JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES
ISSN: 3122-0479
DOI – https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23884709
Volume 2 No 1 August (2026): Journal of English Studies

LOVE FOR A LIFETIME: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON IFEOMA OKOYE'S *CHIMERE*

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Abstract

This article tries to examine the pains women undergo due to the male folks erroneous belief in the subjugation of women. It explores how girls are impregnated and abandoned by the boys or men who ought to be responsible. This is because a man or woman of integrity accepts responsibility of his or her actions and inactions at all times. It explicates that when a man after impregnating a lady or girl, abandons her for whatever reason, has a curse placed on his life. This is because he left that which ought to complement him in the journey of life. It employs Professor Ifeoma Okoye's *Chimere*, our primary text for this interrogation to inundate the society of the need for decency. The theory for this interrogation is feminism which articulates the inevitable relationship between man and woman, the need for wholeness and the dangers of subjugation.

This inquiry discovers that the man who betrays a relationship or subjugates a spouse, hurts the victim greatly, and goes with a curse which prevents him from being fulfilled in life as could be seen in Mr. Ebie Enuma's life. The life of Mrs Fidelia Ato a woman who was greatly hurt, and could not forgive one who abandoned her, shows the burden of unforgiveness. That for years she neither received a male visitor, nor laugh with a man until she met Weluche, shows that unforgiveness enslaves and denies one, the bliss of life. This paper establishes that to avoid these states, humans must not only appreciate complementarity but preach the gospel of its inevitability for the desired wholeness in life.

Key Word: Complementarity, Feminism, Subjugation, Unforgiveness and Desired Wholeness

Introduction

Today, the need to improve spouses' relationship in our society is becoming very topical. Hence, literary artists among others try to examine the relationship between opposite sex, articulate likely problems and proffer solutions. Some call for an end to patriarchy, while others see nothing wrong with it. Unfortunately, most African nations, traditional or modern, are not only patrilineal but keep advancing such tradition with relish; nourishing and nurturing it at the expense of promoting equality of sexes and the indispensable beauty or harmonious, peaceful co-existence; complementarity of man and woman.

Osofisan as cited by Solomon Adedokun, Edebor, Toluwalope Olubukola Oyeniyi and Mojisola Ogbeide-Ihama, (2021) posits that:

> In Africa, the oppressions of women is by traditional attitudes. Women are entrenched in many areas of life; religious beliefs and practices, discriminatory practices inherent in traditional sex-roles; division of labour; and customary laws such as bride price, forced marriage, polygamy, lack of divorce, infibulation, excision and sexual mutilation. (184).

Marriage could be seen from different perspective. The poet, Grace Okot, the wife of Okot' P' Bitek sees "marriage" as a "form of imprisonment" as cited by Helen Cousins (2004). Solomon Adedokun, Edebor, Toluwalope Olubukola Oyeniyi and Mojisola Ogbeide-Ihama, (2021) in their discussion about the pains African women encounter in marriage cite Ex-President Robert thus:

> Customs and tradition have tended more to favour men than women, to promote men and their status and demote women in status, to erect men as masters of the home, village, clan, and nation...The general principle governing relationships between men and women "has in our traditional society, always been that of superiors and inferiors. Our society has consistently stood on the principles of dominance—the

> principle that the man is the ruler and the woman is his dependent and subject"(184).

This is why a man or boy could have sexual relations with a girl and when such a girl becomes pregnant, is abandoned, left to suffer, ridiculed by the society and the boy who impregnated her. It is expedient to stress that such a boy or man based on the principles of natural law has erred. Hence, the aim of this study is to explain that women are human beings and should be treated as such, for though men may be seen to be beyond being reprimanded for the mischief done to women, the laws of karma is sure. John W. Lawrence 1995, *"The Seven Laws of the Harvest"* perfectly well explains the realities of sowing and reaping. John stressed that that" "We reap the same in kind as we sow. Whatever we sow, we reap; so that, if we sow the good, we reap the good. If we sow the evil, we reap the evil" (16). He further added that "we reap in a different season than when we sow. We sow in one season; we reap in another. No harvest comes the moment the seed is planted, but it must await God's appointed time"(16-17).

Theoretical Framework

This article is hinged on feminism, which advocates women's emancipation and differential rights. It tries to ensure equal economic and socio-political opportunities for women no matter the age and culture. It is a theoretical framework that fully concentrates on explicating women's experiences and areas that they are being oppressed and subjugated in our society.

Yeseibo, John Ebimobiwei (2012) argues that:

> Feminists view the current social relations as they exist in contemporary times as expression of patriarchy, a structure of dominance of women by men. The main aim of feminism, therefore, as Hooks suggests, is to dismantle the seeming insidious patriarchal institution. In all the various feminized ideologies we are familiar with, this goal is expressed subtly or with acerbity. (141)

Susan Arndt (2000) avers to Yeseibo's postulation by her summation that:

> The worldview and way of life of women and men, as individuals, groups or organisations, actively oppose social structures responsible for discrimination against and oppression of women on the basis of their biological and social gender ... (with) changes ... envisaged in three vital areas: First, social discrimination against women must be ended. Second, gender specific roles in the family, and with them the oppression and disadvantaging of women in the familiar sphere, must be overcome. Third, an amendment of the unwholesome individual and collective conceptions of manhood and womanhood is to be striven for. (720)

Solomon Adedokun EDEBOR, Toluwalope Olubukola OYENIYI and Majisola OGBEIDE-IHAMA, (2021) citing Solunsa postulate that:

> Feminism is mainly a socio-political movement which focuses on women's issues. It concentrates on eradicating the oppression of women in the male dominated societies. However, because feminism as a movement originated in Europe and America and was first organised by middle class white women, it tended to focus on the concerns of this group of women to the exclusion of other groups. This has led to the domestication of feminism by different cultures and classes. (188)

It is evident from the above postulations that feminism as a concept or theory centres on the subjugation of women by men whether as children or adults which is rooted on culture, religion and the socio-political structures of the society. It boldly challenges the subjugation of women and demands the equality of sexes at all levels or spheres of life.

Furthermore, Mohammed Razinatu T. citing Joni Lovenduski states that any ideological disciplinary "whose goal is to remove discrimination against women and to break down the male domination

society" (463) is feminism. She moves further to cite Nkereuwen in her explanation of the term feminism: It states that any burdensome exercise of power or authority over somebody that makes the person being appraised feel worried, uncomfortable or unhappy" (463) indeed remains an act which feminist's movement reacts against eternally. Nkereuwan terms are explicit enough: "with continual injustice and cruelty" (463).

Hence, citing Jonas Egbudu Ogini, argues that complementarity is the underivable remedy to the unhealthy, relationship between men and women, one in which men exert an undue authority over women. According to Ogini "Womanism desires that the man and the woman should be in harmony in the home and the society at large (15). Ogini further declares that "the womanist believes that the man and the woman have complementary roles of relationship" (16).

It is evident that feminism as a theory centres on the subjugation of women by men whether as children, teenagers and adults. It is deliberately rooted on culture, religion and the socio-political structures which is operational in that society. Such cultures or religions need to be re-ordered for the good of humanity and peaceful co-existence. This is all that feminism is all about and the major thrust of this paper: Complementarity is indeed wholeness.

Literature Review

This paper focuses on the analysis of Ifeoma Okoye's *Chimere*, aimed at inundating the society, men and women, boys and girls, young and old of the need to realise, the irrelevance of patriarchy in our 21st century. It is also aimed at explicating how much patriarchy has under developed humanity in Africa and other parts of the globe where it was and is still practiced. This is due to the fact that it has rendered both sexes one form of pain or the other and had made them die prematurely wasting their destinies and supposed contributions to humanity. And the betrayer is usually cursed, a curse the elements faithfully execute, thereby leaving the betrayed and the betrayer in eternal pains until things are resolved peacefully.

The intent is to graphically show that until both sexes complement each other, in the true sense of the word, a yawning hollow remains a destructive companion. And it widens and strengthens its dominance when the male sex tries to demonstrate the "almighty" figure in the relationship thereby experiencing the bitter taste, of betrayal.

YESEIBO, John Ebimobowei (2012) explicating Stella Oyedepo's postulation in her texts (plays) *The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested and Brain Has No Gender* explicates the inestimable beauty of complementarity between the sexes which humanity needs to develop and fulfil destinies. According to him: "She is rather favourably inclined to the tenets of African feminism which advocates complementarity between the sexes for a more harmonious existence and for social development. To her feminism is not the reversal of roles" (144). This becomes very relevant in the advancement of the family unit and humanity. Obviously, it stresses power sharing, the power of negotiation and not despotism. It denounces patriarchy which is exploitative in all its ramifications. Walby Sylvia theorizing patriarchy, articulates that patriarchy could be seen "as a system of social structure in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (20).

Further in our explanation of what complementarity entails, Filomina Steady, as cited by YESEIBO, John Ebimobowei (2012) avers to Oyedepo's strong view on the relevance of complementarity between sexes by stating that "sexual differences and similarities should be appreciated because the male is not seen by the women as the 'other' rather as part of the human same; thus each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole" (12).

Ogini, E as cited by Jonas Egbudu, corroborates our above postulations that complementarity, is the undeniable remedy to the unhealthy relationship between men and women, one in which men exert an undue authority over women.

The inevitability of this complementarity has really been stressed at various fora hence Oduyoye, Mercy Amba (2007) talks about

how such could be achieved. According to Oduyoye: "The transformation of negative attitudes towards women would come only as the community of women and men become open to re-examine faith-based discrimination against women and cultural provisions for down-grading the humanity of women" (1).

A critical re-examination of the fact that both sexes – male and female – depends on each other for each to be seen beyond all reasonable doubts, man especially black man must see, accept and act the need to compromise for a harmonious co-existence of man and women as cited by Jonas Egbudu Akung (2013) who further succinctly explains that:

> Womanism is a movement that celebrates the woman's strength as a pillar, the strength that brings blackmen to recognize and compromise for harmonious co-existence of both sexes. Womanism is a special culture that reminds men with special indication that without woman's full involvement in the system the man is incomplete in action as well as in achievements. (28).

Asiegbu, Remmy talks about Okoye's explanation of the Plights of African Women. Asiegbu asserts that in *Chimere*, Okoye focuses her attention on the need to" instruct younger women on the intricacies of man-woman relationship" (212) the need for women to be very conscious of the society's perception about them and what they need to do. Garda Lerner definition of feminist Consciousness becomes very handy here. Nutsukpo, explaining Feminist consciousness cites Lerner.

> It is the awareness of woman that they belong to a subordinate group and that, as members of such a group, recognition, that their condition of their subordination is not natural… but societally determined…the development of a sense of sisterhood … the autonomous definition of women of their goals and strategies for changing their conditions [and] the development of an alternative vision of the future. (19).

This feminist consciences and assertiveness has become a working tool for women for them to know whom they are and how to fulfil their purposes on earth unhindered. It is indeed this awareness, this consciousness and the consequent application of the acquired knowledge that Okoye tries to instil in her African women and readers all over the world.

Nutsukpo states that Okoye:

> Successfully does this through the experiences of her female characters, who exhibit these traits of feminist consciousness, as is evident in the actions and reactions of Ije, Beatrice, Ugo, Yeshie, Virginia, Emily, and Patience in Behind the Clouds, and Chimere, Fidelia, Stella, and Kachi in *Chimere*, respectively. These characters, through their feminist consciousness, are able to shape new ideas, even their conception of roles they play in society and assert themselves as individuals and as women.

Ifeoma Okoye, in her novels, explains to her readers the need for caution as explained above by Asiegbu in his postulation.
Asiegbu, Remmy (2020). "asserts that:

> Though meek, Chimere has the strength of will and character that distinguish all but one of the characters under study. When she goes out to look for job, she refuses for Azuka, the female secretary to the manager she wants to see, to stand in her way (pp76-77), Even when Mr. Etem tries to take advantage of her in exchange for the job she, desperately needs, she vehemently refuses (p67). And when Weluche, the handsome and well-mannered engineer falls in love with her, she is obstinate in her refusal before she realizes that Weluche is different (pp 63-64).

Chimere's behaviour at this stage of her life shows her awakened consciousness, and her ability to shape new ideas about life, her roles and her expectations. It is indeed a welcomed development *Chimere*, one who epitomises the agony of illegitimate children in our

society, the bastard's women in their quest for a job, and a place in life, and enough experience to strategies, redefining and challenge her status quo and at the end attained her goals.

Uka, Nkemdirim Carol (2026), in advancing our argument for the need for complementarity stresses that Chimere and others in her shoes are:

> Protest movements against patriarchy, shows the inequalities and abuses inflicted on women by patriarchal traditions whether they are Christians, or Islam. In addition to the focus of these novels as a protestation against patriarchal dominance, they also portray the independent woman, some African novelists hold in high esteem feminist values which promote independence, togetherness and survival. (3)

Ifeoma Okoye in *Chimere* tries to explain women's condition in Africa, and their, quest for self-realization, self-worth and through total dedication rebuild their identities as Chimere the main character in the novel *Chimere* perfectly personifies.

Uka, Nkemdirim Carol further added that:

> Ifeoma Okoye..... succeeded in elevating women in the society, women aspire to contribute to the societal development and human existence without being looked down upon and view social life from the woman's perspective. Ifeoma, ..placed Chimere" (3) at the center of her work.

The Storyline of Ifeoma Okoye's Chimere

Ifeoma Okoye's Chimere is indeed a very, powerful or captivating story of a young woman wanting to discover her identity in a society where illegitimate children are regarded as outcast. *Chimere* is a novel in which Chimere the protagonist struggles endlessly with the social stigma of being an illegitimate child. Her mother, Mrs. Fidelia Ato, had a very short relationship with her father, Mr. Enuma Eze. Her

mother, Mrs. Ato, was abandoned by her parents when she became pregnant by Mr. Enuma Eze.

Chimere's growing up is very stressful, an enlargement of emotional pains. Her life with Jide, is like of her mother with Enuma Eze. Jide exploited Chimere sexually and materially as she pays Jide bills among other things. Her mother greatly exploited by Mr. Eze who abandon her when she get pregnant, till she comes looking for him, to know her root. Her search for her father, her identity is her concern. At the end she finds her identity. Her mother and her father can only know peace when Chimere searches for her father, finds him and units her parents after many years.

Textual Analysis of Ifeoma Okoye's Chimere

Alkali (1986:120) in *The Stillborn*, one of her novels in *advancing* the inexplicable relevance of complementarity shows the problems a man faces when there is no woman in his life. Habu Adams mistreats Li, the heroine of the novel to the extent that she has to leave her matrimonial home. Habu Adams has an accident and becomes crippled. When Li hears about it, she decides to return to Habu Adams who is crippled and tells him in an unequivocal terms "side by side, we shall learn to walk again." This obviously explicates that a man must complement his wife, for no matter how crippled he maybe, being complemented by a wife will make him walk.

This section of this paper explores the inevitability of male-female relation in our modern society no matter the differences that may exist between them. Over time, writers and critics have tried to analyse the inexplicable and indispensable beauty of togetherness.

Loneliness: the causes, effects and the panacea for this state of being form the major thrust of this paper, and the thematic thrust of our primary text Okoye's *Chimere*. The author in her characteristic manner, poignantly begins the novel thus:

> Chimere sat nervously at the edge of her narrow bed. She glanced at her watch and hissed. She was alone in a room which she shared with two other female undergraduates. It

> was a room meant for two but now occupied by three students because of the acute shortage of accommodation in the university ... Twenty minutes past twelve and Jide is not here, she hissed and sat down heavily on her bed which squeaked as if in protest. (1)

Okoye, from the onset of the discourse in *Chimere* expounds the devastating effects or trauma which remains the resultant effects of men's mistreatment of women. Chimere, the daughter of Mrs. Ato, a women, then a girl, who was impregnated by Mr. Enuma Eze who later changed his name to Ebie Enuma is aptly presented to her readers. The burden of loneliness is vigorously pursued. Chimere sits nervously, feeling uneasy apprehensive of what life really entails. It is very devastating. Her psyche is troubled. And when the author further leads her readers into the complexities of life, her narrative: Chimere's unsettled identity and her illegitimacy? We see Chimere's agonies of life personified. A nine year old child with Dangote's trailer load of cement on her head. Hence, Chimere keeps probing into life:

> 'Aunt Stella, do you think what he said could be true?' Chimere asked quietly.
> 'That you are illegitimate?'
> 'Yes I'm beginning to wonder whether my mother has been hiding this from me. She told me that she and my father separated after a bitter quarrel. That was before I was born. She has always refused to tell me anything more about my father...
> You don't know, Aunt Stella, how curious I've been about my father and my mates in the secondary school always, taunted me and embarrassed me about the whole affairs. I've felt isolated ever since I discovered that there was no father in my life. It's a disgrace for me not know anything about my father.' (30).

It is very clear from the above that Chimere is in pains. The trauma of the unsettled identity crises, remains unquantifiable. Rights

from the secondary school, she had faced the burden of being seen as an illegitimate girl. She was "always taunted and embarrassed" ... "about the whole affair." According to her, "I've felt isolated ever since I discovered that there was no father in my life. It's a disgrace for me not to know anything about my father." (50). Beneath the statement, lies the trauma. Mustafa, Linder Jummai, and A. S. Abubakar (2022) aver that "trauma can be defined as the way the body and the mind try to overcome horrible experiences that instigate extreme fear and pains." (140). Those are Chimere's pains. One can imagine what Mrs. Ato, Chimere's mother must have been in, since she became pregnant of Chimere, abandoned by Mr. Enuma, till this moment of Chimere's explication about her identity. Her search for "whom chimere's she is" soon yields good dividends. For her father soon writes her a letter.

Dear Chimere,

> I read with interest your letter on the Letters page of the Daily Times asking Mr. Enuma Eze of Umeze who worked in Ports Authority, Lagos, in 1958 to contact you for the good news you have for him.
>
> I am Enuma Eze or should I say I was Enuma Eze because I changed my name shortly after I left Lagos in 1958. I am now known as Ebie Enuma as your address indicates. I live in Makurdi and work with the Nigerian Railway Corporation.
>
> I am anxiously waiting for the good news you have for me.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> Ebie Enuma.
>
> (147–148)

The above, truly explicates the nature of the male folks which Enuma Eze later known as Ebie Enuma represents. He has an affair with Mrs. Ato, a young girl, impregnates her, leaves Lagos for Makurdi and "shortly after I left Lagos" as he puts it, he changes his name to Ebie Enuma so that his victim of sexual escapades would not locate him

and bring him to justice no matter how much she tries. One can imagine how honey coated he must have been when luring her to satisfy his sexual desires, only to leave Lagos and changed his name to avoid being identified and probably punished.

Ebie Enuma's behaviour is akin to Jide, Chimere's first love, who deceives her to have his way only to abandon her, one he claims to love when integrity becomes the watch word. Ifeoma Okoye creatively gives us the pictures of Jide below.

> "I need some petrol, baby, but I'm flat. Can you let me?"
> "How much petrol do you want?" Chimere asked, hoping he would not ask for all the money she had in her purse. Poor as she was, she had found herself lending Jide some money a couple of times, depriving herself of some essentials.
> "I think truly twenty naira will do. That's all I have here but you can have it, Chimere said with an air of resignation …
> "That's no problem I'll give you back the money as soon as we get to Enugu. (5).

That's a great deception for at Enugu the moment they get there, Jide's mother sends him away to find out Chimere's parentage. The moment she realises that Mrs. Ato is Chimere's mother, she orders her son to take her back to Enugu and end the relationship. Jide like Ebie Enuma takes her back and ends the relationship instantly. Instead of being a man of integrity, having met Chimere in her innocence, ensures that "Agent 1001, a cyclostyled internal weekly paper that was notorious for its vulgar language and unwarranted attacks on female undergraduates of the university" (25) had a news item entitled "An illegitimate undergraduate jilted" (25).

Chimere goes through traumatic moments until she meets Weluchie through divine providence, one who complements her, bringing to the fore the inevitability of complementarity between spouse when divinity is in the engagement.

Chimere after the trauma of being jilted by Jide and the act made a public consumption, searches for and meets her father. It is an act to prove to Jide and his likes that she has a father.

As Chimere and her father talk, one sees the father pretending not to be her father and even denying her when a visitor knocks. "Chimere's spirit fell," because "she had expected her father to hug her affectionately on learning that she was his daughter," (157) whom he abandoned even while she was in her mother's womb. While the discourse between Chimere and her father is on, and the father's pretentiousness gaining momentum, "someone knocked at the door and walked in ... turned to Mr. Enuma: 'Your daughter?' Mr. Enuma shook his head. 'She is my younger sister'. The man looked steadily at Chimere and said: 'I've never seen such striking resemblance'. (157).

As one ponders on Enuma's lies and why he cannot own up to his actions, Ifeoma Okoye, a novelist of high esteem leads us into the mysteries of life:

> Outside, he murmured to her: 'Let's go to the old canteen. Few workers go there at this time of day. As Chimere walked behind him, she could feel some curious eyes peering at them. Presently they came to the canteen. Apart from the waiters, there was only one man in the room which had wooden walls; he was sitting at one end of the room drinking from a tea cup. Mr. Enuma took Chimere to the other end of the room and putting his briefcase on the table, slumped into a chair and buried his head in his hand... Chimere sat staring at his hands, while his head drooped in apparent sorrow. After what seemed a decade, he lifted his head. Where is your mother now? he asked faintly, his hands trembling slightly. (158)

The point Okoye, the author of our primary text tries to stress here is that the idea of abandoning a girl after impregnating her and being tyrannical in marriage have their consequences on both sexes. This is because it does not encourage complementarity. Mr. Enuma Eze

who later changed his name to Mr. Ebie Enuma clearly exemplifies the curse which one who errs has to contend with:

> Mr. Enuma remained silent... At last he began as one talking to himself. 'My sins have always remained with me. I had thought I could run away from them: but I've been punished for my sins. I'm married to a woman who has turned me into a wreck. She bore me three sons, but all of them died before they were a year old. She had not stopped blaming me for our misfortunes. Right now, she's threatening to leave me' Her head dropped. (159).

The truth of the matter is that there is a time to plant or sow and a time to reap or harvest. They are the immutable laws of Heaven. Ebie Enuma lost everything he had struggled for simply because he failed to act responsibly when duty called. If he had accepted being responsible for Mrs. Ato's pregnancy, life would have been perhaps difficult initially, but he would have come out of it. It pains when one listens to his address to Chimere. He tells her "you are the only person in this world who wants me. I've been threatened with dismissal from this place. Now I am being offered something I'd love to take but cannot. I just can't. What will I tell my wife? How can I tell her that I have a daughter from another woman" (160).

Finally, he tells her "what is left of my life will be shattered" (160). Unfortunately for him, nothing is left because everything had been shattered already.

Chimere returns home devastated because her father fails to give her the warm reception she expected. On explaining to her mother how bad she feel, the mother quickly replies thus: "Your father is paying for his sins; Mrs. Ato declared. 'He deserves whatever he gets from his wife. We all pay for our sins in one way or the other; her voice was solemn." (168) What a beautiful explanation of the mysteries of life one which should be a major topic in our informal school of life, a programme where human experiences serve as lecturers.

"We all pay for our sins, Mrs. Ato stressed. (168). As if that was not enough, she adds the payment is in one way or the other. Mr. Enuma gets married after abandoning Mrs. Ato. The woman gives birth to three sons', "but all of them died before they were a year old" (159). He is threatened with a letter of dismissal. Mrs. Ato had never received a male visitor till Weluche comes looking for Chimere. Chimere, from birth till this moment in question, was called illegitimate for no just cause. The society in which they lived is indeed faced with the burden of engaging in the unnecessary and futile exercise for interrogating what they know next to nothing. Imagine Chimere's humble appeal to a heartless Enuma, father:

> "Just let me call you 'Father'," she said. "Just let me tell my friends that my father is at Enugu working with the Railways. That's all I want from you. My mother has taken care of my other needs. She is a brave woman and has single handedly, made me what I am today."
> Mr. Enuma remained silent, but one could see that he was battling to make a decision. At last he began as one talking to himself. "My sins have always remained with me. I had thought I could run away from them; but I've been punished for my sins. (159)

The above extract greatly reveals the agonies of shying away from one's responsibility especially impregnating a woman whether as a girl friend or wife and denying ever knowing her. One finds Mr. Enuma "recapitulating his personal afflictions" (159).

His argument that his sins have remained with him when he thought he could run away from them is a fact. And as reward for betraying Mrs. Ato, Chimere's mother, the wife he marries later turns him into a wreck. He says thus: "I'm married to a woman who turned me into a wreck: She bore me three sons, but all of them died before a year old. She had not stopped blaming me for our misfortunes" (159).

It is also important to stress that each time Mr. Enuma, walks along the street, he is seen as a frustrated being with the burden of

loneliness. The author depicts Enuma thus: "He was tall and fair and handsome by any standard. However, something about his appearance made one unhappy. He dropped and walked like a man who was unsure of himself, a man whose pride and self confidence had been eroded by misfortune (156). The author further states that "colleagues waved at him and he waved back to them, slightly lifting his face but not caring to speak back to them" (156).

Mr. Enuma could be seen to be lonely and restless. Some schools of thoughts may like to say he has a wife. But the truth is that he abandons the one that is truly his and goes for one who should be another man's wife. Hence at the end of the novel, he returns to the one he abandons, while the one he calls his leaves him in search of hers.

The discussion between Enuma and his daughter Chimere clearly explains this:

> 'Did your mother tell you about me? Chimere nodded. 'She did not want to, but I made her do so'. 'She must have painted me very black. But don't I deserve it? I let her down cruelly. I was such a coward and couldn't stand up to my responsibility. As a matter of fact, I was still in Lagos when you were born, but I didn't have the courage to come and see you. He was talking more to himself than to her.' (158–159).

Mrs. Ato, Chimere's mother is in great despair just like Enuma. The author explicates this thus:

> Chimere left to buy some analgesic at a chemist shop nearby. Thirty minutes later she was back. She went straight to the kitchen to see what Ebo was cooking for supper. She found her picking vegetables. 'Have you pounded the ingredients, Ebo?' Chimere asked. 'Not yet, Aunties' A roar of laughter rang from their side of the house. It was Mrs. Fedelia Ato laughing. 'Who's with mother; Ebo?' Chimere asked 'A man' 'A man?' Chimere asked with raised eyebrows. Her mother rarely

> had visitors and a male visitor at that. And who could it be that made her mother laugh so loudly? 'A man came to see her immediately you left, Ebo said. 'What does the man look like?' Ebo looked blank 'I can't tell. I didn't look at him closely' Chimere decides to see who it was (164–165).

And when she does, it is Weluche. "Weluche!", she cried under her breath (166). That's the beauty of a good man in the life of a woman. It demonstrates that every woman needs a man, a good man for that matter just the same way every man needs a woman, a good woman for wholeness. That "a roar of laughter rang from their side of the house," and "it was Mrs. Ato laughing" (165) graphically reinstates the inestimable value of complementarity. This is a woman, a mother, who "rarely had visitors and a male visitor at that" (165). In this same vain, a critical exploration of Mr. Enuma's life as have been done before now clearly shows that because he left whom he would have complemented, one sees that he ended up marrying a woman who turned him "into a wreck" (159) "who bore him three sons" "but all of them died before they were a year old" and has not stopped blaming" him for their misfortunes. And fortunately for him she threatened to leave him, perhaps to allow him seek the one he must complement by divine providence.

Ehimbogwoei (2012) in very succinct term explains the beauty of complementarity thus: "Man is not the measure of humanity but men and women are. It is therefore imperative for a life of complementarity to exist between the sexes for a more harmonious existence and societal development" (137). This indeed explicitly sums up this section of our paper.

Conclusion

The study has, stressed that man and woman complements each other as couples and that when any of the two is mistreated, stressed, abandoned or permanently on exile or away for whatever reason, the

oppressor and the oppressed risked loneliness, depression and failure in life; even if, for any reason, the man gets hooked to another woman and become coupled, the curse placed on him for haven left his rib, his actual rib which could make Adam smile beyond human imagination, makes sure that nothing good could ever come out of the present coupling. Enuma Ebie exemplifies this assertion. It is also important to state that the study also demonstrates that the woman because she is choked with unforgiveness and hatred among other things, lives a frustrated life as could be seen by Mrs. Ato Chimere's mother. This is why Professor Okeyo through her characterization exemplifies this ideology in Mrs. Ato who couldn't laugh for years could be heard doing so when Weluche, a perfect man who visited for Chimere, catched with her.

In conclusion, therefore, the research demonstrates the fact couples complement each other. Hence, no one should mistreats each other for the beauty of "wholeness" remains inexplicable. All we need to do is to be sensitive to one another's needs even in very little things. Not only will it create the desired wholeness but sustains it till Jesus comes.

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