

Renaissance the Nigerian Woman in Contemporary Nigerian Literature: A Critical Study of Chimamanda Nogzi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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Abstract

My surveyed of Adichie's novel Purple Hibiscus uphold the vigorous role. She has engaged in recreation so distant and remains to play in renaissance and insisting the personality of Nigerian women. It also demonstrates her proclamation of their pursuit for agency and power. Although underscoring the tussles women in Nigeria and the diaspora continuously face due to the diligence of masculine cultures on the continent. Unquestionably, Adichie's fiction exposes the reputation of literary creativity as a tool for affecting feminist consciousness and prompting change in gender relations.

Keywords: *renaissance*, Nigerian women's lib, suffragette, masculinity, sexuality. *Ethos*

Introduction

This article inaugurates that negative manliness, which denotes to the ethnic concept of menfolk characterized by the admiring of machismo affects both genders. Masculine social concepts suppress both men and women. Therefore, both genders must merge in the spirit of complementarity to accomplish variation in gender relations. Furthermore, it exposes that Adichie's literary oeuvre re-envisioned the upcoming of Nigerian women by suggesting female education, financial independence, and female connecting as the ways through which Nigerian women can fruitfully provoke and convert the issues of female prejudice, typecasting and empowerment. Like most contemporary female authors, Adichie's origination of the Nigerian female identity exceeds societal acuties of what a woman should and should not be. By doing so, she redefines the image of the contemporary Nigerian woman and renegotiates the patriarchal spaces she is accorded in Nigerian literature.

Patriarchy ruins the essential origin cause of most difficulties faced by women in societies where it holds sway, subsequent in the marginalisation, discrimination and overthrow of women, and performance of violence against women. For illustration, it is also the patriarchal structure of the society and its deep-rootedness that gives rise to masculinity

beliefs and approaches, which are unfavorable to the female gender. Therefore, the deconstruction of patriarchy is an inappropriate obsession of Nigerian feminist writers. This research documents surveys the routine in which Adichie as a Nigerian feminist writer encounters and exposes patriarchy and other related socio-cultural gender-constructs that militate against women, as found in *Purple hibiscus*. These include thematic anxieties of womanly concern such as the romanticising of marriage, the valorisation of motherhood, male-child favorite condition, biased and sexist approaches towards women and violence against women. It also sights Adichie's proposition of education and female attachment as strategies for women empowerment in the novel.

In patriarchal societies, a high priority is placed on women's marital status. In fact, marriage and childbearing are perceived as the fulcrum of a woman's existence. Therefore, no matter the level of a woman's life happenings, she neither has worth nor honour outside marriage because, as Beatrice aptly puts it in *Purple hibiscus*, "a husband crowns a woman's life" (Adichie, 75). This preoccupied arranging of marriage as the zenith of female accomplishment in patriarchal societies is what I refer to in this fragment as the romanticizing of marriage and is unfriendly to the actualization of women's full capacities. Under patriarchy, a woman's identity is authorized only in suggestion to a male-figure. From birth until adolescence, her identity is counted under her father, and after marriage she is rendered appreciation in association to her husband. As a result, throughout the span of her life, the woman occurs predominantly as an attachment to the male figures in her life. The significance of this patriarchal romanticizing of marriage is that it makes the concern for a spouse and ambitious towards marriage the female's sole detection in life thereby restrictive her self-actualizations. So that rather than inspirational young women and girls to pursue an education, master a skill or learn a trade in order to attain self-reliance and economic liberation, they are forced into early marriages, pushed by societal opportunities into making awful selections, and even fraught with a feeling of inadequacy when they fail to get fastened.

In *Purple hibiscus*, Auntie Ifeoma in parallel vein bemoans the eager manner in which many of her female student's recklessness their studies to embrace marriage only to become imprisoned in a life of domesticity. When one of such female students comes to notify her that she is getting married, while speaking of her husband-to-be, Kambili detects that the female student does not "call him by his name; she called him 'dim,' 'my husband,' with the proud tone of someone who had won a prize" (Adichie, 234). In response to Auntie Ifeoma's investigation about her plans to return to school, she arrogantly responds with a high girlish laugh:

I am not sure I will come back to school when we reopen. I want to have a baby first, I don't want *dim* to think that he married me to have an empty home (Adichie, 234).

The female student in the passage is a typical product of patriarchal enculturation. She no longer calls her husband by his name. Rather she refers to him in the possessive term—

“*dim*” (which is Igbo for ‘My husband’ with the emphasis on ‘my’). This is because culturally, by asset of attractive his wife, the imbursement of the bride price signifies a transfer of her identity to him; consequently, his identity succeeds hers. In addition, socio-culturally, she has indeed won the eventual prize in the patriarchal race of womanhood, which is marriage. Furthermore, by revealing that she wants to have a baby before returning to school, the female student affirms the stereotypical feminine expectations whereby motherhood concretizes a woman’s place in marriage. Therefore, she does not want to be seen as being incompetent of bearing children and stand the risk of being exchanged by another wife, as is the norm.

When Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, during gatherings with old friends she is astonished by how “marriage was always the preferred topic” and how quickly the conversations if digressed always switched back to the “subject of marriage” with “a waspish tone in the voices of the unmarried, smugness in those of the married” (Adichie, 398). She also perceives that while the married friends shined with pride and achievement about their marital status, the unmarried friends combined into a “self-pity party of the single” (Adichie, 398). The societal emphasis on marriage for women leaves the unmarried clamouring for marriage while the married clutch to their marriages dreadfully despite their dysfunctional state. For example, in *Purple hibiscus*, Beatrice worries that another woman might assume her place as Eugene’s wife because of her incapability to bear him more sons. She asks Auntie Ifeoma,

Do you know how many mothers pushed their daughters at him? Do you know how many asked him to impregnate them, even, and not to bother to paying a bride price? (Adichie, 50).

This preposterous recommendation that any woman would contemplate imposing her daughter on an already married man and even forgoing the cultural payment of dowry, displays the degree of the nervousness women exhibit in navigating the confines of patriarchy by resorting to marriage. In blunt distinction with Beatrice’s fear of losing her marriage, Auntie Ifeoma actually refuses to remarry after her husband’s death. When Papa Nnukwu tells her, “my spirit will intercede for you, so that Chukwu will send a good man to take care of you and the children”, she quickly interjects, “let your spirit ask Chukwu to hasten my promotion to senior lecturer, that is all I ask” (Adichie, 83). By dispersing her father’s prayers for a husband and asking him to pray for her specialized improvement instead, Auntie Ifeoma rejects the traditional female ambition towards marriage and obsession on marital status and posits a “modern shift in perspective on gender issues” (Stobie, 424).

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