

FAMILY VIOLENCE IN CLASSICAL AND IGBO LITERATURES

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this laborious task to the memory of my late Parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Michael Nwanoro.

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With all humility and sincerity of heart, I am most grateful to God Almighty, *Pater Omnipotens*, who out of His infinite mercy concludes that I must complete this programme in the order of His word to Zerubbabel. And to the glory of His name, He crowned my effort with success to the shame of satan and his cohorts – the enemies of things expedient. I have not known much of God’s awesome power, until I discovered through what I passed through, that God can recover all the spilled content of a broken egg, while the shattered shell, He beautifully restores. This is exactly what God did when my life got broken down completely. I lack words to express my gratitude to Master Jesus my Mentor a friend above the bright blue sky; a friend who never fails; a friend who stood by me when there was no light at the end of the tunnel.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

A.D	Anno Domini
B.C	Before Christ
Bk.	Book
Co.	Company
Ed.	Edition
Ed.	Editor
Eds.	Editors
Etc.	Et cetera
Et al	And others
Ibid.	Ibidem
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
Inc.	Incorporated
Op.cit.	Opere citate
L	Line
LL	Lines
Ltd.	Limited
P.	Page
Trans.	Translation
Vol.	Volume

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ABSTRACT

Classical and African literatures have portrayed the family as a nucleus of the societies. Existing studies from the old Graeco-Roman times and Igbo cultures acknowledged this significance by paying adequate attention to issues of marriage, inheritance, finance, and social class in their literatures. However, hardly any one of these studies has exclusively concentrated on or compared the representations of family violence in the literatures. This study therefore, examines the causes, manifestations and effects of family violence in the Classical and Igbo literatures with a view to highlighting their convergences and divergences.

Using the descriptive and comparative research design, the study adopts Sigmund Freud's Instinct theory of Aggression. The primary Classical sources consulted were the works of Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Suetonius and the *Digests* of Justinian while the works of Achebe, Ofofata, Ike, Adichie, and oral literature were consulted for the Igbo aspect, because these have large representations of family violence. Data were subjected to thematic and critical analysis.

Family violence which is largely a common feature of both Classical and Igbo societies, as portrayed in their literatures, demonstrates that barrenness is hardly tolerated and is blamed on the woman. In Euripides' *Andromache* Hermione is repudiated and replaced with another woman on account of barrenness. Osita, Uju's husband married another wife without her consent in *Onye Chi ya Akwatughi* written by Ofofata. The *auctoritas* of the *paterfamilias* sometimes constitute danger in the household, in *Oresteian Trilogy*, king Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia in order to gain a favourable weather and passage across the sea. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's second wife almost lost her life to his gun shot, after being seriously battered because she made a mistake during food preparation. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* presents Mr. Eugene as a batterer of wife and children on grounds of disobedience. Ezeulu creates a domestic harshness and fear in Achebe's *Arrow of God*. Sophocles' *Electra* and Ike's *Potter's Wheel* show that abandonment, rejection, and child abuse are traumas which family members suffer as a result of violence. The cruel treatment of a spouse often leads to rash reactions and murder as exemplified in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Medea*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, among others. The texts also show that false accusation, infidelity, deviant behaviours, incest and denial can both result from or into family violence. However, some cases are peculiar to Classical literature: youths directly or indirectly killing their mothers as observed in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* and Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. In Igbo literature, wife and child battering (*Things Fall Apart*, *Purple Hibiscus*, and *Onye Chi Ya Akwatughi*) is a common occurrence. While Classical literature often attributes some violent attacks to the influence of the gods, Euripides' (*Bacchae*) Igbo literature has no such corollary.

Family violence in Classical and Igbo literatures is seated in socio-cultural, biological and economic experiences of the Graeco-Roman and Igbo peoples. Its effects scope over abandonment, battering, divorce and murder, with more cases of battering in Igbo literature; and murder and vengeance of the gods in Classical literature.

Key words: Family, Violence, Graeco- Roman literature, Igbo literature.

Word count: 499.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Etymology of the Term, “Violence.”

The term “violence” is a noun; the adjective is “violent” and “violently” adverb. The Greek word, βιάζω which is translated as, force; use of violence; over power; maltreat or oppress is used to explain the meaning of “violence”. Another Greek word, βίαιος is used to express the application of violence, hence is translated as -forcible, violent or strong oppressive force. Subsequently, other Greek words, βιαστής which literally translates as one using force, a violent man, and βία κατά κρατος – by force,¹ are relevant in this regard. The word “violence”, takes its root from the Latin word, *violentia* – noun, *violentus* – adjective and *violenter* – adverb. *Violentia* literally means the application of force with the desire or intention to injure or abuse. Its meaning equally encompasses injury in the form of revoking, repudiation, distortion, infringement or irreverence to a thing or notion. *Violentia* extends its meaning to include vocabularies and phrases which connote serious actions. These include: “intense”, “turbulent”, “vehement”, “furious actions” and “feelings often destructive”². *Violentia* is closely associated with another word, “aggression.” Aggression simply implies “an offensive action or procedure”³ *Violentia* is often accompanied by another Latin term *conflictio*⁴ whose English equivalent is “conflict”. This simply suggests violence and conflict move hand in hand or can be hardly separated from each other.

The Igbo in trying to explain the term “violence” do not use a single word to do so, as obtained in English language. This is because there is no word which corresponds with the term “violence” in Igbo dictionary; however, the Igbo employ a number of words, phrases or expressions to convey the meaning. When the Igbo talk about “violence,” one’s mind immediately flashes at actions such as; fighting – (*ilụ ọgụ*); inflicting wound on any part of the body, from which blood oozes out- (*imepụ mmadụ ọbara, ma ọbụ itipụ mmadụ ọnya*); shooting somebody –(*igba mmadụ egbe*); killing by shedding or spilling of somebody’s blood- (*igbu na iwusi ọbara mmadụ*). Apart from the severe acts of violence, there are other acts such as; pushing and shoving- (*ikwa-*

aka); beating/battering (*iti ihe*); speaking to someone harshly or at a high tone- (*igwa mmadu okwu n'olu ike*); using resentful words on somebody- (*igwa mmadu okwu ojoo ma o bu, okwu mwute*); and verbal fight- (*iko-onu*). Furthermore, the Igbo use expressions like; *o na-eme ihe ike* (he does wicked or atrocious deeds like; kidnapping, killing in a most heinous way, raping, waylaying, and other similar acts), to explain further, their views over violence.

A discussion with Mr (*Maazi*) Ihunna Peter, a Ph.D student in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan, over the Igbo's perception of violence, reveals that the Igbo people refer to "violence" as (*ogbahara*) - which comprises, misunderstanding, riot and locking of horns. "Violence" could also mean (*nsogbu*) - which refers to "trouble," "chaos" or "disaster". It also stands for (*imegide mmadu*), which- literally translates, cheating or oppressing another person; (*iji-aka ike eso mmadu*) - dealing with somebody with high handedness. (*Ogbahara*), according to him can lead to injury, which could be physical, psychological or emotional. (*Ogbahara*) could also include; pouring hot water at a person; stabbing with knife; a husband beating his wife; parents beating their children or the siblings beating one another. He finally points out that, a family in which violence reigns is seen as trouble brewers – (*ndi okwu na uka*). People do not wish to associate with them because of their militant and turbulent life style.

1.2 Background of the Study

A number of playwrights and historians such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Tacitus, Suetonius and some contemporary scholars such as: Sigmund Freud, Marcia Lasswell and Thomas Lasswell as well as Graham Allan, have carried out a number of studies on father, mother, son, daughter and family relationships in general. However, this work sets out to examine family violence in Classical and Igbo literatures on a comparative basis. The foundation cultures in carrying out this study are the Classical cultures, which comprise Greek and Roman; and the Igbo culture.

This work specifically looks at eruption of violence in relationships amongst family members. The family in consideration is a group which consists of one or two parents, their children and close relations. It also includes a husband, his wife/wives,

their children and close relations. The interest strongly hinges on violence as it deals with and affects the life of the above mentioned family group.

In this regard, the research work examines the various aspects of relationships which exist in the family and how violence could shatter or disrupt such relationships. Thus the study looks at violent experiences between husband and wife; father and son; father and daughter; father and parent(s)-in-law; father and brothers/sisters-in-law; mother and son; mother and daughter; mother and parent(s)-in-law; mother and brother(s)/sister(s)-in-law; parent(s) and children; children and grand parent(s); children and uncles, aunts and cousins; amongst siblings; a family member and the rest of the family; a member of the family and relations or other people living with them.

The family as an important institution is upheld for its vital role of regeneration and continuity of human existence. The family is made up of members, who desire and admire one another for the expedient roles they play in their individual lives. Interpersonal dependence and a sort of division of labour exist amongst members. In many homes, the father is the head of the family; he provides security, shelter, food and clothing for his family. The mother has it as obligation to bear and rear children. Harmony and unity are natural expectations of every family, in order to have a successful existence. The children owe it as duty to obey their parents, or caregivers. They have to honour and accord them (parents and caregivers) with respect. In return children are their parents' or caregivers' pride. Also parents put in effort to live up to their children's expectations. They work and thrive in aspiration to make their children *primae inter pares*.

Ehrenberg in his work, *The People of Aristophanes*, supports the above premise, which demands that children should obey their parents, when he asserts: "To honour one's parents was one of the fundamental commandments of Greek ethics, and in tragedy particularly, there are many evidences of the fulfillment of the claims of that duty."⁵ Invariably, Ehrenberg affirms that, children whether young or old have no reason whatsoever, to prove equal to the people that give them life. He points out that, honour to one's parents is a "duty." He stresses that it is a function which the child has to carry out at all times. Obedience to one's parents includes, working in accordance

with their instructions without grumbling, and being submissive to their authority. The child should always be willing to assist his parents. Among the members of the family, Ehrenberg believes that love, which holds the family members together, should be enduring in order to withstand tempestuous situations. He says: “The mutual love of parents and children is a natural fact, which can be destroyed by extra ordinary circumstances only... .⁶

Ehrenberg in these statements talks about the reciprocity of love, which should unite members together or serve as their watchword, as they relate with one another. The love between family members, which Ehrenberg speaks about, is expected not to be a difficult thing to practice, but has to flow naturally like water. This suggests that love among family members should be as natural as the breath we take in. It should neither be technical nor a stage-manage type of love. It is a kind of love that no knife could be able to cut in two. However, concerning the family, and in support of the views of Ehrenberg, Judith Maitland notes as follows:

Values conducive to family stability include respect of parents and obedience to the father, protection of women, honour of good wives and mothers, the importance of paternal authority and regulation of sexual behaviour.⁷

Maitland in her views tries to point out vital ingredients which could build a strong family, and make it withstand adverse and turbulent conditions; which could arise from members themselves. She clearly states that children above every other thing should show reverence to their parents. They have to honour and abide by the instructions of their parents. Children have to remain humble and loyal to their parents. She equally stresses that being submissive to the father of the family will add to the stability and peace of the home.

Furthermore, the women of the family have to be assured of security and other form of protection they require. They (women) have to guard jealously and protect their position in the home. The good works of the mother of the family, should not be ignored, but has to be acknowledged and commended. Obviously, the encouragement will strengthen her to prove equal with the tasks ahead. The sexual life of the family, according to Maitland, should be balanced, to avoid rancour. None of the couple is

expected to punish a partner through denial of sex, as this practice could arouse sharp contention.

The family being a highly treasured institution, those who establish it have various significant or positive expectations at heart. It is a citadel built on a foundation of hope for successes and achievements. It is the desire and aspiration of the family to see her members thrive and make exceptional progress. In the same manner, it is her wish that unity and peace reigns. It is rational to point out that no normal being builds a family and maps out plans or strategies to make it a failure. Subsequently, no reasonable person institutes a family to encourage her members to become as incompatible as cat and dog.

Interestingly, the common and general expectation in the familial relationship is to have a warm, cordial and peaceful relationship, that is, a creamy relationship devoid of anarchy, rancour, hatred, jealousy, cheating, strife, aggression et cetera. This vivid picture of the structure of family shows its ideals. Nevertheless, as members of the family live together, the normal course of its existence becomes thwarted, either by powers stronger than they (that is the influence of the gods), or by their ill wills or mistakes. The result of this influence can lead to domestic violence, conflict or breaches of family ties.

Some of the literary works of both Classical, English and African origin studied, coupled with interviews and discussions, show that a good number of family relationships are affectionate and harmonious. Family members can defend, protect, fight one another's battle or take vengeful action against a member's external offender.

In Greek Mythology, Danae jealously protected her son Persus, who in turn saved her from sexual molestation.⁸ Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus, it was said, had an affectionate relationship with her sons, the death of her husband, Sempronius Gracchus notwithstanding. It was acknowledged that her sons were the most talented men of their generation. In the novel, *The African Child*, by Camara Laye, the relationship between Camara and his parents proved credible. It is a family in which warmth and love radiate over individual lives. It is an epitome of relationship.

The notion of love which holds family members together, and presents the family as a comfortable place, where people tend to retire for rest, after the strenuous activities of the day, is made explicit in this quotation:

The foundation of our free institution is our love as a people, for our homes. The strength of our country is found, not in declaration that all men are free and equal, but in the quiet influence of the fire side, the bonds which unite the family circle from the corroding cares of business, from the hard toil and frequent disappointment of the day, men retreat to the bosom of their families, and there, in the midst of that society of wife and children and friends, receive a rich reward for their industry, and reminded that their best interest are inseparable from public and social morality.⁹

It is clear from the above view that family members expect to be encouraged by members when they return home, weighed down by the challenges met at the larger society. Their efforts should be commended by family members as this goes a long way to put more vigour in them. This is equally why it is important to bid a juicy welcome to a family member who comes back after a day's work, because the person desires warmth from his family members. Such person expects food on his or her table; water for bathing and other healthy treatments.

The affection that transpires notwithstanding, a cordial family relationship could be adversely affected or shattered by violence which could be provoked by internally or externally generated forces. Rancour amongst family members could be externally elicited when the culture, peer group, friend, association, school, gang, religious group or other sub systems which members belong to, influence them to exhibit violent behaviours on other members. For instance, when a youth learns from the gang he belongs to, that the easiest way to get money out of his parents is by beating or threatening them with gun. Internally provoked conflict and violence come into play when family members with their actions or inactions breed problems which affect them adversely.

Consequently, there are shreds of evidence of soured familial relationships presented here. Medea murdered her two sons¹⁰ - an instrument employed to punish and

extinguish the posterity of an unfaithful husband. Emperor Nero of ancient Rome murdered his mother, the younger Agrippina, when she became too over-bearing and authoritatively influential over his government.¹¹ Okonkwo the dramatic hero in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, shot his wife Ekwefi, but narrowly missed killing her.¹² It is identified that domineering attitude, infidelity, false accusation, high-handedness, lack of love in marriage, contention over who a family member marries, hatred, and a host of other reasons are some of the factors which produce conflicts amongst family members. The violent cases which are to be addressed in this study include: quarrelling and the use of stinging words, pushing, and shoving, rejection, abandonment, child abuse, infidelity, fighting, battering, suicide, and worst still, murder, in family relationships.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The research focuses on violence (physical, psychological or emotional) which disrupts family relationship as presented in Classical and Igbo literatures. Igbo literature in this context refers to literary genres written on the Igbo society by Igbo authors either in English or Igbo language. Literature can be used to establish a serious sociological issue as family violence, literary works although can exaggerate or can be subjective, it is a reflection of life and reality.

However, the time reference of these works notwithstanding, human nature being the same universally, distance and time do not thwart or affect the natural order of events or human experiences. Violence is destructive to the family. It is like a monster which has calamitous powers over the family. Family dysfunctional could be attributed partly to family violence. The research takes into consideration these perennial problems. Invariably, it is the conflict, violence, unhealthy relationships in the family and their likely causes, effects and manifestations that this work sets out to investigate. Nonetheless, recommendations are made on how these problems could be abated, reduced or managed.

1.4 Objectives

- i. To examine the positions ascribed to the members of the family, and their various functions to other members, and the family in general.
- ii. To examine the structure of family relationships in the Classical and Igbo literatures.
- iii. To identify the factors that lead to violence and conflicts amongst family members as represented in the literatures.
- iv. To identify the effects and manifestations of violence on family members as portrayed in these literary works.
- v. To make necessary recommendations that could abate the identified violent issues in these works.

1.5 Research Questions

- (a) What are the causes, manifestations and effects of family violence on Classical and Igbo families as depicted in the literatures under study?
- (b) What are the similarities and differences of family violence in both Classical and Igbo societies as these works show?
- (c) What are the effects of family violence on the larger society?

1.6 Justification of the Study

The study in great measure highlights the problems of violence in family relationship on a comparative basis. Scholars have studied Classical, American, or English cases, but there has been no such comparative study carried out on the ancient Graeco-Roman and Igbo literatures based on the theme of violence. The comparison provides suggestions, which, if properly applied would help in reducing family violence, which is ferociously plunging into Nigerian as well as African culture in general.

- (a) The research work will definitely make great contributions to further studies on men, women, children and family relationship in general.

- (b) The study will generate a body of knowledge that would be useful to psychologists, sociologists, classicists, social historians, literary artists, women and children studies, the family and the entire society.
- (c) The study will to a large extent encourage more cordial family relationship.
- (d) The research will generate means of conflict resolution and/or reconciliation amongst family members in both societies.
- (e) The study will equally clear a fertile ground to further the debate on conflict resolution globally

1.7 The Scope of the Research

The scope of this research basically covers a period of civilization in ancient Greek and Roman world which encompasses mainly the literature, and supported by other social materials, and intellectual culture of ancient Greek and Roman, which span the Bronze Age to the collapse of Roman Empire in the West. This civilization endured for a lasting period of some two thousand years or more. It covers the period of Graeco-Roman antiquity. On the other hand, the scope covers the study of the traditional, precolonial and postcolonial Igbo South East of Nigeria. The location of focus notwithstanding, significant information and illustrations are equally drawn from other Nigerian and African literature and literary genres.

1.8 Research Methodology

The research is literary - based. This involves to a large extent the textual analysis of the works of Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristotle, Ovid, Apollonius of Rhodes, Ehrenberg, a Greek literary writer and social critique and the works of other renowned Classical artists. In most of these works are experiences of strained family/household relationships. Equally of importance are Greek and Roman legal literature and histories. The Greek and Roman mythologies are also rich sources which will contribute immensely to make a comprehensive output on the Classical part of the study. In Classical Epic tradition, beginning from Greek Homer to Latin Lucian, family relationship is narrated. The research however, will explore the evidence provided by these literary genres.

With regards to the Igbo aspect, a number of literary works of novelists, dramatists, and poets such as Chinua Achebe, Nkem Nwankwo, Chukwumeka Ike, Flora Nwapa, Chinedum Ofomata, Goddy Onyekonwu, John Munonye, Chimamanda Adichie and many other African artists whose works portrayed the theme of family violence and family relationships were employed for illustrations. These works would be studied to extract the evidence of violence and conflict amongst family members. As part of this research, and for cross- fertilization of ideas, and to enhance the quality of this study, the use of interviews, and discussions would be employed. Stories, oral literature which comprises folktales, folklores and songs which are relevant to this study would be equally brought in.

1.9 Limitation of Study

The major source material for the Classical aspect of this research is limited to literary evidence. While studying the Roman history which contributed to make this a complete essay, it is discovered that the personalities and families mostly captured for strained or violent family relationships were elevated ones, such as the emperors and the people of the imperial *domus* or men of nobility. Such representation excludes to a large extent people of low status, and so this shortcoming limited that part of study to patrician families. Also this limitation did not give opportunity to find out whether the causes of chaotic family relationship were the same at all levels in the social strata. Some situations or experiences found in Classical mythological and mythical dramas seem incredible.

There were equally problems of source materials, for the treatment of the Igbo aspect of the research. There were few Igbo genres (novel, drama, and poetry) which discuss violence, or related concepts. The discussion on murder in the household or family is most dreaded. A number of them (genres) presented relationships, which were without squabble- a suggestion that all is well with the family relationships. A significant number of authors were subjective. They paint pictures of total and lasting affectionate relationship among family members, hence they sing praises and present one another as “amiable and loving” and thus, they fail to reveal any single moment of differences amongst themselves. If at all it is presented, it is in the lightest manner. The

authors try to make us believe that the relationships amongst the family members were quite healthy and enduring. More so, most authors were careful to avoid the murder of a family member by another rather they make the supposed victim narrowly escape death.

During the course of interviews and discussions carried out in Igbo land for the purpose of this work, some respondents found it difficult or are reluctant to submit to the fact that their relationships with either parents or children have ever lost footing. Again, the case of murder in the family circle is hardly reported to the police. The family tries as much as possible to have it concealed so that more heads will not be lost. The limitations notwithstanding, the ground was broken even, through bolts and bars *ad astra par aspira*.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

NOTES

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Portrait of Violence

There are many approaches to the explanation of the concept “violence,” which is based on an individual’s point of view. In the same vein, violence is hydra-headed, that is, it is of various kinds. People in different disciplines and fields of study try to explain and give it meaning from their own background. But what to bear in mind is that, there is a general idea which is common to all. The psychologists’ and the sociologists’ perception of the phenomenon is quite plausible although they do not have common view. Nevertheless, their views are buoyantly employed into this segment of the work. The psychologists attempt to explain and illustrate what violence is, through the study and observation of human behaviour, while the sociologists wade into the study by making a critical study of inter-personal relationships, either between individuals or groups. There are different kinds of violence, which include; political, religious, economic, institutional, gender-elicited violence, et cetera. However, this study is narrowed down to family violence for easy management.

The effort to give violence a befitting treatment necessitated the special study carried out on it. Aggression is found a very good instrument for the explanation of the subject, “violence” because of their closeness and relatedness. Psychologists discovered that violent acts such as beating, fighting, killing, wars and suicide could be traced to aggression. Thus, aggression is given a comprehensive explanation because it could contribute a lot to the study of violence.

2.2 The Term “Aggression”

McCowley opines that animals aggressively contend amongst themselves for survival. This mode of behaviour is common amongst animals with back bone with human beings inclusive. He goes on to claim that aggression is a mechanism which helps to maintain dilapidating social order. However, he maintains that violence becomes irrational when it is unjustified.

Mc Cowley (1997) writes that animals compete with each other over food, mates, dwelling places among others and in the process show aggression. This is common virtually among all vertebrates species including humans. Aggression is also an effective way of maintaining social order. Reckless violence appears to be a poor survival mechanism.¹

Krebs (1982) stresses that “intention” is vital while giving the meaning of aggression. He argues that there must be a clear indication of an attempt to cause harm to a person. Working in line with Krebs’ view, Jucha et al (2004:272) define aggression as “any behaviour intended to harm another person, which the target person would want to “avoid.” Holding unto this definition, a bungled assassination is an act of aggression, because it involves intended harm that the target surely would have wished to walk, run, or hide away from. Heart surgery, which, the patient willingly accepts, to have his health condition improved cannot be regarded as aggression even if the patient loses his life in the process.² There are theories which expatiate why people engage in aggressive or violent acts. They include: Instinct Theory of Aggression; Strength and Arbitrariness of Frustration Theory; Aversive Emotional Arousal /Social Learning Aggression Theory.

2.3 Instinct Theory of Aggression

Human beings have a high degree of urge to harm others. Social psychologists tried to point out reasons which elicit human beings to engage in aggressive acts which are of course violent in form.

- (1) People are instinctively aggressive: The social psychologist, Jucha and his counterparts obtained this view from Sigmund Freud the initiator and propounder of this theory. According to Freud, right from the formation of the fetus in the womb, man is made to carry within him both an urge to create and destroy. The innate urge or desire to destroy “death instinct” could be likened to man’s natural desire for breath. The instinct persistently produces harsh impulse, which must be evacuated. These hostile impulses according to Freud are released when we aggress against others; by turning violently to ourselves (suicide) or by suffering mental distress, (physical or mental illness).

- (2) People become aggressive when confronted with frustrating events or situations³. The above statement suffices that when faced with harsh or difficult conditions, people are likely to exhibit aggressive behaviours.

2.4 Strength and Arbitrariness of Frustration Theory

This theory holds that the more we desire a goal and the closer we are to achieve it, the more frustrated and aroused we become if blocked. For instance, if someone cuts ahead of us as we reach the front of a line, our frustration undoubtedly becomes strong. A field experiment based on this idea demonstrated that stronger frustration elicits more aggression.⁴

Arbitrariness of frustration theory claims that, understanding the reason why one is frustrated determines the extent to which one reacts. For instance, there is the tendency for people to react in a more hostile manner when they discover that they do not deserve the frustration they are subjected to. They view such treatment as uncalled for or illegitimate. A different reaction is expected when one understands that the cause of the frustration he suffered is justified, or accidental. However the arbitrary or illegitimate frustration encourages more aggression.⁵ This states that when an act is performed without the intention to inflict wound or harm somebody, and it eventually does, the victim's reaction will be less. The people around or the law enforcement agents will not handle the offender as severely as when the act was an intended one. For instance, when Okonkwo, the protagonist of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, mistakenly shot a young boy to death, he was sent on exile, because he committed manslaughter and not murder.

In the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen - year old son... Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart... violent deaths were frequent, but nothing like this had ever happened... . The crime was of two kinds, the male and the female. Okonkwo committed the female, because it was inadvertent - He could return to the clan after seven years.⁶

The term "inadvertent" simply explains that Okonkwo's act was accidental or unintentional, thus his penalty becomes mere exile rather than death penalty.

2.5 Aversive Emotional Arousal /Social Learning Aggression Theory

The researcher, Averill was interested in finding out what makes people angry. She resorted to a study and came up with a result which showed that legitimate action by others, and unavoidable accidents could trigger off aggressive reactions (Averill, 1982). It is also likely that insults geared toward what one likes or values; or trait to what one likes or values, could lead to aggression. Also physical pain which one suffers can lead to aggression. Words which are harsh and unfriendly and other physical attacks can equally make one respond aggressively.⁷

The Social Learning Aggression Theory argues that aggression is learnt just as other behaviours could be learnt. It opines that aggression could be learnt through the processes of imitation and reinforcement. A good number of people learnt aggressive behaviour through observation. That is, when they watch others perpetrate or perform aggressive acts, they later begin to put into practice what they have observed (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1961).

Aggressive behaviours such as spouse, child and sibling abuse, which are evident in the family, have their bearing from the Social Learning Theory. According to (Gelles & Cornell, 1990), people who abuse their spouses or children, often themselves were brought up in families wherein they either witnessed or experienced abuse. There is the tendency that a child who grows up in a family in which members abuse one another, sees aggression as an acceptable norm. The theory further buttresses, that people behave aggressively, because they believe aggressive behaviour will elicit reward. For example, a thief can attack a person to make away with the fellow's money. He anticipates that the “attack” will bring reward, “money.” Like wise, a child can give another a knock to collect his toy, “a knock” is the aggressive act while “toy” is the reward and the result of being aggressive.⁸

However, aggression is discovered to be a form of disorder, according to a lecture series from Ibadan. Passive Aggressive Disorder is characterized by covert aggression toward significant others, like a parent, a boss, and others, through disobedience, obstinacy and general oppositional behaviour.⁹

Aggression could be said to be an act of violence portrayed in the conducts of an individual. It could also be said to be a violent or hostile feeling or behaviour. It is that kind of ill feeling which can easily drive one to attack or quarrel. Aggression has destructiveness as its attribute.¹⁰

Adrey (1960), Loren (1966), Morris (1968), Tiger (1969) boast of proof about the relatedness of human and animal behaviour. They claim that aggression is innate and assuming the form of survival of the fittest. Aggression in children is likely to emanate from insecurity, poor ego control and complex (Livson and Mussen 1957), hindered or obstructed self esteem or jealousy. The consequences of the parents' attitudes, such as being indifferent when the child is aggressive, or the use of physical punishment (Lynn 1961; Kefjwutz, Walder and Eron 1963) arouse aggression in youths. Children who suffered rejection are discovered to appear more aggressive than those who enjoyed acceptance (Cuildwell et al 1966, Moore 1967, Cillesen et al 19992). Boys prove to be more aggressive than girls (Walker 1967). Children from divorced home often show intensely higher level of anxiety, general life chaws, disorganization, depression, and develop conflicted behaviour (Wallerstein 1985). Cumter and McAleer (1997) and Thomas (1985), hold that children might learn that violence is the correct way of having one's problems tackled.

2.6 Explanation of Violence

Having looked at aggression, which is a very important pivot through which the wheel of understanding violence rotates, it is crucial to examine the views or perceptions and explanations of violence, from various scholars. Plato the popular ancient Greek philosopher, in one of his works *Apology*, expresses his opinion on violence. He stresses that a man in pursuit of honour can choose to accept violence even though he knows it would be harmful to him. Such man despises danger instead of accepting disgrace. Plato illustrates this view when he reflects on the experiences of Achilles in the Trojan War. Achilles determines to be violently murdered by his enemies instead of leaving his companion Patroclus, unavenged as though a coward.

... And when he was so eager to avenge his companion Patroclus, and slew Hector, his goddess mother said to him that if he avenged his companion Patroclus, and slew Hector, he would die himself...he, receiving this warning, utterly despised danger and death, and instead of fearing them feared rather to live in dishonour and not avenge his friend. "Let me die forthwith," he replies, and be avenged of my enemy.¹¹

Plato still illuminating on the issue of violence claims that it is better to live in a good rather than in a bad community because wicked people have bad effect upon those with whom they are in closest contact, and good people have good effect upon their neighbours. No one desires to be harmed but rather prefers to be benefitted by his associates¹². Plato admonishes that it is a wise decision to avoid places which are prone to violence. A peaceful environment is more secured compared with a chaotic one.

Plato painted a colourful picture of violence in his book, *The Republic*, expressing how the state should react when a citizen is experiencing pain. This pain could be either physical, emotional or psychological. He illustrates as follows:

When but a finger of one of us is hurt, the whole frame drawn toward the soul as a centre and forming one kingdom under the ruling power therein, feels the pain and sympathizes all together with the part affected, and we say that the man has a pain in his finger; and the same expression is used about any other part of the body, which has a sensation of pain at suffering...¹³

Plato believes that as the entire body shares in the pain of a hurt finger, the state should feel the same way for her citizens. He stipulates that when anyone of the citizens experiences any good or evil, the whole state will make his case her own and will either rejoice or sorrow with him. Simply put, the state should provide adequate support and care for all the citizenry and should not leave her members to perish in their predicaments.

In his work *The Symposium*, Plato realizes as follows: Mutilation, imprisonment and many other like deeds of violence could never have occurred among the gods if Love had been there. All would have been peace and friendship as it is now, and has ever been since Love assumed dominion over them (the gods).¹⁴ Plato identifies that

love is the antidote for violence and where love exists violence could hardly thrive. The presence of love shuns violence and ushers in peace.

Lahey et al (2001:379) claim that humans hold their heads high for being higher animals who established distinct political and organized societies to show their superiority over lower animals. It is unfortunate to discover that the level of aggression and violence amongst human beings is amazing compared with what is obtainable in the kingdom of the lower animals. The above premise is clearly stated in the quotation below:

We pride ourselves on being humane creatures who, have left the brutal jungle to establish “civilized societies.” But the sad reality is that no other animal species even comes remotely close to our record of violent and harmful acts against members of our own species. Although fights to death do occur over mates and territory in lower animals, and apes do apparently “intentionally murder” other apes on rare occasions, no species rivals the frequency of human aggression. In my lifetime alone, hundreds of millions of humans have been killed by other humans in wars, revolutions, and acts of terrorism¹⁵

Violent crimes and murder have always been part of human societies, but in recent years their frequency has reached unprecedented levels in many parts of the world. Violence remains the second major cause of death after accident amongst 15- to- 24 year - olds in United States. It is also the common cause of death amongst African-American males (Lore & Schultz 1993).¹⁶

According to Tamuno (1991:3), violence is the unlawful use of force. Domenach (1998:718) approaches the explanation of violence from three angles, (i) psychological, which involves the irrational and murderous use of force; (ii) ethical, which has to do with vandalism of a neighbour's property or an abuse of liberty; (iii) political, which involves forceful seizure of power or the illegitimate use of political power. Furthermore, Domenach (719) considers violence as the use of force, whether overt or covert, in order to wrest from individuals or groups that which they are not prepared to release of their own free-will. Mackenzie (1975:39) understands violence as exercise of physical body with the view of causing damage to persons or property; action or

conduct characterized by this; and treatment or usage championed toward causing bodily injury or forcibly interfering with personal freedom.¹⁷ However, it is vital to point out at this stage, that what is common with the above definitions is the fact that violence has to do with the “use of force” as Domenach, Mackenzie and Tamuno clearly stated.

Balandier (1986:499-511), Kende (1986:529-538) and Halloran (1978:818), point out the differences between “individual or interpersonal violence” and “group or mass violence”. They make the former, (individual / interpersonal violence) to include such acts as, murder, robbery, street fighting et cetera, between individuals, while the later, (group or mass violence) describes that type of violence which springs from mass action, like riots, demonstrations, public contests and so on.

Various scholars have viewed violence beyond the “interpersonal” or “mass” but to include such social problems as property, deprivation, famine, economic, gender exploitation or discrimination. In order to strengthen this point further, Boulding (1978:801-815), affirms “social violence” against women to consist of all elements of patriarchy and other institutional structures which victimize women. Spitz (1978:867-892) is of the opinion that famine and inequality are “silent violence” which must be relentlessly addressed like any other physical acts of violence.

However, Halloran draws our attention to what he terms “legitimate violence” which according to him, are those violent behaviours, which focus on preserving the existing order in the society. Von der Mehden (1970:37) approves of Halloran's line of thoughts. He sees the kind of violence employed by the state or her licenced agents as the police, the military, and bureaucracy and so on, as “established violence.” Subsequently, Domenach (1978-722), holding the same point of view with Von der Mehden, declares; “to condemn all forms of violence is absurd or hypocritical. To extol violence is criminal.”¹⁸

The idea, feeling and thought which these scholars intend to establish is that some violent behaviours have to be acceptable owing to the functions they perform in the state. Invariably, they are of the opinion that all violent acts should not be condemned because they received the power of legitimacy. Furthermore, Hanmer (1978) posits that

violence constitutes the use of force and threats as elements binding social process, based on women's subordination.¹⁹

Some scholars hold strongly that the state is the only entity morally justified to embark on act of violence (Weber, 1947; Walters, 1964). Others, who are uncomfortable with the above premise, argue against the monopolization of the instruments of violence by the state, reiterating that, violence serves different functions. (Anifowose, 1982) reinforcing this position observes:

Violence has been used by groups seeking power, by groups holding power, and by groups in the process of losing power. ... Violence has been pursued in the defense of order by the privileged in the name of justice, by the oppressed, and in fear of displacement, by the threatened.²⁰

However, scholars who oppose the use of violence by the state, further argue that violence carries the overtone of "violating", therefore its exercise should be seen as illegitimate.²¹

Several scholars have expressed their thoughts, views and opinions, about the concept, violence. However, it is worthy to note that their ideas in summary point toward the fact that violence is an act or behaviour which has physical or psychological undertone of force, geared toward one or a group with calculated attempt to afflict or leave wound which could either be physical or psychological. Invariably scholars are at divergency over the usefulness of violence.

2.7 The Family

A family is defined as a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members, of which assume responsibility for caring for children. Kinship ties are connections between individuals, established either through marriage or through the lines descent that connect blood relatives, (mothers, fathers, offspring, grand parents) and so on.²²

The family is not just a collection of individuals. It can be viewed as a system in which all the elements interact with and influence all other elements (Turnbull et al, 1986). This simply illustrates that, there are different relationships, interactions, and transactions which take place between family members. There are also subsystems

which consist of child-parent interaction, the marital subsystem, consisting of husband - wife interaction, and the sibling subsystem, consisting of child-child interaction. Each family varies on how close family members are to one another, how overt the communication and how responsive the system is to change.

Most people live in families and have personal experiences as members of a family. The majority of children grew up in families and in adulthood may form their own families. Each member of the family is expected to carry out one function or the other for the up-keep and wellbeing of the family. The significance of the family often prompts the government to make policies, which inform us expressly of what the family should and should not do.²³

Individual family members also vary in their characteristics. Every family member brings a set of personal idiosyncrasies to the family and these can influence how the family reacts to issues, how they respond to needs of their members and how they cope with any difficulties. For example young and strong parents who are economically buoyant will be delighted and enthusiastic to take up the responsibility of their children's education. Parents who are elderly and sick may not have interest in this kind of responsibility; rather, they will be more concerned on how to get healed.²⁴


The family system does not function in isolation. Each family member belongs to other systems, such as; peer groups, schools, establishments, clubs and associations. The family is also embedded in wider system like; the extended family, friends, neighbours, educational services, the health and social services and also, the political and cultural climate. Each of these wider systems limits and determines what the family system can achieve (Graham, 1984).²⁵ It is quite possible, that these systems could affect the lives and behaviours of family members either positively or negatively. When family members engage in external relationships, it is likely they learn behaviours which could be detrimental or of advantage to family members and the family at large.

The family is a dynamic system, in the sense that, it is prone to change as time passes on. New members find their ways into the family through birth, adoption, and fostering. Older children may leave home for marriage or economic engagements, education, grand parents may come to live with the family and so on. More so, some

members may grow older and may be changing their beliefs and thereby moving closer or farther apart. Interaction among members and wider systems change with time.²⁶

2.8 Family Violence: Definition and Explanation

Since family or kin relations are part of almost everyone's experience, family life encompasses virtually the whole range of emotional experience. Family relationship between wife and husband, parent and children, brothers and sisters or more distant relatives can be warm and fulfilling. But they can equally be full of most extreme tension driving people to despair or imbuing them with a deep sense of anxiety and guilt. The dark side of family life is extensive and belies the rosy images of family harmony frequently depicted. ... Among the most devastating in their consequences, however, are the incestuous abuse of children and domestic violence.²⁷



Poster, (1978) in support of the above premise, sees the family as a place of success, warmth and love on one hand, haven of tension, frustration and desperation on the other. He reiterates:

The family is being attacked and defended with equal vehemence. It is blamed for oppressing women, abusing children, spreading neurosis. ... It is praised for upholding morality, preventing crime, maintaining order and perpetuating civilization. Marriages are being broken more than ever before. The family is the place from which one desperately seeks escape and the place to which one longingly seeks refuge.²⁸

Family violence has become an issue that is expected to elicit worry, due to the degree at which it escalates. There are various forms of attacks amongst members which often result to the death of the victim as evident in the quote below:

What is hard to understand is the frequent violent attacks of family members amongst themselves. More than one third of murder registered by FBI was committed by one family member against another, and some three percent involve the murder of a child by a parent. In United States of America, each year, 4 million husbands and wives make violent attacks on each other which result to severe injuries.²⁹

Family violence has a broader definition, often used to include child abuse, elder abuse, intimate-partner violence, and their violent acts between family members.³⁰

The children and family Court Advisory and support service on the United Kingdom on “Domestic Violence Policy” uses domestic violence to refer to a range of violence and abusive behaviour, defining it as: Patterns of behaviour characterized by the misuse of power and control by one person over another who are or have been in an intimate relationship. It can occur in mixed gender relationships and same gender relationships and has profound consequences for the lives of children, individuals, families and communities. It may be physical, sexual, emotional and or psychological. The latter may include intimidation, harassment and damage to property, threats and financial abuse.³¹

The United States family bureau of investigation, in defining family violence includes spouses, parents, children, siblings, grand-parents, grand-children, in-laws, step-children and other family members. Under this comprehensive definition, the bureau, found that 27 percent of those who suffered violent attacks were related to their offenders. It is important to note that many of these violent incidences were not reported to the police as a result of the victim’s views. Some claim that the issue of violence is a personal or private matter. They may not want retaliation or feel that the police may not be able to help them in any way.³²

In 1994, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Service, Donna Shalala, described domestic violence as a crisis, a sickness, an epidemic, and terrorism in the home. This official went on to disclose that in 1990-1996, there was an 18 percent increase in child abuse and neglect cases - reported as suspected victims of child abuse or neglect, with one million cases confirmed. The causes of child abuse and neglect were as a result of drug abuse by family members, property and economic stress, and lack of parenting skill.³³

The U.S. Office on Violence Against Women (OVAW) defines domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Family violence can be defined as a deliberate attack on another family member with the intention to

leave wound which is physical, psychological or emotional for the reason best explained by the perpetrator, which is often either to gain control over, subdue, or avenge wrongs done to him or her. The definition goes on to claim that domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender, and it can take many forms, such as; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and psychological abuse.³⁴ The two broad categories of family violence are child abuse and spousal abuse. This concept, family violence, shall be treated based on these two broad categories.

2.9 Violence and the Family Child

A family child is a child born or adopted into a family or a child brought to live with a family which he or she is related with either through blood or marriage. A family child also includes a child brought into a family to render services. Child abuse could be defined as the serious physical harm (trauma, sexual abuse with injury, or willful malnutrition) with intent to injure the child. The most recent statistics based on the National Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting System, conducted in United States of America, indicates that, in 2001, there were more than 900,000 reported child victims of abuse or neglects, 52.2 per cent suffered neglect, 18.6 experienced physical abuse, whereas 9.6 percent were victims of sexual molestation.³⁵

Parke and Collmer, 1975 define an abused child as any child who receives non-accidental physical injury as a result of acts or omissions on the part of parents, that violate the community standard, concerning the treatment of children.³⁶ More so, severe child discipline is a form of child abuse which can be traced to the ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish societies where slaves were treated as the property of their owners and children were the property of their parents. It was only in 20th century that cruelty to children was realized to be a problem.³⁷

The gruesome death of Victoria Climbié in 2000, as a result of cruel treatment and torture inflicted on her by her great auntie, Maria Theresa Kougo and her boy friend, Carl Manning, in the United States of America brought to the fore, the extreme forms of

domestic violence against the child. Both partners were jailed for life in November, 2002 (Laming 2003).³⁸

Sexual abuse is another aspect of domestic violence which the child suffers. Sexual abuse of children can simply be defined as the carrying out of sexual acts by adult family members with children below the age of consent. In child sexual abuse, an adult is a leading figure who lures the infant or child into sex to satisfy his sexual urge. Incest refers to sexual relations between close kins. The most common cases of incest is that which occurs between the father and growing up daughter. The application of force by the perpetrator is often involved in cases of incest. In some instances, children are more or less willing participants during the process of incest, but this seems uncommon. A number of children who were attacked sexually by elderly members of the family deem the experience disgusting, shameful and disturbing. There is at present reliable evidence, which discloses that child sexual abuse has long-term effect on the victims. Studies carried out on prostitutes, juvenile offenders, adolescent run-away, and drug users, show that a reasonable number of them had experienced child sexual abuse. This notwithstanding, there are other factors which could contribute to the child's ill behaviours. These include, family conflicts, neglect on the side of parents and physical violence.³⁹

The psychological impact of child physical and sexual abuse has received sustained attention during the past decade. A frequently cited national survey found that 27% of women and 16% of men disclosed a history of child sexual abuse (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990). Compared with individuals without a victimization history, male and female victims of sexual abuse were two times more likely to meet the criteria of a psychiatric disorder sometime during their life time (Stein, Golding, Siegal, Burnham, & Sorenson, 1988). Browne and Finkelhor's (1986) review concludes that approximately 40% of sexual abuse survivors experience a level of distress that may require psychotherapy. The consequences of sexual abuse are numerous, they are; depression, dissociation, sexual dysfunction, self-esteem problem, and eating disorders (Pruitt, & Kappius, 1992; Roester & McKenzie, 1994). The impact of interpersonal violence may be accumulative as revealed by the findings that women who experienced

abuse both as children and adults exhibit more physical symptoms and higher levels of psychological distress than those who experienced abuse at a single stage of life (McCauley et al, 1997).⁴⁰

2.10 Spousal Violence and its Classification

Many scholars or authors use the word "domestic violence" to represent spousal violence. *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* explains that domestic violence is specifically male violent which could either be physical or psychological against the women. The term was made popular by the feminists in the 1970s, some of whom established refuges for battered women, and argued that domestic violence is a reflection of gender inequality in power and oppression of the women. In a broader sense, the term also includes any violence within the family, even though violence against the child is described as child abuse.⁴¹ This definition invariably suggests that domestic violence encompasses all forms of interpersonal violence that could occur between various relationships in the family.

It is credible to note that all forms of spousal violence have a single reason. The primary aim is to win and maintain total control over the victim. Abusers use many strategies to exercise power over their spouse or partner. They could resort to dominance, humiliation, isolation, threats, intimidation, denial and blame.

There are different types of spousal violence identified by Michael P. Johnson:

- Common Couple Violence (CCV) is not connected to general control behaviour, but arises in single argument where one or both partners physically lash out at the other.
- Intimate Terrorism (IT) is more common than Common Couple Violence. It is one element in a general pattern of control by one over the other. It is more likely to escalate over time, and more likely to involve serious injury. Intimate Terrorism may also involve emotional and psychological abuse.
- Violence Resistant (VR) is sometimes thought of as "self-defence." It is violence perpetrated by victims against their abusive partners.
- Mutual Violent Control (MVC) is a rare type of intimate partner violence, it occurs when both partners act in violent manners battling for control.

- Situational Couple Violence (SCV), arises out of conflicts that escalates to argument and then to violence. It may or may not be frequent depending on couples concerned.⁴²

Spousal abuse/violence refers to a wide range of abuse which includes; physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, economic abuse, verbal abuse, and financial abuse. Perpetrators or victims could be either the male or the female. A good number of research data to date reveals that majority of the victims of the spousal abuse are the women while the degree of battered male is infinitesimal.

Physical Abuse is abuse which gears at eliciting the feeling of intimidation, pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, punching, choking, pushing and other types of contacts which leave physical injury on the victim. Physical abuse could also involve behaviours such as denying the victim of medical care when necessary, depriving the person of sleep or other necessities of life, or forcing the victim to engage in drug/alcohol use, against his/her will. It can also include inflicting physical injury onto other targets, such as children or pets, in order to cause psychological harm to the victim.

Sexual Abuse is very common in abusive relationship. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), reports that one-third and one-half of the battered women are raped by their partners. Any situation in which force is used to obtain participation in unwanted, unsafe and degrading sexual activity, results to sexual abuse. Unconsented or forced sex, even by a spouse or intimate partner with whom one has usually had consensual sex, is an act of aggression and violence. However, women whose partners abuse physically and sexually, stand high risk of being seriously injured or murdered.

Emotional Abuse could also be referred to as psychological abuse or mental abuse. As far as emotional violence is concerned, the victim is humiliated either privately or publicly, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, denying the victim of information, intentionally doing things that will make the victim feel despised, inferior or embarrassed, restricting the victim from friends and family, or refusing the victim access to money or other basic resources and necessities. Emotional abuse is

defined as any behaviour which threatens, intimidates, or undermines the victim's self-worth, self-esteem, or controls the victim's freedom (Follingstad, D. & Dehart (2000). It also talks about threatening the victim with injury or harm, telling the victim that he/she will be killed if he/she ever leaves the relationship. Persistent criticism, name-calling, and making statements that damage the victim's self-esteem are invariably other forms of emotional abuse.

Equally, perpetrators employ the use of children to criticize the victim in order to abuse the victim emotionally. Men use their privilege as men to control the victim - the women, and to maintain their power in the relationship (such as the man being "head" of the household or defining a woman's role as submissive). People who are being emotionally abused feel that they do not own themselves any longer; rather their oppressors are in total control of them. Men or women who are emotionally abused are likely to suffer depression, which places them at a high risk for suicide, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse.

Verbal Abuse which is also termed "reviling" is another kind of abusive behaviour which has to do specifically with the use of language. Ordinarily, it has to do with the use of words which are oftentimes abusive on the victim. Even though oral communication is the commonest kind of verbal abuse, it at the same time, involves abusive words put in writing.

Stalking is simply viewed as psychological intimidation that prompts the victim to nurse a high degree of fear.

Economic Abuse occurs when the abuser puts under control the money of the abused or other economic resources. In extreme situation, the abuser puts the victim on a strict "allowance," withholding money as he/she pleases and making the victim to beg for the money until the abuser releases it at will. This means total economic dependence on the abuser, since he/she has taken the complete control of the victim's money or resources. It is likely that the victim receives less money than desired, as long as the abuse continues. This also involves hindering the victim from completing education, getting a job, or deliberate misuse of jointly owned resources.⁴³

Violence by men against their female partners is the second most common type of domestic violence. In United Kingdom each week, two women are bound to lose their lives through their husbands. Domestic violence is the commonest crime against women, which they suffer mainly from the men in their homes and close acquaintances than strangers (Rawstorne 2002). The conservative's commentators have claimed that violence in the family is not about patriarchal male power but about dysfunctional families. They question the argument that violence from wives toward husband is rare and believe that men would hardly report acts of violence against them from their wives (Straus and Gelles 1986). The feminist and other scholars counter the conservatives' line of argument when they reason that, violence by female is more restrained and episodic more than men's. Furthermore, wife-battering - the regular physical brutalizing of women by husbands has no real equivalent other way round. Violence by women against their male partners is often defensive rather than offensive, with women resorting to violence only after suffering repeated attacks over time (Rawstorne 2002).⁴⁴

Gelles & Straus, (1998) from their research found that wives as well as husbands engage in abuse against each other. This claim simply holds that spouses receive ill treatments from themselves. In cases of violence, involving current or former spouses, cohabitators, or intimates, women are the victims of 75 percent of murders and 85 percent of the assaults and sexual abuse (Geen Field et al, 1998). Moreover, it is noted that men and women are equally likely to engage in aggressive behavior but only men engage in violence.⁴⁵ According to the above researchers, it is a fact that spouses both men and women exhibit aggression and mete ill treatments against themselves but oftentimes, women fall the victims of their male counterparts over violent attacks.

Tania Kucherenko describes the pitiable experience of her downstairs neighbour in Mexico, as follows: "It is the same every saturday night. The husband comes home drunk and beats her. There is nothing we can do, it's best not to interfere."⁴⁶

In Russia women are commonly abused and despised. Attempt by a woman to leave her husband creates hydra-headed problems for her. Consequently, she will lose her legal status, the place where she lives and right of work (Benett, 1977:A1). Women are forced to live at the mercy of their husbands irrespective of what they tend to suffer.

Life becomes more unbearable when she leaves her husband's home. However, wife battering, child abuse, abuse of the elderly and other forms of domestic violence, are not restricted to Russia alone.

Criminologist Noga Arni interviewed battered women at a shelter in Israel and found that their day - to - day lives with their husbands or lovers shared many elements of life in an oppressive total institution, as described by Erving Goffman (1961). Physical barriers are imposed on these women by threatening further violence; men restrict women to their homes; damaging both their self-esteem and their ability to cope with repeated abuse.⁴⁷

Domestic violence is a very common phenomenon in this contemporary age. India is not only the country concerned, but the case of India like that of other third world countries is peculiar. Women are denied economic, political, and social rights. They are vulnerable to severe indigenous oppressive systems of caste, religion, traditional family structures and political arrangements which allowed them little or no opportunity of participation. Furthermore, India stands aloof amongst others where demand for dowry sets family violence on height. Dowry is one the national evil in India. Its unscrupulous demand has robbed many young women of their dear lives, in their marital households.

In addition, despite all efforts to stop this monstrous practice, through legislation, protests and demonstration, it still persists. According to the *Rashtriya Mahila* (February 2000), "a young married woman is being beaten, burnt to death, or pushed to commit suicide every six hours." Manushi reports: "In 1997, 64 percent of unnatural deaths of women were as a result of burning, reported as stove burns or kitchen accidents." Three fourths of all unnatural deaths of married women were of women between the ages of 18 and 30 (Geethadevi et al, 2000). This statistics does not include the rising number of women reporting torture and harassment over dowry demands.⁴⁸ Brides estimated at about twenty thousand were killed between 1990 and 1995 by being burnt alive in India, for bringing unsatisfactory dowry to their husbands' families (Wright, 1995).⁴⁹

In the records of trafficking between Indian provinces, the “procurer” - the person who sold, or otherwise introduced, the victim to a brothel - is not always the archetypal wily stranger, but sometimes a member of the victim’s family, such as mother, father, aunt, uncle, husband, and grandmother or step father. The incredible cases of victims procured into prostitution by family members, were those of young women who were pushed into prostitution by their own mothers. In a certain case, the police reported that a mother abducted her married daughter, and with the assistance of two other people transferred the young girl to Poona to be a sex worker (Home Department (1927:53, 73).

In another situation, a mother took away her widowed daughter from the in-laws and sent her to brothel at Bombay to reside and practice prostitution. In 1928 there was a case of a certain immigrant, and his wife who went to live with a woman who introduced him to easy rout to making money, and “made the wife a prostitute.” The man proceeded to bring his second wife to Bombay for the same purpose (Home Department 1928:70)⁵⁰

Wife abuse seems to be the commonest violence against women (Meena 1997:26). Its frequency and degree among the Yoruba cannot be accurately estimated, since most cases are not reported. Nigeria cannot boast of enormous literature on wife beating and battering because she lacks documents to that effect. The reason for this shortcoming is not far fetched, as already mentioned incidents of wife beating/ battering are not documented. Invariably, it is left as Meena puts it, “a forbidden problem” (Meena 1997:26). Counts 1992, as cited in (Richters 1994:75) claims that one of the salient reasons for this loophole is the fear that once research is carried out on the subject matter, it will make women protest against traditional gender roles in marriage. They will be prompted to question the man’s right to beat his wife and subsequently, the marriage institution would become destabilized and dysfunctional, thereby making family life unbearable.

There are cultures where wife beating is a welcomed behaviour Counts (1992). Wife beating is not seen as a criminal offense in Nigeria, according to the view of Atsenuwa (1995:50). He goes on to say that wife beating is socially embraced by the

Nigerian society and thus, the act is not overtly condemned or frowned at. Consequently, the abused does not see it as an ill worth reporting to the law enforcement agents for redress. Contrary to Atsenuwa's opinion, in the contemporary Nigeria, the feminists see wife beating as injustice against the woman which must be squarely addressed. In Papua, New Guinea, wife beating is so common that it is believed to be a normal part of married life (Davies 1993:12).

Surveys conducted by Ranck and Toft, discovered that 57 percent of rural women, and 67 percent of rural men accept in principle the practice of wife beating. These societies consider a certain level of family violence to be normal (Richers 1994:12). In Serbian villages, the peasants and their wives alike consider wife beating as the husbands' right as the head of the family (Richers 1994:84).⁵¹ However, the fact that wife beating wins social acceptability does not exonerate it from being a crime.

Domestic violence, especially violence against the woman is a phenomenon which has attracted the attention of individuals, the academic, feminists, religious institutions, as well as governmental institutions. These various organizations such as government and non-governmental organizations have been institutionalized to reduce violence against women in the home, and to assist or rehabilitate women victims of spousal attacks. This has equally elicited development of many Activist Movements.

Women Aid (WA) for instance, has made known their commitments to make the world hear and take notice of the fate of survivors of domestic abuse and their children, as part of political project, by insisting that the abuse of women should be taken seriously (Debash & Debash 1993; Mullender & Itague, 2001). Within this commitment women who were abused, together with those who were not, work in unison to establish a meaningful response to male violence. A number of survivors' forums such as, Domestic Violence Survivors' Forums (DVSF), The Croydon Domestic Violence Survivors' Forum (CDVSF) and a host of others, have been formed in the United Kingdom, with the view to assisting and rehabilitating female victims of domestic violence.⁵²

Researchers through the models of the feminists and conflict theorists have discovered that inequality has much to contribute in violence against the woman. In a

relationship where there is inequality between men and women, the likelihood of the women to suffer assault is more. It could be deduced that most violent cases in relationships arise out of tussle for power.

2.11 The Genesis of Women's Woes

Women are exposed to violence within or outside their homes. They suffer violence in the hands of their husbands, male family heads, male neighbours, male colleagues and other males they come in contact with. These males are brought up with the view to believing that they are superior to their female counterparts, both physically, mentally, economically and otherwise. Thus men use violence against women to perpetuate and reinforce their gender hierarchy to keep women in their place, to stifle their right to speak, make decision and control them sexually.⁵³

Feminist Theories and Conflict Theories are of the opinion that traditionally, male dominance in the family wins legitimacy. A trip down the human history, reminds that men have exhibited oftentimes enormous authority over the women and children, until the “first wave” of the grieved feminists in USA in 1800, who stood up to question the humiliating position of women and children, labelled as the husbands’ and fathers’ properties.⁵⁴

The intervention of feminists not in the recent times, but from 1960s to early 1970s notwithstanding, male dominance and its unpleasant affects have gone down, though not to a remarkable degree, for instance, women are likely to live their jobs when their husbands get better jobs than men would (Bielby, and Bielby 1992). Disgustingly, men hardly ease off their power and control over their wives and children, but reinforce it through violence.⁵⁵

The preferential treatment or the cultural language enacted and acted by the society as already pointed out, speaks expressly into the male young heads of their importance. This feeling is nurtured right from childhood and it continues to produce unpleasant fruits to the detriment of their female counterparts. The contrasting experience of the Indian boy and girl provides a handy illustration. In India, when a family operates in scarce resources, boys are given preferential treatment. Boys are the ones to be sent to school, while the girls remain at home to assist their mothers and or

baby sit their younger ones. Boys act separately with men and all are served by the women of the home. Girls eat with women after men have taken their turn. In health care, boys are given priority over daughters, in the treatment of sickness.⁵⁶

Randall and his counterpart, in the work, *Theories that Appear in the African Literature of Domestic Violence*, point out a couple of theories which elicit and or subject the woman to domestic violence. One of these theories is the Feminist Theory on domestic violence which holds that African literatures, explain that nearly all traditional African societies are patriarchal, and as such women are placed below men. They are subjects to men and have no reason to compete with them. “Institutionalization of this inequality remains common in African customary law.”⁵⁷

The culture of violence theory alleges that “culture of violence” to some extent has contributed to domestic violence and or violence against women. Thus in modern Africa, within which violence is accepted as a way to resolve disputes - a heritage from their colonizers, who treated them coercively and violently. Lengthy civil wars and repressive practices of many post-colonial regimes continue this culture of violence. This is particularly apparent in South Africa, where there has been a dramatic post-apartheid increase in violence, specifically directed at women, which include, both rape and domestic violence.⁵⁸

The world in which we live is a male dominated one. It flaunts discriminatory attitude on the women. Sex segregation and gender bias make women feel less important and force some of them to see the male child as a rescuer from the attacks of the male and male chauvinistic world. Directly or indirectly, overtly or clandestinely, women are marginalized socially, politically, economically, religiously and otherwise. Scholars conspicuously expose these discriminatory practices against the women.

Socially, it is part of the ideology in a patriarchal world that; “the woman’s place should be in the home, while the man’s task is to go out to earn the money to support his wife and children.” This specific domestic division of labour as it affects gender is significant in policies and practice at all strata of society. Despite the contemporary jingles of equality between the sexes, this ideology strongly influences women’s thinking, especially when they become mothers.⁵⁹

Akachi Ezigbo made an observation similar to that of Graham Allan, when she points out that, there was a time the notion of “women are to be seen but not heard” was widely accepted by many societies. “Silence and invisibility” is another attribute of the woman. She notes that women are more or less decorative accessories to beautify or embellish the home in addition to their numerous roles as wives, mothers and child bearers and rearers.⁶⁰

The economic life of the woman in most cases is affected because she has to give her husband, children and home preferential attention. Some women could give up their paid jobs outside the home in order to take care of their families. The men have power and control over them, even when they cook, they cook to please their husbands and they dress to please their husbands.⁶¹

Despite the large number of women and increasing occupational opportunities, women still squeeze themselves together into occupations traditionally assigned to their sex.⁶² Many women cannot lay claim to have been banned from a particular job because they are females, but they are not encouraged, directed, or guided to such occupations much earlier.⁶³ From a young age, traditionally socialized female is taught that her destiny is to be wife and mother, and that these domestic roles should take precedence over all other roles including occupational ones.⁶⁴

Believing that being responsive, helpful and supportive will lead to marriage, these females will find themselves predisposed to service people oriented “female” occupations, for instance, rather than becoming a mathematician, she chooses to be a mathematics teacher. They find satisfaction with being administrative assistants instead of executives, nurses rather than doctors. However, not all females of course enter or expect to enter traditionally female occupations.⁶⁵

Some people are of the opinion that women are entities who bring about sufferings or contribute to calamitous experiences of others. Jasque de Vitry on this premise states: “Between Adam and God in paradise, there was but one woman, she had no rest until she had succeeded and banished her husband from garden of delights...”⁶⁶

Traditionally, it is expected that women should assume inferior positions before their male counterparts or act “a second to men.” Barbara Rogers has the notion that it

is considered shameful for a husband to earn less than his wife; to be less tall; for a wife to have a stronger personality or greater intelligence. Girls have to learn to fear success and to under achieve, concealing intelligence and initiative in order to be accepted as feminine. Men are expected to be aggressive and unemotional, while women should be sensitive and intuitive. They have to learn their personality differences in terms of “feminine” and “masculine”.⁶⁷

Before the law, the woman does not have equal right with the man. Under the common law doctrine, a married woman is regarded as a “femme couverte” - a legal non-person. It is unappealing to realize that even after some of the barriers to a husbands’ property were removed, in later part of 19th century, a number of legal obligations limiting the married woman, still remain bound in the English common law.⁶⁸

Women are regarded as initiators of confusion, disorderliness, and chaos. In his essay, *Politics and the Arts*, Rousseau observes: “Never has a people perished from an excess of wine; all perish from disorders of women.” He explains that drunkenness is not the worst vice since it makes men stupid rather than evil and turns them away from vices. The “disorders of women” promote all the vices and can bring an entire state to ruin.⁶⁹

Much is expected of women in carrying out domestic and other related duties. She is expected to perform her traditional roles efficiently, run her home; be a good wife; a contributor to family incomes; a super mother; and a supportive member of the extended family. All these tasks are to be accomplished in a culture where she is taught that she is an inferior being. Her fate becomes more pitiable when confronted with childlessness and battering.⁷⁰

Making the woman ignorant was another weapon used to weaken her from competing with the man, Angolan women under colonialism experienced increased exploitation of woman labour and social discrimination. Obscurantism was a way of dominating women, keeping them in ignorance and making them passive. Only boys could go to school because the women’s place was in the home, to look after her husband and children, thus women became men’s slaves.⁷¹

In addition, Uchendu in her work, *Education and Changing Economic Role of Nigerian Woman*, observes that the early deprivation of equal educational opportunity, gives men advantage over women in the area of economy which is the deciding factor for active and successful political participation in Nigeria.⁷² Marriage does not make the state of the woman better; she is represented as the disadvantaged party. According to *Sunday Concord* of April 4th, 1982: “In marriage men are like the amoeba, they embrace, absorb, and entirely devour the entity of their partners, their names, state of origin, private property and a whole lot more”.⁷³

The loss of a husband introduces the woman to an experience more traumatic than her low status. In Igbo culture when a woman loses her husband, she is faced with the problem of the extended family as it affects inheritance. The man’s property automatically does not belong to the woman, and she is worse off if she does not have a male child.⁷⁴

Disruption in family and communal circles are often attributed to women as the cause. This view is similar to Rousseau’s “disorders of women” in which he portrayed women as engenders of evil. Similarly, Akachi Ezigbo reveals that in Igbo folktales women are presented negatively. Numerous acts which depict disruptive family life, communal peace and societal well-being, were claimed to be perpetrated by women.⁷⁵ Summarily, it is quite obvious that the traditional position of the woman not only influenced her psyche but equipped and strengthened her male counterpart to permanently make her remain “a second to man”.

2.12 Factors that Elicit Domestic Violence

It is identified that domestic violence is a common phenomenon in the family, which is provoked by diverse reasons. Mental illness which comprises, psychiatric illnesses or disorders is discovered to be one of the causes of domestic violence. Such disorders include: Borderline Personality Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Drug Abuse and Alcoholism, Untreated Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and Conduct Disorders in childhood which was associated with domestic violence in adulthood.

Furthermore, scholars have studied this subject matter and come up with more likely causes of domestic violence thus they propounded a number of theories to this effect. These are: Psychological Theory, Social Theory and Resource Theory.

Psychological Theory centers on personality traits and mental characteristics of the offender. Personality traits involve abrupt out burst of anger, poor impulse control, and poor esteem. Different theories opine that psychotherapy and other personality disorders are factors that could contribute to domestic violence, and more so, abuse suffered at childhood stage could equally make some people violent at adulthood. Generally, about 80% of both court-referred and self-referred men in these domestic violence studies are diagnosed of psychopathology, which is typical personality disorder. Estimate of personality disorder in the entire population would be more in the 15-20% range. Invariably, as the rate and degree of violence increase in these men, so the likelihood of psychotherapy in these men approaches 100%.

Social theory points at external rather than internal factors in the offender's environment, which includes; the family structure, stress and social learning. Resource theory which was identified by William Goode (1971) claims that women who depend on their husbands for economic needs (e.g. homemakers/house wives, women with handicaps, the unemployed), and are at the same time, caregiver to their children, often exhibit an enormous degree of fear of financial hardship, should they leave their husbands. The fact that they are dependent suggests that they have limited options and scanty resources to help them cope with, or effect change over their spouses' behaviour.

Couples who exhibit equal share of power, experience less incidence of conflict, and when conflict shoots out, it is likely to produce no violence. It is noted that when a spouse aspires to have control and power over the mate, such fellow resorts to abuse. The spouse may apply some techniques to accomplish the desire, these involve; intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, isolation, blaming the spouse, using children (threatening to take them away), and parading oneself as though the whole world is in one's pocket.

Social stress may be on a high side when one lives in a family condition with increased pressures. Social stress as a result of scarcity of financial resources or similar

problems in the family may result to further tensions. Violence is not at all times triggered off by stress, but it could be one of the ways through which people react to stress. Families and couples who suffer poverty are more likely to experience domestic violence, owing to increased stress and conflicts which is basically as a result of financial difficulties and the like. Some people envisage that poverty prevents a man from achieving his aims and goals, thus he fears losing his honour and prestige. Peradventure, he fails to support his wife in financial matters; he could resort to misogyny, insatiate use of substance, and crime, as a means to prove masculinity.

Social learning theory as mentioned earlier holds that people learn from observation and putting into practice other people's behaviour and with positive reinforcement, the behaviour continues. This suffices that if one is often exposed to violent behaviours, one is likely to imitate it. Nevertheless, violent behaviour could be possibly handed down from generation to generation.

In some relationships, violence is conceived to emanate from perceived need for power and control, a sort of bullying and social learning abuse. Perpetrators' attempt to subjugate their partners, could be attributed to low self-esteem or feeling of inferiority due to poverty, hostility and resentment toward women (misogyny), hostility and resentment toward men (misandry), personality disorders, generic tendencies and socio-cultural influences, and a host of other factors.

A causalist view of domestic violence is that it is a technique to win or maintain power and control over the victim. This view is in support of Bancroft's "cost-benefit" theory which finds that abuse brings reward to the abuser for exercising power over the victim(s).⁷⁶

In conclusion therefore, in spite of the ills which women suffer in the hands of their spouses, majority of them either decide or are forced to stay back, rather than leave their homes. African women suffer under the influence of the traditional culture, which portrays the woman who leaves her home as a weak, unindustrious, defiant fellow, who cannot withstand family test and challenges. People point fingers at her. She is looked at with disdain. She is seen as "a run away." No matter how cogent her reason(s) may sound, she would not convince or win the support of many. Her fellow women will

even draw attention to the magnitude of violence they suffer in their homes, which of course cannot throw them away.

In addition, some African women because of children will decide to remain in marriage no matter how violent and traumatic this appears. It is not an exaggeration to mention that a good number of women have lost their lives while trying to muddle through with violent spouses. In the Western world, as well as Africa, some women do not report spousal violence, because they feel it is a private matter and the law enforcement agents may help in little or no way.

However, it is necessary that all hands have to be on deck to challenge the terror of violence against the women in the home, which has sent many to their early graves. Violence generally speaks a common language- “the intention to harm”. Family violence which comprises spousal violence and violence against the family child is characterized by the desire to attack and harm the victim. Women and children are predominantly the victims of family violence.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE STRUCTURE OF GREEK, ROMAN AND IGBO FAMILIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the structure of Greek, Roman and Igbo families. This exploration is necessitated by the fact that the father, mother, and children under this study, and other relatives who affect their relationship belong to the small institution called family. Here, attention is drawn to the following concepts: The nature of the family in the Classical and Igbo societies, the *patria potestas* and his *auctoritas*, status of women and children, identification and the position of the sons and daughters.

The grasp of these highlights would yield a vivid picture of what the Classical and Igbo families look like, and how the structure and the societal values affect family relationships either positively or negatively. In order to make a comprehensive study of this aspect of work, slight illustrations and contributions from African and Western cultures are introduced or incorporated into the study.

3.2 The Greek Family and the Authority of the Father

The Greek word for household is *oikos* singular, while *oikia* is the plural form. The family consisted of the household, which was made up of the husband, wife and children, sometimes other relatives. The Greeks like the Romans were organized in patriarchal structure. The family rigidly operated under the authority of the father of the family *kurios*. He exhibited enormous power over his subjects (household). The power of life and death was in his hand. He could of his own will, sell whoever he pleased into slavery, with the exception of his wife or his son's wife. He had the power to choose the child to rear or expose. Girl children commonly face the danger of exposure, that is, being cast away into the bush or hidden places to die off.

Interestingly, in Greece, the authority of fathers over their sons was legally curtailed when the sons came up to the age of twenty (20) and enrolled as Greek citizens. The right of fathers to murder or sell members of his *oikia* was abolished or brought to a halt by legislation. For instance Solon's code served as a check to the sale of children in Athens. The death of the father of the family, bought his household

especially the sons their freedom. Nevertheless, women unfortunately could not escape the bond of tutelage. The unmarried woman was either under the authority of her father, brothers or other male relatives, if the father was deceased.

It was the duty of father of the family to arrange a match for his daughter. No member of his household was allowed to own property or transact any business in his own name.¹ The implication of this is that only the *kurios* was a property owner. A number of father-son strife were property elicited. Pericles, the renown philosopher, and Sophocles, the great dramatist, experienced conflicts of this sort with their sons.²

The Greek male maintained his health through outdoor life style and so remained active to the threshold of old age. The outcome of this was a high level of strength, which was spectacular in the long life span of some eminent Greeks. For instance, Georgias died at 100, Xenophone 92, Democritus 90, Sophocles 90 and Plato at 82 years.³ Although the notion that the ancient Greeks, like many other societies see the woman or the wife and children as beings of lower status, who were treated as objects, literature had revealed that there were some Greek men who cherished them.

Ehrenberg notes:

Dikaiopolis concludes his private peace for himself, but also for his children and wife who are dear to him. Mnesilochos, who longs for his wife while he is a prisoner, afterwards hurries home to wife and children.⁴

An ancient Greek could express affection to his family but this would not debar him from eating, drinking or being in the company of his friends. He could kiss the maid when the wife was not at sight. And of course he had relative sexual freedom.⁵ He could express this freedom by sleeping with his female slave(s) or keeping a courtesan *hetaira*. The Greek father spent most of his life outside the house, either at the market place or at the assembly *εκκλησια*. This practice to a large extent, affects the life of his family.⁶ The implication of this is that the rearing of the children both male and female, mostly in their tender age, rest so much on the hands of his wife who has great influence on them. The Greek father was in charge of the education of his son. The sons of the noble men had pedagogues employed to teach them.

3.3 The Greek Woman; Marriage and Family Life.

Culturally, ancient Greek women and their daughters were not expected to be seen outside the home. Their place was not just the home but a secluded part of the house designated “women’s quarters”, where they were shut out from other members of the family or relatives. The aim of this measure was to ensure the production of legitimate children for their husbands and to prevent their daughters from unwanted pregnancies.⁷ Women were expected to take proper care of their husbands and remain submissive to them. Other roles which she must not shy away from include, child bearing, taking adequate care of her children and in actual fact, the general management of the household.

Ferguson captures an often-quoted statement by Apollodorus, which briskly describes the situation, thus: “We have courtesans *hetairai* for pleasure, handmaids for day-to-day care of the body, wives to bear legitimate children and to be a trusted guardian of the things in the house.”⁸ Generally, the ancient Greek society looked down on the woman and that explained why she was kept at a separate quarter in the household and perpetually under guard. In the Greek world, the women were not entitled to inherit any property. Sparta was one of the states in the earlier time to uphold this practice. Legally, the woman was incapacitated to engage in any business transaction in the absence of a guarantor.

Remaining at home did not encourage idleness in the women and their daughters rather, they gave in much of their time to cooking, rearing, baking, spinning, dying of wool and doing other miscellaneous domestic chores, irrespective of the presence of the domestic slaves. The duty of receiving or welcoming guest was not meant for them. The entrance of a stranger quickly sent them on flight to their quarters. They could be allowed to attend religious activities, visit friends or go shopping, but had to be guarded by an elderly slave. It was at funeral ceremonies or similar occasions that a woman could be seen by other men. Brothers kept severe eyes on their sisters. Lack of freedom equally denied the woman admittance into the theatre.⁹

Women’s restriction by the men is further exemplified through Ailos, who had six daughters and forced all to share a room and a bath tub in order to avoid free

interaction with other people. It was noted that enclosure of women affect their complexion thereby making it pale, unlike men who have freedom to move around in the open air. Women were restricted from going to the market to make purchases. On this Ehrenberg asserts: "For a larger household a slave who could be called the 'caterer' made the purchases, and even a citizen of limited means might have a slave girl who went regularly to the market."¹⁰ At times a courtesan *hetaira* could live in a man's house. She had the opportunity to sit at dinner with him in the presence of his friends, a wife was never granted such privilege to appear at such table, nor was she serenaded (musical tune from her lover played for her).

In comedies, husbands who enjoy life outside the home, represented Greek women as lovers of wine in consolation to their frequent loneliness, being often left by husbands. Greek women were frequently portrayed in the tragedies of Euripides as entities who should not engage in argument with men but were expected to remain silent. They were more valued to appear in veil. The women were to see men as their mouthpiece and should allow them to act for them. It was a sign of disrespect and absurdity to look a man in the face. It was deemed unruly disposition to speak to a crowd- a gathering of men. In drama, especially in tragedies and other literary works, women were presented as evil. They were exemplified as husband murderers, adulterers, lovers of wine and gossips. Some men developed less interest in women and as such took to amorous relationship with young boys for pleasure. Nevertheless, in spite of antagonism to women, it was not possible for a good number of men to live without a wife.

In fourth and fifth century Athens, legally, women were non-entities who could not take part in political activities. They could not vote in the assembly or be voted for. Educationally, they had no status, perpetually shut up in the home and handled with disdain by the males, whose authority reigned supreme over them.¹¹ In spite of the ills she experienced, she adorned and improved on her beauty, thus cosmetics played important role in the life of a Greek woman. She acquired ornamental objects like trinket boxes, together with certain type of fruits to produce fine scents.¹²

The young Greek girls were given into marriage as an immature teenager of about twelve years or thereabout while men enter into matrimony in their twenties. They never choose their husbands but must accept the men chosen by their fathers or next of kin, in case of deceased fathers. Marriage however was rarely as a result of love affair.¹³

The young Greek girl moved from childhood into a strange home and had to depend on an indifferent husband for survival. A few number of Greek males appreciate women, while a good number of them lacked interest in marriage, due to the notion that woman were evil. The implication of this was that marital tie was not strong. Men held the impression that marriage was a necessary evil, which interrupted a pleasant and suitable pattern of daily life. The experience of a married young girl made her view marriage as a disappointment. The non-chalant attitude and the disdainful treatment from her husband laid credence to her conclusion.¹⁴

3.4 Children in Ancient Greek Family.

Children are important due to the roles they play in the lives of their parents, communities, states and the world in general. It is the desire and wish of every couple to be blessed with children. Families, friends, relations and even well wishers expect marriage of their close ones to be fruitful. Fruitfulness in marriage may denote, peace, love, and companionship, which sustains or makes the marriage work out, but specifically above all evaluations, the presence of children, makes it most successful. The interest and joy in having children is summarized vividly in the views of Leland Foster Wood, a theologian and sociologist; and a distinguished psychologist, Robert Laton Dickson:

The joys and responsibilities of parenthood enrich family experience and bring particular couple into the endless process of renewal and on going of all interests... To say that the social virtues of tenderness, responsibilities, sympathy and devotion have their sports in parental experience is true and important, but pale compared with the radiant joy that parents have in renewal of themselves and their love in children.¹⁵

There is a universally positive attitude to the idea of having children. People want to have their own children and feel satisfied when they get them and disappointed when denied such fortune. The Igbo hold that children are the pride of their parents: a man with a host about his compound is accounted wealthy and fortunate.¹⁶ Many studies agree on the emphasis on child bearing, thus Salome affirms: “No Hausa adult is regarded as an adult until he becomes a parent and a woman’s status is determined not by her husband’s status but by the number of children she has.”¹⁷

According to Lambo, as many as 80% of women who married and have no children develop anxiety of moderate to severe degree necessitating treatment.¹⁸ The interest in children as it is in African and other cultures has its fit in ancient Greek culture. In Greek family, love and feelings for children were strong. The mother actively played her role as a mother by taking care of her children and husband. There was evidence of fathers who expressed a good dose of love to their children irrespective of their sexes. A certain Strespsiades demonstrated his love for his son by nursing and buying him a toy with first payment as a juror. In the same manner, Trygaios another affectionate father promised sweets to his daughters. A number of vase paintings confirmed the interest in children and their games.¹⁹

The relevance of children and childbirth led to the provision of special medicine for easy childbirth. The most beloved wife was “a child bearing” one. No matter how much a woman was loved, she cannot be exempted from the rigours and pains of childbirth. In spite of the fact that the Greek children were loved and cared for, some were taunted with the practice of child exposure, infanticide and mortality.

In most Greek states, the right of father to expose unwanted children was not restricted by legislation. Invariably, after 200 B.C. infanticide became common. This practice has to do with bringing Greek population to a check, but the resultant effect was population regression in some states.²⁰ In ancient Greece, divorce and other troubles threatened marriages which proved childless. Children were the families’ future representatives, and the lack of them caused disunity and other marital disorders in the home. Women were generally attacked, blamed and ridiculed in marriages which proved childless.

3.5 The Son as the Most Cherished Entity.

The system of inheritance in the Classical world made it of enormous importance for a father to have an heir. The system of governance, which reckoned with males, made it necessary for the family to have male children. Son preference among Classical cultures (Greek and Rome), cut across political barriers, education and social class. The male child succeeded his father and represented the family at the communal or state level while a daughter was to marry, thus, she was denied a number of privileges which were given her male counterparts.

Invariably, the son was a mother's delight. His arrival firmly established her, over her marital home. Nevertheless, the Greek mother "must secretly have resented the callous and disparaging male attitude toward female children who were termed economic liability and social burden (that is, in guarding their chastity)." Concerning the Greek society, Slater, postulates that mother-daughter bond seems to have been the closest, most affectionate and the least conflicted of all familial dyadic relationships, as is true in most sex segregated societies.²¹

The legacy of formal education was mainly reserved for boys in the ancient Greece. This practice was to prepare them for political offices and to make them responsible citizens. The sixth book of Herodotus which recorded that, "the roof fell upon their boys at Chios while at lessons"²² confirmed this.

The Greek boy was sent to school at the age of seven and was escorted by a pedagogue (an old slave who made him behave as required of him). He was given special treatment to ensure his safety and moral up built. He was not allowed to go out at night, sit up late at parties or watch comedies at the theatre.²³

The education of a Greek daughter was strictly domestic. The *Oeconomicus* of Xenophon speaks of a young wife of Schomachus, who had passed her girl-hood "under the strictest restraint, in order that she might see as little, hear as little, and ask as few questions as possible."²⁴ At Athenian schools no girls were allowed. Sparta, which was more liberal in educating girls than brilliant and intellectual Athens, allowed girls to

share all the physical exercise and the musical drill of the boys, striving after physical perfection, so as to be worthy mothers of strong men.²⁵

Many Greeks regarded youth and early man-hood as the prime of life and looked upon what would come after as at least an anti-climax. The young men kept their bodies fit by wrestling, playing ball, jumping and throwing discus.²⁶ The young man remained under the authority of his father, just as the son in the Roman world. In ancient Greece, marriage did not terminate the father's authority over him. He became free from his power, only at the death of his father, or if he granted him freedom. The father could decide to grant the son freedom at the age of twenty, and at the same time, he could decide otherwise.

3.6 The Design and Structure of the Roman Family.

The Latin word *familia*, from which the English word family springs forth, has different meanings in the Roman ideology. The jurist Ulpian, who flourished in the early third century A.D, devoted part of his forty sixth book on the *Edict*, to the diverse legal meanings of the word *familia*. To him, *familia* more likely applies to the collection of slaves and freed slaves attached to a married couple. In legal platform, husband and wife each had a *familia* of slaves, though in practice, the jurist noted that, the slaves of the couples were treated as a body.

The term was equally associated with freed slaves who bore the family name of their former owner, and owe him or her certain obligations for life. In the same vein, the term *familia*, could be applied to estate. Ulpian observed that *familia* could mean the estate as in the Twelve Tables ruling inheritance. Saller demonstrated that Romans commonly spoke of house *domus* rather than *familia* when they wished to refer to lineage or kinship unit.²⁷

Apart from Ulpian and Saller's observations about the meaning of *familia*, the term was equally used to associate members of a family. A Roman *familia* (household) was made up of all persons under the authority of the head of the household, *pater familias*. A *familia* consisted of his wife, his unmarried daughters, and his sons by (birth or adoption, whether married or unmarried). Wives, sons and unmarried daughters of his married sons, were also included, as were even more remote descendants, through

the male line. A *familia* remained one irrespective of the number of persons that constitute it.

The head of the family was a *sui juris* (of his own right); this signified that, he was legally independent, whereas every other persons under him, were *juri subjecti* (subject to another's authority). The English word family does not properly bring out the Latin and Roman ideology of *familia*. Household or house is the nearest meaning. The word was sometimes equally used to include clients, slaves, all estates, and personal properties, belonging to the *paterfamilias* himself, or acquired and used by persons under his authority. In the widest sense, the word was applied to the clan *gens*, which included all those households whose heads were descended through males from a common ancestor. *Familia* was equally applied to a branch of *gens* whose members had same *cognomen* that is, the last of Roman citizen's names.²⁸

The combination of the *lar*, the god of the hearth and the *genius*, guardian spirit in the cult celebrated by Roman *paterfamilias* showed that at Rome, family and house (*domus*) were really indissoluble. A house consisted of a family and a father, joined together in the veneration of *lar familiaris*. The *genius* was the god of household genealogy.²⁹

The size of *familia* varied greatly. It depended to a large extent, on the economic status of the family head. Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi brothers, in second century B.C, bore twelve children and only three survived into adulthood. She was a woman of repute, who opted for a large family, unfortunately, the death of her children, dashed her dreams. In the era of the *principates*, Julia, the daughter of Augustus Caesar had five children. Elder Agrippina had nine children for Germanicus her husband, out of which, six survived.

Most of the emperors of the first two centuries of the *principate* encouraged the Romans to imbibe the tradition of building large families. Unfortunately none could give a personal example until Marcus Aurelius, fathered twelve children through Faustina his wife, although only few of these children escaped infant mortality.³⁰

All members of Roman family were under the power *potestas* of the *paterfamilias*. A Roman male once released from the power of his own father, usually by the

father's death, was technically a *paterfamilias* (father of the family), even if he was celibate and immature ten year old. Subsequently, if married, his children were under his power and were sons of the family *filifamilias* or daughters of the family *filiaefamilias*. His wife was technically a mother of the family *materfamilias*.³¹

3.7 *Patria Potestas and His Limitations*

Patria potestas refers to the authority which the *paterfamilias* has over his family. The head of the family had absolute power over his children and other dependants in the male line. He decides whether a newborn baby should be reared or exposed. He had right to expose any child whose paternity was questionable. He could punish what he regarded as misconduct with penalties as severe as banishment, *exsillium*, slavery *servilum* or even death *mors*. He had the right of life and death *ius vitae nesque* over them.

In a situation where his right to a child was disputed, or one of his children was stolen, he used the same legal process as in recovering a piece of property. This process equally applied if he wished to transfer one of his children to another person.³² No Roman who was subject to the authority of a father could do business transaction in his own name, or take possession of any good, unless the father chose to emancipate him. It was only the *paterfamilias* that could own or exchange property. In strict legality, those subject to him were his social property, and everything they earned or acquired was under his power and control. This total authority was prompted from the earlier period for the purpose of security, a family considered it safer to exist as a unit.³³

Women and children have a very inferior legal status. Women remained members of their families in some sense, even after marriage. Children who were legally born were accepted by the father of the family, and they had right to bear their father's family name, while illegal children bear their mother's family name.³⁴ There are some Latin words or phrases which confirm the patriarchal nature of Roman society. Commonly we use "mother tongue," but a Roman uses *sermo patrius* to express the same idea. As *pater* (father) was to *filius* (son), so *patronus* (patron) was to *cliens* (clients); *patricii* (patricians) to *publii* (plebians); *patres* (senators) to *alii* (other citizens).³⁵

The absolute power allowed the *paterfamilias* made those under him to live at his mercy. Hence the stern nature of the *patria potestas* was considerably modified in practice. This was done by custom in Republican era. Measures were introduced to check infanticide, which was a common practice. Legend had it that Romulus, the founder and first king of Rome maintained that, on no account should an infant be exposed, until after three years, except if it was badly deformed. He equally ordered that first-born sons and daughters should be reared.

Numa, the second king of Rome decreed and forbade the sale of sons, who had married, with the consent of his fathers. Custom and public opinion restricted the *paterfamilias* from meting arbitrary and harsh punishment on people under him. He was mandated to invite the council of relatives and friends before he could take drastic disciplinary action against any of his subjects and their verdict was binding on him.³⁶

There were various ways by which *patria auctoritas* could come to an end. The death of the *paterfamilias* automatically terminates his power. The emancipation of his son could make him become independent *familia* in his own right *sui juris*. Loss of citizenship of either father or son makes the power of the father cease. If a son became the priest of Jupiter *Flamen Dialis* or daughter of a Vestal Virgin *Virgo Vestalis*, the power of the *paterfamilias* became annulled. Furthermore, adoption of either father or child by a third party terminates father's authority. By marriage, a daughter passed from the *potestas* of her *paterfamilias* into that of her husband's family. When a son takes up the office of a public magistrate, the *potestas* was suspended throughout his magisterial office.³⁷

3.8 Different Forms of Family Relatives.

The Latin word *agnati* (agnates) refers to every one who is related to each other by a common male ancestor, through the male line. To the Roman *agnati* was regarded as the closest tie of family relationship. This definition notwithstanding, a wife and an adopted son, though were from different *familia*, were accommodated among the *agnati*.

Cognati are relatives who are connected by blood. They could trace their relationship through the male or female line. The authority under which they were, does

not count. It is only loss of citizenship that can legally act as a barrier to *cognate*, but this was not often regarded. Marriage between the sixth degree of cognates, and later fourth degree of relationship, was strongly frowned at. Persons within this degree were said to have *jus osculi* (right of kiss). The twenty second of February was set aside to commemorate the tie of blood *cora cognati*. On this day, presents were exchanged and family reunions were held. By marriage, people who were neither *agnati* nor *cognati* could become relatives through the law, and are referred to as relatives in-law. These persons having been connected by marriage as wife with her husband's family and he with hers, were known as *adfines* (in-laws). The Romans have distinct names for the *adfines*, they include; *gener* son-in-law, *nurus* daughter-in-law, *socer* father-in-law *socrus* mother-in-law, *vitricus* step-father, *noverca* step-mother, *privignus* and *privigna*, step-son and step-daughter respectively.

The provision of single words for these names when compared with the compound words with which they were explained in English, spoke tremendously of the importance which the Romans attach to family ties. In the same vein, this observation is pronounced when we have a look at the terms used for blood relations. English language uses the words, "uncle", "aunt" and "cousin", and still needs phrases to express them. For instance, the Romans had two words for "uncle" *avunculus* - a mother's brother, *patruus* - a father's brother, two words for "aunt" *matertera* - a mother's sister and *amitia* - a father's sister, two words for "cousin" - *consobrinus* and *patruelis*, first cousin on mother's side, and first cousin on father's side, respectively. English language uses the indefinite "fore fathers" while Latin uses *atavus* - father of great-great-grand parents and *tritavus* - the father of *atavus*.³⁸

3.9 The Status of the Roman Woman.

The Roman ideal was for a woman to pass from the *potestas* of father to husband. Ferguson cites the Roman literary artist Livy, who speaks of the women folk as follows: "Never while their men survive, is feminine subjugation shaken off, and they themselves abhor the freedom which loss of husbands and fathers produces."³⁹

Roman women suffered restrictions, but enjoyed a relative amount of freedom, compared with her Greek counterpart, who lived a secluded life, and cannot attend to their husbands' guests. In Roman house, there were separate quarters for the women.

The Roman house-wife met her husband's guests, and dined with them. However, custom demanded that Roman ladies should have an escort out-of doors. The Roman woman was allowed to attend theatre or amphitheatre for entertainments. Education of the Roman woman was given a thought from second century B.C onward. The education of the Roman woman was often carried beyond elementary level. Nevertheless, their early marriage could affect this development, but they were given opportunity for further study at home. The educated Roman women were freely accepted into the literary circles of their time.⁴⁰

Roman history supplied a picture of women attaining gradually more liberty, higher legal status, greater power, and influence. It was noted however, that women of the noble families, in the first century became notorious for vice and moral laxity.⁴¹ Wealth and social position, made some women patrons, and gave them considerable power and influence. They held civic offices, especially in religion where they served as priestesses.⁴² However, virtues of women represented in inscriptions and literatures, included being chaste, loyal to husbands, hard working, able to manage the household, and training the children. Here is a reflection of a son's eulogy of a mother:

My dearest mother deserved greater praise than all others, since in modesty, propriety, chastity, obedience, wool working, industry and honour, she was not on equal level with other good women, nor did she take second place to any woman in virtuous work and wisdom in times of danger.⁴³

The Roman matron was the mistress of the whole house. She had access to the whole home and its apartments. She was in-charge of the home management and supervised the tasks of the household slaves, but did some menial job herself. She nursed her children and conducted their early education. She was her husband's helpmate in business, as well as family matters. Her husband consulted and discussed state affairs with her⁴⁴

3.10 The Roman Marital Union.

Marriage, as in other societies, brings two Roman families together, as relatives in law. The Romans, especially daughters, marry at a very tender age, mostly in their teens. The right age *iusta aetas* for marriage, amongst the women of the imperial household, was between 13-15. Funerary inscriptions and epitaphs revealed that, girls of the upper class families married much younger. Emperor Claudius' daughter, Octavia, married her step-brother, the future Emperor Nero, at the age of 13. Younger Agrippina married Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, at the age of twelve.⁴⁵

Commonly, there existed two types of marriage in Rome, *in manu*, which ushered the woman under the *potestas* of her husband and his *paterfamilias* and *sine manu*, which allowed her to return her legal status as a member of her *agnatic* family. The *sine manu* type of marriage, allowed the woman to remain under the *potestas* of her *paterfamilias* (if he was still alive) and never came under the *potestas* of her husband. Most marriages, in the earlier period, involved the transfer of the woman to the husband's family and his power *convenio in manu*. An unmarried daughter, if emancipated from the paternal power, became an independent *familia* and was *sui iuris* legally independent. At marriage she moved into her husband's family *maritii familia* in place of a daughter, *loco filiae*.

Under the Roman Republic, three forms of marriage brought a woman under the power *manus* of her husband. They were: *confarreatio*, *coemptio* and *usus*. The *Confarreatio* was not for the common people but took place specifically amongst priestly and patrician families. It involved an elaborate solemn religious ceremony. This form of marriage did not give room for divorce. The *coemptio* was an "imaginary sale of a woman" into the *manus* of her husband. *Usus* is the system of marriage in which a woman if married uninterruptedly with a man, for a full year, has come into the *manus* of the man as a wife.⁴⁶ If a woman was under guardianship, she remained therein until guaranteed freedom after having three children *ius trium liberorum* right of three children as postulated by *lex Iulia pappia poppaea* of A.D 9⁴⁷.

According to Cicero, it was only a woman who was under the *manus* that was honoured as a *materfamilias* (mother of the house-hold), while the wife who married

under the *sine manu* free marriage, was a mere wife *uxor*. At the lapse of time, in second century A.D precisely, the term *materfamilias* witnessed a change, of which, anybody could be referred to as *materfamilias*.⁴⁸

A match was arranged without the consent of a Roman girl. This was done by respective *paterfamilias* of the couples or the bride's guardian, tutors, and sometimes the bridegroom *sponsus* himself. She owned no property except her strictly personal outfit. If she was furnished with dowry, it passed into her husband's keeping.⁴⁹

The Romans had an ideal of marriage as a life long union and it was monogamous but successive. Apart from the desire for progeny, the concept of marriage included such elements as compatibility, partnership and love. The notion of harmony *concordia* in marriage was frequently referred to in literatures and epitaphs; boasting that marriage especially long ones, had been without discord *sine discrimine, sine offensione, sine ulla querela*.⁵⁰ Despite the claim that most marriages were harmonious, cases of divorce and remarriage for reasons such as bareness and political connection were common, thus the practice of serial monogamy.

3.11 Fruitfulness - The Salt of Marriage.

The purpose of Roman marriage was the production of legitimate Roman citizens. The phrase "*liberorum quareredum gratia*" (for the purpose of producing children) was very common.⁵¹ Cassius Dio, in his *History*, reflects on the importance of fertility. Juvenal in the same vein, mentions the necessity of producing Rome a citizen, especially that which is useful in the fields' activities of war and peace. Dixon draws our attention to a play, Pot of gold *Aulularia* written in second century B.C., the character Eunomia, tells her brother that she has a plan for his permanent welfare: "*Quod tibi sempiternum sanitere sit; libris procreandis- ita di faxint volo te uxorem domum ducere.*" "I want you to marry a wife so that you can produce children. May the gods grant it" In the book, *Captivi*- The Captives, the parasite Erga Silius, of another character comments: "*Liberorum quaerendorum causa ei, credo uxor data est*".⁵² "I gather that a wife has been given to him, for the purpose of producing children".

The inability of any woman to bear children for her husband consequently resulted to divorce *divortium*. Sulla in first century B.C, divorced his barren wife,

Clodia, who left Sulla's house with praise and gifts. Sulla's action was not frowned at or deemed dishonourable for making childbirth a condition for marriage success.

In as much as children were desirable, some Romans abhorred the inconveniences, discomfort and the stress of child bearing and rearing. Some men chose celibacy to shun this responsibility. The Stoic Seneca, in his composition, launched an attack against marriage. He argued that parenthood was a distraction from philosophy and its accompanying equanimity, since parents worry about children who may even end up unsatisfactorily and causing more worry.⁵³ Marriage avoidance, abortion, infanticide, and child exposure were widely practiced in ancient and Classical Roman world, as ways of limiting the number of children (especially daughters).⁵⁴

Children who were androgynous or with elephantine head, were exposed to die off. Poverty was also another factor that forced poor parents to get rid of their children. Children whose paternity whether son or daughter was questionable were automatically abandoned. Their mothers' fathers, whose names they bear, commonly brought them up. They were denied names such as Gius or Titus, but were given the name, Spurius, "illegitimate".

A child who had stunted growth, deformity or sickly nature, was prone to exposure. Physical disability was viewed as a sign of animal nature. Slave traders often regained abandoned children and their families could trace or reclaim them at a later time, if they so wish. Melissus an abandoned slave at Spoleto was rescued. He grew up to become a prominent cook of Maecena- an enviable office. His mother finally traced him, but he refused to follow his mother into freedom and poverty.⁵⁵ The right of father to cast away a new born baby especially one whose paternity was controversial remained the strongest aspect of his "right of life and death" *ius vitae necisque* over his children.⁵⁶

The interest in making Romans become thoughtful over marriage and childbearing prompted Julius Caesar in 59 B.C, to enact laws which made land available to fathers with three or more children. Cicero, grieved by the dwindling Roman population, advised that in a property run state such as theirs, Censors should do away with celibacy. He urged Caesar to apply his *autoritas* and encourage large

families. Falling birth rate, he said, was a national ill, which the court should strictly address.

Subsequently, Emperor Augustus enacted two blocks of legislations in 18 B.C and A.D 9, (The *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* and the *lex papia poppaea*) respectively. This ushered special benefits and offers to fathers and mothers of three or more children. Bachelors were limited in inheritance they could receive. Childlessness was made to attract penalties. The divorced and the widowed were encouraged to remarry at stipulated time⁵⁷

Apart from child exposure and infanticide *infantem caedes*, the dominant fact about children in ancient Rome was their high mortality rate. The Romans view children as vulnerable, physically and mentally weak. Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi, had twelve children and lost all but three. In the like manner, the elder Agrippina had six children survived out of nine.⁵⁸ Inscriptions revealed that less than half of babies born alive were expected to witness adulthood. Titus Julius Fortunatus made an inscription on the grave of his beloved wife. He used the pronoun “I” as though his wife wrote it while alive. It reads: “I was married to one man. I died having born six children, only one of them survived me”.

3. 12 What Children Mean to their Parents.

The Romans see children as the vital continuation of the bloodline and an insurance policy. Children protect their parents at old age. They are staff for the aged, set as reinforcements to prop up the house or form its foundation, or are the pole to which the vines may cling.⁵⁹

The Latin term *infans* “not speaking” is not confined to infants. Manson points out that there is no specific word in Latin for “baby”. The popular love poet, Catullus according to Dixon, uses *parvus* Torquatus, a “tiny little” Torquatus to describe his friend’s imaginary baby. *Liberi*, (the term for free born Roman children) means issues of any age as, *fili* (sons); *pueri* (boys); and their feminine counterparts, *filiae* (daughters) and *puellae* (girls). All these terms commonly describe children as distinct from adults.⁶⁰ As soon as a child was born; a father was expected to pick up the child *tolere liberos* from the earth where the midwife placed it. Refusal to raise it meant

unacceptance and the child had to be kept outside the house. In this case, anyone who picks it can rear and claim it. The ancient Greeks and Romans wondered that the Egyptians, Jews and the Germans rear all children.⁶¹

The practice of child abandonment, infanticide, reluctance or abhorrence of some Romans to marriage notwithstanding, the Romans loved their children passionately. Children, who were accepted for rearing, were well taken care of. There was a good measure of parental affection. The love and quest for proper attitude to the child made Favorinus address a mother whose daughter had just put to bed as follows: “I don’t doubt that she will be breastfeeding the child with her own milk”. When he learnt that a nurse had to be found to ease the young girl of the pains of childbirth, he lamented:

I beg you woman, let her be a complete mother of her son in every respect. “What kind of mother is it, to have given birth and then immediately cast the child away?” To feed in your womb something you do not know and have never seen, but then not to feed him with your own milk, a living human being whom you see, who is crying for his mother’s help.⁶²

Inscriptions on the graves have revealed acknowledgements and honours bestowed on mothers who reared their babies with their own breast milk. A typical evidence was seen in Gracia Alexandria, as shown by an epitaph: “To Gracia Alexandria, an outstanding exemplar of modesty. She even brought up her children with the milk of her breast”.⁶³

The Roman ideal entailed intense parental involvement in children’s upbringing. Children were regarded as important for the security of their parents and of the community. Cato the elder, Cornelia (mother of the Gracchi), Augustus and his mother, Atia, were among the figures praised for the close supervision of their children and even grandchildren.⁶⁴ The loss of any child was said to be a sorrow, which pricked the heart. The great and most unbending of Roman generals had been utterly affected by child bereavements: The dictator Camillus, conqueror of the Gauls, lost one of his sons to an illness. Paralyzed with grief, he retreated to a close seclusion with the women of his household.⁶⁵

Equally, there were inscriptions, which further expressed parental grief over the loss of their young ones irrespective of their sexes. “*Dis man, Philete Epitunchanum Hesychi dispensatoris fisci casterensis arcarius filae dulcissime, quae vixit anuvi, obit natali suo, ut trans annum septrimum.*” To the spirit of the deceased Philete Epitynchanus, treasurer of Hesychius, overseer of the military exchequer, to his sweetest daughter, who lived for six years and died on her birthday, as she entered into her seventh year.⁶⁶

A nurse *nutrix* and the pedagogue played a prominent role in the rearing and education of the child. Not too long after birth, the baby was handed over to the wet nurse. Breastfeeding by its natural mother was optional. The nurse and the pedagogue make remarkable impact on the life of the child, of which, the affection and confidence developed over the years continued to exist even after maturity. Aurelius, solemnly recalled the soothing relationships with his natural father, adoptive father, and his pedagogue. Nero murdering his mother was aided by his pedagogue. Eventually, when he was about to face execution by his angry subjects, he was abandoned by all but his nurse who stood by him to console him.⁶⁷

3.13 The Supremacy of the Male Child.

The Roman society like most cultures had desire for the male child who was an heir apparent. The *paterfamilias* whether rich or poor longed for the male child, who will inherit his estate, and perpetuate the family name. Lack of a son could lead to adoption, divorce, and marrying of another wife, since the society would not tolerate polygamy.

The birth of a son brought special pride and joy to the father, as it does the father in most societies today. The woman was happy because her position was ensured or secured. The girl child was more likely to be abandoned than the son if parents were doubtful of their ability to raise a newborn child. Son adoption *adoptio* ensured the continuity of a family, when the father had died. Commonly it was the son who was often adopted and he became *filiusfamilias*. Most of the adopted sons were already adults before their adoption. The maturity of the young man assured his adoptive parent of his chances of survival and gave him a clear view of what he was bargaining for.

Most emperors of the first two centuries had adopted sons as heirs. Between A.D 14-200, only Emperor Claudius, Vespasia and Marcus Aurelius, were survived by natural sons. Augustus Caesar adopted Tiberius, who later became an emperor, at the age of forty, after he had fathered a son. Tiberius did not only lose his Claudian name but passed absolutely under Augustus' *patria potestas*.⁶⁸

Some fathers categorically declare their preference for the male child. Ovid captured the desire of a certain Ligdus, when his pregnant wife was about to deliver: "There are two things I wish; that your labour may be easy, and your child will be a boy. A daughter is too expensive, and we do not have the resources. With great regret, I have to say that if it should be a girl, we will have her die."⁶⁹

A boy was often in his father's company. The son of the farmer accompanied his father to the farm to learn the art of cultivation. The son of the noble family stood beside his father in the *atrium* well dressed to receive his father's callers and to begin early to gain some practical knowledge of politics and affairs of the state. The boy equally accompanied his father to political gatherings in the *forum*, or in the senate house, sitting near the door and learning both from what he heard and what he saw.⁷⁰

3. 14 The Son and His Education.

The importance attached to the son, elicited proper care and arrangement for the provision of his education. A Roman father was both companion and teacher to his son, but the actual instruction given, depended on his own level of education. Thus Pliny remarked: "Every child had his father for school teacher." It is interesting to note equally that: *Maxima debetur puero reverentia* (The boy ought to be given the most suitable respect) was a Roman sentiment.⁷¹

A pedagogue, a trustworthy slave, attended the boy of a respectable family. He escorted him to school, stayed during the lessons and saw him safely back home. A boy from a wealthy family might have one or more slaves to carry his satchel and tablets. The pedagogue played the role of guardian, adviser and director to the boy. The boy called him master. His function came to an end when the boy assumed the *toga* of manhood.

The intensity of the interest in the son was also laid bare when prominent men such as Emperor Augustus, Seneca, Cato, Cicero and a host of others, taught their sons and grand sons or arranged special tutors for their education. This effort aimed at preparing them for political offices as future leaders. Augustus Caesar adopted his daughter's sons, Gaius and Lucius, and they were given political responsibilities even when they were young. He also taught them letters, swimming, and other basic skills. On the contrary, he made his daughter and grand daughters get used to spinning.⁷²

Cato did not see the wisdom in entrusting a valuable legacy as education into the hand of a slave. He condemned his son disciplined and had his ears pulled for being inactive at lessons by a slave. He took it as a duty, and trained his son on how to ride on horseback, box, swim, use weapons of war, and endure heat and cold. He taught him letters, laws and athletics. Aemilius Paullus employed Greek philosophers and rhetoricians to ensure quality training for his four sons, and he did not regret his decision.”⁷³

3. 15 The Developmental Stages of the Boy.

There were notable developmental stages which marked growth in the life of the Roman boy *puer*. He moved from boyhood *aetas puerilis* and became an *iuvenis*, a young man. At this age he was regarded as being youthful *iuvenalis*. The young man, developing into early adulthood became a youth *adolescentia*. A son of the family was ceremoniously ushered into adulthood. He had to cast away the crimson-boarded *toga*, *toga praexta*, which boys were associated with, and assume the white *toga* of a man, *toga virilis*. The *toga* was also called *toga libera*, which contrasts the restrictions of boyhood with the freedom of a man. The coming of age ceremony generally took place when the son was between the ages of fourteen to seventeen. Nevertheless, physical and intellectual development as well as father's decision, can determine when a son would be regarded as a man.

Adolescentia was a period in the life of the youth, which was characterized by series of danger, chaos, wrong discussions, and mistakes. *Adolescentia* could last till the age of thirty. It was during this time that the *iuvenis* discovers pleasures of banquet, female company, and nocturnal frays. He was strongly gripped by pleasure and desire

for money. Cicero had a peep into Mark Anthony's adolescent age, and uncovered his amorous relationship with Curio, who made him (Anthony) his *deliciae* "sweet heart". They were inseparable lovers. They established an unholy union, which Curio's father strongly disliked and kicked against:

You were firmly wedded to Curio as if he had given you a matron's robe. No boy ever bought for libidinous purposes was ever so much in the power of his master as you in Curio's. How many times did his father throw you out of his house? How many times did he set watchmen to make sure that you did not cross his threshold? Yet under the cover of the night, at the bidding of lust and the prompting of the money you received, you were let in through the roof tiles....⁷⁴

In order to guard against the "heat" of youthful exuberance, some fathers confined their sons to the countryside where they would be hardly influenced by the decadent youthful city lifestyle. Putting the son under guard was a common phenomenon in 426BC. A tribune accused Manilius Torquatus of shackling a son in a farm and thereby robbing the state of the talented young man.⁷⁵ The effort of Curio's father, together with other fathers, in taking these measures against their sons, was to mould and built responsible citizens out of them. Youths being the leaders of tomorrow, if built on faulty foundation, the entire state and future generation, would be jeopardized. Fortunate was that father whose son withstood and overcame the tempest *turbulentia*, obstacle *impedimentum*, pitfall *fovea*, catastrophe *caesus durus* of childhood and *adolescencia*. His joy was unfathomed, since he was not drowned in the pleasures *voluptatis* and fury *furor* of youth.

Match making and marital arrangement was the responsibility of the father. The young man as he continued to get more matured, became a man *viris*, and marries. He remained under the *potestas* of his father, if alive. He becomes a *paterfamilias*, if his father was dead or had granted him freedom *emancipatio*.

3. 16 The Socio- Political and Economic Life of the Igbo People

The Igbo people inhabit a large expanse of land in South Eastern part of Nigeria. A handful of Igbo speaking people are also found on the Western bank of the

Niger River. In the Nigerian socio-political administrative structure, the Igbo are located in; Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, Abia, some parts of Rivers and Delta States. Their population is put at the estimate of about eighteen million. They have a common blend of socio-cultural identities irrespective of the fact that they formerly lacked unified political identities (Metuh: 1981).⁷⁶

A spectacular feature of the Igbo, in the contemporary Nigeria, is their diaspora in all parts of the country (it is not hard to find an Igbo man in any part of the country). They are probably the most widely traveled ethnic group in Nigeria today. It is difficult to point at a Nigerian village or community that lacked an Igbo in diaspora.⁷⁷

The Igbo people trace descent through patrilineal lines. A person depends on his agnates for economic support and social comfort. Rights over the use of land lies on the agnatic descent and commonly on residence (Uchendu: 1965). A patrilineage naturally “consists of several compound clusters, occupying a given land area, and whose members derive their ancestry from a founding father” (Aniakor: 1978). Every patrilineage is named after the founding father who has the prefix “umu” attached to his name. For instance if the founding father is “*Oma*”, his lineage will be known as “*Umu-oma*” “*Umuoma*” (the children of *Oma*). The common ownership of a territory, which is ritualized in the cult, is the unifying factor of the patrilineage (Aniakor, 1978).

It is also necessary to point out that the mother’s agnates are important in one’s kinship. One is most welcomed and treated with warmth and honour by his mother’s relatives. Although the person does not inherit property or office from this lineage, but depends on his mother’s agnates to protect his jural rights in his patrilineage (Uchendu: 1965). He seeks their assistance and supports in any serious case in which he is involved. He can be given a plot of land to inhabit in his mother’s place, if he is denied of it by his father’s kinsmen.⁷⁸ Okonkwo in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, who was given a piece of land by his mother’s people, to build and live in, when he committed manslaughter and was sent on exile, is a typical example.

The nuclear family is the basic unit in Igbo social structure. It is made up of a man, his wife or wives and their children. The man is regarded as the political, as well as the ritual head of the family. If he is a titled man, his status symbol comprises: a red

cap, ankle tussles, metal staff and an *obi* (a reception apartment), (Aniakor, 1978). At his death, his eldest son inherits his original compound, while the youngest son inherits the *mkpuke* - his mother's hut.

The Igbo homeland is one of the thickly populated areas of Nigeria. The effects of erosion, leaching, and poor soil conditions, result to low agricultural output, and population pressure. This condition has led to achievement-oriented syndrome in that area, (Le Vine: 1966; Ottenberg: 1958; Forde and Jones: 1950). Thus the Igbo have been commonly represented as aggressive, hardworking and self motivated.⁷⁹

The exact records of when Igbo land was occupied are not available. It is estimated that Igbo land was occupied at about five thousand years ago (Isichei: 1976). Traditionally, the major occupations of the people are farming, blacksmithing and trading.

The political organization of the people lacked centralized system before they came in contact with the Europeans. There is a common notion that the Igbo do not have kings (*Igbo enwe eze*). This maxim is disputable, since among the Nri, Aro, and Onitsha, there existed a well-developed kingship system before colonialism. Instead, this maxim points to the republican nature of Igbo political organization. The first Western visitors to Igbo land marveled at the extent to which democracy was truly practiced (Isichei: 1976). They acknowledged hierarchy, but it is not worshipped, rather, this recognition is more importantly limited to seniority in age. In the contemporary time, the institution of *Igwe* (the ruling chieftain), as the case may be, does not make the government undemocratic. He rules with his cabinets that partake actively in decision making and in his government.⁸⁰

3.17 The History of Igbo Culture and Her Culture Areas

The culture history of the Igbo speaking people of Nigeria could be traced back to the eighteenth century (Equiano: 1794, pp 25-28). By 1940, two groups of scholars carried out some studies using Igbo culture, which they believed gave some indications of either the origin of the people, or of their culture or both. At the completion of the study, they come to a conclusion that either the Igbo came from the Orient, or that their culture evolved from the influence of small elite carriers among them.⁸¹

Onwuejeogwu in trying to identify the Igbo culture area, brought into light an imaginary line, running outside the settlements of Agbor, Kwale, Obiaruku and Ebu, which he grouped as (West Niger area); Ahoada, Diobu and Umuabayi, he called (Port-Harcourt area); (Enugu- Ezike, Nsukka area) and (Nzam). In Igbo culture area; Awka, Nri, Ihiala and Owerri, are in the culture center; Enugu- Ezike, Afikpo, Azumiri and Nkwerre ((East Igbo) are in the culture margin. The imaginary line encloses an area in which the people not only speak the various dialect of the Igbo language, but also share typical and significant common culture trait and pattern, up to above 50%. A culture area according to him is defined as a geographical delimitation of areas that have the same dominant and culture traits, complexes and patterns. Onwuejeogwu pointed out that a culture area has the following themes in common. The linguistic theme, political theme, economic theme, ritual theme and cultural theme.⁸²

The linguistic theme simply means that people living in the same culture area, speak the same language and constitute what linguistics call a speech community. The political theme, springs forth from the traditional Igbo concept of political power, and authority which is structured by the concept of *Umunna* (kindred), and the membership of associations founded on the elaborate title system, such as *ichi ọzọ* or *ichi eze* or *ima mmuọ* (title taking or initiation into the masquerade cult respectively)

The economic theme signifies that there is the spirit of individualism due to the structure and organization of the family, which expects an individual to make personal achievements within the context of *Umunna*. Yam cultivation and production is seen as male occupation, and it is a chief traditional source of wealth. Its importance is practically declared in its ritualization, which gave birth to the *Ifejiọku* or *Ahajiọku* festival (a festival in honour of *Ifejiọku* or *Ahajiọku* the god of yam). Men who were able to distinguish themselves in yam cultivation, were given the title, *Diji* or *Ezeji* or *Ikeji* (a famous yam producer). Other crops they cultivate include; cassava, maize, cocoa-yam and others.

The ritual theme and beliefs: The people in the same culture area, have a common conception about the cosmos, to them, the cosmos is divided into four prominent parts: *Uwa*, *Mmuọ*, *Alusi*, and *Okike*. *Uwa* is represented by the visible world, made up of

Igwe na Ala (the firmament and the earth). It is occupied by human beings- *mmadu*, forests- *agu*, and animals- *anumanu* et cetera. *Mmuo* are dead ancestors, men who lived on earth and founded lineages. A dead person is also called, *mmuo*. If he was good and popular on earth, he becomes *ndichie* that is, a canonized father, and if he was bad, he becomes a mischievous spirit, *akalogoli* or *ekwensu* or *ajo mmuo*.

Furthermore, *Alusi* are noted as spiritual forces that may have attributes of men, but they are neither living human beings nor dead human beings. Onwuejeogwu referred to them as “being forces”. They include *Ala*, the being forces that control the earth; *Igwe*, the being forces that control the firmament. The being forces that control the days, from which the days derive their names, are; (*Eke, Ori, Afo, Nkwo*). The divination force is, *Agwu*; the “yam force”- *Ifejioku*; the “river force”- *Idemmili*, all these are being forces that interfere in the affairs of human beings. *Okike* is the creator of all things, and is addressed as follows: *Chi okike* (God the creator); *Chineke* (God who creates) or *Chukwu* (the supreme God).

The last of the themes, is the cultural theme, which shows a similarity of customs among the entire body of the Igbo. The kolanut custom, music, dance, art, oral tradition/literature, ethics, philosophy and taboo, are basically patterned to express an identical conception of Igbo social and ritual values.⁸³

This cultural uniformity, points to two important facts- the constant social demographic changes amongst the Igbo, and the past ritual and political activities of Nri people as itinerant ritualists and diplomats, who built politico-ritual hegemony in Igbo land, at about 10th century AD and 1911. Nri culture is one of the popular sub cultures, which influenced to a large extent the culture of other Igbo people.⁸⁴

3.18 The Family in Igbo Ideology

The family is highly regarded in Igbo culture, because it is the pivot on which the wheel of regeneration rotates. It is referred to as *ezi na ulo*, literally translated, it means relations both within and outside the house. Sharply, it contrasts with the English concept of family, which often times constitutes a man, his wife and children, but includes somewhat vaguely other relations, such as in- laws, uncles, cousins, nephews or even maids and servants. It is the context that determines who an Igbo man includes

as a member of his family. When a young man talks about his family, he usually includes his father and mother and a host of other relatives. When an Igbo man speaks of his family, he means his wife or wives, and whoever is dependent on him. He can equally include his grandchildren, their wives and children.

The idea of extended family is highly recognized in Igbo culture. Thus, the notion that it is an obligation to show a great deal of responsibility to a relation no matter how distanced. The family responsibility extends to kindred *umunna*, to the village *ogbe*, and to the town *obodo*, but, in lesser and lesser degree. It is expected of every Igbo person to show a great deal of responsibility to all who are related to him. Failure to live up to this social expectation attracts criticisms and hatred. A person, who is seen as a success, has it as a moral duty to lift others below him. This philosophy accounts for a total absence of beggars. Even in this age of potential beggars the shame is not on the beggar but on his relatives. The public opinion in his favour is weighty enough to affect his relatives to have a second thought to do something to assist him.⁸⁵

Marius Nkwo an Igbo social writer, while discussing about Igbo family linked it with the home and explains how the Igbo feel about their homes. He explains that Igbo people refer to their home when they want to express where they live. Also the home is highly treasured for the succour it brings. Nkwo while trying to paint a picture of an average home exclaims; Home! Sweet Home! This idea of home is epitomed in the kind of place to return to after a very distant travel, after heart-aches and head-aches which result from effects of daily physical existence. It is not the design, pattern or structure of the erected building that defines what a home is, rather it is the soft feelings, love, hope, strength, inspiration, freedom from fear and oppression housed in that structure. The home is also represented in the dear parents, beloved sisters and brothers, the kind and sympathetic neighbours and friends.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, the Igbo expect occasional conflicts in their interpersonal relations with family members and neighbours. These conflicts notwithstanding, it is Igbo ideal that good relationships exist amongst these groups. In addition, direct aggression is expressed in child beating or wife beating. Women manifest much aggression through utterances. The tongue is their most portable weapon of aggression. Polygamy is a

notable instrument of tension in the family. The interest of the husband often conflicts with those of his wives. The interest of the women themselves may be at ends. Sometimes aggrieved wives could plot and make their husband a victim of their discontentment; an action that might force him into submission. A husband could be saved from this type of treatment, by “the love wife” *Nwaanyi mma*. She remains the confidant of the husband and enjoys a special status, but becomes an object of abuse and gossip by the co-wives.⁸⁷

3.19 Marriage: An Important Institution for Family Raising

Marriage *Alumdi* has a foremost place in Igbo social economy. It looms upon the horizon of any maid and youth as an indispensable function to be fulfilled. The idea of celibate life finds no favour whatsoever amongst the Igbo, they view it as an irrational and foolish practice which runs contrary to the laws of nature.⁸⁸

Marriage being the foundation on which the blocks of the family is set, is very essential for its sacred role. The concept of marriage and its importance is represented in some literary genres of Igbo background. It is of concern to parents and relatives, and boosts their joy. This premise is clearly illustrated in this statement: Chiaku the mother of Nnanna is preoccupied with seeing her son become “the husband of two and father of many.”⁸⁹

Marriage is obligatory to all Igbo males. It shows his maturity to take up responsibilities, and to ensure the longevity of the family. The evidence of this, is seen when Araba, a character in Nkem Nwankwo’s novel, *Danda*, after recovering from a severe sickness, became worried over what would have become of his large compound with ten wives, many children and barns of yams had he died in the sickness. He called Danda, his first son, “into his *obi*” and asked him what he thought about marrying.”⁹⁰ When Araba discovered that Danda had no intention of marriage, he discussed with some of his kinsmen who helped him to find a wife for Danda and he (Araba) paid the bride price.⁹¹

Marriage signifies a man’s maturity and ability to establish, “separately” from the rest of the family and fend for himself. Araba categorically reminds Danda, who for greater part of his life, indulged in drinking, going after women and engaging in comic

displays, “you are no longer young, it is time you had your own house”.⁹² In order to quicken Obika’s marriage, his father, Ezulu, enjoined the members of his household to put hands together to finish the construction of the cocoyam barn “because a new wife should not come into an unfinished homestead”.⁹³

However, it is not a taboo, if for one reason or the other, a matured Igbo male could not afford to marry. Unfortunately, if a man is extremely poor, weak and unintelligent, his parents (if still alive), brothers, sisters and relations, will not leave him unmarried. They have to struggle, put resources together and marry a wife for him, and be ready to sustain them in anyway they could. This is because they share with him the disgrace and taunting by neighbours and townsmen.⁹⁴

Socially, a man has the freedom to take as many wives as possible provided he has the sufficient resources to take care of them and their children. Thus polygamy is widely accepted. In the past, possession of many wives and children offered a veritable means of investment, security and labour. The wives and children were assets and measure of wealth and opulence.⁹⁵ This was because the soil was the commonest source of wealth. Today the story has become different. There are a number of ways through which one can acquire wealth.

3.20 The Marriage Process

The traditional Igbo marriage is not an affair between the couple that intend to marry, but an alliance between the two families (Uchendu: 1965). Marriage involves the whole kindred *umunna* and to some extent the entire village *ogbe*.⁹⁶ Religion has its role to play in the marriage process. A young man who intends to marry, consults a diviner with his parents to determine the clan from which he would marry. When they discover the clan and the girl, the parents of the maiden, will in turn consult the diviner to make sure that their daughter’s ancestral spirit would permit her to marry the young man.⁹⁷

Furthermore, it is very important for the father, mother, and relatives of the young man to thoroughly inspect and give approval of the girl before the marriage proceeds. Their individual or collective opinions are vital. This affirms the maxim that, marriage is not contracted by one person alone (*ofu onye adighi alu nwaanyi*). The

girl's family and the prospective suitor's family, have to be in support of the marriage before it could take off. Normally, if one party or both have contrary opinion, the marriage will be resisted, irrespective of the girl's beauty or good character; or the man's wealth or other good qualities.

At the initial stage, the man's parents and relatives go out for enquiry about the girl, whom their son wants to marry, and her family. Specifically they want to discover whether the girl has good morals or good character, ability to work hard, intelligence, good behaviour, and home-making ability. About her lineage, they try to find out whether they suffer hereditary disease, such as leprosy, epilepsy, insanity and others; and whether they are people of bad conduct; such as fighting, theft, lying, hard heartedness, and others. In the same vein, such inquiry is conducted about the man; whether he is kind-hearted, hard-working, capable of maintaining a wife, has a number of relatives and whether they suffer "bad" maladies. When both parties were satisfied with their findings, the marriage is allowed to take place. The role of witness *onye aka ebe* is very important. He acts as the middle man between the two parties. He actively participates in settling marital disputes and in the dissolution of the marriage.⁹⁸

Traditional Igbo marriage has other rites, such as; payment of dowry, ceremonies, entertainments, and rituals. Dowry is negotiable and it is determined by the size, beauty, level of education or training and lineage of the girl. Normally, the dowry is paid to the girl's father, but if deceased, it is paid to his brother or closest male relative. Should a marriage collapses, and the woman remarries, the dowry is refunded to her former husband, irrespective of the number of children she had for him, or the years they had lived together.⁹⁹

When the man pays the dowry and completes all the ceremonies concerned, the girl departs with all the gifts given to her by her parents and relatives, and begins to live permanently with her husband. At this point, both of them, their families and relatives will anxiously wait to receive news of her conception. Uchendu, concerning this expectation says:

Procreation is the major interest behind marriage, conception is respected and motherhood brings an important change in a woman's status. Children are great social insurance agency, a protection against dependence in old age.¹⁰⁰

3.21 Conception and Birth of a New Baby

One major remarkable blessing of marriage is childbirth. *Omumu* is the goddess, whose favour is sought, for the gift of childbearing. A woman, who desires to have a child, in supplication, comes to the cult of *Omumu* with her husband, together with sacrificial items to offer sacrifices to the goddess. If she is later blessed with a boy, in gratitude she comes back and offers a cock; and for a girl a hen.¹⁰¹ Prior to her delivery, the expectant mother should offer sacrifices with her husband, to the earth goddess, *Ala*; the symbol of her own mother, *Chi*; and to the spirit of the ancestors of her husband, *Ndibunze*.

Hitherto, the sacrificial items include; yam, fowl or even goat. The sacrifices are believed to attract safe delivery. The words of invocation made before the *Ala* or *Chi* goes as follows: "*Biko nne m leziere m onye nga m na afime rue mgbe o muru nwa. Aga m enye gi ihe mkperi gi. Omuo nwoke m ga enye gi okopkpa, omuokwanu nwayi menye gi nnukwu.*"¹⁰² (Please my mother, look after my wife and pregnancy until she brings forth a baby. I will reward you. If she delivers a male child, I will offer unto you a cock, if a female, I will give you a hen).

Delivery normally takes place outside the house. After the delivery, the women gather and announce the birth of the new baby through *ibioro* (a shout and enchantment of joy that depicts the birth of a new baby). Boys and girls have to submit to circumcision, this operation takes place between 4th and 8th day, after birth. The traditional Igbo have a common practice of seeking the service of the diviner to determine the ancestral archetype of the newborn child. The diviner manipulates his oracle *afa*, so that it reveals the dead ancestor who has incarnated in the newborn baby.¹⁰³

In a typical Igbo cultural setting, before the Igbo culture became a mixed kind, a mother who has just put to bed is confined to the house not as a punishment, but for

proper care. This confinement is called *Omugwo*. She is not expected to engage in domestic chores, but to have a good rest after the rigours of pregnancy and the labour of child delivery. If the baby's sex is male, she will be kept for seven native weeks *izu asaa*, but if a female, five native weeks *izu ise*. Throughout this period, she sleeps on a tattered mat, and the baby on a banana leaf. She takes a little out of every meal served her, swings it round the head of the baby and gives it to any child around, or throws it into the ash heap which is not cleared as long as the *Omugwo* period lasts.

A mother under the process of *omugwo*, does not wash neither her hands nor take her bath. It is only the tips of her fingers that she rinses before eating. On the last day of the third native weeks, comes the naming ceremony, *igu aha*, *ime mputa* or *iba nwa afa*. The ceremony varies slightly from town to town. In Nnewi, the ceremony comes on *Nkwo ukwu* day, and the food served on this occasion is cocoyam paste served with *anara* soup.¹⁰⁴ In some towns, the ceremony is accorded with enormous feasting.

The equivalent of a "week" in Igbo calendar is called *izu* which is made of the four market days. The days are; *Oye*, *Afo*, *Nkwo*, *Eke*. The child automatically is named after any of these days. If it is a boy, the prefix "nwa" or "okoro" or "oko" is attached to the day he is born. Thus, a child born on *Nkwo* day is called *Oko-nkwo* (*Okonkwo*). As for the girl, the prefix "Mgbọ" is added to the day of birth, hence a baby girl born on *Nkwo* day is *Mgbọ-nkwo* (*Mgbonkwo*).¹⁰⁵ The baby also receives a name from the *Okpara* or the eldest titled man of the family, who places a hoe and matchet in his hands, and prays thus, if it is a boy:

My son with these instruments your fathers lived well. We call upon you to acquaint yourself with the property and be hard working. We wish you good fruits out of your labour, here grow and wax strong and may the gods of our land bless and guide you.¹⁰⁶

Names are suggested by some admired or fancied phonemena, events or in resemblance of a deceased relative. More so, circumstances or prevailing conditions or unusual happenings are brought to remembrance through some names. In the like manner, some names show the awesomeness of the supreme God-*Chukwu*.¹⁰⁷

The naming ceremony is shortly followed by *iputa na Omugwo* – coming out from the *Omugwo* confinement. This is graced by a great deal of feasting and it is a joyous occasion. Relatives, friends and well wishers, are invited. The man, his wife and the baby receive a lot of gifts from the guests. A number of calabashes of palm-wine are consumed on that day. After the *Omugwo* outing celebration, is the *ife afia nwa* or *izu afia nwa* - the graceful walk around the market place to show that the mother has completed the *Omugwo* successfully. The newly delivered mother beautifully adorns herself. She places a fat flay of goat on her head and a goat skin on her shoulder. She majestically parades herself round the market place, accompanied by women who rejoice with her and sing her husband's praises for taking good care of her and the baby. The market women offer gifts especially items from their wares. This ceremony signifies the end of birth ceremonies.¹⁰⁸

3.22 Value for Children and Desire for the Male Child

Igbo culture like some other cultures value children above wealth. This is due to their roles as providers of prestige and security at old age. Children are obviously the pride of their parents and are of economic advantage. A man whose compound is filled with children is counted wealthy and fortunate. When his friends teased him for aspiring for a new wife, Nwafor gently replied: "Well every man has one more wife, if he can ... how many of you would not want to fill his *Obi*."¹⁰⁹ Flora Nwapa in the novel, *Idu* shows the importance of children through a character who reiterates: "What we are all praying for is children. What else do we want if we have children?"¹¹⁰

Pregnancy in Igbo culture is highly appreciated due to its end product. Danda rules out the arrangement of sending away his wife "for she was found to be pregnant. And every body now honoured her."¹¹¹ Okaka's friends jokingly tease him for getting his wife pregnant.¹¹² Obika temporarily withdraws from taking palm wine before his wife's pregnancy due to the knowledge that too much palm wine is harmful to a man going into his wife."¹¹³ The child does not belong to his biological parents alone, but also to the extended family with whom they often live and are fostered by them. More so, the child literally belongs to the kindred or even the entire town, *nwa bu nwa oha*,

(the child belongs to all). The importance attached to the child could be read from the names reserved for the Igbo child, few of such names include; *Nwakaego*- (The child worths more than money or riches); *Nwabundo*- (The child is the provider of shade); *Nwamaka* – (It is an excellent thing to beget a child); *Nwabunọ*- (The child establishes the family); *Nwabugwu*- (The child is the source of prestige); *Ebubedike*- (The glory of a warrior); *Chukwuemeka*- (God has done a wonderful thing); *Chidimma*- God is good and many others.

Naturally, great affection abounds between parents and their offsprings. There are admittedly certain treatments, which may seem cruel or inhuman but does not depict lack of love. The degree of affection which transpires between brothers and sisters of the same womb and between children of same father, but different mothers (in the polygamous family) is remarkable. The blood ties of the family line require brothers and sisters to be of assistance to one another in austere and distress times.¹¹⁴

In the family, the child is watched and encouraged to love company or show interest in other people, in order to make him build and walk in the light of this moral and social behaviour. His young mind is fed with fearful and imaginary story that quickens him to believe his parents or elders. Thus he was told many years ago, that spirit attacks those who remain alone, eat alone, work alone and play alone in life.¹¹⁵

The system of inheritance makes it of great importance for a man to have an heir. The system of community governance, which reckons with males, makes it necessary for the family to have male children. A lineage of females is sidelined in matters concerning the family and or the community. The issue of son preference among the traditional Igbo cuts across religious barriers, education and social class.

The male children are vital for their roles in carrying on the family names and are expected to give their parents befitting burial. There is the consciousness that the girls would marry out, change their maiden names to that of their husbands. Consequently, before she could render any help or assistant to her paternal family, she is expected to beckon her husband's affirmation, irrespective of the quality of training or education vested on her by her people.

The birth of the baby boy is announced boisterously from the roof-top, accompanied by such terms as “*O mụrụ takịsị*”- she has given birth to one who is qualified to pay income tax. It is believed in the time past, that the woman is not qualified to pay tax. The birth of a baby girl is welcomed, but sometimes it is greeted with some derogatory statement as “*O mụrụ ama onye ọzọ*”- she has delivered one who belongs to another family.

Subsequent to these distinct reactions, there are few pejorative names, which are reserved for female children that further buttress this point. They are; *Nwaanyịbuihe*- (The female child is equally a child/the female child is better than nothing); *Onyinyechukwu* – (The child is a gift from God, irrespective of the sex); *Nkechinyereonye*- (Whatever the sex of the child God gives you, just accept it). Contrarily, there are names, which are mainly reserved for the male folk; such names express a total satisfaction which suggests that a son has arrived. These names amongst others include; *Ifeanyiichukwu* – (Nothing is impossible for God to do); *Chukwuebuka*- (God is great/God is awesome); *Omekannaya* – (One who acts like his father/ the real son of his father); *Ikemefuna*- (May my power or strength be not in vain).

Prior to the colonial era and even during the colonial period, there was little or no consideration for women empowerment in the Igbo culture. Fathers prefer to marry out their daughters and use the bride price to train the sons.

The anxiety and wild desire for the male child makes the custom approve of “woman marriage.” This practice allows a woman who could not produce a male child for her husband, whether dead or alive, to marry another woman on behalf of her husband. She has to face all the financial implications involved in marrying the wife. Naturally, her husband goes into the new wife and produces children through her. Both the newly married woman and the children born out of the union, literally belong to the man’s former wife. A childless widow or a widow, who has only female children, can take a wife, to produce male children and heirs for her late husband. Couples who have no male child can decide and keep back one of their daughters, to have a male child through her.¹¹⁶

It is observed that amongst the educated or civilized Igbo people, majority attach equal importance to all children, irrespective of the sex, and try as much as possible to give them good quality education and training. Yet some, who have only female children, in the recent times, have found option in the adoption of male children to fill this vacuum.

The emphasis and relevance of the son in Igbo culture, is reflected in some novels that have Igbo setting or background. In Chinua Achebe's, literary work; *Arrow of God*, the protagonist Ezeulu, specifically prays: "May your wives bear male children - may we increase in number at the next counting".¹¹⁷ Araba's sudden decision to have Danda married is partly to curb his worry "at not having grandsons".¹¹⁸

Amanze cherishes Obieke's mother to whom he gives the praise name, Obidia (her husband's heart), because she had three boys and a girl for him, while Adagu's mother had "only a girl."¹¹⁹ Madume can hardly tolerate his wife who bore him four daughters - a most annoying thing.¹²⁰ Adiewere has eventually got a son from his wife. During her next pregnancy he says to her, "if you give birth to this baby and it is a boy again, my heart will be filled with gladness".¹²¹ Danda could not control his joy when his wife had a baby boy for him. He announces on top of his voice, "people of my land, it is a man."¹²²

Echebima, (a poet who writes in Igbo language), in one of his poems titled, *Nwoke bu Dike* – (It is the male folk that could be given the attribute of a warrior); uses the medium to depict the power, strength and virility, which is peculiar to the man. He presents the man as a fearless fighter and conqueror in battles. He portrays the man also as a "lion," - an animal very powerful and daring. No doubt, a terror to other animals! It is fearful both in appearance and in action. However, the poet clearly states that, the male child or the man is an honourable gift. It is clear that Echebima draws a sharp distinction between the masculine and feminine gender. A part of the poem reads:

Nwoke bu dike	-	The man is a warrior
Nwoke bu ugwu	-	The male child is a source of prestige
Nwoke bu Agu	-	The man is a lion
Mgbe a muru nwoke	-	When a male child is born, a noise of joy was
Ebiri oro bisie ya ike ¹²³	-	Strongly made.

The importance attached to male child by the earlier society, have some adverse implications on the woman. Psychologically, she is frustrated and lacks self-esteem. She receives insults from her husband, fellow women, in-laws and the society at large. The problem becomes compounded, if her husband abandons her, and her daughters. A number of women, who find themselves in this helpless situation, desperately seek assistance from herbalists, witchdoctors, and from other means. In polygamous families, marginalization by husbands, and insult from co-wives have pushed such women into taking secret drastic actions against her oppressors.¹²⁴

3.23 Discrimination in the Education of the Male and Female Child

In the Igbo culture, there is a pronounced discriminatory attitude, which existed and still exists in the education of the male and the female child. Gender roles assigned in patriarchal whims determine what boys and girls should be taught. In order to make a successful career of motherhood and domesticity, the informal education of women was limited to studies in good behaviour. She was taught how to talk like a woman, sweep like a woman, with her waist bend so low and how to minister with all obedience and submission to the patriarchs of the homestead.

Furthermore, women were particularly responsible for girls' education and they (girls) were expected to learn by precepts, observation, and close association with their mothers. A woman's lifelong successful career as a mother, rests so much on the success in mother-craft and crowning this skill with her ability to produce, especially male children, which ensure her position.¹²⁵ What girls were expected to learn were considered of simple virtues such as; laws of hygiene, simple trading, preparation of various types of food, cultivating crops especially cassava, cocoyam and taking care of the children.¹²⁶

On the contrary, boys in the family were exposed to different forms of education. They were taught the art of blacksmithing, hunting, fishing, wrestling, medical herbs, literature and history, through folk tales and stories about heroic exploits. The boys were always with their fathers, and this privilege gave them the opportunity to learn proverb early. The opportunity to explore the environment was limited to the boys, since the cultural norms designed the role for them.¹²⁷ In addition; children were guided

to follow the calling of their parents. Daughters of women potters for example, usually become potters, and sons of blacksmiths or carvers become blacksmiths or carvers respectively.¹²⁸

During the colonial era and at the advent of Western education, while boys were sent to school, girls were groomed for marriages. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, reveals succinctly Okonkwo's, discriminatory attitude in teaching his children. He teaches only the boys- Nwoye and Ikemefuna, admonishing that they spend more of their time in his *obi* to learn and gain the appropriate knowledge; rather than listening to stories told by Nwoye's mother, which to him "were for foolish women and children."¹²⁹ He refuses to give his intelligent daughter Ezinma the opportunity to learn with her male counterparts.

Literary evidence reveals that such discrimination does not end only in informal teaching and learning procedure, but it is encountered in formal education. When the missionaries settled in Umuaro, Ezeulu sent one of his sons to the mission's school, to acquire the white man's knowledge which he believed was very essential:

I have sent you to be my eyes there. Do not listen to what people say-people who do not know their right from their left... If anyone asks you why you should be sent to learn these new things tell him that a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time. When I was in Okperi I saw a white young man who was able to write his book with left hand...he could shout in my face; do what he liked. Why? Because he could write... I want you to learn and master this man's knowledge so much... You must learn it until you can write with your left hand.¹³⁰

Although, Ezeulu sees in his mind's eye, the plausible opportunities, which the White man's school and education will bring about in future, denies his daughters of such chances, which may be of advantage in time to come.

3.24 Intimacy and Affection between the Mother and the Child

There are some Igbo poems and songs which depict the affectionate relationship between the mother and the child. The mother being the commonest and closest caregiver has the opportunity to build and feed the tender heart with the ordeal she went through during its pregnancy. The child is often reminded of the care, attention and love

lavished on him, and the mother in return, expects affection, love, care, respect and obedience from him.

Some of these songs are found in Ogbalu's poetry work; *Ayoro: Pnem Maka Umụaka*, (Ayoro: Poem for children).

Nwam echezokwala nne mụrụ gi
Nwam echezokwala nne mụrụ gi
Ahụhụ ọ tara na mgbe nwata gi
I mana okeghị ma na orighi
N'elu echiche ka nne gi laruru ụra
Echezokwala nne mụrụ gi. ¹³¹(Korosi : Chorus)

My child do not forget the womb that bore you
My child do not forget the womb that bore you
After all she suffered during your childhood
She neither shared nor ate
Your mother could not sleep as a result of thought
Do not forget the womb that bore you.

Another poem by Ogbalu, *Ewo Nne m* (My Dear Mother), further reveals the Igbo child's feelings of gratitude to his mother. Here, the child contemplates on how best to appreciate his mother, for her excellent role in his life. According to him, she knows when he is hungry and feeds him. In his sickness, she feels his ordeal and expresses this, through weeping. Invariably, he sees the mother as a very priceless jewel.

Ewo Nne m
Nne m na - emere m ihe mgbe nile
Aga m eji gini kelenu nne m o
Ezigbo nne m.

Korosi: (Chorus) Ewoo, Ewoo Nne m
Aga m eji gini wee kelenu nne m
Ezigbo nne m

Oyooyo nne m di ngala (nu) onu
Aga m eji gini kelenu nne m o
Ezigbo nne m

Ka aru na-anwu m, ka o ne ebe-akwa
Aga m eji gini kelenu nne m o
Ezigbo nne m.

Onye na - enye m nri mgbe nile
Aga m eji giñi kelenụ nne m o. ¹³²
My Dear Mother

My mother who feeds for me always
With what do I pay my mother back?
My lovely mother.

My wonderful mother is of great value
With what do I pay my mother back?
My lovely mother.

She weeps all through my period of sickness.
With what do I pay my mother back?
My lovely mother.

One who feeds me always?
With what do I pay my mother back?
My lovely mother.

In the poem, *Nne m*, the child has it as a burden thinking on how best to appreciate his mother, whom he loves exceedingly. The poem is of similar theme with the poem, *Ewo Nne m*, but differs slightly. In this poem, *Nne m*, the child goes extra mile to make a vow to his mother. He promises to support his mother at her old age, and will not watch her suffer the rigours and pains associated with ageing.

Nne m
Giñi ka m ga-emere nne m
m'huru na'anya nke uku
Aga m abụ ezi nwa gi
Ezi nne m, Ezi nne m.

Mgbe i kaara nka gho agadi
Aka m ga - akwagide gi
Ihe mgbu gi ka m ga ewepu
Ezi nne m, ezi nne m. ¹³³

My Mother

What shall I do for my mother?
Whom I so much love
I will remain a good child to you
My good mother, my good mother.

In your old age I will support you
I will remove your pains
My good mother, my good mother.

In as much as the child is desirable, its denial brings agony. The death of a child provokes severe grief and in the same vein, a bad child of course is a big source of bitterness and regret. More so, the poet, *Maazi* (Mr) Okoro, clearly points out that, parents who are embittered by their children's conduct can curse them on this note. This impression is reflected in Okoro's book, *Nka di Na Nti* (*Old age weighs more on the ear*). The above notion is affirmed by Oji who laments:

Onye enweghi nwa no n'akwa
Onye nke ya nwuru no n'akwa
Onye mutara amuta no n'akwa
Nwa juru nne ju nna, ogwukpokwa ya,
Umụ mee kwa ya otu a.¹³⁴

The childless is in sorrow
One who loses a child is in sorrow
One who has children is also in sorrow
A child who rejects mother and father; may he stumble
Let him receive the same measure of wrong done to his parents
From his own children.

3.25 The Functions and Authority of the Father

When a man's parents are still alive, his influence in the family recedes to the background but where they were no more, the responsibility of his immediate family lies in his hand.¹³⁵ The general outlook of the family is characterized by manliness. The man is at the forefront of the affairs of the family. He must develop and become courageous and should not blush at adventures and achievements. As a central figure, and a political actor in the family, on whom his family looks up to, he learns early in life to be aggressive, alert, and assertive, in all conflicts.¹³⁶

More so, the father is the voice of his family; the corner stone of the compound (*ugbo ama*), the defensive wall of the family or the pillar of security. In other words, the man positions himself as a rampart that absorbs both the external and internal shocks. He is at alert at every family conflict and strives vigorously to settle it.¹³⁷

Whether in polygamous or monogamous family, the man knows that his primary duty was to his wife/wives and children.¹³⁸ If the parents were alive, the order of procedure was mother, father, wife and children. Sometimes children took precedence over wife but the choice depends on individual husband. Negligence of the duties one owed to his parents or wife/wives came under strict discipline by *umuada* or *umuokpu* (married or unmarried, widowed or divorced daughters of the extended family) and *inyom-di* (women married into the family).¹³⁹ He issues orders to his wife/wives and children, which they carry out with all respect. During the farming season, he leads while his family follows. He is responsible for all the sacrifices which are to be made on behalf of the family, especially during festivals.

When the father of the family dies, his first son succeeds him and becomes the head of the family. He inherits his hut and even his younger wife/wives. If a titled man, the son assumes his titleship after a process of such transfer is fully observed. However, in the contemporary time of ours, most first born sons do not deem it wise to inherit their late fathers' younger wife/wives to avoid polygamy and its attendant problems. On the other hand, Christianity has held them bound to stick to a wife, with whom they are joined to become one flesh. It is not irrelevant to note that a jealous wife dared not see other women encroach into her territory. She will role out all armoured tanks within her disposal to fight such battle and abort such plan.

In the traditional Igbo home, the father of the family has an apartment where he often retires to rest and receive his visitors. This part of the compound is the structure known as the *obi*. It is very important in the life of the man. This is a rectangular structure built of mud and capped with roof made of raffia palm. Usually, it faces the main entrance of the compound. There are many things which will be of interest to the visitor as he steps into it. The wall is painted with red earth, from the base of the red wall to about a foot length up, is aesthetically painted with black earth; The floor is made smooth with black earth too. There are no seats but mud coaches which serve for sitting during the day and bed at night. The coaches notwithstanding, most visitors come with goat skins which they carry along. This is immediately spread for sitting at arrival.¹⁴⁰

3.26 The Duty of the Mother

The woman bears, nurses and takes care of the children. She inculcates in the girls feminine roles. She and her children are under the authority of the father of the family, and take orders and instructions from him. Her primary duty is to please her husband. She should always look at him in the face to know whether he is happy or not.

The woman has her own hut *mkpuke*. That is where she spends most of her time with her children, especially the girls. The children have special attachment to their mother, especially in polygamous families.¹⁴¹ Her husband in the same manner, has his own *obi* and so does not share the same apartment with her.¹⁴²

The fact which claims that the woman should ever remain obedient and submissive to her husband should not be over-emphasized; thus, she is expected neither to challenge nor exchange words with him. For example, *Things Fall Apart* portrays the female characters as ever crying helplessly for being beaten by their husbands. There was an occasion when Okonkwo was thrashing his younger wife, and others from a distance pleaded for their mate, instead of getting close to intervene.¹⁴³

In most families, the women were socially and economically attached to the man and so have no choice but owed him total submission. She and her children are of economic importance to the man, and to the family in general. They constitute the labour in his farms. It is important to realize that some men of the earlier time, married as many wives as possible to have enough hands to cultivate their farms. Subsequently, the number of wives a man has, and farm products are the criteria for measuring his wealth.

When a mother dies, her property, which includes; clothes, cooking utensils, fowls, mats and few other things, are shared by her daughters, with the first daughter taking the largest share.¹⁴⁴ Her youngest son inherits her hut and the portion(s) of farm land within or around the compound *obubo*.

3.27 The Roles of Sons and Daughters

The boy is regarded as the heir of the family and he is expected to preserve his father's integrity. He is seen as a failure, if he is lazy, cowardly and effeminate. He is taught not to accept defeat, intimidation, or prove shy before his mates, who belong to

more powerful, wealthier and richer families. And on no account should he surrender to them, or fight weakly over his right.¹⁴⁵

Boys are required to be hard and daring. They are taught to be tolerant and soft, while dealing with their sisters and forebear from bullying on their younger brothers. Generally, the Igbo admires courage and its fulfillment in personal achievements. The traditional Igbo man respects a *dimkpa* (a strong man). He believes even in a small statured man - *anụkpọlọnkụ na-eju ọnyụ* (the dry meat that fills the mouth); than in a cowardly giant *akatakpo na nkịti* (a big for nothing). The boy is well indoctrinated to note this difference and to prove himself strong and responsible. Ejiófor describes the Igbo man who has forsaken this traditional belief pejoratively, when he stresses:

The spoilt Igbo man is one who has assimilated the boneless, softness of the Western civilization - soft food, good wine, lavish parties, painless wealth and other trappings of liberal capitalism.¹⁴⁶

At home the boy helps his father to perform essential work such as mending thatched roof or making new fence or repairing damaged ones; (this is usually made with palm fronds). He learns how to till the soil and cultivate plants (especially yams), by lending a hand to his father. He runs errands for his father and sometimes helps in pounding yam or cassava to make paste out of it. At night he joins other children in moonlight play and dances. Sometimes he listens to the minstrels and the epic deeds of the village and learns from them. Boys, no matter how young mingle freely with elderly men. This is of great importance, because it enables them acquire words of wisdom and learn the history of the land.¹⁴⁷

On reaching manhood, every freeborn youth automatically assumes privileges and duties of citizenship. He shares in the burden that borders on the well-being of the village. It is required of him to serve his town in time of war and he is looked upon to give support to the head of his family, the king or paramount chief, where there is one.¹⁴⁸

The young son remains in his mother's hut until he is of age and could afford to build his own quarters which is a sign that he is about to marry. When he is ready to marry, the general expectation is that he inaugurates a new compound. In keeping

relationship, Basden comments that the only one the Igbo man steadfastly holds unto is his mother.¹⁴⁹

The daughter is groomed from the early age for marriage. She is given every necessary domestic training to make her a successful wife and mother. Basden observed that when children were brought under instruction, girls exhibit equal mental ability with boys up to the age of ten or eleven, hitherto, domestic duties have claimed their attention, and their intellectual progress has been retarded.¹⁵⁰

The girl child is trained to be ingenuous in the art of home management. Her mother teaches her how to prepare all manner of delicious dishes, how to sweep the compound, how to talk, how to greet properly, how to behave before strangers, family or extended family members, how to take care of her younger ones, and above all, she is expected to be obedient, respectful and submissive. She is discouraged from engaging in masculine games the ones which are acrobatic in nature.

Furthermore, she is taught the sitting posture. She should not sit with legs spread apart like her male counterparts. As a small girl, who often sits on the floor, the legs should be stretched forward at full length, sometimes with one leg thrown on top of the other. When she begins to sit on the chair as an adult, the two legs are brought together, such that the laps have to come in contact with each other. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo thundered at Ezinma, his daughter: "Sit like a woman!" Ezinma brought her two legs together and stretched them in front of her.¹⁵¹ Nwoye and Ikemefuna could sit any how they like, but will not be scolded. They have not committed any offence because the culture gives them right which is denied Ezinma.

The daughters have no decisive voice in the affairs of the compound, although members of the family respect and cater for them. They are treated with soft hands. Their parents give them more indulgent care and have a number of taboos protecting them. Daughters' complaints are listened to with sympathy. They can intercede for any member of their family.

At maturity, whether married or unmarried, they form the Daughters' Union (*Umụada*) - a very powerful pressure group in the community. At the death of any of her parents, as a married daughter of the family, she is expected to come in "a big way"

to grace such funeral. The first daughter and others who married wealthy husbands are looked upon to attend the funeral with a cow. This is to show appreciation to the deceased parent(s), and secondly to show that their parents did not marry them off to poor, but to wealthy men.

In conclusion, the Igbo live in organized institutionalized settings. Respect flows hierarchically. There is the division of labour in their general life, which every one is expected to carry out diligently. Laziness is discouraged and it is expected of kins and family members to assist one another. More so, the spirit of oneness is imbibed to achieve much. Thus they believe in the saying- *igwe bu ike* (unity is strength).

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CHAPTER FOUR

VIOLENCE AND BREACH OF FAMILY TIES IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the issue of family conflicts, distortions and violence, in Classical literature. Here, violence would be treated as physical, psychological and emotional. Since violence, especially physical violence, is mostly obtainable in Greek tragedy, there would be a brief discussion on the term “tragedy”, and other related concepts, such as blood, blood shed, its importance and implication as they affect the victim, the culprit and other members of the family. This clarification will facilitate easy understanding of the subject matter. The treatment of these concepts will lead to exploring the available evidence of family violence and conflict, in Classical drama, mythology, history and other similar sources.

Most Greek tragedies have domestic violence and conflict as their themes. This phenomenon is not a means portraying the family as problematic, rather it shows the importance of the family, and so instructs that factors which aggravate family rancour should be strictly avoided or guarded against. The success or failure of a family depends on the affections and ties that hold any family together or drive it apart. These ties, as tragedy demonstrates have a greater effect where the relationship is close, and disaffection can produce catastrophic results.

4.2 Tragedy, Blood and Related Concepts

Greek tragedy often draws its plot from the body of myth and tradition. It is often concerned with the catastrophic fall of great men and great families. Most dynasties in the Classical tragic drama ended up in ruin. In Greek tragedy, there is abundant evidence of tension between family and dynastic values. This tension tends to be expressed in the repeated theme of the collapse of a great house¹

Aristotle, in his book, *The Poetics*, states that, a few houses (*oikia*) are relied upon for the plots of the best Greek tragedies, because it is in these families that events most suitable for tragic treatment occur (1453a 18-22). The histories of these families especially those of Alcamaeon, Oedipus, Thyrses and Telephus, all include the slaying

of kin, incest or last minute life-saving recognition between kins. These intra-familial crimes or near crimes are why these families are most appropriate for tragedy, for it is the pathos experienced in kin group, Aristotle argues, that arouses the greatest element of pity.²

Classical tragic dramas are rich in violence and conflicts. However, Aristotle says that the type of tragic character, which he favours, is the man who is neither outstanding in bravery and justice (αρετη και δικαιοσυνη) nor passes to ill fortune as a result of vice and wretchedness (κακαια και μοχθηρια), but as a result of some error (αμαρτια) and he should be one of those who enjoy great reputation and good fortune, such as Oedipus, Thyestes, and other prominent men from such families as these. Aristotle's choice of men of high status as his tragic heroes is because he holds that their fall will arouse in the audience the desired emotion, which characterizes the tragic experience.³

In addition Stinton, affirms Aristotle's statement which holds that the best tragedy is so composed as to arouse pity and terror. It is clear that morally good men (επιεικεις αδρες) must not be shown passing from good fortune to bad; this does not arouse pity or fear but it is repulsive (μιαρον). Nor again, must the very crooked man (Ο σφοδρα πονηρος) be shown falling from good fortune into bad; this arrangement will satisfy human feeling, but will not arouse pity or fear. For fear is concerned with unmerited misfortune (περι των αναξιων δυστυχουντα).⁴ Adkins supporting Aristotle and Stinton says there remains the intermediate character; not pre-eminent in moral excellence (αρετη και δικαιοσυνη) nor falling into misfortune through vice and depravity (κακια και μοχθηρια) but through (αμαρτια), either "error" "mistake" or "flaw" of character; being one of great reputation and good fortune.⁵

The cases of bloodshed are very pronounced in the tragic plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Hitherto, it is necessary to understand the importance, the implication of blood and bloodshed and how it affects the individual victims, other members of the family and the household in general.

Blood is perceived as being simultaneously pure and impure, attractive and repulsive, sacred and profane; it is at once a life-giving substance and a symbol of

death. Handling of blood sometimes is mandatory, but usually dangerous. In many primitive societies, blood is identified as a soul substance of men, animals and even plants. The Romans said that it is the *sedes animae* seat of life. Rites of blood require the intervention of individual specialists (warriors, sacrificers, circumcisers, butchers or even executioners), and always the participation of the group or community. For the Hebrew, “the life of all flesh is its blood.”⁶ The spilling of blood is often forbidden. This ban applies to certain categories of humans and animals. The rulers of Ottoman Empire forbade shedding the blood of persons of royal lineage. There is reason to believe that the Indian Hindu religion abolished sacrifices and feasting that goes with blood. According to Genesis (9:4), the eating of raw meat is forbidden. “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”

It is important to note that, there are different attitudes toward the blood of strangers, foreigners, or enemies and most of all, toward the blood of members of one’s family or community. The blood of enemies usually is not protected by any taboo. It has been suggested that one justification for war is the perceived necessity of shedding blood in order to water the earth.

However, one often encounters the idea that the earth is thirsty for blood, especially for licit blood. It can at times cry out for vengeance against any illicit bloodshed. The blood of the enemy is rarely dangerous, even though the qualities and strength of the soul remain in it. Within a single community, however, attitudes toward blood and killing are different. Members of the community are connected by consanguinity, and they share responsibility for one another; the blood of each is the blood of all. The group’s totemic animal may be included in this community, which is connected to the animal by adoption or alliance.

Murder in the community is forbidden; to kill one’s relative is tantamount to shedding one’s own blood; it is a crime that draws a curse that lasts for generations. When Cain killed Abel, Abel’s “blood cried out for vengeance”⁷ and Cain’s descendants suffered for it. When Oedipus unknowingly killed his father, he subsequently gouged out his eyes to confess his ignorance and misdeed, but actually his punishment fell upon his children.⁸

A murder between families or clans is a grave wrong, which must be avenged by killing the guilty party. The latter, who in turn becomes the victim, will have his own avenger from among his relatives. Thus the offshoot of cycle of killings known as vendetta killing, which can be broken by “paying the blood price”. Vendetta killing is found among the ancient Greeks, pre-Islamic Arabic and modern Corsica. The Jewish and Muslim demands of “an eye for an eye” may be similar to this phenomenon.⁹ The above examples of various backgrounds depict that the blood of a man is of a great value. To shed human blood is a crime and more grievous is the shedding of the blood of a household member. It requires that the blood of the offender must be spilled for the sake of justice. This explains better why Clytemnestra and Orestes resorted to violent killings in order to avenge the blood of their family members.

4.3 Vengeance and Retribution in Family Violence

Vengeance, according to Cambridge *International Dictionary of English*, “is the punishing of someone for harming you, or your friends, family, or the desire for such punishment to happen”. “Vengeance” and “revenge” are used interchangeably here since both are similar in meaning. The desire to give back a wound for a wound is an emotion almost universally felt. Myths or tales involving vengeance also like to show debts of violence that pass from father to son or from brother to brother, before they are finally paid. “Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which, the more man’s nature runs to, the more ought law weed it out”.¹⁰ The instrumental character of retribution finds exemplary expression in the “law of talion” in which the penalty matches the crime, and in the “golden rule” (behave toward others as you wish them to behave to you).¹¹

The murder of a family member by another attracts vengeance from another member of same family who, stands to avenge the blood of the victim. The avenger reasons that the blood of the victim must not waste alone but must be accompanied by the blood of the murderer. In Classical drama, family members avenge most domestic killings.

Human vengeance was an old theme in the mythology and literature of Greece and it was probably one of the earliest representations to be staged there. In the description of the concept of the vengeance play, the terminology of Aristotle is of use.

The minimal vengeance plot is seen as an imitation of an action of the negative type, centered on catastrophe. The plot is then necessarily active rather than passive, and the result is a special pattern in the emotions that are aroused, since here the portrayal is a change of fortune experienced. The overturn from wealth, success and seeming happiness into disaster and death which is, according to Aristotle, the very marrow of good tragedy is certainly present here.¹²

4.4 Retribution as a Punishment

The guilt of offense against a family member or another fellow is not only avenged but also punished, for there are on one hand, offenses against life itself and on the other hand offenses against the rules that protect life and are instituted to defend life. These later offences are met by punishment, which is directed not against the clan but against the offender. The important point to note here is that, the individual culprit is punished.

Law of Talion is one of the oldest forms of payment for crime. The term comes from the Latin phrase *lex talionis* (law of retaliation), and it is first documented in the Law of Twelve Tables, (451-450 B.C.E). “If someone breaks another’s limb and does not come to an agreement on it, he shall suffer the same equal punishment”. “Talion” refers to a codified numerical equality in every punishment, for example, “one hand for one hand, a tooth for a tooth”. In Greek thought, retribution is justice in the form of punishment; it is the context in which Greek thought comes to grip with justice as regulative of revenge. The word justice (δικη) occurs in such phrases as (δικην δίδοναι; δικην τινειν) which literally means “to give”, “to pay”, “justice,” all of which signify “to be punished”. The word means “payment” or “compensation”, but also “revenge” or “vengeance.”

The Erinyes or Furies, which are champions of archaic justice, show that justice is actually retributive to the Greeks. These entities are the spirits who embody the anger of the dead and the curse of the slain in the murderers. They are the oldest Greek divinities of justice, especially of archaic matriarchal rights, and also of the rights of parents generally. The Areopagus at Athens was also known as the hill of the Erinyes. The court, which prosecuted murderers, held its sessions there. Since they were avengers of

perjury, the Erinyes were regarded as agents defending the order of the law. Heraclitus calls them “the handmaids of the ministers of justice”.¹³

The symbol of the court- the wolf, serpent, and lightning bolt, are part of the myth of guilt and punishment. They are symbols of souls that seek revenge of Olympian gods, who represent the rights of such individuals. Apollo is the defender of the rights of blood for blood, but also the god of purification from bloodguilt.

4.5 Purification by Blood

An offender or murderer is accursed or polluted by the act of spilling either a kindred blood or any other. Such an individual, above all, requires purification or cleansing to rid him of the curse. Blood sacrifice is necessary for his purification. Bukert, citing Heraclitus, says that such murders are cleansed through the blood of the sacrificial victim, as if someone who stepped into mud should try to wash himself with mud. Heraclitus ridiculously talks about a murderer (φονεὺς) who has made himself bloody to have himself cleaned by blood. The act of murder gives rise to peculiar, almost physically experienced pollution (μῶσμος) in which the murderer is ensnared. Admittedly, his extreme position is ambivalent, just as sacrament and sacrilege merge in every act of sacral killing.

The community of archaic times knew its obligation to drive out the curse and the murderer with it. He must leave his home and seek a protector abroad, who will take charge of his purification, as in the story of Adrastus in Herodotus 1.344. Until then no word must pass his lips, nor may he be received in any house, nor share a table with others; anyone who comes in contact with him, is defiled. This treatment meted to the murderer attests to how dreadful the issue of murder could be, how much more the spilling of a household blood, which could be likened to the spilling of one's own blood.

The archetypal instance is the matricide of Orestes who flies abroad after his deed. Various places with their local rituals claim connection with his purification. Bukert claims that, in Troizen in front of the Sanctuary of Apollo, stood a hut of Orestes, which was said to have been erected to avoid receiving the murderer in a normal house. A priestly group met there regularly for a sacral meal. In Athens, the

curious wine drinking on the day of defilement during the Anthesteria festival was traced back to the arrival of Orestes.¹⁴

In conclusion, purification by blood is very important for the cleansing of one, who shed human blood. This enables him to interact with people once again after being ostracized from the household, and even his town. The cleansing granted him freedom from guilt and vengeance of the gods.

So far, it is learnt from the discussion that shedding of human blood calls for retributive justice and punishment. The murderer has to undergo purification, which makes him acceptable among his folks. The issue of murder is not the only case of violence to be treated in this chapter, but the fact remains that it is the most “heinous” of all family violence. This, notwithstanding, other cases of violence, conflicts and breaches of family ties are subsequently addressed. However, here below is the evidence of family violence as reflected in some works in Classical drama.

4.6 Seduction and Vengeance in the House of Pelops

Domestic violence could be applied to have one’s way, to make achievements, exert authority, avenge wrong or injustice done to oneself, or another person. Iphigenia gives a clear information about who the father of Atreus is. She explains, “Pelops the son of Tantalus came to Pisa with swift horses and married the daughter of Oenomaus. Of her Atreus was born, who had children, Menelaus and Agamemnon”.¹⁵ Atreus was the founder of the Atreid dynasty. There came up strife between him and his brother Thyestes. The latter offended his brother in “two things”, which resulted in a family feud. In the first instance, Thyestes eloped with his brother’s wife and in second he usurped his brother’s kingdom by trickery. Atreus designed a plan to make his brother commit abominable act, which would be a taboo and render him loathsome in the eyes of the Argives.

In order to effect his plans, Atreus secretly murdered Thyestes’ two sons and served their flesh to their father at a banquet of reconciliation. Thyestes ignorantly “enjoyed” the heinous meal. When Thyestes realizes that he had eaten the flesh of his sons, he fled into exile and later died there; but he had a third son, an infant son called

Aegisthus, whom he took with him and brought up in exile. Atreus himself got away with the murder, but such crimes do not go unpunished.

Agamemnon and Menelaus were the famous sons of Atreus. Agamemnon the eldest son of Atreus inherited the throne of Argos, and thus inherited the curse that settled on the family. Menelaus, his younger brother, became the king of Sparta in succession of his father-in-law, Tyndareus.¹⁶

The house of Atreus became accursed as a result of the abominable occurrence found in it. And that is the satisfactory reason why, successive accounts of vengeance, bloodshed, retribution, justice and guilt are themes of their experiences.

Thyestes seduced his brother's wife, and the deed ignited vengeance from Atreus, who felt assaulted. Thus, he did not handle the adultery matter lightly. Furthermore, the culprit was severely punished for usurping the Argive kingdom. All these atrocious acts against a kin, resulted into vengeance and family feud, which lingered till the family was brought to ruin.

In Agamemnon's immediate household began vendetta killings (echo and re-echo of murder incidences). It all started with Agamemnon; the bad farmer who harvested the sour fruit which set every tooth in his family on edge. He gave a step-by-step narration of why and how he murdered his daughter Iphigenia, whose violent murder triggered off the cycle of termination of lives in his family. At the initial part of his narration, he talked about Helen the daughter of Tyndareus, who chose Menelaus his brother, amongst many suitors, who sought her hand in marriage. Unexpectedly, a young man Paris came from Phrygia, with enormous wealth, seduced, and eloped with her (Helen). Agamemnon recounted the incident:

She chose- in an evil moment- Menelaus. Then that judge of divine beauties, as the Argive story has it, came from Phrygia to Lacedaemon; the habit of his dress was flowery, he glittered with gold-barbaric finery. Helen fell in love with him, and he with her, and so, with Menelaus abroad at the time, off he went with his plunder, to the ranches of Ida. Menelaus, goaded to frenzy dashed up and down Hellas invoking the old pledge of mutual assistance against aggression. Then Hellas rushed to arms. They brought their armament to these narrow straits of Aulis, their ships and their shields, their cavalry and their chariots. They chose

me to be general. I suppose it was a favour to Menelaus, since I was his brother: but I wish some other men had won this honour instead of me: When the army had been brought together and mustered, we were kept idle at Aulis, for want of sailing weather. In our difficulty, the seer Calchas pronounced that Iphigenia, my own daughter, must be sacrificed to Artemis, whose soil this is; thus, and not otherwise, we could sail away and sack Phrygia. When I heard this, I told Talthybius to let the trumpet blare forth and disbanded the whole army, for I would never bring myself to kill my own daughter. Thereupon, my brother pleaded with me and pleaded with me, till he persuaded me to do the awful deed. In the fields, in the folds of the letter I wrote, and told my wife to send our daughter here, to become a bride of Achilles. I enlarged upon Achilles' distinction and said he refused to sail with Achaeans unless a bride of our house should go to Phthia. I used this pretext as a means of persuading my wife ... of the Achaeans only we four know the true situation: Calchas, Odysseus, Menelaus and I... .¹⁷

The beauty and importance of this quote, is its explicit richness in detailed exposition of why Agamemnon chooses to offer his own innocent young maiden, Iphigenia. He tries to defend or justify his action, but it sounds ridiculous when he says, "... my brother pleaded with me and pleaded with me, till he persuaded me to do the awful deed". Here, King Agamemnon, a general in war, a man of elevated status is speaking like a young girl or married woman caught in the act of fornication or adultery, who pleads for mercy on the ground that, the man in question "persuaded and persuaded me before I succumbed". Agamemnon's point of argument is very porous and without substance. It lacks sense of wisdom or reasoning. Clytemnestra in one of her arguments, laments, why her own dear daughter should be a sacrificial lamb, to redeem an irresponsible woman, who, rejected her marital bed for another. This, should have equally been the king's line of thought.

Agamemnon can be seen as a cruel father who lacks paternal emotion, love and mercy for a child of his loins. He has the quality of an irrational father, who throws away the life of a beautiful innocent daughter, in pursuit of an irresponsible sister-in-law. His action suggests that his brother's immediate family is of priority to him rather

than his. He values his brother's joy and peace more than his. Agamemnon exhibits the belief that he can afford to pay so dearly at his own detriment, in order to satisfy his brother, Menelaus.

He goes further and lies to Clytaemnestra that Iphigenia should be brought to Aulis, for a marital union with Achilles. This is a mere trick to have the child released to him and his cohorts. When Clytaemnestra comes to learn about the true situation of events, her pain becomes more aggravated. A household which makes lies, its bedrock is always in chaos, when the truth unfolds. When partners in marriage, do not involve their mates in decision-making or seek their opinions, they easily drive their family into turbulence. He takes a costly decision without the knowledge or opinion of his wife, and of course, has to pay back with his own life. The consequences of this occurrence, explain why adequate and effective communication is a very important ingredient for household unity.

Clytaemnestra joins the servant who comes to take Iphigenia to Aulis, full of joy to partake in her daughter's marriage. Through conversation, she becomes aware of her husband's secret plan to sacrifice their daughter. The servant discloses: "... He is going to slash the girl's neck with a sword.... his father is going to sacrifice your child to Artemis." ¹⁸ When it is time for the sacrifice, Agamemnon sends to the tent where Clytaemnestra and Iphigenia are, in further deception that the time for the marriage has come. He says:

Fetch the child from the house to join her father. The lustral waters are prepared and ready, as are the meal- cakes to throw in cleansing fire and the victims, which must be slain before the marriage ceremony (victims whose dark blood must gush forth for Artemis). ¹⁹

Agamemnon is a character built on deception, cunningness and lies, in order to achieve his aim. He is ironical in his speech. He is preparing Iphigenia for death not marriage. The sacrificial victim, he speaks about, is no other than his daughter. Unfortunately, the secret loom he has woven has been laid bare before his wife.

Aeschylus' account in the drama *Agamemnon*, through the character Clytaemnestra, informs us about the eventual sacrifice of Iphigenia, after Clytaemnestra

has murdered her husband, king Agamemnon. Clytaemnestra loathes her husband's action and thus guards her heart never to pardon him even after ten years.

Why once before did you not dare oppose this man? Who with as slight compunction as men butcher sheep, must sacrifice his child, and my own darling, whom my pain brought forth. He killed her for a charm to stop the Thracian wind!²⁰

Clytaemnestra complains that apart from the loss of her daughter through her husband, she suffered other unjust treatments in his hand. She recalls that he snatched her from her former husband, and killed her infant son for the man.

You married me against my will, you seized me by force and killed my former husband, Tantalus (son of Thyrses). My babe you reached rudely from my breast and crushed him to the ground beneath your tread.²¹

This portrays Agamemnon as a violent killer who joys in gory sight. He cares less what another feels. He is a selfish personality who achieves his aim by all means and at all costs. Being a king whose power is infinite and unquestionable, he employs violence in forcing Clytaemnestra into marriage. Absolute application of power comes into play in this situation. This means that absolute exercise of power and violence could coerce people to accept what they would reject, under normal circumstances. One may ask why Clytaemnestra should release her hand into marriage with a murderer, who robbed her at the onset, of a dear husband and son.

Agamemnon, we have to remember, is a powerful and wealthy king. It is difficult for a woman to make marital choice in the ancient world. The father of the family or guardian does the match making. The woman is an entity of a very humble status. Subsequently, it would be an act of disrespect, deviance or insubordination, for any woman to reject the hand of a king in marriage. Such a woman could be subjected to death sentence. If a father could have power of life and death over his possessions, which includes his wife and children, how much more a king over his subjects.

Obviously, Clytaemnestra refuses to cast off the heinous sacrifice from her heart. She still stands aloof for vengeance and justifies her action. She nurses no regrets

for bathing her hands with the blood of her husband. Concerning Agamemnon's destruction, she announces:

As one who catches fish, a vast voluminous net, that willed him round with endless wealth of woven folds; and then I struck him twice. Twice he cried out and groans; and fell limp. And as he lay, I gave a third and final blow ... I am jubilant. So enriched wine of wickedness this man stored in his house, and now returned, drains his own cursed cup to the last dregs... This is my husband, Agamemnon, now stone dead; this work, the work of my right hand, whose craftsmanship justice acknowledges.²²

The sacrifice of Iphigehia brings to memory the violent sacrifice of Polyxena; a young maiden, the daughter of king Priam of Troy and his consort, Hecuba. Hecuba and her daughter are amongst the war captives brought home by the Achaeans after the sack of Troy. The Achaeans sacrifice Polyxena to their gods in celebration of their victory over Troy, without considering the emotional trauma which the killing would elicit. A herald narrates to Hecuba the boldness, which Polyxena exhibits, and the way she is run through in the most barbaric manner. At the point of death she says: "You Greeks, who laid my city in ruins, I die willingly... . I will give my neck steadfastly to the sword ... he with sword ... cut through the channels; of breath."²³ Abraham in obedience to God's instruction, attempts to kill his son as a sacrifice to show and express his respect and love for God. "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."²⁴

Still on the family of Atreus, Helen's elopement with Paris provoked a great deal of emotional violence not only on her husband, Menelaus, but also on Agamemnon, and the entire Achaean world, who went to battle to have her restored back. It was the trouble, which Helen brewed, that led to familial chaos in Agamemnon's household. Helen's unholy act gave birth to the popular and long lasting Trojan War; which claimed the lives of skilful warriors such as Hector, Achilles, Ajax and others. The misery in the house of Menelaus extended to Hermione, his married daughter. Euripides in the play, *Andromache* presents her as a barren woman most hated and rejected by her husband who married another wife.²⁵

Euripides and Aeschylus present to us Helen, a woman whose passion for a lover supersedes her love for her husband, daughter and family. She could be likened to Clytaemnestra, her sister, whose passion for a lover equally strengthened, to kill her husband and disregard her children. Helen's attitude is contrary to the quality of an ideal mother who guards against any situation that can threaten or tear her family apart; a mother who holds her household as a primary possession of her life.

It is not an overstatement to reiterate that there are mothers who do not see any wrong in what Helen of Troy did and so practice it. The prototypes of Helen abide in the contemporary societies as there are a good number of women who elope with lovers and abandon their families for the preferred men either for the sake of money, or sexual satisfaction. Among the male folks also, exist men who abandon their wives and children for other women, who at times are other men's wives.

It is obvious that Atreus brings upon his family a curse that results into the destruction of this great family. Clytaemnestra presents sleet of reasons to justify the murder of her husband. No matter how cogent her explanations sound, the avengers of blood, according to Greek religion and belief will haunt her. They must get her punished to purify the land. Menelaus lays credence to the above statement as he states: "The woman who betrays her husband dies".²⁶ How and why Clytemnestra did not escape death penalty would be addressed in the later part of this chapter.

4.7 Sterility, Emotional Trauma and Violence in the Household

The motif of barrenness and rejection of the barren and the plot to eliminate a productive co-wife and her son, are some of the themes of the play, *Andromache*. The practice of whisking away a fruitless woman supports the Classical and Igbo ideal, which makes child bearing an important factor in constituting marriage. Hermione who is thrown away by her husband because of childlessness, together with her father, Menelaus, as an accomplice, designs a plan to get rid of her husband's slave-wife Andromache, together with her son. Andromache and her son are almost murdered but are saved by Peleus, her grand father-in-law. Hermione's threat to the lives of her husband's family members, attracts further hatred and immediate sack from the house:

...This house seems to cry aloud "Drive her out. The land of Phthia hates me. If my husband finds me here on his return from the oracle of Pheobus, he will make me die a criminal death. Or else I will become the slave of this bastard wife of his, whose mistress I used to be."²⁷

This shows that childlessness brings about instability in the family. Hermione bemoans her pitiable situation because she could not produce a child/children for her husband and his family. Her honour and respect were withdrawn due to this shortcoming. It is disheartening that the matron of the house, who instructs and directs slaves is removed from the fore front of her office and replaced with her slave-girl. It could make a woman take drastic vindictive actions to avenge ill treatment against her. Hermione in vengeance took part in the plot to murder her husband. Peleus emphatically attributed the death of his grandson to an evil wife, Hermione:

O marriage, marriage, that has destroyed my home, destroyed my city. Alas, alas! O that my family had never for the sake of children and heirs, involved itself with your wife, Hermione (name of evil), thus bringing death on you, my child!²⁸

Peleus is not wrong over the accusation because, Orestes, Hermione's cousin masterminds the plot with Hermione quite aware of it. Here, Peleus stresses the importance or necessity of children, when he reiterates in the above statement: "O that my family had never for the sake of children and heirs, involved itself with your wife..." In a simple term, Peleus decries that it is absolutely the desire to have children that prompts them to marry Hermione. This suggests that, apart from offsprings, there would have been no need for such an evil woman called Hermione.

Andromache, after the death of her husband, Hector, who lost his life in the Trojan battle, is given to Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, as war booty. Later, Neoptolemus marries Hermione, who accuses Andromache of bewitching and making her sterile. She attempts to kill her and her son but fails. To avoid her husband's fury, she escapes with Orestes who claims to have promised her marriage ever before.

This brief plot describes some of the conflicts and differences encountered in the home. It also reveals some of the contentions between co-wives. There are accusations, attacks, and threats over the lives of family members when there is misfortune. Those

who hold the threatened or the attacked, very dear to their hearts will resort to vengeance, irrespective of the closeness or relatedness with the family member, who is the culprit. Hermione accuses and plots to terminate Andromache and her son's life, due to her barrenness. She may or may not be right in her claim, but has gone ahead looking for life to exchange for her unfruitfulness. These are some of the conflicts which face the family.

4.8 Family Violence: Old Versus Young; Fathers Versus Sons

In the Classical world, the conflict and or violence between father and son, and brothers are some of the themes of tragedies and comedies. The beating of father or mother; patricide or matricide; strife between brothers or even killing each other, gear toward the breaking of family bonds. This piece focuses on father-son violence and conflict and strife between brothers. Some of the causes of father-son conflict could be associated with avarice, especially that which has to do with the son's demand to partake in the control of the family wealth or estate, deviant behaviours, difference in interests and opinions and tussle for authority.

Victor Ehrenberg explains that the motif of father-son conflict is common in the Greek comedy and a very paramount theme in the new Greek comedy. He points out that the fact that a father-son relation is given good position in comedy shows the importance of such relation in the family. Ehrenberg associates the rivalry and opposition between father and son as a change and revolution which could be either internal, external or both, which are characteristics of the age. There are often times squabbles between the young and the old, due to differences in age and way of perception of things and events. Older men observe and believe that the modern young men disregard them, "the lads get up and speak before the men."²⁹ The older men when entangled in the law suits by "young orators" are helpless against their new methods and sophisticated cleverness³⁰

A related comparison is seen between the old warriors of the Persian wars and the young profiteers of democracy. Equally, the effeminacy of the younger people and their manner of participation in politics, buttress the opposition between the generations. Again, the differences witnessed between the operation of the good

statesmen of the old and the bad politicians of today, was a dominant theme in Euripolis' *Demoi*.³¹ Invariably, this opposition and rivalry between the young and the old, crept into the households.

In the play, *The Frogs*, by Aristophanes, the beating of father and mother are crimes, which Heracles says are of the same magnitudes as the crime of perjury and offenses against hospitality.³² The chorus in the drama, *The Birds*, supports the above view when it comments, "father beating", for example you believe "a wicked shame."³³ The chorus explains that beating of one's father is a sacrilegious act which is not acceptable. Ehrenberg notes avarice and financial matters as common factors, which provoke father-son conflict. He says:

The parricide desires are prompted by pure avarice, and money plays the leading part also in the quarrel between Strepsiades and Phidippides. To "throttle" the father in a financial sense of course, is typical of the sons of our time.³⁴

Terence in the play, *The Brothers*, presents Demea and his two deviant sons, Aeschinus, and Ctesipho. He gave out Aeschinus to his own brother, Micio for adoption, but still monitors his upbringing. Demea lives in the countryside with Ctesipho, while Micio and Aeschinus live in Athens. Micio has irrational affection for his adopted son, whom he allows to keep mistresses or patronize whores. He finds it difficult to resist his demands. This upbringing is not in anyway right with Demea who disagrees with his brother, Micio. To Demea's complaint that Aeschinus, in one of his visits, breaks into a certain home, beats the father of the family, and abducts his young daughter, Micio replies: "Demea, it is no crime, believe me, for a young man to enjoy wine and women, no, and neither is it to break upon a door"³⁵

Demea is more disappointed that Aeschinus impregnates a young virgin and Ctesipho, on whom he is counting, is part of the abduction. It is all conflict between the old man, his brother and his two sons. Deviant behaviour among youths is a very common phenomenon in the family and the society at large. Youths develop deviant attitudes especially when they are not properly guided. Their environment equally influences them. Micio misguides his adopted son by allowing him go into "pleasures,"

which the youth is not able to handle. Aeschinus' uncle gives him unnecessary liberty, which becomes detrimental to his young age.

Obviously, it is important to place a certain degree of restrictions on youths, as a means of inculcating good behaviours in them. Such restrictions could equally build them up into becoming responsible men and women. Aeschinus, as young as he is, has learnt to sleep with a mistress and to impregnate a girl along the line. His unholy character influences his naive brother who is at the countryside farming with their father, and he joins him (Aeschnius) in abducting a girl. This is a typical example of peer influence and pressure. The unguided freedom given to this young man, shows moral decadence in the family which affects the state of morality in the larger society.

Alcestis is the name of one of Euripides' plays as well as the name of a character, the wife of Admetus the king of Pharae. One of the major themes in the play is built on conflict and severe disagreement between the king and his father who refuses to sacrifice his life for the king's. Apollo pronounces that the king must die except his life is exchanged with another. In perplexity, he approaches his father and mother to have their live exchanged with his, but they could not honour his request. It is his wife, Alcestis who decides to surrender her life in place of his. Admetus spits fire on his aged father when he comes to console him for his wife's demise:

(Shouting at him) Be gone, you and she that houses with you. Grow old childless, as you deserve, though your child is alive. Never will you come under the same roof with me. If it were necessary to renounce your paternal hearth, I will do so.³⁶

Admetus rejects his parents by cursing them to live as those who are barren, and warns them not to come to him. One could conclude from Admetus' outburst, that the familial cord which ties him and his family together is severed. According to him, even though it may not be possible to renounce their parenthood, it is possible not to have anything to do with them as long as breath remains in his nostrils. There is a clear pronouncement of abandonment of parents, to avenge the "wrong" done to him.

From Euripides' presentation, one realizes that he (Euripides) is talking about the decadence in the household setting, in which members find it difficult to make,

sacrifices on behalf of other members and not necessarily with their own lives. He is trying to portay the “looseness” of the bond, which holds the family together. It is, the blood tie and love, which should radiate that makes a member’s problem the problem of all and a member’s success the success of all. This suffices that when a good thing happens in the life of one, all rejoices and in time of sorrow all mourns together.

The play, *The Mother-in-law (Hecyra)* by Terence is a bee hive of conflict and violence between family members. Laches pressurizes his young son, Pamphilus into marrying a girl he does not love. He prefers to be left alone to continue a relationship with a mistress, which to his father will not be of any advantage to the family. He wants him to marry and bear children. This is revealed by Parmeno, Laches’ elderly house slave, who narrates:

Pamphilus was just as much in love with Bacchis as ever when his father began to beg him to take a wife. The old man used the same arguments as all fathers do... The boy refused flat at first, but when his father pressed him still harder he began to waver between his duties to his parents and his love. In the end he got fed up with being pestered, and let the old man have his way and fix a marriage with a daughter of our next- door neighbour here.³⁷

The marriage could not thrive because Pamphilus is not committed to it. He is struggling to build or develop a degree of passion, but is distracted by the death of a relation, which made him leave home for Imbros, to take care of the relation’s property. This incident paves way for him to abandon his wife “untouched” (leaving her virginity intact). Although Pamphilus leaves behind his wife Philumena, his parents take care of her. Sostrata often tries to draw her close, as her own daughter. She aspires to keep her company or chat her up in order to abate her emotional distress. Philumina never appreciates this gesture because she dislikes the mother- in- law. The moment she notices her, she flees. At the long run, when she feels pestered, she runs to her parents. Laches could hold no other person responsible but his wife. He speaks as though an eye witness to the incident. Angrily, he declares:

Heaven and earth, what a tribe they are! In league the lot of them. Every blessed woman with the same like and dislikes as all the other, and not a single one can you find who’ll

show up a different mentality from the rest! Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, they are all of one mind- in hating each other. And they're all of a piece, too, in setting themselves against their men-folk, the same damned obstinacy in every one. I'd say they'd all learned their cussedness at the same school, and if there is such a school, I can tell you who's head-mistress: my wife.³⁸

The above insult and accusation notwithstanding, Sostrata goes to visit her run- away daughter- in-law, at her parents' house; but feels sorely bitter that her husband accuses her of sending the girl away. Concerning this accusation Sostrata laments:

There is no justice in the way our men detest all women alike, simply on account of a few wives whose behaviour brings disgrace on us all. I swear to heaven I'm innocent of what my husband accuses me- but it is no easy matter to clear myself when they've got into their heads that all mother- in- laws are unkind. I know I'm not: I've always treated the girl as my own daughter, and I just can't think how this could happen to me. All I can do is wait and hope my son's return.³⁹

There are chains of violent encounters between members of Laches and Phidipus families. Pamphilius is at loggerhead with his father who accuses his mother unjustly and wants to send her away to the country side and have them separated. The quarrel is sharp and noisy that the elderly slave has to intervene. He tries to bring serenity to the family when he advises Pamphilius thus: "Children loose their temper over little things because they have so little- self control, and these are like children-no sound sense at all. It may have taken no more than a word to start this quarrel."⁴⁰

Sostrata's statements in the above quotation express the resentment of women by men. It shows a patriarchal society in which the woman is treated disdainfully. She is blamed for every mishap which the family suffers. She is the author and brewer of trouble in the family. The man believes that her sense of reasoning is quite myopic and for that, cannot pass sound judgment. This is the common impression of men over the woman both in Ancient and African cultures. However women in the present dispensation are making a clarion call for women's liberation. Their efforts have borne some fruits but more satisfactory results are expected.

There are contentions and noisy quarrels in Phidipus' house. Philumena his daughter is sexually molested and that results into pregnancy which she and her mother conceal from the father of the family, Phidipus. When Phidipus comes to know about the development, he feels despised, thus an explosion of severe misunderstanding between him, his wife Myrrina, and their daughter - the central figure in the drama. Phidipus designs and tells Laches a lie which frees his daughter from being an adulterer. He lies that she comes home with Pamphilius' pregnancy. Further violence springs up as Laches impresses it upon his son Pamphilius to claim the ownership of the baby boy at birth. Pamphilius leaves his father's presence in rage. Through Bacchis, Pamphilius' former mistress, it is discovered that Pamphilius is the stranger who assaults Philumena and impregnates her. The feud is reconciled and the play ends on a happy note.

This comedy exhibits the myopic thinking of the inexperienced youth. Out of youthful exuberance Pamphilius prefers a continual "enjoyment" with a courtesan rather than to marry and have children. His father having wealth of experience about life knows that marriage is the gate way to procreation and thus insists that his son must marry. Most of the violent occurrences in the families represented in this play could be attributed to this youth. The violent experiences of his parents are the consequences of abandoning his wife.

In the same vein, the conflict at his in-law's family is the aftermath of his wife's going home and exposure to a stranger who raped her. The assault suffered by Philumena depicts a degenerated society in which the woman is subjected to sexual attacks. It reveals the insecurity of women in a society whose norms are no longer respected. All the chaos in both families centres on the irrational and uncalculated behaviour of Pamphilius. More critical examination points out a number of secondary factors which equally generated conflict in these homes. These include wrong accusation of a family member; attempt to separate some members from others (especially when they have special attachment); and lack of adequate communication amongst members of the family.

4.9 Family Violence and Leadership Position

In Classical literature, violence between brothers usually rest on share of household property, jealousy over a brother's possession and tussle over who takes the scepter of power in dynastic families. *The Phocian Women*, one of Euripides' dramas, offers an illustrative household tussle for power. Oedipus gouges out his eyes after realizing the incestuous marriage with his mother; his sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, shut him up in an enclosure to have his kingdom shared. The miserable Oedipus curses that his sons can only divide his kingdom with sword. Afraid of this curse, Eteocles and his brother agree that they should not live together in order to avert the efficacy of the curse pronounced by their father. In this regard, one should go on a willing exile, while the other reigns for a year and the other returns from exile to take his turn of the reign.

When Eteocles takes over office, he refuses to leave the throne. Polyneices, who married king Adrastus' daughter insists on revenge, and hence goes to Argos, and brings Argive forces against his brother and his kingdom. Jocasta, who is distressed over her sons' rift, reminds Eteocles the elder son, about the ills of acquiring wealth in the wrong way, and the merits of trust-worthiness. She wants him to give heed to her words because her old eyes have bought her more experiences:

My son Eteocles, old age is not a total misery. Experience helps. Sometimes we can speak wiser than the young ... why do you honour so much tyrannic power and think that unjust happiness is great? It's fine to be looked up to? But it's empty. You want to have much wealth within your halls, much trouble with it? ⁴¹

None of these sons could listen to their mother's pleas but goes headlong to fight with each other in an organized single battle in which they killed themselves. Their mother, who could not stand the violence and loss, takes her life:

But their mother, when she looked on this disaster snatched a sword off the corpses and she did a dreadful deed. Straight through her neck drove the steel. So now lies among her own. In death her arms cast about them both. ⁴²

Eteocles' greedy behaviour reminds one of some world leaders, who are very reluctant to leave political positions even when they have completed their tenures in the

office. It is ridiculous that some would want to influence the constitution through their power of incumbency, or forcefully elongate their stay in office. The led or the masses who are discontented with the trend of events but cannot carry arms as Polyneices did in this drama, pick their own sword - "the pen" to attack such leaders. Unfortunately, most journalists who fight this armless battle do pay exorbitantly for their "unruly boldness". In some occasions, they are jailed, kidnapped or eliminated in one way or the other.

In African countries, the elongation of stay in office has brought the activities of the rebels into being, and this has led to series of wars which have claimed millions of lives and properties of invaluable magnitude. Furthermore, the strife and the desperate passion to acquire political positions have resulted in the assassination of prominent Nigerians. The assassinations of Chief Bola Ige, Mr. Funsho Williams, Dr. Daramola, and a host of others, are insinuated to be politically associated murders.

Family violence could be provoked by jealousy, hatred, victory and achievements made by a family member. Also, failures and feelings of inferiority complex on one's part can elicit jealousy against a successful member of the family. The consequences of the above could lead a member of the family to design a heinous plan to injure or eliminate such member in order to terminate his life, progress or dreams. The suitable explanation to this attitude or action shows a breakdown of order in the family dyads or family relationships. Naturally, the normal phenomenon is to witness a family member prosper in good health and even in other endeavours. The ideology of seeking the fall or failure of the other person is ridiculous and unnatural.

A typical instance of the above illustration could be drawn from the biblical literature, in the lives of Cain and his brother, Abel. Cain kills his brother, because God accepts his brother's offering and rejects his. Out of jealousy, Cain murders his brother Abel, whose offering is acceptable before God.

Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering. But He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell... . Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him.⁴³

Cain's reaction and deed simply explains that jealousy exists within the household and among family members, who come even from the same womb. He is overwhelmed by envy of a brother who is more righteous than he is in the sight of God. Cain is not happy to see his brother favoured by God, the Almighty, a privilege he could not have. Thus, out of anger and jealousy, he decides to cut his life short to stop further opportunities, favours or progress. In like manner, Joseph's brothers had him cast into a pit to perish with his dreams:

Then they (Joseph's brothers) said to one another, "look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'some wild beast has devoured him'. We shall see what will become of his dreams!"... . So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic... . Then they took him and cast him into a pit.⁴⁴

Joseph has dreams which, literally interpreted, shows God's plan to elevate or make him more honourable than his brothers, even though he is the youngest of them all. Joseph with simplicity of heart reveals his dream to his brothers, having the conviction that they will be happy with him, since his promotion will equally affect his family positively. Unfortunately they utilize the information he places at their table to hatch a secret plan to terminate the lofty future ahead.

The incidents, which take place between Joseph and his brothers expressly speaks about the reality of open and secret strife among family members in which parents, sons, daughters and other family members often stand at eyeball to eyeball. They treat themselves as worst enemies. It is good to note that, enmity is most dangerous when it is a secret one. For instance, in Joseph's case, he thinks that his brothers are still his friends but is ignorant of the fact that they have become subtle or hidden enemies.

In the study of Cain and Abel, the punishment and curse for the shedding of the blood of a family member is re-emphasized. The judgment and punishment for Cain is represented in God's words as He fumes: "the voice of your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. "So now you are cursed from the earth ... fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth"⁴⁵

Similarly, Atreus, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes and a host of others who tamper with household blood suffer under a curse, which eventually destroys them. It is worthy to note that, if none of the family members arises to avenge the kindred blood, God does. The erinyes, the traditional avengers of murder, perjury and grave wrongs, do avenge such blood according to Ancient Greek belief. They are champions of kins folk blood, especially parents'. They are guardians of justice and they are thought of, as, the causers of ruinous mental blindness.

4.10 Abandonment, Child Exposure, Infanticide, and Miscellaneous Household Offenses against the Child

In Ancient Greek and Roman cultures, the motif of infanticide, child exposure, contraceptive, abortion, sexual abuse and other related issues are some of the violence which the child suffers in the hands of his household members, especially parents. Children of both sexes suffer exposure but the daughters are mostly affected. Children are usually exposed as a result of deformity, social and economic reasons. Consulting the oracle to determine the future of the child especially the son, is a common practice in the ancient Rome and Greek. The outcome of the oracular message if negative endangers the child to exposure (casting the baby away to get rid of it). The motif of infant exposure is common among ancient mythographers. Persus, Oedipus, and Moses were suspected displacers who suffered exposure to allay the fears of those who exposed or caused their exposure.

The injury of infanticide or exposure dates back to the primitive Greek and Roman laws; *ius vitae et necis* which accords the father of the family with the authority of power of life and death over all children still under his *manu*.⁴⁶ Fathers often nurse fear concerning the character of a child or what he would turn out to become in future. After the murder of Agrippina by her son, Nero, an unknown person exposed his child in the middle of the forum with an inscription, which he had written, "I will not raise you lest you cut your mother's throat."⁴⁷ In mythology, there are mothers such as Alcmena, Thetis and Hera who abandoned their sons: Heracles, Achilles and Haephestus, respectively.

Adults also subject children to sexual molestation. Slave children especially, suffered in the hands of their masters, they were vulnerable to sexual and other forms of exploitation. These handsome boys who took care of the sexual whims of their male or female owners were called *delicae*.⁴⁸ In the same vein, first born children were also physically and sexually abused.⁴⁹

Child exposure was a common practice during the obscure ancient period; however such barbaric ill treatment against the child is no longer prevalent in the contemporary Greek and Roman cultures and even other cultures of the world that witnessed such acts. The emergence of Christianity, civilization and government enactments which create awareness over the rights of children, have rendered such treatments extinct.

4.11 Mother and Sons; Victims of Mad Father

Another issue of mother-son relationship could be extracted from another interesting drama work of Euripides. The play, *Heracles*, mainly centers on the labour of Heracles, and the ruin of his household. Euripides carefully creates this tragic piece to arouse pity in the minds of his readers. Following strictly the trend of the drama, one is meant to see Megara and her sons suffer in the hand of the wicked Lycus; and further in the hand of her own husband, and the father of her sons.

Heracles marries Megara, the daughter of King Creon, and three sons are the fruit of that union. Amphitrayon is the father of Heracles. According to Amphitrayon he shared his wife with Zeus to beget Heracles. Heracles' father is banished as a consequence of murder. When his son comes of age, he decides to bring his father back to his native land. The condition to affect this is a mandate to carry out rigorous labour, after which, his father will be granted freedom.

Heracles has successfully completed all other tasks but, a more terrible one awaits him. The only solution to the remaining labour takes him to the Hades, the land of shadows of death. The long absence of Heracles largely contributes to the suffering of Megara and her sons. A certain Lycus who is not of Theban nativity attacks Thebes, murders Creon, the king of Thebes, the father of Megara. Heracles, being away, Lycus is not challenged. This tyrant still not satisfied, threatens time without number to kill

Magara, her sons and Heracles' aged father. He denies them of their properties, all the good things of life and subjects them to abject poverty:

But now his glory is gone down in death, and you and I, you old man will soon be dead, and with us, these small sons of Heracles whom I ward and nestled under wing first one, the another, bursts in tears, and asks, "mother, where has father gone? What is he doing? When will he come back?" Then, too small to understand, they ask again for "father". I put them off with stories; but when the hinges creaks, they will all leap up to run and throw themselves at their father's feet.⁵⁰

It is necessary to note the maternal role of Megara from this episode. In spite of the hopeless and harsh situation, she deserts, neither her sons, nor her aged father-in-law, to ease off tension from all the complexities, as some irresponsible mothers would do. She stoops and has enough time to attend to her children. She exhibits a reasonable degree of patience to answer the inquisitive children, who ceaselessly inquire of their father's whereabouts. Megara never uses harsh words or aggression to scare them from boring her with disturbances. It takes only a good mother to take this step, to bear her cross when the going becomes thorny and unrosy.

Evidence, experiences and studies, have shown that there are mothers who, during unfriendly situations in the family, decide to bolt away, leaving behind their young ones. Such women may wish or remain single to "enjoy" their lives without having family responsibilities to tie them down. In support of the above premise, Sophocles in his drama *Electra*, shows how Clytaemnestra murders her husband, Agamemnon, whom she feels offends her; marries Aegisthus, and abandons her children, whom she feels would disrupt her "joy" in her new marriage.

Some wives would, for the fact that their husbands are no longer financially buoyant, decide to quit their matrimonial homes. Nevertheless, there are uncountable reasons why women choose to shun their marital homes. Whatever the case may be, the point being sieved out is that Megara stands by her children, tending and gathering them to herself. Wherever she is, there they would be. This fact is drawn from what she says about them. "...these small sons of Heracles whom I ward and nestle under wings."⁵¹

The above statement shows that, as the bird covers and hides the chicks under its wings, so Megara gives her children complete care and protection. The evidence of her love is further disclosed - "I love my children. How not love these boys born of my labours? I am in terror of their death. And yet how base a thing it is when a man will struggle with necessity."⁵²

The immeasurable degree of Megara's love is also displayed when the cruel king, usurper of Theban throne, Lycus, wants to kill her and her sons, she asks for just one thing. "I beg you, grant me this one request, let me adorn my children for their death".⁵³

Even at a critical time, when inevitable death is looming, she has the courage to ask of her tormentor the permission to adorn her sons. This demonstrates boldness sparked off by love. Fortunately, Megara, her sons and her father-in-law, all escape Lycus' death verdict, owing to the incidental arrival of Heracles, who frees his family and destroys Lycus instead.

It is a certified fact that Zeus, Heracles' patron god protected him through out the difficult enterprise, but Hera the ever jealous wife of Zeus, labels him a son begotten out of her husbands' adulterous lifestyle; thus hates him severely and could not watch him thrive. On this note, the goddess afflicts him with madness, in order to have him and his household ruined. It is pitiable to learn that Megara and her sons do not meet their death in the hand of cruel Lycus, but in the hand of the husband and father of the family; who moments earlier, delivered them from the cold claws of death.

Out of the frenzy, Heracles hauls his arrows on his children, mistaking them for his enemy's sons. After the murder, the madness infested Heracles is gripped by sleep. He is bound with a rope and tethered to a pillar. When he wakes up and comes back to his senses, he sees the irreparable and irredeemable havoc. "Why then am I so sparing of this life, born the killer of my dearest sons? Let me avenge my children's murder: let me hurl myself down from some sheer rock, or drive the whetted sword against my side."⁵⁴

Heracles is grieved beyond measure. He recalls all the heroic deeds his arms performed which is at last crowned with ruin. He groans that no man will accept him as

friend, no city will accommodate him; the earth may refuse him to tread on it, and even rivers and seas will cry out against his crossing over them. In this bitter state of woe, his friend, Theseus comes from Athens, consoles and leads him to Athens for purification. In spite of all odds, it is realized that Megara and her sons enjoyed a relationship worthy of emulation until fate played a destructive role in their lives and shattered it.

Unfortunately, Heracles is one of those, who suffered in the hand of the immortals who punish mortals without iota of mercy as earlier mentioned. Hera is a goddess who sorely detests any relationship between her husband and any other woman. She is ever heartless in punishing such women should she find them in her trap. In the same vein, any son born out of Zeus' lechery is equally dealt with. No wonder Heracles is served with an overdose of Hera's treat for being a son of Zeus' paramour.

4.12 Strains and Rancour in Mother –Son Relationship: A Classical Point of View

Observations, interactions, interviews, literary works consulted, and other sources visited, reveal that mother-son bond is a very strong one. Mother-son tie seems to be hard to untie. Works both ancient and contemporary, show that a good number of mothers and their sons hold themselves very close, and dear to their hearts. For instance, from the ancient works, we learn that Danae and her son, Persus, had a cordial relationship, likewise Cornelia and her three sons – the Gracchi brothers; Olympias and her son, Alexander the great, (Livia and Tiberus; Agrippina and Nero) to some reasonable extent; and a host of others.

It is important to realize that some of the harmonious or affectionate relationships which mothers and their sons enjoy could be affected and brought to a total break down. The truth of the matter remains that mother-son relationship could be characterized by violent acts such as battering, abandonment, rejection, restriction, possessiveness, intimidation, and, at worst, murder. These strains and distortions in mother-son relationship is what this part of study addresses.

Decadence in mother-son relationship could occur at any stage of the son's growth. It could be while he is an infant or a little child. At this stage, he can experience rejection or abandonment from his mother. As adults, both can abandon or reject each

other. At this stage too, both can experience conflict or violence of diverse nature from one to the other.

4. 13 Jealousy and Possessiveness in Mother-Son Relationship

According to *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, “jealous” means suspicion of rivalry, or zealous for something. The condition of being jealous in a relationship simply implies a feeling of fear, anger and unhappiness that somebody you like or love is showing interest in someone else or someone else is showing interest in him or her. “Jealousy,” the noun form of the adjective “jealous” is the feeling of being jealous. The same source has this definition for the verb “to possess.” However, “to possess” *possidere* means “to hold as property.” Possessiveness in relationship is an act of holding strongly on somebody whom one loves, demanding total attention or love, not wanting the person to be independent; not liking to share the person’s love and care with others; showing that something belongs to somebody.⁵⁵

In addition, being jealous or possessive in relationships, shows that one of the partners in relationship tries to express a greater degree of love for the other, and would not want to lose the person to another. It is an act of building protection to one with whom one is in a relationship. Jealousy and possessiveness could equally be born out of expression of authority or power over a partner in relationship. Nonetheless, in as much as jealousy and possessiveness in mother-son relationship suggest not wanting to share a loved one with another, or the fear of not wanting to lose a loved one to another person. It, at the same time, shows influential “power” to have the “weaker” in total submission to the will of the “superior”.

The relationship between Agrippina and Nero is partly characterized by Agrippina’s jealousy and possessiveness over Nero. She feared Nero’s relationships with women, especially those who were more beautiful or elegant than herself. An act of jealousy recorded against her was her refusal to allow Nero to marry Poppaea Paulina, a high societal lady; rather she was forcing it on him to recall Octavia, whom he had earlier discarded. It was neither for Nero’s interest nor Octavia’s, that Agrippina fought. She saw in Octavia, a woman who could remain ever submissive to her. Again, Agrippina did not approve of Nero’s relationship with a slave girl, Acte. She claimed to

protect Nero's image and personality by stopping the marriage which would spark off criticism against his personality as an emperor. These were some of her techniques to consolidate her position in Nero's heart. It was Agrippina's possessiveness and other similar behaviours that drove her relationship with Nero into a state of flux.

Jealousy and possessiveness can generate conflict, discontentment or violence in mother-son relationship. There are situations where each would see the possessiveness or jealousy as an infringement on one's freedom. The mother, out of possessiveness may not want to see her son's friends of the opposite sex. In some occasions, it could be that, she wants to protect her young son from putting any of those girls into family way. In the bid to protect him, she could choose to over do it by applying the wrong techniques. In that light, the young man can assess her actions as being odd. He could show resentment or dissatisfaction over his mother's behaviour.

It is not only mothers who are possessive or jealous over a loved son. Sons equally are jealous over their mothers, especially their bodies. This particular aspect of possessiveness will be treated under the subheading, physical violence against the mother, later. Jealousy or possessiveness over the mother equally leads to violence.

4.14 Abandonment, Rejection and Neglect in Mother-Son Relationship

The problem of abandoning a son, or a son rejecting his mother, is part of strains and distortions in mother-son relationship, which this study covers. This sub-heading looks at abandonment, neglect and rejection in the classical literature and other relevant sources. It tries to find out why a womb which houses a child for nine months or there about should summon courage to discard him or her. Again, why would a son abandon a mother who has fought his course relentlessly and made him what he is? It also tries to find out whether reconciliation is possible after the rejection or abandonment. It tries to find out who abandons or rejects and who is the abandoned or the rejected.

Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology defines "to abandon" as giving up to the control of another. "Abandonment" is the noun form of the verb "to abandon." This definition invariably refers act of leaving a person, thing or place with no intention of returning. From the same source, "to reject" *reicere* means to refuse to have, recognize or to discard a person or thing. This can be explained to mean denying a person or an

animal enough care or affection; while “to neglect” *negligere* means to disregard somebody or a thing and failing to take care of such.⁵⁶ According to these three definitions, the person who abandons leaves the presence of the abandoned. In the case of rejection, the rejected and the person who rejects could be together in the same place, probably under the same roof, but sufficient care and affection are denied the rejected. Invariably, “to neglect” means a total refusal to give care. These definitions have something in common, and that is, denial of appropriate degree of care.

It is necessary to employ the evidence available in ancient sources in order to illustrate this motif and examine the factors that lead to the issues raised, their consequences and resolutions or reconciliations if possible.

4.15 Hidden Treasure amidst Rubbles

The Greek myth of Hera and her son, Haephestus, is rich with maternal rejection and punishment. Hesiod talking about Hera, mentions that she produced Haephestus without aid from any male.⁵⁷ According to Slater, Hesiod is of the opinion that Haephestus is a son produced out of anger. His existence is due to parental strife and could also be attributed to Hera’s insubordination. His existence comes as a result of highly narcissistic attitude.⁵⁸

Haephestus is an extension of Hera, a demonstration of her parity with Zeus, who bears Athena without intercourse. In comparison with the bright-eyed Athena, he is weak, ugly and crippled – a living testimony of her (Hera’s) inferiority to Zeus. His appearance ridicules Hera’s maternal vanity and sorrowfully she laments:

See apart from me Zeus has given birth to bright-eyed Athena who is fair most among all the blessed gods. But my own son Haephestus who I bare was a weakling among all blessed gods and shrived of feet, whom I myself took in my hands and cast out so that he fell in the great sea. Had the goddess not saved him, he would have suffered death in the hands of his own mother.⁵⁹

Hera, being disappointed in her intention, accuses Thetis of rescuing a child she has willingly sacrificed unto death. Haephestus, without mincing words, lauds and expresses his appreciation to Thetis who saved him from the claws of death. It is glaring

that Hera hates Haephestus due to his disability and ugly look. She considers that a disabled child will not make achievements or thrive in life. It is reasonable to get rid of him immediately. It is of no use rearing a child who will perpetually remain a liability to the family. She believes that good or pretty looks is a vital instrument for success. Thus, ugly son is irritating and cannot be tolerated. However, her views are proved wrong when Haephestus becomes the most sought after amongst blacksmiths.

Hera's unfriendly attitude to her son takes a dramatic turn when Haephestus becomes a skilled craftsman under Thetis' care. Haephestus' occupation itself satisfies the needs since it is not befitting for him to serve as an object of his mother's display, he alternatively creates objects, which will substitute in this regard.⁶⁰ Haephestus is a man of courage. He did not allow his deformity to limit or constitute a barrier to his life. More so, he did not allow the humiliation and rejection he suffered at infancy or his mother's hatred to deter him from making progress. Though crippled and weak, as Slater discloses, he aspires and becomes a very famous craftsman. Hera seeing the feeble, ugly, impotent, unpleasant and crippled son whom she attempts to kill, becomes a figure to reckon with, she immediately institutes reconciliation and reinstates him to Mount Olympus, the abode of the gods. Hence their relationship becomes cordial.

Hera's quick reconciliation exercise shows that she is one who reaps where she has not sown. Haephestus becomes what he is, under the care of Thetis. She is amongst those people who cling on people only when they are successful. This class of people will like to dine and wine with one, but will not want to drink or eat from the person's cup or plate of sorrow. Hera would like to eat and enjoy the proceeds from a hard rocky soil made fertile by another hand. The singular act she exhibits makes her a failure in her maternal role. Haephestus could not hesitate to show "kindness" to his mother and gives her counsel after their reconciliation. He plays a protective role in her life and remains gentle in his dealings with her. In book one of *Iliad*, he is entreating and counselling his mother to do things which will be pleasant to her husband instead of quarreling with him:

Haephestus, the renowned smith rose up to speak among them, to bring comfort to his beloved mother, Hera of the white arms: "... and I entreat my mother, though she herself

understands it, to be ingrating toward our father, Zeus, that no longer our father may scold her...”⁶¹

The applaudable role which Haephestus plays in his mother's life and her reunion with Zeus does not suggest that Haephestus never attacked his mother. Slater cites Pausinias who reveals an act of aggression towards his mother, concerning his strange birth, and revenge measures for his early rejection. Haephestus cunningly gives his mother a golden throne on which she sits, only to realize that she has been imprisoned until she confesses his true birth story. Another version of the story says she promises him Aphrodite's hand in marriage before he could release her. The strategy which he employs, to bind and immobilize his mother is a suitable model of revenge for a crippled man like him.⁶² Hera's act of casting off her son is not a strange phenomenon either in the ancient or in the contemporary time. Nowadays, such cases abound. Male and female children alike are cast or thrown away by their mothers for various reasons. Fortunate ones among these children are picked up from the refuse dumps, streets, gutters, bushes or hidden corners and are sent to charity homes while the unfortunate ones are picked up and used for rituals, serve other unimaginable functions or die off.

4.16 All that Glitters is not Gold

Ares is another son of Hera and Zeus. He represents all Haephestus could not be. He is virile, aggressive, swift and uncrippled. His mother passionately embraces him because he is good to look at – a substantial contrast of the ugly Haephestus. Hera later loses interest and rejects him at maturity. He becomes an object of his mother's attack due to his unsatisfactory behaviour. Hera, of late, discovers in Ares, an unstable, inconsistent and unreliable son. He sabotages his people and buys them an enemy's defeat. Ares' attitude in the sight of the Trojan War provokes his mother's further hatred. Hera perceives how the Argives are perishing in the strong encounter, immediately speaks to Pallas, reminding him that if they should watch the cursed Ares, the word of promises which they (Hera and Pallas) has given to Menelaos, that is, going back home after the sack of Ilium, will not be a reality.

Furthermore, Hera is furious with Ares due to his unruly behaviour and aggression, which is about making her a liar before Menelaos, whom she has assured of

victory. She deems it sin unforgiven to see her own son destroy or bring about the destruction of the Achaians. Thus, she appeals to Zeus for permission to take punitive action against him:

... Hera stopping her horses, spoke to Zeus... father Zeus, are you not angry with Ares for violent acts, from killing so many and such good Achaian warriors for no reason and out of due order to grieve me? Father Zeus, would you be angry with me if I were to smite Ares with painful strokes and drive him out of the fighting.⁶³

Zeus, the father of gods and men subsequently gives approval to Hera's request and advises her to employ Athena for maximum results. "Go to it then, and set against him the spoiler Athena, who beyond others is the one to visit pains upon him".⁶⁴ Zeus' recommendation sounds as though he has seen Athena mercilessly punish immortals as well as mortals. His blunt response shows that Ares is not a son of his interest, and his leniency he cannot plead. When eventually Athena attacks and strikes Ares, he runs to Zeus the father, complaining bitterly of the parental favour which Athena enjoys always:

It is your fault we fight, since you brought forth this maniac daughter accursed, whose mind is fixed forever on unjust action for all the rest, as many as are gods on Olympus, are obedient to you, and we all say nothing and you do nothing to check this girl, letting her to go free since yourself you begot this child of perdition... my swift feet took me away otherwise, I should long be lying there in pain among the stark and dead men...⁶⁵

The complaint which has the tone of report from a child jealous of another or a child who wishes a father to stage an action against his bully, could not produce any positive effect, rather it aggravates Zeus' anger and blames. He (Zeus) demonstrates the bitterness in his out burst hence:

Do not sit beside me and whine, you double- faced liar, to me you are most hateful of all gods who hold Olympus. forever quarrelling is dear to your heart, wars and battles. truly the anger of Hera your mother is grown out of all hands nor gives around; and try as I may I am broken by her arguments, and it is by her impulse, I think you are suffering all this.⁶⁶

Zeus' fury in this episode further summarizes the personality of Ares and how indecent his character appears to his parents and other gods. The relationship between Hera and her sons is a fertile ground for important lessons, especially in domestic and social circles. Haephestus as earlier mentioned is physically ugly and incapacitated. These disabilities could not obstruct or hinder him from becoming a success. He is able to discover the skill in him and develops it to the fullest. Thus the objects he is able to fashion as a renowned craftsman, made him very relevant.

Hesiod comments his ingenuity in ironcraft as follows: "Of iron, which is strongest of all things, but can be conquered by the blazing fire... and melts under Haephestus' clever hands."⁶⁷ It is vital to point out that, a weak, crippled person is the one capable of working with iron the strongest of all objects. Hesiod describes his hands as "clever hands." His hands are able to transform iron into various weapons or equipment. In *Iliad* book eight, Homer refers to him as... "The renowned smith of strong arms... ." ⁶⁸ It is believed that mothers are proud of successful son or sons who are achievers as could be seen in Hera's case. However, it is not only mothers but family members also associate and celebrate with their members who distinguished themselves. Generally, human beings like to identify with success rather than failure.

Contrarily, at the initial stage, Hera prefers Ares who is all that Haephestus could not be. He is virile, swift and good looking, but turns out to be a disappointment to Hera. This evidence supports the saying that "all that glitters is not gold." In this work, it could be seen that a handsome son fails while the despised, ugly one becomes an achiever. The impression that beautiful people do not make it is not the point being established, rather what transpires between Hera and her sons depicts that beauty should not be the yard stick for measuring what one will become in life. More so, physical beauty is not a symbol of good character or moral decency. It is also learnt that a mother can decide and take drastic action against a son or daughter whose character is incomparably bad. Hera is deeply affected by her son's betrayal and deceptive role. ⁶⁹ Thus he becomes the most hated son whom, she hands over for severe punishment.

4.17 Fear Induced Rejection

Heracles' mortal father is Amphitryon. In Greek mythology, the existence of intimate passionate relationship between mortals and immortals (gods and men) is common. Thus, the conception of Heracles results from a marathon intercourse between Zeus and Heracles' mother Alcmene, in the absence of her husband.⁷⁰

Ovid captures a systematic narration of the ordeal which Alcmene went through before she could bring forth Heracles and his twin brother, Iphicles. She quickly identifies Hera as an arch-enemy rather than a friend, because she prevails over her delivery and she got stuck in labour for several days and nearly perished:

Today, I feel once more the pangs of labour, seven days seven nights I suffered, sick and weary, raised arms to heaven, crying for Lucina, with her two goddesses - midwives, to come help me, and she did come, but with a mind corrupted by Juno's hate. She heard my groans, and watched me; sitting here by that altar near the door way, she crossed her knees, and laced her hands together, and she spoke constricting charm, I pushed and struggled, cursed Jove's ingratitude, wanted to die, screamed so that even stones were moved to pity, and other mothers came to try to help me, prayed, urged me to keep trying. One of them Galathis, ... saw there was something wrong and knew that Juno was working mischief... Galathis went and came and saw the goddess sitting there on the altar, with crossed knees, the hands laced tight together and she spoke:Whoever you are, congratulate my lady! Her son is born, her prayer is heard. The goddess leaped up, at that, and loosed her hands, and I was likewise loosed of my burden.⁷¹

Had Galathis not tricked Hera, who leaped up and Alcmene's delivery enhanced, she (Alcmene) would have remained in agony or die in the process. The ever vindictive Hera, would not see Galathis go free for fooling and deceiving her, she made forelegs develop out of Galathis' arms and she began to walk on four like an animal.

Hera's inhibitive attack on Alcmene paints a picture of what is obtainable in our society, where some women cannot deliver their babies after nine months. In the same manner, some barrens point accusing fingers and nurse suspicion that some evil hearted individuals have shut their wombs from conceiving. Similarly, some people hold that

their woes are caused by people who do not mean good for them. For instance, there are people who believe that their destinies are snatched, tied or locked up. Thus, people go about accusing not only their enemies but also parents, siblings, relations, friends and close associates.

The question which arises is why should Alcmena abandon her infant son Heracles, taking into consideration her agony before he could come forth? The answer is not far fetched, several women who respond to Zeus' amorous advances, has Hera punitively attacked. Evidently, it is the fear of Hera, the antagonistic and oppressive wife of Zeus that forces Alcmena to cast her son away. Concerning fear, the Holy Scripture, has this to say: "Fear involves torment."⁷² Invariably, fear brings worry and anxiety. Alcmena having been tormented by fear feels that getting rid of the child begotten from a relationship with Hera's husband would alleviate her horror.

Konstan in a Lecture he delivered at University of Ibadan, titled; "*Do Animals have Emotions?*" *Views from Ancient Greece*, says, we fear those who are more powerful than us; and we fear when we notice that there is danger ahead.⁷³ Alcmena did not consider the fear of Hera in isolation but have witnessed the practical havoc which Hera perpetrated against those women, who had amorous relationship with her husband. She (Hera) weaved a plan which destroyed Semele who had a son, Dionysus, for Zeus.⁷⁴ Zeus turned a young beautiful maiden Io, to whom he was making sexual advances into a heifer, all to avert Hera's naggings and suspicions. Hera being an unforgiving woman, set Argus (a creature with one hundred eyes) over the maiden to make sure Zeus does not transform her back into the beautiful maiden she was.⁷⁵

Zeus who knows and sees all, notes that the life of his son, Heracles, is in danger, designs a plan in which Athena tricks Hera and had Heracles rescued and saved. At Zeus' instigation, Athena takes Hera for a casual stroll, as they saunter along, she draws her attention to a sight: "Look my dear! What a wonderful robust child!" says Athena, pretending a surprise as she stops to pick him up. His mother must have been out of her mind to abandon him in a stony field! Come! You have milk give the poor little creature suck!"⁷⁶

Zeus does not fight on behalf of his lovers, when attacked by Hera, but makes sure those sons he fathers when exposed, are picked up and are well raised. It is recorded that Apollo's mother, Leto, abandoned him. She did not suckle him with her breast. Zeus caused Thetis to duly pour nectar and ambrosia, which Apollo fed on. Zeus attached Dionysus on his thigh at the destruction of his mother by Hera.

Hera, excited by Athena's word, bares her breast to give it suck, but Heracles draws with such force that she flings him away in sharp pain, referring to him as "a young monster". In any case, Heracles is Hera's foster child, even though it is for a short while. The Thebans brand him her son, who is Alcaeus before she gives him suck, but is renamed Heracles in her honour. Athena, according to Graves returned him to Alcmena and urged her to guard and rear him well.⁷⁷ There was reconciliation of mother and son.

Athene catching the sight of abandoned Heracles, drawing Hera's attention to take care of him, and his return to his mother for rearing, has striking similarities with the Biblical story of the exposure and discovery of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter and his return to his mother for breast feeding, weaning and up bringing.⁷⁸ Concerning a mother who exposes a son, Athene says: "His mother must have been out of her mind to abandon him in a stony field." According to Athene in the above comment, a mother who abandons a son or child of any sex "is not in her right senses". A mother, who abandons a child directly or indirectly, leaves him or her to fate – death. Such mother has lost the maternal dignity and is bluntly heartless.

4.18 Pride Induced Rejection

Thetis the mother of Achilles is another mother in the Greek mythology, who abandoned an infant son. Peleus is the father of Achilles. Considering the fact that gods are superior to mortals, Thetis decides to make her son immortal, by burning off the mortal part of him, which he inherits from his father. She therefore places him over the fire during the night and by day anoints him with ambrosia. Peleus incidentally catches her in the act, seeing his son struggle in the fire, let out a shout. His reaction prompts Thetis to smack the screaming baby on the floor and hurries back to her father, Nereus. Peleus brings the infant to Cheiron who accepts and nurtures him. He is initially named

Ligyron, but Cheiron renamed him Achilles (Acheilè) because according to him, the child has not put its lips to the breast.⁷⁹

Simpson in the book, *Gods and Heroes of Greeks*, could not explain clearly why Thetis abandoned her little son. It could be reasoned that Thetis' departure would not have been unconnected with anger, pride and arrogance. She feels it is an insult to be interrupted or embarrassed by a mere mortal, considering herself an immortal and of superior personality. She would have thought within herself that since Peleus does not want her to make an immortal out of his son, she has to leave both of them inferior beings.

Thetis' action shows that she lacks maternal affection, that is, the special love which a mother reserves for the child of her womb. She could be counted among those women whom Athena exclaims; "must have lost their minds." Thetis and Alcmena's deed confirm what the Scripture says about the failing love of a woman, which is in contrast with God's perpetual love for mankind. God asks a question and provides the answer Himself, thus: "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet, will I not forget thee."⁸⁰

It is worthy to believe that mothers are of various categories. It is not all women who bear children that are decorated with the soft and milky heart of motherhood. Mothers who are merciless or lack compassion can abandon, or even kill their children. The motif of rejection in Thetis' relationship with Achilles ends in reconciliation just as the abandonment of Heracles ends.

Thetis having discarded her son regrets her action when anger leaves her. She goes back and takes him from the Canteur Cheiron, to whose care Peleus has entrusted him and had a reunion with him. She refrains from being an angry mother, but is seen in a number of occasions pleading for her son's case, or acting as his confidant, defendant, protector and mouthpiece. In a certain helpless situation, Achilles reports to his mother, injustice done to him, because she would not relent to proffer solutions.

During the Trojan War, the embittered Achilles has to withdraw from fighting but bestows his amour upon his friend Patroklos and sends him into fighting, at his death;

Achilles' war apparels are lost. The desperate Achilles informs his mother who goes to Haephestus, the skillful smith for replacement:

Therefore now I come to your kindness; so might you be willing to give me for my short lived – son, a shield and a helmet and two beautiful greaves fitted with claps at the ankles and a corset, what he has lost with his steadfast companion when the Trojan killed him. Now my son lies on the ground sorrowing.⁸¹

Thetis' complaint in the above statement depicts a mother affected by the agony of a son's misfortune. Thetis is portrayed as a mother who could not sit and watch a troubled child languish. She is a determined woman who brings smiles and encouragement to a son. Thus, when she succeeds in getting the armour, she hands them over to Achilles. Concerning the presentation Grave reports:

Thetis entered her son's hut with a new set of armour, which included a pair of valuable tin greaves, hurriedly forged by Haephestus. Achilles puts on his armour and made peace with Agamemnon (who handed over to him Breseis unviolated, swearing that he had taken her in anger, not lust) and set out to avenge Patroklos.⁸²

One could realize that anger and frustration could be other contributing factors that made Thetis forsake her son. She is not happy having been forced to marry a mortal as a punishment from Zeus, whose advances she rejects. Thetis tells Haephestus that Zeus forced her alone of the Nereids to marry a mortal and she has to endure such marriage against her will.⁸³ Subsequently, she is being prevented from securing the child's life by making him immortal. It is this experience and feeling that provokes her to abandon the boy. However, no matter how cogent her reasons may sound, she should not expect applause for her actions. Her husband's reaction is not of violence and so should not attract such rash response from her.

4.19 Livia: An Affectionate, but a Domineering Mother.

Ever before Tiberius was born, Livia sought the astrologer to determine his sex and to inquire about his future. This effort shows the love and interest she has in the child. Livia's ambition to prepare Tiberius to experience a comfortable future life, made

her afflict him with emotional wound. He suffered intimidation under his mother and his step father emperor Augustus. One cannot nod in affirmative that, it was out of obedience and respect that Tiberius gave in to their counsel to divorce his beloved wife. The reluctance, which he displayed before yielding to this, showed that he was compelled to do so. Suetonius threw more light on this when he said: Tiberius took this very ill, he loved Vipsania and strongly disapproved of Julia, realizing, like every other one else that she had felt adulterous passion for him while still married to his (Tiberius') father-in-law, Agrippa.

He went further to reveal that Tiberius continued to regret the divorce heartily. One day he accidentally caught sight of Vipsania and followed her with tears in his eyes.⁸⁴ The plan to have Tiberius marry Julia Agrippa's widow was to boost Tiberius' chances of becoming the emperor's successor. This notwithstanding, the relationship between Livia and Tiberius was cordial for a larger part of their lives.

When Augustus married and brought Livia into the imperial *Domus*, all Livia's efforts were centered on how to bring Tiberius to the forefront in the imperial household, and make him popular in state affairs. She (Livia) maximized the use of the instrument of Augustus' love, with this, she did so much exploits, paving ways for Tiberius. She exhausted all strategies at her disposal to see Tiberius as a reputable member of Augustus' household.

Livia heaved a sigh of relief when Gaius and Lucius, the adopted sons of Augustus died in AD 2 and 4 respectively. The untimely death of the young Caesars made Livia's son the focalpoint in the succession list. Subsequently she convinced the emperor to adopt Tiberius.⁸⁵ The incidents of AD 2 and 4 were followed in AD 11 by the death of Octavia, another powerful figure in the imperial family, and the banishment of Agrippa Posthumus in AD 7, left Livia's son without opposition.

Augustus in his will declared him (Tiberius), his successor. Immediately after the death of Augustus he assumed office together with the Senate. He accorded his mother several honours. She was given the lictor, a privilege strictly allowed only to vestals among women. In AD 24, she was elevated to sit with the vestals in the theatre. The Senate conferred on her, the honour – *Mater Patriae* (The mother of the land).⁸⁶

The good relationship which emperor Tiberius and his mother enjoyed, began to develop cracks, when he noticed Livia's uncontrolled interest in public or state affairs, hence a continual friction between both of them. Suetonius who captured Tiberius' displeasure over his mother's attitude related as follows: "Tiberius then complained that his mother Livia vexed him by wanting to be co-ruler of the empire, which was why he avoided frequent meetings or long private talks with her".⁸⁷

The immediate rancour which completely tore them apart was Livia's forceful demand, urging the emperor to enroll in the list of jurors, a man who had been granted citizenship – a thing not obtainable in the Roman Empire. Under severe pressure, Tiberius reluctantly accepted to obey her command under the condition that "the act was forced on the emperor by his mother." Infuriated Livia, on hearing this, produced from a strong box, letters which, Augustus sent to her, commenting on Tiberius' unwholesome and stubborn character. Tiberius was utterly disappointed in his mother who could preserve such incriminatory document to threaten his position, there and then, ensued between them an open verbal fight – a feud which refused to quell.

Furthermore, the quarrel brought Livia her son's abandonment and his withdrawal into Capri. He unwillingly visited her just once in the last remaining three years of her life and spent a couple of hours. When she took ill, he did not visit her, neither in sickness nor at death. Her burial awaited his return which he never did. After several days when the corpse began to decompose, he sent that they should have it buried. He rejected the Senates' suggestion to have her deified. He cancelled her wills and took vengeance on her friends and confidants.⁸⁸

In an unbiased judgment, one expressly argues that, it was Livia's interest in the control of power, her over bearing influence and control over Tiberius that was the root cause of their violent separation. In the same vein, Tiberius' stubbornness as remarked in Augustus' letter must have contributed to his over reaction. Thus reconciliation was impossible. This was how a good relationship built over the years shattered irreparably.

It is important to note that some mothers loose out the cordial relationship with their sons while trying to be over-bearing, domineering and over-protective. Attitudes such as fear, pride, anger, frustration, and wrong judgement could equally disrupt a

good relationship. Sons who feel intimidated by their mothers could go to the extreme in trying to gain liberty from their mothers.

4. 20 Murder and Other Violent Acts in Mother-Son Relationship in Classical Literature

This segment of the work addresses the motif of murder in mother-son relationship. The act of a mother killing her son, and a son destroying the life that gives him life is uncommon, but the fact that literature and other literary works point it out, signifies that it is a serious issue which needs not be waved off with the back of the hand, but beckons for in-depth and careful study. The factors which lead to the unholy act, if discovered and guided against would of surety enhance unity and tranquility in mother-son relationship and in the family setting in general. A number of sources from which evidence is drawn are the histories, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles which are instructive and still stand the taste of time, due to their relevance in providing answers and solutions to present day questions. The tragedies are intensely emotional and focus on horror of murder and violent death, often within the family; hence, it is important to note that Greek tragedies are often family tragedies.

The psychologist Chodorow in her theory hypothesized that early mother-daughter relationship is closer than the early mother-son relationship. This, according to her, is because mothers and daughters are of the same sex. She discovers that when children start to develop a sense of self and to separate from their mothers, girls have easier task doing so, because they are of the same sex with their mothers. Boys on the other hand, have a more difficult time, developing separate identities as they have already identified with their mothers. In order to become masculine, boys must reject femininity of their mothers and develop identity that is different as well as separate. Boys must work to accomplish their separation even with the aid of their mothers.⁸⁹

Chodorow's hypothesis will be of importance in further discussions. There are in extreme cases according to our evidence, where the son in an attempt to separate from his mother, has to terminate his mother's life in order to gain freedom from the maternal hold. Nero and his mother's relationship, is a classical example of female dominance, which is equally expressed paradigmatically in the drama, *Orestes* where

the killing of Iphigenia warranted violent attack on the male and generally, leaving the male son at the mercy of the female.

Speaking about the myth of matriachy and the general importance of myth in preliterate and traditional societies, Bamberger said that, in the Classical Rome, and Greece, during the fourteenth and sixteenth year of a boy, he was ceremoniously ushered into manhood. He discarded the crimson bordered *toga (togaprae texta)*, which boys wore for the pure white toga of a man. At this stage, there was profound separation from his mother under whose 'control' and 'care' he had been from birth. He was now expected to move closer to his father and join him in affairs of the men.

Zeithen examining boy's separation from mothers and the general pattern of puberty rites employed Bamberger's ideas. According to her, Bamberger draws a parallel between the myth of matriarchy and puberty rites which focuses on detaching the boy from his natal household and his association with the mother, and preserving him for his social and political functions. Bamberger is of the view that there is a deliberate effort to have the male child separated from the maternal closeness and his intimacy with the father is encouraged. She finds out that: "This regrouping of adolescent boys with adult males is prefigured in some societies in myths foretelling the demise of female power and in the concomitant rise of male privilege..."⁹⁰

It is identified that some male children do not find it easy to get detached from association with their mothers as Chodorow observed. Such sons when they become conscious of maternal overbearing influence apply extra force which could involve violence to free themselves from the maternal entanglement. This act accounts for some of the mother-son conflicts and violence.

4. 21 The Fox that Spoil Clytaemnestra's Family Relationship

Sin does not die childless, but begets numerous progeny. 'In the hearts of evil men, sooner or later, when the appointed hour arrives, the old insolence *υβρις* begets a young insolence in likeness of its progenitors, an avenging spirit *δαιμοναι* working in darkness, irresistible, unconquerable, unholy recklessness *θρασος* brings back destruction upon the house.'⁹¹

In the dramas *Orestes* of Euripides and *Oresteian Trilogy* of Aeschylus, are examples of perverted familial order, a father who kills his daughter, a wife who kills her husband, a son schemes the death of his mother. On the contrary, however, is the pious daughter steadfastly mourning her father, longing for the brother she saved as a child, and demanding vengeance upon the violators of the family.

Clytaemnestra by her actions toward Agamemnon, her daughter Electra, and son Orestes, make herself an unworthy mother who destroyed her family. The familial relationship has reversed its purpose. It has become destructive instead of generative. Electra enacted the maternal role she played in the life of Orestes, as if she gives him a second birth, by treating him as a mother would, and showing a mother's love to him.⁹²

It is of necessity to note that after murdering Agamemnon, Clytaemnestra discards her children and treats them like slaves. She becomes cruel to them. Her maternal role and affection ceases to flow. At the opening of the play, *Electra* by Sophocles, a certain pedagogue introduces Orestes to the audience. He claims to have saved him by taking him from his sister's hand and raises him. This statement suggests that Clytaemnestra loses total interest in her children, and so Electra has to take up her mother's role in nursing the young Orestes.

Electra, Orestes' elder sister, is denied marriage because Aegisthus fears that if she marries, she would bring forth noble and strong children, who will attack him in future. Her mother and her paramour never wished to see her. Sophocles and Euripides in their dramas *Electra* and *Orestes* respectively, reveal how Electra gives away Orestes to an old friend of their father's, for fear of being destroyed by Aegisthus. Orestes attests to his exile in the *Choephoroi*. He addresses himself "as an exile newly returned to my land, my home, I seek my native right."⁹³

Clytaemnestra could not hide but expresses her desire to have her own son, Orestes, dead. The evidence of this ill thought and desire is drawn from her statements and reactions, when the pedagogue in deception informs her of Orestes' death. She could not show any sign of bereavement, rather she is merely anxious to hear the cause of his death, rather than express pity or weep. Persistently she asks how Orestes died. She questions; ... "Sir tell me the truth in which way did he meet his death?"⁹⁴ When a

false story of his death is narrated, indifferently she mutters: “Zeus what shall I say? “Good luck” or terrible but for the best.”⁹⁵ It is this kind of reaction and similar treatments that force the angry Electra to address her mother pejoratively: “Mother! I do not count you as mother of mine: but rather a mistress.”⁹⁶

4.22 Vengeance over His Mother and Paramour

The bond or tie of relationship between Clytaemnestra and her son is broken by Clytaemnestra herself. When young Orestes comes back as an abandoned exile; he returns as an enemy and not a friend of his mother’s. The maternal love has disappeared just as his mother throws hers into the air. He declares his mission which is commissioned by Apollo. Orestes has to carry out the murder of Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus for certain reasons; the gods command it, grief for his dead father, loss of patrimony and shame. Orestes shows no regrets for killing his mother. He claims that he is fighting a just course. That is, taking vengeance step and paying his mother in exact coin. He justifies his deed in his own words: “... it was no sin to kill my mother who herself marked with my father’s blood, unclean, abhorred by the gods.”⁹⁷

Matricide is an abominable deed which every one condemns. Orestes begins to suffer torments in the hands of the Furies and the Erinyes. The Furies are the mystic enforcers of ancient blood and vengeance law, for whom the greatest crime is matricide, since the closest blood tie is between the mother and child. The Erinyes are avengers of murder, perjury and grave wrongs, entities who might exact their vengeance from the wrong doer himself or from his descendants. They are also guardians of justice *δικη*.

Apollo prompts Orestes to seek help from Athena, who sympathizes with him because she is not born of a woman, but springs forth, from the head of her father, Zeus. Athena arranges a trial, using Athenian citizens as jurors. Votes are cast to determine his acquittal or conviction. A tie vote is made and Athena casts her vote in his support, and thus Orestes is acquitted from blood guilt.

Examining the views of the dramatists, whose works are employed, Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus; Clytaemnestra is the farmer who breeds the caterpillars which devour her plants. She is the one who killed her husband, and throws away her children and makes do with a lover. Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus who murder Agamemnon

should not expect punishment less than what they themselves have exacted. Kindred blood has to flow to avenge kindred blood. To kill her husband is an injury to her children, to discard them and choose a bed partner is robbing salt on the injury. Thus, in this way, she strengthened them to institute action against her.

Aeschylus uses animal metaphors to describe Orestes and Clytaemnestra. He presents Orestes in his mother's night-mare, as a serpent, which draws clots of blood from his mother's breast instead of milk. According to the description which Orestes applies to himself, he says, it is I, who, becoming snake shall kill her.⁹⁸ Clytaemnestra is equally described as the viper that has taken the young of the eagle.⁹⁹ She is a string ray of viper.¹⁰⁰ Concerning Orestes, the chorus declares: "He has entered the house of Agamemnon as the double lion and double Ares."¹⁰¹ He is the very one who "with a fortunate blow cuts off the heads of the two serpents."¹⁰² - Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus.

The emphasis on likening Orestes and Clytaemnestra to snakes or viper shows that both of them are dangerous and can bite to destroy lives. They are cunning and deceptive in order to lead their victims into destruction. Clytaemnestra deceives Agamemnon by leading him into his death. Orestes in the *Choephoroi* of Aeschylus disguises as a stranger who comes to deliver message to Orestes' parents. He is also described as a lion which portrays him as fiendish, courageous, and powerful, as one who has no fear of blood.

4.23 Younger Agrippina; Seductive, Domineering and Influential Mother

Nero's relationship with his mother, Agrippina was quite harmonious right from Nero's childhood until decadence crept into the relationship. Agrippina by her nature was an ambitious mother. All her desire was to see her son, become a man of high status; a man of fame and great honour. This determination made her accept to sacrifice her life as long as Nero becomes an emperor. Suetonius affirmed the above by revealing that, when Nero was an infant, his mother inquired of the astrologer what manner of man her son would grow up to become, she was told that he would become an emperor but would kill his mother. Thus she replied, "*imperaret matrique acciderat, at illa "occidat" inquit dum imperet,*"¹⁰³ "Let him become an emperor but kill his mother."

Agrippina had an eye on the imperial seat; hence, she started preparing Nero for the office right from childhood. In relation to her motives, Suetonius comments, “as a boy, Nero read most of the unusual humanities subjects except philosophy which Agrippina warned that it was not proper study for a future ruler”. She maneuvered her way and became the wife of Emperor Claudius her uncle, in 49 AD. She made sure that Claudius adopted Nero into the Claudian family, and placed him under the tutorship of a renowned teacher, Annaeus Seneca.

In order to increase Nero’s chances of becoming an emperor, she arranged marriage between Nero and Octavia (the daughter of Claudius) who was already betrothed to someone else. She convinced Claudius and got the betrothal annulled, thus they got both Nero and Octavia married in AD 53. Through her influence, Nero was allowed to assume adult costume, which qualified him to take up official career. She made sure that Claudius’ heir Britannicus, whom she saw as Nero’s rival was completely removed from the imperial scene.¹⁰⁴ Her zeal to demonstrate her power to the provincials, made her rename the town Ubii her birth place after herself “*Colonia Claudia Augusta Agrippinensium*.”¹⁰⁵

4.24 Ambitious Agrippina; Her Experience with Nero as Emperor

The reason why Nero killed a mother who led him this far is expressed in his experience with her. Immediately after the death of Claudius, Nero ascended the throne at a youthful age of seventeen. A major part of Nero’s reign witnessed almost a total dominion and control of his mother. She guarded her position against anyone, be it wife, mistress or friend. Invariably, she was bold, to stand before the Senate in the revival of the “*lex civita*”, which was not supposed to be. She was anxious to sit beside Nero; a habit she was acquainted with, during the reign of Claudius.¹⁰⁶ Ferrero declared that Agrippina became “a co-ruler with the Emperor.” She must be informed of all affairs, directed both home and foreign policy. If she did not reach the point of partaking in the sessions of the Senates, she called it to meet in her palace and concealed behind a black curtain and listened to its discussions.¹⁰⁷

Nero for a long time remained under the dictates, control and influence of his mother. On this situation, Tacitus was prompted to comment: “A youth under feminine

control was not reassuring”. Suetonius equally remarked that: “The overwatchful, over critical eye that Agrippina kept on whatever Nero said and did, proved more than he could bear”.¹⁰⁸

Agrippina’s control over Nero did not stop in the control of the state affairs, but extended to his private relationship with women. His mother disapproved of his relationship with Acte, a young girl he was passionately in love with. She wanted to prevent Nero from marrying Poppaea Sabina, a high societal lady whom she saw as a rival or threat to her position. Agrippina did not want Nero to marry Poppaea Sabina, not because she was sincerely touched by the injustice done to Octavia, Nero’s discarded wife, but because she saw a rival in Poppaea. She felt that the incoming woman would constitute a hindrance to her domineering influence over Nero, or make his love for her dwindle.

Nero became weary of his mother’s dictates. He began to see her as a pest and menace over his life. Her presence became irritating to him. Nero’s attempt to get rid of Pallas, Agrippina’s lover attracted words threatening his position. She reminded him that he was a usurper of the imperial seat, which rightly belonged to Britannicus the son of Emperor Claudus. Instantly, Nero developed severe hatred for her, and by this time her grip on him has been loosened by several disagreements. She resorted to amorous advances to consolidate her wavering position. The strategy nevertheless, failed woefully. At this point her power and control had broken down completely. Nero realized that wherever Agrippina was, she was intolerable. He concluded that the best way to check her excesses was murder.

Nero withdrew all powers and honours accorded her and had her moved to a separate residence. He designed several plans to terminate her life but she survived all. By his order, she was assassinated in her house. Her death he said was a national blessing. Nero did not stop at killing his mother but dishonoured her corpse. He cremated her remains on the same night she was murdered, as though an infant. Even this he did cruelly on a dining couch. And worst still, left her grave uncovered as long as he reigned. He included her birth day among the ill-omened days. Interestingly Suetonius captured some of the insults that people cast at Nero in form of jokes or

lampoon: “Alcmaeon, Orestes and Nero are brothers why, because all of them murdered their mothers.”¹⁰⁹

Nero often accepts that, he is regularly haunted by the ghost of his mother and the Furies pursue him with burning torches and whips. The torture persisted, of which he had to seek help from the Persian magicians to conjure up the ghost and entreat it.¹¹⁰ This episode could be associated with Orestes’ experience when he murdered his mother and was hunted by the Erinyes, until he sort help at the temple of Athena at Athens.¹¹¹

Nero, in the history of mankind, was associated with cruelty; Seneca in the early age of Nero, pointed out that he was of “a cruel heart.”¹¹² Lust for gory sights and insatiable greed for wealth acquisition prompted Nero into the unwholesome destruction of innocent boys and people of eminent personalities.¹¹³ Another inhuman act recorded against Nero was inciting the fire out burst which reduced the Roman Empire to ruin. He watched the conflagration from the tower of Maecene, enraptured by what he called, “the beauty of the flames.”¹¹⁴

4.25 Views about the Relationship between Agrippina and Nero

It is observed that Agrippina and her son had what one would term as affectionate relationship all through Nero’s childhood. The smooth ride in relationship continues until after the death of Claudius, and ceases after some time when Nero becomes an emperor. Like every other wise and cunning mother, though over ambitious, Agrippina creates and utilizes every opportunity to bring her son up to a rare position. In spite of all her relentless effort to make Nero soar high in the political scene, it cannot be ruled out that Agrippina has deep passion for power and authority. No wonder she stakes her life to achieve it. It is then a shock to see that the same son murders her, in spite of all her support.

Considering Nero and Agrippina’s life experiences, one could identify some factors, which prompt the dislocation, disruption or total break down in the cordial relationship between both of them. Human nature allows for misunderstandings, but where it degenerates into perpetual and complete breakdown in communication, or in extreme cases murder, it becomes a serious problem that calls for urgent attention.

From the study of Agrippina and her son Nero, the points below could be identified as the factors that drastically affected their relationship.

- (i) Agrippina was over-bearing, authoritative, domineering, and influential.
- (ii) She determined to be Nero's choice maker in his relationship with women.
- (iii) She kept him under her subjugation and control, right from childhood to adulthood, even when he was of age and required his freedom.
- (iv) Agrippina was "over watchful" and "over critical" over Nero's life.
- (v) She was jealous of her son's female lovers.
- (vi) Nero in his own part was of cruel heart. When Agrippina's power, control and influence became more than he could bear; he broke off in a very violent manner.

4.26 Medea and Infanticide

The drama, *Medea* of Euripides, *The Voyage of Argo*, an epic poem by Apollonius of Rhodes, and *The Heroides* of Ovid, are the popular Classical literary works which deal with the story of Medea, her paternal family, her husband Jason, and their sons. Specifically, the drama is a tragedy of revenge where the character Medea murders her two sons whom she loves and cherishes, in order to punish her husband. The work *Medea* is outstanding for its psychological presentation of the depressed, murderous, yet grieving mother. Medea is driven by wild emotions and broods over a husband who fails her after she has done so much for him. She sees in Jason a man who played on her intelligence, thus she swears that he cannot be pardoned.

She saves Jason and makes his difficult task of capturing the Golden Fleece at Colchis, a success. She protects him with her magical art and power, from the dangerous tasks Aeete her father, challenges him with. Medea does not only leak the untold secret of the location of the Golden Fleece, but aides him in capturing and carrying it away to Corinth, all to the detriment of her father, the king.¹¹⁵ Jason elates Medea's heart, convinces and makes her believe that she would be honoured and revered by Hellas, should she elope with him to Corinth. He promises to be a good husband and her, his wedded wife: "I swear, and may Olympian Zeus and his consort,

Here, goddess of wedlock be my witness, then when we are back in Hellas, I will take you into my home as my own wedded wife.”¹¹⁶

Medea leaves her country, her father and her people and elopes with strangers. She makes an outburst which reveals that she chooses Jason and his people, but admonishes that Jason should not disappoint her.

My dear ones, save me from Aeete, save yourselves! All is discovered, all; and there is nothing we can do. Let us sail away, before that man can even mount his Chariot... but you Jason, in the presence of your men, must call the gods to witness the vows you have made to me. Do not expose me to insult and disgrace when I have left my country far away and have no kinsmen to protect me.¹¹⁷

Medea is betrayed, and thus loses confidence in Jason – an untrustworthy man who displays his true colour when they get back to his father’s land. It becomes glaring that she has made a wrong choice, to marry a man who cannot keep to his words. A defaulter and an irresponsible lot, Jason turns out to be a cruel husband who abandons her and contracts another marriage with king Creons’ daughter. It is more humiliating that the king of Corinth, father of Jason’s new bride, intends to drive Medea and her children out of the city into exile. It is disgusting to hear Jason tell Medea that, if she has behaved nicely she would have been allowed to remain in Corinth. When Medea, could not hold her emotions anymore she conceives plans and kills the princess and the king with poisoned gifts send to them through her sons.

No doubt, Medea transfers the hatred, which she of late, has developed for her husband, over to her sons. She begins to associate them with their father as though they have hand in what she suffers. Medea is highly affected psychologically that she loses the power to correct judgment. She could not differentiate between what is and what is not. She addresses her sons as follows: “Children, your mother is hated, and you are cursed: Death takes you with your father, and perishes his whole home.”¹¹⁸ Medea has made clear her bitter intension over Jason’s house. Her plans are to have Jason’s posterity cut off completely. Medea’s nurse notices and expresses discomfort over her cruel attitude toward her sons. Fearfully and quietly asks: ... “Poor Medea! Your

children – why, what have they to do with their father’s wickedness? Why hate them? I am sick with fear for your children, terror of what may happen”.¹¹⁹

Euripides makes Medea’s strategy sympathetic in her murderous sufferings. She loves her children and yet she is finally willing to kill them in order to complete her total revenge against their father: “... You will not look at your mother any more with these dear eyes. You will have moved into a different sphere of life... my misery is my own heart, which will not relent.”¹²⁰ Medea eventually murders Jason’s sons and refuses to grant him access to their corpses for burial. Medea in literature is portrayed as a powerful, dangerous, witch who commits various criminal acts. She is the one who champions the destruction of many lives including those of her family members, in order to help her lover, Jason. She soils her hands with the blood of her own children, but in all these she is neither convicted nor punished.

4.27 Procne Avenges Her Sister

Ovid presents us with Procne who takes vengeance on her husband for raping her sister. Tereus, Procne’s husband, is a man who lacks self-control. A wicked and cruel man as Philomela addresses him. He visits his father-in-law and takes Philomela his wife’s younger sister to visit her sister (Procne). On the way, he diverts to a strange Island and shuts the virgin in an enclosure and assaults her sexually. “Pale, trembling, fearing everything, and asking where her sister was? And he told her then what he was going to do, and straight way did it, raped her, a virgin. ...”¹²¹

Out of anger, Philomela rains abuses on Tereus who becomes terrified by her words and with pincers cut off her tongue, even in that condition he molests her sexually. “It seemed too much to believe – even then Tereus took her, and took her again. The injured baby still giving satisfaction.”¹²² Procne, a large hearted woman could not endure the injury which robs her sister of her virginity and creates speech disability. She decides to spill blood for the cruelty her sister suffered. It is Tereus who deserves to die but she chooses her son. Procne like Medea, instantly develops hatred for her son just like Medea.

... As her son came in, young Itys, she looked at him with pitiless eyes; she thought, "How like his father he is!" ...And Itys, who seemed to see his doom approaching, screamed, and held out his hands, with mother! Mother! And tried to put his little arms around her, but she will never change in her expression, drove the knife through breast, through side, one wound enough to kill him, but she made another cutting the throat...¹²³

In an attempt to stir the murderous action against the victim, Prone withdraws her affection and replaces it with abrupt hatred, so that pity would not stop her. She wears the lion's heart, a heart that does not show mercy to its victim. She likens Itys to his father and thereby hates him as she does his father.

Medea and Procne exhibit the above attitudes to their sons before murdering them. Medea addresses her sons: "Children, your mother is hated and you are cursed: death takes you with your father, and perishes his whole house."¹²⁴ In the like manner, Procne says concerning her son: "How like his father he is." These women do not attempt to murder the perpetrators like Clytaemestra did. However, they realize that without a son, a man's posterity is terminated. Invariably, they would want them to live and suffer for their wicked deeds. It is gathered from these encounters that sometimes when a woman intends to punish a husband's unkindness, infidelity, or betrayal, she extends her aggression to the children and thereby getting the innocent punished for offense not committed.

4.28 Young Hyllus Speaks Dagger into His Mother's Heart

The young man Hyllus speaks harsh and painful words, which drives his mother into suicide. Deianira smears some portion on the robe, which she sends through her son, to her husband, who is on military campaign. To her ignorance, the "love charm" – (a gift she received as a newly married maiden to guard her husband's love and marriage) is poisonous. The moment Heracles, her husband, wears the robe, the unexpected comes into play. "... the robe enfolds him around his limbs, joins tightly to his sides like the work of a sculptor. Spasm of pain bits into his bones. Then, like the vicious murderous viper's poison, it begins to consume him."¹²⁵

Deianira's incriminating deed is the sole agent that destroys her good relationship with her son. Hyllus, her son and an eye witness to the destructive role of the robe, straight from the sacrificial scene, comes home to confront his mother. Though Hyllus and his mother are very intimate, he could not hold his emotions over what happened to his father and leaves his life in danger. He addresses his mother with very painful words: "Mother! I wish I could have found you not as you are but no longer alive, or save but someone else's mother, or somehow changed but with a better heart than now... ." ¹²⁶

Hyllus does not know that his mother applied a "love potion" on the robe; Deianira on her own part is ignorant of the hazardous effects of the "love potion." Hyllus tries to be specific so that his mother would realize her deeds. "What happened? Your husband my father do you hear? – You have killed him."¹²⁷ The young man gives his mother the detailed account of the havoc which the deadly robe she sends across has caused her husband. He persists without relenting in accusing and abusing her:

Mother this is what you have planned and done to my father and you are caught, for this, injustice who punishes, and the fury will requite you. If it is right for a son I curse you. ... for why should she maintain the pointless dignity of the name of mother, when she acts in no way like a mother? ¹²⁸

Deianira who could not stand the trauma of her mistake and the unintended misfortune rushes into the room and takes her life. As a matter of fact, Deianira is quite ignorant of what her son is talking about. The truth is that she is deceived by a canteur whose amorous advances she refuses. The canteur at her marriage gives her a "love potion" which she never knew would be detrimental to her husband and family in general. Sometimes people commit suicide when by self judgement; believe they have committed grave or sacrilegious crime. Thus, when Deianira notices that she has terminated a life that does her no wrong, she quickly takes her life. Suicide is observed to be a common practice in the ancient world. Both men and women employ the use of suicide to express gross injustice done to them, or deep regret for their mistakes or wrong doing. Lucretia committed suicide after she was raped. Jocasta committed suicide when she discovered that she had married and bore children for her son.

It is surprising that Hyllus who sits in the company of his mother each time his father travels on military campaign, could attack his mother in such a hostile manner. Sophocles presents Hyllus as a boy who cannot close his eyes to wrong done to a loved one or allow his mother's influence to blindfold his sense of judgment. Although he regrets his action when he learns that his mother acted in error. But the havoc has been done. He loves his mother but hates her deeds and so confronts her without reservations. The negative reaction to his mother's actions depicts that his father is quite relevant to his life and the injustice done to him must be fought against. This is why he stands up boldly to fight his course. One of the reasons which Orestes gives for avenging his father is loss of patrimony, and that would also be the reason why Hyllus is uncontrollably bitter with his mother. While Orestes uses steel weapon to fight his mother, Hyllus employs verbal dagger to indirectly murder his mother.

4.29 Brutal Murder of a Son by Mother; `A Reflection from Euripides' Bacchae

The *Bacchae* of Euripides is popular for the bizarre mother-son relationship it reflects. It is a tragic drama which depicts barbaric destruction of lives. The work is admired for the effective treatment of two different relationships. These are; the relationships between Semele and her son Dionysus, and that between Agave and Pentheus, her son. The setting of the play is Thebes. *The Bacchae* to a large extent establishes the punitive measures, which Dionysus takes against the Thebans, especially the household of Cadmus including his mother's sisters, who slander her (his mother).

The play opens with Dionysus who declares openly his missions. He has double mission before his arrival to Thebes. Firstly, he is determined to avenge his mother of the slander and jeer, she received from her family. Secondly, he is zealous to make himself renowned as a god and to institute his worship.

Dionysus introduces himself as the son of Zeus. His mother is Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, the king of Thebes. Briefly he highlights on his mother's ill fate. He narrates how his mother bears him and immediately is struck and torn to death by Zeus' lightning, but Zeus saved him for being his own son. Painfully, he talks about

this lightning, his mother's grave and the ruins of her shattered house, which comes as a result of Hera's violence and rage against his mother.

He is grateful to Cadmus who makes her tomb a shrine sacred to her, but he, Dionysus in his own effort, shadows the grave with green clusters of vine. He comes down from Lydia and Phrygia where he has established his mysteries and rites. He explicitly speaks about insult, which his mother suffered, and for that reason decides to punish the people. The women he binds in fawn skin, armed with ivy staffs.

... for I have come to refute that slander spoken by my mother's sisters- those who least have right to slander her. They said that Dionysus was no son of Zeus, but Semele had slept beside a man in love and fathered off her shame on Zeus-a fraud they snared, contrived by Cadmus to protect his daughter's name. They said she lied and Zeus in anger at that lie blasted her with lightning.¹²⁹

Following the above reason, Dionysus swears that he would never forgive his mother's enemies. Though she is no more, the absence could not affect the strength of his love for her. These women, he vows must pay for the idle talk. He hounds them off their homes to the mountaintop, afflicts their hearts with craze, and compels them to wear his orgy's livery. He makes them abandon their homes both rich and poor including his mother's sisters.

Now Cadmus has left his throne and power to his grand son, Pentheus who opposes strongly the strange god and his mysteries. He bluntly refuses to welcome the god and his orgy into his kingdom. He condemns its origin and content. Criticizing the Bacchic ideology, he says that it teaches women lust, seduction and harlotry. He further claims that in his absence, strange mischief has crept in, to make his people lose their senses.

Furthermore, he mentions that women leave their homes to frisk in mock ecstasies among the tickets in the mountain, dancing in honour of the latest divinity - a certain Dionysus. The women also according to him wander off to hidden nooks where they serve the lusts of men, after taking bowls of wine. He confesses having captured some of the women. He proclaims that those women who run down to the mountain

shall be hunted down including his mother Agave, together with her sisters, Ino and Actonoe.

Pentheus' messenger gives more information on the punishment these women suffer. He claims to have seen them as he goes to have the herds grazed on the mountain, and the women are in three companies, one led by Actonoe, the second by Agave and the third by Ino. They lay in deep sleep of exhaustion among oak leaves. Those whose straps have clipped off fasten their skins of fawn with writhing snakes that lick their cheeks. Nursing mothers who leave their babies at home with swollen breasts nestle gazelles and wolves in their arms being sucked.

Dionysus turns their women into wild, brutal and aggressive beings. The messenger reveals that he narrowly escapes being torn to pieces by these women, who hate sight of intruders. They swarm down upon the herd of cattle, and with bare hands tear a fat calf, while others claw the heifers into pieces.

Seeing that Pentheus is repulsive and rebellious, Dionysus coaxes him into dressing in women's attire lest the women kill him, should they discover he is a man. Dionysus helps and has him dressed in gown, wig, thyrsus for his hand, and skin of draped fawn. Deceptionally, Dionysus tells him that he is now dressed and equipped to fight the Bacchae.

The moment Pentheus dresses in Bacchaic costume, he becomes enveloped in the Bacchic power. He becomes delighted in his new attire, dances around and anxiously aspires to see what is happening at the mountain. Dionysus takes Pentheus to the Cithaeron wood, the sight of the Bacchae. Pentheus being eager to see clearly the company of the women complains and suggests that he climbs the fir tree to see their shameless orgies better. Dionysus with his power bends the fir tree and makes him sit on a branch. With his magical power once more, commands the tree to tower high up into the sky. Pentheus now becomes exposed to the women who hurry down the scene. They climb on top of the stones, rain pebbles of stones and javelin of their wands on him, but this could not cast him down.

Howbeit, Agave his mother, and one of the leading figures, commands the women to surround the tree and pull it down. They haul stones and all kinds of crude

objects at Pentheus, and eventually murder him. Agave, possessed by the Bacchaic madness, could not listen to her son's pitiable pleas, but cut off his head while others tear and scatter his flesh. Proudly, she fastens the head of Pentheus her son, on her thyrsus, waves it about and boasts to have killed a lion.

...His own mother, like a priestess with her victim, fell upon him first. But snatched off his wig and snood so that she would recognize his face, he touched her cheeks, screaming, "No, no, mother! I am Pentheus, your own son, the child you bore to Echion! Pity me, spare me, mother! I have done a wrong, but do not kill your own son for my offense." But she was foaming at the mouth, and her crazed eyes rolling with frenzy. She was mad, stark mad, possessed by Bacchus. Ignoring his cries of pity, she seized his left arm at the wrist; then, planting her foot upon his chest, she pulled, wrenching away the arm at the shoulder-not by her own strength, for the god had put inhuman power in her hands.¹³⁰

Out of frenzy Pentheus' mother not only has hand in killing him, but also allows his flesh be shredded to pieces.

...His ribs were clawed clean of flesh and every hand was smeared with blood as they played ball with scraps of Pentheus' body.... His mother, picking up his head impaled it on her wand. She seems to think it is some mountain lion's head which she carries in triumph through the thick of Cithaeron.¹³¹

Agave, still under the influence of Bacchaic madness, is proud and happy to emerge victorious in what she refers to as "the chase". Addressing the Theban citizens, waves the head of her son, which she addresses as "trophy from the chase".

Having rushed home, she tells Cadmus that he should boast as the proudest living man ever. She reminds him that he has brave daughters, but she, Agave, is the bravest of them all. Equally, she waves and shows him Pentheus' head, which she refers to as a "quarry of her chase".

Cadmus is outrageously embittered seeing the bodiless head of his grandson, right in the hand of his own mother. He becomes more sorrowful, having discovered that his daughter's action is prompted by a certain diabolic influence. Cadmus speaks to her, until she becomes sane and calm. Now, in sober reflection over what happened,

painfully questions why her son should suffer such death in her own hands. Cadmus explicitly makes her understand as follows:

He like you blasphemed that god, and so the god has brought all the ruin to one blow, you, your sisters, and this boy. All our house the god has utterly destroyed and, with it, me. For I have no sons left, no male heir; and I have lived only to see this boy, this branch of your body, most horribly and foully killed.¹³²

Agave on her own part is in anguish having killed her son, unknowingly. Sorrowfully, she sees herself as one who bears the curse of a son's blood and pleads to have his corpse well laid. Out of deep pain laments:

Where is a shroud to cover up his corpse? O my child, what hands will give you proper care unless with my own hands I lift my curse? Come, father. We must restore his head to this unhappy boy. - O dearest, dearest face! Pretty boyish mouth! I shroud your head, gathering with loving care these mangled bloody limbs, this flesh I brought to birth.¹³³

Finally, Dionysus still in vengeance movement pronounces the banishment of Agave and his sisters, while Cadmus and his wife, he proposes to turn into serpents as their punishments. He says that being a son of a god, he is slandered and blasphemed. Not only this, his person is equally threatened with violence.

As mentioned earlier at the beginning, two significant mother-son relationships are recorded. The major plot talks about Dionysus who for the love and respect for his dead mother, fights her course, defends her case and practically punishes the entire Theban land including the immediate household of his mother's, who slander her the most. He makes sure there is no heir left in Cadmus' lineage to carry on the scepter of leadership. Dionysus like other gods who are unkind to mortals, is cruel to Cadmus' family. Even though he is the son of a god, he has his root from Cadmus, who is his grand father. He punished his mother's sisters violently, forgetting that they have blood relation, and the peak of the violent treatment is making Agave murder her son in an uncanny manner.

It is observed that under normal circumstances, or granted that Agave's senses are intact; she would not have murdered this son of hers. This fit of madness, is

common in Greek literature. Juno has in a certain occasion afflicted Heracles with frenzy, which pushed him to murder his wife and sons, thinking them to be his enemies. In the same vein, Artemis attacks Ajax with insanity which makes him kill a number of bulls mistaking them for his Greek enemies who deny him honour due to him.

The Greek gods commonly use madness as a weapon to deal with mortals who offend them, or do not revere them. This treatment which mortals suffer in the hands of the gods, illustrates the supremacy of the gods, and inequality between the two entities. It equally shows that mortals live at the mercy of the gods. More so, it is vital to acknowledge that when mortals are being punished by the gods, fellow gods and goddesses do not intervene, even if the fellow is a client.

4.30 Unholy Union; Agent of Family Violence

Before Oedipus is born, the oracle of Apollo does not have any fair prophecy but calamitous pronouncement about his life. The oracle declares him predestined to kill his father and become the husband of his mother. All human efforts made by his parents, Laius and Jocasta his wife, to thwart the prophecy failed. The warning made Jocasta and her husband give the child out for exposure. The servant out of pity hands the boy over to a fellow shepherd who takes him to a king in a distance land who adopts him.

When Oedipus hears the story that he would kill his father and marry his mother, he leaves the palace, thinking that his adoptive father is his biological father. As he is escaping, he runs into a carriage and several men at a cross road. The leader of the group being haughty to him, he fights and kills him, not knowing that he has killed his biological father, Laius. Oedipus, while at Thebes encounters a Sphinx and interprets her riddles, for his reward, he is made the king and the Queen is given to him as wife, with whom he had children.

At a time, Thebes becomes infested and plagued because of the pollution. Oedipus the king, now becomes very zealous in finding the root of the curse. At last, he discovers that he himself and no one else is the cause. In his agony he laments: "... A sword, a sword he cried! He cried; "where is that wife, no wife of mine – that soil where I was sown and whence I reaped my harvest"¹³⁴ When it becomes a reality as the whole story of Oedipus and the marriage to his mother unfolds, Jocasta could not bear

the shame, goes in and hangs herself. Her son and husband gouges out his eyes as punitive measure against himself. It is the violent life taking and the physical wounds that makes Oedipus' relationship with his mother bloody.

A strangled woman swinging before our eyes. The king saw too, and with heart rendering groans untied the rope, and laid her on the ground... Her dress was pinned with golden brooches, which the king snatched out. And thrust... into his eyes. Eyes that should see no longer his shame, his guile.¹³⁵

In conclusion therefore, one could see that mothers and sons who abandon, reject or murder have reasons to justify their actions. Their actions could range from retaliation to injury afflicted on them, injustice, overbearing influence like in the case of Nero and his mother, revenge, as in the cases of Medea and Procne, who take vengeance over their husbands by murdering their sons, Clytaemnestra who avenges her daughter, and Orestes who avenges his father.

One common feature amongst these avengers is that they all have reasons before carrying out their actions. However, no matter how cogent their reasons could be, the family is an institution established with the expectation of peace and love to radiate among her members. The same is a place where one should retire and enjoy utmost comfort irrespective of its affluence or austerity. Thus the saying: "No place like home." However, the chaos in the family is a serious social problem which would, if not completely eliminated should be reduced to the barest minimum. A home which is meant to give succor and adequate protection has become a haven of uncertainty over life's security. When the home, which should represent an epitome of serenity and security, turns into a wild fire, what will her members do? This categorically explains a systematic disintegration which severs the familial cord.

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CHAPTER FIVE

FAMILY VIOLENCE IN IGBO LITERATURE

5.1 Introduction

The father in the Igbo family exhibits absolute authority over his family in which he is the uncontested head. He is the father of the family *di bu ulo* or *ide ji ulo*, an equivalent of the Roman *paterfamilias*. His family members accord him with much respect mixed with fear. They look up to him for survival. The unquestionable power of the father, to some extent, makes him the initiator of conflict or violence in his home. An issue which he can easily or gently address, is exaggerated, thus the offender or perpetrator is blamed, scolded or severely punished. Some of these experiences or occurrences would be plausibly expatiated with examples, in this chapter.

5.2 Violence and Patriarchal Factor

The position of the woman in the traditional Igbo setting portrays the woman as an entity quite inferior to the man in all ramifications. The life of the traditional woman in marriage is not a bed of roses. She is expected to “forget” her father’s home; it is unprecedented to make comparison between her paternal family, and marital family, especially when such comparisons speak about her family’s riches and wealth. For instance, a woman should not make boastful expressions like, “in my father’s house, we eat pounded yam and chicken soup every two days” or “when I was in my father’s house, still unmarried, I do not lack anything. I have everything at my beck and call.” This kind of sayings is frowned at, especially when her marital home cannot afford most or some of the things she enjoyed at her father’s house.

Thus, the members of her marital home automatically nurse the feelings that she tries to prove superior and more important, and of course, she is identified as a proud woman and hated by many. Thus, she is least expected to make utterances that will endanger her integrity or relationship with others. “When a woman marries a husband, she should forget how big her father’s compound was. “... A woman does not carry her father’s *obi* to her husband”¹ – should be her code of conduct.

There are issues, which the woman must not raise, argue or contend with, due to societal belief. Such matters would not arouse or trigger off conflict because the culture brainwashed and blind folded her sense of reasoning and judgment. Invariably in the contemporary period, the woman could stand on her feet, to prove some treatments unholy, unsatisfactory, partial, unjust and ill. The belief that the woman is a stranger in her husband's family is acceptable to the traditional Igbo woman. This is confirmed in her being quiet and raising no complaint when she is addressed thus. This could be clearly observed through Amanze, a character in John Manonye's novel, *The Son*, who often reminds Chiaku, another character, "that the son was yet a child and that she herself was a woman, a stranger in the family"² Chiaku herself tells Joseph who wants Nnanna to go and live with the priest at Ossa: "Go and tell the men; I'm only a woman, a stranger in the family."³

Chiaku's response explicitly declares that, she is not a full-fledged member of her husband's family. More over, as a woman she cannot transact such business which only requires men's attention. The matter at hand is to allow Nnanna to go and live with some one else. Knowing quite well about her position as a woman, she is not accorded with the right or power to discuss or take decision over such matters. Similarly, Anna's refusal to deal directly with her husband's *Umụada* affirms the belief: "You seem to forget that I'm a stranger in Umudiobia. They are your sisters; it's you who should speak to them."⁴

The woman should not rub shoulders with men. She is taught not to make her way into the men's world or assume man's functions. She is expected to know her limits. The "dos" and "don'ts" of her cultures, she tries as much as possible to adhere to, in order not to spark off conflict, rancour, disunity or anarchy, for which she would be punished, either at the home front or at the community level.

The woman cannot give her daughter out in marriage. She cannot sell land, of course, in Igbo culture, she is not in possession of land be it her father's or husband's. She has no share in her father's land. She cannot send any of her children to live with another family without the consent and approval of her husband's brothers, if her

husband is deceased. So Chiaku is limited in her powers to send Nnanna to live with somebody else, even though he is her son.

The Igbo society is a male chauvinistic society where the male figure proves superior to the female. He sees himself as an entity which is higher than the woman in wisdom, knowledge, understanding and prowess. He often groups the women together with the children. He believes that women and children, reason, act, behave, and think alike. Following the above assertion, which signifies that the women and children are lesser entities, the traditional Igbo man feels superior and important to stoop low to cohabit under the same roof with them (women and children), thus he builds himself separate hut. It should not be over emphasized that women and children do not count in men's gathering. The pejorative state of the woman, makes the man treat her with disdain and handles her violently as he deems fit, knowing that physically, he is stronger than her.

Furthermore, these men to further express their superiority over the women, built their huts and live separately from the rest of the family. The hut is usually positioned in such away that it directly faces the entrance of the compound. Ezeulu's hut in Achebe's (*Arrow of God*), Amanze's in Munonye's (*The Only Son*), Okonkwo's in Achebe's (*Things Fall Apart*), Wigwe's in Amadi's (*The Concubine*), Araba's in Nkem Nwankwo's (*Danda*). Their wives have their individual huts where they live with their unmarried children. The head of the family does not eat in the company of anybody, but eats alone. His food is prepared and served at his *obi* by the wife whose turn it is to feed the father of the family. The man rules his family with iron hand.⁵

The head of the family often prefers to speak to his wife (wives) and children in violent tone and maltreat them in violent manner. Some of these acts could be evident in some characters. Thus Ezeulu scolds Matefi bitterly for bringing his food late: "If you want that madness of yours to be cured, bring my super at this time another day."⁶ "If you want this compound to contain the two of us, go and do what I told you."⁷ Madume flogs his wife when she wrongs him."⁸ The wife is likened to a servant and is treated as such, nevertheless there exist between her and her husband a degree of affection as

portrayed in the marital relationships between Ihuoma and Emenike, Wigwe and Adaku (*The Concubine*), Chiaku and her first husband Okafor (*The Only Son*).

The nature of the relationship between the man and his wife as expatiated by Chinua Achebe in *Arrow of God*, illustrates the aura of arrogance, proof of ownership, and authority which the man exhibits over his wife. Ezeulu proves this point:

Every man has his own way of ruling his household, he said at last. What I do myself if I need something like that is to call one of my wives and say to her: I need such and such a thing for a sacrifice, go and get it for me. I know I can take it but I ask her to go and bring it herself. I never forget what my father told his friend when I was a boy. He said "In our custom a man is not expected to go down on his knees and knock his fore head on the ground to his wife to ask for forgiveness or beg a favour. But, my father said 'a wise man knows that between him and his wife there may arise the need for him to say to her in secret: 'I beg you' when such a thing happens nobody must know of it, and that woman if she has any sense will never boast about it, or even open her mouth and speak of it. If she does it the earth on which the man brought himself low will destroy her entirely. That was what my father told his friend who held that a man was never wrong in his own house. I have never forgotten those words of my father's, my wife's cock belong to me because the owner of a person is also owner of whatever that person has."⁹

The above statement discloses that it is uncultural for a man to openly ask his wife for forgiveness. He could if need be, beg her only in secret. This woman of course should never let another ear hear about it otherwise the earth on which she walks on, destroys or punishes her severely. He finds it difficult, if not impossible to make request from his wife in a humble manner. He perpetually has it at the back of his mind that he owns the woman and whatever she has. This depicts that the male world is characterized by pride and superiority over the female. "My wife's cock belongs to me because the owner of a person is also the owner of whatever that person has." The woman is regarded as property whose owner is the man; of which the man has right over what belongs to her and he can have it with or without her consent and she would say or do nothing. She cannot challenge her husband. These treatments which the

woman receives from her husband taunt her emotionally but often times she swallows the sorrow while accepting her fate for being a woman.

5.3 Barenness – The Bane of Violence

Most traditional marriages are invariably polygamous and a man's *obi* is sure to be filled with children. Bearing only female children and lack of male children breed insults and hatred, how much more barrenness. The tragedy of childlessness in monogamous marriage endangers the position of the woman who is often blamed when a marriage turns out unfruitful. The man's friends and relatives especially the female relations consider it even more their business. A woman may suffer ill treatment from her husband but often time, the greatest challenges which face a married or barren woman comes from her mother-in-law and *Umụada* (her husband's matured biological sisters and half sisters married or unmarried).

Anna had an untold bitter experience from her mother-in-law and the *Umụada* because of her inability to produce. When Chiaku visited her son Joe, and his wife, Anna, "The next morning she ransacked one of the trunk boxes and removed a pair of earrings, a necklace and a brass bangle"¹⁰ as though it is a right and declares with authority, "These I have decided to take... give me the ones you showed me last night."¹¹ Chiaku's action was neither pleasing to Joe nor to his wife. She (Chiaku) acted the bully. She portrayed herself as an oppressor, one without any sense of fair judgment or dealings. She has a domineering attitude and does not take into consideration the feelings of others. Inwardly, this couple was bruised, but could not stand up to challenge her. Joe and his wife knew that she was looking for an opportunity to attack them, due to Anna's shotcoming. They chose to remain silent to allow the sleeping dog lie. Nevertheless, the technique could not work because, Chiaku still went ahead to make an out burst thereby, expressing her anger over the entire situation.

Joe and Anna his wife were enjoying a satisfactory marital bliss until Chiaku stepped in and sowed a seed of discord, which had a peaceful marital relationship torn apart.¹² Barenness in traditional Igbo marriage generates pressure from family members especially from the mother of the man in question. Joe's mother speaks to her son without reservations, to make him understand her dissatisfaction over a daughter-in-law who is barren. She thoughtfully states:

We've seen the wife you brought home. We were angry with you at the beginning for marrying a stranger, we no longer

are, we think she's well bred. And she's beautiful. But then, what use is a kolanut tree if it fails to bear fruits?¹³

Chiaku likens Anna, Joe's wife to a "kolanut tree" which is one of the most important and economic trees in Igbo land, but the kolanut tree amounts to nothing when it is fruitless. Since it is the fruits it bears, that gives it value. She speaks in proverb which Joe must clearly understand as a son of the soil. She simply reminds Joe of the worthlessness of a wife who cannot produce a child. This is a way of speaking wound into Joe's heart, to make him have a rethink toward taking another wife. As a matter of fact, she wants to stir up violent emotional feelings in Joe to produce a result which would be favourable to her.

Chiaku through actions and attitudes clearly displays her dissatisfaction and bitterness over his daughter-in-law, who has not "shown changes" in regards to being pregnant. She could not control her anger but flings their gift back at them and make them understand that they have failed woefully. Chiaku does not show any remorse for what she says and does, the narrator puts it thus: "As for what she had said in the night, Chiaku had no regrets at all. For it was her belief that such taunts would annoy the son's wife into being a mother."¹⁴

On Anna's own part, "what worried her more than anything else was the attitude of the women who were Joe's relatives, especially the things they now said publicly, sometimes in her hearing".¹⁵ The *Umụada* concerning Anna's childlessness parade themselves as a people who cry more than the bereaved and dance more than the masquerade. Their attitude over this matter and toward Anna exaggerates the whole situation. A number of them were sent to talk the matter over with their "brother", declaring, that they will not have her as their brother's wife until she bears children for them.¹⁶

They were neither perturbed nor touched over what Anna feels or thinks, that is, the emotional trauma she goes through. But as a people, who have right over Joe, authoritatively command, "We want you to marry again." This embarrassment sparks off, an open verbal combat between Anna and Adagu (the leader of the *Umụada*) who

furiously suggests to Anna, “we’ll have no objection if you bring your own sisters for him to marry, provided they bear for us”.¹⁷

When Adiewere and Idu lived for three years without producing any child, “Many people had advised him to marry another, but he refused. He was not at heart a polygamous”.¹⁸ Onyemuru and Nwasiobi discuss the problem for an enduring period and finally conclude that Idu should allow her husband marry again, or better still “marry” another wife for him as others like Uberife has done.¹⁹ The clarion call or desperation which the traditional Igbo people express toward a son or relation whose marriage lacks children springs forth from the “fear” of no one wanting a loved one to die without leaving behind an heir who keeps his family flag flying.

5.4 Violence and Displeasure over Female Offsprings.

Bearing only female children in marriage leads to conflicts or even violence in some traditional Igbo homes, although the intensity of this practice has reduced in the contemporary time. The man hardly tolerates a wife who produces only female issues for him. It is no doubt, that, in the traditional African setting, the woman is equally accused when the marriage produces only female offsprings. This assertion holds until in the recent past when educated Africans come to realize that the man is responsible for the sex of baby produced. Even though science and research have proved the traditional African belief otherwise, many illiterates and the uncivilized still hold and blame the woman for producing only female children.

In the traditional setting, a woman who gives birth to only female children is not much better than the barren. Of course, her husband marries another wife or she is thrown away and replaced with a wife who can bear male children. She is taunted, spoken to in the most painful and unfriendly way by her husband, mother-in-law, her husband’s relations and even family friends. This is demonstrated herein: Madume finds it quite difficult to tolerate his wife who “bore him four daughters- the most annoying thing”.²⁰

5.5 Violence in Mother-Daughters; and Siblings Relationship.

Maazi Lazarus Madubuchi and his wife, in Emeka Ike's *The Porter's Wheel*, already have got five female issues. They are full of expectations to have a male child. The names which they give to the four daughters who come after the first daughter, - Uzoma (the road is excellent) suggest consolation. The names also prove that something is missing in their life and they are believing God to fill up that gap. The second daughter is Nkiru- a short form of the name, "Nkediniruka" meaning "that, which is yet to come is greater". This name simply implies that a special child whose arrival they await is more valuable than what is at hand. The third daughter is Njideka (the child's survival is of eminent importance). This is a consolatory name, which advises that a child which is alive worths more than the dead one irrespective of the sex.

Futhermore, the fourth is Nkechi, which is also a short form of the name "Nkechinyere" (whatever God gives). In a clearer sense, one is advised to accept whatever sex of baby that God gives. She is followed by Ogechukwu (God's time is the best). This is simply a word of encouragement packaged through a name. It tends to strengthen one's heart that God will send a male child at His own time. Here hope is being built that God will definitely provide a male but not at any body's time, but at a period or season He chooses. All these names, as clear as crystal, depict that something is missing in the life of this couple - a son! "After the birth of her fifth daughter, her husband's family had intensified their pressure upon him to marry another wife who could give him male issues."²¹

Mama Obu is quite fortunate that before a co- wife with whom to share her husband is brought, she bore a male child. "With Obu's arrival, his mother's place had been firmly secured; she could sleep in spite of thunder, no matter how many other wives her husband decided to take."²² When Obu arrives, he is showered with all the names Mr. and Mrs. Maduabuchi have been reserving for the expected son, who has not come till then. It seems as though this couple especially the woman, sees this boy as a little god and worships him. Obu's mother handles him carefully as an egg which she would not want to break.

It is quite important to point out the disparaging attitude of Mama Obu toward her daughters. She clearly spells out to the girls that Obu is the most preferred or desired child. She does this without reservation. The way she speaks to her daughters, the manner in which she addresses them illustrates it all. There is no pretence about the great value placed on Obu. His names are: Obuechina (the compound must not revert to bush), Ezenwa (infant king), Nwokenagu (a male issue is desirable). He was also Onyeabo – (a companion – to his father), and Obiano to his mother (because his arrival ushered in comfort and peace into her soul).

In the first instance, the moment she gives birth to Obu, the way of addressing her automatically changed. Literarily, she is called Mrs. (*Oriaku*) Maduabuchi, now a new way of addressing her is established. She becomes, “Obu’s mother,” popularly called “Mama Obu,” as if she had no other children...”²³.

Mama Obu’s violent treatment of her daughters is clearly made evident when her husband instructs all the children to carry yams from the farm to the house. Mrs Maduabuchi could not hold back her anger because Obu, her precious son is invited to join others in the work. Mama Obu, who over heard Ogechukwu demands that Obu must not be left out from the assignment, thunders from the kitchen:

“Ogechukwu.” “If I hear you call Obu, cholera will purge you to death”! “Its when you return to this house that your strength gets into your head. When you get to school no one hears your name; that’s why a child three years younger than you has already caught up with you. Stupid. If you are too lazy to go to the farm, say so, but let me not hear you mention Obu again!”²⁴

Ogechukwu’s sisters, Nkiru and Njideka, lay blame on Ogechukwu for making the mistake of calling Obu, the apple of their mother’s eye to partake in the rigour of farm work. “I warned you”! Chided Nkiru in subdued tones.²⁵ Ogechukwu sorrowfully exclaims: “Is that why Mama should remind me of my ill luck in the examination. Am I the first to fail examination in this house?”²⁶ “Is there anything wrong in being a girl?” Amuche asked, looking herself over as if to ensure she was not leprous.²⁷

The above incidence demonstrates that Mama Obu is intolerant of her daughters. She sees them as disappointment. A set of people who would have robbed her of her marriage or have her husband shared with another woman, had Obu not intervened on

her behalf. She concludes that Obu's arrival is her only saving grace and while in the daughters she sees entities who helped her matter in no way. The violent and rash way in which she addresses her daughters make them feel rejected, dejected and inferior. Bluntly, she tells them that they are irrelevant, unimportant and without value.

Maazi Lazarus' daughters though not pleased with their mother's maltreatment could only grumble in very low tone amongst themselves. They see in their mother a bully and violent attacker. They have no option than to live at the mercy of their mother with perpetual fear and tremble.

“sh... sh.... Sh....” Nkiru pointed towards the kitchen. The sounds of activity there suddenly stopped and she was sure their mother was straining her ears to catch what they were saying. The girls ate their food in silence; chorused “thank Ma” one after the other in the kitchen, and took their baskets to the farm.²⁸

It is pertinent to learn that Mama Obu handles her children with the exception of Obu with high handedness. Almost all the children being females, makes her feel irritated. She finds it difficult to tolerate their nature as women. This makes her speak and address them in the most unfriendly manner.

On another occasion when the girls arrive from the farm with the first load of yam, Obu is about going out to play with his friend Oti. Ogechukwu who is often irritated by Obu's laziness inquired angrily, Obu where are you sneaking off to? Don't you see us carrying yams? Do you think you alone know how to play? Papa says we should tell you... .²⁹ Ogechukwu has not concluded the statement when their mother furiously shouted in violent tone depicting several warning notes, “Ogechuwku! Ogechuwku!! Ogechuwku!!!” Obu whose mother has always been his strength jeers at Ogechukwu. Mama Obu did not make any attempt to stop Obu from taunting his elder sister. Ogechuwku, realizing her mother's unconcerned attitude complains: “Mama since you defend Obu always, you should warn him...”.³⁰ On one occasion she addresses one of the daughters Nkiru, in a very awful manner: “Bush rat that you are.”³¹

5.6 Conflict and Violence amongst Siblings

In Maazi Lazarus' family, the issues that often stir up, conflict and violence centers on their only son, Obu. He is the cause of most frictions between Maazi Lazarus and his wife, and their daughters. Time without number, it is because of this same Obu that the woman abuses, curses, and shouts on her daughters. The sibling conflict and violence in this family most of the time erupts between Obu and Ogechukwu, and their mother who always takes Obu's side.

Ogechukwu is the fifth daughter of Maazi Lazarus and his wife. She is Obuechina's immediate elder sister. She is often at conflict with her younger brother because Obu's behaviour irritates her. More so, the discriminatory manner in which their mother handles the girls and the boy annoys her. Each time Obu exempts himself from work which all are expected to do, she hardly holds her annoyance but goes ahead to challenge him and she receives curses from their mother in return.

Obu does not have regards for Ogechukwu. He reserves no respect for her. This could be observed in the way he speaks and addresses her. This attitude easily triggers off violent response from Ogechukwu. There arises an incident where Obu abuses, jeers and taunts Ogechukwu regardlessly. The quick tempered Ogechukwu hardly tolerates Obu. She deems it impossible to take any nonsense from her younger brother. In one episode, an infuriated Ogechukwu rushes after Obu to beat the hell out of him. Mama Obu intervenes on the scene. She roars at Ogechukwu: "Has your madness erupted again?"³² Ogechukwu in a voice made unsteady by emotion replies. "Does he acknowledge that am older than he? Because he knows you are always around to heap sand round his waist, he thinks he can keep his mouth however he likes when talking to me."³³

Ogechukwu has an unforgiving heart. Each time Obu offends her, she uses a charcoal to mark a vertical line on the wall of the kitchen as a reminder. The misunderstanding between Obu and Ogechukwu does not decrease in intensity because Mama Obu fails to caution the younger child – Obu, to desist from taunting his elder sister. The truth unspoken, as Ogechukwu points out, is that she encourages and strengthens Obu to behave unruly. On another occasion Obu curses Ogechukwu as he hears his mother does: "May dysentery purge you to death, there!"³⁴ This form of curse

is similar to the type which his mother pronounces at Ogechukwu, for example, “If I hear you call Obu, cholera, will purge you to death!” There is an Igbo adage which says that: *Nne ewu na-ata agbara, nwa ya ana-eleya anya n’onu*, which means, “when a she goat eats grass or leaves which goats do not eat, its kids definitely watch and learn to eat wrong food.” Children according to psychologists learn by observations and imitation. Obu has observed to curse his sister in the way his mother does.

At his juncture, it is necessary to explain the root cause of the most violent contest between Obu and Ogechukwu. Ogechukwu demands that Obu roast a yam for her because she has been victorious in a particular game in which roasted yam is the price. Obu refuses, his reason being that the strategy which Ogechukwu applies is wrong. The misunderstanding arouses a serious disagreement between them. It is vital to note that sometimes Obu’s elder sisters show signs of anger toward him. The reason for this is not far fetched. It is no other than their mother’s partial treatment. In this matter they plot and pass a wrong verdict. Even though they realize that Ogechukwu’s method is faulty, they want Obu to be humiliated as the loser who must roast yam.

At Obu’s rejection of their judgment, they all gang up, make a concise and convincing presentation of the matter before their mother who could find no way out to defend Obu. She could only but succumb to her daughters’ verdict – “Obu must roast yam for Oge.” Mama Obu inwardly is nursing anger; she abused Ogechukwu who passed a comment, though not abusing her. She furiously thundered at her. “Leopards will tear your mouth apart before you talk back at me like that!” “You’re not ashamed of engaging in *odu* (the name of that game) with a small boy.³⁵ Ogechukwu who had been pregnant with bitterness and anger uncontrollably made an out-burst:

There’s never anything I do which pleases Mama,” she shouted as she wept. “There’s no truth in anything I say. It is only Obu who does the right things. It’s Obu who speaks the truth. Everyday Ogechukwu is either a wild beast, or a mad woman, or a serpent, anything bad. All because that thing with a head like a man and tiny legs like an idol is called a boy. Did I create myself? Did I beg you to bring me into this world?³⁶

The emotional pain which Ogechukwu has been going through, in the hand of her mother and her younger brother drives her to pounce on Obu like a hungry lion. They both fought like wounded lion. Their mother wants to flog them apart, but when it dawns on her that Obu is taking upper hand, she quickly decides to allow them continue until Ogechukwu gives Obu a severe bite on the arm, while Obu hits her hard leaving her rolling on the ground. Mama Obu does not stop, but rains more abuses on the girl. “Wild beast,” she curses Ogechukwu, obviously – unhappy that she could not execute her threat. “I hope that blow will teach you a lesson.”³⁷

It is not out of place, if Mama Obu’s character is briefly appreciated. A mother is expected to be meek hearted. She is equally expected to spread her love evenly amongst all the children. Even if there is any reason why a child must be loved more than others, the attitude towards the particular child should not be openly shown, to avoid creating ill feelings amongst other children, arouse hatred or envy for the preferred child. Mama Obu, however, is a mother, unfair in dealing with her daughters. She does not pass correct judgment. This attitude is made clear in the way she relates with her daughters and her only son. There is a sharp distinction in the way she treats both parties.

She is not a disciplinarian. She encourages the younger child to disrespect his elderly ones. The way in which Obu abuses, taunts and disrespects his elder sisters is annoying, yet Mrs Maduabuchi does not call him to order or inculcate in him the proper behaviour. Mama Obu lacks the skill for child and domestic management. It seems the duty of a mother is a challenge, which she does not have the skill to handle. There is little or no peace between her and her daughters and amongst the children themselves. She is ignorant of the technique to apply and make each child feel satisfied in the home.

Mama Obu is a woman of poor mentality. Her myopic way of reasoning does not allow her discover the importance or usefulness of the female child. She forgets that the female child is an extension of her, even though she is married off, she will still have grand children through them. She can visit them when they give birth, and their husbands will take good care of her during the *Omugwo* (a period of confinement for a woman who delivers a baby, during which her mother comes to assist her. She is given

special treatment by her son-in-law, at the end of her stay, which is about three months; her son-in-law sends her home with enormous gifts, to show appreciation). She refuses to understand that both the male and female children have various roles in the family.

This mother is not an ideal teacher. She grooms her son in vice rather than inculcate good virtues into him. Obu has gone deep into cursing, a behaviour he learnt from his mother. She is poor in child upbringing and training. She does not give her children especially Obu, proper home training. Her partial judgment teaches her daughters to make the loser become a winner and vice versa. This is made clear when Obu has a good case against Ogechukwu, but because the girls are on Ogechukwu's side, they repaint the picture of the entire matter and makes Ogechukwu the victor.

The emotional wound which Mama Obu inflicts on Ogechukwu is unbearable. It is enough to make one take one's life, or run away from home. She curses this same daughter without reservation. Her words hurt Ogechukwu's heart like the wound of the dagger. She humiliates her through words and actions and the poor helpless child constantly weeps and lives in sorrow. Mama Obu can be likened to a rainmaker who makes rain that drenches him in future. A child such as Ogechukwu who has an unforgiving heart, may decide not to be of any help to her, when she must have gone down in strength as a result of old age.

5.7 Violence and Conflict; Father-Son Experience.

Obu does not like going to the farm but his father believes that anybody who has breath and life in him must have regards for farm work, because it is vital for sustenance. Anyone who eats must work for it. Anyone who disregards work is inviting failure. Maazi Lazarus has good dreams for his son which includes zeal and interest for work and prosperity. It is unfortunate that his wife encourages his only son through over pampering, to become lazy. She does not allow him to work with his sisters. She exempts him from doing household chores, rather, she encourages him to sleep and wake up at late hours of the morning. What Obu says to his mother one particular morning affirms that she is making a spoilt brat out of him. She is equally preparing a weakling who cannot fend for his family in future.

“Mama, whispered Obu, I don’t want to come out until Papa leaves for the farm. If I do he will take me to the farm. Leave my food where I can find it. Don’t lock Papa’s room; I shall learn to ride the bicycle today”.³⁸ Obu shuns going to the farm but he would want his mother to keep food for him, which she definitely keeps! He prefers to ride bicycle rather than going to the farm, which will profit him in future. His mother grooms him in a destructive way, which he cherishes as a result of being a child and ignorant. She tolerates whatever he says and does, because he is the only son. Concerning the loose manner in which Obu’s mother handles him, King Solomon has this to say: “The rod and rebuke give wisdom. But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”³⁹ Mama Obu thinks that those who work are being subjected to suffering and therefore excludes Obu, but unknown to her is the fact that she is preparing him for doom.

Obu’s attitude to work both domestic and farm, make his father feel disappointed in his only son. He has come to realize that this boy is lazy even though brilliant in academic activity. Maazi Lazarus realizes that academic intelligence is quite different from common sense, which Obu lacks. Send him on an errand, he dribbles one like a football and meanders away. He is often at conflict with his wife because like the farmer, she adds sand to the young plant to make its base very strong. She is the one who encourages Obu to continue in the wrong ways.

Obu and his father, time without number, encounter conflicts and violence. In many occasions, Maazi Lazarus, as he is popularly called, would want his only son to come close and learn from him but he never shows interest to learn those – skills which are expected of a son, who succeeds the father, when he is no more. There is this particular incident where his father wants him to acquire the skill of cutting up a goat, especially when the meat has to be given to people. Obu’s lack of interest to learn from his father is clearly seen in what he says and the way he answers his father.

Where were you when I was cutting up the goat?” asked Maazi Lazarus, “I don’t know at the time “the goat was cut up,” Obu replied evasively... “You probably watching me cutting up the goat?” “About cutting up a goat.” Obu’s tone was intended to make his father’s question sound ridiculous. “You speak as if cutting up a goat is the same as

cutting up stock fish! You don't know that there are specified procedure for cutting up a goat, especially if the meat is to be shared with others or parts of it presented for certain purposes. "Must a person know how to cut up a goat?" Obu did not care for the acquisition of the goat cutting skill...⁴⁰

This is one of the ways in which Obu responds to his father which often set himself, his father and mother at loggerheads. It is not only responding rudely to his father but never carrying out any domestic assignment, which he gives him individually or collectively with his sisters that cause conflicts between them. Maazi Lazarus sends Obu to remind some of his friends (Maazi Lazarus') and their wives of his invitation to his house that afternoon. Obu shows reluctance to go on this errand, his mind centres on playing with his friends rather than going on the errand. To Oti his friend he complains: "This is the kind of thing that irritates me" Just when I am about to do something of my own, Papa comes up with something else I must do for him. Look at the long list of persons he says I must go and tell something to!"⁴¹

Obu then complains to his mother over what he is asked to do, who without wasting time, calls one of the girls, Nkechi, and sends her away to those people, while Obu gleefully disappears with his friend. When Maazi Lazarus discovers his wife's pranks, he had a very noisy verbal encounter with her, after which Maazi Lazarus sits down and takes a deep thought over what his wife actually wants to produce out of his only son. While Maazi Lazarus grinds his snuff in his *obi*, he thoughtfully examines every aspect of Obu's life and discovers that if weighed in a balance, he amounts to nothing:

That boy was slowly but surely developing into a useless boy. He took no part in any thing that was done in the house, all he wanted was to be left to wake up at his leisure, to be given what food he wanted at any time he wanted it, and to be free to play whenever he was not eating or sleeping. Worse still, he showed no interest whatsoever in what went on around him. He could not tell the location of his father's farms. He could not distinguish the water yam from other yams. He had shown no interest in his father's trading activities. A boy soon to attain the age of nine was

still bed-wetting and saw nothing odd about it. He saw no shame in sharing his mother's bed with her at his age, no, in clinging to his mother as to a girl friend.⁴²

This and a lot more are Maazi Lazarus' assessment of his son. Honestly, he tells himself the truth when he blames himself for being absent from the house most of the time. This leaves a big opportunity for his wife to treat Obu with kid gloves. Concerning the above situation he resorts: "A boy should not be brought up by his mother while his father still breathes."⁴³ His long absence from home has contributed very much to this unfortunate situation.

Even at this, Maazi Lazarus still complains that his attempt to shapen Obu's character remains unsuccessful because his wife protects and defends Obu even in wrong courses. She equally creates wrong impression which makes the boy feel that his mother loves him sincerely, while his father does not. Obu's father comes to discover that there is no justification for continuing pampering Obu. It has led to much misunderstanding and unhappiness among his sisters, and Obu's future is at stake. Finally he concludes that he must stand up to this challenge and seek a lasting solution to address it.

Conflict within oneself could lead to conflict with other members of the family. Obu's poor upbringing and development is of much concern to his father and it generates series of conflict and violence between Maazi Lazarus and his wife. Obu's father takes a decision as though he has read what the book of Proverb. 19:13 says, "A foolish son is the ruin of his father." This is exactly what Maazi Lazarus wants to guard against. He does not want Obu to continue to thread on this unappealing path, which would eventually bring shame to him. However, Obu's problem, prompts his father to make an arrangement which his wife might term "rash" because it runs quite contrary to her plans for her only son. "I have decided to send Obuechina away to serve as a houseboy to a teacher."⁴⁴ Maazi Lazarus receives the accurate response he expects from his wife – "My son is not going to anybody as houseboy".⁴⁵ "... You seem to forget that Obiano is still a child. ... Alright, slaughter him if you like!"⁴⁶

The issue of sending Obu away elicits serious unpleasant encounter and heated arguments between the couple. Mama Obu registers her disapproval using two reasons

to back up her discontentment. In the first place, Obu is too young, he is just nine; secondly, Teacher Zacchus Kanu is a very daft and wicked fellow. She summaries her sorrow as follows: “My only son, this sole boy who has been loaned by the gods to wipe the tears from my eyes, is this boy you want to send to that evil man who behaves as if he entered his mother’s womb through the back yard?”⁴⁷

In spite of the serious disagreement, Obu is sent to Aka at last. When he comes back during one of the holidays, what his mother can see is: “Large head, that’s all, and sinews and scars all over his body. They have turned him into a broom stick.”⁴⁸ On the other hand, Maazi Lazarus who is not subjective in his own evaluation could see a recreated and remoulded Obu. Enthusiastically, he admires him:

Missus, don’t you see what change Onyibo has undergone...” Do you see how he has been going on errands cheerfully? Did you notice that nobody told him to join his sisters in carrying yams his morning, and yet he joined them happily.⁴⁹

Maazi Lazarus is quite satisfied with the transformation which Onyibo has undergone. Whether his wife believes it or not, a great work has been done. He uses the story of two men Edmund and Caleb who are age mates to draw an analogy. He tells Obu that Edmund distinguished himself through education after serving at a teacher’s house; he could drink tea, while Caleb who was a servant to the whites was a truck pusher at Onitsha. After the illustration, Obu who has earlier complained of not going back to Zacchus’ house takes a decision, goes back accompanied by nobody.

5.8 Okonkwo, Nwoye and Violence.

The literary work, *Things Fall Apart* authored by Chinua Achebe, is another novel of great importance to this work, because of its richness in the motif of conflict, violence, and breaches in family ties. Okonkwo is a suitable representation of a typical African masculinity. He could be acknowledged for his physical prowess. Socially, he is a great man of fame. Here is a concise but sharp illustrative description of the man, Okonkwo:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements.

As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat.⁵⁰

Amalinze was a famous wrestler because “his back never touches the earth.” However, Okonkwo proved himself a better wrestler than he. Naturally, Okonkwo is a man who finds value in violence. He has no fear for gory sight. In summary, he is a man of action; a man of war. His life is characterized by fear, anger and fiery temper. It is of importance to highlight on Okonkwo’s violent nature. This is because the violent trait in him will serve as the bed – rock to most of the conflict and violent acts in his relationship with his family.

In addition, it is equally vital to notice the presence of internal conflict in Okonkwo’s life. Sometimes, unpalatable events can take place around one’s life and this could trigger off internal crisis. Then the internal conflict is often poured out on family members through conflict or violent behaviours. Obu’s father experienced this inner conflict when Obu was not living up to expectation as an only son. He was filled with conflicting thoughts on how best to arrest the situation. Likewise, Okonkwo has this emotional clash; hence he resorts to violence, and high handedness in training his son Nwoye. The result is that Nwoye could not freely express his feelings: “... And so he feigned that he no longer cared for women’s stories. And when he did this he saw that his father was pleased, and no longer rebuke or beat him.”⁵¹

Okonkwo teaches Nwoye that violence is an ideal virtue. He makes him understand that a son must develop a violent attribute so that he would be able to rule his family. A man who is soft and gentle according to Okonkwo, finds himself under the dictates of his wife, and children. He reasons that a man who has achieved a lot but fails in controlling his family is not a man. His philosophy is that a man must be harsh and violent in dealing with his family. Okonkwo inculcates in the young Nwoye’s heart, the relevance of masculinity and violence: “So Okonkwo encouraged the boys to sit with him in his *obi*, and he told them stories of the land – masculine stories of violence and bloodshed. Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent”.⁵²

There are some teachings or instructions given to a child which rather generates conflict in him. Okonkwo instructs Nwoye to desist from staying in his mother’s hut.

He equally forbids him from finding himself in the midst of the women in the compound. His reasons are quite simple. He would like Nwoye to grow up to become a man who would not have feminine traits in him. He entreats him to become a man capable of controlling his family. Thus, he would like him and Ikemefuna to have their place in his *obi* to listen to stories of heroic deeds. This instruction notwithstanding, Nwoye being a child still prefers his mother's stories, but to avoid being beaten by his father, he pretends to have lost interest in women's stories. There is a conflict of interest in Nwoye's life, at a point he is driven to live a two faced type of life. He feigns to dance to the tune of his father's music, but inwardly his heart is with his mother and her stories.

Okonkwo's life is ruled by fear. Okonkwo is a man who has acquired so much. He is an achiever, and so no one ever suspects that he is deeply conceived by fear - fear of failure. He never wishes to be a wretched failure like his father, Unoka. In the same vein, he fears that the wealth which took him much sweat to gather should not be wasted in the hand of a lazy and worthless son, Nwoye. He swears that Nwoye must be raised to become a powerful successor of his family, thus he threatens:

I will not have a son who cannot hold his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands. And if you stand staring at me like that... Amadiora will break your head for you."⁵³

Still concerning Nwoye's weakness, Okonkwo complains to his friend Obierika:

Nwoye is old enough to impregnate a woman. At his age I was already fending for myself. No, my friend, he is not too young. A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it was hatched. I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but, there is too much of his mother in him."⁵⁴

Okonkwo will never for once tolerate Nwoye's mistakes which often occur as a result of his tender age or inexperience. He would like to hold him by the collar to sniff life out of him. Another of his violent way of speaking is here recorded. The little boy together with Ikemefuna is helping him in planting yams during one of the planting seasons. Nwoye could not cut the yams to the appropriate size since he is yet to learn

the skill. Okonkwo out of fury thundered... “If you split another yam of that size, I shall break your jaw. You think you are still a child. I began to own a farm at your age.”⁵⁵

Okonkwo neither cherishes Nwoye nor sees anything good in him. Their relationship all the while has been violence – filled. He has seen disappointment in Nwoye. He now becomes more disappointed when Nwoye accepts “the new faith.” The “new faith” is the last straw that breaks the Camel’s back and creates a big gulf in their relationship. The “new faith” is the major cause of conflict between Okonkwo and Nwoye.

Obierika, Okonkwo’s friend, is surprised at Nwoye’s sudden appearance in Umuofia, more surprise is he to see him amongst the missionaries, while Okonkwo his father, is still in exile at Obanta, his mother’s place. Obierika is anxious to uncover Nwoye’s mission. Nwoye accepts the new faith and decides to break off from his father and mother. “What are you doing here?” queried Obierika; “I am one of them... How is your father? ... I don’t know, he is not my father.”⁵⁶ Obierika sees in Nwoye, a total disgrace and shame to Okonkwo, an epitome of African traditional giant, who has achieved so much and acquired almost all the titles of the land.

What Obierika sees and hears from his friend’s first son, prompts him to make for Obanta to visit Okonkwo without delay. Okonkwo is too heavy at heart. Grief could not permit him to talk about Nwoye. It is from Nwoye’s mother that his friend hears the peripheral aspect of the story. In another occasion, Amikwu, Okonkwo’s cousin sees Nwoye among the Christians. This is a dreadful thing to be done! He reports the matter to Okonkwo who proves a match to Nwoye’s “foolishness.”

... His father, suddenly overcome with fury, sprang to his feet and gripped him by the neck. Where have you been?
...Nwoye struggled to free himself from the choking grip.
“Answer me,” roared Okonkwo, before I kill you! He seized a heavy stick that lay on the dwarf wall and hit him two or three savage blows.⁵⁷

The novel, *Things Fall Apart*, makes an enduring exposition of Okonkwo’s internal conflict about Nwoye’s conduct, his thought wallows in deep sorrow and fury which nearly pushes him to pick his machet and cut down the “miscreant gang”- (the missionaries and their converts). This gang robs him of his first son, on whom all hope

lies, to take over the mantle of family leadership when he is no more. Nwoye's action is a gross misconduct and a serious misfortune to him. It is equally an abomination: "To abandon the gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens, was the very depth of abomination." ⁵⁸

Okonkwo paints an imaginary picture in which all his children take Nwoye's foot step and wonders what happens to him at death. He concludes that he and his father would be denied of worship and sacrifice - a most terrible treatment. He could see in his mind's eyes, his sons praying to the foreign god, while they abandon their own ancestors. He wonders how a "roaring fire" like him could beget such an effeminate and good for nothing young man, as son. It now dawns on him that Nwoye is a replica of his grand father, Unoka.

In the life of Okonkwo and Nwoye there is a clear evidence of wounded emotions, conflicts and violence. Okonkwo's life is ruled by aggression, anger and fear. This trait is in contrast with Nwoye's who is simple, friendly, emotional, and accommodating. He is friendly to his younger siblings and accepts Ikemefuna with love, into his life. Ikemefuna finds in him a companion and an "elder brother." ⁵⁹ Nwoye and him (Ikemefuna) become quite inseparable. There exists cordial relationship between him; his mother; and his father's other wives. He is obedient and runs errands for them.

Nwoye's interests, to a large extent, are in contrast with his father's. In a simple note, they have what could be termed opposing behaviours. Okonkwo values violence categorically expressed in harsh word, beating, and even murder attempt. He finds pleasure in blood-shed through which he believes his prowess is proved. Nwoye is easy going, peaceful and gentle. Nwoye is not violent in all his deeds. He is not portrayed in any incidence of beating, harassing or bullying on his younger ones. He never for once challenged his father irrespective of the constant beatings and curses.

There is conflict in Okonkwo and his son's belief. Okonkwo holds unto a belief which is crude and cruel; a belief which approves the killing of twins and human sacrifice. Nwoye accepts a belief which speaks preservation of life, frowns at the killing of twins and human sacrifice. Both of them have rough experiences due to these differences. Okonkwo builds his belief in African traditional religion, a religion which

allows worship and sacrifice to the ancestors while Nwoye's new religion – Christianity- encourages worship and prayers to 'white man's god.' This is the most conflicting element of their lives.

5.9 Violence in Okonkwo and Ikemefuna's Relationship.

Okonkwo is chosen among others to send war message to their enemy who killed the wife of Udo. Umuofia now demands for a virgin and a young man for the atonement of the murder. Their enemy, who has deep fear for Umuofia agrees to answer their demand, hence Ikemefuna and a maiden were handed over to Okonkwo. The virgin is given to Udo as wife, while Ikemefuna remains under Okonkwo's care for a while. This is the brief story of how Ikemefuna comes to live in Okonkwo's family. Okonkwo treats him with heavy hand as he does to the entire numbers of his family. Even though he is fond of him, he does not show it openly. Okonkwo always expresses a notion of anger. He believes that: "To show affection was a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating was strength." ⁶⁰

When Ikemefuna is brought into his new home, he is totally conceived by fear. He is deeply afraid of the strange family. He is very sad, always enveloped in thought about his mother and his three year old sister. He often refuses to take his meals and weeps profusely. He presents a particular question before Nwoye's mother, asking her when he will be sent home:

When Okonkwo heard that he would not eat any food, he came into the hut with a big stick in his hand and stood while he swallowed his yam, trembling. A few moments he went behind the hut and began to vomit painfully" ⁶¹

This is the beginning of violent experience from his lord, Okonkwo. However, Ikemefuna adapts comfortably into Okonkwo's family, growing quite rapidly like mushroom. It seems as though Umuofia elders have forgotten about him. A day came, and his case was called up. Ezeulu, the most respected elder comes to remind Okonkwo that Ikemefuna's time is exhausted and he must be killed. However, he admonishes Okonkwo as follows: "The boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death." ⁶²

Ikemefuna has come to see himself as a member of Okonkwo's family and takes him as a father as Ezeulu reveals in the statement below:

Sometimes when he went to the big village meetings or communal ancestral feast, he allowed Ikemefuna to accompany him, like a son, carrying his stool and goat skin bag and indeed, Ikemefuna called him father.⁶³

A day later, Okonkwo tells Ikemefuna to prepare because he is going to send him home. Nwoye senses doom and thus bursts into tears, knowing that very soon his friend and "brother," will be murdered. His father gives him the beating of his life for trying to expose a plot, which is expected to remain secret. As for the young boy, Ikemefuna, he is lost. His home is gradually fading from his memory. He is glad that soon he may have a reunion with his mother and younger sister, but somehow, he feels that being in their midst once again is unrealistic.

On the said day, the men gather together, fully armed with their matchets in sheaths, and take Ikemefuna away with a pot of palmwine on his head. They walk a path-way in the heart of the forest. When they have walked very far away, one of them dares a hard blow with a matchet:

As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his matched, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, "My father, they have killed me!" as he ran toward him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his matchet and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak.⁶⁴

Had Okonkwo not partaken in killing Ikemefuna, the person who initiated the killing would have completed it or someone else. Earlier on, his friend warned him not to be part of the killing. Oknokwo can be seen as an over ambitious fellow. He wants to be perpetually noted for his bravery. This he seeks at every opportunity which sometimes could be erroneous. He is a man full of himself. He will at every point in time desire to exhibit the strength of his arms. The killing of Ikemefuna brings criticism rather than add to his honour.

Obviously, the lad, Ikemefuna is disappointed in him. Of all the strange men surrounding him at that very peak of danger, he sees him as the only entity who can protect him. It never occurred to him that, he is running to the source that quickens his

total destruction. Okonkwo, due to this deed, could be regarded as an untrustworthy man. Nobody would punish, condemn or sanction him for not being part of the killing. He is influenced by what people say or think, and thus makes mistakes or take wrong steps.

5.10 Okonkwo; His Wives and Violence

It is not an over- statement that Okonkwo treats his family including his wives with iron hand. It is established that he visits them with violence of various magnitudes. Nevertheless, let us consider the fact that Okonkwo is ruled by a wild temper. This Achebe succinctly puts as follows: “Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children.”⁶⁵ Wild-fire-like temper contributed immensurable to most of his violent acts. Okonkwo is driven into severe anger by his younger wife who goes to plait her hair and does not come back on time to prepare her husband’s lunch. She leaves her children uncared for, and equally without food.

When Ojiugo returns, Okonkwo pounces on her like a hungry lion ready to devour its prey:

And when she returned, he beat her very heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was the week of peace. His first two wives ran out in great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week. But Okonkwo was not the man to stop beating somebody halfway through, not even for fear of a goddess.⁶⁶

Okonkwo defiles the sacred week and the implication is that his action is capable of ruining the whole clan. He insults the earth goddess and she can withdraw her increase and all shall perish in hunger; declares the priest, Ezeani. The priest commands Okonkwo to appease the goddess, with the following items; one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries.

It is no doubt that Okonkwo is a man of anger. It is another thing to realize that his anger and temper are easily triggered off by the behaviours of the members of family. He does not rage in isolation. The undiluted Igbo culture expects a woman to give her husband his meal at the appropriate time. An average Igbo man does not joke

with his meals. He must not be denied food. He could decide not to eat and not that his food will not be served. It is improper not to serve him his food at all or at the wrong time. As it could be seen, it is Ojiugo's turn to feed her husband that afternoon, but she chooses to plait her hair. It is not an abomination for a woman to beautify herself, but to do it at the wrong time, and at the detriment of her family members, results to misunderstanding. It is not only her husband that is left hungry; her little children are left like sheep without shepherd. It is out of the mercy of her husband's other wives that the children are provided with something to eat.

This indicates that when family members fail in their responsibilities, there is bound to be strife, conflict, and violence. A responsible woman who goes to seek beauty has to be brief. She has to face what she has gone for and return home quickly to attend to domestic issues. Ojiugo goes to plait her hair at a friend's house "and does not return early enough" to cook her husband's afternoon food. It clearly shows that she subjects her husband to starvation. Summarily, she could not live up to her duties.

As seen earlier, Ezeulu scolds his wife Matefi, for bringing his food late. So it is not only Okonkwo who reacts when his food is not prepared at the right time. Why Okonkwo's case is spectacular is that, he over-reacted by punching his wife mercilessly. Ojiugo is not the only woman guilty of such inadequacy. It has been seen or heard about women who have little or no time for domestic functions. Many shy away from domestic duties. A good number of women are failures in domestic affairs. They do not discharge their duties as wives.

In this contemporary period, most of their duties are shifted to the house helps, unsupervised, thus there are a lot of loopholes in the home front, which have contributed immensely to family upheavals and contentions. A wife could be busy as a result of the nature of her work or business, but nothing stops her from making adequate or solid arrangement for the management of her home. The work must be examined, supervised, and monitored closely for effective result.

Another violent incident recorded against Okonkwo, is the shooting of his second wife. The woman's crime is that she cuts some banana leaves to wrap food for cooking. Okonkwo feels much offended, gives her sound beating, which leaves her and

her daughter helpless. This treatment to him is not satisfactory compared with her senseless act, as Okonkwo perceives:

He sent Ikemefuna to get him his gun. The woman who was beaten “made” jesting comment concerning the gun, - “guns that were not shot.” Okonkwo could not assimilate this insult, but was moved to take a most drastic action. “... Okonkwo heard it and ran madly into his room for the loaded gun, ran out again and aimed at her as she clambered over the dwarf wall of the barn. He pressed the trigger and there was a loud report accompanied by the wail of his wives and children. He threw down the gun and jumped into the barn and there lay the woman, very much shaken and frightened but quite unhurt. He heaved a heavy sigh and went away with the gun.⁶⁷

Okonkwo easily picks offense. He does not show forgiveness to any offender. Every ill-behaviour must be punished, irrespective of the magnitude. Pleas do not stop him from taking rash actions over his household. He detests being challenged or jeered at, by any of his wives. That is why he nearly killed Ekwefi because of her statement and the audacity to respond to him disrespectfully. Okonkwo’s behaviour entails that a typical African man of his kind does not expect his wife to talk when he talks, how much more mocking him. He can react in any way he chooses, no matter how barbaric it appears. Okonkwo’s family members are ever helpless each time he attacks his offender. For the fear of him, none dares go near; rather they stay at a distance and make pleas. This is clear when he beats Nwoye for accepting a “new faith”, (p.107), when he beats Ojiugo and when he shoots Ekwefi (p. 27).

5.11 Wife Battering and Miscarriage: Dangers of Violence

There is an incident in *Things Fall Apart*, where Mgbafor’s relatives take her and her two children away from her husband’s house. Uzowulu her husband often beats and leaves her with several wounds. In one instance, she had miscarriage as a result of the beating. Her eldest brother Odukwue, reports the matter to the elders of the clan:

My in-law Uzowulu is a beast. My sister lived with him for nine years. During those years no single day passed in the sky without his beating the woman. We have tried to settle their quarrels time without number and on each occasion

Uzowulu was guilty... . Two years ago, when she was pregnant, he beat her until she miscarried. Last year when my sister was recovering from an illness, he beat her again, so that if neighbours had not gone in to save her, she would have been killed. The law of Umuofia is that, if a woman runs away from her husband, her bride price is returned. But in this case she ran away to save her life. Her two children belong to Uzowulu. We do not dispute it, but they are too young to leave their mother. If on the other hand, Uzowulu should recover from his madness and come in the proper way to beg his wife to return, she will do so on the understanding that, if he ever beats her again, we shall cut off his genitals for him.⁶⁸

The above copious statement from the character, Odukwè is rich in the chaotic marital relationship between Uzowulu and his wife, Mgbafor. The earlier part of the narration has a dose of exaggeration. He says, “no single day passes in the sky without his beating the woman.” This simply implies that he beats her constantly. The implication of one of the beatings resulted to miscarriage. Uzowulu’s crude behaviour soured the relationship between himself, his wife, children and in-laws. Wife beating as openly revealed here could make the woman’s people intervene to protect her and her children from a bullying husband and father. It could lead to divorce or separation. The children are affected emotionally when they are taken away from either of the parents.

In this very case, Uzowulu’s children will be denied father’s love and care. The new environment in which they will grow up, can affect their lives either positively or negatively. It is true we are not told Mgbafor’s offense which warrants the constant beating, maltreating a woman can lead to chaos as laid bare in Uzowulu and his wife’s situation. Wife beating is dangerous; it can lead to the death of the woman. Beating a pregnant woman can lead to termination of the woman’s life, the foetus or both. The information gathered above, shows that Mgbafor loses a baby after being beaten by her husband.

Apart from physical violence in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, there are incidents of emotional violence or emotional trauma. This could be closely associated with Ekwefi, Okonkwo’s second wife who had ten children and all died, but one, Ezinma. She suffered so much in the hand of Ekwefi who is confirmed to be an *ogbange* (a child

who repeatedly dies and returns to its mother's womb to be born again). Her life is always hanged by a thread. She is never strong like other children. She is well today; tomorrow she is sick at the point of death. Each time the attack comes Ekwefi loses hope of her survival. She feels down cast and suffers depression and emotional pain.

Ekwefi had suffered a good deal in that she had born ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three. As she buried one child after another her sorrow gave way to despair and then to grim desperation. The birth of her children, which should be a woman's crowning glory, became for Ekwefi mere physical agony devoid of promise. The naming ceremony after seven market weeks became an empty ritual. Her deepening despair found expression in the names she gave her children. One of them was a pathetic cry, Onwubiko – 'Death, I implore you.' But death took no notice; Onwubiko died in his fourteenth month. The next child was Ozoemena – 'May it not happen again.' She died in her eleventh month, and two others after her. Ekwefi then became defiant and called her next child Onwuma. - "Death may please himself?" And he did.⁶⁹

Ekwefi as could be deduced from the above expression is never a happy woman. Her life is likened with bitterness, sorrow and agony, due to her ordeal. Her desperation and reaction is not abnormal. No one is happy to lose a dear one. Her co-wives often mistake her cloudy countenance for jealousy toward them who are well established with both male and female children. The ill feeling which Okonkwo's other wives have against Ekwefi is not far from reality.

When a woman is without a child, those who have, point out faults at every action she takes. If they are playing with their children and such woman remains indifferent, it will be termed that she is annoyed with them. If she scolds or beats any child for correction, it is explained that she is not happy with children, because she does not have her own. Such a woman encounters several ill treatments. She receives heart breaking words from other women, neighbours and in-laws. Ekwefi's experience is quite unbearable. It is rational to point out that such condition cannot arouse joy or peace in most families. It is one of the ill fated situations which if care is not taken, tears

the family apart or leads the woman into sudden death. “Ezinma is dying,” came her voice, and all the tragedy and sorrow of her life were packed in those words... Ezinma lay shivering on a mat beside a huge fire that her mother had kept burning all night.⁷⁰

The above brief lines affirm that Ezinma is often severely sick and the mother is deeply affected both physically and emotionally. She is denied sleep, peace of heart and rest of mind. Ezimma’s recurrent sickness brings to the fore, that there are factors apart from human, which constitute emotional violence in the family.

It is observed that even though Okonkwo handles his family with iron hand, his children do not take after him nor do his wives emulate his anger or his other characteristics. There is cordial relationship amongst the children, even though they are of different mothers. The three wives are in good rapport with one another.

5.12 Lazy Son: A Disappointment to Father.

In Nkem Nwankwo’s novel, *Danda*, the young man Danda, who is about thirty years of age, is not a father’s pride. He cultivates extremely irritating habit of laziness, drinking and fluting all over the town. He does not help in farm work. He is a disappointment and failure to his parents. His mother is distressed over her son’s laziness and reckless lifestyle. She does not approve of Danda’s behaviour. Time without number, she talks, encourages, and gives him counsel, but he persists in his vice.

Sequel to his attitude, his father, Araba, strongly warns his wife to stop feeding the good for nothing son, who is totally useless to the entire family. He considers Danda a liability to his household because the food he eats is a waste. Araba has many a time attempted to disown Danda because according to him, he is not worthy to be a son. Angrily he reiterates: “He came home today? He came to eat afternoon food. That’s it. You feed him too much... And I am going to stop it... I will not see him in my *obi* again, I have thrown him out.”⁷¹ Araba regrets that if he dies, Danda automatically becomes his successor, but strongly fears that Danda will not be capable to handle that office. He begins to consider his younger son to take up Danda’s position. “When they look for me and fail to see me, he will be the one to take my *obi*... Well he won’t be. I will leave every thing to Onuma.”⁷² Araba who is no longer ready to tolerate “the never do well,” in one occasion angrily thunders at his wife:

He will go about like akaloholi he is. Then he will understand that food does not fall from the birds. Yes hunger will tell him what I have never succeeded in telling him. Ahai. ... And see here, if I hear that you feed him either in here or outside it will be a cause for quarrel between you and me. Nwamma nodded, "It is well..."⁷³

A son especially the first, who could not measure up to his father's standard, is never pleasing in his father's sight. The man in his part views his life as unfulfilled. He is filled with fear of not having a competent successor. Sons such as Danda are hated, despised or disowned by embittered fathers. The pride or joy of a father is to see a son, exhibit wisdom, masculinity and make achievements.

When Danda was about to take the *ichi* (a practice which qualifies one to become a man of honour), his mother was afraid. She knows that Danda will certainly fail the test. Danda's mother is an ideal mother. She is never in support of an irresponsible son like Mama Obu does. When her husband warns her to desist from feeding Danda, she nods in affirmation, she does not argue on behalf of her son, knowing that such treatments could make him change. Continually she advises her son to retrieve his feet from unworthy deeds. She responds to her husband warmly, to declare herself free from suspicion of being in support of Danda's ill behaviour.

"Do whatever you think fit,"... "I won't take Danda's side. This afternoon when he came home, I warned him. I said, "Danda, you cannot leave your father to do all the work while you flout about." Yes, I spoke strongly to him."⁷⁴ The above statement affirms that Nwamma neither supports nor defends her son, as some irresponsible mothers would do. She does not approve of evil but rather lends hand to have it checked.

5.13 Abandonment in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*

The decision over whom a son or daughter of the family marries is a very crucial one and of concern to the members of the family, especially parents. In the traditional Igbo setting, it is the parents that decide whom their child marries. In the case of the son, parents in most cases take it upon themselves to find the girl he marries. With the advent and acceptance of the western culture, some young people make choice of whom

to marry, as husband or wife. This development often leads to conflicts, violence, and disagreements amongst them and their parents or guardians.

In Chinua Achebe's novel, *No Longer at Ease*, this premise is clearly witnessed as Achebe unfolds the bitter combat between Obi and his parents. Obi Okonkwo is the son of Isaac Okonkwo. He is sent to England to further his Western education. He comes back, well read, and gets a good job with the British Council in Lagos. He has a good flat, a car and enough money to spend. His relationship with his parents is quite plausible until he is about to take a wife. He arranges and comes home a certain time to discuss the marriage issue with his father. He is completely disappointed over his father's reaction and response. The discussion which ensues between Obi and his father, will add clarity to this matter:

You wrote to me some time ago about a girl you had seen. How does the matter stand now?" "That is one reason why I came. I want us to go and meet her people and start negotiations"... "Do we know who this girl is and where she comes from?"..."She is the daughter of Okeke, a native of Mbaino." Which Okeke? I know about three. One is a retired teacher, but it will not be that one." "That is the one," said Obi. "Josiah Okeke?"... You cannot marry the girl."... eh? I said you cannot marry the girl. Why? I shall tell you why. But first tell me this. Did you find out or try to find out any thing about this girl? "Yes" "What did you find?" "That they are *Osu*." "You mean to tell me that you know, and you ask me why?" "I don't think it matters. "We are Christians."⁷⁵

Obi presents his case in a convincing and logical manner, but his father remains unmoved. He reminds his father that the issue of *osu* is instituted by their ignorant and illiterate forefathers, who wallow in utter darkness. He goes further to tell him that Christians who have seen and tested the light of the gospel must reason like children of the light. Obi's ideas and line of thoughts produce no effects rather; his father tersely gives him a summary of how his people regard *osu*. Mr Isaac Okonkwo bluntly draws Obi's attention to his final position over the matter and clarifies the implications to him. "*Osu* is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you my son, not to bring the mark of shame and of leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations will curse your memory".⁷⁶

When he could win neither his father's support nor approval, he goes to his mother, with whom he is much close. He believes that his mother would be in his camp, and probably persuades his father and wins his support. The response he gets from his mother sweeps his feet off the ground and he becomes completely devastated. He receives a rude shock from his mother, on whom his last hope rests. His father without mincing words tells him that he must not have an *osu* for a wife, but his mother goes extra mile by swearing with her dear life, should he go ahead to marry the said Clara:

If you want to marry this girl, you must wait until I am no more. If God hears my prayers, you will not wait long."...
But if you do the thing while I am alive, you will have my blood on your head, because I shall kill myself.⁷⁷

The efficacy of Obi's mother's words coupled with what he has received from his father earlier, triggers off unabated anger which drives Obi to hurry off to Lagos after two days, instead of the initial one week he scheduled to spend. Meanwhile Clara is pregnant with his baby. He sees no other solution but in abortion. He takes Clara to a doctor and has the pregnancy terminated. He is in austere condition of financial bankruptcy. The thirty pounds for the evacuation of the foetus is borrowed. Clara nearly died in the process of the abortion, after which the relationship between them becomes completely destroyed.

It is a total chaotic period of emotional upset, depression and loneliness. Obi never saw his mother neither in sickness nor at death. He abandons his parents and never asked about their well-being. It is hard, if not impossible to believe that Obi's mother dies and he refuses to travel home to attend her funeral ceremony. He confesses that he is not moved by the news of her death. Even when he forces himself to feel the loss, it is very difficult to come by. After a day he hears himself humming dancing tune.

It is obvious that Obi's action is prompted by the denial of a wife he wants to marry. He feels that his mother fails him when she refuses to support or argue on his behalf. He holds that his parents are a bunch of disappoint, who turn his life upside down as a result of their archaic culture, which tears lovers apart, rather than unite them together. In his conclusion they must not be forgiven for making him lose the love of his life. Culturally, Obi's mother thinks she is protecting her son from the stigma and

evil repercussions associated with marrying *osu*. It never dawned on her that he would react the way he did.

The theme of culture conflict is pronounced in this work. Obi has imbibed Western education and absorbs the culture of the “Whites.” His perception over life and its issues are in contrast with his parents.’ His ways of doing things and reacting to matters have taken their root from the Western ideology and that is why it is difficult to flow along with his parents. While his father and mother hold that some people must be tagged “outcasts” and avoided like lepers, he views such practice as irrational and absurd in this contemporary age.

Isaac Okonkwo and his wife are people who are neither here nor there; instead they choose to be on the fence. He bears a christian name, “Isaac” which shows that he accepts Christianity as Obi points out to him, “we are Christians.” This statement explains it all. It implies that Christians are expected to do away with all the obnoxious and traditional practices of their fore fathers. Christians are children of light as Obi mentions earlier and should allow the light radiate for others to see. Obi’s parents are holding Christianity on one hand and African culture on the other.

However, Isaac Okonkwo and his wife should not suffer much blame for adhering to their cultural heritage. As infants in the Christian faith, they still need to be tutored; guided properly and closely monitored, before they could have deep understanding of what Christianity entails. This will enable them think or reason in the same line with their son. It is the differences in their understanding that affect grossly their cordial relationship and of course, the provocation of the cold violence.

5.14 Kidnap, Incest and Suicide in the Family

The drama *Nwata rie Awọ (Ọ jụ anụ)*, has its title drawn from an adage. It literally translates; *Nwata* (a child); *rie* (eats); *Awọ* (a toad); (*Ọ* (he/she) *jụ* (loses interest or refuses); *anụ* (meat). If a child eats a toad, he loses interest in meat. This statement is better explained further; when the child eats a toad, he abhors the loathsome meal and therefore hates to feed on anything in the form of meat. This is interpreted to mean: That, if one finds oneself in an abominable situation in life, one becomes afraid of walking into such unholy experience again. The literary work is a

drama, authored by Goddy Onyekaonwu and it is written in Igbo language. The book is rich in violence and tragic experience of a certain family.

Maazi (Mr.) Obidike shows regret over his son Awọrọ, who is often at conflict with him. He sees in him a very lazy and irresponsible son who cannot amount to anything. The thought of Awọrọ gives him much worry. He regrets to have begotten such a son at all. Concerning Awọrọ, he bemoans:

Obidike: Amụtalam nwa ọha na-amụta;
Mụ bụ aturū ji ebule gba aka nwa
Kwa ubochi, Awọrọ teta ụra ụtutu,
Ya amara isi manye n'ọhịa.
Anyā agakwaghị ahụ ya ọzọ.
Tutu ruo na rịomrịom abali.
Kpọọ oku elu, kpọọ oku ala.
Ya aburū iti-cha aka n'akpukpọ ehi.
Ihe nke a ọ bụ ụsà? Ọ bụ etu ndị ọzọ si amụta nwa.⁷⁸

I have begotten a child like others.
Like the sheep which begets a ram, am childless.
Each day, Awọrọ wakes up in the morning, he vanishes
from the house.
No eye sees him till dusk.
Call his name from now till you lose your voice, you are
wasting your time.
What kind of thing is this?
Is this how other people's experience with their children
is?

Obidike is also at conflict with his wife because of their son. He accuses her of being the cause of his son's waywardness. He reiterates that his wife encourages Awọrọ to become a spoilt brat. He abuses his wife for defending Awọrọ each time he tries to take disciplinary action against him. Angrily, over this matter thunderously he curses her:

Obidike: Taa nwanyị a ikuku burukwe gi
Asiri m, aju jukwe gi anya
Amadioha machapukwa gi imi;
Mgbọ! Mgbọ!! Mgbọ!!! piawapukwa gi isi,
Gi bu na- iji aka ekpe putā ura.
Bia na ihe inyuru esiwela.
Nne ewu na ata agbala.
Nwa ya ana-ele ya anya n'onu.

Ihe egbe mụrụ aghaghị ibu ọkụkọ.
 Kwa mgbe ọbụla m chọrọ ịbara Awọrọ mba
 Gị agbata gịgado m, na-asị
 “Hapụrụ m nwa m! hapụrụ m nwa m”
 Ugbu a ka m juọ gị:
 Ole e ebe Awọrọ nọ?
 Ọ bụrụ na ịkpọtaghị ya ugbu a
 A mata mbe n’abọ nke bụ oke;
 Ị gwa m mụ na gị onye nwe ụlọ a.⁷⁹

Obidike: Taa! This woman let the wind blow you away.
 I say, be filled with dizziness.
 Let the god of thunder (*Amadiọha*) cut off your nose;
 Let the bullet violently slash off your head,
 For saying that I did not wake up in good spirit.
 Come and see the ripple effect of the bad seed you sowed.
 When the mother-goat eats wrong leaves, the kid watches her.
 The young of the kite must pounce and carry away fowls.
 Whenever I want to scold Aworo, “you withstand me and lament.”
 Leave my son for me! Leave my son for me!
 Now, let me ask you;
 Where is Awọrọ?
 If you don’t produce him now,
 You will not find it easy with me;
 Then, I will know whether you or I own this house.

It is interesting to note that the misunderstanding, rancour, and differences, facing this family arises as a result of a son who is “a never do well”. Their experience is not far from what is obtained from Araba’s family, in Nkem Nwankwo’s novel, *Danda*. Araba, like Obidike could not tolerate his son Danda, who is irresponsible and unserious and goes about blowing his flute. He equally accuses and abuses his wife of feeding and supporting such a “good for nothing” son. In the same manner, Obidike accuses his wife of supporting Awọrọ’s unhealthy behaviour.

Nwamgbọgo, like Araba’s wife, often advises her son to do the things that will please his father and forebear from provoking him by leading aimless life. Nwamgbọgo encourages Awọrọ to ask his father for forgiveness because it is not reasonable to contend with him:

Nkita anaghị anyụ nsị nga a na-atọrọ ya nri.
 Ya bụ ị ga-ariọ nna gị mgbaghara.
 A ga-emekwanụ nke a n’ụtụtụ a

Nihi na e mee ngwa ngwa.
Emeghara ọdachi.
Ire ọma ka ejula ji aga n'ogwu.⁸⁰

The dog does not pass excreta on the very spot its food is served.
Therefore, you should ask your father for forgiveness.
This must be done this morning.
When procrastination is shunned
Danger is averted (delay is dangerous).
It is with utmost gentility that the snail crawls on the mass of thorn.

Awọrọ refuses to argue with his mother, but goes ahead to make peace with his father. This having been accepted, peace returns to the home. This singular act of Nwamgbọgọ portrays her as a respectable and responsible woman, who has the peace of her family at heart. In spite of her husband's threats, abuses and name callings, she aspires to have her husband and son united. Nwamgbọgọ could be seen as an icon of peace in her family. What later happened in this family shows that when a family is at peace and united, it will be able to plan for prosperity and progress. The family will also stand firm in unison to fight any battle that stares it in the face.

Obidike is now pleased with his son, of which he willingly sends for a traditional medicine man to prepare a potent charm for wrestling for Awọrọ. This step proves that when a child is in good relationship with his parents, they think and plan for his progress and success. Obidike engages the service of the medicine man to make Awọrọ out-wit his opponent. The charm worked! Awọrọ defeated Akatoosi, a very famous wrestler. This victory wins him, the love of a young maiden, Obioma, who already has a suitor, Anene. She swears not to marry the young man any longer. She opts for Awọrọ with whom she falls passionately in love, due to the unbeatable skill he displayed during the wrestling match.

Obioma's mother could not reconcile this sudden decision. This abrupt change is irritating and strange to her. It is a challenge she finds difficult to manage or face. She resorts to violence as a solution, but that unfortunately could not proffer solution. One could confidently conclude that marital decision or disagreement over who a son or daughter marries spark off most of the family conflict and violence. Obioma's mother

confronts her daughter violently by beating, but Obioma has already developed hard skin:

Obioma: (Na-agba oso) Tiwanu m ihe; o bu ya ga-ebi ya?
Gaa kwanu gwa ha ka ha kwusi ibi a
Biko hapunu m. (Nne ya achuru ya puo).⁸¹

(Running away) continue to beat me, will that settle the situation?
Go and tell them (the suitor and his relations) to stop coming.
You people should please leave me alone (Her mother chases her away).

Obioma breaks the Carmel's back when she runs away from home to live with a man who has not performed any marriage rite on her. Aworo confesses that he does not love her but for the fact that she clings to him, he finds it difficult and unkind to throw her away. Moreover, his parents persuade him to accept her. Aworo's confession reveals that he decides to marry out of pity and parental pressure.

After their first child which is a female, Aworo could not tolerate to live under the same roof with Obioma. He equally complains of the baby's sex. He blames Obioma for producing a baby girl instead of a boy. Nwamgbọ, Obioma's friend lets out a secret of what her husband (Obioma's) says at her back:

Nwamgbọ: ...Na di gi na-ekwu na ya
agaghi alukwa gi ozo; na i
gbaso ya agbaso, na onweghi
mgbe o jiri buru uche ya ilu gi.
na i gara imu nwa mbu muo nwaayi.⁸²

Your husband is saying that he will no longer marry you again, that you threw yourself on him, that he never proposed to marry you. For the first pregnancy you produced a female child for him.

Aworo, who has been looking for a means of getting rid of Obioma, weaves a plan which implicates her. He accuses her of poisoning his food. The case is judged in a local traditional setting by the villagers and Obioma is found guilty. She and her daughter are sold away from the village. Odinchefu, Obioma's daughter is separated from her mother, having been resold from the strange land. After fifteen years, Aworo marries Odinchefu not knowing that she is his daughter. After five years, of childless-

ness; Awọrọ becomes terribly sick too, and is forced to go about in search of solution. He seeks the help of a diviner, who tells him that, he has led an abominable life. Awọrọ becomes lost and confused at the deviner's findings, since he could not recall any of such unspeakable acts. The man instructs that he brings back his first wife.

After one year of enduring search, Awọrọ finds his first wife, Obioma, and ushers her in, as wife. He decides to hold a celebration in his house, because of the good things which has happened to him. It is on this occasion that Obioma and her daughter, whom she renamed Ọdinchafu come to realize that they are mother and child; and wives of the same husband. They are prompted to weep uncontrollably, having witnessed incestuous relationship in their family.

Ndị Mmadụ: Ka ndị ọzọ na-abịa ebi ya oma, o nekwasiri Ọdinchefu anya, na- echezi onye ọ bụ n'ihia na ọ di ime, gbanwokwa nke ukwu. Ọdinchefu lekwasikwa ya anya fuu, wee tie si! Ọ bụ nne mụ o! Ọ bụ nne mụo; Obioma etikwasị nke ya; Nwamuo! Ada muu o! ha abuo ehiohide onwe ha.⁸³

As others were coming to embrace her, she gazed intently at Ọdinchefu, trying to recollect whom she was, because she was pregnant and had undergone some biological changes. Ọdinchefu looked at her steadily and screamed, it is my mother! It is my mother! Obioma in the like manner cried: My daughter! My first daughter! The two of them snuggled together.

Awọrọ could not withhold himself at the unfold of events. He becomes confused and without words. He is utterly gripped by fear because of this abomination; he lacks words but only struggles to lament:

O ji ngwere haa ngwere na ọ bughị anụ!
Ngaghị eji anya m hụ ntị m!
Ọ karia m (Ya agba baa n'ụlọ ya were mma gbapụ wee magbuo onwe ya...)⁸⁴

Forebear from catching the lizard it is not an ideal meat.
I refuse to see my ears with my own eyes.
This is more than I can bear. (He rushes into the house, picks up a knife and stabs himself to death).

Violation of the law of the land brings pollution on the land and attracts punishment to the offender; this explains why Aworọ takes his life. This belief is seen as Odemene clearly states:

Violation of moral laws and customs of the people constitutes an offense against the society and the patrons or custodians of the land, such as the ancestors, the earth and the deities. Sociologically, these concepts of sin are necessary toward the well being of the society, which of course no society can do without some of the taboos which include: stealing, poisoning and killing, having sexual relationship with relatives, abusing the gods, one's seniors, husband...⁸⁵

It is then very clear, why Aworọ stabs himself when he discovers the incestuous relationship with his daughter, and the loathsome marriage of mother and daughter at the same time. More so, the above belief explains why Obioma, when falsely accused of poisoning her husband, is sold away with her daughter, as the punishment for the wickedness.

It is necessary to address some salient issues raised in this drama. The character Obioma could be compared with Titi in the play, *The Masquerade* by J.P. Clark. She rejects her parents' advice not to marry "a stranger." She snubs them and elopes with the young man. In the same way, Obioma does not give heed to her parents' advice, not to marry a man who has neither interest nor love for her. Instead, she runs away from home, betrays her integrity as a young maiden; portrays herself and parents as cheap, worthless and irresponsible before another family.

Furthermore, Tufa, Titi's fiance, expresses his sincere love for her. When Titi's father shoots her to death, he refuses to take to his heels. He stands, challenges and insults the man, until he gives him his own dose of the gun shot. Tufa feels satisfied to have died together with Titi, his love. The point that is being made is that, when love reigns supreme in a marriage or relationship, the couple could make untold sacrifices for each other's sake. Contrarily, Aworọ clearly emphasizes that he never had any feelings for Obioma, and thus, the marriage which is not built on the foundation of love, crashes within a short space of time.

Ọgugua’s definition and understanding of the term “love” and its soothing effect on the family asserts:

Ihụnanya.
Chi na-edozi ezi n’ụlọ
Ute oma di na nwunye
Nkasi obi onye ọrịa
Ezenwanyị udo n’ọnụ. ⁸⁶

Love.
The goddess that sets the family in order.
The beautiful mat of husband and wife.
The comfort of the sick.
The queen of peace and joy.

Ọgugua makes a personification of “love”. He addresses it as though a human, to express its importance and uniqueness in the life of the family. He describes its function in the family stating that; it is a thing that brings orderliness, peace and joy into the family. According to him, love brings rest to the couple too.

In the traditional Igbo setting, a girl who wants to maintain her respect and worth must wait for a man to seek her hand in marriage. After all necessary protocols are observed, normal marriage procedure follows suit. A situation whereby a young girl defies this rule, her parents, relatives as well as well wishers are not happy with her. Her action is sternly criticized by all and sundry. Even in this contemporary time, the Igbo try as much as possible to avoid this practice in order to protect their daughters’ interest. A woman is honoured in her marital family, if she behaves herself well and gets married properly. A woman, who throws herself cheaply on a man, receives insult from her husband’s family, especially from the man’s sisters or his female relatives. This commonly happens if, she is of bad character. Each time there is misunderstanding, they will not hesitate to remind her that she is an “unwanted element” who forced her way into the family.

Furthermore, Awọrọ’s mother could be likened to Danda’s mother. They do not sit and watch their sons disregard or disrespect their fathers. They are givers of good advice, especially to their sons in order to settle misunderstanding between them and their fathers. They encourage their sons to do away with behaviours which are

unpleasant, but imbibe and exhibit attitude which portray them as responsible people before their fathers. Nevertheless, inspite of their efforts their husbands accuse them of being the brain behind their sons' bad lifestyle. This simply demonstrates the patriarchal authority and influence of the man over the woman- an entity of lesser worth.

5. 15 Barrenness, Divorce and Moral Laxity in Marriage

The book, *Onye Chi ya Akwatughị*, is an Igbo drama, written in Igbo language by, Chinedum Ofomata. The title of the book literally translates – “He whose fate has not pulled down.” The title simply suggests that, a person whose personal god (*chi*) has not put to shame, will never experience shame. It is a work enriched with incidence of family violence. It is a story about a young man Osita, who marries a beautiful girl called Uju. Uju is not barren, but each time she delivers, the baby lives for few months and dies. Her experience could be likened to that of Ekwefi, Okonkwo's wife in *Things Fall Apart* who had ten children but only one survived. Uju and her husband have lost four children who died serially. Osita becomes uncomfortable with this development, but more uncomfortable are his parents, who lose their patience and persist that he (Osita) must marry another wife, otherwise they disown him:

Osita gwara ndị be ha ka ha nwetukwuo ndidi ka ha mara ma ihe ọ ga-agbanwe. Ọ bụrụ na Chineke mechaa nụ ekpere ha, ọ baghị uru na ọ na-alụ nwanyị nke abụọ. Ha mechara deere Osita leta na ha achọtarala ya onye ọ ga-alụ. Ya lọta ka ọ hụ ya. A gwara ya n'ime leta ahụ na ọ bụrụ na ọ jụ na ọ gaghị alụ nwanyị ọzọ, ha agụpụ ya na nwa ha.⁸⁷

Osita pleaded with his parents to exercise more patience with him, to see whether the situation will change. If God later hears their prayers, it is of no use marrying a second wife. They (his parents) write Osita again stating that, they have found a wife for him. They demand that he should come home to see her. He is told in that letter, that if he fails to marry another wife, they will disown him.

Sequel to this threat and pressure, Osita goes home without Uju's knowledge and takes another wife, whom he leaves with his parents. When Adamma, the new wife

begins to trouble him persistently, owing to her intention to leave the village, and join him in the city, Osita has no option than to unwillingly inform Uju about the marriage; because whether he likes it or not, Adamma would not want to listen to any excuse that would not approve of her coming to Bini. When Adamma, eventually arrives at Osita's house in Bini, it becomes quite glaring to Uju that her husband has married another wife. Uju is deeply distressed because of this development, of which, she could say nothing but weeps as though her life has come to an end.

Uju wee bewe akwa were si ya, Ee ya bu na i meela ihe ahụ
bu uche gi. Amaghi m na i ga emechaa sie onwu hapu m ga
luru onye ozọ.⁸⁸

Uju begins to cry and says to him, so you have eventually fulfilled your heart's desire. I never knew you will eventually discard me and marry another woman.

It is not a surprising thing to see Uju weep profusely. It becomes glaring to her that to yoke two women together in marriage is the most dreadful thing that could happen to any woman. You have to share your home and every thing in it; the kitchen, the bathroom, your bed and even worst your husband. What she fears most is the battle and strife between co-wives which is endless. Her fear eventually comes to reality.

Adamma, her co-wife, makes life more difficult for her. Adamma is a woman of vicious character. She lacks moral upbringing. She is troublesome, insulting, unfriendly and aggressive. Uju could hardly thrive in this hectic condition; life becomes too unbearable and sour, this hardship prompted her to pack her belongings and secretly leaves Osita's house. Adamma sees Uju's departure as the best thing that could ever happen to her. Her heart is filled with sweet melodies and feelings, seeing her arch-enemy turn her back at the battle ground. Osita later goes home to inform his parents that Uju is missing. He gathers from them (his parents) that, she ends her flight at her father's door step. Osita refuses to see neither Uju nor her parents, but travels back to Bini. This singular act, suggests that Osita is done with his first wife, and probably wishes to concentrate on the marriage with the new love, which is the expectation of his parents. Unknown to him that Adamma is a viper in the sheep's clothing.

Life between Osita and Adamma is built on a bed rock of quarrel. Adamma is quarrelsome, insubordinate and lazy. The vice that makes her most intolerable is unchastity. She is deep into extra marital relationships. Apart from the above core reason, she is a spendthrift and very wasteful. She spends a lot and her demands are listless. She is economically unproductive. She makes mockery of the restaurant business Osita established for her with a substantial capital. All these elicit noisy quarrel between them and makes her husband beat her often since she is not making any move to change. The evidence of her infidelity is concisely represented as follows:

Ozigbo Bola kwusichara Adamma na umu ya, o feere ha aka, buru ugbo ala ya laghachi ebe o bi. Ka Adamma batara hu Osita ebe o na anu mmanya o kuja.⁸⁹

Immediately Bola stopped Adamma and her children, he waved at them and drove off to where he resides. Adamma walked into her shop, unexpectedly, seeing Osita there drinking, became shocked.

Adamma's neighbours have been telling Osita about his wife's unruly life style, this day he receives information that her lover picks her up for an outing. He leaves his shop and comes down to Adamma's shop to confirm the information. He is inside Adamma's shop, when Bola, her partner in adultery, drops her, together with her children. Osita could not bear this shame, but struggles to wait until night and had Adamma severely battered:

O gaa ebe ahụ Adamma dina kpulite ya n'ike were kuọ ya ihe ụzụ kuru ogene. O si Adamma na o ga-egbu ya n'abalị ahụ ma o buru na o gwaghị ya ije ya na nwoke ahụ na-ebugharị ya kwa mgbe o bula. O na-ajụ Adamma ajuju, o na eti ya ihe ka onwuo.⁹⁰

He goes where Adamma is lying and pulls her up forcefully, gives her thorough beating. He tells Adamma that he will kill her that night, if she refuses to disclose the man that takes her out all the time. As he asks Adamma this question, he increases the tempo of the beating to have her dead.

After the battering, their relationship becomes severed. The nuptial knot also becomes completely loosened. During Bola's next business trip to Bini, Adamma

narrates all she suffered in her husband's hand, because of him. Bola becomes furious and boasts how he would handle Osita without mercy. He promises and assures her of marriage. In another trip down to Bini, Bola gives Adamma poison to administer into her husband's food.

Ka Bola si Lagoosu loğhachi....O were oğwu nye Adamma ka o tinyere di ya na nri....O mechaa *gari* were... tinye nke di ya n'efere were oğwu ghachenyere ya n'ofe, buputara ya ka o rie. O rie *gari* ahụ nwantịti kwọ chaa aka ya.⁹¹

When Bola comes from Lagos... he gives Adamma poisonous substance to mix with her husband's food... After preparing *gari*.... she puts her husband's in a plate, and administers the poison into the soup and gives him to eat... He eats a little out of the food and washes his hands.

Adamma concludes that the poison will get hold of Osita, and destroys him completely. Obviously, she has nothing to fear, having found a loving husband in Bola. She leaves her home early in the morning to meet Bola, who promises to take her to Lagos as his wife.

Ozigbo chi ututu na-efo, Adamma kuliri yiri akwaya, hapu ma di ya, ma umu ya, ma ihe nile o nwere, makpuo tagzi choro Bola gawa. Ozigbo, ya na Bola yiri lawa Legoosu.⁹²

Immediately it is dawn, Adamma wakes up, dresses up herself, and leaves her husband, her children and all that she has, picks a taxi to meet Bola. At that moment, they both leave for Lagos.

After few days the poison begins to act on Osita's body system. He becomes terribly sick, that he is rushed to the hospital in his village, from where he receives little or no solution. It is a traditional medicine man, Ahuekwe, who reveals that his predicament is as result of poisonous food from his wife, who eloped with a lover. Osita's parents have to believe the medicine man, because according to them, all along nobody knows Adamma's where about. It takes one whole year for Osita to become fully healed. He travels back to Bini where he resides, to continue his business, while

his children remain at home with his parents. He regrets deeply having entered into marital relationship with Adamma. His former wife, Uju, now also in Bini, is doing well in her business, and contributes a lot to see that Osita is restored.

Adamma, being a reckless woman, poses a problem to Bola, who already has wife and children, he gives her the beating of her life, uses the landlord and the police to kick her out of the one-room apartment he rented for her. Adamma becomes helpless and homeless, in her desperation; she finds option in roaming the streets of Lagos.

In this sumptuous work of art, the author explores the predicament of a marriage which is not survived by any child. It is not necessary to over-emphasize “children” as primary focus on Igbo marriage. The man’s family members often choose to exaggerate the situation and show more concerned than the central figure. A fruitless marriage is hardly sustained! It is lack of children that exposed Osita and Uju to the hardship they suffered. Pressure from parents and other family members especially, can force the man to take decisions and carry out actions which could be detrimental to his life.

Howbeit, Osita realizes that the death of their babies are not his wife’s fault, it is fate that plays pranks on her, in order to torment her. Concerning Uju’s case, Osita understands she is not barren. She bears fruit but suffers from what the Igbo refer to as (*Umeomumu*) – (a condition in which a woman serially loses her offsprings at infancy or shortly after birth). Her parents-in-law could not be patient with her; but as a man of understanding, kind hearted, and loving, he believes that with time, their story of woe may turn out to joy. He hopes that time will heal the situation and their babies will come to stay. He pleads with his parents to exercise more patience-which shows his love for his wife. He does not want to offend her in any way.

Now, all the brilliant expressions and gestures which Osita made notwithstanding, he is at last swept off his feet by the wind of his parents’ threat, “*Anyi ga-agupu gi na-nwa anyi*” – (We will disown you from being our son). The threat to disown some body in Igbo culture is not what the threatened handles casually. It is a sign of bad omen and spell of doom, for a family to conceive a plan to do away with a family member. It is a social problem which only few people can stand.

Once one is disowned, it means total excommunication from any form of relationship with the rest of the family. The family has cut the person off and has nothing to do with him whether at death or life. He is not only cast away, but is seen as an enemy to the entire family. It is an experience none would like to have. The ills associated with disowning, make it necessary for every Igbo person to abstain from any conduct that can attract such punishment from his or her family.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy, that presently the fear of being disowned has lost grip on many people who have found new family in Christianity. Again, disowning or threat to disown has lost potency because many people have become exposed and can find footing or find their way out, even when they are disowned. In the contemporary time, family ties are no longer so strong due to several factors. Nowadays, some people on their own alienate themselves from their families and not their families this time.

Although, Osita's first marriage suffered due to subsequent loss of children, the love that held the couple together made the marriage sweet. His second marriage is hell incarnate even though, the woman is able to produce children. There is no peace in his home. Where is the joy of having children, when one cannot have rest of mind to enjoy them, because one's house is on fire? More so, Osita's health and life, suffered tremendously. He suffered in the hand of his wife who is insubordinate, uncaring and morally indecent. In addition, what grieves a man's heart more than realizing that his wife is an adulterous woman?

Ofomata, the author of this work, demonstrates that an adulterous woman exposes the life of her husband to danger. Any punishment to check her excesses could result to counter attack from her paramour. He could be killed, but if allowed to exist, is reduced to a "living dead". In this work, Osita is poisoned by his wife and her lover. The motif of extra marital affair is a glaring factor which triggered off violence between Osita and his second wife. Infidelity in marriage is dreaded in Igbo culture especially where the woman is the guilty party. Men culturally are polygamous in nature as the Igbo believe. Thus, a man can marry as many wives as he wishes, but the woman does not have such right or privilege. It is an abomination for a married woman to sleep with

another man. The punishment for such adulterous act varies from individual towns or places.

There are some clans where it is believed that, if such woman cooks for her husband, and he eats, he will definitely die. Thus, when a man senses or notices such behaviour from a wife, he dreads her food. If the man's suspicion proves true, the woman is questioned to mention her lover, who is expected to give a goat to the man. The goat is sacrificed to appease the gods and cleanse the land of the abomination (*ary*). This goat he will not eat alone, but with his kinsmen. In order to maintain his respect and integrity, he would give different reason(s) for killing a goat for his kinsmen (*umunna*), rather than saying openly that his wife slept with another man. In the recent time, most men do not observe the cultural way of dealing with the adulterous woman, rather, some men send their wives away out rightly, when caught in adultery, while others may choose to forgive them.

5.16 Violence in *Purple Hibiscus*

The novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, is authored by Adichie. The narrator which is a first person narrator, Kambili, is also the protagonist of the novel. She is a teenage girl, who introduces her family as one smeared in violence. The violent encounter is usually flagged off by the father of the family; who irrationally tries to consolidate his "faith." She bemoans that the home is of absolute silence and lacks freedom. All the members of the family live in total awe of the father.

The author presents a character Eugene, a man who washes off his hands, concerning African traditional religion, which his father holds at high esteem. Like Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Eugene accepts the white man's religion. However, he conspicuously arrays his total loss of interest in the indigenous religion. By his own evaluation, the local religion is devilish and satanic, and all who practice it must be avoided. He, to a large extent, alienates himself from the traditional religion, but holds firm to his new faith – Catholicism. Invariably, he is a fanatic by a reasonable assessment. His entire life is enveloped by this new belief. He expects all the members of his immediate family (wife and children) to hold the faith exactly at his own degree.

They must stand and remain bound, and show servitude to all the doctrines that guide and protect the interest of Catholic faith. Inability, failure or negligence of the least of these doctrines, attract punishment which ranges from scolding to severe beating, or more harsh punishment. Evidence abound which stress that most of the beatings he gives to his wife and children are as a result of being found wanting or defaulting in his religious beliefs.

It is expedient to note that, Eugene is not a failure in life. He is a man of great achievement and honour. He is rich both in money and landed property. He is an enormous industrialist, wealthy businessman, a democratic activist, fabulous donor in the church, a distinguished philanthropist, and community leader. He is the *Omeleora* (one who is kind and liberal, especially in financial matters, to his people) of his community. His wife and children are not in lack materially, but his strict and high handedness, present his family as lamb in the lion's den.

Mr Eugene expects that none of the members of his family should exempt him or herself from the Holy Communion, which is one of the practices that describes a Pius Catholic. It is believed that one who takes it all the time is without sin, since sinners are not worthy to eat the flesh or drink the blood of Jesus Christ. "You cannot stop receiving the body of our Lord. It is death you know that" (p.6). Eugene reminds his son that the flesh of Jesus is important, because it is the source of life, and any who rejects it, is beckoning on death. This is one of the reasons why nobody must miss it in his family.

Rather than teaching his family with love and patience, Eugene uses violence to teach and or make his point:

Papa looked around the room quickly, as if searching for proof that something had fallen from the high ceiling, something he had never thought would fall. He picked up the missal and flung it across the room, toward Jaja. It missed Jaja completely, but it hit the glass étagère, which Mama polished often. It cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers in various contorted postures, to the hard floor and then landed after them. Or rather it landed on their many pieces.⁹³

The terse but artistic description reveals Eugene's impatience and fury. He is a man of uncontrolled temper. He cares nothing about the consequences of his action. Even though he is rich, he wastes good things. Here is destroyed, a beautiful ornament which adds to the aesthetic look of the living room; and of course, this is an ornament which his wife loves and cherishes. He creates emotional scenes and tensions, which rob the peace, love and confidence one expects in the home.

Kambili and her brother are shut in at home. They are not allowed to go out, either for sight seeing or spend their holidays outside the home. They are like prisoners who lose freedom and cannot enjoy the other side of the world. This ill-treatment receives intervention, when Auntie Ifeoma, their father's sister, insists that Eugene must release his children to celebrate Christmas with her family. Eugene reluctantly accepts that the children will be with Ifeoma, provided she does not expose them to "anything ungodly." If she drives past *Mmuo* (Masquerade), she must wind up her windows' glass.

Eugene draws a time schedule for his children – there is time to eat, time to sleep, time to do assignment; virtually time for everything and unfortunately as Kambili points out; "Papa did not pencil in TV time on our schedules"(p.79). Kambili is embarrassed and ashamed to tell Amaka her cousin that their father never approved of TV watching, when she asks whether they (Kambili and her brother, Jaja) watch CNN, the day they visit their house.

The anti social life of the children, which is born out of living a prison – like life, is glaring through what Amaka says about them. Amaka is forced to throw a question at her mother, Auntie Ifeoma. "Are you sure they are not abnormal, Mom? Kambili just behaved like an *atulu*, (sheep) when my friends came" (p. 141). "She behaves funny. Even Jaja is strange".⁹⁴

Eugene hardly permits his children to visit or have Papa Nnukwu, (Eugene's father and their grand father) under the same roof. He tells them that Papa Nnukwu is ungodly, defiled, and polluted. This is because he is a pagan as Jaja points out. They dread their grand father's house due to what their father feeds into their young heads. Ifeoma informs them that they are going to pick Papa Nnukwu to join in their outing; when they get to Papa Nnukwu's compound, the children refuse to come down from the car. The reason as Jaja explains, goes: "We are not allowed to come here after we've greeted him." Auntie Ifeoma furiously thunders: "What kind of nonsense is that eh?"

...“Tell me why your father doesn’t want you here?”⁹⁵ In the same light, Eugene does not allow his father to visit his house. He will not let him into his house, and will not even greet him.

Eugene disapproves of his children staying under the same roof with a “heathen” as he refers to his father. Eugene forces his children to confess against their wish, the above incident which he confirms to be sin, before the Reverend Father. He prays for them that God will forgive them and remove the spirit that made them lie that they did not sleep in the same house with a heathen, when they went to their Auntie’s house.

The moment Eugene accepts the new religion, he stops taking care of his aged father. He does not visit or send him money, if not for the intervention of people, which forces him to unwillingly send meager amount through his driver. Papa Nnukwu bemoans that his son is a wealthy man, yet he suffers hunger. He regrets his son’s harsh treatment and thus he complains to his daughter, Ifeoma.

Nekenem, (look at me). My son owns that house that can fit in every man at Abba, and yet many times, I have nothing to put on my plate. I should not have let him follow those missionaries.⁹⁶

Papa-Nnukwu makes a point. He is right in his observation. Eugene is a liberal donor in the church, and a charity donor in the community. He is the *Omeleora*. During Christmas celebration, he feeds the entire community. His house is a swarm of people, who troop in to eat and drink. The fact that he is a philanthropist cannot be over emphasized, yet his aged father suffers hunger.

Eugene’s hatred for his father is further buttressed when he warns him of the looming doom, of not receiving a befitting burial, should he die a pagan. He eventually stands by his threat. Apart from the meager amount of money which he hands over to Ifeoma, after baptizing her with the fire of his words, he neither attends his father’s burial ceremony, nor allows his family to do so. Although the author does not say that Eugene physically beats his father at any point in time, but the emotional wound he inflicts on him is more painful.

Eugene’s brutality knows no bound; on another occasion, he beats his wife, Kambili and Jaja. Their offense is that his wife Beatrice and Jaja aid Kambili to eat before the breaking of the Eucharistic fast. Beatrice, seeing her daughter suffer

excruciatingly under menstrual pain, out of pity, advises that she takes some cornflakes to enable her take pain relieving tablets. Luck runs out of them when Eugene incidentally meets them right together in the room while Kambili eats:

He unbuckled his belt slowly, it was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then mama raised hands as it landed on her upper arm. I put the bowl down as the belt landed on my back... Papa was like a Fulani nomad, although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung his belt at mama, Jaja and me, muttering that devil will not win.⁹⁷

In another encounter, Kambili and Jaja have hot water poured on their feet for not confessing that they slept in the same house with Papa-Nnukwu a heathen, at Ifeoma's house, when they went to Nsukka. Eugene claims that his daughter sees sin and decides to walk into it, and for that reason, the feet must be purged of sin. He calls his daughter into the bathroom and asks her to enter the bath tub, being ever fearful of the father, Kambili could not ask a question, but obeys every command sheepishly:

Kambili, you are precious... You should not see sin and walk right into it. He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment... The pain of contact was so pure, so scaling, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed.⁹⁸

As though the above punishment is not enough, on another ill fated day, Eugene gives Kambili the battering of her life. A beating which leaves her unconscious and have her rushed to the hospital. Her crime is that her father sees her admiring and fondling Papa- Nnukwu's painting. It is quite unfortunate that her father storms into her room and meets her. No doubt Eugene's belt has another buffet of her flesh. Consequently, Kambili becomes terribly sick as a result of the beating, of which she has to take her examination on a hospital bed:

The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal buckle landed on my open skin, on my side, my back, my legs. Kicking, kicking, kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. When I opened my eyes, I knew at once that I was not on

my bed... I made to get up, but pain shot through my whole body... I collapsed back.⁹⁹

Eugene knows that what he did is an untold cruel act, rather than disciplinary measure. His crime can be categorized under child abuse and maltreatment, thus he refuses to disclose to the Doctor and the Priest of the church- Reverend Father Benedict, that he is the household enemy, who nearly sends his own daughter to an early grave. He realizes that, should these people who respect him get to know about this atrocity, they will completely lose all trust and confidence in him. Eugene of course is a two-faced entity. The Eugene at church is a unique contrast of Eugene at home. At church he presents himself an aura and bunch of holiness and righteousness. He is a saint in the church, but a monster at the home front. Father Benedict even classify Eugene with the Pope and Jesus, as people who are worthy of emulation.

The Priest uses Eugene to explain the Gospel, describing him as a man who stands for truth and fights for the freedom of the masses through his newspaper- *The Standard*. On the contrary, at home, his family (wife and children) are in mental chains. Their hearts know neither peace nor rest. He advises Father Benedict to call and win back afresh any soul which misses Holy Communion for two consecutive Sundays, because according him, it is only mortal sin that can stop, the person from Holy Communion.

Eugene is a hypocrite! At home, he beats and makes his wife have several miscarriages. This time, it is just two of them at home; the children went to Nsukka at Auntie Ifeoma's place. Beatrice's husband, attacks her like a lion, and has another pregnancy wasted. This incident leaves Beatrice in deep sorrow, lonely and unconsolated. She leaves her home for Nsukka to seek solace from Auntie Ifeoma. She presents her ordeal to her daughter, Kambili and Auntie Ifeoma. She draws her daughter's attention and says: "You know that small table where we keep the family bible *nne*? Your father broke it on my belly"... "My blood finished on that floor even before they took me to St Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it."¹⁰⁰

When Ifeoma questions further, Beatrice discloses, that she lost six weeks pregnancy. Ifeoma becomes furious over Eugene's uncivilized behaviour while Beatrice

weeps until she sleeps off. In the evening Eugene called, Ifeoma urges Beatrice not to pick it; but she insists on taking the call which orders her speedy return to Enugu the next day, together with the children. Beatrice's life with her husband is a replica of slave-master relationship. A life filled with fear and tremble of an inferior toward a superior.

One fateful day, Eugene died in his office as his wife relates in a telephone conversation with Kambili. "Mama's low voice floated across the phone line and quickly quelled my shaking hand. "Kambili, it's your father, they called me from the factory, that they found him lying dead on his desk."¹⁰¹ Kambili could not believe that her strong and energetic father will die so suddenly. Later, Beatrice casually discloses at a very low tone that she poisoned her husband. Her confession establishes the act: "I started putting poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor."¹⁰²

The police comes from the hospital where the autopsy is conducted and Jaja presents himself as the perpetrator. The police arrests and takes him away. Beatrice begins to nurse slight mental disorder, of which when she proclaims that she killed her husband, nobody believes her. People conclude that the death of her husband and arrest of her only son must have triggered off the mild insanity. On the contrary, it could be believed that Beatrice has exhausted her patience and the strength to bear the burden, and decides to gain freedom through the most dreadful means- murder.

5. 17 Violence in *Purple Hibiscus* Examined

Eugene is generally the initiator of violence in his household. His wife and children are commonly his victims, while he is the offender or oppressor. In the first place, Beatrice sees her self as an inferior entity who cannot challenge Eugene in any way. She believes her husband is not her equal in every sense of it. She counts herself lucky to have such wealthy philanthropist, who most ladies wish to associate with, as husband. This of course is Beatrice's feelings and it however contributes to her inactive response to her husband's tyranny, oppression, brutality and violent treatments.

Furthermore, in Igbo culture women are expected to keep silent, endure in patience and remain unexpressive while dealing with men, but uphold gentleness and

submissiveness which are important treasures of womanhood. Akachi Ezigbo, supports the above premise when she observes as follows:

There was a time the notion; “Women are to be seen not heard” was widely accepted by many societies. Silence and invisibility was another attribute of the woman. Women were more or less decorative accessories to beautify or embellish the home; in addition to their numerous roles as wives, mothers, and child bearers and rears.¹⁰³

Beatrice through her character in this work presents her self as a traditional Igbo woman, who is held bound by the above belief. She seems to accept the hostile treatment in her home, as a cross she must bear. She is not an eloquent speaker. Kambili compares the way her mother talks with the way birds eat tiny bits. She often resorts to weeping when she or her children are battered, with wounds inflicted all over. The only action she takes is to nurse the wound until it heals. She dared not challenge or query Eugene’s action. Beatrice reasons that to leave her marriage is not the best option, because her husband is a very wealthy man whom most women would love to identify with, or have as life partner. When Ifeoma advises her to work out her freedom, even if it means walking out of her home, she turns the advice down.

Adichie presents a clear picture of a traditional Igbo wife. She is expected to remain silent in whatever trials she undergoes in her home. She has to be patient and long suffering. She is not expected to complain because she does not know what the woman next door is passing through in the hand of her own husband. It is the ability to endure and still perform her maternal functions that upgrades her as an ideal, responsible or strong woman. This belief does not make pale the fact that family members or relatives do step in, to settle matters between husband and wife, but the woman is not expected to run away from home because of tough family experiences.

In addition, she is expected to live up to such difficulties and hardships. She has to work out modalities to sustain her self and the marriage. A typical example could be drawn from Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo almost shattered Ekwefi’s brain. The magnitude of the violence notwithstanding, Ekwefi and other wives who suffer under Okonkwo’s terror, refuse to bow out of the marriage. They continue to walk in patience and endurance. However, women who cannot withstand the intensity

of their husbands' tyranny can resort to going back to their fathers' houses, especially when what they suffer is life threatening.

The upbringing which Kambili and his brother Jaja, receive from their father, makes them socially undeveloped. Their behavior is strange when in the midst of other children. They are not allowed to watch the television or engage in social activities. The children and their mother lack the ability of self expression, while Auntie Ifeoma and her children are assertive. Ifeoma's children are expressive and they flow very well in the midst of friends.

Auntie Ifeoma represents the contemporary liberated and educated Igbo woman. She would never allow Eugene, her brother, to intimidate her. She knows what she wants and how to get it. When she is thrown out of the University where she is a lecturer, it does not take her time to work out her visa; travels abroad with her children and continues her life. It is at Ifeoma's house that Kambili and Jaja gain freedom of expression and action, mixed up with sound behavior. Papa-Nnukwu stands for the traditional Igbo values which remain uninfluenced; even though attacked, threatened, bruised and humiliated by the Western culture and religion.

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UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER SIX

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IN CLASSICAL AND IGBO LITERATURES; RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 A Comparison of Family Violence in Classical and Igbo Literatures

This study examined the issue of family conflict and violence in Classical and Igbo literatures and discovered that some causes of family violence could be peculiar to a particular culture or common to both cultures. Family violence in Classical and Igbo literatures is not compared or contrasted based on time of civilization; rather, they are compared based on the fact that life experiences are the same irrespective of place and time. In other words, the time lag between the two cultures no doubt, is quite wide, this claim notwithstanding, there are striking similarities of family violence in both cultures. However, slight contrast appears, owing to the fact that some of the issues which are represented openly in Classical literature are avoided in Igbo literary works. For example, the idea of a family member murdering another member is scarcely represented in Igbo written literatures studied.

Abandonment is a common occurrence in both Classical and Igbo literatures. It is an act which causes psychological or emotional wound to the abandoned. Hera's act of casting away her son, Haephestus due to disability runs contrary to the Igbo philosophy of ugliness and disability. This claim is buttressed through the names the Igbo people give their children. The name, *Ajunnwa* which literally translates, "the child cannot be rejected" is one of such names. This could be more deeply explained to show that a child cannot be discarded or thrown away irrespective of the physical appearance or degree of deformity.

Similarly, the name *Nwokeajonjo* which simply means that, "a male child or a man "cannot" be ugly, is another of such names. It is held that the term "ugliness" should not be associated with the male folk. The Igbo believe that beauty is an attribute of the women. This does not mean that the Igbo do not admire a man who is handsome but the Igbo philosophy of a handsome man, holds that it is wealth, achievement, prowess, courage, being daring and other virtues that make a man handsome and not his physical looks. Hence, it is not shocking to see a very beautiful Igbo girl marry a man

with deformity but an icon of healthy character and achievements. The claim that the composition of a man is not in the outward angelic looks, but in the good quality found in him, is clearly exemplified in Hera who hands over Ares her most cherished child to Athena, for punishment. She accepts and loves him at the early stage of his life, because he is virile and handsome. Nevertheless, she later discovers that the handsome look cannot be reconciled with the real man - Ares. She finds in him a traitor and a total disappointment.

Thetis and Alcmena, mothers of Achilles and Heracles respectively, abandon their sons. These mothers can be compared with Adamma, a character in Ofomata's novel, *Onye Chi ya Akwatughị* who abandons her husband and children. Similarly, a father out of anger can decide to nurse hatred, threaten to disown or reject, not only a son, but a daughter alike, whose character seems severely unpleasant.

The character Danda, in Nkem Nwankwo's novel, *Danda*, is a typical example of a son with an irritating character. He is an unserious and unproductive son. His annoying lifestyle made his father threaten to disown him. The popular Roman Emperor, Augustus Caesar, rejects his only daughter Julia and has her banished out of Rome. He makes sure that she is subjected to perpetual punishment, for committing adultery. It is vital to point out that cases of abandonment are rarely represented in Igbo literature, but through discussions, it is realized that there are many cases of abandonment in the Igbo society. The implication of this poor representation of cases of abandonment is that such problems will remain hidden and thus it will be difficult to proffer solutions to them.

Rejection is another injury which the family suffers when a member feels cheated, hated or unsatisfied with the treatment received from the hands of another or other family members. The person who rejects often withdraws from the rejected, and at the same time, withdraws all love, care, and gifts which he or she formally gives to the rejected. The premise is seen when Tiberius rejects his mother who provokes him, he leaves her and withdraws into another location (Capri). He refuses to see her neither in sickness nor at death. Similarly, Obi Okonkwo in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* rejects his parents who could not support him to marry a girl of his choice. He withdraws to

Lagos and never visited his parents again. Like Tiberius, Obi did not attend his mother's burial.

Barrenness and its attendant effects are common to both cultures. Hermione in the drama *Andromache* is despised, maltreated and rejected because of barrenness. The same problem costs Uju her marriage in the novel, *Onye Chi ya Akwatughị*. It is then evident that childlessness is not a welcome concept in both Classical and Igbo families. Both cultures abhor any marriage that threatens to be fruitless. Hermione and Uju are sent away and their respective husbands got married to other women. Chiaku also threatens her son's marriage which is unproductive. The harsh words with which she addresses the couple seem quite unbearable.

Infidelity in marriage is a common practice in both cultures. Clytaemnestra is guilty of passionate relationship outside her marriage. She is deep into extra marital relationship while her husband is away on military campaign. Moreover, choosing her husband's younger cousin for a bed partner makes the relationship more absurd. Subsequently, the rejection and abandonment of her children to that effect makes her rash. Adamma in the work, *Onye Chi ya Akwatughị* and Julia, Emperor Augustus' daughter are Clytaemnestra's counterparts in extramarital affairs.

Adamma's elopement with a lover could be likened to the evil deed of Helen, the wife of king Menelaus, who eloped with Paris, a pretty young man from Troy - her husband's associate. Helen drives not only her husband, but also king Agammonon into emotional pain, which provokes the search for her, and the eruption of Trojan War which claims the lives of several war lords. In contrast, the Igbo and their cultural practice see a woman who runs away with a lover as *ajọ nwaanyị* (a bad and irresponsible woman). Through her conduct she has proved beyond doubt that she is an adulterous woman thus, she is worthless in the eyes of all. Nobody deems it a rational venture to go in search of her.

It is identified that friction between co-wives is visibly expressed in both Classical and Igbo cultures. Hermione the wife of Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, accuses her co-wife Andromache, of bewitching and making her sterile. In retaliation, Hermione attempts to kill the woman (Andromache) together with her son but fails. In *Onye Chi*

ya Akwatughi, Adamma, Osita's second wife, taunts her husband's first wife Uju, because of barrenness. She frustrates and makes sure she leaves the marriage.

It is also noticed that in Classical culture, divorce and remarriage are common. Sulla married many times, while Augustus married three times. Most of the divorce and remarriages are due to political reasons. Some of the noble politicians employ the use of marriages to consolidate their political offices, ascend to other political offices or pave ways for their children into political posts. As a result of political reasons, Livia presses it upon her husband, Emperor Augustus, to have Tiberius' betrothal annulled, got him married to Julia, Augustus' daughter, in order to have him adopted by Augustus. This is a qualification that makes him an ideal candidate to succeed the emperor. In contrast, divorce and remarriage in Igbo culture are not mainly to make connections politically, but primarily on childbearing matters, for example, Osita divorces Uju because she could not bear children.

In addition, Tiberius having been forced into marriage against his will is tortured emotionally, and he has to bow out after a short time, because he never had Julia at heart. This incidence of forcing a youth into an unwilling marriage compares favourably with the experience of Awọrọ, a young man in the Igbo drama, *Nwata Rie Awọ (Ọ ju Anu)*, who out of parental pressure marries Obioma, a girl he never loved. The marriage witnesses series of unrest until the couple is completely torn apart.

Furthermore, false accusation in marriage is another source of violence in the family, Awọrọ accuses his wife Obioma, of poisoning his food, the consequence of this is a trial by Awọrọ's kinsmen who champion the selling off, of mother and daughter to a strange land. Similarly, Laches, a character in the drama, *Mother-in-law (Hecyra)*, one of the comedies of Terence, accuses his wife Sosatrata, of sending away their daughter-in-law, out of feminine wickedness and jealousy. He threatens to have her sent to live at the country side. The situation is saved at the intervention of their son Pamphilius, who confronts his father because of the love he has for his mother.

Accusation is an instrument that brings about disruption in family unity and peace. It is born out of frustration, confusion, anger and bitterness, which arise as a result of family challenges. When some members of the family get confused over

unpleasant things which the family suffers, they can resort to accusing other members falsely. Blame is a similar instrument which family members use to hold some members responsible for the ill which a member or the entire members suffers. Accusation or blame in family relationship is not limited to spouses alone but extends to siblings who accuse or blame themselves or their parents for misfortunes. Parents equally accuse or blame their children and other close relations.

Excessive power of the family head, both in Classical and Igbo families has in no doubt exposed the dangers it constitutes in the family circle. Some family heads exhibit the paternal authority in extremity and to the detriment of family members. In most cases, these family heads are men of physical prowess and fearless in character. They are not afraid of blood. This suggests that they can shed blood or inflict wounds on wife and children without any ill feeling.

Agamemnon, Okonkwo, Ezeulu and Eugene, represent a patriarchal dominated society in which the man positions himself as one possessing absolute and unquestionable authority. The wife and children have no say in the leadership. The woman's opinion is irrelevant in whatever action he wants to take. They believe that both the wife and the children are their properties and thus can threat and deal with them in any manner they deem fit. At this point, it could be seen, why Agamemnon accepts to offer his daughter, in pursuit of an unholy enterprise, of bringing back an adulterous brother's wife. Alienating his wife from this delicate decision makes her opinion irrelevant and her feelings not worth considering. His act clearly depicts the power of life and death at his disposal. This is an attestation or sign of tyranny and lordship over one's family.

In the like manner, Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, by shooting his wife, declares his power of life and death over his family too. He handles his family with iron hand. Okonkwo partakes in the killing of Ikemefuna, a boy that calls him "father." Mr Eugene in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is another figure who equally exhibits tyrannical power over his family. He beats his children and wife without considering whether the beating could lead to death or not. It is recorded that on three occasions he battered his wife and had three pregnancies wasted. Ezeulu like these

men is strict over his family but not up to the degrees of Agamemnon, Okonkwo and Eugene. In Classical drama, women are presented as violent entities who murder the male oppressors, often their husbands to avenge some wrongs done to them. The precolonial and colonial Igbo literary works, present the typical Igbo women as chattels who endure their husband's oppression in silence. However, many contemporary genres show that some Igbo women can challenge bullying spouses.

Abuse of the child is another theme in both Classical and Igbo literatures. Clytaemnestra is very unfair to her children after the death of her husband. She leaves them uncared for, like sheep without shepherd, being preoccupied with a love affair. Her action is similar to Mama Obu's, but with slight difference. While Clytaemnestra withdraws love from both female and male child, Mama Obu has all her love vested on her only male child, Obu. She treats the female children as slaves. Death of a parent as seen in the case of Agamemnon's family can subject the children to illtreatment or abuse. Similarly, death of both parents can subject the children to suffering especially when they are to live with difficult and hard relations or other people. The children could be exposed to untold dangers. Poverty on the part of parents can obviously expose the children to abuse. Careless and negligent parents could be abusive to children.

Incestuous relationship in the family is striking because of the havoc it brings upon the family as evidently shown. An example of such an incident is the incestuous and abnormal marriage which takes place between Jocasta and her son, Oedipus. The marriage does not only bring disaster upon the whole land, but ruins the entire family of Oedipus. In the same way, Awọrọ marries his own daughter unknowingly and the land becomes polluted and the people suffer. When the whole truth is exposed he destroys his life. Both Oedipus' and Awọrọ's families end up in disaster.

Murder in family relationships is confirmed by the available sources in Classical literature. Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia; Clytaemnestra kills her husband, king Agamemnon; Orestes refuses to spare the life of a mother who murders a husband; Nero initiates a plan and gets rid of his mother. Medea destroys her two sons;

Procne cuts her son down; Eteocles and his brother waste their lives in a violent combat; Hyllus drives his mother into suicide and Jocasta takes her life.

In conclusion, family violence in Classical and Igbo literatures is similar in nature. The slight difference is that murder in the family circle in the Classical culture is freely documented in books. The reverse is the case in Igbo literature, as the artist often makes the victim escape death narrowly. In other words, in Igbo culture murder in the family is given a frugal literary representation. This is exemplified in the incident in *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo nearly kills his wife by a gun shot and where Adamma in *Onye Chi ya Akwatughi*, poisons her husband's food- an ordeal from which he narrowly survives. Nevertheless, Beatrice, the wife of Eugene in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* confesses of poisoning her husband to death through food.

Greek literature often attributes some violent acts to the influence of the gods. This is represented in the drama, *The Bacchae*, where Dionysus inflicts Agave with a fit of madness which made her murder her son Pentheus, addressing his head which she fastens to a wand as quarry from her chase. In the same way, in Euripides' work *Heracles*, Hera attacks Heracles with frenzy which made him kill his wife and children with his sword, mistaking them for his enemies. The Igbo literatures studied have no such equivalent.

6.2 Recommendations

Family violence due to the multiplicity of its causes at present could only be abated, or reduced. However, the problem of family violence in these cultures invites for urgent intervention from the government, non governmental bodies, individuals and various associations to reduce this scourge to an infinitesimal degree. Here are some recommendations which could help fight the scourge, "family violence." The family is arranged in a hierarchical order, this suggests that respect should flow hierarchically. However, this flow should not come from a single direction, that is, from bottom to top only, but has to flow from top to bottom as well. In other words, children should accord their parents with respect, and parents ought to give their children the respect due to them.

It is noted that one of the significant reasons why conflict and violence is common in the family circle is as a result of human nature. It is important to bear in mind that everyone is created to react to matters or issues in a peculiar way. This simply opines that individuals have patterned or peculiar behaviour. Dick's reaction to an incident could be different from Tom's over the same matter. For instance, if Mr A slaps his wife Mrs A on the face, Mrs A could decide to avenge herself by smashing her husband's skull with a stool. In Contrast, if Mr. B gives his wife the same dose of slap, Mrs B, may not see revenge as the best option. She could resort to weeping or decides to report the matter to someone else, thus further violence is shunned. This concise illustration shows that humanbeings react differently to the same situations, while some ractions trigger off violence others restrain it.

In addition, one's behaviour can affect one's relationship with other members of the family either positively or negatively. One should realize that while some people are quick tempered others are of good temperament. While some are amiable, others are aggressive, harsh and unfriendly. While some are cunning and sneaky, others are upright, straightforward and predictable. These and more are some of the traits inherent in man, which makes him prone to violence or otherwise. Therefore, family members should deem it necessary to understand the nature or characteristics of every member in order to know how to deal with each and every one of them.

Family members should learn to tolerate one another's weak points, but lead or help them to rise above such weaknesses. For instance, members who are quick tempered have to be helped or tolerated, and such people must be determined to work on their temperament to achieve self-discipline. Tolerance and love is vital in the family setting. Again, family members should guide their hearts jealously so that they do not live in fear. Fear has the power to drive one into irrational or vicious acts which one may not perform under normal circumstances.

Each member of the family has to be focused, watchful and selective in the groups he/she aspires to belong, to avoid being an agent of violence against the family, due to wrong associations. Except in cases of ill health or woeful conditions, family members ought to be industrious and enterprising. Members, who are expected to be

economically viable (that is, those who should contribute to the economic growth of the family) must live up to such expectations. Such members should not out of laziness, pride or flimsy excuses make themselves liabilities on others, as this breeds discontentment on the member on whose shoulder this dependence weighs.

Most children are abused in different ways in the homes. Concerning, child abuse, parents should improve on parenting skills. They often have to evaluate their own family and develop good relationship with their children. Skills and partnership with other parents will help them (parents) develop healthy parenting skills. Good communication skill will enable parents build and improve family relationships.

Acquiring or developing healthy communication skill demands that members of the family should be able to express themselves clearly before others. Parents should give the children the information which is necessary for them to have, likewise the children should give their parents, guardians, caregivers and siblings the information they must have about them. Another factor to effective communication is to appropriately respond to relationships, challenges and stress even amidst turbulence. It is rewarding to remain focused, rather than being rash and violent during trying times.

In the home, boys receive all kinds of information about what it means “to be a man.” One of such messages is that they have to be tough and in charge or in control. There are also uncountable conflicting and harmful information given to boys directly or indirectly about what being a man in relationship embraces. Boys in the same light watch how their fathers or some adult males relate with their wives or other women. Invariably, what they observe is likely to affect their relationships with their sisters, other girls, or even their future wives. If a boy learns brutality over women, he is likely to exhibit it in the future relationship with the opposite sex, except he is later taught otherwise.

Sequel to the above insinuation, parents should not do or make utterances which would create impressions in these young minds that the woman is of a weaker sex and so, should be subjected to brutality for her to fear and give the males respect. Parents, caregivers and the society at large should make the young males understand that violence generally is not a welcomed practice and violence against women is a crime.

Parents should discourage or disapprove of jokes, songs, music, video films, cartoons, proverbs, idioms, anecdotes, and likely things, which demean women. Parents should teach and help the youth develop healthy relationships with the opposite sex. He has to be taught the importance of treating girls with respect, care and love.

Parents who expect their son(s) to become responsible and anti violence, should teach him/them by leading an exemplary life for him/them to emulate. Parents should make their children see them as those who have respect for others, both in views and opinions. Parents are expected to be tireless teachers and children's instructors. Parents should immediately lead their children to get rid of violent traits discovered in them. The father of the family should make the boy realize how concerned he is as a person, over violence against women and children.

Furthermore, mothers should learn properly the art of mothering. Julius Caesar, led credence to his frugal life style and strength to his mother. He explained that she taught him to adapt to any situation, no matter how unbearable. He claimed that the kind of training he received from her, made him a strong soldier. It should not be over emphasized that Caesar lost his father at a very tender age, and was brought up single handedly by his mother, to whom he owed all that he was.

Parents should learn the art of parenting, teaching the child the right virtues which would sustain him in life rather than making him "useless" in the guise of making all things "rosy" for him. Parents should do away with all sentiments, with which they accord the male child, there by sparing the rod and spoiling the child. Over pampering makes the son a spoiled child, and in the absence of the father, the mother becomes the victim of his criminality and violence.

Children and adolescents who are violent, especially those with histories of aggression, need to be encouraged to learn a number of skills which are not related to violence, for instance, they should not be encouraged to serve in the military. They should be taught how to solve their problem assertively. They should be encouraged to communicate freely with others non aggressively.

It is important for trainings to be organized by government and non-governmental bodies for youths, in order to discourage violent behaviours. For example,

programmes such as Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT) is a good example of skill-based prevention programme focused on aggression in African American familial and peer relationships (Hammonds, 1991). The View Points Training Programme (Guerri and Panizzon, 1986) is a treatment programme that uses cognitive behavioural methods for changing youths' beliefs and attitudes about violent behaviours by enhancing problem-solving skills. However, in Igbo land, Logara Remandary Home Ngokpala in Imo State and Oji River Rehabilitation Home in Enugu State, are the institutions where "minors" who are convicted of violent acts against family members or others are kept to be reprimanded and rehabilitated.

The police should get family members sensitized and encouraged to report acts of violence against them by other family members. Neighbours, eyewitnesses and the community at large, should also be sensitized to immediately report to the police any act of violence by family members. In addition, members of the community or neighbours in urban centers should learn the art of policing and they should report cases of violence against people around them whether they know them or not. The police in turn has to take the report seriously and institute appropriate actions. Failure to attend to the report adequately by the law enforcement agents boldens and strengthens the perpetrator for further violent acts, while the reporter is left disappointed and discouraged.

More so, non governmental organizations, community based organizations and religious organizations, should also help in organizing seminars, workshops and talks, which aim at "family building and cordial family living." The services of marriage counsellors whether established by government or non governmental agencies, need to be encouraged and assisted by the government, philanthropists and organizations. The counselling services have to be affordable. Family members should be sensitized about the availability of such services in order to benefit from it.

The part of the Nigerian constitution which protects the right of women and children should not just be a dormant documented or written "term," but has to be adequately represented in practice. Women should be adequately protected from

violence by husbands, sons or other male family members. Children should also be protected from abuse by parents, elderly siblings, caregivers, guardians and kins.

Appropriate disciplinary actions should be taken against children who abuse their parents. Parents should report cases of violence or life threatening utterances from their children to the police. They should not sit at home and brand such dangerous issues as “family or private matters”.

Marriage should be based on love and not on sentiment or what one will gain, out of selfish interest. Most marriages die off at infancy because they are not built on strong foundation of love. A number of marriages are conceived out of infatuation while some take place as a result of parental pressure. As already mentioned, Tiberius’ marital union with Julia could not thrive, having been forced into a marriage he reluctantly accepts. Aworọ also is forced into a marital relationship which ends disastrously.

Parents should allow their sons to marry the women whom they have passion for. They should not for ulterior motive force their children into marriages where they will remain perpetually unhappy. Furthermore, parents should not deny their sons or daughters marriages due unnecessary reasons. On the same note, the young ones should heed to their parents’ advice on the delicate issue as making spousal choice, especially when they are advising them correctly.

Marriage should not be a matter of fulfilling all righteousness, that is, to satisfy the societal demand which holds that all matured adult male and female alike (all things being equal) are expected to marry, dabble into marriage due to time pressure. This could make one act erroneously or enter into wrong marriage. It is not advisable to walk into a meaningless marriage only to walk out in a very short time.

The desire to have children is the primary intention behind most Igbo marriages rather than companionship. Barrenness is a problem which raises much dust in the family. Despite the gravity of this shortcoming, two can walk together if they agree. However, with love and understanding childless couples can find solace in adoption which has become socially acceptable in this contemporary time. Through this medium, they can fill the vacuum of childlessness in the family. Adoption was a viable practice in ancient Rome. It was a common practice amongst the noble families. The brave war

general, Julius Caesar, adopted Augustus, (later Emperor Augustus Caesar); who adopted Tiberius (later Emperor Tiberius); Emperor Tiberius adopted Claudius (who later became Emperor Claudius) who adopted Nero, (later Emperor Nero).

6.3 Conclusion

After examining the issue of violence in Classical and Igbo literatures, it is unveiled that violent acts are prevalent in the family circle of both Classical and Igbo cultures. Violence affects all family relationships represented in the family. Commonly, there exist violence between husband and wife; violence amongst siblings; violence against the children by parents and violence against the parents by children.

Violence is a very dangerous monster which has eaten deep into the fabrics of the family. It is like an indomitable bull which persistently fights headlong against its victim. As leprosy ruins and destroys the skin, so has violence destroyed the lives of a number of families, in both Classical and Igbo societies. It employs ugly weapons such as suspicion, hatred, intolerance, tussle for power, accusation, barrenness, poverty, anger, et cetera, in order to leave the family at its mercy. A number of family members would never get united again because of the violent experiences they had. Violence has left a good number of families shadows of what they used to be.

It is important to point out that violence being rampant in most families, has a reflection in the larger society. In order words, since violence is common at the home front which is a nucleus of the larger society, the larger society without doubt shares from its adverse effects. There is no straight jacket solution or answer to the problem of family violence, because the factors which fan it off are multiple-faced and hydra-headed, however, the above recommendations would contribute its quota to reducing the causes, effects and manifestations of violence in the family.

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VIOLENCE AND BREACH OF FAMILY TIES IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE

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Abstract

This chapter addresses the issue of family conflicts, distortions and violence, in Classical literature. Here, violence would be treated as physical, psychological and emotional. Since violence, especially physical violence, is mostly obtainable in Greek tragedy, there would be a brief discussion on the term “tragedy”, and other related concepts, such as blood, blood shed, its importance and implication as they affect the victim, the culprit and other members of the family. This clarification will facilitate easy understanding of the subject matter. The treatment of these concepts will lead to exploring the available evidence of family violence and conflict, in Classical drama, mythology, history and other similar sources.

Most Greek tragedies have domestic violence and conflict as their themes. This phenomenon is not a means portraying the family as problematic, rather it shows the importance of the family, and so instructs that factors which aggravate family rancour should be strictly avoided or guarded against. The success or failure of a family depends on the affections and ties that hold any family together or drive it apart. These ties, as tragedy demonstrates have a greater effect where the relationship is close, and disaffection can produce catastrophic results.

Introduction

Tragedy, Blood and Related Concepts

Greek tragedy often draws its plot from the body of myth and tradition. It is often concerned with the catastrophic fall of great men and great families. Most dynasties in the Classical tragic drama ended up in ruin. In Greek tragedy, there is abundant evidence of tension between family and dynastic values. This tension tends to be expressed in the repeated theme of the collapse of a great house.¹

Aristotle, in his book, *The Poetics*, states that, a few houses (*oikia*) are relied upon for the plots of the best Greek tragedies, because it is in these families that events most suitable for tragic treatment occur (1453a 18-22). The histories of these families especially those of Alcamaeon, Oedipus, Thyestes and Telephus, all include the slaying of kin, incest or last minute life-saving recognition between kins. These intra-familial crimes or near crimes are why these families are most appropriate for tragedy, for it is the pathos experienced in kin group, Aristotle argues, that arouses the greatest element of pity.²

Classical tragic dramas are rich in violence and conflicts. However, Aristotle says that the type of tragic character, which he favours, is the man who is neither outstanding in bravery and justice (*αρετη και δικαιοσυνη*) nor passes to ill fortune as a result of vice and wretchedness (*κακαια και μοχθηρια*), but as a result of some error (*αμαρτια*) and he should be one of those who enjoy great reputation and good fortune, such as Oedipus, Thyestes, and other prominent men from such families as these. Aristotle's choice of men of high status as his tragic heroes is because he holds that their fall will arouse in the audience the desired emotion, which characterizes the tragic experience.³

In addition Stinton, affirms Aristotle's statement which holds that the best tragedy is so composed as to arouse pity and terror. It is clear that morally good men (*επιεικεις αδρες*) must not be shown passing from good fortune to bad; this does not arouse pity or fear but it is repulsive (*μιαρον*). Nor again, must the very crooked man (*Ο σφοδρα πονηρος*) be shown falling from good fortune into bad; this arrangement will

satisfy human feeling, but will not arouse pity or fear. For fear is concerned with unmerited misfortune (περι των αναξιον δυστυχουντα).⁴ Adkins supporting Aristotle and Stinton says there remains the intermediate character; not pre-eminent in moral excellence (αρετη και δικαιοσνη) nor falling into misfortune through vice and depravity (κακια και μοχθηρια) but through (αμαρτια), either “error” “mistake” or “flaw” of character; being one of great reputation and good fortune.⁵

The cases of bloodshed are very pronounced in the tragic plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Hitherto, it is necessary to understand the importance, the implication of blood and bloodshed and how it affects the individual victims, other members of the family and the household in general.

Blood is perceived as being simultaneously pure and impure, attractive and repulsive, sacred and profane; it is at once a life-giving substance and a symbol of death. Handling of blood sometimes is mandatory, but usually dangerous. In many primitive societies, blood is identified as a soul substance of men, animals and even plants. The Romans said that it is the *sedes animae* seat of life . Rites of blood require the intervention of individual specialists (warriors, sacrificers, circumcisers, butchers or even executioners), and always the participation of the group or community. For the Hebrew, “the life of all flesh is its blood.”⁶ The spilling of blood is often forbidden. This ban applies to certain categories of humans and animals. The rulers of Ottoman Empire forbade shedding the blood of persons of royal lineage. There is reason to believe that the Indian Hindu religion abolished sacrifices and feasting that goes with blood. According to Genesis (9:4), the eating of raw meat is forbidden. “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”

It is important to note that, there are different attitudes toward the blood of strangers, foreigners, or enemies and most of all, toward the blood of members of one’s family or community. The blood of enemies usually is not protected by any taboo. It has been suggested that one justification for war is the perceived necessity of shedding blood in order to water the earth.

However, one often encounters the idea that the earth is thirsty for blood, especially for licit blood. It can at times cry out for vengeance against any illicit

bloodshed. The blood of the enemy is rarely dangerous, even though the qualities and strength of the soul remain in it. Within a single community, however, attitudes toward blood and killing are different. Members of the community are connected by consanguinity, and they share responsibility for one another; the blood of each is the blood of all. The group's totemic animal may be included in this community, which is connected to the animal by adoption or alliance.

Murder in the community is forbidden; to kill one's relative is tantamount to shedding one's own blood; it is a crime that draws a curse that lasts for generations. When Cain killed Abel, Abel's "blood cried out for vengeance"⁷ and Cain's descendants suffered for it. When Oedipus unknowingly killed his father, he subsequently gouged out his eyes to confess his ignorance and misdeed, but actually his punishment fell upon his children.⁸

A murder between families or clans is a grave wrong, which must be avenged by killing the guilty party. The latter, who in turn becomes the victim, will have his own avenger from among his relatives. Thus the offshoot of cycle of killings known as vendetta killing, which can be broken by "paying the blood price". Vendetta killing is found among the ancient Greeks, pre-Islamic Arabic and modern Corsica. The Jewish and Muslim demands of "an eye for an eye" may be similar to this phenomenon.⁹ The above examples of various backgrounds depict that the blood of a man is of a great value. To shed human blood is a crime and more grievous is the shedding of the blood of a household member. It requires that the blood of the offender must be spilled for the sake of justice. This explains better why Clytemnestra and Orestes resorted to violent killings in order to avenge the blood of their family members.

4.3 Vengeance and Retribution in Family Violence

Vengeance, according to Cambridge *International Dictionary of English*, "is the punishing of someone for harming you, or your friends, family, or the desire for such punishment to happen". "Vengeance" and "revenge" are used interchangeably here since both are similar in meaning. The desire to give back a wound for a wound is an emotion almost universally felt. Myths or tales involving vengeance also like to show debts of violence that pass from father to son or from brother to brother, before they are

finally paid. “Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which, the more man’s nature runs to, the more ought law weed it out”.¹⁰ The instrumental character of retribution finds exemplary expression in the “law of talion” in which the penalty matches the crime, and in the “golden rule” (behave toward others as you wish them to behave to you).¹¹

The murder of a family member by another attracts vengeance from another member of same family who, stands to avenge the blood of the victim. The avenger reasons that the blood of the victim must not waste alone but must be accompanied by the blood of the murderer. In Classical drama, family members avenge most domestic killings.

Human vengeance was an old theme in the mythology and literature of Greece and it was probably one of the earliest representations to be staged there. In the description of the concept of the vengeance play, the terminology of Aristotle is of use. The minimal vengeance plot is seen as an imitation of an action of the negative type, centered on catastrophe. The plot is then necessarily active rather than passive, and the result is a special pattern in the emotions that are aroused, since here the portrayal is a change of fortune experienced. The overturn from wealth, success and seeming happiness into disaster and death which is, according to Aristotle, the very marrow of good tragedy is certainly present here.¹²

4.4 Retribution as a Punishment

The guilt of offence against a family member or another fellow is not only avenged but also punished, for there are on one hand, offences against life itself and on the other hand offenses against the rules that protect life and are instituted to defend life. These later offences are met by punishment, which is directed not against the clan but against the offender. The important point to note here is that, the individual culprit is punished.

Law of Talion is one of the oldest forms of payment for crime. The term comes from the Latin phrase *lex talionis* (law of retaliation), and it is first documented in the Law of Twelve Tables, (451-450 B.C.E). “If someone breaks another’s limb and does not come to an agreement on it, he shall suffer the same equal punishment”. “Talion” refers to a codified numerical equality in every punishment, for example, “one hand for

one hand, a tooth for a tooth". In Greek thought, retribution is justice in the form of punishment; it is the context in which Greek thought comes to grip with justice as regulative of revenge. The word justice (δικη) occurs in such phrases as (δικην διδοναι; δικην τινειν) which literally means "to give", "to pay", "justice," all of which signify "to be punished". The word means "payment" or "compensation", but also "revenge" or "vengeance."

The Erinyes or Furies, which are champions of archaic justice, show that justice is actually retributive to the Greeks. These entities are the spirits who embody the anger of the dead and the curse of the slain in the murderers. They are the oldest Greek divinities of justice, especially of archaic matriarchal rights, and also of the rights of parents generally. The Areopagus at Athens was also known as the hill of the Erinyes. The court, which prosecuted murderers, held its sessions there. Since they were avengers of perjury, the Erinyes were regarded as agents defending the order of the law. Heraclitus calls them "the handmaids of the ministers of justice".¹³

The symbol of the court- the wolf, serpent, and lightning bolt, are part of the myth of guilt and punishment. They are symbols of souls that seek revenge of Olympian gods, who represent the rights of such individuals. Apollo is the defender of the rights of blood for blood, but also the god of purification from bloodguilt.

4.5 Purification by Blood

An offender or murderer is accursed or polluted by the act of spilling either a kindred blood or any other. Such an individual, above all, requires purification or cleansing to rid him of the curse. Blood sacrifice is necessary for his purification. Bukert, citing Heraclitus, says that such murders are cleansed through the blood of the sacrificial victim, as if someone who stepped into mud should try to wash himself with mud. Heraclitus ridiculously talks about a murderer (φονευς) who has made himself bloody to have himself cleaned by blood. The act of murder gives rise to peculiar, almost physically experienced pollution (μιασμα) in which the murderer is ensnared. Admittedly, his extreme position is ambivalent, just as sacrament and sacrilege merge in every act of sacral killing.

The community of archaic times knew its obligation to drive out the curse and the murderer with it. He must leave his home and seek a protector abroad, who will take charge of his purification, as in the story of Adrastus in Herodotus 1.344. Until then no word must pass his lips, nor may he be received in any house, nor share a table with others; anyone who comes in contact with him, is defiled. This treatment meted to the murderer attests to how dreadful the issue of murder could be, how much more the spilling of a household blood, which could be likened to the spilling of one's own blood.

The archetypal instance is the matricide of Orestes who flees abroad after his deed. Various places with their local rituals claim connection with his purification. Bukert claims that, in Troizen in front of the Sanctuary of Apollo, stood a hut of Orestes, which was said to have been erected to avoid receiving the murderer in a normal house. A priestly group met there regularly for a sacral meal. In Athens, the curious wine drinking on the day of defilement during the Anthesteria festival was traced back to the arrival of Orestes.¹⁴

In conclusion, purification by blood is very important for the cleansing of one, who shed human blood. This enables him to interact with people once again after being ostracized from the household, and even his town. The cleansing granted him freedom from guilt and vengeance of the gods.

So far, it is learnt from the discussion that shedding of human blood calls for retributive justice and punishment. The murderer has to undergo purification, which makes him acceptable among his folks. The issue of murder is not the only case of violence to be treated in this chapter, but the fact remains that it is the most "heinous" of all family violence. This, notwithstanding, other cases of violence, conflicts and breaches of family ties are subsequently addressed. However, here below is the evidence of family violence as reflected in some works in Classical drama.

4.6 Seduction and Vengeance in the House of Pelops

Domestic violence could be applied to have one's way, to make achievements, exert authority, avenge wrong or injustice done to oneself, or another person. Iphigenia gives a clear information about who the father of Atreus is. She explains, "Pelops the

son of Tantalus came to Pisa with swift horses and married the daughter of Oenomaus. Of her Atreus was born, who had children, Menelaus and Agamemnon".¹⁵ Atreus was the founder of the Atreid dynasty. There came up strife between him and his brother Thyestes. The latter offended his brother in "two things", which resulted in a family feud. In the first instance, Thyestes eloped with his brother's wife and in second he usurped his brother's kingdom by trickery. Atreus designed a plan to make his brother commit abominable act, which would be a taboo and render him loathsome in the eyes of the Argives.

In order to effect his plans, Atreus secretly murdered Thyestes' two sons and served their flesh to their father at a banquet of reconciliation. Thyestes ignorantly "enjoyed" the heinous meal. When Thyestes realizes that he had eaten the flesh of his sons, he fled into exile and later died there; but he had a third son, an infant son called Aegisthus, whom he took with him and brought up in exile. Atreus himself got away with the murder, but such crimes do not go unpunished.

Agamemnon and Menelaus were the famous sons of Atreus. Agamemnon the eldest son of Atreus inherited the throne of Argos, and thus inherited the curse that settled on the family. Menelaus, his younger brother, became the king of Sparta in succession of his father-in-law, Tyndareus.¹⁶

The house of Atreus became accursed as a result of the abominable occurrence found in it. And that is the satisfactory reason why, successive accounts of vengeance, bloodshed, retribution, justice and guilt are themes of their experiences.

Thyestes seduced his brother's wife, and the deed ignited vengeance from Atreus, who felt assaulted. Thus, he did not handle the adultery matter lightly. Furthermore, the culprit was severely punished for usurping the Argive kingdom. All these atrocious acts against a kin, resulted into vengeance and family feud, which lingered till the family was brought to ruin.

In Agamemnon's immediate household began vendetta killings (echo and re-echo of murder incidences). It all started with Agamemnon; the bad farmer who harvested the sour fruit which set every tooth in his family on edge. He gave a step-by-step narration of why and how he murdered his daughter Iphigenia, whose violent

murder triggered off the cycle of termination of lives in his family. At the initial part of his narration, he talked about Helen the daughter of Tyndareus, who chose Menelaus his brother, amongst many suitors, who sought her hand in marriage. Unexpectedly, a young man Paris came from Phrygia, with enormous wealth, seduced, and eloped with her (Helen). Agamemnon recounted the incident:

She chose- in an evil moment- Menelaus. Then that judge of divine beauties, as the Argive story has it, came from Phrygia to Lacedaemon; the habit of his dress was flowery, he glittered with gold-barbaric finery. Helen fell in love with him, and he with her, and so, with Menelaus abroad at the time, off he went with his plunder, to the ranches of Ida. Menelaus, goaded to frenzy dashed up and down Hellas invoking the old pledge of mutual assistance against aggression. Then Hellas rushed to arms. They brought their armament to these narrow straits of Aulis, their ships and their shields, their cavalry and their chariots. They chose me to be general. I suppose it was a favour to Menelaus, since I was his brother: but I wish some other men had won this honour instead of me: When the army had been brought together and mustered, we were kept idle at Aulis, for want of sailing weather. In our difficulty, the seer Calchas pronounced that Iphigenia, my own daughter, must be sacrificed to Artemis, whose soil this is; thus, and not otherwise, we could sail away and sack Phrygia. When I heard this, I told Talthybius to let the trumpet blare forth and disbanded the whole army, for I would never bring myself to kill my own daughter. Thereupon, my brother pleaded with me and pleaded with me, till he persuaded me to do the awful deed. In the fields, in the folds of the letter I wrote, and told my wife to send our daughter here, to become a bride of Achilles. I enlarged upon Achilles' distinction and said he refused to sail with Achaeans unless a bride of our house should go to Phthia. I used this pretext as a means of persuading my wife ... of the Achaeans only we four know the true situation: Calchas, Odysseus, Menelaus and I...¹⁷

The beauty and importance of this quote, is its explicit richness in detailed exposition of why Agamemnon chooses to offer his own innocent young maiden, Iphigenia. He tries to defend or justify his action, but it sounds ridiculous when he says, "... my brother pleaded with me and pleaded with me, till he persuaded me to do the

awful deed". Here, King Agamemnon, a general in war, a man of elevated status is speaking like a young girl or married woman caught in the act of fornication or adultery, who pleads for mercy on the ground that, the man in question "persuaded and persuaded me before I succumbed". Agamemnon's point of argument is very porous and without substance. It lacks sense of wisdom or reasoning. Clytemnestra in one of her arguments, laments, why her own dear daughter should be a sacrificial lamb, to redeem an irresponsible woman, who, rejected her marital bed for another. This, should have equally been the king's line of thought.

Agamemnon can be seen as a cruel father who lacks paternal emotion, love and mercy for a child of his loins. He has the quality of an irrational father, who throws away the life of a beautiful innocent daughter, in pursuit of an irresponsible sister-in-law. His action suggests that his brother's immediate family is of priority to him rather than his. He values his brother's joy and peace more than his. Agamemnon exhibits the belief that he can afford to pay so dearly at his own detriment, in order to satisfy his brother, Menelaus.

He goes further and lies to Clytemnestra that Iphigenia should be brought to Aulis, for a marital union with Achilles. This is a mere trick to have the child released to him and his cohorts. When Clytemnestra comes to learn about the true situation of events, her pain becomes more aggravated. A household which makes lies, its bedrock is always in chaos, when the truth unfolds. When partners in marriage, do not involve their mates in decision-making or seek their opinions, they easily drive their family into turbulence. He takes a costly decision without the knowledge or opinion of his wife, and of course, has to pay back with his own life. The consequences of this occurrence, explain why adequate and effective communication is a very important ingredient for household unity.

Clytemnestra joins the servant who comes to take Iphigenia to Aulis, full of joy to partake in her daughter's marriage. Through conversation, she becomes aware of her husband's secret plan to sacrifice their daughter. The servant discloses: "... He is going to slash the girl's neck with a sword.... his father is going to sacrifice your child to Artemis." ¹⁸ When it is time for the sacrifice, Agamemnon sends to the tent where

Clytaemnestra and Iphigenia are, in further deception that the time for the marriage has come. He says:

Fetch the child from the house to join her father. The lustral waters are prepared and ready, as are the meal- cakes to throw in cleansing fire and the victims, which must be slain before the marriage ceremony (victims whose dark blood must gush forth for Artemis).¹⁹

Agamemnon is a character built on deception, cunningness and lies, in order to achieve his aim. He is ironical in his speech. He is preparing Iphigenia for death not marriage. The sacrificial victim, he speaks about, is no other than his daughter. Unfortunately, the secret loom he has woven has been laid bare before his wife.

Aeschylus' account in the drama *Agamemnon*, through the character Clytaemnestra, informs us about the eventual sacrifice of Iphigenia, after Clytaemnestra has murdered her husband, king Agamemnon. Clytaemnestra loathes her husband's action and thus guards her heart never to pardon him even after ten years.

Why once before did you not dare oppose this man? Who with as slight compunction as men butcher sheep, must sacrifice his child, and my own darling, whom my pain brought forth. He killed her for a charm to stop the Thracian wind!²⁰

Clytaemnestra complains that apart from the loss of her daughter through her husband, she suffered other unjust treatments in his hand. She recalls that he snatched her from her former husband, and killed her infant son for the man.

You married me against my will, you seized me by force and killed my former husband, Tantalus (son of Thyrses). My babe you reached rudely from my breast and crushed him to the ground beneath your tread.²¹

This portrays Agamemnon as a violent killer who joys in gory sight. He cares less what another feels. He is a selfish personality who achieves his aim by all means and at all costs. Being a king whose power is infinite and unquestionable, he employs violence in forcing Clytaemnestra into marriage. Absolute application of power comes into play in this situation. This means that absolute exercise of power and violence could coerce people to accept what they would reject, under normal circumstances. One

may ask why Clytaemnestra should release her hand into marriage with a murderer, who robbed her at the onset, of a dear husband and son.

Agamemnon, we have to remember, is a powerful and wealthy king. It is difficult for a woman to make marital choice in the ancient world. The father of the family or guardian does the match making. The woman is an entity of a very humble status. Subsequently, it would be an act of disrespect, deviance or insubordination, for any woman to reject the hand of a king in marriage. Such a woman could be subjected to death sentence. If a father could have power of life and death over his possessions, which includes his wife and children, how much more a king over his subjects.

Obviously, Clytaemnestra refuses to cast off the heinous sacrifice from her heart. She still stands aloof for vengeance and justifies her action. She nurses no regrets for bathing her hands with the blood of her husband. Concerning Agamemnon's destruction, she announces:

As one who catches fish, a vast voluminous net, that willed him round with endless wealth of woven folds; and then I struck him twice. Twice he cried out and groans; and fell limp. And as he lay, I gave a third and final blow ... I am jubilant. So enriched wine of wickedness this man stored in his house, and now returned, drains his own cursed cup to the last dregs... This is my husband, Agamemnon, now stone dead; this work, the work of my right hand, whose craftsmanship justice acknowledges.²²

The sacrifice of Iphigehia brings to memory the violent sacrifice of Polyxena; a young maiden, the daughter of king Priam of Troy and his consort, Hecuba. Hecuba and her daughter are amongst the war captives brought home by the Achaeans after the sack of Troy. The Achaeans sacrifice Polyxena to their gods in celebration of their victory over Troy, without considering the emotional trauma which the killing would elicit. A herald narrates to Hecuba the boldness, which Polyxena exhibits, and the way she is run through in the most barbaric manner. At the point of death she says: "You Greeks, who laid my city in ruins, I die willingly... . I will give my neck steadfastly to the sword ... he with sword ... cut through the channels; of breath."²³ Abraham in obedience to God's instruction, attempts to kill his son as a sacrifice to show and

express his respect and love for God. “And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”²⁴

Still on the family of Atreus, Helen’s elopement with Paris provoked a great deal of emotional violence not only on her husband, Menelaus, but also on Agamemnon, and the entire Achaean world, who went to battle to have her restored back. It was the trouble, which Helen brewed, that led to familial chaos in Agamemnon’s household. Helen’s unholy act gave birth to the popular and long lasting Trojan War; which claimed the lives of skilful warriors such as Hector, Achilles, Ajax and others. The misery in the house of Menelaus extended to Hermione, his married daughter. Euripides in the play, *Andromache* presents her as a barren woman most hated and rejected by her husband who married another wife.²⁵

Euripides and Aeschylus present to us Helen, a woman whose passion for a lover supersedes her love for her husband, daughter and family. She could be likened to Clytaemnestra, her sister, whose passion for a lover equally strengthened, to kill her husband and disregard her children. Helen’s attitude is contrary to the quality of an ideal mother who guards against any situation that can threaten or tear her family apart; a mother who holds her household as a primary possession of her life.

It is not an overstatement to reiterate that there are mothers who do not see any wrong in what Helen of Troy did and so practice it. The prototypes of Helen abide in the contemporary societies as there are a good number of women who elope with lovers and abandon their families for the preferred men either for the sake of money, or sexual satisfaction. Among the male folks also, exist men who abandon their wives and children for other women, who at times are other men’s wives.

It is obvious that Atreus brings upon his family a curse that results into the destruction of this great family. Clytaemnestra presents sleet of reasons to justify the murder of her husband. No matter how cogent her explanations sound, the avengers of blood, according to Greek religion and belief will haunt her. They must get her punished to purify the land. Menelaus lays credence to the above statement as he states: “The woman who betrays her husband dies”.²⁶ How and why Clytemnestra did not

escape death penalty would be addressed in the later part of this chapter. **Sterility, Emotional Trauma and Violence in the Household**

The motif of barrenness and rejection of the barren and the plot to eliminate a productive co-wife and her son, are some of the themes of the play, *Andromache*. The practice of whisking away a fruitless woman supports the Classical and Igbo ideal, which makes child bearing an important factor in constituting marriage. Hermione who is thrown away by her husband because of childlessness, together with her father, Menelaus, as an accomplice, designs a plan to get rid of her husband's slave-wife Andromache, together with her son. Andromache and her son are almost murdered but are saved by Peleus, her grand father-in-law. Hermione's threat to the lives of her husband's family members, attracts further hatred and immediate sack from the house:

...This house seems to cry aloud "Drive her out. The land of Phthia hates me. If my husband finds me here on his return from the oracle of Pheobus, he will make me die a criminal death. Or else I will become the slave of this bastard wife of his, whose mistress I used to be."²⁷

This shows that childlessness brings about instability in the family. Hermione bemoans her pitiable situation because she could not produce a child/children for her husband and his family. Her honour and respect were withdrawn due to this shortcoming. It is disheartening that the matron of the house, who instructs and directs slaves is removed from the fore front of her office and replaced with her slave-girl. It could make a woman take drastic vindictive actions to avenge ill treatment against her. Hermione in vengeance took part in the plot to murder her husband. Peleus emphatically attributed the death of his grandson to an evil wife, Hermione:

O marriage, marriage, that has destroyed my home, destroyed my city. Alas, alas! O that my family had never for the sake of children and heirs, involved itself with your wife, Hermione (name of evil), thus bringing death on you, my child!²⁸

Peleus is not wrong over the accusation because, Orestes, Hermione's cousin masterminds the plot with Hermione quite aware of it. Here, Peleus stresses the importance or necessity of children, when he reiterates in the above statement: "O that my family had never for the sake of children and heirs, involved itself with your

wife...” In a simple term, Peleus decries that it is absolutely the desire to have children that prompts them to marry Hermione. This suggests that, apart from offsprings, there would have been no need for such an evil woman called Hermione.

Andromache, after the death of her husband, Hector, who lost his life in the Trojan battle, is given to Neoptolemus, Achilles’ son, as war booty. Later, Neoptolemus marries Hermione, who accuses Andromache of bewitching and making her sterile. She attempts to kill her and her son but fails. To avoid her husband’s fury, she escapes with Orestes who claims to have promised her marriage ever before.

This brief plot describes some of the conflicts and differences encountered in the home. It also reveals some of the contentions between co-wives. There are accusations, attacks, and threats over the lives of family members when there is misfortune. Those who hold the threatened or the attacked, very dear to their hearts will resort to vengeance, irrespective of the closeness or relatedness with the family member, who is the culprit. Hermione accuses and plots to terminate Andromache and her son’s life, due to her barrenness. She may or may not be right in her claim, but has gone ahead looking for life to exchange for her unfruitfulness. These are some of the conflicts which face the family.

4.8 Family Violence: Old Versus Young; Fathers Versus Sons

In the Classical world, the conflict and or violence between father and son, and brothers are some of the themes of tragedies and comedies. The beating of father or mother; patricide or matricide; strife between brothers or even killing each other, gear toward the breaking of family bonds. This piece focuses on father-son violence and conflict and strife between brothers. Some of the causes of father-son conflict could be associated with avarice, especially that which has to do with the son’s demand to partake in the control of the family wealth or estate, deviant behaviours, difference in interests and opinions and tussle for authority.

Victor Ehrenberg explains that the motif of father-son conflict is common in the Greek comedy and a very paramount theme in the new Greek comedy. He points out that the fact that a father-son relation is given good position in comedy shows the importance of such relation in the family. Ehrenberg associates the rivalry and

opposition between father and son as a change and revolution which could be either internal, external or both, which are characteristics of the age. There are often times squabbles between the young and the old, due to differences in age and way of perception of things and events. Older men observe and believe that the modern young men disregard them, “the lads get up and speak before the men.”²⁹ The older men when entangled in the law suits by “young orators” are helpless against their new methods and sophisticated cleverness³⁰

A related comparison is seen between the old warriors of the Persian wars and the young profiteers of democracy. Equally, the effeminacy of the younger people and their manner of participation in politics, buttress the opposition between the generations. Again, the differences witnessed between the operation of the good statesmen of the old and the bad politicians of today, was a dominant theme in Euripolis’ *Demoi*.³¹ Invariably, this opposition and rivalry between the young and the old, crept into the households.

In the play, *The Frogs*, by Aristophanes, the beating of father and mother are crimes, which Heracles says are of the same magnitudes as the crime of perjury and offenses against hospitality.³² The chorus in the drama, *The Birds*, supports the above view when it comments, “father beating”, for example you believe “a wicked shame.”³³ The chorus explains that beating of one’s father is a sacrilegious act which is not acceptable. Ehrenberg notes avarice and financial matters as common factors, which provoke father-son conflict. He says:

The parricide desires are prompted by pure avarice, and money plays the leading part also in the quarrel between Strepsiades and Phidippides. To “throttle” the father in a financial sense of course, is typical of the sons of our time.³⁴

Terence in the play, *The Brothers*, presents Demea and his two deviant sons, Aeschinus, and Ctesipho. He gave out Aeschinus to his own brother, Micio for adoption, but still monitors his upbringing. Demea lives in the countryside with Ctesipho, while Micio and Aeschinus live in Athens. Micio has irrational affection for his adopted son, whom he allows to keep mistresses or patronize whores. He finds it difficult to resist his demands. This upbringing is not in anyway right with Demea who

disagrees with his brother, Micio. To Demea's complaint that Aeschinus, in one of his visits, breaks into a certain home, beats the father of the family, and abducts his young daughter, Micio replies: "Demea, it is no crime, believe me, for a young man to enjoy wine and women, no, and neither is it to break upon a door".³⁵

Demea is more disappointed that Aeschinus impregnates a young virgin and Ctesipho, on whom he is counting, is part of the abduction. It is all conflict between the old man, his brother and his two sons. Deviant behaviour among youths is a very common phenomenon in the family and the society at large. Youths develop deviant attitudes especially when they are not properly guided. Their environment equally influences them. Micio misguides his adopted son by allowing him go into "pleasures," which the youth is not able to handle. Aeschinus' uncle gives him unnecessary liberty, which becomes detrimental to his young age.

Obviously, it is important to place a certain degree of restrictions on youths, as a means of inculcating good behaviours in them. Such restrictions could equally build them up into becoming responsible men and women. Aeschinus, as young as he is, has learnt to sleep with a mistress and to impregnate a girl along the line. His unholy character influences his naive brother who is at the countryside farming with their father, and he joins him (Aeschinus) in abducting a girl. This is a typical example of peer influence and pressure. The unguided freedom given to this young man, shows moral decadence in the family which affects the state of morality in the larger society.

Alcestis is the name of one of Euripides' plays as well as the name of a character, the wife of Admetus the king of Pharae. One of the major themes in the play is built on conflict and severe disagreement between the king and his father who refuses to sacrifice his life for the king's. Apollo pronounces that the king must die except his life is exchanged with another. In perplexity, he approaches his father and mother to have their live exchanged with his, but they could not honour his request. It is his wife, Alcestis who decides to surrender her life in place of his. Admetus spits fire on his aged father when he comes to console him for his wife's demise:

(Shouting at him) Be gone, you and she that houses with you. Grow old childless, as you deserve, though your child

is alive. Never will you come under the same roof with me.
If it were necessary to renounce your paternal hearth, I will
do so.³⁶

Admetus rejects his parents by cursing them to live as those who are barren, and warns them not to come to him. One could conclude from Admetus' outburst, that the familial cord which ties him and his family together is severed. According to him, even though it may not be possible to renounce their parenthood, it is possible not to have anything to do with them as long as breath remains in his nostrils. There is a clear pronouncement of abandonment of parents, to avenge the "wrong" done to him.

From Euripides' presentation, one realizes that he (Euripides) is talking about the decadence in the household setting, in which members find it difficult to make sacrifices on behalf of other members and not necessarily with their own lives. He is trying to portray the "looseness" of the bond, which holds the family together. It is, the blood tie and love, which should radiate that makes a member's problem the problem of all and a member's success the success of all. This suffices that when a good thing happens in the life of one, all rejoice and in time of sorrow all mourn together.

The play, *The Mother-in-law (Hecyra)* by Terence is a bee hive of conflict and violence between family members. Laches pressurizes his young son, Pamphilus into marrying a girl he does not love. He prefers to be left alone to continue a relationship with a mistress, which to his father will not be of any advantage to the family. He wants him to marry and bear children. This is revealed by Parmeno, Laches' elderly house slave, who narrates:

Pamphilus was just as much in love with Bacchis as ever when his father began to beg him to take a wife. The old man used the same arguments as all fathers do... The boy refused flat at first, but when his father pressed him still harder he began to waver between his duties to his parents and his love. In the end he got fed up with being pestered, and let the old man have his way and fix a marriage with a daughter of our next-door neighbour here.³⁷

The marriage could not thrive because Pamphilus is not committed to it. He is struggling to build or develop a degree of passion, but is distracted by the death of a relation, which made him leave home for Imbros, to take care of the relation's property.

This incident paves way for him to abandon his wife “untouched” (leaving her virginity intact). Although Pamphilius leaves behind his wife Philumena, his parents take care of her. Sostrata often tries to draw her close, as her own daughter. She aspires to keep her company or chat her up in order to abate her emotional distress. Philumina never appreciates this gesture because she dislikes the mother-in-law. The moment she notices her, she flees. At the long run, when she feels pestered, she runs to her parents. Laches could hold no other person responsible but his wife. He speaks as though an eye witness to the incident. Angrily, he declares:

Heaven and earth, what a tribe they are! In league the lot of them. Every blessed woman with the same like and dislikes as all the other, and not a single one can you find who'll show up a different mentality from the rest! Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, they are all of one mind- in hating each other. And they're all of a piece, too, in setting themselves against their men-folk, the same damned obstinacy in every one. I'd say they'd all learned their cussedness at the same school, and if there is such a school, I can tell you who's head-mistress: my wife.³⁸

The above insult and accusation notwithstanding, Sostrata goes to visit her run-away daughter-in-law, at her parents' house; but feels sorely bitter that her husband accuses her of sending the girl away. Concerning this accusation Sostrata laments:

There is no justice in the way our men detest all women alike, simply on account of a few wives whose behaviour brings disgrace on us all. I swear to heaven I'm innocent of what my husband accuses me- but it is no easy matter to clear myself when they've got into their heads that all mother-in-laws are unkind. I know I'm not: I've always treated the girl as my own daughter, and I just can't think how this could happen to me. All I can do is wait and hope my son's return.³⁹

There are chains of violent encounters between members of Laches and Phidipus families. Pamphilius is at loggerhead with his father who accuses his mother unjustly and wants to send her away to the country side and have them separated. The quarrel is sharp and noisy that the elderly slave has to intervene. He tries to bring serenity to the family when he advises Pamphilius thus: “Children loose their temper over little things

because they have so little- self control, and these are like children-no sound sense at all. It may have taken no more than a word to start this quarrel.”⁴⁰

Sostrata’s statements in the above quotation express the resentment of women by men. It shows a patriarchal society in which the woman is treated disdainfully. She is blamed for every mishap which the family suffers. She is the author and brewer of trouble in the family. The man believes that her sense of reasoning is quite myopic and for that, cannot pass sound judgment. This is the common impression of men over the woman both in Ancient and African cultures. However women in the present dispensation are making a clarion call for women’s liberation. Their efforts have borne some fruits but more satisfactory results are expected.

There are contentions and noisy quarrels in Phidipus’ house. Philumena his daughter is sexually molested and that results into pregnancy which she and her mother conceal from the father of the family, Phidipus. When Phidipus comes to know about the development, he feels despised, thus an explosion of severe misunderstanding between him, his wife Myrrina, and their daughter - the central figure in the drama. Phidipus designs and tells Laches a lie which frees his daughter from being an adulterer. He lies that she comes home with Pamphilius’ pregnancy. Further violence springs up as Laches impresses it upon his son Pamphilius to claim the ownership of the baby boy at birth. Pamphilius leaves his father’s presence in rage. Through Bacchis, Pamphilius’ former mistress, it is discovered that Pamphilius is the stranger who assaults Philumena and impregnates her. The feud is reconciled and the play ends on a happy note.

This comedy exhibits the myopic thinking of the inexperienced youth. Out of youthful exuberance Pamphilius prefers a continual “enjoyment” with a courtesan rather than to marry and have children. His father having wealth of experience about life knows that marriage is the gate way to procreation and thus insists that his son must marry. Most of the violent occurrences in the families represented in this play could be attributed to this youth. The violent experiences of his parents are the consequences of abandoning his wife.

In the same vein, the conflict at his in-law’s family is the aftermath of his wife’s going home and exposure to a stranger who raped her. The assault suffered by

Philumena depicts a degenerated society in which the woman is subjected to sexual attacks. It reveals the insecurity of women in a society whose norms are no longer respected. All the chaos in both families centres on the irrational and uncalculated behaviour of Pamphilius. More critical examination points out a number of secondary factors which equally generated conflict in these homes. These include wrong accusation of a family member; attempt to separate some members from others (especially when they have special attachment); and lack of adequate communication amongst members of the family.

4.9 Family Violence and Leadership Position

In Classical literature, violence between brothers usually rest on share of household property, jealousy over a brother's possession and tussle over who takes the scepter of power in dynastic families. *The Phocian Women*, one of Euripides' dramas, offers an illustrative household tussle for power. Oedipus gouges out his eyes after realizing the incestuous marriage with his mother; his sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, shut him up in an enclosure to have his kingdom shared. The miserable Oedipus curses that his sons can only divide his kingdom with sword. Afraid of this curse, Eteocles and his brother agree that they should not live together in order to avert the efficacy of the curse pronounced by their father. In this regard, one should go on a willing exile, while the other reigns for a year and the other returns from exile to take his turn of the reign.

When Eteocles takes over office, he refuses to leave the throne. Polyneices, who married king Adrastus' daughter insists on revenge, and hence goes to Argos, and brings Argive forces against his brother and his kingdom. Jocasta, who is distressed over her sons' rift, reminds Eteocles the elder son, about the ills of acquiring wealth in the wrong way, and the merits of trust-worthiness. She wants him to give heed to her words because her old eyes have bought her more experiences:

My son Eteocles, old age is not a total misery. Experience helps. Sometimes we can speak wiser than the young ... why do you honour so much tyrannic power and think that unjust happiness is great? It's fine to be looked up to? But it's empty.

You want to have much wealth within your halls, much trouble with it? ⁴¹

None of these sons could listen to their mother's pleas but goes headlong to fight with each other in an organized single battle in which they killed themselves. Their mother, who could not stand the violence and loss, takes her life:

But their mother, when she looked on this disaster snatched a sword off the corpses and she did a dreadful deed. Straight through her neck drove the steel. So now lies among her own. In death her arms cast about them both. ⁴²

Eteocles' greedy behaviour reminds one of some world leaders, who are very reluctant to leave political positions even when they have completed their tenures in the office. It is ridiculous that some would want to influence the constitution through their power of incumbency, or forcefully elongate their stay in office. They lead or the masses who are discontented with the trend of events but cannot carry arms as Polyneices did in this drama, pick their own sword - "the pen" to attack such leaders. Unfortunately, most journalists who fight this armless battle do pay exorbitantly for their "unruly boldness". In some occasions, they are jailed, kidnapped or eliminated in one way or the other.

In African countries, the elongation of stay in office has brought the activities of the rebels into being, and this has led to series of wars which have claimed millions of lives and properties of invaluable magnitude. Furthermore, the strife and the desperate passion to acquire political positions have resulted in the assassination of prominent Nigerians. The assassinations of Chief Bola Ige, Mr. Funsho Williams, Dr. Daramola, and a host of others, are insinuated to be politically associated murders.

Family violence could be provoked by jealousy, hatred, victory and achievements made by a family member. Also, failures and feelings of inferiority complex on one's part can elicit jealousy against a successful member of the family. The consequences of the above could lead a member of the family to design a heinous plan to injure or eliminate such member in order to terminate his life, progress or dreams. The suitable explanation to this attitude or action shows a breakdown of order in the family dyads or family relationships. Naturally, the normal phenomenon is to

witness a family member prosper in good health and even in other endeavours. The ideology of seeking the fall or failure of the other person is ridiculous and unnatural.

A typical instance of the above illustration could be drawn from the biblical literature, in the lives of Cain and his brother, Abel. Cain kills his brother, because God accepts his brother's offering and rejects his. Out of jealousy, Cain murders his brother Abel, whose offering is acceptable before God.

Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering. But He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell... . Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him.⁴³

Cain's reaction and deed simply explains that jealousy exists within the household and among family members, who come even from the same womb. He is overwhelmed by envy of a brother who is more righteous than he is in the sight of God. Cain is not happy to see his brother favoured by God, the Almighty, a privilege he could not have. Thus, out of anger and jealousy, he decides to cut his life short to stop further opportunities, favours or progress. In like manner, Joseph's brothers had him cast into a pit to perish with his dreams:

Then they (Joseph's brothers) said to one another, "look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'some wild beast has devoured him'. We shall see what will become of his dreams!"... . So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic... . Then they took him and cast him into a pit.⁴⁴

Joseph has dreams which, literally interpreted, shows God's plan to elevate or make him more honourable than his brothers, even though he is the youngest of them all. Joseph with simplicity of heart reveals his dream to his brothers, having the conviction that they will be happy with him, since his promotion will equally affect his family positively. Unfortunately they utilize the information he places at their table to hatch a secret plan to terminate the lofty future ahead.

The incidents, which take place between Joseph and his brothers expressly speaks about the reality of open and secret strife among family members in which parents, sons, daughters and other family members often stand at eyeball to eyeball. They treat themselves as worst enemies. It is good to note that, enmity is most dangerous when it is a secret one. For instance, in Joseph's case, he thinks that his brothers are still his friends but is ignorant of the fact that they have become subtle or hidden enemies.

In the study of Cain and Abel, the punishment and curse for the shedding of the blood of a family member is re-emphasized. The judgment and punishment for Cain is represented in God's words as He fumes: "the voice of your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. "So now you are cursed from the earth ... fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth".⁴⁵

Similarly, Atreus, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes and a host of others who tamper with household blood suffer under a curse, which eventually destroys them. It is worthy to note that, if none of the family members arises to avenge the kindred blood, God does. The erinyes, the traditional avengers of murder, perjury and grave wrongs, do avenge such blood according to Ancient Greek belief. They are champions of kins folk blood, especially parents'. They are guardians of justice and they are thought of, as, the causers of ruinous mental blindness.

4.11 Mother and Sons; Victims of Mad Father

Another issue of mother-son relationship could be extracted from another interesting drama work of Euripides. The play, *Heracles*, mainly centers on the labour of Heracles, and the ruin of his household. Euripides carefully creates this tragic piece to arouse pity in the minds of his readers. Following strictly the trend of the drama, one is meant to see Megara and her sons suffer in the hand of the wicked Lycus; and further in the hand of her own husband, and the father of her sons.

Heracles marries Megara, the daughter of King Creon, and three sons are the fruit of that union. Amphitrayon is the father of Heracles. According to Amphitrayon he shared his wife with Zeus to beget Heracles. Heracles' father is banished as a consequence of murder. When his son comes of age, he decides to bring his father back

to his native land. The condition to affect this is a mandate to carry out rigorous labour, after which, his father will be granted freedom.

Heracles has successfully completed all other tasks but, a more terrible one awaits him. The only solution to the remaining labour takes him to the Hades, the land of shadows of death. The long absence of Heracles largely contributes to the suffering of Megara and her sons. A certain Lycus who is not of Theban nativity attacks Thebes, murders Creon, the king of Thebes, the father of Megara. Heracles, being away, Lycus is not challenged. This tyrant still not satisfied, threatens time without number to kill Megara, her sons and Heracles' aged father. He denies them of their properties, all the good things of life and subjects them to abject poverty:

But now his glory is gone down in death, and you and I, you old man will soon be dead, and with us, these small sons of Heracles whom I ward and nestled under wing first one, the another, bursts in tears, and asks, "mother, where has father gone? What is he doing? When will he come back?" Then, too small to understand, they ask again for "father". I put them off with stories; but when the hinges creaks, they will all leap up to run and throw themselves at their father's feet.⁴⁶

It is necessary to note the maternal role of Megara from this episode. In spite of the hopeless and harsh situation, she deserts, neither her sons, nor her aged father-in-law, to ease off tension from all the complexities, as some irresponsible mothers would do. She stoops and has enough time to attend to her children. She exhibits a reasonable degree of patience to answer the inquisitive children, who ceaselessly inquire of their father's whereabouts. Megara never uses harsh words or aggression to scare them from boring her with disturbances. It takes only a good mother to take this step, to bear her cross when the going becomes thorny and unrosy.

Evidence, experiences and studies, have shown that there are mothers who, during unfriendly situations in the family, decide to bolt away, leaving behind their young ones. Such women may wish or remain single to "enjoy" their lives without having family responsibilities to tie them down. In support of the above premise, Sophocles in his drama *Electra*, shows how Clytaemnestra murders her husband,

Agamemnon, whom she feels offends her; marries Aegisthus, and abandons her children, whom she feels would disrupt her “joy” in her new marriage.

Some wives would, for the fact that their husbands are no longer financially buoyant, decide to quit their matrimonial homes. Nevertheless, there are uncountable reasons why women choose to shun their marital homes. Whatever the case may be, the point being sieved out is that Megara stands by her children, tending and gathering them to herself. Wherever she is, there they would be. This fact is drawn from what she says about them. “...these small sons of Heracles whom I ward and nestle under wings.”⁴⁷

The above statement shows that, as the bird covers and hides the chicks under its wings, so Megara gives her children complete care and protection. The evidence of her love is further disclosed - “I love my children. How not love these boys born of my labours? I am in terror of their death. And yet how base a thing it is when a man will struggle with necessity.”⁴⁸

The immeasurable degree of Megara’s love is also displayed when the cruel king, usurper of Theban throne, Lycus, wants to kill her and her sons, she asks for just one thing. “I beg you, grant me this one request, let me adorn my children for their death”.⁴⁹

Even at a critical time, when inevitable death is looming, she has the courage to ask of her tormentor the permission to adorn her sons. This demonstrates boldness sparked off by love. Fortunately, Megara, her sons and her father-in-law, all escape Lycus’ death verdict, owing to the incidental arrival of Heracles, who frees his family and destroys Lycus instead.

It is a certified fact that Zeus, Heracles’ patron god protected him through out the difficult enterprise, but Hera the ever jealous wife of Zeus, labels him a son begotten out of her husbands’ adulterous lifestyle; thus hates him severely and could not watch him thrive. On this note, the goddess afflicts him with madness, in order to have him and his household ruined. It is pitiable to learn that Megara and her sons do not meet their death in the hand of cruel Lycus, but in the hand of the husband and father of the family; who moments earlier, delivered them from the cold claws of death.

Out of the frenzy, Heracles hauls his arrows on his children, mistaking them for his enemy's sons. After the murder, the madness infested Heracles is gripped by sleep. He is bound with a rope and tethered to a pillar. When he wakes up and comes back to his senses, he sees the irreparable and irredeemable havoc. "Why then am I so sparing of this life, born the killer of my dearest sons? Let me avenge my children's murder: let me hurl myself down from some sheer rock, or drive the whetted sword against my side."⁵⁰

Heracles is grieved beyond measure. He recalls all the heroic deeds his arms performed which is at last crowned with ruin. He groans that no man will accept him as friend, no city will accommodate him; the earth may refuse him to tread on it, and even rivers and seas will cry out against his crossing over them. In this bitter state of woe, his friend, Theseus comes from Athens, consoles and leads him to Athens for purification. In spite of all odds, it is realized that Megara and her sons enjoyed a relationship worthy of emulation until fate played a destructive role in their lives and shattered it.

Unfortunately, Heracles is one of those, who suffered in the hand of the immortals who punish mortals without iota of mercy as earlier mentioned. Hera is a goddess who sorely detests any relationship between her husband and any other woman. She is ever heartless in punishing such women should she find them in her trap. In the same vein, any son born out of Zeus' lechery is equally dealt with. No wonder Heracles is served with an overdose of Hera's treat for being a son of Zeus' paramour.

Abandonment, Rejection and Neglect in Mother-Son Relationship

The problem of abandoning a son, or a son rejecting his mother, is part of strains and distortions in mother-son relationship, which this study covers. This sub-heading looks at abandonment, neglect and rejection in the classical literature and other relevant sources. It tries to find out why a womb which houses a child for nine months or there about should summon courage to discard him or her. Again, why would a son abandon a mother who has fought his course relentlessly and made him what he is? It also tries to find out whether reconciliation is possible after the rejection or abandonment. It tries to find out who abandons or rejects and who is the abandoned or the rejected.

Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology defines “abandon” as giving up to the control of another. “Abandonment” is the noun form of the verb “to abandon.” This definition invariably refers act of leaving a person, thing or place with no intention of returning. From the same source, “to reject” *reicere* means to refuse to have, recognize or to discard a person or thing. This can be explained to mean denying a person or an animal enough care or affection; while “to neglect” *negligere* means to disregard somebody or a thing and failing to take care of such.⁵¹ According to these three definitions, the person who abandons leaves the presence of the abandoned. In the case of rejection, the rejected and the person who rejects could be together in the same place, probably under the same roof, but sufficient care and affection are denied the rejected. Invariably, neglect means a total refusal to give care. These definitions have something in common, and that is, denial of appropriate degree of care.

It is necessary to employ the evidence available in ancient sources in order to illustrate this motif and examine the factors that lead to the issues raised, their consequences and resolutions or reconciliations if possible.

Hidden Treasure amidst Rubbles

The Greek myth of Hera and her son, Haephestus, is rich with maternal rejection and punishment. Hesiod talking about Hera, mentions that she produced Haephestus without aid from any male.⁵² According to Slater, Hesiod is of the opinion that Haephestus is a son produced out of anger. His existence is due to parental strife and could also be attributed to Hera’s insubordination. His existence comes as a result of highly narcissistic attitude.⁵³

Haephestus is an extension of Hera, a demonstration of her parity with Zeus, who bears Athena without intercourse. In comparison with the bright-eyed Athena, he is weak, ugly and crippled – a living testimony of her (Hera’s) inferiority to Zeus. His appearance ridicules Hera’s maternal vanity and sorrowfully she laments:

See apart from me Zeus has given birth to bright-eyed
Athena who is fair most among all the blessed gods. But
my own son Haephestus who I bare was a weakling among
all blessed gods and shrived of feet, whom I myself took in
my hands and cast out so that he fell in the great sea. Had

the goddess not saved him, he would have suffered death in the hands of his own mother.⁵⁴

Hera, being disappointed in her intention, accuses Thetis of rescuing a child she has willingly sacrificed unto death. Haephestus, without mincing words, lauds and expresses his appreciation to Thetis who saved him from the claws of death. It is glaring that Hera hates Haephestus due to his disability and ugly look. She considers that a disabled child will not make achievements or thrive in life. It is reasonable to get rid of him immediately. It is of no use rearing a child who will perpetually remain a liability to the family. She believes that good or pretty looks is a vital instrument for success. Thus, ugly son is irritating and cannot be tolerated. However, her views are proved wrong when Haephestus becomes the most sought after amongst blacksmiths.

Hera's unfriendly attitude to her son takes a dramatic turn when Haephestus becomes a skilled craftsman under Thetis' care. Haephestus' occupation itself satisfies the needs since it is not befitting for him to serve as an object of his mother's display, he alternatively creates objects, which will substitute in this regard.⁵⁵ Haephestus is a man of courage. He did not allow his deformity to limit or constitute a barrier to his life. More so, he did not allow the humiliation and rejection he suffered at infancy or his mother's hatred to deter him from making progress. Though crippled and weak, as Slater discloses, he aspires and becomes a very famous craftsman. Hera seeing the feeble, ugly, impotent, unpleasant and crippled son whom she attempts to kill, becomes a figure to reckon with, she immediately institutes reconciliation and reinstates him to Mount Olympus, the abode of the gods. Hence their relationship becomes cordial.

Hera's quick reconciliation exercise shows that she is one who reaps where she has not sown. Haephestus becomes what he is, under the care of Thetis. She is amongst those people who cling on people only when they are successful. This class of people will like to dine and wine with one, but will not want to drink or eat from the person's cup or plate of sorrow. Hera would like to eat and enjoy the proceeds from a hard rocky soil made fertile by another hand. The singular act she exhibits makes her a failure in her maternal role. Haephestus could not hesitate to show "kindness" to his mother and gives her counsel after their reconciliation. He plays a protective role in her life and

remains gentle in his dealings with her. In book one of *Iliad*, he is entreating and counselling his mother to do things which will be pleasant to her husband instead of quarreling with him:

Haephestus, the renowned smith rose up to speak among them, to bring comfort to his beloved mother, Hera of the white arms: "... and I entreat my mother, though she herself understands it, to be ingrating toward our father, Zeus, that no longer our father may scold her..."⁵⁶

The applaudable role which Haephestus plays in his mother's life and her reunion with Zeus does not suggest that Haephestus never attacked his mother. Slater cites Pausinias who reveals an act of aggression towards his mother, concerning his strange birth, and revenge measures for his early rejection. Haephestus cunningly gives his mother a golden throne on which she sits, only to realize that she has been imprisoned until she confesses his true birth story. Another version of the story says she promises him Aphrodite's hand in marriage before he could release her. The strategy which he employs, to bind and immobilize his mother is a suitable model of revenge for a crippled man like him.⁵⁷ Hera's act of casting off her son is not a strange phenomenon either in the ancient or in the contemporary time. Nowadays, such cases abound. Male and female children alike are cast or thrown away by their mothers for various reasons. Fortunate ones among these children are picked up from the refuse dumps, streets, gutters, bushes or hidden corners and are sent to charity homes while the unfortunate ones are picked up and used for rituals, serve other unimaginable functions or die off.

All that Glitters is not Gold

Ares is another son of Hera and Zeus. He represents all Haephestus could not be. He is virile, aggressive, swift and uncrippled. His mother passionately embraces him because he is good to look at – a substantial contrast of the ugly Haephestus. Hera later loses interest and rejects him at maturity. He becomes an object of his mother's attack due to his unsatisfactory behaviour. Hera, of late, discovers in Ares, an unstable, inconsistent and unreliable son. He sabotages his people and buys them an enemy's defeat. Ares' attitude in the sight of the Trojan War provokes his mother's further hatred. Hera

perceives how the Argives are perishing in the strong encounter, immediately speaks to Pallas, reminding him that if they should watch the cursed Ares, the word of promises which they (Hera and Pallas) has given to Menelaos, that is, going back home after the sack of Ilium, will not be a reality.

Furthermore, Hera is furious with Ares due to his unruly behaviour and aggression, which is about making her a liar before Menelaos, whom she has assured of victory. She deems it sin unforgiven to see her own son destroy or bring about the destruction of the Achaians. Thus, she appeals to Zeus for permission to take punitive action against him:

... Hera stopping her horses, spoke to Zeus... father Zeus, are you not angry with Ares for violent acts, from killing so many and such good Achaian warriors for no reason and out of due order to grieve me? Father Zeus, would you be angry with me if I were to smite Ares with painful strokes and drive him out of the fighting.⁵⁸

Zeus, the father of gods and men subsequently gives approval to Hera's request and advises her to employ Athena for maximum results. "Go to it then, and set against him the spoiler Athena, who beyond others is the one to visit pains upon him".⁵⁹ Zeus' recommendation sounds as though he has seen Athena mercilessly punish immortals as well as mortals. His blunt response shows that Ares is not a son of his interest, and his leniency he cannot plead. When eventually Athena attacks and strikes Ares, he runs to Zeus the father, complaining bitterly of the parental favour which Athena enjoys always:

It is your fault we fight, since you brought forth this maniac daughter accursed, whose mind is fixed forever on unjust action for all the rest, as many as are gods on Olympus, are obedient to you, and we all say nothing and you do nothing to check this girl, letting her to go free since yourself you begot this child of perdition... my swift feet took me away otherwise, I should long be lying there in pain among the stark and dead men...⁶⁰

The complaint which has the tone of report from a child jealous of another or a child who wishes a father to stage an action against his bully, could not produce any

positive effect, rather it aggravates Zeus' anger and blames. He (Zeus) demonstrates the bitterness in his out burst hence:

Do not sit beside me and whine, you double- faced liar, to me you are most hateful of all gods who hold Olympus. forever quarrelling is dear to your heart, wars and battles. truly the anger of Hera your mother is grown out of all hands nor gives around; and try as I may I am broken by her arguments, and it is by her impulse, I think you are suffering all this.⁶¹

Zeus' fury in this episode further summarizes the personality of Ares and how indecent his character appears to his parents and other gods. The relationship between Hera and her sons is a fertile ground for important lessons, especially in domestic and social circles. Haephestus as earlier mentioned is physically ugly and incapacitated. These disabilities could not obstruct or hinder him from becoming a success. He is able to discover the skill in him and develops it to the fullest. Thus the objects he is able to fashion as a renowned craftsman, made him very relevant.

Hesiod comments his ingenuity in ironcraft as follows: "Of iron, which is strongest of all things, but can be conquered by the blazing fire... and melts under Haephestus' clever hands."⁶² It is vital to point out that, a weak, crippled person is the one capable of working with iron the strongest of all objects. Hesiod describes his hands as "clever hands." His hands are able to transform iron into various weapons or equipment. In *Iliad* book eight, Homer refers to him as... "The renowned smith of strong arms..."⁶³ It is believed that mothers are proud of successful son or sons who are achievers as could be seen in Hera's case. However, it is not only mothers but family members also associate and celebrate with their members who distinguished themselves. Generally, human beings like to identify with success rather than failure.

Contrarily, at the initial stage, Hera prefers Ares who is all that Haephestus could not be. He is virile, swift and good looking, but turns out to be a disappointment to Hera. This evidence supports the saying that "all that glitters is not gold." In this work, it could be seen that a handsome son fails while the despised, ugly one becomes an achiever. The impression that beautiful people do not make it is not the point being established, rather what transpires between Hera and her sons depicts that beauty should

not be the yard stick for measuring what one will become in life. More so, physical beauty is not a symbol of good character or moral decency. It is also learnt that a mother can decide and take drastic action against a son or daughter whose character is incomparably bad. Hera is deeply affected by her son's betrayal and deceptive role.⁶⁴ Thus he becomes the most hated son whom, she hands over for severe punishment.

4.17 Fear Induced Rejection

Heracles' mortal father is Amphitryon. In Greek mythology, the existence of intimate passionate relationship between mortals and immortals (gods and men) is common. Thus, the conception of Heracles results from a marathon intercourse between Zeus and Heracles' mother Alcmene, in the absence of her husband.⁶⁵

Ovid captures a systematic narration of the ordeal which Alcmene went through before she could bring forth Heracles and his twin brother, Iphicles. She quickly identifies Hera as an arch-enemy rather than a friend, because she prevails over her delivery and she got stuck in labour for several days and nearly perished:

Today, I feel once more the pangs of labour, seven days seven nights I suffered, sick and weary, raised arms to heaven, crying for Lucina, with her two goddesses - midwives, to come help me, and she did come, but with a mind corrupted by Juno's hate. She heard my groans, and watched me; sitting here by that altar near the door way, she crossed her knees, and laced her hands together, and she spoke constricting charm, I pushed and struggled, cursed Jove's ingratitude, wanted to die, screamed so that even stones were moved to pity, and other mothers came to try to help me, prayed, urged me to keep trying. One of them Galathis, ... saw there was something wrong and knew that Juno was working mischief... Galathis went and came and saw the goddess sitting there on the altar, with crossed knees, the hands laced tight together and she spoke:Whoever you are, congratulate my lady! Her son is born, her prayer is heard. The goddess leaped up, at that, and loosed her hands, and I was likewise loosed of my burden.⁶⁶

Had Galathis not tricked Hera, who leaped up and Alcmene's delivery enhanced, she (Alcmene) would have remained in agony or die in the process. The ever

vindictive Hera, would not see Galathis go free for fooling and deceiving her, she made forelegs develop out of Galathis' arms and she began to walk on four like an animal.

Hera's inhibitive attack on Alceme paints a picture of what is obtainable in our society, where some women cannot deliver their babies after nine months. In the same manner, some barrens point accusing fingers and nurse suspicion that some evil hearted individuals have shut their wombs from conceiving. Similarly, some people hold that their woes are caused by people who do not mean good for them. For instance, there are people who believe that their destinies are snatched, tied or locked up. Thus, people go about accusing not only their enemies but also parents, siblings, relations, friends and close associates.

The question which arises is why should Alceme abandon her infant son Heracles, taking into consideration her agony before he could come forth? The answer is not far fetched, several women who respond to Zeus' amorous advances, has Hera punitively attacked. Evidently, it is the fear of Hera, the antagonistic and oppressive wife of Zeus that forces Alceme to cast her son away. Concerning fear, the Holy Scripture, has this to say: "Fear involves torment."⁶⁷ Invariably, fear brings worry and anxiety. Alceme having been tormented by fear feels that getting rid of the child begotten from a relationship with Hera's husband would alleviate her horror.

Konstan in a Lecture he delivered at University of Ibadan, titled; *"Do Animals have Emotions?" Views from Ancient Greece*, says, we fear those who are more powerful than us; and we fear when we notice that there is danger ahead.⁶⁸ Alceme did not consider the fear of Hera in isolation but have witnessed the practical havoc which Hera perpetrated against those women, who had amorous relationship with her husband. She (Hera) weaved a plan which destroyed Semele who had a son, Dionysus, for Zeus.⁶⁹ Zeus turned a young beautiful maiden Io, to whom he was making sexual advances into a heifer, all to avert Hera's nagging and suspicions. Hera being an unforgiving woman, set Argus (a creature with one hundred eyes) over the maiden to make sure Zeus does not transform her back into the beautiful maiden she was.⁷⁰

Zeus who knows and sees all, notes that the life of his son, Heracles, is in danger, designs a plan in which Athena tricks Hera and had Heracles rescued and saved.

At Zeus' instigation, Athena takes Hera for a casual stroll, as they saunter along, she draws her attention to a sight: "Look my dear! What a wonderful robust child!" says Athena, pretending a surprise as she stops to pick him up. His mother must have been out of her mind to abandon him in a stony field! Come! You have milk give the poor little creature suck!"⁷¹

Zeus does not fight on behalf of his lovers, when attacked by Hera, but makes sure those sons he fathers when exposed, are picked up and are well raised. It is recorded that Apollo's mother, Leto, abandoned him. She did not suckle him with her breast. Zeus caused Thetis to duly pour nectar and ambrosia, which Apollo fed on. Zeus attached Dionysus on his thigh at the destruction of his mother by Hera.

Hera, excited by Athena's word, bares her breast to give it suck, but Heracles draws with such force that she flings him away in sharp pain, referring to him as "a young monster". In any case, Heracles is Hera's foster child, even though it is for a short while. The Thebans brand him her son, who is Alcaeus before she gives him suck, but is renamed Heracles in her honour. Athena, according to Graves returned him to Alcmena and urged her to guard and rear him well.⁷² There was reconciliation of mother and son.

Athene catching the sight of abandoned Heracles, drawing Hera's attention to take care of him, and his return to his mother for rearing, has striking similarities with the Biblical story of the exposure and discovery of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter and his return to his mother for breast feeding, weaning and up bringing.⁷³ Concerning a mother who exposes a son, Athene says: "His mother must have been out of her mind to abandon him in a stony field." According to Athene in the above comment, a mother who abandons a son or child of any sex "is not in her right senses". A mother, who abandons a child directly or indirectly, leaves him or her to fate – death. Such mother has lost the maternal dignity and is bluntly heartless.

4.18 Pride Induced Rejection

Thetis the mother of Achilles is another mother in the Greek mythology, who abandoned an infant son. Peleus is the father of Achilles. Considering the fact that gods are superior to mortals, Thetis decides to make her son immortal, by burning off the

mortal part of him, which he inherits from his father. She therefore places him over the fire during the night and by day anoints him with ambrosia. Peleus incidentally catches her in the act, seeing his son struggle in the fire, let out a shout. His reaction prompts Thetis to smack the screaming baby on the floor and hurries back to her father, Nereus. Peleus brings the infant to Cheiron who accepts and nurtures him. He is initially named Ligyron, but Cheiron renamed him Achilles (Acheilè) because according to him, the child has not put its lips to the breast.⁷⁴

Simpson in the book, *Gods and Heroes of Greeks*, could not explain clearly why Thetis abandoned her little son. It could be reasoned that Thetis' departure would not have been unconnected with anger, pride and arrogance. She feels it is an insult to be interrupted or embarrassed by a mere mortal, considering herself an immortal and of superior personality. She would have thought within herself that since Peleus does not want her to make an immortal out of his son, she has to leave both of them inferior beings.

Thetis' action shows that she lacks maternal affection, that is, the special love which a mother reserves for the child of her womb. She could be counted among those women whom Athena exclaims; "must have lost their minds." Thetis and Alcmena's deed confirm what the Scripture says about the failing love of a woman, which is in contrast with God's perpetual love for mankind. God asks a question and provides the answer Himself, thus: "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet, will I not forget thee."⁷⁵

It is worthy to believe that mothers are of various categories. It is not all women who bear children that are decorated with the soft and milky heart of motherhood. Mothers who are merciless or lack compassion can abandon, or even kill their children. The motif of rejection in Thetis' relationship with Achilles ends in reconciliation just as the abandonment of Heracles ends.

Thetis having discarded her son regrets her action when anger leaves her. She goes back and takes him from the Canteur Cheiron, to whose care Peleus has entrusted him and had a reunion with him. She refrains from being an angry mother, but is seen in a number of occasions pleading for her son's case, or acting as his confidant, defendant,

protector and mouthpiece. In a certain helpless situation, Achilles reports to his mother, injustice done to him, because she would not relent to proffer solutions.

During the Trojan War, the embittered Achilles has to withdraw from fighting but bestows his armour upon his friend Patroklos and sends him into fighting, at his death; Achilles' war apparels are lost. The desperate Achilles informs his mother who goes to Haephestus, the skillful smith for replacement:

Therefore now I come to your kindness; so might you be willing to give me for my short lived – son, a shield and a helmet and two beautiful greaves fitted with claps at the ankles and a corset, what he has lost with his steadfast companion when the Trojan killed him. Now my son lies on the ground sorrowing.⁷⁶

Thetis' complaint in the above statement depicts a mother affected by the agony of a son's misfortune. Thetis is portrayed as a mother who could not sit and watch a troubled child languish. She is a determined woman who brings smiles and encouragement to a son. Thus, when she succeeds in getting the armour, she hands them over to Achilles. Concerning the presentation Grave reports:

Thetis entered her son's hut with a new set of armour, which included a pair of valuable tin greaves, hurriedly forged by Haephestus. Achilles puts on his armour and made peace with Agamemnon (who handed over to him Breseis unviolated, swearing that he had taken her in anger, not lust) and set out to avenge Patroklos.⁷⁷

One could realize that anger and frustration could be other contributing factors that made Thetis forsake her son. She is not happy having been forced to marry a mortal as a punishment from Zeus, whose advances she rejects. Thetis tells Haephestus that Zeus forced her alone of the Nereids to marry a mortal and she has to endure such marriage against her will.⁷⁸ Subsequently, she is being prevented from securing the child's life by making him immortal. It is this experience and feeling that provokes her to abandon the boy. However, no matter how cogent her reasons may sound, she should not expect applause for her actions. Her husband's reaction is not of violence and so should not attract such rash response from her.

Conclusion

Violence and breach of family ties is a socio-cultural problem which faces the family. It ranges from murder and tappers down to day-to-day disagreements which escalates until it tears the family apart. Vengeance of a family member to avenge wrong done to a cherished member is one of the violent issues identified against the family. Some members of the family are selfish and would want to have a lion share of the family's wealth, this unhealthy attitude makes others feel cheated or edged out and thus are prompted to stage action and fight their course. Lack of respect for the elders; parents being disappointed by their children; wrong judgement by parents; false accusation abandonment, rejection and barenness are some of the factors that lead to family violence as portrayed in the Classical literatures examined. Thus, violent acts affect the family and her members both physically, economically, socially, psychologically and mentally.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE IN IGBO LITERATURE

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Abstract

It is identified that the father in the Igbo family as well as in many African societies exhibits absolute authority over his family in which he is the uncontested head. He is the father of the family *di bu ụlọ* or *ide ji ụlọ*, an equivalent of the Roman *paterfamilias*. His family members accord him with much respect mixed with fear. They look up to him for survival. The unquestionable power of the father, to some extent, makes him the initiator of conflict or violence in his home. An issue which he can easily or gently address, is exaggerated, thus the offender or perpetrator is blamed, scolded or severely punished. Apart from the absolute power of the family head constituting a danger to his family, incest, false accusation, difference in opinion and personal beliefs are some of the factors which fan off family upheaval, as shown in the works examined. A family which is violent – filled is denied peace, suffers confusion, and hardly makes remarkable progress. Family violence affects various relationships in the home, but its attack is more pronounced on husband-wife relationship when compared with others. Family violence is a socio- cultural challenge which has a significant influence on the economic, social and biological life of the people.

Introduction: Violence and Patriarchal Factor

The position of the woman in the traditional Igbo setting portrays the woman as an entity quite inferior to the man in all ramifications. The life of the traditional woman in marriage is not a bed of roses. She is expected to “forget” her father’s home; it is unprecedented to make comparison between her paternal family, and marital family, especially when such comparisons speak about her family’s riches and wealth. For instance, a woman should not make boastful expressions like, “in my father’s house, we

eat pounded yam and chicken soup every two days” or “when I was in my father’s house, still unmarried, I do not lack anything. I have everything at my beck and call.” This kind of sayings is frowned at, especially when her marital home cannot afford most or some of the things she enjoyed at her father’s house.

Thus, the members of her marital home automatically nurse the feelings that she tries to prove superior and more important, and of course, she is identified as a proud woman and hated by many. Thus, she is least expected to make utterances that will endanger her integrity or relationship with others. “When a woman marries a husband, she should forget how big her father’s compound was. “... A woman does not carry her father’s *obi* to her husband”¹ – should be her code of conduct.

There are issues, which the woman must not raise, argue or contend with, due to societal belief. Such matters would not arouse or trigger off conflict because the culture brainwashed and blind folded her sense of reasoning and judgment. Invariably in the contemporary period, the woman could stand on her feet, to prove some treatments unholy, unsatisfactory, partial, unjust and ill. The belief that the woman is a stranger in her husband’s family is acceptable to the traditional Igbo woman. This is confirmed in her being quiet and raising no complaint when she is addressed thus. This could be clearly observed through Amanze, a character in John Manonye’s novel, *The Son*, who often reminds Chiaku, another character, “that the son was yet a child and that she herself was a woman, a stranger in the family”² Chiaku herself tells Joseph who wants Nnanna to go and live with the priest at Ossa: “Go and tell the men; I’m only a woman, a stranger in the family.”³

Chiaku’s response explicitly declares that, she is not a full-fledged member of her husband’s family. More over, as a woman she cannot transact such business which only requires men’s attention. The matter at hand is to allow Nnanna to go and live with some one else. Knowing quite well about her position as a woman, she is not accorded with the right or power to discuss or take decision over such matters. Similarly, Anna’s refusal to deal directly with her husband’s *Umụada* affirms the belief: “You seem to forget that I’m a stranger in Umudiobia. They are your sisters; it’s you who should speak to them.”⁴

The woman should not rub shoulders with men. She is taught not to make her way into the men's world or assume man's functions. She is expected to know her limits. The "dos" and "don'ts" of her cultures, she tries as much as possible to adhere to, in order not to spark off conflict, rancour, disunity or anarchy, for which she would be punished, either at the home front or at the community level.

The woman cannot give her daughter out in marriage. She cannot sell land, of course, in Igbo culture, she is not in possession of land be it her father's or husband's. She has no share in her father's land. She cannot send any of her children to live with another family without the consent and approval of her husband's brothers, if her husband is deceased. So Chiaku is limited in her powers to send Nnanna to live with somebody else, even though he is her son.

The Igbo society is a male chauvinistic society where the male figure proves superior to the female. He sees himself as an entity which is higher than the woman in wisdom, knowledge, understanding and prowess. He often groups the women together with the children. He believes that women and children, reason, act, behave, and think alike. Following the above assertion, which signifies that the women and children are lesser entities, the traditional Igbo man feels superior and important to stoop low to cohabit under the same roof with them (women and children), thus he builds himself separate hut. It should not be over emphasized that women and children do not count in men's gathering. The pejorative state of the woman, makes the man treat her with disdain and handles her violently as he deems fit, knowing that physically, he is stronger than her.

Furthermore, these men to further express their superiority over the women, built their huts and live separately from the rest of the family. The hut is usually positioned in such away that it directly faces the entrance of the compound. Ezeulu's hut in Achebe's (*Arrow of God*), Amanze's in Munonye's (*The Only Son*), Okonkwo's in Achebe's (*Things Fall Apart*), Wigwe's in Amadi's (*The Concubine*), Araba's in Nkem Nwankwo's (*Danda*). Their wives have their individual huts where they live with their unmarried children. The head of the family does not eat in the company of anybody he usually eats alone. His food is prepared and served at his *obi* by the wife

whose turn it is to feed the father of the family. The man rules his family with iron hand and make them life in awe of him.⁵

The head of the family often prefers to speak to his wife (wives) and children in violent tone and maltreat them in violent manner. Some of these acts could be evident in some characters. Thus Ezeulu bitterly chides Matefi for bringing his food late: “If you want that madness of yours to be cured, bring my super at this time another day.”⁶ “If you want this compound to contain the two of us, go and do what I told you.”⁷ Madume flogs his wife when she wrongs him.⁸ The relationship between the man and the wife is an equivalent of what transpires between a master and a servant. His authority over her could be likened to that of a superior over an inferior. The above attitude notwithstanding, there exist between the man and the wife shreds of affection as portrayed in the marital relationships between Ihuoma and Emenike, Wigwe and Adaku in (*The Concubine*), Chiaku and her first husband Okafor in (*The Only Son*).

The nature of the relationship between the man and his wife as expatiated by Chinua Achebe in *Arrow of God*, illustrates the aura of arrogance, proof of ownership, and authority which the man exhibits over his wife. Ezeulu proves this point:

Every man has his own way of ruling his household, he said at last. What I do myself if I need something like that is to call one of my wives and say to her: I need such and such a thing for a sacrifice, go and get it for me. I know I can take it but I ask her to go and bring it herself. I never forget what my father told his friend when I was a boy. He said “In our custom a man is not expected to go down on his knees and knock his fore head on the ground to his wife to ask for forgiveness or beg a favour. But, my father said ‘a wise man knows that between him and his wife there may arise the need for him to say to her in secret: ‘I beg you’ when such a thing happens nobody must know of it, and that woman if she has any sense will never boast about it, or even open her mouth and speak of it. If she does it the earth on which the man brought himself low will destroy her entirely. That was what my father told his friend who held that a man was never wrong in his own house. I have never forgotten those words of my father’s, my wife’s cock belong to me because the owner of a person is also owner of whatever that person has.”⁹

The above statement discloses that it is uncultural for a man to openly ask his wife for forgiveness. He could if need be, beg her only in secret. This woman of course should never let another ear hear about it otherwise the earth on which she walks on, destroys or punishes her severely. He finds it difficult, if not impossible to make request from his wife in a humble manner. He perpetually has it at the back of his mind that he owns the woman and whatever she has. This depicts that the male world is characterized by pride and superiority over the female. "My wife's cock belongs to me because the owner of a person is also the owner of whatever that person has." The woman is regarded as property whose owner is the man; of which the man has right over what belongs to her and he can have it with or without her consent and she would say or do nothing. She cannot challenge her husband. These treatments which the woman receives from her husband taunt her emotionally but often times she swallows the sorrow while accepting her fate for being a woman.

Okonkwo, Nwoye and Violence.

The literary work, *Things Fall Apart* authored by Chinua Achebe, is another novel of great importance to this work, because of its richness in the motif of conflict, violence, and breaches in family ties. Okonkwo is a suitable representation of a typical African masculinity. He could be acknowledged for his physical prowess. Socially, he is a great man of fame. Here is a concise but sharp illustrative description of the man, Okonkwo:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat.¹⁰

Amalinze was a famous wrestler because "his back never touches the earth." However, Okonkwo proved himself a better wrestler than he. Naturally, Okonkwo is a man who finds value in violence. He has no fear for gory sight. In summary, he is a man of action; a man of war. His life is characterized by fear, anger and fiery tempter. It is of importance to highlight on Okonkwo's violent nature. This is because the violent trait in him will serve as the bed – rock to most of the conflict and violent acts in his relationship with his family.

In addition, it is equally vital to notice the presence of internal conflict in Okonkwo's life. Sometimes, unpalatable events can take place around one's life and this could trigger off internal crisis. Then the internal conflict is often poured out on family members through conflict or violent behaviours. Obu's father experienced this inner conflict when Obu was not living up to expectation as an only son. He was filled with conflicting thoughts on how best to arrest the situation. Likewise, Okonkwo has this emotional clash; hence he resorts to violence, and high handedness in training his son Nwoye. The result is that Nwoye could not freely express his feelings: "... And so he feigned that he no longer cared for women's stories. And when he did this he saw that his father was pleased, and no longer rebuke or beat him."¹¹

Okonkwo teaches Nwoye that violence is an ideal virtue. He makes him understand that a son must develop a violent attribute so that he would be able to rule his family. A man who is soft and gentle according to Okonkwo, finds himself under the dictates of his wife, and children. He reasons that a man who has achieved a lot but fails in controlling his family is not a man. His philosophy is that a man must be harsh and violent in dealing with his family. Okonkwo inculcates in the young Nwoye's heart, the relevance of masculinity and violence: "So Okonkwo encouraged the boys to sit with him in his *obi*, and he told them stories of the land – masculine stories of violence and bloodshed. Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent".¹²

There are some teachings or instructions given to a child which rather generates conflict in him. Okonkwo instructs Nwoye to desist from staying in his mother's hut. He equally forbids him from finding himself in the midst of the women in the compound. His reasons are quite simple. He would like Nwoye to grow up to become a man who would not have feminine traits in him. He entreats him to become a man capable of controlling his family. Thus, he would like him and Ikemefuna to have their place in his *obi* to listen to stories of heroic deeds. This instruction notwithstanding, Nwoye being a child still prefers his mother's stories, but to avoid being beaten by his father, he pretends to have lost interest in women's stories. There is a conflict of interest in Nwoye's life, at a point he is driven to live a two faced type of life. He feigns to

dance to the tune of his father's music, but inwardly his heart is with his mother and her stories.

Okonkwo's life is ruled by fear. Okonkwo is a man who has acquired so much. He is an achiever, and so no one ever suspects that he is deeply conceived by fear - fear of failure. He never wishes to be a wretched failure like his father, Unoka. In the same vein, he fears that the wealth which took him much sweat to gather should not be wasted in the hand of a lazy and worthless son, Nwoye. He swears that Nwoye must be raised to become a powerful successor of his family, thus he threatens:

I will not have a son who cannot hold his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands. And if you stand staring at me like that... Amadiora will break your head for you."¹³

Still concerning Nwoye's weakness, Okonkwo complains to his friend Obierika:

Nwoye is old enough to impregnate a woman. At his age I was already fending for myself. No, my friend, he is not too young. A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it was hatched. I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but, there is too much of his mother in him."¹⁴

Okonkwo will never for once tolerate Nwoye's mistakes which often occur as a result of his tender age or inexperience. He would like to hold him by the collar to sniff life out of him. Another of his violent way of speaking is here recorded. The little boy together with Ikemefuna is helping him in planting yams during one of the planting seasons. Nwoye could not cut the yams to the appropriate size since he is yet to learn the skill. Okonkwo out of fury thundered... "If you split another yam of that size, I shall break your jaw. You think you are still a child. I began to own a farm at your age."¹⁵

Okonkwo neither cherishes Nwoye nor sees anything good in him. Their relationship all the while has been violence – filled. He has seen disappointment in Nwoye. He now becomes more disappointed when Nwoye accepts "the new faith." The "new faith" is the last straw that breaks the Carmel's back and creates a big gulf in their relationship. The "new faith" is the major cause of conflict between Okonkwo and Nwoye.

Obierika, Okonkwo's friend, is surprised at Nwoye's sudden appearance in Umuofia, more surprise is he to see him amongst the missionaries, while Okonkwo his father, is still in exile at Obanta, his mother's place. Obierika is anxious to uncover Nwoye's mission. Nwoye accepts the new faith and decides to break off from his father and mother. "What are you doing here?" queried Obierika; "I am one of them... How is your father? ... I don't know, he is not my father."¹⁶ Obierika sees in Nwoye, a total disgrace and shame to Okonkwo, an epitome of African traditional giant, who has achieved so much and acquired almost all the titles of the land.

What Obierika sees and hears from his friend's first son, prompts him to make for Obanta to visit Okonkwo without delay. Okonkwo is too heavy at heart. Grief could not permit him to talk about Nwoye. It is from Nwoye's mother that his friend hears the peripheral aspect of the story. In another occasion, Amikwu, Okonkwo's cousin sees Nwoye among the Christians. This is a dreadful thing to be done! He reports the matter to Okonkwo who proves a match to Nwoye's "foolishness."

... His father, suddenly overcome with fury, sprang to his feet and gripped him by the neck. Where have you been? ...Nwoye struggled to free himself from the choking grip. "Answer me," roared Okonkwo, before I kill you! He seized a heavy stick that lay on the dwarf wall and hit him two or three savage blows.¹⁷

The novel, *Things Fall Apart*, makes an enduring exposition of Okonkwo's internal conflict about Nwoye's conduct, his thought wallows in deep sorrow and fury which nearly pushes him to pick his machet and cut down the "miscreant gang"- (the missionaries and their converts). This gang robs him of his first son, on whom all hope lies, to take over the mantle of family leadership when he is no more. Nwoye's action is a gross misconduct and a serious misfortune to him. It is equally an abomination: "To abandon the gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens, was the very depth of abomination."¹⁸

Okonkwo paints an imaginary picture in which all his children take Nwoye's foot step and wonders what happens to him at death. He concludes that he and his father would be denied of worship and sacrifice - a most terrible treatment. He could see in his mind's eyes, his sons praying to the foreign god, while they abandon their own

ancestors. He wonders how a “roaring fire” like him could beget such an effeminate and good for nothing young man, as son. It now dawns on him that Nwoye is a replica of his grand father, Unoka.

In the life of Okonkwo and Nwoye there is a clear evidence of wounded emotions, conflicts and violence. Okonkwo’s life is ruled by aggression, anger and fear. This trait is in contrast with Nwoye’s who is simple, friendly, emotional, and accommodating. He is friendly to his younger siblings and accepts Ikemefuna with love, into his life. Ikemefuna finds in him a companion and an “elder brother.”¹⁹ Nwoye and him (Ikemefuna) become quite inseparable. There exists cordial relationship between him; his mother; and his father’s other wives. He is obedient and runs errands for them.

Nwoye’s interests, to a large extent, are in contrast with his father’s. In a simple note, they have what could be termed opposing behaviours. Okonkwo values violence categorically expressed in harsh word, beating, and even murder attempt. He finds pleasure in blood-shed through which he believes his prowess is proved. Nwoye is easy going, peaceful and gentle. Nwoye is not violent in all his deeds. He is not portrayed in any incidence of beating, harassing or bullying on his younger ones. He never for once challenged his father irrespective of the constant beatings and curses.

There is conflict in Okonkwo and his son’s belief. Okonkwo holds unto a belief which is crude and cruel; a belief which approves the killing of twins and human sacrifice. Nwoye accepts a belief which speaks preservation of life, frowns at the killing of twins and human sacrifice. Both of them have rough experiences due to these differences. Okonkwo builds his belief in African traditional religion, a religion which allows worship and sacrifice to the ancestors while Nwoye’s new religion – Christianity- encourages worship and prayers to ‘white man’s god.’ This is the most conflicting element of their lives.

Violence in Okonkwo and Ikemefuna’s Relationship.

Okonkwo is chosen among others to send war message to their enemy who killed the wife of Udo. Umuofia now demands for a virgin and a young man for the atonement of the murder. Their enemy, who has deep fear for Umuofia agrees to answer their

demand, hence Ikemefuna and a maiden were handed over to Okonkwo. The virgin is given to Udo as wife, while Ikemefuna remains under Okonkwo's care for a while. This is the brief story of how Ikemefuna comes to live in Okonkwo's family. Okonkwo treats him with heavy hand as he does to the entire numbers of his family. Even though he is fond of him, he does not show it openly. Okonkwo always expresses a notion of anger. He believes that: "To show affection was a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating was strength."²⁰

When Ikemefuna is brought into his new home, he is totally conceived by fear. He is deeply afraid of the strange family. He is very sad, always enveloped in thought about his mother and his three year old sister. He often refuses to take his meals and weeps profusely. He presents a particular question before Nwoye's mother, asking her when he will be sent home:

When Okonkwo heard that he would not eat any food, he came into the hut with a big stick in his hand and stood while he swallowed his yam, trembling. A few moments he went behind the hut and began to vomit painfully²¹

This is the beginning of violent experience from his lord, Okonkwo. However, Ikemefuna adapts comfortably into Okonkwo's family, growing quite rapidly like mushroom. It seems as though Umuofia elders have forgotten about him. A day came, and his case was called up. Ezeulu, the most respected elder comes to remind Okonkwo that Ikemefuna's time is exhausted and he must be killed. However, he admonishes Okonkwo as follows: "The boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death."²² Ikemefuna has come to see himself as a member of Okonkwo's family and takes him as a father as Ezeulu reveals in the statement below:

Sometimes when he went to the big village meetings or communal ancestral feast, he allowed Ikemefuna to accompany him, like a son, carrying his stool and goat skin bag and indeed, Ikemefuna called him father.²³

A day later, Okonkwo tells Ikemefuna to prepare because he is going to send him home. Nwoye senses doom and thus bursts into tears, knowing that very soon his friend and "brother," will be murdered. His father gives him the beating of his life for trying to expose a plot, which is expected to remain secret. As for the young boy,

Ikemefuna, he is lost. His home is gradually fading from his memory. He is glad that soon he may have a reunion with his mother and younger sister, but somehow, he feels that being in their midst once again is unrealistic.

On the said day, the men gather together, fully armed with their matchets in sheaths, and take Ikemefuna away with a pot of palmwine on his head. They walk a path-way in the heart of the forest. When they have walked very far away, one of them dares a hard blow with a matchet:

As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his matched, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, "My father, they have killed me!" as he ran toward him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his matchet and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak.²⁴

Had Okonkwo not partaken in killing Ikemefuna, the person who initiated the killing would have completed it or someone else. Earlier on, his friend warned him not to be part of the killing. Oknokwo can be seen as an over ambitious fellow. He wants to be perpetually noted for his bravery. This he seeks at every opportunity which sometimes could be erroneous. He is a man full of himself. He will at every point in time desire to exhibit the strength of his arms. The killing of Ikemefuna brings criticism rather than add to his honour.

Obviously, the lad, Ikemefuna is disappointed in him. Of all the strange men surrounding him at that very peak of danger, he sees him as the only entity who can protect him. It never occurred to him that, he is running to the source that quickens his total destruction. Okonkwo, due to this deed, could be regarded as an untrustworthy man. Nobody would punish, condemn or sanction him for not being part of the killing. He is influenced by what people say or think, and thus makes mistakes or take wrong steps.

Okonkwo; His Wives and Violence

It is not an over- statement that Okonkwo treats his family including his wives with iron hand. It is established that he visits them with violence of various magnitudes. Nevertheless, let us consider the fact that Okonkwo is ruled by a wild temper. This

Achebe succinctly puts as follows: “Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children.”²⁵ Wild-fire-like temper contributed immensely to most of his violent acts. Okonkwo is driven into severe anger by his younger wife who goes to plait her hair and does not come back on time to prepare her husband’s lunch. She leaves her children uncared for, and equally without food.

When Ojiugo returns, Okonkwo pounces on her like a hungry lion ready to devour its prey:

And when she returned, he beat her very heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was the week of peace. His first two wives ran out in great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week. But Okonkwo was not the man to stop beating somebody halfway through, not even for fear of a goddess.²⁶

Okonkwo defiles the sacred week and the implication is that his action is capable of ruining the whole clan. He insults the earth goddess and she can withdraw her increase and all shall perish in hunger; declares the priest, Ezeani. The priest commands Okonkwo to appease the goddess, with the following items; one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries.

It is no doubt that Okonkwo is a man of anger. It is another thing to realize that his anger and temper are easily triggered off by the behaviours of the members of family. He does not rage in isolation. The undiluted Igbo culture expects a woman to give her husband his meal at the appropriate time. An average Igbo man does not joke with his meals. He must not be denied food. He could decide not to eat and not that his food will not be served. It is improper not to serve him his food at all or at the wrong time. As it could be seen, it is Ojiugo’s turn to feed her husband that afternoon, but she chooses to plait her hair. It is not an abomination for a woman to beautify herself, but to do it at the wrong time, and at the detriment of her family members, results to misunderstanding. It is not only her husband that is left hungry; her little children are left like sheep without shepherd. It is out of the mercy of her husband’s other wives that the children are provided with something to eat.

This indicates that when family members fail in their responsibilities, there is bound to be strife, conflict, and violence. A responsible woman who goes to seek beauty has to be brief. She has to face what she has gone for and return home quickly to attend to domestic issues. Ojiugo goes to plait her hair at a friend's house "and does not return early enough" to cook her husband's afternoon food. It clearly shows that she subjects her husband to starvation. Summarily, she could not live up to her duties.

As seen earlier, Ezeulu scolds his wife Matefi, for bringing his food late. So it is not only Okonkwo who reacts when his food is not prepared at the right time. Why Okonkwo's case is spectacular is that, he over-reacted by punching his wife mercilessly. Ojiugo is not the only woman guilty of such inadequacy. It has been seen or heard about women who have little or no time for domestic functions. Many shy away from domestic duties. A good number of women are failures in domestic affairs. They do not discharge their duties as wives.

In this contemporary period, most of their duties are shifted to the house helps, unsupervised, thus there are a lot of loopholes in the home front, which have contributed immensely to family upheavals and contentions. A wife could be busy as a result of the nature of her work or business, but nothing stops her from making adequate or solid arrangement for the management of her home. The work must be examined, supervised, and monitored closely for effective result.

Another violent incident recorded against Okonkwo, is the shooting of his second wife. The woman's crime is that she cuts some banana leaves to wrap food for cooking. Okonkwo feels much offended, gives her sound beating, which leaves her and her daughter helpless. This treatment to him is not satisfactory compared with her senseless act, as Okonkwo perceives:

He sent Ikemefuna to get him his gun. The woman who was beaten "made" jesting comment concerning the gun, - "guns that were not shot." Okonkwo could not assimilate this insult, but was moved to take a most drastic action. "... Okonkwo heard it and ran madly into his room for the loaded gun, ran out again and aimed at her as she clambered over the dwarf wall of the barn. He pressed the trigger and there was a loud report accompanied by the wail of his wives and children. He threw down the gun and

jumped into the barn and there lay the woman, very much shaken and frightened but quite unhurt. He heaved a heavy sigh and went away with the gun.²⁷

Okonkwo easily picks offense. He does not show forgiveness to any offender. Every ill-behaviour must be punished, irrespective of the magnitude. Pleas do not stop him from taking rash actions over his household. He detests being challenged or jeered at, by any of his wives. That is why he nearly killed Ekwefi because of her statement and the audacity to respond to him disrespectfully. Okonkwo's behaviour entails that a typical African man of his kind does not expect his wife to talk when he talks, how much more mocking him. He can react in any way he chooses, no matter how barbaric it appears. Okonkwo's family members are ever helpless each time he attacks his offender. For the fear of him, none dares go near; rather they stay at a distance and make pleas. This is clear when he beats Nwoye for accepting a "new faith", (p.107), when he beats Ojiugo and when he shoots Ekwefi (p. 27).

Wife Battering and Miscarriage: Dangers of Violence

There is an incident in *Things Fall Apart*, where Mgbafor's relatives take her and her two children away from her husband's house. Uzowulu her husband often beats and leaves her with several wounds. In one instance, she had miscarriage as a result of the beating. Her eldest brother Odukwe, reports the matter to the elders of the clan:

My in-law Uzowulu is a beast. My sister lived with him for nine years. During those years no single day passed in the sky without his beating the woman. We have tried to settle their quarrels time without number and on each occasion Uzowulu was guilty... . Two years ago, when she was pregnant, he beat her until she miscarried. Last year when my sister was recovering from an illness, he beat her again, so that if neighbours had not gone in to save her, she would have been killed. The law of Umuofia is that, if a woman runs away from her husband, her bride price is returned. But in this case she ran away to save her life. Her two children belong to Uzowulu. We do not dispute it, but they are too young to leave their mother. If on the other hand, Uzowulu should recover from his madness and come in the proper way to beg his wife to return, she will do so on the

understanding that, if he ever beats her again, we shall cut off his genitals for him.²⁸

The above copious statement from the character, Odukwe is rich in the chaotic marital relationship between Uzowulu and his wife, Mgbafor, The earlier part of the narration has a dose of exaggeration. He says, “no single day passes in the sky without his beating the woman.” This simply implies that he beats her constantly. The implication of one of the beatings resulted to miscarriage. Uzowulu’s crude behaviour soured the relationship between himself, his wife, children and in-laws. Wife beating as openly revealed here could make the woman’s people intervene to protect her and her children from a bullying husband and father. It could lead to divorce or separation. The children are affected emotionally when they are taken away from either of the parents.

In this very case, Uzowulu’s children will be denied father’s love and care. The new environment in which they will grow up, can affect their lives either positively or negatively. It is true we are not told Mgbafor’s offense which warrants the constant beating, maltreating a woman can lead to chaos as laid bare in Uzowulu and his wife’s situation. Wife beating is dangerous; it can lead to the death of the woman. Beating a pregnant woman can lead to termination of the woman’s life, the foetus or both. The information gathered above, shows that Mgbafor loses a baby after being beaten by her husband.

Apart from physical violence in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, there are incidents of emotional violence or emotional trauma. This could be closely associated with Ekwefi, Okonkwo’s second wife who had ten children and all died, but one, Ezinma. She suffered so much in the hand of Ezinma who is confirmed to be an *ogbange* (a child who repeatedly dies and returns to its mother’s womb to be born again). Her life is always hanging by a thread. She is never strong like other children. She is well today; tomorrow she is sick at the point of death. Each time the attack comes Ekwefi loses hope of her survival. She feels down cast and suffers depression and emotional pain.

Ekwefi had suffered a good deal in that she had born ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three. As she buried one child after another her sorrow gave way to despair and then to grim

desperation. The birth of her children, which should be a woman's crowning glory, became for Ekwefi mere physical agony devoid of promise. The naming ceremony after seven market weeks became an empty ritual. Her deepening despair found expression in the names she gave her children. One of them was a pathetic cry, Onwubiko – 'Death, I implore you.' But death took no notice; Onwubiko died in his fourteenth month. The next child was Ozoemena – 'May it not happen again.' She died in her eleventh month, and two others after her. Ekwefi then became defiant and called her next child Onwuma. - "Death may please himself?" And he did.²⁹

Ekwefi as could be deduced from the above expression is never a happy woman. Her life is likened with bitterness, sorrow and agony, due to her ordeal. Her desperation and reaction is not abnormal. No one is happy to lose a dear one. Her co-wives often mistake her cloudy countenance for jealousy toward them who are well established with both male and female children. The ill feeling which Okonkwo's other wives have against Ekwefi is not far from reality.

When a woman is without a child, those who have, point out faults at every action she takes. If they are playing with their children and such woman remains indifferent, it will be termed that she is annoyed with them. If she scolds or beats any child for correction, it is explained that she is not happy with children, because she does not have her own. Such a woman encounters several ill treatments. She receives heart breaking words from other women, neighbours and in-laws. Ekwefi's experience is quite unbearable. It is rational to point out that such condition cannot arouse joy or peace in most families. It is one of the ill fated situations which if care is not taken, tears the family apart or leads the woman into sudden death. "Ezinma is dying," came her voice, and all the tragedy and sorrow of her life were packed in those words... Ezinma lay shivering on a mat beside a huge fire that her mother had kept burning all night.³⁰

The above brief lines affirm that Ezinma is often severely sick and the mother is deeply affected both physically and emotionally. She is denied sleep, peace of heart and rest of mind. Ezinma's recurrent sickness brings to the fore, that there are factors apart from human, which constitute emotional violence in the family.

It is observed that even though Okonkwo handles his family with iron hand, his children do not take after him nor do his wives emulate his anger or his other characteristics. There is cordial relationship amongst the children, even though they are of different mothers. The three wives are in good rapport with one another.

Abandonment in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*

The decision over whom a son or daughter of the family marries is a very crucial one and of concern to the members of the family, especially parents. In the traditional Igbo setting, it is the parents that decide whom their child marries. In the case of the son, parents in most cases take it upon themselves to find the girl he marries. With the advent and acceptance of the western culture, some young people make choice of whom to marry, as husband or wife. This development often leads to conflicts, violence, and disagreements amongst them and their parents or guardians.

In Chinua Achebe's novel, *No Longer at Ease*, this premise is clearly witnessed as Achebe unfolds the bitter combat between Obi and his parents. Obi Okonkwo is the son of Isaac Okonkwo. He is sent to England to further his Western education. He comes back, well read, and gets a good job with the British Council in Lagos. He has a good flat, a car and enough money to spend. His relationship with his parents is quite plausible until he is about to take a wife. He arranges and comes home a certain time to discuss the marriage issue with his father. He is completely disappointed over his father's reaction and response. The discussion which ensues between Obi and his father, will add clarity to this matter:

You wrote to me some time ago about a girl you had seen. How does the matter stand now?" "That is one reason why I came. I want us to go and meet her people and start negotiations"... "Do we know who this girl is and where she comes from?"..."She is the daughter of Okeke, a native of Mbaino." Which Okeke? I know about three. One is a retired teacher, but it will not be that one." "That is the one," said Obi. "Josiah Okeke?"... You cannot marry the girl."... eh? I said you cannot marry the girl. Why? I shall tell you why. But first tell me this. Did you find out or try to find out any thing about this girl? "Yes" "What did you find?" "That they are

Osu.” “You mean to tell me that you know, and you ask me why?” “I don’t think it matters. “We are Christians.”³¹

Obi presents his case in a convincing and logical manner, but his father remains unmoved. He reminds his father that the issue of *osu* is instituted by their ignorant and illiterate forefathers, who wallow in utter darkness. He goes further to tell him that Christians who have seen and tested the light of the gospel must reason like children of the light. Obi’s ideas and line of thoughts produce no effects rather; his father tersely gives him a summary of how his people regard *osu*. Mr Isaac Okonkwo bluntly draws Obi’s attention to his final position over the matter and clarifies the implications to him. “*Osu* is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you my son, not to bring the mark of shame and of leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children’s children unto the third and fourth generations will curse your memory”.³²

When he could win neither his father’s support nor approval, he goes to his mother, with whom he is much close. He believes that his mother would be in his camp, and probably persuades his father and wins his support. The response he gets from his mother sweeps his feet off the ground and he becomes completely devastated. He receives a rude shock from his mother, on whom his last hope rests. His father without mincing words tells him that he must not have an *osu* for a wife, but his mother goes extra mile by swearing with her dear life, should he go ahead to marry the said Clara:

If you want to marry this girl, you must wait until I am no more. If God hears my prayers, you will not wait long.”...
But if you do the thing while I am alive, you will have my blood on your head, because I shall kill myself.³³

The efficacy of Obi’s mother’s words coupled with what he has received from his father earlier, triggers off unabated anger which drives Obi to hurry off to Lagos after two days, instead of the initial one week he scheduled to spend. Meanwhile Clara is pregnant with his baby. He sees no other solution but in abortion. He takes Clara to a doctor and has the pregnancy terminated. He is in austere condition of financial bankruptcy. The thirty pounds for the evacuation of the foetus is borrowed. Clara nearly died in the process of the abortion, after which the relationship between them becomes completely destroyed.

It is a total chaotic period of emotional upset, depression and loneliness. Obi never saw his mother neither in sickness nor at death. He abandons his parents and never asked about their well-being. It is hard, if not impossible to believe that Obi's mother dies and he refuses to travel home to attend her funeral ceremony. He confesses that he is not moved by the news of her death. Even when he forces himself to feel the loss, it is very difficult to come by. After a day he hears himself humming dancing tune.

It is obvious that Obi's action is prompted by the denial of a wife he wants to marry. He feels that his mother fails him when she refuses to support or argue on his behalf. He holds that his parents are a bunch of disappoint, who turn his life upside down as a result of their archaic culture, which tears lovers apart, rather than unite them together. In his conclusion they must not be forgiven for making him lose the love of his life. Culturally, Obi's mother thinks she is protecting her son from the stigma and evil repercussions associated with marrying *osu*. It never dawned on her that he would react the way he did.

The theme of culture conflict is pronounced in this work. Obi has imbibed Western education and absorbs the culture of the "Whites." His perception over life and its issues are in contrast with his parents.' His ways of doing things and reacting to matters have taken their root from the Western ideology and that is why it is difficult to flow along with his parents. While his father and mother hold that some people must be tagged "outcasts" and avoided like lepers, he views such practice as irrational and absurd in this contemporary age.

Isaac Okonkwo and his wife are people who are neither here nor there; instead they choose to be on the fence. He bears a christian name, "Isaac" which shows that he accepts Christianity as Obi points out to him, "we are Christians." This statement explains it all. It implies that Christians are expected to do away with all the obnoxious and traditional practices of their fore fathers. Christians are children of light as Obi mentions earlier and should allow the light radiate for others to see. Obi's parents are holding Chritianity on one hand and Afrcan culture on the other.

However, Isaac Okonkwo and his wife should not suffer much blame for adhering to their cultural heritage. As infants in the Christian faith, they still need to be

tutored; guided properly and closely monitored, before they could have deep understanding of what Christianity entails. This will enable them think or reason in the same line with their son. It is the differences in their understanding that affect grossly their cordial relationship and of course, the provocation of the cold violence.

Kidnap, Incest and Suicide in the Family

The drama *Nwata rie Awọ* (*Ọ jụ anụ*), has its title drawn from an adage. It literally translates; *Nwata* (a child); *rie* (eats); *Awọ* (a toad): (*Ọ* (he/she) *jụ* (loses interest or refuses); *anụ* (meat). If a child eats a toad, he loses interest in meat. This statement is better explained further; when the child eats a toad, he abhors the loathsome meal and therefore hates to feed on anything in the form of meat. This is interpreted to mean: That, if one finds oneself in an abominable situation in life, one becomes afraid of walking into such unholy experience again. The literary work is a drama, authored by Goddy Onyekaonwu and it is written in Igbo language. The book is rich in violence and tragic experience of a certain family.

Maazi (Mr.) Obidike shows regret over his son Awọ, who is often at conflict with him. He sees in him a very lazy and irresponsible son who cannot amount to anything. The thought of Awọ gives him much worry. He regrets to have begotten such a son at all. Concerning Awọ, he bemoans:

Obidike: Amụtalam nwa ọha na-amuta;
Mụ bu aturu ji ebule gba aka nwa
Kwa ubochi, Awọ teta ụra ututu,
Ya amara isi manye n'ọhịa.
Anyanwakwaghị ahụ ya ọzọ.
Tutu ruo na riomriom abali.
Kpọọ oku elu, kpọọ oku ala.
Ya aburu iti-cha aka n'akpukpọ ehi.
Ihe nke a ọ bu ụsà? Ọ bu etu ndi ọzọ si amuta nwa. ³⁴

I have begotten a child like others.
Like the sheep which begets a ram, am childless.
Each day, Awọ wakes up in the morning, he vanishes
from the house.
No eye sees him till dusk.
Call his name from now till you lose your voice, you are
wasting your time.

What kind of thing is this?
Is this how other people's experience with their children
is?

Obidike is also at conflict with his wife because of their son. He accuses her of being the cause of his son's waywardness. He reiterates that his wife encourages Aworo to become a spoilt brat. He abuses his wife for defending Aworo each time he tries to take disciplinary action against him. Angrily, over this matter thunderously he curses her:

Obidike: Taa nwanyi a ikuku burukwe gi
Asiri m, aju jukwe gi anya
Amadioha machapukwa gi imi;
Mgbo! Mgbo!! Mgbo!!! piawapukwa gi isi,
Gi bu na- iji aka ekpe puta ura.
Bia na ihe inyuru esiwela.
Nne ewu na ata agbala.
Nwa ya ana-ele ya anya n'onu.
Ihe egbe muru aghaghi ibu okuko.
Kwa mgbe obula m choro ibara Aworo mba
Gi agbata gigado m, na-asi
"Hapuru m nwa m! hapuru m nwa m"
Ugbu a ka m juo gi:
Ole e ebe Aworo no?
O buru na ikpotaghi ya ugbu a
A mata mbe n'abo nke bu oke;
I gwa m mu na gi onye nwe ulo a.³⁵

Obidike: Taa! This woman let the wind blow you away.
I say, be filled with dizziness.
Let the god of thunder (*Amadioha*) cut off your nose;
Let the bullet violently slash off your head,
For saying that I did not wake up in good spirit.
Come and see the ripple effect of the bad seed you sowed.
When the mother-goat eats wrong leaves, the kid watches her.
The young of the kite must pounce and carry away fowls.
Whenever I want to scold Aworo, "you withstand me and lament."
Leave my son for me! Leave my son for me!
Now, let me ask you;
Where is Aworo?
If you don't produce him now,
You will not find it easy with me;
Then, I will know whether you or I own this house.

It is interesting to note that the misunderstanding, rancour, and differences, facing this family arises as a result of a son who is “a never do well”. Their experience is not far from what is obtained from Araba’s family, in Nkem Nwankwo’s novel, *Danda*. Araba, like Obidike could not tolerate his son Danda, who is irresponsible and unserious and goes about blowing his flute. He equally accuses and abuses his wife of feeding and supporting such a “good for nothing” son. In the same manner, Obidike accuses his wife of supporting Awọrọ’s unhealthy behaviour.

Nwamgbọgọ, like Araba’s wife, often advises her son to do the things that will please his father and forebear from provoking him by leadng aimless life. Nwamgbọgọ encourages Awọrọ to ask his father for forgiveness because it is not reasonable to contend with him:

Nkita anaghị anyu nsị nga a na-atọrọ ya nri.
 Ya bụ ị ga-ariọ nna gị mgbaghara.
 A ga-emekwanu nke a n’utu a
 Nihi na e mee ngwa ngwa.
 Emeghara ọdachi.
 Ire ọma ka ejula ji aga n’ogwu.³⁶

The dog does not pass excreta on the very spot its food is served.
 Therefore, you should ask your father for forgiveness.
 This must be done this morning.
 When procrastination is shunned
 Danger is averted (delay is dangerous).
 It is with utmost gentility that the snail crawls on the mass of thorn.

Awọrọ refuses to argue with his mother, but goes ahead to make peace with his father. This having been accepted, peace returns to the home. This singular act of Nwamgbọgọ portrays her as a respectable and responsible woman, who has the peace of her family at heart. Her husband’s threats, abuses and name callings, notwithstanding, she aspires to have her husband and son united. Nwamgbọgọ could be seen as icon of peace in her family. What later happened in this family shows that when a family is at peace and united, it will be able to plan for prosperity and progress. The family will also stand firm in unison to fight any battle that stares it in the face.

Obidike is now pleased with his son, of which he willingly sends for a traditional medicine man to prepare a potent charm for wrestling for Awọrọ. This step

proves that when a child is in good relationship with his parents, they think and plan for his progress and success. Obidike engages the service of the medicine man to make Awọrọ out-wit his opponent. The charm worked! Awọrọ defeated Akatoosi, a very famous wrestler. This victory wins him, the love of a young maiden, Obioma, who already has a suitor, Anene. She swears not to marry the young man any longer. She opts for Awọrọ with whom she falls passionately in love, due to the unbeatable skill he displayed during the wrestling match.

Obioma's mother could not reconcile this sudden decision. This abrupt change is irritating and strange to her. It is a challenge she finds difficult to manage or face. She resorts to violence as a solution, but that unfortunately could not proffer solution. One could confidently conclude that marital decision or disagreement over who a son or daughter marries spark off most of the family conflict and violence. Obioma's mother confronts her daughter violently by beating, but Obioma has already developed hard skin:

Obioma: (Na-agba ọsọ) Tiwanu m ihe; ọ bu ya ga-ebi ya?
Gaa kwanu gwa ha ka ha kwusi ibi a
Biko hapunu m. (Nne ya achuru ya puo).³⁷

(Running away) continue to beat me, will that settle the situation?
Go and tell them (the suitor and his relations) to stop coming.
You people should please leave me alone (Her mother chases her away).

Obioma breaks the Carmel's back when she runs away from home to live with a man who has not performed any marriage rite on her. Awọrọ confesses that he does not love her but for the fact that she clings to him, he finds it difficult and unkind to throw her away. Moreover, his parents persuade him to accept her. Awọrọ's confession reveals that he decides to marry out of pity and parental pressure.

After their first child which is a female, Awọrọ could not tolerate to live under the same roof with Obioma. He equally complains of the baby's sex. He blames Obioma for producing a baby girl instead of a boy. Nwamgbọ, Obioma's friend lets out a secret of what her husband (Obioma's) says at her back:

Nwamgbọ: ...Na di gi na-ekwu na ya
agaghị alukwa gi ọzọ; na i

gbaso ya agbaso, na onweghi
mgbe o jiri buru uche ya ilu gi.
na i gara imu nwa mbu muo nwaayi.³⁸

Your husband is saying that he will no longer marry you again, that you threw yourself on him, that he never proposed to marry you. For the first pregnancy you produced a female child for him.

Aworo, who has been looking for a means of getting rid of Obioma, weaves a plan which implicates her. He accuses her of poisoning his food. The case is judged in a local traditional setting by the villagers and Obioma is found guilty. She and her daughter are sold away from the village. Odinchefu, Obioma's daughter is separated from her mother, having been resold from the strange land. After fifteen years, Aworo marries Odinchefu not knowing that she is his daughter. After five years, of childlessness; Aworo becomes terribly sick too, and is forced to go about in search of solution. He seeks the help of a diviner, who tells him that, he has led an abominable life. Aworo becomes lost and confused at the diviner's findings, since he could not recall any of such unspeakable acts. The man instructs that he brings back his first wife.

After one year of enduring search, Aworo finds his first wife, Obioma, and ushers her in, as wife. He decides to hold a celebration in his house, because of the good things which has happened to him. It is on this occasion that Obioma and her daughter, whom she renamed Odinchafu come to realize that they are mother and child; and wives of the same husband. They are prompted to weep uncontrollably, having witnessed incestuous relationship in their family.

Ndi Mmadu: Ka ndi ozọ na-abia ebi ya oma, o nekwasiri Odinchefu anya, na- echezi onye o bu n'ihu na o di ime, gbanwokwa nke ukwu. Odinchefu lekwasikwa ya anya fuu, wee tie si! O bu nne mu o! O bu nne muo; Obioma etikwasij nke ya; Nwamuo! Ada muu o! ha abuo ehigide onwe ha.³⁹

As others were coming to embrace her, she gazed intently at Odinchefu, trying to recollect whom she was, because she was pregnant and had under gone some biological changes. Odinchefu looked at her steadily and screamed, it is my mother! It is my mother! Obioma in the like manner cried:

My daughter! My first daughter! The two of them snuggled together.

Aworọ could not withhold himself at the unfold of events. He becomes confused and without words. He is utterly gripped by fear because of this abomination; he lacks words but only struggles to lament:

O ji ngwere haa ngwere na ọ bughị anụ!
Ngaghị eji anya m hụ ntị m!
Ọ karija m (Ya agba baa n'ụlọ ya were mma gbapụ wee
magbuo onwe ya...) ⁴⁰

Forebear from catching the lizard it is not an ideal meat.
I refuse to see my ears with my own eyes.
This is more than I can bear. (He rushes into the house,
picks up a knife and stabs himself to death).

Violation of the law of the land brings pollution on the land and attracts punishment to the offender; this explains why Aworọ takes his life. This belief is seen as Odemene clearly states:

Violation of moral laws and customs of the people constitutes an offense against the society and the patrons or custodians of the land, such as the ancestors, the earth and the deities. Sociologically, these concepts of sin are necessary toward the well being of the society, which of course no society can do without some of the taboos which include: stealing, poisoning and killing, having sexual relationship with relatives, abusing the gods, one's seniors, husband... ⁴¹

It is then very clear, why Aworọ stabs himself when he discovers the incestuous relationship with his daughter, and the loathsome marriage of mother and daughter at the same time. More so, the above belief explains why Obioma, when falsely accused of poisoning her husband, is sold away with her daughter, as the punishment for the wickedness.

It is necessary to address some salient issues raised in this drama. The character Obioma could be compared with Titi in the play, *The Masquerade* by J.P. Clark. She rejects her parents' advice not to marry "a stranger." She snubs them and elopes with the young man. In the same way, Obioma does not give heed to her parents' advice, not to marry a man who has neither interest nor love for her. Instead, she runs away from

home, betrays her intergrity as a young maiden; portrays herself and parents as cheap, worthless and irresponsible before another family.

Furthermore, Tufa, Titi's fiance, expresses his sincere love for her. When Titi's father shoots her to death, he refuses to take to his heels. He stands, challenges and insults the man, until he gives him his own dose of the gun shot. Tufa feels satisfied to have died together with Titi, his love. The point that is being made is that, when love reigns supreme in a marriage or relationship, the couple could make untold sacrifices for each other's sake. Contrarily, Aworọ clearly emphasizes that he never had any feelings for Obioma, and thus, the marriage which is not built on the foundation of love, crashes within a short space of time.

Ogugua's definition and understanding of the term "love" and its soothing effect on the family asserts:

Ihunanya.
Chi na-edozi ezi n'ulo
Ute oma di na nwunye
Nkasi obi onye oria
Ezenwanyị udo n'onu.⁴²

Love.
The goddess that sets the family in order.
The beautiful mat of husband and wife.
The comfort of the sick.
The queen of peace and joy.

Ogugua makes a personification of "love". He addresses it as though a human, to express its importance and uniqueness in the life of the family. He describes its function in the family stating that; it is a thing that brings orderliness, peace and joy into the family. According to him, love brings rest to the couple too.

In the traditional Igbo setting, a girl who wants to maintain her respect and worth must wait for a man to seek her hand in marriage. After all necessary protocols are observed, normal marriage procedure follows suit. A situation whereby a young girl defies this rule, her parents, relatives as well as well wishers are not happy with her. Her action is sternly criticized by all and sundry. Even in this contemporary time, the Igbo try as much as possible to avoid this practice in order to protect their daughters' interest. A

woman is honoured in her marital family, if she behaves herself well and gets married properly. A woman, who throws herself cheaply on a man, receives insult from her husband's family, especially from the man's sisters or his female relatives. This commonly happens if, she is of bad character. Each time there is misunderstanding, they will not hesitate to remind her that she is an "unwanted element" who forced her way into the family.

Furthermore, Aworọ's mother could be likened to Danda's mother. They do not sit and watch their sons disregard or disrespect their fathers. They are givers of good advice, especially to their sons in order to settle misunderstanding between them and their fathers. They encourage their sons to do away with behaviours which are unpleasant, but imbibe and exhibit attitude which portray them as responsible people before their fathers. Nevertheless, inspite of their efforts their husbands accuse them of being the brain behind their sons' bad lifestyle. This simply demonstrates the patriarchal authority and influence of the man over the woman- an entity of lesser worth.

Violence in *Purple Hibiscus*

The novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, is authored by Adichie. The narrator which is a first person narrator, Kambili, is also the protagonist of the novel. She is a teenage girl, who introduces her family as one smeared in violence. The violent encounter is usually flagged off by the father of the family; who irrationally tries to consolidate his "faith." She bemoans that the home is of absolute silence and lacks freedom. All the members of the family live in total awe of the father.

The author presents a character Eugene, a man who washes off his hands, concerning African traditional religion, which his father holds at high esteem. Like Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Eugene accepts the white man's religion. However, he conspicuously arrays his total loss of interest in the indigenous religion. By his own evaluation, the local religion is devilish and satanic, and all who practice it must be avoided. He, to a large extent, alienates himself from the traditional religion, but holds firm to his new faith – Catholicism. Invariably, he is a fanatic by a reasonable assessment. His entire life is enveloped by this new belief. He

expects all the members of his immediate family (wife and children) to hold the faith exactly at his own degree.

They must stand and remain bound, and show servitude to all the doctrines that guide and protect the interest of Catholic faith. Inability, failure or negligence of the least of these doctrines, attract punishment which ranges from scolding to severe beating, or more harsh punishment. Evidence abound which stress that most of the beatings he gives to his wife and children are as a result of being found wanting or defaulting in his religious beliefs.

It is expedient to note that, Eugene is not a failure in life. He is a man of great achievement and honour. He is rich both in money and landed property. He is an enormous industrialist, wealthy businessman, a democratic activist, fabulous donor in the church, a distinguished philanthropist, and community leader. He is the *Omeleora* (one who is kind and liberal, especially in financial matters, to his people) of his community. His wife and children are not in lack materially, but his strict and high handedness, present his family as lamb in the lion's den.

Mr Eugene expects that none of the members of his family should exempt him or herself from the Holy Communion, which is one of the practices that describes a Pius Catholic. It is believed that one who takes it all the time is without sin, since sinners are not worthy to eat the flesh or drink the blood of Jesus Christ. "You cannot stop receiving the body of our Lord. It is death you know that" (p.6). Eugene reminds his son that the flesh of Jesus is important, because it is the source of life, and any who rejects it, is beckoning on death. This is one of the reasons why nobody must miss it in his family.

Rather than teaching his family with love and patience, Eugene uses violence to teach and or make his point:

Papa looked around the room quickly, as if searching for proof that something had fallen from the high ceiling, something he had never thought would fall. He picked up the missal and flung it across the room, toward Jaja. It missed Jaja completely, but it hit the glass *étagère*, which Mama polished often. It cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers in

various contorted postures, to the hard floor and then landed after them. Or rather it landed on their many pieces.⁴³

The terse but artistic description reveals Eugene's impatience and fury. He is a man of uncontrolled temper. He cares nothing about the consequences of his action. Even though he is rich, he wastes good things. Here is destroyed, a beautiful ornament which adds to the aesthetic look of the living room; and of course, this is an ornament which his wife loves and cherishes. He creates emotional scenes and tensions, which rob the peace, love and confidence one expects in the home.

Kambili and her brother are shut in at home. They are not allowed to go out, either for sight seeing or spend their holidays outside the home. They are like prisoners who lose freedom and cannot enjoy the other side of the world. This ill-treatment receives intervention, when Auntie Ifeoma, their father's sister, insists that Eugene must release his children to celebrate Christmas with her family. Eugene reluctantly accepts that the children will be with Ifeoma, provided she does not expose them to "anything ungodly." If she drives past *Mmuo* (Masquerade), she must wind up her windows' glass.

Eugene draws a time schedule for his children – there is time to eat, time to sleep, time to do assignment; virtually time for everything and unfortunately as Kambili points out; "Papa did not pencil in TV time on our schedules"(p.79). Kambili is embarrassed and ashamed to tell Amaka her cousin that their father never approved of TV watching, when she asks whether they (Kambili and her brother, Jaja) watch CNN, the day they visit their house.

The anti social life of the children, which is born out of living a prison – like life, is glaring through what Amaka says about them. Amaka is forced to throw a question at her mother, Auntie Ifeoma. "Are you sure they are not abnormal, Mom? Kambili just behaved like an *atulu*, (sheep) when my friends came" (p. 141). "She behaves funny. Even Jaja is strange".⁴⁴

Eugene hardly permits his children to visit or have Papa Nnukwu, (Eugene's father and their grand father) under the same roof. He tells them that Papa Nnukwu is ungodly, defiled, and polluted. This is because he is a pagan as Jaja points out. They dread their grand father's house due to what their father feeds into their young heads. Ifeoma informs them that they are going to pick Papa Nnukwu to join in their outing; when they get to Papa Nnukwu's compound, the children refuse to come down from the

car. The reason as Jaja explains, goes: “We are not allowed to come here after we’ve greeted him.” Auntie Ifeoma furiously thunders: “What kind of nonsense is that eh?” ... “Tell me why your father doesn’t want you here?”⁴⁵ In the same light, Eugene does not allow his father to visit his house. He will not let him into his house, and will not even greet him.

Eugene disapproves of his children staying under the same roof with a “heathen” as he refers to his father. Eugene forces his children to confess against their wish, the above incident which he confirms to be sin, before the Reverend Father. He prays for them that God will forgive them and remove the spirit that made them lie that they did not sleep in the same house with a heathen, when they went to their Auntie’s house.

The moment Eugene accepts the new religion, he stops taking care of his aged father. He does not visit or send him money, if not for the intervention of people, which forces him to unwillingly send meager amount through his driver. Papa Nnukwu bemoans that his son is a wealthy man, yet he suffers hunger. He regrets his son’s harsh treatment and thus he complains to his daughter, Ifeoma.

Nekenem, (look at me). My son owns that house that can fit in every man at Abba, and yet many times, I have nothing to put on my plate. I should not have let him follow those missionaries.⁴⁶

Papa-Nnukwu makes a point. He is right in his observation. Eugene is a liberal donor in the church, and a charity donor in the community. He is the *Omeleora*. During Christmas celebration, he feeds the entire community. His house is a swarm of people, who troop in to eat and drink. The fact that he is a philanthropist cannot be over emphasized, yet his aged father suffers hunger.

Eugene’s hatred for his father is further buttressed when he warns him of the looming doom, of not receiving a befitting burial, should he die a pagan. He eventually stands by his threat. Apart from the meager amount of money which he hands over to Ifeoma, after baptizing her with the fire of his words, he neither attends his father’s burial ceremony, nor allows his family to do so. Although the author does not say that Eugene physically beats his father at any point in time, but the emotional wound he inflicts on him is more painful.

Eugene's brutality knows no bound; on another occasion, he beats his wife, Kambili and Jaja. Their offense is that his wife Beatrice and Jaja aid Kambili to eat before the breaking of the Eucharistic fast. Beatrice, seeing her daughter suffer excruciatingly under menstrual pain, out of pity, advises that she takes some cornflakes to enable her take pain relieving tablets. Luck runs out of them when Eugene incidentally meets them right together in the room while Kambili eats:

He unbuckled his belt slowly, it was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then mama raised hands as it landed on her upper arm. I put the bowl down as the belt landed on my back... Papa was like a Fulani nomad, although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung his belt at mama, Jaja and me, muttering that devil will not win.⁴⁷

In another encounter, Kambili and Jaja have hot water poured on their feet for not confessing that they slept in the same house with Papa-Nnukwu a heathen, at Ifeoma's house, when they went to Nsukka. Eugene claims that his daughter sees sin and decides to walk into it, and for that reason, the feet must be purged of sin. He calls his daughter into the bathroom and asks her to enter the bath tub, being ever fearful of the father, Kambili could not ask a question, but obeys every command sheepishly:

Kambili, you are precious... You should not see sin and walk right into it. He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment... The pain of contact was so pure, so scaling, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed.⁴⁸

As though the above punishment is not enough, on another ill fated day, Eugene gives Kambili the battering of her life. A beating which leaves her unconscious and have her rushed to the hospital. Her crime is that her father sees her admiring and fondling Papa- Nnukwu's painting. It is quite unfortunate that her father storms into her room and meets her. No doubt Eugene's belt has another buffet of her flesh. Consequently, Kambili becomes terribly sick as a result of the beating, of which she has to take her examination on a hospital bed:

The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal buckle landed on my open skin, on my side, my back, my legs. Kicking, kicking, kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. When I opened my eyes, I knew at once that I was not on my bed... I made to get up, but pain shot through my whole body... I collapsed back.⁴⁹

Eugene knows that what he did is an untold cruel act, rather than disciplinary measure. His crime can be categorized under child abuse and maltreatment, thus he refuses to disclose to the Doctor and the Priest of the church- Reverend Father Benedict, that he is the household enemy, who nearly sends his own daughter to an early grave. He realizes that, should these people who respect him get to know about this atrocity, they will completely lose all trust and confidence in him. Eugene of course is a two-faced entity. The Eugene at church is a unique contrast of Eugene at home. At church he presents himself an aura and bunch of holiness and righteousness. He is a saint in the church, but a monster at the home front. Father Benedict even classify Eugene with the Pope and Jesus, as people who are worthy of emulation.

The Priest uses Eugene to explain the Gospel, describing him as a man who stands for truth and fights for the freedom of the masses through his newspaper- *The Standard*. On the contrary, at home, his family (wife and children) are in mental chains. Their hearts know neither peace nor rest. He advises Father Benedict to call and win back afresh any soul which misses Holy Communion for two consecutive Sundays, because according him, it is only mortal sin that can stop, the person from Holy Communion.

Eugene is a hypocrite! At home, he beats and makes his wife have several miscarriages. This time, it is just two of them at home; the children went to Nsukka at Auntie Ifeoma's place. Beatrice's husband, attacks her like a lion, and has another pregnancy wasted. This incident leaves Beatrice in deep sorrow, lonely and unconsolated. She leaves her home for Nsukka to seek solace from Auntie Ifeoma. She presents her ordeal to her daughter, Kambili and Auntie Ifeoma. She draws her daughter's attention and says: "You know that small table where we keep the family bible *nne*? Your father

broke it on my belly”.... “My blood finished on that floor even before they took me to St Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it.”⁵⁰

When Ifeoma questions further, Beatrice discloses, that she lost six weeks pregnancy. Ifeoma becomes furious over Eugene’s uncivilized behaviour while Beatrice weeps until she sleeps off. In the evening Eugene called, Ifeoma urges Beatrice not to pick it; but she insists on taking the call which orders her speedy return to Enugu the next day, together with the children. Beatrice’s life with her husband is a replica of slave-master relationship. A life filled with fear and tremble of an inferior toward a superior.

One fateful day, Eugene died in his office as his wife relates in a telephone conversation with Kambili. “Mama’s low voice floated across the phone line and quickly quelled my shaking hand. “Kambili, it’s your father, they called me from the factory, that they found him lying dead on his desk.”⁵¹ Kambili could not believe that her strong and energetic father will die so suddenly. Later, Beatrice casually discloses at a very low tone that she poisoned her husband. Her confession establishes the act: “I started putting poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor.”⁵²

The police comes from the hospital where the autopsy is conducted and Jaja presents himself as the perpetrator. The police arrests and takes him away. Beatrice begins to nurse slight mental disorder, of which when she proclaims that she killed her husband, nobody believes her. People conclude that the death of her husband and arrest of her only son must have triggered off the mild insanity. On the contrary, it could be believed that Beatrice has exhausted her patience and the strength to bear the burden, and decides to gain freedom through the most dreadful means- murder.

Violence in *Purple Hibiscus* Examined

Eugene is generally the initiator of violence in his household. His wife and children are commonly his victims, while he is the offender or oppressor. In the first place, Beatrice sees her self as an inferior entity who cannot challenge Eugene in any way. She believes her husband is not her equal in every sense of it. She counts herself lucky to have such wealthy philanthropist, who most ladies wish to associate with, as husband. This of

course is Beatrice's feelings and it however contributes to her inactive response to her husband's tyranny, oppression, brutality and violent treatments.

Furthermore, in Igbo culture women are expected to keep silent, endure in patience and remain unexpressive while dealing with men, but uphold gentleness and submissiveness which are important treasures of womanhood. Akachi Ezigbo, supports the above premise when she observes as follows:

There was a time the notion; "Women are to be seen not heard" was widely accepted by many societies. Silence and invisibility was another attribute of the woman. Women were more or less decorative accessories to beautify or embellish the home; in addition to their numerous roles as wives, mothers, and child bearers and rears.⁵³

Beatrice through her character in this work presents her self as a traditional Igbo woman, who is held bound by the above belief. She seems to accept the hostile treatment in her home, as a cross she must bear. She is not an eloquent speaker. Kambili compares the way her mother talks with the way birds eat tiny bits. She often resorts to weeping when she or her children are battered, with wounds inflicted all over. The only action she takes is to nurse the wound until it heals. She dared not challenge or query Eugene's action. Beatrice reasons that to leave her marriage is not the best option, because her husband is a very wealthy man whom most women would love to identify with, or have as life partner. When Ifeoma advises her to work out her freedom, even if it means walking out of her home, she turns the advice down.

Adichie presents a clear picture of a traditional Igbo wife. She is expected to remain silent in whatever trials she undergoes in her home. She has to be patient and long suffering. She is not expected to complain because she does not know what the woman next door is passing through in the hand of her own husband. It is the ability to endure and still perform her maternal functions that upgrades her as an ideal, responsible or strong woman. This belief does not make pale the fact that family members or relatives do step in, to settle matters between husband and wife, but the woman is not expected to run away from home because of tough family experiences.

In addition, she is expected to live up to such difficulties and hardships. She has to work out modalities to sustain her self and the marriage. A typical example could be drawn from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo almost shattered Ekwefi's

brain. The magnitude of the violence notwithstanding, Ekwefi and other wives who suffer under Okonkwo's terror, refuse to bow out of the marriage. They continue to walk in patience and endurance. However, women who cannot withstand the intensity of their husbands' tyranny can resort to going back to their fathers' houses, especially when what they suffer is life threatening.

The upbringing which Kambili and his brother Jaja, receive from their father, makes them socially undeveloped. Their behavior is strange when in the midst of other children. They are not allowed to watch the television or engage in social activities. The children and their mother lack the ability of self expression, while Auntie Ifeoma and her children are assertive. Ifeoma's children are expressive and they flow very well in the midst of friends.

Auntie Ifeoma represents the contemporary liberated and educated Igbo woman. She would never allow Eugene, her brother, to intimidate her. She knows what she wants and how to get it. When she is thrown out of the University where she is a lecturer, it does not take her time to work out her visa; travels abroad with her children and continues her life. It is at Ifeoma's house that Kambili and Jaja gain freedom of expression and action, mixed up with sound behavior. Papa-Nnukwu stands for the traditional Igbo values which remain uninfluenced; even though attacked, threatened, bruised and humiliated by the Western culture and religion.

Conclusion

Violence is a common occurrence in the literatures studied. It derupts the cordial relationships that exist in various relationships in the home and makes the home uncomfortable to live in. It makes members especially the wife and the children who are exposed to the oppression and tyranny of the family head to live in perpetual fear of the male figure at whose family mercy they look up to. A number of family members may hardly get united again or recover from the violent experiences they had previously. Violence is a Leviathan which is determined to fight the family until it is totally erased from the memory. It employs deadly instruments such as false accusation, lack of love, incest, anger fiery, and murder to destroy its victims. Unfortunately, there is no straight jacket solution or answer to combat violence and its dangers, since the factors which provoke it are hydra-headed and multiple- faced.

Notes and References

1. Achebe, C. 1964, *Arrow of God*, 10.
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SOURD FILIAL RELATIONSHIP IN ORESTEIN TRILOGY

Conclusion

Agamemnon displayed to a large extent his power of life and death ius aetas over his family. The attitude of the family head leads his wife and children at the mercy of the male figure who see his wife and children as inferior entities. The woman Clytaemnestra is represented in this work of Art; shows herself as a liberated woman who allinates herself from the behaviour expected from a traditional Greek woman who is denied the right to speak or make public appearance before the men. She is no rival to the man in all ramifications. It is unimaginable for her then to murder a king in his cold blood. However, Orestes is seen as a young man left at the cross-road considering the circumstances facing him- To kill a mother who killed a husband ; in order to avenge a father who murdered a daughter; who is a dear mother's "most cherished". More so, he had to avenge his father, and get rid of another who discarded him and his elder sister, Electra to consolidate a amorous relationship a husband's younger cousin, Aegisthus. Orestes feels that the woman is no equal to the man. She should not strive with him for any reason. He views and interpretes her courage and murder of a reputable king like Agamemnon as a scenario which speaks of an impending danger over his own life, should he refuse to guard against all odds. He holds that an evil plant must be completely uprooted out to permanently hinder it from further budding.

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THE BELOW IS FROM LIMITATION OF STUDY CHAP. I

This could be associated with the fear of losing two heads simultaneously. Furthermore, it will be an indelible stigma on the family for a family member to kill one another. The act can affect the daughters or sons of the family from getting married as many would fear to marry into or from the family of murderers. The Igbos say that ‘ezi aha ka ego’ (good name is better than riches). Once a family name is damaged, the members find it difficult to gain posts either into political social or religious settings. Thus, it will be easier for the head of the camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for them to expose such heinous crime when the offender is a family member surreptitiously, they hold a deep secret meeting and bury the entire hatchet (matter). These limitations notwithstanding, the ground was broken, though through bolds and bares (*da astra par aspera*).

In Chinua Achebe’s novel, *Things Fall Apart*, the protagonist Okonkwo, who represents African masculinity, is a man whose life is ruled by anger. This particular trait made him act violently in many occasions. He beats and speaks rashly to his wives

and children. His angry mood is significantly arrayed when he shot his second wife with a gun but narrowly missed shattering her to death.⁷

It is discovered that often time, violence leads to further violence. Violence especially one which involves murder, prepares way for further occurrence of murder. When a family member kills another, the favourite of the victim could be prompted to avenge the loved one. This premise is evidently illustrated in some of the Classical works. King Agamemnon murdered and used his daughter, Iphigenia as a sacrificial victim in exchange for favourable weather. In other words, he wanted to gain passage with his comrades to fight the battle between the Greeks and the Trojans, in order to bring back an irresponsible brother's wife, Helen.⁸

In revenge for dearly beloved daughter, Clytaemrestra murdered her husband, King Agamemnon. Subsequently Orestes went ahead and violently shed his mother's blood in vengeance over a dear father. This condition of recurring murder case in a family is referred to as Vendetta – killing, which can be broken by paying the blood price.⁹

In African literature and African traditional setting, the issue of murder of a family member is not treated with kid's glove. The offender is grossly punished. The punishment ranges from exile, or making the offender pay with his own blood. However, in the contemporary time, family members find it difficult to invite law enforcement agents to intervene. Even when neighbours or concerned people invite the police, for fear of losing another member or being tagged as family of murderers, they could paint a picture which would make the offender appear innocent.

When violence rears its head in a family, the members if grown ups, do not fold their hands and watch in awe. They tend to intervene. They are stirred to take action which either fans off the fire or make it escalate. Their reaction could be objectively a subjectively influenced. Some members make genuine or judicious intervention to arrest the situation and have peace established, some arrive at the scene to fight the course or avenge their favourites, whether they are right or wrong. While other family members seem to fight against the injustice, humiliation, or general ills which a member suffers in the hand of another. In some families, there are family members who remain

helpless when serious violence erupts. This occurs especially when children are young and the male figure – (the father) is the oppressor.

Invariably a family which is drenched in the agony of violence and conflict loses her peace and stability. Her progress is mired. There is confusion, anarchy, chaos and cries of woe. Thus, the strength and vigour to march forward is broken down. The family equally suffers shame, disappointment or faces other unpalatable experiences.

Family violence or strife could be provoked by factors such as; avarice, hatred, jealousy, intolerance, injustice, over-ambition, unbearable influence, desire for freedom, sexual immorality, insubordination, negligence of duty, lack of love in marriage, hatred, anger, squabble over property or positions, jealousy, barrenness, laziness, disagreement over whom a son or daughter marries, living below expectation, inability to carry out domestic functions, lack of trust, possessiveness, pride and a host of other reasons. In this study we are going to treat violence as physical and psychological or emotional violence. Physical violence is visible. It can be quantified and measured. On the contrary, it is difficult to quantify or measure emotional violence. For example, when a woman reports that her husband slaps her three times, this could be well understood, because one can access or imagine how three slaps could pain. But when a woman says that she is troubled over a husband who abandoned her and the children for a week, it will be quite difficult to measure and understand exactly how she is being tortured emotionally .

Family violence for the purpose of this study involves abandonment, abuse, affliction of emotional or physical wound or injury, battering, pushing and shoving, and in extreme cases murdering of a family member. Violence champions a breakdown of order in family dyads and relationships. It is noted that governmental and non governmental bodies are putting in more efforts to tackle the problems of family violence in order to reduce it to its barest minimum. There are equally some suggestions made to assist in fighting this war.

Violence and Marriage Partner

The drama, *The Woman of Calabar* is one of the dramas in Elechi Amadi's work, *Collected Plays*. The play paints a picture of a young Calabar girl, Adia who leaves her home to co-habit with a young man, Eme, with whom she is passionately in love. All her parents' attempt to bring her back could not produce any positive effect.

On the other hand, Mrs Akrika, Eme's mother is much infuriated and worried, when she learns that her son, is in the grip of a woman. Thus she planned to separate them. The more she tries, the more the love birds fortify their love-empire. She conceived a number of plans to send Adia away, but all could not proper. At last she resorted to charm. She sent Acho to visit her son at Calabar, to administer some charms, which will send the said girl packing. Mrs. Akika tells him the function of each powder and how they should be administered.

Mrs Akrika: Acho, I am taking any chances. These are from a powerful dibia. When you get there mark this chalk across the doorway. This will ensure that whenever she leaves the house to see her people she will not come back. This guard contains a powder. Blow it into the living room, she will become so uncomfortable that she will eventually pack out on her own. Elechi Amadi (2004: 175)

Acho at arrival, discusses with Eme, he makes him realize how much her mother is being adversely affected by his recent relationship. Howbeit, his assessment of Adia, the girl in question is on the credit side.

Acho: (*Subdued and impressed*) it is a pity
Your mother is worrying herself sick
Over a girl like Adia, it is pity (Ibid, 183).

Further more, he posits:

Acho: (*Rising, pacing and nodding.*) Yes, Eme,
I can answer that question. Adia
is an angel of a girl, but ironically
your marrying her could kill your mother,
I have never seen her so tense and miserable (Ibid, 119).

Acho: ... (*His glance falls on his handbag.*) Ah
Debo's charms. I am reluctant to administer them
but I promised her. What is a pity. I hope they didn't work (Ibid, 179).

When Debora's charm could not work, her daughter promised to perfectly do the assignment herself. She went to Eme's house and tricked Adia. She wrote a love letter which sounds as though a lover wrote it to Eme. When Adia saw it, angrily, she could not wait Eme's return but sorrowfully left for her home, in utter disappointment.

One one incident led to another, eventually both of them came to terms and reconciliation became possible. During the short period of separation, Eme was severely affected, emotionally. Later, Eme discovered it was his sister Gloria, who visited him, wrote the letter and he had a rough time with her. When all plans mapped out for this enterprise failed, Mrs. Akrika decided to go by herself.

Mrs. Akrika persuaded her husband who reluctantly accompanied and both set off for Calabar. Shortly after arrival, she spoke to Adia in a very rough and unreserved manner. She rejected all hospitality Adia meant to offer her. Out rightly, ordered her to leave her son's house.

Mrs. Akrika: You are his mistress, girl-friend or whatever?

Adia: (*Beginning to sob*) Yes.

Mrs. Akrika: In that case you have to pack out right now. (*Adia stares in surprise*)
Did you hear me?
I say you have to pack off. (Ibid, 202)

Eme's mother strongly holds that Adia employed some charms manipulate, and compelled her son to plan for a marriage he would not have walked into under normal circumstances. Mrs. Akrika further believes Adia is a witch, who has captured her only son with her witch craft power and has applied it equally on her husband, who tends to see some good qualities in her. Examine her words:

Mrs. Akrika: (*Scornfully.*) Admire her! I can see her witch craft is working on you already. (121).

Her husband Mr Akrika, who is not in support of her furry and extremity, in a lighter mood replies:

Akrika: (*laughing*) Debo, I thought you were a Christian. (Ibid, 122).

Akrika's statement implies that his wife is over – stretching the matter- and her over – reaction is quite contrary to what is expected of a Christian. A Christian according to his word, should be patient, friendly, humble, and above all, act in love and mercy.

While Mrs. Eme fights relentlessly to stop Eme from marrying Adia, her son has already made up his mind and assures Adia of his plans to marry her.

Eme: Leave that for me. Even if she does not accept you now, eventually she will. Adia: Promise you will stick to me whatever happens. That you will not let anybody scare you from marrying me. (Ibid, 206).

In this drama, *The Calabar Woman*, we could see Mrs. Akrika as a harsh and authoritative woman. A domineering and influential woman over her husband and children. Her opinion is supreme and must be respected, whether reasonable or otherwise. However, she is a woman who refuses to handle with a kid's globe, her protective role over her son's marital life. She feels that her son could not make a good choice. She then takes it upon herself to discard the "bad" and discover the "good." Her

plans and desire to find the best spouse for her son is not wrong but to force her own plans on him, and husband breeds confusion and misunderstanding in the family.

Eme could be seen as a quiet cool headed gentle man. Even though he and his mother, has varying opinions, he did not confront his mother rudely. But in a simple manner, he presents and declares his stand. Eme, as a result of his action of co-habiting with a woman, with whom he is not properly married to, shows a mark of irresponsibly. His behaviour gave his family (especially his mother and sister) much concern. The family experienced confusion, restlessness, emotional trauma, disagreements, and chaos.

The issue of a young girl leaving a father's house to live with a lover, with the view to being married by the man in question is anti-African Culture. It is one of those corrupt elements which crept into African culture in the recent time. The Culture still stands to explain that a girl who elopes, with a man, is a disgrace to herself, family and relations. She is seen as an irresponsible lot. Her relationship with her family members and relations is soured.

In traditional Igbo Culture, the family can take rash decision against her. They could decide not to visit her when she puts to bed. More seriously, her mother who is expected to help her in doing things such as bathing the baby, preparing special local dishes for the nursing mother will neither visit nor take up such functions. In extreme cases the family disowns her and will not have anything to do with her for life. However, if the girl's family is "a kind one", they could visit their daughter as occasions warrant such visits, but the truth remains that their relationship with her will not be deep. In some cases, if a girl goes to live with a lover, whom her family

disapproves, the family can reject the man's wine or bride price even if he comes to marry the girl later.

The normal and ideal process, which, Igbo Cultures and some other Nigeria/Africa Cultures approve, is that a girl's hand is sort in marriage. A normal marriage process follows, and the girl is honorable led into her marital home. Therefore, Adia's action is not a credit. It is such irresponsible behaviour that Mrs. Akrika could not condole.

In this work, the issue of the use of charm and witchcraft power is employed. This shows that in traditional African Culture, the use of charm is very common. It is believed that with the charm and magical powers, difficult problems are solved and solutions are proffered to hard situations. It is equally vital to point out, that in some occasions, the efficacy of the charm is felt, while at other times, it fails. In this very drama, when Acho applied it, to have Adia sent away from Eme's house, it could not carry out that function. Howbeit, on the otherhand, Aworo's parents believed it made son, defeat his opponent in the wrestling match, as witnessed in the work earlier treatd, *Nwata Rie Awo(O Ju Anu)*.

Mrs. Akrika addresses Adia as a witch. She is convinced in her self that the way in which Eme clings to her is not ordinary. It is only beings like the witches, who have supernatural powers to make a man act out of his will. Wizardry and witchcraft is a common phenomenon in African belief.

The work of the witches and wizards is specifically hazardous. All that they perpetrate is evil. They do not attack only outsiders but members of their own family as well. They have power of manipulation and control over people. This we could see when Mrs. Akrika accuses Adia of having control over her son. Witches and wizards carry out

similar functions and it is realized that they hold their meetings in the coven. **when the culture of a people demands that a son of the soil should not marry an out cast, *osu* girl, if a son attempts to pervert such cultural dictates, there would arise a contention between him and his parents. A classical example is drawn from Achebe's novel, *No Longer at Ease*. When Obi Okonkwo's parents stopped him from marrying Clara, a girl he was passionately in love with, the action triggered of a serious aggressive reaction from Obi, of which when his mother died, he neither returned home nor partook in her burial.**⁶ **COPIED FROM INTRODUCTION**
Achebe, C. 1960, *No Longer at Ease*, 147.

Copied from Igbo work uner berrreiness in igbo marriage

It is a misfortune for a married couple to be denied of children. In the traditional Igbo setting, polygamy is widely practiced. In this way, the man guards against childlessness. It is a normal thing to have a man's *obi* (compound) filled with children. And more secured are positions of women with sons. A monogamous marriage falls an easy prey to barrenness and the man's relatives, especially the female ones take it as their own business and cry more than the bereaved.

The novelist, John Munonye, in his novel, *Obi*, highlights on the strains that stare on the Igbo marriage, which threatens to be childless:

We've seen the wife you brought home. We are angry with you at the beginning for marrying a stranger, we are no longer angry. We think she is well bred. And she's beautiful too, but then, what use is a kola nut tree, if it fails to bear fruit.⁴⁰

The character Chiaku allays her fears should her son remains barren. She believes that acquisition of wealth without a son to hand it over to, is a miserable thing. "What was all the property worth, when there was no body – his own flesh – to inherit it? That was what Chiaku was thinking"(Obi p.31), "After Adiewere and Idu failed to produce any child, many people had advised him to marry another wife, but he refused. He was not at heart a polygamist."⁴¹

It is expected of a man to take another wife, if the first one could not bear fruit. Until of recent, it is widely believed that the problem of unfruitfulness in marriage, lies solely with the woman, and so she either allows her husband to marry a second wife, or

does the marrying herself. Based on this notion, Onyemuru and Nwasiobi discussed and advised that Idu should allow her husband to marry, or even marry for him, like Uberife has done.⁴²

The bitter and irritant reaction of Umuada (the union of both matured married and unmarried daughters of the family, kindred, village or town) generates enough trauma for the woman who could not bear a child for their “brother”. In Anna’s case, they lead a delegation, to discuss the matter with their “brother” and declare, “of course, we can’t call her our own yet, not until she produces for us”.⁴³ Anna sorrowfully said that, “what worried her more than anything else, was the attitude of the women who were Joe’s relatives, especially the things they now said publicly and sometimes in her hearing”.(Obi, p.145)**PLS NUMBR**

Ihekanmadu, after seven years of marital barrenness, on the day his wife delivered their daughter, Chinagorom, the joy with which he received her was expressed as reported below: Ihekanmadu gbara egbe

Iji zi umu uwa na ya bukwa nwoke
Ma obuladi otu o bu nwanyi
Ka nwunye ya muru, o juru ya obi
N’ihi o si olee nke m huru ju.⁴⁴

Ihekanmadu received the baby with a gun salute.
To tell the world that he is not impotent.
Even though it is a baby girl that his wife delivered
He is satisfied, because he says did I even see any before?
(Translation Mine)

Lack of male child breeds insults and hatred, how much more bareness. It is an experience no woman would wish to have, because she is more taunted than the man.

40. Munonye, J. 1969, *Obi*, 99.

41. Op.cit. *Idu*, 16.

42. Ibid.33-34.

43. Op. cit. *Obi*, 100.

44. Julie Onwuchekwa, Chgorom, (Ibadan. Evans Brothers Nigeria Publishers) p 1 **CUT**

PART OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IN CLASSICAL CULTURE. Those removed by onayemi.

4.10 Domestic violence and the law.

Emperor Augustus Caesar in the bid to bring sexual laxity to a check enacted, two blocks of law, the *lex Julia de adulteris coercendis*, 18- 17BC, which made illicit sexual relationship a public crime. The law applied to *adulterium*, illicit sexual intercourse by, and with, a respectable married woman; and *stuprum*, fornication with a widow or unmarried free woman, who was not a prostitute.⁵⁰ It was like bereavement for Augustus to discover that Julia, a daughter, he so much loved and cherished and her daughter, younger Julia, had been indulged in several adulteries. The misfortune, to him, was of higher magnitude compared with the death of his two grand-sons. Augustus did not hesitate, but formerly made the crime known to the senate in a communiqué, which was read by a *quaestor*.⁵¹

Julia was tried under adultery law of 2 B.C. by his father and was banished to Pandateria, a small sterile and inhospitable island north of Naples; her mother Scribonia voluntarily shared in her exile. She was denied wine and luxuries, and was not allowed to see any man without Augustus' permission. Augustus sent her a bill of divorce on behalf of her husband Tiberius, whose marital relationship with her was quite unsound. The emperor left Julia out of his will and excluded the two Julias from burial in his mausoleum (family burial tomb). There was a public outcry pleading for Julia's return, which Augustus refused bluntly. At a point, Julia resorted to starvation and eventually committed suicide in AD 14.⁵²

Augustus had a very intimate and affectionate relationship with Julia, before the disaster struck. Nevertheless, Emperor Augustus in his adherence to the dictates of the law did not spare his own daughter from the wrath of the law, hence leaving a big challenge to the world in general. He left golden footprints on the sand of time, which

stresses that, every body is equal before the law, both the patricians and the plebians alike. We have to recall that Julia was not one of the Emperor's children, but was an only child and the only daughter, yet her father, Augustus, made her face the judgment and subsequently the appropriate punishment, **5. 16 Violence in *Purple Hibiscus***

The novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, is authored by Adichie. The narrator which is a first person narrator, Kambili, is also the protagonist of the novel. She is a teenage girl, who introduces her family as one smeared in violence. The violent encounter is usually flagged off by the father of the family; who irrationally tries to consolidate his "faith." She bemoans that the home is of absolute silence and lacks freedom. All the members of the family live in total awe of the father.

The author presents a character Eugene, a man who washes off his hands, concerning African traditional religion, which his father holds at high esteem. Like Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Eugene accepts the white man's religion. However, he conspicuously arrays his total loss of interest in the indigenous religion. By his own evaluation, the local religion is devilish and satanic, and all who practice it must be avoided. He, to a large extent, alienates himself from the traditional religion, but holds firm to his new faith – Catholicism. Invariably, he is a fanatic by a reasonable assessment. His entire life is enveloped by this new belief. He expects all the members of his immediate family (wife and children) to hold the faith exactly at his own degree.

They must stand and remain bound, and show servitude to all the doctrines that guide and protect the interest of Catholic faith. Inability, failure or negligence of the least of these doctrines, attract punishment which ranges from scolding to severe beating, or more harsh punishment. Evidence abound which stress that most of the beatings he gives to his wife and children are as a result of being found wanting or defaulting in his religious beliefs.

It is expedient to note that, Eugene is not a failure in life. He is a man of great achievement and honour. He is rich both in money and landed property. He is an enormous industrialist, wealthy businessman, a democratic activist, fabulous donor in the church, a distinguished philanthropist, and community leader. He is the *Omeleora*

(one who is kind and liberal, especially in financial matters, to his people) of his community. His wife and children are not in lack materially, but his strict and high handedness, present his family as lamb in the lion's den.

Mr Eugene expects that none of the members of his family should exempt him or herself from the Holy Communion, which is one of the practices that describes a Pius Catholic. It is believed that one who takes it all the time is without sin, since sinners are not worthy to eat the flesh or drink the blood of Jesus Christ. "You cannot stop receiving the body of our Lord. It is death you know that" (p.6). Eugene reminds his son that the flesh of Jesus is important, because it is the source of life, and any who rejects it, is beckoning on death. This is one of the reasons why nobody must miss it in his family.

Rather than teaching his family with love and patience, Eugene uses violence to teach and or make his point:

Papa looked around the room quickly, as if searching for proof that something had fallen from the high ceiling, something he had never thought would fall. He picked up the missal and flung it across the room, toward Jaja. It missed Jaja completely, but it hit the glass étagère, which Mama polished often. It cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers in various contorted postures, to the hard floor and then landed after them. Or rather it landed on their many pieces.⁹³

The terse but artistic description reveals Eugene's impatience and fury. He is a man of uncontrolled temper. He cares nothing about the consequences of his action. Even though he is rich, he wastes good things. Here is destroyed, a beautiful ornament which adds to the aesthetic look of the living room; and of course, this is an ornament which his wife loves and cherishes. He creates emotional scenes and tensions, which rob the peace, love and confidence one expects in the home.

Kambili and her brother are shut in at home. They are not allowed to go out, either for sight seeing or spend their holidays outside the home. They are like prisoners who lose freedom and cannot enjoy the other side of the world. This ill-treatment receives intervention, when Auntie Ifeoma, their father's sister, insists that Eugene must release his children to celebrate Christmas with her family. Eugene reluctantly accepts

that the children will be with Ifeoma, provided she does not expose them to “anything ungodly.” If she drives past *Mmuo* (Masquerade), she must wind up her windows’ glass.

Eugene draws a time schedule for his children – there is time to eat, time to sleep, time to do assignment; virtually time for everything and unfortunately as Kambili points out; “Papa did not pencil in TV time on our schedules”(p.79). Kambili is embarrassed and ashamed to tell Amaka her cousin that their father never approved of TV watching, when she asks whether they (Kambili and her brother, Jaja) watch CNN, the day they visit their house.

The anti social life of the children, which is born out of living a prison – like life, is glaring through what Amaka says about them. Amaka is forced to throw a question at her mother, Auntie Ifeoma. “Are you sure they are not abnormal, Mom? Kambili just behaved like an *atulu*, (sheep) when my friends came” (p. 141). “She behaves funny. Even Jaja is strange”.⁹⁴

Eugene hardly permits his children to visit or have Papa Nnukwu, (Eugene’s father and their grand father) under the same roof. He tells them that Papa Nnukwu is ungodly, defiled, and polluted. This is because he is a pagan as Jaja points out. They dread their grand father’s house due to what their father feeds into their young heads. Ifeoma informs them that they are going to pick Papa Nnukwu to join in their outing; when they get to Papa Nnukwu’s compound, the children refuse to come down from the car. The reason as Jaja explains, goes: “We are not allowed to come here after we’ve greeted him.” Auntie Ifeoma furiously thunders: “What kind of nonsense is that eh?” ...“Tell me why your father doesn’t want you here?”⁹⁵ In the same light, Eugene does not allow his father to visit his house. He will not let him into his house, and will not even greet him.

Eugene disapproves of his children staying under the same roof with a “heathen” as he refers to his father. Eugene forces his children to confess against their wish, the above incident which he confirms to be sin, before the Reverend Father. He prays for them that God will forgive them and remove the spirit that made them lie that they did not sleep in the same house with a heathen, when they went to their Auntie’s house.

The moment Eugene accepts the new religion, he stops taking care of his aged father. He does not visit or send him money, if not for the intervention of people, which forces him to unwillingly send meager amount through his driver. Papa Nnukwu

bemoans that his son is a wealthy man, yet he suffers hunger. He regrets his son's harsh treatment and thus he complains to his daughter, Ifeoma.

Nekenem, (look at me). My son owns that house that can fit in every man at Abba, and yet many times, I have nothing to put on my plate. I should not have let him follow those missionaries.⁹⁶

Papa-Nnukwu makes a point. He is right in his observation. Eugene is a liberal donor in the church, and a charity donor in the community. He is the *Omeleora*. During Christmas celebration, he feeds the entire community. His house is a swarm of people, who troop in to eat and drink. The fact that he is a philanthropist cannot be over emphasized, yet his aged father suffers hunger.

Eugene's hatred for his father is further buttressed when he warns him of the looming doom, of not receiving a befitting burial, should he die a pagan. He eventually stands by his threat. Apart from the meager amount of money which he hands over to Ifeoma, after baptizing her with the fire of his words, he neither attends his father's burial ceremony, nor allows his family to do so. Although the author does not say that Eugene physically beats his father at any point in time, but the emotional wound he inflicts on him is more painful.

Eugene's brutality knows no bound; on another occasion, he beats his wife, Kambili and Jaja. Their offense is that his wife Beatrice and Jaja aid Kambili to eat before the breaking of the Eucharistic fast. Beatrice, seeing her daughter suffer excruciatingly under menstrual pain, out of pity, advises that she takes some cornflakes to enable her take pain relieving tablets. Luck runs out of them when Eugene incidentally meets them right together in the room while Kambili eats:

He unbuckled his belt slowly, it was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then mama raised hands as it landed on her upper arm. I put the bowl down as the belt landed on my back... Papa was like a Fulani nomad, although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung his belt at mama, Jaja and me, muttering that devil will not win.⁹⁷

In another encounter, Kambili and Jaja have hot water poured on their feet for not confessing that they slept in the same house with Papa-Nnukwu a heathen, at Ifeoma's house, when they went to Nsukka. Eugene claims that his daughter sees sin and decides to walk into it, and for that reason, the feet must be purged of sin. He calls his daughter into the bathroom and asks her to enter the bath tub, being ever fearful of the father, Kambili could not ask a question, but obeys every command sheepishly:

Kambili, you are precious... You should not see sin and walk right into it. He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment... The pain of contact was so pure, so scaling, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed.⁹⁸

As though the above punishment is not enough, on another ill fated day, Eugene gives Kambili the battering of her life. A beating which leaves her unconscious and have her rushed to the hospital. Her crime is that her father sees her admiring and fondling Papa- Nnukwu's painting. It is quite unfortunate that her father storms into her room and meets her. No doubt Eugene's belt has another buffet of her flesh. Consequently, Kambili becomes terribly sick as a result of the beating, of which she has to take her examination on a hospital bed:

The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal buckle landed on my open skin, on my side, my back, my legs. Kicking, kicking, kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. When I opened my eyes, I knew at once that I was not on my bed... I made to get up, but pain shot through my whole body... I collapsed back.⁹⁹

Eugene knows that what he did is an untold cruel act, rather than disciplinary measure. His crime can be categorized under child abuse and maltreatment, thus he refuses to disclose to the Doctor and the Priest of the church- Reverend Father Benedict, that he is the household enemy, who nearly sends his own daughter to an early grave. He realizes that, should these people who respect him get to know about this atrocity, they will completely lose all trust and confidence in him. Eugene of course is a two-faced entity. The Eugene at church is a unique contrast of Eugene at home. At church he

presents himself an aura and bunch of holiness and righteousness. He is a saint in the church, but a monster at the home front. Father Benedict even classify Eugene with the Pope and Jesus, as people who are worthy of emulation.

The Priest uses Eugene to explain the Gospel, describing him as a man who stands for truth and fights for the freedom of the masses through his newspaper- *The Standard*. On the contrary, at home, his family (wife and children) are in mental chains. Their hearts know neither peace nor rest. He advises Father Benedict to call and win back afresh any soul which misses Holy Communion for two consecutive Sundays, because according him, it is only mortal sin that can stop, the person from Holy Communion.

Eugene is a hypocrite! At home, he beats and makes his wife have several miscarriages. This time, it is just two of them at home; the children went to Nsukka at Auntie Ifeoma's place. Beatrice's husband, attacks her like a lion, and has another pregnancy wasted. This incident leaves Beatrice in deep sorrow, lonely and unconsolated. She leaves her home for Nsukka to seek solace from Auntie Ifeoma. She presents her ordeal to her daughter, Kambili and Auntie Ifeoma. She draws her daughter's attention and says: "You know that small table where we keep the family bible *nne*? Your father broke it on my belly".... "My blood finished on that floor even before they took me to St Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it."¹⁰⁰

When Ifeoma questions further, Beatrice discloses, that she lost six weeks pregnancy. Ifeoma becomes furious over Eugene's uncivilized behaviour while Beatrice weeps until she sleeps off. In the evening Eugene called, Ifeoma urges Beatrice not to pick it; but she insists on taking the call which orders her speedy return to Enugu the next day, together with the children. Beatrice's life with her husband is a replica of slave-master relationship. A life filled with fear and tremble of an inferior toward a superior.

One fateful day, Eugene died in his office as his wife relates in a telephone conversation with Kambili. "Mama's low voice floated across the phone line and quickly quelled my shaking hand. "Kambili, it's your father, they called me from the factory, that they found him lying dead on his desk."¹⁰¹ Kambili could not believe that

her strong and energetic father will die so suddenly. Later, Beatrice casually discloses at a very low tone that she poisoned her husband. Her confession establishes the act: “I started putting poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor.”¹⁰²

The police comes from the hospital where the autopsy is conducted and Jaja presents himself as the perpetrator. The police arrests and takes him away. Beatrice begins to nurse slight mental disorder, of which when she proclaims that she killed her husband, nobody believes her. People conclude that the death of her husband and arrest of her only son must have triggered off the mild insanity. On the contrary, it could be believed that Beatrice has exhausted her patience and the strength to bear the burden, and decides to gain freedom through the most dreadful means- murder.

5. 17 Violence in *Purple Hibiscus* Examined

Eugene is generally the initiator of violence in his household. His wife and children are commonly his victims, while he is the offender or oppressor. In the first place, Beatrice sees her self as an inferior entity who cannot challenge Eugene in any way. She believes her husband is not her equal in every sense of it. She counts herself lucky to have such wealthy philanthropist, who most ladies wish to associate with, as husband. This of course is Beatrice’s feelings and it however contributes to her inactive response to her husband’s tyranny, oppression, brutality and violent treatments.

Furthermore, in Igbo culture women are expected to keep silent, endure in patience and remain unexpressive while dealing with men, but uphold gentleness and submissiveness which are important treasures of womanhood. Akachi Ezigbo, supports the above premise when she observes as follows:

There was a time the notion; “Women are to be seen not heard” was widely accepted by many societies. Silence and invisibility was another attribute of the woman. Women were more or less decorative accessories to beautify or embellish the home; in addition to their numerous roles as wives, mothers, and child bearers and rears.¹⁰³

Beatrice through her character in this work presents her self as a traditional Igbo woman, who is held bound by the above belief. She seems to accept the hostile

treatment in her home, as a cross she must bear. She is not an eloquent speaker. Kambili compares the way her mother talks with the way birds eat tiny bits. She often resorts to weeping when she or her children are battered, with wounds inflicted all over. The only action she takes is to nurse the wound until it heals. She dared not challenge or query Eugene's action. Beatrice reasons that to leave her marriage is not the best option, because her husband is a very wealthy man whom most women would love to identify with, or have as life partner. When Ifeoma advises her to work out her freedom, even if it means walking out of her home, she turns the advice down.

Adichie presents a clear picture of a traditional Igbo wife. She is expected to remain silent in whatever trials she undergoes in her home. She has to be patient and long suffering. She is not expected to complain because she does not know what the woman next door is passing through in the hand of her own husband. It is the ability to endure and still perform her maternal functions that upgrades her as an ideal, responsible or strong woman. This belief does not make pale the fact that family members or relatives do step in, to settle matters between husband and wife, but the woman is not expected to run away from home because of tough family experiences.

In addition, she is expected to live up to such difficulties and hardships. She has to work out modalities to sustain her self and the marriage. A typical example could be drawn from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo almost shattered Ekwefi's brain. The magnitude of the violence notwithstanding, Ekwefi and other wives who suffer under Okonkwo's terror, refuse to bow out of the marriage. They continue to walk in patience and endurance. However, women who cannot withstand the intensity of their husbands' tyranny can resort to going back to their fathers' houses, especially when what they suffer is life threatening.

The upbringing which Kambili and his brother Jaja, receive from their father, makes them socially undeveloped. Their behavior is strange when in the midst of other children. They are not allowed to watch the television or engage in social activities. The children and their mother lack the ability of self expression, while Auntie Ifeoma and her children are assertive. Ifeoma's children are expressive and they flow very well in the midst of friends.

Auntie Ifeoma represents the contemporary liberated and educated Igbo woman. She would never allow Eugene, her brother, to intimidate her. She knows what she wants and how to get it. When she is thrown out of the University where she is a

lecturer, it does not take her time to work out her visa; travels abroad with her children and continues her life. It is at Ifeoma's house that Kambili and Jaja gain freedom of expression and action, mixed up with sound behavior. Papa-Nnukwu stands for the traditional Igbo values which remain uninfluenced; even though attacked, threatened, bruised and humiliated by the Western culture and religion.

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just like any other citizen who disregards the law would.

Emperor Augustus, through his action, declares the supremacy of the law. He clarifies that no one is above the law, no matter the status. Nobility of birth, political position, religious position et cetera, cannot exempt one from obeying the law. He did not banish Julia to a “fertile island” but to a “sterile one” where life would be uncompromisingly terrible for her. His aim was to give her harsh and severe punishment. Of course he did not recall her back before he died. The stand of the law should not be twisted, manipulated or influenced to suit one’s situation. Neither will its position be compromised with. Everyone is equal before the law!

Augustus’ revolutionary step against sexual immorality did not cease or reduce its effect because his daughter and grand daughters were involved. Augustus’ measure is supposed to be a virtue worthy of emulation by leaders, who twist the law to have themselves, their family members, relations and friends guilty and enmeshed by the law, freed. In the year 2006, I was opportuned to sit with other post graduate students at Tafawa Balewa Post Graduate Hall University of Ibadan, to listen to the University Anti Cults Group; who came to address the post graduate students. The group was made up of eminent scholars and administrators from the University community. In the discussion, one of them told us of an incident which he vouched of its authenticity. He spoke about the son of a very wealthy man in the society, who was caught and with other cult members during one of their initiation exercises. Pathetically, the boys were released few days later and the matter died a natural death. This ridiculous step was taken to avert the big man’s son of punishment or have his name dented. The “big man” confronted and threatened the lawyer who came to learn about the matter, and criticized the release. The man in question accused him (the lawyer) of an intention to have his son jailed. Not too long after that incident, nemesis caught up with the very boy, when his cult group clashed with another, and he was murdered.⁵³

Crimes committed by some people who are at the helm of affairs are covered up and the culprits never face judgment. Up till today we still ask questions such as: “Where is Gloria Okon?”- (A lady who was arrested at the Murtala Mohammed Airport Lagos, Nigeria, in the 1990s, for drug peddling). It was reported that she escaped from

the cell and till today, nobody can boldly give account of her where-about. Other similar ridiculous and rhetorical questions include: “Who killed Dele Giwa?” “Who killed Chief Bola Ige?” “Who killed Mr. Funsho Williams?” “Who killed Dr Dararnola?” The list is endless! The answers to most of these questions, one would believe, are not far fetched, but the bane of the truth is the fear of those who are more powerful than us. Thus the situation becomes a problem of who bares the cat.

Apart from Augustus, there were other fathers in the Classical historical literature, who made their sons face the wrath of the law. In 509 B.C., L. Junius Brutus used his consular authority and ordered the execution of his son for treason. Spurius, Cassius’ father, put him to death after a domestic *concilium* declared him guilty of treasonable activities, while holding a counselor office in 486B.C.

Furthermore, in 140B.C., Silenus the governor of Macedon, found option in suicide after his father declared him guilty of *repetundae*. Scaurus followed suit, having fled from a battle at Cimbri, was bared from his father’s presence, thus he took his life. Flurius’ father executed him for the part he played, in Catilinian conspiracy. This incident took place, *circa* 102 and 63 B.C. During Augustus’ reign, Tarius sent his son into exile after a *concilium* found him guilty of attempted patricide.⁵⁴ Most of the issues mentioned, involved public misconduct except the last which is a private offense.

However, it now becomes clear that a number of ancient Romans were not only law abiding, but patriotic to the Roman Empire. They refused to compromise with the crimes of their sons and daughters and ignore the potency of the law. Such practices demonstrated the place of discipline and respect for the rule of law in the Ancient Roman society. It is worthy to note that, a man who can banish a son or daughter or sentence his own son to death, cannot spare anyone found guilty any offence. These “noble” Romans have distinguished and written their names with golden pens on the indelible sand of time. Their aspiration to maintain the efficacy of the law calls for emulation by other nations of the world.

4.10 Divorce and Domestic Violence.

Divorce leaves the divorcee in confusion. Generally, the women in most cases suffer more after divorce has been instituted. A number of them depend on the men economically and that is the simple explanation why a good number of them are most hit by the effects of divorce. A divorced woman also faces problem of insecurity. She loses her respect in a male chauvinistic society like ours, where she is stigmatized. Thus hands point at her, “she is a divorcee”.

Divorce *divortium* is a form of household violence, which gives emotional wound. Divorce in itself does not inflict physical wound, but it is mainly associated with emotional and psychological pain. Nevertheless, in a situation where physical combat and battering precede divorce, physical wounds are likely to be sustained. Commonly, in the Ancient Greek and Roman time, it was the man who initiates divorce. The Ancient Roman practice allows the man to break off from betrothal or nullify a marriage. The women for a long time lived under the dictates and mercy of their husbands, until during the Republican period when they were given a measure of freedom.

Since marriage *coniugium* in Ancient time was monogamous in nature, men, especially those of the dynastic order divorced and remarried at will. They use marriage to establish strong political connections or consolidate political offices. Sulla experienced five marriages. He married Julia, Aelia, Clodia, Caedllia, Metella and Valeria. Augustus married three times. He married Claudia, the daughter of Fulvia in order to seal reconciliation with her stepfather Marcus Anthonius. His second wife was Scribonia whom he also married for political reasons. Through this marriage he wanted to consolidate a relationship with Sextus Pompeius, whose father-in-law Scribo Libo was Scribonia’s brother. He divorced Scribonia of whom he said, “I could not bear the way she nagged at me” and immediately took Livia Drusilla, who came to him with a pregnancy from a previous marriage.⁵⁵ Pericles also divorced his wife and remained single for a long period of time before he remarried.⁵⁶ What is common with these marriages was that no two women were married at the same time. They were serially married one after the other.

Apart from political reasons being the reason for some divorce cases, barrenness is another major cause of divorce amongst couples. In the Ancient culture, husband hardly tolerated a wife who remained barren- the next line of action would be divorce and remarriage. Sulla divorced his wife Clodia, as a result of barrenness. It was an honourable discharge for Clodia who left Sulla's house with praises and gifts. Sulla's action was never queried or frowned at, for making childbearing a condition for marriage success.⁵⁷ Ehrenberg affirms the irritant effects of sterility in marriage, when he asserts; "childlessness often led to marital trouble and divorce".⁵⁸ At this juncture, let us recall the case of the barren Hermione, earlier mentioned, whose husband discarded for a slave woman who could bear him a son.

Furthermore, in Ancient Greece a wife of the family could be divorced if caught in adultery, she loses all affections and interest from her husband and his family as well as her own paternal family members. There was severe law, which allowed a man who caught an adulterer with his wife or his concubine to kill him on the spot. In as much as the woman suffers divorce and other related unpalatable treatments; a husband's adultery was not taken seriously.⁵⁹

A look at the Biblical literature gives us an insight of the opinion of Jesus on the issue of divorce. Jesus in his own view is not comfortable with the idea of divorces. Nevertheless, He approves of divorce on one condition. According to his thinking, a woman should not be divorced for no other reason, than adultery. He knows that at that ancient time, men were divorcing their wives frivolously. Women were facing untold marital injustice in the hands of their husbands and the society at large. He goes on to disclose his ill feeling over divorce by making a pronouncement which makes divorce a difficult enterprise to venture into. Jesus categorically stresses that, if a man sends his wife away and marries another; such man has gone into an unapproved marriage. He is simply committing adultery with the new wife. Furthermore, He points out that whoever marries a divorced woman is living in sexual immorality with her. This tersely explains that such man is equally into a wrong marriage "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."⁶⁰

4.11 Abandonment, Child Exposure, Infanticide, and Miscellaneous Household Offenses against the Child.

In Ancient Greek and Roman cultures, the motif of infanticide, child exposure, contraceptive, abortion, sexual abuse and other related issues are some of the violence which the child suffers in the hands of his household members, especially parents. Children of both sexes suffered exposure but the daughters were mostly affected. Children were usually exposed as a result of deformity, social and economic reasons. Consulting the oracle to determine the future of the child especially the son was a common practice in the ancient Rome and Greek. The outcome of the oracular message if negative endangers the child to exposure (casting the baby away to get rid of it). The motif of infant exposure is common among ancient mythographers. Persus, Oedipus, and Moses were suspected displacer's who suffered exposure to allay the fears of those who exposed or caused their exposure.

The injury of infanticide or exposure dated back to the primitive Greek and Roman laws; *ius vitae et necis* which accorded the father of the family with the authority of power of life and death over all children still under his, *manu*.⁶¹ Fathers often nurse fear concerning the character of a child or what he would turn out to become in future. After the murder of Agrippina by her son, Nero, an unknown person exposed his child in the middle of the forum with an inscription, which he had written, "I will not raise you lest you cut your mother's throat."⁶² In Mythology we learnt about mothers such as Alcmena, Thetis and Hera who abandoned their sons: Heracles, Achilles and Haephestus respectively.

Adults also subject children to sexual molestation. Slave children especially, suffered in the hands of their masters, they were vulnerable to sexual and other forms of exploitation. These handsome boys who took care of the sexual whims of their male or female owners were called *delicae*.⁶³ In the same vein, first born children were also physically and sexually abused.⁶⁴

Child exposure was a common practice during the obscure ancient period; however such barbaric ill treatment against the child is no longer prevalent in the contemporary Greek and Roman cultures and even other cultures of the world that witnessed such acts. The emergence of Christianity, civilization and Government enactments which create awareness over the right of children, have rendered such treatments extinct.

4.12 Violence and Abnormal Sexual Relationships in the Classical Household.

Incest is an inordinate lustful sexual relationship amongst members of the family or people who are related by blood or marriage. Nevertheless, if the culture of a people allows sexual union among people who are related by blood or marriage, it is not an illicit sexual affair to them. Societies, which do not honour such relationships among kins, declare it a taboo. Almost all cultures abhor or prohibit incest, that is, marriage or sexual relationships between certain relatives. They forbid especially, sexual relationships between all members of a nuclear family except the husband and wife.⁶⁵ There are evidences of incestuous relationships especially in Classical literature; mostly among the elevated families. *The Metamorphoses* of Ovid; *Hippolytus* of Euripides; *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles; and *The Oresteian Trilogy* of Aeschylus are made sumptuous with family lust myth.

There exist in some Classical homes especially in literature cases of amorous sexual relationships, advances or desires to propagate incestuous relationships. Incest is an aberration in family relationships. Incest could be violent especially when it involves rape. Incest in some cases does not involve rape especially, when there is a mutual agreement between parties involved in the act. It is worthy of note that, there are complexities or violent acts, which could arise, due to failed or unsuccessful attempt to consummate passionate union with a family member. This assertion is born out of the fact that some family members when turned down in amorous advances could take their lives or wrongly accuse the person who rebuffed them, in order to have the fellow punished.

The factor that leads to incest could be generally associated with the inability to control sexual emotions. This weakness equally exposes some members of the household to the danger of being raped. However, other family members can punish the perpetrator or avenge this unholy behaviour.

Ancient Greeks and Romans hold that, it is of necessity to acknowledge that people sometimes are persuaded, lured or driven into the abominable relationship by powers they cannot resist. Classical Mythology reveals that gods or goddesses could coerce humans to develop such sexual passions. This commonly occurs when the immortals wish to punish mortals. The case of Hippolytus is striking. He was mercilessly punished by Aphrodite, whom he refused reverence. The person suffering under the punitive hands of the gods hardly receive help. Thus, Artemis specifically disclosed to Hippolytus, that a god cannot thwart the design of another, especially when Zeus endorses such design. For this reason he was not delivered from his predicament.

The incestuous advances of Phaedra toward Hippolytus is very popular in the Classical literary scene. The story is drawn from two sources. They are the mythical drama of Euripides; The *play, Hippolytus* of Euripides and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The father of Hippolytus is Theseus, the king of Troezen and his mother, an Amazon whose death prompted Theseus to marry Phaedra his queen. It was by Aphrodite's intrigue that Phaedra fell passionately in love Hippolytus who despises and shows no interest in her. "And Phaedra there, his father's queen highly-born saw him and she saw her heart beat was torn with great love, by the working of my will."⁶⁶ Euripides brought to the fore the role of the nurse who volunteered to aid her mistress to achieve her lustful desire. It was Phaedra's nurse who conveyed the love note from the queen to her step-son. Out of fury, Hippolytus turned down the nurse and her love message and spoke her rashly.

O God why has thou made this gleaming snare woman, to dog us on the happy earth? ... I feel still impure at the very hearing! ... Hast thou not trapped me with that guileful oat,...Then shall I have the taste of it and know what woman's guile is- woe upon you!⁶⁷

Hippolytus because of his devotion and chastity which owes his favourite goddess, Artemis rejected Phaedra's demand. Phaedra's dreadful passion for youngstep-son reduced her fevered state. When she over heard Hippolytus made an outburst against the female sex, and the necessity to abolish women, made her throw all hope into the wind. Having lost all hope of reciprocation of her love, from Hippolytus, committed suicide. She conceived a plan to punish Hippolytus before taking her life. Thus she left a suicidal note , accusing him of seduction.⁶⁸

Unfortunately, the innocent Hippolytus was severely punished by his father who could not make a thorough investigation of the whole matter, before sending him on exile. On his way to exile, his movement was interrupted by a sea- bull, whose sight terrified the his horses, which dashed his chariot head-long down the rocky land, leaving Hippolytus fatally wounded. The goddess Artemis revealed to the king, Hippolytus' encounter with Phaedra. Theseus having realized the truth, showed remorse for his action and sought reconciliation with his son, who died not too long after.

The story of Phaedra and Hippolytus portrays the woman as susceptible to passion. It also shows the degeneration of womanhood and loss of chastity of the married woman. The woman figure in this work is presented as one who cannot be taken for her word. She is a family destroyer rather than a family maker. Hippolytus was predestined for destruction by a goddess, and of course the evil must be fulfilled in his life. This is the reason why he could not escape the calamity. Apart from this insinuation, he could be seen as a proud personality. It is pride and arrogance that attracted the anger of the goddess against him. He shows no regards to the goddess- Aphrodite. Even though he has a goddess he reveres, nothing stops him from acknowledging other immortals. He should have acted wisely knowing that women of all categories and status are jealous of their feminine counterparts. He tries to portray himself as misogynist, who attaches little or no value toward the woman figure, this could be deduced from his statement which suggests the abolish of woman race, if possible. The manner in which he reacted to the nurse, who brought Phaedra's message, showed another incident of pride recorded against.

Euripides and Ovid make clear the fallibility of the family head to pass the right judgment and the disaster such weaknesses brings to the family. Theseus was incapable of discovering the true circumstances surrounding the queen's death. He acted in error which led to the irredeemable loss of an innocent son. It is worthy to understand that the gods do not expose the mortals to punitive treatments in isolation. Mainly, they attack mortals who arouse their anger. They pass judgment which often times is never in favour of their victims. They are impartial in their judgment and dealings with man. It is quite unfortunate that the degree of punitive measures outweigh the degree of offense. For instance, in the case of Aphrodite and Hippolytus, "not showing regards to her" was the bane of his suffering and death; and the ruin of Theseus' household.

Similarly, Ovid, in the *Metamorphoses* tells us a story of a young girl who had a burning sexual passion for her father, Cinyras. Her nurse in the bid to calm her restlessness, got the king drunk, deceived him that she would lead a beautiful girl into his bedchamber when his wife made a journey. That was how the nurse planned and aided Myrrha to sleep with her father for three consecutive nights completely veiled, and the result of the abominable union was pregnancy.

On the bed of incest, the father takes his daughter ... filled
With her father, she left the chamber, carrying in her womb
the seed of crime conceived, and, she came back the next
night and the next.⁶⁹

Myrrha's deception and incest with her father ruined her life. She became not only a wanderer but also denied existence among humans. Through this medium Ovid makes us realize the careless in man. How could Cinyras sleep with a woman whose face he did not bother to see. As a matter of fact, a number of people are guilty of irresponsible acts at varying degrees. Ovid, in his poetry demonstrates the abnormality of incest; its abhorrence in the society and the repercussion that trails the offender.

Ovid narrates another story of Tereus who sexually assaulted Philomela his sister-in-law. He took the young girl from his father-in-law, with the intention of taking her to his wife, Procne; Philomela's elder sister, who longed to see her. Instead of taking

her to his house. Tereus took the helpless girl to an island where he battered, afflicted physical wounds on the girl and raped her several times.

Pale trembling, fearing everything and asking where was her sister? And he told her what he was going to do, and straight way did it, raped her, a virgin all alone, and calling for her father, for her sister, but most often the great gods.⁷⁰

Procne punished and avenged her sister by killing and serving the flesh of her son to her husband who ate out of ignorance. Tereus' payment for raping his sister-in-law was the loss his only son and his posterity.

Hippolytus as earlier mentioned was sorely punished and his life lost because he rejected his step –mother's amorous passion for him. The step, which Hippolytus took, could be likened to an incident in the *Metamorphoses* where a young girl, Babylis expressed such awful lust for her half-brother Caunus, who rejected her advances,⁷¹ as Hippolytus did to Phaedra. Babylis wept herself to destruction, while Phaedra took to suicide. Hippolytus' negative response to Phaedra brings to memory Potiphar's wife's amorous desire for Joseph.

And it came to pass after these things, that his Master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with Me" but he refused and said to his Master's wife, look there is no one in this house greater than I, nor has he kept anything from me but you. How can I do this kind of wickedness and sin against God. So it was as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her.⁷²

Joseph having been brought into Potiphar's house, even though slave automatically became a member of that family. Now, by the status of Potiphar, his wife will equally be a woman of high status. An elevated personality with honour assumed automatically, due to her husband's position. She is not just any woman, but a beautiful one who could attract such great man as Potiphar into marriage. It was clearly seen that it was not once that she desired to have Joseph lie with her, rather it a persistent demand. It was evident that Joseph was able to resist lady Potiphar irrespective of her status, beauty and riches. The young Joseph, full of life with

youthful instinct damned Potiphar's wife who offered her body without any charge or condition. Joseph's ability to reject this "mouth watering offer" made him a man of character and a monument of self control. He cannot be found wanting of avarice because he subsequently tuned down all promises by Potiphar's wife.

She made sure that Joseph was punished for rejecting her, but later God raised Joseph, and lifted him from dungeon to palace.

Similarly, Phaedra even though committed suicide left a suicidal note, which implicated and led Hippolytus to an early grave because his patron goddess could not help him. Hear her:

I am worsted by bitter love. But I shall become a bane of another when I am dead. He may learn not to be superior about my troubles; when he has shared this trouble with me, he still learn to be reasonable.⁷³

Hippolytus' action is quite in contrast with the unruly attitude of Reuben who slept with his father's wife and attracted his father's curse upon himself. "Reuben, you are my first born, ... unstable as water, you shall not excel; because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it, he went up to my couch".⁷⁴ Reuben as the first son of a rich man such as Jacob, is expected to have a larger share of his father's property after his death. Incidentally, he committed a sacrilegious offense before his father's sight and of course instead of blessing which a good child receives from parents, his, was a curse, which trailed his life. The repercussion of his carelessness and indiscipline, denied him so much benefits and had his life crumbled down. He has no fear for God, his father, or the blood which ties the family together.

In the family of Pelops, Thyestes seduced his brother's wife, Aerope. Clytaemnestra shared her matrimonial bed with Aegisthus, her husband's young cousin. Suetonius spoke of the lecherous passion, which Nero felt for his mother...⁷⁵ In the same vein, Tacitus in the *Annal* declares that Agrippina yearned for illicit union with her son Nero, sometimes, she posed naked before the young man. Smith draws attention to the incestuous marriage between Emperor Claudius and younger Agrippina, his

brother's daughter (his niece). The marriage violated the Roman law forbidding a man from, marrying his brother's daughter, or marriage with a sister's daughter.⁷⁶ Amnon, one of the sons of David, raped his virgin half-sister, Tamar. Absalom avenged his sister's virginity by spilling Amnon's blood.⁷⁷

God, Ovid, Euripides, and other scholars whose work we employed, hold a common theme which hinges on punishment, suffering and futility of the crime of incest. The omniscient God knows that incest is abominable and therefore recommends stern punishment; a medium to strictly put it to check. The penalty for incest was childlessness;⁷⁸ death by fire;⁷⁹ and ostracism.⁸⁰

Incest is not a violent act in itself but could be carried out in a violent manner and can equally inflict both physical and emotional wounds. In studying the unnatural sexual relationship in the Classical literature, It is discovered that, the perpetrators of the act of incest, whether by mutual agreement or through force, which is classified as rape, are sternly punished.

Tereus, who raped his sister-in-law had his son killed, by his wife who swore to erase his lineage; Myrrha who tricked and slept with her father was destroyed, so was Babilis; Phaedra who passionately desired it was doomed ; Agrippina and Claudius were ruined; Amnon who raped Absalom's sister was murdered. Thyrestes, Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra subsequently faced death.

The act of incest and its repercussion as evident in this study simply demonstrates how the practice of incest does not only destroy individual lives but brings ruin and calamity upon entire family or even generations as could be seen in the family of Pelops. A peaceful or orderly family when experiences incest is thrown into disarray, confusion or driven into strife. It is evident however, that moral laxity is embedded in the culture of some homes. Brothers see nothing wrong in having carnal knowledge of their sisters, or uncles their nieces. Fathers have terminated daughters' pregnancies because they are responsible. Some mothers aid their daughters get rid of pregnancies, because their sons or other blood relations are responsible.⁸¹ The theme of punishment and suffering which, God, Ovid and Euripides present to us cannot be easily accessed in the society even though the practice of incestuous relationship is real. However death

which could occur in the process of terminating a pregnancy, whose owner is a blood relation, is part of the punishment. More so, a family which is thrown into disarray as a result of suspicion over illicit relationship among members is sharing from the suffering.

During the course of this study, I had a discussion with a male colleague about his relationship with his daughter. He says:

I have a very beautiful daughter whom I love and adore. She is now in the University. I lavish so much money on her and we are always together. I can play or sleep on the same bed with her. Sometimes I do carry her on my laps. At a time my wife became jealous and started maltreating her. She often throws at her depressive words such as “go and marry your own husband, leave my husband for me. ...”⁸²

This woman fears that attention is gradually shifting completely from her to her daughter. She nurses fear that her position is being threatened if she does not act fast to guard it. Her daughter may not as a matter of fact marry her mother’s husband, who is her father, but can acquire a weighty influence over the man through such closeness. And of course, secretly control especially the financial affairs of the house. This woman’s fear and suspicion speaks of a people which have lost footing to excesses. A people whose culture is divested of moral principles.

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51. Suetonius, 1957, *The twelve Caesars*. Graves, R. (Trans), 86.
 52. Ibid. 143.

53. This illustration was given on the day when the University of Ibadan, Committee for Sensitization on Cultism visited Tafawa Balewa Post Graduate Hall, University of Ibadan, on August, 2006.
54. Evans, J.K. 1991, *War, Women and Children*,. 177-178.
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63. Op. cit. *War, Women and Children*, 168.
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69. Humphries, R. Td. 1983, *Ovid metamorphoses*. Humphries, R. (Trans). Book 10: 49; ll. 450-480. ‘
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71. Ibid. Book 9: ll. 22-227; ll.547-577; ll.578-613.
72. Op. cit. *The Holy Bible*, Genesis, 39:1-20.
73. Op. cit. *Ten plays by Euripides: Hippolytus*, 85: ll. 726-785.
74. Op. cit. *The Holy Bible*, Genesis 49:3-4.
75. Op. cit. *The Twelve Caesars*, 228.
76. Smith, W. 1913, *A smaller history of Roman Empire: From the earliest times to the death of Trajan*, 351.
77. Op. cit. *The Holy Bible*, 2 Samuel 13:1-32.
78. Ibid. Leviticus, 20:21
79. Ibid. Leviticus, 20:11-13.
80. Ibid. Leviticus, 18:29.
81. Op. cit. *Nigeria and the Classics: Unnatural sexual relations in the Classical family*, 4. 58.
82. Discussion held on May 10th 2006, with Mr Mike Enwerendu, from Anambra State, but based in Lagos.

6. 17 The Household and Abnormal Sexual Relationship

In order to expantiate further; add more flesh to this work and extend tentacle for more knowledge on this topic; The three literary works by J.P Cark, a famous dramatist from Ijaw; South-South Nigeria; and a poem written by an East African poet; Okot P' Bitek, from Kenya are brought in.

The family of Zifa's father was cursed. The man died leprous. He was a killer too. When he died he was buried at the unholy grove but after a short while Zifa, his first son ritually transferred him to the cemetery. Apologetically he says to the medicine man: Of course, I have recalled him into town so at times of festivals he can have sacrifice”¹¹⁵

Masseur believes that the time for the transfer was short and that is why Zifa was robbed of his manhood and left impotent. In the light of Zifa's weakness, his wife Ebiere, developed interest and passion for her husband's younger brother, and made a bed partner out of him.

Masseur: You are eaten up with anger but although you crush me, a cripple, between your strong hands, it will not solve your problem. What I suggest our fathers did not forbid even in days of old.¹¹⁶

The medicine man who Zifa consulted suggested that he gave his wife to another man to have fruits produced through that medium. “Have you ever considered another should take over the tilling of the fertile soil, and had mud flung at you.”¹¹⁷ Zifa's reaction to this suggestion was rash. He was mad with the medicine man, addressed him perjoratively while calling him all sorts of names.

Masseur's opinion is in line with what is obtainable in traditional Igbo culture. When a man is weak in his loin, he can agree with the wife to go out to any man of her choice and bring in the pregnancy, which she delivers for her husband. The child born through this means authomatically becomes the man's child. This arrangement is a top secret between the man and his wife. No one dares to know about it. The woman has no

reason to reveal this to anybody No matter how a woman quarrels with her husband; no matter how he malhandles her, she must not taunt her husband with this shortcoming and must not disclose it to any body. If she does, she has not only disgraced her husband, but herself, her immediate family and her own father's family. The reason also is to guard jealously the paternity of her children and moreso, the man's ego and integrity must not be dragged in the dust. Should such secret come to open, her children would be regarded as bastards. Masseur makes it clear that their fore fathers were in support of a man giving his wife out in secret to conceive for him. "What I suggest, our fathers did not forbid even in days of old." (p.12).

Zifa never asked his brother to carry out reproductive function for him. He was infuriated to discover that his brother and his wife had been deep into amorous relationship. Zifa is a fisherman and a part-time ship pilot. His job keeps him away from home and thus, his absence creates decorative room for the paramour to thrive in their business of incest. Zifa, when he learns about this unholy relationship, out of furry questions; "Why shouldn't I when my bed is barred from me for my brother to sleep on."¹¹⁸ Zifa becomes quite convinced that both people are lovers. He observes:

Zifa: You see how things are between the two?

Ebiere now consults him even in matters of household.

What further proof do I want now?"¹¹⁹

Zifa's wife Ebiere is very proud to disclose that Tonye, her husband's brother is her bed partner. She holds her head high. Through what she says and does, she wants Tonye to learn that she is carrying his pregnancy.

Ebiere: ...I am so happy today. I think what I told you is true.

Come and feel it. (p.35)

Tonye: We must not do that here under light of day. (p.35)

Ebiere: It is there, all right I know it, and it is for you. Oh,

I am so happy. Tonye lets fly and set up house in another creek.

You'll cast your net I'll hold stern until we have our child. (p.35).

The above discussion confirms the incestuous relationship between Tonye and Ebiere. The relationship bloomed to the point of having Ebiere impregnated by her

husband's younger brother. Ebiere in the above statements reveals her pregnancy for her brother-in-law, Tonye

In Igbo traditional culture and religion, when a man sleeps with a brother's wife, it means that he has uncovered his brother's nakedness. He has soiled himself with the sin of incest, which is an abomination. He must present a goat for sacrifice. Through Tonye's discussion with Ebiere, we are told that, it was demanded of him to bring a goat for sacrifice. "We cannot be too sure.... They asked me to fetch the goat for sacrifice...." (p.34). When an evil act such as this, is committed, the land frowns at it. The gods are provoked to anger and therefore demand sacrificial animal, especially a goat to cleanse the land and rid it of the pollution (*ikpualu*). Zifa's family is left with no option than to make the sacrifice.

Zifa: ...I obey you and built and make instant sacrifice to the gods (p.36).

Orukorere: But you are
As yet not cleansed, and for that matter all
The concession is reeking with rot and corruption (p.36)

Zifa: In that case, it was drastic cleansing which we shall all now perform (p.36).

Orukorere: Be careful, son, and do nothing that is rash,
Where the gods ask for blood it is foolish to offer them oil (p.36).

Here Zifa's auntie explains to him the way in which the gods act. One must satisfy them with their exact requirement, otherwise, such sacrifice will not be acceptable and the calamity not averted. The expectation while making the sacrifice of appeasement is that the gods receive it to avoid reoccurrence of such abominable act.

After slaughtering the goat, Zifa is totally convinced that the compound is completely sanctified by the blood. He exclaims: "See how erect the blood spurs! It should cleanse the compound of all corruption today..." (P.36-37)⁸⁶. The idea of using blood to cleanse the family, or the land, could be likened to what was obtainable in the old testament of the Biblical literature. Then the Israelites as commanded by God made much use of the blood of animal as sin offering or to atone for their sins. "Aaron sacrificed a bull to God to take away his own sins and those of his family."¹²⁰ In African traditional religion, the blood of the animal is spilled to cleanse the perpetrator and the

land, while the Christians believe that the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for the remission of the sins of man.¹²¹ After the sacrifice of cleansing, Ebiere had a miscarriage in which she lost her life.

Ebiere: The blood has soiled my clothes. (p.37)

Zifa: Well, never mind that. A little soap soon washes that off...” (p.37)

Here, the blood which Ebiere talks about is symbolic. Her husband mistakes the blood which she speaks about. Since she is present at the sacrificial scene, he thinks the blood must have splashed on her. He does not understand that his wife refers to the blood which drips from her body, which signifies miscarriage.

Now, at this juncture, let us explore the elements of physical violence which is present in this drama. Orukorere announces that Ebiere is fainting. No doubt, the pain of miscarriage weighs much on her. In anger, Zifa takes a machet and runs after his brother who flees to secure his life. Tonye committed an atrocious act by sowing into his brother’s fertile ground (sleeping with his brother’s wife). Not only this, Ebiere’s life is now hanged by a thin thread. He wants to avenge his brother of his wickedness.

Zifa rages as he chases his brother about furiously, he thunders at Orukorere who tries to bare him. No do not cross me. It is none of your fault but I will get at him, I say do not cross me. Don’t you see they admit their guilt? One falls fainting and the other flees. Now, he’s fled in and barred the door. I shall not let him escape me I will break open the door, break it and get this monster. Now, will you come out, thief, noon-day thief.¹²²

The gravity of Tonye’s deed, the shame to face his brother, and neighbours drive him into suicide. Zifa at last begins to regret his act (the act of threatening him with a cutlass). He blames himself. He reasons that, it is him (Zifa) who drove him into suicide. He realizes that a ground which he could not cultivate due to the weakness of his manhood, his brother has helped him cultivate. He sees it as foolishness to have raised much dust of confusion and chaos over his family. He regrets that a household which his father handed over to him is torn apart by his careless and bad management.

... You see the wretch has gone and hanged himself on the loft. But it is I indeed have killed the boy – my poor,

poor brother, do you hang aloft there smiling in my face? I sought to kill you but in that office you have again performed my part... He went in to my wife, my wife who although under my roof for five years I could not possess, for you see I am powerless between my thighs. Was that not a brotherly act? He sought to help what his brother was powerless to keep in the house. My house it has collapsed.¹²³

Zifa's argument in the later part of this extract, sounds quite irrational and anti – African/Igbo culture. Even though he is impotent, his brother is not the suitable man for such “transfer” since he is still alive, Igbo culture as well as the culture of their neighbours, such as the Niger Delta people, allow a woman especially one whose husband is impotent “to go outside” in search of pregnancy for her husband. It is not the man's brother. Any carnal union of a man's wife and his brother is incest. Zifa is equally wrong to feel that his brother takes over the responsibility which he fails to carry out. In as much as the culture does not permit him to do so, and neither himself, Zifa, asked him to sow in his field. Tonye is guilty of trespass over a land which does not belong to him.

Another element of violence recorded in the play, *Song of a Goat*, involves Zifa himself. He could not restrain his grief, when he came in contact with the dangling, lifeless body of his younger brother. He ran headlong into the sea and had himself drawn. One of the neighbours who followed after him affirms the incident:

Second neighbour: ... But that is not it, he said, and with that, waded into
The deep as one again in sleep (p. 44)

The issue of Zifa's violent death is equally spelt out through what Orukorere says while speaking out of grief:

Orukorere: Oh what boy? Inside there one hangs dangling like a fruit
full before its time. Who will pluck it? And out there you
have brought tidings of another who walked of his own
will into the dust.¹²⁴

J.P. Clark tells us that Ebieri had a miscarriage but we are not clearly informed whether she survived the trauma of the miscarriage. Nothing is heard about her till the

end of the play. If she is alive, one would expect her to say a word or two at the death of her husband or paramour. However, it is interesting to note that, in the second play of the *Three Plays*, which is *The Masqurade*, the character Tufa, affirms that he is the abominable son born into Zifa's family. He also made us know that his mother Ebiere, died in the process of child delivery, and it was left an old woman whom we understood to be Orukorere, who sent him away to have him groomed in another land.

Tufa: For I am the unmentionable beast
Born of woman to brother for whom brother
Drove brother to terrible death. That's not
All. My mother whom they say engendered
The seed, on expulsion of it withered
In the act, and it was left an old woman
Without wit to pick me up and take
Into another country... .¹²⁵

Zifa could not bear the loss of a dear brother, so he sorrowfully got himself drawn in the seas, leaving behind, his only son. . . One clearly sees how one violent acts leads to another until the family is doomed. The enormous relationship between Tonye and Ebiere has similar bearing with what transpired between Clytaemnestra who shared her matrimonial bed with her husband's young cousin Aegisthus.

It is clear from this piece of writing that Zifa's family is ruined through violence which emanated from family predicament; which was not properly guided against. Zifa rejected Masseur's advise which according to him, is a practice approved by their forefathers and of course, his wife who is impatient after waiting for five years decides to seek solution to the family's childlessness, in her own way. It is the long waiting in hoplessness that get her attracted to Tonye in whom she sees a handy answer to her problem. Nevertheless, the place from where she sought help was the wrong place, thus disaster struck on both the seeker and giver of help. However, Zifa who could not tidy up all loopholes had a dose of the disaster.

6.18 Violence and Conflict; Parents-Daughter Encounter.

J.P Clark's play, *The Masquerade*, is one of the plays which make up, "*The Three Plays*", it makes an explicit exposure of family conflict and violence as it affects Diribi and his family. Titi, a beautiful maiden, daughter of Diribi decides to marry a young man Tufa, a "stranger" whom her parents refuse to approve of. Their contrary opinions generated a long lasting argument, disagreement, confusion, conflict and violence. The family is robbed of her peace through out the period. The family experiences a total break down in unity and oneness. The lovers refuse to be separated. It comes to a point that Titi eloped with Tufa. This shameful behaviour leaves her parents in total confusion and agony.

The search period was a season of utter despair. When eventually, Diribi finds them, he shot both to death in cold blood with the gun which the son – in – law to be presented to him as a bridal gift. However, the play *Masquerade* is a tragedy.

Diribi presents reasons why Tufa should not marry his daughter. He is a product of heinous or unhealthy relationship. He is from a cursed family. He is from a wicked family- family of murderers and adulterers. Diribi reminds his daughter, as follows: "It was your Aunt Toro, who then was saying we must find you a man quick, now beauty was complete between your thighs."(p.67)

The above statement discloses that culturally, the man and his wife are to play prominent role in the search of spouse for a son or daughter. Diribi and his wife are reminded to carry out this function by a relative. It is quite strange; to see their daughter come home with a "stranger" whom she introduces as a man she wants to marry. They express their bewilderment, thus: "When, lo, like a couple joined together out of this world you walked in with the man...." (p.67)

Until recent, in Igbo culture as well as J.P Clark's, it is a thing unspeakable for a daughter or son to walk into the family with a man or girl, he/she intends to marry. It is the duty of parents or guardian, to go out in extensive search for a suitable and befitting marriage partner for the fellow. Diribi and his wife made inquiry concerning the man of their daughter's choice. He presents his findings to his daughter as follows:

Diribi: Listen my daughter the man's mother died bearing him.

Titi: He has told me this himself.

Diribi: Has he? Did he tell you also his father usurped the bed of his elder brother, yes brazenly in his life time, and for the shame of it hanged himself in broad daylight... . (p.68)

Knowledge of the family background provides a simple evaluation and knowledge of the manner of son- in-law or daughter-in-law, a family should expect. A family with a daint on her name, faces the difficulty of giving out the young ones in marriage, since most families would want to marry from descent and responsible homes. An Igbo adage, which says that, *Ezi aha ka ego* (Good name is better than riches) supports the above premise. In the time past, when African cultural practice was in its full swing, even up untill now, people prefer to marry “young ones raised in good families.” The history of the family, it is believed, inherently explains the character of the young man or woman.

Diribi lays bare to his daughter, the evils associated with the family she intends to marry into. Titi, who is already blind folded by the lust of infatuation, could not see the short comings. Diribi could not support this marriage because of the above reasons, which, to him are quite cogent. Moreover, Tufa is “a stranger”- a man of different cultural background.

Umuko, Diribi’s wife, resorts to speaking aggressively to Titi, peradventure that would deterre or discourage her, but all to no avail. Diribi goes an extra mile, to promise her daughter a befitting husband; despite what ever it would cost him. He exclaims:

No, not your lot, my child. Look, cast off this fellow, who all the world knows has been a haphazard choice and if you wish it, I will take boat with you myself, sail all the creeks, beat virgin paths on land and sea to find my daughter the best man.¹²⁶

In spite of all the promises, Titi stands her ground. She finds it very hard to refrain from her choice. Umuko cries out and regrets to have her as a child. She is filled with sorrow and resentment over a daughter who has turned out a disappointment and disgrace.

Umuko: Ungrateful child, so heard to please, how is it

you came into my womb? Was it to wreck my
craft of life? (p.70)

Titi's mother equally gives Tufa a dose of embarrassment to whisk him away from her daughter. Unfortunately, the more she applies this weapon, the more Tufa becomes persists in his chase:

Umuko: Leave my, daughter alone, I tell you, leave us in
these parts alone, and go your curse-laden way!" (p. 73).

When the pressure from her parents proves unbearable, she eloped with the said "stranger." Titi in this regard could be likened to Medea of Ancient literature who ran away with a "stranger", Jason. Like Medea, Titi shows no regards for the familial cord which holds the family remembers together. She forsakes her parents, brothers and sisters in preferences for a "stranger", just as Medea did. In contrary, while Medea was too fast, and cunning for the people who chased after her, probably because of her magical powers, Titi could not out-wit her father. He tracked her down and got her shattered down with his gun.

Tufa: Oh, it was the double- barrel piece I myself
Bought him as son to father!

First Priest: With that he chased her like a new-sprawed
chick to the wall

Oh, is it not a strange tide when cocks
Turn hawk on their own brood? But their she was,
Visibly strung to a thread which the man
Seemed only daggers- glad to snap
That instant, and break it he did with one burst
Of his gun. ¹²⁷

Titi's father, equally shot down his son-in-law-to-be, who, challenged his barbaric act.

First Priest: ...Now at one stroke

See him splintered to the ground.
The hand of thunder, so sudden not even
The double – visioned saw it, has battered
Him down, boughs, bole and straight past pith.
Let us help to pick his scattered
Scotched pieces, and oh hurry, hurry
For before the tide turns again we must
For Forcados ... ¹²⁸

The play, *The Masquerade* ended abruptly and left us in suspense. We expect to see how a man who committed such heinous act is tried and punished. At the end of the play, one of the priests, the first priest to be precise, reports that they should hurry to Forcados which we guess is the seat of Government, and Law Court, where Diribi is to be tried. Painfully J.P. Clark could not make us witness the judgement through his work. Nevertheless, a murderer is a wicked fellow who must face the wrath of the law. Diribi could be seen as a Culture-fanatic. He stands to defend and preserve the culture and Custom of his land which is not a wrong course. It is quite unfortunate that he fought the course to extremity at his own detriment. He and his wife failed to handle the matter with wisdom. He allowed himself to make a costly mistake which ruined his family. He lost his daughter, and of course, he must pay with his own life if the law takes its precepts.

Titi will not be credited for headiness, and deviancy, which excited ripples of emotional trauma upon her parents. She is a young girl struggling in a system which is mesmerized by foreign Culture -a culture which allows a young man or woman go for a life partner of his or her choice. What is pertinent in this play, is a motif of clash in Cultural values. Titi's father is not the only one who lost a good relationship with a family member in defence and protection of his tradition. It is equally clear that, Obi Okonkwo's relationship with his parents lost footing due to differences in cultural belief, and in like manner, Okonkwo and Nwoye's. Titi would be enlisted amongst the young girls who prefer to walk according to their own will, rather than the will of their parents, who are wiser and more experienced than they. She defied all efforts made to put her under the guidance and dictates of her family. She refused to be submissive and unfortunately was sent to early grave, by a father who deserves no applause for his misdeed. Invariably, her father's over reaction is heinous and rash. Titi'

Diribi could be compared with Okonkwo, in *Things Fall Apart*, they are personalities ruled by uncontrolled anger difficult to be quenched like wild fire. When gripped by anger, they can do the most outrageous without having a rethink of the aftermath.

6. 19 Violence and Conflict: Brother-Brother Experience

The Boat, another play by J.P Clark is a plausible harvest of tragedy. It makes a presentation of a younger brother shot his elder brother to death due to disagreement over family property. We would witness the incident as the issues unfold.

The younger son of this family is Biowa. He is a wealthy young man, well respected by all and sundry. He is famous and elevated. He is addressed as *goven* (governor) by his people. The way in which he carries himself makes the name quite suitable. The reception he receives from the people, each time he arrives from Lagos on business trip, speaks expressively of how much he is honoured. The exchange of pleasantries confirms our claim:

Biowa: Well, here I am, here I am all in one piece! I wouldn't be here, had I forgotten you, would I?
All: Welcome home!
Peletua: Odokuku!
Biowa: That's my praise name!
Peletua: Odokuku!
Biowa: Wood though I am, I weigh like iron.
Peletua: *Goven* the great!
Biowa: That's my name as well!
Peletua: *Goven* oh, our *goven*!
Biowa: That's me! I am the stranger who came calling and stayed to rule the land.¹²⁹

Umuto, the mother of Bradide and Biowa reserves a special place for Biowa in her heart. He is a son after her heart – “preferred child.” She supports and defends his course especially when dispute arises between him and her first son, Bradide. We need not over emphasize the reason, why, the masquerade dances his strength away - money! Biowa is wealthy and brings his mother enough gifts each time he returns from Lagos. Moreso, he is the family pride.

In one of the scenes, Bradide is seen calling the attention of his younger brother, probably to have a word with him, here their mother's reaction attests to the disdainful seat she reserves for him.

Bradide: Biowa, Biowa! Is Biowa up?

Umuto: Let my son sleep, let him sleep I tell you. Umuto's discriminatory treatment over Bradide attracts criticisms from neighbours and others who come to take notice of it. Hear Maika's reaction to Umuto's comment.

Maika: What's the matter with that woman, any way? She's forever baiting Bradide to please Goven. Look at her the other night.

Sanfio: One brings her gifts of tobacco and gin from Lagos; the other yams and groundnuts from Lokoja. (p.27)

Sanfio makes a distinction of the gifts from the two sons "One" referring to Biowa, who brings special English (Oyibo) items right from the big city of Lagos while "the other" that is Bradide, presents local items such as yams and groundnuts from the smaller town of Lokoja. This clearly speaks about the inequality of their gifts.

The impartial Umuto does not pretend over her lack of interest and love for Bradide. He knows that she has no motherly feelings for him. He understands that any other person could be her delight and not himself. One could see further her impartial treatment in the way she addresses both sons in the statement below:

Umuto: That's my son, a brave pilot. Could you have done as well? (p.18) She refers to Biowa as "a brave pilot" while Bradide, she questions ridiculously "could you have done as well" showing, that he is not his brother's match.

The two brothers are industrious businessmen. They pulled resources together and purchased a boat for their business activities. The joint ownership of the property generated a long lasting conflict much more than the purpose it serves. Each accuses the other of over – usage and usurping the other's turn. It is eventually the strife over this boat, that led to the murder of one of the brothers. Regrettably, their mother does not help matters, rather she takes side with the younger son, and fans the fire of the struggle between them.

In one occasion Bradide laments that their mother never believe he could do any good. Bradide: Mother you are always seeing bad in my action.¹⁰³ (p.20). He also accuses his mother of injustice each time he is on ends with his brother. Bradide: That's a lie, and may the dead and the gods judge you for it.¹⁰⁴ (p.20). Bradide after repairing the boat which Biowa brought home from Lagos in shambles, he was about leaving for

a business trip to Lokoja, when Biowa stopped him. They had a long argument before the younger son, Biowa, murdered his elder brother, who least expected such attack.

The character, Peletua, gives us a comprehensive detail of why and how Biowa killed his elder brother. Listen to his step by step narration before a Court Local sitting.

Petetua: A cock called dawn today, quarrel, not an uncommon occurrence among brothers, broke out between the dead man Bradide, and his younger brother, Biowa, who stands here accused of his murder. The dispute was over the right of the deceased to take to Lokoja the boat they held in common possession, while the accused, disputing his brother had seen the new moon in the sky, and recalling the days he had lost while his brother carried out badly needed repairs on the boat, considered his term to it unexpired. When his brother would not yield to his claim, backed as usual by their mother, a proposal even more peculiar than the original arrangement between the brothers was put up by the accused, namely, that they split the boat, not in any sense of metaphor, allowing one to put up money for the other he give up his part for sole possession to reside in one brother, but in straight literal sense of splitting the craft from helm to prow.¹³⁰

After being interrupted by some people, he continues:

Petua: Well if I may continue, Bradide too thought it a mad proposal, and proceeded therefore, moving with his party to the beach to board the boat. Thereupon Biowa, by now incensed, dashed indoors, came back with his gun and rushing past everybody after his brother, caught up with him, and shot him direct in his chest...¹³¹

It is established fact that their mother fueled the fire of her son's dispute instead of having it quenched. The speaker whose report we are about to see confirms this view:

Onduku: I am, afraid, since the fire she herself helped to start; she has gone somewhat distracted.¹³²

When Biowa, had been proved guilty, waiting for the next line of action, against him, ironically demands to see his mother. Onduku wonders why he would want to see a mother who misled him to misfortune. He exclaims: "What, that woman

who from all accounts has helped bring you to your present position? (p.52). Biowa tricks his mother as he says: “Come, mother, I do like to tell you something...(p.53) Umuto: Oh! he has bitten off my ears, bitten my ear (p.53). Biowa regrets utterly that his mother led him astray. Biowa’s further violent act, signifies and concludes the fact that his mother refused to lead him aright but with her own hand, dug a pit that swallowed him up. Biting off his mother’s ear is symbolic. He imprinted on her an indelible wound which will always remind her of a maternal duty which she failed to carry out effectively.

Furthermore, she failed to inculcate in him the values of integrity, unity and respect for one’s elders. He sees his mother as a woman who takes pleasure in money and gifts rather than making peace and fair judgement her watch word; in order to build a home which would be able to withstand the waves of domestic challenges. Umuto could not deny the allegation that she prompted her son into unhealthy and violence attack. She failed to tell Biowa what truth is. She was showing him the shadow rather than the substance.

The punishment mete upon Biowa is nothing less than paying his brother’s blood with his own blood. The court passed judgment which concludes that he should be lowed down into the depth of the river and the judgement was not thwarted.

Maika: We took him out of here in our boat down the stream to the wide Forcados river, where black and white waters meet. There in the circuitous current of the confluence, we lowered him, tied full-length to those slender poles of the trees...¹³³

Pride it is said, goes before a fall. Biowa is a young man who got intoxicated by the cash he sees in his pocket. He got carried away by his riches and therefore thinks that he could do any thing and get away with it. He was equally deceived by the vane honour, glory and adulation accorded him by the people. He lost his life, all he was and all he would be in future, due to pride and lack of sense of sound judgement. He is a man who cannot control his emotions. His life was controlled by wild anger, which was the primary element that drove him into murder.

A careful peep into the character of Umuto and Rebekah shows that both have similar characteristics to some extent, in dealing with their sons; Umuto like Rebekah

values and cherishes the second son more than the first son. The second sons are these mothers' delight. It is special love and attachment which made Rebekah plot and disguised Jacob with animal skin and his brother's clothes to usurp his brother's blessings to his brother's own detriment:

Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob. So he went to his father and said... I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.¹³⁴

Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac and Jacob was irreversibly blessed in place of Esau. Umuto's impartial support of Biowa and unfair judgement resulted to her sons' calamity.

We are made to understand, that, strife over property has been one of the major causes of violence and tussle in the family. In the drama, *The boat*, "boat" was the bone of contention, which plucked out two young lives in the same family. Moreover, the issue of who bends for who, or act of insubordination, leads to violent occurrences and other conflicting matters.

In this drama none of the brothers agreed to let go. Nobody wants to appear defeated, cheated or intimidated. None wants to submit and thus the aftermath was the big clash and disaster. Furthermore, it is important to note that joint ownership of property, if not properly guided, leads to sharp argument, disagreement and disastrous end.

J.P Clark does not show clearly how the murderers in his works, are punished. Apart from Biowa who was drawned, to avenge the brother he murdered, we learnt that Diribi who killed his daughter Titi and her spouse, will be taken to Forcados. We are not quite informed of the nature of punishment given to him. Zifa walked into the sea, got himself drawned on his own accord.

The belief in witch craft is given prominence in *The Boat*. Umuto, the mother of Biowa and Bradide, is regarded as a witch and she is said to have wished the death of her sons. The situation leading to the suspicion is clear. She confessed that she had made her two sons always quarrel in order that their enemies might not enter into their life and cause them any harm. However, her plan bounced back as a boomerang on her. Her sons perished simultaneously. There is also the inclination that the family was accursed.

6. 20 Violent Murder of a Grand Mother: Ozidi -Oreame Incident.

Ozidi, another drama, written by the famous dramatist J.P. Clark, is another work of Art we cannot afford to leave out in the assemblage of this piece of writing. It is a good asset for its classical contribution which helps embellish this work the more. The character Oreame is a mother and grand mother; who played a prominent role in the life of her daughter, Orea, whose husband Ozidi, was decapitated by enemies. Orea had a post humus son, young Ozidi, whose life was much influenced by Oreame, his grand mother, a witch of unequalled prowess. She had the boy initiated got him equipped with charms and magical powers that made him invulnerable to human enemies.

Without doubt, Oreame has the power to communicate with the god Tamara. When Ozidi the younger grew up, she encouraged and persuaded him to avenge his father's murderers. Through her magical and witchcraft art, she destroyed Tebesonoma. In another occasion, when her grandson, Ozidi was held down by the enemy, she arrived at the scene in the noise of a mighty wind and struck Ozidi's attacker and pinned him to a spot. The enemy yielded as we could see below:

Tebesonoma: (transfixed to one place) "Unscrupulous woman
release me and I'll fight your son man to man."(p.99)

The moment she left, Tebesonoma retaliated and launched another attack against Ozidi and got him stuck at a place through his own magical power.

Oreame: (Releasing Ozidi) What's this – a pig fattened
and being taken to market for slaughter? Wake up,

Ozidi, wake up! Is this how you fare immediately my back is turned?" (p. 99)

Oreama could be seen as a diabolical and ambitious woman, who defeated most of her son's fighters. She saw to it that the life of Ozidi's enemy, Tebesonoma was terminated. Tebesonoma: (In death struggle) This is not the end Ozidi, this is not the end, unfairly killed between you and your witch of a mother... (p.101). At the death of Tebesonoma, Ozidi ripped off his head and led out his men in jubilation.

It was in certain battle encounter with another enemy that misfortune played pranks on Ozidi and forced him make the most grievous and indelible mistake of his life. He murdered his grandmother! The back bone of his life! His strength! His power! His life!

Oraema: (Crawling dazedly on the ground) Oh,
What an end! What an end!
To fall by the hand of my own son here..." (p. 114)

The scene which describes how Ozidi killed his grand mother stopped abruptly. Sequel to J.P. Clark's style of writing, he equally failed to inform us the penalty for the man slaughter, rather the next scene introduced Ozidi suffering a terrible affliction, which though not as a result of his offense.

Apart from the violent murder of Oraema, there are other salient and interesting issues which J.P Clark raised to enrich our thoughts and knowledge. In act four, scene four, we were presented with a situation, where Ozidi abducted Odogu's wife. Scene five of the same act, talks about the enduring battle between Ozidi and Odogu and how the diabolic mother of both men came to support and fight their sons' battles.

A critical appreciation of this drama, presents us with mothers, who play the role of defendants to their sons. They stake their lives to fight their sons' battles. These mothers portray themselves as nests to their sons. In this situation, we could see Azema, Odogu's mother, as one who rises up to avenge a son of an enemy, who offends and intimidates him. Oreama stands her ground to fight her son's enemies to finish, even though he instigated the fight – She desires to see her son a warrior, a man who others

must fear. It important to point out that the use of charm in battles is predominant in the culture of the characters represented in this drama. Here, again we could see men employ the use of charm just as Ozidi's mother and their opponent did earlier.

Unknown to either, the wizard of the forest
Bouakarakarabiri or Tebekawene, as some call him,
after his habit of walking on his head, has invested the
other with his celebrated master charm...¹³⁵

The wizard gives the parties the charm which boosts one's strength. It enhances or improves the skills and strategies to fight and battles. Incidentally, both men are ignorant of the fact that their power is from the same source and thus fight with equal strength. When the two women arrive at the battle scene, Ozidi's grand mother first speaks about the charm, when she accuses her opponent of stealing Ozidi's charm.

Oraeme: Thief that you are, you stole my son's master charm to give to yours!

Ezema: You lie! It is you that have stolen the charm I bought at the hand of Bouakara karabiri. All things being equal, family members do like to defend the cause of their members. While some are careful to fight just course only, that is, avenge or retaliate over wrong done to an innocent member, others delve into fighting, even though the family member or loved one is guilty. It is this kind of unjust war which Oreame went into and had her life wasted. Oreame is best described as a woman fully decked with magical powers. She had strong belief in it. With the application of her charms, she did much exploits which of course were destructive. She was feared amongst her people. Ozidi looks up to her as his personal goddess. It is a thing of worry and quite striking, that the woman who proved invulnerable in numerous battles could be destroyed by Ozidi's inexperienced young hand. It equally proves the infallibility of charms and magic. Their potency limited and can disappoint their patronizers at a time the least expect. Oreame boasts with her powers which failed and disgraced her. She can never be an omnipotent entity, but only God can.

However, a deep thought over this matter could force one to reason that Oreame's charm and magical powers could only shield her from the physical and spiritual attacks of her enemies. She never gave it a second thought to protect herself from a grand son -

an angle from which neither havoc nor death rear their ugly heads. If this actually is the case, Oreame's experience could be likened to that of Achilles, whose mother dipped into the water to make him invulnerable to his enemies. She held him on the two feet while doing the dipping, unfortunately it did not occur to her that, Achilles' feet were not protected, and that was his vulnerable part of his body. As a matter of fact, he met his end as a result wound sustained on the feet through an enemy's arrow.

6. 21 Emotional Wound in the Poem; *Song of Lawino: Song of O'col.*

The literary work, *Song of Lawino and Song of O'col* is written by the reknown literary artist from East Africa, Okot p'Bitek. It is a poem, rich with cultural conflict and violent verbal attack between an African woman, Lawino, who lives and holds firm to the African culture- a heritage from her ancestors; and her husband, O'col, who is so much influenced by the foreign culture(Western Culture), having lived and studied in White Man's land.

Their life style, ways of thinking, reasoning and doing things witnessed sharp distinction. Even the type of food they eat no longer match. The differences leaves the family in utter disagreements most of the time. The woman suffers perpetually from the emotional pains her husband's words give her. Out of her misery sShe complains:

Lawino: O'col treats me
As if I am no longer a person.
He says I am silly.
Like the ojuu insects that sits on the beer pot.
My husband treats me roughly.
The insults!
Words cut more painfully than sticks!.
He says my mother is a witch.
That my clansmen are fools
Because they eat rats.¹³⁶

Lawino laments that O'col despises her and sees her as an imbecile who cannot reason well and has nothing to offer. He looks at her disdainfully and labels her an inferior being. He talks and addresses her without an iota of respect. She affirms that there was no physical beating, but his words hurt more than the cane.

Lawino: My husband's tongue

Is like the penis of the bee
Like the sting of the kalang!
Ocol's tongue is fierce like the arrow of the scorpion,
Deadly like the spear of the buffalo-hornet.
It is ferocious
Like the poison of a barren woman
And corrosive like the juice of the gourd. ¹³⁷

She speaks about her husband as one, rash in the way he speaks. His words are sharp and painful, rather than soothing. Lawino employs the use of similes such as; "the pains of the bee;" "the sting of the kalang!" "the arrow of scorpion;" "the spear of buffalo – hornet;" "poison of a barren woman;" "juice of the guard" to describe her husband's "tongue." The choice of words she makes, to associate O'cols' tongue, to a large extent illustrates the deep bitter taste of his words. It equally depicts the depth of wound it engraves on Lawino's emotions. O'cols' words could drive one into taking deservive actions. His awful words can piece the heart because they are too harsh. She used the simile, uneconomically to make us understand her feelings.

Lawino: My husband tells me
I have no ideas of modern beauty
He says
I have stuck
To old fashioned hair styles
He says
I am stupid and very backward,
That my hairstyle makes him sick
Because I am dirty. ¹³⁸

In thabove song, O'col announces his loss of interest in Lawino. She does not appeal to him as a wife any more. The conjugal feelings have fizzled into the thin air. He detests every thing about her. O'col thinks, she could not step up to his level and thus complains, she is not his match in every sense of it. Mentally she is poor. She is obscure and outdated in fashion. Obviously, Lawino suffers emotionally in the hand of O'col. What makes a woman shrink or recoil to herself; feel like killing herself; than to telling her that "she is ugly," "she smells", or "she is not loved". The antidote for a man to win a woman's heart is to sing "love" lullabies into her ears. Expressions such as "I

love you.” “You look wonderful.” “What a beauty.” “You are the very best thing, that has ever happened to me”, et cetera; makes her feel accepted, recognized and loved, even though she identifies a degree of flattery. On the contrary, to remind a woman of her ugliness or shortcomings especially by the opposite sex, kills her spirit and affects her mentality, socially and otherwise.

I was a mere village girl
You were insulting your grand fathers
And grand mothers, your father and mother!
... you were saying
The customs of your people
Are like the useless things
Left in the old homestead. (p.114)

In response to the above Ocol thunders:

To hell
With your pumpkins
And your old home steads,
To hell
With the husks
Of old traditions
And meaningless customs (p. 115)

Lewino laments that her husband no longer have regards for his ancestors and the customs of the land. O’col’s reaction affirms the unimportance and uselessness of the beliefs and practices of the Ancients which have nothing to contribute in the growth of the society.

Ocol: Woman,
Shut up!
Pack your things
Go!
... Woman
your song
is rotten buffalo
left behind by
Fleeing poachers... ¹³⁹

O’col in the above song decries that Lawino means nothing to him, and declares his intention to whisk her away. When a husband angrily shouts on his wife; “pack your things and go;” a reasonable woman ought to understand that the man is no longer

comfortable. The marriage is no longer palatable and can lose its bearing at any moment. However, a wise woman at this point should start making amendments to patch up the cracking wall.

O'col in another occasion proves how insignificant Africa is to him, her backwardness and ignorance. He understands Africa to be a good for nothing continent. A big content but unproductive. His description of Africa likens her to an elephant which picks its food like an ant. He sees Africa as a mass, enveloped in ignorance, backwardness and ridiculous beliefs. Africa to him is totally uncivilized and perpetually live in unwarranted fear. It is his hatred for Africa and her Cultural values that is transferred to Lawino, a symbol of Africa in his house. Concerning Africa haughtily, he questions, and says:

O'col: What is Africa
To me?
Blackness,
Deep, deep fathomless
Darkness;
Africa
Idle giant
Basking in the Sun,
Sleeping, snoring,
Twitching in dreams
... stuck in stagnant mud
of superstitions
frightened by the spirits
of the bush, the stream,
the rock,
scared of corpses... .¹⁴⁰

O'col's evaluation is subjective. O'col at the time of his songs, should realize that Africa has been under the colonialists for many years. He should know that many African nations have not got their independence how much more developing herself humanly, materially and economically. A servant cannot be greater than his master. O'col looking at Africa today, would nod in affirmation that has passed a fair over Africa. He will equally submit that Africa is not a lazy, unproductive and senseless entity as he thinks.

O'col allowed himself to be soaked, baptized or brainwashed by the foreign culture. He tasted African as well as Western culture, made an evaluation, and opts for Western Culture which to him is more civilized and rational. He openly and boldly sings the beauty of the Culture and his love for it. However, he allowed his choice to be a bone of contention in his family. He made this course which he champions a monument of disarray between him and his wife, Lawino. **THE END**

END NOTES TO IGBO VIOLENCE

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It would be rewarding to look at the definitions of this topic from educational documentaries and some scholars. The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines family as a group consisting of one or two parents, their children and close relations, including those who are now dead¹

Encyclopedia of Religion claims that, who or what makes a family is not exactly clear however, scholars have various views about the concept. Some equate the family with household while others hold that it comprises all the permanent members such as servants or else excludes unrelated householders. Most anthropologists point out two kinds of families, the nuclear family consisting of mother, father, and all unmarried children and extended family, which consists of the mother, father, and all unmarried children and one or more sons with their wives and children.²

The word, family, according to Marcia and Thomas Lasswell has an indefinitely large varied set of meaning. Sometimes it refers to a lineage, as the "Adams family of Massachusetts," which is the only American family that has had fourteen generations of eminent persons. Sometimes, it refers to all the descendants, relatives and in-laws of a particular person or couple.³

Family as defined by United States Census Bureau is made up of a group of two persons of more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together, all

considered as members of one family.⁴ Similarly the household in the view of Raymond Smith consists of a house and the group of people who live in it. Each household group normally 'cooks one pot' and all members are fed from it. It is within the framework of the same household groups that each individual feed and shelter and the household group is a child rearing unit. To grow up in a particular household gives an individual certain customary rights, duties and obligations irrespective of 'blood' relationship.⁵ Carole Pateman defines the family as seemingly the most natural of all human associations and this specifically suited to women, who cannot transcend their natures in the manner demanded by civil forms of life.⁶

Oxford Advanced Dictionary describes the household as "all the people living together in a house". A society in which couples typically live with groom's family is patrilocal, with bride's family matrilocal, or part from families of origin to a new location, neolocal, when couples live with either partner's kin, it is called extended family, those who live by themselves with only their own children present, apart from their families of origin form a nuclear family.⁸

In most societies some forms of patriarchy was clearly established. The modern American family for instance is more likely to be equalitarian. Power and authority is not so much concentrated solely in the hands of the father as in the past or as it is in most societies.⁹ This reveals one of the changes which has taken place in the life of the family, not only in American but in fact in other societies.

Commonly, there are some societies, which freely allow the man to marry more than one wife, and such marriage is termed polygamy. This literally signifies "many marriages"¹⁰. It is however assumed (marriage with more than one woman) within the same period) rather than polyandry, which is marriage with more than one man at the same time. Monogamy is the marriage of one wife, which is clearly evident in the New Testament part of the *Holy Bible*. The creation account in Genesis, presented the marital union in a clearly monogamous term "therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."¹¹

3.2 The Withering Away Theory of the Family

The indispensability theory of the family maintains that societies cannot continue to exist without some forms of institutionalized family life. The decaying moral condition of American family had been of much concern to the press as well as general public. Withering away theory acknowledges such symptoms as high divorce rates, domestic violence, intergenerational alienation and sexual freedom outside marriages as signs of the institution's impending doom. The family's current variety of forms such as, single parent, step, dual pay, communal and cohabiting families have been heavily criticized, the forms are cited as evidence for the withering away theory in the American family system.¹² It is evident that the withering symptoms is being observed and felt in other cultures of the world.

However, the forms families take must vary to meet the unique demands of different times and situations; therefore not only may one family differ from another, but each family also changes its form over time. It is noted that it is most important for members to appreciate one another. We like people who like us; we want to be with those who make us feel good about ourselves, who support rather than criticize us.¹³ Family members because they enjoyed each other, arranged their personal schedule so that they can have time together as a family. Strong families are characterized by positive communication pattern; which involves openness, genuineness, active listening, respect and the airing of differences.

Well functioning families provided evidence of strong family feelings and high family commitment. Cohesiveness derives from the belief of members that some of their important needs such as (being liked and appreciated) are met by belonging to that group. The presence of these factors demand members to invest time and energy in the family.¹⁴

Members of strong families feel power and purpose greater than themselves - a spiritual orientation. This is not necessarily religious or church going people but people who accept values that are generally associated with religion. Finally, these families are able to face their problems and to deal positively with crises. They are striking in their adaptive abilities and in the nourishment and care that they provided during times of

trouble. Families also provide food, shelter, health needs of members and educational needs of the children.¹⁵

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