

THE IGBO PHILOSOPHY OF AGWU AND UNDERSTANDING  
TROUBLING BEHAVIOURS IN SELECTED CHARACTERS OF  
CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS* AND *HALF OF A YELLOW  
SUN*

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**Abstract**

*The Igbo cosmology of the people of Nigeria has categories of spirits that define man and his motivation that influences an individual's disposition and behavior. This worldview is anchored on traditional Igbo religious belief on earth gods and goddesses, and numerous deities and spirits, including agwu, which among its other attributes, is a spirit force of manipulation and motivation. Individuals possessed by agwu usually manifest both normal and abnormal behavioural tendencies, thereby making them have dual or multiple dispositions. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's texts: *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* present individuals that are perceived to be possessed by the spirit: agwu. The actions of these selected characters: Eugene, Beatrice, Ugwu and Kambili, present violent and pervasive tendencies which manifestations mark them as out of the ordinary. Previous studies on the texts have dealt with history and historical consciousness; sex and sexuality; gender issues, language use; comparative; socio-political and ideological themes. Using the framework of agwu, an ambivalent spirit of positive and negative inspiration in the Igbo philosophy, the paper explores the hidden impetus for the disordered behavioural syndromes in the selected individuals. Specifically, this paper examines the effect of the abnormal behaviours on other characters who become victims of the manipulations of agwu. The paper propagates proper education on the Igbo mythology as the prismatic crystals through which conclusions can be reached regarding these weird behaviours which ordinarily leave others bewildered.*

**Keywords:** *Agwu, Cosmology, Abnormal Behaviour, Manipulations, Behavioural Manifestations.*

**Introduction**

The Igbo traditional worldview including its philosophy, cosmology, metaphysics and religion has explanations for human actions, promptings and

defenses. In his explanation about the Igbo belief system, man and his existence in the Igbo cosmology, O.U. Kalu observes that:

The supreme/Ultimate Being, known by different names in various sub-cultural zones- *Chukwu, Chineke, Olisaebuka, Obasi di nelu*- and the very powerful or major divinities, such as *Anyanwu, Igwe, Amadioha/Kamalu*, dwell in the high heavens. The Earth is the abode of men, also the Earth deity, *Ala*, some minor deities, patron spirits and cosmic forces. The ancestors, numerous other spirit and nature forces, some malevolent, live in the underworld, very importantly, the Igbo believe that there is an intense and continual traffic of the various categories of spiritual beings from one place to another... It is man who is the focal center of the traditional Igbo religious cosmology as man's life is intricately bound up with the activities of the beings and forces of the spheres. (Ofomata 353).

The Igbo philosophy has strong belief in the gods and has explanations for man's existential connections which generally posits that man does not exist alone. Same way, the Igbo worldview believes that man interacts with unseen beings and a lot of his thinking and manifest actions are influenced by these spirits. Echoing the existence of other spiritual beings Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu in "The Dimensions of African Cosmology" states that "the African worldview consists of both spiritual and physical realms, which despite their separate existence interact" (84). These spirit gods act as inspirations and motivations that define individual dispositions and personality. An example of such spirit god is the *agwu* which Jude C. U. Agunwa, describes as "a category of spirit that incarnates in individuals with positive and negative inspiration and motivations". He states that "*agwu* among a pot pourri of Igbo gods plays a significant role in individual psychological disposition and behavioural manifestation" (279). In the Igbo religion such belief and existence is given a place of understanding, especially as it relates to man, his actions and behaviours.

Literatures on the modes and patterns of influence of this spirit force exist, one of which is Dominic Obielosi's, "Prophetism, Charism and Agwu: Striking a Balance Between Discriminatory Belief and Reality". The essay questions the claims of gifts of prophecy in the Christian religion against the possession of *agwu* spirit in the Igbo traditional belief system. Obielosi compares the *agwu* in the traditional Igbo society with the Christian Holy Spirit saying that the spirit *agwu* has similar observable positive portents with the Christian prophecy in his adherents. He argues that it is discriminatory to denigrate *agwu* as evil, while the

Holy Spirit is seen as good. For him *agwu* spirit possession stands on the same pedestal with prophetic possession in the church because both have similar patterns of manifestations and signs of possession. He stated that “what the Old Testament and New Testaments call spirit of prophecy is what Africans call *Agwu* because they are the same in essence and substance. The difference is only nominalistic owing to geographical location. Condemning one for the other is to oppose God who has so benevolently blessed every nation with her own natural endowments and gifts to tackle some of her supernatural problems” (169). Therefore, both *agwu* and Holy Spirit are one and the same unseen spirits that possess and influence individuals. Even though some people do not believe in *agwu*, it is a belief system in the Igbo worldview.

Jude C.U. Agunwa in “*Agwu* Possession, Belief and Experience in Traditional Igbo Society” examines the nature of *agwu* experience of individuals. He presents *agwu* as a spirit closely involved in man’s search for fulfillment in his society. He says that “*agwu* enforces determination of all sorts, including the good and not so good, benevolence and afflictions” (279). These positive and negative attributes are manifest in certain individuals who are found to possess troubling and disordered behavioural idiosyncrasies obviously begging for explanation.

Critical works on Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus* cover a range of themes and discussions relating to the society, culture and everyday events. Particularly *Half of a Yellow Sun* has been studied as a chronicle of historical events in Nigeria, especially the Nigeria-Biafra war. Sophia O. Ogwude in “History and Ideology in Chimamanda Adichie’s Fiction” is of the view that *Half of a Yellow Sun* narrates events which ordinarily are taken to be historical but which actually are beyond history. But the narrative provide a positive social vision, such as “the novelist’s handling of relationships within the academia, across various strata of society and interestingly among women of different social and educational standing” (48). This essay elucidated the fact that the text is not directly a historical recording of the civil war but a fictionalized accounts of the pogrom and eventual war. In a similar tune, Ojinma Umelo in “No Humanity in War: Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*” acknowledges the text as Adichie’s imaginative ability, creativity, and remarkable research skills; describing the text as “a fictionalized but masterful tale of events preceding the war that evokes powerful memories of Nigeria’s cloyed past that still beclouds and haunts the present” (1). The experiences of the war create bad and lasting effect on the minds of the individual characters in the texts leaving a feeling of hopelessness and despair. And so the impact of the war affect the

humanity of the individuals' daily living presenting as unresolved conflicts and troubled behavioural syndrome.

Earlier discussions on *Purple Hibiscus* dwell on family relationships, domestic violence, female subjugation, religious fanaticism; among other themes. For example, Ada Gloria in "A Reformist-Feminist Approach to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*" outlines the oppressive tendencies and habits in the male folk stating that "domestic violence is the most common form of gender abuse in *Purple Hibiscus*. Beatrice experiences this abuse at the hands of her husband and bears it in silence....The only available proofs are the "Jagged scar on her forehead", the swollen eye and the fact that she polishes the figurine on the étagère after every episode of beating" (264). Every member of Eugene's household: Beatrice, Kambili; Jaja; Ifeoma, and Papa Nnukwu, has a fair share of domestic violence and abuse meted out to them by their patriarch, Eugene. Most especially, "Kambili and Jaja are physically violated by their father and live in constant fear of his violent attacks' (Gloria 268). Domestic violence and intimidation are common features in the narrative, including issues of silence and domination that are given prominence as patriarchal experiences in *Purple Hibiscus*.

Similarly, Okuyade Ogaga in "Changing Borders and Creating Voices: Silence as Character in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*" projects silence as a strong weapon of intimidation and patriarchal control perceived in Eugene's home. He writes that "silence in Eugene's home is so magnified to the extent that it could be heard.... Kambili, Jaja and their mother speak with their spirit. Sometimes they converse with their eyes, Kambili's mother hardly talks and when she does, it is in monosyllables" (247- 8). These abuses come in different shades and degrees including victimization of children who suffer in silence in the hands of their father.

Despite the plethora of scholarly enunciations on the texts of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*, and on *agwu*, more researches are still possible as this paper examines these texts from yet a different perspective. It hypothesizes that individuals in Adichie's texts manifest certain troubling behaviours, as though acting under an influence which explanations could be found in the Igbo mythology of *agwu*, considering its patterns of possession and manifestation. This paper specifically, makes a literary examination of patterns of abnormal behaviours in the selected individuals: Eugene and Beatrice in *Purple Hibiscus*,

and Kainene and Ugwu in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, using the Igbo religio-philosophical worldview of *agwu* as the framework of discussion, with particular focus on the negative ripple effect of the influence of *agwu* on the individual selected characters. This paper aimed at projecting the understanding of man and awkward behaviours in the African traditional worldview, and the sustenance of the Igbo knowledge system.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Philosophy is about beliefs or views removed from the ordinary everyday affairs of man, thus I.C. Onyewuenyi says “philosophy is generally regarded as the most abstruse and abstract of all subjects, far removed from the affairs of ordinary life” (Ofomata 413). Some of the belief systems in some cultures do not seemed to be readily assimilated by the people and therefore seemed to be far removed from the ordinary concrete experience of life. Onyewuenyi quotes Philip Wheelwright describing philosophy “as a quest for life and a persistent attempt to see life critically as a whole. It is in the light of this that the African worldview finds meaning to certain behavioural absurdities in man living in her society. It becomes pertinent for such abnormalities to be clarified. Such clarification are also located in the Igbo concept of religion which according to Jahnheinz Jahn is “the practical application of philosophy in the daily life of man’ (422). It follows that if philosophy is not ordinary and religion is the practical daily experience of man, then man’s action is anchored on the influences of the unseen spirits which play complementary role in the lives of man knowingly or unknowingly. It simply shows that “the philosophy of the Igbo directs their religious experience and practice” (423). This explains the traditional Igbo religious belief in deities, gods and goddesses, ancestors, such as *amadioha*, *anyanwu*, *agwu*, *ala*, *chi* and other supernatural beings.

The Igbo worldview believes that the universe in which man exists is a unity of the physical and the spiritual realms. Man, therefore does not exist alone. He interacts and to a large extent is influenced by spirit forces. This is why Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony posits that “ the interaction of the two worlds instils a greater sense of the sacred in the African because he/she, (man), sees the presence of the supreme being, divinities and spirit beings (ancestors) present” (103). This explains the fact that man living in the universe interacts with spirits existing in the spiritual space. However some of these spirits push man towards evil, and some are agents of wickedness against man causing sickness and misfortunes to individuals or communities. The knowledge and influence of the

spirit gods, such as *agwu* form a key part of the Igbo traditional religious belief. *Agwu* is one of such minor spirits that hover around man, interfering and interfacing with his mind, intellect and thought pattern.

*Agwu* is considered a two-faced god as it deals with whomsoever it possesses both positively and negatively. Described by M.A. Onwuejeogwu in Isidore Okeawolam Diala, *agwu* as “an ambivalent and unpredictable force capable of both malevolence and benevolence, given his capacity to interfere with an individual’s destiny, or *chi* with constructive or destructive consequences” (30). *Agwu* has both positive and negative motivations on anyone it possesses. As a lesser god, it can deal with one wickedly and equally can be nice to the same person. *Agwu* as a spirit influencer possesses man and inspires him into doing good or bad at different times and at various situations. Also, while echoing the ambivalence of *agwu*, Isidore Okeawolam Diala describes *agwu* as “a repository of all arcane and esoteric knowledge, associated with divination, prophesy, and inspiration; but also linked with lunacy and aberrant behavior, lunatics, deviants, heretics, and in today’s world suicide bombers are considered to be under the influence of the deity who is apparently central in the Igbo conception of tragedy” (31). Deviancy and unusual behaviours are troubling behavioural manifestations in certain individuals. The common symptoms of the *agwu* manifestation includes anxiety, frenzy action, violence, lunacy, numbness, sense of helplessness and violence.

*Agwu* as a benevolent spirit emboldens and empowers the spirit, soul, and mind of the person he tries to manipulate. In buttressing this point, Dominic Obielosi states that “for the Igbo man, *agwu* is the manifestation of the power of the gods” (17). This re-echoes the Igbo traditional belief that man and the spirits are in constant flux as there exists the interference and interface of an unseen force or power that controls man’s behaviour. In supporting this assertion, Jude Aguwa describes *Agwu* as “the Igbo patron deity of health and divination, and one of the basic Igbo theological concepts employed to explain good and evil, health and sickness, wealth and poverty, and fortune and misfortune”. This reinstates the widespread view in the past where communities had some people manifesting *agwu*, who were considered victims of its malignant powers or recipients of its positive influences, especially the belief that *agwu* endows its chosen one with extreme affluence. *Agwu* is not a bad spirit as some people allege, *agwu* manifests in people as a god given gifts in the form of gifts of vision for visionaries, healing or exorcism for the good of others. In confirming the authenticity of *agwu* as a

super-spiritual endowment, Umeh (1999) agrees with the description that *agwu* as:

The Igbo Holy Spirit because of the kind of work it does for the diviners and herbalists gives the native doctor divine revelation of knowledge of herbs and the administration for the benefit of humanity. It makes him potent... The native doctor or African traditional prophet cannot operate unless under the influence of *agwu* Spirit. His power and ability is proportional to the potency of the *agwu* which is itself measurable by the proximity and adherence of the native doctor to *agwu*. The closer the native doctor gets to the *agwu*, the more potent he is. (Obielosi 177).

Therefore, *agwu* is not a bad spirit, but in its double-faced nature it can cause its adherent to behave in an untoward manner. Some people have taken the clue to describe *agwu* as a holy spirit in the traditional form. For example, Munoyedi says *agwu* is "God's everlasting spirit, the Mother holy spirit that can be manifested in different forms and means". (Online). This view added more support to the authenticity of *agwu* acting in individual's life. These negative impulses prompted by the unseen spirit *agwu*, especially, the malevolent inspiration pushes man into aberrant and troubling behavioural manifestations.

Troubling behaviours are psychological issues that show signs of deviant consciousness resulting to emotional upsets and forms of obsession. Such behaviours are typically disruptive and unacceptable. They follow a consistent pattern and can vary in severity. Some of the troubling behaviours are abnormal and irrational and are ordinarily latent in the individuals but eventually erupt without warning. Such individuals are described by A.N. Akwanya and A. N. Anohu "as manifestations and bearers of values, and articulation of behaviour patterns that the community treats as unbecoming, deviant, disruptive and anarchistic" (95). Such behavioural dispositions of characters are found in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). They synchronize with the pattern of behaviours of those possessed by *agwu* in the Igbo religious perspective as studied in this paper. These deviant attributes strongly describe Eugene, Beatrice, Kainene and Ugwu as revealed in the actions, inactions and reactions of these selected characters in the texts.

### **Patterns of *Agwu* Possession and Manifestation in Selected Characters.**

Using the concept of *Agwu*, in Igbo philosophy and religion, this study examines the nature of influence of the spirit, *agwu* in individuals and characters found in

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* given that their personal experiences and manifest behaviours are found rather perplexing, and give room for interrogation. The characters to be studied are: Eugene and Beatrice, in *Purple Hibiscus*; and Ugwu and Kainene, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. These characters manifest both positive and negative idiosyncrasies.

It is noteworthy that the contextual reading of the texts presents them as representing events and experiences of Nigerians. *Purple Hibiscus* which opens with the allusion to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* tells the story of a family that suffers from a high-handed and arrogant father, Eugene, who ironically is highly acknowledged as a good man by the immediate community, but who readily attracts the critical attention of the reader because of his uncommon cruelty on his immediate family. The opening lines of the text record that "things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the etagere" (1). Eugene's violence in the home is revealed early in the narrative. On the other hand, he is presented as a philanthropist who readily makes donations to the church and performs works of charity in the community. He obviously presents an ambivalent identity of the same individual; first as a good man, and secondly as a harsh and arrogant domestic beast and religious extremist who inflicts injuries on his wife, children, father, sister and those that do not share similar religious sentiments with him.

Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* shows a consistent pattern of unconscious influence in inflicting pain and injury on the members of his household. It is like the malevolent motivation of *agwu* leading him to violent actions even with no concrete provocation. These violent actions are usually followed by a show of remorse and attempts to assuage the situation soon after these deeds are done. In one occasion, for instance, after Papa, Eugene, flogs the whole of his family with a leather belt because Kambili takes tea ten minutes before mass, Kambili reports that "Papa crushed Jaja and herself to his body and inquired if the belt hurt them or broke their skin?. Eugene examines their faces" (110-111). Such sharp and contradictory acts are perceived as handiwork of *agwu*, making it incongruous to their outward identities. To affirm the fact of troubled behaviours in Eugene, Florence Orabueze observes that "Adichie creates Eugene Achike's portrait to fit squarely into the mold of a rough beast who unleashes violence on his victims, both the submissive and the defiant ones" (219). Eugene does not



spare any one in his maltreatment. His victims includes his wife, children, sister, father, and others whom he feels do not accept his religious belief.

Violence in Eugene's household clearly presents the *agwu* possession in him. This unconsciously disposes him to exhibiting avoidable acts of violence on people who are around him. This is explained by the manifestations of severe acts of violence based on very flimsy and insignificant reasons. He gets mad at Kambili after he discovers she has Papa's portrait. His reaction shows the frenzy of a possessive spirit as he "swayed slightly from side to side, like a person about to fall at the feet of a charismatic pastor after the laying on of hands" (*Purple Hibiscus* 215). Also worthy of note is the frenzy with which Eugene snatches the painting from Jaja and the swift movement of his hands as he tears it. This reveals a distressed mind, of one being manipulated by *agwu*. As though the snatching is not enough, he charges furiously on Kambili kicking and striking her into coma for struggling to hold onto the pieces of the torn paper. Kambili narrating her ordeal:

The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal landed on open skin on my side, my back my legs kicking. I closed my eyes and slurred away into quiet. When I opened my eyes, I knew at once that I was not in my bed. I made to get up, but pain shot through my whole body in exquisite little packets. I collapsed back. (217).

This manifestation of severe irritability by his father for merely seeing his grandfather's painting smacks of the manipulation of an unseen spirit. Such aberrant impulse clearly shows the ambivalence of *agwu* which Isidore Okeawolam Diala describes as "a repository of all arcane and esoteric knowledge, associated with divination, prophesy, and inspiration; but also linked with lunacy and aberrant behavior, lunatics, deviants, heretics, and in today's world suicide bombers are considered to be under the influence of the deity who is apparently central in the Igbo conception of tragedy" (31). Deviancy and lunacy best describe Eugene's behavioural impulses. His rash reactions reveal him as a victim of *agwu* possession.

In the case of Beatrice, it seems that *agwu* has taken hold of her, making her reticent even in the face of danger. Her inactions are worrisome and smacks of *agwu* possession. These forces can be seen in signs of depression, lack of self-confidence, helplessness and despondency. These symptoms present as a loss of an ideal state of self under conditions of severe failure of the protective

environment which is attributed to the constant noxious familial pressures including the regular intimidation and battering she suffers from Eugene. This state of affairs affects her mind and thinking, leaving her helpless and numb. Beatrice presents a kind of spirit-possession syndrome by enduring suffering and deliberate self-injury. All she ever does at such times of severe molestation is to clean the etagere. This practice unconsciously is so repeated by Beatrice that Kambili notices her:

Mama stood hugging herself in the centre of the living room, near the glass table, until Sisi brought a plastic bowl of water and a kitchen towel. The etagere has three shelves of delicate glass, and each one held beige ballet-dancing figurines. Mama started at the lowest layer, polishing both the shelf and the figurines. I sat down on the leather sofa closest to her, close enough to reach out and straighten her wrapper. (*Purple Hibiscus* 43).

Also, all through the devastating experiences of Kambili and Jaja, including those of her own at the cruel hands of Eugene, Beatrice has been present but has had no active reaction credited to her. She loses series of pregnancies without any attempt to defend herself. For example, she tells Kambili, “you know that small table where we keep the family Bible, *nne*? Your father broke it on my belly”. She sounded as if she were talking about someone else, as if the table were not made of sturdy wood. “My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it” (*Purple Hibiscus* 253). Recounting the various episodes of domestic violence against Beatrice is perhaps not as mind boggling as trying to explain Beatrice’s inert responses and reticence to these actions. Hence, “at a drawback glance, before the death of Papa, Mama could only respond to crises by only crying and remaining calm, in the manner Ihuoma would in Elechi Amadi’s *The Concubine*” (Orie 41). It can only take the spirit of *agwu* to keep its victim numb and taciturn in the face of thrashing pain as in the case of Beatrice. She remains dormant, exuding self-pity and helplessness.

#### **Of Selected Characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.**

*Half of a Yellow Sun* presents the devastating and traumatic effects of the Nigerian civil war, on the premise that the war was caused by pogrom and religious fanaticism. The narrative in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is seen as the depiction of real events in Nigeria since, according to Allwell Abalogu Onukaogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu:

Like *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* also flaunts its Igbo ethnic flag. The title of the novel names the emblem of the breakaway Republic of Biafra. The story documents Igbo affairs during the turbulent period from 1963 to 1970. It covers practically every event of historical significance among Ndigbo in Nsukka, Enugu...and one or two war fronts. (23).

Some characters in the text are found to act in a manner only best described as the manipulative power of the *agwu*. For example, there is Kainene, the business-like twin daughter of the rich Ozobia family, and Ugwu, the highly trusted houseboy to Odenigbo and Olanna among others. These two individuals, Kainene and Ugwu, in spite of the good endowments they possess exhibit aberrant and unacceptable behaviours that call for interrogation. Kainene is filled with the thoughts that she lacks worth and does not measure up to her sister, Olanna. This feeling of inadequacy makes her hostile towards Olanna her twin sister, and to other people that she relates with, especially Richard, his white boyfriend. Kainene accuses Olanna of always pleasing their parents and complains that Olanna is better acceptable than herself. Her feeling of inferiority equally makes her domineering. This reflects in her temper and high-handedness in her relationship with others.

Kainene champions the sour relationship between her and her twin sister Olanna, so that as was reported, 'nothing had happened - no momentous quarrel, no significant incident, rather, they had simply drifted apart, but it was Kainene who now anchored herself firmly in a distant place so that they could not drift back together' (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 37). Her unforgiving spirit is part of her troubled consciousness. She holds on to issues against her twin sister Olanna, sneers at her relationship with Odenigbo, calling him a revolutionary lover. She refuses to let go of her anger against her twin sister for sleeping with Richard, her white boyfriend. Kainene taunts Olanna: "you are the good one and the favourite and the beauty and the Africanist revolutionary who doesn't like white men and you simply did not need to fuck him. So why did you? It was unforgiveable" (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 254). Kainene's show of anger and unforgiving spirit manifests a conflicting mental state that impinges on her normal conscious state. Even in her relationship with Richard, her extremities manifest in the mindless destruction of Richard's manuscript, ruining his writing carrier for a mere expression of anger. Her show of unforgiving spirit and anger towards Richard causes concern, being that Kainene has never shown much commitment to Richard as a lover. Without recourse to Richard's plea for pardon

Kainene manifests a form of destructive and lunatic tendency as she informs Richards, "I took your manuscript from the study this morning and I burnt it" (258). This action shows Kainene's mental state and strength of lunacy and aberration. Her rage at Richard and her destruction of his writing and journalistic career without qualms, even with no just cause, is viewed as manipulative of *agwu*.

Ugwu is an individual with multiple traits, most of them very highly commendable. Odenigbo introduces him to his friends as a "very clever boy" (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 18), and calls him "my good man". Olanna acknowledges the fact that his master has told her how well Ugwu takes care of him. Ugwu wants to prove himself worthy of Master by doing his house chores diligently, including cooking and serving meals. He assures Odenigbo that he can "learn everything fast" (11). He is determined to win his Master's acceptance and enjoy good fortunes in his house. But in spite of these positivity, Ugwu manifests several abnormal syndromes that portray him as *agwu* possessed character. He is steeped in fantasies, day dreaming, sexual pervasion and obsessive impulses. Ugwu's sensuality and sexual escapades contradict the good attributes he has earned as a "good boy" to his Master, Odenigbo. He displays the character of an individual with a lot of erotic fantasies and imaginations who strangely gains sexual excitement by mere fantasy and imagination. He is so perverse that he gets sexual satisfaction by admiring her madam's beauty and in examining her under wears, black slippers, slippery bras, and white pants. He manifests other sexual fantasies that are revealed early enough in the narrative showing him as a paraphilia as he often exhibits sexual arousal and gratification dependent on unusual situations and strangely seeks sexual pleasure through extrinsic objects. For example, Ugwu eavesdrops at his Master making love with Olanna. At one of those instances, he tiptoed to the Master's bedroom and rested his ear on the door. He enjoys their loud moaning and he stood there for a long time, until the moans stopped. Ugwu creates mental and sexual images of himself and his childhood friend, Nnesinachi and achieves sexual satisfaction through masturbation. He develops sensual fascination for Eberechi and later has practical nocturnal sex with Chinyere, a fellow house help. Against these impulses, Onukaogu and Onyerionwu believe:

Ugwu is therefore not sexually innocent or even naïve before his arrival in Odenigbo's house.... not only is he stirred by the loud "moaning sounds" that come from Odenigbo and Olanna's bedroom, he also derives certain kinds of excitement from Olanna's own beauty and desirability... It is

therefore no surprise that Ugwu could strike a nocturnal arrangement with Chinyere, a neighbouring house girl who regularly comes over for quick sex with him. Thus, Ugwu graduates from merely fantasizing about female nakedness and couples having sex, to actually engaging in intercourse himself. (167-8).

These strange and thoroughly impulsive sexual disorders are intensely deviant and abnormal and can only be attributed to *agwu* possession.

Ugwu keeps on with his fantasizing and illusive imaginations. Seeing Olanna dressed up for her wedding, Ugwu finds himself lost in imagination, staring at the shabby, white altar cloth, "he imagined that he is getting married. At first his bride is Olanna and then she transforms into Nnesinachi and then into Eberechi with the perfectly rounded buttocks, all in the same pink and ivory dress and tiny matching hat. It was Okeoma's appearance back at the house that brought Ugwu out of his imagined world" (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 201). It is strange for Ugwu to desire all the women at the same time. Even at a very critical period of raid and bombing as the war rages, Ugwu's sexuality is almost getting him mad, with his mind roving constantly.

Ugwu hallucinates as he is in the hospital receiving treatment for the injuries he sustained from a war operation. In his delirium he sees Eberechi wearing her tight skirt and making gestures to him a though in their usual hide and seek flirtation. Eberechi remains an object of Ugwu's imagination and day dreaming. Thus this separation from real objects of desire presents Ugwu's activation of a particular conflict in his identity and the manner of his resolution. Ugwu falls back on the unconscious with fantasizing and day dreaming, a shift from normality. He seeks sexual satisfaction through expression rather than by action.

These individuals exhibit inappropriate behaviours some of which include extreme violence even at very minimal or no provocation. Most of the characters experience hallucinations, and different types of impulsive, uncontrolled emotional behaviours. These behavioural inadequacies may ordinarily be attributed to social, economic and environmental factors, but are described as troubling caused by the negative motivation by *agwu*. *Agwu* therefore, exercises both positive and negative inspiration and influence in individual's psychological and emotional dispositions, as Dominic Obielosi asserts that

“agwu explains mysteries in supernatural entities” (Mgbakoigba 181). Individuals in this study manifest a range of behaviours asking for explanation. These behaviours such as unwarranted aggression, incessant abuse of family members, inability to defend oneself or run away from harm, emotional dullness, and a range of pervasive and obsessive behaviours are identified.

### **Conclusion**

The place of *agwu* in the Igbo worldview is sacrosanct. Unfortunately in the present dispensation of Christian religion, it is yet to be assimilated in the consciousness of a great majority of the people, as there are still arguments and doubts on the authenticity of *agwu* as a good influence on the people. *Agwu* is being demonized by the Christian religion as it stands, therefore there should be a re-orientation and re-direction of the psyche and understanding of the Igbo people to the mystical and spiritual co-existence of man and the gods.

It also becomes imperative for abnormal and criminal acts perpetrated by individuals to be interrogated following the understanding of the divine interaction of man and the unseen spirits, especially the unconscious motivations and influence of *agwu*. In line with the Igbo traditional religion, appropriate propitiations could be made in appeasing *agwu* if it feels offended, as a way of eradicating criminal tendencies from the criminal minded individuals. The appeasement in the form of *ilu-agwu* can turn around the individual’s fortune for good, since *agwu* is capable of turning around misfortunes to positives. Appeasement of this spirit can equally curb tendencies to crime and criminality as *agwu* is capable of mellowing the aggrieved mind in making its victim sober instead of violent. Africans, especially Igbos should pay reverence to the existence of gods, supreme beings and exhibit committed sense of sacredness in their actions and thereby promote peace and harmony in the communities.

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