

Towards a Type Classification of *Ẹwa-oma* Festival Performances of Nkporo, South-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

Much classificatory work has been done on the African festival performance. However, such work largely has to do with identifying and classifying the continent's performances in general. Some, but not many, of the individual festival performances have received classificatory attention. However, for the purpose of systematic documentation it is desirable to classify the individual performances where it is possible to do so, particularly when pioneering work on them is involved. This is the motivation for this study, a pioneering work on the Ewa-oma festival performances of Nkporo. The multiple-criteria approach is used, and narrowed down to five criteria: duration, plot, style, theme and character. Fifty-two (52) Ewa-oma performances recorded in an audio-visual device during the 2000, 2001 and 2002 editions of the festival are used for type classification. Four types of Ewa-oma performances are identified: the song-dance drama (subclassified into long song-dance drama; short song-dance drama; song-dance drama with represented action; song-dance drama with narration; and poetic narrative song-dance drama). Another is the solo drama (subclassified into narrated solo drama; solo drama with represented action; narrated solo drama with represented action). The third is the declamatory drama (subclassified into solo declamatory drama with represented action; pure declamatory drama; and declamatory drama with song-dance and narration). The last is the represented action (subclassified into long represented action; short represented action; episodic represented action; and organic represented action). Six thematic thrusts – moralistic, gender, religious, incongruous, ideological, and the eclectic – are also distinguished. Similarly, two character types, stock and round, are identified. This classification is based on the enacted performances. Future classification may focus on the Ewa-oma songs.

Introduction

Ẹwa-oma festival is an annual event in parts of the Cross-River Igbo area of Abia and Ebonyi States of Eastern Nigeria. Specifically, the festival is observed by the Nkporo, Afikpo, and Edda peoples of this area who practice a male ancestral cult/religion known as *egbela* or *agbala* with which the festival has a connection. While in Afikpo and Edda the festival is called *ebu mbe*, in Nkporo it is called *ẹwa-oma*. This classification is based on the Nkporo version of the festival.

Nkporo is located in the border areas, north of Abia State, Nigeria and lies between Latitudes 5° 45' and 5° 51' North, and Longitude 7° 44' and 7° 53' East (Igwe 4). It is bounded in the north by Akaeze clan, Oso Edda village, and in the north east by Edda, all in Ebonyi State of Nigeria, and in the south east by Ohafia, in the south by Abiriba, and in the west by Item, all in Abia State of Nigeria.

The community's annual calendar commences in late August with the New Yam Festival which is celebrated on *Eke Ukwu* (the great *Eke* day, different from *Eke Nta* – lesser *Eke* day), and is called *Eke Mbu* (the first *Eke*). The entire year is inundated by festivals ranging from those directed towards pure entertainment to those with ritual import to lesser or greater degrees, and mostly dramatic. Most of the entertaining festivals take place in September and October, a period suitable for their conduct because farming activities are low-keyed, thus, providing people the needed convenience for entertainment. *Ẹwa-oma* festival is one of these festivals. It takes place within a day every year, between the 17th and 25th of October.

Ẹwa-oma performances are mainly satirical, and thus woven around social deviants whose transgressions are not only verbally burlesqued but also openly dramatized. The aim is, in Igwe's words, "...to denounce and, therefore, discourage further evil or unapproved conduct in the community" (2005:450), and by so doing, the festival serves to sustain the moral health of the community, because, for the fear of being made *ẹwa-oma* butts people avoid actions which may attract *ẹwa-oma* performers' attention to them. The principal aim of the festival is to encourage good behaviour among members of the Nkporo Community, hence its name, *ẹwa-oma*, derived from 'egwa oma' (good behaviour)¹.

The festival has its roots in *Agbala*, the religion of the people of Nkporo (Ogbuagu 1982; Egwu 1997). Tradition has it that *ewa-oma* began as a sudden counter-attack by women on men for days of verbal assault by men on them, at a period when the norms of a patriarchal system made it impossible for them to respond to that assault. For several days before the *ewa-oma* day, women go into compulsory confinement. Their movements are restricted within enclosed compounds so that they may not observe the activities which go on at the village square or look into *agbala's* shrine which is now bare, having been pulled down for re-erection. It is believed that in the distant past, as *agbala* faithful re-erected the shrine, they entertained themselves in recriminatory songs directed at women, sometimes at specific women. During such period, women had no opportunity to respond to the verbal abuse. Tired of this yearly assault on them, a time came when, as the men as usual entertained themselves at the expense of the women, the women organized themselves and formed songs and mimes around the men whose voices they could pick clearly from the compounds where they had been confined. To the amazement of the men, as soon as the women emerged from their confinement, being *Afor* (the third of the Igbo four-day week), they launched an open counter-attack on the men, targeting particular individuals. The surprised men had to wait for another year before launching their own open attack on the women on the same *Afor* day. That way, a tradition was born (Ogbuagu 1982). Nobody knows when this happened. To some, the tradition is as old as Nkporo herself. The particular *Afor* has become known as *Afor ewa-oma*. This paper is concerned with the classification of the different types of the festival's performances.

Nature and Method of Classification

According to Fowler (1982), genre's taxonomic dynamics mostly draw on formal (external), concrete elements of a text. As Cann (1997) puts it, "Classification is the grouping together of like objects and their separation from unlike objects...Classification is achieved by arranging objects into classes – a class being a group of objects which share a particular set of properties, no other objects having this particular set of properties." (1). Indeed, classification is properties-based; and those properties should be observable. Derrida and Ronell (1980) observe that there is no genreless text; every text belongs to a genre. The aim of classification, therefore, is to locate texts in their classes or types. Thus,

a genre, or class, or type reveals identifiable features which map texts of that kind. *Ewa-oma* is a festival of drama. Several performances - which are texts themselves - are enacted by different troupes at the festival. This paper seeks to classify the many performances recorded on field by the author in the 2000, 2001, and 2002 editions of the festival. While it was not possible, for logistical reasons, to capture all the performances by all the troupes from the several communities which make up Nkporo during the editions of the festival in question, the plays captured (52 in all) would be considered representative enough for authentic classification.

Problem of Classification

A prevalent problem in a classificatory endeavour is the difficulty involved in the choice of a paradigm. Should, for example, a uni-criterion or a multiple-criteria approach be adopted? Some critics prefer the former. Propp (1969), for example, favours this approach. For him, the plot and how it clarifies character should be the basis for the classification of tales. Certainly, a criterion can define a text, that is, give it a class. Therefore, plot can assign a text to a class. However, since texts, written and oral, that are constructed along a similar plot pattern may differ markedly in other ways, the application of the plot-based, uni-criterion scheme of Propp is here considered inadequate for a fully rewarding classification.

Bamgbose (1969) also adopts the uni-criterion approach in classifying Yoruba folktales. His paradigm here is the theme, by which he identifies three classes of Yoruba folktales: “Moral”, “Tortoise”, and “Why” stories. This theme-centred approach, like Propp’s plot-centered one, is inadequate because, as Fowler (1971, 1979), Derrida and Ronell (1980), and others observe, texts of different genres or classes may be of similar thematic concern, thus making theme the weakest classification paradigm.

The problems that have been identified with the uni-criterion approach are those of redundancy and undue repetition. This is well observed by Dasyuva (1994) and Tsaaior (2005). They adjudge Bamgbose’s and Finnegan’s (1968) classificatory strategy to be arbitrary and make for

redundancy and repetition since tortoise and etiological stories, for example, can also be moralistic in theme.

Other scholars privilege the multiple-criteria approach. This approach has the advantage of at once accounting for the form/content dimensions of the texts to be classified. Fowler (1982) lists such criteria as representational aspect, external structure, size or scale (length), subject, character, mood, and action (plot) or style. Baldick (1990) reinforces the list with such criteria as formal structure, length, intention, effect, origin, and subject matter. In relation to film criticism, Bordwell (1989: 148 in Chandler 2005) suggests such criteria as “Grouping by period or country..., by director or star or producer or writer or studio, by technical process..., by cycle..., by series..., by style..., by structure..., by ideology..., by venue..., by purpose..., by audience..., by subject or theme.” A text may belong to (or in Derrida & Ronnel’s terms, share in or partake of) several genres/types according to how it encapsulates the defining features of those genres based on anyone of the criteria used or those combined. The multiple-criteria approach as we adopt it here favours the combination of a number of those criteria.

Classes of *ewa-oma* Performances

Each *ewa-oma* enactment is a text – literary and performance. The multiple-criteria approach would give the enabling stance to classify it. This way, our classification would embrace the boundaries of content and form. Focus is narrowed down to five criteria: duration (size or length), plot, theme, style and character. As is the case with literary texts, the *ewa-oma* enactments shade into different types. That is, some of them display characteristics of different types and therefore belong to more than a type or class. They will be classified along the lines of readily discernible and objective external features covering duration (size or length), plot and style and the more subjective internal ones, such as theme and character. It should also be noted here that performances are titled after the main character, who is usually the satiric butt, or by the theme of the performance.

Classification by External Structure

Here, *ewa-oma* enactments may be categorized under four different classes: the song-dance drama (SDD), the solo drama (SD), the

declamatory drama (DD), and represented action (RA). In what follows, each of these classes will be defined and further narrowed down to their sub-classes.

The Song-Dance Drama (SDD)

The performances in this class are fully rendered in song and dance. A song is minted around the butt's or butts' misconduct and danced to a rhythm of leg-stamping/tapping, clapping of hands, and/or with musical instrumentation. First, the butt's action is narrated in a telling manner with mini-dramatic enactment and then sung and danced.

The SDD is further classified into five:

1. The long song–dance drama (LSDD)
2. The short song–dance drama (SSDD)
3. The song–dance drama with represented action (SDD + R)
4. The song–dance drama with narration (SDD+N)
5. The poetic narrative song–dance drama (PNSDD)

The six SDD sub-classes will be immediately defined.

1. The long song-dance drama (LSDD). Length is considered in terms of performance duration. Performances which last less than ten minutes are considered short, and those lasting ten minutes and more are considered long. Although this criterion may seem arbitrary, it is used in the understanding that from classical antiquity to the present there seems to be no question about the length to assume by a work before it qualifies as a play. Even Aristotle in all his formalist aesthetics does not prescribe any length for a play. For him, a play is long enough if a change of fortune, from good to bad or vice versa, is realized in the plot (*Poetics*). But since the aim of the song-dance drama is not to portray a character developing from a beginning to an end, as to make for a contrived change of fortune, as we have it in the Aristotelian organic scheme, we simply adopt the length criterion here with regard to duration of performance. Thus, the LSDD performances last for ten minutes and above. An example is an enactment entitled “Kalu Ogbu”, which lasts for ten minutes.

2. The short song–dance drama (SSDD). The SSDD are all SDD performances which last for less than ten minutes. An example is “Ogbu Ikpa”, which lasts for three minutes.
3. The song–dance drama with represented action (SDD+R). The SDD+R are performances which combine song-dance and represented or mimetic action. That is, it is partly song-dance and partly represented action. However, the song and dance predominates. An example is “Kalu Ogbu”. The enactment lasts for ten minutes. It features in the SDDL category also.
4. The song–dance drama with narration (SDD+N). The SDD+N is a combination of song-dance and narrated incident. Like the SDD+R, it could be long or short. An examples is “Anyi a bainyila church”, lasting for two minutes.
5. The poetic narrative song-dance drama (PNSDD). The PNSDD is a poetic narrative rendered as a song-dance performance. There is only one example in our data, entitled “Ogbonne Oke”. It lasts for eight minutes. This enactment features as SSDD as well.

The Solo Drama (SD)

The solo drama is a one-man/-woman enactment. The performer may be a lone performer with his/her company of chorus, who are mostly children, though sometimes adults. S/he may be a member of a troupe but will have to perform a show alone. There are three types of the SD:

1. Narrated solo drama (NSD)
2. Solo drama with represented action (SD+RA)
3. Narrated solo drama with represented action (NSD+RA)

Each of these categories is described below.

1. Narrated solo drama (NSD). The NSD is so designated because the incident is narrated rather than acted out by the sole performer. There are fifteen of such among the plays captured by our camera. These are: Onyinye (O ji onwe ya); O re okazu; Umu nwanyi ma ezie unu; Soup no dey, na esusu dey; Utu afo nso; Uka; I di ogbuu; Terry; Ikpu holi; Ngozi; Ndi inyom Etitama; Lovina Orji; Grace mie Azai Mgba; Umu agboho Etitama.

2. Solo drama with represented action (SD+RA). The SD+RA is an enactment of a butt's action by a sole performer. There is one example of this in our data. It is entitled Uka Echem.
3. Narrated solo drama with represented action (NSD+RA). The NSD + RA is a combination of narrated incidents and represented enactment by the sole performer. Here, the butt's life is both narrated and acted out. There is only one of such among the plays accessible to us. It is entitled Mienna Kalu Uka.

The Declamatory Drama (DD)

The declamatory drama (DD) category embraces performances which are spoken by the performer. They differ from the narrated performances in the sense that in them the performer does not just narrate the plot, but declaims it. The plot here becomes (a) spoken drama. The action of the plot is relayed through word in such a dramatic way that seems to place the action before the audience. This genre of *Ẹwa-oma* can be identified in three types:

1. Solo declamatory drama with represented action (NSD+RA)
2. Pure declamatory drama (PDD)
3. Declamatory drama with song-dance and narration (DD + SDN)

Each of these types will be immediately defined:

1. Solo declamatory drama with represented action (SDD + RA).

The SDD + RA is declaimed by a solo performer (who is either a member of a troupe, or a lone performer), and combines represented action. There is one example of such among our data. It is entitled PYPAN.

2. Pure declamatory drama (PDD). The PDD is entirely declaimed. There is no intermixture of types. There are two examples of this, namely, Ha asuara anyi uzo and Mezie obodo oduo, mekasia obodo ghi.
3. Declamatory drama with song-dance and narration (DD+SDN). The DD + SDN is the declaimed performance, combining song, dance, and narration. There is one example of such, namely, Chukwu Awam.

Represented Action (RA)

The RA category comprises represented or mimetic enactments. There is full role playing here. We isolate four types of this class. They are:

1. Long represented action (LRA)
2. Short represented action (RAS)
3. Episodic represented action (ERA)
4. Organic represented action (ORA)

The types will be presently defined:

1. Long represented action (LRA). The LRA are represented performances lasting from ten minutes and above. There are six examples of such among our data. They are:

1. Egbe, Nne John (twenty four minutes)
2. Sam Ebi (fourteen minutes)
3. Ubi Akuma (sixteen minutes)
4. Ugo Orji Agu's friend (eighteen minutes)
5. Masi Uko (Alias kai kai) (fifteen minutes)
6. Chief Imeri (eighteen minutes)

2. Short represented action (SRA). The SRA is as the LRA but differs from it only in the duration of performance. The enactments here last less than ten minutes in performance. There are fifteen examples of such in our data:

1. Echela (three minutes)
2. Ugo Ndukwe Oji (three minutes)
3. Chairman (nine minutes)
4. Dan Okpan (four minutes)
5. Ude Ukwu (two minutes)
6. Grace Inem (one minute)
7. Agwu Ogbadu (five minutes)
8. Ogbu Ikpa (Obodoman) (nine minutes)
9. Okpu Ikpa (five minutes)
10. Oge Agu Iwo (two minutes)
11. Mie Okude Uja (two minutes)
12. Mie Agwoatambe (one minute)

13. Arua (five minutes)
14. Obu aria kwa afa (five minutes)
15. Nnenna nta (one minute)

3. Episodic represented action (ERA). The ERA enactments present just an aspect of a butt's life. It is hardly a case of incidents building up from the beginning to the end to make for a developed plot or character. The ERA could be either short or long performances; they could also be either solo or group performances. There are twenty two examples of such in our data. There are:

1. Queen e funmi (two minutes)
2. Onyinye (three minutes)
3. Nchi nkita (three minutes)
4. E yere utu (three minutes)
5. Nwoke Etitama, onye na acho nwanyi na alughu di (three minutes)
6. Onwe onye luru ji (two minutes)
7. Nnenna
8. Angelina (five minutes)
9. Chinasa (six minutes)
10. Emeri Okoro (Alias Ukata) (five minutes)
11. Umu nwanyi Nkporo (two minutes)
12. Nnenna nta (one minute)
13. E kesa lam ndi (two minutes)
14. Ude ukwu (two minutes)
15. Grace Inem (one minute)
16. Agwu Ogbadu (five minutes)
17. Ogbu Ikpa / Obodoman (nine minutes)
18. Okpu Ikpa (Nnunu o kala okuku utuo?) (two minutes)
19. Oge Agu Iwo (five minutes)
20. Mie Okude Uja (two minutes)
21. Arua (five minutes)
22. Masi Uko (alias kai kai) (fifteen minutes)

4. Organic represented action (ORA). The ORA are fully plotted performances. They are either short or long. Action is complete here, with the implication also of character development in a number of them. There are sixteen of such enactments in our data. There are:

1. Echela (three minutes)
2. Ugo Ndukwe Orji (three minutes)
3. Egbe, Nne John (twenty four minutes)
4. Sam Ebi (fourteen minutes)
5. Chairman (nine minutes)
6. Akpasa, No.1 (Nduka Uba) (sixteen minutes)
7. Dan Okpan (four minutes)
8. Lazarus Mba (seven minutes)
9. Masi Iwola Ude (two minutes)
10. Okpa asiri (four minutes)
11. Uka Ete (fourteen minutes)
12. Oyindiya (Abiriba wife) (nine minutes)
13. Ugo Orji Agu's friend (eighteen minutes)
14. Obu aria kwa afa (five minutes)
15. Chief Imeri (eighteen minutes)

Classification by Thematic Thrust

In terms of thematic thrust, six types of *ewa-oma* are discernible, embracing areas such as morals, gender, religion, incongruity, ideology, and the eclectic.

TYPE A: The Moral Plays

Consistent with the popular concern of satire, moral issues predominate *ewa-ome* enactments. This thematic thrust is further divided into the following categories:

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|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. sexual immorality/infidelity | 2. thieving |
| 3. fraudsterism | 4. bribery |
| 5. jealousy | 6. cruelty/wickedness |
| 7. irresponsibility | 8. betrayal |
| 9. polygamy | 10. monogamy |
| 11. evil companionship/negative influence | 12. murder |
| 13. diabolism | 14. misrule |
| 15. teenage motherhood | 16. abortion |
| 17. suicide | 18. holier-than-thou attitude |
| 19. selfishness/self-certredness | 20. escapism |
| 21. disloyalty | 22. incompetency |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 23. perversion | 24. notoriety |
| 25. drunkenness /alcoholism | 26. greed/gluttony/insatiability |
| 27. prodigality | 28. tale bearing |
| 29. deception/duplicity | 30. indignity |
| 31. frustration | 32. protest |

The following enactments fall under the moral type.

Table 1

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1	Onyinye (O ji onwe ya)	moral	prostitution / irresponsibility
2	Ori riasi	moral	self- centredness
3	Ore okazu	moral	sexual immorality/infidelity
4	Echela	moral	sexual immorality/seduction
5	Ugo Ndukwe Oji	moral	frustration /suicide
6	Queen e Funmi	moral	sexual immorality/ teenage prostitution
7	E yere utu	moral	irresponsibility/tax evading
8	Nwoke Etitama na cho nwanyi na alughu ji	moral	irresponsibility/escapism
9	Nnenna	moral	thieving
10	Ete Mba Ifegwu	moral	thieving
11	Egbe, Nne e John	moral	lust/ sexual immorality/ promiscuity/ bad companionship
12	Iko Emeri	moral	cruelty/wickedness
13	Ubi Akuma	moral	diabolicalism
14	Kalu Ogbu	Moral	jealousy/possesiveness
15	Ogbu Ikpa	moral	promiscuity
16	O bara ya timba eto	moral	irresponsibility
17	Ikpa Okume	moral	gluttony /greed
18	Chairman	moral	notoriety /fraudsterism
19	Kama	moral	jealousy
20	Chinasa	moral	deception
21	Akpasa No. 1	moral	fraudsterism
22	Dan Okpan	moral	irresponsibility
23	Umu nwanyi Nkporo (Angelina e Kalu)	moral	sexual immorality

24	Umu nwanyi, ma ezie unu	moral	sexual immorality
25	Eme Acha	moral	drunkenness
26	Chief Imeri	moral	incompetency /misrule /bribery
27	Lazarus Mba	moral	jealousy/possesiveness
28	Uka Egbe	moral	sexual immorality
29	I di Ogbu	moral	thieving
30	Terry	moral	thieving
31	Mienna Kalu Uka	moral	thieving
32	Agwu Ogbadu	moral	cruelty
33	Ogbu Ikpa	moral	prodigality
34	Okpu Ikpa	moral	greed
35	Mie Agwoatambe	moral	alcoholism/incongruity
36	Arua	moral	perversion
37	Nde Asiri	moral	tale bearing
38	Masi Uko (alias kai kai)	moral	alcoholism/incongruity
39	Obu aria kwa afa	moral	cruelty
40	Ada	moral	cruelty

TYPE B: The Gender Plays

The gender type consists of performances that grapple with gender issues. They occur in such categories as role definition/reversal, exploitation, feminist physique, domineering syndrome/freedom seeking, and chastity. The plays that fall into this group can be seen in the following table:

Table 2

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1	Nwoke ra agbanwo mie leghe uwei.	gender	exploitation
2	Orieagha	gender	role reversal
3	Angellina	gender	feminine physique

TYPE C: The Religious Plays

The plays in this category concern themselves with matters of relationship between the church and the society and traditional

values/religion. They come in such categories as traditional religion versus church tradition, religious frenzy/ecstasy, hypocrisy, fanaticism, retribution/divine judgment, church and society, and religious intolerance/bigotry. The plays here can be seen as shown in the table below.

Table 3

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1	PYPAN	religious	traditional religion versus church tradition; society versus the church member
2	Anyi a bainyila church	religious	traditional religion versus church tradition
3	Utu bongo	religious	retribution/divine judgment
4	Grace Inem	religious	religious frenzy/ecstasy

TYPE D: The Incongruous Plays

The incongruous type embodies plays that delineate certain aberrant conduct, some of which cannot immediately be pinned down to any definite moral category and others with such conduct that may be considered strange in relation to the character involved; mostly an action that can at best be described as *infra dignitatem*. An example is when a village chief demeans himself by taking his chicken to the market to sell by himself; a duty which any of his many wives or servants/maids should perform. The type encompasses such categories as wooing, undignified conduct, and female alcohol addiction. These are represented in the following table.

Table 4

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1	Emeri Okoro (alias Ukata)	incongruous	wooing
2	chief	Incongruous	undignified conduct
3	Masi Uko (alias kai kai)	Incongruous	female alcohol addiction
4	Mie Agwoatambe	Incongruous	female alcohol addiction

TYPE E: Ideological Plays

The plays in this type address social issues from an ideological standpoint. Some of the issues are religious, cultural, etc. It embraces such categories as church and traditional beliefs, culture erosion, and language question. The plays here are as follow:

Table 5

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1.	PYPAN	ideological	Church versus traditional beliefs
2	Anyi a bainyila church	Ideological	church versus traditional beliefs
3	Ite erim	Ideological	culture erosion
4.	Soup no dey, na esusu dey.	Ideological	language question
5	Paapa	Ideological	culture erosion

TYPE F: Eclectic Type

The plays in the eclectic type combine several concerns within them. There is only one example of this in our data, as can be seen below:

Table 6

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1	PYPAN	eclectic	religious intolerance/ bigotry, church tradition versus traditional beliefs, hypocrisy

Classification by Character

For convenience, classification here is restricted to the main characters in the plays, and to minor characters only in few places. Within that purview, two character types can be isolated, namely, the stock and the rounded /developed. The first suggests the usual character identification by moral category as, for example, the good wife, the irresponsible husband, the wayward child, the thief, the wicked man/woman etc. Majority of the plays that form our data is of this type.

The second type includes the plays in which characters undergo a change of sort due to an experience in the course of the action. That is, a character changes for better or for worse for coming to a new awareness, or undergoes a process of education or re-education in the course of the action of the plot. We categorize the types as A and B.

Type A: The Stock Character

The categories in this type are diverse and numerous, and are shown in the following table:

Table 7

S/N	Performance	Type	Category
1	Onyinye (O ji onwe ya)	stock	the irresponsible / negligent mother.
2.	Ori riasi	stock	the self-centered husband
3.	Ore okazi	stock	the adulterous woman/ unfaithful wife
4.	PYPAN	stock	the intolerant/bigotted, the hypocritical church goer
5	Queen e Funmi	stock	the teenage prostitute
6.	Nchi nkika	stock	the ferminimized man
7.	Eyere utu	stock	the irresponsible citizen/tax evader
8.	Nwoke Etitama onye n'acho nwanyi na alughu ji	stock	the escapist
9.	The man who changes women as clothes	stock	the exploiter of women
10.	Nnenna	stock	the thief
11.	Ete Mba Ifeagwu	stock	the thief
12.	Iko Emeri (Mienna ya Ifeagwu)	stock	the cruel sister
13.	Ubi Akuma	stock	the diabolical mother-in-law
14.	Kalu Ogbu	stock	the jealous, suspicious husband
15.	Ogbu Ikpa	stock	the promiscuous man
16.	O bara ya timba	stock	the irresponsible first son
17.	Ikpa Okume	stock	the glutton
18.	Chairman	stock	the notorious, the cruel, the fraudster
19.	Kama	stock	the jealous husband
20.	Chinasa	stock	the deceiver /prostitute
21.	Akpsa NO. 1 (Nduka Uba)	Stock	the fraudster

22.	Emeri Okoro	stock	the incongruous suitor
23.	Umunwanyi Nkporo	stock	unfaithful wife
24.	Umu nwanyi mezie unu	stock	the prostitute
25.	Eme Acha	stock	the drunk
26.	Chief Imeri	stock	the incompetent and greedy chief
27.	Lazarus Mba	stock	the jealous husband
28.	Utu afo nso	stock	the promiscuous woman
29.	Utu bongo	stock	the thief
30.	I di Ogbu	stock	the negligent husband, the thief
31.	Terry	stock	the thief
32.	Mienna Kalu Uka	stock	the thieving woman
33.	Grace Inem	stock	the religious frenzied
34.	Agwu Ogbadu	stock	the worthless folk
35.	Ogbu Ikpa	stock	the prodigal
36.	Okpu Ikpa	stock	the glutton/the greedy man
37.	Oge Agu	Stock	the husband snatcher
38.	Mie Agwoatambe	stock	the alcohol-addicted woman
39.	Arua	stock	the perverse
40.	Nde asiri	stock	the tale bearer
41.	Masi Uko	Stock	the alcohol-addicted woman
42.	Obu aria kwa afa	stock	the cruel and envious wife.
43.	Ada	stock	the cruel wife/step mother

Type B: The Rounded Character

The plays in this type are as follows:

Table 8

S/N	Performance	Type
1.	Echela	Rounded
2.	Ugo Ndukwe Orji	Rounded
3.	Egbe, Nne John	Rounded
4.	Dan Okpan	Rounded

Each of the 52 performances can be fully identified with due consideration for its external and internal features at a glance. Table 7 below attempts this one-glance identification.

Table 9: A glance of the full identification of *ewa-oma* plays

SN	Play	External Features				Internal features			
		Duration (Size/length)	Plot	Style	Type/Class	Subject matter	Character type	Character	
						Type/class	category	Category	
1.	Kalu Ogbu	Long		song-dance	SDDL, SDD+RA	moral	jealousy	stock	the jealous suspicious husband
2.	Chief Imeri	Long	Complete	represented	RAL, RAC	moral	incompetency/misrule	stock	the incompetent /the greedy chief
3.	Ogbu Ikpa	short		song-dance	SDDS	moral	promiscuity	stock	the promiscuous man
4.	O bara ya timba eto	Short		song-dance	SDDS	moral	irresponsibility	stock	the irresponsible/ poor first son
5.	Anyi a baila church	Short		song-dance	SDDS, SDD +N	religious, ideological	hypocrisy, fanaticism, church tradition versus traditional values	stock	hypocritical, fanatical church member
6.	Ogbonu Oke	short		song-dance	SDDS, SDDNP	moral	sexual immorality	stock	the promiscuous teenager
7.	Ikpa Okume	Short		song-dance	SDDS	moral	gluttony greed	stock	S
8.	Orieagha			song-dance	SDD + N	gender/ incongruous	role reversal	stock	

9.	Onyinye (O ji onwe ya)				SDN	moral		prostitution/ irresponsibility	stock	the irresponsible neglect mother.
10.	Ore okazu			solo-dance	SDN	moral		sexual immorality	stock	the adulterous woman/ unfaithful wife
11.	Umu nwanyi ma ezie unu			solo-dance	SDN	moral		sexual immorality	stock	the prostitute
12.	Soup no dey, na esusu day			solo-narrated	SDN	ideological		language question	stock	the abuser of language
13.	Utu afo nso			solo-narrated	SDN	moral		promiscuity	stock	the promiscuous woman
14.	Utu bongo			solo-narrated	SDN	religion		retribution/ divine judgment	stock	the thief
15.	Uka Egbe			solo-narrated	SDN	moral		sexual immorality	stock	the sexually immoral man
16.	I di ogbu			solo-narrated	SDN	moral		thieving	stock	the thief/the negligent husband
17.	Terry			solo-narrated	SDN	moral		thieving	stock	the thief
18.	Ikpu holi			solo-narrated	SDN	moral		boasting	stock	the boaster
19.	Paapa			solo-narrated	SDN+RA	moral, ideological		insensitivity, culture erosion	stock	
20	PYPAN			declaimed, solo, represented	DDS+RA	religious, ideological, mixed		indigenous tradition versus church tradition	stock	hypocritical, bigoted, fanatical church members

21	Egbe, Nne John	Long	Complete	represented	RAL, RAC	moral		sexual immorality, bad influence	rounded	the promiscuous woman
22	Iko Emeri (Miennyaya Ifegwu)	Long	Complete	represented	RAL	moral		cruelty/ wickedness, murder	stock	the cruel/ murderous sister
23.	Ubi Akuma	Long	Complete	represented	RAL, RAC	moral		diabolicalism	stock	the diabolical mother in-law
24	Masi Uko [Alias keiki]	Long	episodic	represented	RAL, RAE	moral		alcoholic addiction/ incongruity	stock	the alcoholic woman
25	Echela	Short		represented	RAS	moral		sexual immorality	rounded	the covetous sex gratifying girl
26	Ugo Ndukwo Orji	Short	Complete	represented	RAS, RAC	Moral		frustration/ protest	rounded	the suicidal, protesting wife
27	Chairman	Short	Complete	represented	RAS, RAC	Moral		notoriety	stock	notorious; the cruel; the fraudster
28	Dan Okpan	short	Complete	represented	RAS, RAC	moral		irresponsibility	stock rounded	the repentant irresponsible husband
29	Nnenna nta	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral		thieving	stock	the thief
30	Nwoke ra agbanwo mie leghe uwei	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral, gender		exploitation	stock	

31	Grace Inem	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	religion	religious frenzy possession	stock	the religious frenzied/ possessed woman
32	Agwu Ogbadu	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral	cruelty	stock	the cruel
33	Ogbu Ikpa [Obodoman]	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral	prodigality	stock	the prodigal foster parent
34	Okpu Ikpa	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral	greed	stock	the greedy man
35	Oge Agu Iwo	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral	husband snatching	stock	husband snatcher
36	Mie Okude Uja	short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE				
37	Mie Agwoatanbe	Short		represented	RAS	moral	incongruity	stock	the alcohol addicted woman
38	Arua	Short	episodic	represented	RAS, RAE	moral	perversion	stock	the perverse
39	Obu aria kwa afa	Short	full	represented	RAS, RAC	moral	cruelty	stock	the cruel envious wife
40	Queen Funmi	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral	teenage prostitution	stock	the teenage prostitute
41	Onyinye	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral	parental negligence/ irresponsible motherhood	stock	the negligent mother
42	Nchi nkita	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	gender	gender role/ identity	stock	the feminized man

43	Eyere utu	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral		tax evading/ irresponsible citizen	stock	the tax evader
44	Nwoke Etitiana, onye na acho nwanyi na alughu ji.	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral		escapism	stock	the escapist
45	Onwe onye luru ji	short	episodic	represented	RAE					
46	Nnenna	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral		thieving	stock	the thief
47.	Angelina	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	gender		feminine physique/ seduction	stock	the female physique flaunter/ seducer
48.	Chinasa	Short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral		deception/ prostitution	stock	the deceiver/ prostitute
49.	Emeri Okoro (Alias Ukata)	short	episodic	represented	RAE	incongruity		wooing	stock	the incongruous wooer
50.	(Angelina Kalu) Umu nwanyi Nkporo	short	episodic	represented	RAE	moral		sexual immorality	stock	the unfaithful wife
51.	Akpo aza No. 1 (Nduka Uba)	Long	Complete	represented	RAC	moral		'fraudsterism'	stock	the fraudster
52	Lazarus Mba	Short	Complete	represented	RAC	moral		jealousy	stock	the jealous husband

Conclusion

This paper has classified *ewa-oma* festival performances of Nkporo, South-Eastern Nigeria. Using the multi-criteria approach, it focuses on identifiable external features such as duration (size or length), plot and style, and internal ones such as thematic thrust and character. The study has isolated four types of *Ewa-oma* performances, namely: the song-dance drama – SDD, (sub-classified into long song-dance drama; short song-dance drama; song-dance drama with represented action; song-dance drama with narration; and poetic narrative song-dance drama); the solo drama – SD, (sub-classified into narrated solo drama; solo drama with represented action; narrated solo drama with represented action); the declamatory drama - DD (sub-classified into solo declamatory drama with represented action; pure declamatory drama; and declamatory drama with song-dance and narration); and the represented action – RA, (sub-classified into long represented action; short represented action; episodic represented action; and organic represented action). It has further identified six thematic thrusts in the performances – moralistic, gender, religious, incongruous, ideological, and the eclectic, and two character types: stock and round. While it is the first classificatory study of *ewa-oma* performances, this study does not claim to be the final of such study of the festival. It is hoped, however, that it will serve as a useful document and guide to its future researchers. It is recommended that a similar study be done on the *ewa-oma* songs.

Notes

1. At an interview with the Nkporo monarch, Ezeaja of Nkporo, Elder Ogbu Arunsi, on Friday 11 January, 2008 at his palace in Elughu Nkporo, he disclosed that *ewa-oma* festival came with *agbala* religion/cult from Edda; and that the original word for *ewa-oma* was *egwa oma* (good behaviour).

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