

GOOD WIVES AND BAD WIVES: IBEZUTE'S *VICTIMS OF BETRAYAL*, *THE TEMPORAL GODS* AND *DANCE OF HORROR*

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ABSTRACT

This article is a 'masculinist' reading of Chukwuma Ibezute's *Victims of Betrayal*, *The Temporal Gods* and *Dance of Horror*. The article contends that African literature has always focused on Africa's socio-political situation until a group of "activists in feminist movement" started agitating for a proper representation of women in literature. Unlike in Europe and America where the ideology is not challenged, in Africa it was challenged by a group of scholars who called themselves 'masculinists'. Using Ibezute's three novels, the 'masculinist' ideology is demonstrated. While in Ibezute's *Victims of Betrayal* it is revealed that men are play-things in the hands of their bad wives, in *The Temporal Gods* it is depicted that bad wives can go extra miles to impose their decisions on their husbands. In *Dance of Horror*, it is shown that the kind of woman that is married into a family determines the fate of that family. The article concludes that the implications of these situations as represented in the novels are that while the roles of some husbands in African homes are becoming more and more passive, the fate of some African homes and families are in the hands of wives.

Keywords: Good wives, bad wives, husbands, 'masculinist', feminist, families

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1962, when African literature was established, it has always focused on the socio-political conditions of African society. The trend in African continued until when a group of ‘activists in feminist movement started their agitation for a proper representation of women in literature. In his book, *A History of Literary Criticism* (1991), Harry Blamire’s notes that prior to Simone de Beauvoir’s essay *The Second Sex* women writers were not ‘anxious to see how far’ literature has ‘misrepresented women through the ages or contributed to imposing on them a falsely limited notion of their role’ (373). Writing further on the relationship between the female writers of the past and the ‘activists in the feminist movement in the present century’ who ‘have naturally turned their attention to the world of imaginative literature’ (373), Blamires writes:

One of the difficulties of handling some of the recent feminist criticism is that we are invited to suppress the inclination to regard as genuinely ‘feminine’ much of the output of women writers of the past. (373)

Blamires argues further that with the essays of ‘activists in the feminist movement’ like Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, Elaine Showalter’s *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists* and her other essay ‘Towards A Feminist Poetics’ and Elizabeth A Meese’s essay ‘Sexual Politics and Critical Judgment,’ the discourse of feminism gained a firm rooting in Europe and America.

The ideology would not have been heard in Africa if wasn’t for Flora Nwapa’s *Efuru* and her essay, ‘Women and Creative Writing in Africa’ which explained her novel as a reaction to the misrepresentation of women in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. The writings of other African ‘activists in feminist movement’ like Buchi Emecheta, Chikwenye Ogunyemi, Akachi Ezeigbo, Tess Onwueme, Rose Acholonu, and Molar Ogundepé-Leslie consolidated feminist ideology in Africa. But unlike in Europe and America where the ideology began, the feminist ideology in Africa was challenged by a group of scholars who called themselves ‘masculinists’ – even though these ‘activists in feminist movement’ tagged them ‘male chauvinists.’

‘Masculinist’ ideology was also new. It began with Chinweizu’s *Anatomy of Female Power* (1990). Chinweizu’s book challenges the feminist ideology and affirms that women are already in control of everything and should stop talking about misrepresentations. To illustrate his point, he goes further to liken the relationship between a man and a woman to the relationship between the human head and the neck. He points out that man represents the head while woman represents the neck. He argues that while the head is on top of the neck and lords over it, the neck is in control of the head: It is what the neck wants the head to do that it does. Chinweizu stresses that women have been enjoying this right and privilege (of being in control of everything) in life and in literature since creation.

However powerful a man maybe, his power is used to serve the women in his life, that would make dubious the notion that men are masters over women. Because every man has as boss his

wife, or his mother, or some other woman in his life. Men may rule the world, but women rule the men who rule the world. (12)

Charles Nnolim also contributed to the ‘masculinist’ ideology when he wrote that ‘feminism is a house divided among itself.’ Nnolim’s essay posits that feminist ideology and the women who champion it seem confused. ‘Woman hates or at least, confronts man, her vaunted oppressor, but needs love; and the love she needs for emotional fulfillment can only be provided by the ‘enemy’ man’ (135). He writes, pointing out that ‘every responsible normal woman needs a stable home as base, and a home (not a house) is the normal dwelling place of man as the head’ and that ‘even the most uncompromising feminist traces her origins, her genealogy from the male line, hence the last name or surname of every female is patronymic’ (136).

Feminism, as a movement and ideology urges, in simple terms, recognition of the claims of women for equal rights with men – legal, political, economic, social, marital, et cetera. Its tenets are more individualistic than communal and thus place more premium on individual self-fulfillment than achieving, in the African context, the collective needs of the community. (135)

These views have also been reflected in the works of some African writers. Among these writers is Ndubuisi Umuunnakwe, in his epistolary novel entitled *Dear Ramatoulaye*, Emeka Nwabueze, in his play *A Parliament of Vultures*, and Camillus Ukah, in his novels *When the Wind Blows* and *Sweet Things*. In *Dear Ramatoulaye* Umuunnakwe replies to Mariama Ba’s *So Long a Letter*. The narrator challenges feminist ideology by accusing the protagonist of *So long a Letter* of being a bad wife. *A parliament of Vultures* compares a woman who is placed in a position of power to a ram fed snuff until it loses control. In *When the Wind Blows* women occupy the class of university sorters and people whose success in school is linked to one form of favouritism or the other. The novel reflects this through a husband and wife: Adaku, a woman who has bribed her way through the university and ‘graduated a dangerous fake’ (Nnolim, 2) and Ken, a man who studied very hard through his university days. Tension rises when Ken finds himself in a situation where Adaku is meant to save him. *Sweet Things* is about a nagging wife. Because of his wife’s constant nagging and quarreling with him, the husband, Abuyachi, takes to flirtation and eventually meets his doom.

2. GOOD WIVES AND BAD WIVES IN IBEZUTE’S NOVELS

Ibezute’s novels, *Victims of Betrayal*, *The Temporal Gods* and *Dance of Horror* fall in line with the ‘masculinist’ ideology, hence he demonstrates how powerful and how much control a woman has over her man and the society around her. He employs some of the archetypes, signs and symbols that have so become parts of the ‘masculinist’ ideology, especially those evoked in Chinweizu’s book and in Nnolim’s essay.

For instance, in *Victims of Betrayal* Ibezute depicts how easily a bad wife can destroy a man when it is time for him to relax and enjoy the fruit of his labour. In

the novel, the masculinist ideology is demonstrated through Ibezute's juxtaposition of both good and bad wife characters, with a reflection of some of the archetypes that distinguish the bad wife characters from the good ones, such as greed, malice, pride and hate, as contained in both Chinweizu's book and Nnolim's essay. With his dominant representations of the wife characters that exhibit the archetypes greed, malice, pride and hate as attributes in the novel, Ibezute implies that contemporary African society is one that is dominated by bad wives.

In accordance with Chinweizu's postulation that women are enemies to their fellow women, the wife characters in the novel are also enemies to one another. While the good wives meet one ill fate or the other in their attempts at resisting the bad wives characters, the bad wives characters enjoy hedge-free lives since they always have to inflict on the good wives to get what they want. The typical example of the good wife characters that met with ill-fate in the novel as a result of their attempt at resisting the bad ones in the novel are Nduka's mother and Ohakwuo's elder sister. In the bid to resist Alice de rocker alias Oyiridiya, Nduka's mother increased the level of love she showered on her husband, Ohakwuo Nwafor, but was outwitted by Oyiridiya, who was though then involved in an illicit affair with him, by coercing him through the instrument of sex to send his wife to the village where she eventually met her death. Like Nduka's mother, Ohakwuo's elder sister later suffered Ohakwuo and Oyiridiya's neglect because of her outright condemnation of the actions and behaviours of Ohakwuo and his wife, Oyiridiya, thus:

This woman should be disciplined,' said Ohakwuo's elder sister. We are married to different men from different families and places. We too are women. We will not condone her animalistic behaviour because no responsible woman interrupts her husband's speech, or that of her husband's family when they are in family discussion. The men here should tell her the penalty she will pay. (13)

The only good wife character in the novel that did not meet with ill fate is Bridget. This is because she understood the dynamics of women politics. She knew, as Chinweizu would say in his book, that wealthy men are always the targets of most women and then chose to marry Nduka, 'the wheelbarrow boy.' Like the bad wife characters in the novel, she employed some of the tricks and the 'charms' with which women 'catch' men (Chinweizu, 18) in order to win Nduka over. Unlike other wife characters in the novel that, as Chinweizu also writes, would hang their 'bag of charm' (which also implies the bag of makeup) immediately after marriage while still holding onto their 'bag of tricks,' Bridget hang her 'bag of tricks' instead and held onto her 'bag of charms.' This is because even after marriage she continued to remain attractive to her husband, Nduka. Unlike the other good wives characters of the novel, Bridget's character is too good to be real. As a matter of fact, she is portrayed as Ibezute's ideal good wife character. Through the character of Bridget, Ibezute demonstrates the attributes of his ideal good wife.

However, Oyiridiya, Ugodiya and Nwanyinma display the behaviours that reflect the archetypes of greed, malice, pride and hate. Each of these women displayed their greed, hate and other behaviours in different ways. First is in forcing their husbands to wed them in church – since, as Chinweizu notes, church wedding makes the marriage between a man and a woman binding and only allows a man to marry one woman. This is the reason both Oyiridiya and Ugodiya insisted that their husbands wed them in church. Having been wedded in church and are now sure of secured marriage, they started to disturb their husbands and his people. Second is in allowing their husbands sex in rations. After her wedding with her husband, Ugodiya started rationing sex for her husband. This was the reason she and her husband ‘provided their neighbours opportunities to watch dramas by way of their constant fighting virtually every night’ before she turned a practicing Christian (77). This is captured in the novel during one of their many quarrels:

Obiluogu told plenty of lies and wanted to continue but Ugodiya cried out in protest:

‘He has finished me with plenty of lies. A man is not supposed to tell lies-o!’ Her two hands were on her head.

‘Well, then, let me speak the truth. Yes, the Christians usually say, “let me speak the truth to God.” Let me emulate the Christians by saying the truth to God. I have looked around and seen that all of us here are adults. Ugodiya –,’ Obiluogu wanted to continue. Ugodiya cleared her throat loudly and murmured:

‘Who knows what he will say next because some men are not ashamed to say certain things. Let’s listen to him.’

‘Shame for what. You are talking nonsense. There is no shame about it. A timid man dies in silence,’ Obiluogu countered her immediately. ‘Ugodiya my wife rations to sleep with me. Is that fair?’ he asked. (78)

Ugodiya knew how to defend her ‘tricks’ because she is also talkative. Like Oyiridiya she talks too much. Women of this kind enjoy friendship with one another. This can be proved with the characters of Ugodiya and Oyiridiya who both starve their husbands sexually. For example, when her husband was at loggerheads with Ohakwuo over land, Ugodiya still maintained her closeness with Oyiridiya because she found her a worthy talkative friend with whom they exchange negative antis with which to get their husbands continually longing for them. This is also the reason whenever Oyiridiya returned from Onitsha where she stayed with her husband, Ugodiya would leave her house to meet her and they would sit down and gossiped away their times.

Third is in giving their husbands excess of sex, either because they want to be in full control of their husbands or because they love it. Unlike Ugodiya who allowed her husband sex in rations, Oyiridiya Ohakwuo alias Alice De Rocker and Nwanyinma gave their husbands excess of sex. This category of wives is out to destroy their husbands because they are always over possessive. Chinweizu describes them as ‘men’s killers.’ For example, when OhakwuoNwafo was still married to Nduka’s mother, he did very well. The narrator says concerning this time thus: ‘At that time, OhakwuoNwafo was a

successful man and was married and had a son called Nduka' (5). Immediately after he got married to Oyiridiya, his life turned upside down. First, he sent his wife to the village where she met her death. Secondly, 'OhakwuoNwafo who was once a rich man and a respected contributor of ideas became a wretched puppet' (6). Thirdly, she 'successfully changed every aspect of Ohakwuo's social life, including his relationship with his brothers and sisters' (6). Unlike every other female character in the novel, Oyiridiya proves to be a character that is full of negative traits. From the very beginning to the end of the novel, she always has her way. She turned Ohakwuo into her spokesman, that at the gathering of 'the extended family meetings of his kith and kin, OhakwuoNwafo usually reserved his comments or decisions and suggested that they should always sleep over matters before making serious contributions and taking final decisions' (6). This is evident in the novel thus:

His brothers would laugh at, and scorn him whenever he came up with his let's-sleep-over-the-matter suggestion, accusing him of having handed over his sense of reasoning and wisdom to his wife. Before he became the chief advocate of sleeping-over-matter, he was known to have on several occasions disagreed later on decisions he jointly took with his brothers a few days or weeks earlier. People who criticized his way of life said he followed his wife blindly like a zombie, in the name of love. They speculated that this was why he changed his once cherished broad ideas and visions into a sort of native intelligence and wisdom built around selfish understanding and principle. He was found not to engage in activities which helped to improve the knowledge, wisdom and understanding of individuals....The moment he got to his home, he usually resigned his strength and action and his wife took control of matters, reviewing the meeting he had with his kith and kin, and instructing on how the family should be run. (6 – 7)

Oyiridiya's resolve to continuously wreck havoc led her to frustrate Nduka out of his father's house with all sorts of malicious accusations. From the beginning to the end of the novel, she is portrayed as a very bad wife character, though Nwanyinma is worse than she is; this is only on the ground that Oyiridiya never flirted. Unlike the character of Oyiridiya, Ibezute uses the character of Nwanyinma to further tell us about some class of sex loving wives. Hence, one can say that this is the reason she is introduced into the story at a very important time, when there is need for the reconciliation of the issue of Obidigbo's death that has been earlier foreshadowed.

Through the juxtaposition of these characters, Ibezute is simply saying that while some wives can help poor husbands become rich, as is seen in Bridget and Nduka's case, some wives can make wealthy husbands become poor, as we have seen in Oyiridiya and Ohakwuo's case, and that some wives can bring death to their husbands, as we have seen in Nwanyinma and Obidigbo's case. Nwanyinma is represented as a very dangerous wife character the very time she was introduced in the novel:

Obidigbo's last wife was a beautiful childless woman called Nwanyinma. Obidigbo was her third husband. According to her story, after the death of her first husband, her husband's younger brother who had never been in good terms with her wanted to remarry her according to the Igbo tradition. But she refused and left that family because she did not like the man. The second

husband died in a motor accident after six months of marrying her. She claimed that the second man's family maltreated her because she had no child for their brother. At the time Obidigbo was courting her, Obiluogu had had in their usual humorous jokes reminded his friend of one Igbo wise saying of old that any man who enjoys fun with a widow should think twice because what caused the death of her husband may be on her lap. What more of a woman who had variously lost two husbands. (129)

Later in the novel, Nwanyinma's high libido was linked to Obidigbo's death. Typical of what she did when she lost her two former husbands, 'as if to give credence to what the sympathizers said, Nwanyinma was six months after Obidigbo's death spotted at Awukam Quarters, a posh area in the inland town of Onitsha' (147). She was described to be prepared to go into another marriage, where she would possibly make the man her fourth victim:

She betrayed no emotion of grief. She was dressed radiantly and looked like a young lady in her mid-twenties. She wore a light-grey transparent silk coat on top of the same material sewn into trousers with black high-heeled shoes and walked down the road in company of one of her woman friends. As she conversed along with her friend and smiled broadly at interludes, her beauty bubbled to its peak and her steps were fantastic. Her bobbish buttocks danced side to side, invitingly to any interested man who could possibly become the fourth husband and perhaps her next victim. (147)

It is not as if Nwanyinma ended her 'men killing' escapade with Obidigbo, she actually continued. Towards the end of the chapter where we saw her character the last, the narrator says, 'thus, the beautiful Nwanyinma made six men die in sequence and washed her hands clean as Pontius Pilate did after condemning Jesus Christ to death' (148).

Like *Victims of Betrayal*, Ibezute's *The Temporal Gods* falls in line with masculinist ideology and contains some of the archetypes, signs and symbols that characterise it. Ibezute achieves this in the novel by dividing the wife characters in two: good and bad. Each of the women in the novel exhibits some of the masculinist archetypes such as greed, trick and hate. As Chinweizu rightly observes in his book, in order to control the men in their lives women become suspicious of their fellow women and see them as enemies. In the novel, the bad wife character, Akudi, in order to make her decision reign supreme in the family of Geoge Okonta, became suspicious of every woman that Okonta brought in and treated them as enemies. The good wife characters, such as, Nwakego, Nwaku, and Adaeze, experienced a lot of difficulties in the novel because they decided to live a life devoid of 'feminine tricks' immediately after their marriage. Like them, when she was newly married Akudialso did away with her 'bag of tricks' but when Okonta told her that he was no longer going to wed her in church because she was yet to bore him a child, she picked her 'bag of tricks' from where she hang it and began to put it to use.

As Chinweizu also posits, greed is the problem that threatens most polygamous homes. In the novel this is also demonstrated. The conflict in the novel rose to its crescendo because each of George Okonta's wives wants to be in control of their

husband; though the greed exhibited by each of Okonta's wives is represented in levels. Some of the wives proved to be very greedy than the other. While Nwakego, Nwaku, and Adaeze expressed their greed by seeking their husband's favour, they were ready to share. Akudi, on the other hand, expressed her greed the different way. She wanted their husband's favour and was not also ready to share. This attribute of hers was said to have been inherited from her mother:

Other members of George Okonta's family who disagreed with George over his marriage with Akudi were of the opinion that Akudi was not only older than George but might behave like her mother. They had told the young man not to ignore the belief among the people that female children took more of their attitude from their mothers. In this regard, they argued:

'Anybody who wishes to have a good wife and sees a girl he loves to marry should first of all ascertain the girl's mother's way of life.'

Truly, Akudi's mother was notorious for her constant engagement of the services of great medicine men and hostility to her husband. (16)

Both Chinweizu and Nnolim in their different write-ups stress the fact that some women are pretenders. Some women in the novel were good pretenders. When Akudi was newly married, she pretended to be peaceful and good. As if she had set-out time for revolt, she soon started to cause trouble – that when George Okonta finally married more wives, she became the source of George Okonta and her fellow wives' miseries. Through the help of the native doctor, she succeeded in putting George Okonta through the misery of not making his other wives bear children: The same reason he ventured into polygamy. Nwaku and Adaeze also pretended to be quiet while they were George Okonta's wives, immediately after they left and were married into another family they began to say ill things about George Okonta and his family.

In *Dance of Horror*, there are also good and bad wife characters. While characters like Ahamefuna's mother, Ahamefuna's mother's sister and Ahamefuna's wife, Emylia, represent the good wife characters in the novel, Victoria and Amaechina's wife are the bad wife characters. Through the use of these characters, Ibezute demonstrates that it takes the manner of wife a man marries for his home to either experience peace or be in turmoil. Unlike the situation in *The Temporal Gods* where Akudi, Okonta's first wife, resisted her husband's resolve to marry another wife, in *Dance of Horror* Victoria, the second wife, seek to displace Ahamefuna's mother in order to take charge of the house.

Like the other women in *Victims of Betrayal* and *The Temporal Gods*, Victoria deployed her hatred on Ahamefuna's mother when the later gave birth to Ahamefuna. Her reason for hating Ahamefuna's mother was connected to the fact that she was delivered of a baby boy. Victoria felt Okonem would come to love the boy since he was his biological son, and probably hate her own son, Amaechina who was not. Ibezute accounts for Victoria's worry, thus:

Ahamefuna's brilliance, coupled with the fact that this younger son of Okonem was not only his biological son but also looked very much like him, began to give Amaechina's mother much

concern. She thought of what would be the fate of her son if Okonem should, for any reason, betray her. It was her explanation to Amaechina that poisoned the boy's mind against Ahamefuna whom he had all along known as his younger brother. (12)

When Amaechina grew up, Victoria's hatred for Ahamefuna grew to the extent that she told her son to see the later as a rival. This resulted in the conflict that ran through the novel and that eventually tore the family of Okonem apart. Through this, it is revealed that the destiny of any family is in the hands of their kind of wives. With his mother's advice, Amaechina turned a villain. He started hunting for his half-brother, Ahamefuna. This is evident in the novel, thus:

With his mind burdened and senses perplexed, he did not hear the sound of Ahamefuna's footsteps who was just coming into his mother's room to bid the woman and her son farewell because he was leaving. Then, few words and continuous mentioning of Ahamefuna flew into Ahamefuna's ears while he was on the doorway. He hung out and listened more attentively to the dying woman's last words to her son.

'I have been lamenting on this. And it seems this is just the beginning. For him to have the guts to call and address you in such a manner is concrete evidence that my fears are not far-fetched. Now you don't have to be discouraged by the outcome of this last experiment which turned out to look as if it strengthened him. You must get rid of him in any possible way that won't implicate you, if ever you and your children will live in this village and possess your right of heritage.' (54 – 55)

Another good wife character in the novel is Emylia. Unlike Ahamefuna's mother and Ahamefuna's mother's sister, she is an exceptionally good wife character. Though she is portrayed as a city woman who wore trousers and who often titivates her face, she is used to demonstrate what it is like to be a good wife. At the end, the good triumphs over the bad. Emylia and her husband, Ahamefuna, survived all the attacks and hard times, while Victoria, Amaechina's wife and Amaechina himself died in their prime. The irony of the whole story is that Ahamefuna whom Amaechina has been struggling to kill became the person who finally buried him.

3. CONCLUSION

With the study of the three novels, we see the roles of some husbands in African families as passive. What this means is that Ibezute shares in both Chinweizu and Nnolim's different views that some husbands in Africa are just ceremonious heads. They are almost helpless most of the time when their wives start acting out their unimaginable behaviours. In *Victims of Betrayal* OhakwuoNwafo is almost turned a non entity because of his wife's manipulation of him. He is the head of the family no doubt but he could not take any decision on any matter on his own without his wife's interference. This is similar to what we saw in *The Temporal Gods* – When Akudi started evoking evil spirits on Ogonna, George Okonta could really do nothing. In *The Temporal Gods*, George Okonta was as passive as OhakwuoNwafo of *Victims of Betrayal*. But unlike

OhakwuoNwafo, George Okonta was not manipulated by his bad wife – neither was he carried away by her beauty to an extent that his wife determined every decision he took. In *Dance of Horror* Okonem's role was passive but that did not make him a 'woman wrapper' like OhakwuoNwafo. Unlike the many husband characters that we encountered in the three novels, Okonem was the most powerful because he was a priest of the village deities, yet when Victoria, his new wife, started her troubles, he was as helpless as OhakwuoNwafo, Obidigbo, Obiluogu, and George Okonta.

However, using these different husband characters in the novels and their different circumstances, the fate of some African husbands are stressed. While some African husbands have been reduced to 'woman wrappers' like Ohakwuo Nwafo, many others have been placed in the conditions where they can only watch their wives act out their many dramas. The implication of this is that wives are now in full control of some different African families. This brings us back to Chinweizu's claim that though husbands may be the heads of their different families; their wives are actually in control of everything. Wives are in control of the children whom they actually bore for their husbands and are also in control of the family's destiny. It is a matter of common sense that the person who has a way into the heart of the man of the house and whom the children accord so much respect in a family is in control of the family and its destiny. Since some wives always have their ways into the hearts and minds of both their husbands and their children, it is not out of place if we as well say that they are in control of the destinies of the families where they are wives. This is why in each of the three novels, the children characters listened to their mothers more than they listened to their fathers. In *Victims of Betrayal*, for instance, Nduka's mother easily influenced Nduka. While in *The Temporal Gods* Ogonna listened to his mother Nwakaego, Nwokeji listened to Akudi, his mother. In *Dance of Horror* we also see Amaechina carry out every of his mother's advice to kill Ahamefuna.

The implications of all these have been shown in the three novels – that for instance, a family where there is a good wife, there would be good children and the family's destiny would turn out to be good. But a family where there is a bad wife, there would be bad children and the family's destiny would be doomed. What this implies is that most bad children come from homes where there are bad wives as mothers, and good children come from homes where there are good wives as mothers. This is also to say that a child can only become an armed robber, a terrorist, a hired assassin and all other bad personalities if he comes from a home where there is a bad wife as a mother and vice versa.

In each of the three novels, Ibezute seems to be saying many more things than these. In *Victims of Betrayal*, he is saying that some bad wives are not interested in the continuous existence of the family: when they come into any family, they have come to terminate it. Such kind of bad wives are usually 'destiny killers'. In *Victims of Betrayal* he uses Nwanyinma to demonstrate such kind of a wife. It was Obidigbo's marriage to Nwanyinma that earned him his life. Such wife character as Oyiridiya and

Akudi could also be termed family ‘destiny spoilers.’ When Oyiridiya was married into Ohakwuo family, the wealthy OhakwuoNwafo turned a pauper. There are also other wife characters that are ‘destiny helpers’ – those who their coming into a family brings wealth and happiness. Of course, when it is said that he who finds a wife finds a good thing and shall obtain favour from God, reference is made to this kind of wife. A typical example of such wife character in *Victims of Betrayal* is Bridget, in *The Temporal Gods* is Nwakego and in *Dance of Horror* is Emylia. With reference to the three novels, we can therefore say that a man that marries a woman has said to her: ‘please come and run my family for me or come and put the destiny of my family to shape’. This is because, as Chinweizu would say, husbands create the family, but wives run the family.

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