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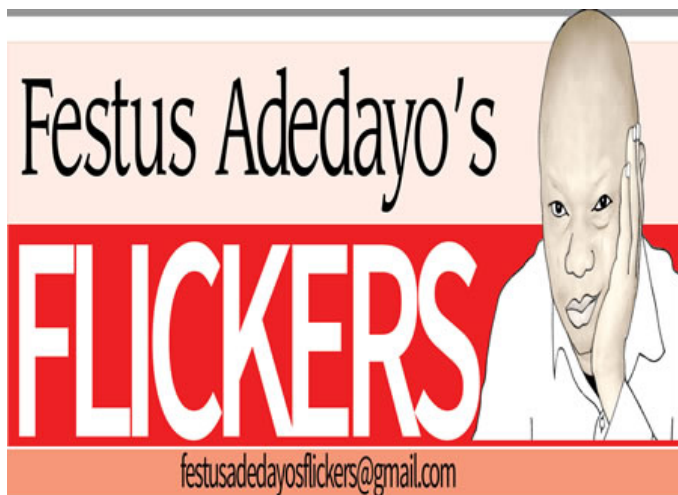
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With this dagger I thee wed...

With this dagger I thee wed...

December 3, 2017

[Festus Adedayo's FLICKERS](#)



As lawyers do while warning buyers to beware of what they want to purchase, this writer must warn the reader, ab initio: I am acquainted with Yewande Oyediran, the lady accused of having murdered her

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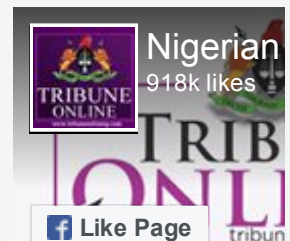
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husband in Ibadan, Oyo State on February 2, 2016 and who was handed a 7-year jail sentence by an Ibadan High Court last Monday. We met post-this tragedy. A couple of times, the writer had visited her at the Agodi Prisons. On the very first day of our meeting, we both wept like babies as she told her tragic story for about three hours. Why would a promising wedlock founded on mutual love become such a Shakespearean tragedy? The writer was also at the Court 1 chambers of the State Chief Judge, Justice Mukhtar Abimbola and listened to his 2 ½ hours judgment on the murder of Lowo Oyediran. So the views I will trade here may be tainted by the fact of my acquaintance with Yewande. The writer will however try, as humanly as he possibly can, to rise above acquaintances and be as objective as possible, for the issues at hand transcend a single individual to a societal cancerous growth.

In recent time, there has been an implosion in the number of spousal violence in Nigerian homes, many of them resulting in deaths and or very serious fatalities. This has bred concerns on the near-pestilence of this social disorder. Academic researches into this upswing in home violence are also on the increase. Scholars try to find a probable link between this menace and, first, the collapse of the traditional African family structure, with its age-long benefits and its replacement with the imported social structure of the west. Second link that academics try to find is that between home violence and the destruction of the productive economy of society, as well as its replacement by a renteer economic system. I will explain presently.

The list in recent times is endless. Beginning from the rear with the murder of Bilyamin Bello, son of former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman, allegedly by his wife, Maryam Sanda, it has been almost a monthly phenomenon. On November 20, 2017 a lady reportedly stabbed her husband repeatedly with broken bottles in Zamfara State. In Owerri, Imo State, Raymond Ilugba was alleged to

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have been stabbed to death by his wife, Augustina. In September this year, a 32-year old Onyinye Eze was reportedly gruesomely murdered In Bayelsa State by her husband, Stephen Akpata. In August, an auxiliary nurse, Folashade Idoko, also stabbed her husband, Laurence, to death in Lagos. In Benue, same August, Chinyere Akalene, who was said to be due for delivery of her baby that same day, was allegedly killed by her husband. And many more.

Matrimony, which African traditional society revered so much that it carved a place of pride for it as the foundation of success or failure of a man's existence has been totally distorted by modernity. Today, the only attention that modern life pays to matrimony is the ostentatious owambe that attends it and the formal certificate given by the state to the couple. In the past, believing that a man entering into marriage, in the words of Yoruba poet, Tubosun Oladapo, could be likened to a man entering the dark, unforeseeable hole of the animal called afebojo, families conducted thorough researches into the kind of boy/girl their children were entering into lifelong relationships with. They traced diseases/vices or virtues of several generations in their future son/daughter-in-law's homes. Indeed, girls were not handed over to the boys but parents or family heads. It is on the basis of satisfaction with their findings that they allowed their children to tie the knot. Today, pre-marriage research is almost non-existent as Mammon is the god of matrimony. What social status do the future parents-in-law/family possess? Does the boy drive Bugatti? These are some of the mundane considerations that define marriages these days. The calamities that result from such matrimonyes make many people pity young boys and girls who today go on marriage journeys that in most cases end up in ruination.

The role of the extended family in marriages and homes in traditional African society was huge. The wife, a la Our Wife and Other Stories (apparently a

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real life experience of the Oyinbo woman) by Professor Karen King-Aribasala who taught this writer Modern and African Literature at the University of Lagos over two and half decades ago, was a collective property of the extended family. Former Miss King, from Barbados in the West Indies, going by conjectures that Our Wife was her fictionalized personal experience, was totally swept off her feet when she encountered Africa's philosophy of collectiveness in marriage.



**Court
dissolves
10-year-
old
marriage
over
claims of
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respectin
g her
husband**

The whole family came together to marry out their daughter and took it as collective responsibility to ensure it didn't fail. If 'our' wife gives birth, an unwritten extended family roster is immediately enforced and for 40 days, each extended family member, which many times even involved the woman selling ogi in the family compound, took their turns to tend the new baby and the mother. In Yorubaland, they prepared a rare oil-less, pepper-less soup they called ate for her. Lore and taboos were concocted in the service of this family responsibility, one of which was that the new mother must not be seen in the market within the first 40 days of giving birth. Another instance of the close-knit feature of the family is that when a son/daughter leaves the family and collects his first salary, it is handed in totality to the father who shares same with everyone in the extended family. Urbanization is also a culprit as it has almost totally broken the ancient ties of families.

If there was any infraction in the matrimony, same families came together to heal the wounds and get amicable resolution. Communal censure was reserved for marriages that failed. In Yorubaland for example, da'lemosu – failed spouses who came back to their fathers' houses – were thoroughly scorned. Today, there is a wholesale importation of the social structure of the west into Nigeria and this is the calamity of the African experience. The concept of the extended family is nil in the west, in the true sense of it but they envied ours, with its impregnable features. The family and its extended

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family variant have totally collapsed. Now, people are scared of their extended families as we have gone the ways of the west where the definition of a family is father, wife and siblings. Even in that family, there is a serious problem. Covertly, Christian preachers especially have succeeded in setting children against their parents, specifically, mothers. The pastors are now the daddies, their wives, mummies and our mothers and fathers, a la the Pastors, are witches and wizards who want to kill us and are responsible for the lull in our personal economies and fortunes. In the ostracism of the extended family and that nonsensical Christian shibboleth of "when husband and wife come together, they become one," the extended family is destroyed. Spouses feel they owe no one the responsibility of keeping the sanctity of togetherness any longer and this is the cause of the constant friction in the family.

The second cause of the friction in the home is the collapse of our erstwhile productive economic structure and its replacement with capitalism and its rent system. Wherever it is practiced, capitalism destroys the traditional structure of the family. The primary school poem we learnt by rote those days etched it on our minds that iwe kiko, lai si oko, ati ada, ko i pe o, ko i pe o, meaning that education without work (farming) was incomplete. The lingo is now mo fe lowo bi Dangote (I want to be as rich as Dangote) or ise kekere, owo nla (small work, big money). Husband and wife's role in the family economy was complimentary and interwoven but not any longer. Politically, our gravitation from federal to unitary political structure could be held as the remote cause of the economic collapse. Husbands alienated from the nation's economy through their erstwhile cocoa, groundnut and palm oil farming lost their productiveness and involvement in the economy of their immediate environment.



Take for instance what happened when Cocoa House was gutted by fire some years ago. People wept like babies and lamented that their fathers' sweats had been set ablaze. When NET Building was on fire about same time, no one could connect with it because its proceeds belonged to nobody – petrodollars. The economy of oil downplayed the role of the father who was a proud productive agent. He switches over to trade which is a main feature of a rent economy. Due to the fissures related to trade, he is barely able to take care of his family, talk more of others. Remember that those days, your children could leave Nchantancha in Enugu and go live with your mother's cousin in Zungeru? All those died a natural death. The man became exposed to the vagaries of his new and alien economy. He cannot be leader of his home any longer. His economic balloon as a man had been punctured; he lost his masculinity and manhood. Men who no longer realized they had lost their economic libido, in trying to assert their erstwhile power, clashed with their spouses and crises of Hiroshima and Nagazaki ensued.

We must go beyond the superficial to locate why husbands and wives have suddenly and repeatedly resorted to the knife and blood as insignia of matrimony. We must urgently return to the sanctity of the extended family and reclaim our family values. While no sane person should justify murder in whatever hue, the tragedy of Yewande and Lowo began at their betrothal. Yewande apparently married the handsome dude whom neither he nor his family knew. The contradictions that manifested thereafter were enough to drown a Titanic. Society is the greatest loser at the death of a promising Lowo and the trajectory of a brilliant young attorney Yewande, a doctoral student of law, a high-flying civil servant who had become a Principal State Prosecutor in the Ministry of Justice, who had the potentials of contributing immensely to the Nigerian judicial system, being behind bars.



If we look at the Oyediran tragedy as that between the victim and the victimizer, we would be mistaken. That tragic marriage had imprimaturs of the metaphysical, the failure of pre-marital investigations, economic and mental power not residing in the man and hypocrisy of the new African family. Today's family is reluctant to head for the court to seek divorce when spousal violence, which is the forerunner of knife and blood, suddenly springs up in its family, afraid of "what the world would say."

Good night, Weli Weli

The ancient city of Akure, the Ondo State capital, erupted in sorrow last week. Diminutive palace bard, Pa Sule Yusuf, known by all and sundry as Weli Weli, suddenly bade this world bye. Even though originally from Osogbo, Osun State, he was a major feature of the palace of the Deji of Akure for more than five decades, working with about six monarchs, beginning with Oba Ademuwagun Adesida who reigned from 1957 to 1973. He went everywhere with the Deji, was the palace guide and understood the historical import of every cranny of the palace. He also entertained guests to the palace with perfect chanting of the Deji's and guests' ancestral chants. President Olusegun Obasanjo was said to have fallen in love with Weli Weli's fastidious grasp of his arts and looked forward to his chants whenever he came to Akure.

Here is commiserating with Yusuff's immediate family, the Deji of Akure, Oba Aladetoyinbo Ogunlade Aladelusi, Odundun II, and the people of Akureland who demonstrated their metropolitan and accommodating nature by making Weli Weli their adopted son.

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