

The Performance/Art of Storytelling: Itsekiri “*Ita Ye*” in Focus

Alero Uwawah Agbonkonkon-Ogeide

Department of Theatre Arts,

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

Introduction

Storytelling is a prominent art form in most African traditions (as in all traditions of the world). This art form involves the skill attained through observation and practice. The more the exercise is carried out the more proficient one becomes. Clearly, the people’s knowledge of themselves is often recreated, preserved and conveyed through storytelling. Through storytelling – which is a marriage of two words: “Story” and “Telling”, that is, the telling of a story. As defined by Holman(511), story is “in its broadest sense any account, written, oral or in the mind, true or imaginary, of actions in a time sequence; any narrative of events in sequential arrangement...” A story takes divers forms such as folklore, folktale, legend, or myth. According to Holman, folklore: (e.g., superstitions and proverbial sayings) belong... to the life of modern man, literate as well as illiterate, and may, therefore, be transmitted by written record as well as by word of mouth. Folklore includes Myths, Legends, Stories, Riddles, Proverbs, Nursery Rhymes, charms, spells, omens, superstitions of all sorts, popular BALLADS, cowboy SONGS, plant lore, animal lore, and customs dealing with marriage, death, and amusements” (228). The Itsekiri *Ita Ye* includes all these listed elements minus “cowboy songs.

Within the Niger Delta of Nigeria, storytelling is a healthy form of relaxation. Three major tribes (Itsekiri, Urhobo and Isoko) in the region relish storytelling performance. Storytellers of these major tribes open their performances with *Ita Yee* with the attendant response of *Yeee* from the audience. Perhaps this is as a result of their closeness in terms of neighbourliness. Indeed, as neighbours they share many things in common, culturally and otherwise. Their dressing habits, food items, and modes of cooking are similar but the opening glee of storytellers’ *Ita Ye*, and the audience’s response of *Yeee*, is one major highlight of their cultural similarities. But this article’s main concern is with the Itsekiri *Ita*

Yee. Thus the main purpose of the article is to re-enact this art form. A documentation of its process of performance, its relevance in contemporary times, and the hope of sustaining the art through a recommendation of modern technology, that is, digital technology, as a better option for the performance are focused on.

Today, in Nigeria, (as in other places in the world) there is an enormous threat of language extinction among minority ethnic groups. The Itsekiri, a tiny ethnic group in Nigeria are faced with the great threat of going into oblivion as a result of mass exodus from their indigenous abode to other urban centres because of the attitude of their hostile neighbours, sea erosion, the quest for wealth and power (Afejuku & Uwawah, 231-233). Also Aziza, who is an Urhobo also expresses the same fear and how to ameliorate it (206-220). Rev. Canon J. O. Binitie (1984), in his preface to *Aro Biri Ita ni Isekiri* states that “there is a wide spread apprehension...about the future of Isekiri language and culture” because “the local language of the majority and surrounding ethnic groups tend to swallow up or overshadow the minority language” and English language is also “gradually swallowing up most local languages.” The Itsekiri ethnic nationality is situate within the coastal region of Nigeria – the Niger Delta. They are a riverine tribe. They have a rich tradition of oral literature which has been preserved from one generation to another. In Momaday’s word, “...oral tradition is that process by which the songs, myths, legends, tales and lores of the people are formulated, communicated and preserved in language by word of mouth” (as qtd by Iyothi, 91). The art of storytelling in Itsekiri is one distinct way of knowing and identifying their culture.

The Performance

Stories in Itsekiri are captured under two categories – *Aro* and *Ita*. *Ita* is the sequence of real event, that is, the historicity and historiography of the people. History is the past event of a people and it can be re-enacted anywhere and at any time as situation demands. *Aro* is the fictional event(s) or fabricated stories. It is fables-created for the purpose of conscientising the people. Although it is now difficult to be factual with some stories (that is, separating the one that is a true life experience from that of fiction) because of their orality qualities and the passage of time,

yet both performances penetrate deep into the social context, cultural structures and moral perspectives of the Itsekiris. However, for the purpose of this essay, *Aro* remains the focus of this paper. The performance involves the performer and the audience. Both are participants. While the performer is usually an individual, the audience can be from an individual to as many as fifty or more persons. The performer could also be an elderly male or female (in the form of parents or grandparents or even elder brothers or sisters or age-mates). The performer who is the storyteller is highly proficient in the art. The performer is very fluid in his action because he/she has the ability to mimic anyone/animal at any time. He/she is an actor, a musician, an orator, a joker and a dancer. In the bid to make the story enjoyable the language of the performer is embellished with the idioms and proverbs of the Itsekiri folks. The audience, on the other hand, is usually made up of youngsters and some adults as listeners. There is an input by the audience, especially with response to the performer thereby creating a holistic play-pattern of collaboration and interaction.

Time of Performance

Stories in Itsekiri land are usually told in the evenings between six and eight. It is forbidden to tell stories in the morning. This is borne from the fact that mornings are time for work. All walks of life begin in the mornings and terminate in the evenings. And so, storytelling is designed as a form of relaxation and entertainment in the evenings after a hard day work. Therefore, telling tales in the morning is frowned at because it is seen as a sign of inactivity that encourages laziness and if not checked can lead to poverty in future. Evening stories usually last from 30 minutes to almost 2 hours – but the duration of time depends on the ability of the performer to carry the audience along.

Place of Performance

This is usually any available space within the compound when it is for a large audience, especially under a tree. But once it is very late, the performance moves to *ogwa ode*, front yard, or within the courtyard in order to prevent snake and insect bites. However, when it is between a small household, like parent(s) trying to give moral instructions to their

children, it could be anywhere in the house, especially with mothers while cooking in the kitchen.

Language

The vehicle of communication used in times past is Itsekiri. The word Itsekiri represents both the people and their language. This language as is rich in proverbs (*owe*: the sayings of the wise) and vocabularies. The story (*Aro*) of *Ọlikpẹrẹbu* (tales about human and animal) as told by Rev. Canon J. O. Binitie, J. P. is used here as an example to showcase the process of presentation.

Aim

Topics which are used during storytelling by Itsekiri vary. However, the purpose is, often times, to teach morals/values of the Itsekiri people. These values include but not limited to humility; respect and obedience to parents and elders; integrity, benefits of self-esteem, etc

Social Implications/Relevance

In agreement with Hossain Anayet F.M. And Md. Korban Alli (2014), who argue that society is a collection of individuals who are joined together by relationships or patterns of behaviour that separate them from individuals who do not have the same relationships or who have different patterns of behaviour. Thus, certain rules guide the behaviour and attitudes of the people. For instance, the reason why Itsekiris always escort new brides to their husbands' homes, according to general deduction, could be linked to *Ọlikpẹrẹbu*'s story. This makes the story relevant in contemporary times. Some of this folktales/lores do not only explain the reasons behind some of the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the people, they also help to strengthen the emphasis placed on them.

Rules

Members of the audience are expected to be attentive and participatory during storytelling. Distractors are at times penalised. No matter how proficient an audience member is in storytelling, no one is permitted to interrupt the storyteller. *Aro pipa* (storytelling) starts with *ẹrin* (the song

in the story) and ends with it also. Oftentimes *Aro* is an outdoor activity (especially when there is no rain).

Arrangement

Arena formation involves where the storyteller (lead actor) has audience seated on three sides – front, left and right. The stage is anywhere the performer sits. The performer sits on *aga* (papa’s chair or seat, or special or rock chair made for the comfort of the elderlies) or on *akpanuse/ujoko* or *akaba* (that is, a wooden stool or stool made from bamboo); members of the audience sit on *ejiko/ebiba* (this is mat made from bamboo tree) or *ere* (mat made from raffia).

Below is the story of *Ọlikperẹbu* as written by Binitie (16-19)

Ita *Ọlikperẹbu*

The Song

Storyteller (Soloist):	Audience (Chorus)
Ọlikperẹbu eguere mi:	eyere
Egungun bi ẹ ku we jẹ:	eyere
Umale bi ẹ ku we jẹ:	eyere
Ere wai do, wai do:	eyere
Ere ma fin ẹ mi, ee kọ si:	eyere
Ana mi wọli wọli:	eyere
Ejorun ee kọn mi ana mi:	eyere.

Storyteller: Mo kpa ghereghere mo kpa ni *Ọlikperẹbu* origho.

Ni ira eghare ọ̀nọkẹrẹn ọ̀kan biri aya a ka winọrọn. Aghan ka bi ọma onobiren ọ̀kan. A ka kpe wun *Ọlikperẹbu*. *Ọlikperẹbu* san ẹgua gidigbo; uwọnrọn rẹn. Di ara ro dede yọ lokpo lokpo o. Owun re san ẹgua ju ni aja aghan. A ka bi ọma ọ̀nọkẹrẹn ọ̀kan le *Ọlikperẹbu*. Teri ẹgua buburu ro a ka kpe wun Akpoofi. Ara ro dede ka kọn biri ofi. Aghan omere meji we ee ka gba ni ara; teri gin ọ̀kan buru ẹgua, okeji de san ẹgua. Biri *Ọlikperẹbu* la ni were won san ẹgua nii. Keke, o kaa to ẹmẹbiren. Teri ẹgua sisan ro we, ireyẹ gidijẹ re ka guọ re ubo iyo ro, biri ọwa ro gbaa gin aghan fẹ fẹ oma we gba ẹ obiren. Ogho gbo buru rẹn – Ti omẹtie ti onaare: ti eligbo, ti ighele, ti o san ẹgua, ti o buru ẹgua. Dereke ee nẹ ti

Olikperẹbu forijẹ gbẹ. Ti o ma wu ọwa ro, ee wu u; ti o ma wu iyo ro, e wu u; a da rere gin ti omere ro Akpofi.

Ojo ọkan ẹḍenma sisengua ọkan ka wa ni ubo ọwa Olikperẹbu. Di won jolo se taan; a koni birikiti. Biri won wọ uli gege, o ka si dakun, ọ ka gin Olikperẹbu won teri ro wa; won fẹ fẹ ẹ gba ẹ obiren. Dereke ọwa Olikperẹbu ee forijẹ. Batenren ti Olikperẹbu gba ri ẹḍenma we kọkọ ara ro dede da ghere ghere; o ka gin ni inọ ro gin, “Eyi re ẹ ọkọ ti won wa do o.” Biri ọwa ro kpe e gege gba bi i rọ urun ti won ro ni ubo ara ẹḍenma we, Olikperẹbu ka si dakun o ka forijẹ. Owun ọwa Olikperẹbu biri iyo ro gba forijẹ kenren. Aghan gba yoo, te ri gin Olikperẹbu (ti e e si da ẹ ometje juwẹre) fiṅo ri ọkọ ti wan do ren.

Ọwa Olikperẹbu biri ira ti o jọ dede ka kin ẹḍenma we; a ko obi si, a ko ẹmo si. Ira ẹren Olikperẹbu biri iyo ro wi ubogun gba se oje ti a waa gba kin ejoji. Owa Olikperẹbu ka gin di a mu omi si ubague di ana wun gba gue. Ara Olikperẹbu dede da welewele. Erin ee si kuri arun ro. Keniken, ẹḍenma we ka gin wen ka gue ni aja ejoji. A rin wen ka je urun ni eju ireye kenren fo. Owun a gba ko oje si abete gbẹ ẹḍenma wee. O ka se ekun ma ara; o ma oro ti won fe ẹ! Akpoofi, ti o ẹ omere Olikperẹbu, ma biri a te yi ara de gba da eju urun omiren. O ka yi ara de gba da alika. O ka fo ma agbafa abete ti a jọ lo si gbẹ ejoji we. Batenren ejoji we, ee ẹ ireye, ere ren!! Agho ara ireye won bi gba so ara ro da ireye e. Ewu olewu won bi gba ko nii! O si gba da a nokan ni inọ abete ti a jolo gbẹ ẹ we, owun won gba yi ara de gba da ere so si ale. O gba je oje ti a gba kin in. O gba la uwan biri eguale ka se. Ee ma gin Akpoofi (ti o da alika we) wi urare ni gbafa gba ri efoo ro! Ere we gba je oje kuro, o ka yi ara de gba da ireye. Oka lefun kuri abete. Akpoofi kenren ka da yi ara de.

Akpoofi ka kpe ọwa ro biri iyo ro, biri omere ro Olikperẹbu si ekiko. O ka yin iyen urun ti won ri dede gbẹ aghan. O ka gin “Eyi we ee ẹ one ti a ka mu oma gbẹ gba ẹ obinren. Dereke Olikperẹbu ee gba eko ti omere ro, biri iyo ro biri ọwa a mu gbẹ ẹ. Arin uku ẹḍenma we re se uku wun. Iyo ro biri ọwa a ka tara ofo kuro. Ira ti a da gba to, a ka ta emo si gbẹ ejoji we gba mu obinren gbẹ ẹ. Eju si gba ma, a gba sin Olikperẹbu biri oko ro to ughere aja. Ireye dede ka yide. Dereke Akpoofi ti o se omere Olikperẹbu ka mu ẹrin ni arun:

Olikperẹbu eguere mi:

eyere

Egungun bi ẹ ku we je: eyere
Umale ẹ bi ẹ ku we je: eyere
Ere wai do, wai do: eyere
Ere ma fin ẹ mi, ee kpọ si: eyere
Ana mi wọli wọli: eyere
Ejorun ee kọn mi ana mi: eyere.
Oniye koniye ti o ma owe ti Akpoofi gba ẹrin we kpa ee winoron.

Edeṅma we biri aya a gba rẹn re aja ro. Dẹreke Akpoofi ti o ẹ afeṛun debo ka da alika gba lele omere ro biri oko ro. A si gba to aja okan, edeṅma we ka mu ekoro gbẹ olekoro; o ka mu ewu gbẹ olewu, keke o kaa daa biri eworiwo. Eru gba ba Olikperebu u, o gba son akun, o gba fe ewe biri wan te sa lude; dẹreke edeṅma we ee si je. A ka datu to aja mirẹn. Edeṅma we gba mu ewo gbẹ olewo; mu esen gbẹ olesen; mu origho gbẹ olorigho. Ere gba nana si ale gbongbongrongbon. Di Olikperebu si guo kpakpa, gba son akun. Dẹreke ere so o ni ogua gba guo lele. Akpoofi wi etin oko gba fo lele aghan, gba dere urun ti o waa si. Keke, keke, ere kaa to ugho to se inoli ro. O ka fa Olikperebu aya a wi ino ugho we. Ebobbo eye ka kpa Olikperebu. Ebi nọkan fe lu u kpa teri e nemi je olode, biri Abilobilọ ti ere oko ro ka kpa gbẹ ẹ.

Akpoofi winoron gba dere biri ere te rẹn dede, biri ubo ti won ka re ti won ke le kpe. Ojo okan di ere si gin gbẹ Olikperebu gin o da ije meji ti owun a gbaa gbe fenmi. Olikperebu ee si ma urun ti wan se. E si ri akun, ee ri ejorun. Ebi e je ebi. Eju ro dede da woloko. Ogba da ojo okan di ije meji we re to, Akpoofi gba ma gin ere re ubo ti ori, o gba yi ara de gba da ireye. O gba mu ara mu ghan Olikperebu omere ro. Akpoofi ka gin gbẹ omere ro gin di o numara di aghan sa. Owun aghan gba saa. Ti ogure ti uren. O gba da kekere di aghan to ughere aja owun ere gba lude ti ubo ti won re waa, ee ba Olikperebu. O gba fun ara, ino gba bi i, o gba tarabayaa, o gba gin, “Eneṅ, eyi uya: emebinren we ri efo mi kuro ren; o fe sa re aja ireye. Me wa je; ma le e keke ra to edon iyo ro biri owa a.” E si ya ti wan gba bi urun ti wan gba yi ara de, gba da ireye. Ere guo gba re ren. O da kekere biri kekere, ti ere agba ba aghan. Aghan kpeju ri ere gba guo gba wa. Aghan gba to ughere aja wun aghan gba wu ogun. Ere ka de lefun aja ubo dede gba bu jo. Olikpakpa gba ikpakpa, oludayibo gba

udayibo. A gba wo ere ara, agba ko ni gbẹ ẹ. Ere dumunẹ. Dẹreke ẹmi ro nọkan ee nemi ka oronron aja. A gba kpa, ere we e; ubo dede ka ni je gba kon yere-re-re. A gba da ikarasin ne ere ara, a gba jo o!

Aja dede gba guo re inoli owa Olikperebu gba biri oyo. Akpoofi ka mu erin ro ni; aja dede ka biri o gbe e

Olikperebu eguere mi:	eyere
Egungun bi e ku we je:	eyere
Umale bi e ku we je:	eyere
Ere wai do, wai do:	eyere
Ere ma fin e mi, ee kpo si:	eyere
Ana mi woli woli:	eyere
Ejorun ee kon mi ana mi:	eyere.
Sisin: Olikperebu eguere mi:	eyere
Olikperebu eguere mi:	eyere

Mo gba ide mo gba itariko, mu ta le oke o. ITA YEE!!

Closing glee: the presenter asks for the lessons learnt from the audience. After the response/s, he/she ends with this closing statement:

English Version:

Olikperebu was a very beautiful girl. She had a brother called Akpoofi. *(These two siblings' names were a description of their appearance. While Olikperebu means beautiful, lovely, robust and well-built girl, Akpoofi is the opposite. The name describes his ugliness and sore-filled body).* Olikperebu grew to become the most elegant and most beautiful lady within her town and surrounding communities. The fame of her beauty went far and wide and her beauty attracted many suitors too. Nobles, rich, elegant, handsome men, all came, even fairies like in the time of Biblical Babel, also came but Olikperebu refused their hands in marriage. Suddenly, there appeared in the house of Olikperebu's parents the most handsome suitor ever seen. This man has no name, no family background and without escort. Like the charming prince of the English legends, he appeared in princely regalia with the show of affluence. Immediately Olikperebu set her eyes on him, she fell in love and refused every voice

of reasoning. She agreed to marry him and her parents who had long waited for her to get married were overwhelmed with joy. A date was quickly fixed for the marriage.

Meanwhile, Olikperebu's parents prepared a bathing space and asked suitor to take a bath but the suitor declined. Meal was placed before him; he refused to eat, claiming he forbade eating in public. So, a room was arranged for him to eat and relax. On entering the room he shut the door and shutters. This action aroused Akpoofi's interest and thus he became inquisitive. Although he was born ugly, he possessed a supernatural or magical power by which he could change to whatever being/thing he desired. He then decided to change to a fly and flew through an opening on the door. There he perched on the doorpost and what he saw was alarming. He changed back to human form and informed his parents. The parents and Akpoofi then called Olikperebu and warned her not to marry the man. She refused and even threatened to commit suicide. The parents unhappily married her to the man.

Immediately after the marriage, the man decided to leave with his wife. He refused to stay a minute longer. After they had crossed many rivers and journeyed through many lands and towns, they got to a certain village and the man began to remove and give out his outfits. He started with the cap on his head, his walking stick, his shoes, his dress, coral beads, wrapper and others until he was naked. When Olikperebu asked the reason for his behaviour, he said they were all borrowed. It was when he gave out his wrapper that Olikperebu became scared. She wanted to run away but she could not because she was far, far away from home. She was all alone with this stranger that was now her husband.

A little further, the man started another round of returns. He returned his borrowed hands, legs, eyes, mouth, and finally, his head, and behold, he stretched himself and became a boa. By now, they were at the verge of a thick forest and Olikperebu was so, so afraid. She started to cry and begged the snake-husband to let her go. The snake refused but marched her straight to his abode, a hole in the underground inside the forest. Each day the boa went out and returned home with dead animals like rabbit, other rodents and palm kernels. After some weeks, the boa announced his intention to consume Olikperebu. He told her that in two

weeks' time, Olikperebu will become his meal. By this time she was already weak, she could neither cry nor run.

Unknown to Olikperebu and the boa, Akpoofi, Olikperebu's brother, had changed to a fly and followed them throughout the journey. He had been hanging around monitoring the snake-husband's moves. A day before the completion of the two weeks, after the snake-husband had gone on his usual long journey, Akpoofi entered the hole and changed back to human. Olikperebu was very happy to see him. He then told Olikperebu how he followed them and what he had been doing since he has been living in the forest. He told Olikperebu to get ready to run and they escaped together to their village. When the snake-husband returned he could not find Olikperebu. He looked everywhere in the forest, he did not see her. He was very angry because he knew she had escaped. He then pursued her to her village. He ran and ran. But before he could reach them, Olikperebu and Akpoofi were already in the village. When they looked back and saw the snake, they shouted for help. The villagers came to their rescue; they killed the snake and burnt it.

The Artistic Rendition of the Story

The plot of Olikperebu is linear. The story begins and ends with sequentially arranged actions, full of intrigues and suspense, that enhances the aesthetics and interpretation of the story.

Suspense: the story of Olikperebu is full of suspense. This is visible from the moment she displayed her narrow mindedness in the selection of whom to marry. The rejection of many suitors around made her become an old maid in the community. When it seemed that all hope was lost, a total stranger approached her in marriage. Then this suitor was also an embodiment of mystery. This aura of mystery created by the suitor was first displayed when he refused to eat or bath in public but rather shut the door and closed the shutters before eating what was prepared for him. This action intrigued Akpoofi whose curiosity in wanting to know his true identity was aroused. The suspense continued throughout the story, especially at the point in which the man began the returns of all he borrowed. One continued to wonder the extent of returns. However, when the returns now included parts of the body it would be expected that the

end of *Ọlikperẹbu* had come. Suddenly again, Akpoofi appeared and advised that they run. From the description of how *Ọlikperẹbu* was starved of food, the possibility of making it to the entrance of the hole where the snake harboured her was not there. Although the time she escaped and when the snake returned was not mentioned, two things that would have caused tension were: would she be strong enough to make it home and would the community assist them to combat the snake when they enter the village? – especially when one considers how *Ọlikperẹbu* treated her people by choosing a total stranger instead of their men? The reader is not kept in absent for long to get an answer to this question. *Ọlikperẹbu* returns home to the embrace of her people who gave the intruder's neck a good dose of what befitted it: death by fire

Characters: most of the characters in *aro* are usually commoners and animals. In the story of *Ọlikperẹbu* two animals are presented – snake and fly (which Akpoofi changed to. For the purpose of this article, only three major characters will be analysed out of the characters in the story. These characters are *Ọlikperẹbu*, Akpoofi and Mr. Snake.

Ọlikperẹbu, the main character in the story is a beautiful and proud woman. Her complexion was never mentioned. But according to her name, *Ọlikperẹbu*, she is beautiful, plump and perhaps of an average height. In the story, she seems to be morally bankrupt, self-centered, disobedient and a coward. Akpoofi, on the other hand, is presented as an ugly but brave young man with body covered with *ofi* (yaws).

Thematic Elements in the Story:

The theme of subtlety and deception is also displayed in the story. This is seen in the manner in which Mr. Snake came as a gentleman to ask for *Ọlikperẹbu*'s hand in marriage. Mr. Snake appeared with the similitude of gait, beauty, love, wealth and humility. He hid under the cloak of belief (his tradition forbids him from eating in public, bathing outside his community), to perpetuate evil. This is comparable to what obtains in Nigeria and perhaps many parts of the world today. We experience some religious sects that professed 'peace' at the instance of their entrance into Nigeria many years ago, but today, most of the atrocities of killing,

kidnapping, abduction and maiming innocent people have been linked to them.

Ọlikperẹbu depicts a proud and disobedient child. She allowed her beauty to becloud her reasoning. This is seen by her refusal to accept the local men's hands in marriage. Her attitude towards the selection of whom to marry also showcases Itsekiri's attitude towards their female child. It portrays a people who from time immemorial do not forcefully give out their daughters against their wish. The Itsekiris are a people who place premium on their daughters' independent thought and wishes.

Morality: There is a universal theme of the negative consequence(s) when a child disobeys the parents. This can be anchored on the popular adage in Itsekiri that sates as follows: *urun ti ọlarẹ ri nu soro, ọma tie ma gun egi, enemi ri*, (that is, literally, what an elder sees while standing, no youngster can behold it even on a tree). This is a pre-supposition of an elder's ability for premonition. Hence the warnings from her parents that she rejected that led to her punishment/suffering.

Allegory: Mr. Snake is a representation of deception. This could also be likened to the biblical snake (serpent) that deceived Adam and Eve. It also emphasis the old muse, 'not all that glitters is gold'. He appeared in the form of a handsome man. He came with the intent of deceit. He borrowed all human apparels and forms to give a sensual feeling of hope and love. This could also be compared to the way most Nigerian politicians, leaders, and some others came with the promise of hope when contesting elections, only to show their true character of deceit and greed when in power.

The story Ọlikperẹbu, could also be a description of the tradition-bound Itsekiri community and indeed Nigeria. In spite of Ọlikperẹbu's spiteful behaviour/attitude towards her people – as a result of her preference for a stranger to her people – when she came calling in her moment of tragic distress, the community did not abandon her. They came all out to fight the stranger, to protect their own against destruction. This is a portrayal of the communal living of the Itsekiri people, who although one of the