

## Culture Intricacies and Igbo Worldview in George Ndubuisi's *Woes of Ikenga*

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### Abstract

Culture is seen as the totality of a people's way of life. It showcases their customs, traditions, value, systems, norms, beliefs, world-views, superstitions and even taboos. So this paper entitled "Culture Intricacies and Igbo Worldviews in George Ndubuisi's *Woes of Ikenga*" set out to explore aspects of the culture of the Igbo's and their worldview of life. The objectives of the study seek to investigate the culture intricacies and Igbo worldview in George's Ndubuisi *Woes of Ikenga*. The theoretical framework for the study is sociological criticism which maintains that literature has a relationship with society and should bring changes. Data for the study was from two main sources, primary and secondary sources. The text under study is the primary source, while library texts, journals and internet formed the secondary sources. The findings include the use of proverbs to pass on a message, the ritual of new yam festival and its meaning to the Igbo culture, and the nuances of kinship ties and spiritual belief in the Igbo society. The study portrayed the Igbo society as it was before the coming of the white men and how after they left changed and affected the Igbo view of the world.

**Keywords:** Culture, Fate, Customs, Superstition, Supernatural, Reincarnation

## Introduction

The study x-rays the cultural and social reality visible and permissible in Igbo land of Nigeria before and after the coming of the white men as reflected in the novel under study. The spread of imperialism in Africa has created areas of political influence and domination which naturally produced a far-reaching influence in the growth of African Literature. English, French and other European languages became a part of African culture and literatures of the western world provided models for the African writers. But the native sensibility retained its identity, though layers of foreign influences became a part of African Literature. African literature of today successfully presents the conflicts and contradictions within the African society and also provides a glimpse of things in the future. As a result of Colonialism, Africans were confronted new values and habits which always did not fit into their cultural background. Africans were judged on the basis of European norms and values by the colonial powers. The African writers have drawn the attention of the world on the predicaments faced by their people, and they have presented the different facets of African heritage in their writings. In spite of their respect for the traditional values, the African writers of today do not like to revive

everything which is old. The African writers have adopted an enlightened outlook and they know what to take from the non-African cultures. The invasion of colonizing force threatens to change almost every aspect of Igbo society from religion, traditional gender roles and relations, family structure to trade.

The African novel, in general is known for its depiction of various cultural tensions arising out of a clash between tradition and modernity, the real and the occult and so on. Chinua Achebe's comments on colonial fiction and on the role of the African writer suggest that he was himself aware when he was writing that he was creating a new literature. He has written the following in an article entitled "*The Role of the Writer in a New Nation*":

In the face of colonial derogation, the prime duty of the African writer in the first few years after independence was to restore dignity to the past, to show that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless, but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and

beauty, that they had poetry and above all, they had dignity (4).

Cultural intricacies are quite common in globalized society where there is much cross flow of people. In process of cultural change, old cultural values lose their grip when new culture is introduced. Culture can best be defined as patterns of human assumptions which are developed or invented by a group of people to deal with its problems and are transmitted to generations as current ways to perceive. Being a property of human beings, it is shared as common learning output. It also refers to what individuals learn from people and lasts by creating customs, traditions and rituals. Ultimately it helps to shape human lives and positions surrounding them. Due to it, human beings are distinct from other creations of the universe. Regarding culture Raymond Williams writes, “Where culture meant a state or habit of the mind, or the body of intellectual and moral activities, it means now, also, a whole way of life” (xvi-xvii). Culture includes all aspects of human lives and everything has meaning in connection with social values. Likewise, Peter Newmark defines culture as, “. . . the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression”(94).

Human values and norms are reflected through culture. Mainly, in tribal culture belief in gods, goddesses, supernatural forces and deities is interwoven. Some cultural groups give too much emphasis on warm hospitality and some others show simplicity as their special features. In primitive societies, people struggle to fulfill the needs of their existence.

Regarding primitive culture Bruno Nettl reflects, “In many parts of the world today there are people who are conventionally called primitive. They have simple cultures with no system of reading and writing of their own, although they usually possess some kind of tribal organization”(1). As being the part of life, culture has become the distinct form to differentiate people of one area from the other. Being a broad term, culture includes many things like language, religion, social habitats, profession, art, music etc.

In primitive societies, people are uncivilized being uneducated in comparison with sophisticated modern societies. In such a context, the involvement of people is found in activities which are difficult to understand and for other people their practices are difficult to comprehend. Mainly, people believe in witches and supernatural powers

which have malignant influences on their lives. For this, they engage in ritual activities and consult witchcraft, oracles and use magic as medicine for protection. Similarly, they use specific dress in process of the celebration of their ritual practices. These activities make the culture distinct in traditional sense because they determine their identity. Chun Wei Choo writes about cultural knowledge “assumptions and beliefs that are used to describe, and explain reality, as well as the conventions and expectations that are used to assign value and significance to new information” (112). The conventions and values distinguish a community from others.

Physical environment, nature and ecology have played significant roles in shaping primitive culture from the earlier civilization. People in such societies are born and brought up being attached to nature and people in some places worship nature. They also worship natural entities like sun, moon, trees, rain, cloud and many other things as gods or deities. In the modern world, culture includes broader areas including economy and politics as Paul du Gay et al. mention:

Culture is now regarded as being as constitutive of the social world as economic or

political processes. Not only this, ‘culture’ has been promoted to an altogether more important role as theorists have begun to argue that because all social practices are meaningful practices, they are all fundamentally cultural(2).

In today’s contemporary world, culture has become a matter of concern across all disciplines because meaning is given to social activities through culture. Mainly culture represents the society and values, gives identity, produces meaning of social activities, and also helps us in the process of consumption and regulation of the activities. Thus, knowledge of culture helps to make sense of all kinds of activities of everyday lives.

Culture is a social practice which is learnt by individuals to be socialized and on the basis of social change culture changes. The reason it changes is that it is concerned with human perfection, the state of intellectual development, body of the arts, ways of life such as physical, spiritual and intellectual. Traditionally, culture is regarded as the sum of best ideas and practices which make up the everyday lives. It incorporates

the ideas of what is thought and said best in a society. Focusing on the change in culture, Stuart Hall says, “In recent years, and in a more social science' context, the word 'culture' is used to refer to whatever is distinctive about the 'way of life' of a people, community, nation or social group” (2). On the basis of the change in political, economic, and social life the development and change in culture can be explored. Similarly, change in culture can be traced with great historical changes. In this regard, Raymond Williams opines,

The progress of culture is dependent on the progress of the material conditions for culture; and, in particular, the social organization of any period of history limits the cultural possibilities of that period. Yet all through history there is a constant interaction between culture and social organization (289).

Culture cannot go alone but it lags behind social organizations and changes with the change in social activities. With the development of relevant ideas, feelings, practices and human relations modern meaning of culture is determined. Every

society consists of a unique set of beliefs and interactions and in multicultural societies people live sharing and adopting values of each other. Such scenario requires polite social interaction and open-minded thinking. In cross cultural environment, expectations cross the boundaries and the society needs to build bridges of relationships among cultural communities by various means such as sharing ideas, listening to others, learning about the values of others, and being open to changes. When multi-cultural and cross-cultural societies are blended, intercultural society emerges and many of the old traditional practices transform. By the proper management the society can prosper where as lack of harmonious relation may cause problem in such new environment. There is difficulty in handling cross and multicultural problems in uncivilized society. Educated people can adjust in the intercultural situation but conservative and illiterate people begin to revolt when New culture is blended with the tradition alone. A cultural group such as the Igbo is able from their worldview, to explain reality, life and the human environment, and predict space-time events, and finally exert control over them. In this way, the force of Igbo Religion as of any other religion or ideological system rests with the cosmology, which undergirds it. In the case of the

traditional Igbo, all forms of individual and group religious practices occur within the broad outline of their worldview, Particular belief systems, such as the basis for the ritual naming of a child, the “Okuku Onye-Uwa” ceremony, and death and burial rites and other traditional values and practices emanate from and are validated by it. It is not only religion, but also most other aspects of Igbo traditional socio-cultural life that come under the influence of Igbo worldview. This study shall therefore explore cultural intricacies and Igbo worldview as portrayed in George Ndubuisi’s *Woes of Ikenga*.

The theoretical framework for this project is sociological criticism. This is a school of criticism that advocates the relevance of a work of art in a given society. This school of criticism or movement maintains that literature is expected to bring some changes in the society. The proponents of this movement are of the conviction that art maintains a vital relationship with society, and that the investigation of this relationship may widen and guide a reader's aesthetic reception of a work of art. In Terry Eagleton's opinion, its apparent capacity to account for a large range of social and human manifestations has proven especially attractive to those seeking new intellectual synthesis.

Sociological criticism is concerned with people's situations in society as a whole, other than narrowly concerned with interpersonal relations. It may be a question of political, or moral argument, which sees the relations between individual qualities and values, and one whole material condition of existence. Through social criticism, we shall be able to see how we have organised our social life, together with the changes that have occurred in our interrelations and attitudes to life since literature assumes that at the centre of the world is the contemplative individual self, striving to gain touch with experience, truth, reality, history or tradition. We shall be able, through social criticism of literary texts, see how wealth has been evenly distributed or concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority, while human services like education, health, culture and recreation for the great majority are torn to shreds. The social critic as a satirist has to make people be aware that a situation is bad in order to bring a change in their attitudes. This is because social criticism aims to ridicule evil and this arouses the people's revulsion towards it. The corrupt public officer who is not moved by law or his conscience, when publicly ridiculed or satirised, becomes frightened and shaken out of his follies.

Therefore, since literature is virtually engaged with the living situations of men and women, and also displays life in all its rich variousness, it is expected to teach good behaviour and to condemn evil in society. It is expected to mirror the lives of the people and to improve their minds so that they will be able to learn from the experience and the fate of the characters in the various works of art. Since writers do not write in a vacuum, they are usually committed in expounding one moralistic element or the other in society. Even Karl Marx believes that literature provides evidence of the society which produces it. Terry Eagleton also points out that: "Literature did more than embody certain social values. It gained new importance when it was directed to diffuse polite social manners, habits or correct taste and common cultural standards" (118).

### **Cultural Intricacies and Worldviews in Ndubuisi George's *Woes of Ikenga***

A worldview is referred to as how people perceive and explain their world, or the ways things are or expressed in their environment. A worldview can be understood in terms of a unified picture of the cosmos explained by a system of concepts, which order the natural and social rhythms, and the place of individuals and communities

in them. In other words, a worldview reflects people's basic assumptions about, and perceptions of the universe which gives orientation and value to their lives. A people's worldview stands for their source of explanation for the way things are in the world, including their theories of illness, death and misfortunes and how human afflictions and problems can be resolved. In the case of the traditional Igbo community, all forms of individual and group religious practices occur within the broad outline of their worldview, particular beliefs, such as the basis for the ritual naming of a child, the "okuku onye uwa" ceremony, death and burial rites, and other traditional values and practices emanate from and are validated by it. It is not only religion, but also most other aspects of Igbo traditional socio-cultural life that come under the influence of Igbo worldview.

The Igbo believed and still believe in the existence of deities; Chukwu as the central deity is classified as the 'ndi mmuo'-invincible beings, category of ontological beings which includes 'Ala' or 'Ani'-the divine feminine earth force, chi-the personal deity, ndiochie-the ancestors, and mmuo-minor spirits. The narrator says:

the people wisely preserved the dreadful punishment of the exile for equally dreadful sins against their powerful earth goddess Ani, and offences that should have merited death were converted to banishment... Since bloodshed was against the command of Chukwu, the great being and against the moral code of Ani, those who merited such forms of punishment were handed over to the army commanders (11).

The Igbo believe in their “Chi” and “Chukwu Abiama” and this has controlled their daily life, their community life, when they wake up in the morning, greetings are accorded to Chukwu. They perceive Chukwu as the controller of everything and so they reverence him. Reverence for Chukwu, the lesser deities and their Chi is very present even before the Colonial Masters came in the character of Reverend Klaus who had to bend into the tradition of the people and he shared a kolanut with Chukwuma. Eloka came in with a bowl water and a wooden tray containing kolanut, alligator pepper and a moulded clay chalk. The items with their significance, a mark of spiritual purity and

hospitality, was not new to Reverend Klaus. “Reverend Klaus repeatedly washed his own share of the kolanut and hastily made a sign of the Cross before throwing it into his mouth” (20).

In the excerpt above, Kolanut in the traditional Igbo society marks hospitality, this is why Eloka brought in first kolanut and water, this showed that the visitor is highly welcomed to the house. Kolanut is the king of ceremony, it is used to bring peace, it is used to settle disputes between people, and it has its various other uses. As the novelist says;

Their system of governance could be best described as theocratic with the central and divine authority being Chukwu, the supreme being and other lesser deities that dealt with the day to day activities of mortals through their priests and priestesses (36).

From the above, the role of Chukwu Abiama and the lesser deities cannot be overridden. Chukwu Abiama is seen as the greatest supreme being, he maintains his superior nature, which is why he has the lesser deities and other of his servants at his



beck and call. The gods are explicated properly in the novel:

It was unthinkable that mortals could communicate directly with Chukwu Okike, the God of creation who ordered the theocratic universe. He was believed to have created lesser gods in his infinite goodness through which humans could reach him. (37)

Chukwu created other gods through which mortals could reach him; he made them his vessels showing his superior nature, these gods were created for different reasons, some were made to tempt, some were made to protect, some were made to see over nature and its environment. He made other gods like Ekwensu; the tempter god, Anyanwu; the sun god, Agbala; Ikenga; the home god; agwu, etc.

As the narrator says; “Ekwensu” is the tempter god who had been given the authority to go against normal rules and conventional human and spirit behavior. His greatest weapons, which were mostly sin, love for pleasure and fear of the unknown (38).

So the god, “Ekwensu” is also the tempter god, his job is to hunt down man so that man would not be able to obey God. He causes them to sin, using tools like lust of the flesh, pleasures of the world and fear of the unknown. He has the authority to make man behave in a way that is not in accordance to the conventional way of behaving.

Anyanwu, the sun god, together with his wife Agbala, lived far away from mortals but saw and reported human activities to Chukwu. Even as he gave light to both the righteous and evildoers alike, his purity and brightness were created as a perfect image of what man should be.

As the narrator says:

Anyanwu is the son god, he provides for the people despite who you are and what you might have done, he gives light to all and sundry. Anyanwu creates the image of the supposed image of what man should be, Anyanwu and his wife Agbala is not unjust, he is fair to everyone under the sun (38).

Ikenga, the home god, was created and endowed with unimaginable strength and

purity. A supernatural warrior who was believed to have come down to earth and made for himself a dwelling place on top of an iroko tree... “the god immortalized himself into a wooden totem depicting a well developed two homed human figure holding a sword at the right hand and a tusk at the left with a fierce experience (38).

Symbolically, the novel is named after the gods and the protagonist- Ikenga: hence *Woes of Ikenga*. Ikenga himself born to Chukwuma Udejaja is strong, fierce and brutally willed, just like the god Ikenga. Ikenga is a god or a lesser deity that depicts strength in a man, it is mostly significant to men because men are naturally strong and they are seen as the stronger sex of the two. Anyanwu, Agbala, Ikenga, Ekwensu, Amadioha are the few amongst the lesser deities created by Chukwu Abiama.

The Igbo strongly believe in “omenani”, or “odinani” which happen to be their religious practices, customs, traditions, norms, values, taboos, cultural practices, modes of interactions, etc. So instead of going to the whiteman (Reverend Klaus), they prefer to go to the traditionalists, dibias who can foretell what was going to happen, the people or the custom that they had always been known to, accustomed to, just like

Udejaja and Chukwuma were accustomed to their Ogwugwu shrine and had become custodians of it. The Igbo equally believe in the 'ndiichie', a group of people, elites selected to represent the opinions of the people to speak and decide rightfully for the people, these people were accorded respect and seen as wise. This is seen in the novel, when the colonists desire the Eke-ogba, the elders were consulted. As the narrator says:

The cries of foul by the omenani custodians fell on deaf ears.. ..since Ogba Lake and its surroundings were jointly owned, the twelve clans of Umuafor separately appointed leaders and elders to represent them in the crucial land negotiations.... In honour of our ancestors, you will come back to take up your role and the custodian of Ndi-ichie and the leader of your people. (13)

The Igbo equally believe in proverbs, it is said that proverbs is the palm oil with which words are eaten. The knowledge of proverbs prove that the speaker is well grounded in the custom of the people, proverbs is one of the traditional techniques

that spices up a language. Proverbs keep the cosmology of a particular group of people from the proverbs of a particular sect of people their perception of the world comes to light. Proverbs is a code so that outsiders cannot hear what is being said. Proverb is one of the elements of folklore. Like some other elements of folklore, proverbs play several significant and important roles in the literary works of writers who chose to blend their works with the touch of African oral tradition and also to give their creative works a stamp of uniqueness, authenticity and identity as they reflect and project their culture and tradition, outlook, view and perception of a community. Rems Umeasiegbu sees proverbs as any expression recognized by a people as embodying the wisdom and philosophy of their ancestors. Proverbs help writers to express the belief, an outlook to life unique to their people. Proverb as seen in the novels expresses the relationships among the characters thus;

it had been a case of oke na ohia,ngw ere n'uzo (22).

...The horns cannot be too heavy for the head of the cow that must bear them" '(23)

"...children will play with snake like a toy only If it chooses not to reveal itself" (23).

Chukwuma father to Ikenga, went searching for his son at Reverend Klaus's home, he was in desperate need of his son which provoked the proverb; "When a frog decides to leave the swamp for the mountains, it is that its life is in grave danger" (24). Another of the cosmology of the traditional Igbo society is myths and superstitions. Myth is an ancient anonymous story that explains how something came to be. It is a fictional tale that explains the actions of gods or heroes, or the causes of natural phenomena. It conveys the beliefs and ideas of a culture and it usually involves gods and goddesses and even tricksters. Myth, as part of oral tradition is composed orally and then passed from generation to generation by words of mouth to explain things about nature or teach lessons about how man should behave. A story surrounding a myth could either be true or false. It is, therefore, very wrong for one to arrive at a hasty conclusion that it is true or it is false. Myth is about something within an environment or society. A myth, therefore, remains true as long as the rite is still alive with the society. In the novel;

Myth and superstition had it that twins were devil incarnates sent by evil spirits to torment their parents and bring pain and agony to people around them. It was also believed that they would eventually die at a young age and return to their sender, leaving their parents in grief. Thus, single births were regarded as normal while multiple births were seen as a typical (26).

The birth of twins in the traditional Igbo society was seen as an abomination prior to the advent of the colonial masters. They threw these multiple birthed kids or babies into the evil forest because they believed it harboured evil, it was bad omen. Reincarnation is equally a myth in the traditional Igbo society, the Igbo believe that great men and women reincarnate into the families of those they love and feel at peace with. Reincarnation happens when an elderly person dies and immediately or some hours, days, weeks later a child is born into that family, it is said that that child is a reincarnation of the dead elderly person - male or female. This is the case of Ikenga, who was born the eve- Udeaja- his

grandfather died. The novelist says; Reincarnation is a strong tenet of the Umuafor cosmology. In such perfect coincidences as these, where an infant arrived just. "As an elder departs, the people considered it an extension of life approved by their ancestors and spirit in world" (31).

The Igbo harboured the superstitious belief about the twins and circumcision; they saw circumcision as part of the tradition. Before the advent of the missionaries, the Igbo threw away the twins into the evil forest, it was seen as a bad omen, an abomination, so much that the land had to be cleansed. The advent of the missionaries accompanied with the stopping of the killing of twin children saved the life of Ikenga who could have been killed because he is a twin. "Those who are blinded by superstitions surrounding twins still nursed fear that the twins would one day die off mysteriously" (21). So with a sharp razor, he beatified the tiny genital of the male child, a practice he very well knew how to perform" (35). Circumcision, they say would stop or prevent the child from behaving sexually immoral. Still on myths, the Igbo equally believe that rain during occasions like marriage ceremonies, funeral ceremonies is a bad omen and so the rainmaker's are taken care of. The rainmakers if not taken

care of could cause mischief and bring down rain. This is equally seen in the novel;

Udeaja was not an ordinary villager and would not be buried as such. That meant that a drop of rain during the burial ceremony of such a man would be seen as a bad omen. Therefore, all the rainmakers in Umuafor and beyond had been consulted and given whatever requirements they demanded (34).

Funeral is a time to mourn the dead and equally celebrate their time spent on earth, how fruitful they have lived. At times, rain would disrupt the programme of the day, therefore, this has to be avoided and this makes it a necessity to visit the rainmakers as custom demands. The Igbos have a myth on creation, they have a myth about kolanut, places, wind, sky, moon.etc As Ruth Finnegan says:

Myths are prose narratives which in the society in which they are told are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith,

they are taught to be believed and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance doubt or disbelief (361).

Omugwo is one of the cosmologies of the Igbo. This is the part where the grandmother of the child; the mother to the wife, comes to take care of daughter and the new baby. It is where the mother of the new born is being pampered and taken proper care of. They make sure that the child is in good health. This time helps the grandmother, mother and child to bond, it brings the family together. It helps the nursing mother who would be in pain at that time. The grandmother helps around in the home, gives the child his early morning bath, feeds him and helps in fostering peace and love in the home. Omugwo is one of the traditions and cosmology of the Igbo people because it had been there since time immemorial. It gives the grandmother a sense of joy and pride, as this is one of the joys of being a grandmother and having to see your sons and daughters, and see how they are faring. It gives a sense of fulfillment.

The naming ceremony of a child is equally paramount, as the name of a child gives identity to the child and it makes sure

that the lineage continues. In the traditional Igbo society, children are named for different reasons, either they are named after the person they are believed to have reincarnated or they are named after the experiences their mother went through during child delivery or labour, or they are named because of the longtime they waited for a child-either way, a child must be named and carry the surname of his father to ensure lineage continuity. Ikenga and Vanessa kept on arguing about his traditions. Ikenga having left Umuafor for Germany for some years, but, the worldview about his people could not be completely erased from his memory. "First, there had been a beat of quarrel over amending the child's name, then circumcision, and also the invitation of nne for omugwo. In his vicious quest to bestow an African identity on his first son, the boy was renamed Udejaja Heinrich Afamefuna" (196).

The Igbo people also believed in 'ogbanje or agwu'. They believed that agwu or ogbanje worked in different ways most especially when provoked. The ogbanje would be really beautiful and have a date when they would die and go back to the world they came from, thereby causing pain, heartache and sorrow to the respective parent. Agwu is believed to be a spirit that comes and goes, when provoked it reacts fiercely.

"Throughout the thirty five minute ride to work, he tried to understand or identify the ogbanje element in his wife and its modus operandi in the white man's land" (195).

Most of these aspects of the people's culture were strange to the white imperialists who were determined to convert them to Christianity. The dogged efforts of the colonialist, gullibility of the Africans, and of course, the perceived consequences of not accepting the whiteman, and his culture and religion resulted in conflicts as can be seen in the novel.

### **Conclusion**

The novel under study George Ndubuisi's *Woes of Ikenga* reflects the aboriginal Nigerian society known as Igbo. The novel is full of rustic values and traditions and people were proud of their primitive culture which was their identity. The society was guided by many of the rituals practices of the African society and people would believe in oracles as gods. The novel offers a fascinating glimpse into the complexities of Igbo culture, tradition, and philosophy, weaving a rich tapestry of themes, motifs, and characters that continue to captivate readers.

Through the lens of cultural intricacies, the novel reveals the Igbo worldview as a complex, multifaceted entity that defies simplistic interpretations.

George Ndubuisi's in *Woes of Ikenga* offers a contemporary perspective on the Igbo worldview, exploring the tensions between tradition and modernity. The novel delves into the complexities of identity, culture, and belonging, as the protagonist, Ikenga, navigates the challenges of growing up in a rapidly changing world. Through Ikenga's journey, the novel highlights the struggles of preserving cultural heritage in the face of colonialism, urbanization, and globalization.

One of the most striking aspects of the novels is the exploration of the Igbo concept of "chi". In *Woes of Ikenga*, Ikenga's chi is a source of strength and inspiration, connecting him to his ancestors and cultural roots. This concept of chi underscores the Igbo belief in the interconnectedness of all things, highlighting the delicate balance between individual agency and communal responsibility. Furthermore, the novel demonstrates the significance of storytelling in Igbo culture. Ikenga's father shares tales of their ancestors, emphasizing the importance of remembering and honoring one's heritage.

Storytelling becomes a powerful tool for preserving cultural identity, transmitting values, and fostering community.

The novel also explores the role of gender in Igbo culture, challenging patriarchal norms and stereotypes. The female characters, such as Ikenga's mother and sister, play crucial roles in shaping the protagonist's worldview and identity. The novel also highlights the impact of colonialism and modernity on Igbo culture. The protagonist grapples with the consequences of urbanization and globalization, struggling to reconcile his cultural heritage with the demands of modern life.

In conclusion, *Woes of Ikenga* offers profound insights into the cultural intricacies and Igbo worldview, revealing a rich, complex, and multifaceted culture that defies simplistic interpretations. Through the exploration of chi, storytelling, gender roles, and the impact of colonialism and modernity, the novel demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of Igbo culture, highlighting its continued relevance in contemporary society.

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