

INTIMACY, POWER AND INFORMATION ASYMMETRY IN *NKA DỊ NA NTỊ* AND *ONYE ỌMA EMEKA*

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Abstract

*Romantic relationships in literary texts are often represented primarily as spaces of affection, companionship and anticipated marriage. However, intimacy can also become a site where economic resources, information and agency are contested. This study examines the relationship between romantic intimacy and power in B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and Mmuotulumanya J. Okafo's *Onye Ọma Emeka*, with particular attention to deception, informational asymmetry and economic consequences. Using Michel Foucault's relational conception of power as the theoretical framework, the study adopts a qualitative textual and comparative approach. It argues that economic capacity does not necessarily guarantee relational power. In both texts, male characters possess significant material resources, but female characters gain influence through control of information and manipulation of emotional attachment. The analysis further demonstrates that concealed knowledge compromises agency by limiting the ability of characters to make fully informed decisions. The concealed-substance motif is particularly significant in both works, although it produces different consequences: emotional and economic depletion in *Onye Ọma Emeka* and physical death in *Nka Dị Na Ntị*. The study concludes that romantic intimacy in the two texts functions as a contested site where economic, emotional and informational forms of power intersect and shift. It contributes to the study of Igbo written literature by foregrounding the relationship between intimacy, information asymmetry, economic behaviour and agency.*

Introduction

In literature, romantic relationships are commonly portrayed as expressions of love, desire, companionship and the hope of marriage. Nevertheless, such relationships are not shaped by emotions alone, rather, they are also influenced by the social, economic and cultural circumstances within which they develop. The exchange of affection may involve material resources, expectations, information and obligations, while unequal access to knowledge can influence who exercises control within a relationship. Recent African literary scholarship has consequently drawn attention to intimacy as a site through which broader relations of power can be examined (Bámgbósé, 2021; Adebani, 2022). Such an approach is particularly useful for examining literary representations in which romantic attachment intersects with economic behaviour and deception.

Power, from a Foucauldian perspective, is not simply a possession permanently held by one individual; rather, it is exercised within relationships and may shift according to changing circumstances and positions (Foucault, 1978). Haugaard (2022) emphasises the relational character of power, while Engstrand and Enberg (2020) demonstrate how power can operate through relational positioning and unequal access to knowledge. More recently, Offer, Rahwana and Hertwig (2024) draw attention to the significance of not knowing in power relations. These perspectives provide a useful basis for examining relationships in which one character possesses material resources while another possesses privileged information about the relationship or the intentions of the participants.

This study applies this perspective to B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and Mmuotulumanya J. Okafo's *Onye Ọma Emeka*. In *Nka Dị Na Ntị*, Njoku's economic investment in Ezinwaanyi creates an expectation of marriage, but her knowledge of her own intentions gives her a different form of power

within the relationship. In *Onye Oma Emeka*, Emeka's education, employment and income provide him with considerable economic capacity, yet Nwanneuka's concealed intervention and control of information enable her to influence his emotional and financial behaviour. In both texts, therefore, economic resources do not necessarily correspond to relational control.

Although *Nka Di Na Nti* has received scholarly attention in studies of written Igbo drama, including Onuegbu's (2010) study of the representation of women, and *Onye Oma Emeka* is recognised within the history of the Igbo novel (Emenyonu, 2020), the scholarship consulted for this study does not appear to have adequately examined the two works comparatively through the intersection of romantic intimacy, informational asymmetry, economic relations and agency. This study addresses that gap through a qualitative textual and comparative analysis, using Foucault's relational conception of power as its principal theoretical framework. It examines how economic, emotional and informational forms of power are distributed and transformed within the relationships represented in the two texts, with particular attention to deception and the concealed-substance motif. It argues that romantic intimacy becomes a contested site of power in which material resources can be redirected, agency can be compromised by unequal knowledge, and power can shift between participants with significant economic and personal consequences.

Power, Agency and Intimacy

The central concepts in this study are power, agency, intimacy and information. Power is understood not simply as the possession of material resources or formal authority but as a relational process through which individuals influence, constrain and shape one another's actions. Such an understanding is particularly relevant to intimate relationships, where economic resources do not necessarily correspond with emotional or relational control. A character may possess financial resources while another possesses privileged information or greater influence within the relationship. Power can therefore shift without a corresponding change in the participants' social or economic positions (Haugaard, 2022).

Intimacy here refers to romantic, emotional, and prospective marital interactions. Far from being a purely private emotional experience, intimacy is entangled with material needs, personal motives, and social ambitions (Bámgbóşé, 2021; Adebani, 2022). Agency, meanwhile, refers to a character's ability to make choices and act on them. Yet agency is not just about the freedom to choose; it depends heavily on what a person knows when making a decision. When crucial facts are hidden, a decision that looks voluntary on the surface is actually manipulated.

Agency refers to the capacity of characters to make decisions and act within particular social circumstances. Agency does not necessarily imply complete freedom from external influences. Rather, the conditions under which a decision is made may enable or constrain an individual's capacity for autonomous action. This distinction is important in the two texts because the male protagonists make significant decisions without possessing information that is available to the women with whom they are involved. The resulting disparity raises questions about the extent to which apparently voluntary actions remain autonomous when the conditions surrounding them have been deliberately manipulated.

Foucault's Relational Conception of Power

Michel Foucault's relational model of power serves as the core framework for this analysis. Foucault (1978) rejected the idea that power is a commodity owned by one group and used against another. Instead, power flows through social practices, institutional structures, and everyday encounters. It circulates continuously, putting actors into shifting positions of strength and vulnerability.

Key to this dynamic is the link between power and knowledge. Controlling information gives an actor a distinct edge when others are kept in the dark (Engstrand & Enberg, 2020). Modern Foucauldian theorists emphasize that strategic ignorance of what a person is prevented from knowing can shape human behavior just as forcefully as physical constraint (Offer et al., 2024).

This theoretical perspective is applicable to the relationships represented in *Nka Di Na Nti* and *Onye Oma Emeka*. In *Nka Di Na Nti*, Njoku initially possesses substantial economic resources and uses them to support Eziwaanyi's education and other needs. His economic position, however, does not

provide him with equivalent knowledge of her intentions. Ezinwaanyi's privileged knowledge of her own intentions consequently constitutes a different form of relational power. In *Onye Oma Emeka*, Emeka possesses education, employment and income, but Nwanneuka possesses knowledge concerning the concealed substance administered through his food. This informational asymmetry becomes significant when his subsequent emotional and economic behaviour changes.

The framework therefore makes it possible to distinguish economic power from relational and informational power. Economic resources may provide material influence, but privileged information may enable another character to manipulate decisions and behaviour. The study consequently examines how economic, informational and emotional forms of power intersect and change within intimate relationships rather than assuming that power belongs inherently to either the male or female characters.

Foucault's conception also accommodates the possibility of reversal because power relations are neither fixed nor permanently possessed. As power operates relationally, changes in circumstances can alter the position of actors within a relationship (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022). This principle is particularly useful for analysing the two texts, where characters who initially appear economically powerful subsequently experience forms of relational vulnerability, while characters with less economic power temporarily acquire considerable influence through information and intimacy. The study therefore uses the Foucauldian framework to examine romantic intimacy as a contested space in which power is continuously negotiated, exercised and transformed.

Concise Synopsis of *Nka Dị na Ntị*

Nka dị na ntị centres on Njoko, an Aba-based trader whose financial success, extravagant lifestyle, and romantic involvement with Eziwanyi shape the major events of the drama. Njoko finances Eziwanyi's education with the expectation that they will eventually marry. However, Eziwanyi secretly views the relationship as an opportunity for financial gain and later rejects Njoko because of his lack of formal education, eventually marrying a wealthier man. Following the destruction of his property and loss of his wealth, Njoko relocates to Lagos, where he rebuilds his fortune. He subsequently returns to Eziwanyi, hoping to revive their relationship, but discovers that she is married. Their encounter takes a tragic turn when Eziwanyi uses a poisonous substance, disguised as a love-enhancing potion, in an attempt to manipulate her husband. Njoko unknowingly consumes the substance and dies. The drama thus presents romantic intimacy as a space in which affection, material interests, deception, and personal vulnerability intersect.

Concise Synopsis of *Onye Oma Emeka*

Onye Oma Emeka centres on Emeka, whose father, Okoro, insists on his education after experiencing the economic limitations associated with being uneducated. Despite initial opposition from the community and Emeka's mother, he acquires an education, secures employment, and rises to become a successful and respected young man. His fortunes, however, change when Wanne Oka, a teacher from a wealthy family, expresses romantic interest in him. She secretly uses a love potion to intensify his affection and gradually gains control over his resources. Under her influence, Emeka becomes extravagant, borrows money, neglects his work, and eventually loses his job and possessions. Wanne Oka subsequently abandons him and moves on to exploit another man. Her attempt to steal from the man ends in a fatal accident, which Emeka interprets as divine retribution. The narrative therefore explores the intersection of romantic desire, economic exploitation, deception, and the consequences of misplaced trust.

Economic Power and Romantic Investment in *Nka Dị Na Ntị*

B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* presents romantic attachment within an environment in which economic resources significantly shape the expectations of the characters. Njoku's relationship with Ezinwaanyi is initially structured around his economic capacity and his expectation that material investment will eventually produce marital commitment. He finances her education and provides other forms of material support because he regards her as a prospective wife. Economic power therefore constitutes

an important basis of Njoku's confidence in the relationship. However, the narrative simultaneously demonstrates that material investment does not guarantee emotional reciprocity or relational control.

Njoku's position illustrates the distinction between economic power and relational power. His ability to provide money, educational support and material necessities gives him an apparent advantage. Yet his understanding of the relationship is based on an assumption that Ezinwaanyi shares his intention of eventual marriage. Ezinwaanyi, by contrast, possesses information that Njoku does not: she does not regard the relationship in the same way and does not intend to marry him. The resulting disparity is significant because Njoku's economic investment is made under an understanding of the relationship that is not shared by its recipient. His money therefore gives him material influence without giving him control over the meaning or future of the relationship.

This situation illustrates Foucault's (1978) proposition that power operates relationally rather than existing permanently as the possession of one individual. Njoku has greater economic resources, but Ezinwaanyi possesses privileged knowledge concerning her intentions. The relationship consequently contains two different forms of power that do not coincide. Njoku can determine what material resources he provides, while Ezinwaanyi can determine what she knows and withholds about her commitment. As Haugaard (2022) observes in his reassessment of Foucauldian power, power relations are better understood through interactions between actors than through a simple division between a powerful individual and a powerless one.

The economic dimension of the relationship also exposes an instrumental understanding of intimacy. Njoku does not merely provide for Ezinwaanyi in the present; his material support is connected to an anticipated future marriage. His expenditure consequently becomes an investment in an expected relationship. Ezinwaanyi's response, however, separates the receipt of material benefits from the fulfilment of Njoku's expectation. This separation creates the possibility of exploitation because one participant understands the economic exchange as part of a developing commitment while the other can receive the benefits without accepting the anticipated obligation.

The narrative intensifies this imbalance when Njoku experiences economic catastrophe. His house and possessions are destroyed, leaving him without the wealth that had previously defined his social position. The change exposes the instability of economic power. Ezinwaanyi's subsequent withdrawal from the relationship demonstrates that her attachment is closely connected to Njoku's economic condition. The important point, however, is not merely that she abandons him when he becomes poor. Rather, the episode reveals how strongly the relationship had been organised around unequal expectations concerning material resources and emotional commitment. Njoku discovers that the economic resources through which he had previously exercised influence cannot secure continued access to the relationship.

His journey to Lagos and economic recovery produces another transformation. When Njoku returns with renewed wealth, he attempts to revive his relationship with Ezinwaanyi. His economic recovery restores the material power he previously possessed, but it does not restore the relationship. Ezinwaanyi has married another man and therefore exercises the power to refuse Njoku's renewed claim. Njoku's question concerning the amount paid for her marriage further exposes the economic language through which he understands the relationship. By imagining that the husband's expenditure can be repaid, he treats marriage partly as an economic transaction that can be reversed through superior financial capacity.

The episode is significant because Njoku's renewed wealth fails to produce the outcome he expects. His economic power has returned, but his relational position has changed. This supports the argument that economic power and relational power are not interchangeable. The narrative thus moves beyond a simple opposition between a wealthy man and a financially dependent woman. Instead, it presents a relationship in which power changes according to the resources, information and choices available to each participant.

The contrast between Njoku's economic position and Ezinwaanyi's relational position becomes most dangerous when their relationship is re-established in an intimate setting. Njoku enters her marital space believing that the encounter is associated with affection and perhaps the possibility of renewed

intimacy. Ezinwaanyi, however, possesses knowledge of an intention that is concealed from him. The private setting therefore becomes a site in which the informational imbalance becomes more consequential than Njoku's economic advantage.

The trajectory of Njoku's relationship consequently demonstrates the instability of power within romantic intimacy. He begins with economic advantage, loses it through catastrophe, regains it through personal effort, and nevertheless remains vulnerable because his economic resources do not give him equivalent access to Ezinwaanyi's intentions. The text therefore constructs intimacy as a space in which material power can be displaced by informational and relational power. Njoku's eventual death completes this reversal: the character who appears economically powerful becomes physically and decisively powerless within the intimate relationship.

Information, Deception and the Reversal of Power in *Nka Di Na Nti*

If economic resources initially give Njoku a degree of power in his relationship with Ezinwaanyi, control over information gradually produces a different configuration of power. Ezinwaanyi possesses knowledge that Njoku does not: she knows the limits of her commitment to him and, ultimately, the purpose of the substance involved in their final encounter. The unequal distribution of knowledge therefore becomes central to the transformation of their relationship. This supports a Foucauldian understanding of power as relational and exercised through unequal positions rather than possessed permanently by one individual (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022).

From the beginning of the relationship, Njoku interprets his material investment in Ezinwaanyi within the expectation of marriage. His provision of money, food and educational expenses creates, in his understanding, a shared future towards which his sacrifices are directed. Ezinwaanyi, however, does not disclose an equivalent commitment. Her eventual marriage to another man reveals that the two characters have been operating with different understandings of the relationship. The significant issue here is not simply that Ezinwaanyi deceives Njoku, but that she possesses information about the relationship that he does not possess. The resulting asymmetry makes it possible for her to make decisions while Njoku continues to act on incomplete knowledge.

The significance of this asymmetry becomes clearer when Njoku returns after rebuilding his economic life. His renewed wealth does not restore the relationship because the central obstacle is no longer his material condition. Ezinwaanyi has already made a decision concerning her marital life, while Njoku approaches the encounter with a different understanding of their relationship. Thus, the earlier assumption that economic investment guarantees relational access is further undermined. What Njoku possesses materially cannot compensate for what he lacks informationally.

The final encounter intensifies this unequal distribution of knowledge. Ezinwaanyi receives Njoku in her home when her husband is absent and prepares food for him. Njoku, believing that the substance he brings can produce affection between Ezinwaanyi and her husband, enters the encounter without knowing that Ezinwaanyi has a different intention. The object therefore acquires different meanings for the two characters. To Njoku, it is associated with love and relational influence; to Ezinwaanyi, it becomes an instrument through which she can redirect the danger intended for another person towards Njoku himself. The dramatic effect depends precisely on the fact that Njoku does not possess the information necessary to interpret the situation correctly.

This is where the relationship between knowledge and power becomes particularly important. Foucault's conception of power does not reduce power to physical force or ownership of resources; power operates through relationships, practices and the production and circulation of knowledge (Foucault, 1978). More recent Foucauldian scholarship similarly emphasizes that knowledge positions people differently within social interactions, while the possession or withholding of knowledge can affect what actors are able to perceive and do (Haugaard, 2022; Offer, Rahwana, & Hertwig, 2024). In *Nka Di Na Nti*, Ezinwaanyi's advantage in the final encounter is therefore not economic. It is informational. She knows what Njoku does not know, and this knowledge enables her to control the meaning and direction of the encounter.

This dynamic complicates standard ideas of personal agency. Njoku appears to act freely when he visits her and offers the substance, but his choices are grounded in false information. His capacity to

act remains intact, but his ability to make a meaningful choice is compromised because he cannot see the true context. Ezinwaanyi, working with full knowledge, directs the scene. Agency, the play suggests, is not just about making a choice, rather, it depends heavily on what you know when you make it.

Ezinwaanyi's control, however, should not be equated automatically with empowerment. Her ability to manipulate the situation represents a temporary reversal of relational power, but it does not establish a stable or emancipatory form of power. Indeed, the reversal culminates in Njoku's death. The dramatic consequence suggests that power exercised through deception can become destructive even for the person who successfully controls the immediate encounter. The relationship therefore moves beyond a simple opposition between a powerful man and a powerless woman. Instead, the text constructs a shifting field in which economic, emotional and informational forms of power continually alter the positions of the characters.

The final reversal is particularly significant because Njoku's earlier economic dominance does not protect him from the consequences of informational vulnerability. The man who could provide educational and material resources to Ezinwaanyi becomes the person whose lack of knowledge makes him vulnerable to her actions. The relationship thus demonstrates that material power and relational power do not necessarily coincide. A character may possess considerable economic resources and yet occupy a vulnerable position when another participant controls crucial information.

Through this reversal, *Nka Di Na Nti* presents romantic intimacy as a space in which power can be concealed beneath ordinary interpersonal practices. Courtship, provision, hospitality, food and apparent affection become entangled with knowledge and intention. The drama consequently shifts attention from the question of who possesses more resources to the question of who knows what, who is able to conceal it, and how that unequal knowledge affects the choices available to the other person. Information, rather than money alone, becomes a decisive instrument in the redistribution of power.

From Emotional Attachment to Economic Depletion in Onye Oma Emeka

The relationship between Emeka and Nwanneuka in *Onye Oma Emeka* presents another configuration of intimacy and power, but with a different trajectory from that of Njoku and Ezinwaanyi. Emeka enters the relationship from a position of considerable social and economic promise. His education and subsequent employment represent the material realization of his father's desire that he should acquire the opportunities that had been denied to the older generation. Education therefore gives Emeka not only social mobility but also productive capacity. His relationship with Nwanneuka subsequently becomes the context in which this capacity is redirected from accumulation and productivity towards emotional and material depletion.

Nwanneuka initially appears to offer a relationship compatible with Emeka's aspirations. Her presentation of herself as educated and socially suitable, together with her promise to contribute towards the expenses associated with marriage, creates an impression of mutual commitment. The relationship therefore does not begin as an obvious struggle for economic control. Rather, it is constituted through expectations of companionship, marriage and reciprocal contribution. This apparent reciprocity is important because it enables Nwanneuka to gain Emeka's trust before the relationship becomes exploitative.

The significant transformation occurs through the concealed administration of the substance intended to intensify Emeka's attachment. Because Emeka does not know what is being administered to him or the intention behind it, his subsequent conduct cannot be understood simply as a series of fully informed choices. His increasing attachment to Nwanneuka is accompanied by excessive expenditure, borrowing and neglect of responsibilities. The relationship consequently begins to affect the economic and professional dimensions of his life.

The connection between intimacy and economic depletion is particularly significant. Emeka's money is not taken from him through an overt demand or conventional act of theft at the beginning of the relationship. Rather, his emotional attachment becomes the mechanism through which his resources are progressively redirected. He spends beyond what his circumstances reasonably permit because his perception of the relationship has been altered. In this sense, the text presents economic exploitation

as relationally mediated: money changes hands because intimacy has first altered the conditions under which Emeka makes decisions.

This pattern reinforces the distinction between economic power and relational power established in the discussion of *Nka Dị Na Ntị*. Emeka possesses income and social status derived from education and employment, but Nwanneuka exercises another form of power by controlling information about the relationship. The person who controls the resources is therefore not necessarily the person who controls the interaction. Foucault's relational conception of power is useful here because it allows power to be located within the interaction itself rather than assigned permanently to the economically stronger character (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022).

The consequences extend beyond Emeka's finances. His excessive attachment contributes to the neglect of his professional responsibilities, eventually resulting in his suspension. The text therefore connects romantic manipulation to the erosion of productive capacity. What begins as an intimate relationship affects employment, reputation and economic security. The significance of this development lies in the fact that exploitation is not represented merely through the loss of money. The more consequential loss is the gradual weakening of the social and economic structures through which Emeka sustains himself.

The eventual emptying of Emeka's house and Nwanneuka's departure make the material consequences of the relationship unmistakable. Nwanneuka has benefited from the resources generated through Emeka's labour while he has suffered both economic and professional decline. The movement of resources thus mirrors the movement of power: as Emeka's productive and economic position weakens, Nwanneuka's capacity to determine the direction of the relationship increases.

The text nevertheless complicates a straightforward victim-perpetrator interpretation through Nwanneuka's subsequent actions. Her attempt to repeat the same pattern with another man indicates that the behaviour is not confined to her relationship with Emeka. Her eventual death while fleeing after another theft also introduces consequence into the narrative. This does not erase the harm done to Emeka, nor does it transform the earlier exploitation into justice in any simple sense. Rather, it demonstrates the instability of manipulative power. Power acquired through deception may produce immediate control, but it does not necessarily provide lasting security for the person exercising it.

The episode also returns the discussion to agency. Nwanneuka exercises deliberate agency in concealing her intentions and directing the relationship, whereas Emeka continues to act according to an understanding of the relationship that has been deliberately distorted. His actions remain his own, but the conditions under which he makes them have been manipulated. His financial collapse can not be seen as simple personal carelessness, rather, his downfall happens within a relationship built on deliberate deception.

The novel therefore represents romantic intimacy as a potentially consequential economic relationship. Education, employment and income give Emeka considerable productive power, but these resources become vulnerable when emotional attachment is manipulated through concealed knowledge. The resulting reversal demonstrates that economic power is contingent: it can be weakened when the individual who possesses material resources loses control over the informational and emotional dimensions of an intimate relationship.

Unlike *Nka Dị Na Ntị*, where the unequal distribution of information culminates rapidly in physical death, *Onye Qma Emeka* develops the consequences gradually through emotional attachment, financial depletion and professional decline. Yet both texts arrive at a comparable insight: intimacy can become a channel through which power is redistributed, particularly when one participant possesses knowledge that the other lacks. The difference in the consequences of the two relationships makes the concealed substance especially significant as a comparative motif.

The Concealed Substance and the Crisis of Agency: A Comparative Reading

A major point of convergence between *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and *Onye Qma Emeka* is the use of a concealed substance within an intimate relationship. In both texts, the substance creates an unequal knowledge

situation in which one character acts without knowing the intention behind what is being done. The motif therefore connects intimacy with knowledge, agency and power.

In *Nka Dị Na Ntị*, Njoku brings the substance pretending that it will influence Ezinwaanyi's relationship with her husband. Ezinwaanyi, however, understands the situation differently and redirects the substance into the food prepared for him, resulting in his death. In *Onye Oma Emeka*, Nwanneuka secretly administers a substance to Emeka, intensifying his attachment to her without his knowledge. Although the consequences differ, both situations show that economic strength does not necessarily produce relational control. Njoku has material resources, while Emeka has education, employment and income, but both become vulnerable because another person possesses information they lack.

This unequal distribution of knowledge is important to a Foucauldian reading of power. Power does not depend only on wealth or social position; it can also operate through relationships and access to knowledge (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022). Engstrand and Enberg (2020) and Offer, Rahwana and Hertwig (2024) similarly draw attention to the role of knowledge and ignorance in power relations. In the two texts, what the male characters do not know affects the decisions they make and the consequences they face.

The situation also complicates the idea of agency. Njoku and Emeka are capable of making choices, but those choices are made under conditions of incomplete information. Njoku consumes the food without knowing Ezinwaanyi's intention, while Emeka spends money and changes his behaviour without knowing the cause of his intensified attachment. The texts therefore distinguish between simply acting and acting with adequate knowledge.

The economic consequences further connect the two works. Emeka's manipulation leads gradually to excessive spending, borrowing, neglect of work and economic decline, whereas Njoku's final encounter ends in immediate physical death. The concealed substance thus becomes more than a plot device: it exposes how unequal knowledge can compromise agency and turn intimacy into a means of control.

The two texts also complicate any simple interpretation of the female characters' actions as female empowerment. Their ability to influence men demonstrates agency, but the destructive consequences of their actions reveal the limits of power exercised through deception. What emerges is a shifting relationship in which economic, emotional and informational power do not always belong to the same person.

Reversal, Consequence and the Limits of Manipulative Power

The power relations in *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and *Onye Oma Emeka* are not permanently transferred from men to women. Rather, power shifts according to the resource available to each character at a particular moment. Njoku initially possesses economic power through his investment in Ezinwaanyi, but she later gains an advantage through information. Similarly, Emeka's economic independence does not protect him from Nwanneuka's control over his emotional behaviour.

These reversals support the Foucauldian view of power as relational and unstable (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022). The male characters are not presented as completely powerless, just as the female characters do not achieve unlimited control. Njoku makes deliberate economic and romantic choices, while Emeka makes his own decisions about spending and attachment. Their vulnerability comes from making those decisions without access to information that could have changed their responses.

The economic dimension is particularly important. Njoku's financial investment does not guarantee the marriage he expects, while Emeka's income becomes a means through which his attachment to Nwanneuka is converted into material loss. Money therefore operates alongside emotion and information rather than independently of them.

The texts consequently avoid a simple reversal in which women merely replace men as dominant figures. Instead, they show that power can move between economic, emotional and informational forms. A person may possess money but lack knowledge; another may lack economic resources but possess information capable of influencing the relationship.

The consequences also reveal the limits of manipulation. Deception may produce immediate control, but it cannot guarantee control over what follows. In both works, the exercise of power eventually produces consequences that extend beyond the immediate intentions of the characters. Intimacy therefore becomes a site where trust, affection, resources and information can be used either to sustain a relationship or to exercise control.

Conclusion

This study has examined romantic intimacy, power, deception, agency and economic relations in B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and Mmuotulumanya J. Okafo's *Onye Oma Emeka* through a Foucauldian understanding of power as relational and shifting. The analysis shows that economic strength does not necessarily guarantee control within an intimate relationship. In both texts, male characters possess considerable material resources, yet female characters gain influence through information, emotional attachment and concealed intentions.

The concealed-substance motif is central to this process. It creates unequal knowledge and places the manipulated characters in situations where they cannot fully understand the consequences of their actions. Emeka suffers emotional, professional and economic decline, while Njoku's deception ends in death. The different outcomes nevertheless point to the same problem: intimacy becomes vulnerable when trust is separated from informed agency.

The study also shows that the female characters' exercise of power should not be reduced to a simple narrative of female empowerment. Their actions demonstrate agency, but the destructive consequences of manipulation reveal the limits of such power. Economic, emotional and informational power shift between the characters rather than remaining permanently attached to either gender.

Ultimately, *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and *Onye Oma Emeka* present intimacy as a contested space where affection, money, knowledge and agency intersect. The person who controls material resources does not necessarily control the relationship, just as the person who controls information cannot completely determine the consequences of using it. The two works therefore offer a useful basis for examining the relationship between romantic intimacy, information asymmetry, economic behaviour and agency in Igbo written literature.

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