

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

AN ASSIGNMENT

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS OF THE
COURSE:EIS 102(INTRODUCTION TO NIGERIAN LITERATURE)**

NAME: EZE, KEVIN CHUKWUEMEKA

REG.NO. 2014/196028

LECTURER: MR ONYEKA ODO

DATE: AUGUST, 2017

SHOULD HUMANITY AVENGE DIVINITY? A DISCUSS USING ACHEBE'S THE DEAD MEN'S PATH AND REUBEN ONYISHI'S A CLASH OF DIVINITY.

The question whether humanity should avenge divinity appears so absurd as long as the word divinity in this context denotes superior being (the gods) while humanity denotes inferior being (the human).

Africans believe in the existence of the spirits of the dead which they see as a mediator between them and gods. The masquerade, which dramatically imitates and represents the spirit, is seen and

treated as the spirit itself in Africa. The Africans therefore, hold much respect and reverence to these spirits. It is this believe that Chinua Achebe and Reuben Onyeishi try to portray in A clash of divinity their work; ***The dead men's path*** and ***A clash of divinity***.

If divinity is given reverence because it is above humanity, what then is the need to cause conflict by fighting to avenge it? This fact is what the people of Imobi and Ndume are ignorant of. In pages 126 and 127 of the novel, ***A clash of divinity***, the Ozo Elihe Ezeja, one of the elderly men in Amuzu, advises his fellow aggressive men at the village arena;

"wait! wait! These women have already seen what they should not have seen. it is not our duty to avenge the spirit of Omaba; the spirit will avenge itself. We are privy to cases of women who inadvertently saw the nakedness of omaba and the calamity that befell them, let alone these ones that deliberately broke it".

This, he said to stop the angry men of Amuzu from attacking the women who have deliberately broken the laws of the land by

seeing the nakedness of the Omaba masquerade. The young men of Ezenagu who are known for their love for violence, did not waste time to take the laws into their hands . The men, led by Ogbanu Oyeugwu, popularly called seventeen-seventeen, entered the church while the sermon was going on and did not only beat pastor Dinma and other men,they striped him(pastor Dinma) and his wife naked, and also raped his wife. When the young men of Ezenagu tried to sacrifice pastor Dinma to the earth goddess at Eluama, the Onyeishi of Eluama repudiated such an idea and asked the young men this question

"Is it that Omaba cannot avenge himself or what? Why do you young men of Ezenagu want to bring a curse upon yourselves and your generations? If the man had offended Omaba, does it mean that Omaba can no longer fight for himself"

Fighting for divinity gives the impression that the divinity is not strong enough to fight for himself. Avenging divinity results in a serious conflict among the humanity. The young men of Ezenagu were arrested by the police for their atrocious act.Although seventeen-seventeen escaped the direct punishment by running

to another village, he lost his dogs which he uses for hunting; they were shot dead by the police. The arrest of the young men is also an avenger for divinity on the path of the Christians. If the Lord's anointed is beaten, the right thing is to wait for the Lord to fight for himself. Reverend Okoro and Reverend Udo see this and argue that as practising Christians, they should leave the matter to the Lord to handle.

In Achebe's **The dead men's path**, the people of Ndume destroyed all the beautiful works done by the headmaster, Michael Obi, and his wife because they believe that the closing of the path is an insult given to their ancestors by the headmaster. As the over zealous headmaster fails to listen to the words of the village Chief priest, after the death of the young woman in labour, the people of Ndume could not wait but took the laws into their hands in order to avoid more calamity in their land. They did not only remove what was used to cover the dead men's path, but also destroyed all the beautiful flowers in the school compound.

The question is, if the ancestors are so strong to cause the death of the young woman in reaction to the road closed by the

headmaster, why can't the ancestor fight the headmaster direct?
Humanity avenging for divinity, as I earlier said, only leads to serious conflict among humanity. If the divinity deserves the reverence given to him by humanity, they should not only be strong to fight for themselves, but also be strong enough to fight for, and protect humanity from every disaster.