



## **The cosmological culture of the Igboman's three worlds of make believe**

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### **Abstract**

*The Igbo people that constitute one of the three main ethnic groups of Nigeria are people of high traditional life with their own historical past. In the course of practising their custom and beliefs, they believe that physically, there are two inter-related parts of the universe - the sky and the earth. They believe that while they live on the earth, their God (Chukwu) lives in the sky. But non-physically they believe that there are three worlds. They are the world of man, the world of animals and the world of spirits. All of them are not physically separated from one another. They exist upon the earth. They are not compartmentalized. The existence of the land of human beings is marked with the convergence of people on a place. In the same manner where animals have gathered is termed the land of animals. When human beings leave their farms for their homes, the spirits take over the farms and they will become the land of spirits. This is noticed in Igbo folktales. The tales of Igbo people will be used to support this claim. The aim of this paper is to state the existence of the physical world and the world of make believe, show that the former is known whereas the latter is unknown and use folktales to support the existence of the latter.*

### **Introduction**

From the Igboman's observation, that is without the knowledge of the sciences, specifically physics and geography, he can see that the universe in which he lives contains the earth on which he lives and walks about and the sky which is above. He sees all the physical entities on the earth with his naked eyes. He believes that it is in the sky that God the Almighty lives and probably some other celestial powers. He has captured



the earth, which is available to him to feel. Nwala (1985:31) records in detail, what occupy the face of the earth thus:

This refers to the earth on which we live. It is the home of man, animals, birds plants and a host of other created beings. It is the scene of most mythologies where gods and men interact. Some spirits “visit” the earth while some live on earth. A host of deities live on earth, although they belong to the supernatural realm. The latter includes numerous deities associated with several phenomena on earth - such as the earth deity (Ala), the River deities (Imo, Idemili) mountain deities and those associated with groves, valleys, from products and fertility generally.

In the sky, the Igboman observes that the sun, the moon, the star etc are up in it. He observes that the sun moves from the east where it rises towards the west where it sets. Some of the heavenly bodies are deities for some Igbo people worship God through the sun, stars, the moon and other aspects like thunder. Nwala (1985:301) agrees thus:

Elu Igwe (The sky). This is the celestial zone where celestial bodies such as the stars (Kpakpando), moon (Onwa), the sun (Anyawu), the cloud (Irukpu), rain (Mmiri) etc are located. The sky is also believed to be the home of certain deities such as Kamalu or Amadioha (the thunder god), the sun god, and a host of other deities, spirits and the birds. The supreme deity (Chukwu – the Great Deity, or Chineke, the Deity who creates is also believed to live there. At some remote past, he was identified with sun-god hence we hear “Anyanwu Okike” (Sun, the creator) used during sacrifices. Atmospheric changes are associated with the actions and activities of the deities and celestial forces. And certain events on earth (Elu-uwa) are believed to be reflected in the sky. As children, when we saw red cloud in the sky as the sun was just setting, we exclaimed “Ewo! Egbuola madu n’ Owerri! That is behold! Someone has been executed at Owerri. Owerri at that time was the seat of a magistrate court, where hanging and execution of people, criminals, and murderers used to take place.

What we are arguing about is that the very earth, which is a part of the universe contains three worlds which are non-physical and are not separated from one another by compartmentalization. They are all sharing the earth. These worlds as the Igboman



believes in his oral tradition are the world of man, the world of animals and the world of spirits.

### **The Three Non-physical Worlds**

Only one man has treaded the three non-physical worlds of the Igbo oral tradition. The man is no other than Ojaadili. Ojaadili was a great wrestler whose reputation is known far and wide. He had already wrestled and defeated so many known personalities and he was respected in his community for that. One day, one wrestler came to the market place of Ojaadili's town to challenge the whole of the town to a wrestling match. He insulted the people of the town saying that all the men in it were women and as a result nobody there could defeat him in a wrestling bout.

Ojaadili's people appealed to him to accept the challenge. He agreed and joined the wrestler outside. They wrestled and Ojaadili defeated him and he became unconscious and was about to die. The reason is that he had a charm that would not allow anybody to floor him but if eventually he is floored, he would die. The people of Ojaadili rejoiced and carried him shoulder high singing various songs of victory.

As the celebration of Ojaadili's victory was on, nobody knew when the fluter of the defeated wrestler approached Ojaadili's right hand man to help him find a certain herb that its liquid contents, when squeezed out, would be used in resuscitating the defeated wrestler. They went out and ran into some chimpanzees that were in the forest. Unfortunately, the chimpanzees tore Ojaadili's right hand man into pieces. When the fluter of the defeated wrestler returned without Ojaadili's right had man, he reported the



ordeal they had and this made Ojaadili to squeeze the fluter so much that he was about to die. And the people at the market place begged for his release.

Having defeated this wrestler in the world of man, Ojaadili decided to search for his friend in the world of animals, since he was said to have been attacked and killed by chimpanzees that took him away. In the land of animals, he could not see his right hand man. He saw chimpanzees that made meat of the man jumping from branches to branches of trees. He attacked them and killed a lot of the chimpanzees and some ran away when they saw that they could not continue the fight. By this, Ojaadili defeated the animals but is still worried about his right hand man. He felt that the right thing he would do was to trace him down the land of spirits where he would rescue him from spirits.

He went out to the land of spirits in defiance to everybody's advice that he should not extend his fight to that land. His mother became dejected because he was the only son of hers. When he was preparing, he arranged with Dove to accompany him. They set out for a very far journey. Ojaadili ran along the road as Dove flew from one point to another making sure of keeping pace with him. At a point he saw spirits and shouted that he could see them. When they arrived, Dove flew upon a tree from where he could see the wrestling arena very well.

The spirits underrated Ojaadili and started presenting their candidates from the least to the highest. They presented the one-headed spirit, which Ojaadili defeated. He threw the spirit down and its head got severed and fell into a nearby ditch. The fight went on with the two-headed spirit, the three-headed spirit, the four-headed spirit, the five-headed spirit, the six-headed spirit and the seven-headed spirit. All of them suffered the



same fate. The remaining spirits went into their house to confer. Ojaadili was pacing up and down boasting in their hearing that he must not go without his right hand man, else the heaven would be let loose. When they saw what humiliation they were suffering in the hands of Ojaadili, they decided to present Ojaadili with his personal god (*chi*). Ojaadili's *chi* was very much withered, very diminutive and sluggish. Ojaadili saw it as a walkover. He did not recognize the spirit as his *chi*.

But Dove had noticed that it was Ojaadili's *chi* and was warning him from the tree he perched that he should not wrestle with that spirit for it was his *chi*. Dove saw that its face was a resemblance of Ojaadili's, but Ojaadili would not agree. Dove sang this song for him.

*Ojaadili  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo  
Ojaadili  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo  
Agbana Nweze mgba  
Na Nweze bu chi gi  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo  
Agbana Nweze mgba  
Na Nweze bu chi gi  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo*

Translated

*Ojaadili  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo  
Ojaadili  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo  
Wrestle not with Nweze  
For Nweze is your personal god  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo  
Wrestle not with Nweze  
For Nweze is your personal god  
Mgbololo mgbolodimdim mgbolo*



In spite of the warning, Ojaadili wrestled with his *chi* and his *chi* floored him. His head got severed and fell into the nearby ditch.

The spirits assembled the head of each of the defeated spirits with its body and dropped the squeezed out liquid contents of a certain leaf they got from the neighbourhood. Each of the spirits sneezed and regained life. They agreed on a time, later in the day, when they would make a feast with the meat of Ojaadili.

Dove became dejected and disillusioned. He was at a loss as to what he would tell all the people who knew he accompanied Ojaadili to the land spirits. At a point he decided to assemble Ojaddili's head and the body and squeeze the liquid contents of the same leaf on his neck to see whether he (Ojaadili) would regain life. He did it and succeeded.

As soon as Ojaadili regained life, he wondered where the spirits had gone. He was out to finish up his fight but Dove warned him of the danger of delaying a moment. When he agreed with him, they hurried out of the land of spirits as fast as they could. No sooner had they left than the spirit assembled and pursued them. As they (Ojaadili and Dove) were crossing over to the land of man, one of the spirits scratched Ojaadili with this finger nails and left a scare that is today known as the spinal grove. So the only human being that has been to the land of man, the land of animals and the land of spirits was Ojaadili.

The Odunke Artists (1978) have captured this folktale in an Igbo play they entitled *Ojaadili*. In their work, Ojaadili remains the protagonist and his right hand man is



Udumeje. Both of them hail from Umungodo. But the wrestler that Ojaadili defeated is named Otiaba and his flute is Ajiobu. Ojaadili defeated Otiaba as stated below:

(Mmadu tuuru Udumeje oja. O tuhapu ekwe mpu, jiri oja ya gbuwe ebelebe n'onu, nke bu na a nakweghi anu ihe Otiaba na-ekwu. Ojaadili hapuru aka mgba ha ji onwe ha puo okika ozo) (p.14).

Translated:

(Somebody threw a flute to Udumeje. He dropped animal horns, and used his flute to play much wonder that nobody heard what Otiaba was saying. Ojaadili released his hold of hands and went for another demonstration).

(Mgba na-aga, ndi mmadu na-etu ha aha, Ojaadili maburu Otiaba tuo n'ala..... Odunke Artists 1973:15).

Translated:

(As wrestling was going on and people were mentioning their praise names, Ojaadili raised Otiaba and floored him.....)

According to the artists, Ojaadili killed the chimpanzee with a matchet. He first gave the chimpanzee a puzzle by placing five leaves for it. It deals with even numbers so as it was wondering, Ojaadili drew his matchet and killed it as in: (Ka o na-acho akwukwo na-efu efu n'okpa Ojaadili, Ojaadili miliri mma ya n'ike, selie aka elu ka o gbuo ozo, oku wee nyuo n' ike ntakiri oge. Ka oku malitere inwu ozo n'ala umu anumanu, a hu ozo, hu ebe Ojaadili ji mma obara di n' aka na-ele ozo ozo anya) (Odunke Artists: 1973:3&4).

Translated:



(As it was searching for the missing leaf at Ojaadili's feet, Ojaadili drew his matchet suddenly, raised his hand to kill the chimpanzee. Light went off suddenly for a short time. When the light was on again in the land of animals, Ojaadili was seen, holding a matchet spilt with blood watching the dead chimpanzee).

In the work of Odunke Artists, it was Ogwumagana (Chameleon) that accompanied Ojaadili to the land of spirits. The artists state how he revived Ojaadili thus:- Ogwumagana na-agbakeri na-eweputa ogwu o ji bia ji gwotee Ojaadili, mana o nweghi nke nwere isi. O hu ebe Okwuma ngilinga onu chezoro akwukwo o ji na-atute ndi mmuo Ojaadili nwuturu, were ya tunye Ojaadili n'imi na nti. Ojaadili kwara ukwara bilie. A nu mkpotu ndi mmuo ebe ha na-aloghachite azu, Ogwumagana kpulie Ojaadili n'ike ha abuo agbapu, tupu ndi mmuo abata. A na-anu ka oja na-afio "Ebube Dike" (Odunke Artists 1973:64&65).

Translated:

Ogwumagana was making frantic efforts by bringing out the medicine he came with to revive Ojaadili. But it was fruitless. It was where Okwuma the tattered mouth forgot the herbs he used in reviving the spirits Ojaadili floored that he collected it and administered it into Ojaadili's nose and ears. Ojaadili coughed and got up. The noise of spirits was heard as they were coming back, Ogwumagana suddenly dragged up Ojaadili and they ran away before spirits entered. What rented the air was the flute being played in praise of "Ebube Dike".

Note: "Ebuba Dike" means a prestigious hero.



As we have now seen from the story of Ojaadili as told in various parts of Igboland as well as the cast of the artists, the Igboman's belief in the three non-physically realized worlds of man, animals and spirits is not in doubt. We will substantiate this belief by going through some folktales as recorded in various published works.

### **The World of Man**

The world of man is that in which man and his fellow man interact at different levels. In this world we come across man, woman and children both male and female doing all sorts of things. In this world the activities range from the birth of a child through different activities of the child on growth to death. Other activities include marriage, buying and driving motor vehicles, building houses, attending school, working at various places of employment or in various professions of man. These activities as we have mentioned above are realistic but there are various places of employment or in various professions of man. These activities as we have mentioned above are unrealistic but there are various unrealistic stories of the activities of man, which we can derive from various folktales below.

### **The Origin of Day and Night**

In this story, one man had many wives but one of them had no child and so was hated by the man and other wives of his. The co-wives of the hated one tormented her so much and abused her by saying that she was an evil woman and that that was the reason for cursing her womb. She heard of a *dibia* (medicine man) in a far away town and went to him after crossing seven rivers and seven mountains.



She told the *dibia* her pathetic story and he had pity on her. He told her that he had no good child in stock and as a result would wait for a while but this woman was impatient. She asked the *dibia* to give her any child but he was reluctant. After mounting much pressure on him, he gave her one bad son by robbing his bare palm on her belly. Her belly began to swell from that moment. When she returned, some of her co-wives were envious whereas some were skeptical about something good coming out of her.

Eventually she gave birth to a baby boy. The boy from his infancy started to be naughty. He grew up devilish and acquired a charm he used in killing all the people in the kingdom including his parents. He found it difficult to kill one old woman who had a lot of charms. The woman used her charms to cause darkness as it covered her from the boy's attacks whereas the boy used his own magical powers to change darkness to daylight. This continued until both of them dropped dead and up till today there is day and night from daylight and darkness respectively. Nobody has been able to change them (Egudu:1973:19-21).

Note: This story of fantasy tells of the world of man. It tells about a husband and his wives, his evil son and his wickedness as well as his battle with the old woman. It also discusses the profession of a medicine man, who is capable of treating gynaecological cases.

### **The Origin of Earth**

One day God threatened to destroy the world, probably it is filled up with people. Mankind was afraid and decided to suggest an alternative to Him so that He would live the world to stay. They gathered for a meeting but could not agree. One group suggested



that men should die one after the other so that the world would be left with space for people to move about but the other group was afraid of death and rejected this idea. By the end of the meeting they did not agree.

The group that approved death sent its message to God through Tortoise. The group that disapproved death sent its message through Dog and hoped he would reach God's home first but he ran out to impress them and stopped over to feed on faeces in the bush. But Tortoise kept moving on without stopping and was the first to get to God and tell Him that the people were asking Him to allow death to take men away from earth one after the other and that by that there would be space on earth instead of destroying the world. God agreed and approved that. Before Dog ran up to give Him message it was late. Ever since then there is death (Egudu:1973:23 & 24).

### **The Woman that Calls her Husband “that Person”**

Onuoha's first wife left him for another man so he got remarried. His second wife is the beautiful lady called Ada. They love themselves but one problem Onuoha had was that Ada never called him by his name. He called him “that person”. This is an abomination in Onuoha's community. He wanted this stopped but could not address his beautiful wife for fear of losing her.

They crossed a certain river when they strolled in the evening. Onuoha begged the river to get hold of his wife until she called him by his name and the river agreed. One evening, they were crossing the river, Onuoha forded fast and left his wife amidst the river. The waters of the river rose to Ada's knee, and she called her husband “that person” asking him to come to her rescue. He did not and the water rose to her waist and



then chest but she called him “that person” still. But Onuoha became afraid when it reached his wife’s chest. He promised the river a half of his wealth if it would release his wife. The river accepted but all of a sudden it rose to his wife’s neck and she unconsciously shouted his name (Onuoha) asking him to come to her rescue. Immediately she called her husband’s name, the waters of the river reduced and released her, since that day, she started calling her husband by his name(Ogablu,1973:5-10).

Note: This story was translated from the Igbo language. It is portraying the settlement of quarrels between the husband and the wife.

### **A Woman with a Hunchback**

There was one beautiful woman with a hunchback. Because of the hunchback, men did not approach her. At the age of twenty-five she had neither a lover nor a husband. One day, one man asked for her hand in marriage. She took him to her parents who approved of the marriage.

After the wedding, he took her to a medicine man who cured her of the hunchback. Later the medicine man gave an instruction that she should not carry a heavy load otherwise the hunchback would return. But her husband did not tell her the truth about the effect of carrying a heavy load. He told her that the very day she carried a heavy load, he (her husband) would die. She promised her husband never to do so for he loved her so much by getting married to her and curing her the hunchback which saved her from public disgrace.

Later the man became wretched and so the woman felt that she was suffering. She listened to some women who advised her to jilt the poor man for she was too beautiful to



be his wife. She became so much embittered about being the man's wife any more that she thought up to kill her husband by carrying a heavy load. Unfortunately for her it was her hunchback that returned rather than her husband dying. She regretted it. Her husband took her back to her parents and refused to listen to all the appeals for mercy. His father-in-law and mother-in-law told him that it was wickedness that made their daughter to destroy herself. They asked him to go in peace (Egudu, 1973:119-122).

### **The World of Animals**

There are various animals all over the world. Some kinds of animal are got at different parts of the world only. For example kangaroos are seen in East Africa and not in West Africa. Animals are either tamed at home like dogs, goats, pigs, birds etc or are wild ones which live in the bush. The wild animals are lions, elephants, deer, leopards, ostriches, eagles etc.

All these animals do not have a general language. But one specie of the animals has a way of talking to themselves, that is one dog has the means of expressing itself to another and all lions have the language only they themselves understand. The same thing is applicable to all breeds of animals.

But when we come to oral literature, folktales to be precise, we feel that all the animals irrespective of breed have the same language. The Igboman has the saying that states that the reason why the cock and the hen fall victims of ritual sacrifices is that when all animals gathered for a meeting, they were too busy to attend. Rather they promised to abide by all the decisions taken by other animals. During that meeting, all animals present rejected being used for ritual sacrifices and so decreed that the cock and



the hen would be used for sacrifices. When they heard the decision, they could not disagree because of their promise to accept all decisions. This story proves that all animals have one common language. Let us use various folktales in proving that animals have a world of theirs in which they operate.

### **Why Tortoise Has a Checkered Shell**

In this story the animals are living in what is called a kingdom which means the same as a world of theirs as Egudu (1978:37) states: “Once the animals of the forest decided they would build a palace for their king and began to contribute money for its construction”. The animals contributed money from time to time. The treasurer, Rat, was appointed as such because he has a big hole at the foot of the hill where he lives. He was appointed on the nomination of Tortoise.

When Tortoise thought that the money was enormous, he convened a meeting of all the animals. He told them that God appeared to him in a dream and He warned that they (the animals) did not pray and that if they did not, they would not succeed in building the palace. He asked the animals to close their eyes and never stir until God touched them. He left the venue of the prayers and went to the hole of Rat and took away the money. He returned to the venue and spread sand into the air and it fell on the backs of the animals. Later Rat raised an alarm informing the animals of the money missing.

It took them much to reorganize and this time they appointed Wren the Treasurer. He carried the bags of money to the tree in which he constructed his nest. When Tortoise felt a lot of money was in the nest, he attempted to burgle the nest and fell down in the



process of climbing the tree. When he fell, he broke his shell and so it was patched up.

This is how Tortoise came to have a checkered shell. (Egudu, 1973:37-9).

### **Tortoise and the King's Cow**

Tortoise felt very hungry. Each time he saw the king's cow, he wished he slaughtered it. One day, he planned with his son to slaughter and eat the beef of the cow with his son only. He gave his son a knife and asked him to position himself where the cow grazed so that the cow would swallow him together with grass. He told his son that as soon as the cow swallowed him let him talk through the cow's mouth that only Tortoise would slaughter and eat the beef of the cow.

This terrified the king who summoned other people, with Tortoise attending. He expressed his fear over the issue. Tortoise expressed hopelessness before asking the king to help him with six persons who would carry the cow to his house. The king did as such.

In his house, he slaughtered and dissected the cow. His son came out to join him. Lizard, at the wall of Tortoise's compound, saw him and threatened to report him. He invited Lizard and lured him into each of them feeding the other. When it was the turn of Tortoise to spoonfeed Lizard on meat, he used a piece of sharp bone to injure Lizard so much that he could not talk. He went to the King's house to report but could not talk. Up till today, he cannot talk. (Ogbalu, 1975:46-8).

### **Tortoise and Squirrel**

Tortoise thought up how to kill Squirrel. Tortoise asked his wife (Oma) to prepare drop soup with okro, fish bones and pepper so that Squirrel would have bone stuck in his



throat. Tortoise arranged to stay away under the pretext of going to get Squirrel some palm wine. When Squirrel came, he ate carefully and dodged the trap.

Squirrel then invited Tortoise to a feast. He planned evil against his guest. He asked his wife to prepare delicious meal. He got the skin of cooked chicken and used it to wrap himself. His wife, as he instructed her, put him into the soup when it was cold. When Tortoise took the supposed chicken to eat, Squirrel jumped down his stomach and started cutting his intestines into pieces. Tortoise cried, but later he agreed to give Squirrel three goats before Squirrel came out of his stomach.

Tortoise later asked Squirrel how he planned his attack. He told Tortoise to wrap himself with the skin of cooked chicken so that his wife would put him into the soup pot when it is hot. Tortoise then invited Squirrel and planned to kill Squirrel by wrapping himself with her skin of prepared chicken and his wife dropped him into the pot of soup as she prepared the soup and he died in the pot. When Squirrel came, the wife of Tortoise served him with the food containing Tortoise that had died. He ate the food and ate up the meat of Tortoise. He lastly gave the head of Tortoise to the son of Tortoise who was eating little meat left in the skull when Squirrel thanked the wife of Tortoise and left. As soon as the wife of Tortoise found out that her husband had died and that her son was eating the remaining meat in his skull. she raised an alarm and cried wildly(Iwe,1976:1-3).

### **Hornbill and Chameleon**



All the animals in the kingdom quarrelled over who is the oldest when it comes to breaking kolanuts and making libations. They decided to find out the oldest by finding out who should tell the story of the oldest time. All the animals except two finished their stories but they all ended up telling about the recent past. The remaining two were Hornbill and Chameleon.

The next to tell the story was Chameleon. He stated that the earth had not dried up. He said that everywhere was swampy. According to him, he moved slowly to avoid getting drowned by the swampy land. He said that ever since then he moves slowly. The rest of the animals clapped for him thinking that he would win.

Hornbill then told his own story. He said that he started to exist before the earth was created. According to him, his father died before the earth was created so he buried him on one side of his head and later his mother died and he buried her on the other side of his head and that is why he has two big lumps on his head. All the animals were impressed and declared him the winner(Egudu,1973:93-5).

### **Tortoise and his Wife**

Tortoise's wife was notorious for lacking firewood. She wasted a lot of time in cooking. Each time Tortoise gave her meat to cook, she would from time to time go to fetch firewood before continuing the cooking. So what Tortoise learnt was to fetch firewood and store. From the firewood, he would put wood to the fire and hasten the cooking. As his wife was away, he would take some meat and eat. Each time his wife wondered who stole the meat.



One day, only four out of twenty pieces of meat she was cooking was left. He collected them and rushed under his bed to eat and saw her husband eating the one she was looking for. She asked her husband what he was doing there and her husband put a counter-question to her. He asked that they should go out and eat else they are thieves of their property. Since then his wife never left her kitchen while cooking (Egudu,1973:79-81).

### **The World of Spirits**

Spirits are of God, gods, ancestors and all forces of the dead, in addition to the existing entities of the earth like man and plants have spirits that can leave and travel after which they can come back. Nwala (1985: 37-8) observes like wise:

We may distinguish between two types of spirits (i) the pure and (ii) the embodied spirit. The first refers to Chukwu, the deities, ancestral spirits and a host of spirit which, as it is believed, have no bodily form but may have objects and locations associated with their presence. However, the spirit of an ancestor may appear in the form in which the ancestors died as a human being, while deities can appear in human or animal forms e.g. in Mbaise ... the Thunder deity is said to appear in the form of a heavily beard man.

Wherever the spirits gather is their own world. They can gather at the marked places, farms, streams, village squares etc when human beings have left. The examples of spirits interacting with man are in the following folktales.

### **Obiadi**

A certain man and his wife had seven children. One of them that was extremely handsome was Obiadi. His father bought him a flute to make him happy. He blew the flute every time to different destinations. One day he forgot it in the farm. He cried so much that his people promised to buy him another flute but he insisted on going to the



farm to collect the flute. They dissuaded him because people had left the farm as a result of which spirits would have taken over the farm.

Finally, he left for the farm. He met the one-headed spirit that asked him his mission. The spirit allowed him to pass after begging it so much. In this manner he met the two-headed spirit, the three-headed spirit, the four-headed spirit, the five-headed spirit and the six-headed spirit. When Obiadi met the seven-headed spirit with a dangerous snake on each of the heads, it swallowed him.

Obiadi's relatives waited for him to return but he did not. His father sent Obiadi's siblings, one after the other, to find out what he was doing in the farm. The seven-headed spirit swallowed them as they came. He then sent his wife whom the spirit also swallowed. Then the man armed with a dagger came to find out what happened. The seven-headed spirit swallowed him as well. The man used the dagger to cut the intestines of the spirit and it fell down with a thud. The man cut the belly of the spirit open and he and the members of his household, except Obiadi, came out. Obiadi had already died. His corpse was taken home and buried while various people shook hands with the man for his valour (Ugochukwu, Meniru and Oguine, 1977:5-8).

### **Obaraedo**

In a certain town, one woman has only one daughter she named Obaraedo. One day, the woman was going to the market. She gave her daughter a cocoyam and a snail and asked her to roast the cocoyam before roasting the snail because the water that would be gushing out from the snail will douse the fire and that she would no longer roast the



cocoyam and so would starve. The woman also told her daughter not to go out for fear of the harm of one certain male medicine spirit that had the habit of cutting people's noses.

Obaraedo disobeyed and roasted the snail first. She ate the snail and went out to fetch live coal to reset the fire. Out on the frontage, the male medicine spirit cut Obaraedo's nose. When her parents returned, they were very worried. Her father went to a very far away land and brought a human medicine man. This medicine man fought the male medicine spirit and snatched Obaraedo's nose from it. The medicine man restored Obaraedo's nose leaving the spirit dead.

### **Conclusion**

From all the stories we have gone through, we can see that the Igboman tells about human beings, animals and spirits. He sees these three groups of beings as being in their unseparated worlds, which are referred to as kingdoms, or lands of human beings, animals or spirits respectively. These three worlds exist on the earth. Nwala (1985:36) observes what exist on the earth thus:

Let us examine the Igbo world-view from its ontological notions – i.e. the nature of the beings that inhabit the Igbo world. The structure of the cosmos is conceived in terms of unity and interaction of all beings. Basically, Igbo traditional ontologically order falls into three broad categories with sub-categories.

So in one physical world of ours, there are existing non-physically partitioned world in the Igboman's cultural beliefs. These three worlds come into conflicts from time to time. We can see that some stories involve human beings and animals or human beings and spirits. In Biology, we have the plant kingdom but this kingdom or world does not



exist independently like any of the three discussed above so in the Igbo folklore the three worlds of man, animals and spirits are told of.

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