

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	I
1. RELIGION AND MYTH	1
1.1. Religion: A Preliminary Definition	1
1.2. Myth in General	5
1.2.1. Friedrich Max Mueller (1823-1903)	9
1.2.2. Sir James George Frazer (1854-1941)	12
1.2.3. Bronislaw B. Malinowski (1884-1942)	14
1.2.4. Adolf E. Jensen	16
1.2.5. Claude Levi-Strauss	17
1.2.6. Mircea Eliade	18
1.3. Myths a Medium of understanding for the religious beliefs and practices of the people	22
1.4. Myth and History	25
1.5. Myth and Culture	28
1.6. Technical Terms	31
2. AFRICAN RELIGION	39
2.1. Historical Background	39
2.1.1. The period of Ignorance and False Certainty	41
2.1.2. The period of Doubt and Resisted Illumination	42
2.1.3. The period of Intellectual Dilemma	43
2.2. Component Elements of African Religion	48
2.2.1. Belief in God	49
2.2.1.1. The Oneness of God	53
2.2.1.2. The Uniqueness of God	54
2.2.1.3. The Realness of God	55
2.2.1.4. God as the absolute Controller of the Universe	57
2.2.2. Belief in the Divinities	58
2.2.3. Belief in the Ancestors	59

2.3.	Different Manifestations of African Religion	62
2.3.1.	Ritual Ceremonies and Festivities	62
2.3.2	Works of Arts and Symbols	64
2.3.3.	Myths and Legends	65
2.4.	Summary	65
3.	IGBO TRADITIONAL RELIGION	67
3.1.	The Igbo People and Theories of Their Origin	67
3.2.	The Igbo Cosmology	69
3.3.	The Idea of God - Christian or Islamic Influence?	73
3.4.	Religious Beliefs and Practices	77
3.4.1.	Chukwu - God	79
3.4.2.	Excursus	83
3.4.3.	Divinities - Messengers of God	86
3.4.4.	Ala - The Earth Goddess	89
3.4.5.	The Ancestors	95
3.4.6.	The Role of the Ancestors	99
3.4.6.1.	Custodians of Law, Custom and Morality	100
3.4.6.2.	Mediation between Chukwu and Man	101
3.4.6.3.	Control of Social Relationship pertaining to the sphere of Domestic Productivity	102
3.4.7.	The Ancestor Cult	103
3.5.	Igbo Concept of Man - Mmadu	105
3.5.1.	Life as Structure of Roles and Functions	108
3.5.2.	Vertical and Horizontal Relationship	109
3.6.	Igbo Socio-Cultural Structure	111
3.6.1.	The Family Group	112
3.6.2.	The Village Group	116
3.7.	Balance of Cosmic Forces	120
3.8.	Summary	

4.	CREATION MYTHS	124
4.1.	The Origin of Human Environment - The Earth	125
4.2.	The Origin of Man	134
4.2.1.	The Origin of Man and his Trans- ference from Heaven to Earth	135
4.2.2.	The Origin of Man from Clay	139
4.2.3.	The Origin of Man in Hole, Marsh or Tree	143
4.2.4.	The Original State of Man	149
4.3.	Summary	152
5.	THE MYTHS OF THE ORIGIN OF DEATH	154
5.1.	The Lost Paradise	157
5.1.1.	Analysis and Interpretation	159
5.2.	The Failure of the Messenger of Immortality	160
5.2.1.	Analysis and Interpretation	165
5.3.	Family Disharmony	168
5.3.1.	Analysis and Interpretation	170
5.4.	Procreation and Death	171
5.4.1.	Analysis and Interpretation	172
5.5.	Death as Punishment	173
5.5.1.	Analysis and Interpretation	176
5.6.	The World Beyond - The Spirit World	178
5.7.	Summary	181
6.	NOSTALGIA FOR PARADISE	183
6.1.	Myths and Symbols - Relationship	186
6.2.	A symbolic Phenomenological Explanation	189
6.3.	The Fundamental Themes	193
6.3.1.	Archtypal Symbolic Themes	194
6.3.2.	The Cosmic Dimension	195
6.3.3.	The Ritual Dimension	197
6.3.4.	The Socio-Communal Dimension	199

6.4.	Some Symbolic Igbo Cult Objects and their Religious Functions	201
6.4.1.	The Ofo Cult Symbol	203
6.4.1.1.	The Origin of Ofo	204
6.4.1.2.	Two different Categories of the Ofo Symbolic Cult Object	206
6.4.1.3.	The Uses of the Ofo Cult Symbol	207
6.4.2.	The Ikenga Cult Symbolic Object	210
6.4.2.1.	Ikenga as Cult Object	211
6.4.2.2.	The Functions of the Ikenga Cult Object	213
6.5.	Summary	216
7.	THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND LEVELS OF MEANING	218
7.1.	The Paradox of Life and Death	218
7.2.	The Quest for Reunion	220
7.2.1	Cosmic Concept of Salvational Self-fulfilment	221
7.2.2.1.	Salvational Self-fulfilment through Initiation	221
7.2.2.2.	Salvational Self-fulfilment as Intercommunicative Existence in the Ununna Lineage Community through the Maintenance of Omenala Moral and Socio-cultural Principles	223
7.2.2.	Eschatological Salvation	226
7.2.2.1.	Salvational Self-fulfilment through Death and fitting Burial Ceremony	226
7.2.2.2.	Attainment of Paradisial Immortality	229
	CONCLUSION	233
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	237