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Folkloric Psyche in Nollywood Epic Movies: Ogbuagu and Akwaeke in Amayo Uzo Philip's *Odum Na Akwaeke/Odum Na Ogbuagu (Deadly Adventure)*

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Abstract: This paper is an exploration of the content, or the characterization of the folkloric epic realist form in Amayo Uzo Philip's *Odum Na Akwaeke* and *Odum Na Ogbuagu*. The focus is on the craft and performative realism of the characters, Ogbuagu and Akwaeke, in elucidating thought through an artful mastery and creation of character. The work is necessitated by the need to critique Francis Duru and Chioma Franklin Akpotha who acted as Ogbuagu and Akwaeke in these movies with regard to their ability to through technique and style bring to the burner of social discourse the problematic and funny idealistic immaterial world of impractical perfection, love and rejection. Akwaeke the delectable and beautiful princess of Amanato Okporo has her eyes set on an utopian and imaginary wealthy and perfect gentleman husband, leaving distraught and at the same time a hopeful Ogbuagu. Dances, music, songs and choreographed movements and processions are crafted into this epic story as creative stimulus to reinforce themes of love, adventure, rejection and sacrifice. Francis Duru's interpretation and portrayal of the character, Ogbuagu is exemplary and full of enormous art and talent, as are the manner that Chioma Franklin Akpotha interprets the character, Akwaeke; and places them squarely as mirrors on their society. Whether treated as the collective psyche of a disenchanted and ideal society of imperfections or not, the work nonetheless evaluates Francis Duru's (Ogbuagu) celebration of love, tolerance, patience and sacrifice through an assemblage of vast folkloric elements which this work unearths.

Keywords: Drama, Folkloric Drama, Nollywood Films, Culture, Heritage.

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INTRODUCTION

This study xrays the folk technique adopted by the characters Ogbuagu (Francis Duru) and Akwaeke (Chioma Franklin Akpotha) in the film *Deadly Adventure*. It evaluates the role of folkore in character interpretation and portrayal in Nollywood film. The study explores the objective and elements of the film as well as investigates how the folklorist epic film advances cultural, religious, educational and artistic needs of the society. The Study applies the Bruno Bettelheim psychoanalytical model of the human personality to the folkloric drama. The theorist argues that folklore "carry important messages to the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious mind, on whatever level each is functioning at the time ... suggest images to the child by which he can structure his day dreams and with them give better direction to this life. (Dundes, 1969; & Basil, 1965) Thus the Akwaeke na Ogbuagu folkore of Amanato Okporo is a cultural and historical tradition that reinforces ethics, communality and good conduct. The story moralizes and advice that patience and resort to traditional values are the yardsticks for the moral development and growth of a society.

Folkloric drama centres on peoples' lives and imaginations as they confront their emotions, and anxieties and apprehension by reliving the story's detail. It is essentially cognitive and therapeutic; as it enables characters and individuals and audiences to

objectify their experience and be able to assimilate them in real setting. An objective of folkloric drama with regard to the film medium is its ability to build and sustain viewers' attention with the development of cognitive ideas, values shared in the stories.

Dundees premises folk on its modern encapsulation. It is seen as "a social group which includes two or more persons with common traits, who express their shared identity through distinctive traditions." (Kehinde, 2010) Thus, very vital to the transmission of this folklore is the Nollywood film medium. Through the film the culture and traditions of the people of Amanato-Okporo and its environs is secured and stored as a historical archive. The role of film in preserving oral traditions, folktales, folksongs, and folk-legends from being bastardised by changing culture cannot be overemphasised. Dundees avers that the precondition for folkloric drama is its service as a vehicle of oral transimission, as "a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own." (Bettelheim, 1977)

Characters in folkloric drama usually are flat. They represent the good or bad/evil motives with basic features exaggerated or extended beyond reason. Whereas the hero of a folk drama is an honourable, comely, courageous, compassionate and unselfish character, the heroine may be fair and beautiful, good,

kind and caring. The protagonists are defined by the special and mystical powers and abilities that they have.

The environment of a folkloric drama is that world of fantasy and utopia, usually with the settings being segments of the culture and valued geographical repository of the people. Time in folkore is retrospected and espouse the peoples' heritage and history. Folkloric drama elicit thought provoking themes. It is presented in a manner that leaves the audiences or film viewers with moral subjects to ponder on. Simple and interesting, folkloric drama weaves into the plot captivating action that rapt audeinces/viewers attention and interest. The plot of a folk story is elucidated by the protagonist's sheer courage for humanity, great deeds or acts of charity.

Thus, the subject-matter revolves around universal truths and affirmations, values, and moral codes traceable to the peoples culture and history, their actions, beliefs. The principal aspect of the folk story is the eschewing of conducts and behaviour that are amathema to the growth of the community or their traditions. In folklore, it is the peoples traditions that are explored with an objective of assembling and propagating shread values and moral signs. A few of the discourses found in the folk include the challenges of young people, friendship/relationship, love and acceptance and rejection, good versus evil, marriage and the apprehension or ecstasy associated with leaving home, etc.

It acts as a controlling mechanism. Folkloric drama can be used to express social approval of those who conform. Therefore, escape in folk drama as compensative therapy manifests from the root word – fantasy – flight from repression and frustrations which are influenced by geographical environment and biological restrictions.

Folklore employs minimal detail and description in rendering its plot. Story is plausible and not probable. Fantasy and utopia rule the plot's paraphernalia by the exploration of a magical or supernatural environments, fast moving objects, incantations and enchantments. The language of folk is enchanting and musical and cultural. Characters transform magically and evil is repelled by good. Folkloric drama is replete with refrains; repetition of words and phrases. Animal characters and their registers abound; and, demons and zombies, or other inanimate/animated beings, objects being dramatized.

Music, songs and dances are essential to creating and sustaining truth, mood and environment. Ofuani states that music-making "houses the peoples' worldviews." (533) According to him, "using data from folksongs to explicate the rationales behind the name is very necessary because much about the philosophies and canons of traditional Igbo society are largely

domiciled in their folksongs." (534) It is necessary to point out that folk drama explores human capacity for good or evil; their imperfections, moral failures, weaknesses and frailties. It is necessary to also point out that the focal environment of the Akwaeke na Ogbuagu folklore is Amanato-Okporo, a village in the present day Orlu in Imo State Nigeria. From discussions in the folk film and realities on ground, Amanato Okporo is bordered by towns like Abara, Amaifeke, and Ihioma all in Orlu. The Akwaeke na Ogbuagu folklore has been the tale passed on from generation to generation. Though some of these towns are scattered over some areas in Imo State, the folklore remains unchanged. The lesson to be drawn from the Akwaeke na Ogbuagu folkloric drama is in the viewers' ability to draw upon new insights, or new understandings, for personality shaping and correction.

Problem Statement

Folklore oral tradition treats wide ranging subjects from depicting animals to humans and then to demons and supernatural powers. The environment of folkore galvanise diverse settings as the subject-matter. Characters could live and perform anywhere: land, sea, forest, caves, sky, or heaven. Folklore stories engender morals and values of ethical re-orientation. It can be produced under social context, religious context, entertainment context, educational context, enlightenment and moral shaping and to actuate or debate past and recent arguments on subjects of folklore.

In view of characterizing theoretics, folklore or the folk film can elicit superlative results, with societal ethics, correction and bonding being rife. The study is problematized by the need to weigh the role that folklore plays in expanding the frontiers of human psychology which helps for easier understanding and assimilation. It became needful that being a folk-legend, underpinning the style and techniques of the film's dramatization and characterization of the philosophy behind the folkstory was necessary. Does Akwaeke's and Ogbuagu's artful mastery and communication of folklorism in the film suggest the disenchantment that one envisages of a morally blighted society?

Rationale

The study seeks to appraise Francis Duru's interpretation of the folk-epic realist form through the character, Ogbuagu. It unearths Akwaeke's (Chioma Franklin Akpotha) weaving of the plot in line with the dramatization or fictionalization of folk within time and space. Additionally, the study sets out to prove that:

- Through the film medium, folklore materials and data can be historically stored as evidenced in the Amanato Okporo "Akwaeke na Odum" Igbo oral culture and traditions.
- Folktales and legend stories and their successful characterization internalizes social role and harmony and bonding.

- Ogbuagu and Akwaeke successfully fictionalized the Amanato Okporo folklore and that the propagation of this content enables socio-cultural revival or rebirth as well as the development of the human person.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study will for the purpose of espousing the literature of the work apply the Bruno Bettelheim psychoanalytical model of the human personality to the folkloric film drama. As Kehinde (2010) stated about the psychodynamic role of folklore as a source of imagination in Nigerian communities, “it has therapeutic, emotional, cathartic, didactic, and socializing usefulness in Nigerian societies, and it gives an intimate account of their values.” Bettelheim (1977) Folktales for example has been noted for its role in managing existential and important challenges or problems in Nigeria because every tale ends always with a lesson, a meaning and a message to disseminate to members of the folkloric society in so far as it aids them in tackling life’s vicissitudes. According to Nsereka and Iyalla, folkloric tales have the capacity to transport the film viewership population to fantasy land and connects the stories to their plausible life situations in future. As they argued, while quoting Obiechina and Kehinde, it reveals “the identity and uniqueness of a people. A society expresses itself through oral tales. These, in turn, reflect that society and its beliefs.” (522)

Researchers posit strongly that personality conditions behaviour. Though a child may have a wider scope of control of impatience as he/she grows older, it would not solve the root cause of the impatience. Although life experiences conditions how we feel about them and behave and integrate coping skills they rarely do resolve an individual’s primary nature. Allport in Engler states that “personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behaviour and thought.” (262) The human soul and mind (emotions and will) actuate human behaviour and attitude. The vision of the individual cannot be separate from his psychology. It is what validates the preconditions for maturity of the individual as he/she establishes a sense of self, accepting friendly relationship of self to others, empowering the self-emotional security, realistic perception, including self-objectification and the codification of a philosophy of life. Human personality is socially encased and fuelled by sometime, extreme or mild feelings of inadequacy which is critical to forming compensatory roles. According to Haviland, Prins, Walrath, and Mcbridge “the distinctive way a person thinks, feels, and behaves ... the idea of learning to play one’s role on the stage of life” (385) is not negligible about one’s development of self-awareness which streams the psychological orbit of human action.

Since one of the ways of conveying folklore is through the catharsis medium, it becomes gainful to say that the psychoanalytical stratum proves more a productive inquiry to the viewer of folklore.

Folklore as oral performance arts is a socio-cultural activity which traditional African societies use in exploring communal ethics and mores through the indoctrination and admonishment of members. It should be said that folklore is used to describe a tradition that allows unrestricted use of music, dance, chants, songs, proverbs, myth and poetry, while providing space for story-teller or narrator, and audience participation. Blavin states that “folklore applies to ideas, words and physical objects of a people; particular characteristics of folklore include its oral nature, group characteristics, and transmission across generations of people” (Blavin, 2003). Oral traditions refers to those stories which belong to the people, which they pick up, formulate and re-interpret as cultural heritage. Folklore is an example of oral tradition.

Alan Dundees states:

Folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people; it encompasses the traditions common to that culture, subculture or group. These include oral traditions such as tales, proverbs and jokes... Folklore also includes customary lore, the forms and rituals of celebrations such as Christmas and weddings, folk dances and initiation rites. Each one of these, either singly or in combination, is considered a folklore artifact. Just as essential as the form, folklore also encompasses the transmission of these artifacts from one region to another or from one generation to the next. (Kehinde, 2010)

Also, *Encyclopaedia Britcannica* writes in its definition that much of narrative folk literature is fictional and filled with unrealistic events, with the storyteller or epic singer giving his story credibility by the use of realistic details. The *Encyclopaedia* stressed about how pivotal folk literature is in “linking the never-never land of the tale or song to everyday life or emotions... [as] such realistic details may allow a stretching of the imagination to embrace a larger world (Britcannica, 2019).

According to Carthy, in a quoted reference to Bascom, every culture “depends in part on folklore for the maintenance of its continuity. This is evidenced by the fact that much of our communion is composed of repetition of familiar ideas expressed in a familiar form.” (26) She states that folklore has the capacity therefore to spread from one society to another depending on the receptivity of its relevance, rejection, or adaptation. Folkloric drama provides some instructional gains which Adams, Dundees and Carthy

have described as validation, maintenance of conformity or control, escape, and education. Carthy reiterated that folkore validates certain aspects of culture and justifies its rituals and institutions. She was able to identify the role of “explanatory tale” or a moral animal tale, myth or legend in validating doubted pattern and warning of consequences when accepted practices are violated. She further argued that folklore provided justifications when institutions and rules faced danger.

In Article 67 of the Revised Agreement of the African Intellectual Property Organization (“OAPI”) of Folklore Protection under Regional Arrangements in Africa, these are some of what could constitute folkore: “literary works of all kinds, whether in oral or written form: stories, legends, proverbs, epics, chronicles, myths, riddles; ...” (Blavin, 2003) The Article document further identifies artistic styles and productions: dances; musical productions of all kinds; dramatic, dramatico-musical, choreographic and pantomime productions; ... and rites and rituals as some of the content of folkore in Africa. The others the author revealed include educational traditions: codes of manners and social conventions; agricultural techniques, hunting and fishing techniques.

Folkloric Psyche in Nollywood Epic Films: Akwaeke and Ogbuagu in Amayo Uzo Philip’s *Deadly Adventure* Story-Telling

Deadly Adventure is an Igbo epic traditional Nollywood film. The film revolves around two principal characters, Akwaeke and Ogbuagu, and third, Odum the anti-hero who brings more of the troubles that are seen in the film.

The folkloric film which employs the story-telling technique traverse the length and breath of the world of the living and the dead. When it starts the story-teller adopting the formulaic expression of “once upon a time” revealed how there lived an adorable princess called Akwaeke in the kingdom of Amanato Okporo. Akwaeke the story teller says was a very beautiful woman that all the men in the village wanted her hands in marriage. Akwaeke was the apple of the eyes of the king Ochikaeze (Amaechi Munonagor) and Ugoeze her mother. Akwaeke was also loved by all her maidens very much. It is not that Akwaeke does not reject the advances of her suitors but she goes ahead and marries a stranger. Here, the battle for her redemption and freedom ensues.

Early in the film, Akwaeke (Chioma Franklin Akpotha) is accorded recognizable epic traditional appellations and praise. We tend to believe that Ogbuagu’s intention to woo her must have been from the popularity of the appellations and lores. After the prologue, her maid Ntana (Queen Nwokoye) compares Akwaeke’s beauty to the sun and the moon. She is

addressed as the heart of Amanato Okporo, a land that produces beautiful queens. She is personified as the sun that brightens Amanato Okporo. She is called the “Morning Sun.” When she demands to know how her beauty is viewed in the village from her maidens, although this is self-delusional, Akwaeke reveals a deep seated reminiscence of idealistic and imaginary fantasy of love and romance. Akwaeke from what she says and how she behaves seeks validation from her friends, and exposes herself as being influenced by insecurities of self-worth. Through her actions and words, which she portrays before her friends and her suitors, Akwaeke discredits the personality and the genuiness of appropriacy of her suitors, even when it appears though that she could be acting out of self-hate, untraceable feelings of consuming anger, and pride. It would be critiqued that her extolling virtues in the folkloric film is because of her increasingly felt sense and thought that: “Is there a man out there fit for Akwaeke?” Her mother feels though, very concerned and at best worried that: “The way she has treated her suitors is very bad... Does a young lady drive away suitors?”.

It will be observed that in the film Igbo traditional histrionics and cultural appurtunances of human libidinal love and sex suffuse the characterization and story. Akwaeke envisions of herself the mirror of supernatural beauty when she employs the imagery and semiotics of “wings” and “butterfly” and juxtaposes her friends’ concurring that in Amanato Okporo and its environs, her beauty is unparalleled. According to the princess; “I am yet to see the man fit enough to command the love of princess Akwaeke.” She cries emotionally about waiting for the man; “A man strong, full of strenght as handsome as the Morning Sun.” Further employing validated Igbo traditional histrionics of self recognition and praise, Akwaeke eulogizes herself as “the sunshine of Amanato Okporo. This is confirmed by her mother Ugoeze (Chinyere Wilfred) who eulogizes her beauty as the sunshine of the entire kingdom of Amanato, adding that: “only a fulfilled man is qualified to have you as a bride.” Though Akwaeke turning down every man is in the public knowledge, Ogbuagu will not stop as he retorts unhesitantly to a bemused Azundu (Offia Mbaka) on how he cares less about the princess’s identity and integrity as a woman. Thus he resolves to be defiant in his love quest and not constrained by any feelings of Akwaeke being a peacock, dog-fowl or a vulture.

When Ogbuagu (Francis Duru) appears in the folktales he emerges as a hunter. The realism of his character triumphs in his affirmative declaration of dream, energy and courage. He says he has dreamt of getting married to Akwaeke. Employing allusion and referential imagery, Ogbuagu and his hunter friend Azundu use animal registers, hunting and entrepreneurial business to refer to the absence of the princess and the maidens from the secluded part of the

village stream where he has come to make his love advances known to her. The images also bear on his expectation of love and marriage from the princess. As a result both Azundu and Ogbuagu express light-hearted wariness about the animals attending a meeting of community business, if by any metaphorical extension connoting his agenda.

Although Azundu (Offia Mbaka) muses at what he preconceives as his friend's foolery, being that in Amanato Okporo and beyond, Akwaeke the delectable daughter of Ochikaeze cares less about the suitors who come for her hands, Ogbuagu has overpowering emotions of desire and commitment to the task. He declares to an enraged and bemused princess Akwaeke:

I am Ogbuagu the sweetest and richest hunter in Amanato Okporo.

When they meet and Ogbuagu stops Akwaeke in her tracks he praises and adulates her parentage and royal background:

You are beautiful; bright as the Morning Sun, wild as the moon on a dry night and enchanting...

Akwaeke's response is almost flat, and close to something that wrecks emotions. Through her narration the viewer is acquainted with the registers associated with creativity, hunting, animals and agriculture which she capitulates on to attack Ogbuagu's personality and voids his love request.

I have heard of your prowess with animals and how you use your craftiness to lure them into your trap... Hunter. Every animal does not smell the bees. Akwaeke does not run after bush meat... You do not qualify... Meat does not buy love... My body is not for an ordinary hunter like you.

Although her response is blunt and unremarkable, Ogbuagu is not dispirited. His perfunctoriness with village nuances bears well in his utterances of replies to her:

My princess, I have come to use the same craft to lure you into my marriage proposal. Here. There's my business. This is meat. I kill it with my bare hands, prepared it and roasted it for this purpose. Please accept it, it is from my heart.

The hilarity of Ogbuagu's insistence and Akwaeke's overt rebuttal is esconsed in the fable of the daring and the confused. It is said that insistence displaces resistance. When Ogbuagu's father praises him as: "The only hunter that dares the lion... You lured the animals into your trap with craftiness," one observed bitter truth remains that Ogbuagu will goad Akwaeke to himself as though it was a craft for him to hunt women as he does animals. The characters'

perfunctoriness at village histrionics and nuances, fables and folk associated with industry, agriculture, strenght and femalism is of great dexterity to the film in the unfolding of plot and subject-matter. The manipulation of words by Ogbuagu and Akwaeke, utilization of proverbs are seen to be of strong effect in the film also in the conveyance of the theme(s) of the story – a proud and idealistic adorable palace princess unsure of the right man for marriage – and a realistic village male hunter totally assured/aware of what he wants.

Akwaeke is presented as an arrogant and self-bloated princess who does not have any regard for anybody. When Akwaeke says she cannot stoop so low to marry an ordinary village hunter, the lack of regard and underestimation that she has of other suitors and apparently the male-folk is generally established. She has rejected Prince Ezenwankita, Diji and Dinta and still searches for a husband from utopia. She states:

There are men everywhere. When Akwaeke desires them she'll choose. Am I not Akwaeke the only daughter of Ochikaeze of Amanato Okporo? They'll always be there when I need them.

Although Ogbuagu is known to be the toast of so many young maidens in Amanato Okporo, Akwaeke rebuffs him carelessly as she does to Diji the biggest yarm farmer in his village, as she warns the former to: "Keep your eyes on the antelopes, the grass-cutters, the rats in the bushes." That Akwaeke considers Ogbuagu poor is objective to the folk culture. Dundees observes correctly that the 'expanded definition of folk was their identification as the underclass of society.' (Dundes, 1978).

Thus, the objective of the folktale is one of moralising, ensuring that Akwaeke looked before she leaped. Accordingly, in his persistence to declare his love and admiration of the princess and assurances of a successful marriage, Ogbuagu asks:

What does a man want from a woman Akwaeke? I am Ogbuagu the wealthiest hunter in Amanato Okporo. I have filled my house with the wealth made from my hunting games. I'll feed you Akwaeke... I'll feed you from the fatness of the fresh meat of the harvest of the forest of Amanato Okporo.

According to the *Brticannica*:

Since in essence all folk literature is oral and subject to its survival in the human mind, it is full of devices to aid memory. Perhaps most common of all is mere repetition. Especially in folktales and epics it is common to hear the same episode repeated with little or no verbal change. As the hero encounters his successive adversaries the description changes only enough to indicate the increasing terror of the enemy, always leading to a climax and usually

to the hero's success. These long repeated passages often enable the teller of tales or the singer of an epic to extend his performance as much as he desires. (Britannica, 2019)

It will be observed that Ogbuagu's articulacy of words, imageries and aphorism is great at exposing his commitment, hardwork and industry of being the right suitor for the adorable princess. Appropriateness of words and metaphors in the film is utilitarian and serve to accentuate the stories' preoccupation. Whenever Ogbuagu voices out his intention Akwaeke's friends and palace maidens are amazed and titillated and they encode signs of appeal and desire. They are even the first to stop hounding Ogbuagu when at Akwaeke's demand for guidance and clarification, they are able to point out his handsomeness. The viewer is not surprised as Ntana sexually assaults Ogbuagu.

The stories are narrated as though they were fables; a folkstory of loves' grandeur and endurance with Amanato Okporo and the never-never world as the traditional settings illustrating the actions and conflicts. Akwaeke and Odum are folk legends. Adams notes that the folk-legend is "a traditional, oral expression which tells of extraordinary events in the lives of everyday people, told as if it were an historical account" (Engler, 2013). Carthy affirms that "the legend is told with the assumption that the story really happened and the audience reaction revolves in part around the credibility or incredibility of the story." *Carthy (1984)* the story appears to fall into the horizons of supernatural legends and local legends. Whereas supernatural legends tell of vampires, trolls, fairies, little people, zombies and ghost stories, local legends and referenced to their names, their geographical features, or their histories. It would be seen that while Odum is a supernatural legend, Akwaeke and Ogbuagu are local legends.

As Odum na Akwaeke is a vast traditional story popular with the people of Amanato Okporo and environs, thus the popularity or otherwise of the folk heroes manifest from what Brunvad has termed as "the local tall-take specialist who has gathered a repertoire of traditional exaggerations and attached them to his own career." (120) It should be observed that the folk drama as we see in *Deadly Adventure*, presents positive solutions to difficult problems by giving vent to or expiating all formless, nameless anxieties, and often-time chaotic, and violent utopias. *Deadly Adventure* tells of the impact of idealism on the young inexperienced African love and relationship enthusiast. It exposes its unreal aspects by the various exaggerated postures of Akwaeke, her virulent attacks of Ogbuagu, insult and dehumanizing humiliations while under her own beclouded judgment and hypnosis to realize or

negate an end. The tragic facade that the characters face in the folk film reflects the unharmonizing lack of stability or control over their situations, or choices as well as their desire for understanding. There are instances where Akwaeke hurls the table of love against Ogbuagu; in so far as it is, one must know that the task was to guide these stories toward exhortation and education and to preserve traditional ethos. The character, Ogbuagu in his action buttresses that struggles are part of achieving and yearning for love and acceptance, and that if one perseveres against unexpected hardships and unjust odds, such as he experiences with Akwaeke and Odum's supposed relationship and ultimate marriage, the individual can survive and even win. In this Carthy affirms the utilitarian value of folkloric drama. According to her: "Folklore can carry along and teach the history of a people as well as its cultural norms, diligence, respect, perseverance, etc. dangers and how to avoid them may be pointed out." (*Carthy, 1984*)

Folksongs, Music and Dance

This section considers some of the folk-music and folksongs found in the Odum na Akwaeke myth as veritable to the transmission of the subject matter of the folkloric film. The explication of the folksongs is crucial to exposing the diverse motifs of the Amanato Okporo folklore with regard to their preoccupations on love, adventure, rejection, sacrifice, tolerance, patience and perseverance, romance, acceptance and morals. It must be added quickly that Igbo folkloric culture and traditions pass on information, teaching, enlightenment and education to the people through folksongs as they integrate all of the burning issues in the stories. Folksongs and folkmusic corrects, admonishes and berates, while documenting and eulogising the travails and legendaries of young adults.

First, in the "Akwa Nwa" folksongs and musical dance, Ogbuagu bears Akwaeke's insults, rejection, humiliation and open rebuke. He does not cower in the midst of Akwaeke's troubles with regard to her arrogant display of pride and insolence. If Ogbuagu's songs are for anything else, it was for the actualization of his emotional display as was seen in his comments earlier on:

The fur does not keep its eyes away from the fly until it has drowned its mouth. The butterfly Akwaeke cannot stop dancing around the flower until it has drawn the nectar. Ogbuagu will not keep his eyes off Akwaeke until she becomes his wife.

Akwaeke na Ogbuagu "Buru Nwunye"
Folksong:

Igbo

Akwaeke ka m luba gi oo
Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma

English

Akwaeke I want to marry you
Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one

Akwaeke ka m luba gi oo
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Akwaeke buru nwunye m oo
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Akwaeke buru nke m oo
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Akwaeke nyem obi gi oo
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Akwaeke nwanyi oma
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Akwaeke kam luba gi oo
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Mgbe obula mu huru gi obi n'eme m ninini
 Asampete nwanyi oma, achalugo Amanato,
 enenebe eje oru
 Akwaeke ka m gwazie gi obi m oo
 Achoro m ka iburu nke m oo
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Kweta nu ka mburu nke gi, ezinwanyi oma
 Nwa oma, nwa oma, nwa oma
 Akwaeke ka m luba gi oo

Akwaeke I want to marry you
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 Akwaeke I want you to be my wife
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 Akwaeke be mine
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 Akwaeke give me your heart
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 Akwaeke pretty one
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 Akwaeke give me your heart
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 The sight of you gladdens my heart
 Pretty one! The princess of Amanato, the
 most beautiful one
 Akwaeke let me tell you the truth
 I want you to be mine and accept me to be yours
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 My lovely one Akwaeke give me your love
 Lovely one, lovely one, lovely one
 Akwaeke I want to marry you

These are praise chants and love prayer folksongs eulogizing Akwaeke's beauty and grandeur. Through folksongs and music, Ogbuagu shows innate understanding of the power of emotions in communicating his inner fears, worries, expectation, love, and passion for Akwaeke. His patience in waiting is found to be unwavering and he does not sacrifice it for Akwaeke's uncouth rants. The folksongs are couched in a way to reflect the minds of the characters

and build on the environment of action through imagination. In one of the songs by Odum and Akwaeke, mood and environment and subject matter of the film are communicated. They also give focus and balance to characterization while establishing didactic and moral lessons.

Odum na Akwaeke "Haa Muo" Folksong

a. Akwaeke

Igbo

Odum ee bia jide mu aka gi oo
 Odum ee bia sie mu obi oo
 Odum dim oo, nkegi ka m ga abu
 Odum nkegi ka m choro ibu oo

English

Odum eee... May I have your hand
 Odum come and embrace me
 Odum my husband I will be yours
 Odum yours I want to be

b. Odum

Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele
 Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele
 Nwaeze k'ibu
 Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele
 Adighi kwa ihe mbu ee
 Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele
 Nwa mmuo ka mbu ee
 Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele
 Oburu na iluba m, ihe iga edi ka
 Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele
 Enweghi mu nwanne, soso mu so eje
 Akwaeke haa m oo Haanyele

Akwaeke leave me. Ok.
 Akwaeke leave me. Ok.
 You are the princess. Ok.
 Akwaeke leave me. Ok.
 I'm not what you think I am. Ok.
 Akwaeke leave me. Ok.
 Indeed I am a spirit. Ok.
 Akwaeke leave me. Ok.
 If you marry me, you will regret it. Ok.
 Akwaeke leave me. Ok.
 I don't have a brother. I am a lone soldier.
 Akwaeke leave me. Ok.

Furthermore, the Odum and Akwaeke folksongs expose Akwaeke's mythical mind and the rate at which she forgoes her life in the real world for a mundane and utopian husband. Sung like one of those fairytale songs, it interrogates that world of fantasy where some eligible marriageable young African women would prefer a wealthy and influential man they

have never seen and whose outstanding features keep flooding their memory to someone they know who has prospects and is hardworking. The Odum na Akwaeke folksongs is an aberration to the Igbo culture where a man is expected by tradition to ask for the hands of his female suitor in marriage. Here, the viewer is

astonished at Akwaeke's rush to do that and to make promises to a stranger she does not truly know.

Again, the folksongs teach that some beauties are extraordinary. The folksong below (**Enenebe Eje Oru**) is sung by Ugoeze (Chinyere Wilfred) during Akwaeke's introductory rites and traditional marriage with Odum. It explicates on the general belief and acceptance of Akwaeke's unmatched beauty as the sunshine of Amanato Okporo. It also elucidates probably on the unique features that must have set her

Igbo

Akwugo puta wa oo
Enenebe eje oru
Akwaeke puta wa ee
Enenebe eje oru
Ndibe anyi n'echekwa gi oo
Enenebe eje oru
Ndi ogo n'echekwa gi oo
Enenebe eje oru
Achalugo nwanyi oma ee
Enenebe eje oru
Oyiri nne ya nwata di mma
Enenebe eje oru

Thus, the above is an abridgement of the **Enenebe Eje Oru** folksong by Ugoeze (Chinyere Wilfred) since this limited space would not contain all of the folksongs. Akwaeke is further praised as the mirror of her mother's beauty, her sunshine and lovely one as well as her apple and the fruit of her womb. The folksongs enable Akwaeke to make a grand entry into the Ochikaeze's royal palace where she presents traditional wine to Odum and they are offered his father's royal blessings. The study does not forget the role of the folksongs **All that glitters is not gold my dear** and **what a marriage tie I have Oh my world** which were sung by Akwaeke and her maidens when they found themselves in the world of the dead. The folksongs advise the young adults to adhere to reason and apply caution when making choice in life. Ugoeze at her moment of depression sings a song to decry Akwaeke's attitude as a fly that follows a corpse to the grave. Hence, folkmusic and folksongs are used in the folkloric film to heighten the effect of the moment of Akwaeke's marriage to Odum and her relationship with Ogbuagu and the general people of Amanato. The

Igbo

Between Fantasy, Reality and the Supernatural

Despite entreaties and insistence by Ogbuagu for her hands in marriage, Akwaeke the daughter of Ochikaeze continues to resist his overtures. Her far-

apart from other village maidens as well as her hesitation to marry someone from her parts. The folksongs expose how her beauty and the associated praises and chants of her may have got into her head and how this symbolises the trajectory of most marriageable young ladies who are still being "choosy" when it comes to matters of marriage. The songs also touch on one of the preconditions for presenting the beautiful daughter of Ochikaeze the king of Amanato Okporo to her beloved husband.

English

My lovely one come out
You are extraordinary pretty
Akwaeke come out
You are extraordinary pretty
Our people are waiting for you
You are extraordinary pretty
Our in-laws are also waiting for you
You are extraordinary pretty
The most precious and pretty lady
You are extraordinary pretty
The beautiful lad that took after the mother
You are extraordinary pretty

folksongs and music are illustrated with beautiful and sonorous refrains. Dances are also patterned to rhyme with the folksongs and folkmusic. The dances are celebratory, lively and invigorating. Body positions and gestures in the film are appropriate and serve to actuate the many themes of the story.

Finally, Akwaeke's folksong as the film builds to an end is also enigmatic and enterprising. One of the roles of folklore is to enable the transformation of characters and characterization through genuine and sincere sacrifice, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration of values. The beauty of Igbo epic romance tales is the happiness and the victory that the protagonists get by their virtue of overcoming the troubles that have been cast their way. As Ogbuagu meets Akwaeke unconscious in the world of the dead, he makes incantations for her health and revival. Akwaeke is stabilised. The folksong interlude at the end enables her to sue for peace and forgiveness while appreciating Ogbuagu's unalloyed charity and sacrifice.

English

Ogbuagu forgive me, Ogbuagu forgive me
Forgive all my wrong doings to you
All my neglect and reproach to you forgive me
All your sufferings for my sake, forgive me
All the humiliations you had for my sake, forgive me.

etched preference of a distinguished husband sets the conflict of the folkstory burning. According to Akwaeke, in her description of the basic features of the right man for her hands in marriage:

He has to be tall, handsome, strong, rich. His beauty will radiate like the early morning sun such as when my body touches his body... He will lift me in his hands like an egg. Am I not Akwaeke?

Egg in Igbo mythology is a precious object and can break easily. Akwaeke symbolises egg. And her own kind of egg is the supernatural one from the beautiful and petal coloured cobra snake. As a precarious egg Akwaeke rejects suitors here and there. A chance meeting between her and a stranger as she goes to the village stream with her maidens would change her fortunes. Akwaeke is hypnotized by the stranger and she stops in her tracks: Akwaeke finally woos the stranger as untypical of Igbo traditions of the culture of Amanato Okporo and accepts Odum as her husband. She says: "Stranger. Odum. My heart goes out for you. Ever since the day I set my eyes on you, I have not stopped thinking about you." We are amazed at the reluctance of her family, the community as well as Akwaeke and her friends to trace Odum's village and personality. Here, Akwaeke gets ruled by own emotions, love and fantasy rather than reality. Here, it would seem that the supernatural is now at their best: unleashing their powers on the people and controlling the mind of Akwaeke. The Ochikaeze taken aback by the ecstasy of his daughter finally accepting a man dumps the bid to ask Odum of his parentage and place of origin. He is allowed to behave as he wishes.

Soon after the necessary rites have been completed and the marriage contracted, Akwaeke discovers to her chagrin that she has married a demon. It is not that her supposed in-laws have begun to disappear into spatial nothingness, she is appalled at the creature before her. Odum transforms into a ghost nature with smoke and fire and other strange occurrences billowing here and there. She and her friends found out too late that Odum rented demons and zombies for the marriage and that he obviously is not human. We are not in short memory recalling Ogbuagu's words to Akwaeke about the identity of her supposed lover. But it is seen that clearly, Akwaeke has set herself for a destruct end. "When the gods want to kill a man they make him deaf," Ogbuagu is found advising Akwaeke. And she replies, rather airily to her friends: "I cannot wait to blossom in his kingdom. He is my king and he rules in the kingdom of my heart." Even efforts made by the village nit-wit to forestall what he probably feels to be a tragedy is clearly rebuffed by Ochikaeze who instructs guards to bear him away. Ogbuagu too is himiliated, shamed and disgraced.

They are petrified by guttural toned voices and unfamiliar sounds. Instances of supernatural phenomenas that the girls and the male visitors to the land of the dead are confronted with include the bodyless head and hands of Odum, skeleton, being staked to the tree and flogged by some invisible canes,

crusts of fire and smoke billowing, flying zombies and monsters bearing ominous calabash of fire, dancing male zombies and demons; and Odum appearing as a chimpanzee, and other deadly apparitions suffuse the world of dead. There are quick appearances of the dead and their disappearances after they have wreaked havoc. The height of sacrifice for Akwaeke's preoccupation with fantasy becomes the disappearance and death of her three friends Ntana (Queen Nwokoye), Udo (Uche Ogbodo), Nana (Amina Innocent-Ndim). Ogbuagu suffers casualties too. Mbata (Links Edochie) and Azundu (Offia Mbaka) get consumed despite being ritually prepared and cooked by Ikuku for the task of liberating Akwaeke from Odum.

Akwaeke is almost losing the battle when she is met and rescued by Ogbuagu. As the latter bears her over his shoulder and they are confronted by fierce looking zombies, Ogbuagu disperses them into spatial vacuum with his *ebube agu na eche agu* ritual fortification enchantment. Thus, it becomes true that, as Ogbuagu rightly told Akwaeke earlier: "I am Ogbuagu. The one who puts down the back of Odum with his craftiness" would not be mere refrain found in folklore but evidence of his strenght and capacity for love. They return home and the two lovers live happily ever after.

CONCLUSION

Societies from research have been shown to live by tradition and culture. Folklore appears to be one of the veritable ways of disseminating cultural and traditional values to the people. Amayo Uzo Philip who is the screen writer, director and producer of the *Odum na Akwaeke* and *Odum na Ogbuagu* flicks which are sequel movies in the film *Deadly Adventure* has made an indelible mark in the transfer and adaptation of the Amanato Okporo folklore of the Akwaeke myth into Nollywood, thereby documenting and storing it as a historical film data. The folklore's ability through narration to educate, correct, and enlighten young adults is remarkable. Francis Duru's interpretation and portrayal of the character, Ogbuagu is exemplary and full of enormous art and talent, as are the manner that Chioma Franklin Akpotha interprets the character Akwaeke; and places them squarely as mirrors on their society. Whether treated as the collective psyche of a disenchanting and ideal society of imperfections or not, the work nonetheless evaluates Francis Duru's (Ogbuagu) celebration of love, tolerance, patience and sacrifice through an assemblage of vast folkloric elements which this work unearthed. Through the assemblage of dances, folkmusic, folksongs and choreographed movements and processions aesthetics of performance are crafted into the epic story as creative stimulus to reinforce themes of love, adventure, rejection and sacrifice.

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