

gallivants about town.

Few saw the marriage institution itself as being the problem. The feeling amongst all the women we talked to was that it was the attitude the men brought to their marriage that made it unworkable. In earlier times, such attitudes were acceptable, but in the contemporary period, most women enter marriage with different views.

Previously, for example, women were often involved in productive activities outside the home, just as much as (if not more than) the men. Then European education and values intruded, and many of us who experienced them directly came to adopt the constricting upper class European binds on a woman's independence; if possible, it was beneath her dignity to work outside the home, but if financial considerations made it necessary, the work she sought was seen merely as income, not as meaningful activity or as a career. In many of our modern middle class marriages, therefore, the clear expectation is that the man will be the major breadwinner. But more and more, this expectation on the part of the wives turns out to be false, because they rarely see much of the man's income. The woman finds over a period of time that she is having to meet most of the household expenses despite her much smaller salary. It's not long before some come to the realization that he is not "providing" as had been planned.

As Achola said, "I woke up one morning and it seemed so clear to me: Paul certainly wasn't a help in the house, emotionally or financially, and was in fact often a hindrance. He did not provide the security that I had assumed would come from him. When this understanding dawned on me, I was no longer able to accept behaviour that I had previously put up with—like his going to his favourite bar after work every day and coming home around eight, so that I would have the full responsibility of looking after the children, the shopping and the cooking. Paul wasn't a

Many men cannot just stand talented and intelligent women—especially when they are married to them. Others will marry a woman only because she is beautiful and they want to show her off to enhance their status—but they soon come to resent this beauty because it gives her an identity of her own.

really bad person like some other husbands, but he just couldn't bear the tension of all my burdens, so I left him. It's not all that easy being single—but I don't feel so agitated as I used to. I think it wasn't all the work I was doing that was getting me down; it was more the contradiction of having a man in the house who was not contributing that got to me.

"It's for this same reason you will see that a lot of younger women who get pregnant before marriage are not in a hurry any more to marry the man, because they realize that he is not necessarily going to be the help that women previously thought husbands were. 'What will he do for me that I can't myself?' one such friend of mine recently told me.

"With more and more economic independence for women, I think the issue will become very clear: men must contribute to the household chores and provide genuine companionship in the home. If they don't, there will be no reason for a woman who can earn a living to stay married."

The "conventional" reasons associated with marriage break-ups are still there, of course. Foremost on this list is the addiction to the bar. Instead of going home after work, some men routinely head for their favourite pub where they get drunk and entertain (or are entertained by) prostitutes. Some contract venereal diseases from these prostitutes and take them home to their wives. And after a drinking binge, some men find it necessary to wake their wives late at night and demand food and other "services." A man who drinks everyday also rarely has time for his children and some men don't remember what classes their children are in or even their exact ages! And of course a man who drinks every night usually has no money left for the family, and often it is the working wife who has to pay for household expenses, school fees, etc.

Another reason is adultery: African men feel justified in running around with women while insisting that their

wives remain faithful to them. The more articulate philosophers philosophize about this common double standard by explaining that African men have always had promiscuous tendencies and that is nothing they or their wives can do about it. But if a married woman is attracted to someone other than her husband the philosopher becomes sour, tempers flare and the husband professes deep injury, even if he cannot wait to meet his own mistress that evening!

Thirdly, physical and mental cruelty: some men treat their wives like football—lifeless objects to be repeatedly kicked and abused. A man may be frustrated in his career, or turned down by a girl at the office, but it is his wife who becomes the scapegoat for these things. Sometimes a small matter is enough to trigger a domestic Armageddon. One woman, a Kenya Airways employee, had to have plastic surgery done on her nose after her husband broke it with a fist. Her only crime was that she bought a television set without consulting her husband about it. The money she used to buy the set was from her own savings.

Even more hurting can be mental cruelty. Some men openly flirt with or date other women. One man makes his wife entertain his mistresses at their home and when she complains he threatens to leave her. Nora had to put up with a husband who yelled obscenities at her in front of their young son. Some men disassociate themselves from their family units except for name, and refuse to offer such basic economic support as rent, food, clothing or school fees. They ride around in big cars and take girlfriends on trips while their wives have a budget for simple items to make ends meet.

A fourth very important reason is that some men cannot stand talented women—especially when they are married to them. These men want their wives to work as long as their work is sufficiently boring and stable. Basically these men are insecure about their