



Africans and the Power of Socio-Cultural Belief: To Break or to Keep the Status Quo? Analysis of Emmy Unuja Idegu's *The Legendary Inikpi*

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Abstract

Every single society has its dos and don'ts, and African is not an exception. What is more, Africans are strongly attached to their socio-cultural beliefs. However, as time is dynamic, there is need to reflect on the context of situation to evaluate our tradition. Thus, *The Legendary Inikpi*, the play under discussion, does not only serve as a central source to enable the readers find out African societies hold on to their religious beliefs and practices as part of their cultural identities, but also serves as a media tool that calls Africans for a change of attitude. The author considers human sacrifice as a murder. To redirect the mentality towards certain religious practices such as human sacrifice, Emmy Unuja is able to create a female character named Daughter whose role is to convince people for a change of mentality. If we want African societies to move forwards, it is high time people change their mentality for the better.

Keywords: Belief system; Sacrifice; Ancestors; Oracle; Culture.

1. Introduction

Reading, writing, interpreting, narrating, examining or analyzing a literary work can be assimilated to intellectual efforts with the aim to discover, to know and to learn about people's life in all domains and in all periods of their existence. Thus, literature can be conceived not only as a human cognitive creation or production but also as a tool for human entertainment, education, instruction, etc. What is more, literature, as human production, may be logically tied to people culture, which reflects their daily deeds, needs, preoccupations and behaviors. That is why, we attempt to analyze Emmy Unuja Idegu's *The Legendary Inikpi* to disclose the connection of African religious beliefs, which has a link with literature. African religious beliefs in connection with African culture have been major issues in many literary productions the world over. For example, we can cite Angmor (1996) who writes about the importance of traditional beliefs in the Ghanaian society. His work principally focuses to explore the connection between the living world and the world of the ancestors through a spiritual connection which is obtained by pouring either an animal's blood or the human's. Ikechukwo Okodo, on his turn, in "African Traditional Drama", retraces the originality and the values of African traditional drama which Igbo people usually perform to identify themselves by ritually creating connection with their ancestors.

Moreover, Amadi Elechi in his novel, *Great pond*, presents some features of the African traditional religious beliefs. For example, Olumba, the main warrior of Chiolu, offers himself to the ritual by swearing in the name of Ogbunabali, the god of the night, that wagaba (the pond of the conflict) belongs to Chiolu. In the same vein, to attest the religious practice of human sacrifice, Heusch (1986) investigates African traditional religious practices mainly with a central issue based on the nature and the functions of sacrifice. His attentive study of African ritual practices led him to discover that animals are most of the time victims of sacrifice in religious practices while a human being is often chosen when it is about saving a given community or society from a danger. This is because heavy pains demand heavy medicines. Seemingly, all the above mentioned writers write to point out that human sacrifice exists, in African religious practices, mainly in the belief in ancestors.

Angmor (1996), Ikechukwo (1962) and Amadi (1969) then reveal, in their works, the importance and the functions of human sacrifice without criticising or denouncing it to stop the practice, which is, somehow, considered as a crime or a murder. Emmy (2005), on his part, despite retracing Igala people's existence due to the sacrifice of Inikpi as ancestors' demands for support in order to win a war against enemies, Emmy is able to denounce human sacrifice as an evil social deed and urge African people to a change of mentality. He finds it useless to sacrifice a human being to prevent danger or for gaining peace while the sacrificed person's descendants for whose sake he or she died continue to live in trouble, fighting and killing one another every day for one reason or another. Emmy Unuja can therefore be considered as a social stabilizer.

So, as said earlier in the abstract, African traditional religious beliefs are mixed with their culture and as such they form a socio-cultural unit. It is important in this sense to assert the existence of a great and a non-dissociable linkage between religion, culture, literature and society.

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2. The Relationship between Literature Culture and Society in Africa

In the *Oxford Progressive Colour Dictionary* (1972), literature is defined as the writing or study of books valued as works of art. With emphasis on the above definition of literature, a writer, then, produces literary works as a mirror to reflect realities within societies. Therefore, we dare attest of an undeniable relationship between literature and society including culture. N'gugi (1969, 35), proves this relationship in *Writers in Politics*:

Literature reflects the life of people. It reflects in words images, a people's creative consciousness for their struggle to mould nature through co-operative labor and in the process acting on and changing themselves. It reflects in word images a people's consciousness of the tensions and conflicts arising out of their struggle, to mould a meaningful social environment founded on their combined actions on nature to wrest the means of life: clothing, food and shelter. Literature thus contains people's image of themselves in history and their place in the universe.

Both oral and written literatures give significance to people's life because they have a function of education and entertainment. Literature, in sum, is the way by which people express their ideas, feelings, opinions; and identify themselves with their culture. Literature is a great component of culture. It can be defined as people's daily acts, deeds, needs or behaviors. That is why, culture is often seen as the whole of a people's way of life.

According to Abercrombie (2000, 83): "Culture refers to the totality of life of a people. That is their differing attitudes, beliefs, languages, dress, manners, tastes in food, music or interior decorations, and a host of their features which comprise a way of life".

Upon importance of culture while speaking about literature, *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* (1999) explains that culture has to do with the customs, ideas, etc of a particular society, including their art and literature.

After all that is said about literature so far and about the relationship between society and culture, we notice that their relationship is interdependent. Then, because literature is a component of culture, we can deduce that culture is influenced by religious beliefs, and one can learn other's life style through literature. In African societies, both culture and religion are merged in such a way they create a sense of belonging of the practitioners to a given society or community.

3. Overview on African Religious Beliefs and Practices

3.1. Religious Beliefs and Practices as African Cultural Identity

The past of the African continent was marked by its domination by the Europeans. African writers then attempt to reconstruct West African pre-colonial era through its religious and cultural practices.

Religion has been defined in different ways. A reading of some works related to sociology and religions by writers such as Durkheim Emile, Mbiti Johns, Boladji Idowu, Radcliffe Brown, Onigu Otite and W. Ogiwo, show that there is no standard definition of religion because the concept of God varies from one race to another, as well as from one religion to another.

Durkheim (1979, 46), for example, views religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden. Beliefs and practices which unite into one simple moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them".

Tshibaangu (1993, 501), writes: "the African is profoundly, incurably a believer a religious person. To him, religion is not just a set of beliefs but a way of life, the basis of culture, identity and moral values. Religion is an essential part of tradition that helps to promote both social stability and creative innovations."

From the above quotation, we clearly understand that Africans' cultural identity and moral values rely on their religion. Then, what is the contribution of these indigenous religious beliefs to the stability of societies when offerings and sacrifices are often of human blood? Or else, can societies find collective stability and creative innovations by sacrificing a human being? If we understand well the content of Tshibaangu's quotation on religion and mainly about its social utility, we can, in contrast, deduce that religion helps to promote social stability and creative innovations only when rituals or offerings are limited to animals.

In addition to the cultural aspects that embody African traditional religion, Mbiti (1969, 01) states: "Africans are notoriously religious", implying that religion permeates and is integrated in daily African life with no clear-cut separation between what is secular and what is sacred.

Sharon (1960, 182), almost shares the same idea of religion for Africans' life when he says:

African traditional religion is inextricably linked to the culture of the African people. In Africa religion has been understood as an integral part of life in which every aspect was knit together into a coherent system of thoughts and actions, giving significance and meaning and providing abiding and satisfying values. Religion, culture, politics and society were part of a seamless whole and no part of it could stand on its own.

Mbiti (1969) tries to show to his readers and researchers how Africans are motivated by religious beliefs and practices, without a little time of interruption. For him, traditional religious beliefs and African culture are inseparable and form a unit of values. Religion and culture in Africa cannot be fragmented if we want to give meaning to Africans' life.

The ideas of the existing link between African traditional religion and culture are also supported by Awalalu (1970, 52) who notes in the article entitled "African Religious beliefs" that: "Religion is a fundamental, perhaps the most important, influence in the life of most Africans." Adewale (1994) in "Crime and African Traditional Religion" seems to agree with Awalalu's assertion when he states:

In traditional African society, the sacred and the secular are inseparable; there is no compartmentalization of life. What religion forbids or condemns is also forbidden and condemned

by society, and similarly society approves what religion approves. An offence against God is an offence against man, and reciprocally an offence against man is an offence against God, since man is a creature of God. Either offence is criminal.

Both Awolalu's and Adewale's assertions attest the importance of religion in Africans' life. In fact, both of them assimilate religion to African cultural behavior in the sense that what culture disapproves is also disapproved by religion. Adewale proves through the above quotation the great linkage and the socio-cultural relationship between the sacred (religion) and the secular in African traditional society. In religion, the sacred refers to religious acts as practices (rituals, rites, worship, sacrifices, offerings ...etc). The common aspects of man's life are considered as an expression of their cultural values because values can be seen as only man's daily actions. In other words, these actions and behaviors are generally the standard to which members of a given community adhere for their personal and common achievement of social goals.

People's values are largely based upon traditional religions and moral principles that they cling to, and the willingness to help others for the development of the community is reciprocal. One of the supporting speeches of this passage is echoed by Mbiti (1969, 141) when he writes: "I am because we are. And since we are therefore, I am." The individual is united with the rest of his community, both the living and the dead, and humanly speaking nothing can isolate him from his corporate society.

Religion is an important component of every culture, and as such it cannot be ignored or denied. Mbiti (1991, 10) argues that, "Religion is by far the richest part of the African peoples' heritage. Religion is found in all areas of human life. It has dominated the thinking of African peoples to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social life, their political organization and their economic activities."

From the above quotation, we learn that religious beliefs are found in all the aspects of man's existence in such a way that it is surely impossible to dissociate religious beliefs from culture. Religion therefore shapes Africans' culture, their social life, their politics, and their economics.

Like Mbiti, the great and strong linkage between religion and culture is also asserted by Abercrombie (2000, 83) in the following words, "Culture refers to the totality of life of a people. That is their differing attitudes, beliefs, languages, dress, manners, tastes in food, music or interior decorations, and a host of their features which comprise a way of life." Similarly to Abercrombie's view of culture, Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999) views that culture has to do with the custom, ideas, etc of a particular society, including their art and literature. The same need of pointing out the existing linkage between culture and religion is expressed by James (1965, 9) when he writes:

A religion that took no account of people way of life, a religion that did not recognize spots of beauty and truth in their way of life was useless. It would not satisfy. It would not be a living experience, a source of life and vitality. It would only maim a Man's soul." James (1965) further adds "religion creates patterns of relationship between individuals and groups, through the values by which such individuals and groups make choices and thereby develop culture",

As for Sarpong (1974, 17), "Culture is the integrated sum-total of behavioral traits that have been learned, and passed on from one generation to another in uninterrupted succession." Traditional religion is very special because of its particular belief in ancestors which is found and classified by some scholars of African Traditional religion, like Mbiti or Parinder, as one of the commonest belief in Africa. The patterns of communication with ancestors, in many African societies, share some similarities with the pattern of communication with god. The cult of ancestors in African communities is the "heart" of African religious belief because ancestors are considered as living-dead very close to their descendants and usually look after them for a daily protection. Ugbojao (1990) illustrates it in the following words:

All the living-dead are bilingual, they speak the language of men, with whom they lived until 'recently', and they speak the language of spirits and of god ...They are 'spirits' with which African people are most concerned: it is through the living-dead that the spirit world becomes personal to men. They are still part of their human families, and people have personal memories of them.

In fact, it is believed that everything is accomplished with the ancestors' support. That is why each activity or each movement starts with a prayer to the ancestors. Everybody in the clan is obliged to pray for the ancestors when beginning an action such as: eating, drinking, planting, farming or harvesting.

Also, in many West African countries where yam is grown, people gather on a specific day with certain materials to make sacrifices to ancestral spirits before they eat new yams. These sacrifices are made to recognize ancestral spirits' help for glorious harvest. Ugbojao (1990, 108), says; "Ancestral spirits are of great importance in the affairs of humanity. In particular, ancestral spirits are believed to guard the fortunes of their descendants and may punish those who do evil, neglect or fail to honor them through prayers and sacrifices."

3.2. Religious Beliefs and Sacrifices

Known as an important part of African cultural identity, religious beliefs are always accompanied and they find their vitality and significance in offerings and diverse sacrifices. Then sacrifices are made in different ways and for different purposes. They stem from animal to human like as it is the case in the play under analysis (*The Legendary Inikpi*).

From the past and up to date, religious and cultural sacrifices are still being practiced. The social changes, that we remark in African life, have not affected the society, people's activities and religious beliefs that characterize their cultures. Even today, sacrifices as religious practices are being performed in different ways and for many purposes. Mbiti (1970) notes that the practice of sacrifice is strictly tied down to the religious belief system of the people.

The idea of a person giving himself as a sacrifice for the common good of his society is fundamental and proper to Africans knowing that sacrifice is a basic religious demand. It is hard to have religion without sacrifices which can either be animals or humans. According to N'gugi (1969, 66) "oracles and shrines made of human sacrifice to appease the god of such oracle is for a common good purpose, for example the water spirits at ontsha"

So, the evidence of sacrificing human or killing a person for his/her blood is asserted in certain Africans' plays and drama such as *The Legendary Inikpi*, *Great Pond and Death and the King Horseman*. In the *Legendary Inikpi*, for insistence, the Igala's king daughter offers herself willingly to be buried alive as sacrifice in order to save her people from a total destruction that would have been a result of a war against Bini people.

Sacrifices play a great role in African traditional religious beliefs because of a massive emphasis that is put on supernatural agencies and the belief in ancestors. A sacrifice can therefore be seen as an act and means of getting quick results from the supernatural spirits.

Mbiti (1969, 283), commenting on sacrifice in African traditional societies states that, "sacrifices and offerings constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among African people and examples of them are overwhelmingly many". He further observes that the materials for sacrifices differ from one community to another. To him, the Africans use almost everything that man can get hold of for sacrifices and offerings to god and other spiritual beings.

Sacrifice, as we notice, is one of the very regular and incontestable practices of all religions in the world from the earliest time to the current. Its purpose serves to establish, regulate or rectify the relationship between humans and the divine or to appease the ancestor and the land. Through sacrifice, humans seek to protect themselves or to escape from a danger and also to keep themselves connected to their gods for a long sustaining relationship.

African traditional societies today still perform sacrifices through different festivals and ceremonies according to their needs. Thus, they can avoid provoking god's anger that leads to failure or disaster; and disaster is synonymous of destruction. Almost every African ceremony is preceded with certain sacrifices. These sacrifices are made as a means of submission to spirits that seek to control and to protect the people.

Regarding all that is mentioned and said about the African traditional religion with some illustrative examples and brief explanation of the selected quotations from prior researchers on the topic, we can conclude that African traditional religious beliefs and practices are proved to be an essential part of African cultural identity especially in West African societies.

Religious sacrifices are therefore made as an offering to appease a god mainly of a ritually buried and slaughtered animal or person.

4. Religious Beliefs and Practices in *the Legendary Inikpi*

The Legendary Inikpi deals with African religious beliefs and practices (that are the belief in ancestors, the oracle and human sacrifice) among the Igala people in Nigeria. As the focus of this research paper, African religious beliefs and cultures are so merged in such a way that we cannot separate them.

The Igala ethnic group in Nigeria belongs to the ethnic minority mostly found in the north-central region, known today under the name of Kogi State. The Igala traditional culture is the focus of our work not only because their culture is based on traditional religions, but also for their historical existence that let us know how they sacrifice human life to seek for ancestors' protection whenever the community felt itself threatened by natural calamities and wars.

4.1. The Belief in Ancestors

The ancestral veneration or the cult of ancestors is a religious belief that belongs to a majority of African communities, and the Igala community is not an exception. The belief in ancestors is therefore one of the traditional African religious beliefs that connects ancestors to their living descendents. This connection is made possible through certain religious practices. Orobator (2008, 107), writes: "There is a common belief that an ancestor can only be alive if she/he is remembered by her/his descendents through prayer, incantations, sacrifices and ritual offerings". Likewise, an ancestor is expected to assure peaceful life to her/his kin with guaranty in health, material wealth, fertility, good harvest, and abundant rains for abundant harvest. *The Legendary Inikpi* is an example which attests that good conditions of life are expected from ancestors who are always ready to support. Ayegba, the Igala, confirms it when he asks his advisers: "what can your king do without the support of our ancestors?" Emmy (2005, 28). Igala people ancestral veneration focuses on the idea of lineage as fundamental relationship between their ancestors and the entire community as descendants. One is only an ancestor for a particular lineage. According to Orobator (2008, 107), "an ancestor is a blood relative of a living community, this relationship could be of common parentage or shared ancestry."

The belief in ancestors in Igala community is the one that characterizes their religion. For the Igala, the ancestors have a direct link with *Ojo* the Supreme Being and are considered as messengers or representatives of *Ojo*. The communities or villages where tradition and culture are practiced to its fullest, *Ojo* is not even mentioned when Ibegwu, the ancestral veneration is the topic of discussions because ancestors are said to act on his behalf. Igala people's ancestors are also both the protectors of the land as well as the source of judgment since they control crops, human fertility, peace and progress in the community. Ancestors are always consulted before executing any action. They are considered as guides because they are supposed to be protectors though they can turn into evil deciders when they are frustrated. Ayegba, the Igala chief, in *The Legendary Inikpi* says: "whoever violates the wishes of our gods (ancestors) will pay with his life" Emmy (2005, 40).

In Igala religious belief, ancestors are fathers who should be remembered regularly through prayers, offerings and sacrifices in order to keep the connection strong.

In African traditional religions in general and in Igala community in particular, prayers are addressed to the supreme beings who are often conceived of as ‘ancestor’, ‘elder’ or ‘life giver’ and that his creative activity and providence are thought to be mediated by human ancestors or intermediaries. It is then important to note that one of the major preoccupations in African belief in ancestors should be life and the transmission or continuation of life. When ancestors are angry, people are obliged to seek their pardon, to appease their anger with sacrifices that sometimes go over animals but human.

One of African traditional religious practices that is worth evoking for better understanding of the way ancestral believers connect with their ancestor, mainly Igala people, is the oracle.

4.2. The Oracle

According to the *Webster’s International Dictionary (1952)*, an oracle refers to the medium by which a god reveals hidden knowledge or makes known the divine purpose. The revelation of utterance is supposed to come from a divinity through a medium; usually a priest or priestess.

Oracle consultation is a religious practice used to know about future events in all aspects of people’s lives. It is therefore a system of divination that is practiced among many West African societies. Massive harvest, successful hunting, good fishing, successful and fruitful marriage, victory in war, in competitions and even cordial interactions with other people are affected by man’s understanding of how he thinks he can commune with the Supreme Being and have blessings from him. To attest the above lines, Ayegba, the Atta Igala, (the chief of Igala) reminds his people about the utility of the oracle consultation to get their ancestors’ support: “we never go war unless we have the full backing of our ancestors.”; and Ohoga, the oracle master replies: “that is what it should be” *Emmy (2005, 144)*.

In showing and attesting confidence and trust in their ancestors that their land cannot be destroyed and that people will not be defeated by their enemies the Beni, Makoji Ata, an adviser says: ” Our ancestors are always ready to help “. *Emmy (2005, 44)*

Divination is a means to consult the supernatural powers including the ancestors who guide and assist their descendents. In the play under analysis, Ayegba, the chief of Igala land, confirms the use of the oracle regularly in African societies when addressing Ohioaga: “consult them for us so that we may know how solid that soil on which we stand is” *Emmy (2005, 160)*.

The oracle plays a very important role in African traditional and even modern societies. Africans regularly refer to an oracle to prevent future events. When the future is bad they offer sacrifices that are aimed at appeasing the ancestors or divinities in case they are angered:

The oracle is not only consulted for major issues affecting people’s lives like going to war for the best possible results, but also for minor issues such as who leads the land.

In *The Legendary Inikpi*, the consultation of the oracle becomes compulsory when the Igala people felt themselves in danger with the war declared against them by the Bini).The oracle’s verdict is heavy as it is about human sacrifice, principally a sacrifice with life burial and of the only beloved Inikpi, daughter of the Ata Igala. This sacrifice is to honor and demand favor in order to gain victory over the Bini. That is probably why the author entitled the play: “*The Legendary Inikpi*”.

It is believed that oracles do not lie in their regular consultation. Likewise, whatever the verdict, it is irreversible and cannot be disobeyed. If disobedience occurs regarding the oracle’s demand, ancestors will get angry at their descendants and can punish them seriously with drought, or other calamities. Ayegba, the Atta Igala reminds his people of the danger they incur when the ancestors are angered: “it is sad that some of us think we can disobey or ignore the advice of our ancestors and go free.” Amanata (an adviser) continues in these terms: “destruction is always the outcome” *Emmy (2005, 39)*.

Igala people’s ancestral belief is of an immense power when the oracle, the medium of the connection with ancestors, is fully respected and obeyed. Amanata, to attest the importance of the oracle obedience, says: “complete obedience to the oracle worked the magic with the assistance of divine powers from beyond” *Emmy (2005, 41)*.

In traditional religious beliefs such as the belief in ancestors, the oracle is used to communicate, for specific purposes with ancestors. People believe greatly in the oracle because as said earlier, it does not lie and its verdict is both unchangeable and uncontestable. But, the consultation of the oracle is generally preceded or followed by a sacrifice ranging from animal to human. Thus, which functions do sacrifices ensure in religious practices, particularly the one of human?

4.3. Human Sacrifice and its Functions

According to *Tylor (1971, 324)*, “Sacrifice was originally a gift to the gods to secure people’s favors or to minimize hostilities”. *The Legendary Inipki* offers us an example of human sacrifice which is an exchange to obtain something important in life. The play is probably entitled so, because Inikpi is the victim of sacrifice in the intention to save the Igala land from total destruction in the war against the Bini. Ohioaga, the oracle performer, finds that the sacrifice of Inikpi is not a too much demand from their ancestors if peace will return to the Igala land when he says: “this sacrifice will mark the end of enemy invasions in Ingala land. So, the oracle promised, and we shall gain total victory over the Bini forces and everlasting peace will come to the land” *Emmy (2005, 55)*.

The practice of sacrifice, mainly human sacrifice, has multi dimensional functions for the individual or people that have such needs or performs such acts. These functions depend on the nature of such sacrifices being undertaken whether religious, cultural or otherwise .The nature of people’s needs determine the nature of sacrifice ranging from animal to human.

So, human sacrifice is not only religious practice for Igala people, but also a cultural identity as Inikpi is not the only one who has been sacrificed to protect her community from war destruction. Ayegba, the Atta Igala, says: "have we not sacrificed human beings to save the land before? Didn't my own sister, Omodoko die to save Igala land from the invading forces of the Jukuns when Idoko my father was king?" Emmy (2005, 50).

If the practice of human sacrifice helps to maintain peaceful condition of life both for human and non-human prosperity and even more ensures socio-cultural development, are African communities and societies living really in peace today? Is human sacrifice not a suicide or a murder worth denouncing through literature? As a result, Africans must think to live according to the time. As time is dynamic, there is then a need to change mentalities; to reject the ancient times' errors and bad deeds so-called traditions than keeping them active. Nowadays, things are very different from our forefathers' ones. Therefore, because Africans' current societies are formed of modern and positive generations, the communities and societies may not continue to be guided with murdering and suicidal rules. That is why, Emmy Unja is able to discover human sacrifice as a murder and appeals for resignation. To reach his readers with this appeal; he attributes the role to Daughter, a character that stands as an agent of redirecting the minds toward modernization. Face to her elders, Daughter expresses herself in the following terms:

where is the life? Tell me where is the life Inikpi died to give her people when the same people she died to save continue to kill themselves without good cause or regard. Where is the life when someone fed and choked to death for taking in more than their bellies can hold even as they watch their nearest neighbors die of starvation in this very land. The land led by the doyens of human blood suckers, shameless exploiters Emmy (2005, 74).

Daughter further adds:

she died to unite the land and everyday the land disintegrates into a million and fragments with varying leaders and many voices. Where lays the so-called peace you people killed her to restore? Murders, cold-blooded murders that you are. Tell me, is there peace today? Do you have peace in your houses? Don't we kill ourselves, struggling to be kings, political leaders, chiefs, and whatever? Emmy (2005, 76).

She goes on performing her role of messenger to awake and redirect people awareness to a positive social life. She says: "Ask yourselves these questions as you go. Does today's tradition protect the land and people? Is the tradition of our time as selfless as it was in Inikpi's days? Use your senses oh people. The time to decide is now or be forever fools and slaves" Emmy (2005, 79).

What is more, Emmy Unuja, is able to rebel, to show African people clearly through Daughter that it is time to liberate themselves from traditional religious beliefs such as human sacrifice which he compares to slavery in a mosquito system as mosquitoes life depends on animals and human blood. Daughter calls attention:

Oh ye people, liberate yourselves. Free yourselves. No longer be slave to the mosquito system. Get your blood poisoned. Liberate yourselves. We have endured for so long a time. We refuse to be exploited by tradition any longer. Raise, raise my people. Rise up and walk or be forever self crippled. Liberate your senses. Free your mind from curable bondage.

5. Conclusion

Emmy Unuja Idegu's *The Legendry Inikpi* let us learn that like in many African societies and communities, Igala people are ancestral believers and that their protection and their hope for everything in life rely on their ancestors' will. The oracle serves as a means to connect with ancestors who most of times ask for sacrifice to play their role. Inikpi is sacrificed to save Igala land from war destruction against Bini. Afterward, Emmy Unuja uses his play not only to retrace Igala people's socio-cultural and religious background, but he also touches African people's mind for shifting their attitudes regarding certain religious practices like human sacrifice.

Human sacrifice is then a real religious practice in Igala community which can be considered not only as a religious practice, but also a cultural identity. So, as the practice is common to most of African societies. Emmy Unuja attempts to purify, clean Africans' mind from ignorance of forefathers' traditional religious legacies. In reasoning people by the means of his play and through Daughter, a character, Emmy Unuja Idegu is worth considering as a social development guider, counselor and promoter towards a prospective future.

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