

AWING PROVERBS: FROM PATRIARCHY TO FEMINIST REVOLT

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Awing is a village found in the North West Region of Cameroon with a population of about 60000 inhabitants according to A wing Palace statistics (Shedmankah 2009:3). Awing society has moved from a patriarchal and hierarchical society to egalitarianism, from homogeneous society to heterogeneous one within the same indigenous set up. The patriarchal and hierarchical society in which the man takes initiative alone and controls production is now changing to one in which the woman has started taking initiative thus revolting against chauvinism and assuming her independence. This paper demonstrates through proverbs that there is a shift /move from the ideology of conservatism to that of egalitarianism in the Awing society as a result of the influence of contemporary issues. It also illustrates the role of the Awing female in social cohesion as spelt out in their proverbs. Proverbs are the wisdom of the ancestors and the best way of preserving language. So analysis of proverbs will show the present male hegemony and how women are revolting against it. The problem this paper raises is that there is a shift in ideology in Awing society. This will create confusion and destroy social cohesion. The moral value of proverbs will diminish in Awing community and people will become less interested in the use of proverbs, the excesses of the feminist movement is going to destabilise the Awing society. The African man has a role to play as well as the woman. If these roles are destabilised, there is no unity or social cohesion. Social cohesion takes place when each person plays his role. The fact that the feminist movement is attacking the traditional tenet of unity is dangerous and can never bring unity. About 90 proverbs are analysed using the (post) Marxist approach. Through these proverbs, the African thought in relation to the on-going struggle for women emancipation is expressed. These proverbs are collected from the Awing society and transcribed in the Awing language. The free translation method is used to bring out the English version with concentration on the context of the proverb and not on Grammar.

CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY IN AWING

Zender W. Vander (1988), propounds that “ Americans have traditional stereotyped men and women as polar opposites: men are dominant, independent, competitive, self-confident, aggressive and logical; women are submissive, dependent, emotional, conforming, affectionate, and nurturant” (p.308). It is upon this division that the American as well as the African ideology is built. Proverbs from Awing milieu illustrate that the man is the ruler or the person dominating in the society and the woman depends on him for protection. The woman on her part performs the roles of care taking, maintaining her well defined position in the society, she is a beggar but at the same time very active in contributing to the well- being of the family. She is the brain behind children upbringing.

P1.Nəkwĩŋ ná ɲwumbyaŋnə ná chí lé atũ məŋgyě.

A man's arm is on the woman's head

P2.Mbə gho sog mbô pi pə pətəkaŋ gho jĩ əpú pə əshĩ'nə. *When you wash your hands with the elders, you eat delicious things*

P3.Təmbə' á tí' mbə pá lé mbe'tə á kě atũ tse pō.

No matter the situation, the shoulder can never be above the head.

P4.Təmbə asaŋə ɲwumbyānə á kəmkə á pá lé ä kó'kə tsə'ə nō əjə. *A man is proud, no matter how short his tail.*

P5.Məpũ a chí lá awatə.

A nursing mother is found only in the hospital

P6.Zó' əfəg mó nə mé.

Allow the child's fever to the mother.

P7.Na ə tú nkĩ lé ali' mə əyə ä tú nə əwə.

An animal crosses the river where its mother also crosses

P8.Gho pyă nəpi tó náŋə atĩə.

You have picked kola nuts without looking at the tree

Culturally the Awing male has authority over the female and there is no situation whatsoever that can place the traditional African female above the male. Even the male who is weak in reasoning has some level of ego and respect in the Awing society just because he is a male. The stratified society attaches much importance to age. Age is respected and the elders always occupy eminent places in every occasion. Any well- behaved person can be admitted among these elders. The young of an animal has a strong affinity towards its mother. The Awing man seems to love and protect his wife, especially as he is her only defender, so much so that when the woman is in trouble, it is only to the man she directs her regards for help. The Awing culture obliges a man to take care of his wife and the woman to take her place in the home and in the society. The above proverbs indicate that there is always somebody to help in any problem and that person is the man. The society therefore is predicated on unity and people help one another. The Awing woman nurses the home, her husband, the society and her in-laws. She is warned or restricted not to interfere in matters concerning men. Like in any stratified society, where there is segregation, the woman has her own place and has as a role to maintain this place. The home is like a hospital for its inhabitants, especially for the man. The woman nurses this home which is very essential in order to maintain hierarchy.

Though exercising this very important role, the Awing woman comes under the man's control. The in-laws make up part of the home and the peace of the Awing woman depends on how she takes care of her in-laws. The husband is ‘kola nuts’ that the woman has found among her in-laws and while enjoying her kola nuts she needs to look after the tree (in-laws) that has produced it.

The Awing man is at the centre of decision making. He takes decisions concerning the family almost single handed since ideologically the woman is not intelligent to take initiative.

The woman's words as well as her curses are weak and ineffective as the proverbs below illustrate.

P9.Lə tso'ə əghā pá' mbab mə mǎwú mə pá'kə ná pá' á yĩ ná pó ŋgi pó ŋkog ŋgəbə.

It is only when the wings of an eagle are broken that he can become the friend of a Hen.

P10.Nkog ŋgəbə á kě toŋə pō.

A hen does not crow

P11. Atĩ' mǎbəg mbi mó pó'ə á tsáb ná pəŋgyě?

Is the world getting worst that a masquerade should speak to women?

P12.Mbə' mətseenə mə məŋgyě mə kě tónkə ŋja'lə aku'lə atĩ pō.

A woman's urine cannot cross a log.

P13.Nəkəŋ ná mə n̄túmə awú'nə.

A pot does not send the lid.

P14.Pələ' pá mə pá kě kwúnə pō.

The curses of the woman do not work.

The Awing female has no voice where important decisions are taken. When the male comes to the end of himself in any matter, he prefers to turn to another man for help than to a woman. Females in Awing are not allowed to see a masquerade. The female fears the male the same way she does a masquerade. The Awing male considers the female's reasoning

meaningless. Her ideas cannot solve a problem, therefore the male does not depend on her for direction since her words as well as curses are ineffective and weak.

The traditional Awing female provides labour for her family seen through these proverbs below;

P15. Achú'ə á kě á ndê ná' kwúnə pō. Achu *does not enter a house which has soup*

P16. Mbəd tə kə' ndi' məyeləP11.

I have developed joints without being matured P17. Móonə ä ghoolē atūā mā əyǎ .

A child pays his mother's bide price

P18. Məngyě wə a twáamə apecmə əfo.

That woman has carried the chief's bag

P19. Pə lə ndê ŋwu lá nə mó kə' əkwunə.

They beg a person's house only with a small bed P20. Ə fē məngyě əfē əkwu?

Should I give the woman and also give the bed?

P21. Afenə á nə ndzəgə mó təshú nətō jī nə ŋədnə.

The wasp over fed the child and its stomach got dried.

P22. Ndē ŋji ndē ndē tə əfəg mógə.

I slept in hunger and without fire

P23. Pə tē ŋnəŋə ghōŋə na məngyě ghō nəŋə azō.

When they are smashing a woman's ridge smash it also.

P24. Pə fē məjī mə nchúb móg nə maŋə.

They have given me food meant for a fire beggar.

The traditional Awing female provides labour for her family by pounding 'Achu' for the male, giving birth to children and bringing these children up in such a way as to replace her in future in her marital duties. An orphan girl does what her mother use to do in the home. For the African woman to accept her role in the society, she needs to procreate so that her child plays her role in future. The traditional female bares children who are a source of wealth

(Chief's bag) and labour. The traditional female is a beggar in the man's house and works for the man. Even though a beggar, the traditional female must not demand much from the man. The Awing ideology requires the female to do the work and the male to feed the family. The images of the dry stomach (the female) and child (the male) show that the traditional female gives all she has to the traditional male. The female endures sexual starvation by the male not providing her the satisfaction and warmth that she needs, symbolised in the proverbs by hunger and fire respectively. Ideologically, the Awing female must get sexual satisfaction only from her husband. She is not permitted by her culture to go prostituting. Though being compared to a 'beggar' the Awing female must beg only from the male (her husband). In A wing society the female tilts the soil, plants crops, harvest them, and sells and the money goes to the male, and in most cases the male misuses this money. The indirect use of the female's resources by the male destroys the female's economic power, seen in proverbs as smashing a woman's ridge (p23)

The male, who sees the traditional female as ideologically ungrateful, does not recognize all that she does. The traditional male is always right and has a pretext for every action he takes. The man has a reason even for doing 'wrong'. The traditional male feels he is doing too much for the woman, by providing her with a shelter, giving her love, children, controlling her good, so expects her to be very contented with her traditional culture. These proverbs below say something on these points

P25. Maŋ lə apeclə pə lúm nkadtə.

I only carry and they bite my back

P26. Ntəkanə a mə əsēenə ati' ndyāŋ əpag.

An adult cannot break a calabash and hide the pieces.

P27. Ōwunə ä chīə əshūə tó liə mó?

Does someone fart without carrying a child?

P28. Məjī mə chīə ndē á ndē pō nkə pə chīə nə əwə?

Does food sleep in a house with children?

P29. Ghō laŋə á ndzəm ndē Ngwéndōŋə.

You have passed behind Ngwendong's house P30. Maŋ ləg məkoolə mə əfən ndē əwə.

I have used my legs to lock the door.

P31. Ambélə á zéd mətó'ə.

A squirrel is fed up with Irish potatoes

The traditional male does all the work and the woman is seen as ungrateful. 'Biting the back' is a sign of ungratefulness on the part of the woman. The squirrel (woman) who is hardly fed up with Irish potatoes can now attain satisfaction, especially as the man's wives are as many as his children. The death of a woman's husband, especially at an age where she cannot get married to another man is like a door that is closed to her. The imagery of the legs (children) and I (widow) show that a widow depends so much on her children.

Because the traditional culture paints the woman as a weaker vessel, the man cannot depend on her for help and security postulated by the proverbs below;

P32.Mbɔ' ɲwunə a lyāŋə alí'ə ngəsánjə alu?
Can someone hide in a dry season corn farm?
 P33.Mbɔ' gho ké alí'ə mǎndzǒ lyǎŋ pō.
You cannot hide in a groundnut farm
 P34.Lɔg ntso gho tso'ə əgho ńkwág móg əwá.
Use your own mouth to blow your own fire
 P35.Mətseenə mǎ mǎngyě mǎ ké tǎnka' já'ə pō.
A woman's urine cannot cross a boundary.

Depending on the help given by the woman is like hiding in a groundnut farm, where the groundnuts (woman) cannot cover one. The senses of the woman are as short as her urine (idea) which cannot even cross a log or solve a problem. The traditional man thus believes in himself as the head of the family in handling his family matters and depends on his mouth (authority) to bring order in his family. The African female only depends, she is never independent. A weaker vessel must be supported by a more powerful one. That relationship exists between the Awing man and woman. While one person is independent, (the man) another is dependent on him (the woman). The senses of the woman are short and her ideas cannot solve a problem.

Awing ideology through procreation or dependency on children

The African culture attaches much importance to children. Ideologically the African male is considered great when he has many children. Children to him are a source of unity, support, respect or honour, and a sign of (black) beauty. A man who does not have them depends solely on the Almighty God for help. The ideology in Awing is that a man should have his own biological children, despite the communal life that this culture portrays and practices. The woman depends still on the man for procreation and the children they both produce provide a labour force for the traditional man. Barren or childless women make up the under privileged and most suppressed group in A wing. Their fate also affects the marital home. The need for children to build a strong marriage foundation in our traditional society cannot be over emphasized.

P36.Maŋ yĩ kwúd ndê páŋ mǎnyelǎ?
Will I build a house but dodge the ends of the zinc?
 P37.Maŋ pegə á ndê ńńáanə á ntén əkwunə.
I came first to the house but sat under the bed.
 P38.Afagə ngəbə á tó kó' lǎ əshu pō nkə .
A weaned hen that does not grow is a friend of children.
 P39.Mbaŋ nǎlen lǎ móonə.
The walking stick of old age is a child
 P40.Tí' gho pí póonə gho píə móonə.
Instead of giving birth to children, give birth to a child.
 P41.Nənjwínə ná akəmə asanjə á mǎ ngwú lǎ kəm Əsê. *It is God who drives away a fly from a dog without a tail*
 P42.Pə ké mbō mǎ əsō ngón ńnaŋə pō.
They do not look at the hands of a person weeding a farm.

Ideologically, the Awing culture demands that the fertility of the traditional female should determine her position in the marital home. While we expect the first wife to be loved and respected by the husband, in the case of childlessness, she has no position in the marital home.” The end of the zinc” (periphery) and “under the bed” (downward) positions in p32 and p34 portrays the African culture as laying more emphasis on children rather than the communion between husband and wife that marriage is supposed to bring. A woman cannot say she is married without having a child. The above proverbs truly celebrate the importance of procreation, since the men will use women and the children they bring forth as labour to produce economic good. Children are a great sign of maturity on the part of the woman, since she is always the accused in such a situation. This absence makes the woman depend on petting just like a child (who is under privileged). A childless person finds himself in the underprivileged class in the society. Children can provide help and support to the man. One should look at the product, not the person or the process. This means that one should not consider the appearance of a woman but her fertility. A woman weeding the farm should reap some benefits, in the same way; a man who gets married to a woman should reap some benefit from her.

Contingency on marital institution as part of the African ideology

This African ideology is also exposed in Awing proverbs through the respect given to marriage institution. The African family is an extended one, where the problem of one member is the problem of the whole family. In-laws play a vital role in holding up the hierarchy that exists in the home between husband and wife. There is need to build a strong home by taking care of one's husband and in-laws. When an African man decides to get married, he always considers the background of the woman because it is believed that one's background affects him either negatively or positively and can either make or mar a marital institution. Ideologically, therefore, the reputation of the family from which a woman comes will be the reputation of that woman analysed from the proverbs below.

P43. Ðwunə ä chîä ñkwúnə akəb tá nán mətén mí?
Does one enter a forest without looking at its valleys?
 P44. Mbo' gho pîä ngəsánj əsô gho kólə atso' yəshí'nə.
If you plant your maize and weed it, you will eat a better cob.
 P45. Atséebə mǝ 'ə á kwúd ndê ngə'ə.
Agreement can build a solid stone house.
 P46. Ðwu pá'ə ä ghenə á nkí tə atí' ló ŋwu pá'ə ä nwu' ná nkíə.
The person who goes to a stream without a calabash, is he who soils the water.
 P47. Tá'ə apô á kě nəpo' kwúlə pō.
One hand cannot tie a bundle
 P48. Pə pó'ə mó íneŋə ló á ntén əkwuná.
They beat the child and send only under the bed.
 P49. Á pe' ñkǝ ñgə nó ə lámə atəŋə məghód pō tə mbə gho zəənə.
If a snake had not wrapped on the cover of the oil, you would have seen.
 P50. Pəŋ ə kəbkə ná ndê .
It is the roofing grass that covers the house.

P₄₃ Suggests that an Awing man like any other traditional African man does not get married to a woman without considering her background. If a woman is from a good background and also takes care of her in-laws well, she will have a good husband, symbolized in p₃₈ By a better cob. The African woman has a big role to perform in the marriage home for them to live in agreement, which builds a strong foundation (solid) for the success of their marriage. There should be agreement between the man, the woman and the in-laws for a strong and successful marriage and a wife from a bad family can influence negatively the other wives of the man thus destroying hierarchy in the home. The man who gets married to such a woman did not have what he needed or adequate help (calabash) for him to get into a good family.

The woman, though being a weaker vessel and the lower class in the home, acts as one in a periphery upon which the man, symbolizing the Centre exercises power. She is actually the unseen actor who sustains the home, through the way she handles her husband and the inlaws; the man alone cannot form the unity of the home. Is like a bundle (problem) where the efforts of many people are needed to tie (solve)

Respect for hierarchy

The African ideology is also seen through the respect for hierarchy. The African woman is submissive and comes naturally under the man. The uses of vivid imagery in some proverbs that declare this fact to create verisimilitude makes Africans believe and accept it as a way of life. Hierarchy is respected in Africa and any attempt to destroy it is to destroy the culture of Africa. Ideologically, the Africans include the Almighty God in building up their culture, by using the parts of the body in determining the position of human beings in the society. It is also a society where there are chiefs, beggars, elders, princesses, children and so on, who all perform different duties.

Təmbə' á tí' mbə pá lé mbe'tə ə kě atú tse pō.
No matter the situation, the shoulder can never be above the head.
 Təmbə' asaŋə ŋwu mbyəŋnə á kəmkə əpələ ä kó'kə tso'ə nō əjǝ.
A man is proud, no matter how short his tail is
 P51. Nkógə a tseelə mbíə.
A mentor is greater than the procreator
 P52. Mbo' mō nkə a pwódnə a kólə akwəŋ yə əshí'nə.
If a child is humble, he will eat the softest bone
 P53. Mbo' gho sog mbō pī pə pətəkanj gho jī əpū pə əshí'nə. When you wash your hands with the elders, you eat delicious things
 P54. Na ə pī nkélə.
A cow has accepted the cord
 P55. Pəfo pá chîä a ndê .
There are chiefs in the house
 P56. Móg ə pə'nə apū ló pəfó pá kó' əwə.
When fire is quenched from the ash, rats enter there,

Man (head) is naturally created by God to be above the woman (shoulder). It is not something or an attitude that gives the African man his position as the head/ruler. A man is a man, no matter his authority (tail) and he (mentor) is greater than the woman (procreator) who undergoes all the sufferings in child bearing. The African man is proud of his authority (tail) no matter how unreasonable he is. Ideologically, the African woman should be very submissive as the deprived and underprivileged class in order to gain the favour of the man.

The presence of an Awing male and female in any occasion 'enslaves' the woman automatically. The woman accepts to be ruled (the cord) by the man as a means of complying with her culture. The men (chiefs) are the ones in authority (house) where women are present, to take decisions and implement on the women. The African woman in general or the Awing woman in particular is submissive to the man in order to be petted and well taken care of (eat the softest bone). The African

woman behaves well to seek for a better treatment from her husband. She is humble to accept to be under the man. Ideologically, the Awing woman is forbidden to do what a man can do even in the man's absence. The duty of the man is performed by another man or even a child. A male child, no matter his age is above the woman and the woman accepts him to perform the male duties of the home when the husband or father is away, in order to strengthen hierarchy. Traditionally, a man does not run errands for the woman because of the master and slave relationship that exist between them and because the woman depends on the man she allows another person to fill up the man's gap in order to maintain hierarchy. A good society in Africa, is therefore one in which hierarchy is respected and laws are not violated.

Feminist Revolt

We shall demonstrate here the structure of the shift from traditional ideology to egalitarianism, from a homogeneous society to a heterogeneous one, within the same indigenous set up. The patriarchal and hierarchal society where the man takes initiatives alone, and controls production, is changing to one where the woman has started taking initiatives thus rebelling against chauvinism and assuming her independence. The Awing female has created a new society within the traditional set up. There is a move from the ideology of conservatism to that of an egalitarianism society where the female is sharing power with the male. This shift portrays a new set up where there is no more respect for one's husband and marital institutions, but a gradual move by the women towards freeing themselves from what they now see as male oppressive and exploitative rule. The Awing female, is shifting away from the ideological norms of the society creating her own space. The female has found in herself certain innate abilities and is thus imbued with a desire for social change. The change is the materialization of the crisis. The crisis in the African society in general and the Awing society in particular emanates from the facts that traditional female rights in her traditional milieu is influenced by urban life proverbs pro in to the female personality, as Essien Oku, (1987), asserts that; "the women are significant and understanding fundamentally in their ability to use their sensuality to full advantage, when their ego is threatened; they resort to asserting their Individuality" (227)

Because of this spirit of individuality (egalitarianism) in the Awing female she expresses her ego and discontent for her male dominated society by developing a revolting spirit. Ezenwa Ohaeto, (1987), comments on Molara Ogundipe Leslie's one of Africa's erudite female scholar's opinion in "Replacing myth With myth: The feminist streak in Buchi Emecheta's *Double Yoke*" published in *Critical Theory and African Literature*, that: "it is up to women to combat their social disabilities; to fight for their own fundamental and democratic rights, without waiting for the happy day when men will willingly share power and privilege with them- a day that will never come" (215). It is this female fight for liberation from chauvinism that has deconstructed the ideology of conservatism by establishing a new egalitarian society where the female can now function, not as a periphery where the male establishes himself at the centre to exercise his power, but as one who also exercise economic control over the system. It is strongly believed that proverbs x-ray the ills of the society, especially the wrong done by social nuisance and those who mismanage power. The Awing female now claims equality with the male, through sources and means of production, moral liberalism and spaces.

Sources and means of Production

The Awing female ideologically engaged solely in subsistent agriculture. Presently, the Awing economic power lies in the hands of the females. There is a shift from subsistent agriculture to cash crop production. This attitude of the females hurts the males as they have lost control over production and their economic power has fallen, seen in the proverbs below.

P57. Ẹ́ zánṣé ló ndónṣé.

It is a lazy person that is ever hurt.

P58. Nkóg ngábà á kě́ ñta'á ñdzáṣé yítsé pò.

A hen does not scatter to feed another

P59. Gho lóg nka ító' nkí ówó. *You have fetched water with a basket*

P60. Ló ngab na ñkólá awéṣé.

He is the one who shares meat but eats the bone.

P61. Pá kě́ mbô má nsô ngón náṣé pò.

They do not look at the hands of a person weeding a farm

P62. Májì mǎ chíá á ndé pónkâ pá chí ná ówó?

Does food sleep in a house with children?

P63. Pá fě́ mǎjì má nchúb móg ná maṣé.

They have given me food meant for a fire beggar

The fact that the female controls her goods really hurts the male (lazy person). In the traditional ideology, the Awing female spends time working on the man's plantation where her labour is employed. The male cannot more exploit her. This behaviour by the female to demonstrate her egalitarian spirit brings tension between her and the male. The female is pushed by the desire to meet with the daily demands of life. She does not longer work to feed the man. The Awing female does not bother whether her husband has food to eat or not. When she gets up in the morning, she rushes to the farm and spends the whole day there. Every female in Awing presently is deeply involved in farming for marketing. Hard work and competition are presently common in Awing. The sharing spirit has tended to create an atmosphere of antagonism. The act of charity has diminished in Awing. Everyone now seeks his own interest. The Awing women no longer bear the family responsibility of feeding many mouths that provided labour for the male. She is no more the unseen and exploited

producer for the large African family. The Awing market is crowded with female who in the ideology are not required to sell their own products.

Charitable deeds are optional these days in the Awing society. In the ideology, a woman pounding 'achu', for example, gave to every visitor who passed round. At times she interrupted the process, just to provide a bit of it for her visitor. Today this same woman hides a dish of food when the footsteps of a visitor are heard. The conversation that use to take place around bundles of 'achu' and jugs of palm wine to entertain visitors, around the fireside in the evening is no more practiced. Egotism has come into the Awing society and food and wine are for marketing and children buy these items from their own parents. The idea of egotism is also greatly emphasizes in the present Awing society. The female exercise strict control over the good she produces. She work and reaps the benefits. P₅₃ points to an egalitarian society where the female has refused to be controlled in her production by the male. She provides her own labour. She is not deprived and treated as a beggar concerning the food she produces. She is cautious in giving (P₆₀) and keeps the best (bone) of her produce (meat) for herself. She decides on the item to consume and the one to market.

Every female has become wise and takes initiatives. She has left the initial position of the ideology. Awing females give pieces of advice to men. Some sensitization programs on the marketing of agricultural products are carried out in Awing by female elites.

P64. Təmbə' ɲwunə a pá' nka a tsonkə wəələ ngă yə.

When a person weaves his basket, he should decorate it himself.

P65. Mó tə zó' ntəgə lá mó təpəŋə.

A child who does not listen to advise is a bad child

P66. Nəto' ná mbəŋ nə lá' pīə.

A poor person's lap will one day get rotten P67. Gho zəənə mə mbə nkī tá soŋnə . *You have seen me as a river that does not flow*

P68. Gho zəənə mə mbə sōye tə lib ngád?

Have you seen me as a soldier without a gun?

The idea raised here is that of independence. Each person in the egalitarian society minds his own affairs. The traditional male does not longer stop the female from initiating ideas and taking care of other family matters (P65), but the female does this liberally, not as an obligation. The Awing female thinks that she will be destroying the society and contributing nothing to its development, if she remains under the male. She will be an abnormal 'child' to the society by not fighting for independence. Any woman who has not yet seen the desire to come out of male domination is wasting her resources. In the present, the Awing female feels she has reached the point of also advising the male. Female Awing children determine their age of getting married and do not bother whether the suitor pays bride price or not. Parents who depend on bride price to carryout building projects have become frustrated in Awing. A man was required ideologically to give a daughter in order to celebrate a certain death but today, if a person is faced with such a problem, he will only become depressed. An Awing female child makes her choice of a husband and determines when to get married.

The Awing male has lost one of the greatest means of production as a consequence of equality in the society. From the light of the above proverbs, the present society is one in which a person who does not help others will also not be helped, unlike in the ideology where people lived a communal life. The present Awing female does not only make a choice for a life partner but controls procreation. There are women who decide when to have children, and when not to have, seen in Awing proverbs. The Awing female is a river, in terms of production but she does not flow (procreate) when it is not yet convenient for her, since she takes care of these Children. She then goes prostituting to look for money for herself. This female is not more obliged to bear children. She rather uses herself for economic motives, thus revolting against the African ideology. This female does not more yield to anybody so the money she gets through prostitution does not go to the male as the egalitarian spirit is one which does not yield to any person.

Moral Liberalism

Contrary to the ideological society where the female was required to accept just what her parent presented to her, she was to get married just to the husband chosen for her by her parents and in the marital home the woman was to allow the man to bring in as many other women as possible to increase his economic strength, the female Awing population has started violating these traditional laws by taking initiative and expressing their own opinion. They do not longer subjugate to the male insinuated by the proverbs below.

P69. A kī mājī ńjīə atsa'ə.

He has refused food but eaten mud.

P70. Gho kīə mändzə ńkód mbə'ə.

You refused groundnuts but ate groundnut pudding.

P71. Gho lá akoolə nkaŋə alaŋə.

You are a latrine by the road side.

P72. Maŋ lá alí'ə atūə kəŋ pəngyě pə lí' nə tá pītə.

I have become a farm on a hill where women farm without being questioned.

The egalitarian spirit in the Awing female has led her to express herself, her opinion and her ego she is not still a 'yes sir' but has gathered the power to say 'no'. In this domain of marriage parents in Awing have fallen out with the daughters

who have refused to get married to the husband they choose for them. The Awing female now makes her choice of a husband (groundnut pudding). There is a desire in this female now to be independent from the influence of her parents. This revolt from parental rule has indulged many Awing female populations into illicit love making and abortion. The Awing woman has indulged in free sex in order to get money and attain economic independence. Ideologically she should be at home with her husband but now she is outside (roadside) and gives herself to every man. She is accessible to every man as a latrine at the roadside or a farm on a hill.

The Awing female now penetrates some ritual institutions, as opposed to the ideology in which a woman is not allowed even to see a masquerade, not to talk of standing on its path. The female is now present where the male is and they have the same traditional dance group and new dances have emerged in the society like “ijag”, which are managed by both the male and the female. Awing females are thus present where the males are.

P73. Təmbə' lə chí tsə'ə ngan məkwumə á ndê əkwub əkwu' á lö əfó?

If there are only mask dancers in the house, where have coco yam peelings come from?

P74. Təmbə' ntso ndê á fənê ndəəmə á kě kwú pō.

If the door is closed, a witch cannot penetrate

P75. Á tí' mbəg mbí pō'á á tsáb nə pəngyě?

Is the world getting worst that a masquerade should speak to women?

Some Awing female described even the appearance of the ‘kwéfor’, the greatest traditional ‘juju’ in the community that women are not allowed to see. The freedom of the female to enter ritual institutions has created in them a form of initiation and has brought about the equal distribution of the goods and services in these institutions. The benefits are shared irrespective of whether one is a man or a woman in these institutions. The Awing male has lost control over the female. The female has opened up to other men and this exposure has led her into problems symbolized in the Proverb by a ‘witch’. They wayward life the Awing female is living has many consequences. There are many children suffering in the society today who are gotten out of wed-lock and many female children who have lost their lives in the course of committing abortion. Coco yam peelings symbolize children out of wed-lock. The traditional African male does not recognize the bastard child as his child. This child looks strange among his children. He is an odd and illegal child who is not supposed to be part of the family of the new husband. Usually the girl hides the father of the child gotten out of wed-lock. Peelings are left with the girl’s parents when the girl is getting married. A few cases of parents, who accept these children into their homes, treat them differently from their own offspring (peelings) as symbolized by P₇₃. These children are born as a result of the violation of the indigenous laws and this paints a new society with its own way of life. Children gotten out of wedlock in Awing are either a burden to their grandparents or a source of strife between the married couple in the marital home. The husband discriminates over the bastard child, and the wife behaves towards the child as to claim ownership over the child and since ideologically, children belong to the man, the male ego is threatened by the attitude of this female. Especially as it is known in the village that the child does not belong to the present father. The above proverbs therefore enhance the idea that the traditional Awing female has become secretive and independent and can act in hiding, and only the consequences of her action are seen.

Moral liberalism has quickly spread to the younger generation as these proverbs below express;

P76. Mó ná lə akə'á á nə ntón ná á nəpomə.

This child is a cock that crowed in the egg.

The proverbs describe a society where the female generation has become precocious. They do things that are not meant for them, but that should be done by the men. They violate any law hindering their progress. A female is not supposed to rear any domestic animals in Awing. Practically today, women own domestic animals and even carryout activities like gun shooting to show that what a man can do, they can do it and even better. Female children were to know a man only after marriage, at very tender ages. Today the marriage age which used to be 15 years has gone up to about 20 years and a female child before reaching this age has known many men and has in some cases even caused many abortions. All this is to come out of dependency on her parents and to attain economic independence, by taking care of herself and her needs. Crowing in the egg is a change of status. The Awing female has changed her status quo by changing her position in the society. She has moved out of the man’s home and control.

P77. Ngan ntəələ a nə ndê nkwa'əfə nə nəwūə.

liar once came back from the farm with death

P78. Mbə' amú'á á chí paŋ pō a paŋ mó?

If the mother banana is not ripe, is it the daughter that will be ripe?

The traditional female prefers to encounter death than remaining dependent. The females are not afraid of the negative consequences of moral liberalism. Prostitution causes many females in Awing to contract HIV and all sorts of venereal diseases and the result of this act is death. Women as well as their offspring get involved in this practice. Women nowadays in Awing send their female children for prostitution so that they can bring them money. Female children now co-habit with their boyfriends right in the Awing village and the parents do nothing as long as the girls can bring home litres of palm oil and some tablets of soap. The act has affected the age at which a female child should get married. The ideological age, at which this child should get married, which used to be 15 years is when she starts going after men. If the mother of

the child cannot come under the control of the male, her daughter will not. p Warns against the danger of females who have freed themselves from chauvinism and expose the ills of prostitution which however, do not frighten today's Awing females. The traditional female prefers to live under difficult conditions than subordinating to the male.

In the egalitarian Awing society, no one stops the progress of another. The Awing female carries on her daily activities without the consent of the man. Unlike in the ideology where this class of people do not own land, a traditional female can now consider a piece of land, buy it and construct on it. Each person in this society now seek their own interest and no traditional male can stop the female from what she wants to do. There are women in Awing who now own big houses as result of growth brought about by the desire to be independent. It is the egalitarian spirit in the traditional female seen through proverbs that has created this consciousness of maturity in her.

P79. Ðwunə a mǎ mbî mǎ ńńéń ngo'ə apô yí.

Nobody gives birth to a child and puts a stone in his hand.

P80. Kəchíá á nə ńđé ńđzé'ə á mǎ tǎń ná ńtǎń tǎ ńđé apeńǎ.

When the cricket started learning how to cry, it cried until slept outside

P81. Mǎ-kwúneemə á nyinə kəkáń lǎ ńtē nged mǎnu yá.

A pig walks with difficulties because of its deeds.

When the Awing female discovered her exploitation by the man and that she could stand alone and do what a man can do, she endures every 'danger' in the system by going out of the man's rule. 'Outside', actually means the Awing female has gone out of the rule of the male. The image of the outside is an attempt by the female to create new spaces different from the patriarchal way of life. The female group has thus created a social milieu where the man (pig) feels uncomfortable. The pig (man) being an animal which is very healthy, and living well, is now having difficulties. This is comparative to the state of the Awing male whose economic power has been seized by the female. This brings crisis in ideology, as the female now dominates the means of production, and thus dominates production. She cultivates her cash crops, sells them and does whatever she wished with the money.

SPACES

The egalitarian society as the post Marxists explain is also characterised by the erosion of the order, antagonism and tension among competing groups or those who own the means of production and those who do not. In this society social change is seen in institutions. The Awing female has become aggressive and has come out of the man's house to look for space / habitation elsewhere. The female Awing has seen marriage as a bondage in which she has no opinion of her own, many mouths to take care of, and a place where she is deprived and subjugated. The woman is now taking initiative and this creates tension between her and the male and because she can no longer subjugated to the male, she escapes from the institution of marriage to seek space elsewhere. Proverbs echo the idea of divorce in Awing.

P82. Kəm ngu ná mbéd míá á əfǒ'kád yə.

Drive away a dog with its faeces in its anus.

P83. Ðwunə a lá' ńkyé'tə mbu mi pǎ medtǎ a kǎbkǎ .

When a person hatches his eggs, they should allow him to incubate them

P84. Ajúmǎ ə pǐ ná mǎ á kě mǎ tsəńǎ pǎ.

A thing that gives birth to a child does not destroy the child.

P85. Gho kwúd ndé ńđé apeńǎ.

You have built a house but slept outside

The egalitarian milieu is built on divorce. The Awing woman comes to live with a man still having in her mind that she has a home elsewhere and when problems start arising between her and her husband, she escapes with her children. The rate of divorce in Awing may increase since the woman no longer accepts the authority of the man unconditionally. She came to have children (faeces) with whom she can now escape out of the man's home. The woman is free. She has no bond holding her under the man's roof. Getting out of this roof with her children who will provide her with great labour force is taking over the means of production and according to Karl Marx; the person who dominates production dominates the society. She takes care of her children (eggs) and gains economic from their labour. The Awing female has seen herself as a child who has grown, properly in knowledge /self-consciousness, and like any grown up, should become independent. When a woman divorces her husband in Awing and goes back to her parents, she is considered big and her parents do not longer exercise control over her and her children.

The African male thinks that he is still living in the home with the woman meanwhile this woman is living a free life under him. The Awing female lives out of the traditional marriage vow of being faithful to one's husband. She is in the man's house but practically she is outside (behind the house) shown by this proverb;.

P86. Pəg ńwu pǎ á ndé a pǎ á ndzəm ndé .

With a person in the house but he is behind the house.

This proverb illustrates a separation and a change of status. This female does not more agree with the male. The female has become secretive and is manipulating over the man's psychology. She does so many things like buying or selling

plots, business, contracts, without her husband knowing. The female population has gradually used fertilizer and bush burring

‘mukara’ to destroy the fertility of the Awing soil without the knowledge of the male. In the ideological society a woman dared not work ‘mukara’ on a man’s land. The Awing females have gone out of control and the males are just there like puppet rulers. The marriage institution is facing crisis of deceitfulness and hypocrisy infiltrating into it.

The post-Marxist Awing society is constantly in conflict between social groups as proverbs portray;

P87. Dwu pá’ə ä ghenə á nkĩ tə atĩ ló ɲwu pá’ə a nwu’ nó nkĩə.

A person who goes to the stream without a calabash is the one who dirties the water

P88. Lě ló mó mé a pá əfō?

This is the child but where is the mother?

A dependent person will always cause problems. The Awing female has moved from this state to a stage where she is standing on her own. Females who depend on the males cause problems when the males fail them. The Awing female has avoided these problems by creating space for herself out of the male’s home. The marriage institution is now an orphanage where the man (the child) finds himself alone like an orphan. The Awing female who was required ideologically to nurse this home has abandoned it. There is the destruction of the mother (wife) and child (husband) relationship and anybody is to fend for himself. Each person owns his own property. A person cannot more claim another person’s property or dominate over what is not his own. The man Produces his cash crops in Awing and the woman produces hers. There is no interference in the production. Each individual identifies his goods and reaps the benefits.

The traditional marriage institution of today is one in which both the male and female command because the female has started taking initiatives and this weakens the male’s authority. The proverbs below illustrate this;

P89. Mbô má kwú nó ná’ tashú ló ə págə.

When many hands get into the sauce it gets stale

P90. Mó-ngũə á nə tó ɲnyia á ndê əsón ɲgə nkəd ə chíə á ndě yó.

When a dog was defecating in the house, it’s said there was a rope on its neck.

P91. Maɲ nə ɲkə ɲtəm mbĩ ɲnogə .

I was created to shoot and miss the world

P92. Mópuə a chí ló awatə.

A nursing mother is found only in the hospital.

The multiplication of ideas in the home places the ideology in crisis (staleness). The marriage institution is now one where one partner does not blame the other for his/her failure. The Awing female doesn’t blame the male if he doesn’t carry out a project. Many men had the pride in Awing of saying that they take care of their wives. During coffee harvesting season for example, a man with ten wives had the responsibility of buying loin clothes for all these women. This practice has gradually diminished in this society and an Awing female now provides for herself. She is a burden only to herself. This has given rise to a society where the female has rebelled against the male’s authority (hands). Gender hierarchy is destroyed among couples in Awing. When hierarchy is defiled, the male is reduced to a mere listener. The female has come to a realisation that she is a human being like any other human being and should live a free life, not a life of suffering (shoot and miss) under the man. This point of self –realization has made the women in any condition to prefer her liberty than to serve the man as a deprived and an unfortunate human being. This realisation has pushed many traditional women into acquiring plots and building their own dwelling places. Presently in Awing, it is very normal for a woman to build out of her husband’s compound and live there with her children, especially in polygamous homes. The egalitarian ideology has thus constructed a society in which the female feels she should struggle (shoot) alone, rather than being a” slave” under the male. The female is no more nursing in the home. She is now out of the home. A woman who depends on help remains a child’ forever. Proverbs express women’s independent attitude. The idea in the society is that the woman has attained growth. She is no more a child to be catered for. The father and child relationship does not longer exist in the marital institution, where one person serves the other.

For social cohesion to be maintained, a woman should maintain the role she played in the past in her society. That is, the role her society had assigned for her. The unity of the family depends more on the woman. She is a link to her husband as well as her children. She is the one playing the role of social cohesion. Therefore, for social cohesion to exist the role of the woman must be respected. The research has shown through proverbs that the Awing community is not indifferent to the contemporary issue of women emancipation and social change. Proverbs should be documented and preserved for posterity. Awing citizens should observe the didactic value of proverbs for social cohesion to be maintained, without necessarily pointing the finger at someone else. Proverbs should also be taught in schools in Cameroon as they contain the wisdom of the forefathers who lived in more peaceful communities. This will go a long way to stabilise our chaotic modern society.

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