

MANHOOD PATRONAGE AS TRANSMUTATION IN THE NOVELS OF AKACHI ADIMORA-EZEIGBO AND CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE

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Abstract

Most deep-seated feminists find writing as a veritable medium for not only reacting to the unpleasant challenges of women, but also for creating female characters who are burdened with revolts against men. On the other hand, their male characters are rather entrusted with roles that portray their weaknesses. It is this consideration that has generated the controversies that trailed the institution of feminist discourses in emerging Nigerian literature. However, female writers have begun to consider portraying the flaws of women more than those of men, with the supposition that a less apologetic approach be employed in this regard. They are rather projected to instigate the woman's consciousness to the outcome and dividends of self appraisal. In this circumstance, there is a reduction in the vehemence of earlier feminist models. It is with the supposition of such transmutation that this paper examines the pointers to African female writers' enlistment in feminist conciliation, with a focus here on Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie. This comes within the framework of the overall repercussion of the feminist conjectures on the continent's literary output.

Keywords: Manhood, Feminist writing.

Introduction

Given the influence which the society has on literary harvest, the hypothetical outlook on the male domination of the opposite sex accounts for the agitations for the liberation of women and is implicated also in feminist writings. Anti-feminist critics easily find loopholes with such works, particularly in interrogating the measure and validity of the claim that male writers have been inclined to the derogation of women. To this end, feminist criticism has become a battlefield of sorts in which ideological constructs have been made to adopt diverse rhetorical alternatives. What this has done is to generate in writers the tendency to mediate in this seemingly distressing sexist war, with the understanding that there is need for a perceptive appraisal of the elements underlying these conflicts such that the indulgence to fanning its flames is dissuaded.

Therefore, part of this enterprise among writers committed to a responsible and responsive writing has been to mitigate all conflagrations as pragmatically as it is possible

within the reach of their craft, and with a measure that remains at the precincts of reality. It is in this light that scholars have severally undertaken an evaluation of such purposive writing. Among these critics within the African literary field is Nwachukwu-Agbada, whose appraisal of what he views as a compelling development of Achebe's characterization elicits a liable response among writers to exhibit some kind of artistic metamorphosis, particularly in the face of criticism. In his view, there are such discernible transitions in three of Ayi Kwei Armah's novels: *The Beautiful Ones Are not yet Born* (1968), *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) and *The Healers* (1978). Nwachukwu-Agbada also observes how the characterization of women in the novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong'O impinge on the said transmutation. As he puts it, Ngugi translates the women from the "crying mothers of Njoroge in *Weep Not Child* (1964) to the gun-wielding Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross* (1982)" (Armah's *Women* 48). It is in this regard that this paper examines how the latter novels of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie also demonstrate their inclination to patronising their male characters.

Adichie's own conciliation project seems to have come in progressive degrees in her last two novels, considering the over-bearing father-figure in *Purple Hibiscus*. Adimora-Ezeigbo may be said to have lingered longer with the force of feministic leanings in her trilogy: *The Last of the Strong Ones* (1996), *House of Symbols* (2001) and *Children of the Eagle* (2005). Therefore, the novels from which these deductions come and which form the trail of the evidence here are Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Adichie's *Half of A Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. Perhaps these writers began to see the need to toe Chinua Achebe's lines in mitigating the gender imbroglio.

For Achebe, the rhetoric of mediation comes forcefully in the Igbo dictum *Nwoke lucha ogu, nwanyi enwere akuko* (When the man completes the battle, the woman takes up the story). The personage of Beatrice (Nwanyibuife) in *Anthills of the Savannah*, following the spate of feminist charges against *Things Fall Apart*, is moulded to give the required facelift to female posture. While the aforesaid dictum recollects Chinua Achebe's identification with the ranking of the story-teller and the warrior in the Igbo (African) society, it surges with a glaring design to mitigate the feminist charge against the ostensibly male-dominated Igbo society. It appears to emphasize a positive shade of meaning to the ambiguity in this dictum. While it might be interpreted that women lack the capacity to fight, Achebe insists that,

It is the story that outlives the sound of War-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story, not the others, that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns and directs us (124).

Here, Achebe commemorates the place of the woman as mother and story-teller yielding a justification for the several views on what is ranked as tenure shift. But much more, some recourse to certain privileged positions of women which had been supposed to be redundant in *Things Fall Apart* have yielded interesting observations. The non-antithetical premise in the dictum: *Nwoke lucha ogu, nwanyi enwere akuko* (When the man completes

the battle, the woman takes up telling the story), may be adjudged to summon female writers to the consciousness of wars that had been fought and those that might erupt in the future, in the telling of the intertwining components of the African story.

With their varied recourse to stories of the Nigeria-Biafra War, Adimorah-Ezeigbo and Adichie may be adjudged to patronize the complementarity in *Nwoke/Nwanyi* – man/woman, as they pertain to *ogu/akuko* – war/storytelling. Both writers are credited with streaming the consciousness of their nativity, just as their narrative inheritance has been frequently associated with the tenets of humanism among the Igbo people. While it is Adichie whose acquaintance with Achebe has more often been pinpointed, there are valid suggestions that both of them, female writers and critics on their individual scales, have advertently or otherwise implicated the traditional, somewhat mythic, role of women as vituperate story tellers. The tradition which they have inherited promotes the re-enactment of commonly owned myths, perceptive narratives of familiar human experiences.

In spite of being influenced by the air of literary tradition which is attuned to their nativity, Adimorah-Ezeigbo and Adichie represent another crop of accomplished writers within an epoch frequently identified as an extension of Achebe's. Eve Eisenberg yields a more profound enthronement of Achebeism among writers of the present generation submitting that,

...when Adichie represents African writers speaking about their trade, Achebe enters the conversation, not just as a deity against whom sacrilege cannot be committed, but in a dual role as the producer of sublime writing, and as the author who used his pen to contest Conrad's racist depiction of Africans (14).

The parallel placement of Achebe and Joseph Conrad invokes among critics of African literary commitment the misrepresentations of the African people and their traditions. For this reason also Zulu Sofola recognizes, in a particular assessment of Achebe's craft, that, "The human reason of the creative artists is thus inspired, elevated and brought into direct contact with transcendental and divine Truth..."(44). And, within given traditional perceptions, these truths are enshrined by the custodians of certain values. These effuse as mythical elements which could come in the form of tales or proverbs, the very prominent artifacts that have become accessible condiments for infusing narrative potency, but more emphatically in eliciting myths. The master/mistress story-teller in the Igbo tradition is known to re-present a familiar tale with a certain uniqueness that projects a new knowledge.

Certain myths are adopted in *Things Fall Apart*, with the intention to caricature anti-social patterns. These include: "The Quarrel between Earth and Sky", "Why the Snake-Lizard killed his Mother", "Tortoise and the Birds" and the Mosquito and Ear". It is in emphasizing the metaphorical import of those myths that Quseynou Traore explores the mosquito myth in such an adaptation which lends a fructose to the projection of Achebe's gender sensitivity. Traore puts it thus:

The Mosquito and Ear myth is one of the significant paradigms that structure and clarify Okonkwo's gender conflict in its most essential form: it is a symbolic configuration of Okonkwo's obsession with his warped ideal of manhood characterized by extreme violence a need to dominate the female principle... (329).

The understanding that this myth draws attention to the placement of the 'ear' as the wooed-woman image and the 'mosquito' as the suitor-man image, may give warrant to the re-examination of Traore's perception of the myth. All the same, Traore suggests that the implication in each of the stories detracts from any pejorative picturing of the woman in *Things Fall Apart*. Rather, the kind of social deviance which Okonkwo's character represents is censured with more ironical undertone in Achebe's poetic justice which ensures that the hero commits suicide.

In analyzing these myths, Traore (326) concludes that there is a idealistic intrigue in the manslaughter which Okonkwo commits. Therefore, in killing a woman through an accidental discharge, he is submerged in what the Umuofia people regard as *igbu ochu*, an outrageous abomination of the feminine kind against Umuofia humanity, and indeed against their earth goddess. It was in this circumstance that Okonkwo got banished to his maternal home, for a period though, where his uncle unveils the meaning of Nneka – mother is supreme.

The appraisal of such menacing sing-song of the mosquito's prowl on the ear only reveals a frustrated conjugal bonding. It becomes difficult to place whether the often perceived complementary reverse in *Anthills of the Savannah* comes as a consequence of the mosquito myth or in the wake of the criticisms on Achebe's earlier portrayal of women. More perceptively, it is adduced that Achebe's placement of women in his narratives hardly agrees with the view that his female characters are not positively positioned.

Nonetheless, there are differing perspectives on Chinua Achebe's switch in the characterization of women in *Anthills of the Savannah* and even the recourse to the much implicated *Things Fall Apart*. For instance, not only did Flora Nwapa create in the eponymous *Efuru*, such sterling moulds that measured with Okonkwo's enterprise, her collection of short stories, *Wives at War*, seemingly draws same kind of challenge with Achebe's *Girls at War*. In so doing, Nwapa appeared to have set the stage for female writers and critics to embark upon the feminist adventure. Brands of feminism emerged: Motherism, Stiwanism and even Akachi-Ezeigbo's 'Snail Sense' feminism, and perhaps daughterism. Will some more theories emerge in this regard?

Obioma Nnaemeka refuses to validate the transformational characterization of women in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, but she is rather emphatic on Achebe's position which relates that "The pervasive contiguity of women and barns of yams in *Things Fall Apart* underscores the existence of the woman as a signifier" (283). This critic goes ahead to relate Achebe's exhilarating portrayal of Okonkwo's acquaintance with manliness, particularly how Nwakibie's wealth is traceable to his yams, "three huge barns" (TFA 17). Nonetheless, Ijeoma Nwajaku holds that the undue placement of women in

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is only arbitrated in *Anthills of the Savannah*, coming in the wake of the contemporary struggles for the liberation of women. Nwajiaku concludes that,

Achebe's text is largely an authentic representation of the role of women in his nation in the nineteen eighties setting of the work. His narrative serves to open up fresh vistas into the reality of the female. His insights which are profound and remarkable (especially coming from a male), reveal his indisputable faith and confidence in the ability of the female...(166).

Elsewhere, Nwachukwu-Agbada appraises what he regards as "daughteronomy" and concludes that the installation of matriarchy or daughtriarchy by Adimora-Ezeigbo is only made to substitute patriarchy, an outlook which comes to counter the known order. It may be said that Nwachukwu-Agbada extends this scriptural derivation, correlating the functional establishment of the Hammurabic law in Exodus and in Leviticus, the embodiment of its adjudication by the Levitical priests.

The Patronage Project

The mediation project which Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie embark upon may indeed be geared towards a better understanding of the possibilities of the man-woman compatibility. Nwajiaku had pointed to the Igbo philosophy which she identifies as being rooted in "duality in thought". She clarifies this proposition with the Igbo proverb, "*The kwuru, ihe akwu de be ya*, (When something stands, something else stands beside it)"(Traff 152). In spite of identifying the world with transformational alternatives, she appears not to insist on who stands first or the one to stand beside the other, whether the male or the female. The complementation of contrasts in the Igbo proverbial structure instructs discussants on the imperatives of mediating in the seeming ambiguities which some of these sayings call forth in the context of contemporary feminist arguments.

In this light therefore, it becomes needful to examine how these two strong female voices may be seen to have embarked upon the hypothetical patronage of manhood, a project which is seen to mediate their earlier stand on the radical feminist matter. In Adimorah-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*, the consequences of rejecting suitors implicates not only the trafficking business, but is also made to stand as a precursor to the fantastic acceptance of strange ways and ideals which had come when 'things began to fall apart'. To some extent, these may have indicted the belligerence of the feminists, an intrusion into the known patrilineal order. The portrayal of the man's weakness, as it is in deep-seated feminist works, is reversed. It comes with a more forceful logic that the premeditated battle against the man as the source of women's woes is abrogated.

In her view of conciliation, Onyeka Iwuchukwu places the hypothetisation of African feminism within a given order, the quest to mediate in what seems an eccentric outlook in feminism and what holds true in the cultural values of the proponents. These shades of ideology are captured in Iwuchukwu's view here,

Chioma Opara's Femalism focuses on the African female writer, Catherine Acholonu in Motherism advocates the co-existence of men and women and that each role complements the other and Akachi Ezeigbo's Snail sense Feminism is also based on negotiation... A close study of these Nigerian postulations reveals [sic] that none of them advocate [sic] gender equality but a complementarity that would ensure that each individual is given an opportunity and freedom for self actualization. They understand that in our culture, like Ezeigbo said, any woman who decides to confront men will fail (6)

It is in this regard that the 'invention' of the theme, setting and characterization particularly, are perceivable as the appurtenances which Adimora-Ezeigbo employs in *Trafficked* as Adichie also does in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. These writers are insistent on enforcing the subject matter, sexism, shades of the trafficking of women and indeed pictures of self-enslavement. The conflicts portrayed in *Trafficked* relate to the kind of psychological twist which marks the attitudes of female delinquents. In *Americanah*, Adichie only moderates the delusion of women with the sex trade. She appears to severally caution women, bringing them to the consciousness of their sexuality, the consequences of accepting roles either as sex agents or sex merchants. In so doing, the writers seem intent on demobilising the assertiveness of the woman, with certain probabilities of giving a facelift to the characterisation of men in novels authored by women.

The fact that Adimora-Ezeigbo draws attention to the history of slavery in *Trafficked* suggests that these writers advertently trace the import of feminism to Western ideals and the pointers to a rebranded march into captivity. The humiliation and enslavement of Jaja of Opobo presents a cogent symbolism. In the programme of rehabilitating the trafficked girls, some form of self-examination is implicated against the erstwhile accusation of the men for the woes of the woman. The narrative voice in *Trafficked* says, "She and the fifteen humiliated young women shuffled out of the aircraft, past the crew who stood aside, watching them as if they were lepers or slaves disembarking from a slave ship"(4).

Adimora-Ezeigbo adopts some proverbs which may be viewed in the light of the supposed retraction from an erstwhile position. One of those adages employed says, "It is not every fruit that is good to the eyes that is good to the belly" (209). It is artistically woven to correlate the reminiscence of the story which Hannah's grandmother had told her. This comes in the fashion of the tale-telling tradition in which proverbs and other witty statements are contrived in what Helen Chukwuma regards as "introductory verbal formula" (232). In this observation they are known to be "courtesies" which the performer extends to his audience. In this instance, both patterns are employed. The story recollected goes thus:

The excreta swelled and swelled until it turned into a handsome young man... All the maidens wanted him as a husband. Finally the young demon, who had told the villagers that he was a prince, chose seven of them and took them away" (209).

Adimora-Ezeigbo also employs the song accompaniment to the folktale as one of the key structures in the Igbo folk narrative here – “Who are you following/ the magic bird is asking are you following excreta” (209). The introduction of the proverb; “Our people say that when something is done and done properly, it brings peace and pleasure to the heart and to the mind” (260); suggests that they are not inadvertent. While they relate the significance of each of these statements in the re-enforcement of the Igbo traditional art, they are reflective of their timelessness as well as their rhetorical essence.

Some of the seeming feminist clues in these works may have implicated the weakness of the man, yet they are meant to more forcefully draw the woman’s attention to the consequences of paying close attention to their femininity. In *Americanah*, Obinze’s mother cautions Ifemelu on abstaining from sex with the son here: “If anything happens between you and Obinze, you are both responsible. But nature is unfair to women. An act is done by two people but if there are any consequences one person carries it alone” (72). This instance relates to the said vulnerability of the woman for which the man is also often arraigned. Some of them rather come as natural co-occurrence. Consequently, there are suggestions that the consciousness of the woman’s placement by nature implicates the course of traditional values.

Hannah’s act of rebellion against established tradition is berated. In spite of the fact that her false prophet-husband is the one whose acts sound abominable, but much more is highlighted in the rejection of parental advice. It goes thus:

When her parents objected to her marrying Prophet Elias – who in any case was not prepared to pay a bride price on her head – Hannah took her fate in her own hands. “If you refuse to give your consent, I’ll leave without it,” she had threatened ... “Why must you insist on a bride price? (170).

It is difficult to establish which of these is the more rebellious act: the oversea adventure which Nneoma embarks upon without giving any hint to her parents or Hannah’s disloyalty and marriage to the prophet. Adimora-Ezeigbo regards the period of such unapproved marriage as “three years of wild adventure...” (170). It is the same view that is cast of Nneoma’s journey overseas and the accompanying traivals.

Also, the narrative voice draws from the animal world to justify how customary practices agree with patterns in nature – “These lizards teach a lesson,”...It is natural that a male should pursue the female and that the female should hide in fear. It should not be the other way round – whether in the animal world or in the human world”(212). This observation comes in the face of Lebechi’s atrocious impudence in Ogukwe’s compound. The elders had to send emissaries to Lebechi’s maiden home with the report that, “Lebechi, your daughter and our wife has become the proverbial – *Ezeonyeagwanam* – the one who listens to no one, God or man”(215).

It may be said that these two female voices walk in the consciousness of Okonkwo’s reproof that Ezinma sits like a woman. Part of what they are inclined to is the subversion of the statement, ‘What a man can do, a woman can do better’, the fast-becoming-cliché among certain feminist indoctrinants. It relates the measure of assertiveness that easily compels the men into a battle of supremacy. These writers appear

inclined to enforcing Achebe's caution in this regard. Certain actions of ladies are satirized in their works. They subtly emphasize the place of role apportionment in the Igbo world view.

Certain shades of values among the Igbo for which the patrilineal order has been tackled appear to take an outlook which simply shows the translations that have come with civilization. The husband/wives relationship is represented in the picture of women in *Half of a Yellow Sun* as they glaringly chase after the men. This are seen in the women skirting around Odenigbo (HOYS: 21), Olanna's desire to move to Nsukka (HOYS: 44), Sussan's provision of shelter for Richard and also Kainene's suite at her father's Zobis Hotel where she and Richard quartered at her expense.

Nonetheless, Adimora-Ezeigbo demonstrates her rejection of the conflicts of wife-battering that has been known to fuel the feminist war against men and the inordinate handling of their manhood. While Prophet Elias is placed at the centre of such undesirable act, Hannah's disregard for the traditional marriage rites is also indicted just as her delusion in following the fake prophet is visible. Hannah testifies that, "He says Jesus whipped sinners who desecrated the temple, so he's simply emulating the Master. Women are not exempted. After whipping us, he invites us to his bed" (Traff 182). The conflicts generated here are ironical of fantasy-ridden ranks which religious bigotry fortifies. While the several misdemeanors that are linked with Prophet Elias and his spirituality are put to question, the return of Hannah to her maiden home is made to parallel the return of the trafficked girls and indeed the need for their rehabilitation.

In Adichie's *Americanah*, this view of the projected manhood patronage, the exhibition of acceptable maleness, surges forth. Indeed it comes as a testimony by a non-Igbo woman. "I have two Igbo men. Very good. Igbo men take care of women real good" (AM: 14). Further on what could be seen as the goodness of the man comes in a deeper measure here:

Inside was his furniture imported from Italy, his wife, his two year old daughter, buchi, the nanny Christiana, his wife's sister Chioma, who was on a forced holiday because university lecturers were on strike yet again, and the new house girl, Maria who had been brought from Benin republic because Nigerian house girls were unsuitable (AM: 21)

Adichie appears to invoke the spirit with which Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, had moulded an Okonkwo, the champion Wrestler from Umuofia to Mbanta. Okonkwo's mould in *Things Fall Apart* is captured here: "When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often" (3). Adichie's picturing of Odenigbo gives this lead here: "His walk was brisk, energetic, and he looked like Ezeagu, the man who held the wrestling record in Ugwu's village" (HOYS 7). As much as it may not have been a calculated disparagement of the feminist cause, it recollects her challenge against the detractors of the portraiture of Achebe's Okonkwo, setting up her inclination to re-presenting the natural attractions and affections that occur in the man/woman intercourse.

In *Half of A Yellow Sun*, Odenigbo is cast in the mould of a resolute man who is neither influenced by the mother's unrestrained desire for a grandchild nor Olanna's inability to conceive, one of the usual reasons why men are berated for spousal

estrangement. In this circumstance, he is not hesitant in apologizing for an act that he was not privy of – “Ugwu told me what happened. I’m so sorry my mother acted that way”(100). In the same vein, he is made to stand resolutely against imperialistic ploys. Odenigbo says that, “It is now that we have to begin to decolonize our education!”(75).

Nonetheless, there are several pictures in the texts of the women’s desire for their spouses. Quite unlike Adimorah-Ezeigbo’s belligerent female characters in the trilogy, the Ofomata’s retrospection that the congenial relationship in his family is recognized. Ofomata, who used to catch the priceless fishes was always glad to give them to his mother, who in turn dutifully prepared delectable sauce for the entire family. In Ofomata’s words “His father always got the lion share” (Traff, 35). Adaye demonstrates her recognition of the husband even in his time of disillusionment and calls him, *Nnamukwu* (Traff, 110), meaning, my lord. In the same manner, the women in the texts are seen to pay due allegiance to the man’s masculinity, his manhood.

For Adichie the sensuous picture of man gives the indication that she is intent on overthrowing all the vices which the feminist struggle heaps upon man. There are suggestions in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* that the feminist rage and rejection of marriage relationship stems from fears. This indication comes in Olanna’s voice, “they were too happy, precariously so and she wanted to guard writer’s grit on the amiable relationship of the man and the woman is apparent. It is in that bond; she feared that marriage would flatten it to a prosaic partnership” (52). Contrarily, the portrait of man is that which reveals that they are desirable other, is profusely presented. The men are made to reveal the kind of sex appeal which the women salivate to possess. These pictures are seen here: “and the hair that covered his chest and legs was a lustrous, darker shade (HOYS, 4), “his thick hair that stood high on his head, his muscled arms, his broad shoulders’ (HOYS 5). Although these are recollected by Ugwu, the entrapping tone with which the manhood matter is applauded sounds femininely Adichie’s. The goodness of the man in these novels under discourse relate a great regard for morality, sensuous appeal and indeed the strength of the man in matters that pertain to traditional.

These writers are dutiful in capturing consummate spousal reciprocity as a means of portraying the man as being responsible. In *Trafficked*, the man, Ogukwe is made to appreciate his wife’s efforts, a higher status as the breadwinner – “Thank you, my wife. What can I do without you who have practically become the breadwinner in this house?” (Traff, 109). While it must be observed that the narrative is not entirely bereft of feminist echoes which some extremists might latch unto, they are seen to have come in modulated forms. It is also evident in the relationship between Odenigbo and Olanna and their mutual desire to have a child. Olanna goes ahead to complement Odenigbo’s love for Ugwu by offering powder for his body odour, again to actualize the desirable personality, the manhood in the man. Even in recapitulating aspects of Nigerian history, which may stand to indict the British in their meddlesomeness in the country’s socio-political wrangling, same spousal reciprocity is not obliterated in the amalgamation of the North and South by Lugard and the giving of the name ‘Nigeria’ by his (Lugard’s) wife (HOYS 115). To this end, it is supposed that paying homage to Western ideals, which is a perspective of feminism, may indeed be inordinate.

Conclusion

One of the key challenges which Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie confront is the possibility of mediating in the feminist rage in African literature which, for some time now, has been erecting formidable ideological structures, with impeccable logic, geared towards demobilising what is perceived as male domination within the people's culture and values. What is seen to be the patrilineal order within the African society may indeed be a universal practice which only applies in distinct measures from one culture to the other. Therefore, the global urgency of instituting the poetics of humanism has found easy eloquence in the apparent disparity in the status of men and women in many spheres and endeavours.

Feminists not only suppose that every (wo) man ought to become part of the struggle they also enthuse men who philosophize the equality of man to the obligation of rejecting the domination of one sex by the other. However, it is the deeper scrutiny of the disproportions against women that generates the rage which feminism has borne, particularly in literature. The simplicity in gauging these inequalities may have generated more strife than is rational for humanist thinkers. Therefore, it places a demand on the possibilities of mediation with the implicit recline from revolting against the patrilineal Igbo society which their previous works are said to suggest.

For Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, it is in placing her trilogy: *The Last of the Strong Ones*, *House of Symbols* and *Children of the Eagle* against *Trafficked* that the stand is elucidated. Even with yielding to her traffickers, the protagonist, Nneoma is thrust with an outlook disparate from those in the trilogy where the sustained radicalized feminist personas are moulded in a persisting pattern. These are entrenched patterns for erecting her matriarchal effigy. It is therefore easy to pinpoint the directional switch in *Trafficked* with the (dis)inclination to extending her radical bearing on the feminist matter. As it is in Chimamanda Adichie's own *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*, the reluctance in furthering the heat of the feminist burden in *Purple Hibiscus* is visible.

Given the projection in the main plots of these novels, it may be adduced that the feminist matter which had been uppermost in their earlier invention became overtaken or overturned by other crucial conflicts in African literature – the fallout of the Nigeria-Biafra War; the challenges of governance and the unemployment/underemployment status that has given rise to brain drain and the search for greener pastures; forms of alienation also that have come with diaspora adventures. The consciousness of both writers in these regard affirm the assumption of maturation in their craft.

There are significant hints that Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie retract from projecting the misdemeanors of the man against the (wo)man. It is in this light that this paper has examined the latter works of these writers with some degree of comparison with the earlier works. Established here, is the retraction which stands as the measure for mitigating their initial posture on the feminist struggle. This may be gauged as a subtle appeal for mediation within a society where the conflagrations that had attended the earlier adventure suggest that a more potent option be employed. These may indeed reveal the consequence in Adichie's proposal that 'Everyone is a Feminist' and how it most poignantly aligns with the 'Snail Sense' construct in Adimora-Ezeigbo's invention. If indeed the mould of characters in these writers' latter works stand as the practical

realisation of their philosophies, then the probable trickster image of the snail is evidently submerged in the novels as this discourse has highlighted.

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