

IBIBIO LIBATION PERFORMANCES AND WORLDVIEW

By

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Mr. Okon Daniel Usoro,
for all the support, encouragements and above all, for defying patriarchy.

It is dedicated to everyone out there, who encourages intellect.

It is for you, who ignite the flame of intellect and wisdom.

It is for you, who incite the satisfaction of a quest.

It is for you, who inspire the contentment of a yearning.

It is for you who appreciate goodness.

It is also for you my uncle, Rtd Serg. Enefiok J. Bassey,
for nurturing the plant that has given birth to this fruit.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mrs. R. O. Usoro in the Department of English, University of Ibadan.

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ABSTRACT

Libation among the Ibibio involves invocations, incantations and supplications to the gods and ancestors through which their world view is expressed. While aspects of libation such as sacrifices, chants, rites and rituals, which emphasis on contents, have been adequately researched, performance of libation has not been elaborately studied, relevant as it is in revealing the cultural values of the Ibibio people. This study, therefore, examines the performance properties and world view of Ibibio people in their libation performances.

The study applies Charles Peirce's semiotic and Richard Schechner's performance theories. Purposive and snowball techniques were used in selecting fifteen libation performances covering sacrifice (3), coronation (2), purification (1), planting (1), harvest (1), appeasement (2), dispute (1), welcome (2), puberty (1) and naming rite (1), collected from *Uyo* (5), *Itu* (1), *Nsit* (1), *Eket* (2), *Ibesikpo* (1) *Ini* (3) and *Ikono* (2). These performances were transcribed and translated into English. Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving Chiefs (8), academics (3) and a combination of artisans, traders and youths, aged 25-35 (6) were held. In-depth interviews were conducted with libation performers (4), academics (3) and elderly members (3) of Ibibio society. Data were subjected to semiotic and critical analyses.

Ibibio libation performances reveal indexical, iconic, and symbolic signs. Schnapps, *ufofob* (native gin), other hard drinks, *nnak enaĩ* (cow horn), *ukpok/iko* (gourd) or glass indexicates sacrifices. Pointing up and down to denote heaven and earth combines with verbal deixis in personal pronouns such as *ami* (I), *nnyin* (we) and *mbufo* (you), to indexicate the Ibibio source of strength. While *nnak eniin* (elephant tusk) and *ekere* (gong) are iconic of coronation performances, palm-wine and palm-oil are iconic of appeasement; animals are iconic of sacrifices. *Ukpok/iko* (gourd) symbolises oneness, palm-oil and eggs symbolise peace and *nnak eniin* (elephant tusk) symbolises royal authority. Ibibio libation performances are ritualistic, but some are more intense in contents and props. Performances from *Ini* and *Ikono* are more esoteric than those from the urban settings. Spatial and temporal settings of the performances vary according to context: while appeasement performances to *Amasa*, the water goddess, are set by the sea-side at midnight, with fowls, eggs, white basins, schnapps and priests dressed in white, appeasement performances for the earth deities are performed at shrines or spots of desecration, in the evenings with items like *ufofob* (native gin), other hard drinks and palm-wine. The insistence on schnapps for the water goddess underscores Ibibio understanding of schnapps as a foreign drink. Similarly, coronation performances are performed at designated spiritual arenas, while routine worship, welcome, naming or puberty rites are performed at homes with performers dressed in traditional attire. The select texts exhibit repetition and metaphor as devices used in exploring narrative properties such as plea, confidence and affirmation.

Libation performances in Ibibio society which utilise symbolic drinks, objects and props reflect the mores of the people. Thus, they reveal a communion with the gods and ancestors manifested in theatrical aesthetic that portrays the cultural values and world view of the Ibibio.

Key words: Libation text, Performance, Significations, Ibibio religious life, Ibibio rituals.

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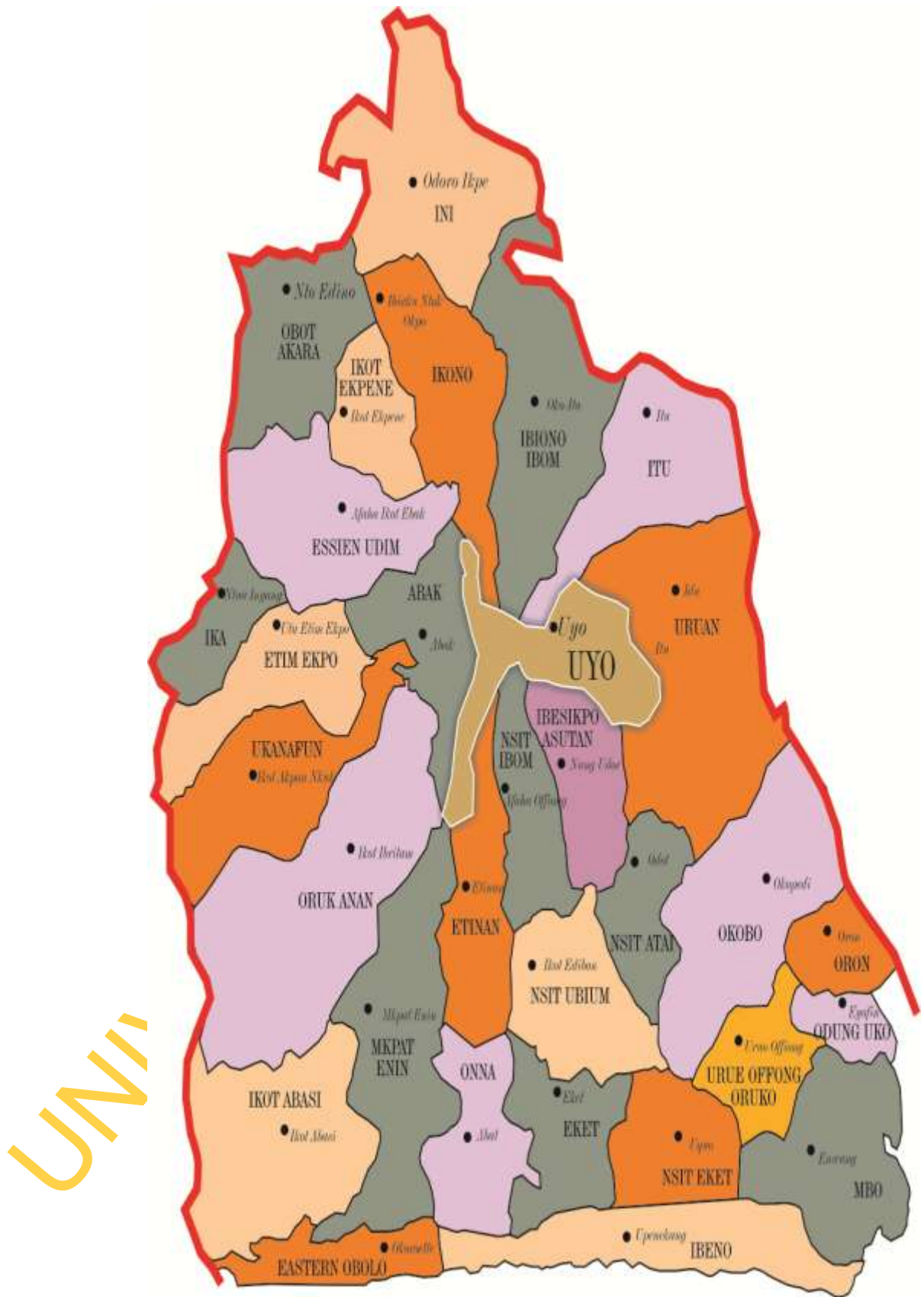
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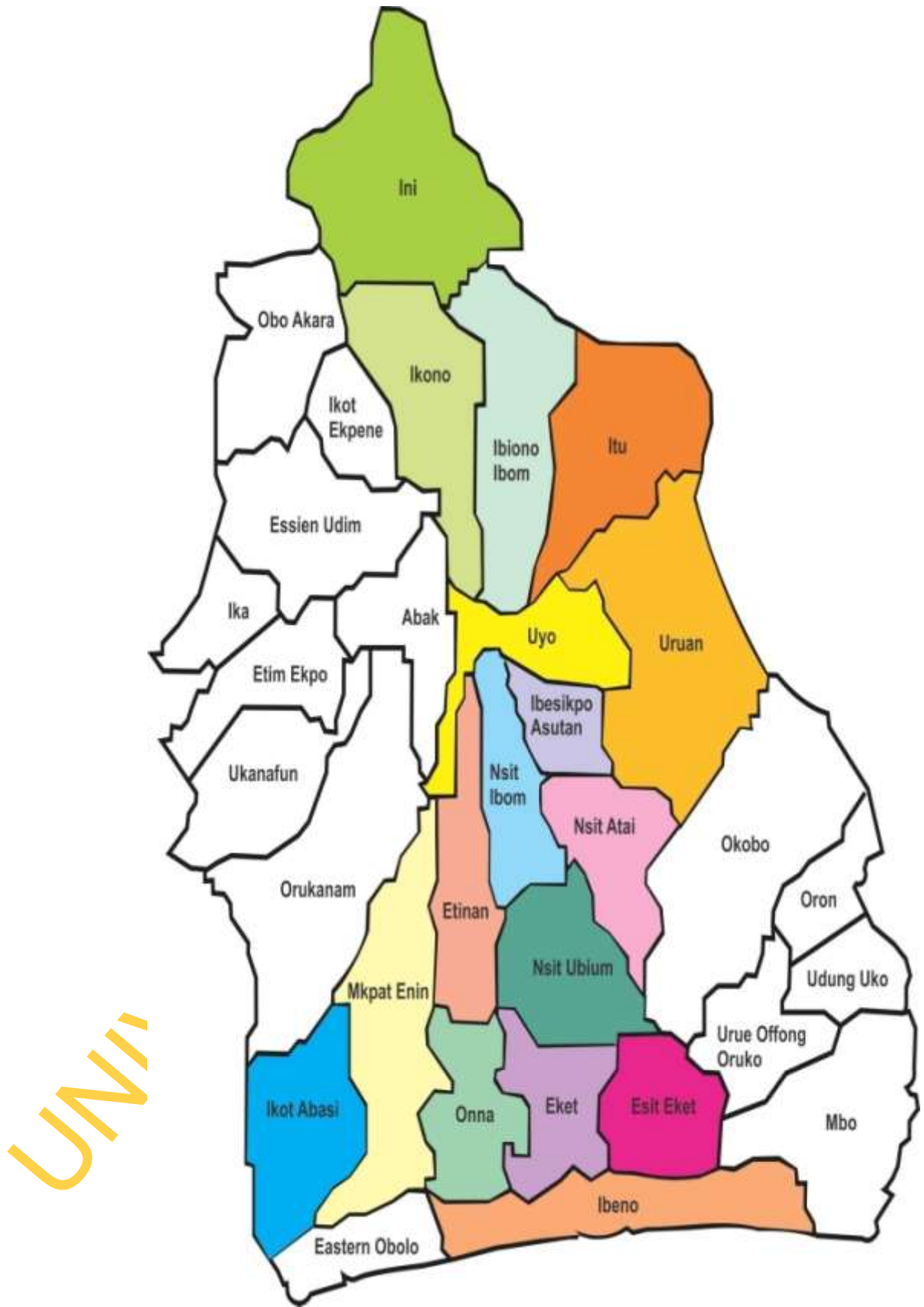
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Glossary of Ibibio words

Abañ idem – a pot kept at the base of the tree where libation is performed. It usually contains water which is believed to have the potency to strengthen warriors if used before they set out for an encounter as well as in other traditional usages.

Abasi ekõñ – this was a shrine made for the god of war.

Abasi enyõñ – the God who dwells in the sky.

Abasi Ibom – the God Almighty.

Abõn – a kind of social group known for its wildness. It operates mostly at night. It is open to members only, especially men; women are not members and non-member males are not free to move about when it is on operation.

Adiaha – the first daughter born into a family.

Adõdõdõ – a colourful traditional cultural group that entertains at public functions. It usually operates on height extension that amazes the onlookers. Non-members of the group do not know how it suddenly grows that tall.

Akata – a masquerade that operates at night in the last month of a leap-year. It reveals all the year's secret and scandals to the villagers (Ekong. 2009: 10).

akõkõd – a socio-cultural group whose specialty is height extension.

Akpa – the first, either as in the order of event or opinion.

Akpan – the first male child of the family.

Akpenè – an old parcel of land (acres) that belongs to *ekpuk* (the entire family lineage), *efaak* (a part of the village) or *Obio* (the entire village population that comprises different families). Planting of an *akpenè* usually takes an interval of seven years.

Akwa Esop Imaisong Ibibio - a socio-cultural group of the Ibibio.

Akpõ esiin – front view to a compound. The front view is the male domain in Ibibio land. It is a predominant arena controlled by the man and is synonymous with the *esa eko* (back view), which is the woman's domain. The concept of *akpõ esiin* goes beyond being the front view of a house. It underscores the domain of male authority.

Amasa – the goddess of fertility.

Anansa – a vast mass of water, known for its turbulent nature.

Anwa Esioon – front view of a compound.

asabõ – a python.

Asa-iwa – special porridge made from cassava that is grated and wrapped in tiny bits with tender cocoyam leaves.

Asan – the Ibibio traditional shrine.

Asian uboikpa – an elegant maiden cultural group. They entertain at very special occasions and during Christmas festivities.

Atabrinyañ – the high sea that empties itself into the Atlantic Ocean.

Atakpo – the god of Uruan Clan.

Atan – a type of bush cat that is forbidden by the Ofood [Offot] clan of Uyo. (Ekong, 2009: 17).

Awa adia – a kind of ritual made following *awa oduoño*, before the actual marriage rites of the first daughter. The meal, along with the animals, is eaten by everyone present except the parents, who MUST have a long chewing stick in their mouths throughout the ceremony, so that they may not mistakenly eat from the feast.

Awa oduoño – the preliminary rituals made before the actual marriage rites of the first daughter, the meal along with the animals is not consumed but buried behind the mother's kitchen.

Ayin uboñ – a little boy-priest who is assigned the duty of carrying the items of libation which he hands out as required. He is officially ordained as a chief and most often, he is chosen by the deities to inherit the mantle of priesthood after the father.

Ebok – monkey.

Ebre – an association of elderly women. It is a fraternity for clean and upright women of the society. It is equally a species of yam (water yam – *Discorea alata*) particularly cultivated by women (Etukudo, 2003: 49).

Efiat (eto) – bitter kola tree (*Garcinia kola*) with a “closed crown and suitable as a shade”, noted traditionally to harbour the presence of unseen powers (Etukudo, 2003: 38).

Eka ndito – a mother.

Ekere – a small metallic gong with curved rim used by some traditional cults in Ibibio society. It is used for speech punctuation during consultation with the deities/goddesses, especially during libation performance. It is also used by the *akwa ikọ* (the palace orator), for the announcement of the arrival of the traditional ruler to the palace or an event. (Ekong, 2009: 40).

Ekom – African walnut/Garban nut tree (*coula edulis*) (Etukudo, 2003: 105)

Ekombi – a socio-cultural dance group.

Ekõñ ñke – opening formula for story-telling sessions

Ekpooñ – a masquerade group that entertains at festivals and other ceremonies

Ekpe – a secret cult strictly for men of proven integrity.

Ekpo – an adult male exclusive cult reserved for men of integrity. Physically in Ibibio society it is a masquerade which uses fresh palm fronds, designed wooden mask and charcoal all over the body. Women and children were not free to look at ekpo in the old days.

Ekpo usoro-abasi – a masquerade which uses fresh palm fronds, designed wooden mask and charcoal all over the body, but appears around the month of August when new yam festival is about to hold. It leads the way for mboppo maiden outing, *udua mboppo*.

Ekpurikpu ubooñ – the inner caucus of chieftaincy.

Ekuho inam – official seclusion period for the *Inam* Priest.

Ekuriku – a special kind of staff with nods all over it; it is handled by high ranking chiefs like clan heads, paramount rulers or a village head who is “complete” in traditional initiations.

Ekwooñ – snail

Enem – sweet yam (*Discorea dumetorum*) (Etukudo, 2003: 49).

Esa eko – back view of a woman’s domain; it comprises the back space and the hearth of the family.

Ese – praise, especially during praise poetry.

Etaha – a day set aside for rites of passage into priesthood or chieftaincy and sacrifices to the deities. It is also a big market day on which traders come from far and near.

Etebom – an Ibibio traditional title for clan heads

Eteidung – a traditional title given to village head

Eto usiere – Parrot tree (*Erythrina mildbraedii*) used as both boundary tree /fence stick and as a decorative tree. Like bitter kola tree (*Garcinia kola*), it is believed traditionally to harbour the presence of the deities (Etukudo, 2003: 85).

Eyei – young palm fronds used for traditional communication and other rituals. It is derived from *Elaise guineensis* - oil palm tree.

Fiõaran – a day declared for female cleansing rites and initiation.

Fiõetok – a day declared for female cleansing rites and initiation.

Ibok – medicine or a carved wooden image used to represent the world of traditional medicine.

Idim itotoho – water fall.

ldio – a great wind (whirlwind).

Idiõñ – a religious divination society for privileged people.

Ifõfõbpo – self-implied word, meaning to intoxicate.

Iko – a gourd.

Inam – the highest religious order of Ibibio land.

Inneh – a fishing village or community.

Inim-isoñ – a cultural troupe that is well covered in a ring of materials. Listeners hear its voice but do not see it.

Iso abasi ekõñ– the trees base comprising *itumo*, *eto usiere*, *efiat*, *õkõõ*, *usan idem* and *abañ idem*, where libation is performed.

iso idio – a shrine built for *idio* spirit.

iso ndem õkpõõ – a shrine built for deceased name sake.

Itembe – a social group of adolescence and youth.

itumo – boundary tree or chieftaincy tree (*Newbouldia laevis*) (Etukudo, 2003: 29)

Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio – a non-governmental social group of the present Ibibio men and women.

Mboppo – a mature maiden and one being prepared for marriage.

mmõñ-mmõñ – a kind of native hair-do by the Ibibio maiden, where the thread is not tied firmly around the hair. It is quick to make and adds beauty to the maiden.

Ndem – a benevolent spirit

Ndubiat – a profane woman.

Ndukpo – hawk (Ekong, 2009:103).

Ñke ekõñ abasi – audience response to the opening formula of story-telling sessions

Nnak enañ – the horn of the cow which the chiefs and priest use for drinking

Nnuk eniñ – (elephant tusk) is used by high chiefs and on very important and highly religious occasions such as chieftaincy/ kingship coronation ceremony.

Ntañña idiõñ – divination/religious poetry.

Ntum ntum – a shrine built for childrens' spirits (*õkpo ñka*).

Obio ekoõñ – a person who has been properly initiated into all the societal cults in Ibibio land; he must also possess human skull (s) as evidence of people he has killed in battle.

Obo – a day set aside for rites of passage into priesthood or chieftaincy and sacrifices to the deities.

Obõbõk ukõm – plantain porridge

Okonọ – boundary tree (*Newbouldia laevis*) (Ekong, 2009: 183).

okponọ idiñ – a head-ring worn by *idiñ* cult members (Ekong, 2009: 128).

Oku-Ibom – a high chief, the highest traditional stool in Ibibio land.

Okuidem – An *okuidem* is an *okuinam*; one who has undergone all societal initiations. He must possess evidence of successful exploits in wars where he has killed his victims. We say that such *okuinam* is “complete”. It is only an *okuidem* that prepares the people for war.

Okuinam - the Chief Priest to the god(s) of his society, village or family. He is the custodian of the religious values of his society, village or family. At the clan level, he is the chief priest and custodian of the shrine to the god (s) of his society. At the family level, he may or may not be the chief priest of the family deities, especially where the village has one central god to worship.

Okponọ – a traditional muffler used by men; it is woven stiffly.

Qwok – sacred grove, not accessible to all

Uban ekpo – formal initiation into *ekpo* cult.

Udad ekpo – the official occasion for the outing of *ekpo* masquerade, the commencement of *ekpo* calendar year.

uduok ukod – libation performance.

Ufofob – an indigenously distilled gin with psychoactive agent, the inherent property of which is believed to be capable of “awakening” sleeping deities and ancestors.

Ufok usen – a first personal house built as a sign of maturity for marriage.

Ukqon edon – a ritual performed before any *akpene* is cleared for the planting season. It involves elaborate incantations and libation where a sheep is hung to a stake without slaughtering it. The sheep dies in pains and remains there until its carcass decays. It is usually performed deep into the innermost part of the *akpene* at least two weeks before the day that the farm is to be cleared.

Ukqon udak – the way of installing a traditional ruler in Ibibio.

Ukpad ekpo – the official day to send forth the *ekpo* masquerade, a day that marks the end of the calendar year for the *ekpo* cult.

Ukpok – guord.

Usan idem – a small earthen bowl.

Usoro idok – general harvest festival for all crops planted during the season.

Usoro ufa udia - the new yam festivals which prepares people to eat their yams after harvest.

Usoror usuuk udia – the new yam festivals which prepares people to eat their yams after harvest.

Usañ ikporñ – pounded cocoa-yam that is eaten in balls with soup.

Uta – a socio-cultural group that entertains, especially at occasions.

Uto – balad.

Utop ikod – hunting, a very lucrative occupation among the Ibibio resulting from the abundance of rich terrestrial delicacies of the people.

Utuekpe – a socio-cultural group.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Ethnography of the Ibibio People

The Ibibio people formerly belonged to the South Eastern State of Nigeria; the region later became known as Cross River State in 1976. Today, the Ibibio is an ethnic group in the present Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The creation of Akwa Ibom State by President Ibrahim Babangida in 1987 is the result of the agitation instigated by the Ibibio State Union (ISU) founded in 1928 which comprised at the time, Annang, Ibibio and the Oron people. (Ekpotu, 2004; Nkanga, 1991; Obot, 2006). Otoabasi Umana (2004) says that:

[...] from the earliest times, all the groups which now constitute Akwa Ibom State were Ibibio. That was during the virgin age when politics never coloured the perception and consciousness of the people. Every inhabitant of today's Akwa Ibom State was proud to be counted as an Ibibio person. They did this because it was good and profitable to be identified as one. For this, Ibibio State College was sited at Ikot Ekpene which is in Annang land today.... Similarly, during this very age of innocence, a high chief in Oron was the National Treasurer of the Ibibio State Union (3).

The Ibibio constitute the major power brokers and the majority of the indigenes of Akwa Ibom State, numbering about 2.6 million out of the 3.9 million realized at the 2006 National Population Census. Although Imelda Udoh and Bassey Okon (2008) claim that the Ibibio language is spoken in fifteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state, authoritative indigenous scholars insist that, of the thirty-one local government areas that the state is delineated into, the Ibibio occupy seventeen LGAs, leaving fourteen to be shared by the other smaller groups of Annang, Oron and Obolo who claim not to be Ibibio but understand and speak variants of Ibibio language nonetheless (Essien, 1990: ix; Okon 2012). Thus the Ibibio language forms the majority or “a kind

of lingua franca in the State” (Udoh and Okon, 2008: 38). The Ibibio is “the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, after the three major ones, Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa” (Essien, 1990: ix; Essien, 2001: 317; Nssien, 1991: 1; Ukpanah, 1996: 153). This is contentious as some other ethnic groups like the Ijaw contest this position as well.

The region is coastal in nature and lies between latitudes 4° 33 and 5° 33 North, longitudes 7°35 and 8°25 East. The name Ibibio is an omnibus name for both the people and their language, as observed by Monday Noah (2002) who says that the word “Ibibio” is used as “an ethnic and linguistic term” for the identification of the people (1). Ibibio language is spoken in about 1,181 villages in Akwa Ibom State (Usoro, 2005; Eberefiak, 2005) and is also understood and spoken in some local government areas in Cross River State, such as Odukpani, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo and Calabar municipality. Genetically, Ibibio language “belongs to the Benue-Congo sub-family which in turn belongs to the Niger-Congo families” (Essien, 1990: ix). More recent studies have adjusted this group structure which now places them among the Niger-Congo group of languages directly (Williamson, 1989; Essien, 1986 and Urua, 2000).

Ibibio origin is not certain, as different sources trace it differently. While some historians claim the Ibibio homeland as the Cameroon (Abasiattai, 1987; Ekong, 2001; Noah, 2002) and Middle-Eastern origin (Umoh-Faithman, 1999), Udo (1983) believes them to originate from the Benue valley where they finally settled at Ibom. This migration, done in stages is believed to have been completed in about 200 years, after spending 100 years (1300-1400AD) of this in Arochukwu where they worshipped the Long Juju and moved to their present location as a result of internecine wars with their immediate neighbours, the Igbo. In spite of these various assumptions concerning their origin, many scholars have agreed that the Ibibio have settled in their present location longer than any single ethnic group in Nigeria (McKeown, 1912; Talbot, 1926; Jones & Forde, 1950; Dike, 1956 and Messenger, 1959).

The settlement pattern of a people is to a large extent determined by factors like topography, vegetation or soil type, availability of abundant water, type of neighbours and family organization pattern. Ekong (2001) identified two forms of settlement patterns noted among the Ibibio - line and disperse. The line settlement according to him simply means “dwelling in such a way that forms a line along a river course” for the purpose of fishing - in a cluster known as “*inneh*” which is found among the riverine areas where the inhabitants are mainly fishermen (12).

The clustered settlement is a thickly populated dwelling that later replaced the former (line and dispersed) due to the establishment of markets in the upland which shifted the economic activities of the people from the river banks to the interior (Ekong, 2001). This form of cluster provides necessary incentives for urban migration and an attraction for urban employment and white collar jobs for most people especially in the local government areas. This search for new lifestyles has brought considerable urban drift and of course, a decline in many traditional economic activities of the people like palm-wine tapping, palm-fruit processing, trading, fishing, pottery, weaving, mat making, etc., but has not disrupted the kind of unity among them whereby a close-knit socio-cultural life is sustained.

1.2 The Socio-Cultural Life of the Ibibio People

1.2.1 Story Telling Tradition: Folktales, Legend and Myths

In Ibibio society, there are many tales about animals, children, family structure (especially the polygamous), men and their different levels of achievements and the society as a whole. The tradition of storytelling in the Ibibio society is a process and an art. Tale sessions normally include a very skilful narrator and his audience who are usually younger people, although older people or age-mates of the narrator may sometimes participate passively as they listen in. Every such session begins with the normal opening formula “*Ekoñ ñke e e!*” (by the narrator) and “*ñke ekoñ abasi*” response by the audience. For a successful session, attention is retained by ensuing rounds of riddles before the actual story for the night is told and sometimes, to a more mature audience. Stories of bravery and conquest, where libation performances dominate, are usually the overriding subject matter. Ropo Sekoni (2003) asserts that “the retention of audience attention is however only attainable through the performer’s manipulation of the emotions of the audience ... manifested in the narrative-performance through the patterning of narrative images or episodes” (142). The Ibibio audience by this manner, thus become an “integral part of the creative act in an oral performance” (Okpewho, 2003:180).

1.2.2 Ibibio Religious Conception

The Ibibio religion is best described as monotheistic. Ime Ekpo (1999) avers that religion “is not only concerned with a mere belief in god or deities, but also the expression of that belief in acts of worship such as prayers and rituals” (2). According to Bolaji Idowu (1991), religion results:

[...] from man's spontaneous awareness of and spontaneous reaction to his immediate awareness of the Living Power "wholly other" and infinitely greater than himself; a power mysterious because unseen, yet a present and urgent reality, seeking to bring man into communion with himself (75).

A psychologist, J.B. Pratt (1946), defines religion as "the attitude of the self towards an object in which the self generally believes" (2). Ibibio traditional religious practitioners believe in the existence of only one God called *Abasi Ibom* (the God Almighty). Udo (1983) avers that in Ibibio parlance *Ibom* signifies largeness, wideness, endless, something limitless (249). Also in Ibibio, the word *Abasi* is a short form of *Ababa ke nsinsi* – Eternal, Infinite Being (Offiong, 1989: 15). Ime Ikiddeh, in Obot (2006), affirms the reality and significance of Ibom to the Ibibio saying that;

[...] the reality of IBOM in Ibibio history and the impact it has continued to exert on the Ibibio psyche. The appellation in such names as Ikono Ibom, Iman Ibom, Ibiono Ibom and Nsit Ibom and the more recent Ibom connection and Ibom Hall in Akwa Ibom State are the living marks, which the Ibom ancestral home has left on the minds of the Ibibio people. The name conveys unmistakable connotations of largeness, greatness and grandeur (24).

This conception denotes God as a limitless being that cannot be accommodated in an enclosure. This explains why the people have no priest for him, because no one is qualified to serve him directly.

This distance between God and the Ibibio man, adding to his huge commitment to other dependants, makes the Ibibio believe that God is less committed to the daily affairs of man; a stance Udo Etuk (2002) considers as "*Deus remotes* - a God who has withdrawn spatially and conceptually from man" (31). Ekong (2001) says that He is "regarded as only distantly interested in the affairs of the living" (43) while Etuk (2002: 31) believes him as "not meddling too much in the daily affairs of men". The people believe that it is only the *ndem* and the ancestors that are close enough to, and can relate directly to and be immediately involved in the affairs of humans. Nevertheless, this awesomeness of God demands an intermediary in the form of spirit beings. This creates the need for the reliance on ancestors.

In African cosmology, the ancestors are the spirits of people with unquestionable character who had died, and are deemed to keep watch over their living descendants on earth. Daniel Offiong (1989) corroborates that the ancestors are the ones who “mediate between the elders and the spirits who finally carry the message or supplication to God” (12). He adds that it is impossible to divorce religion from the traditions of society of Ibibio because the ancestors, though dead, are believed to be still actively involved in the affairs of the society; they are invisible members and belong to these societies (95). The ancestors, Udo (1983) intones “consisted chiefly of the forefathers and grandmothers...[as] not every ancestor was honoured and worshipped, but only good ones who were noted for good life, sane judgment and philanthropy” (258). Similarly, Bolaji Idowu (1991) observes that “only good people become ancestors after they have received the well done judgment of deity or of the court of the ancestors” (187). Ancestors are the invisible rulers of their various communities. This is further observed by Mair (1974) that “the spirit of dead ancestors, particularly household heads, are very much involved in the activities of their living descendants” (210). To the Ibibio therefore, the qualifications for ancestral intermediary role relates to the nature of good and upright living while on earth. The dependence on the deities which also characterizes African drama till this century confirms that they are “the manifestation of our worldview and a basic human epistemological condition” in Africa (Olatunji, 1993: 35).

The most important ingredient of religion is worship. Thus worship in the African pantheon denotes praise and prayer moments when supplications, sacrifice of offerings, among others are made. The concept of libation is therefore canonized within the religious activity of African to which the Ibibio belong and comprises the acts of prayers, incantation, invocation and supplication. In the religious rites of some early Christian groups, especially the Roman Catholic, God is approachable through the saints and angels. The Ibibio too have their own god-like representatives in the likes of images of the deities and ancestors. Ekong (2001) summarizes that there are “many gods responsible for the various aspects of the physical environment” - the *Abasi isong* (god of the earth) who constitute *ibok* found on land and *ndem* found in water (43). Ekong (2001) reiterates that these earthly deities are both benevolent (*ndem*) and malevolent (*ibok*). Offiong (1989) corroborates that these earth deities are represented as being vengeful and vindictive as well as benevolent. The earth deities are “believed to have human-like passions but transcendental powers” (Offiong, 1989: 11). Udo

(1983) confirms that traits like jealousy and anger are easily attributed to these deities; hence, they must be regularly appeased through sacrifice.

John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo (2006) notes the presence of many deities in the physical environment when he confirms that the Izon also believe in the existence of some deities/powers which influence the peaceful existence of order of their society. Like the Ibibio have *Abasi Ibom*, the Ijo/Izon have *Oyin* as their Supreme God. They also have “a variety of deities and beings peopling the Ijo cosmos” (xxiv). These are what Wole Soyinka (1967) calls “presences” in *Idanre and Other Poems* (Soyinka, 1967: 57).

Udo’s conclusion is that life’s expectations of the Ibibio are hinged on the prospect of a God who is deemed to perfect things and bring about divine direction. The nature of the relationship and communication with this God is established through several forms of incantations, invocations, prayers and sacrifices. These are the constituents of libation which this study is focused on.

1.2.3 Rites, Rituals and Chants: The Matrix of Ibibio Religious Life

Rituals refer to the strict, ordered or traditional method of performing or conducting the act of worship or a solemn ceremony which must not be faulted or altered. Rituals and rites are similar as they both deal with liturgy. They are media of communication to and invitation of the ancestors and deities to the affairs of the people through invocation. They constitute important links between the past and present and both constitute core ingredients in libation performance. Rituals (libation) are found in all aspects of Ibibio life ranging from traditional occupations like *utop ikod* (hunting), sea-faring, bricklaying (masonry) and carpentry. Rituals are also performed for some traditional rites like *ekpurikpu uboñ*, *mboppo*, *udad ekpo*, *ekuhọ ekpo*, *ukpad ekpo*, as well as the general initiation into *ekpo*, *ekpe*, *ndaam*, *inam*, *idiñ* and *ekoñ* societies.

Even the Ibibio worship of their deities is ritualistic in that every priest/priestess of a deity must as a matter of inevitability offer periodic sacrifice to his/her god. Such sacrifices are normally carried out on a specific day of the Ibibio eight-day week. The Ibibio calendar week comprises *obo*, *edem-obo*, *fiñaran*, *edere-etaha*, *etaha*, *edem-etaha*, *fiñetok*, *edere-obo*. *Obo* and *etaha* are big markets days on which traders come from far and near to buy and sell at the designated market locations. Other local markets take their turns in the other six days of the week.

These days too have their significance for social activities like sacrificing, worship of the deities and libation performance. For instance, in Oku clan in Uyo, *fiñaran* and *fiñetok* are days for female cleansing rites while *etaha* and *obo* were set aside for rites of passage into priesthood or chieftaincy¹. In Afaha Offot, Offot clan in Uyo, *edem-obo* is generally set aside for *udad ekpo* and *ukpad ekpo*. Sacrifices are also offered on these days to the deities.

From birth to death, many rituals accompany the Ibibio at certain stages of life. For instance, at birth, the family gather together on the eighth day for *usio anyiñ* – a thanksgiving to *amasa*, the god of fertility and naming. In the case of a male child, the day begins with circumcision of the foreskin whereby his blood spills unto mother earth as a symbol of unification and a form of identity. At puberty the girl child has to contend with puberty rite – *mboppo* (maiden seclusion), while the male gets initiated into a traditional society like *ekpo*, among others (Etuk, 2002: 34). In *ekuhò mboppo*, series of rites are performed such as clitoridectomy (otherwise known as Female Genital Mutilation – FGM) and cicatrisation. *Mboppo* marks the preparation of a maiden for marriage after intention has been declared and accepted.

Other rituals found in Ibibio land occur during the institution and consecration of her several traditional cult groups and shrines like: *uban ekpo* (formal initiation into *ekpo* cult), *iso ndem okpõñò* (a shrine for a deceased namesake), *iso idio* (a shrine for *idio* spirit), *iso abasi ekõñ* (a shrine made for the god of war), *ntum ntum* (pantheon); children's spirit otherwise known as *okpo ñka*, etc., which involve regulated sacrificing and rituals duly accompanied with elaborate libation performances. All these and more are believed to have regulatory impact on the people's well-being and hence are observed accordingly.

Chants are a category of Ibibio oral poetry and have a rich and thriving tradition that varies according to content of rendition. They are also called recitations. Chants in Ibibio include *Uto* (ballad), *Ese* (panegyric), *Ntañña idioñ* (divination/religious poetry) and *Uduok-ukòd* (libation/religious poetry)" which this present research is about (Okon, 2012: 8). They are "marked by higher degree of stress in such a way as to achieve greater emotional intensity" than normal speech (Okpewho, 1992: 131). Chants most often have religious connotations; therefore they are performed by people identified as religious functionaries on religious occasions.

According to Okpewho (1992), "the tone of chanting is frequently quite high, the chanter's aim being to impress the audience of the open performance not only with

the strength and sonority of the voice but also with the importance of the idea” (131). Chants make use of fixed poetic structures which must not be altered. In Ibibio society, chants are performed by the priests of the different oracles as communion with the deities. This may either be as a routine communication pattern or as a request by “customer” in need during libation, periodic sacrifice or during an enquiry into the problems of the individual, the community or both. Chants have specialized linguistic terminologies which are esoterically removed from the normal conversational level of man. These stylized languages of chants require interpretation which is done by the priests who are believed to understand the language of the divinities. Whether the audience understands the words, which they most often do not, they nevertheless enjoy the sound effect of the literal words employed by the performer(s).

1.2.4 Social Structure of Ibibio Society

Among the basics of Ibibio social composition are festivals where different practices of the Ibibio people are highlighted as epitome of the cultural lifestyle of the people. Ibibio social composition includes religion, dressing, housing, food, occupation, arts and crafts, music, marriage practices, family systems, medicine and education (Esema, 2002). Some highly celebrated festivals among the Ibibio have a religious significance. Among these are: *ekpo*, *ekọṣñ* and *ekpe* cult-celebrated festivals that are observed annually among the Ibibio. However, membership into them is highly restrictive. Some prerequisite formalities are necessary for admission into these societies and their activities are shrouded in secrecy that is accessible to only willing initiates. Even at the early stage of initiation, the initiates are not allowed to have access to the inner secrets until after many years of proven faithfulness. Initiation into these cults is elaborately ritualistic. Other social groups like *Idiṣñ* and *Inam* are religious cults while *ebre*, *asian uboikpa*, *itembe*, *abañ*, *ekombi*, *uta*, *adoḍoḍo*, *utuekpe*, *akọḳọḳod*, *abon*, *akata*, *inim isoñ*, *ufok usen* are age-grade exclusive social groups marked out for entertainment.

Yet other social components of the Ibibio society include: *usoro idok*, *usoro usuuk-udia* (new yam festival) - marked with the coming of a special type of masquerade, *ekpo usoro abasi*, who is allotted the distinct privilege of leading other ranks of masquerades around the village and nearby communities and the fishing festival among the fishing communities of Ibibio land called boat regatta (Esema, 2002). These fishing festivals mark the people's way of offering sacrifices and libation to the creator for giving them a whole year for the pieces of cultivated land and peaceful waters for fishing.

Participation in the festivals is not restrictive in composition; every family participates effectively.

1.2.5 Ibibio Personhood

The late arrival of Ibibio literature on the literary shelf suggests that not much may have been heard about them and their literature, especially when the position of the Ibibio as the fourth largest group on the Nigerian ethnic ladder is considered. It was not until much later after the arrival of written culture to Nigeria that an Ibibio work was written. The first published work about Ibibio literary experience is Akpan J Esen's *Ibibio Profile: A Psycho-literary Analysis* (1982), although Ikiddeh is recognised as the first to undertake a research into the literary experience of the people via his M.A. dissertation at Leeds.

The Ibibio worldview, like that of the rest of African society, includes the belief in a cyclic life pattern – the world of the unborn, the living and the dead. Akpan Esen (1982) postulates that the people's worldview comprises “the ordinary thing the people do and say everyday and the characteristic way they do or say them ... the unconscious feelings about themselves and their collective assessment ...of their environment” (6, 62).

Every facet of the Ibibio life, the nuances and complexities embedded in her traditional system reflect patriarchal significations. The day to day Ibibio traditional life is a portrayal of the continuation of culturally institutionalized notion of male dominance and subjugation of women. All the taboos of life are geared towards the restriction of the woman. For instance, *idim itotoho* – water fall – is not accessible to the woman. Even the *owok* – sacred groves are equally restricted water sources to the female gender². If and whenever water from these sources is a matter of necessity for use, it is only a boy or man who could access the source to get the water. In an instance where a woman is requested to get water from there, it is either she is marked for elimination or she is an instrument for the service of the deities (these sets of female instruments are the ones accepted into the *ekpo*, *ekpe*, and *inam* orders).

Like any other African society, the Ibibio encourage polygamy. Men relish their ability to acquire as many wives as possible. Even after the emergence of Christianity which has reduced matrimony to one-man-one-wife, the Ibibio man, like his counterparts, strives to keep as many “unmarried wives” as possible. As a patrilineal society, having male children determines the strength of the man as well as his pride.

No matter how irresponsible the male child may turn out to be, the Ibibio man is still proud to own one rather than having only female children. Lots of diviners are consulted when they are faced with fathering an all-female family. Libation performance is an agenda at such a visitation.

The Ibibio are a morally-conscious society that wastes no time to ridicule a morally bankrupt person or family through songs at their numerous festivals. Character traits like laziness, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, are attacked. A punishment as harsh as banishment is pronounced on an unrepentant, immoral person while libation is performed to propitiate the divinities when they are committed.

The Ibibio value the prevalence of order in the society. Akpan J. Esen (1982) says that “order in nature prescribes that the older person shall be more knowledgeable than the younger ones” (65). This brings about demonstration of deep respect for the elderly: casualness was never expected from any youth in relating with an adult. They believe that a deep fascination for the concept of order is a reflection of their reverence for God and nature. A youth is not expected to “throw” greetings at the elders. He must wait and acknowledge the response to his greetings. Where a handshake is necessary, it is the adult who initiates the act before the youth responds with both hands.

According to Esen (1982), the sense of order in nature is usually reflected in the numerical and cardinal activities of the Ibibio. *Akpan* or *akpa* means the first; hence first children, opinions or issues are generally regarded as the most important in their lives. In spite of modern times where children are given English and traditional names which bear meaning to the children’s arrival and parental attachments, the *akpan* and *adiaha* (and others down the line), are still recognised accordingly (Esen, 1982). For example, the first male child is named *Akpan*; the second is named *Udo*, for the female children, *adiaha* is first; *nwa*, etc. The *Akpan* or *akpa* is understood by them as the first; every first opinion or issue is never toyed with.

1.3 Background to the Study

The arrival of Western civilisation and colonialism changed the thinking pattern of the Africans; it reduced their self-esteem and respect for their culture, religion, language and everything that served as the bulwark to the survival of the people. The “modern” African looks up to everything “European” as the ideal. The consequence is that the modern African abandons the natural communal culture of their land for the white man’s artificial culture. The Ibibio man is a victim of this as well; his religious

culture is undermined to the extent that most cultural values are no longer honoured. Among the Ibibio, most rites are no longer performed. Even the few that are still adhered to are performed in secrecy, so that the larger society may not vehemently condemn the performance and the performers as heathen and agents of darkness.

Even though colonialism exposed the African cultures economically and politically to suffer neglect, Ibibio inclusive, some cultural values such as food, clothing, hair styles and furniture have been greatly enriched as a result of this contact. New methods of making delicious meal from the same local raw materials have been popularised, new fashionable ways of crafting the hair-weave and creativity in the ways the same fabrics are designed have enhanced the lifestyles of the Ibibio in line with the trend in the outside world.

However, the formalised Eurocentric education which the Africans now have has tended to lead to the neglect of most societal mores and values, especially among the educated elites. In Ibibio society today, most traditional rulers have abandoned their social responsibilities of performing libation, a status quo that was put in place to promote some values as well as to check and harmonize relationships among the citizens. The rulers claim that libation performance would contaminate their faith as Christians whereas the non-disclosed reason for this nonchalant attitude among the traditional office holders is simply the quest and crave for wealth. Greed and the quest for material wealth have paved the way for mediocre to assume the post of traditional rulership which was hitherto achieved on merit. Dishonest government functionaries capitalize on these human foibles to install their stooges on most traditional seats, thereby killing the cultural implication of libation performance. Accordingly, Niyi Osundare quotes Achebe as saying, “when it is the hunter that tells the story of the hunt, the antelope would always be at a disadvantage”³. There is no way these types of leaders can “command the respect”⁴ of the ancestors that they are supposed to be pouring the libation to. Knowing the impact of libation on deceit and hypocrisy, the fraudulent leaders cannot pour libation but delegate this power to people who are deemed to be more traditionally religious.

Although this research on Ibibio libation performances is not a maiden search into Ibibio life and culture, it is to a great extent a novel attempt. Libation is an aspect of African oral life. Orature (a word coined by Pio Zirimu, a Ugandan linguist, which means the oral nature of literature) as a discipline, has come to stay (Onuekwusi, 2001; Ikiddeh, 2005). Most researchers shy away from this field of study because “it is fetish”.

This study focuses on an in-depth literary examination of an aspect of Ibibio oral tradition, the libation performances.

Many scholars, indigenous and expatriate, have written so much about the ethnic group or people called Ibibio. The anthropological reports of Messenger (1959) "The role of proverbs in a Nigerian Judicial System"; Talbot (1926) *The People of Southern Nigeria Vol. 2*; Forde and Jones (1950) *The Ibo and Ibibio-speaking Peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria* and other colonial administrators of the erstwhile colonial community attest to this.

Similarly, scholars in the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, especially the Yoruba and Igbo, have carried out extensive studies of aspects of their orature, in addition to the linguistic study of their language. But among the Ibibio, the reverse is the case. While there has been observable progress in the study of the language and linguistics of the Ibibio as a group, not much has been done in the area of research and preservation of orature such that there is a virtual dearth of research in the orature of the Ibibio as an ethnic group. This shortcoming has prompted this study.

In a book review in the *Journal of American Folklore*, Elaine Lawless (1987) confesses that "major texts of the study of folklore simply ignore religious folklores and genres; save for the few paragraphs that describe the categories of religious legends" (227). Similarly, Melville Herskovits (1961) regrets that "Social Anthropology" (a discipline developed in Great Britain) concerns itself with the study of kinship and related structures, using only a "highly restricted approach which focuses on social rather than cultural issues" of the people studied (455). The result is that they "have done little to give us a rounded view of the life of any people" under study (455). This, he further adds, has left a vacuum in the study of non literate, non historic societies.

Lawless (1987) further says that, in spite of the many anthropological collections on African arts and cultures compiled in *Journal of American Folklore*, religion is not given adequate attention. In Herskovits' (1961: 455) view, "the study of narrative, like that of other humanistic aspects of African culture ... has been eclipsed by emphasis laid on the study of social institutions", Similarly, Olatunde Olatunji (1993) considers the study of oral art genres even as practised today, as "fast-vanishing remnants of a dying 'folk', 'lowly class' culture which must be rescued and preserved" (8). This assertion is observed to be an accurate description of the state of Ibibio religious sub-genre, especially libation performances. Early investigations into African life were more interested in observing features that bore resemblance to their indigenous

environment, with a view to ultimately highlighting any different peculiarities of African life as evidence of the continent's backwardness.

It has been observed that the "superior" American civilization also had folklore which it sought to preserve because it realized that:

[...] proverbs, riddles, racy sayings, peculiar expressions, having that attraction of freshness and quaintness ... belong only to the unwritten words ... [that] relate to the quiet past: if they are not gathered while there is time, they will be absorbed into the uniformity of the written language (Jackson, 1988: 57).

On May 5, 1887, a proposal was signed by seventeen people at Cambridge to establish the Folklore Society in America. The number of signatories to the proposal was later upgraded to one hundred and four people. Its aim was to establish a journal that will "collect the fast-vanishing remains of folklore in America" (Jackson, 1988: 56). Also on the term of their reference was the quest to collect "the relics of old English folklore such as ballads, tales, superstitions, dialects, etc" for the purpose of preservation, regarding their importance to the American society (Jackson, 1988: 56).

The above assertion corroborates the position of this researcher that if the Ibibio language and its literary propensities are not written down, not gathered while there is time, there will come a time when they will be no more and posterity will lose them forever. Also stated in this research on Ibibio libation performances is the belief that proper documentation of Ibibio cultural artefacts (such as the libation texts) should be taken up as a matter of urgency to avoid extinction. As Bruce Jackson (1988) recalls, in America, urgent calls were made at some point where, "some local historians express the love to maintain relics of information that pattern to their genealogies" so as to ward off its extinction (56). In this regard, African literary scholars and theoreticians have provided vibrant indigenous paradigms and hermeneutics in the definition and classification of African literature as their modest effort to locate indigenous artefacts within their rightful places of survival and recognition.

In the case of the Ibibio race, indigenous scholars have dwelled on one aspect of Ibibio life or the other, one form of literary study or another. When searching into the libation performances among the Ibibio, the data bank becomes empty as very few people seem to have taken interest in this arena. The available resources are in the field

of socio-religious enquiry, not a literary analysis. This thus forms the crux of this research.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Many indigenous scholars have dwelled on one aspect of Ibibio life or the other. These scholars include: Essien O Essien, Akpan J Esen, Akpan Udo, Daniel Offiong, Monday Abasiattai, Eno Urua, Ekong E Ekong, Monday Noah, Udo Etuk, Joseph Esema, Effiong T. Inyang, among others. The first notable indigenous scholar to undertake a research into Ibibio oral literature is Ime Ikiddeh (1966) in his M. A thesis entitled “Ibibio Folktale Night” carried out at Leeds University. In this work, he examines Ibibio worldview through the organisation of folktale performance sessions. His many other scholarly works such as “Two Decades of African Oral Literature” (1986), “Literature in our Language” (1988), *The Vulture’s Funeral* (1996), *The Vulture’s Funeral and Reincarnation* (2005), in addition to his *Historic Essays on African Literature, Language and Culture* (2005) where some of these and other essays are republished, all dwell on one aspect of Ibibio oral literature or the other. In spite of these spirited efforts to promote Ibibio lifestyle, not much interest has been taken in the search into the libation performances among the Ibibio.

Much as libation practices are a universal concept, Ibibio libation performances, believed to be relevant in revealing the cultural values of the Ibibio people, have not been given a serious literary touch. A few researchers isolate aspects of libation as sacrifice (Effiong, 1997), as rituals (Ebibai, 1998; Edet, 2008), as invocation (Edidem, 2005) or as chant (Usanga, 2006) for study without dwelling on the whole libation corpus. Emekah Onwurah (1994: 37) has however carried out a socio-religious study of libation in Ibibio culture where he avers that “no formal gathering, arrangement or agenda would be complete without the inclusion of the libation rites” in Ibibio land.

Others have merely mentioned the facts that “among the Ibibio, libation is poured” in academic journal articles whenever an aspect of oral genre among the Africans is discussed. For instance, Des Wilson (1987) has written on “Traditional Systems of communication in Modern African Development: an Analytical Viewpoint” where he mentioned the pouring of libation as a means of communication in Ibibio traditional society. Shedrack Mvunabandi (2008) also mentions libation in his thesis, “The Communicative Power of Blood Sacrifices: A Predominantly South African

Perspective with Special Reference to the Epistle of the Hebrews”, as an aspect of religious experience in Africa.

Some aspects of oral literary arts in Ibibio have been given some attention, albeit not adequately. For example, in the University of Pretoria, South Africa, Mvunabandi mentions but does not give in-depth treatment to the concept of libation performance. Here Mvunabandi makes elaborate comparison between blood sacrifice which involves incantations and invocations and the Christian religious liturgy. He confirms both as a means of communication, reverence and worship. Similarly, Innocent Ebere Uwah (2009) of Dublin City University, Ireland, and Rev. Fr. Michael Nginan Ushe (2010) of the University of Jos, make passing mention of this concept in their theses as a practice among Africans.

In Ibibio literary stand, one can access quite a number of works on Ibibio proverbs, folktales, riddles, and songs, while one becomes lost when searching for works on Ibibio libation texts. It is thus easy to find scholarly works in areas like the proverbs, masquerade performance, folktales, songs and ballad, but not a direct work on libation performances.

In Herskovits’ (1961) opinion, African poetry as a whole “has been almost completely neglected simply because the anthropologists and ethnographers who led the study of African oral arts considered these poetic expressions as words instead of songs” (452). Their literary qualities were underplayed as none of the earlier anthropologist collectors paid emphasis to “analyzing the way in which effects are gained through the tonal values of words” of these poetic manifestations (Herskovits, 1961: 452). There is now a resurgence and renewal of interest in some aspects of African oral arts as most of the oral arts in some societies are given proper literary consideration and attention. In spite of this, some are still left in their hitherto marginalised position.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The research aims among other things, to:

- (i) analyse specific aspects of Ibibio narrative arts through a study of libation performances of collated texts;
- (ii) examine the aesthetic qualities of Ibibio oral art forms, using libation performances as an example;

- (iii) examine the cultural pattern of the Ibibio people with a view to projecting their worldview;
- (iv) demonstrate the relevance of the Ibibio worldview to the existence and survival of the Ibibio as a race and
- (iv) document some Ibibio libation performances and their kinesics.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is instigated by the datum that not much attention has been given to libation performances in spite of it being regarded as an indispensable ceremony in the religious and social life of the Ibibio society of Nigeria. This fact has also implied that there is almost a virtual absence of critical materials on Ibibio libation performance. This study is significant in the sense that it aims at gathering available data on Ibibio libation performances, to examine their aesthetic and documents them for posterity. Prior to this research, it was not an easy task gaining access to Ibibio libation texts; to get a recorded text was a near impossibility. It was an uphill task trying to gather written documents on libation performance among the Ibibio.

This lack of critical materials was not because the content of libation performance could not sustain critical discourse. Rather, it was due to scepticism on the part of Ibibio scholars who claim to be more religious than even the Europeans who brought Christianity to them, in their assessment of their cultural artefacts; and the restrictive nature of very serious libation performances discourses, which discouraged some prospective writers from attempting their documentation. The restriction placed on access to Ibibio libation performance is a major obstruction to collection of data as well as the absence of critical materials. In this era of information and critical research, there is a need to bridge the gap. Ibibio libation performance is restricted to people deemed to be highly religious (an *okuidem*), especially when very crucial issues concerning the stability of the society, life and death are involved. On daily routine service characterised by reverence to the ancestors, a delegated *okuidem* may perform without any consequences. On some occasion of libation performances such as those that relate to coronation or inauguration of chieftaincy positions and initiation into the various traditional cults of the Ibibio, the content of performances is not publicized, although non-participants may attend the occasion (in the case of chieftaincy title coronations). In the case of initiation into the various traditional cults of the Ibibio, non-

members are not permitted to even sneak into the arena for fear of dire consequences such as death.

1.7 Research Methodology

The present study encompasses field research where data were collected through primary and secondary methods. Fifteen Ibibio libation performances were collected with the aid of video and audio recorder. The recorded performances were analyzed using a qualitative method. The analysis reflected high level of aesthetics in the narrative properties as were showcased in the moments of their performances. Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with purposively selected individuals who are conversant with traditional Ibibio libation processes. The composition of the FGD cuts across local chiefs (8), academics (3), a combination of artisans, traders and youths, aged 25-35 (6) and academics (3). Six in-depth interviews were also conducted with some selected Clan Heads noted for their fidelity to libation performances at separate traditional festivals. Heads of families, villages and other persons deemed to have knowledge of the subject matter were also interviewed.

The libation texts recorded in this research were randomly selected to cover puberty rites of passage, periodic monthly sacrifice to the deities, chieftaincy/kingship coronation ceremony, purification/ cleansing of the land, planting and harvesting and annual festival celebration, appeasement of the water goddess, etc. Texts were not available for any cultic initiations as their activities are shrouded in mystery; even members are not permitted to divulge information about the cults to non-members, irrespective of sex or status.

There are fifteen purposively selected libation texts for literary analysis, aimed at authenticating the presence of performance properties and the worldview of Ibibio people in their libation performances. The study focuses on libation texts from the major linguistic sub-groups of the Ibibio-speaking people, namely *Uyo*, *Itu*, *Nsit*, *Eket*, *Ibesikpo*, *Ini* and *Ikono*, in Akwa Ibom state. It throws light on the libation texts as are performed in the context of the Ibibio society and attempts their taxonomy for ease of reference and a clearer understanding of the collected texts.

The study undertakes an extensive reading and data collection from both public and private libraries to cover the aspect of related literature on Ibibio arts, life, culture and worldview. Internet sources are also used where necessary to augment the information from these other sources.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Libation is the ritualistic performance that involves invocation, praise, incantation, prayers and supplication offered to a “Higher being”. In essence, libation is foregrounded in performance which involves the performer and the audience. Items such as hot drinks, palm wine, water, salt, palm-oil, *ukpok*, *iko*, *nnaak eniin*, *nnaak enañ*, *ekere*, glass, etc., are usually used for the performance of libation among the Ibibio. While the psycho-active property of the hot drink is intended to “awaken” the spirits of the ancestors, the palm-wine is used to pacify them. In the context of this work, libation is not restricted to the act of “pouring” alone but encompasses every ritualistic utterance that is made within the appropriate context or circumstance.

Performance is the artistic manifestation of action. It involves the actual creative representation of the event for scrutiny by an audience. A performance cannot be said to have taken place without a performer and the audience. Sometimes, a performance involves a single performer or a group of performers. In the case of an audience, a performance may comprise either an invisible audience only (where the performer is performing a routine consultation) or both the visible and the invisible audience. In any of the instances, communication is continuously made through codes, signs and symbols. In performance, both the linguistic and non-linguistic signals occur and combine to make meaning.

Audience is the receiver of the rites of performance. In oral performance, there are both the visible and the invisible audience who contribute to performance by coding and decoding the texts of the performance. The performer sends out the code in the text performed and the audience decodes the message thereby making meaning. The audience perceives and decodes the text of the performance according to the canons that are already known to him and the “traditional elements” within his society (Lord, 1960: 4). There is usually a feedback mechanism in this kind of communication; the meaning in the decoded text is internalized and the response is encoded by the audience back to the performer. The role of the audience in performance is to initiate “theatrical communication process through a series of actions, which are practical and symbolic” (Jegade, 2002: 6). The audience–performer relationship in traditional African society is usually interwoven. In Ibibio libation performance for instance, both the performer and the audience engage in a dialogical relationship. Isidore Okpewho (1992) asserts that their relationship is harmonious and this facilitates easy interaction (12).

Invocation is the cry or call on a “Superior Power” for help, protection and benevolence. This is a cry from a troubled person, to someone believed to be in a better position to render the required assistance. It involves the dire need “to call (and attract the attention of) the objects of worship (and sources of help/sustenance) to listen to petition” (Amponsah, 1975: 38). Invocation reinforces Ibibio belief that *ekpo akpa anyen ikpaaha utõñ* - which translates that “death is in the closure of the eye, not of the ear”. The Ibibio believe that the dead can hear, hence, they are invoked when the need arises.

Prayer is a solemn request made to a “Superior Power” in the hope of receiving succour. It embraces an atmosphere of awe and reverence where heart-felt requests are made to God. Prayer in itself is humans’ acceptance of God as the Supreme of all powers. Supplication is a plea for grace and mercy over the issues that the person makes. It involves a request for something that one needs so dearly.

Text is a piece, an article, an extract of analysable writing or its orally expressed counterpart. In the context of this research, text is that extract of libation performances (which are orally expressed) that this work seeks to analyse.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to the libation performances among the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Due to time constraint and the huge amount of funds required in field research, the study cannot claim to cover the entire Ibibio speaking areas of Akwa Ibom State. It therefore selects some clans among the Ibibio-speaking local government areas of the state as case study. The selected areas are *Uyo, Itu, Nsit, Eket, Ibesikpo, Ini* and *Ikono* local government areas. Since the study is on an aspect of oral art genre of literature where similarities are possible, some issues found in the selected Ibibio ethnic group are sometimes used to make a global statement about Africa. Thus, reference is mainly to performances of Ibibio libation only.

The study is structured into five chapters where the first, the “Introduction,” gives general information about the socio-cultural matrix of the Ibibio, background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, definition of terms and delimitation of the study. Chapter Two deals with review of related literature and theoretical framework while the remaining three chapters contain detailed analysis of collected texts, identification of performance,

narrative and aesthetic features contained in libation performances as well as the findings and conclusion of the study.

Performances gathered by the researcher at the point of performance, those supplied to the researcher because of restriction of admission to the point of performance and the data of previous years succinctly recorded by a keen *okuinam* form the data bank for this study. Fifteen texts of libation performances are recorded in this study. There are some video recordings of some of the performances which are adopted for literary and performance analyses, aimed at ascertaining the presence of performance properties in the selected texts. Since it is noticed that the concept of libation in Ibibio is the same, the selected fifteen texts are considered to be adequately representative for this study.

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Notes:

1. Interaction with Iboro Nkanta - Slim, on the lives of Ibibio forebears on June 12, 2010.
2. Interview with the Clan Head of Oku, Etebom Effiong Eberefiak JP, BA, MPA, PhD, on the religious life of the Ibibio people.
3. Niyi Osundare's speech entitled "African Literature in the Age of Globalization" delivered on July 26, 2012 at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.
4. Niyi Osundare's speech entitled "African Literature in the Age of Globalization" delivered on July 26, 2012 at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of libation is not new in world history, neither is it a recent literary discovery. It dates back to and was a central and vital aspect of ancient Greek religious activity. Libation performance is a religious rite in honour of the gods and goddesses of the land or the ancestors. It is an act of intimate communion with the deities or spirits of the ancestors; it involves the act of ritual pouring of liquid as offering to the deities or spirits of the ancestors. In African cosmology in general, and the *Ibibio* in particular, libation is an aspect of religious poetry, which in turn is a sub-genre of oral literary form. In libation performance, there are key concepts like invocation, prayers, supplication and worship.

Oral literature, the mother of religious poetry which this study focuses on, dates back to the emergence of a people as living in groups within specific cultures. It involves the life pattern of the people as they come into existence. In Africa, oral literature includes all the artistic literary expressions embedded in both the visual and performing arts components of the people's culture. This chapter makes a review of some literatures that relate to African religious poetry, libation performances, and also considers the theoretical framework applied to the study.

2.1 African Religious Poetry: The Journey So Far

African religious poetry comprises those poems that originate from the rituals and practices of African traditional religion. Many scholars have made their opinions felt extensively on what they consider to be the status of African culture of which religion is an integral part. Some have called for a modification of some African religious practices and values considering the present globalized status of the world, while some have insisted on outright abandonment of these practices considering the

fact that we “have seen the light”. Others have clamoured for a resuscitation of “the good old days”, a “return to their roots” (Etuk, 2002: 23,151).

What then is African Traditional Religion? African Traditional Religion (ATR) is the religious culture of a people. According to Etuk (2002), tradition is a tenet that institutions seek to “be known and identified, and will serve as their epitaph when they are no more” (29). Bolaji Idowu (1991) says that “Africans share common origins with regard to race and customs and religious practices” which in turn bring about a common Africanness (103).

African Traditional Religion thus is one that the Africans identify with. Etuk (2002) adds that it is the most accommodative of existing religions in that it does not:

[...] seek to convert others to its tenets, it neither objects to its members holding membership in one or more other religions as they feel the need; nor does it frown at its adherents borrowing into it any elements from other religions which may appear to enhance its practices and rituals. ... [It is] so readily accessible that anyone could come to it without feeling alienated, for instance, by the inability to read its sacred writings. In this way, the traditional religion lent itself readily to use; one did not have to go to school in order to learn it or to be an educated person in order to understand it; and one did not have to master anything in order to be admitted to its membership (36-7).

By this assertion, Etuk (2002) is of the opinion that African Traditional Religion is free, open and easily adaptable without encumbrances. It is “not merely at one with the culture of the people; it is the culture of the people”, the total way of reference to the Supreme Being (Etuk, 2002: 36).

The study of African Traditional Religion finds apt expression in Idowu’s assertion that Africans share a common origin with regard to race, customs and religious practices. Thus, religion, to him, permeates African life as a vital key to the understanding of African cultural values (99). This assertion unfortunately does not go down well with the likes of Leo Frobenius who believes that “Black Africa is a Continent which has no mystery, nor history!” This foreigner’s myopic contention echoes Emil Ludwig’s ignorant opinion that “deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing” since he (Ludwig) could not believe that untutored

Africans can ever conceive of God (cited in Idowu 1991: 88). These of course are notions born out of blind ignorance, rancid racial prejudice and pride.

However, P. Amaury Talbot (1926), a colonial administrator who lived in the Southern part of Nigeria, tends to uphold the Diffusionists views in his religious summations in his agreement that Nigeria has a higher degree of religion than Frobenius and Ludwig believed. His interactions with the natives as an administrator over the years afforded him the opportunity to conclude that “Nigerians are ... long past the primitive degree of development” but that her religions have suffered retrogression as a result of her environment (Talbot, 1926: 14). He believes that the dense forests of Nigeria have negatively affected the religious life of the people.

Similarly, Ruth Finnegan (1970), a more liberal investigator, believes that African knowledge of God is not in doubt, adding that “the title of God and even the exact framework take a different form in different areas” (337). Finnegan’s opinion corroborates Andrew Lang’s judgment which recognizes the fact that every society has its own knowledge of God which is indigenous to the people. According to Lang, as people vary, so too are cultures and their concepts of God since there is no defined systematic statement about beliefs in God. He concludes that “certain low savages are as monotheistic as some Christians” (cited in Idowu, 1991: 89). Even Father Schmidt echoes this in his statement that “the belief in, and worship of, one supreme deity is universal among all really primitive peoples” (cited in Idowu, 1991: 89).

Since no parameter is set to measure or define man’s belief in God, Idowu is of the opinion that one should leave the Almighty to conduct His judgement on man. He believes that Africans’ efforts to defend their belief system are efforts in futility as preconceived opinions have blinded their assessors’ minds to any of their defences. His summation is that any attempt by Africa to reposition herself from the parochial position allotted her as “third world” by the first and second worlds, especially in a search for equity and assertiveness, brings “upon herself a frown; she is called names ... she is helped to be divided against herself” (Idowu, 1991: 77). This is to say that Africans can do better than try to live a life of complaisance with her assessors. She should rather indulge in a critical self examination in relation to her worship and reference to the Creator. All her attempts to reflect that she believes in and worships the true God is seen by the superpowers as attempts at asserting equality, which is never imagined possible by the superpowers.

However if a culture, any culture at that, is left in its pristine undiluted rudimentary form, it can only mean that such a culture is static; a dead culture. And no one culture can be so assessed since culture in itself is an adaptive phenomenon which changes and adapts itself to various demands of the dynamics of the larger world. To this Idowu adds that religion in its pristine form is no longer in existence, what we have today are modernized contemporary worship forms.

The study of early life patterns of the Ibibio reveals that her society was far from idyllic. There was indiscriminate indulgence in “human sacrifice, most commonly of slaves, and infanticide, particularly the killing of multiple birth children” (Etuk, 2002: 22). There was also profound involvement in slavery, rituals and other forms of wickedness, especially on those that were considered as weaklings. Etuk (2002) adds that this is not to lay an emphatic claim that the Ibibio’s (and by extension, African’s) past was altogether “depraved and so utterly benighted that they had no values” which helped to maintain and strengthen the survival of the people as a race (23). Every society at one stage or the other has what can be classified as their imperfect period which it grows out from as time and development set in. If these are so, Africans should make concise efforts to reflect their current status of development and not condemn their years of early beginnings. It is therefore important that those values and institutions found to be the bulwarks of the survival of the people should not be discarded and trampled underfoot.

2.2 Libation

Libation performance is an aspect of religious worship in Africa. It implies the reverence and call on the ancestors, deities/goddesses and the deities in the African pantheon. It is a communion with and a means of communication with the gods/goddesses in the African culture. Libation involves invocation, chants, praise, prayers and supplication, to the ancestors and deities of the land who are believed to channel these to the Almighty. It entails an appeal to God, the deities and the ancestors through the invocation of these supernatural beings to protect human beings from their enemies. Onwurah (1994) calls it “a mark of veneration for the ‘living-dead’ whose participation is sought as continuing members of the clan” (39). Its performance is not limited to the Ibibio society alone as libation exists in all cultures of the world. The Igbo call it “*igor ofor*” (Obasi, 2012); in Pretoria, South Africa, Mvunabandi (2008:3) calls it

“drink sacrifices”, while the Ibibio call it “*uduok ukod*”. It is so important that the Asante of Ghana weave a proverb about it that a:

[...] people who lack the knowledge of their pasts are like a tree without roots. So, in the spirit of remembrance, we pour this libation. We pour to honor the past, so that we may learn from it. We pour to honor the importance of family and friends. We raise our cup to God to show our reverence for the original source of our lives. We use cool water as a symbol of the continuity of life, to purify and to nourish our souls. We pour to celebrate the memory of the departed. Place your minds with those who could not be here today. Family, friends and ancestors who have passed on, are ill, or simply could not find their way here. Place your thoughts with this person or persons and if you feel so moved say their name aloud. Asante (*Thank You*). Please say it after the name. We cast our libation to the North, to the South, to the East and to the West. We wish everyone to leave today more blessed than when they arrived. Asante (Anonymous)¹.

Even in ancient Hebraic tradition, libation was an aspect of Judaism. Jacob, the son of Isaac, sets up a pillar of stone in the place where he has spoken with God, and “poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it” (Gen 35: 14). Prophet Isaiah uses libation as a metaphor to describe the manner of death of the Suffering Servant when he says He will “pour out his life unto death” (Isa 53: 12). In the Jewish tradition, libation is regarded “as a worthy sacrifice to Yahweh” (Onwurah, 1994:39).

Libation belongs to the tradition of toasting, an ancient tradition of Grecian antiquity. It exemplifies the religious act that defines piety in ancient Greece and dates back to the Bronze Age and prehistoric Greece (Burket, 1985: 70). According to Robert Wood (1978), “in Greek memorial ceremonies for the dead, libation of liquids were poured on the grave. Libation was a common form of public or private sacrifices to the deities. A little wine was poured on the ground at meal times in the homes, to propitiate the household deities” (291). Libation was a part of the daily life of Greece and the most pious were noted to perform it morning and evening, including at meal times. Etuk (2002) corroborates this when he avers that a “real traditionalist in religious matters cannot take food or drink without throwing out a morsel or pouring a few dregs on the ground for the ancestors to partake” (33). Libation in the Grecian tradition consists of

mixed wine and water, unmixed wine, milk, honey, water or oil (Zaidman and Pantel, 2002; Burket, 1985).

The Greek-style libation was often performed with olive oil and the Greek mythology credits Athena (Zeus' daughter) with the act of planting the first olive tree as a gift to humankind. In return, the Greek performed libation using olive oil as a way to commemorate her contribution (DerBedrossian, 2010: par. 5). In Greek tradition, a specialized form of libation called *sponde* included a ritualized pouring of wine from a jug into a bowl in the hand while the commonest was to pour the liquid from an *oinochoe* (wine jug) into a *phiale* (a shallow bowl designed for that purpose). After pouring into the *phiale*, the remaining content was drunk by the celebrant. This act was performed as early as the Homeric epics at any time wine was to be drunk. When the first bowl of the wine (*krater*) is served, libation is made to Zeus and the Olympian deities. The heroes take the second and *Zeus Teleios* (Zeus the finisher) receives the third and last bowl's content (Dickson, 2008).

Libation in its narrow sense comes from the Latin word *libare*, meaning, "to pour as an offering" (DerBedrossian, 2010: par. 4), or from the Greek word *leibein*, meaning "to pour" (Effiong-Fuller, 1987: 8). It was the English that discovered that the Scandinavian custom of drinking was not just to everyone present but to all of one's friends, even those who are absent as well. Suddenly, one did not have to limit oneself to the mere twenty drinks normally pledged at a party of twenty.

It originated from ancient Greece and has continued "to modern day America, throughout most religions and just about all parts of the world" (DerBedrossian, 2010: par. 4). Paul Dickson (2008) says that "if there was a Golden Age for toasting, it came during the period from approximately 1880 to 1920" (par. 75). The act of toasting became more fashionable and adaptable to all occasions. Over time the simple act of toasting became embellished and intertwined with other customs. (It would not be until the seventeenth century that the act was actually referred to as a toast).

In ancient Roman religion, libation was an act of worship in form of liquid pouring which may involve unmixed wine and perfumed oil. Both emperors and divinities were the receivers of libation, just like it was performed at funeral rites. In the Andes region of South America, it is common to see the use of beverage poured as a performance to *Pachamama* - the mother earth. It is a common ritual called *challa*, performed quite often, especially before meals. In contemporary America, there is the

tradition of pouring malt liquor to the ground before drinking; it is called “tipping” which is most often accompanied by songs and parody.

In Asia, Burmese Buddhists perform a kind of libation called *yay zet cha* - water libation where water is poured from a vessel of water into a vase, drop by drop. The ceremony involves three stages of prayer: the confession of faith, the pouring of water and sharing of merits and is usually conducted to conclude all Buddhist ceremonies. In China, rice, tea or wine is used as an instrument of libation dramatized horizontally from left to right at the altar with the hands upward as in reverence to the deities, after this has been placed on that altar for a while. In Japan the ceremony of *Miki* - the liquor of the deities - is performed before drinking at the shrine of Shinto (Spiro, 1996).

Libation is a concept that cuts across all cultures. It has been extensively researched into in many cultures, although it is sometimes directly linked with sacrifice in some cultures, it nevertheless remains a means to which the living communicates with the dead (Mvunabandi, 2008; Anonaba, 2012). While comparing the reasons for conducting blood sacrifices among the Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga communities of South Africa and Christian religion, Mvunabandi (2008) posits that blood sacrifice serves as a medium of communication between the performer (s) and the super power in the metaphysical realm. He states that in Christian religion, the sacrifices from Judaic culture served to link man to the spiritual, a kind of restoration of a broken order. He further asserts that both instances serve as means of acquiring material and spiritual benefits to the performers. His assertion corroborates the Ibibio worldview that the world is a combination of the visible and the invisible, stressing that both worlds intertwine through constant communion by way of libation.

In an interaction with a Roman Catholic priest, the source infers that libation is a part of African life, just like the communion of the saints is an integral part of Catholic liturgy. In the same way that the Africans believe that the ancestors are alive and around us in the invisible realm, the Catholics believe that the dead saints are alive in the spiritual realm. This belief accounts for the performance of the “Litany of the Saints” where different saints are invoked through prayers. This is a regular event in the soteriological order of Catholicism². Similarly, Onwurah (1994) corroborates that:

with the advent of Christianity today, it [libation] has become a common practice to begin any formal ceremony with a Christian prayer followed by the pouring of libation. The former meets the Christian

aspiration while the later responds to the yearnings of the traditionally oriented people of Ibibio (37).

In West African traditions, libation is performed to awaken the ancestors and directly communicate with them to give thanks and ask for blessings and guidance in the same way that orthodox Christians communicate with God in worship, prayers and thanksgiving. Mvunabandi (2008) avows that libations, which he call drink sacrifices, “are made in order to secure the benefaction of the deity out of actual need, to give thanks to it (sacrifices of thanksgiving, first fruits, thanksgiving festivals after festivals), to increase the fertility of the field through the use of sacrificial blood and other matter” (3-4).

In Ghana and Nigeria, schnapps is the preferred alcohol for libation (DerBedrossian, 2010: par. 6). In the Yoruba culture, libation occurs mostly during offerings which are usually made of “foodstuffs, palm-oil, snails, cloths, in addition to animal and human blood” as sacrifice to the invisible powers (Mvunabandi, 2008: 137). These sacrifices, (which the Yoruba call *ẹbọ*) are believed to make up for atonement, appeasement, thanksgiving and worship of the supernatural that in return showers the practitioners with blessings and favour.

In Ibibio however, the local gin, *ufọfọb* was and still is the preferred drink for libation of awakening while other kinds of drinks (palm-wine, gin and schnapps) and items (oil, salt, water and pepper) are used for regular performances. Whenever a priest is confronted with the need to consult the water spirit, the schnapps must accompany the props to be used because schnapps arrived in Ibibio culture through the sea, whereas in the consultation of other deities and spirits, any gin or *ufọfọb* is sufficient for the performance. In the Yoruba tradition, libation is performed in form of *oriki* – praise – and it is usually accompanied with chants, prayers and sacrifice (*ẹbọ*) in form of offering to the deities and ancestors³.

Libation in Ibibio is the call on ancestors to be a part of an event. Since Africans generally nurture the belief in life after death – reincarnation, this belief is prefixed on the notion of the ancestors as the link of the living to divinities. The ancestors, Udo (1983) avers, “consisted chiefly of the forefathers and grandmothers... not every ancestor was honoured and worshipped, but only good ones who were noted for their good life, bravery, sane judgment and philanthropy” (258). Similarly, Idowu (1991) intones that “only good people become ancestors after they have received the well done

judgment of deity or of the court of the ancestors” (187). To the Ibibio therefore, one qualifies to be relied upon as an intermediary if one lived a good and upright life while in the secular world. In this same vein too, orthodox Christians believe that the saints are those who kept the faith till the end and as such they are invoked through prayers and revered at baptism and ordination services⁴.

In order to contact these ancestors for their very important role as links to the deities, libation becomes eminent. Helen Chukwuma (1994) observes that the African society “consists of basically two worlds – the spirit world and the human world - the spirit world no less real if less evident and visible and removed from the human environment” (72). Friday Okon (2012) on the other hand asserts that the Ibibio believe in “the multiplicity of the existential planes of the society – the planes of the living, the dead, the unborn, the spirits and the deities” (4).

The essence of libation is succinctly expressed in its spiritual and religious importance to the Africans. This is why Kofi Asare Opoku (1978) indicates that the pouring of libation to the African ancestors reaffirms that:

[...] the community in Africa is not only made up of the living, but also of the dead and the reality of this notion is given concrete expression in libation and other sacrifices to the dead whose participation, involvement and blessing are sought, as continuing members of the community (9).

Onwurah (1994: 40) confirms this by adding that “libation symbolically opens the way to the presence of the divine powers by providing an avenue through which prayers are directed ultimately to God”. This belief is further enhanced by the discernment that Africans understand that “the margin separating his physical world from his spiritual realm is very thin, and he is repeatedly criss-crossing that margin”: the natural world and the spirit world which is accessed only through libation (Etuk, 2002: 51). This margin “criss-crossing” reinforces the Ibibio belief in the intertwining of these two worlds – the visible and the invisible.

Libation is one of the categories of religious poetry in Ibibio; it connotes a sacrifice which is a means of communication of the visible with the invisible beings believed to be living amongst us. It permeates all facets of Ibibio cultural life, from birth through puberty and maturity to death. In this sense, Etuk (2002) enthuses that libation “is most commonly a drink offering made to the deities and spirits as part of an

invocatory prayer [which involves] calling on the deities, divinities and the ancestors by name, [at the same time] inviting these spirits to attend, drink and bless the occasion or prosper the undertaking” (39). Ekong (2001) confirms that libation is “a ritual of pouring of drinks to the spirit of the departed ancestors and divinities of the land” (48).

The concept of libation entails a set of “flexible narrative spaces designed to accommodate a range of desires” which are manifest in each performance (Agawu, 2007: 3). Libation to the African is the “basic instrument for the appeasement, invitation and worship of the African deities/goddesses”⁵. *Etebom* Effiong Eberefiak, while discussing on the importance of libation, adds that libation is the call on the ancestors and deities of the land to intercede and intervene in the affairs at hand. Owusu Brempong (2000) considers libation as a traditional religious ritual among the Africans (39). He adds that:

libation is the pouring of wine or any alcoholic drink on the ground and reciting a prayer to God, Mother Earth, the deities and the ancestors Libation is designed to engage the supernatural beings in the lives of human beings. At the same time it demonstrates human belief in the power and the presence of God, the deities and the ancestral spirits” (39).

Brempong’s assertions distinctly corroborate the views of this researcher that, the power of the spoken words of prayers is the defining factor in the actualisation of the concept of libation performance in Africa, not the “pouring” alone as many tend to define. He considers the words of prayers which are uttered during the pouring of libation as “the verbal ceremony of invoking the supernatural powers”, while confirming that “the two acts, the pouring of the drink and the reciting of a prayer, occur simultaneously” in every libation performance (Brempong, 2000: 54).

Des Wilson (1987) calls libation an extra-mundane communication. It is “the mode of communication between the living and the dead, the supernatural or supreme being [that is] usually done through incantation, spiritual chants, ritual, prayers, sacrifice, invocation, séance or trance” (93). Although Ekong (2001) says that “it is not just anybody who may perform sacrifice, ritual to *ndem* or *ibok*” (47), libation among Ibibio is gender friendly. It can be poured by a woman to a male ancestor and vice versa, especially in female-related problems but these occasions are few. It is equally not a

taboo for libation to be poured by the youth, although this is usually in a more informal setting such as the meeting of friends after a long while.

In the same vein, Brempong (2000) agrees that “libation needs no specialists” (40). His “specialists” here implies a “formal pattern” of acquisition which is mandatory for libation performers. However, while discussing on the performance of libation amongst the Akan of Ghana, he quickly adds that “since the libation ritual is basically religious, [it is the] individuals who are articulate in the Twi language and culture [that] perform elaborate libation because they possess the necessary understanding of the Akan belief system” (40). His views validate the assertion that one needs to be cultured in the nuances of the societal religious import, to be a good performer of libation practices.

Ibibio society of Nigeria is highly religious and monotheistic in the sense that the Ibibio believe in the existence of only one Almighty God – *Abasi Ibom*. In Ibibio parlance, *Abasi Ibom* denotes a “God so large and mighty that he cannot be housed” (Udo, 249). Therefore *Abasi Ibom* or *Abasi Enyong* simply means the Almighty everlasting God who dwells in the sky. He is not only the God of Ibibio by this understanding, but the God of the entire universe that He created.

Many other names signify the Ibibio concept of God, as Udo (1983) observes:

He is *Abasi Ibom* (limitless and infinite God). He is *Obot* (creator of all things in the world), *Abasi Ime* (patient God), *Abasi Ima* (God of love), *Abasi ódùdù* (God of power), *Abasi onyong ye isong* (God who rules sky and earth), *Abasi Imo* (God of wealth), *Abasi unen* (A just God), *Abasi akamba owo* (God of the aged), *Abasi eyeyin* (God of protecting offspring from a woman married outside her mother’s lineage). *This refers to grandchildren from the daughters* (249), Emphasis mine.

These many expressions of what God means to the Ibibio reflect the Ibibio understanding, acceptance and reliance upon the supremacy of God. It is their concept of His supreme relationship. Ekong (2001) also confirms this assertion: “the Ibibio recognize the existence of *Abasi Enyong* - God of the sky” (43). Therefore He remains *Abasi Enyong* to the Ibibio man. For this spatial relationship to man, ancestral worship through libation becomes the only way to gain access to him.

Eberefiak (2009) asserts that libation is a belief system that implies strict adherence to, acceptance and approval of the deities/goddesses who are the physical progenitors, though spiritual entities, of Ibibio religion. He says that religion is the worship while libation is the means of reference. Since every form of worship entails series of praises and prayers in addition to offerings, it is obvious therefore that even the orthodox method of worship in Christian services and Moslem *jumat* sessions at the mosque all conform to libation performances. One of our sources confirms that

every prayer made is an invocation of the super Being. For instance, during baptism, the words “I baptise you in the name of the father, son and the holy Ghost” invokes the presence of the Holy Spirit to the baptised. Similarly, during elevation (communion), the consecration of the bread and wine is a re-enactment of the intimacy with Christ. It reinforces the belief initiated at baptism whereby the raising of the baptised is analogised with the resurrection of Christ. In order to show humility, the priest kneels during the presentation of the Eucharist. The elevation, as the sacred host is raised, may be accompanied with audible or inaudible utterances “My Lord and my God” as a profession of faith. It is an act of adoration and worship as Christ is believed to be truly present in the sacred host. In communication which the Christian faith does, words give form to the action⁶.

If the Ibibio have this much confidence in the efficacy of libation as an instrument of contact to their mediator, one cannot underestimate the extent to which it is their religious instrument.

In furtherance of the belief that the body of folklore encompasses the innate desire to explore human relationships in a particular society, William Wilson’s (1988) opinion becomes very apt in this Ibibio context. He says that “folklore is concerned with revealing interrelationship, discovering what it means to be human, the basis of our common humanity, the imperatives of our human existence” which can only be made possible through performance (157-8). Every African society has a duty to present its cultural values expressively through its many social events. In order to accomplish this, performance of its cultural values, in this case, libation, becomes integral to worship as well as an integral part of its existence.

In all definitions accessed, there is suggestion of dependency on the divine and some ancestral presence as well as a desire for blessing which is in tandem with the Ibibio belief that the ancestors mediate between man and the unseen *Abasi Ibom* (the Great God). Although many of these definitions seem to imply “pouring” as the focus of libation, this research extends its scope beyond “pouring” as we believe that “words give form to action and are inseparable in meaning making. Intentions at libation are directed to the ancestors and gestures are a significant part of that action”⁷. If the act of “pouring” is the only indicator of libation and it is capable of invoking the unseen powers into action, then words would not usually accompany “pouring” (libation) performances. If there is potency in words as invocative substance, then the above definitions are limited in that they refer only to the act of “pouring” without taking into consideration the verbalized output which actually moves the unseen powers.

During libation, the drinks “poured” are actually efforts to feed the deities. It is however observed that while libation performance is ongoing, no “pouring” is done in isolation of utterances. In another instance of comparison between the activities of Christianity in line with Christian beliefs and libation, our source adds that it is the words uttered during communication with God that state the desire or request of the worshipper:

for instance, take the utterances at baptism “I baptise you in the name of the father, son and the Holy Ghost”. This implies the death of the baptised during immersion in water with Christ and as he is raised up, it implies the resurrection with Christ. If one was not actually referring to the Almighty, one could easily say “I baptise you in the name of the *amadioha*”. In this case, the person is only initiated into a powerless deity. But the mention of the tri-unity name of God marks the difference⁸.

In another instance drawn from another Christian sect, another of our source there asserts that every act of worship must vocalize the source that is being worshipped.

Citing baptism of new converts, he enthused:

Ime Etim Udo, upon your belief in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the hope that when He returns, He shall receive you into glory, I now baptize you in Jesus name, for the remission of

your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost – Amen⁹.

Or in the case of confirmation of member whose consistency with the doctrines of the church is adjudged as satisfactory:

We ask thee O Lord to protect this thy servant with thy most gracious favour and grant that he may be guided with the gift of the Holy spirit, to be a faithful soldier in this thy church militant, so that after this life, he may dwell in thy church triumphant which is without fault – Amen¹⁰.

It may not then be out of place to submit that it is the words which accompany the “pouring” during libation performances that activate the ancestors to listen to the invocative words and to act accordingly, as the people believe. Be this as it may, the acceptance of “pouring” as the only reference where libation occurs negates acts whereby a “real traditionalist in religious matters cannot take food ... without throwing out a morsel of the food ... on the ground” whereby he calls on his “ancestors to partake” without necessarily “pouring” (Etuk, 2002: 33). This conforms to the Greek tradition in which pious indigenes observe libation before every drink or meal. Till date in *Uruan* community in Ibibio land, the drinking glass is clinked in a loud sound on the bottle before a drink is taken there from. This is an aspect of their libation performance whereby sometimes the bottle of drink is slashed with the glass and only a word like “*ekpe*” (cultic chant of members of *ekpe* society) is uttered (while others who are initiates respond with the ululation, “*mbokò*”). Following this action, the non-initiate of *ekpe* is prohibited from partaking in the drinking.

The definitions do not also take into account the sometimes inaudible utterances that precede most activities. For instance, a palm wine tapper is most often noted to say his incantations without “pouring” anything before climbing the palm tree with his tapping rope. At the point of circumcision too, the “surgeon” does no “pouring” but says her incantations, nonetheless. In Etuk’s (2002) summation,

even the herbalist whose work ostensibly involves only the collection and concoction of herbs, barks of trees and roots into potent medicine may not collect the herbs without incantations and sacrifices to propitiate

the spirits of the forest and of the trees, [so that they may make] his medicines more potent (41).

Etuk (2002) by this assertion emphasizes the words (incantations) as a potent weapon to communicate with the mundane, not the “pouring”.

This research therefore extends the definition of libation to all the verbal utterances that reflect dependency on a “superior power”. Whether there is “pouring” or not, this research deals with all ritualistic verbalisations that are meaningful in the projection of Ibibio worldview especially as the signs, symbols and the verbal deixis (speeches) made in these speech situations constitute texts whose meanings are decipherable through semiology. It connotes all the forms of instinctive cry of the human soul to a power that it believes can help in times of need. The *Holy Bible* in Proverbs 18:21 confirms that “death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” (KJV). Therefore the present researcher asseverates that every utterance that looks up to a superior being for help and succour which the Ibibio man utters qualifies to be considered as libatory.

2.3 Narrative Arts in Retrospect

Narration is the art of communicating issues to an identified audience. Narrative art is concerned with the patterns by which values are communicated to the targeted audience, the society. Since oral literature, which is the crux of this research, is situated as it is in verbal rendition, the art of narration plays an immeasurable role in its effective rendition and transmission. It is an indisputable summation that oral literature thrives, not on the pages of the book that technology has promoted/elevated it to in recent years, but on performance. Performance in oral literature can take any pattern: song, dance, drumming, clapping, telling a story, and speaking in esoteric language which is understood by the performer and his audience (invisible), chant, among others.

Ropo Sekoni (2003) says that “oral narrative performance is a communicative system in which social discourse takes place principally between a narrator/performer and an audience” (139). This assertion implies that the most important aspect of any oral performance is narration. It is the ability to set in motion the machineries of informing the audience. Narration is the basis of performance. It implies that more than the issues (content) are required in this regard. The artist has what to say, he needs who to say this to; he needs the crowd since oral literary forms require a one-on-one

interaction. The audience is this crowd whose reactions either encourage or discourage his future performance.

Audience in African cosmology comprises “two types of audience from asymmetrical realms” (Yankah, 1995: 173). Kwesi Yankah (1995) further refers to them as the “primary but unseen audience or deities and spirit for whom the prayer is meant ... [and] the secondary audience, those physically present on the scene of the discourse – the potential beneficiaries of the prayer” (173). His summation refers to the visible and the invisible audience that are recognised in the realms of oral literature. The role of these audiences is to witness the performance of the oral artist. The invisible audiences are the silent observers of the performer and most of the time, the recipient of the performance (in the case of libation). Yankah (1995) calls them “the forces of beneficence” (173). The visible audience on the other hand are the active and vocal participants in oral texts. They function to control the scope of the narrative events by quickly drawing the artist back into line should he digress by the numerous comments and additions of the excited audience. The audience also eliminate boredom by their interjection, laughter and clapping, among other functions which serve to shape recollection of memory of oral art delivery. Their participation indicates their empathy as well as their understanding of issues in the African society. Audience thus is a major controller of the oral narrative domain. Okpewho (2003) calls them “an integral part of the creative act in an oral performance” (180).

In tales or storytelling situations, the performer could be a member of the audience. He/she will return to his/her seat after the narration. Okpewho (2003) in “The Role of the Oral Performer” says that “there is no division whatsoever between the narrator’s apperception of the world of the tale and their own” since the audience participate actively in storytelling and are also familiar with most of the tales (161).

This audience-performer interaction provides an emotional-intellectual harmony between the performer and them, most especially as the audience is able to recognise the fictive community of the tale as a replica of their own habitual community. Audience participation is very necessary because oral literary texts do not thrive on their component selves, but on performance. This implies that the performer’s preoccupation is not lost on the audience as there is no point at which the narrator contravenes the already familiar scenario of the audience with strange, unfamiliar concepts. To Okpewho (2003), “the success of a performance is judged fundamentally by the degree to which the artist mirrors the outlook and expectation of this society; and the audience

of the performance seems obliged primarily to aid the artist in this task of mirroring” (161). Okpewho’s comments here underscore the widely accepted views in oral literary studies that the audience exerts an immeasurable weight of influence on performance which Finnegan (1977) also corroborates with her elaborate examples of audience-artist relationship. One of such is that there is a clear distinction between the roles played by each. These views are also corroborated by Yankah when he asserts that both audiences exert some influence on the mode of the performance and the rhetoric employed.

Daniel Biebuyck however seems to differ from Okpewho’s opinion. In his Zairean study analysis, he gives an example that “the Nyanga listener is not at all disturbed by such apparent inconsistencies” that may come up from time to time in the course of a tale performance (cited in Okpewho 2003: 161). To them, it is part of the performer’s artistry which of course conditions their enjoyment of the performance, not any influence from the audience.

Although Okpewho’s (2003) and Finnegan’s (1977) views underscore the positive influence of Functionalist view points where texts are proposed to be studied from their specific social environments without generalisations, it nevertheless does not apply in the libation texts where this work is grounded. The participatory audience cannot exert influence on the content of a libation text nor can they input to correct or influence the artist who is the authority in content, context and qualification to render the performance. Any comment that may be made afterwards as corrections to some omission is merely informal: it cannot empower the performer to re-perform what he has already finished.

Finnegan (1970) in her *Oral Literature in Africa* buttresses her emphasis of narration with two examples, one from the Limba stories (of Sierra Leone) she gathered by herself and the second from a source about the Kikuyu of East Africa that she recorded. Both stories have different details and characters but the subject matter remains the same. The idea of these stories is to emphasize that the subject matter and the literary structure of any story is fully appreciated with sound and detailed knowledge of the social and literary background of the people that produce the story (342). Take, for instance, her tales about the misfortune of the hen losing her chicks to the higher birds of the air. The familiarity of the tales and the concepts mentioned therein lend meaning and significance to the live audience than if same were printed on the strange white pages of paper. Similarly, even her other stories of the trickster where details of humorous activities crafted by small wily animals to outwit the bigger more powerful

ones render more vividly in live narration than the same on pages of a book. The stories they tell, the moral deduced there from, that is the foibles and weaknesses, virtues and strength, ridicules and appealing qualities, all appear more meaningful and effective in actual narration (351). Even children stories, which sometimes appear naive and puerile, assume a better understanding and meaningfulness when the social contexts of the stories are linked, as they usually are, in dramatic narration. These underscore that narration is detail-specific; the same story may differ in details within the same society when narrated by different people, and also by the same individual when narrated at different occasions.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study applies both the semiotic literary theory of investigation and the performance theory. The need for both theories is informed by the researcher's aim of analysing the performed texts and isolating performance rhetorical devices which enhance the meanings of the recorded performance and situate libation performance as a worthy literary exercise. Charles Peirce's semiotic theory and Richard Schechner's performance theory constitute the bedrock of this analysis.

2.4.1 The Semiotic Theory

Semiotics or semiotic study is the study of signs and sign processes (semiosis). It includes indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism and signification that enhance communication. Semiotics, in the wider sense, operates within the context of performance, where these inherent concepts are manifest, to relate meaning. According to Clarisse Souza (2005), semiotics is the study of signs, signification processes, and how signs and signification take part in communication (26). Pierre Guiraud (1975) uses the word semiology and defines it as "the science that studies sign system [which includes] language, codes, sets of signals, etc" (1). Austin Nwagbara (2001) calls it the systematic study of signs. It explores and interprets signs and their meanings.

Accordingly, Hans Bertens (2008) asserts that signs "take their meaning from the underlying structure of their activities" (51). Semiotics also investigates how these signs operate between individuals in diverse socio-cultural contexts to give meaning and coherence. It focuses on the nature, form and structure of sign system and how this aids in the conceptualisation of meaning in language use. According to Benedict Ibitokun

(2008), “a word, ... is the idea or the symbol of a signified, whether abstract or concrete” (3). Semiotics has three major branches, namely: semantics which is the relation between signs and the things they refer to (their denotata, or meaning); syntactics which is the relations among signs in formal structures; and pragmatics which is the relation between signs and the effects they have on the people who use them. The semantic branch of semiotics is what Morse Peckham (1988) calls “significance, or meaning” while the pragmatics branch is the reactions that the response elicits from the hearer (s) (185). Peckham (1988) believes that one “can scarcely say something unless there is somebody to receive and respond to what he/she wants to say. Unless there is a response on the part of somebody, there is no significance, no meaning” (185).

There are two words for the semiotic enterprise, “semiotics” and “semiology,” which have to do with its dual origins in the Peircean and Saussurean traditions. Although some theorists such as Julia Kristeva have argued that “semiotics” studies the signifier, while semiology studies the signified, the two terms have often been used interchangeably (Stam et al, 1992: 4). Semiology derives its etymology from a Greek word σημειωτικός, (*sēmeiōtikos*), “Semeion”, meaning “sign” or “observant of signs”). It was developed by a Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), as Semiology in his 1894 manuscript which was published posthumously as *Cours de Linguistique Generale* (*Course of General Linguistics*) in 1916. Semiology was however first used to denote the branch of medical science relating to the interpretation of signs. According to de Saussure in this work, Semiology (the study of signs), “is a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life”. He states:

It is ... possible to conceive of a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life. It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them.... The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge (Cited in Chandler, 2002: 5-6).

Ferdinand de Saussure defines the sign as a form made up of the signifier and the signified. To Saussure therefore, the first component of a sign is a tangible object which has meaning; the signified and second component is the inseparable parts to that sign, the signifier, which expresses the sign (Stone, 2000: par 3). The signifier is usually something which exists in the real, material world while the signified is the

idea or notion which the signifier evokes when we see and understand it. The signifier comprises physical items such as sounds, letters, gestures, etc., while the signified comprises the image or concept which the signifier refers. In Guiraud's (1975) opinion, semiology embodies "the study of systems of communications which use non-linguistic signals" in making meaning (3). De Saussure calls the relation that holds between the two, Signification. To Saussure therefore, the conception of signs as part of social life relates meaning easily to the hearer. Meaning to de Saussure therefore is arbitrary as there is nothing inherent in the word to imply the name of the concept to the referent; there is no relationship between the word and the concept, but only on the derived meaning to the utterance or text. Meaning is further believed to exist conventionally as human beings within each society have established it to be so.

Saussure views language as a binary phenomenon. To him, language as a system of sign (signifier) and the signified (referent or the mental concept of meaning) should be studied synchronologically, not diachronologically. Saussure privileges language over actual speech act – emphasized *langue* over *parole*, thus viewing language as a social phenomenon. His assertion implies that meaning is determined by the difference that exists between linguistic signs and conceptualization, not because a word or living term /sign refers to the words/concepts outside language. Meaning therefore resides not "on the individual words, but in the complex system of relationships or structures" that hold together in a society (Martin and Ringham, 2000: 2).

Later Charles Peirce (1839-1914), an American philosopher and mathematician, expounded this theory as Semiotic. Peirce uses the term without "s"; it was Margaret Mead who reportedly initiated the use of the "s" plural marker on "semiotics" on the analogy of "ethics" and "mathematics" (Stam et al, 1992: 4). Peirce borrowed his term "Semiotics" from the British pragmatic philosopher, John Locke, which means the "quasi-necessary, or formal doctrine of signs", which abstracts "what must be the characters of all signs used by...an intelligence capable of learning by experience" (Peirce vol.2, par 227) or "the formal doctrine of signs which is closely related to logic" (cited in Chandler, 2002: 6). Peirce defined the study of semiotics as the "doctrine of signs"; in his view, the word 'signs' indicates anything that "stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity" (Peirce, 1958: 2.228 cited in Danesi 1994: 4). For Peirce, language constitutes the human being: "the word or sign which the man uses is the man himself...thus, my language is the sum total of myself" (Peirce, V, 8 cited in

Stam et al, 1992: 5). Peirce made a number of essential contributions to the study of semiotics. One is his definition of SIGN as “something which stands to somebody for something in some respects or capacity” ... (cited in Stam et al, 1992: 5). Peirce identifies three basic components of sign: the icon/iconic, the index/indexical and the symbol/symbolic.

2.4.1.1 The Iconic Sign

Peirce defines the iconic sign as “a sign determined by its dynamic object by virtue of its own internal nature.” According to Shaleph O’Neill (2008: 70), Peirce describes iconic signs, in relation to firstness, as signs that represent their objects via a direct likeness or similarity. The iconic sign resembles its object by means of similarity, what Kier Elam (1980: 21) conveys as “between the sign-vehicle and its signified”. This means that the relation between sign and its interpretant is mainly one of likeness, for example pictures, portraits, diagrams, statues, and on an aural level, onomatopoeic words (Stam et al, 1992: 5). Elam (1980) avers that even “the voice of the actor” is equally accepted as iconic of him (22).

2.4.1.2 The Indexical Sign

Peirce defines the indexical sign as a “sign determined by its dynamic object by virtue of being in a real relation to it.” An indexical sign somehow associates with what it is since it involves a causal, existential link between a sign and its interpretant. For example, Robert Stam et al (1992) say that there is a kind of link to meaning when we consider the physical object of “a weathercock, or of a barometer”, of a smoke signifying the existence of fire” to what they actually are (5-6). Similarly, spots may signify rashes that could have been caused by measles. O’Neill (2008) avers that “indices are signs or imprints often left in one physical entity, possibly a medium, by the passage of another physical entity that uses that medium” (70). Elam (1980) avers that indexicals comprise gesture and/or verbal deictics which often have “the effect of indicating the objects ... and thus placing him in apparent contact with his physical environment, with his interlocutors or with the action reported” (26). There is a clear connection between the signifier and the signified, the form and the content” (O’Neill, 2008: 70). Indices relate to Peirces’ concept of secondness.

2.4.1.3 The Symbolic Sign

Peirce defines the symbolic sign as involving an entirely conventional link between a sign and its interpretant. O'Neill (2008) infers that symbolic signs are signs that refer to their objects by virtue of a law or set of socially derived rules that cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object. Therefore, in corroboration of Saussure's opinion, Peirce views symbolic signs as conventional signs and wholly related to the notion of thirdness. Accordingly, Gary Montrezza (1994) views symbols as "an amalgamation of signs which come to significance by having specific biological, cultural, societal essences ... [which] are not proxy to specific objects but 'are vehicles for the conception of the objects' ..." (15-16). Symbols thus are interpretations that are culturally, biologically or socially given to sign codes that are produced in the course of communication. Generally, symbolic signs have no relation to their object other than the accepted conventions agreed upon by a culture. Elam (1980) surmises that in some cultures, "the linguistic sign" and what they stand for imply that the "relationship between sign vehicle and signified is conventional and unmotivated" (22). A case is the majority of the words that form part of "natural languages." Linguistic signs therefore are symbols in that they represent objects within their environments and acquire meaning on the basis of differences within certain context and convention (Stam et al, 1992; Bertens 2008).

Ibibio libation texts deploy intense use of symbolism. Metaphors, which in themselves utilise a lot of symbolic representations, are immensely employed in Ibibio libation texts. For instance, *nnyin ibeñge ibo, mbok k'uyak akoiyo ato ikod adi mmm ebod o o!* (we plead that the duiker should not come into the home and snatch our goat). The goat is a domestic animal which enjoys full human protection while the duiker is a wild animal that lives in the bush with all its vulnerability. Metaphorically, the home is a place of safety for both human and domestic animals. Where the home is vulnerable that one or the kept animal is no longer secure (a goat being snatched from the home by the wild beast duiker), a plea has to be sent to the higher authority. This statement presents the metaphor of anguish arising from perceived threat to life and disharmony in relationship; the reason for the appeasement. Similarly, the phrase *idñ duuopeba, udok duuopeba, idñ akpo-kpon udok duuopeba, asei-sip, udok duuopeba* (for our twelve villages, let's have twelve doors; whether the villages are big, let there be twelve doors or even if they are small, let there be twelve doors) is a metaphor. The reference to twelve villages and doors reflects Ibibio belief in their link to the twelve tribes of Israel.

It also indicates a belief in equality of judgement. The above examples contain a high level of symbolism.

2.4.1.4 Semiotics and Literature

The central/focal point of semiotics is “sign” which is a configuration of conventionalized response. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), cited in Sebeok (2001), defines sign as consisting of three dimensions: the physical part of the sign itself, the referent and its evocation of a meaning (4), while Umberto Eco (1977) calls sign “everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else” - everything that on the grounds of a previous established social convention can be taken as something else (7). In Danielle Roemer’s (1982) view, “the term ‘sign’ refers to a semiotic relationship ... [this she adds, is] the correlation of an element from an expression plane with an element from a content plane” (174). This relationship, she furthers, is developed when we associate the element of expression with the content that is conventionally interpreted within the culture that the expression holds. Therefore most semiotic meanings of issues are derived from the culturally assigned “content to what we perceived as the semiotic unit” relating to it (Roemer, 1982: 174). Eco (1977) expatiates further that “semiotics is concerned with everything that can be *taken as sign*” and this sign could be words, images, sounds, gestures and objects (7). Roemer’s (1982) and Eco’s (1977) opinions recognise that there is an existing social order – convention – which has interpreted itself to mean something before now which has therefore been established and accepted.

The concept of semiotics (signs and the thing they refer to), enhances the construction of reality. The whole idea behind sign as a means of communication is that there must be interpretation to assume meaning – decoding the message to make meaning. This representational activity (which Saussure calls Signification) is the referent that understanding has accentuated in any discourse or text. It is culturally determined by the correlation between the signifier and the signified. Peckham (1988) avers that “a theory of signs must be subsumed by a theory of meaning” (185). To him therefore, “a sign ... is any perceptual configuration to which there is a response” (186). Without a response to the information sent out by an encoder, it becomes obvious that either communication has not actually taken place or there is what Festus Adesanoye calls “a gross misrepresentation or misinterpretation of the facts”¹¹. Eco (1977) asserts that “semiotics studies all cultural processes as processes of communication” (8). This is

to say that the codes are culture specific and because it is conventionally accepted, it thus becomes arbitrary. Saussure thus corroborates Peirce’s “symbolic” kind of meaning making.

Peirce’s logical standpoint is reflected in his adding a third side to Saussure’s two-sided component of semiology (signifier and signified), “the reality denoted by the object” as relative to meaning. He adds that semiotics is “the doctrine of essential nature and fundamental varieties of possible semiosis”. Meanings and the things they stand for (referents) do not share any direct link, but are arbitrarily conceived to be so.

According to Rebecca Stone (2000), Peirce’s model of ‘Triangular Relation’ quoted from Danesi (1994:6) can be used to illustrate his notion of the relationship between the sign, the interpretant and the object.

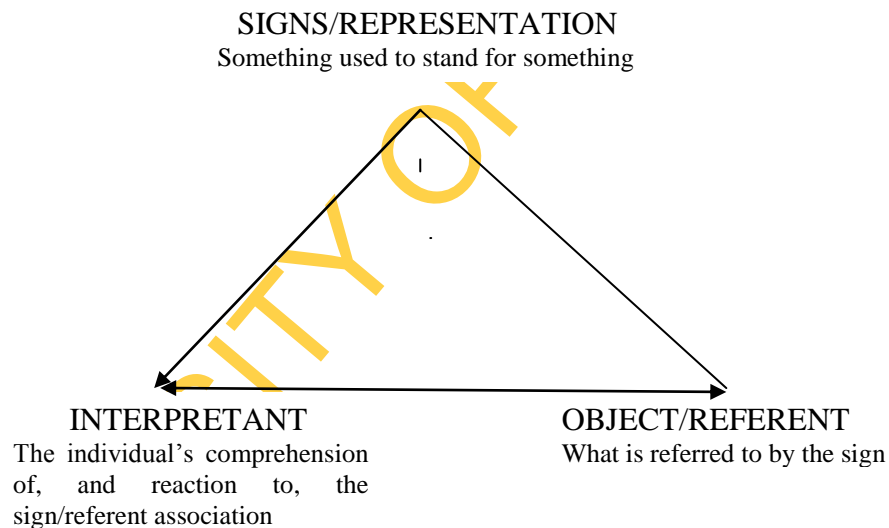


Fig .1 Diagram of Significations.

Put differently, Daniel Chandler (2002) says that:

contemporary semiotics study signs, not in isolation but as part of a semiotic sign system (such as a medium or genre). They study how meanings are made and how reality is represented. Semiotics is concerned with meaning making and representations in many forms, perhaps most obviously in the form of ‘texts’ and ‘media’.... A text is an assemblage of signs (such as ‘words’, images, sounds and or gestures) constructed (and interpreted) with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication (2-3).

The interpretations derived from “signs” therefore constitute the crux of semiotic literary criticism. The “texts” can exist in any medium; verbal and non verbal or both and can also be analysed as a text of situation or culture.

According to Thomas Sebeok (2001), a text bears no meaning unless the receiver of the text knows the code(s) in which it was constructed and unless the text refers to, occurs in, or entails some specific context. Similarly, Ibibio libation texts (incantations) most often have no meaning on their own except when there is understanding between the performer and the audience of the communication. The context is the environment - physical, psychological, and social - in which a sign or text is used or occurs. Human intellectual and social life is based on the production, use, and exchange of signs and representations. Some cultures in Guiraud’s views, display inverse relation between knowledge and affectivity; this he calls the realistic functioning of signs (Guiraud, 1975: 19). Sebeok (2001) further avows that:

[...] when we gesture, talk, write, read, watch a TV program, listen to music, look at a painting, etc, we are engaged in sign-based representational behaviour [which] endowed the human species with the ability to cope effectively with the crucial aspects of existence [such as] knowing, behaving purposefully, planning, socializing, and communicating (8).

It is believed that the heterogeneous nature of humanity the world over has made the use of signs and representational activities culture specific. This then makes “the signs people use on a daily basis to constitute a mediating template in the worldview they come to have” (Sebeok, 2001: 8). Corroborating this, Bertens (2008) adds that signs “have no meaning in themselves but ... take their meaning from their function within a given structure – from their relation with other signs”. Semiotics thus embodies concepts like texts, contexts, significance, extra-texts and inter-texts, etc. While a text is any mechanism that comprises a number of conventionally defined signs which aid the establishment of meaning, context is the particular instance to which the texts apply. The possession of these concepts constitutes the relevance of the present study to this theory.

Following the work of French cultural theorist, Roland Barthes, semiotics became a major approach to cultural studies in 1960. His works helped to launch the awareness of this approach in the Anglophone works of literature. Its anthropological

facet is blazed by Claude Levi-Strauss while the psychoanalytical aspect of semiotics is fanned by Jacques Lacan (1901-81).

While Peirce identifies three major relative forms to semiotics, later semioticians added the aesthetic mode which is the basic feature of literature and art generally. The aesthetic mode combines both the iconic and analogical attributes within the text in creating meaning. The aesthetic signifier sees art as subjective and therefore has inherent affective potentials. In this sense, “the aesthetic sign is free from all conventions and its meaning adheres to representation”- the referent that it links in the process of the communication (Guiraud, 1975: 67). Guiraud adds that:

the arts are representative of nature and of society, real or imaginary, visible or invisible, objective or subjective. The arts utilize the media and their corresponding codes; but starting with that primary signification they create signified structures which themselves are signifying (69).

Semiotics is the hallmark of literary aesthetic, which is foregrounded in the ability to interpret representations and expressions.

Both Saussure and Peirce built their foundation of semiotics on the principles of the English empiricism philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704), but all subsequent works on semiotics are developed on the frameworks begun by Saussure and Peirce. Other users of Semiotic theory include Charles Williams Morris (1901-1979) who introduced behaviourist semiotics, Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Algirdas Greimas (1917-1992), Yori Lotman (1922-1993), Christian Metz (1931-1993), Umberto Eco (1932-) and Julia Kristeva (1941-). Other linguists are Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965), Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-90), Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), Thomas Sebeok (1920-2001), Daniel Chandler, among others (Chandler, 2002: 6).

Our social strata subconsciously imprint conventions upon the citizenry without much effort. The everyday usage and contact with signs accord them a position of “naturalness” which makes their appearances unquestionable. Media signs by these modes become persuasive as well as referential. Felix Gbenoba (2006) says that “by the ‘denaturalizing’ signs, therefore, semiotics demystifies ideology” (25).

Semiotics does not limit itself to only written or oral texts alone. Bouisacc in Ogundeji (1988) classifies texts as:

[...] any permanent set of ordered elements, either sentences, objects, actions or combination of any of these of which the co-presence (or collation) is considered by an encoder and/or a decoder as being related in some capacity one to another through the mediation of a logico-semantic system (13).

In the context of this research on the Ibibio libation performance, the above quotation could not have been better placed as “logico-semantic system” in Bouisace’s opinion is the same as Ibibio “conventions, rules or codes”. The performance of libation, which is conventionally adhered to in the Ibibio religious system, has become the “rules” that must not be altered by any performer since the deities and ancestors (invisible recipient/audience who are believed to be aural though dead) are involved here. This research adopts Peirce’s concepts of sign (semiosis) which implies that indexical sign determines its meaning by being in relation to the object of referent; while symbolic sign relays meaning that is conventionally accepted by the speech participants. In the observation of libation performances, both the indexical and symbolic components of his explications clearly apply and lend credence in the performances of these texts as well as give understanding to their religious implication.

2.4.2 Performance Theory

Performance is a creative manifestation of activities in actual situation, not in abstraction. It involves the actual portrayal of literary forms, especially the oral art forms and the dramatization of societal values before an appreciable live audience. Richard Schechner (2006) further describes performance as “what people do in the activity of their doing it” (1) and Marvin Carlson (2001 cited in Okoye 2007: 81) terms it “an activity consciously carried out and presented to others to have some effect on them” (141).

According to William Beeman (1997), performance is an inherently human activity. It is believed that it is only human beings that can successfully replicate actions – through performance – that would have meaningful impact on both the performer and the audience. In order to emphasize his point, he reflects Victor Turner’s (1986) opinion that:

If man is a sapient animal, a tool making animal, a self-making animal, a symbol-using animal, he is, no less, a performing animal, *Homo performans*, not in the sense, perhaps that a circus animal may be a performing

animal, but in the sense that a man is a self-performing animal--his performances are, in a way, *reflexive*, in performing he reveals himself to himself (Beeman, 1997: 1).

Performance is thus “an essential aspect of human communicative capacity that” can only be understood with “a full appreciation of the roles of language and other semiotic behavior in human life” (Beeman, 1997). To Peckham (1988) therefore, “culture stabilizes performance. This means that culture stabilizes the responses to signs” because every sign is interpreted in line with the culturally embedded realities of the speech participants (188). Accordingly, Mary Magoulick avows that the texts without its context (where performance holds) “are disembodied from the reality of their performance event, and are thus incomplete and less meaningful” (“Fieldwork/Ethnography and Performance Theory”). In cultural terms, performance is seen as pervading virtually all institutions of public expressive behaviour. Performance, in Turner’s (1986) opinion, is a two traffic; “the actor may come to know himself better through acting or enactment; or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another set of human beings” (Turner, 1986: 81).

According to Magoulick, folklorists and ethnographer shifted their perspective from collecting and categorizing, to synthesizing and understanding of peoples and their creations in their environments from the 1960's. This new idea is the by-products of Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock working with Native American texts. These new, fine-tuned insights have contributed in changing earlier methods of analysis of oral arts to a better, appropriate way in which texts are understood and appreciated by members of the cultures from which these texts came. The shift in insights was their attempts at seeking clarity that fits contemporary methods or goals of oral arts analyses. These efforts, which Magoulick termed “re-imaginings”, gave birth to performance theory.

Performance theory as an academic discipline is concerned with the artistic and aesthetic demonstration of issues like concerts, sporting events, social, political and religious events like rituals, ceremonies and theatrical events. It encompasses the systematic identification of those components which require someone doing something, the way those things are done, the rules or conventions that govern the action and the sum total of concepts that are in use in the process of doing those things. It comprises the “whole constellation of events ... that take place in/among both performers and

audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of performance ... to the time the last spectator leaves” (Schechner, 1988: 72). Although Schechner’s *performance theory* expresses Western theatrical concerns, its relevance to the analysis of theatres within African societies is still apt as some of its concepts apply to local theatres such as the Ibibio libation performances. In as much as Wallace Bacon (1914–2001) is termed as the father of performance theory, Richard Schechner and Victor Turner are however recognised as the avant garde of this theory. Bacon’s (1984) definition of performance theory implies a kind of interaction between readers and texts aimed at enriching, clarifying and altering the interior and exterior lives of students [and performers and audiences] through the power of texts (84). Although this definition bordered on “texts” in the context of written work, an excerpt of orally rendered performance certainly impacts similarly on both performers and audiences.

Performance studies incorporate theories of drama, dance, art, anthropology, folklore, philosophy, cultural studies, sociology and comparative literature (Beeman, 1997). It also has a strong relationship in the fields of feminism, psychoanalysis and queer theory as well.

2.4.2.1 Performance Theory and Literature

The concept of performance borders on the recognition of temporal and spatial significations as they adapt to the event. According to Schechner (1988), temporal organisation in performance is “adapted to event” and this makes it susceptible to variations and creative distortions (13). The most observable temporal variations occur in three major areas: (a) event time, which specifies that activity must obey set sequence such that all the steps of performance must be completed, no matter the length of time made available. An instance is scripted theatrical performances; (b) set time, which specifies arbitrary time pattern imposed on events. All events begin and end at specified time (certain moments), whether they are completed or not. There is an agonistic contest between activity and the clock in this kind of temporal indication; (c) symbolic time, which implies that the span of activity represents another span of clock time. For instance, rituals, theatre, make-believe play and games adopt span of clock time in applying specific duration for their performances.

In the context of spatial organisation, Schechner (1988) avers that performance borders around games, sports, play, theatre and rituals, with each operating within spaces that are uniquely organised to “foster celebratory and ceremonial feelings” (13).

To him therefore, the relationship that exists between games, sports, play, theatre and rituals is determined by the spaces they dominate and the use of rules accepted/expressed by each. Schechner (1988) asserts that these five fields can be sub-grouped into three thus: games and sports; theatre and play; and play and rituals. While play exhibit “free activity” where rules are made by the players and initiators in a pleasure principle of a fantasy world, ritual performances show strictly programmed pattern that express “the individual’s submission to forces ‘larger’ than oneself” (Schechner, 1988:13-4). Rituals represent one’s readiness to obey set rules and conventions, whereas games, sports and theatre tend to mediate the extremes of rules. This means that these three (games, sports and theatre) balance in combining the rules of play and rituals. The concept of rules in performance signifies that rules exist as frames to what must be done and what must not be done. In between the frames, there is freedom that each player/performer must conform to as we have in play. However, there are instances when rules are applied and freedom is exerted, At such instances, some performers, especially in theatre, must adhere to the conventions and physical space, while at the same time, obey the instructions given by the director.

Keir Elam (1980) asserts that the analysis of performance system and codes can be interpreted to mean the organisation of architectural, scenic and interpersonal space. This extended meaning of performance space is what American anthropologist Edward T. Hall calls proxemics relations (1980: 62). He continues that, “the spatial organisation of the performance venue is a primary influence on the perception and reception the audience” (sic) (cited in Elam, 1980: 56). Elam implies that the space in which performance occurs (venue) influences to a great extent, the way in which the audience perceive and receive the entire communicative activities. In African performances, the naturalness of the theatre promotes closeness, cordiality and confidentiality in both the act and the performer. In the same vein, the natural theatre in which the *Ibibio* libation is performed and the absence of barrier between the audience and the performer lend credence to the reception of these rites as a communicative process between the people and the deities/goddesses.

Accordingly Erving Goffman’s (1959: 35-6, cited in Schechner, 1988: 13), enthuses that there is “an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community” in the natural spaces that performance occur. In the African theatre where proxemics arch is not encouraged, the space of performance promotes social solidarity in the atmosphere of cordiality that exists between the performer and the

audience. Proxemics relations, according to Hall, are “the interpersonal observations and theories of man’s use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture” (Hall, 1966: 1). The key features of proxemics are distinguished according to the boundaries between the units. Elam (1980: 62-3) identifies three levels of proxemics: fixed (static architectural configurations, play house- that relates to spaces and dimensions of stage and auditorium), semi-fixed (movable but non-dynamic objects as furniture, lightings and other informal stage arrangements) and informal space (the ever-shifting relations of proximity and distance between individuals - actor-actor, actor-spectator, spectator-spectator interplay).

In Western bourgeois theatre, the informal and semi-fixed feature systems exist under the domain of fixed-feature (Elam, 1980: 63). On the other hand, African theatres project the informal space features which do not enhance proxemics arch but rather exhibit cordiality in its “free activity” of a fantasy world (Schechner, 1988:13).

This concept further implies that instructions and conventions are inevitable and integral in performance. Schechner (1988) avers that there is axiom of frames, that is, more structures (frames) within these frames – inner frames within the outer frames. Whenever the outer frame becomes looser, the inner frame becomes tighter and vice-versa. The improvisational artist, which the oral performer is, is free from both the director’s and drama frames but owes his major anxiety in the situation of delivery of his performance and his ability to measure up to the audience expectations. In this manner, the oral artist adopts the tighter the outer (conventions), the looser the inner (the director’s instructions) principles.

In terms of spatial regulation, the Ibibio libation performer obeys strict compliance with the conventional provisions. His is the tighter the outer, the looser the inner frame structure. For instance, while the performer consults the deities, the type of performance determines the time and place of performance. This also influences the props that must accompany the ritual. A case is the performance for the appeasement of *amasa*, the water goddess, for the release of a flood victim who has gone in search of fishes or crabs that overflow the river bank on the days of flood due to heavy rains. The flood itself is believed to be masterminded by the goddess, a strategy to remind the people whenever the required sacrifices are deemed to be delayed.

Since no literary text has meaning on its own unless in performance where the aesthetical propensities are reflected, the different features which constitute audience captivating factor are aesthetically elicited by the analyzer for the purpose of making

meaning. Sign as a major focus of Semiotics which invariably implies the understanding accentuated in libation texts thus makes this theory related to the present study. Similarly, the consideration of the entire outlay of performance which includes the temporal and spatial organisation in connection with performer-audience relationship in making meanings of Ibibio libation performances also makes performance theory relevant to this research.

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Notes:

1. An Asante proverb of unknown origin. Accessed on 05/07/2012. http://www.neac.org/files/documents/libation_ceremony/
2. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
3. In an interaction with Prof. P. A. Ogundeji, Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ibadan.
4. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
5. In an interaction with the clan Head of Oku, Etebom (Dr.) Effiong Eberefiak.
6. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
7. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
8. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
9. In an interaction with Rev. Godwin D. Usoro, a Senior Pastor of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Abak, Akwa Ibom State.
10. In an interaction with Rev. Godwin D. Usoro, a Senior Pastor of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Abak, Akwa Ibom State.
11. Festus Adesonoye's lecture on English Language Clinic (ELC) entitled "Of Nigerian English and Nigeria's English" delivered on 26th April, 2013 at the Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan.

CHAPTER THREE

PERFORMANCE AND IBIBIO LIBATION RESOURCES

This chapter examines, among other things, a discussion on performance as a means through which Ibibio libation resources are manifest. Ibibio libation performance is noted as a communion between the secular and the sacred. It involves the performer's resourcefulness with his texts in his efforts to impress his audience, since the audience is the only context within which oral performance makes meaning. The oral performer owes the audience the duty of manipulating his/her voice (tone) level, his choice of words and his gait, which must be properly harnessed, to the satisfaction of his audience. The chapter also focuses on the Ibibio libation resources collected at the point of performance. It discusses the different literary features of performance that the collected libation texts portray. It also presents the taxonomy of Ibibio libation texts and the contexts necessitating each performance.

3.1 Performance as a Literary Tool

Richard Bauman (1988) defines performance as “a unifying thread tying together the marked, segregated esthetic genres and other spheres of verbal behaviour into a general unified conception of verbal art as a way of speaking” (5). In Gregory Gizelis' (1973) opinion, “performance is considered to be a creative process that takes place either in the message or in the way it is delivered or in a combination of these two” (167). It involves the dramatization of societal values before an appreciable live audience. Performance is the actual portrayal of literary forms “either to accompany or add to what is uttered in speech, or to affect communication independently” (Olatunji, 1993:9). It is only in performance that the actual “physicality ... or textual elements associated with the performance” of the actions, can “have a profound effect on the observers and participants of performances” (Montrezza, 1994: x).

In performance, there is always an established relationship between the performer and the audience. This relationship is predetermined by the fact that in oral art performances, there is hardly a defined distinction between the space occupied by both the performer and the audience; a member of the audience can stand up at some point to contribute to the performance or correct some digression from the performer and thereafter walks back to his seat. Sometimes too, the performer can emerge from the audience to begin the performance. This is because in Africa theatre does not have a “set aside audience” which in turn makes every African theatre a participatory one - a deviation from the norms of Western theatrical practices (Montrezza, 1994: 57). In Chukwuma Okoye’s words, the “performance space is commonly the material environment within which performance is hosted” (Okoye, 2007: 86). Unlike the Western theatre where there is a defined space for both the performer and the audience, the Ibibio libation performer does not have any proxemic arch between him and the audience. What is noticed here is a kind of unity which encourages participation between the audience and the performer. Through this unity, African audience enjoy what Goddy and Watt (1968:29) calls “direct semantic ratification” (cited in Ong, 1982:47). This existing unity in turn translates into some direct interference in the course of a performance. The interference, whether through interjection or comment such as in naming ceremony, puberty rites, initiation into social cult group or welcome, does not provoke any act of anger in the performer, rather, it serves as an encouragement to the performer, which invariably shapes the performance.

Bauman and Ritch (1994) identify the four characteristic components in the course of every performance. Performances, according to the duo appear as artful, reflexive, performative and traditional and emergent, and these features constitute the attraction for both anthropological and folkloristic analyses. They expatiate that “we look to performances as sources of insight into art, meaning, values, social efficacy, and the dynamics of tradition and creativity” (Bauman 1992; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Bauman and Ritch 1994).

According to Bauman and Ritch (1994), performances as *artful*:

[implies] the locus of aesthetic behaviours, forms, responses, and values that are enacted in social life; performances [as] *reflexive* [implies] the cultural forms about a culture, social forms about the society, communicative forms about communication, in which

meanings and values are cast in symbolic form and placed on display before an audience; performances [as] *performative* ... [on the other hand implies] the consequential and efficacious ways of accomplishing social ends; ... [while] performances [as] both *traditional* and *emergent*, reflect the contexts in which the already done is done anew, recontextualized, shaped by and shaping the unfolding agendas of the here and now (255).

Fred Akporobaro (2004) affirms that “an oral literary expression exists as a performance, as a speech act accentuated and rendered alive by various gestures, social conventions and the unique occasion in which it is performed” (4). This is to say that the survey and understanding of literariness in orally expressed art form are succinctly manifest only in the open demonstration or what Gary Montrezza (1994) calls the “physicality” of the performance (x). This is expressed in the components explicated in Charles Peirce’s semiotic theory which this research adopts. In corroborating this assertions, Walter Ong (1982) adds that “words acquire their meanings ... [in] gestures, vocal reflections, facial expression and the entire human existential setting” that these words are demonstrated (47). In affirming the relevance of the chosen semiotic theory for this study, Elam’s (1980) definition of semiotics as a science “dedicated to the study of the production of meaning in society” becomes apt (1). Meaning of any situation in a society is concerned with signification, especially gestures, sounds, movement, actions and other symbolic representations that the audience’s responses would generate in a particular performance.

Libation among the Ibibio is unique as it differs from the performances of other tribes. This realisation confirms Okoye’s (2010) position that there exist “specific historical, cultural and social processes that construct distinct traditions amongst the various African people” (22). It is on this premise that the study of every oral performance should be distinctively embarked upon, rather than the acceptance of a “unitary and homogenous formation” to every concept encountered (Okoye, 2010: 22).

Libation in Ibibio is usually performed by an *Okuidem* of the society, village or family as the case may be. At the clan level, he is the Chief Priest of the shrine but at the family level, he may or may not be the Chief Priest or the custodian of the family deities, especially where the village has one central deity to worship. In the latter case, the *Okuidem* may be the head of the family or his appointee. Where he is appointed to perform, he is under the unction of *Okuidem* and all the respect accorded the *Okuidem* is

equally conferred on him. No stranger can just wake up to perform Ibibio libation in any village unless he is so authorised by virtue of his recognition as a respectable *Okuidem* of his own clan or village. This segregation underscores an Ibibio belief that “*annie idañ ase'tam ndutam idañ amo*”, which translates to mean that “it is only the owner of the land/house that arranges the preparations in his home; a stranger is not permitted there in”.

Libation in its serious sense is normally performed by the most senior member of the society or his appointee. For more serious occasions in Ibibio culture, such as coronation, initiations, feast of purifications, atonement and appeasement, burial of a prominent person, planting and harvesting or in the case of childlessness, libation strictly requires the attention of priests who in turn must be highly reputable (Udo, 1983: 252). Similarly, Brempong (2000) avers that “during ceremonial occasions the chiefs, the linguists, priests, priestesses and the elders, the key Akan traditional bearers would be more erudite in the performance of libation than would others [who are less conversant with Akan tradition] in an informal situation” (40).

These opinions are corroborated in Jan Vansina's (1965) assertion that:

[...] Some traditions may be a matter of esoteric knowledge, just as others may be known and recited by all ranks of the population. In the first case, they are only transmitted by certain persons attached to a particular institution, or are the property of a special group. No one else is allowed to transmit them even if he should happen to be well informed about the tradition ... esoteric traditions are in fact the property of certain special group (34-5).

The liturgy of libation thus demands keen compliance and judicious observation of its conventions. Violation of the traditional hierarchy may upset the spiritual realms with its attendant sanctions and consequences. Accordingly, Ekong (2001) opines that “for proper prognostication, the *abia idiñ* [performer] must maintain a good rapport with the spirits of the powers concerned, as his libation would reflect” (47). He further adds that libation “may also be performed at any time else by an expectant mother, the parent of a sick child or by anyone who is in any form of difficulty.... [It is carried out] effectively for the welfare of man” (46).

In Ibibio libation performance, the performer does not always have to elaborately prepare himself before the performance; he does not need to bother about the colour of his costume before taking up the task. This context is reflected in the performance of welcome and other similar social responses. Albert Lord's (1960) opinion that "for the oral poet [which the libation performer is], the moment of composition is the performance" as there is no gap between composition and performance as is found in literary poems, affirms the Ibibio concept of libation performances (13). In the area of dressing, the Ibibio traditional loin-cloth and shirt are adequate attire for the action, especially if the person is delegated to carry out the performance. In the case of a traditional ruler, his regalia are the proper attire required for this exercise.

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Fig. 2. An *Okuidem* about to perform his routine libation, consisting praise, prayer, invocation and supplication to the deities/goddesses, dressed in his normal Ibibio traditional attire.



Fig. 3. An *Okuidem* in his complete traditional regalia about to perform a libation.

However, when a performance involves a water spirit like *Amasa*, *Atabrinyañ* *Anyang Nsit*, or *Atakpo*, the dress code comes in; a white piece of wrapper and a stripe of white clay marked around the eyes and a strip of red clothe tied around the forehead¹. The white colour which generally connotes peace and purity, at this instance, implies the purity of both the priest and peace for the cause which they seek. Abayomi Ayansola and Esther Ugwu (2008) say that connotations, like indexical meanings are meaning derivatives (30). Where a performer dresses in red, it is worthy of note that he is an *Okuinam* or one who is “complete” in all societal initiations, especially one who has achieved so much prowess at war (*obio ekoñ*) with evidence of human skulls of victims he has beheaded at wars². Red naturally denotes a universal colour of brightness but symbolically connotes danger and warning. In Ibibio pantheon, it “correlates feelings, moods or attributes to tangible objects”, especially the possibility of blood spillage which are directly associated with people of such calibre as the *Okuinam* (Williamson, 1978: 31).

Similarly, Ibibio libation performance does not require different styles for performance, except the variation in the word content and length of the text. The actual pouring performance is not different in the coronation performance and any other less ceremonious ones. However, this research reveals that in the event of deep religious performances like coronation ceremony to the throne of chieftaincy such as clan headship, Paramount rulership or the stool of *Oku-Ibom*, styles may vary as information is restricted to non-members. The research also reveals that during such performances, performers do not wear shoes into the *ekpurikpu* for obvious reason of sanctity.

Ibibio libation performance is spontaneously performed; instances of excitement, visitation or happiness can provoke one. The *okuidem* does not need any prompting before he performs:



Fig. 4. An *Okuidem* performing a libation of welcome to visitors from his throne

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Libation in Ibibio is performed for both evil and good; it is evil when the text is tuned to incite the deities against the living and for good when the performance is meant to appease the deities on behalf of the living. Therefore, for the Ibibio, the communicative impact of libation is achieved through the conscious accentuation of the rhythm of ordinary common speeches and the modulation of voice tone quality. This elevated speech mode serves to maintain a psychic distance between the secular and the spiritual world.

During the regular periodic sacrifices to the deities, the chief priest, the *okuidem*, stands at *iso abasi ekõñ*, (the base of special kinds of tree planted close to each other (comprising *efiat*, *itumọ*, *eto usiere*, *ọkọnọ*, *abañ idem*, *usan-idem*), which is believed to harbour the presence of the deities.



Fig. 5. *Iso abasi ekõñ*, the tree base, with *abañ idem* and *usan-idem*, where libation is performed.

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Elam (1980) defines the theatres as “the complex phenomenon that is associated with the performer-audience transaction” whereby communication of meaning takes place in the performance and with the system underlying it (2). Communication and meaning in Ibibio libation performances takes place between the performer and the audience right under this tree which is one of the Ibibio theatre for ritual performances (other sites include the base of anthills, road junctions and shrines where necessary).

The libator begins as he pours some of the hot drink from the bottle into the glass or *nnak eniin* that he will use for the performance. He raises his hand upwards and downwards, as he calls on the Almighty God before calling on the deities and ancestors. The act of raising his hand is a sign and gesture of reverence, a symbol of acknowledgement of the authority of the almighty God. He pours some of the drink on the ground for them while he asks them to come and bless the undertaking. Tadeusz Kowzan (1968) avers that “everything is a sign in a theatrical presentation” (57). He begins by looking up and raising the glass towards the heaven saying:

Performer: *Àbàsì ényọ̀n̄*, [the most High God] (and raises his hands upwards too in reverence).



Fig. 6a. A performer raising the glass with drink upwards as he calls on *abasi enyoñ*.



Fig. 6b. An *Okuidem* raising the glass with drink upwards as he calls on *abasi enyoñ*.

He looks downwards as he says “*abasi isọ̀n*, (our divinity below)”. After this, he begins to list the deities of the respective clans that make up the Ibibio society in the order of their seniority:

Performer: *Mmè èté yè èté-ète ònyìn. Ùkàná Ọ́fọ́t, Àwà Ítàm, Ètẹ́fía Ìkòndò, Ànyààñ Nsìt, Ítinna Ìmàn, Àkpàsímà, Ùdoè Ókù, Ítá-ùmà Èkíd, Àná-ntia Íbìono, Àtákpò òdém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, (oduok ukod).*

Translation: (the good spirits of our fathers and our forefathers, our clan deities: *Ùkàná Ọ́fọ́t, Àwà Ítàm, Ètẹ́fía Ìkòndò, Ànyààñ Nsìt, Ítinna Ìmàn, Àkpàsímà, Ùdoè Ókù, Ítá-ùmà Èkíd, Àná-ntia Íbìono, Àtákpò* spirit of *Uruan!* (pours some of the drink on the ground on the ground).

(Text 2: lines 1-7).

(Note: - This is the opening formula for almost all libation performances, although the consultation with the water spirits sometimes takes a different opening).



Fig. 7. A performer pours the first batch of the drops of drinks after calling on God and his ancestors.

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In traditional dramatic performance, the actor's body acquires its mimetic and representational powers by responding to every aspect of his performance to the extent that even the physiological reflexes are accepted as signifying units (Elam, 1980: 9). Niyi Osundare (2012) corroborates that in performance, the text becomes a multi-text because of the paralinguistic/extra-linguistic features incorporated into the performance than normally appears in a non-performed text³.

After the performer has called on all the ancestors, he pours some of the hot drink from the glass or *nnak eniin* on the ground for them, taking time to bend the mouth of the glass or gourd downwards. The performer of Ibibio libation text does not stand in one place during performance. Sometimes he turns to the visible audience (Fig. 8) and at other times he focuses on the base of the site of the performance - tree that is believed to harbour the divinities. Whether he faces the visible or invisible audience, he makes sure that he does not move away from the site of the performance – the special tree base.



Fig. 8a. Performance of libation of periodic sacrifice to the deities by an *Okuidem*



Fig. 8b. Performance of libation of periodic sacrifice to the deities by an *Okuidem*

While performing the libation to the deities of the land, the performer asks them and ancestors to give the people good health so that the people may continue to worship them:

Performer: *Sé ñnyìn ñdìtọ mfo dọ o o!* (Behold! We your children
have come!)
(Text 2: line 8).

He demonstrates by spreading his hands as if to embrace a multitude and makes a sign of beckoning, although the visible audience makes no effort to move closer. This gesturing, Elam (1980) says, “has the effect of indicating” between the objects of performance; it shows an “apparent contact with physical environment, with his interlocutors or with the action reported or commanded” (26). This therefore is an indexical signification of pointing wherefore the audience’s attention is marked within the spatial and temporal relationship of the performance. He continues by raising his hands upwards to the sky:

Performer: *Atimmé atọtọd àbàsì ndiin átuàk ísọñ* (The digging stick
must first consult God before it pierces the soil).
(Text 2: lines 9-10).

This is a confirmatory statement on why the performer has to call on God first at the beginning of the libation performance. By the analogy of the “*atimme atọtọd abasi*”, he is believed to be reverencing the Most High God first. Through this, he is believed to have obtained permission from Him before he will pour to invoke the earth deities to be a part of the undertaking, a situation that is likened to the piercing of the soil (*ndiin atuak isọñ*). As he raises his face upwards, the audience too look up in expectation.



Fig. 9. An *Okuider* performing a libation. He raises his glass upward as he calls first on God, while the researcher watches and records proceedings.

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He goes on to inform the divinities of the reason for their coming to pay homage to them for continuous harmonious relationship. He includes the visible audience here as a group coming for pacification through the use of plural marker indicator “*nnyin*”:

Performer: *Ànyé ké nnyìn idí àmì itè idu'tòd fien k'ábáńá édinám
èmi. Àbàsì ányoń, àbàsì ísoń,
M̀bòk ké ábáń akpa-o, ké ikim àwàkà ínua – o!*

Translation: That is why we have come to consult you concerning the event of today. The most High God, our divinity below. Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.

(Text 2: lines 11-15).

The inclusion of the visible audience through the use of the marker “*nnyin*” connects with Brempong (2000) assertions that “both traditional and modern libation use vivid, concrete language to explain the power and the greatness of these supernaturals ... [through] the invocation of the supernatural beings to protect man from his enemies” (54). Ibibio concept of *M̀bòk ké ábáń akpa-o, ké ikim àwàkà ínua – o!* (meaning, “Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge”) connotes the people’s regards and respect to cosmic order. The statement is a prayer against all manner of cosmic disorder like natural disasters, failure of crops, plagues, war, etc. it is a prayer for peace, good health, fertility in the soil and of the womb, long life, progress, prosperity, development, abundance and success in all areas of the community. Brempong further adds that the desire to seek “the protection of the supernaturals is a general phenomenon, a goal for all libation rituals” (Brempong, 2000: 54)

He pleads for mercy, asking that there should be no calamity in the land. Using metaphorical notations, he asserts the people’s justifications for paying the homage:

Performer: *Ndiòoń ádòkkò òdùbè íduèhè úsáń nnyìn ibò yak àfò
òdiòoń mbóhó emi inò nnyìn. (òduòk ukòd).
Àbàsì ányoń, bọ ùkòd dó nwoń (òduòk ukòd).
Èté mì nwoń, èté éte mì, nwoń dó o (òduòk ukòd).*

Translation: The flood that enters the pit does not mistake the way. We are saying that you bless this gathering for us. The Most High God, take and drink this.... Our father, our forefathers, drink yours too!

(Text 2: lines 16-22).

He pours some of the drink on the ground intermittently as he calls on each group of the spirits of the ancestors and the deities, while the audience look on.

Similarly, during the onset of planting season where routine consultations are carried out too, the *okuidem* performs a libation for planting, asking the deities and ancestors to give the people good health to undertake the rigours of planting and to bless the crops for bountiful harvest later. He confirms Ekong's (2001) assertion that "it is not just anybody who may perform sacrifice, ritual to *ndem*" (47), justifying his qualifications to approach the ancestors, the *Okuidem* says:

Performer: *Àníé ídàí as'tammò òdèm ídàí amọ. Kpà òtórò ké òdí, àdíbó mbùfò mmè Èté ònyìn mbọk, ìbọ úwà àmì ònyìn òditọ mbùfò ìbénne ìsọk mbùfò mí. Ìnì kèd áfen, ònyìn iya ídòñño utọ.*

Translation: It is the owner of the land that appeases the deities/goddesses of his land. In the same way I have come to you our fathers saying, please accept this offer of worship that we your children have brought. Once again, we are about to commence planting season.

(Text 5: lines 9-13).

Performer: *Ésén ówò ísí'kóttó, ònyàñño iwa uwa inọ mmè òdèm ídàí owo. Ado áyín ísọñ kpód ase 'kood mmè èté - èté ammọ. Mmè kood mbùfò mfin mbo, òdí, ònwọñ ònyàñ inọ unwam náñná ònyìn òyémmé àdímmèk ufa ọbọñ ònyìn*

Translation: A stranger never calls on/sacrifices to the deities of the land, it is only a true born who calls on his forebears. I am calling on you today to come, drink and lend us your support as we choose our king.

(Text 7: lines 9-14).

Ibibio libation performances define both temporal and spatial relationships elaborately. The call on the ancestors to come and partake in the occasion at the venue being "there and then" (*Kpà òtórò ké òdí, àdíbó mbùfò mmè èté ònyìn* - In the same way I have come to you our fathers) and the time being *mfin* – today, "now" that the performance is ongoing, indicates an affirmation of these temporal and spatial relationship.

He calls on all the ancestors who were noted to always reap bounteous harvest to arise and give them support. This is likened to the invocation of muses whenever one in that field undertakes a similar venture:

Performer: *Etim Akpa Uko, Effiong Udo Okpok, Emaeno Idem Etok, Mbukidem Isuaiko. Mmè àfíd mbùfò ekésèhé ètọ mkpọ eyàñ edọk nti mfid, òwák- òwák.*

Mbùfò ádó ké nkóód àmì mfin mbó, òdí òdídá yè ònyìn ké ònì utọ ák'ìsuà anyem (ọduọk ukọd).

Translation: *Etim Akpa Uko, Effiong Udo Okpok, Emaeno Idem Etok, Mbukidem Isuaiko*. All of you, who are always remembered for your huge harvest, come and support us during this year's planting season.

(Text 5: lines 16-22).

In the above examples drawn from two different texts, deixis are elaborately displayed by the performer to indicate his cordial relationship with the deities and his competence in approaching and pouring libation to them. The elaborate use of “we” and “all of you” indicates the speaker and the receiver of the utterances. These deictic words are very important in drama which performance is. The word “*mfin*” (meaning “today”), which suggests the “here and now” marks the physical environment of the communication (Elam, 1980: 26-7).

The performer first of all invokes the deities and ancestors to wakefulness to their call. He invites them to come and drink a peace offering offered to them before presenting his requests to them. The above performances also indicate the performer's confidence in the power of the deities to grant the requests. By this, the Ibibio libation performances display gestures, which are the hallmark of performance, demonstrated by the performer on every occasion that they are performed.

Performance is an inclusive term that embraces both human and non-human activities, from ritual which is a repetitive and heightened behaviour in ceremonies such as sports, games or even theatrical performances. Lord (1960) opines that “most of the instruments which accompany chants are not intricate (33)”. It therefore means that they are the simple, almost overlooked non-paralinguistic features that we encounter without actually giving much thought to, such as sudden clapping of hand as a result of excitement or a rib-cracking laughter following a performance. In the same vein, Olatunji (1993) collaborates that:

the context of performance ... entails drumming and dance, handclapping and song. The voice of the artist, which follows a recognizable rhythmic melody, often combines other signals like pitch range, articulation control and tempo, which are affective and emotive indices [that enhance good performance quality] (9).

Performance thus constitutes the rich system of folk aesthetics which is transformed by exaggeration and repetitive gaits. It is only in performance that the aesthetics of any oral art are manifested.

Ropo Sekoni (2003) asserts that oral narrative performance “is a communication system in which a social discourse takes place principally between a narrator/performer and an audience” (139).

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Fig. 10. Group discussion with an *Oku*dem and his council of Chiefs in an informal setting.

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Performance is first and foremost an expressive medium before it is a communicative one. In performance, graphic representations of art forms like incantation, invocation, libation, dirge, praise poetry and even lullaby are given visual demonstrations. It is in performance that the standard of taste which reflects the aesthetic values of oral art is visible, observed and appreciated. This implies that in performance, social issues are first and foremost expressed in the communicative process that the whole narrative exercise portrays before the aesthetic properties are made manifest. For instance, in libation performance, it is the social issues within the society that initiate the performance and these issues are expressed firstly before the aesthetic values of the act are recognised. Performance offers to an oral analyst, a symbolic multiplicity of perspectives of the constituents of social life prevalent in a given society.

In Fred Akporobaro's (2004) views, "oral narratives constitute a realm of vision and ontology that was psychologically, artistically and morally satisfying explanations to the primitive man" (57). To this Ekong (2001) corroborates that "any religion or system of beliefs (which libation constitutes) of a people serves the vital function of providing meaning to otherwise inexplicable phenomena" (51). Libation serves as a veritable means of solving life's crises and finding meanings that are of religious inclinations to the lives of the Ibibio people. James Tsaaior (2005) substantiates that libation is a demonstration of the concrete materiality of the triadic worlds of the African society. A world in which Clark-Bekeredemo's (2006) avows that "man ... is ... a medial link in a chain embracing the dead, the living and the unborn" (xxiii); these are the worlds of the unborn, the living and the dead.

Libation performances are most often linked with sacrifices and rituals. Among the Efik sub-group of Ibibio, sacrifices are offered in a pit while the "proper" Ibibio offer theirs at road junctions, anthill base, riverside or foot of a tree, depending on the nature of the ritual (Ekong, 2001: 46). Libation in Ibibio pantheon is believed to take an almost uniform opening pattern of *Àbàsì ọnyọñ, àbàsì ísọñ*, (the most High God, our divinity below). This is contentious as one of the data collected for this study show that in the performance to the water spirit, the *Okuidem* approaches the dreaded *ndem* directly without using the above phrase as an opening formula. In the performances for the terrestrial spirits, the performer first and foremost calls on the Almighty God, the earth deities and spirits of the land, as we have in: *Àbàsì ọnyọñ, àbàsì ísọñ*. This literally means, "the Most High God", before the call on the earth divinities, *mmè èté yè*

mme èté-ete ònyìn, which means, “our deities below, our fathers and our forefathers”. This is a call on both the ancestors and deities to intercede and intervene in the affairs of men.

The call on/invoke of the earth deities/goddesses is done according to the order of importance and seniority. The divinities, spirits and ancestors, are mentioned by their names and identities. The names, which are honorific, must reflect their traditional hierarchy which in turn is the order of seniority or prominence within the religious pantheon. For instance, we have:

Performer: *Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, (ọduọk ukọd). Mmè èté èté yè mme ndem ísoñ Akwa Ibom ònyìn: Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítám, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò Ndem Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono...*

Translation: The Almighty God above, the deities below, our forefathers, the good spirits of Akwa Ibom land: *Etefia Ikono, Ukana Offot, Awa Itam, Udoe Oku, Anyaañ Nsit, Atakpo* spirit of Uruan, *Itinna Iman, Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono...*

(Text 6: lines 1-7).

A similar act of invocation runs through the openings of all kinds of libation performance made on land as the deities and ancestors must be dutifully invoked, invited and appeased before the occasion commences, although some slight pardonable variations do sometimes occur. Normally, the ancestors are called by their names but there are some differences in the order in which they are sometimes recognized. This difference in order depends on who performs the invocation. In the above example, Text 6: lines 1-7, the performer is an *Ikono* man, therefore he begins with his clan deity (*Etefia-Ikono*) even when he is designated to perform in Oku clan in Uyo.

This is because the performer, the *Okuidem* or custodian of the particular god and its oracle delegated to perform, decides to utilize the “charity begins at home philosophy” with the deities of his clan. Udo (1983) asserts that the *Ibibio* “begins his religious worship therefore, with his ancestors, who are quite dear and close to him” (242). On the order of worship of the ancestors too, Etuk (2002) avers that “they would invoke first the host deity and then their clan deity” before calling on other deities or before running down the list of other *Ibibio* deities using the order of seniority (31).

In text 1, 2 and 5, performed by persons from the urban part of Ibibio, the performer opens with the call on the deities from their clan, (*Ukana Offot, Awa Itam*):

Performer: *Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, (oḍuok ukod). Mmè èté èté yè mme ndem ísoñ Akwa Ibom ònyìn: Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò Ñdém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono...*

Translator: The Almighty God above, the divinities below ... our father and our forefathers: *Ukana Offot, Awa Itam, Etefia Ikono, Udoe Oku, Anyaañ Nsit, Atakpo* spirit of Uruan, *Itinna Iman, Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono...*

(Text 1, line 2; Text 5: lines 1-7).

Similarly in the performance from Ikono clan, the opening is as follows:

Performer: *Àbàsì onyoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, (oḍuok ukod). Mmè èté yè mmè èté-éte ònyìn. Mmè ndém ísoñ, Ìtù Mbònúso: Èkùrì énañ, Àbàsì Ubòm, Ñyàmà Ísoñ, Édiéné Ñyàmà, Èkàndèm Ítòbò, Èkàndèm Ínyañ, Ñkañgi Ísua, ìdínwoñ èkè mbùfò (oḍuok ukod).*

Translation: God above, the Almighty, the divinities below (pours part of the drink), our forefathers, the good spirits of our divinities in Itu Mbonuso land. Our ancestors: *Èkùrì énañ, Àbàsì Ubòm, Ñyàmà Ísoñ, Édiéné Ñyàmà, Èkàndèm Ítòbò, Èkàndèm Ínyañ, Ñkañgi Ísua ...* come and drink your own (pours some of the drink on the ground).

(Texts 3 and 4: lines 1-6).

In the first example which was performed by an *Ikono* man, also by the virtue of *Ikono* being the most senior of the *Ibibio* clans, the deity, *Etefia-Ikono*, was mentioned before *Ukana Offot* and the rest of the divinities. In the second example (Texts 1, 2, 5, 12, 13 and 15) the performer applies the reverential technique by calling on *Ukana Offot* and *Awa Itam* before *Udoe Oku* (the host deity) and *Etefia Ikono*. This is in reverence to *Uyo* as the centre of *Ibibio* land. There is usually no split in the mention of *Ukana Offot* and *Awa Itam* as both are recognized as twin deities. In the third example performed in *Ikono*, *Etefia Ikono* is mentioned first to comply with this reverential belief. By this, the invocation hierarchy is not violated because of dire consequences. This study has revealed that the sustained practice of libation performances even in this age of globalization reflects that:

Western colonization and modernity have not resulted in ... a helpless confusion and fatal submission to European cultural hegemony. Rather, traditional African cultures have reacted in “traditional” ways to the new experience: selecting, modifying ... cannibalizing in order to make sense of their rapidly changing social realities (Okoye, 2010: 25).

Traditionalists continue in their little corner to maintain the status quo in spite of modernity and Western civilization by paying regular homage to their ancestors. By this reaction of “traditional ways to the new experience”, African societies continue to maintain their indigenous identity – a situation that Chinua Achebe sums up as our ability to “choose to eliminate the product and retain the process so that every occasion and generation will receive its own impulse and kinesics of creation” (cited in Okoye, 2010: 26). Okoye in the same article further asserts that even where new elements are witnessed in performances other than the conventional ones, they are subsumed within performance idiom.

In assessing the performances of libation in Ibibio, Daniel Offiong (1989) avers that all the ancestors may not always be remembered by their names, especially by a distant person who is delegated to perform in another clan, but they (the ancestors) will always be among those to whom the libator calls upon to come and share in the drinks and any other offering (12):

Performer: *mme ndem isoñ akèn,*
Translation: the other good spirits of our land,
(Text 5: lines 6).

Also noticeable is that the spirits of the mentioned ancestors are those that were presumed to have lived a good and harmonious life while on earth. The names of past brave warriors, hunters, successful farmers, other personalities that relate to the present need are invoked while their past great feats and acts of good nature are carefully catalogued to psyche up the divinities into more benevolence for their subjects before attempts are made to request for the present need:

Performer: *Àbàsì Ísò Èkpò Nsìkọk, Àbàsì Úbrè Nkàñ, Àbàsì Úkàñ
Èyò, Àbàsì Ídìm Énañ, Àbàsì Ébua, Àbàsì Mbàd Èsè,
Àbàsì Úkhiere, Àbàsì Ébìoñ, Àbàsì Mbo Nkìàñà, Àbàsì
Ènìn, Àbàsì Ísuà, Àbàsì Nkàngì: Ìdí ídíwoñ inyañ ino
útoñ ké mkpé ùbọk ònyin.*

Translation: *Àbàsì Ísò Èkpò Ñsìkọk, Àbàsì Úbrè Ñkañ, Àbàsì Úkañ Èyò, Àbàsì Ídìm Énañ, Àbàsì Ébua, Àbàsì Mbàd Èsè, Àbàsì Úkhiere, Àbàsì Ébìoñ, Àbàsì Mbọ Ñckiàñà, Àbàsì Ènìn, Àbàsì Ísuà, Àbàsì Ñkàngì: Come out and lend your ears to our supplication.*

(Text 4: lines 6-13).

Performer: *Okuku Frank Akpan Ekoon, Okuku Anthony Etim Akpan Akpan, Okon Eberefiak Udoidiong, Michael Akpan Udo Eka,*

Translation: *Okuku Frank Akpan Ekoon, Okuku Anthony Etim Akpan Akpan, Okon Eberefiak Udoidiong, Michael Akpan Udo Eka.*

(Text 6: lines 9-12).

The role-call of the ancestors is not uniform because the libator calls on the ones he remembers at that time of spontaneous performance. For instance, in Text 4 above, the libator recalls the long list of his clan ancestors whom he calls to come and lend a hand in the cleansing of the land following an outbreak of cholera attack which claimed many lives. In Text 6 however, the libator merely remembers few names of the ruling dynasty to call. The solemnity in the coronation ceremony is not as intense as that felt for a calamity that consumes lives.

In Ime Ikkideh's *The Vulture's Funeral and Reincarnation*, an Ibibio folktale in English verse, the author in the poem praises God thus:

Mighty source of-all-things
whose abode lies beyond the clouds
Great mother of all Earth...
we your creatures flutter in-between
your awesome shadows unable to help
ourselves except by your strength and will (17).

The author follows up the recognition of the Almighty with the invitation to him to partake in the affairs of the day. These divinities and the good ancestors are given their drinks using either both hands or only the right hand.



Fig. 11a. The performer uses both hands in pouring drinks for his ancestors, while the *ayin uboqñ* watches.



Fig. 11b. The performer uses both hands while pouring drinks for his ancestors.

In Offiong's words, "when pouring libation, the person calls upon both good and evil or bad ancestors (spirit) to come and take part. But the libator holds the glass, [*nnak eniin*, *nnak enañ* or *ukpok*] with both hands as a sign of reverence when giving wine to the ancestors ... left hand when calling on the evil or wicked ones to come and drink" (11). He drinks with both hands holding unto the *nnak eniin*, *nnak enañ* or *ukpok* once he is done with "giving" to the ancestors.

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Fig. 12a. The performer drinking with both hands hugging the *nnak enañ* after “giving” the ancestors with both hands too”.



Fig. 12b. The performer drinking with both hands hugging the *nnak eniin* after “giving” the ancestors with both hands too, while his *ayin uboqñ* awaits his turn.

Etuk (2002) concludes that the switching of hand from right to the left marks Ibibio man's consciousness of the side-by-side existence of good and evil. The serving of the wicked spirits with the left hand is traditionally symbolic; a notion which signifies that negative stands in opposition to good.

The libator makes conscious efforts not to overlook the wicked departed clansmen:

Performer: *Amaado mbùfò mfim-mfim ékpò, ibọ dọ inwoñọ a-mbùfò, ìnnié ìtiê ké mbóhó emi-o (ọduọk ukọd k'isọñ ke ubọk ufìn).*

Translation: But you detracting/evil spirit, take yours from my left and get choked (pours with the left hand).

(Text 2: lines 23-26; Text 3: lines 53-54; Text 4: lines 75-77; Text 6: lines 42-45).

It is generally believed that a wicked person who was wicked when he was alive continues in the act of wickedness when he dies and as such is capable of causing irreparable damage to the occasion and sometimes to the entire clan, if not properly pacified. The wicked ancestors are fed with the left hand after which they are admonished to stay away from the ceremony at hand.



Fig. 13. A performer giving drink to the wicked ancestors with the left hand.

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In their opinion, Offiong (1989) and Udo (1983) declare that since the “liturgy of libation embraces those remembered and those not remembered”, after naming the ones he knows, the libator calls on “others not mentioned” to come and partake (Offiong, 1989: 13; Udo, 1983: 262).

Performer: *Yè àfíd ndùfò eke ‘daaha ùbọọñ, ndùfò ké ñkóód àmì
idáhámì mbó, idí idíwàn do ké ádínám úsèn mfin.
(òduọk ukòd).*

Translation: All of you who ruled before, the ones that I remember and those that I do not remember to call, I say “come and drink in today’s affair” (pours some of the drink on the ground).

(Text 6: lines 13-16).

Performer: *mmè ndém ísoñ àkèn,*

Translation: the other good spirits of our land,

(Text 5: lines 5-6).

This is to ward off anger and offence to the ancestors “since they can punish dereliction of filial duties ... thereby withdraw their support” (Offiong, 1989: 13). It is believed in Ibibio that there is always punishment for filial impiety; therefore every matter that involves religious undertone must be respectfully attended to, for peaceful human earthly habitation.

Eberefiak, in a discourse of the role of libation in the Ibibio religious belief, concludes that the native gin, *ufọfọb*, known for its very harsh taste (psychoactive properties), is meant to activate the “good” spirits for the benefit of man, while it intoxicates the wicked spirits in the event of any wicked desires by them⁴.

However, it is discovered that drinks are not the only apparatus for libation pouring⁵. In an interaction with the village head of *Use Ikot Ebio, Offot, Uyo - Eteidung* Augustine Edmund Akpan, he mentions that items like salt, pepper, palm oil, water and kola nuts are sometimes used for libation, depending on the occasion for the performance. For instance, pepper, palm oil and water are used for appeasement while palm-wine, salt, kola nuts are used for both appeasement and curses, depending on the occasion. These he insists are not offerings as the texts that precede the performance would rightly underscore invocation.

After the rigours of invocation, comes supplication which is the most important aspect of libation. It involves presenting a petition for guidance and offering prayers for protection throughout the occasion and beyond. Petition in the Ibibio libation

performance involves the complaint that is the core of prayer and request made to the deities. It is the expression of the inner will of petitioners who ask favour for themselves and their well wishers and damnation for their adversaries from dependable deities. By the concept of this research, even our ritual of praying before a meal is taken as libation.

Oh God our father, bless this food before us, sanctify it for our good. Bless the hands that made the food and let it be nourishing to our body and soul, in Jesus' name⁶. Amen.

The prayer is itself incantatory. The act of praying is a ritual that one hardly omits, even when it may not be an elaborate one. It signifies the recognition of a supreme being who is above every other power that is visible and invisible. There is a huge dependency on the "power" that is beyond the immediate environment in which the meal is prepared and eaten. The "father" here is recognised as all powerful to nullify any content of the meal that may have been contaminated during preparation. The "sanctification", it is believed, will perfect the meal and make it wholesome for consumption which will in turn nourish the eaters.

In an interaction with a source at the major seminary, the source confirms that the raising of the communion wine up to God is a mark of communion with God for sanctification and protection. He asserts that it symbolises humans' acceptance of their dependence on the Almighty for strength and survival⁷. Similarly, while interacting with another head of another Christian congregation, the leader asserts that the prayers to God during baptism, confirmation and consecration of the church officers at different occasions imply the reliance and dependence of believers on the power of God to protect and sustain these believers. The content of the prayer(s) confirms a crown of glory that awaits the steadfast believer when victory is won through total dependency on God's supremacy:

We ask thee O Lord to protect this thy servant with thy most gracious favour and grant that he may be guided with the gift of the holy spirit, to be a faithful soldier in this thy church militant, so that after this life, he may dwell in thy church triumphant which is without fault – Amen⁸.

The pastor affirms that although libation in African Traditional Religion (ATR) is a form of worship, Christ has offered the last sacrifice for humanity; therefore, no other sacrifice is necessary for the restoration of human beings in God's presence.

In the case of a more religious libation performance, the libator is careful to include the reason for his dependence on the object of worship; he states the reasons for the reverence (past accomplishments) which boost his confidence for present contact:

Performer: *Ísí dóhó èté áyìn k' ánwá, idem ámia áyìn áwàk àfòñ (òduok ukòd). Ké òtórò ònyìn òniéhé òdik ké útò mkpò á ònyìn òyémmé àdí òak mí. Sia ònyìn òma'si òàk òkíd mfon á' mbùfò èséhè fon ké úsèn édèm, ànyé ànám ònyìn òh mààná òdi k'isua anyem mbààk òdí yém ísò mbùfò.*

Translation: It has never happened that the father is among the elders and the cult's masquerade beats the child to a pulp. As such, we are not afraid in this planting season that we want to begin.

It is because we often recall your favours in the past which have never been in doubt, that we are confident to come to you once again this season to seek your face to favour us again.

(Text 5: lines 37-43).

Ibibio libation performances also muster threats as the performer threatens the power should he fail to adhere to his supplications. These threats, though mildly presented, are directed to the deities and they incorporate the consequences for their refusal to both the people who depend on them and the deities themselves. An instance is one typical Ibibio libation performance which reflects its threat thus:

Performer: *Ònyìn òmí'nim ké mbùfò émébo mkpé ubok ònyìn ènyáñ èbèññé òdém àdi kòp mmè èsémé ònyìn ònyáñ mborò, màñ nyìn òwa uwa ebod ye éwá òno mbùfò*

Translation: We firmly believe you'll accept our supplications and grant our petition, so that we shall live and sacrifice to you, goats, and dogs.

(Text 4: lines 83-86).

Similarly, Ezeulu's prayer in Achebe's *Arrow of God* reflects this kind of threat:

Let our wives bear male children.
May we increase in number
at the next count of the villages
so that we shall sacrifice to you a cow,
not a chicken as we did after
the last new yam feast (6).

The above examples reveal that the level of sumptuous sacrifice to be offered to the deities depends on their willingness to grant the petitions of the people, hence, they too suffer in non compliance as the people, disappointed through their failure, will not offer good sacrifices to them.

When the performer has completed his list of entreaties, he interjects that:

Abañ okukpa, ikim akuwakka utōñ (which translates that the water pot should not break, while the drinking gourd should not be torn). This is a warning that all should go well. He is then “welcomed”, since he is believed to have traversed the land of the spirit from where he has just returned. It is observed that the performer must ensure that he pours out the entire content of the glass, *ukpok/iko* (gourd), *nnak enañ* (cow horn) or *nnak eniin* (elephant tusk), that he used for the performance exercise before the observers receive him with the greeting “welcome”. The participants are free to drink the remaining liquid content of the same bottle, but not the content of the cup that was poured out for the deities. It is believed that the content poured out was for the deities and must not be diverted.

As each occasion unfolds, the unwavering need for libation becomes obvious. Each libation performed at every occasion has its intrinsic peculiarities that it must address. It is noted however that every Ibibio libation performance is symbolic and represents a conventionalized pattern that the people understand “as standing for something other than themselves” which is relevant to the people’s existence (Elam, 1980: 27). The most observable among this is the call on the different ancestors who played very distinctive roles in their lifetime as it relates to the purpose of the performance on hand. Their feats are recounted as means to psyche up the ancestors’ desire to help the callers more. The priest invokes their presence as well as requests their support, especially in the instance of a contest. The performer further makes conscious efforts to reiterate his confidence in the ability of the invoked divinities and ancestors to grant his supplications.

Elam (1980) declares that all these “verbal references and other direct foregrounding devices are geared towards presenting the display” in the oral theatre (30). Therefore, the audience’s presence and the signals they make during performance are all essential contribution to the formation and reception of the performance texts and the meaning they make thereof. Their patronage and presence initiate the communication signals between the performer and the ancestors which makes the performance successful. Olatunji (1993) observes that “even the responses to a wink, a

gesture, the coming in of a member of the audience or the message from his master drummer ... are significant within the setting of performance” (10).

3.2 Classification of Libation Texts

Taxonomy in oral literary arts is not an easy task. What can be classified as songs could be chanted at some points of performance. Even narrative sub-genres could be sung, dramatized (performed) or even chanted too. Ibibio libation performances are occasioned by many issues ranging from the pattern of life of the people to their dependency on the ancestors. Ademola Dasylva (1999) has expressed the need for Africans to critically consider Soyinka’s persistent call for “home-grown literary canons” in assessing and identifying the taxonomy of African literature as a whole which this research supports (1). In compliance, this research work makes an independent attempt to classify Ibibio libation performances into two broad categories: ceremonial and non-ceremonial.

Ceremonial libations by the position of this paper are those that are performed when the need arises while non-ceremonial libations embody those that are routinous. Ceremonial libation includes those performed at coronation and chieftaincy title taking (Text 6 and 7), Naming rites (14), burials of members of secret societies, rites at marriage (Text 1), burial of a victim of gruesome murder which is considered a taboo (Text 8), preparing for war (10), rites at the point of burial (of anybody), death of eminent personalities, rescue rites (Text 11), rites of passage into maturity (Text 1), initiation into cults of the land, childlessness, disequilibrium such as multiple births, cleansing of the land (Text 4) and consultation with the oracle in the face of perceived disaster, individual or clan afflicted with calamity (Text 11). To the traditionalist, the laying of the foundation of a building as well as the final stage of its roofing are also specific instances where libation is performed.

Non-ceremonial libation includes the regular social regulatory rituals like gathering of the clan, welcoming of visitors (12 and 15), periodic sacrifices to the deities and goddesses (Text 2), routine worship rites (13) and harvesting and planting (Text 5 and 9). The art of palm wine tapping too constitutes a fertile ground for libation. Even the rituals of praying before meals are eaten cannot be divorced from libation. Some of these are discussed below.

3.2.1 Cleansing of the Land

Most of the socio-cultural activities of our traditional societies are sometimes carried to the extreme by some overzealous initiates. This implies that at the end of that cultural activity, the chief custodian owes a duty to cleanse the land from any form of abuse and excesses perpetrated by the members during the period so as to avert incurring the wrath of the deities on the people. For example, the conduct of *ekpo*, *ekọṣṣṣ* and other such cult groups are usually exhibited beyond the boundary that tradition demands by either over-zealousness or envisaged hatred for someone. The Ibibio also carry out cleansing for such convicted offences like adultery, rape, seduction and incest (Esema, 2002: 19-20). Similarly, the beginning and ending of a season call for cleansing. At these times, libation, whereby the deities are “fed”, becomes necessary.

3.2.2 Gathering of the Clan

The Ibibio society, as an essentially traditional one, depends so much on discussion for the day to day running of the society. This entails regular consultations among the representatives of the families and the elders of the land where issues pertaining to the land are solemnly discussed. Since libation involves the invitation of the divinities for participation, the presiding elder of the gathering or the *Okuidem* of that society will initiate the performance of libation at such meetings.

3.2.3 Funerals of Important Personalities

The burial of a chief or a prominent member of the respective cults in Ibibio land cannot be performed without elaborate libation. Each society has its peculiar prerequisite pattern for the disposal of their dead members, just as they have for initiation into it. A chief is usually buried with so much fanfare that sometimes includes live person or fresh human heads placed as his footstool. Of course, those heads and humans are not just placed there silently. The incantation that accompanies their “burials” is in itself a libation in addition to the drinks that would be poured in the process. Equally, the announcement of the death of the chief requires much more than just giving of information; other traditional rituals that follow his demise also call for libation as this strict pattern must be followed in order to avert danger in the society.

3.2.4 Consulting the Oracle in the Face of Perceived Disaster

As an orally inclined society, the Ibibio consult different oracles at regulated intervals or when the need arises, to locate the source of a situation and possibly seek a solution to it. This instance too lends itself naturally to the pouring of libation since the divinities are only brought to the mainstream through libation (Eberefiak, 2009).

Similarly, in consulting an *abia idiõn* (*idiõn* priest) in a religious reflection or in an enquiry into life's affliction, libation becomes inevitable. *Abia idiõn*, Ekong (2001) enthuses, plays an important role in the lives of the Ibibio people in that he is consulted before any major decision is taken (46).

3.2.5 Individual or Clan Afflicted with Calamity

As a non-literate society, some of life's events – like sickness – are still attributed to affliction from the divinities for some assumed guilt of omission or commission. Even at this time of globalization, so many people cannot shake off their traditional beliefs on certain matters; they still indulge in the consultation of the relevant *abia idiõn* for any serious affliction. Some cases of famine or drought are still blamed on some god/goddesses as punitive measures. This, after the necessary consultation with the priest of the presumed god (s), must be attended with libation performance.

3.2.6 Rites of Passage

So many rites attend the life of a traditional Ibibio person. Some placate the deities at the birth of the child and at certain marked stages of growth up to the point of death (the latter depends on the type of cultural religious group that the person assumes at adulthood). Others begin at the stages of age grade, through puberty, marriage, to adulthood where the person(s) is/are believed to have acquired a sense of maturity. Since each of these stages border on an assumed fidelity of that individual to the tenets of his/her society, libation becomes inevitable at each stage. Instances include the unfailing performance of *uwa idiõn adiaha awo* (rites of passage for a first daughter's marriage, Text 1) that the Ibibio uphold, initiation rites into cults, among others.

3.2.7 Initiation into *Ekpo*, *Ekpe* and Other Cults of the Land

During initiation into the different socio-cultural societies in Ibibio land such as *ekpo*, *ekpe*, *ekõõn*, *idiõn*, *ibok*, *inam*, among others, libation is an important aspect of the exercise. It borders on the invocation of long gone ancestors to guide the new initiates during their fraternity with the cults. This invocative performance is considered necessary to activate the spirits of the divinity in certain natural phenomena. Through libation, divine realities become represented in physical realities.

3.2.8 Periodic Sacrificing to the Deities

There are usually periodic sacrifices that each priest/priestess must offer to their deities. These normally happen at the onset of a season, the end of one, the coming out of a new moon, annual worship period for a particular spirit, among others. These too cannot be performed without libation.

3.2.9. Harvesting, Planting and Fishing

As an agrarian society noted for high dependency on land and its produce, the Ibibio offer periodic sacrifice “just before the clearing of the farm for planting” to the deities of fertility, asking for peace upon the land during planting season, pleading for fruitful yields of their crops at harvesting period (Etuk, 2002). According to our source, the ritual of *ukọọñ edọñ* must be performed before any *akpene* is cleared for the planting season⁹. The fishing community does the same elaborate ritual with libation at the beginning of a fishing season (Etuk, 2002: 34). Libation is also performed to thank the deities for abundant yields during the season of harvest as a mark of reverence to them. This also serves to pacify them for the coming season, a gesture of well established relationship.

3.2.10 Childlessness

This is another important instance in which libation becomes unavoidable. Africans value procreation; a childless marriage is no marriage at all. Therefore, at the slightest indication of delay in procreation, the family (if the man of the house delays) must seek solution to the cause of such delay. This of course involves the consultation of *amasa* - the goddess of fertility who invariably is a water spirit - and libation is the only link through which this goddess is reached.

3.2.11 Disequilibrium in the Natural Order of the Land

The traditional Ibibio does not believe that multiple births come from God or that there is anything like multiple egg fertilization from which these births result. Ekong (2001) enthuses that “the birth of twins or any multiple birth in human beings or cattle was regarded as a deviant occurrence which is abominable to the deities of the land” (130). To them, it is disequilibrium in the normal order of events; as sin or curse for an offence which could be guilt of commission or error of omission.

The gift of twins or triplets is regarded as an evil omen to the family and land. The mother of the twins is regarded too as evil. The mother and her set of twins are not permitted to pass through the village’s sacred grove or shrine for this reason. They are believed to commit sacrilege should they enter the village’s sacred grove or shrine. If this happened either consciously or otherwise, the divinities must be pacified with an elaborate libation performance. The land must be cleansed of the contamination. This too calls for elaborate libation performance. Such women of multiple births (twins, triplets and the likes) were seriously sanctioned, including being barred from the free

flowing activities in the society. In the ancient past, such women and their infants were thrown away to die in the evil forest.

As civilization brought more awareness, they were reluctantly accepted but not without reservations; their mother was branded as *ndubiat* – a profane woman (Offiong, 1989; Esema, 2002). With this stigma, she was restricted from attending social gatherings like other women; she could not go to the market, neither could she fetch water from all water sources or even be allowed to farm on normal, regular farm plot of the year as others do. These women were equally not allowed into compounds of powerful men, native doctors (traditional medicine practitioners), *abia idiõn* (*idiõn* priest) *abia mfa* (magicians), and other sacred places. She was seen as “unclean”. She “must not pass through a shrine where the spirits inhabit; and she cannot go to certain streams to fetch water” (Offiong, 1989; Ekong, 2001; Esema, 2002). Therefore, should a woman give birth to more than one child at a time, there must be cleansing rites which are aimed at restoring her rights within the society. This too involves elaborate rites where libation is performed.

3.2.12 A woman with Menstrual Cycle

A woman who is menstruating is regarded as abomination to the regular order of tradition. Should such a woman pass through the village shrine or a confined sacred area, she is believed to have desecrated the place. Offiong (1991), while writing on witchcraft, sorcery and social order and the role of the ancestors and ancestral spirits among the Ibibio, enthuses that whenever there are disorders in society, the deities have to be appeased or neutralised in order to maintain social and cosmic equilibrium. The chief priest must be informed so that he may perform some rites to restore the peace of the land wherefore libation is inevitable.

3.2.13 Rites at the Graveside

It is observed that at every grave side in Ibibio land, the family of the deceased members must pay “homage” to the diggers before the corpse can be accepted into the grave. It constitutes a set of rituals that all traditionally prescribed items are offered as well as money before the diggers are pacified to declare the grave “habitable” for the corpse. Since the idea is hung on a set belief that is ritualistic, this work classifies this as libation too as incantations are made thereof.

3.3 The Ibibio Belief and Libation

In Ibibio society, libation generally expresses the people's religious dogma and spans the entirety of their existential reality from life to death. It is used as an instrument of appeasement, invitation and pacification of the divinities and ancestors. Within Ibibio culture, there is a profound belief in the spiritual support of the divinities and ancestors who are recognised as the intermediaries and intercessors between humans and the "High God". Their presence is required on every occasion such as festivals and celebrations. As there is only a very thin margin between the living and the dead, libation is the only means known by the Ibibio to bridge the thin line between them. In order to ensure their very unavoidable presence, the Ibibio invoke them through the pouring of libation. The opening formula of every libation is an invocation of God and the deities:

Performer: *Àbàsì ányoñ*, (the Most High God) [raises his hands upwards too in reverence].

Performer: *mmè èté yè èté-éte ñnyìn. Ukàná Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia Ìkòno, Akpasima, Udoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsìt, Àtákpò Ndem Ùruàn Inyàñ, Ítinna Ìmàn, Ítáùmà Ékíd, Ànántia Ìbìoṇo, mme ndem isoñ aken,*

Translation: Our fathers and our forefathers, our clan deities: *Ùkàná Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia Ìkòno, Akpasima, Udoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsìt, Àtákpò* spirits of *Uruan, Ítinna Ìmàn, Ítáùmà Ékíd, Ànántia Ìbìoṇo*, other spirits of our land,

(Text 5: lines 1-7).

And the performer must pour some quantity of drink immediately he has called on them:



Fig. 14a. An *Okuidem* pours libation with a glass



Fig. 14b. An *Okuidem* pours libation with a glass



Fig. 14c. An *Okuidem* pours libation with both hands using *nnak enaĩ*

As classified above, Ibibio libation performances are both ceremonial and non-ceremonial. In most ceremonial performances such as in *ukọpñ udak* - coronation ceremony - and initiation into any secret cult of the land, the actual performance is conducted in *ekpurikpu*, away from the view of non-members. In the case of initiation into secret cults of the Ibibio land, the texts are not made available to non-members by virtue of the oath of secrecy which every member must swear to before acceptance for initiation is granted. In the instance of coronation ceremony, the texts for this study were recorded on tape by a dependable contact.

In other less secluded performances like *ukọpñ edoñ*, performed before the actual clearing of the farmland for the year's planting, other members of the society can form a part of the audience in addition to the chiefs whose presence is mandatory. The paraphernalia for these occasions are the formal chieftaincy attire of a long wrapper tied around the waist, long velvet gown-top, the head wear (which differs according to the rank of chieftaincy), staff of office, with long, big royalty beads around their necks and the gourd or *nnak eniin* that will be used for the performance.



Fig. 15. A group of Chiefs (with different types of hat and staff of office) after an official assignment. The *Okuidem* - Clan head of Offot (5th from the left) - has a specially designed carved staff in addition to his studded woven hat.



Fig.16. An *Okuidem* - Clan head of Oku - on his throne with his special insignia muffler, *nnak eniin*, a special wooden staff (*ekuriku*), in addition to his studded woven hat.



Fig. 17. An *Okuidem* - Clan head of Offot – dressed in his complete chieftaincy attire - with his special insignia muffler, two rows of royalty beads (one with a tiger's teeth), a staff and his studded woven hat.

In order to confirm that Ibibio libation performance is a communion between the living and the dead, the performer, along with the audience, must drink from the bottle from which the drink was poured for the ancestors:

Performer: *Sé inọ mbùfò ádó mmín ñsọñ idem, ídóhó íbọk mkpa.
Kpà ànyé k'ñnyìn mmè adu-úwèm inyáñ inwọñ, ìbọ,
inwọñ o o o!
Ànyé anam nnwọñ òyọhọ ñsọhọ; ñnyìn ìbò, inwọñọ
dó o o! (atọkko ukọd anwọñ).*

Translation: We offer you no poison, but healthful drink from a clean heart that we the living also drink. That is why I now drink the leftover, take yours and drink (he pours some of the drink on the ground from the same bottle and drinks).

Performer: *Ìdító ékà, mme tañ uyio ñbùfò?*

Audience: *ih- ih - ih – ih! (mme nda nse, ete idáñ enyimme, etop ke iwuod).*

Translation: My people have I spoken your wishes?

Audience: *ih- ih - ih – ih! (the audience, the village heads present grunt and nod their heads).*

(Text 7: lines 77-85).



Fig. 18. An *Okuidem* – the clan head of Oku- using *nnak-eniin* during performance of libation, gives drink to *ayin uboqñ* after he has drunk.

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In the performance of Ibibio libation texts, a lot of movements are involved. The performer moves from one spot to another while he performs his chants and intermittently drops some contents of the drink as he chants his incantations. In a performance of welcome to visitors to a family (Fig. 19), the performer shows his excitement by moving around the *akpo esiin* (front view of a compound) while inviting his ancestors to bless the visitors as well as the dwellers of the compound that is visited.

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Fig, 19. An *Okuidem* moving around *akpo estin* during a performance of peace

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Performer: *Yàk èmèm ákéénè mmè isén áwò ésùkké 'dàk édí mí o (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Èmèm ákéénè áyín Alex Ubom (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Ákéénè Utibe Alex (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmen.*

Performer: *Ákéénè ídòk ikòt áyín Ndon Ufok Udo (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Ákéénè Okokon Akpan Udo (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *yàk èmèm ákéénè àfíd áwò (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Akpedò áké 'tò mkpò ufòk, áto ékpùk, áto ímáán, áto íkáán, àmì mbo yàk èmèm ákéénè àfíd áwò (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Ámádo àmì, áyín Edet Udoekong Udoudom Unwaan-ntuk Anyangidem Ananayin-isòñ Akpan Nwa-esu, áyín Edet Udoekong, yàk èmèm á nkeenè míín (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Ákéénè àfíd-àfíd awò (òduòk ukòd).*

Audience: *Àmèn.*

Performer: *Íyò òò! Íyò òò!! Íyò ò òò!!! (òduòk akptre ukòd uwak-uwak).*

Translation: Let everything today pass on peacefully. Our forefathers started it, they continued with it.

Audience: An ululation to mean it is so!

Performer: Oh land! oh land!! oh land!!! The land deserves respect!

Audience: Yes, it does!

Performer: The land deserves respect!

Audience: Yes, it does!

Performer: The land deserves respect!

Audience: Yes, it does!

Performer: Peace unto the land!

Audience: Peace to the land!

Performer: Offenders must pacify the land!
Audience: Yes, they must!

Performer: The land must hear us
Audience: Yes, it must!

Performer: O-o-o-oog (an ululation to signify awe)
Audience: We are in support

Performer: The land fears no creature
Audience: Why should it?

Performer: If a man cleaves unto the land, can he fall?
Audience: How can he?

Performer: Let everything pass peacefully. It is our ancestors that began this, it is to them we return after. Let there be utmost peace.
Audience: An ululation to mean “why not?”

This manner of response is echoed by Kofi Agawu (2007) when he asserts that in performance of a libation, features like “interjections, some quite, some not so quite, some restricted to a monosyllabic exclamation of approval, agreement or dissent, others involving the shouting of whole phrases to amplify certain sentiments” often occur. He continues that “ululating is not uncommon on elevated occasions”, such as performance (4).

Also Ibibio libation performances demonstrate a high level of communication. In the above text extract, communication flows smoothly between the performer and the audience. There is a call-response mechanism deployed in the text. In this type of performance, there is direct audience participation where the audience are free to comment and interject. This type of display is most prominent in a less formal kind of libation – where friends meet after a period of separation.

Even where the visible audience makes no vocal contribution to the performance, communication still occurs in the silence that follows the performance. Another common linguistic feature found in this semi-formal setting are some kind of grunt, nods and cheers from the audience. The nodding (up and down movement of the head) here signifies agreement to what the performer says in the course of his performance.

In some more formal and serious religious type of performance, one may notice some kind of sighing or heavy groaning as response from the utterance of the performance:

Performer: *Ñnyin èdọñ ákpé dọk ábód, íníñé uyio ámọ àná akọn.
Ábód ányin idọkkọ mí ányọọñ ikàn ñnyìn.
Adò anam ñnyìn itua (asiọp, afáñ iwuod, ọduọk ukọd).*

Audience: (*esiọp, efuuñ iwuod*)

Translation: “If a lamb climbs a hill, its sweet voice goes hoarse”. The hill we are now climbing is too high for us. That is why we are crying (hisses, shakes his head before pouring some drink).

Audience: (though they do not talk, they make a long and sad hissing sound and shake their head).

(Text 4: lines 29-34).

Performer: *Mkpa awak abọhọ ké obio nnyin; mkpa ntak ayin, uboikpa mmè mkpàráwà ami adò mbùbiàm (amim mmim).*

Audience: (*emim mmiim ke akposọñ*).

Translation: There is too much death in our land; the death of young men and young women is an abomination! (groans and pours some of the drink on the ground).

Audience: (the audience groans audibly).

(Text 4: lines 35-38).

Performer: *Ñditọ edò mkpò inémésit éno iwuòd iwad. Akéna ñditọ ébuuk únié, aah! Ñsinám ñnyìn inánà iwààd ñnyìn? (ọduọk ukọd, amim mmim).*

Audience: (*emim mmim ke mbọm*).

Translation: Children are the joy of grey hairs. They were to outlive and bury their parents, aah! Why are we losing ours in their numbers? (pours drink and groans).

Audience: (the audience groans sadly).

(Text 4: lines 39-42).

These texts exemplify sadness and sorrow felt by the audience in connection with their reason for gathering at the central shrine where the libation is performed. Sighing in itself implies a state of irreparable loss and helplessness that the people felt. The mere performance of this cleansing rite at the shrine implies that a very serious calamity befell the citizens wherefore they sought the chief priest’s intervention to the deities.

Before this kind of performance is embarked upon as reported by my source, the Chiefs and village heads who must accompany the Chief Priest of the clan, must have

undergone certain cleansing rites which include self sanctification and abstinence. They must have severed their closeness to their wives for at least a week to the set date for the exercise. They remain in a kind of seclusion, going out only when it is absolutely necessary and receiving very limited number of visitors. They are believed at this time to be in close communication with the deities. Therefore, during the main performance by the clan head, the designated *Okuidem* for this type of libation performance, their spatial diameter is believed to be closest to the deities and ancestors.

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Notes:

1. . An interaction with the village head of *Use Ikot Ebio, Eteidung* Augustine Edmund Akpan.
2. An interaction with the clan head of *Offot, Uyo, Etebom* Sylvanus Effiong Okon.
3. Niyi Osundare, in the Faculty of Arts English Language Clinic (ELC) lecture series tagged “Don’t talk like a Book”, delivered at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan on the 18th June, 2012.
4. An interaction with the clan head of *Oku, Etebom* Effiong Okon Eberefiak.
5. An interaction with the village head of *Use Ikot Ebio, Eteidung* Augustine Edmund Akpan.
6. Routine prayer usually offered before a meal is eaten.
7. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
8. In an interaction with Rev. Godwin D. Usoro, a Senior Pastor of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Abak, Akwa Ibom State.
9. An interaction with the clan head of *Offot, Uyo, Etebom* Sylvanus Effiong Okon.

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CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE DISCOURSE AND AESTHETICS IN IBIBIO LIBATION TEXTS

In any ritual drama theatre, performance constitutes the rich system of local folk aesthetics which is transformed by exaggeration and repetitive gaits. All the verbal references of libation texts and other direct foregrounding devices present during performances are geared towards presenting libation performances as a stage spectacle. Libation texts performances among the Ibibio exhibit elaborate repetition and exaggeration. The performer adopts (though he may not know) certain stylistic devices in the process of relaying his performance. It is only in these performances that the aesthetics of these libation arts are manifested.

This chapter discusses the oral literary traditions prevalent in Ibibio libation text performances. More texts are analyzed here to highlight the stylistic rhetoric deployed by performers of libation. The aesthetic features that are inherent in each text are examined as well. The focus of this chapter therefore embodies the elucidating of the narrative, the stylistic and aesthetic properties that are available in Ibibio libation texts, among other related issues.

4.1 Oral Literary Traditions

Finnegan (1970) notes that one of the most significant features of oral narratives is the delivery and dramatic performance of the text. The vividness, subtlety and dramatic performance of texts highlight the literariness of oral arts that one longs for a repeat performance at the slightest opportunity. The gaits and demonstrations of the action coupled with the audience response combine to make oral performances an impressive art worthy of study. Smith and Dale in Finnegan (1970), while speaking about the Ila stories, note that it is “impossible to put on paper” the appreciative capacity of literary value of any literary text (383). Olatunji (1979: 113) similarly enthuses that “when therefore spoken art or oral literature is recorded to yield a scripted

text, much has been lost”. No amount of imagination and recollection by a writer is able to place a reader in the stead of the listeners to the actual one-on-one performance of oral arts. This implies that the context of performance is crucial to the understanding of literariness in oral texts.

While watching the performance of a libation text, the dramatic movements, gestures, voice quality that pitches high and low at some points of discourse, the facial manipulation of the priest which accompanies each excited honorific worship and invocation are never replaceable on printed pages. In Herskovits’ (1961) view, African oral performance is dramatic in form. He affirms:

the presentation of a tale is a bit of acting in itself; when the trickster is in a difficult situation, his whining plea for help is heard. So cleverly can the story-teller act out the part of the characters that the only way fully to convey how these stories are told would be to have a talking motion picture, which would capture the total setting of teller and audience, the gestures, the play of facial expression, and in total effect would not be very dissimilar from drama as we know it on the stage (454).

While written literature receives appreciation through what amount of literary features it musters on print, oral literature invites responses based on its oral context of performance and the human contributions (audience participation) it displays. This of course is manifest only in performance. The audience thus is another important feature of oral literary tradition.

Finnegan (1970) avers that “the way in which stories are dramatized, the narrator taking on the personalities of the various characters, acting out their dialogue, their facial expressions, even their gestures and reactions” all play important roles in explicating aesthetics, meaning and understanding of oral art (384). She observes that “a good narrator economically and subtly presents these with ease in performance” (384). This implies that every verbal aspect of the creative life of the African people, their artistic traditions such as are “found in the tale, the proverbs and the riddle” as well as in the libation text performances, oratory and other verbal expressions of the African people, involve “acting” which is the hallmark of performance (Herskovits, 1961: 452). This dramatic theme of African oral art form that Herskovits implies is apparent when the priest is performing a libation; his voice projects “a bit of acting” especially as he

manipulates his voice to a “whining plea” tone which is meant to pacify the divinities and spirits that he is consulting.

In performance, the performer’s ability to select appropriate words for his speech is highly commendable. This accounts for variation in texts of performance. Finnegan (1970) substantiates that “even when he does not choose to elaborate any extremes of dramatization, the narrator can and does create vivid effects by variation and exaggerations of speed, volume, and tone” which in themselves are indices of “acting” (384). For instance, in the libation texts performed in *Ikono/Ini* axis of Akwa Ibom State, there is a remarkable variation in the choice of words. The texts’ content show a profuse use of proverbiales which is meant to excite the deities addressed:

Performer: *Ebò ké èté únèn aké 'dia ké ifim, èkà únèn aké 'dia ké ifim, òdíín sító ifim ísítèkké únèn esit.*

Translation: It is said that “the mother hen fed from the refuse dump, the father-hen fed from the refuse”. Therefore food from the refuse dump cannot cause nausea for the chick.

Performer: *Ebò ké akananam ikwòd ísí fèhéké inì uwem'éyo íbòhòké abinne mkpò, mme mkpò abinne anyé. Ifakkò inuèn akpon die yàk òdííúúúú itíaba afíd? Nnyin èdòñ ákpé dọk ábód, ínínñé uyio ámọ àná akọọn. Ábód ányin idọkkọ mí ányọọñ ikàn nnyin. Adò anam nnyin itua*

Translation: It is said that “the toad does not run in the broad daylight unless it is after something or something is after it”.

How big is the lap of the skylark (bird) that it should be infected by seven dangerous boils?

If a lamb climbs a hill, its sweet voice goes hoarse”.

The hill we are now climbing is too high for us. That is why we are crying.

(Text 4: lines: 23-33; Text 7: lines 28-30).

The appearance of this stretch of proverbiales in one performance contradicts what we have in the performances of libators from Uyo or any of the other urban settings:

Performer: *Àníé ídálñ as'tammọ òdèm ídálñ amọ.*

Translation: It is the owner of the land that appeases the deities of his land.

(Text 5: lines 9-10).

Performer: *Ndiọọñ ádọkkọ òdùbè íduèhè úsálñ.*

Translation: The flood that enters the pit does not mistake the way.

(Text 2: lines 16-17).

The variation in the choice of words as shown in the profuse combinations of persuasive element above also affects the length of the texts from the different locations. The *Ikono/Ini* texts are longer than those from the urban. As the instrument of the deities, the libator's choice (of linguistic codes) is highly "different and unique to him, [and this] ... has to do with his control and mastery of his environment", and as such, it is different from the mundane speeches of ordinary men (Etuk, 2002: 18). The urban Ibibio speakers of *Uyo*, including *Oku*, *Etoi*, and *Nsit Ubium*, use more common, down-to-earth proverbs in their wording to show their competence at performance.

The above examples confirm Finnegan's (1970) assertion that "each literary culture has its own stock figures whose characteristics are immediately brought into the listeners' minds by their mere mention" so that even in tale narration, names of characters are not given but stocks like "a certain man, a chief, a woman, etc" refer to the characters accordingly as these are understood by the audience of the narration event (Finnegan, 1970: 361). In the libation texts' performance, each locality (audience composition) expects to hear the names of their deities and ancestors mentioned in the cause of the performance. The compliance by the performer quickly retains the audience's attention throughout the entire performance as this confirms that he performs each stage of the art "according to the local conventions" (Finnegan, 1970: 374). The nuances of first and foremost naming the deities and ancestors of each locality accounts for the high level of variation in the content of the libation texts accessed.

Any valid appreciation of an oral art therefore is measured in the context of performance where all para/extralinguistic features are manifest as "no written version ... could hope to reproduce the real atmosphere of the actual narration" (Finnegan, 1970: 383). In a written text, the facial expression of the performer, the limb movements of gestures, his spatial location as he demonstrates and his voice modulation are lost on the page that the work is written on. One cannot therefore comprehend, on paper, the expression of sorrow and anguish on the faces of the audience or libator's while he laments the pains of losing youths at quick succession in the outbreak of cholera which informs the performance of Text 4.

The society sometimes places "conventions about the age and sex of the narrator" (Finnegan, 1970: 375). While a large number of them may appear to grant freedom to any skilled master story teller, quite a number too seem to have "a definite emphasis on one or another category as being most suitable one for a story teller (Finnegan, 1970: 375).



Fig. 20. The researcher with a mixed group discussing libation performance.

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For instance, some society prefer older women as most dignified and gifted, yet others believe men to be more expert, especially in more serious narration such as myths and legend. Animal stories are usually generally left for women and children.

In issues of libation text however, though there is no clear-cut barrier between the choice of its performers, the most severe and solemn libations are, in spite of this flexibility, performed by the priest and custodian of the tradition. For instance, when a suitor approaches a family to request for a hand in marriage to a daughter of that family (*nkọñ udọk*), a libation is performed by the oldest member of that family (who may decline for obvious reason of “Christianity”) to intimate the ancestors of the would-be union. Here, the performer need not be a priest or the *okuidem* of the family. Rather, what is obtained here is that the family head delegates another person to do the performance on behalf of the family. In oral literary tradition, the audience constitute a major importance and “could be crucial for the assessment of the social and literary significance of the texts” (Finnegan, 1970: 376). In the above, both the visible and non-visible audience are present during the performance.

4.2 Narrative Rhetoric and Ibibio Libation Performances

Narration in literature is the giving of the account of a sequence of events in the order in which they happened. Ibibio worldview is prominently expressed in the people’s literature which is oral in nature. It comprises folktales, proverbs, riddles, songs, poetic recitals, incantations, among other artistic oral art forms. The above subcategories can be spoken (narrations) sung or chanted and acted or danced. As an oral society, important aspects of the people’s daily lives are conspicuously conveyed through performance. Narrative on its own is the aspect of literary work that is concerned with the relating of the stories embedded in that literary work. Every literary work, be it prose, drama or poetry, is a kind of narration. Each one has a story or an event to relate. Ibibio literature which is oral in nature is no exception in this regard.

Narrative art is the artistic efforts at making known the rigours or intricacies involved in the rendering of the accounts of events themselves. Ibibio libation performances, though shrouded in mystique and awe, tell the stories of human’s relationships with the unseen God via the assumed earthly deities and ancestors. They reflect person’s realization and acceptance of their limitations in grappling with their cosmic environment.

Narrative art in its strict sense is that aspect of the verbal creative expression of a people. It infers the creative life of a people which is verbally expressed to relay the mores and beliefs of the society to its members. In Ibibio society, societal values are not taught in any formal educational institutions. They are acquired informally as the tales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles and other folklore forms are relayed. Accordingly Herskovits (1961) enthuses that narrative art embodies “verbal aspects of the creative life of the people, their artistic traditions found in the tale, the proverb and the riddle” as well as in the libation text performance, oratory and other verbal expressions of the African people (Herskovits, 452). While the tales and other forms of folklore are told, the members of that society isolate the acceptable societal values which they strive to emulate as they also identify the non-acceptable values that are to be shunned and discarded.

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Fig. 21. The researcher with academic group discussing on libation performance.

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For instance, the norms of respect and order are succinctly expressed in the opening formula of every libation performance:

Performer: *Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, mmè èté yè èté-ète ònyìn. Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsìt, Àtákpò ndém Ùruàn Ìnyàng, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Ìtá-ùmà Ékíd, Àná-ntia Ìbìono, yè ndùfò mmè mbọọñ aken.*

Translation: The Most High God, our divinity below, the good spirits of our fathers and our forefathers: *Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsìt, Àtákpò* spirit of *Uruan*, *Ìtinna Ìmàn, Ìtá-ùmà Ékíd, Àná-ntia Ìbìono*, and those of whose names I do not remember.

There is a conscious hierarchical order of the Ibibio earthly deities which in essence reinforces the people's worldview on order. According to Esen (1982), "order in nature prescribes that the older person shall be more knowledgeable more capable and wiser than the younger ones" (65). This sense of order is enshrined in a proverb like "*idiñ abre nto ntie*" (the soothsayer first attends to first arrival) which is highly esteemed by the Ibibio, educational status or position notwithstanding (Esen, 1982: 65).

Order in Ibibio is equally observable in the numeral and cardinal activities of the Ibibio: "*Akpan* or *akpa* means the first, hence first children, opinions or issues are generally regarded as the most important in their lives" (Esen, 1982: 66). *Akpan*, *Udo*, *Etokudo*, for the order of arrival of sons and *Adiaha*, *Nnwa* and *Unwaetok* or *Etokafia* for the order of arrival of daughters is meticulously observed by the Ibibio family structure, in spite of Western civilization and modernity.

In observing respect in Ibibio libation performances, the mode of pouring of drinks is of utmost important; two hands or only the right hand is involved when the ancestors are given the drinks while the left hand is used to pour drinks for the wicked ones.



Fig. 22. The performer uses the right hand while pouring drinks for the ancestors.

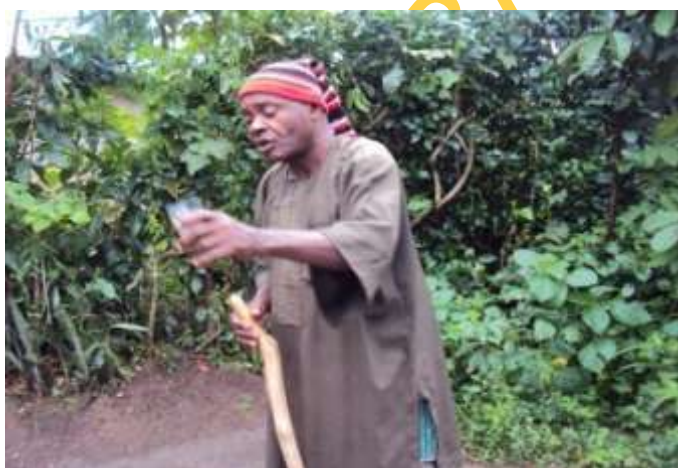


Fig. 23 The performer uses the left hand while pouring drinks for the wicked ancestors



Fig. 24. The performer uses both hands to drink after giving drinks to the ancestors as a mark of respect.

The use of the right hand, sometimes both hands, in the process of pouring libation is symbolic of respect and reverence to the ancestors and the divinities. Likewise the conscious use of the left hand in pouring drinks for the wicked spirit is indicative of casualness and disregard which the Ibibio are known to allot the wicked. The above summation validates Peirce's definition of the symbolic sign as involving an entirely conventional link between a sign and its interpretant. It also reinforces O'Neill's (2008) inference that symbolic signs are signs that refer to their objects by virtue of a law or set of socially derived rules that cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object (70). In this sense, the use of the right or left hand is symbolic to the Ibibio while the right and left hand in the culture iconize positivity and negativity respectively.

Also derived from Ibibio libation performances is the norm that one should not give to another what one does not eat:

Performer: *Ọnọ ówò mkpọ obo náñńá mkpọ ifọn Yak ndad ètòk mbùfò èdikéré ké ami ñk'ọnọ mbùfò ibọk.*

Translation: He who blesses another, seeks fortune. Let me take a little of what I have offered so that you know that I have not given you a poison.

(Text 2: lines 30-32).

The Ibibio society believes in communal existence whereby sharing is encouraged and practised. An Ibibio person naturally does not offer an unwholesome food to someone since he believes that blessing accompanies giving. The giver must also partake in the gift as a mark of communality.

The art of narration is a crucial one in Africa as this is the only medium through which information were sought for and obtained in the preliterate African society. Historical accounts of the origin of places and events were transmitted through this oral mode of communication. It is however noted that writing and printing, which are a feature associated with Western civilization, arrived late on the African continent following her contact with the Western world. According to Ime Ikiddeh (2005), writing "has only been in the world some eight thousand years, and printing for only a couple of centuries" (52). To the Ibibio society, it would have arrived long after her contact with the Whites which happened through trade and colonialism in the fifteenth century. To date, most African communities still depend for their day to day interaction, on oral transmission codes. Most of the mores of such societies are communicated through their

folklore which includes the folktales, the riddles, the proverbs, the epics, the praise poetry, the traditional songs, the dirges, the masquerade performances and other oral narrative discourses.

Narrative art is the ability to communicate effectively using language, especially to persuade and influence the captivated audience. The art of narration has been with every living society for as long as life existed there. It spells out the manner in which the artistic traditions of a community are carried out. Narrative art is therefore the spoken medium of language use which creatively captures the ways of life, emotions, manners, aspirations and hopes of the people it discusses. Ikiddeh (2005) calls this the “composition of beauty and value as man created in spoken words” (52). For instance, in the libation of rites of passage of an Ibibio maiden into the realm of maturity, (*uwah idiõñ adiaha awo*), the emotions, manners, aspirations and hopes of the people are exquisitely highlighted:

Performer: *Èkà ádia-dia ñkpò, úbòk áyìn, ádia-dia ákè èbé áyìn mfoõñ mfon,*

Translation: The mother will eat her daughter’s food without any fear of a risk. She is free too to eat from her Son-in-law without hindrances.

(Text 1 lines 7-8, 21-22).

Performer: *Mbòk ké ábáñ akpa-o, ké ikìm àwàkà ìnua – o!*

Translation Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.

(Text 1: lines 15-16, 24-25).

Performer: *Ákpò íwuò kèèd-kèèd éyohò ùfòk.*

Translation: A nose at a time, until the home is filled.

(Text 1: lines 26-27).

The Ibibio people believe in procreation; every marriage should be fruitful hence, *Ákpò íwuò kèèd-kèèd éyohò ùfòk*. (a nose at a time, until the home is filled). The ancient Ibibio did not cherish multiple birth; they believed that single delivery is a blessing from God while multiple birth is an abnormality. Today, multiple children are accepted with less complaint than before. It is their keen hope that *áyìn ádo àkòd àdu ’bòk* – one’s child is supposed to come and take care of the parent when the child is grown, hence the parents are expected to *ádia-dia ñkpò, úbòk áyìn, ádia-dia ákè èbé áyìn mfoõñ mfon*, (eat the daughter’s food without any fear of a risk and equally be free too to eat from the Son-in-law without hindrances).

For the Ibibio, most subgroups have certain taboos on the first daughter, *adiaha*, while some have on *Nnwa*. This means that in the event of a marriage proposal, there must be a certain ritual of cleansing which frees the parents to enjoy the products of that union. Where this is omitted, *Etebom* Sylvanus Okon says that disharmony in the cosmos ensues and a normal Ibibio person strives not to break the chain of equilibrium between his family and the divinities so as not to incur their wrath¹. This libation is thus a reaffirmation of the people's social values. Every narrative art requires "considerable imaginative alertness, creativity, training, technical clout, artistic patience, practice, and critical appreciation" and Ibibio libation performances exhibit these qualities so lucidly (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, 2009: 69).

Allwell Abalogu Onukaogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu (2009) aver that "written literature" in Nigeria "is relatively very new" (68). This means that Nigeria as a society, depended for a long time on oral forms of literary expression as it had "to wait ... to master the new art of writing, particularly in the foreign, more universal English language" before her literary values were written down as we now have in the genres (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, 2009: 68). What this means is that the task of acquiring effective narrative ability in the print media too had to undergo the waiting processes before it emerged. This left the transmission of any literary value to the oral means and to the Ibibio, libation performances constitute one such medium. In Charles Nnolim's (2009) views, these earlier forms of literary expressions had existed with each society and they constitute "the undisputed antecedents of the more modern genre" which are the novel, the drama and the poetry (279). Narrative art as used in this paper is the process of telling of an oral event, which in this case, is the libation performance. It embodies the process or rigours of exploring the literary elements that are inherent in oral arts during performance such as the proverbs and other paralinguistic devices that are of aesthetical value.

Rhetoric on its own is the persuasive ability of the author's words, either in speech or writing. It means the strategies/techniques that are involved in the efforts to narrate the tales. In oral performance, rhetoric is achieved through the ability to invoke some mystique of solemnity whereby the audience is spell-bound as they watch the artistic demonstration of the performer (s). The art of narrative rhetoric as used in this research is the artistic use of language in speech, especially to effectively persuade or influence the audience. Ibibio libation performances use adequate techniques of consultation, appeasement, invocation and invitation to indicate their desire to include

their ancestors and deities in the affairs of the living. These strategies are shrouded in humility and reverence to the super power that is the main force consulted in these processes. In Ibibio libation performances for instance, there are a lot of persuasive phrases of plea, certainty, confidence and affirmation which emphasize their dependency on the deities in the people's incantations to the deities and ancestors:

Performer: *M̀b̀ok k̀e ̀ab̀ań akpa-o, k̀e ikim ̀aẁaká inua – o!*

Translation: Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.

(Text 1: lines 15-16, 24-25).

Performer: *Ndiọọń ̀adokko ̀odubè iduèhè úsáń. Nnyin ibò yak ̀afò ̀odiọń mbóhó emi inò nnyin.*

Translation: The flood that enters the pit does not mistake the way. We are saying that you bless this gathering for us.

(Text 2: lines 16-19).

Performer: *Èkà ̀enań ama ata mbíd, ̀nditọ ese sáńń*

Translation: When the mother cow eats grass, the calf watches intently.

Performer: *Ebo k̀e ̀étó k̀éed akpe duọ, ̀afen ase tippé k'itie ado.*

Translation: It is said; 'when one tree falls, another must come out to take its place'

(Text 3: lines 13-14).

Performer: *Èté únèn aké 'dia k̀e ifim, ̀ekà únèn aké 'dia k̀e ifim, ̀ndiín sító ifim isítèkké únèn esit*

Translation: It is said that "the mother hen fed from the refuse dump, the father-hen fed from the refuse". Therefore food from the refuse dump cannot cause nausea for the chick.

(Text 7: lines 28-30).

Performer: *Ebò k̀e akananam ikwọd isí f̀ehéké inì uwem'éyo ̀ibohoké abinne mkpọ, mme mkpọ abinne anyé.*

Translation: It is said that "the toad does not run in the broad daylight unless it is after something or something is after it".

(Text 4: lines 23-25).

Performer: *Ísí dóhó ̀eté ̀áyìn k' ̀ánwá, idem ̀ámia ̀áyìn ̀aẁak ̀afọń.*

Translation: It has never happened that the father is among the elders and the cult's masquerade beats the child to a pulp.

(Text 5: lines 36-39).

In Ibibio libation performances, the performer pauses after every key sentence and pours some of the drink on the ground from his *nna* *eniin*, *ukpok*, *iko* or glass as the case may be, on the ground for the ancestors; styles of performance (pouring) are non-variant. Variation of style is observed in the incantatory contents of each text. However, the performer(s) lucidly invoke mystiques of solemnity through voice modulation and in some cases, conscious restriction of audience may be classified as a rhetorical device also. For instance, the installation of an *Okuibom* is a rare occasion that one may not have the opportune moment to see twice in a life time. At the point of the libation performance of *ukọṅ udak* – the crowning of the *Okuibom*, the teeming crowd would love to capture every detail of the occasion for future reference but this act is performed inside the *ekpurikpu*, away from the media and non caucus members.

In the narrative rhetoric of performance, the appreciation of every literary genre is in the live enactment by the performer before an audience. Ong (1982) says that:

words acquire their meanings only from their always insistent actual habitat, which is not, as in a dictionary, simply other words, but includes also gestures, vocal reflections, facial expression and the entire human existential setting in which the real, spoken word always occurs (47).

This is to emphasize that oral arts thrive on their natural mode of contextual presentation, rather than on (the pages of) paper. In the words of Finnegan (1970) therefore, every aspect of oral narration seems to contain similar features “in the characterization or detached comment by the way they (the narrators) spoke as well as by the words themselves, the pathos and humour, subtlety and drama” that each narrator adds in the process of performance only appreciable in the natural observable point of performance where all these signs are semiotically assessed; they are never communicable in writing (383).



Fig. 25. The performer uses the right hand while pouring drinks as he communicates with the Ancestors.



Fig. 26. The performer uses both hands (while the *ayin uboñ* watches) while pouring drinks for his ancestors.

Performance is the wheel in which all forms of assessments and appreciation are anchored. The actual oral delivery of the text accentuates the literary properties inherent in oral art forms. As the world of the oral artist lives successively on the spur of the moment, the literariness of every art form is manifest only on the merit of its actual performance as each performer's competence is observed and assessed effectively thereof. This is to say that context is the appropriate instance for the grasp of literariness (literary properties) in oral texts. This implies that it takes a good imaginative adeptness "to place a reader in the stead of the original listeners" to the actual performance, if he is only told of the performance (Finnegan, 1970: 383).

In the performance of a libation text for instance, the dramatic movements, gestures, the high and low pitch of voice, the facial manipulation of the priest which accompanies each worship and invocation, manifest responses that the priest receives from the invisible audience/recipients of the worship, among other distinguished features that present themselves clearly, thus elucidating meaning.



Fig. 27a. The performer and members of the discussion group with the props for the performance.



Fig. 27b. The performer and members of the discussion group with the props for the performance.

These paralinguistic properties are never transmissible on printed pages when such a performance is published.

Accordingly, E. G. Alagoa (1990) corroborates that “the print medium loses most of the directness, informality, and aesthetic devices present in the oral tradition” at the point of performance, the moment attempts are made to bring them to the “literate public” (audience) “through the official language” of writing (5). Narrative rhetoric highlights the following key concepts in oral art (Ibibio libation text) performance: Improvisation of content by each author, Performer/artist voice mode, variation in texts, the personality of the artist and the performance of the text, props/costumes, among others. Some of these concepts are discussed below.

4.2.1 Improvisation of Contents

In the select texts, as in all other oral performances, there is much improvisation. This results from the oral nature of the texts’ performances as well as from the authors’ innate desire to reflect some kind of authority in their performances. As an orally presented literary piece, libation texts are never written down. Dandatti Abdulkadir (1981) puts it that oral performance texts are “never composed before the moment of performance” (27). Milman Parry and Albert Lord, in their famous Parry-Lord’s performance /composition theory which Abdulkadir (1981) cites, have it that performance and composition are inseparable. According to Abdulkadir (1981) citing Parry-Lord’s opinion to corroborate his views, there is no point of difference as most texts are composed at the point of performance. This is encouraged to a great extent by the improvisation ability of African oral artists. This harmonious relationship is reflected in Ibibio libation text performance where composition appears to occur side by side with the performance.

Finnegan on her part believes that there is separation between texts and performance as “much of the composition takes place before the moment of performance” (Finnegan, 1974: 29). This is however not the case with all instances of performance. In the Ibibio libation performances studied, a casual observation may corroborates Parry-Lord’s opinion of oral arts, being as they are, composed at the point of performance.

The African oral artist is well versed in the art of improvisation where a great display of his competence as a performer is manifest. This ability to improvise, replicates “the actual way in which the story teller’s imagination can combine fantastic

elements with his knowledge of the real” to have effective communication (Finnegan, 356). The variability is not only in terms of the difference between the geographical locations among societies, but also in the difference in the skill of each narrator. This implies that differences arise from the societal composition as well as “from narrator to narrator”. This, according to Finnegan (1970) means that “each narrator has his own contribution to make of wit, satire, elegance, or moralizing”, which all comes to bare at the instance of performance (356).

While improvising, the performer introduces variations on older pieces and sometimes, totally new forms in terms of the detailing of the wording, the structure, or the content. The extent of this kind of innovation, in Finnegan’s (1970) opinion “varies with both the genre and the individual performer” (7). There is usually variability in delivering style except for the opening formula which must not be altered in most cases. The content, sequence of performance and length depend so much on the purpose of the performance as well as the ingenuity of the performer’s improvisation. All these are accounted for by the oral nature of oral literary forms.

4.2.2 The Personality of the Artist.

Although it is believed that in oral literature, the personality of the artist enhances or diminishes the performance of the text, this is not exactly possible with the libation text performances. The reason for this is not far-fetched as a mystique of awe always surrounds this particular genre of oral art. Solemnity and total comportment are usually associated with religious performances since the recipients are usually the unseen revered divinities. Any slight omission or error is easily punished; the judgemental courts of the divinities and ancestors know no appeal, therefore the performer takes conscious efforts to sustain the status quo in certain order in which the performance must take. This constant guard on self diminishes any influence that the personality of the artist is supposed to have on the libation performance texts. In spite of this inflexibility, the performer here is not easily accused of “not seeing well” as is usually observed in some other religious performances such as in divination consultation (Ekong, 2001: 47).

In these religious performances therefore, the “narrative elements are sometimes found in a rudimentary form in the invocations and divination” which the artist/performer displays rather than in his personality (Finnegan, 1970: 168). It can be inferred at this juncture that in African narrative arts, the elements of characterization,

thought, language, music, dance and spectacle, which comprise Aristotle's mandatory six elements of drama, are present if not all in one narrative event, definitely more than one element in each event. During the course of this research, it was gathered that in Ibibio libation practices, such dramatic elements as characterization, thought, language, and spectacle, are very common occurrences, although in some very highly ritualistic cases such as *ekpe*, *ekọọñ* and *ọbọn* performances, music and dance do accompany such performances.

4.2.3 Variability in Texts

In the selected libation texts, the voice quality on each occasion, though predominantly solemn, differs as occasions (and sometimes authors) differ. Both the texts i and vi, performed in the same locality (Uyo) on different occasions, reflect clear evidence of variation of wording, lengths and contents of the libation performances. A performer from the urban town like Uyo or Ubium would end his performance thus:

Performer: *Ọnọ ówò mkpọ obo náññá mkpọ ifọn Yak ndad ètòk mbùfò èdikéré ké ami ñk'ọnọ mbùfò ibọk.*

Translation: He who blesses another, seeks fortune. Let me take a little of what I have offered to you so that you may be convinced that I have not given you a poison.

(Text 2: lines 30-32).

While on their part, the Ikono-Ibibio speakers in the hinterland would rather end their libation performance thus:

Performer: *Eyio akim, usen ikwèññéké Yak ùsáñ asinne k'udáñ abed àsén. Sé inọ mbùfò k'ami nnyáñ ñwọñ ami o o!*

Translation: It is only night that has come, not end of life. Let the bowl of foo-foo rest in the mortar awaiting the visitor. What I have offered to you is what I am also drinking.

(Text 3: lines 54-55).

In every oral narrative performance, "the impacts of stories (or any of the art forms) based on 'same' plot or motif can vary considerably, even in the same society, if told by a different individual on different occasions or even, in some cases, by the same individual on different occasions" (Finnegan, 1970: 342). This is accounted for by the oral nature in which the arts are acquired and transmitted. Each moment of performance provokes the artist's improvisation prowess and he is equally influenced by the dynamic

composition of the African audience. This establishes that variability is an inseparable feature in African oral arts.

Just like Finnegan (1970) avows that “the detailed subject matter and context, however, vary considerably with the differing religious beliefs and institutions of each people”, the content of Ibibio libation texts are not static but vary depending on who said it, the occasion and the particular dialect used (Finnegan, 1970: 175). For instance, the dialectal differences in the Ikono-Ibibio speakers account for the different pronounceable words in the opening formula of text performance such as in *Abasi onyoñ* (Text 3) for Ikono-Ibibio and *Abasi anyoñ* (Text 1) for Uyo-Ibibio. There is also another differential in *Abasi enyoñ* which is usually uttered by people from the Ubiom-Ibibio (Text 2).

4.2.4 External Factors

Apart from the inherent features within the texts, several external factors also contribute to the general structure of libation performance appreciation. These factors are, but not limited to the followings:

4.2.4.1 Voice of the Artist

This is an important aspect of narration. In storytelling, poetry, chants, among others, the voice quality of the artist goes a long way to captivate, sustain and retain the audience’s attention. Similarly, in Ibibio libation performance, the high pitched voice quality of the artist is an asset to his audience. Onukaogu and Onyerionwu (2009) avow that “several resources of performance such as facial gestures, body movements, voice manipulation etc., which all contribute to raise the aesthetic quality” in any African oral art performance (77). It is believed that such a high tone penetrates the depth to move the deities and spirits into desired action, unlike the sluggish, dull voice.

Since there are obvious differences in the content of each orally presented text, each performer seizes every opportunity to exploit and explore various kinds of literary effects which aim at portraying his mastery of his literary environment. Even when the same performance is required of the same artist on a different occasion, he ensures that his voice quality, facial gestures, movements and gaits as well as his entire performances vary in the different contexts. Transcription/Rendition of the voice quality cannot be reflected in the analysis here; this in essence confirms the inadequacy of the print media to capture the aesthetics of oral performances.

4.2.4.2 Choice of Language/Ability to Select

Although most genres of oral art specifically demand the use of special language, each artist must possess the keen ability to select his lexicon appropriately to reflect his purpose. The chants of a priest at the point of invocation must go beyond the normal day-to-day speech pattern to delight his audience as well as identify him as a “powerful” instrument of the deities. The choice of sensitive honorific phrases is equally an admirable asset to the artist.

4.3 Stylistics and Aesthetics of Ibibio Libation Texts

4.3.1 Stylistic Effects in Ibibio Libation Performances

Libation as a traditional performance among the Ibibio is a creative verbal expression which is highly dramatic and picturesque in form; it thrives on honorific and awe-inspiring lexical items. Akporobaro (2004) asserts that “the offering of libation to a God often involves a highly literary use of language” (59). Sainte Beuve, one of Matthew Arnold’s heroes says that style is the man while George-Louis Leclerc de Buffon declares that the style is the man himself. In order to display competence and skills in every performance, both as a means to sustain his credibility and to impress this audience, every oral artist must adopt some stylistic tools in his performance. In this vein, Ibibio libation performances studied hereunder demonstrate the stylistic effects in attempt to mirror their literary prowess.

4.3.1.1 Opening Formula and Salutation

Every Ibibio libation performance begins with greetings. Salutation is thus a gesture of greeting and welcoming somebody to the present field of discourse. It implies recognition and acceptance to fellowship. For instance, the opening formula is an acceptable form of salutation and it is highly invocatory:

Performer: *Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, Mmè èté èté yè mme ndem ísoñ Akwa Ibom nnyin: Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsìt, Nédém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono, mmon sé ñtíyó ye mmon sé mmi ’tíyóké,*

Translation: The most High God, our divinity below, the good spirits of our fathers and forefathers of our clan: *Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsìt, Àtàkpọ spirit of Uruan, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono,* and those of whose names I do not remember.

This opening formula runs through all Ibibio libation performances, although not always in this strict order. There sometimes occur some variations in the order in which the deities are mentioned, depending on the clan of the performer. Most often, *Ukana Offot*, *Awa Itam* and *Etefia Ikono* take the lead while other deities could be mentioned in whatever order the performer is conversant with. The names of the ancestors too change, depending on the type of performance.

4.3.1.2 Appreciation

This is an expression of gratitude for a perceived favour. This is another affirmation of the people's worldview of proper behavioural pattern; the Ibibio worldview supports gratitude for every good disposition received. During the Ibibio libation performances, the performer is conscious of earlier favours and blessings received from the divinities through the ancestors. The Ibibio believes that in order to be favourably disposed to the deities, one must always show gratitude to the goodness of the ancestors' supplication to the Almighty on their behalf. In the following selected libation performances, one notices profuse attempts by the performer to please the deities before new requests are presented to them:

Performer: *Àfíd mbùfò esehe 'dá yè ònyìn, ìdí ìdí wòñ k'ubòk ònàsià dọ ọ ọ (ọduok ukọd ke ubok nnasia).*

Translation: All you good and supporting spirits come and drink from our right hand (pours some wine with the right hand).

(Text 4: lines 69-70).

Performer: *Mbùfo mmè àbàsi ònyìn k' ísòñ yè mmé ètè ònyìn, ádò mbùfò èkédaha yè ònyìntòñọ ké ayio mmè ètè ònyìn, ákpọsòñ Enọkọn.*

Translation: Ye deities of our land and our forefathers who have stood by us since the days of our founding father - the 'Great Enokon'

(Text 4: lines 77-79).

4.3.1.3 Reassurances and Interaction

Another stylistic effect that one quickly observes in Ibibio libation performances is reassurance and the desire to interact with the ancestors and deities. The performer(s) shows(s) the eagerness to be reunited with the ancestors and interact with the deities in their human activities. This, of necessity, reinforces the people's belief in the world of the dead, the unborn and the living as continuum:

Performer: *Ọnọ ówò mkpọ obo náñńá mkpọ ifon Yak ndad ètòk mbùfò èdikéré ké ami ñk'ọnọ mbùfò ibọk.*

Translation: He who blesses another, seeks fortune. Let me take a little of what I have given to you so that you know that I have not given you a poison.

(Text 2: lines 30-32).

Performer: *Ké inì inèmèsit mmè iyádèsit, mbùfò ese edo étó ibèdèdèm ònyìn,*

Translation: In times of celebration and sorrows, you are our pillars of support.

(Text 3: lines 9-10).

Performer: *Se inọ mbùfò k'ami nnylñ nwọñ ami o o o!*

Translation: What I have offered to you is what I am also drinking!

(Text 3: lines 60-61).

Performer: *Sé inọ mbùfò idóhó ibọk mkpà, pà anyé k' ònyìn mmè adu-uwèm inyalñ inwọñ, ibọ, inwọñ o o o!*

Translation: We have not given you poisoned drink but what we, in the land of the living also drink, please take and drink too.

(Text 4: lines 89-91; Text 5: lines 62-64; Text 6: lines 62-65; Text 7: lines 76-79).

This act of sharing is a kind of communion that tries to blend the secular and the spiritual worlds into one.

4.3.1.4 Recollection/ Memory

The style of recollection borders on the people's understanding that life is not lived in a vacuum; there is a link between actuality and what is expected. In the Ibibio libation performances, the performer recalls the benevolence of the past, which is their source of hope and encouragement:

Performer: *Áfid ndùfò èsèhé 'da yè ònyìn, mmọn sé ntíyóyó ye mmọn sé mmi'tíyóké, idíwọñ dó k'úbọk ònàsìà dó o o!*

Translation: All you good and supporting spirits, the ones whose names I remember and the ones that I do not recall come and drink from our right hand.

(Text 3: lines 48-50; text 4: lines 69-71; Text 5: lines 23-24; Text 6: lines 32-33; Text 7: lines 71-72).

Performer: *Sia ònyìn ima'si dàk ikíd mfon á' mbùfò èsèhé fon ké m'úsèn édèm,*

*Ŋko sia ákéna-nam áyín ísíbeññeke èté unam òdíín èté
áno údak íkòd,*

Translation: It is because we often recall your favours in the past which have never been in doubt.

As it is that a child never asks the father for meat and is given a snake in the process,

(Text 5: lines 43-46; 57-60).

Performer: *Mfọọñ òtibbe údia ase-dàkká atọ ínwañ ìtọñ òdíín
ànyé wa-uwa ké ònwáñ amọ.*

Translation: It is healthy yam tendrils that warrant a farmer's sacrifice on a farm path.

(Text 9: lines 47-49).

Similarly, Ibibio libation performers depend greatly on memory for action and confidence. Although the beauty of oral literary performances depends on the artist's ability to improvise, the libation performer relies most of the time on memory. For instance, his zealousness to impress his audience cannot so much overwhelm him that he will overlook a conscious recitation of the order of the deities and ancestors. His efforts to show a shared social relationship with the deities and ancestors mandate him to convey emotions in his choice of diction. Guiraud avers that:

The phatic function plays a very important part in all forms of communication rite, solemn occasions, ceremonies, speeches ... the same words, the same gestures are repeated; the same stories are reiterated. This makes the communication absurd or unbearable to the outsider, but renders it euphoric for the 'participant' who 'is involved'- and unpleasant if and when he ceases to be involved (Guiraud, 1975: 8).

In the same way, he is conscious not to forget to use some key active words in his invocation. In observing the fixity of words, his actions must accompany each stage of the performance. For instance, in saying: *Ibọ uwa ekọom ye itoro nnyin* which translates as "accept our sacrifice /drink and worship", he must pour the last drops of the drink. This pouring at this point is different from the intermittent droppings that he does when he utters punctuated sentences while calling on the deities and stating his requests. Also in the following instances:

Performer: *Mmè mbon ésèhé énam nti mkpọ, idíwọọñọ do o o ké ubọk nnàsià mi (ọduọk ukọd ké ubọk nnasia). Amado ndùfò mmọọn ésèhé nám ndioi, idíwọọñọ ké ubọk úfíin mí inyọñ inie itié ndùfò (ọduọk ukọd ke ubọk ufíin).*

.Translation: All of you who are noted for your good deeds, come and drink from my right hand (pours some part of the drink from his right hand).

But you performers of evil come ome and drink from my right left hand and go your way (pours some of the drink on the ground from his left hand).

(Textb 13: lines 118-12-, 122-124).

In the above excerpts, the performer must use the appropriate indexical feature in pouring the drink to the appropriate forces as he says the words. His act of memorization is in this manner wrapped around the fixed and active words and the pattern of merging words with the appropriate actions.

4.3.1.5 Ululation

Performer: *Ùwuó! Ùwuó!! Ùwuó o!!! Íyà à à!*

Audience: *Ùwuó o!!! Íyà à à!*

Translation: Shout in ululation!

(Text 2: line 28-29; Text 11: lines 47-48).

Performer: *Íyà o o! Íyà o o!! Íyà o o!!!*

(ọduọk akptre ukọd uwak-uwak).

Audience: *Iyoooo!*

Translation: Performer: An ululation to mean “may it be so” *Íyà o o! Íyà o o!! Íyà o o!!!*

Audience: *Iyoooo!*

(Text 15: lines 78-82).

The word “ululation” and its response do not have intrinsic meaning. It is a kind of interjection that implies agreement which is the bedrock of unity. Clark-Bekeredemo (2006) asserts that “the ululation is an imitative yell emitted at appropriate points in the performance. It is no more than the traditional cheer of *íye*’ repeated several times over, usually by women and accompanied with hand-claps” (xxv). It is believed, by the audiences’ response (*uwo o o!/ Iya a a!*), that every one present affirms the words of the performer.

4.4 Aesthetics

Aesthetics is concerned with the task of creating beauty out of the ugly details of human life (Akpan and Etuk, 1990). Art on its own is aesthetics. In discussing aesthetics

function of sign, Richard Jakobson (cited in Guiraud, 1975:7) refers to it as “the relation between the message and itself ... [which] are bearers of their own meaning, and belong to a specific semiology”. Okpewho (1992) summarises that oral performers are faced with the anxiety of saying the thing that will please the ears of their audience and the pressure of creating a lasting impression in their performances (70). For these reasons, every performer maximizes the resources at his disposal to impress his audience. In the texts of Ibibio libation performances, aesthetics is manifested in different rhetorical devices that are deployed by the performers. The different paralinguistic features which constitute the hallmark of aesthetics are exhibited at every instance of performance.

4.4.1 Movement/Extra-linguistic Features

It is an important characteristic of every art to entertain. It is the duty of every artist to satisfy his audience too. Okpewho (1992) sees this as the anxiety that oral performers are faced with within the process of creating a lasting impression in their performances (70). The performer of the libation art does not stand rooted to the spot to perform his art, even though he communicates with the invisible forces who are supposed to be held in awe during the course of the performance (Fig. 2 and 9 refer).

4.4.2 Props/Costumes

The costumes and props of a libation text performer must, as a matter of necessity, reflect his vocation. As a priest to the deities or the oracle in question, his priestly costumes must be properly adorned. He must be accompanied by the little priest, *ayin uboŋñ*, whose duty is to carry the items of libation which he hands out as required. The priest is further accompanied by his tokens of libation which include: *ufofob* and *iko/ ukpok / nnak eniin* (local gin and gourd/ elephant tusk) which he uses in the “pouring” of the libation. While the other kinds of cups, *iko* and *ukpok* (gourd) or glass are used for about any other kinds of libation performances, *Nnak eniin* (elephant tusk) is used on very important and highly religious and chieftaincy/ kingship coronation ceremonies, especially as paramount ruler or *Okuibom*. This special instrument is an insignia of power to the chieftain:



Fig.28. The traditional ruler with complete insignia of his chieftaincy.

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Although Okpewho (2003) avers that “there is accepted convention in some contexts that members of the audience can intervene directly in oral art performance”, this is not quite possible in the libation performance as there is a limit to what and how the artist, occasion or audience can influence its performances (162). Similarly, Abdulkadir (1981) infers that a social art “can only exist when it is decipherable and appreciable by an audience” (29). In libation performances, silence is maintained by the audience and silence in itself is an aesthetic paralinguistic feature which suggests reverence to the unseen deities and ancestors; therefore audience “appreciation” sometimes is not made openly but it is sustained.

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Fig. 29. The performer having a silent communion with his ancestors before his daily performance.

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The actual oral delivery of texts accentuates the literary properties inherent in oral art forms, thereby giving life and meaning to them. In the same vein, one of our sources maintained that during communion or the litany of the saints, the raising of the hands and silent meditation are gestures that give meaning to the communion of the interaction². The vividness, subtlety and dramatic performance of texts highlight the literariness of oral arts thus making it worth the while as a field of literary study. This research considers at this point the literary devices contained in the Ibibio libation performances:

4.4.3 Metaphors

Metaphor is a rhetorical device that writers and speakers use convey their message. In speech, metaphors are used to enrich conversations. George Lakoff (1992) defines metaphor as a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of its normal conventional meaning to express a *similar* concept. The locus of metaphor is not in language, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another. Ibibio libation performers deploy a lot of these metaphors in their routine communication with the ancestors. In metaphors, comparisons are made between issues that are realistic and their use enhances aesthetics. In African context, the ability to capture one's audience (which the use of metaphor does) is a hallmark of good communication. The followings are some instances of metaphorical words in the selected texts:

Performer: *Ètək áyìn anie ùnén àdí bádto mmọñ ábàñ èkà kpọd!
mbọkkọ íkpá.*

Translation: It is only in his mother's water pot that a child can dirty the water therein and go unpunished.

Performer: *Ìkpàd èkà ùnèn ísì wòttó òdìtọ*

Translation: The feet of the mother hen do not kill her chicks.

Performer: *Eyio akim, usen ikwèññékéYak ùsáñ asinne k'udáñ
abed àsén.*

Translation: It is only night that has come, not end of life. Let the bowl of foo-foo rest in the mortar awaiting the visitor(s).

(Text 3: lines 30-32, 34-36, 55-56).

In the above excerpts (Text 3: lines 32-34 and 36-37), the metaphors stand to imply a kind of right that the Ibibio have whenever they call upon the ancestors. They recognise the fact that they may offend the deities, but then there is the belief that there will be mercy because *ikpad eka unen isi wotto ndito*, which literally translates that the feet of a mother hen do not kill her chicks; the Ibibio believe that any chastisement is welcome as a corrective measure, not destructive.

4.4.4 Simile

Performer: *imi'béññé íbó yàk mbùfò edakka-eda nte àbùmà, èsákkà nte àkéb-kéb, èsòkkò ammọ esio àfíd-àfíd (ọduọk ukọd, anyeghe akikọ uwa).*

Translation: we plead that you move like thunder; move like lightning and wipe them away in this war (pours some of the drink on the ground and shakes the sacrificial cock).

(Text 10: lines 76-78).

There is usually apt comparison of requests and corresponding issues. In the above excerpt, the performer compares his desire for the actions of the deities with some forceful elemental occurrences like thunder and lightning. In the words *edakka-eda nte abuma, esakka nte akeb-keb* (move like thunder; explode like lightning), the performer desires that the actions of the deities should be as quick and swift as that of thunder in attacking their enemies or rewarding vengeance.

4.4.5 Plea and Supplication

The Ibibio believe that one does not receive favour with disdain. If one needs favour from another, the approach must be that of respect and plea in a humble tone. A lot of Ibibio communication with the ancestors is made in submissive tones:

Performer: *Sé ònyìn ndító mfo dó o o!*

Translation: Behold! We your children have come!

Performer: *Atimmé atọtọd àbàsì ndiin átuàk ísọñ*

Translation: The digging stick must first consult God before it pierces the soil.

(Text 2: lines 8-10).

Performer: *Ákpédò kèèd kètú ammọ edue ké íbíoñ útòm ammọ, mbọk, idàkká ìnọ ammọ.*

Translation: If any has failed in his traditional responsibility in an act of omission or commission, please, pardon such!

Performer: *M̀b̀ok, ǹnyin ibèñ̀nè ib̀ò, yak èm̀em ádùokk̀o ké àfíd ù̀s̀or̀o usèn m̀fíí. Yak m̀fíí ado ídára-ídara. Yak m̀kp̀o m̀f̀oh̀o áfèhè ikp̀oñ ǹnyin! Yak áf̀on yè ndit̀o m̀f̀ò ké ákp̀àn úduà ǹnyin, ké m̀kp̀o ínwañ, ké id̀ok ǹnyin. Yak èm̀em ikenne, ma ǹnyin ika ísò iwa uwa iǹo mb̀ùf̀ò k'ini-k'ini.*

Translation: Our plea is that you grant us peace to prevail throughout today's celebration. Henceforth, may it be celebration all through and may sorrow flee far off, nay! May it be well with us, your children. With our market wares, with our farm produce and harvest, let there be peace that we may continue to sacrifice to you at intervals.

(Text 3: lines 26-28, 36-44).

Performer: *Ǹnyin èd̀oñ ákpé d̀ok abód, iníñ̀hé uyio ámo ànà ak̀oñ. Abód ányin id̀okk̀o mí ányoñ ikàn ǹnyin. Adò anam ǹnyin itua.*

Translation: If a lamb climbs a hill, its sweet voice goes hoarse. The hill we are now climbing is too high for us. That is why we are crying.

(Text 4: lines 29-32).

Performer: *Ìb̀o uwa ék̀om yè itòro ǹnyin. Yàk ináñ yè nti inem amò akénè àndíyàm anyoñ k'úsuànà úduà.*

Translation: Accept our sacrifice (drink)/worship. The salt, with all its good taste, must go with its trader (seller) when the market is over (closes).

(Text 4: lines 93-95).

Performer: *Ǹnyin ibo o, yàk ùdiá adak ídém m̀f̀on- m̀f̀on, ikp̀oñ abeed ñk̀ok ùwák-ùwák, iwá adak ídém asai isoñ, úk̀om yè mb̀òrò esuuk itu nyán-nyán.*

K'esid ufa k ǹnyin, ib̀ò yàk íbaan eman kwà étáhá, kwà édérétaha.

Translation: We are saying that our yams must yield abundantly, our cocoa yams must produce abundantly, the cassava must split open the grounds with big tubers while our banana and plantain must produce long huge bunches. In our homes, we are praying that our women should deliver weekly healthy, bouncing children.

(Text 5: lines 48-56).

The performer begins by stating the relationship of the visitors “*Se nnyin ndit̀o mfo do-o*” which translates “Behold! We your children have come!” Children access favour from parents than do strangers. There is a plea that he has already consulted the

Almighty before calling on the ancestors (Text 3: lines 28-30, 38-46). By pleading, the performer seeks a cordiality that he believes exists in their relationship. He uses an elaborate plea for the forgiveness of any wrong done by the people to the ancestors because he is aware that if the cosmic order is not stabilized, the people will face dire consequences, hence, the plea for intervention from the ancestors (Text 4: lines 33-36). The culture of reciprocity is encouraged too as the performer ensures that he presents a token for the blessings he hopes to receive (Text 4: lines 92-95).

4.4.6 Repetition/Parallelism

Repetition is a way of saying the same words or stretch of words over and over again. It is used to emphasize certain issues of great importance. In parallelism, Daniel Kunene (1971) juxtaposes several methods through which repetition is achieved and affirms that “repetition may be aesthetic; it may be unaesthetic and monotonous”, in either form that it appear, it is an adequate pattern that actually indicates the poet’s intention (68). In speech generally, repetition is used to “enhance the style” as well as to show the progress of narrative the (Kunene, 1971: 87).

Ibibio libation performances adopt the aesthetic repetitive pattern in that phrases are repeated quite often whereby emphases are made on issues for clarification and assurance:

Performer: *Eèm! mfiñ ádó adod, èkà ádia-dia m̀kpọ́ úbọk áyìn,
ádia-dia ákè èbé áyìn m̀fọ̀n m̀fọ̀n, m̀kpọ́ ínámámá,
ádia-dia ákè èbé áyìn m̀kpọ́ ídóhó...*

Translation: Today is a week day; the mother will eat her daughter’s food, without any fear or risk, she is free, too, to eat from her son-in-law without hindrances.

These sentences are repeated thrice in this particular performance (Text 1: lines 9-12, 18-21, 28-31), each after certain rituals have been conducted. The aim is to emphasize the efficacy of the performance as a safety guarantor; a belief which emphasizes that non-compliance with the *uwa idiọñ adiaha awo* (first daughter’s rites of passage), may cause serious disharmony in the relationship between the parents and the new couple, as well as childlessness to the marriage.

Performer: *M̀bọk ké ábáñ akpa-o, ké ikim àwàkà inua-o*
Translation: Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.

Performer: *Àsọ̀nko ukọd ádó àmì, ìnwọ̀njo dó o o o o!*
 Translation: This is our native gin (known for its strong taste), Come and drink.
 (Text 1: 15-16, 24-25, 26-27).

This sentence *Mbọk ke abañ akpa-o, ke ikim awaka inua-o*, meaning “Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge”, is repeated throughout the entire text performances. There is no way a performer can leave it out in his chant. The emphasis is to underscore the people’s belief that one must not talk to the ancestors /deities with impunity; plea is seen as a mark of humility and reverence (Text 1: lines 9-17, 18-26).

Ibibio libation performances sometimes display several patterns of aesthetic repetition, some of which are discussed below:

4.4.6.1 The oblique-line pattern

The oblique-line pattern is visible in:

Performer: *Ñnyin èdọ̀n ákpé dook ábód, ìníńńé uyio ámo ànà akọ̀n. Ábód ányin idookko mí ányọ̀n ikàn ñnyin.*
 Translation: If a lamb climbs a hill, its sweet voice goes hoarse’’.
 The hill we are now climbing is too high for us.
 (Text 4: lines 29-32).

Performer: *Mbọk, iyák úkára ámo ádò ké ifùré yè èmèm; yák úkára ámo adad nti ñkpọ asọk àfíd ísọn Ìnì yè mmè ñkán ñkák abio ñnyin.*
 Translation: May his reign be fruitful;
may his reign bring only good tidings to the entire people of *Ini* land and beyond.
 (Text 7: lines 67-69).

The underlined constitute the features of repetition. It is noticed that there are incremental elements following the lexical corelativity in the phrases highlighted. The stretch of words that complete the sentence is longer and different from the ones that accompanied the preceding sentence.

4.4.6.2 The vertical-line pattern of repetition

The vertical-line pattern of repetition is found in the following examples:

Performer: *Yak mfin ádò idára-ídara.*
Yak mkpọ mfọhọ áféhè ikpọn ñnyin!
Yak áfọn yè nditọ mfò ké ákpàn úduà ñnyin, ké mkpọ inwañ, ké idọk ñnyin.
Yak èmèm ikenne, ma ñnyin

ika ísó iwa uwa ìno òbùfò k'ini-k'ini.

Translation: Henceforth, may it be celebration all through
and may sorrow flee far off, nay!
May it be well with us, your children.
With our market wares, with our farms produce and
harvest, let there be peace that we may continue to
sacrifice to you at intervals.

(Text 3: lines 39-45).

Performer: *Bọ òdùòk òdùdù! (òduòk ukòd).*

Bọ òdùòk òdùdù!! (òduòk ukòd).

Bọ òdùòk òdùdù!!! (òduòk ukòd).

Translation: take your rest! (pours some of the drink on the ground),
take your rest!! (pours some of the drink on the ground),
take your reeesst!!! (pours some of the drink on the
ground),

(Text 8: lines 72-74).

Performer: *Ñnyìn ibò o o, yàk ùdiá adak ídém mfon- mfon, ikpõñ
abeed ñkòk ùwák-ùwák, ìwá adak ídém asai isoñ,
úkòm yè mbòrò esuuk itu òyán-òyán.*

Translation: We are saying that our yams must yield abundantly,
our cocoa yams must produce abundantly,
the cassava must split open the grounds with big
tubers while our banana and plantain must produce
long huge bunches.

(Text 5: lines 46-51).

4.4.6.3 Re-statement of ideas through synonyms and indirect references

The Ibibio libation performer adopts re-statement of ideas through the use of
synonymous words that collocate with each concept and indirect references in the
underlisted examples:

Performer: *yàk ùdiá adak ídém mfon- mfon,*

ikpõñ abeed ñkòk ùwák-ùwák,

ìwá adak ídém asai isoñ,

úkòm yè mbòrò esuuk itu òyán-òyán.

*K'esid ufak ònyìn, ibò yàk íbaan eman kwà ètáhá, kwà
édérétaha.*

Translation: We are saying that our yams must yield abundantly,
our cocoa yams must produce abundantly,
the cassava must split open the grounds with big tubers
while our banana and plantain must produce long huge
bunches.

In our homes, we are praying that our women should
deliver healthy bouncing children weekly (pours some
of the drink on the ground).

(Text 5: lines 48-53).

The blessing of fruitfulness that the performer is asking for is emphasized by the different underlined synonyms that collocate with the concept referred to.

Performer: *Èkà énañ ama ata mbíd, òdìtò ese sàññ.*

Ebo ké étó kээd akpe duo, áfen ase típpé k'itie ado.

Translation: When the mother cow eats grass, the calf watches intently.

It is said, 'when one tree falls down, another must come out to take its place'.

(Text 3: lines 11-14).

The performer in the above excerpt uses structural synonyms in re-stating his request that the divinities intervene for the people. He emphasizes the reason why the youths should be spared from dying: *Ebo ke eto ked akpe duo, afen ase tippe k'itie ado* "It is said, 'when one tree falls down, another must come out to take its place'" – which is the need for continuity in lineage. In the understated extract, the performer makes a plea for the withdrawal of the scourge, saying that the burden and pains of the repeated loss of lives has eaten deep into the number that the village was known for:

Performer: *Ifakkò inuèn akpon die yàk òdúfúúú itíaba afíd?*

Nnyin èdòñ ákpé dọk ábód, ínĩñé uyio ámo ànà akọn.

Translation: How big is the lap of the skylark (bird) that it should be infected by seven dangerous boils?

If a lamb climbs a hill, its sweet voice goes hoarse'.

(Text 4: lines 26-28).

Ibibio libation performances in some cases portray some mixed tenses where the verbs narrative used by the performer display the depth of intent nature of the performance. In this type of repetition, eulogy is the purpose of the poet and he deploys "pseudo-exhortative verbs" whose sole aim is the recollection of some historic situations where the powers addressed had performed similar or greater feat (Kunene, 1971: 85). In the phrase: *Afíd mbùfò esehe 'da ye nnyin, idi idiwoñ do k'bọk nnasia do o o* - "All you spirits/forces in support of his cause, drink to your good health from my right hand", - the performer clearly recalls instances of success that the deities and the ancestors have not disappointed the people. This forms the basis for the people's constant reliance on their consultation of these powers.

Another repetitive technique that is common in the Ibibio libation performances collected is the use of ordinary present tense indicative. Before any performance is carried out among the Ibibio, there is the call on the deities and their respective ancestors, especially those ancestors that were noted for their steadfast and bravery while on earth. As the people believe that the same strength is still possessed by these

forces even though dead, they are confident that “not only did he [they] do it then, but he is [they are] capable of doing it any time under similar circumstances” (Kunene, 1971: 86):

Performer: *Dáññá òdùfò èkèda ùbọọñ ènyàñ ènám aḡon, ìbò yàk òdùfò enọ áyín òdùfò àmì ùkémé àdí nám aḡon ké `yio ùkàrà àmọ.*

Translation: As you were able to rule the land successfully, we are asking that you grant this your son the favour to rule successfully too henceforth.

(Text 6: lines 28-30).

Performer: *Àfò ake sóbóké àfíd údìm ábiò k`ínì ammọ éké tuàkká ìyád-èsìd mfò. Nták ádò ánám ònyìn òdìtọ mfò ìyémme àdí tọí ìyád-èsìd mfò.*

Translation: You, who wiped off an entire community in the past when your wrath was sorely woken.

That is why we (your children) dread waking your fierce anger.

(Text 10: lines 52-56)

Kunene (1971) declares that the performer in this case “seems to be saying to the audience that the hero is right now engaged in performing the actions described” (86). This really is the thrust of their consultation and dependence on the presence of these forces for every possible human activity.

4.4.7 Threats

Performer: *Yak èmèm ikenne, ma ònyìn ika ísọ iwa uwa inọ mbùfò k`ini-k`ini.*

Translation: let there be peace that we may continue to sacrifice to you at intervals.

(Text 3: lines 44-45).

Performer: *Ònyìn ìmí`nim ké mbùfò émébọ mkpé ubọk ònyìn ènyàñ èbèññé idém adi kọp mmè ésémé ònyìn ònyàñ mbọrọ, ma ònyìn iwa uwa ebod ye éwá inọ mbùfò.*

Translation: We firmly believe you will accept our supplications and grant our petition, so that we may live and sacrifice to you; that we shall live and sacrifice to you goats and dogs.

(Text 4: lines 82-86).

Performer: *o akim, usen ikwèññéké Yak ùsàñ asinne k`udàñ abed àsén.*

Translation: It is only night that has come, not end of life. Let the bowl of foo-foo rest in the mortar awaiting the visitor (s).

(Text 3: lines 55-56).

There is a form of threat in the first sentence. The will to continue to sacrifice to the deities and ancestors is dependent on their positive predisposition to the people. It is believed that should the deities intercede for the people and their desires are granted, the people will sacrifice fowls, goats and dogs (*ma nnyin iwa uwa ebod ye ewa ino mbùfò*, meaning “that we may live and sacrifice to you goats and dogs”) as well in appreciation. The sentence metaphorically implies concession; a concessional clause, *ma nnyin*, meaning “that we may”, indicates that there surely will be a celebration if the people get the desired response; “if” is conditional, meaning that a negative result will definitely not attract a sacrifice. The performer concludes with an expectation in mind (Text 3: lines 57-59).

4.4.8 Curses

The curses here are implicit; the good spirits are offered local liqueur with both hands or the right as a mark of respect but the ones known as bad spirits are invited with clear disdain. The wicked spirits are succinctly informed that although they are invited to come and drink, (which is given with the left hand which implies casualness), the drink is not expected to fill but to choke them in case they attempt to unleash wickedness on the gathering. This segregation in the manner in which each class of ancestors is fed indicates the kind of regard accorded each group:

Performer: *Ámádo mbùfò mmé ukpaka ékpò, íbọ ake mbùfò k'úbọk úfiin, yàk ùfofọb àmì ifọfọbpọ mbùfò.*

Translation: But you detracting/evil spirit, take yours from my left and get choked.

(Text 3: lines 52-53).

Performer: *Áke'kọbọ ànyé aduo, ákpékkè ákpọ, abuuñ ísín, itoñ ánwínnè*

Translation: Who ever says otherwise, should stumble and fall, fracture his limbs, his waist and the neck should break in the process.

(Text 6: lines 58-61).

4.4.9 Rhetorical devices:

4.4.9.1 Alliteration

In an effort to create aesthetic effect, the Ibibio libation performer deploys many alliterative sounds in performances. The repetitive use of similar initial vowel or consonant sounds serves to emphasize the words, a means of creating musicality in word use.

idara-idara – joyfully (Text 5: 41).

In establishing the authenticity of libation performance as a means of worship, Rv. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh compares Christ's sacrificial death where He poured out His blood for mankind. Nwosuh went on to recount God's scheme of events for humanity, where man is supposed to enjoy unlimited bliss in the relationship with God but which is broken by the Adamic sin. In comparing African libation practices with the principles of God's restoration of the equilibrium that existed between God and humans prior to the fall, Nwosuh affirms that God in His infinite mercies takes the initiative to restore humans back to Him through His redemptive plans by Christ's sacrificial death³. The Ibibio man, by extrapolation, the Africans, believe in the unity and cyclic nature of existence, and that once an offence is committed by a member of the society, the equilibrium which holds the society in a balance has been broken. When sacrifice is conducted, it is believed to restore the equilibrium whereby peace will return to the land. The performer thus alliterates "*idara*" meaning "joy" which is emphatic of his belief.

aad-dia – must eat (Text 1: 9, 11, 20, 27, 32).

emem-emem – peacefully (Text 1: 31).

mbre-mbre – peacefully/happily (Text 1: 32).

Even the repetition of *aad-dia* – must eat (Text 1: 9, 11, 20, 27, 32), *emem-emem* – peacefully (Text 1: 31) and *mbre-mbre* – peacefully/happily (Text 1: 32), is the performer's conscious attempt at emphasis.

4.4.9.2 Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are questions that are asked intentionally for some kind of aesthetic effects, without any expected response. The questions themselves state some truth and are self explanatory. Most oral presentations explore this device sufficiently

and Ibibio libation performance is one of such oral domains where rhetorical questions are effectively deployed.

Performer: *Ado sé ònyìn itèmmé mbùfò? Ado ntè àkpòk ìdìoñoké anyen ñwèd ísòñ?*

Translation: Need we tell you? Or is the lizard not familiar with the colour of the red earth?

(Text 3: lines 20-24).

Performer: *Ifakkò inuèn akpon die yàk ndúfúúid itiaba afid?*

Translation: How big is the lap of the skylark (bird) that it should be infected by seven dangerous boils?

(Text 4: lines 29-31).

Performer: *Ñsínám ònyìn inánà iwààd ònyìn? Mme akpeto òdùduè ònyìn ìduèhé mbùfò mme ete nyin ye mme abasi nnyin k' ísòñ? Ìsóbó akébò k'imò ìníéhé útòk mme mfínná mmè ánwán yè áwó, ndiín òsí nám áwó boom imò ntom?*

Translation: Why are we losing ours in high numbers?

Is it as a result of our errors against you the divinities and good spirits? The crab says “it was never aware of, nor engaged in, any squabble or fight with man”, why then the sudden crushing of its liver (heart) by man?

(Text 4: lines 55-60).

Performer: *àbá ké mmò, àfò ùtíppè iyàk ésed?*

Translation: where art thou, fish of ancient fable?

Performer: *òsínám òdídíá ábùkpà ádíwuud ònyín únèn?*

Translation: why then should the chick die because of corn meal?

Performer: *Àfò mmò mí, Ete Idim, àfò mmò mí?*

Àbá ké mmò, Adakekpat?

Àbá ké mmò, Asa-Usung?

Translation: Are you here, *Ete Idim*, are you here?

Are you here, *Ete Idim*?

Where are *Adakekpat*? ...

Where are you *Asa- Usung*?

(Text 11: lines 14-15, 36-37, 101-102, 104-105).

4.4.9.3 Onomatopoeia

This involves the artistic use of words that imply meanings through the sounds the words make. The word *kpoð!* – only (Text 3: line 33) is normally used to emphasize a specific situation. The emphatic sound of the word is what makes it an aesthetic

device here. Similarly, the word *ufofob* (*asõñko ukod*) – is a local gin that has psychoactive agent whose inherent property is believed to have power and strength enough to “awaken” the sleeping deities and ancestors. It must be present at every traditional ceremony. The word *ufofob* in Ibibio language has a meaning that is relative to the action it makes - *ifofobpo*, self implied, meaning to intoxicate (plural) (*ufofobpo* – to intoxicate you – singular usage).

4.4.9.4 Contraction

Normally, contraction of word use belongs to the informal speech mode. But most Ibibio word use encourages the deployment of contraction of words. Maybe it is natural, assessing, as it is, their mode of action. In Ibibio libation performance, there is a high level of contracted diction even when the performances are strictly formal. This is stylistically employed to enliven the communication and bring a sense of closeness between the speech participants. Thus contraction as used here is for aesthetic purpose. Contraction is found mostly when two words that end and begin with a vowel collocate. In some rare cases, two words that do not have these features may collocate and are contrasted too as in the word “*am’bufo*” meaning “that you” (Text 5: 40). This kind of contraction reflects the need to make the speech more intimate, a kind of informality that close relationships require.

ase’tam – *ase atam* (to arrange), *as’tammø* – *ase atammø* (prepares) (Text 5 line 9).

k’uyak – *ke uyak* (don’t allow) (Text 6: line 25).

ak’isua – *ake isua* (Text6: line 21).

k’anwa – *ke anwa* (outside) (Text 5: 35).

k’ubøk – *ke ubøk* (in the hand, at hand) (Text 6: 23).

eke’daaha – *eke edaaha* (Text6: line 22).

mbi’taañ – *mbi’itaañ* (Text 6: 17).

ke’yio – *ke ayio* (Text 6: 17).

esehe ’da – *esehe eda* (Text17, 30, 33;).

am’bufo – *ami mbùfò* (Text 5: 40).

4.4.9.5 Symbolism

This is an artistic use of symbols that represent the idea rather than describe the things. In cultures like the West, especially of “mass-culture versions”, signs play “a symbolic function ... to stage-manage certain affective situations and desires which are strictly coded and decked out in meanings” (Guiraud, 1975: 18). In Ibibio society, *mmem ukod* (palm wine) symbolises peace. It is used as a peace drink, especially in the

settlement of a discord. In the instance of *uwa idiõñ adiaha awo* (first daughter's rites of passage), the Ibibio believe that there has been a discord, a disequilibrium in the cosmic relationship of the first daughter and parent once a man declares his intention to marry her. It is only after the performance of these rites (*uwa idiõñ adiaha awo* (First daughter's rites of passage) which comprise *awa aduõño* and *awa adia*) that the equilibrium could be restored. This is why *mmem ukòd* (palm wine) must accompany the items used for the rites (Text 1 refers). Water too as used in Text 1 symbolises peace, it is a source of life and an agent of purification and cleanliness. The concept of *adiaha awo* (first daughter) is considered as special to the family. The father most often dedicates her to his own mother – *Ekaete* meaning the father's mother (as a namesake), to show a kind of special love for the *adiaha*. Sometimes *nwa*, the second daughter is the one so revered in most clans such as *Ikono*:

asoñkò ukòd (palm wine) – symbolises strength and power (Text 1: lines 14).

Ukwòkkò inua (the cleaning of the mouth using water) – water is a symbol of peace and purification (Text 1: lines 25).

Mmem ukòd – symbolises peace (Text 1: lines 27).

Performer: *Atimme atòtòd abasi ndiin atiak isõñ*

Translation: The digging stick must first consult God before it pierces the soil.

(Text 1: lines 13-14).

In the same vein, the raising of Ibibio traditional digging stick, *atimme*, symbolises reverence in the people's cosmology. It is a mark of respect given to God through the upward raise of the stick, before the ground, God's property, is pierced during harvest. Similarly, the hand symbolises the person. The raising of both hands in lifting the *atimme* is a mark of surrendering to the almighty. If one is greeted with both hands, it represents the height of respect such a person can ever receive. The right hand (*ubòk nnasia*) too symbolises respect, while the left hand (*ubòk ufiin*) is believed by the Ibibio to be discourteous.

The above stylistic and aesthetic values reflect the literary propensities that Ibibio libation performances contain. They represent the aspects of Ibibio oral expressions, especially the desire to communicate with their creator.

Notes:

1. An interaction with the clan Head of *Offot*, Uyo, *Etebom* Sylvanus Effiong Okon.
2. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.
3. In an interaction with Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh, Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This research sought to examine performance features of Ibibio libation and to confirm its ability to portray the worldview of the people. The scope of the study is restricted to the collection, exploration and analysis of libation performances among the Ibibio people.

Performance is an inseparable part of African oral literature. Its impact spans all facets of the continent's oral literary compositions. It is the concern of the poet who desires to pass his message to his audience. It embraces the thrust of the tale performer who educates and entertains with his or her stories. This research explored the religio-cultural life of the Ibibio via libation performances. It surveyed the nature of its language use, the atmosphere of the performance, the audience participation, the contents of selected texts as well as the occasions of their performances. The study revealed that narrative arts (which Ibibio libation performance is) make use of eulogy and each performance eulogises the divinities and the ancestors of the Ibibio cosmology. The application of semiotic theory of literary investigation has shown that the drama of Ibibio libation performances, though ritualistic, is not a mere show of excitement, but rather an intense demonstration of the people's living culture and versatility.

Through some reviews, it has been revealed that most of the works undertaken so far by the Ibibio elites have tilted to favour some oral art forms such as the proverb, folk songs, *ese* (praise poetry), riddles and tales against the others like *ntañña idiõn* (divination) and *uduok-ukod* (libation) performances, oratory and other sub-genres that are classified as religious. Where any closeness to the study was found, the reviews reflected that only some concepts or subcategories of libation performances such as invocation, chant, rituals or sacrifice were isolated for study. On closer examination of libation performance, we noticed that past studies of Ibibio libation have concentrated

on its socio-religious function or significance, not its literary features. The thrust of this research therefore focused on the literary analysis of Ibibio libation performances.

The data were collected in Ibibio, which is the language of the people, with the aid of an audio-visual recorder. The data were subsequently transcribed and later translated into the English language for easy accessibility of analysis and understanding by non-Ibibio language users. A total of fifteen (15) texts performed at both the urban and rural areas at different occasions were recorded. Their concerns covered libation performed at both the urban and rural areas with themes covering puberty rites of passage, periodic sacrifice to the deities, chieftaincy/kingship coronation ceremony, purification/cleansing of the land, planting and harvesting ceremonies, other annual festivals, appeasement of the water goddess, naming of a child and welcoming of visitors. These were randomly selected for analysis with emphasis on their literary properties of performance.

In the selected Ibibio libation performances, their contents revealed that the Ibibio predominantly thrive on oral transmission of their values and mores which are relayed through different enactments within the society. Libation performances constitute an important source through which matters of religious import, especially the relationship with the creator, are made manifest. In this research, we have discovered that Ibibio libation performances are the narrations of the religious affiliations of the people, their intimacy with the creator as well as their dependence on the capability of the divinities and ancestors to mediate for them because of their concept of God.

The study also showed that contrary to some unrepresentative biased opinions of early investigators of Ibibio oral culture and the misconceptions of some indigenous elites that libation is a “fetish” practice, it is rather a traditional means by which an orally inclined society communes with, gives thanks to and reveres their creator; an expression of their relationships to the traditional religion. Sources interacted with confirm that Ibibio libation performance is an act of communion in the traditional religion, just like prayer in Christianity and Islam. It is a way through which they remember their long gone ancestors whom they believe to be alive and around them in the spiritual realm, and also an avenue for restitution of order which is believed to have been eroded by acts of disequilibrium. It is the same way that some Christian sects believe that their saints, though dead triumphantly, are living in the spiritual realm which is why they are usually invoked in certain relevant circumstances.

This literary study of Ibibio libation performances has revealed that every society has its own concept of libation, irrespective of the name that it is called or the manner in which it is performed. It was also discovered in the course of this research that no society is sophisticated enough not to have had its own season of orally transmitted existence, and as such, what goes on in one culture also goes on in another, even when the processes and names may not be the same. For instance, in Yoruba culture, libation performances are deduced from praises, either the one carried out through *ese ifa* (*ifa* divination processes) during consultation or during similar ritualistic performances like sacrifice (*ebo*).

In the observed Ibibio libation performances, every narration makes use of elaborate praises and eulogy in reverence to the ancestors, especially when the performer intends to invoke their muse to connect to the need that the performance on hand requires. In the oral art genre of the Ibibio, narrative art, using libation performances as a case study, describes the relationship between man and God via their belief system. The divinities and the ancestors are the only known direct link found worthy to approach the Almighty and libation is the only means through which the ancestors are contacted to perform this intermediary role. The dramatic presentation of events during performance is the artist's means of narrating the morals of the people as is the case with soloists, chanters and other oral art performers.

Performance of libation among the Ibibio indicates their recognition of the powers of unseen forces who rule the earth. Moreover, it indicates that the Ibibio people give due respect and credence to these unseen forces. Libation performances are thus acts of worship and reverence to these forces. They further embody human attempts to maintain a balance of peace and unity between humanity and these forces.

We discerned that all the performances depend first on the Almighty God as the supreme force, while the deities and ancestors are the intermediaries. It is also realized that all the libation texts are ritualistic in orientation but some are richer in contents and props which make them more esoteric than others. An instance is the performance directed to *Amasa*, the water goddess in the course of a plea for the release of a flood victim (Text 11). Although every performance seems to observe temporal and spatial significance, this performance for *Amasa*, the water goddess, is very rigid. The time for its performance is twelve (12) midnight. It is believed that the water spirits are at work at such an hour when everywhere is quiet and mortality is expected to have gone to rest. The performer too, who must be accredited in the matters of water-spirit divination,

must be conscious of who he is approaching in terms of accuracy of items and time of their presentation, in addition to his spatial location.

It is observed that the spatial and temporal organisations of these performances have a remarkable touch of influence on the perception and reception by the audience. The text of appeasement to the water goddess is set by the sea-side at midnight, while the texts of cleansing and appeasement for the deities on land are located at designated places such as the shrine or at the spot of the desecration, but in the evening time. Similarly, texts for coronation are situated at the central spiritual arena, which may be the village square or primary school ground. Text for planting (*ukọñ udọñ*) is performed at the designated *akpene*, texts for routine daily worship, periodic monthly sacrifices and harvesting are performed by the *Okuidem* at his personal shrine. Also texts for welcome are performed at the home of the one being visited, while texts for naming or puberty rites, are conducted at the compound of the persons concerned, which thus becomes the site of the performance.

The sentence structures found in Ibibio libation texts is not homogeneous. While some texts are very short and are performed at non-formal and/or very casual occasions, some are elaborate, lengthy and are performed on more serious religious occasions. Most lengthy structures are found in texts that address serious religious significance, especially those gathered from the rural areas. The structures of texts from the urban towns yield more to what can be termed linguistic abuse – code mixing of English in the local dialect when performers were speaking in the Ibibio language: “Oku Clan, Clan head, *Mammy-water*” (the water goddess) are some examples (Text 6: lines 20, 21; Text 13: line 72).

Some performances are performed before any kind of available visible audience while some others accommodate restricted audience participation. Others yet may or may not necessarily require the presence of any visible audience. Even when the human audience is not present, we discern that communication is still sustained. In the text of appeasement to *Amasa* - the water goddess, the performer maintains some intermittent moments of silence before moving to the next stage of the consultation, while at some moments, he mumbles inaudibly (Text 11: 93-97). A performance about planting, harvesting, appeasement, *uwa idiọñ* or *ukọñ edọñ* is not restricted in terms of audience participation, whereas the libation of a coronation ceremony restricts audience participation to members of the *ekpurikpu*. Similarly the appeasement of the water spirit is very restrictive in audience composition, as only the performer, his performers-in-

training and very close family members of the victim permitted by the okuinam are allowed access.

Libation as observed during the investigation, involves the recognition of feats of the dependable beings and a cry/call for help through supplication and prayers. The justification for libation is tenaciously anchored on the people's faith in past achievements of the ancestors and the belief in their constant unfailing intervention. This reflects the worldview of the Ibibio as a people who are anxious to sustain the existing equilibrium between them and their cosmic order. The performer too, at this instance, strives to justify his qualification to serve as the people's intermediary; he wastes no time in recounting his periods of service to the deities and his success (Text 11: lines 64-82). This effort reflects as self-purgation as well as confirms the confidence of the people in his competence and their expectation for the fulfilment of their desire for the consultation.

In this research, we noticed that performers deploy rhetorical devices that enhance aesthetics in their efforts to enrich their communication to these unseen powers. It was further revealed that the conception of the ancient society towards libation performance has both Judaic and Hebraic origin and is analogised with the biblical conception of worship and thanksgiving. Ibibio libation it was shown has similarities to offering in the *Bible*, especially as recorded in the books of Genesis, Isaiah and Hebrew.

The study discovered that libation performances among the Ibibio are performed in and out of season; it is spontaneously performed whenever a visit is made or at times when the need to thank God arise and when there is a dire need for atonement for improper behaviour. This feature depicts Ibibio libation performances as a veritable piece of narrative art. It also revealed that among the Ibibio, libation performances are carried out as a regulatory force among the people. It is capable of promoting positive values as well as acting as checks on some morals considered as ill and, therefore, unacceptable to Ibibio society. Libation can be poured for both good and evil purposes; the content of the text is what points out the purpose. Where it is established that libation performances can have an adverse impact on the people, some sources confirm that the same is found in the orthodox religion; "the word of God is ... sharper than any two-edged sword" they quote at such an occasion (Heb. 4: 12).

The libation performances of the Ibibio showed in many different ways the cultural values of the Ibibio people and reflect a people's earnest belief and reliance on

the divinities for onward transmission of their needs to the Supreme God, rather than the erstwhile erroneous Euro-Christian conception of fetishism. The libation performances of the Ibibio, by the potency to promote and check the social status, demonstrate the moral worldview of the Ibibio traditional society. In this study, we have also elucidated that although ignorant minds refer to the call to the ancestors to intervene in human affairs as fetish, the unprecedented idea behind the call is the fear of God whom the traditional society sees as awesome and too big to be approached directly, hence, they are unable to find a living person qualified enough to approach Him.

The literary components of Ibibio libation performances have also been succinctly studied. It has been observed that the contents of libation performances from the interior parts of Ibibio land are more elaborate and well spiced up with ample proverbs and witty sayings than those found in the urban Ibibio areas. There also seems to be more occasions for libation performances in the rural areas and many are found to be longer in content than the ones gathered from the towns. The reason may be that the performers at the hinterland seemed more relaxed as observed during data collection. This may be that they are less interested in the contemporary spirit of wealth-acquisition rush that their urban counterparts are engaged in.

The text contents of performances from the urban areas too have been affected by modernisation (civilisation) especially as there was never a written form of any such text; the oral acquisition has left room for each performer to improvise where necessary as it is usually not a case of memorisation. Through the sources interacted with, it was also discerned that the tempo of libation performance has been watered down by the conversion of many people to Christians. The idea of invoking the dead to commune with the living is repugnant to Christians. Christianity and modernity, having claimed the larger population, thus impact negatively on the practices of libation performance. In addition, most people do not believe in its efficacy either to uphold values or sustain unity or function as the bulwark of the society. This has made libation performance unpopular in this jet age.

There have also been keen dialectal moderations in the texts drawn from the urban towns while the dialects of texts from the hinterland tend to be packed with deep-structured words. However, one is quick to observe that regardless of areas where a text emanates from, the aesthetic values are not diminished but are clearly expressed. They are found to contain all the necessary narrative elements such as characterization, thought, language, music, dance and spectacle, which according to Aristotle, are the six

mandatory elements of drama. Ibibio libation texts parade abundant rhetorical devices that situate them as a worthy corpus for literary analysis. This work also revealed that the Ibibio language reflects, to a large extent, variation in the choice of words which is the hallmark of literary aesthetics.

The study makes a plea that more academic interest be directed to the vast well of Ibibio oral arts which are yearning to be discovered, especially the religious sub-genre that libation belongs to. It is only on this note that we can isolate those traditional practices that have a positive impact on the well-being of the people and also be able to discard the ones that are setbacks to development. The people's philosophy that *anie idañ as'tammọ ndem idañ amọ*, which means that "it is the owner of the land that appeases the deities of his land" before order is maintained, is corroborated by this research. Thus this study holds that it is only Africans who know what their beliefs are centred on, that understands the demands and can respond to them effectively; no outsider can interpret the culture of another people better than the owners. It is these clear and unbiased interpretations that will enable them to know how their belief system is able to inspire their worldview, enhance a better life pattern and mould their cultures in general.

With the effort of this researcher, the literary study of Ibibio libation performance has just begun; the study has added value to scholarship on African literature in general and to the Ibibio literary turf in particular. This study provides a resource data bank for future researchers. This research therefore concludes with an inspiration garnered from earlier researchers on oral literary art forms that we should not judge our indigenous cultural values and, in fact, African literature by the parameters set by Western ideologies. Each value should be observed directly in their undiluted forms, assessed for what they are, before conclusions are drawn as to their usefulness or otherwise.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Libation Texts

Text 1 - *Uwa idiõñ adiaha awo* (First daughter's rites of passage).

Location/ Spatial Setting: The bride's father's compound, Ukana Offot Street, Four Towns, Uyo.

Performer: Etim Udo Effiong

Age: 66 years

Occupation/Rank: Palm wine tapper/ Official progenitor of the *adiaha-awo* rites of passage.

Uwa idiõñ adiaha awo is a follow up performed on the week day that the preliminary rite (*awa adia*) has been performed. Functionary moves towards the site of the performance (in Efik sub-group of Ibibio, the site is usually a pit but in Ibibio proper, the site can be a tree trunk, the base of an anthill or road junction. In this case, it was the base of a shrub in the bride's family), pours the *ufofob* into the tumbler and begins the ritual performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, mmè èté yè èté-
été ònyìn. Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia
Ìkòndò, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò
Nédém Ùruàn Ìnyàng, Ítinna Ìmàn, Ítá-ùmà
Ékíd, Àná-ntia Ìbìono, yè òdùfò mmè
m̀bọ̀õñ aken (òduok ukod).*

*Eèm! m̀fíh ádó adod, èkà ádia-dia m̀kpò
úbọk áyìn m̀fọõh m̀fọõh, m̀kpò ínámámá,
ádia-dia ákè èbé áyìn m̀kpò ídóhó...
(òduok ukod).*

*M̀bọk ké ábáñ akpa-o, ké ìkìm àwàkà
ínua -o!
Àsọñkọ ukod ádó àmì, ìnwọñdọ dọ o
o! ... (òduok ukod).*

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, the good spirits of our fathers and forefathers of our clan, *Ukana Offot, Awa Itam, Etefia Ikono, Udoe Oku, Anyaañ Nsit, Atakpo* spirit of *Uruan, Itinna Iman, Itauma Ekid, Anantia Ibiono*, those of whose names I do not remember (pours some of the drink on the ground).
Today is a week day; the mother will eat her daughter's food, without any fear or risk, she is free too, to eat from her son-in-law without hindrances (pours some of the drink on the ground).
Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.
This is our native gin (known for its strong taste), Come and drink (pours some drink on the ground).

He pours the remaining drink when he is through with the incantations. He picks up the bottle of palm wine, pours some into the glass and says:

*Eèm! m̀fíh ádó adod èkà ádia-dia m̀kpò,
úbọk áyìn, ádia-dia ákè èbé áyìn m̀fọõh
m̀fọõh m̀fọõh, m̀kpò ínámámá... (òduok
ukod).*

Today is a week day; The mother will eat her daughter's food without any fear of a risk. She is free too to eat from her Son-in-law without hindrances (pours some of the drink on the ground on the ground).

<i>M̀b̀ok k̀e ̀abáñ akpa-o, k̀e ik̀im àwàkà</i>	Please let the pot not break, neither shall	24
<i>inua – o!</i>	the gourd split or shred its edge.	25
<i>Ákp̀o iwuò k̀èèd-k̀èèd éyoh̀o ùf̀ok.</i>	A nose at a time, to fill the house.	26
<i>M̀m̀em ùk̀od ádó àm̀i-o o o, inwòñ̀o</i>	This is the palm wine, our drink of peace,	27
<i>dó o o! ... (̀ođuok uk̀od uwak-uwak).</i>	take yours (he pours some of the drink on	28
	the grounds elaborately on the ground).	29
<i>Ukwòkk̀o inua ádó m̀f̀ín, ádia-ádia</i>	Today is the day for cleaning of mouth;	30
<i>m̀kp̀o àyìn m̀fo, m̀me àk̀e èbé, m̀kp̀o</i>	you will eat your daughter's food, eat	31
<i>ùnám̀m̀á (̀ođuok uk̀od uwak-uwak).</i>	from your son-in-law without any	32
	fear of risk, without any hindrance too	33
	(he pours more drink on the ground).	34

He digs the site, unearths the egg he buried a week before, and washes it in the bucket of water provided. He calls for the mother as the first to be brought blindfolded. She must not utter a sound until the ritual is over. Then the daughter is invited in likewise manner. The priest takes the washed egg, asks each to tighten her mouth securely. He cleans the mother's and daughter's mouth with the native fowl's egg, one after the other, saying:

<i>Tòñ̀o k̀e m̀f̀ín, èm̀em- èm̀em ik̀ènné.</i>	From today, it is peace all the way.	35
<i>Ísó ádia-ádia, ewanna ùb̀ok udia m̀brê</i>	Each will eat and share all you have,	36
<i>-m̀brêê (̀ođuok uk̀od uwak-uwak).</i>	joyfully and playfully (he pours more	37
	drink elaborately on the ground).	38

He cleans their mouths, one after the other, 3 times and washes the egg each time in the bucket of water. He uncovers the mother's face, followed by the daughter's. Both embrace each other and speak for the first time since they were both brought from hiding, amidst laughter at the regained freedom and liberty.

Text 2 - Periodic monthly Sacrificing to the Deities

Date: May 30, 2002
Location/ Spatial Setting: The Village shrine
Performer: HRM Obong Joseph D. Esema
Age: 70 years
Occupation/Rank: Clan Head of Afaha Ubium, Nsit Ubium LGA
Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, mmè èté yè èté-
ète ònyìn. Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia
Ìkòndò, Akpasima, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsìt,
Àtákpò Ndém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ítinna Ìmàn,
Ìtáùmà Ékíd, Anántia Íbìono,
(òduok ukòd).*

*Sé ònyìn òdító mfo dó o o!
Atimmé atọtọd àbàsì ndiin átuàk ísoñ*

*Ànyé ké ònyìn idí àmì itè idu 'tọd
fien k'ábáñá édinám émi.*

*Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ,
mbok ké ábáñ akpa-o, ké ikim àwáká
ínua – o!*

*Ndiọñ ádọkko òdùbè íduèhè úsáñ
ònyìn ibò yak àfò ọdiọñ mbóhó
emi inò ònyìn. (òduok ukòd).*

*Àbàsì ányoñ, bọ úkọd dó nwọñ
(òduok ukòd).
Èté mì nwọñ, èté ète mì, nwọñ dó o o*

*Amaado mbùfò mfim-mfim ékpò,
ibọ dó inwọñọ a- mbùfò, innié itié
ké mbóhó emi-o (òduok ukòd
k'isọñ ke ubok ufìin).*

*Ùwuó! Ùwuó!! Ùwuó o !!! Íyà à à!
òduok ukòd k'isọñ ke ubok ufìin).
Onọ ówò mkpọ obo náññá mkpọ ifọn
Yak ndad ètòk mbùfò èdíkéké ké ami
ñk'ọnọ mbùfò ibok.*

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, the 1
good spirits of our fathers and our fore 2
fore fathers of our clan, Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà 3
Ìtàm, Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Akpasima, Ùdoè Ókù, 4
Ànyààñ Nsìt, Àtákpò Ndém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, 5
Ìtinna Ìmàn, Ìtáùmà Ékíd, Anántia Íbìono, 6
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 7
Behold! We your children have come! 8
The digging stick must first consult 9
God before it pierces the soil. 10
That is why I have come to consult you 11
concerning the event of today! 12
The most High God, our divinity below. 13
Please let the pot not break, neither shall 14
the gourd split or shred its edge. 15
The flood that enters the pit does not 16
mistake the way. We are saying that 17
you bless this gathering for us (pours 18
some of the drink on the ground). 19
The most High God, take and drink this 20
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 21
Our father, our fore fathers, drink yours 22
too! 23
But you detracting/evil spirit, take 24
yours and drink From our left hand and 25
have your place away From this gathering 26
(pours some of the drink on the ground on 27
the ground with the left hand). 28
Shout in ululation! (pours some drink on the 29
ground with the left hand on the ground). 30
He who blesses another, seeks fortune. 31
Let me take a little of what I have offered 32
I have not given you a poison. 33

Text 3 - Periodic Sacrificing to the Deities

Location/ Spatial Setting: St Patrick's RCM School, Ananamong
 Performer: HRM Nteong Udo Effiong Akpan (Osung V)
 Age: 60 years
 Occupation/Rank: Clan Head of Itu Mbonuso, Ini LGA
 Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsi ọnyoñ, àbàsi ísoñ, (ọduọk ukọd).
 Mmè ètè yè mmè ètè-ète ònyìn.*

*Mmè òndèm ísoñ, Ìtù M̀b̀ònúso: Èkùrì
 énañ, Àbàsi Ubòm, Ñyàmà Ísoñ, Édiéné
 Ñyàmà, Èkàndèm Ítòbò, Èkàndèm Ínyañ,
 Ñkañgi Ísua, idínwoñ èkè mbùfò
 (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Ké inì inèmèsit mmè iyádèsit, mbùfò ese
 edo étó ibèdèdèm ònyìn, Sé ònyìn inám
 m̀fín ado sé ìkí mamanna idí'kíd.
 Èkà énañ ama ata mbíd, òndìto ese saññ
 (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Ebo ké étó kééd akpe duọ, áfen ase típpé
 k'ítie ado.
 Sé ònyìn inam m̀fín ámi ado
 idó ésed mmè ètè yè mmè ètè-ète ònyìn.
 Úsoọ edidara úsen Ìtù M̀b̀ònúso yè edi
 manna òyák idáñ ònyìn inọ mbùfò.
 Ado sé ònyìn itèmmé mbùfò?
 (ọduọk ukọd).
 Ado òtè àkpọk idioñoké anyen ñwed
 ísoñ?
 Ìbọ úkpónò ònyìn mi o o o (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Mmè ètè idáñ dùdèbà obio Ítù
 M̀b̀ònúso eeda énkanna ékák.*

*Ákpédò kèèd kètú ammọ edue ké ibíoñ
 útóm ammọ, mbọk, idàkká inọ ammọ
 (ọduọk ukọd uwak uwak).*

*Ètək áyìn anie ùnén àdí badto mmọñ
 ábáñ èkà kpọd! mbọkko íkpá.*

M̀b̀ọk, idàkká inọ ònyìn (ọduọk ukọd).

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, 1
 (pours some of the drink on the ground on 2
 the ground). 3
 Our fore fathers, the good spirits of our deities 4
 in Itu Mbonuso land. Our ancestors: Èkùrì 5
 énañ, Àbàsi Ubòm, Ñyàmà Ísoñ, Édiéné 6
 Ñyàmà, Èkàndèm Ítòbò, Èkàndèm Ínyañ, 7
 Ñkañgi Ísua, come and drink your own 8
 (pours some of the drink on the ground). 9
 In times of celebration and sorrows, you are 10
 our pillars of our support. We were born 11
 into the tradition we are observing today: 12
 When the mother cow eats grass, the calf 13
 watches intently (pours some of the drink on 14
 the ground). 15
 It is said; 'when one tree falls down, 16
 another must come out to take its place. 17
 Thus we are observing the age long 18
 traditions of our fathers and fathers' fathers 19
 – the Itu Mbonuso Day Celebration/Re- 20
 dedication of the land to ye deities. 21
 Need we tell you? (pours some of the 22
 drink on the ground). 23
 Or is the lizard not familiar with the colour 24
 of the red earth? 25
 Accept our worship (he pours some of the 26
 drink on the ground). 27
 Around me are the Heads of the twelve 28
 villages which are the armlets of Itu 29
 Mbonuso. 30
 If any has failed in his traditional 31
 responsibility in an act of omission or 32
 commission, please, pardon such! (pours 33
 some drink generously on the ground). 34
 It is only in his mother's water pot that a 35
 child can soil the water therein and 36
 go unpunished. 37
 Please, pardon our errors (pours some of 38
 the drink on the ground). 39

<i>Ìkpàd èkà únèn ísì wòttó òdìtò (òduòk ukòd).</i>	The feet of the mother hen do not kill her chicks (pours some of the drink on the ground).	40 41
<i>Ìbòk, ònyìn ìbèññè ìbò, yak èmèm áduòkko ké àfíd ùsòrò usèn mfiń (òduòk ukòd).</i>	Our plea is that you grant us peace to prevail throughout today's celebration (pours some of the drink on the ground).	42 43 44
<i>Yak mfiń ado ídára-ídara.</i>	Henceforth, may it be celebration all through and may sorrow flee far off, nay!	45 46
<i>Yak mkpò mfòhò áféhè ìkpòń ònyìn!</i>	May it be well with us, your children.	47
<i>Yak áfòn yè òdìtò mfò ké ákpàn úduà ònyìn, ké mkpò ínwań, ké idòk ònyìn.</i>	In our market wares, in our farms produce and harvest, let there be peace that we may continue to sacrifice to you at intervals (pours some of the drink on the ground).	48 49 50 51
<i>Yak èmèm íkenne, ma ònyìn ika ísò iwa uwa ìnò mbùfò k'ini-k'ini (òduòk ukòd).</i>	The pot shall not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.	52 53
<i>Ábáń òkukpá, ìkìm òkúwàkà útòń.</i>	All you good and supporting spirits come and drink from our right hand (pours some wine with the right hand on the ground).	54 55 56
<i>Àfíd mbùfò esehe 'da yè ònyìn, ìdí ìdíwòń dó k'bòk nnasia dó o o.(òduòk ukòd ke ubòk nnasia).</i>	But you detracting/evil spirit, take yours From my left and get choked (pours some of the drink with the left on the ground).	57 58 59 60
<i>Ámádo mbùfò mmè ukpaka ékpò, ìbò ákè mbùfò k'ubòk ufìin, yak ùfòfòb ami ifòfòbpò mbùfò (òduòk ukòd ke ubòk ufìin).</i>	It is only night that has come, not the last day/end of life.	61 62
<i>Eyo akim, usen ìkwèññéké .</i>	Let the bowl of foo-foo rest in the mortar awaiting the visitor (s) (pours elaborately, the last drops of the drink on the ground).	63 64 65
<i>Yak ùsáń asinne k'udáń abed àsén (òduòk akpatre ukòd uwak uwak).</i>	What I have offered to you is what I am also drinking (pours in some quantity and drinks).	66 67 68
<i>Sé inò mbùfò k'ami nnyáń h'wòń ami o o o ! (atòkko ukòd anwòń).</i>		

Text 4 - Cleansing/ Purification of the Land

Location/ Spatial Setting: Etefia Central Shrine, Nnung Ukim, Ikono LGA.

Performer: Obong Udo Nsung Inemenyen.

Age: 75 years

Occupation/Rank: Chief Priest of Etefia Central Shrine.

Performance:

IBIBIO	ENGLISH	
<i>Àbàsi ọnyòń, àbàsi ísòń, mmè ètè yè mmè ètè-ète ònyìn. Mmè òdèm ísòń, Ìkòno: (òduòk ukòd).</i>	The most High God, our divinity below, our fathers and forefathers of our Ikono land (pours some of the drink on the ground).	1 2 3
<i>Mmè ètè ìdáń dùdèbà obio Ìkòno:</i>	The Heads of the twelve villages which are	4

<i>Àbàsi Ísò Èkpò Nsìkọk, Àbàsi Úbrè</i>	the armlets of Ikono: <i>Àbàsi Ísò Èkpò Nkañ,</i>	5
<i>Àbàsi Úkañ Èyò, Àbàsi Ídìm</i>	<i>Nsìkọk, Àbàsi Úbrè Nkañ, Àbàsi Úkañ Èyò,</i>	6
<i>Ènañ, Àbàsi Èbua, Àbàsi M̀bàd Èsè,</i>	<i>Àbàsi Ídìm Ènañ, Àbàsi Èbua, Àbàsi M̀bàd</i>	7
<i>Àbàsi Úkhiere, Àbàsi Èbìoñ, Àbàsi</i>	<i>Èsè, Àbàsi Úkhiere, Àbàsi Èbìoñ, Àbàsi</i>	8
<i>M̀bọ Ǹckiàñà, Àbàsi Ènìn, Àbàsi Ísuà,</i>	<i>M̀bọ Ǹckiàñà, Àbàsi Ènìn, Àbàsi Ísuà,</i>	9
<i>Àbàsi Ǹkàngì: Ìdí ídíwọ̀n ìnyl̀n ìnọ</i>	<i>Àbàsi Ǹkàngì: Come out and drink then lend</i>	10
<i>ùtoñ ké m̀kpé ùbọk ǹnyìn (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	your ears to our supplication (pours some of	11
	the drink on the ground).	12
<i>Ebò ké akananam ikwọd ísì f̀héké</i>	It is said that “the toad does not run in the	13
<i>ìnì uwem'èyo ìbohóké abinne m̀kpọ,</i>	right daylight unless it is after something	14
<i>mme m̀kpọ abinne anyé, (amim mmim).</i>	or something is after it” (groans).	15
<i>Ifakko ìnuèn akpon die yàk ndúfúú</i>	How big is the lap of the skylark (bird) that	16
<i>itiaba afid? (ọduọk ukọd, amim mmim).</i>	it should be infected by a set of seven	17
	dangerous boils? (pours drink on the ground	18
	and groans).	19
<i>Ǹnyìn èdọñ akpé dọk abód, ìníññé uyio</i>	If a lamb climbs a hill, its sweet voice goes	20
<i>ámọ ànà akọp.</i>	hoarse”.	21
<i>Abód anyìn idọkkọ mí anyọoñ ikàn</i>	The hill we are now climbing is too high	22
<i>Ǹnyìn. Adò anam ǹnyìn itua (asiọp,</i>	for us. That is why we are crying (hisses	23
<i>ọduọk ukọd).</i>	and pours some of the drink on the ground).	24
<i>M̀kpa awak abọhọ ké obio ǹnyìn;</i>	There is too much death in our land; the	25
<i>m̀kpa ntàk ayìn, ubọikpa mmè m̀kpàràwà</i>	death of young men and young women, is	26
<i>ami adò mb̀biàm (amim mmim).</i>	is an abomination! (groans).	27
<i>Ǹditò edò m̀kpò inémésit éno iwuòd</i>	Children are the joy of grey hairs.	28
<i>iwad.</i>		29
<i>Akéna nditò ébuuk úníé, aah!</i>	They were to outlive and bury their parents,	30
<i>Ǹsínám ǹnyìn inánà iwààd ǹnyìn?</i>	aah! Why are we losing ours in their	31
<i>(ọduọk ukọd, amim mmim).</i>	numbers? (pours some of the drink on the	32
	ground and groans).	33
<i>M̀kpá úsoñ asédo m̀kpọ ídàrà, adò</i>	The death of grey hairs is usually greeted	34
<i>m̀kpá ntàk ayìn ado mb̀biàm,</i>	with celebration, but the abominable death	35
<i>ase 'dad ùkùú yé èkím ànò obio</i>	of youths usher in sorrows and darkness	36
<i>(ọduọk ukọd).</i>	(pours some of the drink on the ground).	37
<i>M̀bọk mb̀fò mmè ètè ǹnyìn, ìdí o o o</i>	Ooh ye deities and spirits come, come,	38
<i>ìdí 'nìm utre ubọk ké m̀fahò ami akpon</i>	co- o-o-m-m-e, and put an end to these	39
<i>abọhọ k'ésid ǹnyìn (ọduọk ukọd, ọduọk</i>	sorrows in our hearts! (pours some of the	40
<i>inweek).</i>	drink on the ground and sighs heavily).	41
<i>S'íkpidad ùto m̀fahò ami ídí, m̀bọk</i>	Whatever is the cause of this plague, may ye	42
<i>mb̀fò mmè ètè ǹnyìn, iwìppé ànyé</i>	deities find out and pluck it from its entrails,	43
<i>isio, ké ǹnyìn ìniéhé ànyèn (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	for we are blind (pours some of the drink on	44
	the ground).	45
<i>Mme akpeto ndùduè ǹnyìn iduèhé mb̀fò</i>	Is it as a result of our errors against you	46
<i>mmè àbàsi ǹnyìn k' isọñ yé mmè ètè ǹnyìn?</i>	deities/spirits? Please pardon us. The crab	47
<i>M̀bọk idàkká ìnọ. Ìsóbó akébò k'imò</i>	says “it was never aware of, nor engaged in	48
<i>ìniéhé ùto mme m̀fínná mmè ánwán</i>	any squabble or fight with man”, why then	49
<i>yé áwó, ndiìn ǹsì nám áwó boom ìmọ</i>	the sudden crushing of its liver (heart) by	50
<i>ntom? (ọduọk ukọd, amim mmim).</i>	man? (pours some of the drink on the	51
	ground and groans).	52
<i>Akpédò mmè ásuá énam ami, yàk</i>	If our enemies have done this to us, may	53
<i>ammọ ekpañña usọp-usọp.</i>	they soonest die, die shameful and	54

*Yàk ekpa mkpá esuènné, sia áwó ákpé
suenné mkpák èto, ase duo èbéék k'ákpò
usáñ, iso awòd anyoñ (òduok ukòd,
amana òduok uwak uwak).*

*Àfid mbùfò esehe 'dá yè ònyìn,
ìdí ìdí woñ k'ubok ònàsià do o o
(òduok ukòd k' ubok nnasia)
Ábáñ okupá, ìkìm okuwàkká utoñ.*

*Amado mbùfò mmè ukpaka ékpò,
ìbò ákè mbùfò k'úbok ufiin, yàk ufòfòb
ámì ífòfòbpo mbùfò (òduok ukòd ke
ubok ufiin).*

*Mbùfo mmè àbàsi ònyìn k' isoñ yè mmè
èté ònyìn, ádò mbùfò èkédaha yè ònyìn
toñò ké ayio mmè ètè ònyìn, ákpòsoñ
Enokon, ànyé ama áwà iFr. e àkíkò únèn
k'ini-k'ini (òduok ukòd).*

*Ònyìn ìmí'nim ké mbùfò émébò mkpé
ubok ònyìn ènyáñ èbèññé idém adi kòp
mmè ésèmè ònyìn ònyáñ mbòrò, ma
ònyìn iwa uwa ebod ye éwá inò
mbùfò (òduok ukòd, amana òduok
uwak uwak).*

*Sé inò mbùfò ídóhó íbòk mkpà,
kpà anyé k' ònyìn mmè adu-uwèm
ìnyáñ ìnwòñ, ìbò, ìnwòñ o o o!
(atòkkò ukòd anwoñ).*

*Ìbò uwa ékòom yè itòro ònyìn.
Yàk ìnàñ yè nti inem amò ákénè
àndíyàm anyoñ k'úsàdà ùduà
(òduok akpatre ukòd).*

untimely death, for, “whosoever uproot
the budding elephant grass by the
roadside must fall facing the sky” (pours
Some of the drink generously on the
ground and pours again). 55
56
57
58
59

All you good and supporting spirits
come and drink From our right hand
(pours some wine with the right hand). 60
61
62

The pot shall not break, neither shall the
gourd split or shred its edge. 63
64

But you detracting/evil spirit, take
yours From my left and get choked
(pours drink with the left hand). 65
66
67

68

Ye deities/spirits of our land and our fore-
fathers who have stood by us since the
day of our founding father - the ‘Great
Enokon’. And he had continually sacrificed
“whole cocks” to you at intervals (pours
some of the drink on the ground). 69
70
71
72
73
74

We firmly believe you’ll accept our
supplications and grant our petition, so
that we shall live and sacrifice to you,
goats, and dogs (pours some of the drink
generously on the ground). 75
76
77
78
79

80

We have not given you poisoned drink
but what we, in the land of the living also
take in (pours some quantity of the drink
into the now empty glass and drinks). 81
82
83
84

Accept our sacrifice (drink)/worship.
Let the salt, with all its good taste, go with
its trader (seller) when the market is over
(closes) (pours the last drops of the drink on
the ground). 85
86
87
88
89

Text 5 - Planting and Harvesting

Location/ Spatial Setting: Usak Etidon, Mbririt Itam, Itu LGA
 Performer: Chief Okon Udoidiong Akpakpan
 Age: 70 years
 Occupation/Rank: Chief Priest and custodian of Anen Umiana, a subsidiary shrine for Awa Itam deity of Itam, Itu LGA.

Performance:

IBIBIO

ENGLISH

*Àbàsi ànyoñ, àbàsi ísoñ, mmè èté yè èté-
 éte ònyìn. Úkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia
 Ìkòno, Akpasima, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsìt,
 Àtákpò Ñdém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinna Ìmàn,
 Ítáùmà Èkíd, Ànántia Ìbìoño,
 mme ndem isoñ aken, (oḍuok ukod).*

The most High God, our divinity below, the
 good spirits of our fathers and forefathers
 of our clan, *Úkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia*
Ìkòno, Akpasima, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsìt,
 Àtákpò spirits of Ùruàn, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Ìnyàñ,
 Ítáùmà Èkíd, Ànántia Ìbìoño, the other good
 spirits (pours some of the drink on the
 ground).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

Àníé ídàñ as 'tammò ñdèm ídàñ amọ.

It is the owner of the land that appeases
 the deities of his land.

9
10

*Kpà ñtórò ké ñdí, àdíbo mbùfò mmè
 Èté ònyìn mbok, ibọ úwà àmì ònyìn
 ñditọ mbùfò íbènné isok mbùfò mí.
 Ìnì kèd àfen, ònyìn iya ídọñño uto.*

In the same way I have come to you our
 fathers saying, please accept this offer of
 worship that I have brought.

11
12
13

Once again, we are about to commence
 our planting season.

14
15

*Etim Akpa Uko, Effiong Udo Okpok,
 Emaeno Idem Etok, Mbukidem Isuaiko
 Mmè àfid mbùfò ekésèhé èto mkpọ eyañ
 edok nti mfid, ùwák- ùwák.*

Etim Akpa Uko, Effiong Udo Okpok,
Emaeno Idem Etok, Mbukidem Isuaiko.

16
17

*Mbùfò ádó ké nkóód àmì mfin mbó,
 idí idídá yè ònyìn ké ìnì uto ák'isua
 anyem (oḍuok ukod).*

All of you who are always remembered for
 your huge harvest, come and support us
 during this year's planting season (pours
 some of the drink on the ground).

18
19
20
21
22

*Àfid mbùfò esehe 'da yè ònyìn, idí
 idíwoñ dó k'úbok ñnàsià dó o o
 (oḍuok ukod ke ubok nnasia).*

All you good and supporting spirits, come
 and drink from our right hand (pours some
 drink on the ground with the right hand).

23
24
25

*Ònyìn íbèñge ibo, mbok k'uyak àkóiyò
 ato ikod adi mam ébód o o!*

We plead that the duiker should not come
 into the home and snatch our goat.

26
27

*Íd^ñ dùdèbà, ùdọk dùdèbà, ìdàñ
 a kpọ-kpon ùdọk dùdèbà, ase- esip,
 ùdọk dùdèbà.*

For our twelve villages, let's have twelve
 doors; whether they are big, let there be
 twelve doors or even if they are small, let
 there be twelve doors.

28
29
30
31

*Mbok ké ábáñ akpa-o, ké ikim àwàká
 inua - o!*

Please let the pot not break, neither shall
 the gourd split or shred its edge.

32
33

*Ámádo mbùfò mmé ukpaka ékpò, ibọ
 ake mbùfò k'úbok úfiin, yàk ùfofob àmì
 ifofobpọ mbùfò (oḍuok ukod ke ubok ufiin).*

But you detracting/evil spirit, take yours
 from my left hand and get choked with it
 (pours some of the drink on the ground
 with the left hand).

34
35
36
37

*Ísí dóhó èté àyìn k' ánwá, idem ámia
àyìn áwàk àfòñ (òduòk ukòd).*

*Ké òtórò ònyìn íniéhé òdik ké útò mkpò
á ònyìn iyémme àdí òk mí.
Sia ònyìn ima 'si òk íkíd mfon á' mbùfò
èséhè fòn ké m'úsèn édèm, ànyé ánám
ònyìn ih mààná idi k'isua anyem mbààk
ídí yém ísò mbùfò (òduòk ukòd).*

*Ònyìn ìbò o o, yàk ùdiá adak ídém mfon-
mfon, ikpòñ abeed òkòk ùwák – ùwák,
ìwá adak ídém asai isòñ, úkòm yè
mbòrò esuuk itu òyán-òyán (òduòk ukòd).*

*K'esid ufak ònyìn, ìbò yàk íbaan eman
kwà ètáhá, kwà édérétaha (òduòk ukòd).*

*Òko sia ákéna-nam áyìn ísibeññeke èté
unam òdíín èté áno údak íkòd, ònyìn
ímí'nié òdòd-ànyèn ké mbùfò èyáenam
e ekan se ònyìn ìbèññé òno òdálñ ònyìn
ámì (òduòk ukòd).
Sé òno mbùfò ídóhó ìbòk mkpa, kpà
ànyé ònyìn mmè adu-úwèm ònyàn
ònwòñ, ìbò , ònwòñ o o o!
Ìbò úwà ékòom yè òtórò ònyìn (òduòk
akpatre ukòd uwak uwak).*

It has never happened that the father is 38
among the elders and the cult's masquerade 39
beats the child to a pulp (pours some of the 40
drink on the ground). 41
As such, we are not afraid in this planting 42
season that we want to begin. 43
It is because we often recall your favours 44
in the past which has never in doubt, we 45
are confident to come to you once again 46
this season to seek your face to favour us 47
again (pours some of the drink on the 48
ground). 49
We are saying that our yams must yield 50
abundantly, our cocoa yams must produce 51
abundantly, the cassava must split open the 52
grounds with big tubers while our banana 53
and plantain must produce long, huge 54
bunches (pours some of the drink on the 55
ground). 56
In our homes, we are praying that our 57
women should deliver healthy, bouncing 58
weekly children (pours some of the drink 59
on the ground). 60
Since a child never asks the father for meat 61
and is given a snake in the process, we are 62
confident that you will bless us beyond 63
our expectations (pours some of the drink). 64
on the ground). 65
We have not given you poisoned drink but 66
what we, in the land of the living also 67
take in (drink), please take and drink too. 68
Accept our sacrifice (drink) /worship 69
(pours the last drops of the drink on the 70
ground). 71

Text 6 - Coronation Ceremony

Location/ Spatial Setting: QIC Primary school, Idoro, Oku Clan, Uyo.
Performer: HRH Nsobom Inemme (Paramount Ruler of Ikono LGA)
Age: 73 years
Occupation/Rank: Paramount Ruler of Ikono LGA, Akwa Ibom State
Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì ísoñ, (oḍuok ukọd).
Mmè ètè ètè yè mme ndem ísoñ Akwa
Ibom nnyìn: Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót,
Àwà Ítàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít,
Àtákpò Ndém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinna Ìmàn,
Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono, yè ndùfò
mmè mboḍoñ àkèn (oḍuok ukọd).*

*Okuku Frank Akpan Ekoon, Okuku
Anthony Etim Akpan Akpan, Okon
Eberefiak Udoidiong, Michael Akpan
Udo Eka, yè àfíd ndùfò eke 'daaha
ùbḍoñ, ndùfò ké ñkóód àmì idáhámì mbó,
idí idíwáná ké ádínám úsèn mfin.
(oḍuok ukọd)*

*Ikọ ùbḍoñ ké mbi 'taañ àmì oo oo!
Ákè'bò ké áyín mfò àmì, Effiong Okon
Eberefiak Udoidiong, átòhò éfáák
Ídòró Uyo ké Oku clan íkpí'daaha
ùbḍoñ nte clan Head k'isoñ Oku àmì,
yàk ànyé atip ádínám úsèn mfin
(oḍuok ukọd).*

*Áyín ase ádiá mkpọ ké ndòòn ètè,
ndíín àmì mbo o, ké ànyé anie ùnén
àdídá ùbḍoñ ñyàñ ndiá mfon k'isoñ
Oku àmì, (oḍuok ukọd).*

*Dáññá ndùfò èkéda ùbḍoñ ènyàñ ènám
afon, ibò yàk ndùfò eno áyín ndùfò àmì
ùkémé àdí nám afon ké 'yio úkàrà àmḍo
(oḍuok ukọd).*

*Àfíd ndùfò èsèhé 'da yè nnyìn, mmḍon
sé ntíoyó ye mmḍon sé mmi'tíoyóké,
idíwoñ dó k'úbok ñnàsìà dó o o (oḍuok
ukọd ke ubok nnasia).*

ENGLISH

The Almighty God above (pours some of the 1
drink). Our forefathers and other 2
good spirits of our land, Akwa Ibom: Ètéfia 3
Ìkòndò, Àwà Ítàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít, 4
Àtákpò spirit of Uruan, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Itauma 5
Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono, and all of you who 6
had at one time ruled our land (pours some 7
of the drink on the ground). 8
Okuku Frank Akpan Ekoon, Okuku Anthony 9
Etim Akpan Akpan, Okon Eberefiak 10
Udoidiong, Michael Akpan Udo Eka, all of 11
you that reigned before and those that I do not 12
remember to call, I say “come and drink 13
in today’s affair”, (pours more of the drink on 14
the ground). 15
We are talking about kingship on our land! 16
Whosoever says that your son, Effiong Okon 17
Eberefiak Udoidiong of Idoro Uyo in Oku 18
clan, here should not be made the leader of 19
his people, let him not witness this occasion 20
today (pours some of the drink on the 21
ground). 22
It is the child that inherits the wealth of the 23
father. I stand now to declare that he is 24
entitled to enjoy the proceeds of the legacy 25
that you left behind in Oku Clan. 26
As you were able to rule the land success- 27
fully, we are asking that you grant this your 28
son the favour to rule successfully too 29
henceforth (pours some of the drink on the 30
ground). 31
All you good and supporting spirits, the ones 32
whose names I remember and the ones that 33
I do not recall come and drink from our right 34
hand (pours some wine on the ground with 35
the right hand). 36

<i>M̀b̀ok k̀e ̀ab̀aĩ akpa-o, k̀e ikim ̀aẁak̀a inua – o!</i>	Please let the pot not break, neither shall the gourd split or shred its edge.	37
<i>Ámádo mbùfò mmé ukpaka ékpò, íbò ake mbùfò k'úbok úfíin, yàk ùfòfòb àmì ifòfòb̀p̀o mbùfò (òduok ukòd ke ubok ufíin).</i>	But you detracting/evil spirit, take yours from my left hand and get choked with it (pours some of the drink on the ground with the left hand).	38 39 40 41 42
<i>Ñnyin ibò-o, Effiong Okon Eberefiak Udoidiong, ákárà úkárá amọ k̀e ñsòñ idém yè èmèm.</i>	We implore you, <i>Effiong Okon Eberefiak Udoidiong</i> , rule over this clan in good health and peacefully.	43 44 45
<i>Áke 'kòbò ànyé aduọ, ákpékkè ákpò, abuuñ ísín, itòñ ánwínnè (òduok ukòd uwak-uwak).</i>	Whoever says otherwise should stumble and fall, fracture his limbs, destroys his waist and the neck should break in the process (pours large quantity of the drink on the ground).	46 47 48 49 50
<i>Sé inọ ndùfò ídóhó íbòk mkpa, kpà ànyé ñnyin mmè adu-úwèm inyañ inwoñ, íbò , inwoñ o o o!</i>	We have not given you poisoned drink but what we, in the land of the living also take in (drink), please take and drink too.	51 52 53
<i>Ìbò úwà ékọom yè ítòró ñnyin (òduok akpatre ukòd uwak uwak).</i>	Accept our sacrifice (drink)/ Worship. (pours the last drops of the drink on the ground).	54 55 56

Text 7 - Coronation ceremony

Location/ Spatial Setting: Saint Patrick's QIC Primary School, Ananamong, Itu Mbonuso, Ini LGA.

Performer: Chief Ekpenyoung Afia-Ukangeyo

Age: 103 years

Occupation/Rank: Chief of Ikot Ebo village and the oldest man around.

Performance:

IBIBIO

Àbàsì onyòñ, àbàsì ísòñ, ñnyin: Iso Ekpo Nsìkok, Ekuri Enañ, mmè ndèm ísòñ idañ dùdèbà obio Ìtù M̀b̀onúso, (òduok ukòd).

Èsiere Ikpe, Ekpenyong Ibuodo mmè èté, yè èté-ète ñnyin yè mmè ndèm ísòñ, idañ dùòp ísòñ Ínì, idí id'ínọ ñnyin èwùànná mfín (òduok ukòd).

Èsén ówò ísì'kóttó, inyaññọ iwa uwa inọ mmè ndèm idañ owo.

Ado áyín ísòñ kpód ase 'kood mmè èté - èté ammọ.

Mmè kood mbùfò mfín mbo, idí, ínwoñ inyañ inọ unwam náññá ñnyin iyémmé àdímèk ufa ọbọñ ñnyin (òduok ukòd).

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, *Iso Ekpo Nsìkok, Ekuri Enañ*, our divinities, ancestors and all the deities of the twelve villages of Itu Mbonuso land (pours some of the drink on the ground).

Esiere Ikpe, Ekpenyong Ibuodo our forefathers and other deities of the ten clans of Ini come and lend us your support today (pours some of the drink on the ground).

A stranger never calls on/sacrifices to the deities of the land.

It is only a true born who calls on his forebears.

I am calling on you today to come, drink and lend us your support as we choose our king (pours some of the drink on the

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Èté únèn aké 'dia ké ifim, èkà únèn aké
'dia ké ifim, ndíín sító ifim ísítèkké únèn
esit (oḍuok ukọd).

Sésé mmè èbù! Íkámáké ífìok ínɔlɔn̄n̄o
íkámá esit, édí mmọ́ émèk mmè mbọḣn̄
mmọ́ (oḍuok ukọd).

Ammọ́ émèk ényal̄n̄ ékrono mmè mbọḣn̄
ammọ́.

Edoñ ammi 'níééhe àndíkprémé ese
edue usal̄n̄.

Ìdàkká-ídá! (oḍuok ukọd)

Ìdàkká-ídá!! (oḍuok ukọd)

Ìdàkká-ídá!!! (oḍuok ukọd)

Ìsín unwam ké eti ùdoñ ònyìn ami
(oḍuok ukọd).

Eded ámá bekke, áfen aseeda ké itíé ádò
(oḍuok ukọd).

Dáñná imék áyín mbùfò, Ntoeng Udo
Effiong Akpan ké ònèkké úsal̄n̄, àdídad
itíé áyín ùkpòndò mbùfò, Nya Udo Inua-
eyen, ake 'kpọñn̄o úwém ámì, ònyìn
ibinne mbùfò, ònyìn imé kpé úbọk íbó,
yàk mbùfò edí, èdídad yè ànyé ké edinam
ibíọñ útòm ámmọ́ ké ònì úkàrà ámmọ́
ámì (oḍuok ukọd).

ètək áyìn akpe 'tua, anyan úbọk ké àfàñ
úsal̄n̄ ndín- ndín, èté ámmọ́ àmíbaaha
dó, èkà mmọ́ ába dó (oḍuok ukọd).

Ké òtórò, ònyìn imínie mbùfò ké mmè
àfàñ úsal̄n̄ ámì: Anyama Itu Mbonuso
(oḍuok ukọd ke usuuk);

Nkuri Enañ Nkari (oḍuok ukọd ke
usop-utin);

Ekpenyoñ Ibuodo (oḍuok ukọd ke
usiak-utin);

Esiere Ikpe, yè àfíd mbùfò ákè àmì mmè
ńsiakké ányíñ (oḍuok ke edere), mbùfò

èbà-ábá dó yè mmè mfoḣn̄ úbọk ènọ
mbùfò (oḍuok ukọd).

ground). 17
“Father-hen fed from the refuse dump site; 18
mother-hen fed from the same dump site, 19
food from the refuse dump never kills the 20
chicks” (pours some of the drink on the 21
ground). 22
See the termites! They bear neither a mind 23
nor brain, but they choose a King /Queen 24
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 25
They choose a King and honour their 26
King and Queen. 27
A flock without a shepherd is bound to 28
loose direction. 29
Arise! (pours some of the drink on the 30
ground on the ground). 31
Arise!! (pours some of the drink on the 32
ground on the ground). 33
Arise!!! (pours some of the drink on the 34
ground on the ground). 35
And sanction this noble cause (pours some 36
of the drink on the ground). 37
A tooth pulled out must have another in it 38
place (pours some of the drink on the 39
ground). 40
As your son *Ntoeng Udo Effiong Akpan* is 41
chosen today by due process, to replace 42
your faithful servant, *Nya Udo Inuaeyen*, 43
who now journeys back to you in the land 44
of our forefathers, we pray that you come 45
and stand by him (his successor) to perform 46
the duties you have given to him faithfully 47
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 48
When a crying child keeps pointing at a 49
particular direction, it is either the father 50
or the mother is in that direction (pours 51
some of the drink on the ground). 52
Thus we point to these directions because 53
we have you, *Anyama Itu Mbonuso*, there 54
(pours some of the drink on the ground 55
southwards); 56
Nkuri Enañ Nkari (pours some of the drink 57
on the ground westwards); 58
Ekpenyoñ Ibuodo (pours some of the drink 59
on the ground eastwards); 60
Esiere Ikpe, and all of you out there that I 61
have not mentioned (pours some of the 62
drink on the ground on 63
the ground northwards), you are there in 64
your ceaseless generosity (pours some 65
drink on the ground). 66

<i>Ñnyín ékpè ásáñà ùkó- ùkó ké esid ikòd sia ànyé anie èkà yè èté òtè mbòqñ esid-ikòd (òduòk ukòd).</i>	A young lion pants about fearlessly in the jungle, knowing his safety is guaranteed (pours some of the drink on the ground).	67 68 69
<i>Ntoeng Udo Effiong ayara ànyàya ányáñ ákama ésáñ úbòqñ òtè òsòbòm ké ísòñ Ínì sia ànyé anie mbùfò ké oyòhò ìbèrèdèm (òduòk ukòd).</i>	<i>Ntoeng Udo Effiong</i> now wears the crown and holds on to the staff of office as the Paramount Ruler of Ini with confidence because he has your overwhelming support (pours some of the drink on the ground).	70 71 72 73 74
<i>Mbòk, iyàk úkàrá ámq ado ké ífùré yè èmèm; yàk úkàrá ámq adad nti ñkpò asòk àfid ísòñ Ínì yè mmè òkán òkák abio ònyìn (òduòk ukòd).</i>	May his reign be fruitful; may his reign bring only good tidings to the entire people of Ini and beyond (pours some of the drink on the ground).	75 76 77 78
<i>Àfid mbùfò ésèhé 'da yè ònyìn, ìdì ìdíwòñ dó k'úbòk ònàsìà dó o o (òduòk ukòd ke ubòk nnasia).</i>	All you good and supporting spirits, come and drink from our right hand (pours some of the wine on the ground with the right hand).	79 80 81 82
<i>Ámádo mbùfò mmé ukpaka ékpò, íbò ake mbùfò k'úbòk úfiin, yàk úfòfòb ámì ífòfòbq mbùfò (òduòk ukòd ke ubòk ufiin).</i>	But you detracting/evil spirit, take yours from my left hand and get choked with it (pours some of the drink on the ground with the left hand).	83 84 85 86
<i>Sé òno mbùfò ádó mmín òsòñ idem, ídóhó íbòk mkpa. Kpà ànyé k'ònyìn mmè adu-úwèm ònyáñ òwòñ, íbò , òwòñ o o o! Ànyé anam nnwòñ òyòhò òsòhò; ònyìn ìbò, òwòñq dó o o! (atòkkò ukòd anwòñ).</i>	We offer you no poison, but healthful drink from a clean heart that we the living also drink. That is why I now drink the leftover, take yours and drink (pours some of the drink on the ground from the same bottle and drinks).	87 88 89 90 91 92 93
<i>Òdìtò ékà, mme tañ uyio mbùfò? (mme nda nse, mme ete ìdàñ enyimme, etop ke iwuod).</i>	My people, have I spoken wishes? (the audience, the village heads present grunt and nod their heads).	94 95 96

Text 8 - Appeasement of a spirit of the assassinated.

Location/ Spatial Setting: The site of the crime, a bush at Ikpe Ikot Nkon, Ini LGA

Performer: Chief Adaise Mmemfin (aka Oto Edi, mbre enem)

Age: 68 years

Occupation/Rank: Traditional medicine man who specializes in violent death libation performance (a kind of special libation performance)

Performance:

IBIBIO	ENGLISH	
<i>Àbàsì onyòñ, àbàsì ísòñ ònyìn, mmè èté, mmè èté-ète ònyìn yè mmè òdèm ísòñ ìdàñ dùòèbà obio Ìtù Mbònúsq, ikob uyo</i>	Our God above, the Almighty, our divinities below, our fathers and forefathers and all the deities of our twelve tribes, hear us	1 2 3

<i>ñnyìn (òduọk ukọd).</i>	(pours some of the drink on the ground).	4
<i>Ìdí, mbùfò mmè ódùdù íkpèhè ìnàñ ọtọ</i>	Come, you spirits of the four bearings of the	5
<i>ìsọñ àmì òdáhá mí; ìdí ìdíwọñ mmín</i>	land on which I stand; come and drink	6
<i>mbùfò mí (òduọk ukọd).</i>	(pours some of the drink on the ground on	7
	the ground).	8
<i>Mmè odùdù énáhà ké èdèré, mmé ódùdù</i>	Spirits that lie northward; Spirits that lie	9
<i>énàhà ké ùsùùk, ké úsìák útín, yè mbùfò</i>	southward; eastward; and those of you	10
<i>ékè ùsòp útín, ìdí! Ìdí ìdíbuana ké úsọrọ</i>	that lie westward to this ground, come!	11
<i>edifiak ònám ìdàñ ásánà yè editaad úkpọñ</i>	Come and partake in the feast for the	12
<i>áyìn mbùfò, Akpan Udo Mkpá (òduọk</i>	purification and release of the angry and	13
<i>ukọd).</i>	wandering spirit of your beloved son,	14
	<i>Akpan Udo Mkpá</i> (pours some of the drink	15
	on the ground).	16
<i>Ìdí! Sésé àbísó òsèn afia únèn itiábà,</i>	Come! Here are your seven eggs; eggs	17
<i>a ndááhá ísọk mí (òduọk ukọd).</i>	from a spotless white hen (pours some of	18
	the drink on the ground).	19
<i>Sésé afia àkíkọ á àmì ìnọhọ mbùfò mí</i>	Here is your white cock with full-blown	20
<i>(òduọk ukọd). (òduọk ukọd, otop nsen</i>	crown (pours some of the drink on the	21
<i>unen ye mme nwa unen).</i>	ground, throws an egg, along with feathers).	22
<i>Ese ebo ké “ema etim ètak áyìn íkámá,</i>	It is said: “when a child is treated the	23
<i>ùkím nán’ékámá òdìtọ mfen ké ésid ùfọk,</i>	same way other children are treated, he	24
<i>ànyé ánie mbùòtìdém ké ùfọk ànyé átóhó”.</i>	goes home happy and satisfied”.	25
<i>Ádò ké èditim òtáñ, mmè àsuá éké</i>	But here, your son was violently hacked	26
<i>kpòkpóók áyìn mbùfò àmì àfáí àfáí.</i>	down by unknown enemies.	27
<i>Òdíín ukpọñ ámọ íkànná íbá ké èmèm</i>	His spirit is angry and restless (pours	28
<i>(òduọk ukọd).</i>	some of the drink on the ground).	29
<i>“Òbód ama anọ mbád, anọ údàrà íkpàd”</i>	“When nature sets muddy portion on a part,	30
	it equally provides a stagnant water to wash	31
	off the filth it makes on the feet of passers-	32
	by.	33
<i>Ukpọñ áyìn ònyìn, Akpan U Mkpá, ònyìn</i>	Spirit of <i>Akpan U Mkpá</i> , we know that	34
<i>ímí ’dìọññọ íbọ ké àfò àmé yád esit,</i>	you are angry and your anger is justified.	35
<i>òdíín àmènyáñ anen. Ádò ònyìn ìbò,</i>	But we say, please, be calm! (pours some	36
<i>mbọk sùùhọ esit (òduọk ukọd).</i>	of the drink on the ground).	37
<i>Ìnnèh ákèbo ké mkpá ínamma ímọ òdíín,</i>	The grass-cutter says that “death is	38
<i>imakap íkpá ké ótú mmè ùbòn ímọ</i>	welcomed when it dies among its	39
<i>(òduọk ukọd).</i>	comrades or amidst kings” (pours some of	40
	the drink on the ground).	41
<i>Ónàñná ònyìn íkólọ, ék’ kpòkpóók fiin ébono</i>	But here, you were hacked down at a cross-	42
<i>ké òwààñá úsáñ, adoho ukpọñ mbòn</i>	roads where none of your forebears’ spirits	43
<i>ékpúk mbùfò ìnàhà dọ àkpá (asii-me</i>	ever lay (sprinkles fowl’s blood and feathers	44
<i>iyib unen ye mme òwá unen, ndiín afehe).</i>	and runs).	45
<i>Ayem, éma úsuak éseppé ké àtá ídiọk úsáñ,</i>	Here you were exposed to the most cruel	46
<i>òdíín ukpọñ mfò íkànná ídiọñọ úsáñ ikiwuọ</i>	disgrace and your soul did not get home to	47
<i>èbíét òdùọk òdùdù (atop nsen unen, òduọk</i>	your kindred (throws an egg, pours some of	48
<i>ukọd, ndiín afehe).</i>	the drink on the ground and runs).	49
<i>Ádò òtìm mfiọk ifiọk ké eded éetuàkkà</i>	It is common knowledge that “a tooth that	50
<i>ebeek ase ’kama úbíák eti eti. Mbọk,</i>	is forcefully pulled out causes much pain”.	51
<i>sùùhọ esit (atop nsen unen,</i>	Please, be calm (throws an egg, pours some	52
<i>òduọk ufọfọb, ndiín afehe).</i>	of the gin on the ground and runs).	53

<i>Íkwó ékà áyìn asee nám áyín adop uyio áyìd anyāñ ánam ídáp ayeed áyín (atop nsen unen, ọduọk ukọd, ndiin afehe).</i>	A mother's lullaby calms a crying child and makes him sleep (throws an egg, pours some of the gin on the ground and runs).	55 56 57
<i>Oh! Àyád ésìt úkpọñ, dí! dí!! dí bọ òdùọk òdùdù yé mmé ukpọñ èté-éte mfò mí (afikka akikọ itọñ, ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Oh! You angry spirit, come! Come!! Come home and find rest among your forebears (strangles a cock, pours some of the drink on the ground).	58 59 60 61
<i>Ùbòn mfò énwọñọ adi sio úsíné mkpa mfò (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Your guardians have vowed to revenge your death (pours some of the drink on the ground).	62 63 64
<i>Áwó ama atúúk òtọọñ, útébé òtọọñ ase saña yé ànyé (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	"He who touches the scent leaves stays with the scent" (pours some of the drink on the ground).	65 66 67
<i>Áwó akpe bre mbre yé òkwà ábre k'ini ékà ábáhá, áwó ado akama mkpá isāñ (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	A man who chooses to fumble with a cobra's eggs when the cobra is in her nest indirectly signs his death warrant (pours some of the drink on the ground).	68 69 70 71
<i>Ata utop ísì sínné òdìtọ ekpe ké èkpàd íbén íyọñ k'ini ékà ékpè ábáhá (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	No hunter ever puts young lions in his huntingbag and walks away while the lioness watches (pours some of the drink on the ground on the ground).	72 73 74 75
<i>Bọ òdùọk òdùdù! (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Take your rest! (pours some of the drink on the ground on the ground),	76 77
<i>Bọ òdùọk òdùdù!! (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Take your rest!! (pours some of the drink on the ground on the ground),	78 79
<i>Bọ òdùọk òdùdù!!!</i>	Take your reeeest!!! (pours some of the drink on the ground on the ground),	80 81
<i>Kórò mmè mboọñ isoñ ùsọ éya éwòd mmè àwòd áyìn ammo (ọduọk uwau-uwak ukọd atop akptre nsen unen ndiin asop adakka anyoñ).</i>	For your angry deities must strike your murderers dead in their entire numbers (pours large quantity of gin, throws the last egg and quickly scurries away).	82 83 84 85

Text 9 - Preparing for Harvest

Location/ Spatial Setting: Iso Ekpo Nsikok grove in Nkwot Edem Edet, Ikono LGA.

Performer: Chief Daniel Edion

Age: 62 years

Occupation/Rank: Chief Priest of Etefia central shrine

Performance:

IBIBIO

Àkwa àbàsì onyòñ, ísoñ ònyìn, mmè
ète, mmè èté-ète ònyìn yè mmè òdèm ísoñ
and ìdāñ dùdèbà obio Ìkono Mbònúso.
Ìdí ìdíbo òdìto mbùfò mmín mí ìnwòñ
(òduok ukòd).

Ìnì utò mfen àmààná adikem.
Àkpá édim áduòko àdí bèññé ísoñ
mbéd utò (òduok ukòd).

Ékà únèn ama atre àdíkad úyíó, ànyé
adi inam die ìkòòd òdìto édídiá òdídiá?
(òduok ukòd).

Utò mkpò ádó ìdíp udia ònyìn; ànyé ádó
úbok útòm ònyìn òde.

Mmè áwó edad úbok útòm àkènné údòñ
ésìt ammò (òduok ukòd).

Ñnyìn àkùbè ase nék únék ànyé ama akid
Náññá ìmò ìbiéd ùbòn ammò.

Ké òtòró ònyìn ìkènné ìkpád mmè èté-ète
ònyìn yé òbód ònyìn ké edu utò (òduok
ukòd).

Náññá ònyìn ìbèññé ìdém utò ké àdítém
ìkòd, òkàppá ísoñ ìnyāñ mbód mbóód, ìto
mfid ùdia, ìm' ìbèññé ìbo mbok, ké únán
baba kèèd a- ònyìn ìdi dad ké ìnwāñ ònyìn
ànám ònyìn ìtábbà utò ònyìn (òduok ukòd).
Ìm' ìbèññé ìbo yàk edim ásééhè, adad
édìdìoñ adi ké ódùdù yé oyohò ìnwèèk.
(òduok ukòd).

Yàk mmè mFr. ì ìnwāñ ònyìn àséhé, átárá
mkpak, òtè mkpak ébà yé íták ìsìn aboikpa
(òduok ukòd).

Yàk mmè ise ùdiá yé ébónnó ìkpòñ ònyìn
awak ké ítìé ikie (òduok ukòd).

Ìkúyak mmè àsùá ònyìn, mmè ìsén ìdìd,
esin mmè mFr. ì ìnwāñ ònyìn ké mbùbùrú

ENGLISH

Our Supreme God above, the Almighty, our
divinities below, our fathers and forefathers
all the deities of the twelve armlets of Ìkono
land. Come and drink from the hands of
your children (pours some of the drink on
the ground).

It is the dawn of another farming season.

The first rain of the year has fallen to
prepare the soil for tilling and cultivation
(pours some of the drink on the ground).

“If the mother-hen ceases quacking, by what
means will she feed her chicks?” (pours
some of the drink on the ground).

Farming is a means of livelihood; trade a
means of livelihood. Men chose based on
their interest and disposition (pours some
of the drink on the ground).

“A young chameleon dances because it
must be true to its kind”.

Thus we tread the path of our forefathers
in farming as our climate and as nature
lends her support (pours some of the drink
on the ground).

As we clear our farmland, till the land
make moulds and plant our seeds, may no
accidental wounds from our farm
implements disrupt our cultivation (pours
some of the drink on the ground).

May the rain, which ushers in blessing, fall
in its right intensity, proportion and duration
(pours some of the drink on the ground).

May our crops bloom like the untapped
breasts and hips of a maiden (pours some of
the drink on the ground).

May our yam barns and cocoa-yam heaps
measure in hundreds (pours some of the
drink on the ground).

May those with the forbidden white skin not
play pranks with the prices of our farm

(*oduok ukod*).

*Yàk àfíd awo edok kpà nètè ùkémé mmọ́
ádóhó ké utọ́ (oduok ukod).*

*Ákúkwo ase 'ta nýin-únèn àfíd awo, ké
ntórò, baba awo ndòmò kèèd ikeréké
inọk ké àdíyém mmọ́n̄ ntuèn ákúkwo
(oduok ukod).*

*Mfọ́n̄ ntibbe údia ase-dàkká atọ́ ínwañ
itọ́n̄ ndiín ànyé wa-uwa ké inwáñ amọ́
(oduok ukod).*

*Mbọk, mmè mbọ́n̄ nnyìn, inọ́ àkpàkab
idọk.màn nnyìn iwa uwa inọ́ mbùfò
k'isua-k'isua (oduok ukod).*

*Ese dad nýáhá yè ifiá atóhó inwáñ ésin
ikáñ ké inwáñ (oduok ukod).*

*Nnyìn íyikké mmè ùwák mfọ́n mbùfò yè
nnyìn (oduok ukod).*

*Ké 'kpán, àták-ták atim ádiọ́n̄ uyio mmè
nkà íkwọ́ amọ́ (oduok ukod).*

*Nnyìn imenim íbó ké mbùfò eya enam àfíd
sé nnyìn ibéññé e inọ́ nnyìn. Náññá ake
se'ba ké ayio mmè èté-éte nnyìn, ado ntórò
idáhá ámì, adi inyáñ ido ntórò tütù ake'sim
inì-ísò nditọ́-nditọ́ nnyìn (oduok akpatre
ukod).*

produce (pours some of the drink on the 40
ground). 41

May each reap according to his effort in 42
sowing, but each should have a satisfactory 43
harvest (pours some of the drink on the 44
ground). 45

“The hawk preys on everyone’s chick thus 46
no-one should be called a glutton for 47
demanding hawk’s pepper soup” (pours 48
some of the drink on the ground). 49

“It is healthy yam tendrils that warrant a 50
farmer’s sacrifice on a farm path” (pours 51
some of the drink on the ground). 52

May you deities grant us bumper harvest 53
that we may sacrifice to you; year-in, 54
year-out (pours some of the drink on the 55
ground). 56

“It is the firewood gathered from a farm 57
that is used to burn off the clearing of the 58
farm” (pours some of the drink on the 59
ground). 60

We doubt not your benevolence towards us 61
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 62

After all, “a praying mantis knows his 63
fellow chorister” (pours some of the drink 64
on the ground). 65

We trust that you shall do it for us. 66

As it was unto our grandfathers, so it is 67
now, so shall it continue to generation of 68
our children’s children (he pours the last 69
drop of the drink on the ground). 70

Text 10 - Preparing for war over a farmland dispute

Location/ Spatial Setting: Nku sacred grove in Ikot Nsidibe, Okon Eket, Eket LGA.

Performer: Obong Gabriel Dick Udom

Age: 72 years

Occupation/Rank: Chief Priest of Ikot Nsidibe, Okon central shrine

Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àkwa Àbàsi ọnyoñ, àbàsi ísoñ, ñnyìn,
Mmè ètè ètè yè mme ndem ísoñ Akwa
Ibom nnyin: Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót,
Àwà Ítàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít,
Àtákpò Nédém Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinna Ìmàn,
Itauma Ekid, Ana-ntia Ibiono, yè ndùfò
mmè mboqñ àkèn (ọduok ukọd).
Mbùfò edáhá dó òtè ádínè ké àwọk mbùfò,
mmédiqño ké mbùfò èmékòp sé àmì òtáñ
ámì. Mbùfò edaada ké òkónyèyè yè ùwéméyò
èsé ùbòn áwò yè sé ammọ énáam, ádò,
edoodop uyio tütù ema ító-íyó.
Mmédiqño ké mbùfò emá edíqdiqño
óták á ñnyìn idíéhé àwọk mbùfò ùbák-
ùsèn ámì (ọduok ukọd).*

*Mmè àsúà ñnyìn ésàñá ékpèrè ébọhọ;
ésìn àdíkíd mfiíná ànàhà àbèd ammọ
(ọduok ukọd).
Ammọ ikáná ínùù-nó útébé mfiíná sia íwúó
ammọ ádèññè òtè íwúó éwà (ọduok ukọd).*

*Ammọ edoñ ídém édi yè ínwéék, àdì bọ
ñnyìn ùnén ñnyìn. Ñnyìn imídiqño ké
mbùfò èmédiqdiqño mmè mfiíná ámì
(ọduok ukọd).
Ádò ese ebo ké íbèhéké nánñá ifèn áyòp
asip atre, éñfè èdíbìòm ànyé ké ikará
(ọduok ukọd).*

*Mbòn Abam éké 'se edo nti mbóhó idáñ
ñnyìn ké mkpoñ. Ádò idáhá ámì, ammọ
énwoño àdì fíík ñnyìn yè ùnén sia ammọ
ewak (ọduok ukọd).*

*Ammọ ékéké ké sia mmímọ imíwák, eFr. e
ké baba awo kèèd ikéméké àdì kan áduà
úbọk mmbọ ánwáàn áto ké óták á ànyé
níéhé eták mfèd (ọduok ukọd).
Ìdí idí báná mbòn koñ ñnyìn ídém,*

ENGLISH

Our Supreme God above, our forefathers 1
and other good spirits of our land, Akwa 2
Ibom: Ètéfia Ìkòndò, Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, 3
Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò spirit of 4
Ùruàn, Ìtinna Ìmàn, Itauma Ekid, Anantia 5
Ibiono, and all of you who I do not mention 6
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 7
You who stand there like anthills in your 8
sacred grove, I know you can hear me. You 9
stand there, night and day in the sacred 10
grove, surveying our human activities/ 11
deeds but chose to be mute unless you are 12
roused. I know that you are already aware 13
of our reason for visiting your sacred abode 14
this morning (pours some of the drink on 15
the ground). 16
Our enemies have come too near; they have 17
refused to perceive danger (pours some of 18
the drink on the ground). 19
They have refused to smell the delicate air 20
because their nose is as cold as a dog's nose 21
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 22
They (Abam) have come to forcibly take 23
from us what rightly belongs us. We know 24
that you are aware (pours some of the drink 25
on the ground). 26
But it is said, "no matter how small the 27
bunch of palm fruit is, it is carried on the 28
head with a head pad" (pours some of the 29
drink on the ground). 30
Abam people have been our good neighbours 31
all along. But now, they have decided to 32
encroach on our inherited property (land), 33
deceived by their numbers (pours some of 34
the drink on the ground). 35
Abam have forgotten that, "one cannot 36
intimidate the squirrel and take away its 37
wife because its penis is small" (pours some 38
of the drink on the ground). 39
Come and strengthen our warriors and 40

inyañ ino ammọ ódùdù àdí wáná ñnyañ ñkán mmè asua ñnyìn. Ìwàm ñnyìn àdí wọd mbòn Abam íbó ké kpà usen áwó úko ákémánáké ké ídlañ ammọ, mfen áma ányañ ámáná ké ídlañ mfen (ọduọk ukọd). Usen ayio ké àbre ase wuọ ké àduó ammọ ádí wue ayio (ọduọk ukọd).

Ìkwọd ísì fèhéké ùwéméyìdò ìkúuìkpú íbọhọ ké anie sí bìnne ànyé (ọduọk ukọd).

Etim Enang, àfò ñkèñé ídèm ñtuèn ayad áwò ñsọñ. Dí dá yè ñnyìn (ọduọk ukọd).

Àfò ake sóbóké àfíd údìm ábiò k'ínì ammọ éké tuàkká iyád-èsìd mfò (ọduọk ukọd)

Ñták ádò ánám ñnyìn ñdìtọ mfò iyémmé ádí tọí iyád-èsìd mfò (ọduọk ukọd).

Mbòn Abam esin àdí tọiyò mbó, àdíéké àsábọ aníèhè isim ábààk isim, unam afen ákpénà adad úkpééb mkpọ ké àfànékọñ ànàhà àbéd ammọ do. Nnyìn imitim ídìọpọñ ké afo úsú wànàké ìkpú-ìkpú ékọñ (ékọñ ufik), ké ñtórò, ìmí 'béññé íbo yàk àfò àdúññọ. Dúññọ ákíkéré ñnyìn yè àfíd ádínám ñnyìn (ọduọk ukọd).

Ákpédò ñnyìn iyèm àdí 'wànà yè Abam ké udu, ákpédò ísọñ ádò, (Okporo Omufi), ídóhó ùnén ñnyìn a mmè èté-éte ñnyìn ék'kpaha ekpọñ ino ñnyìn, Idim Enang wọññọ ísọ mfò ikpọñ ñnyìn (ọduọk ukọd).

Ákpédò ñnyìn ìníé ísọñ ádò, ákpédò ñnyìn ìmí 'se idak iyèm èmèm yè mbòn Abam ké úwák ísùà ké ñták ísọñ ádò ammọ ìnyímméké, ìmí 'béññé íbó yàk mbùfò edakka-eda ñtè àbùmà, èsákkà ñtè àkéb-kéb, èsọkkọ ammọ esio àfíd - àfíd (ọduọk ukọd, anyeghe akikọ uwa). áwó áyèmmé àdìkpá ísì 'kòppó ñdlađ ùtọñ.

Mbòn Abam ésín àdíkíd mkpọ ídik; ésín àdìkòp ñdlađ ùtọñ. Ké ñtórò, ìtọ ammọ iwùùd ké ọkpọsọñ iyád-èsìd mbùfò (ọduọk ukọd).

fight for us. Help us prove to *Abam* that “when a warrior was born in a certain town that another warrior was at the same moment born in another town” (pours some of the drink on the ground). It is the sunny day that brings the cobra out of its hole (pours some of the drink on the ground).

“The toad never runs in daylight unless something is pursuing it” (pours some of the drink on the ground).

Etim Enang, you are the small pepper that peppers the mouth for days on end. Come and stand by us (pours some of the drink on the ground).

You, who wiped off an entire community in the past when your wrath was sorely woken (pours some of the drink on the ground).

That is why we (your children) dread waking your fierce anger (pours some of the drink on the ground).

But *Abam* have refused to take heed that “if a python has a tail and is afraid of its own tail, then other creatures should be aware of the danger approaching them”.

You never fight a war of blame, this we know only too well. Therefore, we plead that you probe! Probe our thoughts, even us (pours some of the drink on the ground).

If we prepare to fight *Abam* out of malice; and if the land in dispute, (*Okporo Omufi*) is not our rightful inheritance from our forefathers, *Idim Enang*, turn your face away from us (pours some of the drink on the ground).

If the land is ours, and if we have severally broken peace with *Abam* over our own inheritance and they turn it down, then we plead that you move like thunder; move like lightning and wipe them away in this war (pours some of the drink on the ground and shakes the sacrificial cock).

“Death that must kill a man seals his ears from warning and advice”.

Abam have refused to sense danger; they refused to listen. Therefore, strike them dead in your awful powers (pours some of the drink on the ground).

<i>Ìwád ammọ́ ìbó ké ánwán ídọ̀nńọ́ké ké ékpád ídèm áwò, ádò ínweéké (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d, anyeehe ayei).</i>	Show them that “it is not the size of a man in a fight but the size of a fight in a man that counts (pours some of the drink on the ground, shakes palm fronds).	91 92 93 94
<i>Ékọ̀n áamá ánie àdòd usen ísíwòttó inyọ̀ọ̀n (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d).</i>	A battle that has a fixed date does not claim the cripple/weakling (pours some of the drink on the ground).	95 96 97
<i>Ìdíp mmè iban yè òdìtọ̀ ònyìn ídémmé àyọ̀họ́ ódùdù k’ídem mmè òkà ekọ̀n ònyìn (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d).</i>	Hide our women and children in your sacred grove. Enkindle the firebrand in our warriors (pours some of the drink on the ground).	98 99 100 101
<i>Ònyìn k’ídém ònyìn ínìéhé ódùdù àdíwáná ékọ̀n ámi òkán, ádò ònyìn ìmí’níé mbùfò òtè àkámábá áwò èkọ̀n ònyìn (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d). Áyín imọ́ àwò ísì-kéréké uwuéné (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d). 'Fion-etaha adi wuọ́ ámà, usen ìbà kpọ́d ásáhọ́ (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d).</i>	On our own, we may not be strong enough, but we have you as our source of strength (pours some of the drink on the ground). A child from the loins of rich parents is never called poor” (pour some drink). 'Fion-etaha is near; it is only two days away (pours some of the drink on the ground).	102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109
<i>Ìnám mmè ndutám ònyìn ado ònèn-ínèn (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d). Ema ebem iso ìben ákpín ídák ánwá, mbọ́k áwò ísì sáák-ká sák íwánná útọ́ anwan ado (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d).</i>	Please, perfect our preparations and strategies (pours some of the drink on the ground). For a wrestling contest preceded by palm fronds as signals must never be wrestle with a smile on the face (pours some of the drink on the ground).	110 111 112 113 114 115
<i>Ònyìn ima ikan ammọ́, oh! Ònyìn iya íseppè àfẹ́ mbùfò yè mkpọ́kpọ́rọ́ íwuod ammọ́. Mmè itiàd áfẹ́ ámi ádiyáyamma yè iyíp ammọ́ (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d).</i>	And when we might have defeated them, Ooh! How we shall deck your sacred abode with a cache of human skulls! How this dull-looking rusty stones shall sparkle with splashes /sprinkles of human blood! (pours some drink joyfully).	116 117 118 119 120 121
<i>Ké ònèmèsìt a ònyìn ima ídìdìdìọ̀nńọ́ ké mbùfò eya ínọ̀ ònyìn ódùdù àdí kan, Ònyìn ìbò, ìbọ́ iyíp yé òwá akikọ́ ami òdíín itíe ìbéd uwa iyíp mmè asua a ònyìn idi’waagha k’únyọ̀nńọ́ ékọ̀n (ọ̀duọ́k ukọ́d).</i>	In anticipation of success, we say, make do with the blood/feathers of this special cock whilst you await your appetite for reviving blood of our enemies (strangles the cock, spills its blood on the stone and throws its feathers carefully around the grove, pours some drink).	122 123 124 125 126 127 128

Text 11 - Rescue attempt on a flood victim

Location/ Spatial Setting: Amasa Stream in Nsukkara Offot, Uyo LGA

Performer: Obong Udo Eko

Age: 73 years

Occupation/Rank: The longest serving Juju priest in Eket LGA Akwa Ibom State. He was invited based on high recommendations of recorded success in water spirit appeasement. He was the then chief priest of Inyañ Idem

Performance: The performer sets *usan idem* (a clay dish) of dried crayfish and palm-oil on a bamboo table near the water.

IBIBIO

Ùyàì iyàk àyín Àmàsà, kpàñ útoñ
nno íkóód mmì nyalñ nám útóm
mmì mí ámuhọ; yàk nkìd ñwọ-wahọ
ákpọ-ìsò mfò, bén ùyàì édèm mfò
ábùdtè nkòì ébiòñ, wuọ dí àdòró
mmọọñ; K'únám ñnyìn idíọk ádò
wad nti èdù mfò.
Mme dá mí yè ènọ yè mkpé ùbọk;
bóókó mmọọñ, dọñ àbùmà yè ákéb-kéb,
búúñ étó nyalñ bòdòm mmè tíat; ádò ama
'dó àmì, k'ùwọd iyád èsìd mfò.
Àdò bén idàrèsìd yè èmèm yè nkukíd
isọk ñnyìn; àbá ké mmọ, àfò útíppè iyàk
ésed?
Ùwaam mme íyírè edo ñkèññé k'ísó mfò.
Sésé, mm'edi adí nám útóm èmèm.
wùọ dí, dí nám útóm ábià íbọk mmì
ásoppọ.
Áwó ama-anọ áwó mkpọ ké ñtád ubọk,
aadod mkpọ áyìn útóm.
Ñk'ídiéhe adí yíp mkpọ mbùfò, nyalñ
iyáák mbùfò ubọk ñkáńá; ìbọ mkpọ
k'ústéné mí sia, mfọn ásie ékénè mfọn
(awaak afia nnyin-unen ndiin atop asin
ke mmọọñ; anuhọ, aben odu-uwem
iyak aisneke ke ufa etok basin).
Adaकेpat, Asa-Usuñ, Asiakobufa,
Iso-Atai, Okpo-Ikut, Odufioñ and
Ndoró-Nkoñ, ké ataa édu úkpòndò
yè ñdí k'é ndí íbìnnè mbùfò .
Udu'Fr. eké uyio étì ísáñ utom mbùfò,
Udo Eko.
Mmè di yè àkàm k'inua íbìnnè mbùfò.

ENGLISH

Lovely fish of Amasa's daughter, listen to 1
my call and make my work here shorter; 2
let me see your sharply pointed face, bring 3
your porcupine-quill back to the surface of 4
the water; Harm us not but show your 5
noble breeding. 6
7
Here I stand with gift and humbly pleading; 8
stir the water, send the storm and thunder, 9
knock down trees, and tear the stones 10
asunder; yet to me, you dare not show your 11
passion. 12
Rather, bring me joy and peace and vision; 13
where art thou, fish of ancient fable? 14
15
Hooks and nets to thee are often feeble; 16
See, I come to render peaceful service. 17
Come up now and speed my priestly office. 18
19
'Whoever gives out freely deserves 20
something in return. 21
I came not to rob and leave you empty- 22
handed. Take in exchange; kindness 23
follows kindness'(tears a white chick into 24
two parts and throws them into the water; 25
he carries the livefish that is in a new 26
white basin). 27
Adaकेpat, Asa-Usuñ, Asiakobufa, Iso- 28
Atai, Okpo-Ikut, Odufioñ and Ndoro- 29
Nkoñ, with respect and for fear I come 30
to you. 31
You shall not forget the voice of your 32
faithful servant, Udo Eko. 33
I come to you with prayers on my lips. 34

Àkikọ́ áké'dià ndídíá ábùkpà, uman-
 únèn áké'dià ndídíá ábùkpà, òsínám
 ndídíá ábùkpà ádíwuud ñnyín únèn?
 Ídíok mkpọ́ aka ñsàn-ñsàn, àdí'kpíkòp,
 ñyañ ñkíd utọ́ mbak àmì ké ídāñ ñnyìn.
 Àkàm áké'nyaña ákúbè ásiọ ké áfíá.
 ìdàkká-ídá k'íkpad ìbà, ìbìnnè èkà
 mbùfò – Amasa.
 Ìkpé ànyé úbọk ìbọ yàk ànyé anno miin
 àyín ndiok-ísó ñnyìn, ákáán àdéén
 Etim (abọ nditọ abia ibọk akpasa nkwa-
 unen, keed ke adiana-k'-adiana, abo):
 Sia ndííhé àdí'kpé úbọk, mbéññé
 mbáñá úwém yè ñsọñ-idém, mm'ino
 mbùfò àyọhọ akpasa ñkwà-únèn (atop
 akpasa nkwa-unen anim anọ nditọ
 Amasa keed-a-keed, ke adiana k'adiana).
 Ké atá ayọhọ ùkpòndò mmédi úbìnné fiin,
 Inyañ Idèm, àfò ádò ètè áyọhoké yè
 utéññè. Èbèkpo mfo ayọyọhọ yè mmè
 údak ikọd, èkpè yè ñtìdùkpòm.
 Àmì ndíéhé mbìnnè amọ, ádò ndì
 àdíyém sído akèmmi.
 Ñno sé ñyém yàk àmì ndákkà nnyoñ.
 Úwák íyip úmàn únèn -ísò ùwà áya'yọhọ
 èkpà mfò (asio ikwa, ayiok itoñ unen,
 ayaak aduok k'isoñ. Asio ekpeme ufọfọb,
 amia nkanika ndiin aduok ukọd):

Àmàsà! Àmàsà!! Àmàsà ànníé ndik!!!
 Ètək ìdìm ádò àkè mfò yè afíd sí'
 yọhoké èsìd. éké'mbaabad k'ótu mmè
 àndídod, ndíín ènkood yàk ñd'úbìnné
 fiin, amì'kpídoho ñtórò, ammọ íkpí'ńkooito.
 Mmè ñám útóm ísùà édíp ye itíábà ké ídak
 áyìn mbùfò, Ube Okpo. Mmá ñám útóm
 mmì mfoñ mfoñ, ké àyọhọ ñsùhídém yè
 ké ákpáníkọ.
 Ákánanàm ñwòttó, ñnyañhọ
 nno úféné ñbọhọ-ídāñ mmì únán.

Ñnohọ nditọ mbọhọ ídāñ mmì uyie ndìdìà
 sí'tá ammọ úbọk. Mkpe'dia úyíé ndìdìà,
 ñníè àdí'no ammọ úyíè, mkpè'dia ñdèdèñ
 ñno ammọ ñdèdèñ.

Ndíọññoké ìnì k'úwém mmì ammì
 ñdàkkọ ìdíok ñkà màn ñkénè nwod
 áwó mme ñnyañhọ ñdak útọ ádu ádò.

The cock fed on corn, the hen fed on corn 35
 why then should the chick die because of 36
 corn meal? 37
 Far be it from our soil, evil should be heard 38
 of, but then not be seen among us. 39
 It was prayer that helped the Chameleon 40
 escape from a trap. Stand up on your 41
 feet and approach your mother – Amasa. 42
 Plead with her to give back to us our 43
 unfortunate son – the only son of his 44
 mother- Etim the old (collects the baskets of 45
 eggs from one of his servants after the other; 46
 saying): Since I have come to beg for life 47
 and health, I offer to you a basket full of 48
 eggs (he threw each basket on the ground, 49
 one after other as he calls on each of the 50
 seven sons). 51
 With respect and honour I come to you, 52
 Inyañ Idem. You are the most terrible of all 53
 fathers. Your palace of woods is full of 54
 snakes, leopards and eagles. 55
 I come not for them but for what is mine. 56
 Give to me what I ask, and then let me go. 57
 Your almighty loins shall swell and swell 58
 with the blood of a hen duly sacrificed (he 59
 drew out a knife and cut off the head of a 60
 hen, letting it fall, flapping on the ground. 61
 Draws out a bottle of gin, rings a bell and 62
 pours saying): 63
 Amasa! Amasa!! Amasa the monstrous!!! 64
 The small stream is yours and all that is 65
 live in it. I was counted worthy to approach 66
 you, or I wouldn't have been invited. 67
 I served twenty-seven years under your late 68
 servant – Ube Okpo. I was faithful to him 69
 as I have always shown in my selfless 70
 services to you in the past. 71
 There's never been a time in my life that I 72
 happened to kill or wound my neighbour's 73
 livestock. 74
 I have never given them hot food to burn 75
 the fingers of my neighbour's children. 76
 Rather, when I eat hot food I give them hot 77
 food; and when I eat cold food I give them 78
 cold food. 79
 I know no period in my life when I have 80
 joined a gang to destroy life or conspired 81
 to do so. 82
 83
 84

*Úbọk mmì íkámákké iyip àwo òndomo kèèd.
 Útóm mmì ádó àdíyíañña úwém áwó.
 (Atop abiso ye akpatre nkwa-unen
 anim ke iso ndem ado. Ayiok atēññe-mfu
 ayiara ewa ndiin anim basin iyak ado
 k'iso ndem ado. Aben akikọ akpọkkọ
 akañ keed, akood nditọ Amasa ke
 'nyiñ-ke 'nyiñ: Adakekpat, Asa-Usuñ,
 Asiakobufa, Iso-Atai, Okpo-Ikut, Odufioñ
 ye Ndoro-Nkoñ abo edibọ uwa enyañ
 eyiak Etim inọ. Awai akikọ, adad iyip ado
 aduoi ke ebekpo ado, atañña nkpo ndiin
 asin ikañ ke ebekpo ado, akood
 k'ọkpọsọñ uyio):*

*Ìdí o o o! Ìdí àfíd mbùfò! Àfò mmọ mí,
 Èté Idim? Bọ ndídíá mfò mí.*

*Kood nditọ mfò mbọk! Àbá ké mmọọ,
 Adakekpat? Àbá ké mmọọ, Asa-Usuñ?
 Àfíd mbùfò ké ñkóód! Nsítóóho áwó
 baba kèèd ñduok! Èsàñá èkpèré ènyañ
 èdád ùdèmé mbùfò . Asiakobufa! Iso-Atai!
 Okpo-Ikut! Odufioñ! Ídóhó ité mbùbák
 mfò ádó mì Ndoro-Nkoñ! Mme nám
 ùbiọñ útòm mmì mmé yañ nám afon.
 Iféd ákè mbùfò ádó mmì, k'úyàk buud
 a-nam míín.*

My hands are clean of the blood of all men. 85
 And my duty remains that of saving life. 86
 (He throws a first and last egg on the 87
 ground in front of the shrine. He slaughters 88
 the bearded ram and the bulldog, brings the 89
 white basin containing the livefish and 90
 pushes it into the shrine. He holds up the 91
 cock that has crowed only once in its life, 92
 calling on all the children of Amasa: 93
 Adakekpat, Asa-Usuñ, Asiakobufa, Iso- 94
 Atai, Okpo- Ikut Odufioñ and Ndoro- Nkoñ, 95
 to receive the sacrifice and release Etim. He 96
 tears the cock apart, smears the blood on 97
 the altar, murmuring inaudible incantations, 98
 and then sets fire on the altar of sacrifice, 99
 shouting): 100
 Come along, come along all of you! Are 101
 you here, Ete Idim, are you here? Here is 102
 your food! 103
 Call all your children together! Where are 104
 you Adakekpat? Where are you Asa-Usuñ? 105
 It's all of you I'm calling! No one is left 106
 out! Draw near together and have your 107
 Share. Asiakobufa! Iso-Atai! Okpo-Ikut! 108
 Odufioñ! This is no place for your wicked- 109
 ness Ndoro-Nkoñ! I have done my part 110
 and I have done it well. This is your turn 111
 and let me not be put to shame! 112
 113

Text 12 - Performance of welcome to visitors

Location/ Spatial Setting: Palace of the village head, Use Ikot Ebio, Uyo.

Performer: Eteidung Augustine Edmund Akpan.

Age: 78 years

Occupation/Rank: The village *Okuidem*/Village head, Use Ikot Ebio, Uyo.

Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsi ànyoñ, àbàsi ísoñ, (oḍuok ukòd).
Mmè ètè ètè yè mmè ñdèm ísoñ Akwa
Ibom ñnyìn: Ètèfia Ìkònò, Ùkánà Òffót,
Àwà Ìtàm, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsít,
Àtákpò Ñdèm Ùruàn Ìnyàñ, Ìtinnà Ìmàn,
Ìtáumà Èkìd, Ànà-ntià Ìbionò, yè ñdùfò
mmè mboḗñ ákèn (oḍuok ukòd).*

*Mmè ètè ètè mmì, oh! Àbàsi ikpa ísoñ
ìwuoḗḗ ìdí, mbià ètì ìbók, àfíd ñdùfò,
ìwuoḗḗ ìdí, ìdí k'òp sí íbá (oḍuok ukòd).
Ètí mkpò ádak ádi Òffót àmì o.
Ñnyìn ìbó áwó-wààn àmì adu- úwém,
èbé ámmò àmì adu- úwém.
Ké Òffót ké idó, k'ádó ánám ñnyìn
ìdí, ìdí e ! (oḍuok ukòd).*

*Ìdí e!! Abia-abia ase 'kóód àbàsi ànyé
àyìé ikóód, àdùfan ákpe 'kóód,
ìwuod ase 'bòòmó. Mmè ètè ètè mmì
oh! Akpan- Udo Etokakpan, Ekpo
Umoh Ndem, Akpan Ekpo Umoh
Inyañ, Itia-ita Etim Udim, Mbaak
Udie, ìdí (oḍuok ukòd).*

*Anyem ke ikóód ñdùtam.
Àbàsi ikpà ísoñ ìwuoḗḗ ìdí, àfíd ñdùfò
nti àwò, ìwuoḗḗ ìdí. Ìdàkká idá ké,
ñdùtam Òffót ké ikámmá ami k' ubok,
ìdí e (oḍuok ukòd).*

*Àbàsi ikpa ísoñ, ìdàkká idá ìdí, ndem
dùòp-èbà, ùdòk dùòp-èbà, ìdàkká idá
ìdí o. Abia-abia ase 'kóód àbàsi ànyé
àyìé ikóód, adùfan ákpe 'kóód, ìwuod
ábòòmó.*

*Áfan ánwààn àmì ádiìhè mmì, aka mkpò,
ánò Òffót, yak áfo-fon anò ànyé ké
ededimbod ami o, Amen.*

ENGLISH

The Almighty God above (pours some of the drink on the ground). Our forefathers and other good spirits of our land, Akwa Ibom: *Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ìtàm, Ètèfia Ìkònò, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Ñsít, Àtákpò* spirit of *Ùruàn, Ìtinnà Ìmàn, Ìtáumà Èkìd, Ànántià Ìbionò*, and all of you who had at one time ruled our land (pours some of the drink on the ground).

My forefathers, oh! The divinity of the entire land, come and drink (pours some of the drink on the ground).

A good thing at last is coming into Offot! We are saying “may this woman live! May her husband live”!

We are indigenes of Offot, which is why we come to you. (pours some of the drink on the ground).

Come! It is only a true priest who calls on the deities and is answered. If a false priest calls, the deities break his head. My forefathers, oh! Akpan-Udo Etokakpan, Ekpo Umoh Ndem, Akpan Ekpo Umoh Inyañ, Itia-ita Etim Udim, Mbaak Udie, come! (pours some of the drink on the ground).

This is what we call preparation. Oh deities of the entire land, come and drink!

All of you good people, come and drink! Arise to this Offot preparation in our hands. Come o o o! (pours some of the drink on the ground).

The god of the entire land, come. You twelve spirits that have twelve doors arise and come. It is only a true priest who calls on the deities and is answered. If a false priest calls, the deities break his head.

This woman here is trying to uplift the Offot clan. May it be well with her in this world, Amen.

*Ké ededimbod ámi o, úsañ isàn ammọ
idiọkkọ. Ána anam mkpọ asin ké Ọffót
ami. Anam mkpọ anọ ùbòn áwò ké
ededimbod ámi o (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Anie mbóm àbàsi k ké ededimbod ámi o.
màn ofo-fon ákèné ànyé yè ufọk ammọ
yè ébé ammọ, yè òdító ammọ yè mmè
ùfàn ammọ o (ọduọk ukọd).
Ùwuó! Ùwuó!! Ùwuó o o o!!! Ùwuó!
(ọduọk akpatre ukọd uwak-uwak).*

In this life, may her path be thorn-free. 41
She must succeed to enable her to uplift this 42
Offot. She must succeed to be able her to 43
uplift others in this life (pours some of the 44
drink on the ground). 45
May she have human sympathy on the 46
people she meets so that it is well with her, 47
her home, husband, children and friends 48
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 49
Shouts ululation “Uwuo! Uwuo!! Uwuo o o 50
oo!!! Uwuo!” (pours the last part of the 51
drink on the ground).

Text 13 - Daily Routine Invocation

Location/ Spatial Setting: Performer’s compound in Ikot Ntuen Oku, Uyo LGA

Performer: Chief (Trad. Dr.) Daniel Okon Udobio

Age: 65 years

Occupation/Rank: Traditional medicine practioner/ Udoe Oku 1 of Ikot Ntuen Oku, Uyo.

Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsi ànyoñ, àbàsi ísoñ, ébóóñ
àbàsi èkà mkpọ, ébóóñ àbàsi ényoñ.
Èté mmì Okon Udobio, Udobio Akpan
Udofia, Akpan Udofia Abasi Ubong,
isàñá idí àfíd (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Udo-Ekong Akpa Okon, George Utuk,
Utong Udo Akpan- Ekpo, Akere Esang,
Atim Ekpo Itim, Udoong Akpan Ekamen,
Udofia Udo-Udo ké Ikot Oku, Ntong
Odong Ekpo Enuá ké Ikot Ebido, idí o o
àkpa imọ ndufo (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Ikpa Ikoedem ké Itam, Okon Ekpo ké
Ekom Iman, Etim Idim ké Ediene,
Okon Effiong Usanga ké Ediene,
Akpan Uwah ké Ekit Itam, ikènné idí,
Offoñ-anyen Usung ké Utu Edem Usung,
Mbaang Udomesit ké Ukanafun,
Ubokudom Udo Ekanem ké Ukanafun,
àfíd ndüfò, ntè èké tá, ntè èké’tié, isàñá
idí o- àfíd ndüfò (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Udo èkà mmi Eyo, mmọn sé èké séé
nam ntom idí, àmuum isoñ isiduho,*

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, we 1
normally call on God when going out and 2
when coming in. My father Okon Udobio, 3
Udobio Akpan Udofia, Akpan Udofia 4
Abasi Ubong, come closer (pours some of 5
the drink on the ground). 6

*Udo-Ekong Akpa Okon, George Utuk,
Utong Udo Akpan- Ekpo, Akere Esang,
Atim Ekpo Itim, Udoong Akpan Ekamen,
Udofia Udo-Udo in Ikot Oku, Ntong
Odong Ekpo Enuá in Ikot Ebido, (pours
some of the drink on the ground). 12*

*Ikpa Ikoedem in Itam, Okon Ekpo in Ekom
Iman, Etim Idim in Ediene, Okon Effiong
Usanga in Ediene, Akpan Uwah in Ekit
Itam come along. Offoñ-anyen Usung
Usung in Utu Edem Usung, Mbaang
Udomesit in Ukanafun, Ubokudom Udo
Ekanem in Ukanafun, wherever you are,
come forth all of you (pours some of the
drink on the ground). 21*

My second brother Eyo, all of you that are 22
noted to have performed this act, he who 23

àtám idém ké idém ase 'dehe. Èsiin ákpè'top ké unen ase bak èkòm, èsiin ábià isi fídté mbiid, Àbàsi. Àtám idém ké idém ase 'd á ábéd, àdioyo usèn ké usèn ase ádèi (òduok ukòd).

Ìdí, ìdí àbàsi, èdèm èté yè èdèm èkà mmi, ikènné ìdí. Mbon sé èké 'sée nám ntom, àtáñ ayohò (òduok ukòd).

Akpan Udo Isiõñ ké Ikot Enuwa, Akpan Okuku, Udo Okuku, Itiaba Udo Okuku ikènné ìdí (òduok ukòd).

Uwah ké Use, Archiboñ Edem ké Itiam Etoi, Okon Anko ké Efiat Ikot-edo, Efanga Abañ ké Efiat Ikot-edo. Eyo Ekaete ké Mbiakoñ, ikènné ìdí àfid, idiwoõñ do àkpaimo ndüfò (òduok ukòd). Àsoñko úkòd ádó mi, sé ntúúú ádó mfon-mfon. Ufok mmi ádó àyohò-àyohò. Sé ndáád nọ áwó údọño yàk afon (òduok ukòd).

Àbàsi, ènọ ànyé àfó àkéboho ndínám ádó mi. Ànám utom mbàkára ádàkká utom mbàkara, mmè àtọ inwañ edàkká, mmè àkọ nkọ ké mmọõñ eedàkká, mmè ànim ufok àbàsi edàññá aké ammọ, mmè ànyàm uduà edàññá udémé aké mmọ. Sé àfọ aké nyañ a nọ àbó nam ádó mi. (òduok ukòd).

Àbaak ábod ase dákkà ukééñ, mbáàkká ábod (òduok ukòd).

Ndem sée ndod idém, àfid ndüfò. Ndem edem èté yè èdèm èkà, Aboti ndém ké Iba nnañ mmè èkà mi, Atakpo ndem ké Uruan, Anyañ ké Nsit, Etefia ké Ikono, Iso Itiat, Ikpruk Ukpa ké Uruan, Itiat, Ukpa ké Itam, Anantia ké Ibiono, Abaam ké Itak, Ido ké Atam, Asuakha asi ndém ké Ibəno, Ibritam ké Inokon, Udi Edo ké Andoni, afia anwaan ké nduetọñ, ikpad nsek ayin ké Afaha-ube, Afioõñ

holds unto the earth does not fall. 24
 He who pays respects to the ancestors does 25
 not fail. The compound of one who throws 26
 grains. The compound of a renowned priest 27
 never grows weeds. He who sacrifices 28
 regularly obtains favour from the deities, he 29
 who reverses the day receives the day's 30
 blessings (pours some of the drink on the 31
 ground). 32
 Come, the blessed of god from both my 33
 paternal and maternal sides, come along. 34
 Those of you who did a similar feat and had 35
 quite a large patronage (pours some of the 36
 drink on the ground). 37
Akpan Udo Isiõñ in Ikot Enuwa, Akpan 38
Okuku, Udo Okuku, Itiaba Udo Okuku, 39
come too (pours some of the drink on the 40
ground). 41
Uwah in Use, Archiboñ Edem in Itiam 42
Etoi, Okon Anko in Efiat Ikot-edo, Efanga 43
Abang in Efiat Ikot- edo. Eyo Ekaete in 44
Mbiakoñ, come along all of you and drink. 45
(pours some of the drink on the ground). 46
 This is our native drink, the strongest of 47
 them all. Let anything that I touch be 48
 blessed. Let my household be complete. 49
 Let anything that I give to the sick heal 50
 them (pours some of the drink on the 51
 ground). 52
 Oh God, this is my own gift/talent that you 53
 gave to me. Government workers have left 54
 for work, farmers have gone to the farm, 55
 fishermen have left, pastors have also gone 56
 to their abode and traders have gone too. 57
 This is my talent from you (pours some 58
 of the drink on the ground). 59
 60
 The disrespectful dies at youth, I do not 61
 disregard my elders (pours some part of the 62
 drink). 63
 All the benevolent spirit that I am initiated 64
 into, all of you from both my paternal and 65
 maternal families. *Aboti* spirit from my 66
 mother's side, *Atakpo* spirit from *Uruan*, 67
Anyañ in Nsit, Etefia in Ikono, Iso Ikpruk 68
Iso Itiat, Ikpruk Ukpa in Itam, Anantia in 69
Ibiono, Abaam in Itak, Ido in Atam, 70
Asuakha-asi spirit in Ibəno, Ibritam in 71
Inokon, Udi Edo in Andoni, afia anwaan in 72
Nduetọñ, Ikpad nsek-ayin in Afaha-ube, 73
 74

<i>ayu unwa ké Oron, Abre mmọọñ ké Oro (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	<i>Afioọñ ayu unwa Oron, Abre mmọọñ in Oron (pours some drink on the ground).</i>	77
<i>Mammy-water, àbiom inyene àfid Ederimbod. Ekpenyọñ- Ekpenyọñ, Ekpenyọñ isu, utin Ekpenyọñ iso-mkpek, itak ukana, Ekpenyọñ ukara akpa, afia anwan, Ekpenyọñ udem-inyañ (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	<i>Mammy-water, the owner of all the wealth of the world. Ekpenyọñ- Ekpenyọñ Ekpenyọñ of the moon, Ekpenyọñ of the shrine, Ekpenyọñ of the oil-bean seed. Ekpenyọñ of the river (pours some of the drink on the ground).</i>	78
<i>Àno áwò ufọn abo náñńá ufọn isimme. Àdia áwò itippe ide. Ake doro ké iwuod abia ase adoro-doro, akpa (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	<i>He who blesses another seeks his own fortune. He who benefits from another preserves the source. Whoever insults a priest dies at a tender age (pours some of the drink on the ground).</i>	79
<i>Mmè asén áwò s'ibá ké idlāñ ámi, si inam nti mkpọ, yàk eti mkpọ ákénńè. Kpèmé mmbon ékọñ ésehé do, ayio ama akim ònyìn idak ufọk isuuk ina, mbon inọ éke kaakan o-o. Ìkpèmé mmè boris, ésehéédo ayio akim ònyìn idak ufọk isuuk ina, ammọ ekpọñ ufọk ammọ, ewàd moto ékanna àfid idlāñ ámi, ìkpèmé ònyìn. Ìkpèmé ammọ, k'uyak inọ ekan ammọ (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	<i>May all the good strangers in this land receive favour. Protect members of the Army who move about at night to ensure our safety while we sleep. Protect the members of the Police force who leave their homes to drive around to ensure peace while we sleep in our homes. Preserve them all, do not allow armed robbers to overpower them (pours some of the drink on the ground).</i>	80
<i>Àbàsi, àtam idém ké idém ákpeme, mmè àsén áwò sé ibá ké àfid isọñ Akwa Ibom ámi. Ìkpèmé governor Akwa Ibom ámi o, ìkpèmé mmè kọmisiọna, ìkpèmé àfid-àfid ìkpọ áwo, mmè presiden Nigeria ámi o, ikpemé àfid-àfid. Ikpemé àfid-àfid áwo, iki iyak mfíńá aba k'isọñ Akwa Ibom ámi àbà (ọduọk ukọd). Mfíńá sé iki bá, yàk ate-atre, toọño ké mfín. Àbàsi anyọñ, àbàsi isọñ (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	<i>He who pays respects to the deities receives their protection. All the visitors to this Akwa Ibom State, preserve the governor of this Akwa Ibom land, preserve the commissioners, the VIPs, the president of Nigeria and all the citizens. May there be no strife in this Akwa Ibom land (pours some of the drink on the ground).</i>	81
<i>Abia-abia ase 'kóód àbàsi ànyé áyíé, ikóód, àdùfàn ákpe 'kóód, iwuod akoppo</i>	<i>Where there was disharmony, let there be peace henceforth. Our God above, the deities below (pours some of the drink on the ground).</i>	82
<i>Mmè isén áwò se íbá enwánà àkàk enim, eben enyọñ éké nam mkpọ ké idlāñ ammọ, màn ammọ étioyo ébo ké isua a mmimọ iki 'baaha ké Akwa Ibom, ànyé ké mmimọ iki nam àmi. Eedad edọ anwaan, ánwaan áfọn, eman áyin, nditọ éduiyo, sé étuuk áfọn (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	<i>It is only the true priest that calls on the deities and is answered; if a fake priest calls, the deities break his head.</i>	83
<i>Mmè mbon ésehé énám nti mkpọ, ìdí wọọño do o o ké ubọk nnàsià mi (ọduọk ukọd ké ubọk nnasia).</i>	<i>May our strangers prosper in this land so that they will go back happily to their respective land, they will invest the wealth they made from Akwa Ibom. May they use the wealth to marry and be fruitful (pours some of the drink on the ground).</i>	84
<i>Amado ndùfò mmọon ésehé nám ndiọi,</i>	<i>All of you who are noted for your good deeds, come and drink from my right hand (pours some of the drink from his right hand).</i>	85
	<i>But you performers of evil come ome and</i>	86

<i>idíwoṣoṅṅo ké úbọk úffíín mí inyoñ inie itié ndùfò (ọduñk ukọd ke ubọk ufiin).</i>	drink from my right left hand and go your way (pours some of the drink from his left hand).	127 128 129
<i>Àbàsì anyoñ, àbàsì isoñ. Idiọk mkpọ k' iso, nnyin ké èdèm, Idiọk mkpọ ké èdèm, nnyin k' iso, idiọk mkpọ aku 'dak isoñ Akwa Ibom nnyin àmì o o! (ọduọk ukọd). Àbàsì anyoñ, àbàsì isoñ, àwo abọoñ àbàsì aka mkpọ. Ndém inyàñ anam inyàñ anié ndík. Inwoṣoṅṅo do o o! (ọduọk akpatre ukọd).</i>	Our God above, the deities below, may evil be in front while we are behind. When danger is behind, may we be in front. May evil depart Akwa from Akwa Ibom State. Our God above, the deities below, we normally call on God on our way out. It is the spirits in the waters that make the sea dreadful. Take and drink! (pours the last of the drink on the ground).	130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138

Note: Trado.Dr. is a traditional title among traditional medical practioners. They are deemed to attend certain height of perfection in tyheir field.

Text 14 - Naming of a new born baby

Date: December 3, 2009
Location/ Spatial Setting: The parent's compound, Ukwa Eket, Eket LGA
Performer: Mr Godwin Daniel Udo
Age: 48 years
Occupation/Rank: Public Servant, Eket LG Council, Eket LGA

Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsì ányoñ, àbàsì isoñ, mmè èté yè èté-
ète nnyin. Ukánà Ọffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia
Ìkòndò, Ítáùmà Èkíd, Ítinna Ìmàn, Àkpàsímà,
Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò Ndém Ùruàn Inyàñ,
Ùdoè Ókù, Ànántia Íbìoṅṅo, mmè ndèm
isoñ ákèn, (ọduọk ukọd).*

*Mfín ádó àyọhọ ùsèn itía-itá áyín
ámì áké mana adak ufọk mmì ámì.
Ké òtórò mfín ádó usen ákè àmì, ètè
nyémmé àdísíó ànyé mmì ányíñ.
Èséd éké'bed, èséd èbèdé. Mme béññé
mbo, yàk áyín ámì ado eti àyìn ké úfọk
ànyé àtòhó mí, ké áduuk yè ké ábíò
nnyin ànyé mánàké ádíak mí (ọduọk ukọd).
Mkpọ ufọk éte mmè áké èkà íkídíté ànyé.
Áyín ámì akoñ akan àfíd ammọ (ọduọk
ukọd).*

Mbọk mbùfò mmè èté nnyin, idíbèdé yè

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, the
good spirits of our fathers and forefathers
of our clan, *Ukánà Ọffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia
Ìkòndò, Ítáùmà Èkíd, Ítinna Ìmàn, Àkpàsímà,
Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò* spirit of *Ùruàn, Ùdoè
Ókù, Ànántia Íbìoṅṅo*, the other good spirits
(pours some of the drink on the ground).
Today is the eighth day since this child was
born into this family. As such, today is the
day that I, the father wish to name him. It is
a tradition from my forebears. It is my
desire that this child will be a good child. I
therefore plead that this child be a good
child in the home, the family, clan and in
the entire land.
Evil from the lineage shall not befall this
child. This child is higher than generational
curses and covention (pours some of the
drink on the ground).
Please my fathers, come and stand by me as

*ñnyìn ké ádíńám ámì. Ìnyáñ ìńám ányíñ
ámì asọp áyín ámì ké eti ùsáñ (ọduọk ukọd).*

I name this child. May the name that I shall
give him today impact positively on him
(pours of the drink on the ground).

21
22
23

Text xv - Performance of peace to welcome friends to a social gathering.

Location/ Spatial Setting: The front view of performer's compound

Performer: Solomon Edet Udoekong

Age: 40 years

Occupation/Rank: The Village *Okuidem*, Mbikpong Ikot Edim, Ibesikpo-Asutan
LGA.

Performance:

IBIBIO

*Àbàsi ányoñ, àbàsi ísoñ, mmè èté yè èté-
éte ñnyìn. Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà Ítàm, Ètéfia
Ìkòno, Àkpàsímà, Ùdoè Ókù, Ànyààñ Nsít,
Àtákpò Ndem Ùruàn Ìnyáñ, Ítinna Ìmàn,
Ìtáumà Èkíd, Anántia Íbìọno,
(ọduọk ukọd).*

Performer: *Ísoñ! Ísoñ!! Ísoñ!!! Ísoñ
Àdòd ùkàná!*

Audience: *Àdòd ùkàná ísoñ.*

Performer: *Ísoñ àdòd ùkàná!*

Audience: *Àdòd ùkàná ísoñ.*

Performer: *Ísoñ àdòd ùkàná!*

Audience: *Àdòd ùkàná ísoñ.*

Performer: *Ísoñ èmèm*

Audience: *Èmèm ísoñ*

Performer: *Ísoñ àduè àkpe*

Audience: *Àduè àkpe ísoñ*

Performer: *Ísoñ ímá*

Audience: *Ímá ísoñ*

Performer: *Ísoñ ñdùkóppó*

Audience: *Ñdùkóppó ísoñ*

Performer: *Ísoñ mbòho-mbòho*

Audience: *Mbòho ísoñ*

Performer: *Ísoñ ò-ò-ò-òòñ*

Audience: *Ò-ò-ò-òòñ ísoñ*

Performer: *Ísoñ íbààghá ámọn*

Audience: *Ákpe bààgh mọ?*

Performer: *Àmùùm ísoñ áse'duọ?*

ENGLISH

The most High God, our divinity below, the
good spirits of our fathers and our fore
fore fathers of our clan, *Ùkánà Òffót, Àwà
Ítàm, Ètéfia Ìkòno, Àkpàsímà, Ùdoè Ókù,
Ànyààñ Nsít, Àtákpò* spirits of *Ùruàn,
Ítinna Ìmàn, Ìtáumà Èkíd, Anántia Íbìọno,*
(pours some of the drink on the ground).

Performer: Oh land! oh land!! oh land!!!

The land deserves respect!

Audience: Yes, it does!

Performer: The land deserves respect!

Audience: Yes, it does!

Performer: The land deserves respect!

Audience: Yes, it does!

Performer: Peace unto the land!

Audience: Peace to the land!

Performer: Offenders must pacify
the land!

Audience: Yes, they must!

Performer: The land must show love

Audience: Yes, it must!

Performer: The land must hear us

Audience: Yes, it must!

Performer: There must be unity in the land!

Audience: Yes, there must be!

Performer: O-o-o-oog (an ululation to
signify awe).

Audience: O-o-o-oog (an ululation meaning
"We are in support")

Performer: The land fears no demons!

Audience: Why should it!

Performer: If a man cleaves onto the land,
can he fall?

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Audience: <i>Ase 'duo ké mmọ?</i>	Audience: How can he?	34
Performer: <i>Yàk àfíd mkpo ádiùò èmèm - èmèm, ké èséd éké'bed, èséd ébèèdé. Ísoñ fùùd.</i>	Performer: Let everything today pass on peacefully. It is our ancestors that began this, to them we return after. Let there be utmost peace.	35 36 37 38
Audience: <i>Iya-yọọ?</i>	Audience: An ululation to mean “why not?”	39
Performer: <i>Yàk èmèm ákéénè mmè Ìsén áwò èsùkké 'dak édí mí o (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: May peace be with these visitors that have come into our midst (pours some of the drink on the ground).	40 41 42
Audience: <i>Àmèn:</i>	Audience: Amen.	43
Performer: <i>Èmèm ákéénè áyín Alex Ubom (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Peace be with Alex Ubom's son (pours some of the drink on the ground).	44 45 46
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	47
Performer: <i>Ákéénè Utibe Alex (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Unto Utibe Alex (pours some drink on the ground).	48 49
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	50
Performer: <i>Ákéénè ídọk ikọt áyín Ndon Ufok Udo (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Peace be with Ndon Ufok Udo's son (pours some of the drink on the ground).	51 52 53
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	54
Performer: <i>Ákéénè Okokon Akpan Udo (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Peace be with Okokon Akpan (pours some of the drink on the ground).	55 56 57
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	58
Performer: <i>yàk èmèm ákéénè àfíd áwò (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Peace be with everybody. (pours some of the drink on the ground).	59 60
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	61
Performer: <i>Akpedò áké 'tò mkpo ufok, áto ékpùk, áto ímáán, áto íkáán, àmì mbo yàk èmèm ákéénè àfíd áwò (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Even if it were an ancestral curse, or from the kinsmen that there will be no peace, I say may peace be with everyone (pours some of the drink on the ground).	62 63 64 65 66
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	67
Performer: <i>Ámádo àmì, áyín Edet Udoekong Udoudom Unwaan- ntuk Anyangidem Ananayin- isoñ Akpan Nwa-esu, áyín Edet Udoekong, yàk èmèm á nkeénè míín (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	As for me, the son of <i>Edet Udoekong Udoudom Unwaan-ntuk Anyangidem Ananayin-isoñ Akpan Nwa-esu</i> , the son of <i>Edet Udoekong</i> , may peace be with me (pours some of the drink on the ground).	68 69 70 71 72 73
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	74
Performer: <i>Ákéénè àfíd-àfíd awò (ọduọk ukọd).</i>	Performer: Peace be with everyone (pours some of the drink on the ground).	75 76
Audience: <i>Àmèn.</i>	Audience: Amen.	77
Performer: <i>Íyò òò! Íyò òò!! Íyò ò òò!!! (ọduọk akptre ukọd uwak-uwak).</i>	Performer: <i>Íyò òò! Íyò òò!! Íyò ò òò!!!</i> (An ululation to mean “may it be so” (pours the last drink elaborately on the ground).	78 79 80 81
Audience: <i>Iyò ò òò!</i>	Audience: <i>Iyoooo!</i> (An ululative response meaning, so be it).	82 83

Appendix II - Interview Questions

Respondent 1

Name: *Etebom* (Dr.) Effiong Eberefiak.

Rank: Clan Head of Oku

Age: 61 years

Occupation: Retired Teacher, now businessman

Place of interview: The palace of the clan head, Oku clan

Date: 14-05-2011.

What do you consider as libation?

Response: Libation is the means of pouring of drinks to the ancestors and deities of the land. We do this to awaken them to listen to us, be involved in what we want to do and bless us. It is our own way of communicating with God who is too big for us to approach directly. When we have consulted the deities and ancestors, we send our request to the Supreme God through them since we are not qualified to talk to God because of our human nature. They are spirits so they can approach God on our behalf.

What constitutes libation in your culture?

Response: Libation is the channel through which the living communicates with the divinities and our dead ancestors. It is a way in which we revere their virtues and the legacies they left for us. People no longer regard the ancestors and age hence no regard for the concept of seniority. This is why they die indiscriminately without getting old.

Who is eligible to perform?

Response: A Chief priest, his appointee, the family head or the custodian of the people's shrine. The performance of libation is strictly done by the Chief Priest of the community or by an *Okuku* who invariably is the oldest person in the community in the case of issues that concerns on the village's or clan's spiritual well-being. If the issue is a family matter, the family head or the family priest (where there is one) does the performance. Performance of libation can further be delegated; the person so delegated is working on the unction of the overall authority that has been vested upon him/her at such occasion.

At What instance (s) is/are libation performed?

Response: In every traditional activity of the Ibibio life. There is always a need to call on God before one embarks on a journey to anywhere, be it sea, on land, preparing for war, planting or harvesting, at coronation ceremonies and any activity that the Ibibio man

considers as important must be communicated to God for preservation, hence, libation must be performed.

What are the paraphernalia of libation in your context?

Response: *ufofob*, schnapps, gin, palmwine, snuff, salt, pepper, palmoil and water. Libation is poured with *nnaḱ eniin* during Chieftaincy coronation, while *nnaḱ enañ, ukpok* or glass is used during other occasions.

Why do performers prefer schnapps and hot drinks for the exercise?

Response: Generally, hot drinks are preferred because of their psychoactive properties which are believed would awaken the sleeping ancestors. Its content too is believed, would intoxicate the wicked spirit should they attempt to perfect their wickness. Schnapps is considered potent in matters that concern the water spirit; it is a drink that came with the White man across the ocean.

Can a woman perform libation?

Response: Yes, matters that are specifically female oriented are never performed by a male priest. For instance, the performance of libation during Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or *mboppo* initiation is strictly done by the female priestess of the community.

Do you think other instruments are permissible in the performance of libation?

Response: We first and foremost use hot drinks to wake up the gods [divinities]; the spirit in the hot drink awakes them and they listen. We also use water too for libation as an indication for peace; water and palm-wine are used to broker peace.

What are the implications of not using the appropriate tools for libation performance?

Response: The person is calling for the wrath of the gods [deities] and we know that in their court, there is no mercy. Their anger is swift and any reasonable person does not walk into a moving vehicle to be crushed.

Do you believe in its efficacy?

Response: Everything that has religious significance depends on belief. I would not perform it if I am not sure it will work. My forefathers believed in it and it worked for them. So far the deities have never failed me so I believe that in anything that I consult them, they will respond positively.

Are there specific patterns in which it is done?

Response: All libation performances require that, when the drink has been poured into the appropriate container, the performer pour as he calls on the deities or punctuates his speech. The mouth of the guord is turned downwards as they pour.

What are the regalia of the performer of libation?

Response: The normal Ibibio traditional attire of long gown top and a wrapper tied sarong-wise for the male and a long gown or wrapper and blouse for the woman. In the case of a traditional ruler, the royal insignia is sufficient for his performance.

Is there any significance to colour usage in Ibibio libation performance?

Response: Like I [*Etebom* Eberefiak] said before, Ibibio libation performances are different from, say, the Yoruba, where the *Ifa* priest is distinctly clad always. In Ibibio there is no dress distinction in libation performances; the normal Ibibio traditional attire is sufficient, except when the priest is approaching the water spirits or preparing the people for war, whereby he must dress in white and red respectively.

Why do they use white or red at such times?

Response: the water spirit is pure, therefore the use of white by the priest signifies his purity of self and purpose. He must of course have sanctified himself prior to his consultations, otherwise he faces the wrath of the spirits which is instant death. In the case of preparing the people for war, red signifies blood and it is only an *okuidem* that must perform this.

Who is an *okuidem*? Is he different from *okuinam*?

Response: An *okuidem* is an *okuinam* that has undergone all societal initiations with evidence of successful exploits in wars where he has killed. We say that such *okuinam* is “complete”. It is therefore the highest religious title that one gets. Whereas a priest or chief priest is qualified to perform all his duties credibly with his status as *okuinam*, it is only an *okuidem* that prepares the people for war.

Do the Ibibio have sacred animals?

Response: They have totems

At what time are they killed?

Response: They are never purposefully killed; they die naturally in their shrines and the chief priest accords them the required rites at burials with libation.

Do we have sacred groves? If yes, what constitute their libation?

Response: We have Amasa, forest of the goddess of fertility where a woman is barred from entering. It is located in Nsukara Offot and even men do not get in there haphazardly, otherwise they pay dearly for “seeing the nakedness of *eka nditọ*”.

Are there sacred trees in Ibibio?

Response: We have *Ekọm* with its headquarters at *Ekom Iman*, Uyo, where *Asan* Ibibio is cited and *efiat* which is located at *Afaha Efiat* in Etinam Local government Area.

Does dance as a cultural artefact has any relationship with libation performance?

Response: Except in *oḅon*, *ekọḳḳḳ* and *ekpo*. Most of such dances are based on incantations which are usually prominent during initiations, especially those which have religious implications.

What type of dance relates to libation as art?

Response: They have been generally abused so that they do not have traditional values, reverence, awe and respect again because of the influence of Christianity and civilization. People are afraid to be identified with “fetish” objects; hence mediocres take over the arena of these cults.

What is libation like in your generation?

Response: Libation in my time has been watered down. Every concept is tied to the people’s belief and responses to it. I could say that it has been killed but for very few custodians of the raw traditional values within the Ibibio society. That is why we have chaos all over the land, people committing abomination and walking away without a prick on the conscience. You see, the consciousness of fear has been removed from most issues of the tradition. Any tradition that cannot elicit fear in its believers is a dead religion. The elimination of these objects of fear in traditional institutional management is the cause of chaos and insecurity that we witness today through theft and harassment. Some, many are not keen on its performances or its religious significance.

What was it like in your father’s generation?

Response: Libation in my father’s time used to be very awesome and the efficacy was instantaneous. Everybody believed in its potency and it worked for them.

How do you see present day’s Christian attitudes to libation performance?

Response: Christians today are bags of hypocrites; they parade themselves as saints when they are as filthy as a compost heap. Christianity has brainwashed so many of its followers that libation is fetish. Like I said earlier, every concept is tied to the people’s belief and responses to it. Many no longer believe in it but it does not alter the fact that our forebears reverence and worship the almighty through this communicative process.

What is your opinion about today’s attitude to traditional religious worship?

Response: Religion has been watered for personal achievements. It is practised as a means to wealth acquisition today, not an instrument of salvation. Even in traditional religious circle, we still see priests who compromise their credible reputation for substance. That is why you hear people saying emphatically that what has been done is false; because they

know that money has changed hands for what should not be, which has become. This is bad for the religion.

What is the hope, if any, for the survival of libation performance as a reflection of the Ibibio societal values?

Response: Libation is greatly threatened by the influx of foreign cultures. In recent times, we do not promote the public performance of libation because of current belief on the sufficiency of the power of Christ and Christian prayers. Rather, the traditionalist observes his communication with his ancestors at the dawn of the occasion with appropriate libation before the function starts. But we believe that it will survive till the fall of the last traditionalist.

What can you say are those things that are considered to make religious culture popular for the Ibibio people?

Response: When the people send a request to the deities and such requests are granted, the people can thumb their chest that they have a listening god. This brings a sense of peace among the people. Therefore every activity that pertains to these deities is carried out without grumbling.

What is the worldview of the Ibibio as a people?

Response: Ibibio worldview was and is still based on the concept of tripartite relationship. This comprises of *ukod*, *iman* and *ayeyin*. This is the universal brotherhood of man where one is related to all as an in-law, grandchild or neighbour. These concepts consolidate protection to all concerned. An *ayeyin* is revered and given a higher esteem among the mother's kindred than in his/her paternal family. He enjoys much liberty and immunity thereof.

To what extent is it a responsible factor for their existence and survival over the years?

Response: The people's worldview is the hub on which the society rotates, therefore if this worldview is not protected, the societal elements are threatened and there will be disequilibrium in that society.

What is the present/current worldview of the people since independence and the current state of modernity?

Response: All society changes over time. The worldview is still observed but with the new wave of modernity, what is prevalent is the survival of the fittest. Brotherhood has been discarded for individuality and personalism. The concept of truth which the Ibibio of my father's age was known for is thrown to the wind; there is no honesty in relationships. Let

me quickly add that all these trivialities are not without consequences – even in today’s event or thing. That is why the people die early like chickens in times of epidemic.

Are there other aspects of narrative forms in the Ibibio culture that require performance other than libation performances?

Response: Yes there are other aspects of narrative arts in Ibibio which require libation performance. One of them is incantation.

How and why?

Response: It is true that incantation is a part of libation, but incantation on its own, without an object, is purely incantation. It becomes an aspect of libation once we accompany the incantation with objects like snuff, cola, oil, pepper or salt.

Do the Ibibio have distinct cultural patterns?

Response: Yes they do.

What are they?

Response: The cultural patterns of the Ibibio people manifest in their dressing, food, names, language and even the oral art expressions. For instance, the way we conduct our own libation does not have to be dependent on procedures; we perform spontaneously as the occasion presents itself. This may not be so for another people but we adhere to our pattern.

Have these patterns changed over the years considering the fact that societies are dynamic in nature?

Response: You see, societies change with time, even though most of the values may still be observed. Many of our cultural patterns have been modified. People strive to catch up with the current wave of events. The society of our youthful days is gone. In the area of food, parents offer their child spaghetti and indomie in place of *asa-iwa*, *ato mboro* and *usañ ikpoñ*.

Have they been influenced by other/outside cultural phenomena at any time?

Response: Our cultural patterns have greatly been influenced by other cultural patterns. Due to acculturation, cultural exchange, education and technology like the Internet, our dress codes are fast changing so much that most youths can hardly demarcate between Ibibio traditional wear and other cultures in Nigeria. We see our children dressing in another cultural dress to a traditional marriage in Ibibio land and we wonder how one can isolate such Ibibio child out from others.

In what ways do you think the Ibibio orature can truly be identified as a compendium among world literature?

Response: By intensive exploration and usage of our language in the narration of our cultural values through the evening relaxation modes. Television and satellite dishes of different makes have taken over the valuable moments that parents used to spend with their kids. Ibibio language is regarded as a “second class” and rated inferior by some people. Parents feel shy to use the language with their children, even at home. This has contributed to the dwarf growth that the language is experiencing. This extends to some form of immaturity in its acquisition spirit. So if we overcome this slavery mentality and seek to revive the folktales sessions in our home, Ibibio orature will become popular and will be recognised for what it is among other comity of world literature.

RESPONDENT 2

Name: *Eteidung* Augustine Edmund Akpan.

Rank: The village head of Use Ikot Ebio

Age: 75 years

Occupation: Retired Police officer, later turned a trader

Place of interview: The palace of the village head, Use Ikot Ebio

Date: 06-04-2012.

What do you consider as libation?

Response: It is the pouring of drinks to call up the ancestors of the land.

What is your own concept of libation?

Response: It is a form of respect and recognition of our gods [divinities] and ancestors.

Salt, pepper, kola are also sometimes added. It all depends on what we are consulting them about.

Have you ever participated in libation performance?

Response: I am a recognized performer in this Offot. I perform at every traditional occasion. Even when the clan is meeting, the clan head usually delegates me to pour libation for our ancestors before any event can begin.

Is libation demonic/fetish?

Response: I do not believe it to be demonic. It is our own way of worshipping our deities. We pay homage to them through libation.

Do the Ibibio have distinct cultural patterns?

Response: Yes they do.

What are they?

Response: The dressing pattern of Ibibio is distinct. Even when people from other cultures tend to dress in the same way, one can always spot out an Ibibio person, male or female. The Ibibio culture is visible in food, names, language and even the oral art expressions. For instance, the way we conduct our own libation may not be so for another people but we maintain [are strict to] our pattern.

Have these patterns changed over the years from what they used to be before?

Response: Yes they have changed. Most of our people, especially the young ones have thirst for foreign things [other] than their own. Their dressing is mostly foreign; even food is looked down [upon] by [the] present generation. Can you see our girls and women plaiting our *mmoñ-mmoñ* hair-do again?

What is the worldview of the Ibibio people?

Response: the Ibibio believe in unity, peace and harmony. They cherish the concepts of *ukod*, *imaan* and *ayeyin*. They ensure a peaceful existence between these bodies. They love respect and order.

Are there specific patterns in which it is done?

Response: During libation performances the performer pours the drink into the *iko* [appropriate container], he pours little by little as he calls on the gods [deities] or as he breaks the flow of his speech. The mouth of the guord is turned downwards as they pour.

What are the regalia of the performer of libation?

Response: The Ibibio has a traditional attire of long gown top and a wrapper tied sarong-wise for the male. The women wear a long gown or wrapper and blouse. A traditional ruler is condemned to his royal attire; therefore the royal insignia is sufficient for him whenever he needs to perform.

Is there any significance to colour usage in Ibibio libation performance?

Response: Ibibio libation performances are unique in its [their] demands. In Ibibio there is no dress distinction in libation performances; the normal Ibibio traditional attire is sufficient, except when the priest is approaching the water spirits or preparing the people for war, whereby he must dress in white and red respectively.

Do the Ibibio have sacred animals?

Response: Every clan has. In *Offot*, we have *atan*, *Itam* has *ebok*, *Ikono* has *ekwoon*, *Ibesikpo* has *ndukpo*, while *Ibiono* has *asabo*, as our revered totems.

At what time are they killed?

Response: No one kills them. They are the gods [deities'] representatives; they grow old and die.

Who is eligible to perform?

Response: It is the duty of the chief priest to perform. Sometimes, he can appoint someone to act on his behalf. The family head or the custodian of the people's shrine is also eligible to perform libation.

At What instance (s) is/are libation performed?

Response: In all traditional activities that there is a need to inform God about. When someone is going on a journey, or to the sea, when preparing for war, while preparing for planting or harvesting, at coronation ceremonies, naming of a child and any activity that the *Ibibio* man considers important.

What are the paraphernalia of libation in your context?

Response: We use schnapps, *ufofob*, gin, palmwine, salt, pepper, palm-oil, even snuff and water for libation. Libation is poured with *nnak eniin* during Chieftaincy coronation, *nnak enañ*, *ukpok* or glass for other occasions. Water and palm-wine are used when there is a need to broker peace. While kola, oil, pepper or salt are used when the performer intends a curse. It all depends on what we are consulting them about.

Do you think other instruments are permissible in the performance of libation?

Response: Water is allowed for peace, but that is applied after we have used the hot drinks to wake up the gods [deities]. The spirit in the hot drink awakes them to hear our call. Water and palmwine are used to settle discord and restore peace.

What are the implications of not using the appropriate tools for libation performance?

Response: No reasonable priest will overlook this unless he is tired of his life. The performer must ensure that he has a good relationship with the gods [deities] that he is calling, to avoid being struck down by the same powers he is supposedly revering.

RESPONDENT 3

Name: *Etebom* Sylvanus Effiong Okon (aka Eti-ido)

Rank: The Clan head of Offot, Uyo

Age: 60 years

Occupation: Business man – transporter

Place: The palace of the clan head of Offot, Uyo

Date: 08-04-2012.

What do you consider as libation?

Response: Libation is an act perpetrated and cherished by our forefathers; it is the pouring of drinks to call up the ancestors of the land. Our forefathers believed that it aids their successful exploits and it worked for them.

What constitute libation in your culture?

Response: Libation is the channel through which the living communicates with the deities and our dead ancestors. It is a way in which we revere their virtues and the legacies they left for us.

Do you believe in its efficacy?

Response: Yes I do. I would not perform it if I am not sure it will work. My forefathers believed in it and it worked for them. Libation used to bring fear and awe in the society. Any tradition that cannot elicit fear in its believers is a dead religion. The elimination of these objects of fear in traditional institutional management is the cause of chaos and insecurity that we witness today through theft and harassment. People no longer regard the ancestors and age hence no regard for the concept of seniority. This is why they die indiscriminately without getting old.

Who is eligible to perform?

Response: An *okuidem* (Chief priest) is the only authorised person to perform libation. An *okuidem* is the soul spiritual leader of the family, village or clan. At the family level, the oldest person is usually consecrated as the *okuidem*. Any of these may delegate authority to someone else to perform on his behalf and it is effective. No person can stand up, on his own, to perform libation.

At What instance (s) is/are libation performed?

Response: Libation occurs in all traditional activities. People always need to inform God about their activities in the land, since God is their creator. During planting or harvesting, while going on a journey, at sea, while preparing for war, at coronation ceremonies,

naming of a child, etc. whenever the Ibibio man feels the urge to commit the affairs to God; any activity that the Ibibio man considers important, he feels free to pour his libation.

What are the paraphernalia of libation in your context?

Response: Our local gin, *ufofob*, schnapps, other hot drinks and palmwine. *Ufofob* is our our key item of performance. While Schnapps is considered potent in matters that concern the water spirit; it is a drink that came with the White man across the ocean. We normally use *nnak eniin* to pour libation during chieftaincy coronation, while *nnak enañ*, *ukpok* or glass is used when pouring for other occasions.

Why do performers prefer schnapps and hot drinks for the exercise?

Response: Hot drinks have harsh taste, that is why we use it. It is believed to have the power to awaken the sleeping ancestors, while the same content too, would intoxicate the wicked spirits if they attempt to perform any act of wickedness. Schnapps is used to appease the water spirits; it is also used as a foreign drink in occasions like marriage and burials to indicate a kind of class structure.

Do you think other instruments are permissible in the performance of libation?

Response: Water is used as well for libation of peace, after we have used the hot drinks to wake up the gods [deities]; the hot drink “charges” them up listen to us when we call on them. Water and palm-wine are used for peaceful settlement of dischord among people. Sometimes, salt, pepper, kola are also sometimes used. It all depends on what we are consulting them about.

What are the implications of not using the appropriate tools for libation performace?

Response: The person may be inflicted by the anger of the gods. You see, the gods are always quick to anger and their anger is difficult to appease; it is better to avoid it. Their anger is swift and always disastrous.

Are there specific pattern to which it is done?

Response: Every libation performance needs that the drink be should poured into the glass or *ukpok* [container], while the performer pours in small quantity at a time, to the gods [divinities] as he calls on them during his speech.

What are the regalia of the performer of libation/colour significance?

Response: In the case of divination, the *okuidem* must wear his *okpono* and red attire; this signifies his rank as “complete” in all initiations. In Ibibio there is no dresss distinction in libation performances; the normal Ibibio traditional attire is sufficient, except when the priest is approaching the water spirits or preparing the people for war, whereby he must

dress in white and red respectively. In the case of a traditional ruler, the royal insignia is his dress for libation performance.

Why do they use white or red at such times?

Response: It is the colour of purity; the water spirit is pure therefore the use of white by the priest signifies his purity of self and purpose. He must have sanctified himself prior to his consultations otherwise the spirits will be angry with him. In the case of preparing the people for war, red signifies blood and it is only an *okuidem* that must perform this.

Who is an *okuidem*? Is he different from *okuinam*?

Response: An *okuidem* is an *okuinam*; one who has undergone all societal initiations. He must possess evidence of successful exploits in wars where he has killed his victims. We say that such *okuinam* is “complete”. It is therefore the highest religious title that one gets. Whereas a priest or chief priest is qualified to perform all his duties credibly with his status as *okuinam*, it is only an *okuidem* that prepares the people for war.

Do the Ibibio have sacred animals?

Response: They have totems

At what time are they killed?

Response: No one is empowered to kill totems; they die naturally in their shrines and the chief priest accords them rites at their burials with libation. Killing them requires elaborate and more expensive sacrifice than burying them after a natural death.

Do we have sacred groves? If yes, what constitute their libation?

Response: We have sacred groves that are not open to all; they have their “forbidden” days. There is *Amasa*, the forest of the goddess of fertility where a woman is barred from entering in Nsukara Offot. Even men do not get in there without prior consultation; they pay dearly for their indiscretion. The gods will accuse them of “seeing the nakedness of *eka ndito*”. Therefore, it must be placated by the chief priest of the land before any visit is made. A stray visitor usually gets missing in this grove; and can only be found after due consultations with diviners for the where wither [whereabouts] of the person, elaborate sacrifice is performed before he is released.

Are there sacred trees in Ibibio?

Response: We have *Ekom* and *effiat*.

Does dance as a cultural artefact has any relationship with libation performance?

Response: Most of such dances are in *obon*, *ekọṣñ* and *ekpo* or during initiation which must be accompanied by incantations.

What is libation like in your generation?

Response: Libation is different in my time from what it was in the days of my father; it has been adulterated. Everybody tends to be a church goer. Even when we are dealing with traditional issues, the performance is secretly done very early on the D-day; when the occasion starts, we perform church prayers. People no longer fear those issues; the consciousness of fear has been removed from most issues of the tradition. The belief in God has taken over.

What was it like in your father's generation?

Response: Libation in my father's time was very powerful and frightening. It was full of awe and the efficacy was instantaneous. Everybody believed in its potency and it worked for them.

What is the hope, if any, for the survival of libation performance as a reflection of the Ibibio societal values?

Response: Libation performance is threatened by foreign religions and cultures. In recent times, we do not encourage the public performance of libation because everybody is a "christian"; they do not want their Christian brethren to know that they participate. Where the matter is unavoidable like *uwa idiõn adiaha awo* (puberty rites of the first daughter), the parents secretly perform the act. The traditionalist observes his communication with his ancestors at dawn with appropriate libation and whenever an occasion will occur, before the function begins.

What is the worldview of the Ibibio as a people?

Response: Ibibio worldview is based on the concept of *ukod*, *iman* and *ayeyin*; the tripartite relationship which broker unity and value for peaceful coexistence. We believe in the universal brotherhood of man; one is related to all as an in-law, grandchild or neighbour. We do not toy with these concepts because it offers protection to all concerned. An *ayeyin* is revered among the mother's kindred than in his/her paternal family. He enjoys a higher esteem and immunity among the mother's kindred.

To what extent is it a responsible factor for their existence and survival over the years?

Response: The people's worldview is the hope of the society. There must be way that this worldview is protected. If the societal elements are threatened and there will be disorder and the gods may visit calamity on that society. There is a need for libation to continue any how.

What is the present/current worldview of the people since independence and the current state of modernity?

Response: Societies are dynamic; every one of them changes over time. Some people still observe the Ibibio worldview but with caution. They [people] tend to adapt easily to the new wave of modernity, what is prevalent is the survival of the fittest. The force of unity as we came to meet [brotherhood] has been discarded while individuality and personalism are promoted. The concept of truth which the Ibibio of my father's age was known for is trampled upon in the wake to rush for what is current.

RESPONDENT 4

Name: Rev Fr. (Dr.) Emeka Nwosuh

Rank: Dean of Studies, Dominican Institute, Samonda, Bodija, Oyo State.

Age: 55 years

Occupation: Lecturer

Place: Dominican Institute, Bodija, Ibadan

Date: 15-07-2012.

What is your conception of libation?

Response: In African traditional society, libation is poured. In African context, both the living and the dead are present and active in unity. Libation is a ritual indicating a link which the Africans believe they maintain with the ancestors.

Do you believe in its efficacy?

Response: We are first and foremost Africans before we are Christians. If I say that I do not believe in the efficacy of libation because I am a Christian that will not make it less potent. I know that it is a call, a reverence to our ancestors and these ancestors' concept is real.

As a Rev. (Fr.) is there any link that you can identify in libation with the Christian religion?

Response: One can analogise the Litany of Saints with libation. Litany of Saints is one of the rites that express a link with the saints and the present. In the Eucharist, we call on the routine of the Saints whenever we pray on a particular issue; the link with the Saints is thus maintained in that relationship. This is the communion of Saints in Eucharist.

What is prayer to a Christian considering that in libation there contain prayers and request and you have said that the role call of the Saints is made during prayers?

Response: Prayer is a spiritual communion with God. It is that which brings the individual and God in absolution; it is that colloquium of Christian with the Almighty.

Most definitions insist on “pouring” as the meaning to associate with libation, what does only pouring achieve in libation?

Response: It is true that in libation there must be pouring. Pouring alone is meaningless in defining what libation is all about.

What happens if a child pours water, can it be said to be a communication with some powers?

Response: Pouring is linked to libation but that alone does not make a relationship. If a child pours water on another, that cannot be said to be baptism. There has to be words which signify the power to which the person is baptized. For instance, take the utterances at baptism “I baptise you in the name of the father, son and the holy Ghost”. This implies the death of the baptised during immersion in water with Christ and as he is raised up, it implies the resurrection with Christ. If one was not actually referring to the Almighty, one could easily have said “I baptise you in the name of the amadioha”. In this case, the person is only initiated into a powerless deity. But the mention of the tri-unity name of God marks the difference. So for pouring to imply libation, it must be accompanied by words which will carry the action.

RESPONDENT 5

Name: Bishop Sunday Nice Nkanang

Rank: Diocesan, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World - Nigeria Council, Uyo.

Age: 68

Occupation: Preacher

Place: Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Headquarters, Uyo.

Date: 09-04-20012

What do you consider as libation?

Response: In the old religion, in the old testament they called it drink offering.

What is your own concept of libation?

They call it the act of remembrance of our ancestors.

This research is not in any way trying to resuscitate it, but for academic purpose.

Have you ever participated in libation performance?

Response: From the Adamic age through Mosiac period, God accepted the sacrifices of animals, incantations and all that was associated with libation. But with the coming of Christ, all those rituals are no more acceptable by God. In Christianity, the *Bible* in the book of Romans says that “there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus”. Christ has paid the ultimate price for mankind as He gave himself as ransom for the sins of man. Even in olden times, God instructed Moses that He no longer wants those things. In those days it was called drink offerings which simply means libation. God had rejected it then; therefore all that must worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Is libation demonic/fetish?

Response: It is highly fetish and demonic. When you pour libation, you are invoking the wrath of God, you are not in any way pleasing Him.

Is there any relationship between the Christian act of communion and libation?

Response: Christian communion is holy and sacred; there is no relationship.

How about the raising up of the bread and wine to God before they are served?

Response: When Christians raise the body and blood of Christ in communion, we are confirming the belief in Christ and His tenets. What did Christ do on the night of Passover? He raised the bread and wine and called them His body and blood. He entrusted Christians to always “do this in remembrance of me”. The act of raising the communion is not the same as the libator raises his cup.

In libation we see the performer raising the cup along with some utterances. In communion too, you do the same but you still say there is no link?

Response: We raise the communion and utter prayers to the Almighty who is most powerful, not to some dead deities. The bible tells us that there is no wisdom in death; therefore we do not confuse the tenets of Christianity with the traditions of the people. Christ had said “be ye separated and come out From among them”; that is what Christians must do.

When you call on God during consecration of the officers to the church as you did yesterday, don’t you see that as an invocation which is what the libation performer does when he calls on his ancestors?

Response: We call on God during consecration of the officers to the church in this way. For instance, in the ordination of an Elder/Pastor in the church we say: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Pastor in the church of Jesus Christ now committed into thy charge by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins ye retain shall be retained. Be ye a committed and faithful soldier of the cross till your life end – Amen”, we invoke the Holy Spirit upon the person but in libation they invoke the anger of God.

UNIVERSITY OF BADAM

RESPONDENT 6

Name: Dr. Okokon Akpan

Rank: Lecturer I

Age: 55 years

Occupation: Teaching

Place: In his office, Department of Linguistics, University of Uyo, Uyo.

Date: 12-04-2012

What is libation in your opinion?

Response: From my personal orientation and experience, libation is a traditional act to arouse the ancestors to partake in the activities of the living. It is a way of showing respect to the owners of the compound, land, clan and state.

What constitute libation in your culture?

Response: Libation is the means through which the living communicates with our dead ancestors. It is a way in which we show respect to our ancestors. In state events, traditional rulers are called upon to show respect to the land and ancestors even after Christian prayers are conducted. This underscores the belief that every request made is answerable and sometimes, the answers are instantaneous.

Who is eligible to perform?

Response: Depending on the occasion, it is usually the oldest male present at the occasion that is called upon to perform libation. In serious religious occasion, it is the Chief priest or his appointee who pours libation. The custodian of the people's shrine or a titled elder can also pour libation. This excludes mischievously acquired title holders, who, by virtue of their ill-gotten positions, do sometimes show respect to the land by avoiding to personally pour libation. They delegate such functions to qualified persons. It is a known fact that should such a ruler show recklessness to pour libation, a member of the qualified group can pour a counter-libation which will adversely affect the power usurper. In nucleus family matters, it is the family head that pours.

Why did you say "it is usually the oldest male present", is libation a male exclusive affair in your culture?

Response: I said "a titled elder pours". A titled woman also qualifies to pour but some times, the women decline to perform this role. Also a female priest or authorized women in

matters that are female exclusive like the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) process that accompanies *mboppo* seclusion.

At What instance (s) is/are libation performed?

Response: In all traditional activities like laying a foundation for a building, performing marriage ceremonies, while travelling at sea, while preparing for war, planting or harvesting, at coronation ceremonies, naming of a child and any activity in Ibibio land as casual as the gathering of friends for a drink or meal.

What are the paraphernalia of libation in your context?

Response: In a social context like the meeting of friends, there is no rigid paraphernalia required. Whatever is available for the entertainment is sufficient for the act. In religious contexts, items like *ufofob*, schnapps, gin, palmwine, soft drinks, snuff, salt, pepper, palmoil and water are used. Libation is poured with *nnak eniin* for chieftaincy coronation, or with *nnak enañ*, *ukpok* or glass during other occasions.

Why do performers prefer schnapps and hot drinks for the exercise?

Response: Hot drinks are generally preferred because they have psychoactive properties which are believed to be strong enough to awaken the sleeping ancestors. The content of hot drinks too, is believed, would intoxicate the wicked spirits should they attempt any act of wickedness at the undertaking. Where the unadulterated *ufofob* is not available, Schnapps becomes the closest alternative. Schnapps is mostly considered potent in matters of water spirit consultations.

Do you believe in its efficacy?

Response: Yes, I know that libation is efficacious; even people who claim not to partake in “fetish practices” do so indirectly by giving cash for it to be performed for them in their absence. Moreso, I have seen people face dire consequences for overlooking this religious activity.

Are there specific patterns in which it is done?

Response: Drinks are held with the left hand and are poured into a cup that is held with the right hand. These drinks are poured out to the ground intermittently as the person speaks and calls on the ancestors and deities of the land.

What are the regalia of the performer of libation?

Response: Just like the paraphernalia, some occasions do not require any specific appearance. Specifically, the Ibibio traditional attire of a wrapper and shirt is sufficient; libations are not poured with the use of a pair of trousers. For religious occasions, a title holder, who is always clad in his regalia, performs without the need to change his dressing.

Do the Ibibio have sacred animals?

Response: They have totems; in my place (Ikono Clan), it is *ekwoṣṣṣ* (the snail).

At what time are they killed?

Response: Snails are not eaten in my place neither are they cut, killed or disturbed in any way. Sometimes visitors come and pick them but we try to discourage that too because snails are revered in *Ikono* land.

Do we have sacred groves? If yes, what constitute their libation?

Response: We have lands that are left for years before they are cleared for farming. It is the chief priest that performs the libation before activities begin there, so I do not know the words of the libation.

Are there sacred trees in Ibibio?

Response: They may be but I readily know of sacred days where women are bared from fetching water from the streams. This day is *edet-edereobo*; it is the male that helps the women on such days to fetch water, even if the male is a small boy. Normally women are advised to get their water on the previous day or the day after.

What is libation like in your generation?

Response: It is still very active and potent

What was it like in your father's generation?

Response: Libation in my father's time was very strong; it was upheld by all and the efficacy was instantaneous. It was never compromised or overlooked.

How do you see present day's Christian attitudes to libation performance?

Response: Christians today are not sincere even to the Christian religion they claim to uphold. So many Christians see libation as fetish, when they want to marry, they rather give monetary gifts than openly identify with libation, so as not to contaminate their beliefs. Some give the money that libation be performed on their behalf, where necessary, while they pretend not to be a part of it.

What is the hope, if any, for the survival of libation performance as a reflection of the Ibibio societal values?

Response: Libation is greatly threatened by civilization and modernity. As society changes, people tend to follow the new wave. But I believe that it will survive till the fall of the last traditionalist.

Appendix 3 - Prayer of invocation in a Pentecostal Church

Name: Rev. Godwin Daniel Usoro

Rank: Senior Pastor, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Abak, Akwa Ibom State.

Age: 62 years

Occupation: Clergy

Place: Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Abak

Date of Recording: 04- 07- 2012

Ordination of a Pastor

1. **Male:** Receive ye the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Pastor in the church of Jesus Christ now committed into thy charge by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins ye retain shall be retained. Be ye a committed and faithful soldier of the cross till your life end – Amen.

We ask thee O Lord, to protect this your servant with thy most gracious favour and grant that he may be guided with the gift of the holy spirit, to be a faithful soldier in this thy church militant, so that after this life, he may dwell in thy church triumphant which is without fault – Amen.

2. **Female:** Receive ye the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Pastor in the church of Jesus Christ now committed into thy charge by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins ye retain shall be retained. Be ye a committed and faithful soldier of the cross till your life end – Amen.

We ask thee O Lord, to protect this your servant with thy most gracious favour and grant that she may be guided with the gift of the holy spirit, to be a faithful soldier in this thy church militant, so that after this life, she may dwell in thy church triumphant which is without fault – Amen.

Ordination of an Elder

Receive ye the Holy Ghost for the office and work of an Elder in the church of Jesus Christ now committed into thy charge by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins ye retain shall be retained. Be ye a committed and faithful soldier of the cross till your life end – Amen.

Baptism

Ime Etim Udo, upon your belief in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the hope that when He returns, He shall receive you into glory, I now baptize

you in Jesus name, for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost – Amen.

Confirmation of ordinary member

We ask thee o Lord to protect this your servant with thy most gracious favour and grant that he may be guided with the gift of the holy spirit, to be a faithful soldier in this thy church militant, so that after this life, he may dwell in thy church triumphant which is without fault – Amen.

Appendix 4 – Prayers of invocation in an Orthodox Church

Litany of the Saints

Response

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Christ hear us

Christ graciously hear us

God the Father of Heaven

”

God the Son, Redeemer of the world

Have mercy on us

God the Holy Spirit

”

Holy Trinity, one God

”

Holy Mary

Pray for us

Holy mother of God

”

Holy Virgin of virgins

”

Saint Michael

”

Saint Gabriel

”

Saint Raphael

”

All ye holy Angels and Archangels

”

All ye holy Orders of blessed spirits

”

St. John the Baptist

”

St. Joseph

”

All ye Patriarchs and Prophet

”

Saint Peter

”

Saint Paul

”

Saint Andrew

”

Saint James	”
Saint John	”
Saint Thomas	”
Saint Philip	”
Saint Bartholomew	”
Saint Matthew	”
Saint Thaddeus	”
Saint Mathias	”
Saint Simon	”
Saint Barnabas	”
Saint Luke	”
Saint Mark	”
All ye holy Apostles and Evangelists	”
All ye Disciples of Our Lord	”
All ye holy innocents	”
Saint Stephen	”
Saint Lawrence	”
Saint Vincent	”
Saints Fabian and Sebastian	”
Saints John and Paul	”
Saints Cosmas and Damian	”
Saints Gervase and Protase	”
All ye holy martyrs	”
Saint Sylvester	”
Saint Gregory	”
Saint Ambrose	”
Saint Augustine	”
Saint Athanasius	”
Saint Jerome	”
Saint Martin	”
Saint Basil	”
Saint Nicholas	”
Saint Ignatius of Antioch	”
All ye holy Bishops and Confessors	”

All ye holy Doctors	”
Saint Anthony	”
Saint Benedict	”
Saint Bernard	”
Saint Dominic	”
Saint Francis	”
Saint Francis Xavier	”
Saint Ignatius Loyola	”
Saint John Maria Vianney	”
All ye holy Priests	”
All ye Monks and Hermits	”
Blessed Cyprian Michaelwene Tansi	”
Saint Agnes	”
Saint Mary Magdalen	”
Saint Lucy	”
Saint Agnes	”
Saint Cecilia	”
Saint Cathrine	”
Saint Theresa of Avila	”
Saint Anastasia	”
Saint Perpetua and Felicity	”
All ye holy Virgins and widows	intercede for us
All ye Saints of God	”
Be merciful unto us	spare us O Lord
Be merciful unto us	graciously hear us O Lord

(Culled From Obiukwu, 2001: 89-93)