

Folk Media: Indigenous Learning Systems and Instructional Methodology

Robert W. Nicholls

A People Centered Model of Development

Is it easier to learn about a people's philosophy through a study of their arts, or vice versa? I posed this question in the penultimate paragraph of an article comparing West African ideas of sociocultural time to musical timing in their dance performances (Nicholls 1992a:180). In this essay, I explore the philosophy and the art of the Igede of Nigeria within the framework of their indigenous learning systems. An examination of folk media and their uses is important both in itself, and for the potential instructional methodology that can be extracted from it. This essay proceeds from two independent suppositions. One is that a model of communication processes and instructional techniques can be extrapolated from the learning systems contained in indigenous music and dance. The other is that music and dance provide viable pedagogical tools in which indigenous media can be utilized to develop model educational programs. My discussion here focuses on the public education systems aimed at rural development. I propose, however, what I call a "pedagogical methodology" that is not only tied to the traditional milieu but also carries the possibility of meeting varied educational needs—modern as well as traditional—for example, within formal lessons, training videos, theatrical performances, and radio or television transmissions. Although my discussion here focuses on public education systems aimed at rural development, an abstraction such as a "pedagogical methodology" is not tied to the traditional milieu but can be utilized within various educational situations. For example, it could be applicable to formal lessons, training videos, theatrical performances, and radio or television transmissions. Because the proposed methodology is adaptable to the indigenous sensibility and utilizes frames of reference and conceptual modes already familiar to rural populations, I believe that it is likely to be more effective than foreign models. The model elicited has

relevance to formal, non-formal, and informal instruction. Its most valuable application lies in its potential to serve as a developmental tool in African nations, as an indigenous instructional methodology that utilizes familiar folk media to motivate village populations and assist them in regional development.

It is my contention that international donor agencies have not taken enough interest in, nor consideration of, the philosophy, art, and indigenous learning systems of the rural communities they are charged with developing. Despite lip service from the World Bank, USAID, and other development institutions dating back to the early 1970's as well as E.F. Schumacher's notion of appropriate technology (Schumacher 1973) and Michael M. Cernea's endorsement of village level activity a decade later (Cernea 1983), not enough has been done to stimulate appropriate instruction for rural populations. Folk media has been under-utilized within rural development projects. Moreover, indigenous learning systems have not been closely analyzed and systematized as a pedagogical technique, nor have they been integrated with audio-visual media, whether indigenous or electronic, to disseminate development messages.

While development experts stress that there is a need for viable mechanisms by which people living in rural communities in Africa can become involved in the development process, some folklorists and anthropologists argue that in the process of development, rural African communities also need to maintain their historic roots and cultural identities (e.g., Brokensha et al. 1980; Nettle 1985; Schadler 1979). This essay suggests that two problems, loss of culture and inappropriate development campaigns, can be resolved in such a way that they remedy each other. And, it argues that cultural conservation and rural development can and should go hand in hand. A people-centered model envisages decentralized development approaches which would empower rural populations by enabling them to develop new systems of instruction grounded in indigenous communicative and aesthetic modes such as music and dance. In this model, indigenous culture could be utilized to optimize approaches to development and facilitate the integration of technology.

During my tenure as faculty of the Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria, I conducted field research among the Igede of Benue State. I explored the role that traditional music and dance serves in disseminating information, skills, and values and the indigenous methodology by which individuals acquired competency in music and dance. The Igede of Nigeria (formerly known as Egede) occupy the Oju local government area of Benue State bordering the Anambra State at the southwest and the Cross River State at the southeast. As part of the old colonial Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, Oju used to be part of the Idoma division, but it obtained its own divisional status in February 1976 following

the reorganization of the local government administration. While there is some cultural overlap between the Igede and Idoma ethnic groups; Igede history, language, and culture are distinct to a considerable degree. Some traditional associations are common to both peoples such as the Achuku secret society (a governing-by-consensus organization comprised of the men of a village), the Anjenu possession cult, and the Ogirinye warrior association (Oglinye in Idoma). In addition to these commonalties and differences, I believe it should be noted that the Igede and the Idoma have cultural ties to other ethnic groups in the region. For example, the celebration of the annual New Yam Festival, the use of the slit-drum as a signal instrument, the sharing of kola nut to foster cordial relations, and the funeral ceremony as a dominant rite of passage are found among the Igede, Idoma, Iyala, Igala, Iyachi, Ukele, and Igbo ethnic groups.

Eliciting an Indigenous Pedagogical Model

An examination of the Igede performing arts and their role as educational and communication vehicles serve to illustrate their functions in revealing the hidden, ordering complexity, symbolically recapitulating ideas, stimulating thought, and mediating oppositions (see Nicholls 1992b). In his studies of the acquisition of vocational competency in Ivory Coast, Milton Adams recognizes that indigenous pedagogical methods have relevance and application to modern Africa. He contrasts indigenous pedagogy to the Western model and proposes that the traditional model more closely resembles “progressive” educational methodology. He writes:

It is here, in its day to day practice that one finds educational principles which appear quite similar to those advocated today by the more progressive educators....[Students] learned systematically from their own peers as well as from accomplished masters; the rhythm of instruction was linked to the natural pace of the learner; students gained practical on-the-job experience through productive work assignments; learning was flexible and inter-disciplinary, combining technical skills training with moral instruction. (1982a:3)

Elsewhere Adams maintains that “correct behavior is the object of training and is learned through the process of direct observation, modeling, and active participation in social activities” (1982b:5). In my own research on the traditional instructional processes among the Igede—for which I used direct observation, probing interviews, questionnaires, and recordings of indigenous music—I extracted a range of pedagogical principles that were similar to those listed by Adams, such as active participation, direct observation, self-directed learning, learning in a group setting, peer learning,

imitation, role modeling, and expert instruction (Nicholls 1992b). In order to ascertain how they learned their musical skill, I administered a questionnaire to a small sample of twenty-three musicians in the central Igede area. With over three-quarters of all the respondents (77.3%) claiming imitation as a major means of learning their musical ability; whether singing, dancing, or drumming, it can be concluded that imitation is one of the common methods of learning among the Igede. Although expert instruction—an older master teaching a younger novice—is not usually awarded a high priority in the literature concerning indigenous African educational methods, as many as 45.5% of the Igede respondents (60% of male drummers) I interviewed claimed expert instruction as a means of learning. Among the Igede, learning between peers also takes place. Relative to imitation, in the “pure” sense, peer learning is a unilateral process initiated by the imitator. However, in Igede learning contexts, an expert might demonstrate his techniques for the explicit purpose of being imitated by a learner. In such a case, a bilateral relationship exists closely approximating instruction; thus the boundary between imitation and expert instruction is blurred.

I was also able to observe similarities to progressive methodology. For example, progressive educational thought maintains that values are not learned by “learning about” something in a detached, verbatim fashion, but by going through experiences which stimulate emotional responses, thereby affecting the core of the personality (Nicholls 1985:115). Such experiences are generated in the process of an Igede public ritual because such rituals provide vehicles by which the principles, values, and qualities thought to be crucial to the welfare of the community are expressed. At a funeral ceremony, for example, fundamental values about kinship, the ancestors, tradition, and the Igede perception of life and death are communicated, examined, and negotiated. Music and dance, *inter alia*, provide the media by which worldview is made salient to a community. Igede ideology is not simply theoretical or contemplative, it is also manifested in the actions by which it is expressed. In Marshall MacLuhan’s terms, the medium does in effect become the message.

In Africa, folklore serves many functions, but in many instances, an element of instruction is involved. Within the many and varied African oral traditions, a large amount of societal knowledge is preserved within sculpture, masks, pictograms, murals, dance, songs, music, poetry, and proverbs. Folklore is a source of authoritative information and an important channel for public communication. It can contribute to and highlight the integration of society by expressing social organization, validating institutions, portraying values, and promoting group cohesion (Nicholls 1992b). In communication studies, the term “folk media” is used to encompass the visual

arts, drama, oral narratives and other oratorical forms, as well as music and dance. For Paul Mundy and Megan Lloyd-Laney:

folk media are the forerunners of mass media. Like the mass media they are used primarily for entertainment, but may also promote education, social values, and cultural practices. Each culture has its own forms: song, dance, puppetry, festivals, plays, story telling, debates, proverbs, parades, and so on. (1992:2)

Njoku Awa argues that orators and bards (equivalent to the terms “raconteurs” and “folklorists”) perform all the functions attributed to Western media, such as surveillance (sharing knowledge of the environment); correlation of the parts of society (explication and interpretation of events occurring in society from the perspective of a cultural looking glass); transmission of the social heritage from one generation to another (socializing new members and inducting them into the secrets of society); and entertainment (the stock in trade of all storytellers, singers, and balladeers everywhere) (1988:141). Frank Okwu Ugboajah coins the term “Oramedia” to describe “traditional/folk media” and “informal media or oral media.” He states:

Oramedia...are functional and utilitarian by way of definition. Their most important purpose is to provide teaching and initiation, with the object of imparting traditional aesthetic, technical, social, ethical and religious values. (1983:22)

Ugboajah focuses on visual means of communication. Historically, among the Akan of Ghana, for example, the news of a birth was communicated to a husband by the *ogyrafo* (traditional midwife) by tying a piece of white cloth around the wrist. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, the *edan*, the chief’s staff, is a symbol of his office. Anyone waking up in the morning to find the *edan* at his door must report to the chief’s court immediately (1983:26). Similarly, Judith Lynne Hanna’s (1987) research among the Ubakala Igbo utilizes a theory of dance as nonverbal communication. A. Babs Fufunwa, the Nigerian educationalist, also emphasizes the value of African dance as a vehicle of physical, emotional, creative, and social development (1974:206). A major function of masks in Africa is to communicate social mores.

Music as Communication

The Igede people commonly form music and dance societies primarily to ensure that festivals and public rituals are celebrated appropriately. Many ceremonies such as funerals and marriages are postponed to the dry season

when there are fewer demands on farmers' time. The sponsorship of dance festivals is a means of acquiring power and prestige; clans and villages vie with each other in direct contests usually of grandiosity and artistic skill. Igede music and dance performances often consist of several inter-related phenomena: verbal and song texts, music, dance, visual arts, masquerades, and ritual action. Verbal texts including proverbs and wise-sayings may be relayed through talking instruments such as slit-drums or antelope horns. In a non-musical context, such speech-reproducing instruments may be used to inform the community of the death of an elder. When secret societies meet they may issue proclamations to that effect, or during emergencies such as bush fires, they may be used to issue commands and warnings. During musical occasions talking instruments greet, praise, and encourage dancers (Nicholls 1993a). The form the music takes is conditioned by the aesthetic sensibility of the Igede which demands rhythmic complexity and musical pluralism such as polyrhythms and polyphony. The music is instrumental in setting the mood, creating an atmosphere that is complementary to the particular context, whether pathos, humor, solemnity, frivolity, or awe. As such, it motivates learners and creates an attitudinal "set" for information dissemination.

Songs

Historically, songs serve a number of purposes, such as disseminating traditional wisdom, commenting on local news, relaying history, instilling pride and solidarity, as well as teaching, testing, and storing information. They critique local action and personages, serve as mnemonic devices, and/or provide mediums for thinking through ideas. Songs are frequently performed before and during the recitation of oral narratives, acting as advance organizers and orienting the listeners to the story's themes. The songs of adolescent peer groups initiate young people in the mores and conventions of adult society. The Igede relay history within several epic songs, for example, "Egoh Nya Igede" ("The History of Igede") is sung by Micah Ichigbeh (Ogede 1991). Translations of Igede songs show that they are interspersed with references to local modes of exchange and production: farming, hunting, markets, and domestic labor. They often carry a moral message and decry anti-social tendencies, such as laziness, selfishness, promiscuity, and willful pride, while they extol positive virtues, such as hard work, modesty, moderation, and self-discipline. The songs of women's music ensembles, such as the Imwo, Ihih, and Ogbete associations, often feature forms of social critique and commentary. The biting satire contained in these songs serve as vehicles for social regulation (Nicholls 1985:99). Praise songs, on the other hand, are often used to commend an individual for noteworthy efforts, and encourage emulation.

Dance

Among the Igede, singing is usually coextensive with dance and many songs are performed in a dance context. Moreover, within the Ihih, Imwo, and Ogbete associations of the Igede, dance provides a special license for social commentary which might not be uttered in any other context. In itself, dance may be described as social behavior. Among other things, it communicates the social standing of an individual within a community relative to age, sex, marital status, and prestige. As a medium of self-expression, dance can reveal a dancer's character traits, attitudes, aesthetic sensibility, physical condition, and mental poise. Igede dance is a complex nonverbal semiotic system. It orders experience and presents ideas in a summarized form. Dance stances, gestures, postures, and locomotion manifest worldview principles such as fertility, egalitarianism, innovation, respect for self and others, reciprocity, standards of conduct, and cultural integration. Dance also provides a forum for communication between individuals including admiration, derision, praise, and competitive rivalry. It offers an opportunity for impressing, wooing, confronting, and challenging while also providing a means for enhancing the dancer's social status. Dance demonstrates normative behavior in a variety of ways including: directly through role modeling, retrospectively through recapitulation, anticipatorily through rehearsal, and symbolically through metaphors for model behavior. The Igede dance ring metaphorically symbolizes community and cooperation. Unison dances illustrate harmonious teamwork. Solo dances may demonstrate stamina and skill, emphasizing competition and individual achievement. For Hanna, "dance is an effective communications medium—it functions as a multi-dimensional phenomenon codifying experience and capturing the senses." Moreover, "dance has the unique potential of going beyond many other audio-visual media of persuasion" (1987:26).

Masquerades

Masked dancing is concerned with the enactment of power. Manifesting traditional norms, masquerades invest ceremonies with ancestral authority. The Igede have a strong masking tradition. But, unlike the Ekpo masquerades of the Annang or the Oto Muo of the Igbo, Igede masquerades are persuasive rather than coercive vehicles of social regulation. Masquerades are self-contained entities which serve to legitimize certain activities. Each masquerade projects particular values and qualities. The Obemu masquerade expresses joy and thanksgiving. Ijege symbolizes the endurance of truth and beauty. Akatangka characterizes dissolution and anarchistic qualities. Ogirinye extols celerity and symbolizes the mastery of the spirit over death.

Onyantú with its Janus-faced mask represents dualistic conceptualizations. The large Aitah masquerade exhibits the attributes of a great warrior, such as vigor and courage. And, the female Aitah (worn by a male dancer) demonstrates guile and dexterity. In a sense, a mask is a mascot that enhances the status of a men's association and symbolizes the group's authority.

Ritual

In a discussion of instructional methodology, ritual might at first seem to be a rather esoteric area. However, it is difficult to overlook ritual when discussing folklore. In ritual, music, song texts, and dance come together within a performance frame. For the Igede, ritual arts represent the epiphany of artistic form to which other more practical or social arts aspire. Rituals provide a forum for intensive communication and education. Igede Agba, the Igede New Yam Festival, is traditionally a time when elders instruct children, and when discussions about community development take place. The movements of a ritual masquerade as it dances serve as a metaphor for cosmic order. And, by a process of proxemic transfer, human society is imprinted with this order. A ritual such as the Igede funeral fosters social interaction, reinforces the beliefs that underlie society, and acts as a vehicle for experimentation. As discussed by Victor Turner, a ritual is a period of emotional stock-taking within an arena of renewal. It stimulates analysis and re-evaluation of core values, allows for the modification of underlying protostructures, and works to fashion the collective identity and to reinvigorate the social process (1984:91). Elsewhere (Nicholls 1992a:173–76), I have explored how rituals demonstrate both convergent/conservative and divergent/creative characteristics. In addition to reinforcing indigenous conceptions, they stimulate innovation by involving the creative imagination. Thus rituals can be agents of change and can help inculcate new ideas and behaviors.

Indigenous Information Processing

The way people organize knowledge and process ideas is culturally based. Indigenous methods of instruction are more effective than are foreign models because they are more emotionally acceptable, more efficient, and better matched to the way people of a particular community think. The following discussion works within a framework of learning models developed by educationalists of the Cognitive Theorist school. Cognitive Theorists, such as Piaget, Jerome Bruner, and David Ausubel, focus on how people organize and process information (e.g. Piaget 1977; Ausubel et al. 1978; Bruner 1971). Although these educational psychologists are concerned with

concept formulation and the cognitive structures of the individual rather than the cultural fund of knowledge that is the concern of folklorists, their conceptualization of “schema,” “schemata,” and the “ideational scaffolding” of cognition is useful in that it delineates the process by which humans construct a cognitive map of the world. Bruner argues that a theory of instruction should be based on a theory of learning because successful instruction should mirror the way that people conceptualize their frames of references and the way they process ideas. Constructivism, one of the dominant learning theories of our era, is particularly concerned with how people construct knowledge (Duffy et al. 1993). Among other methods of associating ideas, numerical organization of concepts permeate all levels of human cognition and is a universal trait. For example, a phrase such as “ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country” represents a rhetorical dualism, while “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” is a triplet. Within specific cultures more weight may be given to particular methods of such associative clustering (Nicholls 1992b). Dualisms are especially prevalent in Igede thought and are often presented in the form of contrasts, juxtapositions, and oppositions.

The Igede, like other societies, possess an organized and complex fund of knowledge which might be described as their worldview. The worldview of a people approximates the corpus of knowledge and beliefs that inform social behavior. This includes factual information, productive skills, metaphysical beliefs, attitudes, and organizing principles. People’s worldviews are reflected in their perceptions of their histories, sociopolitical structures, economic behaviors, and cultural expressions (Nicholls 1992a:148). Implicit in the notion of a fund of knowledge is that there are rules for the selection and organization of component elements. Thus analyzing and connecting are important aspects of the cognitive processing of ideas. Through analysis, a whole entity is separated into meaningful parts and attempts are made to understand the interrelationship of these parts. It involves identifying main ideas and key concepts, recognizing patterns, and classifying and finding sequences. Connecting involves determining or imposing relationships between the wholes that are being analyzed. It utilizes the methods of comparing and contrasting, looking for cause and effect relationships, and making inferences.

A knowledge system can be said to be comprised of “concepts” and “operations.” Concepts summarize and condense information by setting up equivalencies, grouping related items into discrete categories defined by the criterial attributes of their members. Operations describe the chains of reasoning by which concepts are cross-related in order to create further ideas. The constructivists’ model of a “semantic network” sets out to represent human memory structures and methods of associative referencing in the

form of a map or web composed of nodes (concepts or ideas) connected by links (statements of relationships) (Jonassen, et al. 1993). Emile Durkheim showed an early interest in generic notions of class and conceptual hierarchies and discussed symbolic organization in terms of the attraction of similar images, commingling of classes, resemblance, participation, and contagiousness (see Durkheim 1915). Benjamin Colby et al. state, "Durkheim thus raised questions of associative processes, of symbolic formation and function. At issues here is the logic, if it is logic, by which symbols are joined" (1981:431). In Education, cognitive activities such as classifying, sequencing, drawing analogies, identifying similarities and differences, determining cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, and drawing inferences, are described as higher order thinking skills.

Holism, Pluralism, Dualism, and Numerical Associations

In an attempt to describe their unified nature, the traditional folk cultures of the world are often referred to as "holistic." Divisions made in the Western world between sacred and profane, art and technology, religion and culture, and economic and political institutions are not really applicable in an African context because these areas intermesh and overlap. The term "holism" implies that the parts of a system are interrelated; each part manifests the characteristics of the whole. Marcel Griaule's study of the Dogon paved the way for holistic descriptions of African sociocultural systems. His encounter with the Dogon elder Ogotemeli in 1947 revealed a coherent metaphysics underlying the social order and all its cultural manifestations, including architecture and art (Griaule 1965). Scholars of African art, such as Margaret Thompson Drewal and Henry John Drewal (1987), Kris L. Hardin (1987), and Robert Farris Thompson (1974), point out that aesthetic criteria are directly related to the principles which people use to organize their lives. The Chomskian notion of "deep structure" whereby artistic domains are considered to be surface manifestations of underlying aesthetic structures represents a similar idea. For example, John Blacking describes the overall sound that emanates from the interaction between drums as the "surface pattern" of the music. He suggests that it expresses deep structures such as "concepts of individuality in the community, and of social, temporal, and spatial balance" (1973:28-30). Similarly, Marie Jeanne Adams (1973) finds that major structural principles, such as a dyadic-triadic set, underlie not only the textile design of the Suba, but also village organization, seating arrangements at formal negotiations, marriage, and gift exchange. These structural patterns are part of a larger system of Subanese thought.

In accordance with holistic approaches, indigenous African religions are often described as all-pervasive. For example, in reference to Idowu's

contention that Africans are “a people who in all things are religious,” James Ikande Uko writes:

Religion is at the root of Igede culture and it is the determining principle of their life. It is not an exaggeration to say that in traditional Igede, religion is life, and life religion. They engage religion in whatever they do—whether it be farming, fishing or hunting, drinking, eating or traveling. (1988:36)

The first impression of Igede religious beliefs is, however, not of a self-contained unitary system, but rather of a profusion of ideas. It is true that in many African cultures, holism has a tenuous relationship with pluralism. The latter term is equally appropriate in describing Igede knowledge systems. John O. Ikoni states:

The foreign observer who wishes to study Igede traditional religion will find himself faced with a veritable welter of objects of worship apportioned out among individuals and extended families on no very clearly defined principles. (1988:28)

A number of factors contribute to the multiplication of belief systems in Igedeland. These include animistic conceptualizations of multiple forces in the world and the fact that particular locations or families may have their own special deities. Because polytheistic systems can easily accommodate incoming ideas, beliefs that have emerged in different times and circumstances coexist.

A holistic scenario might seem more applicable if the Igede were predisposed towards monotheism rather than polytheism. However, like many African groups, they are traditionally monotheistic in the sense that they believe the creator God is supreme, but are polytheistic to the extent that in the intangible world of the spirit, various manifestations of spiritual power such as the spirit of the earth, ancestors, guardian deities, and other charms and medicines intercede in people's relationships with the divine. For the Igede, these spiritual forces are not so much separate from Ohe Oluhye, the Supreme God; rather they are canalizations of his power. It is as if a vital energy permeates all of existence and greater or lesser amounts of this power reside in various aspects of creation such as trees and rocks.

The notion of pluralism within holism is probably best exemplified by the African concept of rhythm. Rhythm, not synonymous with drum beating, is an organization of phenomena or events structured in time and/or space. While the parts exhibit the contrast arising from the novelty of their detail, the whole never loses the unity of the controlling pattern. An unvarying repetition destroys rhythm as surely as does a confusion of differences. A

state of balance exists, but rest does not; motion is as intrinsic to the notion of rhythm as it is to the dance of Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction and creation. A rhythmic orientation provides a sophisticated perception of life essences because rhythm is fundamental to existence. The world's processes are rhythmic—day follows night, the moon waxes and wanes, the seasons rotate. At the level of human physiology, rhythm prevails, as is exemplified by the beat of the heart and by inhaling and exhaling. At the sub-atomic level, rhythm is the one constant, while matter is described by physicists in terms of pulses, waves, and cycles.

Reflecting holism and unitary notions, the circle is a ubiquitous organizing principle in much of Africa. For the Igede, the dance ring is a consistent feature of communal ceremonies. The dance ring represents the unity and security of the lineage and village community. According to Hanna, "the circle appears as a metaphor for safety, solidarity, stability...reincarnation...peace and fertility" (1987:96). The circle dance is communal in scope and, in theory and often in practice, the whole community is included. Solo dancing also reflects unitary notions. But, whereas circle dances reflect communal unity, solo dances emphasize competitive instincts whereby individual dancers try to outdo one another. Within a solo dance (*ewoh-okpokpo*) an individual demonstrates physical and mental strength, stamina, concentration, and aesthetic sensitivity. During the funeral held at the Obohu meeting ground, respected senior members of the Ogirinye association, age mates of the deceased, take turns to honor the deceased by performing solo dances. A solo dancer enters the dance arena by authority of a cloth tied around his head, waist, or wrist. He might end his performance by throwing this cloth at the feet of a rival, a challenge calculated to intimidate or embarrass the recipient unless resolved within a dance performance. When a solo dancer enters the arena created by the dance ring, a metaphor of communal unity embracing individuality is created. The dances of the solo and circle dancers are different. Whereas the circle dancers move slowly around intoning an ostinato chorus, the solo dancer's movements are coordinated with rapid percussive patterns and are much more dynamic.

In addition to holism and pluralism, numerical associations such as dualism permeate Igede thought and are exemplified by such matches as binary opposition (opposed, but balancing polarities) or twinned pairs (matched according to similarity rather than opposition). Dualism has been noted by many scholars of African thought systems. For example, "cognitive anthropologists, French structuralists, and other scholars of symbolic behavior have found binary opposition to be a common way of conceptualizing" (Hanna 1987:104). In his studies of the Fang, James W. Fernandez (1966, 1973, 1977) was influential in establishing an awareness of dualistic distinction in West African categories, such as male/female and bush/village.

Barbara DeMott (1982) proposes that Dogon art is structured according to an underlying conceptual system that is discovered by analyzing relations between pairs of cultural phenomena through reversals, transformation, and other permutations. She classifies Dogon masks according to binary opposites such as male/female, realistic/abstract, predatory/non-predatory, and danced/non-danced characters. Herbert M. Cole and Chike C. Aniakor (1984) relate the structural dualisms they discovered in Igbo art (e.g. black/white, male/female, youth/age) to social relations, while emphasizing that these binary parts shift in meaning according to different contexts.

Dualism is apparent in Igede beliefs in the binary pairing of male and female; the world of the living (Ijalehe) and the world of the dead (Ijalegwu); the “good” god, Ohe Ogbadogogo, and the “bad” god, Ohe Onyobi; day and night; light and dark (as exemplified by Onyantú Janus masks and Adiya dancers); the village and the bush; purity and impurity; order and disorder; work and play; and earth and sky. Reflecting their dualistic orientation, the Igede see man as placed between two great powers—the Sky-God above (Ohe Oluhye) and the Earth-God below (Ohe-Oleji or simply Eji). The dualistic character of West African music is readily apparent. For example, rhythm consists of an oscillation between opposing circumstances (e.g. drumbeats and silence), and drum patterns themselves are repetitive. Similarly, call-and-response vocal (and instrumental) styles typical of the Igede are dualistic in construction. Surrogate speech reproduced on Igede talking instruments utilizes a binary system of high and low tones.

Tertiary conceptualizations also exist in the Igede worldview. An example is the grouping of three trees that comprise the shrine to Ohe Onyobi, the “bad god.” Three often appears in relation to funerals. For example, a corpse is seated for three days on the *agwurube* (bamboo platform) before interment. If the deceased was a warrior, a piece of *oriewu* (war rope) is cut into three, painted with camwood, and “thrown on the ground in front of the corpse as it is seated dressed up and ready for burial” (Idikwu 1976:30). A eulogy delivered on the day of burial opens with the line, “*Ihio! Ihio! Ihio! Ugbabwo ita ari nya onyi adirahu le...*” —“Honor! Honor! Honor! Three times is for the kingly child” (Idikwu 1976:26). During a funeral ceremony, each masquerade stages only three dances. And, tertiary rhythmic notions are manifested in music in triple time.

Nodes in the Web: Signifiers in the Igede Lexicon

Tied as they traditionally were to the organic environment, many Igede concepts and ideas are based in nature. Trees, for example, are especially important in Igede religious thought. Forests have meant security for the Igede. Each village has at its center an *ojiya* or sacred grove. With their roots

in the earth and branches in the sky, the Igede feel that trees have godly qualities. Joseph Okanga Adikpe talks of customs appertaining to the fruits of certain:

economic trees like bush mango, locust beans (*ino, iyeke*), oil-bean (*ajinyi*), whereby people are prevented from plucking God....They must fall on their own when ripe so that people can pick them at will. (1988:82)

The *unwu* (kapok) tree is a shrine to Akpang, the protector against witchcraft. The *ubwo* (fig) tree represents the elder god, Ohe Ogbadogogo, and acts as a shrine for the great God, Ohe Oluhye. When the *unwu* and *ubwo* are planted in a clump with an *ugbwilebwu* tree, they collectively comprise a shrine where Ohe Onyobi, the "bad god," can be appeased. Like the olive branch of the Middle East, the *utu* tree is a symbol of peace. In the case of war, anyone approaching with an *utu* branch is understood to be calling for peace.

Other major symbols and signifiers in the Igede lexicon consists of organic materials such as feathers, fibers, furs, horns, and porcupine quills. Certain kinds of woven cloth represent particular ideas. For example, *ejenta*, *george*, and *eturubabah* textiles are associated with bereavement and are used both as burial shrouds and as apparel for mourners. Their dual use as burial cloth and dance costume creates a powerful, if incongruous, conjunction. Masks are visual systems in their own right. The gaping/screaming mouth of the Ogirinye headpiece makes reference to war and death, while the image of the snake being beheaded that is superimposed on the Aitah mask of Obohu village refers to trophy head taking. Because such knowledge is secret, it is not easy to ascertain whether the Igede symbol system approaches the sophistication of Bamun script or the Nsibidi symbolic code of Ibibio peoples (manifested in pictograms, dance gestures, and costumes) (Macgregor 1909) or even whether separate codes are conceptualized as a single system. The Igede have a (rapidly declining) drum language and a system of signs encoded in certain leaves, furs, feathers, and so forth. Such items embody the *concepts* or *nodes* of Igede thought systems. A frond of Utu leaves, for example, represents peace, while the mane of a male goat symbolizes war.

Arnold Rubin argues that power materials such as claws, horns, and beaks when added to African sculpture signature elements which are more than metaphoric allusions as they actually transfer capabilities (1974:10). For the Igede, the line between symbol and reality is thinly drawn. When activated in a ritual context, symbols are believed to manifest the reality represented. In such instances, they become "power objects" or "power materials." For example, during dances calculated to cure a person of mental illness attributed to a wild possessing spirit known as Apuruja, the patient is decorated with *ojini*, *dowadowa*, and *okopi* leaves, and young palm leaves that are not yet green. The patient also holds an *ubeji* rod (pre-colonial money)

(Nicholls 1995:152). Other “power materials” include red *umu* feathers awarded for bravery, porcupine quills signifying valor, the *ehwong* wrist shield made of goat’s mane, raffia, animal horns, machetes, *oriwuwu* war rope, body-paint designs, masks, cloth, and foliage. Further, power symbols are embodied by talking-drum phrases, musical passages, song texts, and dance gestures. The *ogirigboh* (slit-drum), *opikeh* (bugle), *ijachi* (metal spear) and other accouterments of warrior societies contain by association aspects of the warrior’s control over life and death. The talking slit-drum is thought to be the voice of the ancestors and the sacrifice of a chicken on the *ogirigboh* on the night before a performance is thought to keep the tone sonorous.

Organizing Principles

How are ideas related to one another? If these visual symbols, song texts, dance movements, musical sounds, and physical objects represent the concepts or nodes of the Igede semantic network, how do they interact when juxtaposed? What is it they do and what is it they say about each other? In other words, what are the links or organizing principles by which they operate and how might the logic by which such items are juxtaposed, best be described? According to Paula Ben-Amos [Girshick], in analyses of symbolic classifications, scholars have noted at least two ways in which symbols come to have meaning: through associative clustering or binary opposition (1987:73).

Associative Clustering

A form of associative clustering with a unitary or holistic focus can be achieved through organization around a dominant symbol. In a sense, a ritual serves as a dominant symbol within Igede society; it represents a single defining event in which all that matters is assembled within a circumscribed time and place. Similarly, Sidney Kasfir states, “African religious systems are holistic, compressing many planes of experience into a single event” (1988:12). Holism as a clustering principle has a unitary focus and emphasizes homogeneity and the inter-relatedness of phenomena. However, within a public ritual the masquerade stands out as a dominant symbol although it is both a symbol and a reality. It is a reality in the sense of “art for art’s sake.” Its presence speaks for itself, and need not be defined or understood in the terms of another convention. It is also a reality in that it serves as a metonym, a sample of the spirit of the wild or the bush, and a conduit for the forces of nature brought into the confines of the village and under the control of humans. The masquerade mask is an attempt to imitate the appearance of a spirit as imagined by the carver. A masquerade is a symbol in that it represents a particular association, be it ancestor, warrior, age-grade, or music

association. In this sense it is an icon, a mascot, a manifestation of the integrity and distinctive qualities of the association, which is in turn identified with a particular Igede village. It symbolizes the association's control of social and spiritual power, and an accompanying outlook on life. It also serves as a metaphor. Its dance represents cosmic order and, by a process of proxemic transfer, human society is imprinted with this order.

However, in another aspect, a masquerade's performance can be seen as only one of many voices within a total ritual event in which various juxtapositions of arts and activities interact in various ways. For Ben-Amos [Girshick], "the repetition of themes in different media and imagery is one way of associative clustering" (1987:76). Not only are different art forms integrated, but, unlike a "stage" performance, the role of audience and performer is often interchangeable. Adams uses the term "heteroglossia" to describe the resultant pluralism and argues that the totality of the enactment is composed of "multiple voices" (1989:72). Within the context of performance, an element of "whole-theater" pervades traditional Igede festivals. Corresponding to the principles of associative clustering, major themes and ideas, texts and subtexts, appear and reappear within the heteroglossia of the total event. The resultant communicative complexity draws the participants in, bombarding their senses and enslaving their attention with multiple layers of meaning. Such perceptual saturation inevitably leads to some redundancy. Edward O. Wilson argues that the employment of multiple signals that are different in form but redundant in meaning sustains a state of arousal (1975:200). Hanna maintains that "semantic redundancy" occurs in the Ubakala dance-play. She states:

This redundancy may eliminate the risk that a solitary message might be missed or misinterpreted, it may yield new information and it may clarify conflicting or changing messages. Also this redundancy modifies the audience's selective perception, retention, and comprehension. (1987:90)

Rubin suggests that art forms in which redundancy and progressive accumulation are important aesthetic features are in fact *message systems* about notions of power and display (1974:10). These organizing principles suggest that the Igede respond to the presentation of a total picture with a dominant theme and interlocking sub-themes rather than a presentation that consists of sub-components strung together in a linear form. This mode also operates in the composition of song texts. The texts of African songs are often characterized by a tangential approach, indirect allusion, and the use of oblique or cryptic references. The lengthy philosophical songs of the Igede, for example, consist of an assemblage or collage of ideas. The subtexts exist alongside the dominant message. In his discussion of Igede dirges, Ode S.

Ogede conveys the sense of a “seething mixture” when he talks of the “seemingly chaotic assemblage of incantations...[by which] the dirger can work up emotion.” Ogede maintains that the imagery and metaphors of the dirges are drawn from a “store of *associative references* current in his society” (1990:17, emphasis added). These cyclical and recurring themes encourage discursive rather than linear reasoning processes. Cognitive faculties and the creative imagination are exercised in making connections between ideas and penetrating layers of meaning.

A song of the Iboma music association provides an example. True to the Iboma genre this song bemoans marital problems. The following verse illustrates the way traditional wisdom and advice can be inserted as subtexts that are unrelated to the major theme. Although the theme of this song is marital hardship, the organizing principle of this verse, “if poverty does not strike you, you do not feel it,” appears in line 9.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. My husband’s farm is far away | } scene setting |
| 2. On a distant farm the okra has dried | } non-productive situation |
| 3. If there is no pot you use a large gourd instead | } pragmatic suggestion |
| 4. If a goitrous person is around, you do not describe the gourd | } advice on tact |
| 5. If there is no knife, you take a wooden knife to peel your yams | } pragmatic suggestion |
| 6. If a dwarf is around you do not describe a bantam chicken | } advice on tact |
| 7. If there is no pot you use a large gourd instead | } pragmatic suggestion |
| 8. But when there is a pot you no longer use a gourd to replace it | } pragmatic suggestion |
| 9. If poverty does not strike you, you do not feel it | } organizing principle |
| 10. Marrying is easy, but supporting is difficult | } context of song |
| 11. If you do not know how to support you will be without a wife | } moral |

While lines 4 and 6 spell out traditional etiquette, lines 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9, provide sage advice on self-sufficiency. The pragmatic suggestion regarding the use of a gourd in line 3 triggers the advice regarding tact in line 4, that stimulates advice of a similar nature in line 6. Sandwiched between this advice, on line 5, is a pragmatic suggestion regarding the use of traditional utensils. Line 7 is a version of line 3. Line 8 essentially defines pragmatism, while line 9 provides the organizing principle of the verse. Lines 10 and 11 return to the overall theme of the song. In some Igede songs, component stanzas are interchangeable and do not necessarily appear in the same order in subsequent renditions of the same song (Ranung1973).

Binary Juxtaposition

When concepts or objects are juxtaposed or compared, what is the intent or suggested inference? What do they say about one another? Within the dualistic orientation of the Igede, pairs can be matched in many ways. Examples are: contrast and difference including binary opposition and exclusion; similarity or complementarity including conjunction, inclusion, participation, equivalence, metaphor and analogy, and twinned pairs; proxemic transfer including contagiousness, exchange across boundaries, and transformation; inversions, reversals, and transpositions; and sequencing modes including prediction and cause and effect.

Contrasts and Opposition

The process and purpose of masquerading manifests the opposition between the bush and village. In Igede dance performance, contrasting opposition exists between the male and female masquerades of associations such as Abakpa and Aitah, the light and dark Janus-like faces of the Onyantú mask, and the light and dark complexions of Adiya dancing duo. Masquerades of the Abakpa or Aitah genre often appear as a duo whereby a male masquerade in a rough raffia costume (*onyuwunyu*) dances with a female masquerade in a smooth velvet costume (*ibelebele*). The male masquerade commonly, but not invariably, wears a large frontal face mask—Janus-faced in the case of Onyantú. The *ibelebele* does not wear a frontal face mask, but instead has a small carved effigy set on top of the costume above the dancer's head. The Onyantú masquerade of Anyiwogbu village wears a skin covered Janus-faced mask in which the face at the front is light tan while its reverse is black. It is probably an oversimplification to say that this mask mirrors the paradoxical nature of existence. According to Percy Amaury Talbot, the Janus headdresses he saw at funerals in the Cross River area of Nigeria may recall the binary opposition of sky god and earth goddess, death and life, danger and beneficence (1912:16–17). Keith Nicklin informs us that among the Ejagham of Cross River State, the dual faces of a Janus-faced helmet mask represents male and female. The female face is light brown, yellow, or white, while the male is black or brown (1974:14). It was not suggested to me that the dark/light faces of the Onyantú mask represented male and female. Relative to the symbolism of Janus masks, Kasfir comments, “there has been much airy speculation on the meaning of Janus-faces in the Cross River context and the dualisms cited include sky god/earth god, male/female, and life/death” (1979:321). It is interesting to note that the use of a dark complexion contrasted with a light complexion existed in the now defunct dance of Adiya dance queens where gender was not denoted. In the past, the

Adiya dance was performed by two young virgins as a fertility ritual connected to the New Yam Festival. The girls were chosen for their beauty and trained as dancers. One was fair in complexion, the other smooth black. They were known as Aloho and Ominlonya respectively. Binary opposition also appears in Igede song texts, for example, in the contrast between pleasure/trouble, humor/pathos, pride/foolishness, optimism/despair, and urgency/apathy.

Similarity or Complementarity

The two male masquerades of the Aitah association of Obohu village are similar in appearance and complement each other. Both wear vividly painted masks, one a bright yellow with horns the other black and red. Both have large silver teeth, and the latter is biting on a black and yellow banded snake stretching around the face. As male masquerades they do not dance together. The Onyeweh children's association of Andibla village has two masquerades dressed identically that do dance as a duo. The masqueraders are boys of about ten years of age. They wear simple calabash masks daubed with silver paint, and with holes pierced through for the eyes and mouth and a marooned patterned costume in the style of a short shift dress. The Onyeweh boys' masquerades do not perform so much in unison; their bobbing up and down and fluttering movements are in counterpoint to one another. The tradition of paired dancing in which two dancers matched in age and sex dance in unison is very strong in Igedeland. For girls, Imeri dance queens continue the female costumed duo traditions, but without being steeped in the ritual of Adiya.

Metaphor

Within Igede aesthetic conventions, metaphors are widely used. Comparisons, analogies, and parables are so much a part of verbal dialogue and debates, especially among elders, that metaphor appears to be part of the traditional reasoning process. A ritual utterance following a demise likens death to a war, and also to a roasted yam besieged by a kitchen knife (Idikwu 1976:5). A dirge "I Call For Father," also likens the dead to a yam. In this instance, a yam in the ground that will yield a new tuber. This dirge also compares a father to a large tree that provides shade from a merciless sun. Other metaphorical references liken the bereaved to motherless chicks or road-side ants that are trampled underfoot (Ogede 1990). Fire appears regularly in speech and song as a metaphor for danger and destruction. In the Iboma song, "climbing a mountain" and "pounding a pestle" are metaphorical references to the hardships of marriage. In the sense of revealing the hidden, dance provides a metaphor for the cosmic order—cyclical,

rhythmic, and interconnected—and for the life force that activates existence—vital, kinetic, and creative. Death creates disorder, but for the Igede, like the Dogon as described by Hanna, funerals help to rectify the situation: “Through the dance humans metaphorically restore order to the world” (1987:113). The agility and stamina demonstrated in dance is a metaphor for the health and vitality which counters the antitheses of apathy, disease, and death. The multi-movement capabilities of the body engaged in dance serve as a metaphor for the pluralism of existence as projected by the Igede worldview. The nurturing dance ring reflects the seasons, the life cycle and ancestral cycles. It represents the unity and security of the lineage and village community. Among the Igede, the fast, foot-stamping dances and strenuous gestures performed by dancers of warrior ensembles serve as a metaphor for battle. The dance arena is analogous to the battle-field. Hanna argues that whereas circle dances signify security, “the use of relatively large space and angular lines in the men’s warrior dance suggests a metaphor for engagement in the wider, dangerous, and unstable world” (1987:96).

Proxemic Transfer

One of the principles that is operative in associative clustering is proxemic transfer which promotes a “like-equals-reality” conception, whereby abstractions, analogies, and metaphors are viewed as instrumentally equivalent to a desired state or situation. By transfer, a positive image becomes attached to a dissimilar idea, thus acting as a persuasion variable. In this regard, Elizabeth Tonkin refers to studies of “beautiful masks” in West Africa in which “the aim was to create harmony and good order by making it appear” (1988:245). Proxemic transfer is exemplified by Dea masks of the Dan-Ngere ethnic complex (Ndege and Nicholls 1990). The calm demeanor of the Dea mask is facilitated by its simplified naturalistic features, smooth black surface, and symmetrical facial planes. It represents a beneficent woman and is used to pacify and motivate youth during the trauma of initiation into the Poro society. Beautiful masks of the Igede might include those white-faced masks of the past like old Onyantú masks, Ekpwe (which are the equivalent of the maiden spirit masks of the Igbo), and some head effigies. More appropriately, they refer to the *ibelebele* costumes of the female Aitah, the Ijege masquerade as a unit, and the decorated dance queens of Imeri. The term beauty is probably most accurately applied to the gestures and locomotion of the dance itself which represents Igede aesthetic notions in their most distilled form. Exposing the community to the arts during public rituals brings “good” into the occasion and imprints the social process with indelible patterns of harmony and aesthetic order. Proxemic transfer, however, is not confined simply to emphasize an abstract good. It juxtaposes an

expression from one domain with an expression from another to encourage interpretation of the latter in the light of the former. For example, the male Aitah brandishes a real machete and wears a real *ehwong* wrist shield. Although the brandishing of this weapon is real enough, the context is one of dance, not battle. The audience is encouraged to view the skill of dancing as comparable to the skill of combat. Similarly, the line of the Omepa song “put the ehwong on your hand,” although seeming to suggest “ready yourself for battle” is really an exhortation to dance. Readying oneself for battle then serves as a metaphor for entering the dance arena.

Inversion or Reversal

Inversion turns a normal situation upside down in some way. The African American slang use of the term “bad” to connote “good,” for example, is an inversion. Inversion turns convention on its head and provides alternatives to established conventions. Kasfir argues that symbolic inversion is integral to African mask systems, and that mask systems encompass a certain amount of “framed disorder.” She writes:

The more widespread functionalist explanation for the presence of these symbolic inversions is the ‘steam-valve’: by allowing the world-upside-down within the safe boundaries of the performance frame, one preserves the established social order. (1988:8)

An example of anarchistic masking is provided by the Akatangka association of the Igede. Bjorn Ranung (1973) talks of *ayilo uchih*, dirty or foolish music. And, he recorded a performance of the Akatangka association whose members engage in aberrant behavior such as eating from a pit in the ground. The ensemble members, including those in masks, dress in tattered costumes. Thus, art can provide the opportunity to experiment with novelty within the safety of a “pretend” situation. Inversion often involves parody or satire. The fool elected king for a day in the “Lord of Misrule” games of Medieval England is an example. Rebellious sketches directed at elites have less application in classless, segmentary societies such as the Igede. However, in the male dominated societies that characterize many agrarian communities such as the Igede, challenges to convention may relate to gender. An example of a festival that involves a reversal and mediates the opposition of the sexes comes from the Gbagyi (Gwari) of Niger State, Nigeria. In Shatta village (near Minna), the social order is dissolved once a year within an annual women’s festival. During this one day, women abandon their normal family roles and domestic duties and act as if they are oblivious to their menfolk. In his discussion of Igede song texts, Ogede makes reference to “the widespread phenomenon in

many parts of Africa where criticism is tolerated in song where it would not be tolerated elsewhere" (1994:117). This latitude is used to good advantage by the women's associations, and satirical commentary is often associated with the song texts of the Igede chanteuse. The special license enjoyed by Imwo and Ihih women's associations is extended to the Ogbete adolescent girls' association. The most politically contentious song that I collected was an Ogbete song (Nicholls 1992b). The Och'Idoma, the paramount chief of the Idoma, Mr. Abraham Ajene Okpabi, a popular figure among the Igede, is a source of pride in that he hails from Igedeland. Nevertheless, the following song presents an image of reversal between Igede and Idoma and acts as a reminder that even celebrities should not forget who they are and where they came from:

He comes from Igede
 Ajene comes from Igede
 He turns himself into an Idoma
 Ajene turns himself into an Idoma

Political satire, however, is not confined to women as is evidenced by a song of the male Etuh association that deals with national politics (Ranung 1973). This song likens General Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, leader of Biafra's failed secession attempt of 1967–70, both to an unnamed womanizer and to the greedy and foolish figure of Akpatiriku'u who unsuccessfully scrambled after rats. Akpatiriku'u found a nest of rats. As the rats scattered, Akpatiriku'u almost captured one, but let it go as he caught site of another. In this manner he went on until he had to return home with his bag empty.

Wait and see, wait and see, wait and see, wait and see
 Wait and see, trouble will come!
 Your hand clears the way for the hand of death.
 Running after rats like Akpatiriku'u

He tried to catch the mother but failed
 He tried to catch the child but failed
 Running after rats like Akpatiriku'u
 He tried to catch the mother but failed
 Odumegwu-Ojukwu is trying to catch rats like Akpatiriku'u

Indigenous Instructional Methodology

If, as Bruner suggests, a theory of instruction should be based on a theory of learning, what methodology might be derived from the indigenous learning system of the Igede? Within education, methodology is all-important and refers to the systematic techniques and general procedures by which

instructional goals are accomplished. With informal education structures, such as traditionally used by the Igede, one is not dealing with a methodology that has been individually devised nor even necessarily articulated consciously in the minds of participants. Rather, the educational methodology evolved amorphously over time as an extension of indigenous culture and the Igede world view. Nevertheless, through analysis, I was able to verify that certain procedural methods pertain. Some, like proxemic transfer which employs a “like-equals-reality” conception, have already been discussed. Others include arousal, multimedia, spiral curriculum, and modeling of norms through role modeling, rehearsal, and recapitulation.

Arousal

The Igede traditionally utilized various persuasion variables whereby strong or pleasant appeals are used as seducing bait. As psychologists have noted, strong appeals are more effective than mild ones when communicated by a highly credible source (Karlins and Abelson 1970:73). In order to create attitudinal set and insure receptivity, the technique of arousal incorporates shock and surprise to grab the audiences’ attention. As Daniel P. Biebuyck observes in his discussion of Lega initiation art, “the Lega initiates have no difficulty in replacing one visual symbol by another....They take delight in the unusual combinations and manipulations of objects to heighten the element of surprise” (1979:78). The Igede also use artistic juxtapositions to stimulate arousal. Masquerades are deliberately created to arouse the imagination. Even the Igede consider their appearance strange and bizarre. As the manifestations of the other world they are expected to be, in abstract expressionist Wassily Kandinsky’s terms, “a mysterious expression of the mysterious” (1959:38). The costume and movements of an Igede masquerade operates in the realm of stylization. The shaggy *onyunwuny* costume of the male masquerade contributes to its appearance of hugeness, while its bold, exaggerated gestures add to its “bush monster” appearance. The rippling and shimmering of the *ibelebele* costume of the female masquerade as it is deftly maneuvered by the dancer enhances the beauty of the masquerade, while the nimbleness of the footwork adds to the exquisiteness of its appearance. The body-stocking costumes of Ogirinye and Ijege accentuate the human torso and add to the heroic quality of the masquerades. The Ijege masquerade does not wear a mask. Instead, his head is adorned with an antique Roman-style helmet of Western origin. Although the connoisseur of African art might judge this to be an incongruous and unwelcome addition, for the Igede this conjunction provides the necessary stimulus for the creative suspension of disbelief. As has been discussed, the Igede stimulate arousal by the use of multiple signals—clustering major symbols, power objects,

and prestigious artifacts within a performance to provide layers of meaning and semantic redundancy—and multiple channels—presenting various permutations of multivocal symbols which combine core notions from diverse cultural domains in different visual and auditory forms simultaneously and sequentially. The Igede find this profuse diversity intrinsically thought-provoking.

Multimedia

Igede visual arts such as masks, costumes, body paints, as well as power materials and symbols convey nonverbal messages. The symbolism of the visual arts that constitute masquerade performances reinforces or modifies messages that are conveyed in dance or song. Such information is apprehended first by the senses and provides a level of meaning that can often only be conveyed by nonverbal means. I previously discussed notions of multimedia and whole-theater and I illustrated how an enhanced aesthetic is initiated within a ritual festival by the conjunction of different art forms interacting according to a dominant theme.

Many authors point out that performances that combine masks and costumes with music and dance ostensibly serve as audio-visual aids. J.H. Kwabena Nketia emphasizes that in Africa:

musical performances are generally multi-dimensional in character, for it is customary to integrate music with other arts, with dance and drama, as well as with various forms of visual display such as masks. (1974:244)

J. de Vere Allen comments on the role of masquerades (“likenesses”) among the Swahili: “The ‘likenesses,’ made out of straw, leaves, clay, and wood, with the accompanying proverbs and songs...were effective visual aids in education” (1981:268). Henry John Drewal describes “masked performances” as “multimedia experiences involving many arts—sculpture, costume, dance and music—usually occurring simultaneously” (1988:72). Because information presented to the different senses simultaneously or sequentially is more likely to be retained, the use of multisensory modalities reinforces educational efficacy.

Spiral Curriculum

Repetition not only involves the proximate juxtaposition of elements in time and space, but also their recurrence over longer intervals. Corresponding to indigenous emphasis of cyclical aspects of time, recurrence and repetition of themes are utilized in indigenous instruction. Techniques known as “pulsing” or “spiral curriculum” come into play. In educational parlance, “spiral curriculum” refers to the periodic return to earlier units of learning. At each revisiting, concepts are broadened and learning is moved

to a stage of greater complexity. Without using this terminology, traditional forms of Igede education utilize this technique. Musical performances, for example, recur regularly with junctures in agricultural or life cycles, or intermittently as redressive rituals in times of crisis. Thus as an individual matures, he or she is periodically exposed to formalized expressions of society's *modus operandi*. And, relative to the level of enculturation or initiation reached, he or she will over time be able to penetrate successive layers of meaning that are encapsulated within the symbol systems presented.

Modeling of Norms

In terms of methodology, perhaps the broadest, most all-encompassing educational technique promulgated by music and dance performance might be described as the projection of norms. As norms vary, so do their expression. They can be conveyed metaphorically through abstract dance or directly through role-modeling.

Role-modeling is a major educational technique used by the Igede. The public acting out of social norms provides young people and adults alike value-laden paradigms of traditional behavior. For participants and spectators, music and dance performances provide examples not only of role behavior, but also of Igede ontology and value systems. Within a performance event such as a funeral, males (hunters, farmers, and warriors) and females (home-makers and birth-givers) embody their characteristic roles. Through the medium of music, dance, and song-texts, they convey the essence of these to the community at-large.

In the above discussion of inversion, it was shown that performance can involve a symbolical pre-visiting of unfamiliar territory and thus in this sense can constitute a rehearsal. In the past when tribal wars were relatively common, dance was used to prepare young men both physically and psychologically for battle. Coordinated team dances taught them the necessary control and discipline, while forceful music and patriotic song texts provided motivation (Nicholls 1992b). Among the functions of music of war (*ayilo nya ewu*) was rehearsal for battle. According to Hanna, Ubakala dance-plays promote continuity since participants can cope with psychic tension through "anticipatory psychic management." She writes:

Anticipatory psychic management, one method of achieving socialization, prepares an individual for a threatening experience by *rehearsing* it until its potentially destructive emotional impact is reduced to manageable proportions. (1987:166, emphasis added)

Utilizing Hanna's rationale, forms of rehearsal or anticipatory psychic management can be equally applied to Igede dances of a comparable nature. Certainly the themes of both Oge and Ogbete songs focus on imminent marriage, courtship, and the leaving of one's natal village to live among strangers. Dirges, wakes, and funeral dances provide a means for the Igede bereaved to manage the psychic tensions imposed by death in a manner that is minimally disruptive. Reminding the living of their own mortality, such performance events provide them with an opportunity to anticipate and thus better manage their own demise.

Whereas rehearsals precede events, forms of recapitulation occur after an event and serve to review the experience by reliving it. Traditionally, in Igede, forms of recapitulation were at least as pervasive as rehearsal. Dances performed following a battle victory are prime examples of recapitulation, especially when they involve the brandishing of machetes and the display of the spoils of war. Funeral dances metaphorically recapitulate the great deeds in the deceased's life. Certainly, any traditional event is a form of reliving the behaviors of the ancestors. As an education technique, rehearsal and recapitulation differ from direct role modeling in that, the latter is centered on a spectator who is essentially passive, while the former involves the spectator's active participation and involvement in the enactment.

Conclusion

In this article I set out to illustrate how significant instructional techniques can be derived from indigenous models. I have explored the inherent utility of multiple channels and multiple signals—binary juxtaposition, proxemic transfer, persuasion variables, arousal, spiral curriculum, modeling of norms, rehearsal, and recapitulation. All of these represent valid pedagogical methodologies which could be incorporated within various educational vehicles, not only within the traditional milieu or in music and dance, but also within formal instruction—training videos, theatrical performances, radio or television transmissions, and social marketing campaigns (see Nicholls 1993b). For example, the technique of arousal, which involves stylization or exaggeration, suggests that shock and surprise can stimulate interest in an educational setting. Traditional dance has emphasized principles of cultural integration, respect for self and others, physical coordination and mental poise, individuality, and group cooperation. These and other positive developmental attributes might be conveyed within dance performances aimed at educating rural populations. Within the design of educational programs, the indigenous emphasis on cyclical recurrence and repetition could be utilized by revisiting the ideas with increasing levels of complexity. The indigenous propensity for discursive rather than linear

reasoning should also be taken into account. Song texts can be utilized as mnemonic devices for information storage and dissemination. And, the development projects could draw upon the traditional fund of wisdom encapsulated in proverbs and wise-sayings. Drummed renditions of slogans and mottoes could be adapted for transmission by speech-reproducing instruments such as the *ogirigboh* slit-drum and the *ekureh* and *opikeh* talking horns in order to reinforce key concepts and act as rallying points. These could be played at set times in the form of a "saying for the day," and they could even be broadcast on the radio.

Dualisms such as contrasts, juxtapositions, and oppositions could be incorporated into a video or song presenting development themes such as regressive versus progressive, apathy versus diligence, kin obligations versus village obligations, and competition versus cooperation. Male roles within a development campaign might be compared to female roles, or the roles of youth contrasted to the roles of elders. Proxemic transfer is not some exotic device but one that Westerners are subjected to on a daily basis. A trite version exists within advertising campaigns whereby cigarettes are juxtaposed to mountain streams, cologne to sports cars, beverages to beautiful girls, a tiger to a brand of gasoline, and so forth. By transfer, a positive image becomes attached to a dissimilar idea. Within development initiatives, it would be constructive to juxtapose new ideas to traditional ideas; the rewards of labor to the need for labor; ordered dance sequences to the need for sequencing project activities; and joyful dance expression to the idea of project completion. Taking the Ijege masquerade as an Igede example of a beautiful mask, it might be used as a persuasion variable and juxtaposed to development endeavors in order to win public approval for project activities. Masquerades have served as mascots for particular associations. In a developmental context, masquerades could be used to enhance the status of developmental groups. Particular types of ritual might possess some specialized utility within a development campaign by helping to validate those development activities which may be ratified by ancestral charters.

It is evident that there is a need to systematically examine the role of folklore as indigenous learning systems as there is a dearth of information in this area. This is especially true of traditional music and dance whose function as development media has not been systematically examined despite ample evidence of their potential. Mundy and Lloyd-Laney urge the adoption of indigenous communication channels:

Development programs can use indigenous channels, both to collect and to disseminate information...Indigenous channels offer opportunities for local participation in development efforts. Indigenous channels allow local people to communicate among themselves and with development professionals, using forms they are familiar with. (1992:3)

Awa advocates that there should be a revival of interest in traditional media for communication between development planners and their clients. He argues that balladeers and raconteurs should be mobilized to disseminate development messages. He muses:

It is hard to understand why African elites have not resorted to traditional media and story tellers in rural communities for the propagation of development concepts and for the identification of development problems. (1988:142)

Through the provision of appropriate grassroots communication systems that are small-scale, user-friendly, and cost-effective, cultural conservation can be linked to positive innovation and developmental change.

Indigenous media can be married to modern communications technology for purposes of development, as Jan Sevaes and Randy Arnst confirm:

Modern mass media and alternate or parallel networks of folk media or interpersonal communication channels are not mutually exclusive. They are more effective if appropriately used in an integrated fashion, according to the needs and constraints of the local context....modern and traditional channels can be effectively combined. (1992:19)

Africans do not have to abandon their centuries-old folk traditions to obtain technology because the two are compatible. Acoustic communication technologies such as radio, television, film, video, and audiotape have a natural affinity with oral traditions. The need to combine indigenous and modern media was articulated in 1980 within the "Yaounde Declaration on Communication Policies in Africa" adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies. Section Three of the Declaration holds in part that "Africa represents a special human context, in which the living forms of traditional communication can be harmoniously linked up with the boldest conquests of modern communication" (Ugboajah 1983:29). Joseph Amali Yusuf Shekwo documents the narrative tradition of the Gbagyi (Gwari) of Nigeria and argues that not only are folktales a valuable means of instruction in the traditional environment, but that they can easily be adapted to the modern developmental context and transformed into educational television. In line with these sentiments, William J. Stover advocates that:

less developed countries...should revive their indigenous culture, encouraging national film makers, musicians, dancers, and writers. These artists should perform their work in mass media, emphasizing common cultural elements in the population and the aesthetic traditions of the nation. (1984:17)

Despite this:

hardly any policies have been devised in any African country to systematically integrate the traditional with the modern communication and telecommunication systems or to consciously use and encourage sustained utilization of the widespread traditional communications media for Africa's development. (Boafo 1986:41-42)

In April 1992, a conference, "Culture and Development in Africa" was held at the World Bank. It was intended to explore "new actions to bring the cultural dimensions of development into the mainstream development paradigm" (World Bank 1992). Although the goal was laudable, once again it proved to be window dressing only and had no meaningful outcomes.

The role that folklore could play as a development variable deserves more attention than it has previously received. This omission is grave, considering that the building block of rural development, the African farmer, is a significant culture carrier. By working within a framework of communications that is cognitively and emotionally acceptable to rural communities, development campaigns would be less disruptive and have a greater likelihood for success. John Naisbitt points out that "folk art is the perfect counterpoint to a computerized society" (1984:46). Africa has "high touch" and it is a mistake for Africans or others to believe that Africans must first create a cultural *clean slate* before they can be "high tech." If vital rural development programs are implemented that marry traditional media with modern communication technology, the rural environment will be invigorated. A pragmatic approach to development in rural areas should by necessity include the use of folk media. This in turn will stimulate the restoration of indigenous genres. Applied with sensitivity, modern media can foster direct communication with and between rural audiences, enhance agricultural activities, and provide rural populations with new cultural horizons. As a result, rural areas will no longer be thought of as backward and regressive. Instead, they will represent the locus of economic change; the rural exodus will be reversed.

References Cited

- Adams, Marie Jeanne (Monni). 1989. African Visual Arts from an Art Historical Perspective. *African Studies Review* 32(2):55–103.
- _____. 1973. Structural Aspects of Village Art. *American Anthropologist* 75:265–79.
- Adams, Milton. 1982a. A Modern Analysis of African Traditional Pedagogy: Implications for Contemporary Education. A research proposal presented at the 1982 Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Washington, D.C. (Sponsored by the *Institut de Recherche, d'Enseignement, et d'Experimentation de Pedagogie* [IREGP], Ivory Coast).
- _____. 1982b. Behavioral Objectives, Processes and Outcomes in African Traditional Education. A paper presented at the 1982 Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Washington, D.C.
- Adikpe, Joseph Okanga. 1988. Administration of Justice in Igede. In *Igede Gedegede*, eds. Ogwuna Oboh, Ogaga Agocha, Isaac Ode, John Adima, and John Aja, pp. 82-84. Oju Local Government Council, Oju L.G.A., Benue State, Nigeria.
- Allen, J. de Vere. 1981. Ngoma: Music and Dance. Appendix III in *The Customs of the Swahili People*, by Mtoro Bin Mwinyi Bakari, pp. 223–46. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Ausubel, David P., Joseph D. Novak, and Helen Hanesian. 1978. *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View*. New York: Rinehart and Winston.
- Awa, Njoku E. 1988. Communication in Africa: Implications for Development Planning. *The Howard Journal of Communications* 1(3):131–44.
- Ben-Amos [Girshick], Paula. 1987. African Visual Arts from a Social Perspective. Paper commissioned by the ACLS/SSRC Joint Committee on African Studies.
- Biebuyck, Daniel P. 1979. The Frog and Other Animals in Lega Art and Initiation. *Africa* (Tervuren) 25(3):73–84.
- Blacking, John. 1973. *How Musical is Man?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Boafo, S. T. Kwame. 1986. A Proposal for New Communication Research Methodologies Innovations in Rural Development. *African Media Review* (African Council on Communication Education) 1(1):35–47.
- Brokensha, David, D. Michael Warren, and Oswald Werner. 1980. *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

- Bruner, Jerome S. 1971. Needed a Theory of Instruction. In *Contemporary Thought on Teaching*, ed. R. T. Hyman. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cernea, Michael M., John K. Coulter, and John F.A. Russell. 1983. *Agricultural Extension by Training and Visit*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Colby, Benjamin N., James W. Fernandez, and David B. Konenfeld. 1981. Toward a Convergence of Cognitive and Symbolic Anthropology. *American Ethnologist* 8(30):422–50.
- Cole, Herbert M. and Chike C. Aniakor. 1984. *Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos*. Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History.
- DeMott, Barbara. 1982. *Dogon Masks: A Structural Study of Form and Meaning*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press.
- Drewal, Henry John. 1988. Object and Intellect: Interpretations of Meaning in African Art. *Art Journal* 47(2):71–74.
- Drewal, Margaret Thompson and Henry John Drewal. 1987. Composing Time and Space in Yoruba Art. *Words and Images* 3(3):225–51.
- Duffy, T., J. Lowyck, and D. Jonassen. 1993. *Designing Environments for Constructive Learning*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer-Verlag.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1915. *The Elementary Form of Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Fernandez, James W. 1977. *Fang Architectonics*. Working Papers in the Traditional Arts, 1. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- _____. 1973. The Exposition and Imposition of Order: Artistic Expression in Fang Culture. In *The Traditional Artist in African Societies*, ed. Warren L. D’Azevedo, pp. 194–220. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- _____. 1966. Principles of Opposition and Vitality in Fang Aesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 25(1):53–64.
- Fufunwa, A. Babs. 1974. *History of Education in Nigeria*. Lagos: Allen and Unwin.
- Griaule, Marcel. 1965. *Conversations with Ogotemeli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hanna, Judith Lynne. 1987. *To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Hardin, Kris L. 1987. *The Aesthetics of Action: Production and Re-production in a West African Town*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Anthropology Department, Indiana University.
- Idikwu, Simon Eriba. 1976. *Burial in Igede*. Oju. L.G.A., Benue State, Nigeria.
- Ikoni, John O. 1988. Igede Indigenous Religion. In *Igede Gedegede*, eds. Ogwuna Oboh, Ogaga Agocha, Isaac Ode, John Adima, and John Aja, pp. 27–33. Oju Local Government Council, Oju L.G.A., Benue State, Nigeria.
- Jonassen, D. H., K. Beissner, and M. A. Yacci. 1993. *Structural Knowledge: Techniques for Conveying, Assessing, and Acquiring Structural Knowledge*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kandinsky, Wassily. 1959. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Sixth ed. Berne.
- Karlins, Marvin and Herbert Abelson I. 1970. *Persuasion: How Opinions and Attitudes Are Changed*. New York: Springer.
- Kasfir, Sidney L. 1988. Masquerading as a Cultural System. In *West African Masks and Cultural Systems*, ed. Sidney L. Kasfir, pp. 1-16. Tervuren, Belgium: Musee Royal de L'Afrique.
- _____. 1979. *The Visual Arts of the Idoma of Central Nigeria*. Ph.D. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Macgregor, J.K. 1909. Some Notes on Nsibidi. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (U.K.) 39.
- Mundy, Paul and Megan Lloyd-Laney. 1992. Indigenous Communication. *Appropriate Technology* (London: IT Publications) 19(2)(September).
- Naisbitt, John. 1982. *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*. New York: Warner Books.
- Nettl, Bruno. 1985. The Concept of Preservation in Ethnomusicology. In *More Than Drumming: Essays on African and Afro-Latin American Music*, ed. I.V. Jackson. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Ndege, Conchita and Robert W. Nicholls. 1990. *Through African Eyes: The Rhythm of Art and Life in Africa*. Monograph accompanying art exhibit. North Carolina: Winston-Salem University.
- Nicholls, Robert W. 1995. Pragmatic Spirituality: Enablement in Traditional Africa. *Rehabilitation Education* 9(2&3).
- _____. 1993a. The Language of the Drums: Africa's Traditional Broadcast Technologies. *The World and I: A Chronicle of Our Changing Era* 8(4):244–55.

- _____. 1993b. Educational Communications for African Development. *African Technology Forum* 6(2):22–25.
- _____. 1993c. Between Two Worlds: Cultural Losses in Africa. *The World and I: A Chronicle of Our Changing Era* 8(6):296–305.
- _____. 1992a. Timing in West African Dance Performance: The Influence of Extramusical Factors on Rhythm. In *Dance: Current Selected Research* Vol. 3, pp. 145–82. New York: AMS Press.
- _____. 1992b. Music and Dance Associations of the Igede of Nigeria: The Relevance of Indigenous Communication Learning Systems to Rural Development Projects. Ph.D. Dissertation, Howard University, UMI #9239182.
- _____. 1985. Music and Dance Guilds in Igede. In *More Than Drumming: Essays on African and Afro-Latin Music*, ed. I. V. Jackson. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Nicklin, Keith. 1974. Nigerian Skin Covered Masks. *African Arts* 7(3).
- Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. 1974. *Music of Africa*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Office of Technology Assessment. 1984. *Africa Tomorrow: Issues in Technology, Agriculture, and U.S. Foreign Aid*. Washington, D.C.: Congress of the United States.
- Ogede, Ode S. 1994. Counters to Male Domination: Images of Pain in Igede Women's Songs. *Research in African Literature* 25(3).
- _____. 1991. Imagery in the Praise Poetry of the Igede Adiyah Poet Micah Ichigbeh. *Research in African Literature* 22(1):149–70.
- _____. 1990. *Context, Form and Structure in Igede Funeral Dirges*. Department of English, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Oxfam, U.K. 1993. *Africa, Make or Break: Action for Recovery*. Oxford: Oxfam.
- Piaget, Jean. 1977. *The Development of Thought: Elaboration of Cognitive Structures*. New York: Viking Press.
- Ranung, Bjorn. 1973. *Music of Dawn and Day: Music and Dance Associations of the Igede of Nigeria*. Long playing record album with notes. Helsinki, Finland: Love Records.
- Rubin, Arnold. 1974. *African Accumulative Sculpture: Power and Display*. New York: Pace Editions.

- Schadler, Ferdinand. 1979. African Arts and Crafts in a World of Changing Values. In *Tourism: A Passport to Development*, ed. Emmanuel Kant. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Sevaes, Jan and Randy Arnst. 1992. Participatory Communication for Social Change: Reasons for Optimism in the Year 2000. *Development Communication Report*. No. 79. Arlington, Virginia: The Clearinghouse on Development Communication.
- Shekwo, Joseph Amali Yusuf. 1984. Understanding Gbagyi Folktales: Premises for Targeting Salient Mass Media Programs. Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Radio, Television and Film, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.
- Stover, William J. 1984. *Information Technology in the Third World: Can I.T. Lead to Humane National Development?* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Talbot, Percy Amaury. 1912 [1969]. *In the Shadow of the Bush*. London: Heinemann [New York: Greenwood Publishing Corporation].
- Thompson, Robert Farris. 1974. *African Art in Motion*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth. 1988. Cunning Mysteries. In *West African Masks and Cultural Systems*, ed. Sidney L. Kasfir, pp. 241–52. Tervuren, Belgium: Musée Royal de L'Afrique.
- Turner, Victor. 1984. Liminality and the Performance Genres. In *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle Rehearsals: Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. J.J. MacAloon. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Ugboajah, Frank Okwu. 1983. "Oramedia" or Traditional Media as Effective Communications Options for Rural Development in Africa. In *Communication Socialist Yearbook*. Vol. 11. Indore, India: Satprakashan Sanchow Kendra.
- Uko, James Ikande. 1988. Indigenous Igede Religion. In *Igede Gedegede*, eds. Ogwuna Oboh, Ogaga Agocha, Isaac Ode, John Adima, and John Aja, pp. 34–38. Oju Local Government Council, Oju L.G.A., Benue State, Nigeria.
- Wilson, Edward O. 1975. *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- World Bank. 1992. Culture and Development in Africa. Advance publicity to conference. Washington, D.C.