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Should Humanity Avenge Divinity? Discuss Using Chinua Achebe's *Dead Men's Path* And Reuben Onyishi's *Clash of Divinity*.

"Can humanity avenge for divinity? Why then should we fight for it? (*Clash of Divinity*, 176). These questions of Ozo Elihe to the Amuzu people constitute a huge dilemma in the minds of many. A lot have lived and died with and as a result of the many divergent and misunderstood answers to these. Likewise, seventy percent of the world's conflict today can be alluded to the misconception of the obscene answers to these very questions. This essay, using some selected texts as case study, tends to address this dominant pandemonium and the resultant effects of being the middleman in the clash of divinity.

Many hide under the cloak of the saying that 'we are pencils in the hands of the creator', to detect their maker's will for them. Many claim to be fighting a religious battle for their maker when they are actually avenging for themselves the worldly wrongs done to them by others because, according to them 'the voice of the people is the voice of the gods'.

Humanity avenging for divinity seem to be what transpired in Achebe Chinua's *Dead Men's Path*. Seem', because of the opposing arguments on the brain behind the resultant outcome of the story. It is implied. Thus, the readers are left to fill in the void of what may have resulted between the villagers and the hard labour of their new immigrant and 'saviour', Mr Michael Obi. Mr Michael Obi who is newly appointed the headmaster of Ndume central school arrives his duty post enthusiastically with

new ideas on ways to man the school to be the first among equal, the best way to leave a lasting legacy on the history of the school. But, as the saying goes, 'man proposes but god oppises', some might call.it, not employing a good strategy, others will call it, 'ova Sabi sabi', but the end result is that all his works are rendered to nought His case can be termed what is referred to as, 'the pseudo Messiah',. (One who tries to right something but ends up destroying everything).

Likewise is the case in Reuben Onyishi's *Clash of Divinity*. The villagers try to avenge the wrought on their deity, Omabe, by Rev Dinma who also like Mr Michael Obi, tries to modernise the 'barbaric' culture of the Amuzu people. Through their actions, the villagers take laws into their hands to be the spokesman for their deity. They invade the church, disrupt the activity going on there, beat Rev Dinma and his wife blue black, take them for sacrifice at Eluama village, but when they did not succeed in that, they tie him and his wife to burn alive alongside the church building. Thanks to Michael who rescues them.

Some will tell their maker 'we revere you because you are of a higher existence and you have more powers than we do. So this battle should not involve our powerless efforts', while others will opt in to be the mouthpiece for their maker, depending on the context and the side of life's situation that one finds himself at that particular moment. Going by the first arguement on the brain behind the destruction of the school building in *Dead Men's Path*, they argue that the villagers did the havoc owing to the fact that Michael Obi blocked a sacred path, thus resulting in the death of a pregnant woman. Because of these, they also made themselves instruments in the hands of the creator. When the priest of Ani visits Michael Obi, he outlines to him the usefulness of that path to the village, thus: departure for their dead, visit of the ancestors and path for the villagers coming in to be born. Now, if that path has that level of touch of the ancestors as they believe it to have, why then did they not allow the gods avenge the wrong done to them. He who believes his maker to punish an offence he does against it, should he not also believe the same maker to punish an

offence done by another to him?

Contrary to this, some others argue that the destruction of the school building is masterminded by the gods. This is because when the pregnant woman dies, the villagers go to ask questions and it is confirmed to them that it is because of the closed path . They offer the appeasement sacrifices to the gods, thereby, absolving themselves of the anger of the gods. Ani receives their sacrifice and diverts his anger to its rightful place, thus, the destruction of the school buiding. This is an evidence of the fact that the gods do not need humanity's help to do their battle for them, that they actually have their own weapons which are far from being humanity.

Moreso, Ozo Elihe, the Onyishi of Eluama village is kind of a voice in the wilderness crying and warning the people of Amuzu of the consequences of priding to be the machinery in the hands of the gods. Ozo Elihe s words; "It is not our duty to avenge the spirit of Omaba, the spirit will avenge itself". (126). Despite his warnings and that of Eluama's Onyishi, they still pay deaf ears, nonchalant of the fact that ' he who kills by the sword dies by the sword'. Well, some might argue that their adamance not adhering to the voice in the wilderness is because of the truism that,"he who the gods want to kill, they first make mad". So, it may be that their fate are already sealed by that same divinity, (or by an opposing divinity that wants to destroy the followers of a rival divinity).

Contrary to popular view, there are others in the text like Zeus, Rev Ogidu, Ozo Elihe to mention but these, who decide to hearken to the biblical saying that "vengeance is mine' says the Lord, ' for those who poke their fingers into your eyes' and also to, "he who kills by the sword dies by the sword". Rev Ogidu wants to revenge for the wrought on Rev Udo by Rev Okoro, but decides to let Udo s God fight for him. The military governor's wife wants to avenge for the wrong on Rev Dinma by the Amuzu villagers, by abandoning them to rot in prison without trial,, but decides to drop the

charges to pave way for divinity to avenge itself. In as much as Rev Zeus knows that Rev Okoro and his cohorts are intentionally prolonging the court case on the position of the GS, he opts to hearken to the voice of the Lord who reveals to him that, 'he that has called him into His vineyard will equally defend him in times of tribulations and trials. The villagers in *Dead Men's Path* can also be categoried here. This is because, when the priest of Ani pays Michael Obi a visit, he came with peace and not to fight. He warns him that because he is still a stranger, he is still oblivious of how dreadful and vengeful their god, Ani can become. He warns Michael, " let the bird petch and let the eagle petch". This shows that Ani is a god of justice and fairness, and will not take it lightly with anyone that tries to act against this principle.

Now, in this essay, one encounters two contradictory parties, the first party includes Ogbuagu Oyiugwu (Seventeen seventeen) and his group who decides to help the gods in their work and as expected, does not end on a good side. Seventeen seventeen experiences exactly the same fate that he plans for Rev Dinma, he is mobbed to death by the villagers in the market place. The same is Paulinus Nwalugwu's case who masterminds the rape of Dinma s wife. He is robbed at home and his wife raped. Others' case are no exception as they receive their own pound of flesh. They all die as a result of the nemesis of their actions, of course, masterminded by the divinity. The other part are people that are loath to be the pencils for the battle royal in the spiritual realm. Thus, their end are awesome.

Conclusively, avoidance to be the the machinery and the weapons during the clash of divinity will do a lot more good than harm. Many have testified to this. Trying not to drink panadol for the divinity's headache will go a long way in restoring peace to the numerous religious conflicts in the world today. People should bear in mind that those who decide to stand in-between the clash of divinity may not withstand the blow.

