Eleanor A. Dasi, Adaobi Muo, "Entry on: Myth of the Superior Status of the Male Gender by Rebecca N. Umeafonta", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/742. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

Rebecca N. Umeafonta

Myth of the Superior Status of the Male Gender

Nigeria

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Myth of the Superior Status of the Male Gender
Country of the First Edition	Nigeria
Country/countries of popularity	Nigeria
Original Language	Igbo
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Nigeria
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	August 13, 2018
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Umudege, Igbo-Ukwu
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover (Young adults + adults)
Author of the Entry	Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com Adaobi Muo, indepent researcher, deskola2011@yahoo.com
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Creators



Rebecca N. Umeafonta (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator: 69 (in 2018)

Social status: Community leader

Profession: Headmistress (retired)

Language of narration: Igbo

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, Yaounde, wandasi5@yahoo.com and Ada Muo, University of Lagos, deskola2011@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating	Background: Igbo-Ukwu (see the entry) Occasion: Staged Performance

Summary

After *Chukwu Okike* (Creator God) created human beings, both man and woman. He assigned an equal social status to both genders. As time went on, conflict became a constant factor in several families and societies. The problem reached God in the sky. He sent down some of his *muo-ozi* (angels) to the world to investigate the cause of the incessant conflict among the humans. After observing interpersonal, familial and group relationships in the world for some time, the angels discovered the root of the conflict. Most of the problem was caused by acrimony arising from the refusal of each gender to submit to the other, both in significant and insignificant matters. The angels departed and gave their report to God. A meeting was convened in the sky to find a solution to the problem. After listening to all the suggestions, God decided to select one gender as the head. The determining factors for the choice were bravery, consideration, compassion and contentment.

To determine the gender that possesses all these qualities, God gave an assignment to men and women. Each group was sent to raid a weaker tribe and bring back seven human heads. They were told that any group that performed well would become the leading class. Both groups left. After some days, the men returned happily chanting victory songs and reported that they achieved great feats as they submitted three human heads. The women also returned. However, they came back wailing and lamenting their misfortune as they presented six human heads. God decided that the male gender exhibited admirable leadership qualities by sparing more lives and expressing happiness even in seeming failure. Thus, the leadership position went to the male gender. This explains why most Igbo societies are patriarchal.

Analysis

Gender disparity and inequality has existed in many world societies since the beginning of time but how the male came about to be the

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	superior gender has only mythical explanations from each culture. In African cultures particularly, patriarchal institutions dominate and by implication, women hold only subservient positions which they have tried, over the years, to break away from. The Igbo people, in the above myth, have tried to offer an explanation as to why the male gender dominates in society. In a nutshell, the myth attempts to explain the patriarchal nature of the Igbo society. By associating vice with women, it gives the men an excuse to dominate them.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Gender expectations/construction Gender, female Gender, male
Further Reading	Ezeigbo, Theodora Akachi, "Traditional women's institutions in Igbo society: implications for the Igbo female writer", *African Languages and Cultures* 3 (1990): 149–165. (accessed: December 28, 2020). Nduka, Udeagha and Nwamah Grace Ozioma, "Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and the Role of Women in Igbo Traditional Religious Culture", *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 7.12 (2019): 272–289. (accessed: December 28, 2020). Ojukwu, Ebele V. and Eunice U. Ibekwe, "Cultural Suppression of Female Gender in Nigeria: Implications of Igbo Females' Songs", *Journal of Music and Dance* 10.1 (2020) available at https://academicjournals.org/JMD (accessed: December 28, 2020).

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Addenda

Method of data collection: Note taking and tape recording

Researchers: Adaobi Muo (trans.)

Editors: Daniel A. Nkemleke

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