Well, sixteen dollars for eight hours is something, I console myself. Besides the job might even go lighter. My only fear is that I might collapse by the time I earn my wage. Anyway, it might get better (43-44).*

By the time Mark goes on break for thirty minutes, he manages to walk and even then, he consumes almost all he could be paid for the day. This includes his transport fare. Yet, he has to go to work to earn it. The most terrible of the job is the offloading of the lumber truck. The driver knows his job and handles it with ease.

One remarkable feature of this story is the author's mastery of language, the use of language to evoke the scene he wants to create. The scene where the driver deposits the lumber is vividly created:

> *He moves the truck back into the street, then reversing it back into the open space in the yard, breaks and jerks it forward all at the same time. The tyres make a sharp grating nose on the concrete. The whole stalk of lumber slips down to the floor. Easy. The only rough side to it is the noise. It is like a bomb explosion. I gaze with admiration at the driver, as he steps out to look at his handiwork. That is an artist. He loves his work, so it seems easy. Re-entering the truck, he waves at us, starts the engine, and rolls out of the yard, the back of the truck as open and clean as tennis court (44).*

The contrast between the manual and mechanical aspect of the lumber work is very striking. The exertion during the manual use is easily imaginable. The grace with which the truck driver waves at the workers conveys a reality that is difficult to beat. Enekwe's manipulation of language puts him in a class.

The statement by Peter's mother which makes his father deduct part of the narrator's wage shows the extent of the inhuman face of the capitalist system. Enekwe leaves the reader with the final impression that this is a place to avoid and the comic aspect is the speed with which Mark takes his leave.

AN ESCAPE

An Escape is a love story about the loose life of Biafran soldiers, their women, the frequent changing of beds and lovers and the short-changing of loved ones. Unlike "The Last Battle", and the novel *Come Thunder*, there are fewer scenes of battles, although there are victims and wreckages of war like the four disabled soldiers and Joe. Vicky Eze is a harlot of a sort who runs from one Biafran soldier to the other. She is hell bent on getting a husband from the lot as she tries to maintain one, Joe, with the gratification she gets from the other, Major Amah. She does

not mind how the two men see her until Joe threatens to break her head with a bottle.

The action of Vicky Eze comes close to the character of Jagua Nana in Ekwensi's novel of the same name and Moll in Daniel Defoe's novel, *Moll Flanders*. Although, Moll and Jagua are certified prostitutes, Vicky's life of debauchery is also on a large scale. Like Jagua protects Freddie, Vicky dots on Joe, with the hope that he will eventually marry her. But when Joe becomes a cripple, she swiftly changes camp and holds on to Major Amah with the hope that he will let her realize her life's ambition. Out of human sympathy, she tries to share her waning love for the cripple after a futile effort to save his leg. Vicky's double roles can be seen in this passage:

> *"Well, doctors know better", Amah said gazing into the woods. This had caused some trouble. The doctors took the decision, but Vicky would not hear of it. She bored the doctors with her incessant pleadings. But it was no use, they said. The boy would either lose his leg or die. So, they chopped it off. The other major sighed. Amah said, "She is doing her best by him, though she is more of a mother than a girl friend".*

Vicky soon after changes her love destined for a future husband to one deserving for a pet. The role reversal irks Joe who sees in between the line and quickly throws off the surrogate mother.

Like Freddie in *Jagua Nana*, Major Amah does not mind the double game of Vicky, as long as she makes herself available when he needs sex. Freddie wants Jagua's sex and helps to survive and so has to put up with her prostitution at the Tropicana.

> *"Well, I am not in the world to suffer", Major Amah said. "I agree there is suffering and death, but there is also pleasure-that is if you understand what I mean. One should not accept suffering as if it was the part of the air we breathe. One should have pleasure in spite of the suffering. So it is well that Vicky likes that boy and satisfies him when necessary and possible. Whether she eventually marries him is not my concern. As long as she gives me my own share, I don't mind.*
>
> *"So, we must have pleasure in spite of suffering, the war. There are certain women whose course, it seems, is to give pleasure. They come and go, scattering their thighs on hundred*

beds. When they come to me I take them like palm wine and think little of the rightness or wrongness of my action (50 - 51).

Enekwe makes fun of the flirtatious attitude of Vicky. First, he makes his reader see that Joe has been able to read-in-between-the-lines. He consequently gives her the boot by asking her to take away the gift she has brought. In a very skilful presentation, he says:

"Carry your gifts back with you Vicky", said the young voice of the junior officer. It was husky and rough like the fall and scratching of pebble on a metal surface. There were tears in that voice, and also bitterness as concentrated as the spittle of a wounded python" (51 - 52).

Hurt and bruised, Vicky returns to Major Amah, hoping at least to be consoled and comforted. He proves to be what is expected of an intelligent man. Both Major Amah and Vicky Eze will agree with each other, but for different reasons. He, seeing all her flirtatious life, could not brook her wiles to trick him into marriage; she for his lies, promises and pretense of gentlemanliness. Vicky's bitterness now knows no bounds. She scampers to the front seat, abandoning him and when she asks

to alight and the driver obeying his master's voice alone. Vicky takes the only option available: she flings herself out of the moving vehicle.

Through "An Escape", Enekwe is preaching the gospel of fidelity which pays in the end. When two tortoises are playing games on each other, the result is always a game.

EMENTE

Emente is a love story that is bleak in the fashion of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. It portrays the callousness in a depraved and sympathy-eroded world. The story is about a beautiful girl, Emente who after contacting tetanus has no one to cater for her. A young man no sooner after discovering her is married to his dream. The author tells his reader that Emente is from Uyo in Southern Nigeria.

Enekwe tells this story in the first person narrative in a tone that hunts and perplexes. Emente lies dying on a hospital bed while the narrator vacillates between giving a helping hand or not.

There is a religious undertone as the story ends; the patient is left to die with no one to love her. The author seems to highlight the absence of love and empathy in the world and he sees himself as

a part of this growing mess. The attitude of the nurse will later hunt the narrator and the author:

> *"I don't know what you are talking about", she said. "I have no time to waste listening to somebody who wants to know about a patient he never cared about for three months. You are not even sure when she was admitted", she said, looking at me with enough disgust to last me the rest of my life. I said not a word. I turned and walked away, my heart laden with my guilt (9).*

The nurse represents the creator who is now rebuking the narrator for his callousness and indifference to the plight of a fellow human being. Emente represents humanity, that vast wobbling creation, full of ingratitude and apathy. Enekwe creates the impression that we dig a chasm that separates us from the rest of humanity and this gulf is responsible for our loneliness and abandonment. There is a universal bond uniting all mankind. Pain to one will reflect on the other. This whole system ensures a continuity, integration and commitment.

This could be seen in the pain which the narrator suffers when he comes on a visit and could not immediately see Emente. His heart misses a beat

like a funeral drum. Then he sees her shuffling along, supported by a nurse.

This nurse symbolizes the caring few within mankind. And when the narrator asks, "How are you today?", Emente does not know. Humanity does not know the cause of its ailing health.

> *"I have been lonesome. Why didn't you come yesterday? There is no one to care for me" (6).*

This question, this lifting of hand by a drowning woman, should have elicited unrestrained support. But the world is not for those that are perishing. It is for the luxuriant and flourishing. Emente will learn of it to her peril that the world does not care if she lives or dies. To latch her emotion on another is merely a waste of time. What makes "Emente" a beauty to read is the grace with which it flows. The language is power packed:

> *The anxiety which tore at me until my nerves jarred like rusted guitar strings", "She ate one egg", "All this took about thirty minutes. Afterwards, I held a cup of water to her mouth. It makes a scratchy sound with her teeth. It was difficult for her to drink, for her tongue was barricaded within her teeth which were adamantine as steel walls", "my*

legs began to weaken like the leg of a robot made of rubber", "Her face was sweaty, and as solid as a statue hewn out of ebony rock. Her eyes did not perceive me. They glared at me like the masks of Ikot Ekpene .

The solitary life in "Emente" and its universal outlook make it more of an experience than a work of art. The melodrama is a creation that remains long after it must have been read and we should remember it each time we come upon such an experience. Emente's suffering is the crisis of mankind and suffering, and Enekwe takes time to report it:

With each attack of the disease, Emente writhed and twisted as she tried to wrestle free from the grips of an invisible demon. Her dilated nostrils and her viscid mouth bore witness to a struggle carried on in the deep and lonely regions. From the look in her eyes, it was clear that she had all but lost the battle for human love. She was lonely humanity being smothered at the gates of Hell. I find it difficult to describe the feeling I had at the time. I came closer and looked into her face, into the balls of her eyes where God

has preserved the perpetual beauty of mankind (7-8).

WAR IN THE HEAD

This story is about the uncertainty, fear, privation and emotional crisis that characterize the post war era on the rebel side. The story brings to light the idea that although physical warfare has ceased, the war continues in the heads of those who lost the war. On campus, soldiers make appearances at strategic points; searching students and making them feel that the liberty which they so much value is far from sight. The fear that the war might break out again and the attendant air-raids, cause the students to live in fear and pray that the crisis may not escalate.

"War in the Head" is one of Enekwe's early works and one that explores the civil war experiences and their aftermath. Anthony and Ekene, on returning to the campus, find it in a state of abandonment. They live up to the situation until the end of the session when Anthony, still finding himself unable to put off the fear of the war in the sub-conscious, flings himself out of a car, like Vicky Eze in "An Escape". Anthony plunges himself to his death and in the end is unable to see his much longed for wife and four children.

The fear of another outbreak of war is a recurring decimal throughout the story. Anthony is the hardest hit by the war fear. Once he runs back from the bathroom when the wind begins to rustle the zinc. Ekene asks:

> *"Did you think it was a bomber?"*
> *"Yes", Anthony replied full of embarrassment. "I don't know what is wrong with me".*
> *"Don't you believe that the war is over?"*
> *"I do, but I am afraid. A student was saying that Federal troops may descend on us suddenly and mow us down. And you know how unreasonable some students can be. They can do something rash that may cause the Army to attack us" (93).*

Enekwe does not see the students as responsible for the war on the sub-conscious. He blames the Federal government that stations soldiers all over the rebel side. The constant searching of students and the discovery of live ammunition and Biafran currency notes make the soldiers suspect those on the rebel side. Possible outbreak of war dominates the students' discussion. Stories of the civil war, the air raids and the gory details hunt the students all through the session.

A BABY FOR CHIEF BAYO

The story is all about greed and its nemesis in the sophisticated city of Lagos, Nigeria. It is the story of Chief Bayo, a wealthy businessman who snatches a girl, Helen, from her boyfriend with the hope of getting a baby by her. The intimidating attitude and the belief that money could solve all problems make Chief Bayo a pathetic hero. Helen plays along, using her female charm to swindle him. First she tells him that she is pregnant. This elates Chief Bayo who showers her with love and material gifts. In the end, Helen reveals her true colour and Chief Bayo loses in the game he initiated, and he goes back to his wife heartbroken and dejected.

Chief Bayo who has been without children from his first wife hopes to lure Helen into keeping the baby by taking his wife along. Helen welcomes the older woman, but would not accede to their request. Enekwe intends to recast the attitude of people towards marriage. Marriage is for better or for worse. If the union fails to produce an offspring, the couple should not abandon one another or if they so desire adopt a child. Helen's attitude may sound wicked, but it is also a lesson for children entrepreneurs. Enekwe's creation of the last scene is very vivid:

"Helen", he called as if he was afraid of her name.
"Are you alright?"
"Why... why do you ask?"
"I mean... what happened?"
"What? I can't understand what you mean"
"I mean... the baby"
"Which baby?"
"The one you have been expecting".
"I have no baby right now".

A ripple of despair tinged with fear swept through Chief Bayo's heart. He felt like one being drowned in a pond in the dark. He stood up feeling as light as a wroth. He staggered towards the door and down into the street, his eyes going faint, his brain going blank (30).

The ruse over pregnancy is an attempt by Helen to bring Chief Bayo to submission, so as to humiliate him. She has been suspecting him of flirting with some girl and sees less of him. Since she knows that his greatest need is to have a baby, she decides to use it. Helen's anger must have been the false hope which he presents, especially after she must have jilted her boy friend Joseph Adeoyo, a History undergraduate at Ibadan. As a staff at Equatorial Insurance

Company, Helen lives above her means, with a flat at Ikoyi and cigarettes to the bargain.

Chief Bayo's activities are regular features in big cities like Lagos, and young men losing their heart throbs to such money spraying lovers is a regular occurrence. The skillful manner they outwit such men is well-known. Helen kicks out Chief Bayo as she has kicked out Joseph Adeoyo. Momentarily she may look lonely, but availability of men in Lagos cannot allow the situation to last for long. Although Helen may think she is having a good time, her life is also on the decline.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

With this story, Enekwe begins an analysis of thuggery and violence which characterize Nigerian politics. His verdict will hunt even the people who organize such violence. Violence ruined Nigerian past attempts to keep her democratic experience. The evil it portends has so worried the author that he makes it a major literary consideration.

Barrister Kenneth Eze and his wife have their eyes fixed on the nation's political leadership. Eze has a noble intention of sanitizing the terrain while Amaka has the intention of lifting herself from their social condition. Thus, the intentions of husband and wife from the onset are divergent. Barrister Eze thinks that he could rule his political

landscape without thuggery and violence, but his wife knows better. The political thugs also know that he needs their services. So they come to his house to ask for employment:

> *Madam, we are political boys. We wan work foram. We wan helpam win the election".*
>
> *"Is that so," she said, considering awhile, "but, he is not in".*
>
> *"But, madam, we wan see am. Mr. Udoma de plan wicked thing foram. But we wan helpam because we know say he be a good kind gentleman".*
>
> *Amaka was painfully curious. "And what is he planning"*
>
> *"He dey plan to cause trouble for the rally today. He get more dan twenty thugs weh go helpam fight your husband. He wan hire me even but I refuse. So we come because e'fit be your husband want some helpers" (11-12).*

Enekwe's tone is sardonic here; he accuses the thugs who offer their services without invitation, as hideous and dangerous persons. They cause

violence on both sides and no matter the blood shed; they are unmoved once their fee is paid.

Amaka's admission of thugs into the sitting room of Barrister Eze offends him greatly. Enekwe takes time to describe the looks of the boys:

> *Their clothes and dirty shoes were oppressive to her sight. They bore the odour of dry sweat and dirt. But, what could she do? She needed them. When Barrister Eze arrived home, he walked into the sitting room holding his black briefcase in his left hand. He was very natty in a grey suit and black tie. It was clear he did not expect to see such people in his house, and worse still, sitting comfortably on his cushion chairs (12).*

The contrast between Barrister Eze and the thugs is symbolic: the good and the bad, the attempt of the bad to make impression or exert influence on the good. With their lack of education and proud insistence they could exert this influence. Enekwe wants to drive home this pathetic contrast. Eze's outburst says it all:

> *"How absurd", he said, "to think that thugs are now running the country" (13).*

Amaka's position is an albatross: she stands with her hands on her waist to tackle her husband head-on:

> *"Ken, what has gone into your head? Mr. Udoma, according to these boys, has hired about twenty thugs. Do you think you can get on without some... in this country?" (13).*

She has not investigated the claims of the boys. Her only authority is their report. Here Enekwe emphasizes the role of rumour and propaganda in the nation's politics. Although Barrister Eze appears to want to smash the syndicate, Enekwe warns on his lack of preparation. He does not investigate like his wife but they outnumber him in terms of opinion. The first attack he suffers lends credence to their superior knowledge of the political terrain. And when Barrister Eze states:

> *"There is nothing more to consider. To associate with thugs is to expose yourself to them, to make yourself vulnerable. Let them find their employers. I have no need of them. It is for the people to elect their leaders. We can't terrorize them in order to lead them".*
>
> *He stopped as if he were trying to control his temper.*

"Get these dirty fellows out of my house, Amaka... please... immediately"

"Your house," she stormed and flung out of the room (13).

Enekwe's position is clear. Barrister Eze is an arrogant and idiotic politician. By telling his wife to send out the thugs from his house, he is alienating the main confidant in his life. The statement burns the heart of Amaka and she clears out of his way. This route will eventually lead to his doom. The author does not sympathize with his hero, an architect of his own destruction.

In evaluating the whole scenario, the author hides behind the character Amaka to delve into the nature of the hero and his lack of knowledge of his society. The tragic hero, Barrister Eze, like Obi Okonkwo, in *No Longer at Ease*, will refuse to identify fully with a society he wants to sanitize: but without the necessary weapon to do this. He is then seen as a lone voice in the wilderness where he will bleat like a goat in the sun only to attract a wild beast to devour him. As a man of ramrod rectitude, Barrister Eze is like Socrates and is destined to drink the hemlock. Enekwe's summation in this passage shows that Eze is irredeemable:

Barrister Eze had always been obsessed with the problem of morality, private or public. He was clean, not only in his appearance, but most consciously, in his dealings with others. For him there could be no public morality without private morality. Both could not be separated. At least, they should be complementary. He could not imagine a morally depraved man being a good doctor, a just judge, or a good politician. He was inflexible in his belief that good and evil could not co-exist without disastrous consequences. As far as he was concerned, there must be no compromise with evil. He had no doubt whatever that he would triumph, despite the apparent dominance of Mr. Udoma (14).

Barrister Eze's inflexibility will affect his family which he is increasingly finding difficult to maintain. His law colleagues will even laugh at his "blind idealism". The Opel he is driving worries his friends but he does not mind. And when he decides to run for the seat in the State House of Assembly, they feel his madness is now complete as he pursues it in his own way.

Amaka tries to use this first attack to rouse him into reality.

"Ken, I hope this has taught you a lesson". He does not reply, which prompts her to ask him a second and a third time. His reply is typical of tragic heroes:

"I don't need any lessons", he said definitely. Barrister Eze is like David Lurie in J.M Coetzee's book, Disgrace.

Enekwe hides behind Amaka to pronounce his verdict:

> *"It has not.. I didn't suppose it would. Fools never learn any lesson until they go to their graves" (15).*

Amaka slaps him to prove his full emasculation. He does not retaliate; instead, he resorts to his blind argument and alienated speeches.

On the other hand, Amaka's efforts are private and selfish. Eze is fighting a just war, but for a blind society. Amaka wants to be a Minister's wife, to escape night duty and live a life of opulence, amidst rot and squalor. She does not care how her husband makes his money, as long as they become rich.

The opponent of Barrister Eze, on finding that he is living in a different world, "decides to carry the violence to his house. The crowd sprouts abuses at him. Amaka urges him to withdraw from the race, at least to save their lives. Barrister Eze refuses and clings to his blind idealism.

He thinks that the police could protect them from violence and the mob action. But the police prove to be of the same extraction as the mob. They, as the proverbial dog, eat the bone tied around their necks. The constable posted to him withdraws without an excuse and so leaves the principal vulnerable. At the appropriate time, his opponents come to finish the job already begun. They drive a dagger into his belly and Barrister Eze pays the supreme penalty for his obstinacy. With that, Enekwe passes his final message: it will be a long time before Nigerian politics could be cleaned of its dirt and violence.

As a character, Barrister Eze is very memorably cast in very deep and convincing garb. He belongs to a different world and his generation cannot understand him.

BLOODSTAINS ON THE SANDS

This story is not only about the civil war and the carnage that characterized the tragedy, but also about the foolish belief and obstinacy which lead

to the ruin of many. During the war, raids lead to the flight for dear life. Safety is the greatest preoccupation that engages man at that time. Enekwe categorizes the war into three: the inter-village war, the present and what the future war can be. In this story, the author tries to delve into the way personal tragedies can be created by one's own creation.

First, the disease eats its principal victim. Chief Obollo Okoro refuses to leave his ancestral home, despite the bombardment of the village by Federal artillery. Enekwe here reveals Okoro's foolishness:

> *Chief Obollo Okoro refused to budge. Like an iroko, he was adamant and insensitive to the turmoil all about him. Not that he did not hear the fiery echo of artillery. He did, but his nerves had been numbed by this consuming hatred for the enemy. The hate had become his supreme master, nourishing his head and heart with its violent self-gratifying pride (57).*

Chief Okoro did not just encase himself in his foolishness; he also blocked his children from seeing reason.

> *"To leave our village, you say? The land of our ancestors."*

"Yes, father, let us leave. It is no longer safe here. Our people have all fled. We can go to Enugu."

"Run away. Follow them", said the old chief contemptuously and bitterly. Uzo's fear seemed outrageous to him.

"Am I holding your legs? Run..." Unoka, the youngest son, held the hand of his sister, Nkechi, who was sobbing as if the worst had happened.

"Uzo, you have betrayed your manhood. You hear the sound of guns and you quake like a bamboo in the wind", Chief Okoro said.

"Are those boys fighting the Hausas not people's children, and you run... leave your village for the Hausas". Those words hit Uzo like a dub. He stood there gazing at his father in total confusion (58).

The refusal to see reason by Uzo would in the end make him pay with his life. Unoka and Nkechi reasoned well and they are saved. Unoka casts a cursory look at the past actions of his father and his brutality towards his mother which might have

claimed her life. But Uzo is consumed by foolish paternal love. Enekwe's description of the scene is very vivid. But it is with a view to distinguishing between foolish paternal love and real effort to save a senile old man:

> *Nevertheless, Uzo was stymied by guilt and doubt. How could one leave his father in danger... a father? He slowed down, and soon after halted, turned and looked. There was no sign of him. He went on, but this time very slowly, his mind in a whirl. Then he stopped completely, turned and began to move back towards the village. (The Last Battle 59).*

Chief Okoro, on the contrary, does not kill his son. He merely creates a situation that hastens it. But Uzo is the author of his own death. The author's account and what he sees should have convinced Uzo that he is on a foolish mission:

> *Nwolie's chest had been blown apart. Chunks of flesh hung by tiny ribbons of his skin. His glassy eyes and his teeth shone at the sky like a mask. His arms were thrown side ways. The wife's body had a grotesque posture, though there was no visible injury. Her knees were thrown wide apart and her mouth was ajar. The child's*

head had been bashed like an egg, (The Last Battle 60).

All the efforts of the lieutenant to dissuade Chief Okoro to leave prove abortive. And when he makes up his mind, it is on a condition:

> *"We shall leave... But that will be tomorrow morning. We can't run off like fowls. We must prepare ourselves", (64).*

In a flashback, the writer recalls the past of his people. As Achebe would say, it was not one rosy past. There were some bad moments. As Okonkwo kills Ikemefuna in *Things Fall Apart*, this memory rushes at us like a tornado. And when Okonkwo hangs himself after killing another who stands on his way, who encourages the desecration of the land, this scene in "Blooshstains... comes alive:

> *The next day, the three youths dangled from a tree, taunt with their own weight. Small boys, naked as tadpoles, with their penises dangling up and down, jumped up and down as they flung stones at the dead bodies. Women kept away for they could not stand the sight or the smell (65).*

The death of Chief Okoro after trying to resist the Federal troops is an anti-climax. It is a tragedy well deserved and calls for no sympathy. The unnecessary delays at resistance to arrest all make Chief Okoro the architect of his own ruin. It also portrays his son Uzo as a foolish young man who deliberately sees fire and jumps into it. Enekwe's description of the last scene is memorable. We cannot but hail the Federal troops when justice catches up with Uzo and his father:

> *The Corporal gestured to Uzo to run. Uzo could not understand. The corporal, then gave him a shove, watching him lift his legs awkwardly and swing his arms erratically. The soldiers were amused by his awkward figure trying to run away from death. "Which man go fit run past bullets", the corporal guffawed, cocking and lifting his rifle, and taking aim, like the rest of his troops after him (72).*

Enekwe's verdict is that Uzo and his father are foolish heroes who deliberately stain the world with their blood.

DEALING WITH THE ENEMY

This story appears to hang solely on the conduct of the civil war on both sides and the bravery and blood letting that characterized the entire war. It

also shows the poor military state of the rebel side and the superior weaponry of the federal side. Unlike in other stories, Enekwe laments the partisan roles played by the international community, especially Britain:

> *"But why we no get artillery or mortar. So Britain no fit send us anything. They know that Nigerians dey plan to kill everybody they see".*
>
> *"And they no wan help us"*
>
> *"Every time officer dey say mortar go soon come. Wey dem now?"*
>
> *"E go be say they support the Hausas".*

The rumbling goes on for a while and the needed assistance does not come. Second Lieutenant Umana hopes against hope. He knows the situation of his troops is hopeless but he fights on. It is bad when a soldier has to combine fear with poor logistics. At that point, defeat is imminent:

> *Second Lieutenant Umana was becoming afraid. As the platoon got set, it seemed as if he was being brought closer to his destiny, death in the battlefield. Nothing could beat the Federal firepower. It was simply*

terrible. But, inside him he felt that somehow, in spite of all the odds, he and his men would be able to spring a surprise. Just one single opportunity would be enough for them to get the Federal troops in a tighter corner and maul them to pieces. Victory after all often came to people when they did not expect it. At Verdun, General Petain never knew that victory would eventually come. The British almost lost the Second World War. Israel beat the Arab nations to bits by dints of hard- work and skill (76).

Enekwe uses the story to indict both sides. It is a case of a brother killing another brother. The shame would be seen in the title itself: "Dealing with the Enemy". What is planned on both sides is to rout the perceived enemy. By recalling the time of peace, the author wants his readers to see the futility of raising arms against fellow country men and the complete disorganization of an ordered life:

Second Lieutenant Umana, the commander of this platoon, was a middle-sized man, with a comely face which was beginning to show shades of deep setting worries. He was in the Nigerian Army, had never seen real

fighting and was looking forward to a quick rout of the Federal troops which would mean the end of suffering in the field. He used to be merry in those days in Lagos. There was a parade in the morning, a short period in the office of the Quartermaster General, home and then siesta. After this, there would be a drive to the heart of Lagos with his girl friend who would be in his flat as early as four O'clock in the evening. A night in the pubs, all the time feeling the warmth of her deep perfumed body; and her quilted dress glittering in the electric light. Sometimes, they would visit as many as five pubs in a night. Now, he was in the field and had spent almost a month lying under the sky with nothing to cover himself from the rain. One had to stay there, rain or shin (74).

CHAPTER TWO

NOVEL

COME THUNDER

In *Come Thunder*, Enekwe strives to present the Nigerian Civil War of which he was a major actor. It is a relatively short novel of 116 pages which is a rich account of the Biafran War as the author saw it. There are many literatures on the war, but Enekwe gives an account of a participant in a language he has mastered in vivid and lucid prose. Like the other short stories on the war, horrors of the war, the hurriedly trained young men sent to face the superior fire power of the Nigerian troops make the story both an indictment and an historical account.

The author takes the title from a poem written by a fellow Igbo poet, Christopher Okigbo, who himself, was killed at the very beginning of the war:

> *Now that the triumphant march has entered the last street corners,*
> *Remember, 0 dancers, the thunder among the clouds.*

Come Thunder is Enekwe's first full length novel which concentrates on the Nigerian Civil War, his pet theme. It is beautifully scripted and aimed at

diagnosing the major causes of the war, the devastation it caused, the bitter recrimination it engendered and why the secession failed.

Although Enekwe tries to use pseudonyms in the cast, the scene and the country being referred to can easily be discerned. The story begins with the pogrom in the north, then moves up to Lagos, the return of the refuges, the blowing up of the Niger Bridge by the rebel army and then the eventual fall of Enugu, the capital of Biafra. The story is not a complete account of the civil war, but it is a good account of the major activities of the principal actors, and the untold hardship of the people on the rebel side.

The author sees most of these actions through the eye of a fifteen year old Meka Chinedu, the lad who goes into the army much against the wishes of his family and whose action greatly unsettles them. Through Meka, a batman to the benevolent Lt Fred Umana, Enekwe carefully presents the civil war account as the events unfold and the battles are fought. The pathos and grueling condition of the people race like ferret and the reader is carried along through the evils of war, the division of the families, air raids, war propaganda and recrimination, inevitable in such situations.

The recruitment exercise is in itself an ordeal. It is an exercise to ensure means of livelihood for both self, parents, and relatives and an ego trip:

> *All around him, naked bodies swayed in the sun, brown and wet as sausages stuck up in an open field under a tropical sun. Around the garrison field were thousands of young men watching the exercise. The trees swayed with the weight of scores who wanted to see every bit of it. Though considered unfit for soldiery, many of these people tarried, hoping that the recruiting officer might change his mind. There were others who merely wanted to find out all they could about the whole exercise in order to be better prepared for the time they would present themselves for recruitment. Most of all these people had come from the farthest towns and villages in Bala. It would be humiliating for them to return to their homes as disqualified men; hence the reluctance to go home (1).*

From the outset, Enekwe wants us to see that the war is full of lewd jokes and expanded erotica. The lance corporal in-charge of the parade drills the men until they almost all collapse out of

exhaustion. But the songs, the erotic tales and sheer will power thrill them:

> *"You call yourselves soldiers; people who done waste their manhood poking harlots all over the town ... Everybody wan be soldier, soldier for mouth. You no fit march but you call yourself soldier. You see that one who dey march as if they put spoke for him penis or it fit be he de dance ajascow music. Make you dance ajasco now... bullets will play ajasco for you soon...bullets no hear or see and they no know anybody. They no know student or gentleman; they no know Kingsway or Esquire or Opel or small boy. Anyway, nobody de small nowadays. Everybody don begin fuck before he even comot from his mother's uteru" (5).*

By using pidgin, Enekwe makes the war more memorable. Recruiting officers are usually soldiers with lower rank and little education. They therefore use the only language they have good command of and available to all strata of the society: pidgin. By their raw and vulgar language, they want us to see the level which war has carried down mankind. Since man has reached

the nadir, his world will collapse as can be seen in his debased language.

The cruelty of soldiers especially that of Federal troops is an area that seems to worry Enekwe. He sees this barbaric act as inhuman:

> *"Yes. Hundreds... men and women, boys and girls and children. Within a short time Zagar soldiers came into the station and opened fire on all of us. People ran this way and that way, and women cried.*
>
> *But the soldiers continued to shoot pa-pa pa-pa-pa-pa...."*
>
> *"So nobody begged them and they had no mercy for the children...?" Meka's voice was husky.*
>
> *"Mercy for the children! Hm... You don't know what you are talking about. They say all our people are the same, male or female or children. You know what happened? Two women knelt down and begged, but the soldiers just shot them down and began to shoot everybody" (8).*

The description of the pogrom in the north is pathetic:

> *"But Zagar soldiers came into the hospital, shouting "Where are the Nyamiris?"*
>
> *"The nurses told the soldiers not to enter the wards like that but the soldiers told them to shut their mouths or they would pepper them. Immediately they began to look at the names, you know the paper boards with the names of the patients.... you know the papers are at the foot of the bed?"*
>
> *"Yes", Meka agreed.*
>
> *"But I sneaked out immediately they came in, and I stayed in the dark to watch them. Now when they saw any name like ours, they shot the patient on that bed immediately. The nurses cried and begged them, but the soldiers kept shooting until they killed all our people there. Everybody began to run. I ran into the woods. I trekked about ten miles inside the forest. Then I met other Balans and all of us trekked until we saw a lorry full of our people" (9).*

When the disturbance begins to tilt against them, why could they not just leave and return to their own region? The current disturbances in the northern states of Nigeria seem to vindicate Enekwe that all is still not well with the country. In his presentation, Enekwe makes good use of language that makes him a master of his art:

> *All the recruits walked towards the building, an old low rectangular hall which grew dust like hair. Inside, there were low iron beds with rusty springs and tattered show-stuffed mattresses. They were meant for sleeping, not for relaxation (10).*
>
> *Meka followed him, walking like an eleven month old baby, his muscles and sinews almost snapping (12).*
>
> *Darkness descended on the battlefield. Soon afterwards they were brought two buckets of rice. There were big lumps of meat, the size of a kid's fist (38).*
>
> *Outside he saw Asa in a different mood. In happy days, Asa sparkled like the sky in a starry night. There was a lot of merriment. Asa was different now. It was like a ditch with phantom people.*

Darkness stood like guards in all the corners. The taxi-cabs which used to splash their headlights into the limits of the horizon were almost blind and slugged along the road, quietly as mice in a place invaded by cats (57).

Through the haze of noon sun, Meka discerned the British ferret armoured cars -which gradually became spectres of iron monsters built by Lucifer and his servants, hidden in the entrails of Hell for a billion years, abnormal steel tortoises with coffin loads of death, driven by red eyed, fat, sweaty British mercenaries, white as scalded pigs and smoking marijuana in pipes made of iron and as big as the barrel of a machine gun; iron huts upon which an iroko tree had crashed; metal houses which became mobile after roasting and consuming their tenants...; monstrous steel land tuna fish... (83).

They could smell the quick odour emanating from the coffin. It was muffled by perfume and cloth, but it was there quite alright. When the vehicle was moving very fast it was less evident, since the wind was swift and pervading

in its influence, carrying the echoes of rotting flesh and scattering them like pollen grains into the face of the sky (85).

At night, the sound of battles was crafted by the wind across the hills and plains. At dawn every place was quiet, but horrible news plagued the mind.

Slaughter and bitterness. Woe upon woe. Too many battles. Twenty enemy solders killed at Mere sector..... .....thirty rebels dead at Amari. News from the B.B.C. News from the Voice of America, Radio Togo, Radio Ghana, everywhere. Hope and despair in combat in the mind (109).

The loose life of soldiers especially that of the officers, is given full treatment in *Come Thunder*. Sex, savage sex, is the order of the day. Since no one knows what will happen on the battlefield, the soldiers play politics of sex, wooing the girls who quickly accede knowing that time is running out fast. Marriages are quickly contracted and when a soldier falls in battle, his colleagues take over his wife or concubine. The girls know that the marriage will last only for a while and tears are meant to get license to change partners. Umana

knows the position very well and he cashes in on it at every opportunity:

> *Umana wanted to sleep on top of her that night. He could not control himself. Ada herself became agitated. She walked all about the kitchen talking endlessly, often incoherently to the Red Cross girls. But, she would not come to Umana, and kept circulating like a ballet dancer so that he could see her. Umana thought it would be unfortunate to miss this girl. We could be moved from our present rest place at day break. If I fail to do it this night, it might be impossible tomorrow. I must do it. I'll fuck her vagina red with this my thing which has not talked to any woman since two weeks. These vandals have been trying to destroy this my little gentleman, this artillery (49-50).*

Both sides engage in war propaganda to boost the morale of their people. Little attacks are magnified to look like devastation and each calls its soldiers gallant officers even when they are suffering retreat.

The criticism against *Come Thunder* as lacking depth and diversity overlooks the basic foundation on which war stories are hinged. War

situations are rare, uncommon and unnatural periods. No one truly behaves according to nature and rules. What takes precedence is the zeal to survive. As supplies are short, the few that are available are rushed. It is unlikely at such situations that man will not degenerate to the level of animals. Superficiality will most likely take over the nature of characters in such situations as each tries to assume roles to outwit the other.

CHAPTER THREE

POETRY

BROKEN POTS

Broken Pots where Enekwe made his first debut in a major collection of poems is a threnody. A threnody is a song of lamentation. The songs of lamentation are woven around the civil war experiences which the poet has made his eternal preoccupation. In *Broken Pots*, there are thirty eight poems written at various periods of the poet's life: the civil war, his undergraduate days at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, his encounter with the West and the winter cold, the unity of his country Nigeria, the love of his wife Chioma, his mother on her birthday and his feeling about death. War and death have special places in this collection and he sees them as heralds of disaster. Edith Ihekweazu, while summarising Enekwe's works, contends in the foreword that:

> *Most of Enekwe's writings struggle with the experiences of the Nigerian Civil War, the experience of brutal death and senseless suffering. He never reverts to euphemism or embellishment. Instead, he leads the reader right into pain, death and despair, but he does not abandon him there. The real beauty of Ossie Enekwe's poems stems, to my mind,*

from the calm reassuring confidence that there is "NO DEATH AT ALL" as long as there is love and that is the dead are distant friends/who refuse to write or call (iv).

Ihekweazu's comment is even more relevant in Enekwe's published novel, *Come Thunder*, and many of his short stories where he makes more commitment.

Poetry for most readers is about emotions, individual experiences, but which the good poet elevates to a universal level. Eldred Jones, while arguing along this line, says that the writer in trying to portray a local experience reflects a universal world view; that "The happy paradox is that, to be truly universal, one must be truly local". Jones has also argued that fusion of individual experiences and the environment in a way that would present universal appeal are the issues that would show the stature of the writer" (John 7).

Enekwe sang a lot as a teenager especially at mass where he was a server. Then in the choir at St Patrick's School and the Holy Ghost Cathedral, both at Enugu, he got the fire that influenced the musical quality of his poems. This past-time later graduated into full scale interest. Of this interest Enekwe says:

> *As a teenager, I spent many hours every day listening to popular music, especially rock and roll and rhythm. I was thrilled by syncopation. Lyrical passages that combined images and feelings in an unusual manner easily brought tears of joy to my eyes. The pristine music of the Odo masking cult in my hometown of Affa etched itself in my consciousness. These factors may account for the strong lyrical quality of my poetry, and may explain why, at that time, I enjoyed Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Keats, who combined music and sense so well. Later in the university, I was thrilled by W.B. Yeats and T.S. Elliot. Soon after, I was struck by Christopher Okigbo, whose enchanted lines continue to haunt me with their delicacy and deftness (30).*

By his own admission, Enekwe had poets that greatly influenced him. The poet writes in this tradition and looking at his works, one could see this influence. When Ihekweazu enthused in her "Foreword" to Broken Pots that "Ossie Enekwe's poems, simple with few exceptions, cannot be labeled as being influenced by any poet or school. They are his very personal and own reactions to

situations where ordinary language cannot absorb the shock of a shaking experience and where poetry is the rescuing medium. Critics like Peter Thomas and John Povey have recognized the power and forcefulness of Ossie Enekwe's poems": she meant to my mind that the poet's place is assured, as having a voice of his own despite this influence.

JOKER

Joker is the very first poem in *Broken Pots's* collection and written with simplicity and ease. Here, Enekwe tries to compare the West where he is currently residing with his home land. Electricity is still alien to his people. The poet looks out from the cabin into the intense cold and the falling snow where "all shoot white clouds through their nostrils/into the mist like pipers in a crowd". No one takes the winter as a joke. The winter is seen as a brutal recurring weather that causes all discomfort and restricts movement:

In the coming winter
I was scared of ice, slip and fall
Turtle neck, coats fat
With hair or feathers,
And all that make men
Walking birds, for none
Ever spoke of winter as a joker.

The poet's effort at making himself warmth with cigarettes later backfires. The smoke burns his lungs and he longs to see a doctor.

The feeling of nostalgia and adverse effect of racism would lead many Africans scurrying home where they would participate in the nationalism that ushered independence to so many African nations.

A LAND OF FREEDOM

This poem, written in 1972, is made up of only two stanzas and evokes a feeling of nationalism and national pride often found in most war poems in Eastern Nigeria. It is full of regret and a sense of betrayal that characterizes the national experience. Many Ghanaians betray their leader who loves them and finds a home for them after independence. The poet then wonders why the people have to erect hurdles for their leader and call him bad names only to dump him in the end.

The coup and exile in 1972 of Kwame Nkrumah was a continental disaster as he symbolized freedom for all black people all over the world. The poet's disappointment could be seen in the last stanza:

The paths were full
Of snakes and thorns,
And so, endlessly

In want of beds,
They called him a hawk
And murdered him.

THE STORY OF A CEYLONESE GIRL

Here Enekwe remembers Mathi Kulersegaram, a female Ceylonese (Siri Lankan) undergraduate of the University of Nigeria who died fighting on the rebel side. The love of Mathi is compared to the effort of so many who paid the supreme penalty in that senseless war. She tries to stop a falling rock when she "should have gone to her mother". By relating mother and child at this time, the poet wants us to see the beauty inherent in serenity and security which Marthi flicked away by riding "on the wings of the wind". Mathi is lost to all peace loving people but especially to Biafrans on whose account she died. As Enekwe observes, "she is gone with the wind of eternity" through lack of caution and youthful zeal "to the sad music of a wasted life/mirrored on the furrows of a pretty face".

The poem is one of the most pathetic of the ten in the collection about the Nigerian Civil War. But what distinguishes "The story of a Ceylonese Girl" is the feeling it evokes which shows that war is a universal tragedy that could engulf any victim, irrespective of race, creed and without any distinction of the age of the victims.

1972 POEMS

Starting with the death of the former President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, Enekwe's feeling and revulsion against injustice in the world took a wearisome turn. The poet sees man as a victim of his environment. The environment itself knocks heads together so that it could eat human flesh during burial. Enekwe asks mankind not to wail at the sight of the cataclysm in shadows of Osiris because

Once in every season
The earth that we feed
And sit on
Asks for food
And we hurry
To do her will.

The poet sees man as merely obeying a laid down order which is symbiotic and so should not be feared. Man is always at war and ever preparing the instrument of warfare. Enekwe attributes this propensity to the "dull edges of our hearts"

In "A Palace of Tomes", Enekwe turns his attention to a white lady who devotes all her time to books. He describes her as "a youthful queen". She stands dejected and mournful. Her preoccupation is "the lone thought / in her cold skull". All the praise singers have since departed.

Enekwe's description of the lot of the white lady is memorable:

The birds have since
Fled her walls,
The last leaves
In their beaks.

By the birds taking along with them the last leaves of praise singing and hallowed praises, the poet seems to be suggesting that those who devote all their attention should take a cue from what happened to her. The title, "A Place of Tomes" is very instructive: the life of the white lady is a huge lesson, a big volume to be read and reflected over.

"Sing Not for a Crowd" is a poem of encouragement to two distinguished Nigerian scholars, Achebe and Obiechina. Enekwe's love for the writing of Chinua Achebe and Emma Obiechina is undisguised. He tells the scholars that they should not worry about recognition and the effect of their work because it will come long after they must have passed on:

Our course is ever to flourish
When maggots have chewed and moulded
These frames and hues back to earth
For from dust to dust the drum rolls.

The poet cautions against guided writing that tends to please and mollify the audience. He warns them to always keep in mind the main objective of creative writing.

"You whose notes suffice". As one of their students, he reminds them and stresses that these notes "numb the tiger's sinews". Enekwe's verdict on the attitude of the crowd is blunt and scathing:

> *These people are no listeners.*
> *They hear nought beyond the needling of the finger*
> *Beyond flames or shaking walls*
> *They are dry pebbles waiting on the beach.*

This ode, written at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1972, is meant to draw attention to the strength and stature of the two highly published professors.

Assessing the quality of Enekwe's art, Sesan Ajayi says:

> *Enekwe's poetry enriches our humanity with fresh insights, pure, inspired (almost casual) lines of poetry not ideological scarecrows that may rule the day for as long as the climate of taste is for the sensational and the maudlin. The poetry reminds us that*

we are a nation "sick of heroes and monuments", while not forgetting to encourage us not to sing for a people who are no listeners but "dry pebbles waiting on the beach" (3).

There is instant parallelism when the artist pitches his tent against those in authority and praise singers. Enekwe's identification with the crusader is discernible and manifest in all his works. He does not court a payback period which often corrupts the mind of the artist and leaves him joggling between euphoria and commitment. Both Achebe and Obiechina earned his praise as they belong to this camp. Ajayi's summation is equally apt:

At a time when writers cross swords with one another and break lances to protect their vulnerable cardboard sheds, it is fulfilling to return to a consideration of the dramatic lyric as an important poetic genre perfected in Enekwe's Broken Pots. The poems, through the personal and emotions explored debate our agonizing condition of morality and affirm that the music of eternity lives on, oblivious of the cruelty of worsted passing days.(3).

LET DEW DWELL

The collapse of humanity, visible in the fall of man and the ideals, takes a prominent place in this poem that encases itself in regret and almost a hasty appeal to the divine. The poet's religious background which obtrudes reveals his helplessness and recourse to prayer to the creator of the world:

Lord ... Lord!
Let your rains falling wash
Dust to dust underfoot to let
Dew dwell inviolate.

BUTTOCKS

This poem that revolves around a relationship is more about the physical side of it. It is also a comment on the tangential nature of a relationship which might have been roving over time in fleeting moods. The poet seems to see it as barbaric, because the personae soon after fall into shallow ponds, and elephants falling break their knees.

Don Adinuba commenting on the poem posits that:

Enekwe is a fine writer of verses revolving on love, platonic and otherwise. "Buttocks" is one of his artistically most accomplished works, humorous, witty and imaginative.

Handy death and love without measure are good (1986).

In agreeing with Edith Ihekweazu who sees Enekwe's poem as involving and a "crystallization of personal emotions not a poetic form that makes them universal" (iv), Adinuba asserts:

> *This is a valid observation. He displays an impressive level of craftsmanship without sounding artificial, mechanical, or obscurantist. Poetry should, of course, be pleasurable (1986).*

Enekwe did not think of poetry as a formal artistic engagement until Steven Vincent, an American Peace Corps member and his short story writing instructor in the Department of English, University of Nigeria, Nsukka drew his attention to it, "You should write poetry. Your language is poetic", he told him. But he did not bring any of his verses up for publication. He consigned them to the dustbin which he later regretted.

> *But I soon discovered what Vincent considered poetic in my writing. It was its lyrical, emblematic, and imagistic qualities, as well as its precision (79).*

"Buttocks" is a typical and clear example of good craftsmanship. The precision and economy of words evoke so much artistry that the perennial momentary madness can easily be imagined: "The mud dam burst/ and frees the flood".

TO KINS WITH LOVE

The poems in this division in *Broken Pots* include "To Mother on her Birthday" and "Love Without Measure". The first is the poet's reaction to his mother's love, her care and devotion to him and her other children, her widowhood and the love she planted that now runs through her children. "Love Without Measure" is Enekwe's reflection on what his wife, Chioma, means to him. He compares her with his mother in a language that is sweet and kind.

Oyiafo, you did more
Than bring us into the world
and let us suck life
from your nipples:
you gave us love
fresh and strong
as air on Ibuzu.

By comparing his mother's love with the fresh air on Ibuzu hill, a sacred hill in Affa, the home town of the poet, Enekwe wants his audience to see that motherhood is sacred. For his wife, Chioma, the poet sees her as

A distant maid
flammable in memory
in dream striding
like an Amazon.
For her the ocean
is but a pond.

The strength of character of Chioma is described as "an Amazon" and her industry is highlighted in the idea that "for her the ocean/is but a pond". The ever conquerous wife is a delight any day and good poets usually devote verses to the women of their dream. In an interview granted to Chi Chiazzo and Chukwuemeka Agbayi in *'The Colour of Writing'*, Enekwe poignantly regrets not giving women a prominent role, beyond what he has done:

> *Though he has not given women an "opportunity" to mount the soap box and begin to deliver their own view," the writer believes that he has shown in some of his works like "The Last Battle" and Other Stories such as "A Baby for Chief Bayo" that what is being done to women is not good because they play a very important role in the development of human society. Enekwe feels that women have to be protected and respected because they have a lot of gifts for mankind (45).*

The poet sees a common feature in both his mother and wife. Although, their roles are not interchangeable; at least in some planes, they harbour common characteristics which make him compare them:

I have now a woman who is to me as
you were to my father.
Your other sons have begun to love the
shape of girls.
One already writes love letters.
Sooner or later they will do as I have
done.

But what one woman is to her man is what the other is to his own: they are both wives and give children to their husbands. Motherhood is a common feature in all females to be cherished and loved. But when the poet is creating a scene about women, he starts from this particular and universal phenomenon. When a poet compares his wife to his mother, there is that likelihood that the same pathos will be evoked, if love and care characterize both relationships.

In his opening paragraph to the forward he wrote to the collection *Marching to Kilimanjaro*, the poet, scholar and critic, Niyi Osundare, outlines the mission of poetry:

In his stupendously definitive book,
The Bow and the Lyre, Octavio Paz,

the Mexican poet, describes poetry as "knowledge, salvation, power, abandonment. An operation capable of changing the world". Poetry isolates and unites, it is an invitation to exile and return, "a shell that echoes the music of the world". It is the social and spiritual distillation of events lived and suffered. Already, in Broken Pots, Ossie Enekwe has demonstrated a gifted capability for garnering shards of diverse experiences, transmuting them, and crafting them into a mould which is thoroughly humanized and constantly affecting (Foreword I)

The relationship between mother and child, wife and husband, should be a humanized vision that should affect and encase. Enekwe admits that the poet cannot isolate himself from the rest of humanity:

He is a strand in the web of life and he must participate in this theatre of transmutation:

It is possible but I find it difficult to explain what happened in that collection. Somehow I was not always sure what was moving me. The impulse was strong and I was trying to

describe every experience as I felt it. Any mythic impact it must have had was accidental. Somehow it appears to me that you have the universal and the particular in any good poem. If a poet is honest with his feelings, the fact is that, that poet will capture the universal in his work. I was responding naturally to the events as they occurred in my idiosyncratic view of life but a lot of the things that have been said about these poems I have noted. The poems were as a result of controlled reaction to very intense feelings (Enekwe 6).

Enekwe sees love as a cyclic or revolving loan which all members of the society can benefit from. It is for this reason that there must be a code of conduct guarding love. All must play the game according to the rule. Both the lover and the loved are under some obligation to each other because

Love without measure
is a chaos in the brain.
Nothing hotter than love
That is ignorant of sea and time.

The poet sees his mother as a good farmer who plants good seeds: the seeds of love. The good

feeling it engenders is enveloping and deserves return:

But we love you as much as before
Will never forget you.
For you've planted a love that thrives
like iroko.

Yet, love is as juicy as it is pernicious and that is why nothing is hotter than love which does not cool down with the passage of time or when dipped in water. But the pains of love can survive time and events.

PANEGYRIC POEMS

Enekwe's verses of lamentation stud his collections and critics might see him as a threnodist. Yet, the poet devotes time to his heroes and individuals who have made impact in his life. This long list include Chinua Achebe, Emmanuel Obiechina, Pablo Neruda, his wife Chioma, Christopher Okigbo, Martin Utsu, Alvan Ikoku, Pol Ndu who died on July 1, 1976, etc. In his evaluation of war fallen heroes, Enekwe remembers Nzeogwu, Atuegwu and Achibong. He extols their virtues and decries the events and those whose activities caused their death. Their bravery thrills him as he says in "No Death At All". (In memory of Pablo Neruda).

Afraid of death, the world dies;
afraid of love, people die.
Afraid of light, roses die.

Death by bullets is no death at all.
Ask the phoenix for confirmation:
The dead are those afraid of love.

Ezenwa Ohaeto wonders why Enekwe buries himself in mournful events which might be thousands of miles away from him. His response in that interview shows that the world and the events therein are part of his life:

> *I think I am essentially a very sensitive person. I always respond to situations where there is injustice because from childhood I have always objected to it. Essentially I am a rebellious person although my maturity has tended to moderate that tendency. It happened at a certain time I was living in New York City and it appeared as if I was at the centre of every crisis in the world because the journalists brought those events to the inhabitants. I tried to counter the negative feelings engendered by the South African situation which was part of those events (Ohaeto 1991).*

Enekwe's voice is sometimes like that of a fatalist. Thus, the events that culminate in a tragedy according to him, are outside the control of its victims. The victim is part of a cosmic order that has been unsettled. In "To a Friend Made and Lost in War" (In memory of Martin Utsu), the poet visits this view:

God had saved you at Ihiala,
Ozubulu and Eluama
Where you lay
On the tracks of enemy guns.
But a hungry driver
And a tired truck
Hauled you into a ditch
In a thick bush.

But it seems the victim's time is up:

Two days later,
Soviet bomber rockets
burst your belly
and tore your intestine
on the white sheet
of the hospital bed.

Man's effort cannot stop a journey destined to stop at all cost:

They bore you weeping
to another place
and tried to stitch you,
to keep your soul

from escaping in the purple flow.
But you had too many holes.
So you died among strangers.
We could not find you.

Enekwe laments the child-like nature of his heroes. Christopher Okigbo, who also fell to the enemy's bullet, is Enekwe's subject in "The Defiant One". Okigbo strays into the battlefield and is cut down by bullets. Enekwe chides him and laments his lack of caution:

You lacked the drift
Of the aged smoke
ubiquitousness in time
and colour, despite drought
And wreckage of the shrine.

Enekwe not only laments over Okigbo's wasted life and lack of recognition, he regrets that the River Idoto in the late poet's village will no longer receive recognition and adoration.

Your shell fragments watch your symbols gather rust and your shadow smutted by the trumpery of the innocent and let loose the wail of the age that with you stood before Madam Idoto naked and disinherited.

As an academic, Enekwe compares his vocation with that of Achebe, Obiechina and Alvan Ikoku.

First, he warns the first two not to dissolve in the crowd:

> *Sing not for a crowd.*
> *These people are no listeners.*
> *They hear nought beyond the needling of the finger,*
> *Beyond flames or shaking walls;*
> *They are dry pebbles waiting on the beach.*

In "Beyond Tears", In memory of Alvan Ikoku, he says:

> *Great men are not plucked from trees; they are the lone leaf sailing, the glitter, on the sea, calm or angry and rumbling with the agony of the waves.*
>
> *They are not in the glint of hatchets; they are the flash in the beggars' roots in the dark lonesome nights of storm.*

The gift of great men to a generation is intermittent and seasonal. It is for this reason that their worth should be appreciated. Although they come into the world quietly like everyone else, their life is always marked by remarkable events.

For Enekwe, man forgets too soon. He chases the wind and his energy is dissipated:

People sing to faggot gods
and dogs bite the fingers
that gave them bones.

The last two lines above are enough for Ikoku if he feels his efforts are not valued. For Achebe and Obiechina, Enekwe is more realistic:

The seed to bloom must crack and
rot For birth is only death's echoing,
Spread the pollen on smiling earth,
For love is the kindler of this song

Love is the gift of the great to the unappreciative world. This lesson of hope which critics have continued to ask of Enekwe he later answers Ezenwa Ohaeto in an interview. The poet seems to store his feeling of hope in *Marching to Kilimanjaro*, his new collection.

Broken Pots contains poems of diverse interest but the gloom of war darkens the hope which some of them embody.

Death, either at war or in an accident worries Enekwe. In both, blood is split and life is lost. In "Husband Man", he remembers Pol Ndu whose car ran into the iron base of a tanker at night. The poet laments his death even as his muted cry could not elicit any help:

The cry of nza is lost in the violence
of its end.
Nothing is heard but claws
and is silences wet with blood.
Nothing is seen but battered steel,
shattered glass, a pool of blood in a
velvet seat a blood-stained mangled
car on a lonely road.

MARCHING TO KILIMANJARO

If *Broken Pots* is an attempt at establishing Enekwe's reputation as a poet, *Marching to Kilimanjaro* will give him a place among the world's best poets.

Indeed, what distinguishes this from other collections is the breath of coverage, the thorough grasp of the world situation over a long period of time and the poet's applicable personal experiences which have universal proportions. In *Broken Pots*, Enekwe has a long arm for the pathos, through wars and their aftermath, for friends he made and lost in war, for death that came at peace time and unsettled him. A few of the love poems have no room for glee and the whole picture the collection paints is one of gloom and devastation. *Marching to Kilimanjaro* is however a multi dimensional journey in a more balanced scale.

One unchanging feature that runs through both collections is the tone of the poet. The controlled mood is consistent, and behind every line is Enekwe's power to inflame music. Through "Agbogho Mmonwu" to "Mother", the tone is the same:

Let my naked body
bathe in a fount of melody and I shall
drop this pack of stones (2)
"Oh... let the fishes come!"
"Oh... let them come

Feeling the restlessness
of human hands
the stirring sea
loosens her bra
and bares her bosom. (3)

In "Mandatory Song", the poet states:

I remember Cindy
who arrived Saturday
departed Sunday
Moving ever onwards
in her hand a linen bag
full of memories (13)

Like *Broken Pots* that has war and death as its central theme, Africa is the central theme of *Marching to Kilimanjaro*. On this, Osundare says:

For the thrust of this new collection is the total liberation of Africa from several centuries of slavery and dehumanization, and Enekwe assails this grand project by glamorously showing and reminding us of "the sin of my people/against my people". Africa is presented here in intriguing diversity: generous and mean, lofty and base, rich and poor. From the soul-stirring Ode to Agostino Neto to the buffoonish cha-cha-cha of Mobutu's Zaire, from the life instilling whispers of the new born in Cachicane to the fly infested corpses of Kolwezi, a beleaguered continent lives the paradox of a chequered existence. Is it any wonder, then, that one of the poems is titled "Dictatorship", one of Africa's running political sores, and another goes by the name "Africa Puppets", that ubiquitous African tribe of toads "fit to be deployed/flogged and plugged (p.iii).

Enekwe's style in the very first poem is typical of Okigbo. He makes supplication to Agbogho Mmonwu as the latter would to Mother Idoto.

Agbogho Mmonwu
maiden spirit dancing jewel,
teach me to fly
fleet
wriggle
and make miracle figures in space

In "The Sweet Things", the poet remembers the decadence of the sixties which has persisted. The level of moral decadence worries him:

Pelvis gyrates in a flame dance,
storm-guided, in the nook of our hearts.
Broken faggots over which maggots
carouse with unending turbulence
catch the seeds of the infernal echo.

In the poem, "Lagos", Enekwe continues the theme which he began in "The Sweet Things". He describes the generation as "dark tired ashes of burnt humanity". As he moves through a public transport to see sorry faces, his cash strap pocket could not allow him to take more aerial view of this ancient and growing city. He waits for the driver to ask him to disembark:

I wait to be rejected
at a spot where my coins only
could freely admit.

The poet says they are "drifting through endless tremors of existence". The people he sees are not sure of their destinations and neither are they well located. The pallid nature of their looks makes him sick and causes him to long for home:

> *Then marooned and in quagmire,*
> *I think of the journey home, of endless trucks, slugging to and fro, snarling and grunting the same lethargy of humanity from the sky suspended.*

The traffic indiscipline, the constant blaring of horns and the traffic jam are common sights in this highly populated city. Enekwe's parting word is memorable: the people are suspended from the sky. Once they search for their root, they will have bearing like the rest of humanity.

SHOCK

Shock is a love poem, but one that makes the poet sick. The poet had valued and had high opinion of his love. But on coming close, he is disappointed by what he sees. Although the poem is about a hill near the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus, it can be seen as in a relationship between a lover and his beloved:

> *I see within your flanks*
> *neither love, nor flower or bird,*
> *only broken mud, gaping*

starved, breathless
and with lines
of age, pain and batter

At the time of desire, the poet calls his love "The glory object of my desire". He also calls it "your elephant world". As an albatross, the command his love has over him is as gigantic as the size of an elephant. The poet's disappointment is shown in these lines:

Like love after love,
you are
wan vapid, spent- a whore
Of human embrace contaminated.

By this description, Enekwe advises his readers not to be deceived by appearance. Wait until you see all through. In the end, the poet does not call the object of his earlier adoration love. He does not know what to call her. Yet he hopes he or she will germinate cultures of adoration that will once again attract his devotion.

MAMMON WORSHIP

The moralistic tone of this poem will appeal to puritans. Enekwe here attacks rich people who make their money through dubious means. He sees their ostentatious life-styles as mammon worship. The vain attempts to protect the thieves are only preparations for their funerals. He calls

their edifices "monuments of sin in stone", which they fence "with iron and concrete". The rogues also use

Red-eyed security dogs
wall round them
to scare off nemesis

All these the poet says are futile because the day of retribution will come.

The rogues are like dictators in the following poem. His iron fist and tight rule remind the poet that

A great beast
hauls itself across the sky
casting a heavy night over the land...

His reign is "A mist of despair". The dictator causes deaths, and leaves the off-springs with lies. Instead of freshness, the despot leaves the morning wind to waft "the ashes of the dead".

RAVEN DAY

The poem is for Major General Mamman Vatsa, OFR, the poet who was killed by General Ibrahim Babangida's regime for plotting a coup. Enekwe is jolted by the news of his death. He wonders what must have put the poet -victim in the mess:

What fate hurled you into this gully of helplessness?
Inscrutable fate hovers on horrid wings.
Relentless time rolls forward on armoured wheels.

Between the time of conviction and execution, the poet visualizes the victim's pain, but he concludes that fate is

gunblast as the terrible voice of God calling you to His merciful bosom.

Then, the poet beckons to Vatsa to be forgiving, for there is a hand of God in the pull of death. He appeals to death that separates him from friends and relations:

Pardon the echoing distance
between friends lost in harmattan haze.

LOVE

The contrast in the theme of love is always between sensation and pain for most poets. The making of love is like the gathering of the storm "flaming flowers dance and tremble". Enekwe sees the peak as the anticlimax and "Night swallows sea pebbles among salted ocean grains".

WARM WINTER

The poem is the poet's memory of his stay abroad in a black neighbourhood in Harlem, Manhattan. As the rain falls,

"cold air tickles
the armpits of lovers".

Since it is an apartment made for just two, it is tight and compact. The memory of being alone and the accompanying love-making lull the lovers to sleep. The singing rain whispers in the ears of the lovers" and soon after "The falcon soaked in rippling waters/glides down low where sleep waits".

THE CROWD

"The Crowd" is like "Sing Not for a Crowd" in *Broken Pots*. The poet's submission is that the mob forgets too soon. As he says; we should beware of the crowd at difficult periods:

Beware of the crowd
when there is no boat
to cross the river
when game vanish
from the wood.

As Enekwe berates dictators, so he advises them:

The crowd that enthrones the king
will harry him into the wilds
ferret him out for the gallows
And dance on his grave.

This happened to Nkrumah in Ghana. The crowd that praised him to the sky was the same that carried a coffin that symbolized his death when he was overthrown.

DEFEAT

With Defeat, Enekwe continues his counseling of his society.

Defeat is a crime
in love and war.

The poet does not see any good in going under. His attitude might provoke protestation. Should the artist dance to the people's tune? But Enekwe has an answer for this position.

for memory is a wind-swept desert
of quick-aging-fading footprints.

Man does not remember yesterday as long as today gives joy.

GENTLE BIRDS COME TO ME

In this collection, Enekwe begins his attempts to re-enact his childhood and the world of the young. His language here is understandably simple but the vision he explores is broad and delicate. In her foreword to this beautiful collection, Myra Klahr writes:

Dr Onuora Ossie Enekwe has the unique capacity to open the treasures of his own childhood and share his continuing wonder with children of all ages and nationalities. During his Poets in Public Service, Inc. classroom writing workshops, he not only taught the craft of writing poems and plays, but also shared his rich personal experiences with the youngsters.

I remember a day in 1975 when, as a poet in the classroom, Dr Enekwe told a fourth grade class in Greenburgh, New York, about growing up in Nigeria where he rolled down a grassy hill joyously singing a traditional Nigerian folk song. The children drank it all in and applauded as they do today when Dr. Enekwe shares his own writing with children in his creative writing workshop.

To tune to the same wave length with the young, Enekwe enamours his readers with a phase which has passed and is present, for the joy of the young and the appreciation of all ages. The poems are centred around the major preoccupation of the young: motherhood, breast-feeding, birds and wind, hunger and crying, proper conduct, like

waking up to go to school and early bath; keeping out of trouble, listening to teachers and man's relationship with the environment. Such other natural phenomena, like sun and rain, the rejuvenation of vegetation and truth as eternal verity will continue to occupy the readers of this collection.

"Happy Baby", a poem in the collection, which has been translated into several languages, is about the most beautiful of the poems:

Her lips suckle the nipple.
Milk bubbles, foams and ripples
Little hands in the air
Catch on to mother's hair.
Sweet sensation rises in pressure
Tiny legs kick with pleasure.
Sleep comes gently and strong.
Sleep whispers softly and long.

The love enveloping mother and child as both go through memory lane is infectious. The vision of the child catching his mother's hair and kicking with pleasure is a scenario that transcends all ages and nationalities. And after this, the poem says that sleep, the next natural attraction, takes over and the child surrenders to a mother who, taking full control as protector and partner in creation, envisions the Supreme Being.

Enekwe continues the vision of motherhood in the next poem, Nneka:

She nurtured and tended me.
I grew like a flower in sunlight.

Though life seems hopeless and gray
mother's love shows the way
To those who love their mothers, I say:
God's grace all your days.

"Babies in Bed" will establish the correlation between motherhood and the image of God. Both are interrelated and the safety of the child, and indeed that of the whole human race is assured:

Babies grow
in the umbrella of love.
Babies glow
in the bosom of God.

By this juxtaposition, Enekwe seems to be accusing abortionists who, instead of protecting the babies, kill them. By linking motherhood with godhood, he is saying that such women are not mothers but evil.

In "Hungry Mouth", Enekwe brings in parental responsibility. Although children are precursors of joy and happiness, they need love and protection which parents must provide at the risk of their peace of mind:

The voice of an infant
rings in the night
like an alarm clock.

This cry of a mouth that's hungry
keeps neighbours awake and angry

Thus Enekwe does not lose sight of the irritable children whose endless cries annoy their parents and neighours.

WAKE UP AND GO

"Wake up and Go" is for those of school age. It is meant to rouse them from bed and prepare them for school:

Bells beckon us to school.
A thousand feet pound the road.
Wake, brother, don't be a fool
Don't dawdle like a toad.

"Morning Bath" is equally in the same light:

Soap and water in the armpit
Down the groin, to the feet.
Scrub away all the grit
Keep yourself healthy and fit
and you'll always be strong and neat.

After this, Enekwe begins to think of the relationship between man and other animals,

even as his address is for the young. In "Birds. Our Teachers" he says:

Birds taught mankind
to run, hug the wind
Lift, rise, fly
and always try

Birds did not teach us to war
cheat, lie and defy the law.

In "Gentle Birds Come to Me", Enekwe begins to express his admiration for the innocent creatures who adorn the landscape. He appears to be preaching against cruelty to animals:

Come to me.
Gentle creatures
Come to me.
I carry no pebbles in my pocket.
I have no stones in my hand.
And no need for guns and bullets.
I play side drums in the school band.

Hunting for bird, the sport of children, seems to be a favourite pastime.

This is cruel as animals fear man who should co-habit with them. The beauty of nature is further advanced in "That I Could Fly":

I stand on a hill
beside my home and gaze afar.

Other hills are covered with deep green grass.
Hamlets blossom in the midst of trees,
and roads, like yellow ribbons, stretch to the end of the world.
Oh, what a beautiful panorama.
How I wish I could fly.

"Rain", with the imagery it conveys, is the most onomatopoeic in the collection. It is also the most symbolic which shows the union existing between man and nature. Both are interdependent:

Crash, lash
dripping rain
falling splash on window panes

Drop, drop
morning rain, tapping on crops
to wake them up.

The rain mingles with the earth to bring up life and wake up the vegetation.

Through "A Song of Harvest", the poet brings in the theme of the dignity of labour. Enekwe wants the young to see the farm as a necessary place for recourse to:

In the farm, food abounds.
We worked so hard
all year round tending what we had.

He encourages the children to sing a song of harvest. But he hastens to add that it comes after a long labour, all the year round.

"The Voice of Waters" is Enekwe's attempt at explaining the immensity of nature and the services it offers. Through the poem, he tries to link all rivers and oceans, from America to China, from Africa to India and from Europe to Australia. By linking the Niger and Benue Rivers with the rest of the world, he is emphasizing universal brotherhood and the influence of these natural forces on mankind. Through his poems, Enekwe stresses this universal bond and why the joy and calamity at one end should affect all sectors of the globe.

SUNBIRDS AND THE SUN

"Sunbirds and the Sun" is about risk takers which the sunbird symbolises. Enekwe uses the sun as a great force that tackles its adversaries. The sunbirds are proud,

Gliding sunbirds lift
their proud heads nigh.

In line with their nature and the zeal to take risk,

Sunbirds want to kiss the Sun
too hot for anyone.

Apart from their pride, Enekwe says that sunbirds are venturesome. Despite the hazards, the sunbirds will always try.

Sunbirds will try anyway

But the sun is a portent force. It lubricates but it can also kill. In the words of Enekwe, it tells the risk taking sunbird.

"Enjoy my heart but stay away"

The Sun addresses the sunbird like humans. The personification brings home the message more forcefully. The lyricism in the lines makes the poem one to be sung. As a musician, Enekwe brings this to bear on the poem.

SPRING IN NEW YORK CITY

As a child of the two worlds, Enekwe reminiscences on the time he was in New York City for his post graduate studies. As an African, he finds solace in both the intense sunshine in his native country Nigeria and the city of his sojourn. At spring time, New York City is like Abuja in Nigeria. Since Enekwe is communicating with the young, he does not strain to bring it home.

Spring time.
Spring light
Brings us life.
Warm and bright.

If spring time brings light, life, warmth and brightness, winter on the other hand conjures a harsh image for the poet, which the warm weather drives away:

No more snow.
No more ice.
No more slips
falls and pain.

As the winter blurs vision, citizens of the city crash as they cannot find their way. The winter then is emblematic of all that is harsh and pain giving. By calling the children to come and dance, the poet's joy is intricately bound with that of the children. The poet celebrates thus,

I feel like a bird once again
With a sprint
a skip, a leap
and a dance
sweet, sweet sounds
I tap from stones.

One great beauty in the line is the absence of stress which is associated with adult life. The ability of the poet to re-enact his childhood

sentiments is a tribute and a point that age is only a number.

RAINY SEASON

Enekwe continues the exploration of the theme of weather in another poem, "Rainy season". It is like "Spring in New York City", but the poet says it brings home more memories like abundant rainfall, a time to be merry:

The wet season is here,
A period of rains.
Harvests of grain
Fill us with cheer.

Grains like maize are in abundance in the poet's home, Affa. The hilly country side which exhibits these grains at the wet season is a common sight in the eastern part of Nigeria where the poet comes from. In Coal Camp, Enugu, where the poet grew up, the grain was freely sold at street corners. For a penny's worth, a family's meal was assured.

The poet however advises the young who might take the eerie rains for granted while playing under it:

Be not too bold
In the stubborn rain.
It will give you cold
And lots of pain

Too much exposure to the rain can give pain like the winter, the same chord stretching from the North Pole to the south, he seems to say.

HARMATTAN

With Harmattan, Enekwe continues his vision of nature and how it affects mankind. While rainy season is about greenness of vegetation, Harmattan explains why some trees are deciduous. In a discussion between a child and his father, the poet explains to the child why some trees are ever evergreen:

It is dry season, son.
The rainy season is gone.
Harmattan is here
To make things dry.

In a simple language just like in the other poems, the child wants to know if the Harmattan makes people cry and crave for the wet seasons. The father's explanation settles the worries of the young:

My son, without the Harmattan,
Crops will not grow
Its dry fingers soften the soil
For the roots to pass

THE CAT

In "Cat", Enekwe compares truth with the ever active cat. The suppression of truth is habitual as the cat lingers in the shadow.

As the cat waits for an opportunity to spring on its prey, so truth tarries until it is made manifest. Opportunity for both will always come and when it comes, a landmark is made:

It tarries like truth
often shouted down by falsehood,
until it emerges
in all its glory
in sunlight.

This lesson for the young is timely. In a world full of falsehood, it is necessary to teach them that truth is a virtue that endures for all time.

Outward nature could be deceptive, he says,

Look at its eyes,
so deep, as the sea,
filled with treasures
only the mind can see.

The poet has warned, but would children heed the advice? Only carefulness can take them away from trouble. The cat may look serene but when it

is hungry, the prey cannot interpret its sprawl as a sign that all is well.

The poet continues his counsel in the following poem, "The Cat". He advises children not to be deceived by the outward nature of things. The cat treads softly like breeze in the navel of the forest.

SILENT ARMS

This poem does not really address children but adults. It is for adults not to overstretch the mischiefs of children. They are innocent. Enekwe says,

A bird rides the waves
but does not know
The secrets of the sea.

Only God's grace prods them along.
They are as naive as the birds of the air.

God's silent arms
are unknown by birds
they buoy along.

Children should be treated with love

PASSING ALONG

Enekwe continues his education of the young with "Passing Along". His target is on the nature of the world and time management. Aware that the age of reason begins from seven years, the poet brings

in the issue of time and God. Every thing in the world floats and passes away:

Kingdoms rise,
Kingdoms fall
Into the junkyard of time.

The exit of a kingdom may be comprehensible, but the ever constant sun image drives home more deeply his message:

Even the sun
Burns itself out
Moment by moment

Everything passes away
Passing along.

The lyricism in the last stanza will grip the children and make up for what the preacher has begun in his church:

Only God does not change.
Only God lives forever.

The children must be told that they too will die and pass away. What matters then is how best we can make use of the time available to us now.

LET'S GET TOGETHER (Song)

As a musician, Enekwe brought in his deep knowledge of music when composing this song. It

is very much in line with Roberts Nesta Marley's song "Lets Get Together And Feel Alright".

Since his audience in the collection is the young, he feels all must come together.

Get together and work
to build a nation today
Get together and work
to build a nation today.

The clarion call is necessary for the young who are the leaders of tomorrow. Nigeria as a nation has been battling to forge ahead as a nation. The problems of tribes and corruption make this noble idea difficult. Enekwe's direction of his message to the young is pertinent as it is imperative. We should not let the opportunity slip away with the young.

Come on, brothers,
let's get together
Come on sisters,
Let's work together.

Having lived in the United States of America, Enekwe knows the true meaning of patriotism and the love for one's country. Seeing absence of it in Nigeria will worry any committed artist. The poet admonishes his audience who appear to be unserious.

He is worried that his message has not been heeded, and so comes on forcefully.

How much do I get from all this?
How much do you give me?
How much do I get from all this?
How much will I get?

The impact of this poem will be better appreciated in the last stanza.

To build a great nation
Is to work with devotion
Let's build a great nation
Through wisdom, hard work
And compassion.

Enekwe's message is for all and will sell better when sung or recited. Didn't the critic say poetry is meant to be sung?

MANDELA

This last poem is on the greatest hero of freedom in Africa, Nelson Mandela. Mandela was jailed by the racist regime of South Africa where he spent 27 years in South African maximum security prison, Roben Island. Out of the twenty-seven years, eighteen years were spent in one cell. Although Mandela was released and later rose to become the first black president of South Africa in an all races election, his sacrifices for freedom and

the love of his fatherland was acknowledge all over the world.

Enekwe's choice of his person in the last poem of this important collection is significant. Mandela is not only an icon but a symbol. He is a passing light for the children and who must be emulated. The poet opens the poem on the significance of his persona and what he represents:

Mandela
Mandela
Son of Africa
fighting for freedom

He brings out what he represents in the third stanza:

Everyone is bound to be free.
Life has no meaning
When man is in chains.

Like Mandela who refused a conditional offer of freedom, Enekwe continues his policy:

You never seek to enrich yourself
Your life is all
for justice and peace

The efforts of Mandela should not be made to go in vain. The poet says:

We will fight
With all our might
Till all African is liberated.

Both Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela believe that enslavement of Africans will never end until the whole of Africa is free. I cannot agree any less.

The poet through this interchange between father and son explains the flow of culture from one generation to another. From the relationship between a father and son we see how wisdom is passed from one generation to the next. The poet's explanation though not adequate to explain the chemistry in the soil, but the trust between a father and son seals all doubts and rests the mind of the young. In the words of Ebele Oseye (Ellease Southerland), this message is forcefully delivered.

> *In simple rhymes, Enekwe unites two cultures, using images from both sides of the ocean: North America's spring, Snow and Ice, Nigeria's Rainy season and Harmattan, the day season. The collection of poems for children does not dwell exclusively on the pleasant side of life as it informs in "Birds, Our Teacher".*

Birds did not teach us to war.
Cheat, lie and defy the law.

Children are younger members of the family and so deserve love, care and attention. Chika Nwankwo expresses the feeling of most people who have read the poem, in the blurb when she says:

> *In most of the poems, the end rhymes enhance the lyrical quality of the rhythm and properly clothe their subtle didacticism.....All the poems grip the reader so much and give such sense of reality and the feeling of being a partner of the poet in the experienccs. As an adult reader, I feel young again when reading through the poems. This is a significant collection.*

GETTING OUT OF TROUBLE

Enekwe's aim in this poem is to draw the attention of the young to the hazards of life. Since children do not fear danger or think they could get hurt, the poet takes his time to counsel them. Taking them ahead of their age is necessary to pull them out of trouble. He uses the image of a lion to dramatize this danger:

Like a king
Lion roams the jungle.

To be successful in life, human reasoning is necessary. First, he catalogues animals that have either made a mark or escaped from trouble.

With a sting
Scorpion wins a battle.

Similarly a monkey and a bird escape trouble by applying their brain. For man,

With their brain
Humans solve puzzles

CHAPTER FOUR

DRAMA

In drama, Enekwe has written two one-act plays of note: "The Betrayal" and "Dance of Restoration". As a drama critic, he brings his full theory into practice: aesthetics of theatre. His language in both plays is simple as it aims at a full blast performance and delight. He does not seem to pursue double or multiple plots strategy but goes ahead to mirror his age and the rot therein. Critics might see this as weakness, but Enekwe believes in organic unity, and a single line message.

In "The Betrayal", the fall of Pius Okoro is the fall of the whole system. Enekwe seems to say that the situation is irredeemable. Pius, like Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer At Ease* cannot resist a bribe because of his mounting domestic problems. At the appropriate time, the hero caves in, degenerates to the moral decay he has set himself apart from. That collapse, unfortunate as it is, is the fall of man from grace to grass. Enekwe is not condemning Pius; he is instead satirizing a system that creates and destroys him. As long as the system persists, he says no good can thrive in it. And when it perdures, it is only for a while before it finally collapses. The fall of man in the play is

collective. The individual is set up by his society and he dies before the god he prays to rescues him. Onookome Okome while summarizing the play says:

> *"The Betrayal" is a one act playlet that employs a simple, indeed simplistic narrative motif in the fall of a family from the shaky pedestal of religious piety to the banal existence of contemporary philistinic life. The economic hardship that Pius Okoro, Chief Clerk in an employment office faces is overwhelming and the persistent temptation to which he is subjected leaves no question as to the moral questions which Ossie Enekwe grapples with in this text. Simply put, Enekwe dramatizes a society at the brink of spiritual emasculation. While Pius Okoro, a type in our society, is the Adamic prototype who represents the original fall in the narrative of Biblical creation story; the wife Angela is the Eve who sets the bait for the fall because she knows that money opens up different stakes of power and position in society and the daughter, Oby, a clear manifestation of the philistinism of this corrupt society (Foreword I).*

Okome's scathing criticism of the play is not only on the organic development but on conceptual finishing. The play rises to a feverish pitch and remains hanging:

> *The play tells how this man falls. However it fails to tell or make explicit the next stage of the moral lesson we ought to draw from the death of all for spiritualism and worship of god -the total collapse of the economic process itself. Perhaps Ossie Enekwe does not set out to do this in his text. His major preoccupation seems to have been the mere revelation of the morbidity of our contemporary lives (Viii).*

Okome expects Enekwe to be more distributive in his moral lesson and to drive them down to the very end of his cast. Should Chief Okoro not have been justified in the end? He falls too quickly and the moral profile built around him comes crashing down in an unsatisfactory way. To Okome, Okoro lacks verisimilitude. It is my feeling that Enekwe by the nature of his art has little patience with coloration and this is essentially the main thrust of his art. His vision is profound but in a critic-artist frame. On stage, "The Betrayal" itself, is a great delight. The simple language of the play and the very theme of corruption ravaging the Nigerian

society make the work a familiar one. As Theodore Shank observes:

> *Drama is the most complex of the fine arts. Its works are created for perception by two senses, they have both a spatial and a temporal dimension, and they are the result of a creative collaboration by a number of artists. Furthermore, the work of dramatic art is often begun in a period and country different from that in which it is completed by other dramatic artists. These characteristics have made a theory of the art difficult and may provide a partial explanation for the paucity of theoretical writings in the areas (3).*

In other words, it is what the director makes of a play that matters. The performance, unique as it is, is a different work of art. By extension, the work of a director is different from the play as the interpretation of a critic can be from the art it strives to elucidate. Shank further argues that "Works of art are not created according to theory; rather; theories are made according to works of art". For this reason, Enekwe is free to pursue his own line of thought. Interpretation takes a secondary place.

DANCE OF RESTORATION

This play is very much in line with "The Betrayal" as a one act playlet. First staged on 5th April, 1992, in the Cultural Centre, Colgate University, New York State, United States of America, the play won a short fellowship that enabled the author to write and stage it with the cast made up of the students of the institution.

The story is woven around the event of the Second World War where one of the characters, Tony loses his memory. At the end of the war, his return provokes much anticipation and excitement as his relatives await his joining the family fold. Much to their surprise and irritation, Tony begins to behave abnormally. All efforts to resuscitate him, including the services of a spiritualist, prove abortive.

But his wise grandmother calls her god children to re-enact an old dance which eventually restores Tony. The suspense built around Tony's expected return soon turns into frowns as his behaviour leaves much to be desired. Ada, his sister, appears to be more hit by the strange act. Tony's regular reference to Burma, one of the great battles of the war, is symbolic. It is the venue in which the world loses it senses. During war, man loses his reasoning power and degenerates to the level of

animals. Enekwe carries this image to regular warfare and the harm it has done to humanity.

Like in most of his works where war features, the author decries its employment to settle human scores. The anxiety which Tony's strange behaviour causes shows the disquiet which war causes to families. Chief Agunze's use of the spiritualist is resisted by Tony because the solution has not been found. This solution can only be found in human harmony which dance, music and good order engender. That is why it is a dance of restoration. The efforts of the girls: Uzo, Amaka, Ada and Ngozi show that the solution to human problems of global proportion can only be contained collectively. The dance collectively done arrests the crisis. By coming together to bind Tony, the symbolic act which is a collective action is the final onslaught that brings order to the whole system.

Enekwe's venture into the theatre of the absurd is in line with those written at the end of the Second World War. By giving it an African coloration, the author seems to be saying that the world is one big village and we are all actors in the drama of life.

The play opens with Ada clarifying the reason for the assemblage: the horde of men, women and

children in front of the Diribes who are expecting their son, Tony Diribe who has not returned with other combatants from the Second World War.

> *Ada: (Coming through the door) Welcome, my people. I am touched that after twenty months, you still care about my brother who has not returned from the war, but is awaited. If what I have heard is true, he will warm our hearts today (35).*

Ada gives the people joyful hope which has been beclouded by the uncertainties of war.

Ada is a principal character because she ties her brother's fate with her marriage; until he returns from the war, she will not marry. This attitude of roping her destiny with that of her brother completes the notion that man is collectively fated and shows that their well being is inseparable. Ada is the one that opens the stage, the first to notice Tony and rush towards him, the first to offer to take his bag and the first to receive the shock, through his sideward shove. Ada is also the person to interview Tony and to notice his change of character. Her exclamation shows her deep worry:

> *Ada: Oh my God, what have they done to him? He can't even answer my questions. I wonder what to do (38)*

Ada's worry is infectious as it fires the minds of others until a solution is found.

Both Ada and Grandma are the two strong characters that determine the pace of events. The entry of grandma consoles Ada. Grandma is defiant and unruffled:

Grandma: (Defiantly) But, we will not accept it, whatever it is.

Ada: What are you going to do?

Grandma: (Moves towards Ada) Not

What I am going to do, but
what we shall do, my child.
No... no tears. We shall say
No to evil... Now, listen (39).

Grandma is an interventionist force, but a graceful one. The wisdom of the old predominates but she gives it a collective flavour so as to carry everyone along. Grandma's action humbles the male force of Chief Agunze whose spiritual method fails to achieve any useful result. Grandma confronts the controlling spirit inside Tony and rouses it to reality:

Grandma: Now, listen. You have no right to do this to us. We have suffered enough on your account. This family has

a name, and your sister has her own life to live. You have no right to spoil her future. You will either live or die. (Pulls a chair and sits). For months, we waited for you to come home so we could receive a young man seeking to marry your sister. But, you return as a dead man, useless to everybody. In fact, you are worse than a dead man, for you suffocate us. We will not allow it. You hear. We will not allow it. You are warned. Restore yourself or be ready for the journey of the dead. (As she is talking, sound of music is heard, increasing in volume. Ada and her age mates enter, singing and dancing (142).

This music is the therapy that Tony requires and he responds to it positively. Tony who has been torn away from his ancestral homeland regains his spirit and is back to normal. If music is the food of the soul as Shakespeare says, Tony knows there is no better recipe.

THE BETRAYAL

The simple life style of the Okoros which engages the reader as the play opens is most familiar. The characters enter the prayer room still beating off the remaining vestige of sleep. The words of exhortation of Pius after reading is 'the Sword of

Damocles' hanging around his neck from the beginning until the play closes:

Pius: *As we can see, God is admonishing us to be clean in thought and deed, to avoid sinful people and reject evil examples.*

We must sweep evil out of our homes so we can live like true children of God. In whatever we do, wherever we may be-at home, at school, at work, or in the market-we must avoid corruption. In our dealing with others, we must be honest, not lie and cheat or take things that do not belong to us, for such surely lead to damnation (34-35)

Pius then prays, leaving the protection of himself and family in the hands of God. The tone of the opening scene is the lens with which we see the rest of the play.

In the next scene, Pius continues his war against corruption by scaling the first hurdle. Jude Okonkwo his messenger accepts a bribe and carefully inserts it into the file for which the bribe was given. Pius burst the crime. Elated, he berates Jude with the pride and zeal of an infallible hero:

Pius: What is this? (Lifting a fat envelope from one of the files. Jude stares at him and says nothing) Who brought this envelop here? Can't you talk?

Jude: Sir. Eh. na dat man.

Pius: Which man?

Jude: The father of the applicant we come yesterday.

Pius: So, what is this doing here?

Jude: He say na kola

Pius: Kola! For what?

Jude: He say make you just take am for kola. That's all. He say he go come see you tomorrow.

Pius: Are you trying to tempt me? Jude remains silent) Are you trying to put me into trouble?

Jude: Oga. I no wan put you into trouble.

Pius: What do you think you are doing? (35-36).

The author's skill is quickly revealed in the language of the characters. Enekwe contrasts the sophisticated language of Pius with that of Jude which is Pidgin English. As Achebe does in *No Longer at Ease*, the approach makes the whole story familiar and readable. Oladele Taiwo, in considering the importance of language in African literature, has this to say:

Pius: What is this? (Lifting a fat envelope from one of the files. Jude stares at him and says nothing) Who brought this envelop here? Can't you talk?

Jude: Sir. Eh, na dat man.

Pius: Which man?

Jude: The father of the applicant we come yesterday.

Pius: So, what is this doing here?

Jude: He say na kola

Pius: Kola! For what?

Jude: He say make you just take am for kola. That's all. He say he go come see you tomorrow.

Pius: Are you trying to tempt me? Jude remains silent) Are you trying to put me into trouble?

Jude: Oga, I no wan put you into trouble.

Pius: What do you think you are doing? (35-36).

The author's skill is quickly revealed in the language of the characters. Enekwe contrasts the sophisticated language of Pius with that of Jude which is Pidgin English. As Achebe does in *No Longer at Ease*, the approach makes the whole story familiar and readable. Oladele Taiwo, in considering the importance of language in African literature, has this to say:

The problem connected with the use of language in African literature is so central that no discussion of it can be considered exhaustive or final. Each critic can only hope to make a little contribution. In a second language literature, the use of language is affected by several factors-the artist's linguistic competence, the kind of material he is handling, what he intends to make of this material and the type of audience he has in mind. Although many of the writers of modern African literature use English, they do so, conscious of the fact that they wish to convey typical African experiences. In order to make the language serve the purpose for which it was not originally designed, many new things have been done with it. We have a widespread range from the near illiterate English of Tutuola, the unorthodox Pidgin English of Adaora Ulasi, to the language which expresses adequately the writer's sensibility in Achebe, Ngugi and Lenrie Peters, among others, and the experimental language of Okara (110- 1).

The artistic skill is further revealed because Enekwe uses standard pidgin. It enhances the

fluency of the dialogue and produces remarkable and memorable effect. Oladele Taiwo's view on this is also relevant:

> *It is important to stress that, after the use of Pidgin in common speech and as a medium of creativity for several years, it has come to acquire its own special vocabulary and syntax, which are not often identical with those of Standard English. It is only when the unique features of Pidgin are recognized that it can serve as a useful medium of creativity (13).*

In scene III, Pius will face another obstacle to his war on corruption. This time from his immediate family. His wife wants to know how much money it involves:

Angela: You could have counted it.

Pius: What for? All I know is that it was a lot of money.

Angela: What was the money for?

Pius: Bribe! What else do you think it would be for? Although the man called it kola, it was a bribe, since it was meant to influence me.

Angela: Why are you upset? You look so worried. Why?

Pius: I am not really upset. I just wanted to hear what you would say. I expected you to say something, instead of asking me how much money was involved.

Angela: What do you want me to say?

Pius: Your husband has just defeated the Devil in a major encounter.

Angela: Because you refused a bribe? Bribes are being given and are accepted or rejected for various reasons so many times a day. Why is yours so unique?

Pius: Sometimes, you talk like an unbeliever.

Angela: Yet, I am a believer. It is necessary sometimes to consider the other angle. If you had accepted the money, perhaps I could go in for my major operation. Sometimes I wonder (37-38).

The argument presented by Angela only helps to weaken the resolve of Pius. By introducing the major problem of his wife, Enekwe reveals why most tragic heroes fall: private crisis. By not finding any consolation in the activities of his wife and daughter who wear expensive dresses, Pius is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

In the soliloquy of the fourth scene, the internal worries of Pius are made more manifest. By employing the voice in the dialogue, Pius's desperation reaches a tragic crescendo:

The voice: There is always a way out.
Pius: There is no way out in this case.
The voice: There is always a way out.
Pius: I can't find it.
The voice: It is already offered to you.
Pius: It is the work of the devil (39).

The dialogue in the last scene is pathetic. Driven too hard, unable to find solace in his wife, daughter and peace of mind, Pius's will and resolve collapse. The father of the applicant, Oso returns and he pushes his case through. He appeals to the religious mind of Pius and he accedes to the request:

Pius: What you are demanding is very difficult. Why didn't he apply in time?
Oso: You know boys of nowadays.
Pius: How do we add his name?
Oso: Just wipe out one of the names on the list and affix his own.
Pius: (Alarmed) It is not fair. It is going to be very difficult.
Oso: Life is not fair. It is a matter of destiny. Your assistant can do it easily.
Pius: Has he assured you he can?
Oso: Yes.
Pius: (ruminating) Hm... Is that so?
Oso: (Offering the envelope) Please.
Pius: I see you are insistent (42).

The underlying motive in corruption is to use money to elevate one and discard the chance of another. The act, unjust as it is, is the evil that makes it bad. Enekwe frowns at this wickedness but seems to say that the society itself is the evil that breeds it. He exonerates Pius in the end although he is guilty. By not allowing Pius fall into the hand of security agents, Enekwe announces his acquittal and indictment of the society of his extraction.

CHAPTER FIVE

DRAMATIC THEORY AND CRITICISM

As a scholar, Enekwe seems to have made his greatest impact in dramatic theory and criticism. Enekwe's concern is to prove that there are other types of theatre as distinct from the western model propagated by Aristotle. The Igbo masquerades varied and distinct as they are, are some of the theatre forms which he has put forward in his analysis. Enekwe's argument is that the nature of dramatic theatre can be in different ways. On this he is in agreement with Sprinchorn who shares the same sentiment.

The author believes also that in traditional African theatre and the Oriental world, the role of the metaphysical is significant. Logic and reason recede to the background while the supernatural takes over. Enekwe submits that Igbo Mask theatre is either ceremonial or episodic, typifying incidental events theatre enacts as occasion demands. They are symbolic and ritualistic, involving the interaction of audience and performers in a public place.

The argument that dialogue and plot are inseparable from drama does not agree with Enekwe's position which sees them as dispensable. While scholars in Aristotle's school

believe in the formal approach to theatre with dialogue and plot playing a principal role before an audience, Enekwe argues that pantomime and dance drama have contradicted this view. He opines that "dialogue is not really of essence, not that it is not good but that drama like mime and pantomime can exist without it" (Gbenoba 15).

The position of Enekwe in Igbo Masks:

The oneness of ritual and theater is somewhat rebellious. The European conception of drama as narrative is based on the main trend of dramatic theory of Aristotle's *Poetics*. The dramatic theory sees dramatic action as synonymous with plot. After years of sustained impression, European critics consider drama as a branch of "poetry of literature with a linear pattern of plot, with character, language and thought" (ii). Enekwe's submission is that "society and history determine the shape that drama takes at any time or place" (ii) He sees theatrical practices as dynamic all over the world and condemns the use of Aristotelian model to shape theatre in every society. To be able to drive home his point, Enekwe redefines the meaning of theatre.

Bernard Beckerman, in his ***Dynamics of Drama,*** looks at drama not as narrative but activity. The insights Beckerman provided gave Enekwe a platform to strengthen his position. As

his supervisor at Columbia University, the topic came up from time to time. In evaluating the position of Bernard Backerman, Enekwe states that:

> *...every few Elizabethan plays show closely linked causation producing denouement. This is because the causes of significant changes are frequently assumed or implied. Even when they are dramatized, they are not always commensurate with the efforts, because "within the Elizabethan scheme of man's relation this action, tightly linked causation was incomprehensible" (13).*

Enekwe says that the Asian theatre has demonstrated that the Aristotelian plot should not be used as universal model. Quoting Simon Ottenberg's "The Analysis of an African Play", Enekwe argues:

> *In the Balinese theatre, stories are suggested tenuously, and ideas are not presented in a clear, predigested form nor is the audience expected to derive an intellectual pleasure from a working out of the subtle meanings of drama (13).*

Enekwe also says that in Indian Sanskrit drama, the main aim is to achieve *rasa* (aesthetic delight) through the portrayal of *bhawa* (emotional state).

He believes that available evidence shows that myth is not of essence in Greek theatre, and that drama does not need to evolve from myth, that if it contains elements of myth, the myth is not used for itself, but rather for social restructuring. To him, myth is important in terms of an ideological position, the ideology of the moment.

On the functions of drama, Enekwe does not agree with M.J.C. Echeruo who feels that the main concern of drama is the interpretation of life. Enekwe argues that interpretation is the least important of the aspects of theatre. Beckerman lists them as the descriptive, the participational, the referential and the conceptual. The conceptional is synonymous with the interpretative. Enekwe is not comfortable that Echeruo wants to detach Igbo myth from its ritual. He says that drama is not myth- "Drama is activity involving the interaction of the audience and the performers within a public space" (15).

Enekwe says that it is impossible to talk of the Igbo traditional theatre without considering the context in which it operates, which is ritual. He feels that as a subject, it has been wildly

misunderstood. He contends that because of misuse and misunderstanding, its true value has virtually disappeared from modern theatrical discourse and practice.

The general impression of ritual is *stasis*, but in the modern imagination, it is associated with religious practice and superstition.

Conceptualizing the Traditional Theatre of the Igbo

Enekwe says that Igbo masks do not have the same objective as Greek tragedies but are meant to "introduce or manifest supernatural beings or forces among the living. These supernatural figures usually remain the same from the beginning to the end of the performance. There is usually no development of character as we know it in European theatre. We may refer to the supernatural beings or forces as "stock" characters, but "characterization" must not be considered a major concern of mask performance" (16) Enekwe sees all those who call for a streamlining of Igbo theatre to suit European drama as being unfair to the Igbo. He maintains that Igbo people have no need for tragic drama or they would have invented it. He places Ugonna, Amankulor and Osadebe in the school that says performance is theatre if entertainment outweighs efficiency.

Ritual-Theatre Relationship

Enekwe argues that attempt to categorise ritual and theatre as exclusive concepts is futile because they are structurally and functionally similar. He opines that the problem with their exclusive considerations is the misconception that ritual is a religious affair, that the confusion between ritual and theatre is the inability of some scholars to see the mutual transformability of the two. For instance, a performance can be a ritual for the participants while it can be an entertainment for the audience.

Other ways ritual can transform to theatre are:

> *"One is displacement, for instance, when a real combat is sublimated through ritualization" (22). Second, "transformation from ritual to theatre may occur when ritual is displayed for the entertainment of strangers, while it may remain ritual for the performer. This happens quite often in Nigeria, especially when very important people are touring. Third, "ritual can be transformed into theatre within a context of social disruption, when the rituals are proscribed or lose their efficacy, or when an invading power looks on them as entertainment" (23).*

Enekwe also believes that entertainment can be transformed into ritual. He gives Owu, an Igbo drama, performed by the Nsulu Ngwa, as an example. Although it used to be a dramatic festivity, it has, through periodic recreations, been transformed into a religious ritual, a vehicle for social integration and a ceremony to enact the survival of the people (23). He believes that ritual and theatre educate and socialize, and they are both organized event.

Enekwe agrees with Beckerman that the three main conditions that govern theatre are actor, space and audience. He insists that since these same conditions appear in ritual, rituals are sometimes referred to as drama. But if a ritual is so ascetic that it is not presentational, it cannot be enjoyed as theatre. Enekwe gives "presentational" and "ascetic" as conditions that can fully determine the transformability of ritual and theatre.

The Socio-Political Life of the Igbo

Enekwe devotes chapter 2 of *Igbo Masks* to the socio-political life of the Igbo. He categorises it under their economy, the age grade systems, their women, Igbo cosmology, their dance and music. He says that the main occupation of the Igbo is farming which is complemented by hunting, fishing, wine tapping and trading. He sees the

Enekwe also believes that entertainment can be transformed into ritual. He gives Owu, an Igbo drama, performed by the Nsulu Ngwa, as an example. Although it used to be a dramatic festivity, it has, through periodic recreations, been transformed into a religious ritual, a vehicle for social integration and a ceremony to enact the survival of the people (23). He believes that ritual and theatre educate and socialize, and they are both organized event.

Enekwe agrees with Beckerman that the three main conditions that govern theatre are actor, space and audience. He insists that since these same conditions appear in ritual, rituals are sometimes referred to as drama. But if a ritual is so ascetic that it is not presentational, it cannot be enjoyed as theatre. Enekwe gives "presentational" and "ascetic" as conditions that can fully determine the transformability of ritual and theatre.

The Socio-Political Life of the Igbo

Enekwe devotes chapter 2 of *Igbo Masks* to the socio-political life of the Igbo. He categorises it under their economy, the age grade systems, their women, Igbo cosmology, their dance and music. He says that the main occupation of the Igbo is farming which is complemented by hunting, fishing, wine tapping and trading. He sees the

drum as the most important instrument in Igbo dance and music. Yam is the chief crop and cultivated by the man while cocoa yam and cassava are left for the women.

Masking - Encounters with the Dead

Enekwe says that masking is the most popular, versatile and entertaining performance among the Igbo. He sees masking as the soul of Igbo theatre. As it has religious dimension to it, it has the force of invocation and extra-human forces. But from the aesthetic point of view, masking is seen by Enekwe as a synthesis of many art forms, like costuming, impersonation, miming, sculpture, music, dance, poetry, movement, dialogue and painting. He says that the Igbo conceive the mask (sometimes called *Mmonwu, Odo, Omabe, etc*) as the incarnation of the dead and ancestors who continue to interact with the living relatives.

The Religious, Social and Political Roles of Igbo Masks

Enekwe says that Igbo masks wield religious powers in many parts of Igboland. Gifts and prayers are offered to specific masks. Supplicants request blessings such as good health, long life, numerous children and good harvest. This can be noticeable in *Odo and Omabe* masks. When masks represent deities, they become really very

powerful, and are accordingly worshipped and priests appointed for them to offer sacrifices.

Enekwe also says that masking in Igboland is a communal affair. Thus, a masker is answerable to the community. Codes of conduct are prescribed for them and they are forbidden from vendetta or grudge. He also submits that masking is a male affair and some of them are awe-inspiring. But women who are elderly or have distinguished themselves may be admitted into the masking cult. It is to forestall their being frightened that such women are admitted. Although they are excluded from preparation and performances, great masks like Ijele are escorted by a woman, called Nne Ijele (Ijele's Mother).

Mask in Performances

For the development of Igbo theatre, Enekwe disagrees with critics that ritual elements should be eliminated. Nnabuenyi Ugonna and Oseleko Okwudii Osadebe are some of the drama critics in this school. He believes, unlike them, that the theatricality of the Igbo mask is reinforced by its supernatural aura; and certainly not "the subordination of belief in the supernatural" (77). On this, he is in agreement with G. I. Jones that once the religious or social elements of a play decline, it degenerates to boys' play. A masker in his early years, Enekwe further states:

It is for this reason that masks worn by children are not regarded with any seriousness by adults. To eliminate the supernatural aura in mask can only lead to the decline of the traditional masking theatre, since the manifestation of the supernatural is the justification for its being (77).

Similarly Enekwe does not believe that efficacious elements of a mask must be reduced before it can be enjoyed as theatre. The masker is out to entertain the audience; incantations, magic demonstrations are parts of the entertainment. Enekwe also talks about the roles of escorts. The challenges of masking are enormous. *From the maskers' dependence on escorts to his impaired hearing*, Enekwe articulates them, thus:

A mask is only what its escorts make of it. Without the superlative support of escorts, the man in the mask is a paper tiger. His courage crumbles and his skills are dissipated. Because he has to look through the holes in the cloth, wood or fibre covering his face, his vision is impaired. In addition, his costumes limit his hearing. Most of the time, he relies on his escorts to keep him informed about happenings in the field of play. Nevertheless, the audience must not

sense this dependence, for that would undermine the myth that the mask is a supernatural force (78).

The dynamism of context can transform a masker and make him excel himself. When the audience is appreciative, the mask performs better but under a combination of factors. Music and dance accentuate the feeling of power in the person in the mask. Enekwe summarizes thus:

> *The intense rhythm of various musical instruments - including ekwe (slit wooden drum), opi (flute), Igba (skin drum) and ogene (metal gong) intoxicates the performer and drives him to heights of physical efforts that he could not attempt in ordinary life. In the hands of a good flutist, the opi actually calls the masker, reminding him of his predecessors who had performed wonders, praising him, egging him on. To emphasis the point and to transfer energy to the masker, some unmasked members of the troupe may begin to perform some rounds of acrobatics (79).*

Categories of Masks

Enekwe classifies marks according to the age of those who organise them. They include:

- Juvenile masks - they are simple in design and are often constructed by their owners.
- Odo and Omabe masks - They are often constructed communally.

Often some are made in secluded places. By categorising masks based on age, Enekwe is in agreement with J.S. Baston whose differentiations are only on age. Enekwe goes further by looking at his classification based on activity or what they do. Thus, Enekwe has (I) elegant masks like the *Agbogho Mmanwu* or *Agbogho Odo*. These are maiden spirits (Mermaid), *Ojionu* and Ijele. Enekwe says that "Agbogho Mmonwu and Ijele reflect the Igbo concept of beauty" (97). He argues that the "Ijele is like a mobile art gallery that shows the life of the Igbo in all its complexities" (102) Among the Igbo, like Nri and Onitsha who operate the monarchical system, the Ijele is associated with the mimicking and burlesquing of the manners and foibles of society. They are found everywhere in Igbo Land" (110). Some criticize but some are out rightly vulgar. They include Efi Hausa, (Hausa cattle), Ewu Hausa (Hausa goats), belle, Oganachi etc.

They use different ways to mimic or criticize society. Since most of them are fun pokers, they lack the usual supernatural aura associated with awe- inspiring masks. Since they are made with

fun in mind, their mere appearances symbolize either ugliness or abnormality.

- Lampooning Masks - Their criticism of society is not general or particular. They come to the scene when deviant behaviours are too serious.

When a man is involved in excessive drinking, he can be lampooned by the mask. Some of such masks include Ayaka, Ulaga etc.

Wonder-Making Masks

These are special masks performed by the elders who, according to Enekwe, "are versed in the occult powers in the Igbo environment. The appearance of these masks is usually a challenge to other masks who may have claim of magical powers. An example of this type of mask is *Aga ako kwansi* (shall we duel with charms) which is dreaded by other masks but they do not venture out when it is about" (123). This can be found among Umu-abi in Udi area of Enugu State.

Ancestral Masks

These masks have oracular powers that stand them out. Such powers are passed from generation to generation. According to Enekwe,

> *Ancestral masks derive their "terrible" power, not through physical prowess, but through their moral and mystical*

fun in mind, their mere appearances symbolize either ugliness or abnormality.

- Lampooning Masks - Their criticism of society is not general or particular. They come to the scene when deviant behaviours are too serious.

When a man is involved in excessive drinking, he can be lampooned by the mask. Some of such masks include Ayaka, Ulaga etc.

Wonder-Making Masks

These are special masks performed by the elders who, according to Enekwe, "are versed in the occult powers in the Igbo environment. The appearance of these masks is usually a challenge to other masks who may have claim of magical powers. An example of this type of mask is *Aga-ako kwansi* (shall we duel with charms) which is dreaded by other masks but they do not venture out when it is about" (123). This can be found among Umu-abi in Udi area of Enugu State.

Ancestral Masks

These masks have oracular powers that stand them out. Such powers are passed from generation to generation. According to Enekwe,

> *Ancestral masks derive their "terrible" power, not through physical prowess, but through their moral and mystical*

attributes. As embodiments of the ritual powers of the ancestors, they often play oracular roles in which their decisions are final. They are believed to be the incarnated figures of ancestors who lived holy or ideal lives (132).

About entertainment, Enekwe has a definite opinion about its relationship with efficacy. Norbert Oyibo Eze in his review of the book says this about the relationship between efficacy and entertainment: "Enekwe uses Igbo Masks to prove the relationship between efficacy and entertainment, the factors upon which those who find ritual antipodal to theatre rest their argument. He argues that, apart from entertainment, theatre has its form of efficacy, as "it is also the goal of those who organize theatre to change or influence things" (Enekwe, 1987:26). He cites a lot of instances to support his position, but of note is Amiri Baraka's view of the goals of Black *Theatre (1998: 10). Enekwe's submission*, sound and thorough as it is, has provoked a lot of reaction from within and outside the country. *In Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre*, Enekwe strives to counter the views of some scholars who tend to ascribe all scholarly activities to European origin. Ulli Beier, Ruth Finnegan and Michael J.C. Echeruo *provided the theoretical*

framework on which Enekwe would base his model and submission. Enekwe argues that:

> *The European conception of drama as narrative is a major obstacle to the understanding of the theatre. Derived from the main trend of dramatic theory based on Aristotle's Poetics, it regards dramatic action as synonymous with plot. The ideas of climax, dramatic progression, conflict and tragedy are also derived from Aristotle. Even when they depart from the substance of his analysis, many European critics use Aristotle's mode of analysis. Hence, they consider drama as a branch of poetry or literature with a linear pattern of plot, with character, language and thought. Because they believe that Greek tragedy is the universal model for drama, such critics pay little attention to actual theatrical practices all over the world, which indicate that society and history determine the shape that drama takes at any time or place (Enekwe 11).*

Ruth Finnegan believes that drama in Africa is "not typically a widespread or a developed form" (Finnegan 500-1). She argues that, because of the absence of linguistic contents, plot, represented interaction of several characters, specialized

scenery, the art form is not developed in the continent. Ulli Beier, on his part, is disappointed in the Yoruba Agbegijo masks which have no longer story and complicated plot. Enekwe sees Echeruo as agreeing with Finnegan, since the former argues that, story pattern is indispensable in the infrastructure of drama. In "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual", Echeruo sees myth or story as synonymous with plot and the essence of drama. Enekwe does not agree with Echeruo's view that the Igbo have no drama because Igbo myth is trapped in ritual.

Echeruo and Finnegan do not see the Kalabari Ekine as drama. Echeruo believes that the argument arises because of the confusion of the word drama with festival. He then analyses the differences between the two words. He says that festival is celebration while drama is "a re-enactment of life" Drama he says is "a public affirmation of a mythos or plot" while ritual is "the translation of a faith into external action". He contends that while divination, communion or baptism may be dramatic, they do not tell us a story but assert a faith. Drama, he maintains "allows for the reinterpretation of life through a pattern of history we usually call plot (Echeruo 138-39). Echeruo admitted that a ritual may (and often does) contain details that could be

transformed into drama, but this ritual must first "yield its story".

Drawing inspiration from Andrew horn on the imprecision of definition, Oyekan Owomoyela argues,

> *Scholars who link drama and ritual do so owing to a misconception that Greek drama, generally thought to be archetypal, grew out of ritual. In fact, there is no reliable authority for deriving drama from ritual, whether in ancient Athens or elsewhere. The attraction of a ritual or religious origin has, however, refused to yield to persuasive refutation, and its implication make it necessary that we devote some attention to the opposing arguments (Owomoyela 37).*

He picks holes in Enekwe's argument that the commedia dell' arte and Doric mime involved no "linear plot" because they were improvised.

> *What was improvised of course, was some narrative event, an action, that entertain, had a plot. As for Noh, although it strives for yugen, for "immutable essence" that transcends speech, it nonetheless incorporates symbolic narrative. According to Reiter (1974:63), "its dramatic form*

can dispense with a syllogistic plot structure. It can, but it does not always do so; for wherever there are a story and a disciplined architectural sense a logical unity may emerge....."

The position of M.J.C Echeruo is that "ritual is, and always has been a dead end-----The Igbo should do what the Greeks did: expand ritual into life and give that life a secular base". Appearing to reconcile Echeruo and Enekwe's positions, Frances Harding submits:

> *I therefore see Echeruo and Enekwe not as spokespersons for opposing points of view but as both articulating the centrality of performance in its many guises, but acknowledging that some performances are self-referential in recognising their artifice, whilst others require to conceal the artifice in order to maintain the belief system underpinning the social order and the systems of power that go along with it (Harding 8)*

Peter Lang agrees with Finnegan, Echeruo and Beier. Lang believes that the argument over the nature of drama has something to do with failure to agree on a universal definition, a definition that

both Africans and Europeans will accept. He inclines towards Andrew Horn who posits that drama studies in Africa suffer from "an unnecessary imprecision of nomenclature" (1981: 181). Both Lang and Horn argue that because some scholars, both African and non-African, ascribe the name drama to African traditional performances without delimitation, the study of the art form is posing a lot of problem, especially as it relates to African drama. Lang traces the origin of this confusion to the contribution of Peter Nazareth who argues that "dramatic forms" existed in Africa well before colonialism (91).

In an attempt to properly lay his blame, Lang contends that the confusion and development of the art form do not manifest in the same degree in all parts of Africa. He believes that drama and theatre have developed more in West Africa than in South Africa because the former witnessed earlier the establishment of Christian and western influence. B.L. Leshoar who had first argued in this line will later be supported by Lang. Lang's discomfort lies in the equation of drama with rituals.

Ossie Enekwe, Oyin Ogunba, Kwebena Nketia and even John Pepper Clark will all come under Lang's criticism as propagators of the idea that drama and rituals are synonymous. The position

both Africans and Europeans will accept. He inclines towards Andrew Horn who posits that drama studies in Africa suffer from "an unnecessary imprecision of nomenclature" (1981: 181). Both Lang and Horn argue that because some scholars, both African and non-African, ascribe the name drama to African traditional performances without delimitation, the study of the art form is posing a lot of problem, especially as it relates to African drama. Lang traces the origin of this confusion to the contribution of Peter Nazareth who argues that "dramatic forms" existed in Africa well before colonialism (91).

In an attempt to properly lay his blame, Lang contends that the confusion and development of the art form do not manifest in the same degree in all parts of Africa. He believes that drama and theatre have developed more in West Africa than in South Africa because the former witnessed earlier the establishment of Christian and western influence. B.L. Leshoar who had first argued in this line will later be supported by Lang. Lang's discomfort lies in the equation of drama with rituals.

Ossie Enekwe, Oyin Ogunba, Kwebena Nketia and even John Pepper Clark will all come under Lang's criticism as propagators of the idea that drama and rituals are synonymous. The position

of these scholars is that you cannot use the Aristotelian model to judge all drama especially in relation to Africa. The opinion of Nketia as found by Lang goes for all of the same persuasion:

> *While Nketia concedes that what he describes as traditional drama differs from "narrative" drama or "the straightforward play", the Nigerian champions of traditional drama characteristically insist that it is drama without any qualifications. Furthermore, their expositions usually carry an insistent rebuttal overtone, because they are usually directed at scholars who favour "Aristotelian" definitions of drama and wish to keep it distinct from ritual. An appropriate keynote for the more or less characteristic Nigerian discussion is John Pepper Clark's establishment of a parallel between the origins of drama in Africa and elsewhere (1981:58-70) He asserts that just as European drama developed from rites connected with Osiris and Dionysus, Nigerian drama arose from "the early religious and magical ceremonies of festivals" of the country. This drama, he adds, has the special function of propitiating spirits and gods "in the manner described by Frazer" (141).*

Ogunba rejects "Aristotelian model" because "drama is far more complex and universal a phenomenon than Aristotle could have ever construed" (1978: 11). Lang counters this argument:

> *That would be a fair enough position if he means that drama since Aristotle's time has undergone phenomenal growth in complexity and cultural variety. Equally fair, though, would be the assumption that if drama is universal, there must be some basic common traits or benchmarks that would transcend culture-specificity, such that scholars, interested in a cross-cultural comparative study would know where to look in each culture for its peculiar example. He however denies us that assumption (142).*

Like Ogunba, Enekwe rejects Aristotelian model for drama. Aristotle proposes six parts that are indispensable to drama: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song. Lang believes that although Aristotle specifically addresses tragedy, his views "will apply to any drama, be it tragedy or comedy" (1991:145). Enekwe dismisses Aristotle's preoccupation with "linear plot" which he regards as unimportant. Enekwe sees Doric mime and the commedia dell-arte as plotless

drama. In the same way, he says that "the Balinese Legong drama is so far removed from narrative that it is almost pure dance". Lang states:

> *Enekwe further argues that the forms of drama that de-emphasize plot also deemphasize moral implications; Greek tragedy, for example, by contrast emphasizes the moral order, and the emphasis is reflected in both the order of events (plot) and the moral rhetoric. We might note in passing that with regard to Shakespeare, Enekwe invites us to draw the troublesome conclusion that the bard, whose drama he says de-emphasizes causality, was not interested in moral implications (Lang 46).*

Lang's discomfort over the position of some African scholars about the unique nature of African drama and indeed literature is a matter of interesting debate. He sums up Enekwe in this order:

> *Enekwe's thesis in this regard is that drama differs from culture to culture because in each it performs a different function and function dictates the form of drama. The function of Greek drama, as he conceives it, was to carry moral implications; for that reason it was poetic. Asian and African dramas implications;*

innocent of any such intentions, manifest instead "dance, mime and music". By this token "While the mainstream European theatre is syllogistic in form, the Asian and African theatres are ritualistic" (Lang 147).

Lang will later condemn Enekwe's lack of criterion for determining drama. He says that this lack of admission makes his position different from that of Ogunba. But both Enekwe and Ogunba equate ritual with drama.

Lang believes that both scholars confuse the terms drama, festivals and rituals which they see as synonymous. Lang finds support in Michael J.C. Echeruo, another Igbo scholar, in this regard. Lang states the reason for his effort and pain:

The effort to free African drama of the stifling weight of ritual is important for several reasons. Drama scholarship, like all scholarship, should undoubtedly be dedicated to ascertaining the truth of whatever it apprehends, exposing and discarding fallacies, and replacing even old truths when they are no longer tenable. In addition, as Horn points out, the insistence on blurring the boundaries between drama and ritual makes meaningful discussion of either impossible. The progress of scholarship

should be in the direction of even greater precision of definition and even crisper distinctions, even among closely related phenomena (156).

Lang thinks that scholars, who link ritual and drama are wrong, because they do so, believing that Greek drama grew out of ritual. He advises Africans to humbly admit that Africa borrowed drama from Europe. That doing so would not mean admitting inferiority of their own brand.

Lang would have done better if he knew that African scholars were apprehensive not only in the drama origin but in other genres as well. Has he forgotten the great debate on African Philosophy? The admission and rebuttal are healthy, let us all act out our thoughts.

CONCLUSION

As an artist, Enekwe is a curious one who sees the entire world as his fort. The problems of life affect him greatly. But his worries stem mainly from the fact that the problems assailing mankind are self inflicted. He believes very strongly that man needs to re-order his priorities to be able to achieve peace and happiness in the world. From the theme of war to bribery and corruption, to the political mismanagement in Africa, Enekwe sees them as the creation of man.

As he has taken time to diagnose the ills of his society and age, his calculation is that man being the author of his own misfortune must equally find answers to his problems. He cannot escape from the rot which his actions have imprisoned him. Rather, he must sit down and find the cause of his problems which can be found in himself.

Enekwe has not lost hope in mankind. There are admirable personalities living and dead who have influenced him greatly. These role models he uses to wipe out the tears from his eyes which other bad eggs have brought to his society. From the battle scenes to academic life, he explores the theme of individual weaknesses which have caused human disasters. However, the love of his wife and mother which constantly affect him and the dedication of certain figures that have influenced him all bring back to him the idea that all is not lost.

Enekwe sees the future as bright through the poems he writes to the younger generation. From the great life of Nelson Mandela to the courage he tries to infuse in the young, he urges them to brace up for the task ahead. The lyricism in the poems and the sheer power of the messages all combine to compel the reader as he looks at life through the prism of his works. The beauty of life is not how much a man has amassed for himself

and family, but how deeply he has influenced his age. Through Enekwe's works, man will continue to take a second look at his life.

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED

Achebe, Chinua. Foreword to *Short Stories of Contemporary African Experience*. Ed. Obradoric Nadezda New York: Anchor Books, 1994.

Adeniji, Olayiwola. "The Marks of a Carnage". *The Guardian*, 29 July 1996.

Adinuba, Don. "Enekwe's Broken Pots is Here At Last". *The Guardian*, 3 Nov., 1986.

Ajao, Toyin. "Come Thunder: Another Perspective on the Civil War". *The Guardian*, 4 Sept., 1985.

Ajayi, Sesan. "Of Faith Not broken," *The Guardian, 3 Dec.*, 1989.

Ajibade, Kunle. "The Compassionate", African Concord, 6 May, 1991.

Baraka Amiri. *The Revolutionary Theatre Selected Plays of Amiri Baraka/Laroi Jones*. New York. William Morrow and Co. Inc., 1970.

Clark, J.P. "Aspects of Nigerian Drama". In Yemi Ogunbiyi(Ed) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos : Nigeria Magazine, 1981. pp 57-74.

Echeruo, M.J.C. "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual". Yemi Ogunbiyi(Ed) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981 pp135-48.Emereole, Olisaemeka. "Okike Comes to Fill a Vision", *The Guardian*, 6 May, 1991.

Enekwe Onuora Ossie. *Come Thunder*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1987.

_____The Last Battle and Other Stories. Lagos: Minaj Publishers, 1996.

_____*Broken Pots*. Enugu: Government Press, 1986.

_____*Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1987.

_____*Theories of Dance in Nigeria* SNAAP Press, 1991.

_____Nkponkiti Dance Group of Nigeria, Enugu: SNAAP Press, ND.

_____(Ed) Okike, An African Journal of New Writing, Enugu, 33. (1996).

_____(Ed) *Okike*, An African Journal of New Writing, Enugu, (1983).

_____(Ed) Okike, An African Journal of New Writing, Enugu, 9. (1975).

Enekwe, Onuora Ossie and Sonny Samson Akpan, *Two Experimental Plays, "The Betrayal"and "Comments"*, Uyo: Modern Business, 1990.

Enyinnaya, Korubiri Innocent Chimela. "The Line of Passion: Nigerian Civil War Poetry", Unpublished M.A. Thesis of UNN,1989.

Esslim, Martin. *An Anatomy of Drama*. New York, Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publishing Data, 1977.

Ewuzie, Alvan. "Another Nigerian Can Win the Nobel But-Enekwe" (Interview), *Daily Champion*, 6 Nov. 1998.

Eze, Norbert Oyibo. "The Quintessence of Dramatic Form: A Review Essay on *Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Ritual and Theatre*", Okike No. 40, 1998, pp 97-101.

Eze, Peter. "The Demolition of Old Dance", The Punch, 26 Mar., 1992.

_____"A Guitar Boy's Metamorphosis", *The Post Express*, 25 Sept., 1998.

Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970.

Ferguson, Francis. *The Idea of a Theatre*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949.

Harding, Frances. "Actor and Character in African Masquerade Performance". *Theatre Research International*.21 No 1 (1996) pp 51-71.

Horn, Andrew. "Ritual Drama and The Theatrical: The Case of Boris Spring Mediumship" in Yemi Ogunbiyi(ed) *Dance and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981. pp181-202

Ihekweazu, Edith (Ed). *Readings in African Humanities*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1985.

Ikwuemesi, C. Krydz, "Heroes and Songs "An Introduction to a Commemorative Exhibition on Ossie Onuora Enekwe" *Sunday Vanguard*, 14 June, 1998.

Inyama, N.F. Review of *The Last Battle and Other Stories*, *Okike*, No. 37, Oct. 1997.

Ker, David. *African Popular Theatre*. London: Currey, 1995.

Krasner, David. Performance and Drama in Africa. Project MUSE http://muse.jhu.edu.

Martin, Lisa and Martin Megan, "Ossie Enekwe: The Midas of Nigerian Literature", *The Herald* 10 April, 1992.

Nketia, J.H Kwebena. *Ghana Music, Dance and Drama. A Review of the Performing Arts in Ghana*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, 1965.

Ohaeto, Ezenwa. "Art Personality". *Daily Times*, 27 April, 1991.

Ogunbiyi, Yem. (Ed.). Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book. Lagos: *Nigeria Magazine*, 1981.

Obradovic, Nadezda. (Ed.) African Rhapsody: Stories of Contemporary African Experience. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.

Ogunba, Oyin. "Ritual Drama of Ijebu People: A study of Indigenous Festivals". PhD thesis, University of Ibadan, 1967.

Okpewho, Isidore. African Oral Literature, Background, Character and Continuity. Bloomington: Indianapolis University Press, 1992.

Onuzulike, Ozioma, "At Nsukka the Grass Sings", *The Guardian*, 20 Feb. 1999.

Ojo, Emma, "Echoes of the Last Battle". Rev. *Daily Times* 24 July, 1996.

Orewere, Omano Andy. "The Colour of Writing". Interview by Chi Chiazzo and Chukwuemeka Agbayi. *The Guardian*, 6 July, 1998.

Otiono, Nduka. "Major Challenges in Keeping Okike Alive". *The Post Express*, 20 Dec., 1997.

Owomoyela, Oyekan. "*Visions and Revisions*". *Essays on African Literatures and Criticism*. Ed. Peter Lang. New York, 1991.

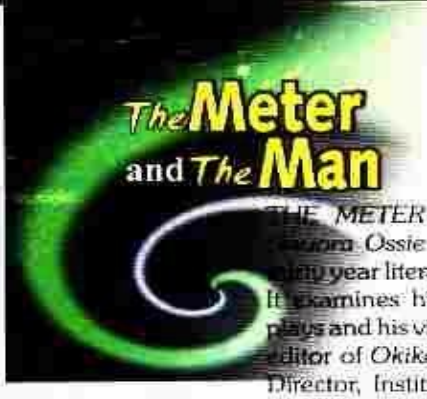
_____Give Me Dance or the Argument on the Existence of Drama in Traditional Africa. *African Studies Review*. Vol. 28 No 4 (Dec. 1985). P28-45.

Shank, Theodore. *The Art of Dramatic Art*. New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1969.

Taiwo, Oladele. Social Experience in African Literature. Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1986.

Taylor, Quintard, Ed. *The Making of the Modern World: A History of the Twentieth Century*. Kendal: Hunt Publishing Co, 1990.

Widdifield, Stacie G. *African Arts*. UCLA Vol. XII (No.2) Feb. 1979.



ABOUT THE BOOK

THE METER AND THE MAN- Introduction to the Works of Onuora Ossie Enekwe is a comprehensive account of the thirty year literary history of Professor Onuora Ossie Enekwe. It examines his collections of poems, short stories, novel, plays and his views on dramatic theory and criticism. A former editor of *Okike*, An African Journal of New Writing, Former Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Chairman, University of Nigeria Trans Routes and Professor of Dramatic Arts, UNN, Enekwe's dogged pursuit of academic excellence and social justice have marked him out as a scholar of note. His works which have been translated into several world languages have distinguished him as one of the most important writers and critics to emerge from Nigeria.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dan Chima Amadi hails from Aku in Igbo Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State. He took degrees in English from Universities of Jos (B.A) and Nigeria (M.A) and is currently pursuing a doctorate in English from Abia State University, Uturu. Apart from numerous articles published in several journals and contributions in books, he is the author of the following published works:- Wait Till Tomorrow (1994) a novel, Secrets Are Wavering Flames (1994) a novel, Bishop G.M.P. Okoye, His Life, His Times (1995)- a biography, The Life and Works of Chief Med. Dr. H.I. Uzoewulu (co-authored) a biography (1997), The Barber's Shop (2003)- a novel, The King Never Reigns (2008)- a play, The Trial of The Militants (2009)-a play and The Great Judge - The biography of Hon. Justice A. N. Aniagolu (2009). Mr. Amadi is a lecturer at the Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and a former branch Chairman, Association of Nigerian Authors, Enugu State, Nigeria (1998-2003).

ISBN: 978-978-49165-4-9

TREASURE BOOKS

SKILLMARK MEDIA LTD.
OWERRI, NIGERIA