Language in Africa 6(2), 2025, 64–85. doi: 10.37892/2686-8946-2025-6-2-64-85

FOLKTALE AS A TRADITIONAL MENTORSHIP GENRE AMONG THE IGBO OF SOUTH EAST NIGERIA: TRADITION AND INNOVATIONS IN THE MODE OF DELIVERY

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Abstract: Among the Igbo, South East of Nigeria, folktales serve as fixed or stock narratives/stories, rooted in the infinity of ancestry and used to teach children about their roots, tradition, culture, character and sense of responsibility. Folktales were strictly orally or verbally delivered and meant to be so transferred, from generation to generation. Folktales that carried the moral lessons of virtue were meant to be emulated while those that depicted immorality, wickedness and other vices were warnings against such vices, and meant to be jettisoned. In this paper, the authors have traced how a traditional narrative genre, meant to be stable or fixed in their structure and mode of delivery, is undergoing rapid development, transformation or changes, which the authors consider to be largely positive and innovative. The findings from this study include flourishing interest in the folktales as a research and scholarship area, electronic documentations of it into radio and television dramas, home video films, modern community entertainment dances/dramas and full-length folktale-based story/narrative books. These developments indicate diversification and promotion of the method and mode of delivery of the Igbo folktale. It was also found that this diversification of the Igbo folktale beyond the primary (verbal/oral) communication mode to the secondary sources has popularized Igbo folktale and, to a reasonable extent, language, in other languages and cultures. However, the authors are of the view that the current practice of pushing Igbo folktales into English through translation mutes the outcome and violates the interlingual translatability criteria of such a language-specific genre, except where the source language footage is accommodated.

Key words: folktale delivery, genre, Igbo, innovations, traditional mentorship

1. Introduction

From the infinitesimal past, from generation to generation, age to age, there has been an undying desire to preserve the morals and intrinsic nature of man. For the traditional Igbo man, this desire is evident in his oral delivery of his culture, norm, values, beliefs and highly esteemed virtues which he closed up in very interesting stories embellished with the beauty of intrigues, songs and storytelling. These stories as explained by Mbah & Mbah (2007) occur in three spheres to include the land of the spirit, land of the human and land of the animals.

These stories (folktales or *Akụkọ ifo*) are regarded more as instructional means through which morals are taught though it could play other roles like entertainment. As an art, it was told by the elderly in the society to primarily prepare the young ones for the events of life ahead.

It is typical of every art of man to have dynamics and changes both in delivery and reception even in the medium used; either good or bad and the Igbo art of folktale is not an exceptional case. This is evident in presentation, content and interpretation of these age long stories. Notwithstanding these dynamics, it is also true that the core of the folktale in Igbo language which is morality has not been extinguished and as such, there is a static or stable flow in the desired moral to be taught or learnt from the story even though it depends highly on the way the story is handled by the story teller.

This paper focuses underlying diachronic intrigues of Igbo folktales as well as emphatically shows the points and elements that are unchanging of same. It is of course notable to point out that the idea of oral narratives started from the preliterate world. And since inception, changes have occurred due to technological advancements and western colonization. Owing, to the above, significant changes have occurred in the delivery of folktales even in Igbo. The paper therefore calls for the optimistic use of technology to boost propagation of folktales rather than give in to the generalised view of negativism many have considered it to bear.

2. Igbo folktale: Origin and meaning

There is no gainsaying the fact that folktale in Igbo as well as other languages is as old as man himself. Just like language, folktale and storytelling ride far back into infinitesimal past. By this, the Igbo folktale has remained as a non-visible but strongly felt monument of cultural and moral transmission from age to age. To this end, one cannot specifically point to the beginning of folktale in any society. Rather, it evolves and grows with the people with no particular time of emanation.

As pointed out by Nwaozuzu (2006: 28), "the widespread of human tendencies to teach, entertain and satirize by indirect means seems to be the root of the evolution of Igbo folktales". Hence, noting that one cannot exactly say when Igbo folktales started, but one thing is certain, folktales are as old as the users.

It is important to note that folktale as it were is a very important category (genre) of oral narratives which includes others like proverbs, poems and drama. it is primarily delivered orally by the storyteller to his audience.

Iyasere (1975: 105) defines folktales to be "a primary form of oral tradition, primary as a model of conveying culture, experience and values and as a means of transmitting wisdom, knowledge, feelings and attitudes in oral societies". Folktales are popular stories ingrained in people's memories which are centuries old and also testify to core truth. Every African folktale is a story embellished with the vey values of a society or people, handed down orally to a younger generation. Igbo folktales exist in different dialect, but have no authorship. This further entails that it is a communal property. Dorson (1972: 60) in his definition of folktales says that "folktale embodies the highly polished, artistic story genres that have a relatively consistent, finished form. Their origin, goals and themes, on the other hand, are diverse".

For the purpose of this paper, Igbo folktales shall be seen in this light. The use of oral, printed or electronic medium to establish an idyllic model of cultural values, norms, identity and virtues through

storytelling so as to achieve cultural preservation and homogenous existence in a society or amongst a people.

3. Igbo folktales: Functions and benefits

Most African folklorist and anthropologist have tried to emphasis the function folktales play in a society and how the society depends on storytelling to preserve its ethnics and values. Each story told is very relevant to the society at large, and has its unique function to children and adult alike. Beyond its entertainment functions, it kindles the imagination of a child and helps to communicate appropriate cultural and societal traits to him, thus making an important contribution to the educational process (Ibeli 2016).

Mbah & Mbah (2007: 177) explain that Igbo folktales are both entertaining and didactic meaning they reinforce ethical and moral values. They point out the acceptable as well as unacceptable practices in the society.

Ogbalu (2011) classifies and points out three basic functions of Igbo folktales to include: (i) educational – the use of folktales to instruct, guide and educate both the young and the old in a society but majorly the young; (ii) entertainment – she describes the Igbo folktales as an "after work" event used to relax and calm the anxiety of the day. She exposed the characteristic component of folktales which include songs, riddles, proverbs and other acoustically inclined vocal productions to sometimes play humorous and captivating intrigues for the listener. Finally, she sees the folktales as a tool used to satirize deviant character in the society, thereby making them turn on a new and better leaf.

Uzochukwu (2001: 121) also lends his voice to the function of folktales thus:

> Apparently simple in language and characterization, the folktale invariably contains some lessons which serve as a tool for correcting anti-social behaviours. As is often in the case, wickedness does not go unpunished in the moral world of the folktale. As the guilty is always

> punished, retribution is always a recurring theme. The implication is always warning people to adhere to the norms of the society or else, they meet the fate of the guilty.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that the Igbo folktale plays the primary and recurring role of character modelling- caution and emphasis on the acceptable as well as non-acceptable social interaction in the society. Though the tale may be tragic or humorous, the core reason for engaging the young ones is to nurture, inculcate, build and model them after the acceptable ethics that guide the society. One cannot underestimate or over emphasize this fact. This is regarded in this paper as "mentorship genre" of Igbo folktales.

The Igbo folktale is seen playing the role of mentorship like a two side coin it plays the role of advocacy or affirmation, as well as condemnation. Advocacy in the sense that it openly applauds a virtue, character, ability or norm, seen to be accepted in the society. Condemnation likewise is vehemently abhorring a character and action seen to be unacceptable to the society. Either way, the aim and goal set is to model the young one into a life of bliss and wisdom.

4. Themes in mentorship genre of Igbo folktales

Mentorship simply refers to modelling, guidance, an art of providing counsel and trusted advice. It is not an overstatement to reckon the obvious fact that Igbo folktales are primarily tools for counsel, guidance and mentorship. For example, Dundes (1965: 293) says that tales serve the purpose of disciplining young children. Fables and folktales are used to teach general attitudes and principles and to ridicule vices and misbehavior; proverbs are used as a means to warn them against what is bad and, as Dundes (1965: 296) puts it, 'to warn the dissatisfied or over-ambitious individual to be content with his lot, to accept the world as it is and thus to conform to the accepted patterns.' It is medium through which the young ones are acculturated. The acculturation of the child as explained by some scholars begins at birth. The folktales are stories organized around a particular purpose and theme, either

to relate a moral lesson, tell a human truth, describe the adventure of war and tell stories of personality types and figures.

Ogbalu (2013: 58) assents by adding that "...Igbo children are exposed to folktales as early in life as when they are two years old". The child is engaged in storytelling and introduced to the folktale of the society to build his knowledge about the identity for which the society is known for and to enshrine the norms and values learnt to become a lifestyle and thought pattern for the child.

Meserve & Meserve (1978: 128) describe that "the Jewish folktale narrator's careful description of their lives in Europe enlightened the younger generation…" Eze (2018) has it that the Igbo folklore is open to children through which they gain a lot in linguistic expression, common knowledge, honesty, endurance, respect, the common rules and the established etiquette of the Igbo society and the entirety of good morals. Njemanze (2010) also emphasizes that literature has become an ideological tool which while entertaining the people is also used by adult members of the society to initiate the younger ones into their socialization process used in personality achievement, moral development and cultural transmission.

In Igbo literature, both oral and written, many themes abound. According to Oxford advanced learners dictionary 8th edition, "theme is the subject matter or main idea in a talk, piece of writing or work of art". This therefore explains that there is always a core for every literary work. In the heart of every Igbo literature (oral and written), there is always an intended meaning housing a virtue, character, and socio-cultural norm expected to be learnt or observed. This is the emphasised topical issue of discussion and this is regarded as the theme of the art.

Genre, according to Onuoha & Ogbonnaya (2017: 330) "is a type of text- a coherent stretch of speech involving two or more participants… The study of the genre is a study of the form and content of a message as to whether it is appropriate or not…" They posit that the form and content of a genre reveal much about the speaker, his/her language, audience, norms and values. This is true for the Igbo folktale

as its content reveals more of the values of the Igbo nation and also, the characters in the tales also depict the audience for which the stories are meant for notwithstanding the fact that the elderly in the society can also learn from the story

As earlier said, there abounds quite a volume of themes the Igbo folktale unravels and unfolds. Some of these themes are captured by Onu (2018) in her work to include Theme of Wickedness, theme of treachery and Greed. Nwachukwu-Agbada (1991) in considering the thematic and contextual pattern of the internal character of the Igbo folktale tradition observes the theme of prowess and intelligence, contests and task. But of course, these themes are only but few compared to the virtue encapsulated in the Igbo folktale. For one to wholistically attempt a one-to-one analysis of the themes of Igbo folktales is seemingly untrue. Corroborating the views of Nkoli & Okoye (2016: 3) stating that "Igbo folktales teach morals by exposing the follies and wicked characters and extol the virtuous action in the story", this paper captures the thematic functions of the Igbo folktale under two major divides: anti-themes and pro-themes.

Anti-themes. In this category, we primarily place themes that the Igbo nation and people are known to have disgust for. These themes condemn characters and actions as well as decisions seen as non-beneficial to man. They preach the recompense for evil doers and how the path of the wicked leads to pending doom and unfruitfulness. Themes accounted for in this category includes wickedness, jealousy, pride, selfishness, ungratefulness, gossip, greed, treachery, tyranny, cheating, lies, laziness, theft, idleness, deception, covetousness and cowardliness. The question that quickly comes to mind is why such themes are given consideration in/by the folktale/storyteller. The answer is not farfetched as can be seen clearly in the saying "A wise man learns from the misfortune of other people and the events and conditions that is evident of the aftermath of their evil decisions". This is the belief of the Igbo man that if these social vices and menace are adequately and vehemently debunked in tales, it instils fear on the younger ones not to do same ills and to do what is expected by the society.

Just as shown in Appendix 1, Ogbalu (2011: 60) explains the above as she accepts that "most folktales and songs criticize and or ridicule those who deviate from the accepted norms and social conventions and this helps the young to know early enough what is expected from him by the society".

Pro-themes. These are themes that challenge the participants of the folktale to adopt the virtue in case discussed. These themes preach the value and inestimable gain in upholding good character and actions as well as decisions. Emenyeonu (1987) explains that there are many folktales that teach morals, children learn obedience and respect from such stories. These themes advocate for the character encapsulated in the tale. Themes captured in this category includes: love, bravery, kindness, strength, patience, maturity, occupation and industry, responsibility, loyalty, shrewdness, commitment, humility, and so on. Folktales with the above themes help in understanding and appreciating the gains of good behaviour and virtue. In Appendix 2, we find the subtle theme of focus, resilience and critical thinking skills of the tortoise as his tool to getting a wife for himself. He also understood the place of sacrificing what he had to get what wanted. Although by unholy means, the tortoise depicts the virtues requisite for a person to get to the actualization of their desires.

It is imperative to say at this point that no matter what theme a tale encapsulates, the end point of the tale is always a desire to mentor (model and guide) the young generation. Hence, either pro- or anti-theme, the desired result is that the young has been taught a value and virtue to avoid or acquire.

5. Characters in mentorship genre or Igbo folktale and major themes

When we talk of mentorship, we primarily and fundamentally are talking about the knowledge shared from the older to the younger. Therefore, if we talk of mentorship folktales, we are also directing our focus on stories used by older ones to teach and mentor the younger generation. In Igbo tradition, folktales have settings of which Mbah

& Mbah (2007) explain to be three, namely: the land of humans, spirits and animals. No doubt, tales have been told about humans and spirits, but more often, as it has to do with children, stories are told about the animals. This interests them as it is a story about the characteristics of what they can see and relate with. In tales, these animals are portrayed to expose the societal assentment of them for in actual fact, these tales are based in actual traits of them, Obika & Eke (2016).

It is therefore true that every animal used in Igbo tale possess physical and metaphysical characteristics that account for the theme they project. For example, the ant is known for hard work and industriousness which is a virtue the Igbo is known for and consequently, a theme encapsulated in every folktale the ant plays a role (Anochirionye, 2013). It is for this, that the tortoise also is known for its shrewdness, craftiness and cunningness (as seen in the folktales given in the appendices). The following are children tale characters and the virtue they have as well as theme they project:

Tortoise	Shrewdness, craftiness and cunningness
Lion/Tiger	Bravery
Elephant	Strength
Sheep	Contentment / meekness.
Goat	Stubbornness
Dog	Faithfulness / loyalty

For Mbah & Mbah (2007), the animal world in the context of folktales is the traditional Igbo society; this further explains why the animal world is the major setting for tales of mentorship in Igbo.

6. Sample folktale analysis: Theme, characters and characterization

6.1. “Why bats don’t fly during the day”

This folktale (see Appendix 1 for full folktale) is told to explain the Igbo saying *ehi na-enwe ghi ọdụ, chi ya na chụrụ ya ijiji* translated

as 'the cow that has no tail depends on its god to chase flies away'. In the folktale, the mother sheep whose lamb was starved and maltreated could not retaliate the evil done by the bat. This singular act shows the calmness and meekness as well as non violence naturally shown by the sheep as an animal. The cunning tortoise who always has his way of showing off wisdom comes into the scene to help deal recompense to the evil doing of the bat. Also importantly, we see the bat: a detested animal playing the wicked role. The mentorship theme derivable from this folktale is that of the recompense for evil. From our categorization, we find out that the theme projected by the folktale in appendix 1is an anti theme that is that of wickedness as shown by the bat and the impending consequence. The younger generation is taught by this folktale to abhor wickedness and seek to do to others what we want them to do to us.

6.2. "How Tortoise got a wife"

In this folktale (see Appendix 2 for full folktale), the tortoise as always uses his craftiness to find a wife for himself. Though mixed between two settings – the human and animal worlds, the tortoise leverages on what he has, to getting what he wanted. Superficially, one would ask how does such folktale model or teach the younger generation? A closer look at the willingness and voyage of the tortoise shows that with what one has, and being undeterred, one can achieve any feat. It also teaches that everything has its time, and one must be able to know what to do at every given time: the tortoise knew he was due for marriage and he set it as a goal, and with determination, he was able to get a wife. Hence the pro-theme of determination could be derived as the mentorship focus of the folktale.

7. Traditional era and delivery of Igbo folktales

In the traditional era i.e. before the coming of the white man, the Igbo society had no technology or products of technology. Every art that

was manifest in the society was primarily oral even in the means of communication; letters were not sent, rather messages were carried through oral means by town criers. According to Emenyeonu (1987), the Igbo people did not derive their entertainment from books. Rather, their imagination was developed through oral narratives. Logic was inculcated through proverbs and experienced practitioners who embellished their language with imagery, folk idioms and witticisms. These, the young have to learn and appreciate the basic ideas of life, their people's fundamental values, and their systems of personal relationships and their sense of humour.

Okafor (2004) also points out that the traditional Igbo society uses oral poetry as a medium to inculcate socially acceptable behaviour in the generality of their population. Edosomwan and Peterson (2016) also point out that storytelling is one of the oldest methods of interaction and communication in human history. He also shows that before the advent of the written word, historical events were transmitted to future generations through the use of compelling stories. Folktales are an integral part of the oral society and played a significant role in the community life of Nigerians and also reflected a communal lifestyle of living. Hence, it could be said that the primary medium for transmitting culture was oral and this is also tone through folktales.

In Igbo folktales, stories are not just told using void words. The words spoken got and acquired their meaning by the prowess of the storyteller. Sesan (2014: 79) explains that during the performance of folktales, words are not formless, baseless, passive or void, rather, they add to the realization of the theme of the folktale. By this, we could deduce that the words told by the storyteller carries the essence of the theme projected by the story. Also, Ong (1982) describes the functionally of words in folktales thus:

> Words acquire their meanings only from their always insistent actual habit, which is not as in a dictionary, simply other words, but includes gestures, vocal reflections, facial expression and the entire human existential setting in which the real, spoken words always occur.

From the foregoing, we can say that the power of the words used in Igbo folktales is a derivative of the face to face contact between the performer (storyteller) and the audience. This further ensures effective participation of both. The use of facial expression and gestures to express pain, happiness, surprise, or the use of vocal reflections to express calmness or harshness all play a vital role in helping the storyteller create a vivid picture that can be understood by the listener and further more helps the listener to imprint these pictures as messages in his brain. And by this, there is no mechanical or semantic noise.

8. Contemporary transition and development in Igbo folktale delivery

The coming of the Europeans into Africa, one will recall, introduced the continent to modernization and development. This could be clearly seen in the appreciable developments that has engulfed the media as a tool for cultural emancipation. The tide of change has swept through the medium through which folktales were originally transmitted. The developments which include screen adaptation of tales, printing and publication of stories, and transmission of stories and dramatization of events of tales.

Through technology and development, the introduction of its product such as television, radio, the print media, and computer followed. Once development and modernization are introduced into a society, it gradually begins to creep into every fabric of the society; its language, culture, beliefs, activities and so on. The process of modernization begins to take over even the basic attitudes of the people it has been introduced to. The advent of modernization in Nigeria which spread out to even the Igbo people affected the delivery of even the stories in Igbo. A gradual shift from oral traditional delivery of tales to delivery of tales through technological gadgets ensued. For example, the adaptation to screen of tales such as *Omalinze*, by the film making industry, production of audio-visuals of some tales by the Nigerian Television Authority called "Tales

by Moonlight", the audio production of stories on BCA (Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State) radio station titled "*nti nara rie"*, the publication of story books to include Mbediogu by F.C. Ogbalu, *Elelia na ihe omere* and *Ala Bingo* by D.N. Achara, *Ije Odumodu jere* by Leopold Bell-Gam. These dynamics in the presentation of folktales has so been due to the chase to meet up to the fast track of development and modernization which Schaniel (1988) explains further that the new technology has created change in the society and that the direction of change is determined by the nature and function of that technology in the adopting culture.

9. Harnessing realities of the new media in the delivery of Igbo folktales mentorship genres

The greatest doom for a society is the inability to produce a generation with knowledge of who they are and stand for. If the society is alienated from its true identity, then that society is gradually sliding away into carpets.

Nkoli & Okoye (2016) are of the view that the media is said to perpetuate the alien system imposed on our youth from their childhood.

Akijobi (2001) also decries the effect of foreign morals have sneaked into our societies under different cloaks, especially religious have been added to or in most cases substituted for authentic African native morals. In the case of Igbo folktales, the above holds true for the medium through which the Folktale is given. The internet and modern development have caused a great decline in the effectiveness of the essence of folktale which as a focus of this paper is mentorship. This is as well captured in the view of Epuchie & Amaechi (2009) who posit that the impact of folktales is rapidly diminishing with the increasing awareness of modern inventions. The past time of tales telling is fast disappearing because of other technological innovations like television, radio, DVD's and so forth. As good as the technology is, if not properly harnessed, can cause a whole lot of damage to the age long Igbo practise of storytelling.

For us, instead of fighting the change brought about by the new media, we propose a re-think and an alternative by harnessing properly the products of technology. It is common knowledge that no man lives in his past, rather, he is to learn from the events of the past. So also, no society should live in its past but rather learn from it. In lieu of this, the contemporary medium of folktale delivery (radio, television, social media and the internet) can be efficiently used to engage the younger generation with our cultural values and norms rather than let the western values occupy the whole of the new media. Furthermore, proper scrutiny of the view of Nkoli & Okoye (2016) afore mentioned that the media is said to perpetuate the alien system imposed on our youth from their childhood, it then behoves of us to know that we can also use the new media to institutionalise and engrave our values and norms using the same media. The problem here is not the media, rather, the content of the media, i.e. the user of the new media will surely utilize the content housed in the media.

The following are reasons for which the authors advocate for the incorporation of the new media in transmitting Igbo folktales to the young generation so as to achieve proper mentorship and tutelage.

1. Accessibility. With the help of technology i.e. internet, one can easily access Igbo folktales from any part of the globe. By this, the problem posed by distance is bridged and the dilemma of reaching the Igbo youth in Diaspora is taken care of.

2. Aesthetic Appeal. The contemporary generation is not in any way attracted anymore to the fire place. The seeming primitive setting is far too archaic for the present day young person. For anybody to properly learn, the environment of learning must be appealing and conducive. The new media and technology have provided a more appealing and aesthetic environment for the younger generation. This appeal has created an affinity so close that the whole of their time is spent on the technological gadgets. The resultant effect then should be that we ensure that we make these gadgets the "fireplace".

3. Documentation. for originality to be preserved, Igbo folktales must be documented for futuristic purposes. This can be better achieved

through the use of the new media. As good as oral delivery is, its preservation is better ensured through publication of books, adaptation to screen, and so on. These stories also should be uploaded on the Internet.

10. Conclusion

This paper looks at the innovations in the mode of delivery of the folktale as a traditional mentorship genre among the Igbo of south east Nigeria and points out that the themes projected by Igbo folktales could be divided into two main categories: the *anti-themes* and *pro-themes*. It also decries a decline in the transmission and reception of Igbo folktales owing to gross negligence of the effects of the new media and modern technological waves. This paper also points clearly that the basic and fundamental need for folktales which is the mentorship of the young ones has been abandoned simply because the younger generation are now occupied by the invention of the new media.

It should be very clear to the society if it wants to live on, that folktale is more than an enterprise. It is more of a tool for cultural emancipation, consciousness and awareness. The power of every successor is domicile in the information given by the predecessor. From the findings of this paper, since the younger generation is now preoccupied by the new media, it is then wise to engage the propagation of folktales using the modern media. Every available media should be used to inculcate the desired values for a better life ahead. Igbo folktale Apps that are compatible with android phones can be developed. Schools and institutions should be encouraged to engage their students as well as pupils in the art of folktale. More cartoons and animated motion pictures should be produced to meet up the very young generation quest. The new media should not just contain the values, norms and lifestyle of the western culture but rather be used as a tool to revive and revitalize the gradual declining art of folktale/storytelling.

The Igbo folktale is an integral part of the Igbo folklore. It is seen as stories owned by the folk which helps them in teaching and instructing the younger generation about their identity. Though could

be used as a tool for entertainment, it is essentially used for the creation of awareness, education, moral instruction and cultural identification. This paper proposes the effective and efficient use of the new / contemporary media such as radio, television and the print media in ensuring that every nook and cranny of the globe is stuffed with the values and norms of the Igbo society via the propagation of folktales.

Finally, Okpewho (1983: 72) observes that "in some Igbo urban areas where the past, painfully aware of its weakening hold on the living but reluctant nonetheless to let go oft hem for good; the present, mindful to be sure of legacies at its disposal but equally conscious that the changing scene urges are adjustment of means and goals". This paper also agrees that changing times require changing measures.

Appendix 1. "Why bats don't fly during the day" (translated version of an Igbo folktale)

There was once an old mother sheep who had seven lambs, and one day the bat, who was about to make a visit to his father-in-law who lived a long day's march away, went to the old sheep and asked her to lend him one of her young lambs to carry his load for him. At first the mother sheep refused, but as the young lamb was anxious to travel and see something of the world, and begged to be allowed to go, at last she reluctantly consented. So in the morning at daylight the bat and the lamb set off together, the lamb carrying the bat's drinking-horn. When they reached half-way, the bat told the lamb to leave the horn underneath a bamboo tree.

Directly he arrived at the house, he sent the lamb back to get the horn. When the lamb had gone the bat's father-in-law brought him food, and the bat ate it all, leaving nothing for the lamb. When the lamb returned, the bat said to him, "Hullo! you have arrived at last I see, but you are too late for food; it is all finished." He then sent the lamb back to the tree with the horn, and when the lamb returned again it was late, and he went supperless to bed. The next day, just before it was time for food, the bat sent the lamb off again for the drinking-

horn, and when the food arrived the bat, who was very greedy, ate it all up a second time. This mean behaviour on the part of the bat went on for four days, until at last the lamb became quite thin and weak.

The bat decided to return home the next day, and it was all the lamb could do to carry his load. When he got home to his mother the lamb complained bitterly of the treatment he had received from the bat, and was baa-ing all night, complaining of pains in his inside. The old mother sheep, who was very fond of her children, determined to be revenged on the bat for the cruel way he had starved her lamb; she therefore decided to consult the tortoise, who, although very poor, was considered by all people to be the wisest of all animals.

When the old sheep had told the whole story to the tortoise, he considered for some time, and then told the sheep that she might leave the matter entirely to him, and he would take ample revenge on the bat for his cruel treatment of her son.

Very soon after this the bat thought he would again go and see his father-in-law, so he went to the mother sheep again and asked her for one of her sons to carry his load as before. The tortoise, who happened to be present, told the bat that he was going in that direction, and would cheerfully carry his load for him. They set out on their journey the following day, and when they arrived at the half-way halting-place the bat pursued the same tactics that he had on the previous occasion.

He told the tortoise to hide his drinking-horn under the same tree as the lamb had hidden it before; this the tortoise did, but when the bat was not looking he picked up the drinking-horn again and hid it in his bag. When they arrived at the house the tortoise hung the horn up out of sight in the back yard, and then sat down in the house.

Just before it was time for food the bat sent the tortoise to get the drinking-horn, and the tortoise went outside into the yard, and waited until he heard that the beating of the boiled yams into foo-foo had finished; he then went into the house and gave the drinking-horn to the bat, who was so surprised and angry, that when the food was passed he refused to eat any of it, so the tortoise ate it all; this went on for four days, until at last the bat became as thin as the poor little lamb

had been on the previous occasion. At last the bat could stand the pains of his inside no longer, and secretly told his mother-in-law to bring him food when the tortoise was not looking. He said, "I am now going to sleep for a little, but you can wake me up when the food is ready."

The tortoise, who had been listening all the time, being hidden in a corner out of sight, waited until the bat was fast asleep, and then carried him very gently into the next room and placed him on his own bed; he then very softly and quietly took off the bat's cloth and covered him self in it, and lay down where the bat had been; very soon the bat's mother-in-law brought the food and placed it next to where the bat was supposed to be sleeping, and having pulled his cloth to wake him, went away. The tortoise then got up and ate all the food; when he had finished he carried the bat back again, and took some of the palm-oil and foo-foo and placed it inside the bat's lips while he was asleep; then the tortoise went to sleep himself.

In the morning when he woke up the bat was hungrier than ever, and in a very bad temper, so he sought out his mother-in-law and started scolding her, and asked her why she had not brought his food as he had told her to do. She replied she had brought his food, and that he had eaten it; but the bat denied, and accused the tortoise of having eaten the food. The woman then said she would call the people in and they should decide the matter; but the tortoise slipped out first and told the people that the best way to find out who had eaten the food was to make both the bat and himself rinse their mouths out with clean water into a basin.

This they decided to do, so the tortoise got his tooth-stick which he always used, and having cleaned his teeth properly, washed his mouth out, and returned to the house.

When all the people had arrived the woman told them how the bat had abused her, and as he still maintained stoutly that he had had no food for five days, the people said that both he and the tortoise should wash their mouths out with clean water into two clean calabashes; this was done, and at once it could clearly be seen that the bat had been eating, as there were distinct traces of the palm-oil and foo-foo which

the tortoise had put inside his lips floating on the water. When the people saw this they decided against the bat, and he was so ashamed that he ran away then and there, and has ever since always hidden himself in the bush during the daytime, so that no one could see him, and only comes out at night to get his food.

The next day the tortoise returned to the mother sheep and told her what he had done, and that the bat was for ever disgraced. The old sheep praised him very much, and told all her friends, in consequence of which the reputation of the tortoise for wisdom was greatly increased throughout the whole country.

Appendix 2. "How Tortoise got a wife" (translated version of an Igbo folktale)

Once upon a time, Tortoise wanted to get married but he did not have any money. He thought out a plan and set out on a journey with three grains of corn. When it was getting dark, he entered a man's house and said to him, "Oga please, could you allow me to pass the night in your house? I still have a very long way to go and it is still dark." The man accepted him and showed him where to sleep. At night, he threw the grains of the corn on the floor and the rat ate them up. He began to cry and told the man to pay for his corn. The man begged him to forgive him but he remained adamant. He said to the man, "If you do not have corn in the house, you have to give me something else in place of it". The man saw that he was not getting anywhere with his pleas and gave him a chicken. Tortoise thanked him, took his chicken and continued with his journey. Again when the night came, he went into another man's house and told him, "Oga please, could you allow me to pass the night in your house? I still have a long way to go and it is already dark". The man accepted him and showed him where to sleep. At night, he strangled the chicken and waited for the day to break. When the man woke up, he went to him and started crying, "I am an orphan and the only thing I have in this world has died in your house and I am now left with nothing." The man begged to be forgiven but it fell on deaf ears. Tortoise kept demanding

something in place of his chicken. The man gave him a goat. Tortoise thanked the man, took his goat and continued with his journey. Darkness came again and he came to another man's house with his goat. Again he was offered a place to sleep. At night, again, he strangled the goat and waited for the day to break. Immediately the man came out of his hut, Tortoise started crying that his only belonging had died in the man's house and kept asking for a replacement. The man, after begging Tortoise for a long time, did not know what else to do. He gave Tortoise a child. Tortoise cleaned his face, thanked him, took "his child" and continued with his journey. Then he came to the king's palace to "seek shelter for the night." The king offered him one but at night, he strangled the child and laid it among the king's daughters. When morning came and the daughters raised alarm about the dead child. Tortoise screamed, "Oh! My child, my only belonging! Your daughters lay on my child and they have killed him. You have to pay me with one of them." The king looked upwards to the sky and down. He did not know what to do since he had begged Tortoise to no avail. He simply gave out one of his daughters to Tortoise. He happily took his wife home, laughing at how he had fooled all of them.

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Received 17.04.2024. Received in revised form 08.10.2024. Accepted 29.12.2025