

☐ Contemporary
Literary Criticism

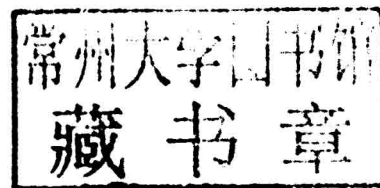
CLC 381

Volume 381

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short-Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and
Other Creative Writers

Lawrence J. Trudeau
EDITOR



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Preface

Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (CLC) series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 3,000 authors from 91 countries now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Before the publication of the first volume of CLC in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. CLC, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially necessary to today’s reader.

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CLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors of the twenty-first century. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 covered authors who died after December 31, 1959. Since January 2000, the series has covered authors who are living or who died after December 31, 1999; those who died between 1959 and 2000 are now included in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. There is minimal duplication of content between series.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science-fiction writers, literary and social critics, world authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each CLC volume contains individual essays and reviews selected from hundreds of review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning an author’s career from its inception to current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other works that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in CLC provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

CLC is part of the survey of criticism and world literature that is contained in Gale’s *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC), *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* (NCLC), *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800* (LC), *Shakespearean Criticism* (SC), and *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism* (CMLC).

Organization of the Book

A CLC entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name given in parentheses on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the author’s name.

- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication information of each work is given. In the case of works not published in English, a translation of the title is provided as an aid to the reader; the translation is a published translated title or a free translation provided by the compiler of the entry. As a further aid to the reader, a list of **Principal English Translations** is provided for authors who did not publish in English; the list selects those translations most commonly considered the best by critics. Unless otherwise indicated, plays are dated by first performance, not first publication, and the location of the first performance is given, if known. Lists of **Representative Works** discussed in the entry appear with topic entries.
- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included. Criticism in topic entries is arranged chronologically under a variety of subheadings to facilitate the study of different aspects of the topic.
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Zaynab Alkali

1950-

(Born Zaynab Tura-Mazila) Nigerian novelist and short-story writer.

INTRODUCTION

Zaynab Alkali is the author of novels and short stories that explore the role of women in traditional Muslim societies. Her characters strive to achieve their own vision of independence, whether by pursuing an education or insisting that their marriages be equal partnerships. Alkali also addresses the values of African and Islamic societies, in which loyalty to kin and community is espoused as a particular virtue. Given the feminist message of Alkali's work, a significant amount of criticism of her writings addresses issues of gender, religion, and the oppressions of a patriarchal society. Scholars have particularly noted her portrayal of women who are struggling to develop a place within a traditional society yet do not remain at odds with that society and approach their task with both humility and determination. Many critics have found a difference from Western feminism in her approach to achieving social change while preserving a cohesive society.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Born to Auta Wawuta Jauni and Tembi Lindus Tura on 3 February 1950, Alkali grew up in Garkida, Adamawa State, Nigeria. Early in life, she was exposed to several major cultural influences: a Western European education, the traditional African culture of her hometown in Nigeria, and her family's devotion to Islam. Her elders were also dedicated to art, and her grandmother told her stories every night. For that reason, she places her grandparents first and writers such as the Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the American Ernest Hemingway second when discussing her influences.

Alkali attended Waka Girls Primary School in Biu, Borno State, from 1961 to 1963 and Queen Elizabeth Secondary School in Ilorin, Kwara State, from 1964 to 1968. In 1971, she married Mohammed Nur Alkali, who later became the director general of the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, Jos. She earned a BA in English from Bayero University, Kano, in 1973, followed by an MA in African literature from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1980 and a PhD in African literature and creative writing from Bayero University in 1995. Her first novel, *The Stillborn*, was published in 1984 and received the 1985 Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Prize for Prose Fiction. Beginning in the late 1980s, Alkali taught steadily in addition to writ-

ing, first at Bayero University and then at the University of Maiduguri in Borno State. After a stint as deputy director and head of the resource center at the National Primary Health Care Development Agency in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, from 2000 to 2003, she taught African literature and creative writing at Nasarawa State University in Keffi, where she subsequently served as deputy vice chancellor for administration and dean of the postgraduate school. During this period, she received more awards, including an ANA Prize for Short Fiction for her collection *The Cobwebs and Other Stories* (1997) and awards from the National Council of Women's Societies in 1997 and the Association of Women Academics in 2000. She and her husband have six children.

MAJOR WORKS

The Stillborn is Alkali's most acclaimed and critically discussed novel. At the book's outset, thirteen-year-old Li grudgingly moves through her daily routine of chores—sweeping the compound, washing dishes, and gathering firewood. She lives with her tyrannical father, whose home she finds repressive. One night, she makes a hole in her father's fence so she can sneak into the village to attend a dance, and there she meets her future husband, Habu Adams. The two fantasize about life in the big city, where she will be a teacher and he a doctor. After they marry, however, Habu promptly abandons Li in the village and goes off to the city. When Li finally locates him four years later, Habu, now a salesman, has remarried. Li returns home, a broken woman, and, after her father dies, assumes the role of "man of the house." Over the next few years, she completes her studies at a teachers' college and raises Shuwa, a daughter conceived with Habu while she was in the city. Ultimately, however, Li returns to the city to find Habu, who is now debilitated and dependent on crutches after an automobile accident. She decides to reestablish their former relationship, saying, "I will just hand him the crutches and side by side we will learn to walk." Despite initial critical rejection of this ending, over time scholars have come to view Li's decision as one of female autonomy.

Alkali's other novels have focused on variations of independent-spirited female characters struggling to forge their own paths in patriarchal Nigeria. *The Virtuous Woman* (1987) centers on Nana Ai and her friend Laila as they journey from their tiny village of Zuma to Her Majesty's College in Kudu. Along the way, the girls meet Abubakar and Bello, two young men who are traveling to King's

College in Lagos. The duos repeatedly cross paths, first while collecting transport money at the secretariat in Birnin Adama and later in the midst of an accident that claims Abubakar's life. Nana and Bello are drawn to each other and part with the hope of meeting again. The inner beauty of the virtuous woman, Nana, is emphasized in the novel. *The Descendants* (2005), which Umelo Ojinmah and Sule Egya (2005; see Further Reading) called Alkali's "most ambitious work to date," is divided into two parts. The first part introduces Magira Milli, a matriarch who guides her family through major life events such as births, marriages, and deaths, all the while working to secure an education for the younger generation. The second part follows Magira Milli's granddaughter Seytu, a charismatic physician recently divorced from an unfaithful husband. Both Magira Milli and Seytu are strong, independent-spirited women who command respect and make decisions concerning their personal lives. More strong-willed women—a mother whose daydreams take a nightmarish turn, a devoted wife who learns of her husband's second family, a polygamous man's wives who try to prevent yet another wife from joining the fold—populate Alkali's award-winning *The Cobwebs and Other Stories*.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

The critical discussion of Alkali's works centers almost exclusively on issues of feminism, which many African scholars call womanism. As Adetayo Alabi (1998; see Further Reading) observed, Alkali's female characters "represent different strands of the ongoing debate about the relationship between the African woman and her male counterparts."

Responses to *The Stillborn* have "outclassed and outnumbered those of any of Alkali's other works," according to Ojinmah and Egya, who noted that a significant portion of the criticism has accused Alkali "of doing a disservice to feminism by ending the book with Li returning to Habu." Other critics have argued instead that the novel demonstrates empowered womanhood. Through Alkali's heroine, Nadežda Obradović (1990) contended, readers "witness the daily endeavors of an African woman to become conscious of her own personality and powers and to achieve independence." Nduka Otiono (1996) interpreted Li's return to her husband as Alkali's way of "questioning the stereotypical Western feminist canon," while Hannah Ngozi Eby Chukwu (2005) applauded Li's "radical stance" in making her own personal choice rather than acting "in accordance with traditional expectations" or in "the feminist mode."

Scholars have explored similar themes in Alkali's subsequent novels and in her stories. Ojinmah and Egya wrote of *The Descendants* that it moves Alkali's work toward a more "radical feminism" with its celebration of education's

"liberalizing influence" on women, an influence that leaves them "so engrossed with their careers" that they "couldn't care less about marriage. They would wish to get married, yes, but only on their own terms."

Alongside the need to educate women, perhaps the greatest theme to emerge from Alkali's post-*Stillborn* output treats the ways in which women's independence and the Islamic faith can coexist. In *The Virtuous Woman*, as well as in *The Stillborn*, Ezenwa-Ohaeto (1996) detected an "elasticity of religious and social traditions" that Alkali's female characters fully inhabit. Furthermore, Ezenwa-Ohaeto explained, both novels encompass a "range of Islamic gender and social projections." Shirin Edwin (2006) agreed with and elaborated on this point of view, asserting that Alkali's multifaceted approach to Islam and feminism continues in *The Cobwebs and Other Stories*, whose tales "show the diversity within Islam and also break the mold of the misconception about Muslim women locked in a perpetual battle against patriarchy and oppressive religious systems."

Sam Krowchenko

PRINCIPAL WORKS

The Stillborn. Harlow: Longman, 1984. (Novel)

The Virtuous Woman. Ikeja: Longman Nigeria, 1987. (Novel)

Vultures in the Air: Voices from Northern Nigeria. Ed. Zaynab Alkali and Al Imfeld. Ibadan: Spectrum, 1995. (Poetry and short stories)

**The Cobwebs and Other Stories*. Ikeja: Malthouse, 1997. (Short stories)

The Descendants. Zaria: Tamaza, 2005. (Novel)

The Initiates. Ibadan: Spectrum, 2007. (Novel)

*Comprises "The Cobwebs," "The House of Dust," "Saltless Ash," "The Vagabond," "The Nightmare," and "Footloose."

CRITICISM

Nadežda Obradović (review date 1990)

SOURCE: Obradović, Nadežda. Rev. of *The Stillborn*, by Zaynab Alkali. *World Literature Today* 64.2 (1990): 354. Print.

[In the following review, Obradović contends that in *The Stillborn*, Alkali "presents her view that women all over Africa are striving for emancipation" but does so in a

way that "attracts and maintains the keen interest of the reader."]

In her first novel the Nigerian writer Zaynab Alkali presents her view that women all over Africa are striving for emancipation. Through her heroine Li, who first appears "with skin the colour of brown earth, a graceful neck and a slender body," we witness the daily endeavors of an African woman to become conscious of her own personality and powers and to achieve independence. The path is very thorny for Li, who goes through an unsuccessful marriage, a lonely existence in the town where her husband has another woman, long years of solitude while waiting in the village for her husband's invitation to join him in the city, and the mockery of the entire village over her husband's desertion despite her great beauty. She nevertheless finds the courage to continue her education, become a teacher, and achieve economic independence.

Though the use of Li as a *porte-parole* of the author's ideas could easily have turned the novel into an ideological pamphlet, this does not happen with *The Stillborn*. The book attracts and maintains the keen interest of the reader.

Ezenwa-Ohaeto (essay date 1996)

SOURCE: Ezenwa-Ohaeto. "Shaking the Veil: Islam, Gender and Feminist Configurations in the Nigerian Novels of Hauwa Ali and Zaynab Alkali." *Ufahamu* 24.2-3 (1996): 121-38. Print.

[In the following essay, Ezenwa-Ohaeto investigates how themes of Islam, gender, and feminism overlap in the work of Alkali and her fellow Nigerian novelist Hauwa Ali. According to Ezenwa-Ohaeto, in *The Stillborn* and *The Virtuous Woman*, Alkali disrupts the Islamic tradition in a way that reiterates "the positivity of womanhood" as well as the moral values embedded in Nigerian society.]

Through the depictions of interactions associated with gender relations, the issue of Islam and feminist configurations in Nigerian fiction is given prominence. Although it is obvious that modern trends in social activities have undoubtedly become pervasive, especially in terms of the importance attached to the acquisition of education, the female in Nigerian Islamic society still encounters some of the impediments emanating from gender relations contracted and encouraged through religious and cultural considerations.

The fundamental view of a gender relationship, like marriage, in Islam has never been in doubt, for I. M. Lewis states that "despite the control over a woman vested in her guardian (*Wali*), the *Shari'a* conceives of marriage as in essence a voluntary contract between individual spouses,"¹ and also that "the fundamental transaction is the explicit agreement of the bride (subject only to the constraint, *jahr*,

of her guardian), and also requires the presence of a cleric, or *shaikh*, to perform the marriage ceremony."² This conception of matrimony, however, impinges on the society in several ways. The varied reactions to it, as well as other associated inter-gender interactions within a basic Islamic framework, produces the tension that usually emanates from such actions and reactions.

Female writers from the localities in Nigeria where Islam is widely practiced clearly perceive those actions and reactions emanating from issues of gender relations, education, and the fulfillment of the female as essential in their creative portrayal of reality. Their fundamental concern relates to the delineation of the female in a family environment and through that environment they telescope the prevalent norms and mores that provide the tension of life in the society. The choice of Hauwa Ali³ and Zaynab Alkali is informed both by their northern Nigeria origins, and the relevance of thematic preoccupations in their novels to the essential aspects of Islam identifiable in Nigeria.

The acceptance of these female writers, especially Zaynab Alkali, as worthy of critical attention is emphasized aptly by a critic who states, while assessing her works, that "the entrance of Zaynab Alkali into the burgeoning fold of female Nigerian writers is significant in a historical sense as well as in the sense of the contribution to our literary tradition,"⁴ and also that:

from demonstrated creative potentials as well as her acute sensitivity to typically female issues, experiences and problems, we may well expect that Zaynab Alkali would contribute illuminatingly to the creative output of other important, predominantly 'Southern' female writers.⁵

That observation equally fits Hauwa Ali who comes from a similar cultural and Islamic tradition in which gender issues have not been given the prominence they deserve. Thus, we shall use Hauwa Ali's two novels entitled *Destiny* and *Victory*,⁶ in addition to Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* and *The Virtuous Woman* to demonstrate the social dimensions, gender linkages and feminist intersections emanating from novels produced in an environment portraying socio-cultural aspects of life associated with the Islamic tradition.

It must be stated that these female writers do not conceive their works primarily from a position of overt rebellion in as much as some of their characters are overt rebels, and they as writers are aware of the need for reasonable socio-cultural changes in their society. It is interesting that the two female writers are engaged in teaching at the University of Maiduguri, which is not distant from Kano, a town that has been examined in a recent essay and shown to be in the midst of social tension because "there are many overzealous Muslims in Kano city; there are even many who advocate the total rejection of the present system of government in favor of an Islamic one."⁷ However, the writer adds that:

for the majority the recourse to Islamism is the result of their frustration with the failure of modern measures to cope with the worsening social and economic problems. The slogan 'Islam Only,' therefore, is a way of saying that Islamic solutions to these problems are the only remaining options, all the others having been tried and having failed.⁸

With this resurgence of Islamism, gender relationships and the need to allow women to achieve fulfillment through education are greatly affected. Hauwa Ali, obviously aware of the incipient effects of the Islamic tradition on such aspects of life, creates her novel within that tradition of Islamic resurgence, while managing to interrogate the consequence of its rigid application in female lives, especially in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society like Nigeria.

In *Destiny*, the centering of the story on Farida, who completes her education in a Teachers' College where she falls in love with Farouk, a Senegalese with a Nigerian mother, is part of that creative interrogation. The issue of marriage thus becomes the pivot on which the novel revolves as Farida, while waiting for admission to further her education, is compelled by her guardian to marry Wali El Yakub whom she does not love. The major thrust of the novel is the dramatization of how the decision for such an affair is taken without due respect for the feelings of the young woman. The ostensible reason for this decision is to provide security for Farida, and her Aunt Nana insists:

Just because you have gone to school you have the audacity to question my position. What do you know about life outside the confine of the boarding school? While at school you were protected by the school authorities and the school rules.⁹

Gogo, the mother of Mallam Tanimu confirms that view as she dissuades Farida from accepting a teaching appointment that would make her live in Kano, as "a young pretty girl in a large city is big trouble. Things can sometimes get really messy."¹⁰ The moral consciousness associated with not only a reasonable cultural tradition, but also an Islamic tradition, is involved in the views of these two women.

This is complicated, however, as Wali El Yakub, in the bid to marry Farida, has provided financial enticements to the family of Aunt Nana and her husband. Aunt Nana therefore seeks to justify her action by falsely attributing it to Allah, and in this way, it will be justified according to the Islamic belief that Allah is omnipotent. Thus, she stresses that, "Allah knows best. It's only He who knows who will marry whom. Ours is only to pray that He guides our choice and gives us the understanding to make the right decision."¹¹ Ironically, that guidance of Allah is denied Farida by Aunt Nana because she is not allowed to choose her marriage partner.

This decision made by "the other" for Farida, a woman who is capable of taking such decisions, is the focus of

Hauwa Ali's interrogation. The fact that two other women are involved does not mitigate it as a restrictive, gender-oppressive and ultimately insensitive decision. Ironically, one of the ostensible reasons for this decision is to protect Farida, although Wali El Yakub is incapable of providing that security. Farida would have been better secured, financially and socially, as an employed teacher. Subsequently, the education she has acquired would have enabled her to carry out her duties as well as attain self-actualization. Thus, this disruptive marriage affair with an individual who cannot relate to her at the same intellectual level is stifling and even stultifying. Hauwa Ali, through this decision affecting Farida, indicts some of her female characters as willing accomplices to the degradation of their fellow women in society.

This affair portrays Wali El Yakub as an individual who depends excessively on the power of his material acquisitions. In fact, the writer hints that it is through this dazzle of his wealth that he manages to convince Aunt Nana to compel Farida to marry him. The implication of this fact is that greed and covetousness often impair the ability of individuals to examine situations closely. Hauwa Ali's criticism of unbridled material consciousness in her society is thus widened to reflect how such inordinate materialism affects gender relationships, destroying the visions, hopes and aspirations of those affected. The implicated view in this case bears close resemblance to Elleke Boehmer's perception that postcolonial women writers stress the importance of "having the power to articulate selfhood."¹² It is this power to articulate her "self" that is denied Farida through her marriage to Wali El Yakub and it is also this power that he deviously and sinisterly strives to erase permanently from her life.

It is the consequence of his decision to erase the selfhood of Farida that almost leads to tragedy, even as the unpleasant traits of Wali El Yakub, as a person, threaten the marriage. One of these unpleasant traits is an inferiority complex that transforms Wali into an arrogant man who strives to subjugate his wife. The novelist narrates that:

he was never known to have any problem that he didn't know how to solve. To him, failure was unmanly. His life must be one huge success and so he battled to succeed in all things. He had often prided himself with the belief that he had a hold on his destiny.¹³

Ironically, this view is interrogated through the fact that he ultimately fails to control his wife's destiny, especially when his decision to prevent her from seeking higher education is circumvented by his own selfish motives. The intersections in this story are provided by Tinu's (Farida's former classmate and friend) marriage to Farouk (the man Farida loves) and the deliberate, vicious efforts of Wali El Yakub to destroy Farouk through Tinu. In addition, Wali's resort to polygamy is an attempt to reduce Farida to a level of subservience that would enhance his ego. The portrayal

of polygamy in this novel indicates that it has become one of the most problematic of Islamic tenets as well as a social problem. Wali El Yakub engages in polygamy through self-ish motives, believing that it will earn him the power to intimidate Farida. Thus, his engagement in polygamy reflects one of his socio-cultural abuses. A female critic argues that "the most misunderstood position in Islam is that relating to polygamy"¹⁴ and "the first point to note is that the Qu'r'an does not oblige Muslims to practice polygamy."¹⁵ Second, it has to be noted that, "it is presented "in phrases of caution"¹⁶ with the intrinsic "fairness which is the condition under which it is permitted."¹⁷ That intrinsic fairness is not considered by Wali as a result of both arrogance and insensitivity to the feelings of Farida who yearns for emotional satisfaction.

Fortunately, events bring Farida and Farouk together in London where the plans of Wali are thwarted by destiny. Farouk divorces Tinu while Farida divorces Wali El Yakub in order to fulfill their emotional desires. What Hauwa Ali metaphorizes in *Destiny* is the fact that marriages contracted without due considerations for the views of the respective partners eventually disintegrate. It is this idea that makes relevant Farida's question quite early in the novel: "Is that what marriage is, an arrangement where only one of the principal partners is happy and satisfied?"¹⁸ It is the answer to this question which is the crux of the novel because in the scene where the affair is discussed it occurs only "after Farida left the room" and "Wali told the elders that he had come to ask Alhaji Abba" for permission to "marry Farida his niece."¹⁹ Alhaji Abba agrees, as he considers his role as a guardian in terms of the fact that it is his "responsibility, in the absence of [Farida's] father, to see that [she is] rightly settled."²⁰ The exercise of that responsibility ostensibly under an umbrella of a socio-cultural and Islamic tradition is without the commensurate sensitive appraisal of the girl's feelings. Thus Hauwa Ali demonstrates its negativity in the ensuing matrimonial interaction in *Destiny* and makes it clear that in marriages, as in all gender relationships, the principal partners should all be happy and satisfied.

Obviously at the center of the novel is the impression that such marriages contracted with only the consideration of the male partner's interests undermine the self-fulfillment of the girl involved. In her second novel entitled *Victory*, Hauwa Ali presents Tinu as an individual who now assumes responsibility within such a relationship. Although some of the characters encountered in the second novel have their origins in the first novel, the novelist weaves a new pattern of events and incidents that are insightful for the analysis of human nature. Tinu, now a qualified medical doctor, is posted to Farfaru Hospital Kano where she is thrown into the company of other doctors and paramedical staff. The decision of the management to place her under the supervision of Dr. Sanusi introduces an element of romance that is illuminating. Sanusi is a Muslim while Tinu is a Christian,

in addition to the fact that they are from different ethnic groups. However, the moral consciousness associated with Islam emanating from the novel comes from Sanusi when he tells Tinu that "being unfaithful to one's wife is not something a married man should be proud of. It is immoral and no religion in the world permits it. Even society disapproves of it."²¹ Implicated in that remark is, of course, the acknowledged view which has been stated as "Islam, like other religions, condemns adultery, fornication, and all sexual vices. It teaches Muslims to moderate their natural inclinations and to control their sexual behavior."²² The lack of that control which Sanusi perceives in Dr. Umar is portrayed as a negative, as it eventually leads to the endangering of Umar's wife's health in a quarrel she has with his girlfriend. In contrast, Sanusi epitomizes the sexual control which Islam stipulates as his relationship with Tinu develops and culminates in a mutual decision to marry.

Illustrating a novelistic purpose is the fact that the past history of Tinu, which should have militated against her emotional fulfillment, is not hidden or erased. The significance of this fact is that Hauwa Ali demonstrates that social and moral mistakes can be made by women, but that those affected can rise above such human frailties by consciously reordering their priorities in life, and imbibing ennobling human qualities. Tinu's rehabilitation in this novel, despite the fact that she had collaborated with Wali El Yakub in the earlier novel to destroy the emotional lives of Farouk and Farida, is an obvious indication that Hauwa Ali insists that women, who, like her female characters, are guilty of social and moral vices, possess the essential capability of positively transforming their lives. Thus the novelist is warning against stereotypical perceptions of individuals, groups of people, members of certain professions and even members of cultural communities as reflecting only certain eternal characteristics and attitudes. She illustrates that as members of a dynamic society, these individuals are constantly evolving and transforming into better human beings. This is certainly a hopeful vision and such literary perceptions emerge as convincing fictive constructs as Sanusi and Tinu proceed to fulfill that decision to link their lives in a marriage of equal partners.

However, their decision to marry is subjected to antagonism from the parents of both partners. At the same time the relationship receives support from Gidalo who advises Sanusi:

if she accepts you, as I am sure she will, try and convince your parents and hers to over-look your tribal differences. Our religion allows marriage between a Muslim and a Christian woman. She might accept your religion because of the love she has for you.²³

Eventually the opposition to the marriage of Tinu and Sanusi fizzles out, as "their patience, determination and power of persuasion eventually won for them some acceptance from their parents."²⁴ Tinu decides to become a Muslim "and took the new name of Jamila."²⁵ It is significant that