THE BITTER-HONEY NATURE OF TRADITIONAL MYTH PRACTICES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA: THE CASE OF KABANGATENDE CULT OF OBUDU COSMOLOGY IN CROSS RIVER STATES

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Abstract : Every way of life, whether Asian, European or African, is traditional by nature. This corpus explores contradictions inherent in the traditional practice of the myth of *the Kabangatendé cult* of Obudu in Cross River State, Southern Nigeria. The myth presents an image of positive effects on human practitioners, leading to a consistent increase in money, social influence and political strength. It is also said to be a symbol of affluence, nobility, auspiciousness, success and prosperity with less effort. It is imperative to note that myths operate in diverse capacities. Some are authoritative and appear to have a compelling force of obedience on the people, while others are manipulated and their influence on custodians can be termed to befit situations. This study seeks to address the following questions: Is the *Kabangatende cult* a revolutionary myth that militates against human existence? Does this myth halt the economic, social and political transformation of its custodians? Or is it an artistic reality that favors literary aesthetics that in turn promote Obudu tradition? In an attempt to arrive at possible tentative responses to the interrogations raised, the paper hinges on Joseph Campbell's theory of monomyth and other theories whereby empirical evidence will be drawn from ethnographic and historical research, interviews and observations. This study contributes in a better understanding on how traditional practices, with counter-productive tendencies notwithstanding, can be adhered to by the people.

Keywords: Myth, Kabangatende, African civilization, African cosmology, Bitter Honey, Cultural practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is perceived by many as a continent whose moral values, culture and traditions became grossly dominated by Western norms after the invasion by the British and other European settlers and missionaries in the continent in the 19th Century. Effects of infiltrations are still evident in a vast majority of African countries. Nigeria, as one of the recipients, was before now a country with strong traditional beliefs and practices. However, in the integral midst of this so-called dominion of western society, Nigeria remains nostalgic of its rich cultural heritage. To this effect, many traditional practices have survived the wave of "civilization" in the country. They include the *Sharo* practice also known as *the Flogging festival* of the Fulani in Northern Nigeria, the *widowhood* practice in the Eastern region of the country and the *Magun practice* actively present in Western Nigeria. Worthy of note is that while some of these practices are perceived as normal and highly applauded, others are considered dreadful and scary, leading to a multifaceted feeling among their practitioners. African culture and civilization are distinguished from those of other continents by traditional abstract philosophies/beliefs in the existence of a supreme being in control of the universe, made manifest in nature and ancestors. Consequently,pre-colonial African societies were governed by such philosophical belief systems through which cultural space was ideologically adopted for meaningful living according to Ogumor (1993) and Kreamer (2007), quoted in Akpang (2013). Drawing from the fact that not much expository literature has been published about Obudu tradition, this study examines social aesthetic boundaries and human destructive limits of the myth of **Kabangatendé** of Obudu.

It is often postulated that if there ever existed an African philosophy, then myth played a vital role because African philosophy cannot function in isolation. Myths represent the African spirit as well as the African understanding of reality. Therefore, in order for African philosophy to be certified African, it must operate within the conceptual framework of myths that represent the authentic African reality. In his words, Jaja (1995) believes that:

> Myths provide not only the solid foundation on which African tradition hinges, but also constitute an expression of inner side of individuals and their relationship with other nature as well as the supernatural (p. 119).

However, the central idea of a myth is far beyond being just an explanatory object. Nigerian perception of the world is, to a large extent, entrenched in diverse creations of myths that basically serve etiological purposes. It certainly has many values in the Nigerian societal setting, sometimes used to nourish and buttress the tradition of the ancestors (Andrew-Essien 2014; Andrew-Essien 2018). It is a philosophical reflection of people in the past, served and handed down to society to decide the future. More so, myths play the role of literature and fill the lacuna created by the inadequate literary content on past African history, and supplement the oral culture of the African experience. It can be broken down from different perspectives based on the writer's social structures and environmental activities. Extrapolating from the evolution of science, there has been a housecleaning of beliefs. Many African myths and practices such as the rain dance, preservation of the cadaver of a sage on top of a tree for days before internment, complete shaving of hair of a widow, putting on black clothes for one year to indicate loss of a husband, playing of wooden drums at obsequies and the wish for a bird to deposit its droppings on one's clean, ironed clothes which signify luck among others, are going extinct. But some

are still significantly prevalent to date in our culture.

The myth of **Kabangatende** of Obudu is a case study. The myth has no doubt spread through space and evolved through time in the Northern part of Cross River State and the Obudu people in particular. But very little has been published for a global audience on this. It can be broken down from different perspectives based on the writer's social structures and environmental activities. **Kabangatendé**, baptized with different names depending on the northern tribe concerned. It is sometimes called "Kabanga" by the Obudu, it is known as "Kabenketen" in Obanliku tribe, Agburumgu among the Bekwarra tribe. It presents an image of positive effects of the practice leading to a consistent increase in money, social influence and political strength, a symbol of affluence, nobility, auspiciousness, success and prosperity with less effort. It is, however, pertinent to note that myths operate in diverse capacities. Some are authoritative and appear to have a compelling force of obedience on the people, while others are manipulated by people and its influence on its custodians can be termed to befit situations. The most practiced field is based on the common experiences of a group of people in a given community. To critically survey the links with myths of *Kabangatende.* The following interrogations are formulated as thus: is *Kabangatende* a revolutionary myth that militates against human existence? Does this myth halt the economic, social and political transformation of its custodians? Is it an artistic reality that favours literary aesthetics thereby promoting Obudu tradition? What are the forces behind their perfect working in both positive and negative perspectives? Is the myth a distraction from ideal living or a form of progress in futility? Responses to these questions shall lead us to a point where possible conclusions would be drawn on the reason why honey has turned bitter.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The era of myths has been variously described as the pre-logical time in human history when people believed in gods and goddesses, whose existence and powers were merely figments of the human imagination. Popular understanding views this to mean that myths are untrue and without any historical backing, Anyacho (2005), as quoted by Okwuosa, Onah, Nwaoga and Uroko (2017).

In another notion, Okpewho (1983) postulates that the real basis of myth is not thought, but feeling. He believes that in it, the sensible present is so great that everything else dwindles before it. Hence, it formed part of the unwritten codes of human behaviour written in people's hearts and transmitted from one generation to another unbroken. As this was done in the spirit of communal duty, people's sense of origin and future were formed and sustained. In African cosmology, myths are referred to as a primitive form of psychology which is also popular among the Igbo ethnic group in southern Nigeria. The Mammy Water myth has been the soul of religion and culture in Oguta lake. It has over the years conditioned their worldview and strengthened their community norms and values but socially, religiously as people.

To Okwuosa, Onah, Nwaoga and, Uroko (2017), the myth of Mammy Water creates the spirit of consciousness in the lives of Oguta people, as she serves as their daily companion from underneath the lake. She is revered at all times by the people of the region, at birth when people are happy and at the death when they are mourning, they also invoke her intervention. Accused persons of any form of anomaly swear in her name to prove their innocence while the guilty dread mentioning it. The belief is

that wherever her shrine is enthroned, the place and the people involved must be pure and honest. Hence her ministers, Eze Ugo (the priest), Eze Nwanyi (the priestess) and Dibia Mmiri (water herbalists) in order to be effective must avoid evil. They cannot divinise anything if they commit evil or work effectively for an evil person. Evil blinds them from seeing the gods. They conclude that when her ordinances such as: not fishing in the lake on particular days, not fighting within the territory of the lake, etc. are strictly adhered to, The Mammy Water myth brings sanity against any form of criminality, sexual immortality or violence in the region.

Similarly, scholars have explored myth belief systems in many communities and linkages among people of Cross River and have maintained that the people possess special animals or vegetation that they have bonded with. According to Percy Amaury Talbot (1923),

> This came with the ability to take the form of the animal, plants, or trees through a projection of the individual's consciousness which can happen at great distances such as from one's home to an entity in the wild. The ability is usually first gotten through medicine. Sometimes these animals may have protected or saved the community before the bond. It is forbidden for members of such lineages to harm or harvest the animals, plants, or trees they have bonded with or allow others to do so because they are considered kin (p. 88).

Similar practices have been recorded in Yache tribal communities in Cross River, where they have a tradition of environmental stewardship of a tree, where a dead body of a king can be kept for 7 days before internment based on totemism and religious beliefs. Also, a study in Obanliku, northern Cross River, found black python population thriving, they are counted as totems there. And as such, the reptiles are protected hence they are revered (John & Nnadozie 2021).

Appiah-Opoku (2007) observes that local people have developed a variety of resources management practices and approaches that continue to exist in tropical Africa, Asia, South America and other parts of the world. He opined that "the contributions of indigenous and local myth belief systems towards a better understanding of natural resources and its sustainable use and management has been documented in the scientific and grey literature in many domains: biodiversity conservation and wildlife management, customary marine resource management, rural development and agroforestry, traditional medicine and health, impact assessment; and natural disaster preparedness and response".

It is no doubt that Nigeria is engulfed by negative publicity in many aspects. Prominent among the bad news attributed to the country is her youth, trapped in her acculturated association to cybercrime popularly called "Yahoo Yahoo". It has become more worrisome as perpetrators also called "Yahoo boys" have resorted to a myth called Yahoo plus(spiritual connotation). According to Tade (2013), Yahoo boys are youths involved in cybercrime using electronic e-mails. This social tag originated via the mode employed by yahoo boys in defrauding, which involves sending sinister and deceptive e-mails using 'Yahoo mail'. Alubo (2011) as quoted by Tade (2013) informs us that the web has created a platform for fraudsters to engage in advance-fee-fraud via the sending of spam e-mails. This act, he notes, is called 419, and the perpetrators are called yahoo boys. They typically utilize free e-mail accounts (e.g., Yahoo or Hotmail) to communicate with their targets (Dyrud 2005; Smith 2007; Tanfa 2006). This is made possible owing to the availability of e-mail extractors (Adomi and Igun 2008).

However, Tade (2013) opined that the unrestrained celebration of materialism in Nigeria without an equal platform for all to reach their desired goal may have a profound effect on youth deviation into seeking fast wealth via cybercrime (cyber spiritualism). The socio-economic climate encourages excessive individualism and diminishes we-feelings. He maintains that corruption plays an important role in cybercrime as Nigerian youths are socialised into corruption by the penchant for looting public funds by the political class. Tade (2013), concludes that: "Unbridled corruption and the broadcast of wealth in public glare may have produced the wrong psyche in the youths, making them jettison hard work and embrace shortcuts to making money. As chances of getting employment become slimmer in Nigeria, a less risky but high-profit act (cybercrime) may germinate and be nurtured"

Similarly, Adeniran (2008) and Tade and Aliyu (2011) claim that the emergence of the yahoo boys subculture in Nigeria could be linked to the failure of political leadership and pervasive corruption. Trade(2013) describes yahoo plus as a cybercrime strategy that blends spiritual elements with internet surfing to enhance victimisation rates on the web which he referred to as"Cyber spiritualism".This involves the procurement and use of mystical, spiritual and supernatural powers by yahoo boys to cast a spell on their victims. Through this method, victims become hypnotised and, without objection, offer their treasures (products and money) to the fraudsters. The 'plus' in yahoo plus implies the addition of spiritual ingredients to yahoo yahoo.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted Joseph Campbell's concept of monomyth (one myth) and other approaches whereby empirical evidence will be drawn from historical research, interview and observations. However, monomyth is a theory that sees all mythic narratives as variations of a single great story. This theory is based on the observation that a common pattern exists beneath the narrative elements of most great myths, regardless of their origin or time of creation. Campbell borrowed the term "Monomyth" from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake.* He also made good use of Carl Jung's theories on the structure of the human psyche and evolved through time to become a strong believer in the psychic unit of mankind and its poetic expression through mythology. Campbell, however, made use of the concept to express the idea that the entire human race can be viewed as engaged in the effort of making the universe "transparent to transcendence" showing that underneath the world of phenomena lies an external source which is constantly pouring its energies into this world of time, suffering and ultimately death. However, to achieve this task, one must speak about things that existed before and beyond words, a seemingly impossible task, and the solution to which lies in metaphors found in myths. It is worthy to note that these metaphors are statements that point beyond themselves into the transcendent. Campbell often described mythologies as having a fourfold function. It is the awakening of a sense of awe before the mystery of being. According to Campbell, the absolute mystery of life, what he called transcendent reality, cannot be captured directly in words or images. Symbols and mythic metaphors on the other hand point outside themselves and into what reality. They are what Campbell calls "being statements" (p. 35), and their enactment through ritual can be given to the practitioner a sense of that ultimate mystery as an experience. Mythological symbols touch and exhilarate centers of life beyond the reach of reason. The first function of mythology is to reconcile

making consciousness to the *mysteriumtremendum et fascinans* of this universe as it is (p. 36).

Cosmological function: this explains the shape of the universe for pre-modern societies, myth also functioned as a proto-science, offering explanations for the physical phenomenon that surrounds and affects their lives, such as the change of seasons.

Sociological function: This validates and supports an already established social order. Ancient societies were compelled to conform to an existing social order if they were to survive at all. This is because they evolved under "pressure" from necessities much more intense than what is obtainable in modern society. Mythology confirmed that order and enforced it by reflecting it into the stories themselves, often analyzing how the order arrived from divine intervention. Campbell often referred to these "conformity" myths as the "right-hand path" to reflect the brain's left hemisphere's abilities for logic, order and linearity. Together with these myths, however, he observed the existence of "left-hand path", mythic patterns like the "Hero's Journey" which are revolutionary in character in that they demand from the individual a surpassing strength of social norms and sometimes even morality.

Pedagogical function: this guides a person through different stages in life. As an individual traverses life, many psychological challenges will be encountered. The myth may serve as a guide for a successful transition through stages of one's life. Furthermore, Campbell's conception of myth was by no means static and his works analyzed in precise detail. How mythologies evolved through time, reflecting the realities in which each society has to adjust. But basically, he views myth as the highest form

of a culture's idea and beliefs because, regardless of the degree one is interfacing within a society, they are all existing or functioning in the same symbolic field, the most suitable field is dependent on the common experience of people in a certain community. We posit here clearly based on the analysis above that the sociological function of a myth best describes *Kabangatende* of the Obudu.

KABANGATENDE AND DISCOURSE

The story of the myth of Kabangatende, sometimes called "Kabanga", spread through space and evolved through time among the Obudu people. It can be broken down from different perspectives based on the writer's social structures and environmental activities. It is with no doubt that with the evolution of science, there has been a housecleaning of beliefs. Many African myths and practices such as the rain dance, preservation of the cadaver of a sage on top of a tree for days before internment, complete shaving of hair of a widow and putting on black clothes for one year to indicate loss of a husband, playing of wooden drums at obsequies and the wish for a bird to deposit its droppings on one's clean, ironed clothes which signify luck are going into extinction. But some are still significantly prevalent to date in our culture. The myth of Kabangatende of Obudu is one of such. The myth has different names depending on the tribe, concerned. It is sometimes called "Kabanga" known as "Kabenketen" in the Obanliku language in the Bekwarra language, it is called Agburumgu. This myth presents an image of the positive effects of the practice leading to a consistent increase in money, social influence and political strength, however. It is said to be a symbol of affluence, nobility, auspiciousness, successfulness and prosperity with less effort.

The origin of kabagatende is traced to the Tiv of Benue State who named it Boyungu. The Tiv belong to a minor ethnic group in Nigeria, numbering about six million inhabitants according to the (2007) census. They have a rich history associated with their existence. They occupy the middle belt region of Nigeria, comprising states such as Benue, Taraba, Nassarawa and Plateau. They can also be found in Cameroun. They are predominantly Christians, although, Islam is also practiced among the minority of them. Tiv land stretches from Igede in Benue in the Southeast, Iyala, Gakem and Obudu in Cross River State, Chambam and Junkun of Taraba in the northeast and Idoma of Benue in the south. They are great farmers producing the largest deposit of all sizes and varieties of yam tubers, large volumes of tomatoes which are hard to see in West Africa, an alarming quantity of Mangoes, Oranges, Cassava, potatoes, maize, millet, etc. This won them a nickname as "The food basket of the nation". It is, however, believed that every crop under the sun can thrive on the soil of Benue. Some even lay claim to a river that runs right through a sizeable portion of the length of the state.

This background history ushers us to an interrogation. What is really existing behind the bountiful harvest recorded by Tiv farmers? Is it the fertile soil as claimed? While Joseph Campbell sees myth as the highest form of a culture's ideology, Tiv farmers see it as the highest means of agricultural productivity. Because of their interest in large-scale farming, they make use of kabangatende, known as "Boyungu" in Tiv, to make this desire realistic. Notably, it is said that producers of varieties of Yam tubers in ZakiBiam were sacrificing human hair gotten from a barber's shop at the close of work to rest assured of good harvest, the same ritual abounds in every agricultural product. Some of the Obudu people who had no interest in formal education fled their homes in fear of being compelled to acquire western education, to different locations. Some traveled to the famous Zaria in Kaduna State, others to Ajaokuta in Kogi state, some towed the route of Owo in Ondo State, others find themselves in Benue state, where they came in contact with these large scale farmers and their Boyungu practice. However, in their quest to return home with at least a trade if not a certificate in order not to be classified as monumental failures by their parents upon return, they decided to work for the Tiv farmers. After several years of farming alongside the Boyungu Myth practice to perfection, some began to advocate for a return home. In honour of dedication to work, some were given Kabanga as a souvenir, while others were traced back to Obudu by the women who fell in love with them because of their farming strength. It is worthy of note that both men and women can be in possession of Kabanga. However, the presence of this myth in Obudu recorded some alarming discoveries. One man decided to introduce a new ritual of sacrificing human blood to it instead of human hair as was the practice in ZakiBiam. This is how it came about to signify monetary luck and became a money magnet.

According to Ogar (2000), it is not known if this phenomenon is an object, a liquid, powder or a living creature. All that is known about it is that it exists in Obudu. Protagonists of the myth believe that it can be owned as property, some say that it can be preserved by swallowing and stored in the human stomach, while others believe that it can be hidden in a pot or box and kept in the owner's private room, (p. 127). There are also very strong speculations that it cries when hungry and to quench the hunger, there must be the spilling of human blood, hence the frequent loss (death) of the possessor's children or relatives or wife. Those who own "*Kabanga*" normally have good fortune coming their way. If he is a farmer, he will have a bumper harvest every season. If he is a trader, his annual turnover

will always be heavy. Whatever a possessor sets out to do as a means of livelihood, the sky will indeed be his limit (p. 128).

Furthermore, an example may provide a more concrete understanding of this phenomenon. Chief UshieIgali, who claims to have once seen *Kabanga* has this to say:

> Look, it is a very proud creature. It is always bluffing and making Iyanga; its shape and appearance are exactly that of a doll baby, and the size is about 6-8cm. it looks like a very small human being, with small white teeth like those of a bat. The eyes are constantly rolling and the little lips are broadly fixed in a perpetual smile. It shrinks like a baby whenever it is hungry for human blood ... and he continues, "as a young boy, I lived with a certain family in Itikib Village, Ohong, Obudu; it happened that one certain New Yam Festival day, a man named Undie Agog went to visit an in-law, as it is the practice during festivities, in Betuwel village also in Obudu. At night, when the in-law was out of the house, the visitor made away with a box from one of the rooms to his village in Ohong. A couple of days had passed when the host noticed that the usual familiar sound of a crying creature had suddenly seized from its location. He became apprehensive and suspicious and quickly went to the room, only to discover that the box had vanished. He created awareness of the sudden disappearance of his box. Soon after news spread all around the village and to villagers beyond that a very serious theft had occurred in Betukwel. But it took some weeks before things began to unfold. Meanwhile, back in Ohong, Undie, instead of taking his loot to his own house, rather, he went and hid it in his brother's (Adalikwu) house Adalikwu was married to Amu, and he

was blessed with children. Unknown to Adalikwu, his brother had hidden something in his house. One unfaithful night, he heard some strange shrieking of a creature within the confines of his house. Fear gripped him but he summoned the courage to search his apartment for the unfamiliar intruding guest. During the search, he discovered a strange box in one of the rooms; with panic, he dragged the box out of the room into the compound. Very soon, a scene had been created and people gathered. On opening the box, this little creature was seen by many and I was one of those who saw it live (p. 129).

However, information about the mysterious discovery in Ohong soon got to Betukwel. People who rushed down to their dismay that the box and its content was the same one stolen from them on the last New Yam festival day. The box and the "Kabanga" were quickly taken back to Betukwel but with paying the price and making necessary appeasements. Chief Igali concluded that before long Adalikwu and his two children died in rapid succession but the real person who stole it is still alive to this day.

CONFLICTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MYTH OF *KABANGATENDE CULT*

There have been continuing debates about whether or not society has actually become more violent. Popular accounts describe a changed world. One in which the idyllic community of the 1950s has given way to a violent society characterized by drugs, sexual assaults on children, robbery and killing in neighbourhood, Violence in school corridors(Warr1994). The quest in human nature to find more possible reasons, in addition to Warr's submission to conflict is what paves way for the myth of *kabangatende* as a grave generator of conflict. The presence of this myth in a

family does not only rob and destroy a sense of connection and camaraderie but also, is brutal to the joy that a healthy relationship can bring. Even the theory of social control of Shaw and McKay(1942), which ensures that members of a family and the society at large, do not harm each other cannot contend with the conflict of interest associated with the myth of *Kabangatende cult*. A possessor of this mythical artifact is always confronted by contenders who are members of the same family. This can prove to be very challenging as a current possessor is never ready or willing to pass it onto the next person even on account of an initial mutual agreement on the duration a custodian should possess it. As such, prolonged possession leads to bitter and vicious squabble, petty jealousy and rivalry between siblings. These often end up in physical and spiritual battles such as, manipulations, deception, and confusion, suicidal threats escalating from the bedroom to compound, spreading to public functions and with the use of weapons. In a conference of Catholic Bishops, held in the United States of America (1994), a priest declared:

> Our families are torn by violence, our communities are destroyed by violence, and our faith is tested by violence... We have the obligation to respond. Beyond the violence in our home, is the violence in our hearts, hostility, hatred, despair and indifferent attitude are at the heart of a growing culture of violence (p. 12).

Extrapolating from the citation above, one can affirm that family harmony provides a sense of belonging and a strong feeling of security, but when conflicts that breed violence arise, it threatens that security. However, it is worthy of note that conflict theorists suggest that it is a positive force in society and human groups must handle it in productive ways. Spread (1974) described the informal mechanism that traditional community and family structures offered for the management of conflict thus:

> In the extended or multi-generational household, any conflict between siblings could be mediated by others who were not as intensely involved. Neighbourhoods also offer ready access to concern others who could assist with a family or other disputes... But, lacking the support of concerned others; disputants may use violence in an attempt to achieve resolution (p. 22).

In the case of *kabangatende*, the violent impulse toward a contender is always uncontrollable. When manifested in public, which is often the case, no matter the persuasion from concern others in pursuit of a peaceful resolution between siblings, no contender is ever ready to explain in clear terms the subject or item under dispute, even at gunpoint, none offers explanations to even a close associate. This affirms the fact that *Kabangatende* breeds disharmony and confusion in a united family. However, siblings tend to fall out in such a bitter fashion to an extent that a brother can stop speaking to a sister for years, and they will probably never speak again and nobody can unify the rift which appears in the family as life wears on. Sometimes, a parent, in a quest to bring back sanity, tends to favor one child over another in her judgment. This decision from parents as to who possesses the myth generates cracks in their relationship adding to a life of dispute, unpleasantness which trickles down through the generation. This is because siblings are born with this feeling that each child deserves an equal amount of parental love and acceptance.

Nevertheless, on an event where this myth is attending a near successful transition, a prospective possessor, to be in total control of the myth, indulges by instructions in divers human blood sacrifices. These include thus: the sudden

death of siblings widely loved and cherished, maybe through a ghastly auto-crash, plane crash, brief illness, communal clash, surgery of an inflated ailment, cardiac arrest and accidental discharge of arms among others. According to one of the village heads who accepted an interactive section with us: "The mysterious death of a sibling or two in a family as a form of ritual for the transmission of *kabangatende* from a possessor to a prospective possessor is never carried out directly by prospective possessor but the choice of who dies is strictly his prerogative".Having laid this foundation, should the transition achieve a complete success from one sibling to another, the law of "twist of faith" sets in as the life of the predecessor will become problematic. He would brutally face career difficulties, financial set-back, health scares and socio-economic degeneration, thereby reducing his immediate family to a harsh struggling ground for survival, languishing in grinding poverty, and destitution. When one is dispossessed of Kabangatendé, he or she will begin to wallow in seemingly endless misery due to dejection, which most times lead to a life-claiming disease.

Ironically, a possessor of this myth hardly enjoys a comfortable lifestyle worth his accumulated fortunes. He could be comparatively better, yet far from the real sense of comfort because no matter how perfectly he pretends to be at peace with himself during the day, it is an all-time spiritual battle and sacrifices at night. Incidentally, a possessor seems not to have realized he was simply creating an unfriendly social atmosphere for himself where he could not enjoy his wealth while indulging in his inconsiderate accumulative spree. As such, a man naturally born in a commitment to life, liberty and in pursuit of happiness, will rather be hunted by solitude, death, imprisoned by mental slavery and with a feeling of uncertainty. Those who cannot come to terms with their present predicament, or better still, those

who cannot face the shame that accompanies the unwanted law of "diminishing returns" will resort to a radical decision of suicide. When this occurs, the accumulated wealth acquired through *kabangatende* will never be inherited by anyone related to the family but can only be sold to a distant person. Most of the time, the properties are inhabitable and remain in perpetual abandonment in a fast and furious dilapidating fashion.

CONCLUSION

This study has viewed the myth of kabangatende as a peculiar way of encompassing reality to explore the society, which is rooted in far past but manifesting its extraordinary survivability and revivability in the present, among the Obudu people. The study focused on the imperative characteristics of the social myth whose request under modern stringent conditions has remained on the rise. The study also analyzed the notion of violence in families by the modern age which has not discouraged the functional field of the mythological consciousness among the Obudu indigenes. The study has emphasized the concept of uncertainty associated with the myth and its ability to contribute historically to the growth of modern society. It has become almost impossible for the youth of Obudu to resist her quest to possess this phenomenon, even though it is obvious that they struggle to effectively manage the processes successfully.

This study examined the myth of kabangatende as an attempt to, firstly, reconstruct the history of Obudu from an oral source and, secondly, to establish that myths, as the embodiment of philosophical reflection, are embedded and transmitted in relation to ritual practices hence their efficacy among custodians. Horton (1987) places myth and rituals in the general

corpus of experience where he maintains that there are capable of exhibiting a logical and consistent structure. The study has established that Obudupeople is not oblivious of the fact that kabanga is a revolutionary myth that militates against humans but they duels in it as a means to beat cultural identity in contemporary society and to acquire false socio-political powers by creating temporal wealth. This life of illusion lived by the custodians of the myth is caused by corruption in Nigeria, a country that has made access to food, security, wealth creation employment, functional quality education to her citizen, a mirage.

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