

Elliott P. Skinner Book Award Honoree, Association of Africanist Anthropology, American Anthropological Association Meeting 2008. *Anthropology Newsletter* 49 (9), Dec. 2008.

Testimonials:

“To the best of my knowledge, this is the most informative study yet on the Water Goddess in Igbo cosmology, and it seems poised to remain for a long time, the most authoritative work on the subject.”

(Ernest N. Emenjonu, University of Michigan, Flint)

“This evocative study of a water Goddess among the Igbo of Lake Oguta in southeastern Nigeria, thoroughly explores the rituals, beliefs and social organization associated with rituals of women's power. A form of *Mammy Wata* found through coastal Western Africa ... the analysis of this powerful Goddess, based on many years of research, is a notable contribution to African female ritual studies, long neglected by scholars.”

(Simon Ottenberg, University of Washington, Seattle)

“Jell-Bahlsen’s book is, like the Igbo water deity it describes throughout its pages, much more complex than it may initially seem. Based on the author’s twenty-five years of research in southeastern Nigeria, this work is actually an ethnographic study of indigenous Igbo religion, epistemology, and social practice. It is by far the most comprehensive and carefully researched work to date on the female water deity known as Ogbuide in the town of Oguta, Nigeria—more popularly known throughout sub-Saharan Africa as Mami Wata. Jell-Bahlsen’s work is also a major contribution to religious studies, to African studies, and especially to Igbo studies. ... This work is invaluable for its commitment to describing both the ideological and practical dimensions of Mami Wata worship, and for demonstrating the importance of this worship for women’s empowerment and the sustainability of the local community and environment as a whole. Most of all, the author has certainly done her part in honoring the mother of waters.”

(Christey Carwile, Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC)

“This brilliantly researched and documented book is a must read for all serious scholars and researchers of Africa and its various cultures, religious beliefs and practices especially the adulatory worship of the Water Goddess in the Oguta Riverine areas of southeastern Nigeria.”

(Michael C. Mbabuike, Hostos Community College, CUNY)

“Produced with the cultural sensitivity and thoroughness of a seasoned ethnographer and an accomplished filmmaker, this long-awaited interdisciplinary work is a study of confluences on a grand scale. *Ogbuide* (the Lake Goddess) holds sway in an environment where the force and flexibility of water determines commerce, artistic expression, gender relations, and communal life. Located at the confluence of the rivers Niger and Urashi, *Ogbuide* (Oguta Lake) stands as a metaphor for where worlds meet; revealing the intertwining of numerous registers—myths, symbols, aesthetics, customs, medicine, spirituality, religion, history/histories, literature, and ecology.”

(Obioma Nnaemeka, Indiana University, Indianapolis)

