

**Magic Realism in Odili Ujubuonu's Pride of the Spider Clan and Iweka's So  
Bright a Darkness**

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**Abstract**

Literary works often explore the forces behind the strangeness of things and occurrences in human life, and also try to clarify the doubts bestowed on them. These works showcase the cultural sophistication of the society, and as well celebrate aspects of culture which serve as gateway to the enlightenment of minds wallowing in doubts on the existence of supernatural forces in the affairs of man. So, ever since man's existence on earth, certain things have been left at the background due to his inability to decode them. They have been made sacrosanct even when proofs exist, and should stir man in investigations to unravel the mysteries surrounding them. But unfortunately, these proofs have also been slammed with doubts. The aim of this paper, is to highlight these issues, particularly on magic realism with evidence from Odili Ujubuonu's *Pride of the Spider Clan* and Chidubem Iweka's *so Bright a Darkness*. Sociological criticism and the reader-response theories were employed to critically depict the existence of supernatural manipulations in the world of man. In the works under study, the novelists left no stone unturned in their explorations of these supernatural involvements as mysterious in the affairs of man. Thus, the study brought to light the impacts of supernatural forces in human lives and society, and also clears the doubts which readers/scholars may have in their minds for years as regards the concept of magic realism.

**Keywords:** Magic, Realism, Mystery, Supernatural, Destiny, Fate, Culture

## Introduction

It has been observed that some aspects of the human world have been neglected, despite the fact that they reflect in our daily living and they have been made sacrosanct. One of these aspects is the involvement of the supernatural and magic in human affairs. It cannot be doubted that there is an influence of the supernatural forces on humanity. This influence goes beyond human mind's comprehension, and therefore, has been classified severally by humans as the workings of fate. This classification stems from the inability of man to vividly decode the working of these forces. Most times, some of these manipulations done on human affairs, form mysteries and puzzles to man. This therefore, gives credence to the natural existence of a world higher than this one. It is also noteworthy to note that the supernatural bodies are capable of working through man in the achievement of their goals.

Ngozi Chuma-Udeh in Trends and Issues in Nigeria Literature says, "put side by side the supernatural forces and humans, the physical and the metaphysical. The fates of humans are decided by these mystical powers as the humans intermingle and even marry these strange beings" (52). The above idea, situates a fact that there is an interference of the supernatural in the affairs of man. It also fans into flame the existence and manifestation of forces above the spheres of human assimilation. We live in a society filled with happenings that are unfamiliar to man, hence, the interest in this research work. The researchers strongly agree that literature has gone way in exposing mysteries and mystic occurrences. Therefore, the researchers intend to pinpoint the mystic occurrences as capture by Odili Ujubonu and Chidubem Iweka in their works under study.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Sociological Approach and the Reader-Response Theory.

The Sociological is a product of the society. It projects the social issues in the society through literature. Asika Ikechukwu has this to say:

*Sociological Approach is rooted in the idea that literature is a product of the society. It sees a literature work as nothing but a product of several real aspects of the society of a writer. The critic using this approach to criticism is interested in determining the real life social-political and economic issues that obviously gave to a work of art (258)*

Kofi Agyekum in Aska Ikechukwu's Literature Appreciation; a practical Demonstration says, "Sociological criticis focus on the values of society and how those values are reflected in the literary works". He further added that "sociological criticism studies the economic, political and cultural issues expressed in literary works because they reflect the true picture of what exists in the society" (258).

From these opinions, it is not out of balance to say that the sociological approach is solely concerned with the happenstances in the society. Wikipedia has this to add:

*Sociological criticism is a literary criticism directed to understanding (or placing) literature in his larger social context; it codifies the literary strategies that are employed to represent social constructs through a sociological methodology. Sociological criticism analyzes both how the social functions in literary works in society.*

The Reader-Response criticism or theory looks at the different meanings given to a literary work by a reader. It invests on a reader the power to extract meaning from a text or work. It portrays the view of a reader and bestows on them the right to give meaning and life to a text. Based on this, the researchers seek to unveil issues on magic realism in the texts under study, from their own views.

Ann Dobie in Asika Ikechukwu's *Literary Appreciation; A Practical Demonstration* declares "Readers have always responded to what they read, but with the advent of reader-response analysis the worst fears of the formalists came true" (351).

Again, Sheena Gillespie et al still in Asika Ikechukwu's, *Literary Appreciation; A Practical Demonstration*, gave their voice by placing "much emphasis on the literary experience of individual readers not only as interpreters of texts but as producer of meanings" (351).

Just as linguists believe that no two humans think alike, so it is for the users of this approach. The meaning they produce in a work must differ. Interpretation will vary because they think differently.

### **Magic Realism in Odili Ujubuon's Pride of the Spider Clan**

Odili Ujubuonu's *Pride of the Spider Clan* is a novel episodically told by the writer which involves a quest to restore the pride of a clan. This was laid as a burden on two characters whose mission was to see that the pride of the clan was restored back to them. It was their purpose in life to fulfill this mission despite all threats in the course of its fulfillment.

Odili has greatly succeeded in creating a world of magic in his quest to represent the precolonial period in Africa specifically the works links one to Chinua Achebe's storytelling style and language though with marks that differ it as his. In his work, he narrates the tale of a missing mystical flute and quest for its retrieval.

The footprints of magic realism in his work began with a myth which explained why children laugh and smile in the absence of physical being. This was brought to limelight from Egondú's question to the child minder of Odidika, when she notice that the child was smiling alone. The child minder replied:

*He plays with child spirits always.*

*What do you mean by that?*

*I don't know, that is what I hear other children say when babies laugh on their own (27)*

When I consider the possible causes of Odidika's sucking of lips is evidently supernatural **manipulations** beyond human comprehension. The baby's sucking of lips which was different from the smile and laugh, was traced to dream Egondú, the surrogate mother of the orphaned child had. "what transpired the last and third time that Ekemma appeared, worried Egondú this afternoon. Ekemma had walked in when Odidika was home alone. She picked him up and began to breastfeed him" (28).

Mbandu and Egondú nurtured Odidika until he was of age and the predictions of Udegbala the diviner of him being a door of fruitfulness to the family began to unfold. At a time, things went sour for the family and saw to an un-purposeful but compulsory eviction of Odidika according to the wish of the land god called Ani. The eviction came

after Odidika had desecrated the land by killing a man called Ikebuasi who ravaged some properties of Mbandu in his leopard form. Actually, he was right in killing the leopard that threatened his father's household but what terrified him, was the changing of the cat from an animal to a man who turned out to be Ikebuasi at death. This incident breeds the idea of the multidimensional views of life. It brings into existence the fact that, not only humans exist in the world. It establishes the idea of magic and magical acts. The victory of Odidika over the cat caused a change to occur, a change from "the snarl of a dying cat" to "the wailing of a man in agony" (40). It further terrified him after "the carcass of the leopard had metamorphosed into the corpse of an old man. It bore unmistakably, the image of their closest neighbour, Ikebuasi" (41). This marked the beginning of Odidika's journey into destiny. It marked his departure from Mbaosu to Mbaozo after a process of purification took place on him. It ushered him into the family of Ikedike Obidi's family. Ikedike was the man who married his mother's only sister and a successful man in Mbaozo.

However, it is good to note that the writer made use of an episodic pattern and at that, told two stories at a time. The writer explored together side by side the two aspects of the story. While one of them mirrors the life of Odidika, the other mirrors that of Isikamdi who was destined to find the flute which will be used to enthrone Odidika, though Odidika also played a role in its identification. Fate interlocked their destinies. It could be said that the quest for clarity in understanding of the work, made Odili write and position his work in an episodic way.

The legend which characterized the prosperity of Obidi's family and the village of Amankwu in Mbaozo, undoubtedly captured the issue of magic realism. The legend holds that:

*When the founder of Amankwu came to Mbaozo he prayed for prosperity by casting palm fruits on the wide earth leading into the new land. Legend had it that not a single nut failed to sprout. They all grew into the hundreds of trees, which today brush the skies of the village. It is often said that the prosperity of Obidi's family is linked to the prayers of this ancestor (58).*

Another traced the outnumbering of the male over the female in Obidi family and it was found that it was as a result of the obedience of Chukwu. It goes that "He was given an Udala seed to plant inside the compound with a promise that a male child would follow the fruits germination. True to the promise, the family had produced more male children than female since then" (61).

There are mysterious happenings and occurrences which cannot be denied in the society. The semantic content of some of them are only brought to man's knowledge by the will of the spirit beings even when they are the one that-played the role. Nweke could only discover the extraordinariness of Akamelu, the drunken minstrel after his death. It was also after his death that he realized that there was a link between him and the new born child Isikamdi. Akamelu's words before death sunk into consciousness when the child was born and brought awareness to Nweke that he was an instrument of the gods have fulfilled his role. Nweke laid it bare in the words below:

*Akamelu was, physically, the son of the Obosi Carver but spiritually, the child of a distant god from a faraway country who came-purposely to Mbaozo too set us free. He was, I learnt, unawaere of his role. He had no family here (75).*

He remembered the words of his wife to him about Akamelu who “saw her one day and started dancing and singing to Ani to hand over all her misfortunes to him and set her free from whatever would fade her beauty ...” (76). Akamji the wife of Nweke had thought it was a joke until the news of his death came three days after Isikamdi’s birth.

Odili fostered further the activities of the supernatural though the soul captivating and engulfing scene where the thieves that raided Ikedike Obidi’s farm for yam, came to report themselves with the yam to Ikedike. At first Odidika was alarmed when he went to the farm and saw them, and tiptoed home to tell his surrogate father. What astounded Odidika more was that, there was no single physical force that compelled them to surrender. The writer uncovered it in the following words:

*Not too long after he had taken his seat, two men who looked like the ones in the farmland walked into the compound with two long baskets full of yams. As they walked in, they spoke to nobody. They placed the loads of yam in front of the Obi and stood aloof over them. Almost at the same time, Ikedike entered the Obi and the children in the compound flocked around the thieves mocking them. Odidika was bemused. He could not understand what was happening. Why did the thieves change their minds about running away? (93)*

Similarly, the death of Nweke is a stronghold. It was a death in tandem with the destiny fulfillment and the role that awaited the younger brother Isikandidi. Though Kambite, Nweke’s younger brother had a pre-knowledge of the death as briefed him by Nweke, the manner through which he died was bizarre. It was recorded by the writer that he kicked the bucket two days after “an evil bird from a position atop the Ogirisi tree in front of the obi, sang from dusk to dawn” (94). This was lurid and true to the topic under discussion, considering the fact that Nweke never had anything to do with a bird throughout his lifetime. So how come the long chirping of a bird announced his death?

Days after Nweke has joined the league of those given libation, another case came. It was the case that endangered Isikamdi who went for a festival with his mother Akamji at her place Umuele on invitation from her father Eze Umeh. The festival was graced by the whole of Eze Umeh’s blood. Before the situation that endangered Isikamdi’s life, Kambite has been informed and this made him act quickly for the rescue of the boy. What keeps the brain thinking was where the snake that delivered the message to him came and what was its where-about after delivering the message? Surely, it can’t be argued that such things do not occur in the society. The narrator says:

*First, he was woken by the unsettling feeling of an invisible stranger in the room. He opened his eyes but the light in the room discovered no one... He rose fully from the bed, picked the lamp and searched the four corners of the room. He stopped in his tracks. Coiled at one end of the bed was a python bigger than most of the species seen... After emptying his bladder, he returned to the room. He looked at the corner where the snake was a few moments ago and it was vacant. He searched the whole*

*hut but it was no-where to be found. At that moment, he felt a distinct tug on his left breast ... it was a sign. A danger signal ... (138).*

The python gained entrance into his room through the spiritual realm after the message. The message sent him on action and his action delivered the little boy from the clutches of death's emissary which was the bull meant for sacrifice during the festival. It was a mystery to the people of Urnuele how the young boy got saved. In the same vein, Odidika was rescued from the crutches of death by a larger-than-life figure called Fiberesima, when he played into the hands of a deadly man in Umuele called Unegbu. He fell into his net after the man found out he was having a secret affair with his daughter Akudo, and they meet in a bush. It irked Unegbu, the deadly man who sent his guards to lay siege for him. Their siege worked out to an evil forest where his kinds were kept to die, and tied him to a tree. They tied him there and left but he was rescued by Fiberesima. When the unconscious boy woke up, he found himself before Fiberesima and questioned him on who he is. He replied,

*I am human. I am spirit. I live on land. I live in water. I am morning. I am night. I am Izon and I am Aro. I am two things in one at every point in time. Above all, I divine for man. I am divine for spirits" (156).*

One would ask, why the constant rescue of Odidika and Isikamdi in the face of death, even when others die? This could be linked to supernatural predestined their future and fate, and come to rescue them always.

The researcher's goal continued to unfold even as it pictured the case of the Mmonwu spirits and Isikamdi on the day the journey of his initiation into the men's world began. Isikamdi lost hope when the serenity that beclouded the vicinity of the Mmuonwu spirits sent fears to his heart. He opted for a race and received invisible strokes of the cane. The writer laid it bare in the following words:

*He jerked his hand away from his conductors to escape. He could not go far before whips rained from all corners on him. He screamed at the top of his voice. As he cried and pleaded, the more he received, until a benevolent voice whispered and advised him to stop crying. He did. The flogging ceased (176).*

However, Odidika's issue after gathering ant-infested firewood became another charming point to explore. He gathered the wood by intruding into the chamber of the river goddess and her worshippers. They were observing their normal ritual in worship of the goddess when they noticed the presence of a stranger. If not for the intervention of Fiberesima with his magic powers Odidika would have been killed by the goddess and her worshippers. He was in an unconscious state after his encounter with the goddess which walked on him like a snake. The writer effectively portrayed magic realism –at work, through Fiberesima. After Fiberesima has delivered Odidika with his magic powers, he left Dukubo to man him., and Dukubo has these words to say to Odidika when he woke powers from Papara Creeks forest, he had returns from Degema" (198).

As the novelist says;

*Unexpectedly, Fiberesima had come from nowhere to rescue him. Apart from hiding him from them, he resuscitated the stubborn man and plotted his escape from Kirike. The*

*medicine man had hidden inside a gorge in an Obeche tree. From there, Fiberesima lured away coastal spirits with the transcendental music of a strange flute. When the coast became clear, Odidika was taken away. Piriye could not believe one could, with a mere flute, manipulate the coastal spirit and sway them away from carrying out such a crucial revenge (372)*

The act of Fiberesima ignited a hunger in Piriye who sought to possess the flute with all her might. Meanwhile, her quest was not given in to by Fiberesima. Therefore, a battle line was drawn between them. Piriye engaged the whole coastal forces against him. Fiberesima knew that staying in the coast will be tough, so he escaped to an island far from the seashore, where he holed himself up. From there, he saw and fought the attempt of Piriye to track him down. Piriye is one of the worshippers of the river goddess and her beauty attracts Odidika. She was once a friend to Fiberesima but her quest for the flute betrayed their friendship. It made them enemies. Piriye's attempts were narrated by the novelist thus:

*Piriye employed power within her means to get the flute from the medicine man but they all failed... Piriye had set a lion, a leopard, a wild ox, and a thousand vampire bats to attack him on several occasions. On each instance, the particular animal or bird would leave for the island but when she woke up the next morning, the animal's skeleton will be waiting at her doorstep. She fought Fiberesima for seven years, until one day, she woke up, packed her things and left Kirike (373).*

Her departure was thought to be a cease of quest for the flute, but unfortunately, it was to re-strategized ahead of a prediction from the Rain man, a god of the forest, concerning the Aro man that will restore the pride of the spider clan, and this Aro man was Isikamdi who embarked on a journey for the flute. Before Isikamdi could get to the island where he took a rest, Piriye has already returned from her journey but now with a daughter. It was through her daughter that he had the knowledge of a man sleeping at the shores of the island. He acted quickly by taking him at his unconscious state and filling him with some dangerous spirits ahead of his mission. The novelist says:

*Piriye watched as the last part of the snake, a tiny but hard tip, entered the man's body. Isikamdi, who had been lifeless all this while, raised his head up, his eyes opened, and his eyeballs popped out like two black bubbles about to bust. He opened his mouth and a forked tongue shot out like that of a serpent. He was fully possessed by the winding spirit. Two weeks later, Isikamdi was endowed with the spirit of a leopard, the fourth fortnight he received that of a porcupine and by the fifth fortnight, he was empowered with the spirit of a hawk (377-378)*

This became a serious battle and challenge for Fiberesima who was totally at the losing side but help came to him in a dream. He was given solution on how to handle the now possessed Isikamdi and set him free from Piriye's bondage. In this dream, he was given seven Ogirisi leaves and a basket of water through which he will see his opponents. The scene was described thus;

*Fiberesima removed one of the Ogirisi leaves from the water basket and threw it into the furnace burning beside him. Simultaneously, the anthill exploded with the hawk. As smoke billowed into the skies, the wrenswiftly circles the rising dusk and a thousand vampires were unleashed. They swarmed Fiberesima's compound. He saw them approaching and quickly removed and threw into fire, yet another leaf... (381-382).*

It continued so, until Fiberesima destroyed the vampires, the boa constrictor and the leopard that came later. He dealt with all of them and delivered Isikamdi from the grips. Despite all, he never allowed Isikamdi to go with the original flute for fear of losing it. Instead, he sent it as a gift wrapped in a spear to Odidika through Dukubo. This cleared the heart of Aro people. It graced their heart with joy when Odidika identified it in exclamation, "Fiberesima is a wizard" (398).

### **Magic Realism in Chidubem Iweka's So Bright a Darkness**

So Bright a Darkness is another novel adorned with the art of magic realism. It brought to limelight happening which played out of human control. It is a story of double-edged sword. First was from the scene of war between the "government of the country and some terrorists, and second, from the scene of obodo Ogwari a village in the country.

The novelist explores the conflict that arose from the advent of the Whiteman in his community and his efforts to undermine the traditions and religious beliefs of the people. The story took off at night after Philip Carter's meeting with his students from Obodo Ogwari High School where he teaches, as the boys came to intimate him on their desires to further their studies in America. In his attempt to win their boys over to Christianity, he stepped on their toes. He did this by ranking Christianity over Ideamala a bird that maintains justice and order in the land, and it brought their meeting to an unpleasant end. The boys departed unhappily and at night, he was visited by the Ideamala bird. It started from his dream to reality when he woke up. The bird came in a strange manner, not to hurt but to warn him against his Christian motive. The novelist captured the moment in the following words:

*He covered his face with the sheets but a compelling force that he could not resist made him look up and he saw it standing on the window ledge. It could have been a hawk except hawks do not grow that big. It must up most of the long colonial window... it grunted and moaned-human sounds but definitely not an invitation to a cocoyam harvest. Somehow, Carter understood every moan-every grunt... as soon as Carter looked up, ears peeled to the knocking on his door, he saw it the head of a white ram what seem to be floating in the mind-air... Fresh blood dripped from its severed neck, its back eyes starring blankly at carter" (17-18).*

As Carter was having his own tea of the encounter, Segent Major Okafor, a banished indigene of Obodo Ogwari who was part of the soldier fighting for the country in the war between the country and some group of terrorists or rebels, had his too. His was cleanly a show of magic from one of the rebels who was a giant. He was strongly guided with amulet, making the war tougher for the soldiers to conquer. Iweka recorded that from Okafor's point of view, "their bullets were either passing through the man's body or making detours around him. But surely, they were not stopping him" (20). Okafor was



alarmed by a conviction that the giant was fortified with legendary Odeshi talisman, and this conviction was sealed when the telescope sniper rifle aimed at him but could not bring him down. “He pressed the triggers. He was certain that he had scored a bulls eye on the giant chest yet the huge man kept coming and firing, unhurt” (21)

Amidst all, the giant was later killed but not without a spiritual courage from Okafor. After the death of the man, Okafor severed his head from his body and made mockery of the rebels with the head of the giant. But on the long run, it turned sour and extraordinary as the hair almost asphyxiated life out of him. It was put succinctly this way:

*Okafor tried to get up but the hair strapped him by the neck unto the tree trunk. His tongue struck out and he attempted a second scream but strands of the giant’s rope-like hair crawled unto his mouth and nostril, choking him. When the mortar crew found him, Okafor was still seated with his back against the tree. His eyes dilated in an attitude of frozen terror, peered through the mass of scattered hair as he fought to pull the hair off his face... They stood perplexed as Okafor flung the hair away from him. (26-27).*

Sergeant Major Okafor survived that encounter but unfortunately, private Ekeidi who was cheered into it to scare away and defect the remaining militants/rebels, never did. Though they conquered the militants, it was a painful victory. “The giant’s long matted hair had formed a cocoon around Ekeidi’s head, strapping so tightly that it was obvious the skull had been crushed, the head compressed to a pulp half its former size. (41). One would wonder what potency holds the hair.

In Obodo Ogwari, it was believed that the Gundu priest also called the keepers, who were in-charge of the spiritual affairs of the village, were ageless. Their acts that of the bird left Emodi with many unanswered questions such as, “How does the Ideamala bird keep its priests alive so longer? How does it move objects, induce sleep on the victims and project itself into your dream? Nobody knows”. (34).

Bringing the test to view, it was unbelievable how the culprits of crime were found out. The Itah test was a test that reveals one behind any committed evil that brings a group to a cave. The journey to the cave by Emodi, Carter and some students who occupied one of the hostels where stealing was at high rate, was to fish out the one behind those crimes. The test was administered by one of the keepers. When they arrived at the cave and the test began, it was hard for Philip Carter to believe its potency after seeing just a basket and rope. He underestimated its authenticity until he was struck by it. The test began with Emodi, the prefect and finally it caught up the third person who confessed all he has ever done as pertains to the stealing in the hostel. The lie dictator test called itah exposed the boy to be the one behind the stealing of food from the prefect’s locker. Skeptical about the test which he considered an ordinary rope and basket. “Carter’s eyes wandered around the room searching for more items of interest than that ‘dump’ rope and basket” (51).

He was still searching until it got to the turn of Chuka, a boy Carter loved so well. The test dictate him as the one behind the particular crime that conceived the journey to the cave. The novelist points out that:

*the loose end of the rope that disappeared into the basket was not moving at all so Carter was sure that nothing was pulling it tight from within the basket. It was the knot itself that was slowing closing in as if an invisible finger was drawing it shut. The boy stood petrified to a trance... By the time he stammered out a few throttled words, the rope was too tight around his neck. His tongue struck out; his eyes bulged” (53).*

When Carter saw the situation at hand, he quickly lurched into a rescue mission which Emodi unsuccessfully tried to stop. He embarked on the mission thinking that Chuka will die if none intervenes, but the after effect left everyone in shocked. He was instantly struck down and lifeless. It was presented thus;

*At the first contact with the rope, Carter’s body shook and quivered violently as if high electricity had passed through it. He fell back clutching his head. His teeth bared in a deadly grin, his eyes flashing widely... Carter fell on his knees still holding his head then crashed to the floor, face down. He lay still and unconscious (53)*

This alarmed the keeper who reacted immediately with a curative. After he applied the first stage of it on Crter, he woke up but not totally in his right senses. The keeper was coming with the second curative when Carter saw him and bolted out of the cave even before Emodi could hold him back as instructed by the keeper. He left the cave a mad man but was later found afterwards. “They found Carter stark naked and foaming at the mouth. He was sampling line of American popular dances to a few boys who cheered him on. Apparently, all the woman had left out of sheer embarrassment.” (54). It reinforces the potency of supernatural elements in the human world. They deprived Carter of sanity for some time because he went against their rule. With some of the curatives which the keeper handed over Emodi to force down the throat of Carter when found, they brought him back to sanity. He drank-the medicine from the forceful hands of Emodi and was carried home unconscious. Later, the keeper visited and complete his healing processes. This brought Carter back fully to the world of sanity.

Furthermore, the attempt of Federal Minister of Work and Housing to arrest Igo, Emodi and Carter who came to represent the people of Obodo Ogwari in a meeting held by the Minister on the rejection of the Federal Road Construction in the village, staged a strange setting. It gave stronger evidence to magic realism which the searchers explore in a twinkling of an eye, the cop who touched Igo, developed a deadly sickness. The novelist says:

*At first contact with the sixth keeper’s arm, the cop felt a slight tingle sensation in the middle of his palm but he ignored it and steered the old man around. When the tingle developed into an urgent itch, the policeman used the fingers of his other hand to scratch his palm. It was then that his problem became apparent (99).*

Though the cop and his fellow who had contact with him, were later healed through obedience to Igo’s instruction, the case escalated. The Honourable Minister Jibril could not take it lightly. He saw it as a slander on his office, and therefore, involved the military, after the trio left his office, with advices not to have any skin contact with them. The

military men arrested only Igo and Emodi, sparing Carter who they took a foreigner. They were unaware that Carter naturalized with the people of Obodo Ogwari. They took the arrested victims to cell, leaving the confused Carter who found his way home to report the matter.

Meanwhile, the case was laid at feet of Okafor who attained the rank-of a Captain through his victory over the giant, and was pardoned alongside other banished fellows of Obodo Ogwari. Okafor was persuading to intervene quickly due to intervene quickly due to the conventional belief that something harmful will happen to Igo and any of the keepers if they stay or sleep outside the protection of the cave for up to three days. It was considered a taboo and detrimental to their health. Before Okafor could help out, Igo has found his way through the supernatural realm. He did this by first distracting the soldiers kept to man them with a shout, and suddenly, every one of them was put in a sleeping mode when they responded with an eye contact. Igo completed his transformation and made for escape but unluckily for him, his invisibility mode for escape was intercepted by a military gatekeeper called Ismail Suraju, who was blessed with the vision of seeing the extraordinary and supernatural. He inherited it from his father Mallam Suraju who was deeply into it, for healing people. “Other soldiers who were with him, even the Colonel who had stopped to chat with another officer, were all startled by Ismail’s shout at an apparently imaginary person.” (127).

When Ismail did this, he succeeded in distracting Igo but Igo neutralized his vision. He later got back and found out that Igo was about to leave the gate. He followed him and again stopped him with a shout. After much plea from Igo who was now outside the gate and in the midst of protesting military pensioners, Ismail felt for him but couldn’t help out. He forced Igo back to the physical with a threat on Emodi’s life. Igo obeyed for the sake of Emodi and the protesting pensioners took to their heels to a safe distance when they saw him appear. The novelist states;

*All mist dissolved and the old man stood before the soldiers and the crowd stark naked, his jet-black skin glistening a hue of blue in the glare of midday sun ... Pandemonium struck; placards flew in the air as pensioners closet to Igo took off in quick flashes defying the constraint of age or bulk (134).*

Despite the incident that stopped Igo from escaping, he finally did escape again but this time with Carter and Emodi after he was re-arrested. He did it with the help of his brothers, the Ideamala keepers before the third day that will risk his life. Emodi and Carter joined Igo immediately by having a contact with his body, though that gave Emodi a spiritual reawakening. He acted on this together with Carter by making a hit on the floor while having a bodily contact with Igo. “Amidst a blinding flash, Igo translocated, taking Emodi and Carter with him. A brownish foul-smelling smoke eddied faintly over the area where Igo had lain, then faded into nothingness” (143).

However, another encounter that pushes further the idea of magic realism in the work was found when General Idris and Prof. Okediadi went on a visit with some soldiers to the cave of Obodo Ogwari where the Gundu priests reside. They went there after concluding that there must be something precious, hidden by the keepers of Ideamala which made

them reject and oppose the construction of the road. On their way to the hill, Igo appeared and made himself visible only to the General whom he called for a discussion. “Igo beckoned on the general with his fore-finger. Instantly, the situation became crystal clear to Idris. The old man wanted to see him alone and he alone could see Igo” (156).

Nevertheless, all pleas for a stop in the construction of the road fell on ‘deaf ears as the minister was determined to complete the task. It risked one of the keepers into action and the first thing he did was bringing back to health, fallen trees. He brought back the trees fell down by the engineer’s crew to their normal state. This sent shock to the bones of some of the workers who gave up the work. At first, it was like a nightmare to the contractor Okenedo when he was informed by Engineer Frank about it, but became real to him after he came to the site for verification. As the novelist says;

*In a flash, he confirmed the same evidence he had sought for in the first trees plus one final details he missed earlier. Chunks of earth that the tree had pulled from the ground as they were felled by the dozer were still roughly caked around the base of the trees in varied quantities. Suddenly, Okenedo felt threaten standing in the midst of this cluster of trees shrouded in mystery (162).*

Second, Frank noticed a strange movement after his boss Okenedo departed. It was a cluster of a wide variety of species suspended high up in the air. He made arrangements for security men who secured the machines throughout that night. The next day, he hired more labourers to replace those workers that left at the sight of the first strange incident, and with them, he made another progress. Though the new labourers have heard of the past record but they were strengthened by the presence of the military men attached to the work from the military headquarters. In spite of all, they were attacked at night by bees, a strange manipulation that instilled fear in them. It was strange because bees don’t operate in that number at night. “The bees in the lieutenant’s tent attacked. They swooped down on the three occupants of the room, striking and slamming against their faces and flaying arms” (169).

Still in the realm of this bizarre occurrence, others followed ‘suite. Another surprised attack followed after that of the bees, and it was the chirping and squawking of birds in an unusual number before dawn. The birds were of various species and took over the camp ground which housed the soldiers and workers. The scene was portrayed thus;

*There were birds on the camp ground and even in tents. Out on the road, there was a greater concentration of birds. Most were perched on the earth’s moving machines and vehicles while others just walked the grounds. There were big birds of prey, hawks, kites and eagles, and there were vultures, parrots and a host of other species of birds (213).*

One would wonder the possibility of this because it was larger than human comprehensive ability. The soldiers managed to drive away the birds and then began to hunt t ascertain the force behind the manifestation. In the process of their search, one of the soldiers called Shittu caught a small boy who was reckoned to be one of the servants of the keepers. All efforts to make him speak were fruitless, and finally, he escaped when

he got the chance. Even after his escape, he was caught up by Shittun but this ‘time things went sour as the sickness that possessed the cop who tried to arrest Igo, struck him. Just a contact with Shittu and his escape was totally guaranteed. “Suddenly, Shittu felt an urgent itch in the middle of his palm. He scratched hands, holding the boy. The itch came to the new hand and he left the boy” (126). After the boy’s escape, Shittu’s health was restored through a taking of the oil, as Igo then suggested. The oil was the remedy advised by Igo to be given or administered to the cop.

As all these were happening, a battle that changed the sphere of things in Obodo Ogwari was taking place. It was a great one indeed that took place between the Ideamala bird and Ajo-ofia of Obodo Ite, a neighboring village, during the burial of Nwalie Njaka of Obodo Ogwari. Nwalie Njaka was a prosperous man whose mother came from Obodo ite and he was loyal, and close to the customs of Obodo Ite before his death. He was a member of their cult group before he died, and this brought about the presence of Ajo-Ofia, the deadliest masquerade in Obodo Ite to Obodo Ogwari, to pay homage and last respect to the deceased. His coming provoked a battle of supremacy between him and the Ideamala bird. The people saw the battle as an unhealthy and calamitous one because they have heard and witnessed the might of each of them. Before the battle began, the presence of Ajo-ofia in the village caused many havocs like the death of a little boy who crossed his way, the loss of an unwanted pregnancy of Ichie Ezeaputa’s daughter Egodi who breathed the air of Ajo-ofia’s presence. She did this knowingly because before his coming, it was announced that the pregnant ones should depart, but she’ didn’t so that her father and the villagers will not know of her pregnancy. Amongst all, the little boy was later resuscitated to life by the Gundu Priests. As the narrator says;

*The bird clapped its huge wings aggressively and charged down from the anthill toward the Ajo-ofia masquerade. Ajo-ofia spun around and floated to meet the great bird. In one quick rush, the Ideamala bent its withered bald head low to the ground and raised one of the flaps that covered the Ajo-ofia and barged into the hidden confines of the evil masquerade (199).*

What happened next was history, but it shocked the people how the Ideamala bird was able to penetrate into Ajo-ofia, and also how Ajo-ofia was able to float to meet the bird in the air. Another was about the fire that erupted and burnt both of them to death even after Ideamala bird came out of Ajo-ofia. The ignited fire which was a product of their clash burnt the bird till it turned back, to the people’s amazement, into its original form. Its original was the form of a man who recognized-Igo before all, and who Igo called Tarn. From Rev, Father Mojekwu’s, the priest sent to the land to propagate the gospel, discovery as he was standing beside Igo, Tarn was Igo’s brother. He sacrificed himself to a bird form in order to maintain justice, peace and order in the land of Obodo Ogwari when they came. The novelist simply puts it thus;

*Most of the wing and body feathers burned away, leaving a partly charred, goose-pimpled, body ... Bare arms appeared where the bird’s wing stumps had been. It stood arm’s length before Igo. A skeletal human head formed. Fr. Mojekwu watched the head*

*mutate, the large gaping holes where the eyes would have been, narrowed down to dim human eyes. It opened its mouth as though to speak but only fainted grunts came out. In a flash, Fr. Mojekwu saw the true image of the bird-man. It was a very close resemblance of Igo (201).*

The death of both the Ideamala bird and Ajo-ofia, paved way for the development of the Obodo Ogwari, though it also met challenge which was from Nji, one of the priests of Ideamala. Nji was determined not to let road construction take place, despite the general agreement of the priests to let it be. He disobeyed the workers and soldiers with his power. He unleashed terror on them by using the wind storm to control the inanimate objects. This left some of his victims injured and some dead. “The wind storm struck with devastating intensity. Many soldiers were knocked off their feet by the blast of the sand-filled torrents. Rocks, pebbles and other debris hit the tents, tearing and ripping them from their pegs.” (124). He also extended his power to the soldiers’ above monitoring him with their jet, and trying to distract him with gun shots, as commanded by General Idris who was with the ground soldiers. Nji gave them a bit of himself as wild wave swept their helicopter down with no survivor.

As this was happening, the case of Sid Jefferson came to limelight. Sid Jefferson was an agent of GMERC, a TV station, which he took from a man called Sanders, after a deal Sanders pushed for with the station could not hold, Jefferson took it up and came to Obodo Ogwari to complete the task he abandoned due to the disagreement. He succeeded in getting permission from the king of Obodo Ogwari but one thing happened, and that was his stealing of the precious stone that emits light from the cave. This action of his was hidden from the knowledge of all, except Olo the keeper of Art and Culture who accosted him on their way out of the cave, and Sanders who came for the same stone. Olo knew that he has done but never bothered using his power against him. All he did was advise him on the danger of taking the stone away, which Jefferson ignored. The outcome portrayed Jefferson as a man who saw his death and still ran into it. Few seconds, after his conversation ended with Olo, he had an encounter with the precious light, and it almost took his life. It began after he was stopped by Sanders who came from his back with a pistol. Hel ordered him to hand the light over to him. Jefferson refused initially, trying to play on Sanders intelligence but when he found out that his life was at stake, he gave into his demand. “In contact with the blazing midday sun, the light Egg had come alive. It shone and sparked, burning to a deep lesson into Jefferson’s hands... On its way down, a light beam caught Sanders on the side of his head.” (142).

While Nji doing all he could to destroy the people and materials from making progress on the road, Igo intervened to bring his works to a halt. Igo tried talking to him but found out that it was futile so he went for the protection of the people. He served as their protective emblem, having perceived that Nji was protective emblem, having perceived that Nji was out of control, and ready to bring more doom on them. The novelist puts succinctly:

*As Igo ran across the fire barrier that circle the area towards Ogwari hills, he flipped his fingers in the air as if showing away pests. A powerful gust of wind blew through the barrier throwing flames and fiery sparks into the forest. A narrow path was formed from*

*Igo's effort. The old man stood on the other side of the gateway of fire while the soldiers, Carter and Okorugo crossed over on the run (244).*

Nji was determined not to let the men go scot free while Igo was determined to see to their escape. This resulted to a personal confrontation between the keepers and a brief squabble even after Igo reminded him that the environment was out of his jurisdiction. Igo left the work in his jurisdiction going because he foresaw everything that will come to pass. The encounter was clearly depicted or portrayed this way:

*Igo was taken unaware as powerful vibes from 'Njis's blow zapped clear across the ten feet gap between them and hurdled him off his feet. While he was hurtling through the air towards a line of robust trees, Igo sought to resist the powerful blast that below him through th air. Just before the impact that may have caused some damage to his body, Igo broke his speed and landed softly before the trees. He was now certain that Nji had malfunctioned. His reasoning faculties had gone haywire for him to have opposed the joint decision of the Council and then to attacked his skin with intent to harm (245).*

Igo finally succeeded in temporarily protecting the people before Nji and leading them to a hiding in the cave after he kept Nji recovered, he came after them in the cave, sending a large number of insects and reptiles against them. "Hundreds of insects, predominantly soldier-ants, had crawling with dozens of slithering hissing reptiles, snakes of many species rolling over each other, cobra heads raised on the offensive war path" (252). The soldiers managed to shoot dead the reptiles while Igo in his unconscious state controlled the insects. While the insects clustered around him, he called for the help of his brothers through the supernatural realm. Nji was about to attack the men when the other Gundu priests came and bounded him away. To the joy of all, Igo led the people out of the cave to the road for their departure.

He spoke with them outside the cave briefly when they pleaded with him to stay, and joined his brothers who were waiting above for him for a final departure from the earth. They were standing above without any physical assistance. "Igo did not disappear. One moment he was standing with his back to them, looking down on the clear paths... In his final show of his unusual skills Igo zipped off like a dragonfly kid-chased from a puddle." (255).

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this work is to establish the fact that life incorporates magic realism. Things about them were that Odili Ujubuonu captured in his pregnancy of the Gods and also Children Iweka in his *So Bright A Darkness*. The researchers seek to dispel every atom of doubt on supernatural participation in the world of humanity with concrete evidence from the works of the writers. Even before the real came to be, there was involvement of the supernatural or external forces which till date are still unclear to human comprehension. The researchers seek to substantiate the points, opinions and views of critics on magic realism, and also for ground them through the texts used.

Writers have commented extensively to bring to light this long-disbelieved concept. They have recreated life severally to dislodge the conception of supernatural as non-

existent, from the mentality of human, with characters whose roles cannot be questioned. They have also written to reincarnate this dying aspect of life which most people try to push away. Writers plainly point out through their works that magic realism is a child of double world, natural and the supernatural or extraordinary, and to them, it is when the supernatural play into reality that the voice of magic realism echoes.

Odili Ujubuonu and Chidubem Iweka were part of those writers who have poured out what they have as libation to hearts for their liberation from the cage of doubt. They also did this to quench the urge and taste of skeptics, and to meticulously convince them with concrete instances from the African environment or circle. They portrayed the might of magic realism as double-edge, that is, it can occur at same time and at various places. Their works are true epitomes and clear instances of the involvement of magic realism.

In Odili Ujubuonu's *Pride of the Spider Clan*, the major characters were mirrored from their tender age to their adulthood, not losing focus on the issue of magic realism. The novel portrays more of the bildungsroman novel pattern. Its evidences are like a moving train, moving from family to society in obedience to the concept under study. Odili judiciously carved his words in the representation of this, showing mastery. His work portrays in a typical African society, precisely the Igbo society. It shows magic realism as part and parcel of the Igbo society's beliefs, customs and values. His interest in restoring the pride of a clan, also builds up the concept of magic realism to the peak. His work also pushes further this concept as an offspring of double world. While the first is the supernatural, the second is the human world. The supernatural world based on this concept, needs the human world to function. It needs not just human world but the presence of humans to affirm its role. In other words, the confirmation of supernatural workings required humans. It requires humans to authenticate it as magic realism. Without humans, its effect is lost.

However, the might of this concept is shared equally between the two worlds or realms because without the supernatural, the idea of magic realism become a mere joke.

In Chidubem Iweka's *So Bright A Darkness*, the Idea of magic realism was more public in its occurrence, that is, it always played out before the people who react to it in shock. Iweka also showed mastery in this concept as his work was more intense. His novel painstakingly proclaims magic realism as an offspring of double worlds, with most events in the work happening at same time and in different settings. He also supports the idea as being part and parcel of the Igbo society, taking root in their beliefs, customs and values. In his work, he channeled most of its acts to a setting, with most of them playing out abundantly in the setting.

In conclusion, the idea of magic realism is real and exists, and should not be doubted or questioned. Its occurrence most times is beyond what man can fathom. It features the work of providence or the supernatural into the affairs and world of humanity.



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