A CURSORY REVIEW OF IGBO TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT
Religion can be defined objectively and subjectively, both recognizing man’s dependence on a transcendent being. The object of Igbo religious belief and worship are three: God, non – human spirits and the ancestors. Since the coming of the colonial masters the practice and worship of the ideal Igbo religion have been on the decline. As a result proper emphasis and modern technologies have not been used to modify and enhance the Igbo religious architecture. This study initiates the proper study of the indigenous Igbo religion, its customs and tradition and also their religious architecture in order to introduce new and advanced method in its architecture thereby encouraging its practice. This can be achieved by proper study of the dogma in the religion, symbolism of different elements used in the practice of the religion, knowing the detailed reason behind every construction method, planting of various trees, and landscape of various shrines thus substituting the elements of construction which cannot stand the test of time for a more superior material which can serve the worshippers for at least a century. Finally, after a close study of the Igbo religion, it can be seen that every religion has the same process of worship and belief. With that in mind, proper attention is to be paid to the disintegrating and dilapidated religious practices and structures of the Igbo religious architecture and hence salvage what is left of it.

INTRODUCTION
The Ndi Igbo, in spite of their achievements in various areas of endeavor, in science, technology, religion, education, arts, sports, etc., have been on the verge of cultural denudation. It has been observed that the Igbos is a highly religious people. Leonard (1900) observed that “they are in the strict and natural sense of the word a truly and a deeply religious people, of whom it can be said that they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously and sin religiously. In a few words, the religion of these as I have all along endeavored to point out is their existence and their existence is their religion”.

Religion and philosophy are intertwined in the beliefs and practices of the people, and in this wise, Nwala (1985) argued that the best word or concept which expresses Igbo philosophy is Omenala or Omenana which literally means that which obtains in the land and refers to what accords with the customs and traditions of the people. Igbo Traditional Religion is inseparably interwoven with the traditional African society, architecture and culture. This is because African Traditional Religion (ATR) is essentially a philosophy and a spiritual way of life, which permeates, pervades and animates the cultural and social
institutions as well as norms and celebrations. With the coming of the colonialists the practice of traditional religion, and consequently Igbo religious architecture, have been on the decline.

Objective of this Study
This work studies Igbo religious architecture, its development and the possibility of its up-dating using modern tools, methods, materials and while still retaining its cultural and nature-based character. This can be achieved through reviews of Igbo traditional religious symbolisms, dogmas, and elements used in the practice of the religion. Its landscape concepts, materials and methods of construction are also germane. The reviews will provide the platform for adaptation of new methods and materials while not destroying the cultural contents.

Historical Background of the Ndi Igbo and their Religion
Scholars have continued to engage in the research into Igbo origin. Afigbo (1981, 2000) articulated these scholarly views on Igbo origin and which situate Igbo origin within general Negro race and the West African Kwa language group like the Yoruba, Edo, Igala, Igaw, and Idoma. On the mythological basis, the Nri myth claimed that man’s origin started in Igboland when God created Eri and sent him down. The Nri creation myth claimed that Chukwu, the Igbo Supreme God sent down the Igbo ancestors; Eri and his wife; Nnamaku, somewhere in Aguleri and that it was from these two humans that the Umueri and Umunri clans of Ndi Igbo originated. The Nri and Aguleri people belong to the Umueri clan and trace their lineages back to the patriarchal king-figure Eri who has been described as a “sky being” sent by Chukwu (God)(Arazu, 2005, Isichie, 2002).

Though the myth did not assert that the rest of Igbo people originated from Eri, many Igbo scholars have come to believe and treat Nri town as the heart of Igbo nationality. Similar myths of creation are found among the Binis and Yorubas of Nigeria. The importance of the Nri myth is not only historical but also religious because by it the Igbos acknowledge their divine origin and that they did not come into existence by chance. In Time Magazine of July; 22, 2002 pages 50-55 and also the Guardian Newspaper of Thursday, September 19, 2002, presented recent archeological findings, in the Lake Chad region, of the earliest ancestor of modern homo sapiens named 'Toumai' (hope of life), with the scientific name sahelanthropus tchadensis (Sahel hominin from Chad) dated about 7 million years old. That man first settled in Africa is no longer an archeological statement, but a historical fact. This, challenges the Darwinian theory that man originated from apes. Though earlier theory had placed the origin of man around the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, the Lake Chad theory by Professor Michael Brunet, a paleontologist from the University of Poitiers in France, has challenged established theories of human origin and migratory patterns of the world and suggests that the myth of Igbo origin may be taken seriously. This is because the current findings have shifted attention from East Africa to the Lake Chad region that is relatively geographically proximate to Igboland in Nigeria. In the past three decades nobody thought about this, perhaps a little patience may lead to another finding East of the Niger. Speculations about Igbo ancestry whether it was Eri as in Nri myth or as averred by Nwosu (1983) that both Igbo
Myth of origin and archeological discoveries show that Igbo history and culture go far back into human history. Archaeological evidence suggests that Nri hegemony in Igbo land may go back as far as the 9th century, and royal burials have been unearthed dating to at least the 10th century. Eri, the god-like founder of Nri, is believed to have settled in the region around 948 with other related Igbo cultures following after in the 13th century. The first Eze Nri (King of Nri) followed directly after him. Each king traces his origin back to the founding ancestor, Eri, and is a ritual re-incarnation of Eri. The initiation rite of a new king shows that the ritual process of becoming Ezenri (Nri priest-king) follows closely the path traced by the hero in establishing the Nri kingdom (Uzukwu, 2000). All human societies have beliefs and practices immersed in religion. Religion is a universal phenomenon and speculation about which religion is superior has never been of scholarly interest but rather why religion is found in all societies.

The quest for the origins of religion has centered on four main views. The first refers to the psychological theories, which cover a variety of postulations, which locate the origin, of religion in primitive people’s concept of ghosts, the soul and even in the deification of natural phenomena (Ember, 1977). Again, it has also been suggested that religion may have arisen out of intellectual curiosity concerning mental states and other things not fully understood or even links with belief in ghosts and ancestors (Nwanunobi, 1992). Sociological theories suggest that religion stems from society’s needs. Emile Durkheim (1912) recognized that it is the society, not the individual, that distinguishes between sacred and profane and that a sacred object symbolizes the social fact that society considered something sacred. Also there is the combination of the psychological and sociological approaches that argued that religion is a response to strain or deprivation which is caused by events in society. Thus, when the society is stable, its efforts and its energy are employed to maintain its equilibrium. But when the stability is threatened either by internal dissension or by outside force, the society may revitalize self by various means like a new cult, sect, denomination or religion (Aberle, 1971) and that relative deprivation, whether economic or social, is the cause of the stress which generates new religious movements. Wallace (1966) suggested that the threat of societal breakdown forces people to examine new ways to survive. It is the hope they gain from the new ways - not deprivation for people can live for centuries in deprivation - which leads them to revitalize their society.

Igbo religion is as old as the Igbo society. Igbo ancestors like other ethnic groups received the revelation of God from their Chi-Ukwu, Chukwu, the Supreme God. Religion in Africa is the root of African culture and the determining principle of African life. Thus religion is the basic philosophy. This is one of the reasons the Igbo is said to be a born religious. In Igbo world, time and space, objects and persons are sacred and the Igbo world approximate to the spiritual which is why, according to Igbo cosmology, people are born with their personal ‘chi’ or personal god or protective spirit. The Nri myth which contains Igbo cosmology also has in it an important dimension of historical truth not yet hitherto recognized, namely, the origin or evolution of Igbo traditional religion (Afigbo, 1983). In this mythical evolution, Afigbo (1983) observed that
Igbo traditional religion underwent a three-stage development. The first stage is called the Eri period; a-horizon. This was the earliest period of human existence, the probable dynamic age of Chukwu, when God created and dominated the earth, including the Igbo world. The Age of pure intuition marked by the over powering awareness of the presence and nearness of Chukwu the Creator. Then God fed Eri and his people and Eri had intimate contact with Chukwu and worshipped him alone. This was the age of innocence and pure religion when humans had no need of intermediaries between them and their Creator. Igbo myths and folklore corroborate this claim (Iwuagwu, 1985). In the second stage, the b-horizon, something was presumed to have gone wrong. It was the Age the ancestors abandoned the worship of the Creator in favor of the created — Ala (Earth) and other divinities. The created entities became so powerful that they took the place of 'Chukwu' in Igbo religious life. For instance, the New Yam Festival which the Igbo celebrate with fanfare is part of the ritual of worship of the yam spirit. Loss of contact with 'chukwu' generated insecurity and fear which necessitated the need for seeking help from powerful deities for protection and for resort to amulets. As the myth tends to suggest; there appeared a strain in the relationship between ancestors and their Chukwu and which needed to be repaired. This situation was followed by the c-horizon that refers to the Aro Era - the era of Arochukwu Ascendancy with its Ibinukpabi Oracle - the famous long Juju and an era that is regarded as most tragic because of its link to the evils of slave trade (Isiche, 1976). The developments support the theory of Igbo traditional religion as a combination of psychological and sociological needs of protection and survival.

Content of Igbo Religion
Odinani, also odinala, Omenala, Omenana, Odinana or omenani is the traditional cultural beliefs and practices of the Igbo people. These terms, as used here in the Igbo language, are synonymous with the traditional Igbo "religious system" which was not considered separate from the social norms of ancient or traditional Igbo societies. Theocentric in nature, spirituality played a huge role in their everyday lives. Although it has largely been supplanted by Christianity, the indigenous belief system remains in strong effect among the rural and village populations of the Igbo, where it has at times influenced the colonial religions. Odinani is a panentheistic faith, having a strong central deity at its head. All things spring from this deity. Although a semi-pantheon exists in the belief system, as it does in many indigenous African and Eastern religions, the lesser deities prevalent in Odinani expressly serve as elements of Chukwu, the central deity. Like all religions, Odinani is the vehicle used by its practitioners to understand their World (called "Uwa"), or more specifically, the part of the World that affects them, which is to say the dry land on which the Igbos live and gather sustenance. And it is from this that the belief acquires its names: "o di" (Igbo: it is) + n'(na - Igbo: on/within) + "Ani" (Igbo: the Land or the Earth goddess) in the Northern Igbo dialects and also "O me" (Igbo: it happens) + n'(na - Igbo: on/within) + "Ala" (Igbo: the Land or the physical manifestation of the Earth goddess as dry land) as used primarily in the Southern Igbo dialects. Chukwu, as the central deity and driving force in the cosmos is unknowable, and too great of a power to be approached directly save
by the manifestations that exist in the World (the Land, the Skies, and the Sea). Thus, Odinani rarely deals directly with the force that is Chukwu. Many other spirits and forces also exist in Odinani belief and folklore.

**Symbolism in Igbo Religion**
In the native Igbo settings, various markings and symbols mean various things and a few of them are listed below;

![Symbol Images]

- ‘War’
- ‘Child’
- ‘Ézê’
- ‘Tree’
- ‘Root’
- ‘Music’
- ‘Snake’
- ‘Country’
- ‘Bank’

**Material and Numerical Symbolisms**
The Kingdom of Nri was a religious polity, a sort of theocratic state, which developed in the heartland of the Igbo region. The Nri had seven types of taboos which included human, animal, object, temporal, behavioral, speech and place. The rules regarding these taboos were used to educate and govern Nri subjects. This meant that, while certain Igbo may have lived under different formal administrations, all followers of the Igbo religion had to abide by the rules of the faith and obey its representative on earth, the Eze Nri.

Mathematics in traditional Igbo society is evident in their calendar, banking system and strategic betting game called Okwe. In their indigenous calendar, a week had four days; a month consisted of seven
weeks and 13 months made a year. In the last month, an extra day was added. This calendar is still used in indigenous Igbo villages and towns to determine market days. Cases were settled through mediation, and the banking system of loans and savings, called Isusu, were and is still used. The Igbo New Year, starting with the month Ọnwà Mbụ (First Moon) occurs on the third week of February, although the traditional commencement of the year, for many Igbo communities, is around springtime in Ọnwà Ágwụ (June). Used as a ceremonial script by secret societies, the Igbo had a traditional ideographic set of symbols called Nsibidi that originated from the neighboring Ejagham people. In the ideal Igbo settings numbers have various meaning as shown below:

One: Almighty God
Two: Duality in Nature (Left and Right, Man and Woman, Good and Bad)
Three: Point of Intervention and Manifestation
Four: Completeness and Stability (Four Market Days)
Five: Extra and Gain
Six: Problems and Trouble
Seven: Complete Cycle and Good news (Uwa m uwa asaa)
Eight: Repetition of a complete cycle
Nine: Closure
Ten: Repetition and Unending

Igbo Religious Architecture: Conception and Plan

The prominent housing type for Igbo Religious Architecture is the Mud House. Igbo art is also famous for Mbari architecture (Ikegbum, 2014). Mbari houses of the Owerri-Igbo, which are large open-sided square planned shelters, are examples of Igbo architecture. These architectural products housed many life-sized, painted figures (molded with mud to appease the deity, especially the Earth goddess as well as other deities of thunder and water. Other sculptures of officials, craftsmen, foreigners (mainly Europeans), animals, legendary creatures and ancestors abound. Mbari houses take years to be finished and building them is regarded as sacred, therefore new ones are constructed and old ones are left to decay. Everyday houses were made of mud and thatched roofs with bare earth floors and artfully carved fenestration. Some houses also had elaborate designs both in the interior and the exterior. These designs sometimes include Uli art designed and created mostly by women.

Fig 1: Plan for a Thatch house with palm leaf mats, early 20th century

Plate 1: Thatching with palm leaf mats, early 20th century (elevation)
Mud-House Construction
Mud is natural building material that lends itself to malleability and possibility of recycling. It is environmentally friendly and easily reintegrated with the natural earth, requiring little or no carting away when demolished. Moreover, mud is harmonized with all environments and good for being a passive air-conditioning system. The Mud-house is comfortable all year round because of the insulation qualities of the mud. This quality helps modulate and maintain a cool interior. Frugality and reuse in mud-house construction can create tremendous saving in environmental impact, energy use and capital expenditure.

Earth mud or soil is one of the most widely used traditional building materials in traditional societies around the world and this implies that much of the human population live in mud houses. The material is abundant. Because of its pliability, various forms can be constructed with it while wet. Hence, Mud brick vaults and domes, that are products of baked and fired mud, are common in countries like Iran and Egypt. Many communities in Nigeria, the north and northeast of Thailand also live-in and build their dwellings with mud. All mud-house constructions use just simple local materials, mainly soil and water, added up with paddy husky or rice straw or local fiber weed. Mudded walls are mostly massive, which help stabilize the temperature inside houses at about 24°C to 26°C through the year.

Construction Techniques
Basically, there are roughly seven types of mud-house construction.

Adobe: Sun-dried brick [soil & water & local fiber materials] bonded with clay Mortar; wall baring system.

Plate 2: Bonding sun-dried brick with clay mortar.

Plate 3: Mud covering the bamboo wattle wall

Cordwood or Stone: Left over materials like slender shoot of a tree or tiny stone bonded with mud [soil & sand & paddy husk]; wall-baring system.

Plate 4: Stacking lumps of muds
**Cob:** Fresh lumps of mud [soil & water & local fiber materials] stacked on each other; wall baring system.

**Wattle and Daub:** Woven work of sticks intertwined with twigs or bamboo covered with mud; framework system

**Cordwood or Stone:** Left over materials like slender shoot of a tree or tiny stone bonded with mud [soil & sand & paddy husk]; wall-baring system.

**Earthen Bag:** Stacking the sags of damp earth hooked up with thorn or barbed wire; wall baring system.

**Plate 5:** Mud plastering over stone and twigs wall

**Rammed Earth:** Damp earth lay between formwork and mould and compacted by ramming; wall baring system.

**Plate 7:** Mud houses made of earthen bags in Mexico

**Straw-bale:** Plastering the bundle of hay with mud; the structure can be both skeleton and wall baring system.

**Plate 8:** Mud plastering over straw-bundle wall

**Plate 6:** Compacting mud in the wall-mould
MATERIALS FOR IGBO RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

In the traditional settings of most Igbo communities, for example; the Akpuoga – Nike community, there are local builders who are versed in the techniques of religious buildings. Apart from their knowledge of techniques, these are people who understand the theologies of their traditional religion. The traditional religious architecture of the Akpuoga – Nike can be analyzed under two main stages of substructure and superstructure (walling and roofing).

Substructure

Construction work for buildings commences with the determination of the area of the building and which is done directly and practically. The practice of producing working drawings was not there. Hence, the setting out of the building is carried out on-site. This is followed by the digging of the foundation, normally width 150mm and depth 300mm trenches, in compliance with the space/room needs. Earlier the preparation for the pliable earth mud must have been made in a burrow dug near the building site. The prepared mud is normally protected from the sun by covering it with palm fronds and leaves, a kind of mulching. After the spaces have been determined, wet mud is then poured into the spaces to attain thickness of about 300mm. This is to achieve floor level that is significantly above the surrounding ground level. The mud is leveled throughout the floor area and smoothened with Mkpuru nkwo stone.

Superstructure; Walling

For walls, the wet mud is laid on the prepared substructure up to the window sill. This method is the cob method of constructing a mud-house. Bamboo reinforcements are inserted into the walls to achieve strength, stability and precision of walls. The technique is called wattle and daub. When the walls reach the window sill, usually about 900mm to 1000mm, the window openings are marked. Here it may be pertinent to note that in traditional buildings fenestration openings are limited. This may be connected to the moderating effects of the walls that keep the interior relatively cool and, therefore requiring moderate ventilation. When the lintel height is attained, plain wood or sized logs are used to bridge the window and door openings, Itu Upa, to allow the continuation of the walling. This formwork may or may not be removed before the mud hardens, depending on the quality of aesthetic appeal desired.

Plate 9 A & B: Pictures showing the slim wood not removed before setting
In another method of construction, wooden reinforcements (bamboo) are first weaved right round the building while indicating the various openings for doors and windows. The reinforcement is to enable them hold the clay in place and also align the walls. Generally after laying the wall in its wet malleable state, a sharp cutlass is used to trim off protrusions to give a straight wall. Then the “Mkpuru nkwo” stone is used to render the wall surface. The walls are also, sometimes, decorated with cutlass marks or carvings and left to dry.

**Roofing**

As part of the structural roof members, a large post that extends and defines the pitch of the roof is erected at the centre of the building from the foundation. This pillar/kingpost is a long wooden log that may be of various sizes. Different sizes of bamboo and sticks are used for the wall plates, rafters and purlins. All these are joined together and made firm with ropes or wooden plugs to the central kingpost, giving the roof a cone shaped roof form. The type of roofing materials used is what differentiates communities. Communities in Anambra area use Raffia palm leaves for their roofing sheet, while Imo communities use “Ata” elephant straw grass, but the grass indigenous to the Akpuoga - Nike community of Enugu area is the “Ata” spear straw grass. The straw is then cut to give an even edge which is aesthetically appealing and for easy placement on the trusses.
Straws are placed on the purlin, starting from the edge of the rafter to the ridge cap. In order to make it over lap and impermeable to rain, the straw are bound onto the purlins with twines or ropes to prevent them from being thorn off by wind.

**Contrasting Traditional Architecture and the Religious Architecture of Ndi Igbo**

Traditional Igbo and religious architecture is homogenous and organic. This is to say that elements of construction in both Igbo domestic and religious architecture are of same materials but the difference lies in the careful placement of certain materials, the intricate design of certain objects and finishing (colors, paintings and carvings). The reality is in the traditional setting, indigenous building materials were limited.

In Igbo domestic architecture painting is scarce, whereas in its religious architecture, whether a shrine or the residence of a titled person, houses are finished with paintings and carvings. These paintings portray pictures of various elements and creatures that usually include tortoises, pythons, mermaids, masquerades, etc.

Again, while in domestic architecture fencing is extensive, in its religious domain, like places of worship (Shrines) and palaces fencing is rare. The primary reason for this is the belief that the gods are able to protect themselves and that these are sacred public places that should be accessible to the people (Ikegbunam, 2014). For privacy, shrouds of cloths are hung in specific areas, especially in areas used for sacrifices.

Plates 12 A & B: Showing *Uli* motif paintings done on the walls of a shrine and a spirit worker who does the painting

Plate 13: Entrance to a Communal Shrine
Further differences can be seen in the simplest household instruments used in the day to day activities. For example, the contemporary stool (Oche) used in households is not the same as that used in the religious places. The type used in religious worship, Oche Mgbo, is mostly circular with neither front nor rear. This implies that the priest is not backing any participant of the religious ceremony. This chair is mostly used by the Eze-Nri to serve elders in the community and also used by the chief priests to perform rituals called azu orji and which provide openings through which spirits are expelled during rituals. The azu orji comes in the form of wooden panels or planes with different carvings on it and also with some triangular openings in it through which the spirits are expelled (Ikegbunam, 2014)

**Plates 15:** Showing the picture of Azuu Orji

**The Landscape of the Igbo Religious Architecture**

The Igbo Religious architecture is characterized by various features of which landscape planting is an integral and dominant part. The landscape planting varies with regards to various religious practices, location and also the character of the deity to which the shrine is dedicated. Some trees have religious symbolisms in Igbo cosmology and theology and these determine their use. At adult age a person erects in front of his house an Ora and an Ogbe tree where he occasionally worships his chi, that is his personal god (Arinze, 2008). The Ogbe is a tree planted when a man begets his first child and because this is when the
man is considered to have come of age among the Igbo. It symbolizes the mark of manhood and independence. This tree is cut down at the death of the owner. This is the last thing done at the burial rite of the deceased man as a symbol of final respect and demise (Ikegbunam, 2014).

Plate 16: Showing a picture of an Ogbu tree

Plate 17: Picture showing an Ofo tree

Other important trees used in traditional architectural landscape include ofo (detarium Senegalese), ogilisi (boldia laevis) and akpu. The ofo is a piece of wood derived from detarium Senegalese tree. It is not a spirit but the symbol of authority from the ancestors, a guarantee of truth, and part of the regalia of the shrine attendants. Its highest importance is its symbolism of ancestral authority when it is handed on to the first-born sons (Okpala) through several generations (Arinze, 2008). Ogilisi tree, on the other hand, is normally planted in the open family shrine and represents the forebears of the family (Arinze, 2008). It is normally used for keeping the Ofo and believed to be potent in capturing the ghost of persons with unrested spirit. The process involves some rituals and the planting of Ogilisi tree at the head of the grave of the person in question. This plant consists of a parencaima cell that is believed to be an ancient plant used for rituals. In the absence of an Ofo, the Ogilisi can be used.

Akpu is a particular kind of tree commonly found in shrines and village squares primary purpose of which is for surveillance. It is also found at the market places because it is the common ground and meeting place for villagers. The Akpu leaf is edible and in recent times the tree is used as timber in the construction industry (Ikegbunam, 2014).

The Igbo religious architecture does not deal only with planting as landscape element, but also incorporates other elements. Hence, elements like springs, rocks, lakes, trees, rivers, which are regarded as deities in some areas, form part of the landscape.
Plate 18: Showing a shrine with the lake as its deity.

Factors Influencing Igbo Religious Architecture

Various factors influence traditional religious architecture. These factors include: climate, cultural belief, available materials and Vegetation. Igbo land lies within the tropics whose climatic condition is characterized by high precipitation and temperature. Precipitation is both intensive and extensive and lasts for 8 months that stretches from April – October each year. As a result of this the traditional religious architecture is characterized by pitched roofs to minimize leakages.

The cultural disposition of the people also has some imprints in the architecture and landscape of places. The traditional Igbo society admits of polygamy though a greater number maintain monogamy. However, whichever is the case, compound includes the public living area or parlor (Obi) that is usually located opposite the entrance to the compound; the household shrine is adjacent to the Obi or located within the Obi. The kitchen and other huts belong to the wife/wives and children; the yam barns are located at the rear of the compound and usually detached from the Obi. These areas are private.
Modernization
Influences of modernization and globalization have greatly affected architecture and its products in Igbo land. This has brought about the modernization of traditional architecture and its elements as occasioned by the emergence of new materials and methods of construction. Ease and better means of transportation has also made accessibility of better and more durable materials possible to the people. Cross cultural and religious influences have taken place. A greater population of Igbo people is now adherents of Christian religion with all its implications. The result is that in both concept and content, the Igbo architecture has undergone fundamental changes. Most Igbo communities are now urbanized. This has affected traditional architecture. One of the gains of this transformation is that the life span of buildings is now greatly increased with relatively more enclosures and aesthetic appeals.

Colonization and urbanization are the major factors that contribute to the eroding neglect of traditional religion, native architecture and the pollution and distortion of natural landscapes. This scenario leads to environmental deforestation, denudation and, consequently, to erosion as prevalently evident in Igbo land. On the contrary, traditional architecture is eco-friendly and supports biodiversity. It is significantly pollution free because of its organic nature. Modern architecture, however, has very improved building techniques and tools. Finding the balance between what the traditional architecture and modern architectures have as positives in order to enhance the sustainability and health of the environment is part of the mission of Green Architecture.

Conclusion
Traditional Igbo architecture, whether in its domestic or religious modes, has undergone evolution and transformation. The various experiences of the Igbo people, ranging from cultural, religious, to socio-economic have impacted significantly on their architecture to the extent that transformation has occurred both conceptually and substantially. Architecture is a product of many factors in play and the extent to which it is sustainable and comfortable is determined by the extent to which it is in harmony with climate, culture and available building materials of the society that owns it. Again the symbolic nature of architecture and its elements is an index of its acceptability, especially in the religious realm. This is the case in Igbo religious architecture. Religious symbolism is at the heart of Igbo architecture and is the binding force of traditional Igbo religious practices. Though new methods and materials have evolved, the value of the preservation of the indigenous is as good as the gains inherent in Post Modern Architecture. Not to protect it is to destroy an important history of evolution of a people.

The traditional architecture was an appropriate tool, both in material and technology in its time and place and can still be enhanced to adapt it to times and needs in a way that the core of its concept, that is the integration and preservation of the natural environment is assured. It is a community, religion and nature based architecture.
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