

**The Interplay of Language, Style and Ideology in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus***

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**Abstract**

*To a remarkable degree, there is a nexus and interconnectedness in the linguistic, stylistic and ideological issues arising from both *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Purple Hibiscus*. The interplay and familiarity in the linguistic features, stylistics orientations and ideological preoccupations in the two novels are apt and succinct. This work, therefore, explores the extent of influences and parallels in the works of the two writers in the books. We shall establish, in this study, the ideologies that lie behind the linguistic and stylistic orientations of the books and see whether the choices of words are ideologically based; and besides, measure how far the truism that Adichie is said to be Achebe's literary daughter can hold water.*

**Keywords:**

Interplay Language, Style, Ideology, truism, literary daughter,

## Introduction

With the writing of *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Purple Hibiscus*, both Achebe and Adichie have shown a new line of sociological paradigm. Metaphorically speaking, Chimamanda Adichie is observed to be Chinua Achebe's literary daughter, for she once lived in Achebe's home when she was ten years old; read *Things Fall Apart* then, and she believed his halo surrounded her, which explains their easy comprehension and analytic style. It has also been observed that the language patterns in *Anthills of the Savannah* also assist Achebe to a remarkable degree in eschewing anti-woman position.

On the two novels' narrative method, scholars observed that their simplicity lies in the interconnection of the past, the present and future. Events in the two novels are made to cover a period (a time span) of one and a half to two years. With these simple, aesthetic and narrative devices, Achebe and Adichie delve into Nigerian legends, anti-woman resistance and post colonial realities. Although the anti-woman resistance is more deeply felt in Adichie's debut more than in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*.

It is evident that Achebe's social vision in the prose differs from his earlier works; as it is vivid in Adichie's debut, too, the above position is, nevertheless, anti-podal to what Achebe is formerly known for. He has been wholly influenced by his familiarity with radical woman outspokenness as we see in the case of Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* and Auntie Ifeoma in *Purple Hibiscus*. This observation need not be interrogated or be questioned in real sense that Achebe's ideological development and literary production seem to be historically conditioned.

It is an established fact that the patterns of language in *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Purple Hibiscus* also help to fortify both Achebe's and Adichie's pro-woman position. Yankson (1985:35) succinctly and clearly highlights some of the language patterns like; paradigmatic association, antonymous relations and foregrounding. Paradigmatic associations means the creation of a harmonious relationship between words of similar paradigms. This is opposed to antonymous relations which occur when words of contrasting paradigms are used along with others.

Generally, it would be observed that the styles of the novels have been deliberately adopted to serve both Achebe's and Adichie's ideological purposes; based on this study, it would be established that Achebe's and Adichie's ideological concerns have separately shaped their artistic practices in the novels. Tanure Ojaide (1989) observes that:

Modern African literature is much socialized. The literature is different from that which focuses on the individual. It is this communal spirit which informs the characterization and social analysis in Soyinka's *The Interpreters*, Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* and Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*. In each of these novels, a group, rather than an individual is emphasized. There is no single protagonist that overwhelms other characters.

It is interesting and worthy of note that Achebe strives for suitable aesthetic and stylistic means for the depiction of his ideological intent. In this, Adichie appears to toe Achebe's literary ideological line. In the novels, speeches and characters serve as ideological carriers, that is elements showing ideological dispositions and inclinations. The speeches of the different characters carry ideological import, expressing their views and beliefs. With this, Achebe and Adichie expose the power and workings of class consciousness in society.

In an essay, Lukacs (1988:22) has maintained that the "intellectual physiognomy... is the chief factor in creating living personality". In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Ikem Osodi is not only a living personality but a dynamic and revolutionary one; thanks to Achebe's painting depiction of character's intellectual. Lukacs goes on to say that:

Characterization that does not compass ideology is not complete. Ideology is the highest form of consciousness; ignoring it, a writer eliminates what is important in delineation of character. A character's conception of the world represents a profound personal experience and the most distinctive expression of his inner life, (ideology) at the same time it provides a significant reflection of the general problems of his time.

Achebe and Adichie appear to be very much aware of Lukacs' observation and they utilize the recommendation to their own advantage. Not even the Ikems and the Auntie Ifeomas of the two novels are devoid of the ideological dimension in their characterization. Our first meeting and encounter with Ikem in *Anthills of the Savannah*, for example, confirms the fact that this is a man who is experienced and who has already chosen his way of life. His self-consciousness, wisdom and confidence are remarkable. He always takes the initiative in any difficult situation. Ikem is unbelievably resourceful and his learned utterances are very remarkable. Ikem is not just an armchair revolutionary, he is also deeply involved in active social commentary. From the tone of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, it is undebatable that the novelists -Adichie and Achebe- have taken sides. They are explicitly partisan. Their stylistic mode of presentation itself forces the reader to take sides. We are made to understand that in the Nigerian society the political

situation is strictly an either for or against. There is no sitting on the fence, no middle road. We are either for justice and liberation of the people (characters) or against.

Hence, the partisanship of the authors is infectious in that it induces the partisanship in the reader both in their thematic preoccupations, ideological inclinations and stylistic presentations. The exhortative aspect of the ideological dimension in the novels makes the possibility of objective and neutral reading impossible. And the success of this, which is not exiguous, is largely due to the powerful stylistic and propagandistic thrust of the novels. The overt and explicit condemnation of the *status quo* and constant stress on the need for the destruction of the existing social order enhance the political and propagandist intent and force of the novels. And the propaganda is an *incitant* (a catalyst) that moves one to action. For example, Sam wanting to have a love affair with Beatrice, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, is an element for propaganda. Again, Father Amadi being moved to the verge of making love to Kambili, in *Purple Hibiscus* connotes propaganda, too.

Adichie, in her debut, appears to be writing her experiences in life this perhaps informed an earlier comment by Ngugi when he says in one of his popular essays that “every writer’s books are autobiographical, that is you write about your experiences, your immediate experiences”

It is interesting and worthy of note that Adichie strives for suitable and appropriate stylistic and aesthetic means for the depiction of her ideological intent. The description of Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin by Biodun Jeyifo as a playwright, who gives and pays “an engrossing, even meticulous attention to finding the aesthetic, technical means of effectively achieving his ideological objectives” appears to befit Adichie perfectly.

### **The concept of style**

The *Free Online Encyclopedia* (2010) expresses that definitions of style are conditioned by the concepts of language and of linguistic norm. When the standard spoken language is accepted as the linguistic norm, style is defined as a variant of the language, and colloquial language as well is regarded as a style. However, when the norm has the more restricted meaning of correct literary speech style, style is defined as a variant of the literary language. It states further that classification of style varies accordingly; for example when style makes references or refers to the standard spoken language, a plain or neutral conversational style is identified, and all other styles are marked or coloured, in association with it. On the other hand, when style refers to the literary language, a linguistic fund common to all style meant to be considered to be neutral segment of language, and marked stylistic devices combined with this common fund in varying promotions to form different styles.

**Style as choice, deviation and man.**

Olajide (1997:95) while describing style as choice projects that the ideology within which a text is written should determine the writer's choice of discourse pattern, grammar and lexis. It, again, informs the pre-eminence assigned to features in the text, and dictates how such features are related, as well as how they exert pressure upon one another. He asserts further in relation to Goatly's (1993) position that the concept of style is essentially a comparative exercise. It is aimed at establishing norms and degree of probability of occurrence of linguistic features. This view puts at equal rate stylistics with such discourse studies as description of varieties or register analysis, and stresses a comparatively complementary approach to the study of style.

Deviation which a brand of style that is a conscious branching off from the existing norm is alluded to by Aristotle (1907:127) in his commentary on poetic diction. This may explain the reason why some writers deviance from general acceptability to project their writings and let it stand out clear away from hackneyed form of expressions. He observes that:

The most effective means of achieving both clarity and diction and a certain dignity is the use of altered form of words, the unfamiliarity due to this deviation from normal usage will raise the diction above the common place

The ideology that surrounds a piece of discourse or writing most of the time informs and dictates the writers choice of style. Invariably the ideology makes the man and the man makes his style. Olajide (1997:95) stresses further that the second aspect of man's style is the dialect scale which is consummated in the individual language user's habit within his linguistic community; and the dialect scale is often times affected by factors such as social class, age, sex and geographical location. Thus, Leech (1996:27) points to the social implication of the concept of style by recommending that the register and dialect scales be brought under close attention in the investigation of textual style. Register can altogether be considered as the structural amalgamations of textual, contextual and thematic features that serve as variables which influence verbal discussion in a particular situation.

Volosinov (1973) and Halliday (1985) gave the impression that the concept of style has to do with sociological factors that has gotten greater attention in more modern and recent literature. The socio-political element of an ideological dimension is seen to be specifically dominant in stylistic discourse. Hence, as observed by Huntson (1993:29), the production of a text as a social process plays a great role; for example, it establishes the interactive point between the reader and the writer. Huntson stresses further that since the social system encapsulates ideologies, the text is

scribed to be comprehended within the environment of a specific ideological orientation: The ideology within which a text is scribed ought to project the writer's choices of discourses lexis, grammar and pattern. It determines the pre-eminence anchored to features in the text, and dictates how such features have associations and as well how they enact pressure on one another.

Therefore, the apex goal of stylistic analyst should be to proceed from formal description of styles to a rhetorical interpretation of texts. As a result of this, stylistics is selective and purposive; as Huntson (1993) observes that it can only depend on a few features of the text to provide explanation to language function in the text and proffer an interpretation and account of extra-textual effects of that language projects.

Budagov (1967) stresses that complex modern national languages have three major style: a neutral conversational style (that is sometimes called a conversational style), a higher and formal style and a lower formal style, and a lower familiar and colloquial style. He maintains further that: consequently, the same phenomenon can be named and described on various stylistic levels: compare Russian Zhizn' bytie and zhite, three level of the neutral word zhizn' (life). This variety, he says, constitutes a great resources for linguistic and literary language.

Each style, he states further, may also have narrower though less well defined subdivisions. The literary style is used for official, commercial, scientific, scholarly, journalistic and publicist writings; and the familiar colloquial style is used in informal language, student slang and other types of speech. Each style is appropriate to certain social conditions and situations; the formal literary style to official contacts, the neutral conversational style to ordinarily contacts at work and everyday life, and the familiar colloquial style to informal and family contacts. He stated further that in Soviet linguistics, all styles and stylistic subsections or sub-divisions are sometimes called functional style. Some linguists view literary speech- the normal speech of educated people- as a functional style and the style of literature as a whole.

The great *Soviet Encyclopedia* (1979) inferred that emotional and expressive shadings of language must be distinguished from stylistic division, although such shadings are sometimes termed stylistic as well. These shadings may occur within a single style and may elicit such value judgment as "lofty and elevated" "solemn" neutral or "low" as well as "coarse" or "ironic" Owing to the historical development of languages, lofty terminology tends to be found in the formal literary style and "low" "coarse" terminology in the informal and colloquial style.

Style is expressed to be a distinctive formal or characteristic manner of expression in words, music, painting etc. Stepanov (1965) states that style can exist only when a linguistic

system permits a choice of linguistic means. Consequently, style is a historical category that originates together with the concept of a linguistic norm. The three basic styles have three distinct historical sources. The formal literary style generally originates in the age which is often different from the everyday language of the majority of the population. For example, in Russia, the formal literary language originated in Old Church Slavonic. In France, Italy and Spain, it originated in Latin, and in the republics of Middle Asia, in ancient Ugher language. The neutral conversational style originates in the popular language and the informal colloquial style originates largely in the urban colloquial language.

Stepanov stresses further that individual national traits in the origin and literary development of style are reflected in different interpretation of the concept of neutrality in French, the formal literary style in Russian, on the other hand, the neutral style has come close to conversational colloquial speech. This is because the French literary language took form during the age of classicism (the 17th century), whereas the Russian literary language took form during the period of establishment of realism (the age of Pushikin) at a time differing attitudes towards the democratic elements of the language.

In the development of language, the breakup of stylistic boundaries is often an indication of new literary or ideological trend. Vinogradov (1938) observes that the division of style into three levels existed in ancient Rome, where it was identified with specific literary genres and was used only in the formal literary language to designate actual objects. Examples in the high style were “warrior” “steed” and “sword” in the middle style, “farmer” “ox” and “plow” and in the low style “lazy” shepherd” and “stick”. On a general note a given object could be designated on only one stylistic level. Vinogradov also stressed that during ancient and medieval time, style was studied as part of rhetoric and poetics. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, style was the subject of three-style theory accepted in Europe and applied in Russia by M. V Lamonosov.

Vinogradov maintains that in its modern meaning, the term “style” appeared in European languages in the development of 19th century owing to the development of the theory of historicism. The term was introduced towards the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Spencer and Steirthal. With the emergence of semiotics, such scholars as Foucault proved that style is important not only in literary affair but in every area in which language is used, including science and in the present investigation such as the work we have at hand.

In Vinogradov words, a manner of speaking or writing and individual’s speech in a given social milieu or situation constitutes the style. The style of an individual is his finger-prints. The

style of language is the aggregate of speech traits used in a given social situation and the style of speech or of a written text results from the choice made by a speaker or writer from the stylistic means available in a given language. Consequently, the styles of language and of speech are the same phenomenon-style-studied from different standpoints by means of stylistics. Style is also the secondary level of any linguistic system including that of an artificial language. The level arises when a purposeful choice is made among the system's available means. The purpose of such a choice may be to provide information, evaluation, or instructions when one of the three modes of language usage: semantic, syntactic, or pragmatic is studied.

### **The interplay of language, style and ideology in the two novels.**

The ideological inclination and disposition of an individual or writer dictate the language and style of such personality. There are a lot of influences and parallels in the linguistic orientation, stylistic dimension and ideological disposition in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The nexus and interplay of language, style and ideology in the two literary prose works shall be explored, textually, in this area. For example, some of the angles we shall examine here are the ones in which we can draw parallels, that is where the ideology, style and linguistic choices of the authors are different and the places where Achebe's writing and ideology have influences on Adichie's work. Some of the stylistic dimensions and ideological preoccupations to be examined in this arena include: linguistic simplicity of expression, easy narrative style, use of mono / polylingual code-mixing, use of proverbs and idioms, employment of the folktales and folklores, and the use of exquisite figurative expressions such as metaphors and similes. In addition, other thematic ideological orientations that are in the works encompass, among others, gender ideology, religious ideology, political ideology, and the ideological aura of critiquing the society. For practical consideration, therefore, we are going to restrict ourselves to the analyses of both the gender ideology and that of using critical discourse analysis (CDA) in critiquing the society.

In view of this, the affair of gender ideological dimension which is grouped under two classes: culturally related gender, and sociologically related gender are critically examined first, in the two novels. It is deduced that Achebe is manly or masculinely biased in his gender ideological orientation, with some few digressions in *Anthills of the Savannah* while Adichie tends to feminine ideological disposition, although subtly pursued in *Purple Hibiscus*. In other words, Adichie's ideological persuasion, though it is not flouted in our faces like a placard, bends towards feminism.

The sociologically related gender persuasion expressions are marked by the words written in italics. These are gender related dimensions which have social trends that is it is the societal issues that prompt such ideological gender bias. For example, it is deduced on page 27 of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (henceforth *Anthills*) that "An angry man is a stupid man" The lexeme "man" is used to represent both women and men. Achebe is prone to employing the lexical word "man" because of his ideological gender affiliation for the masculine sex.

Again, in another sociologically related gender espousal on page 27, of *Anthills*, we have the following sample written in italics form; a conversation between Chris Oriko the Commissioner of Information and his lady secretary about Ikem Osodi the editor of the government owned report magazine, the *Gazette*

"Who was it?" (Secretary)

"Didn't you know?" The Editor of the *Gazette*" (Chris) Then the authorial comment that follows the conversation is: "Her flag of victory seemed all of a sudden to lose its wind. Her face fell; Chris noticed it the look of awe".

There is interplay of linguistic preference (choice) and ideological preoccupation of the author here that signifies masculine centeredness. The secretary's consciousness is being aroused as to the personality and social caliber of the individual she had been discussing with on the telephone immediately before the above sample conversation. The sense of victory she had with tackling Ikem wisely on the phone was nipped in the bud instantly when she comes to the awareness of realizing whom she was telephoning. The masculine over-whelming degree is indicated by the linguistic choice of the author when he expressed that the lady's "flag of victory..... lose its wind," her face fell and she looked with shock and awe.

In another instance of ideological sociological dominance of men over women, on page 31 of *Anthills*, there is a rhetorical question that downplays the significance of women in a world ruled by men. This is made evident in the sense that the women are made to do all kinds of demeaning and menial jobs that range from carrying miserable fish and palm-oil. And it is the women heads that are made to befit heavy loads of pottery while the men are chiefs, kings, elders of the society. As the author put it thus: "Where are the fish women and the palm-oil women, where the high head-loads of pottery?"

Generic pronouns and nouns are instances of gender or sexist linguistic choice for they proffer phallogentric generated experience as the norm or generic affair: for instance, in its most vivid form, "when discussing humanity as a whole, the term 'mankind' and 'men' are often used" (Mills 1995:89). Put in other words, these types of generic references make Achebe and his

characters submerge and subsume the woman experience under that of man. In this sense, the elders are culturally and sociologically the men in the Nigerian society.

Therefore as we have in the following italicised sample from Achebe's *Anthills*,

So they send instead a deputation of elders to the government who hold the yam today, and hold the knife to seek help of them. p33; it makes the lexeme elders here represent people of substance in the society who are invariably the men. The men in Achebe's world are the individuals who are wise and capable enough to be sent as delegation to the government who have the power to dictate the affairs and social well being of the people because they are the ones in authority and power who metaphorically have the yam and the knife with which it can be peeled, sliced and eaten.

There is another pathological instance of the female subordination by the male in the page 35 of *Anthills* of the sample below, as beating and battering a woman by a man has become somewhat a commonplace in the sight and hearing of a policeman who should be an upholder of the law and the defender of human rights in the society. A man beats up his wife and batters her up and it is not the concern of the law enforcement agent. This is completely irresponsible, unbecoming and unacceptable of such an agent of government, as the shocking sample below espoused.

I was dumbfounded. Later, I hear how a concerned neighbour once called the police station-this was before I came to live here-and reported that a man was battering his wife and the Desk Sergeant asked sleepily: 'So Therefore?'

The workings and implication of systemic functional linguistic come to play in this textual analyses for the meaning negotiation of the examination of word choice together with the semantic realization of the signifier and the signified. Hence, looking at the meaning of word choice in the below phallogocentric preference of Achebe, one discovers the elevation of the masculine sex over the feminine gender. Therefore the lexeme such as "famous men" and "our fathers", come to the fore to praise and describe the wise men who "invented the shower or the paper stapler" and whose industry and hard work must be learnt to have a suitable egalitarian society. The adulation and adoration of the men of honour are realized on page 38 of Achebe's *Anthills*

Who was it invented the hot shower? It's the kind of thing one ought to know and never does. We clutter up our brains with all kinds of useless knowledge and we don't know the genius who invented the shower or the paper stapler.....Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us. And if we are to improve on our father's performance in their invention business we must learn the sweet uses of hard work

The sociological trope in the following paradigm that forms Achebe's phallogocentric view and gender bias against women is premised on the fact that it is only men who can take life "simpler" and are bold enough to face the squeamishes of the world head-on "like a man" who is courageous adequately to march to the stake and face the firing squad with his chest pushed out to receive the bullets. A woman, in the author's perception, cannot do such for her feminism and cowardice. This then, in the same vein, warrants Achebe's position in the following sample from pages 45-46 of *Anthills* as italicised.

Much simpler: Stop looking back over your soldier. I tell him. There aren't no deliverer running just a little behind schedule. March to the stake like a man and take the bullet in your chest. Much simpler.

In another sample from page 60 of Achebe's *Anthills* that is put in italics below, the author plays down on the dignity, integrity and worth of the women by subjecting them to a mere play thing and object of entertainment that men could use to cheer themselves up, just by being organized or fixed up by certain individual to do such job of entertaining and cheering men up when they are tired and bored. Therefore, in the expression below such as: "Did she cheer him up?" It is made succinct that the author uses the lexeme "she" which refers to a woman to "cheer up" a "he" that means a man to be a pointer to the sociological phallogocentrism of the writer, as we have below:

The least I could do was fix him up with a warm friendly girl to cheer him up. Nothing serious. A reasonable magistrate would let me off I'm sure.  
'But woman done suffer for this world -o' says Elewa.  
'A modern Desdemona, I see. Did she cheer him up?' asked Beatrice totally ignoring Elewa's more basic solidarity call.

Subtly, however, unlike Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Adichie indirectly weaves her feminine gender ideology into the conceptual and constitutive core of her novel in *Purple Hibiscus*. Although she did not flash her sex gender ideological stand against our face like a glittering sword, Adichie, with complex subtlety portrays women as being very gentle and caring, which indicates an intrinsic, intriguing, intricate and subtle superiority of women over men. In Adichie's word choice in the following short samples from pages 11 and 15 of *Purple Hibiscus*, it is comparatively evident that in sociological ideological terms, when men tear down or destroy the fence, women, in their kind heartedness, redress such destruction and mend up the torn fence by men. Hence, when "Papa 'flung' his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurine on the étagère" "... She (Mama) 'stared' at the figurine pieces on the floor and then 'knelt' and started to 'pick' them up with her 'bare hands'"

In another trope on page 18 of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, the superiority of women to men in taking care of the home is intricately made evident. Men can go to bed anytime after the day's work or when they are bored. The women seem to keep busy at all times; even when they are

sleeping their minds would still be working like the clock in attending to the domestic affairs. This is what is made to come to play in the following sociological feminine gender superiority lexeme word choice by the author which is an intricate testimony to Adichie's ideological dimension. Hence, we have the following expressions.

“Papa ‘took’ his siesta”  
“Mama ‘plaited’ my hair

Another clear indications of feminine ideological tropes are made to occur on pages 19 and 20 of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, as it is made vivid that men grow more quickly older than women and women are the ones who take good care of the home affairs whether they are young or old. Here Kambili looked at Jaja getting and growing older quickly through his composure and the asymmetric lines growing up in zigzag manner on his face. Sisi, though rather young and a mere house girl could pound yam ‘energetically’ to make “fluffy fufu” meal for the whole family.

Hence, Adichie's choice of words here is an intricate extension of her ideological premise. Such lexeme like: ‘face had grown lines’ and “she pounded the yam energetically” that are in the samples below make the point that is made here more succinct.

“Ke Kwanu?” I asked, although I did not need to ask how he was doing. I had only to look at him. His seventeen year-old face had grown lines; they zigzagged across his forehead, and inside each line a dark tension had crawled in”

Again, in association to the feminicentric locution of her gender eulogy, Adichie subtly lauds Sisi, the house girl, in the following troupe and chastises Papa for giving the children an unusually masculine and ironical “love sip” from his cup of tea that was extremely hot which scalded the tongues of the children, Kambili and Jaja.

Lunch was fufu and Onugbu soup. The fufu was smooth and fluffy. Sisi made it well; she pounded the yam energetically adding drops of water into the mortar, her cheeks contracting with the thump-thump-thump of the pestle. The soup was thick with chunks of boiled beef and dried fish and dark green onugbu leaves. We ate silently. I molded my fufu into balls with my fingers, dipped it in the soup, making sure to scoop up fish chunks, and then brought it to my mouth. I was certain the soup was good, but I did not taste it, could not taste it. My tongue felt like paper” (from Papa's excruciatingly hot “love sip” tea)

In the following samples from pages 22 and 23 of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* the feminine ideological preoccupation is portrayed. Here women are shown as being more soothing, gentle, and more caring than men. In the trope, the lexeme realized in “thumped” for man and “rubbed” for women is a clear indication of this. Following this are expressions like: “Papa ‘threw’ the missal at Jaja” and “Mama was ‘caressing’ my cornrows” The related expressions are thus put in italics below.

But the only thing that happened was my chocking. My body shook from the coughing. Papa and Mama rushed over. Papa ‘thumped’ my back while Mama ‘rubbed’ my shoulders and said, ‘O zugo. Stop coughing’

In another trope that follows, we have the lexeme expressing the feminine gentility, meekness and care in women and the men somewhat highhandedness as stated below:

She was ‘caressing’ my cornrows, she liked to do that, to trace the way strands of hair from different part of my scalp meshed and held together ... May be Mama had realized that she would not need the figurines anymore; that when Papa ‘threw’ the missal at Jaja it was not just the figurine that ‘came tumbling down; it was everything. I was only now realizing it, only just letting myself think it.

A sample from page 27 that exhibits another sociological feminine trope, is the premise here where Mama, though a woman manages the home like a heroine. In fact, Eugene’s home must have been devastated for long if not for her tenderness, care and love for the family to run on well unabated. Again, she does not bother or mind any sort of difficulties she encounters as a result. The instance of this is put succinctly in the follow sample.

“Thank you, Mama, I was about to bring them (the washed clothes) in ”I said, getting up to fold the clothes, it was not proper to let an older person do your chores, but Mama did not mind: there was so much that she did not mind”

In the same vein, the mother of the house, Mama, is praised by the other women (the members of her church, and not Papa, the man, for the goodies done in the home, this portends another sociological ideological paradigm. The woman is intricately eulogized here and she is made to be elevated over the man. This exhibits Adichie’s feminine ideological dimension as we have it being evidently shown in the following sample put in italics from pages 29 and 30 of Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*. Hence, in Mama’s words, a ‘little something’ that she prepares for the members of her church for their refreshment and entertainment becomes a “big something” of great eulogy in the estimation of her group.

The sisters, members of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal prayer group, soon arrived, and their Igbo songs, accomplished by robust, hand clapping, echoed upstairs.

They would pray and sing for about half an hour, and then Mama would interrupt in her low voice, which barely carried upstairs even with my door open, to tell them she had prepared a ‘little something’ for them. When Sisi started to bring in the platters of moin-moin and jollof rice and fried chicken, the women would gently chastise Mama “Sister Beatrice, what is it?

Why have you done this? Are we not content with the anara we are offered in other sisters' home?

You shouldn't have really. "Then a piping voice would say, "Praise the lord!" dragging out the first word as long as she could. The "Alleluia" response would push against the walls of my room, against the glass furnishings of the living room.

Then they would pray, asking God to reward Sister Beatrice's generosity, and add more blessings to the many she already had. Then the clink-clink-clink of forks and spoons scraping against plates would echo over the house. Mama never used plastic cutlery, no matter how big the group was.

Adichie is a little diversionary in this trope on page 31 of *Purple Hibiscus* in that she made Jaja, express his phallogocentric gender chauvinism when he projects his liking for their mother giving birth to a baby boy; this is a bit parallel to where Achebe gives voice to a woman, Beatrice, in his *Anthills of the Savannah*, his masculine gender ideological bent notwithstanding, Adichie, however, plays it down on Papa, Eugene, here for his pathological highhandedness on the members of his family; his wife, Beatrice too, not left out. Jaja is more or less determined to guard and protect the 'boy' from Papa's bizarre idiosyncrasy. Hence, this is made more vivid in the italicised sample below:

"Mama is pregnant" I said.

Jaja came back and sat down at the edge of my bed.

"She told you?"

"Yes. She's due in October"

Jaja closed his eyes for a while and then opened them. "We will take care of the baby; we will protect 'him'

I know that Jaja meant from Papa, but I did not say anything about protecting the baby. Instead, I asked,

"How do you know it will be a he?"

"I feel it. What do you think?"

"I don't know."

In another appalling sociological trope, Adichie expresses on page 39 of *Purple Hibiscus* a subtly feminine superiority of women over men in the innate power of women controlling their emotions and keeping them more than men could do. The lexeme in the following italicised sample such as the words "hovered" employed by the author to describe Mama's attitude and the word "ignored" used to portray Papa's somewhat eccentric behaviour portend a kind of emotional disequilibrium in the two characters. Hence, the following citation drives home the point.

Papa placed the missal and bulletin on the dining table and sat down.

Mama "hovered" by him. 'Let me pour your tea'

She offered, although she never served Papa's tea.

Papa ‘ignored’ her and poured his tea and then he told Jaja and me to take sips Sociologically and somewhat naturally the children prefer the mothers’ love to that of their fathers’ which culminates in another score for womanhood that Adichie has made succinctly here. Invariably, such phrase like “children clinging to their mothers’ hand” exemplifies this projection in the italicised citation from pages 48-49 of *Purple Hibiscus*

The boiled yam and peppery greens refused to go down my throat: they clung to my mouth like children clinging to their mothers’ hand at a nursery school entrance. Again, Aunty Ifeoma, a University don and a widow who is a younger sister to Eugene champions the course of living together with her three children, Amaka, Obiora, and Chima, after losing her husband. She believes life should go on inspite of the unfortunate affair of the loss of her spouse in a fatal motor accident. This is an uncommon phenomenon; and a situation that the woman ploughs through courageously with a lot of strength, character and doggedness. Hence in the emotional trope on page 83 of Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, the feminine strong character is made explicit with the adumbration in the phrase that “life begins when marriage ends” as expressed by Aunty Ifeoma in the sample italicised below:

“So you say. A woman with children and no husband, what is that?”

“Me”

Mama shook her head. “You have come again, Ifeoma. You know what I mean. How can a woman live like that?” Mama’s eyes had grown round, taking up more space on her face.

“Nwunye m, sometimes life begins when marriage ends”

Furthermore, as Papa Nnukwu sympathises with his daughter, Aunty Ifeoma, on her widowhood and prays for another good man for her, he thanks his stars for having a daughter like Ifeoma who takes care of him at old age, and he wonders what could have been his fate and condition if his “*Chi* had not given ‘him’ a daughter”

Here, Adichie underscores a socio-cultural feminine ideological premise in Nnukwu celebrating the natural notion of being blessed with a daughter for the son he has in Eugene Achike does not translate to benevolence for him as a female child does; and Ifeoma does what Eugene could not do for their father as a man. Hence, Papa Nnukwu begins on a lighter note with Ifeoma before hitting the nail on the head. The italicised sample from page 91 of *Purple Hibiscus* brings home the point.

‘But you are a woman. You do not count’.

‘Eh? I don’t count? Has Eugene ever asked about your aching leg?’

If I do not count, then I will stop asking if you rose well in the morning”

Papa-Nnukwu chuckled. "Then my spirit will haunt you when I join the ancestors"

"It will haunt Eugene first"

"I joke with you, nwam. Where would I be today if my chi had not given me a daughter?" Papa Nnukwu paused. "my spirit: will intercede for you, so that Chukwu will send a good man to take care of you and the children"

So also, in another femininely inclined traditional and cultural ideological dimension, Adichie subtly diffuses her gender belief into the core of her piece here where the woman 'mmuo' [masquerade] is placed higher than the male one because of its prettiness and totally being innocuous as against the male one that has an ugly countenance and composure and rather very deadly. The woman mmuo is beautifully and femininely appealing while the man mmuo is grotesque and fearsome. Hence, lexeme such as "harmless" and "pretty features" are clear indications of her gender ideological premise as it is made evident in the italicised sample on page 93.

"Look at this," Papa Nnukwu said,

"This is a woman spirit, and the woman mmuo are 'harmless'. They do not even go near the big ones at the festival" The mmuo he pointed to was small; its carved wooden face had angular, 'pretty features' and rouged lips. It stopped often to dance wiggling this way and that, so that the strings of beads around its waist swayed and rippled. The crowd nearby cheered, and some people threw money towards it.

Little boys-the followers of the mmuo who were playing music with metal ogenes and wooden ichakas-picked up the crumpled naira notes. They had hardly passed us when Papa Nnukwu shouted, "Look away! Women cannot look at this one!" (the man mmuo)

There is a clear indication here that the woman mmuo is more celebrated and accepted than the male ones in that the people 'cheered' and "threw money towards it" the acceptability and celebration of the woman mmuo in Adichie's lexical choice and the way Papa Nnukwu "shouted" that the women should not look at the man mmuo which is fearsome, ugly and grotesquely bizarre make the author's feminine ideological preoccupation more evident.

In another femininely inclined ideological dimension, Aunty Ifeoma is seen doing better what a man can do. On page 120 of *Purple Hibiscus*, she is seen doing all the domestic chores alone, putting on "pair of shorts" and "T-shirt" and working so hard that the skin at her knees was becoming very dark. In the lexeme used by the writer to portray a feminine character in this trope, we see the woman working assiduously in filling the vacuum created by her dead husband and she does all the duties very energetically and stoically, too. This is made expressly in the sample below:

“Aunty Ifeoma emerged from the flat in a pair of shorts, rubbing her hands over the front of her T-shirt. The skin at her knees was very dark.”

In addition, Papa Nnukwu acknowledges the significance of having a female individual as a progeny. This is a feminine ideological trope Adichie portrays in her word choice in the sample we adapt from page 164. The female children when they come of age tend to treat their parents “like a child”, in Papa-Nnukwu’s expression, which he himself candidly puts forward and accepts; for Aunty Ifeoma his daughter treats him, in his old age like a child he has metaphorically become, an act his son Eugene can not perform. This is a cultural and as well a sociological feminine ideological trope.

Papa- Nnukwu dutifully picked up each molded morsel, dunked it in soup, and swallowed. When the five were gone, Aunty Ifeoma asked him to drink some water so the tablets could break down and start to help his body heal. He took a gulp of water and set the glass down. “When you become old, they treat you like a child” he muttered.

Furthermore, Aunty Ifeoma, if carried away by great emotion, starts up back to life and looks “fearless” again as she has always been, a very extroversive, outspoken and strong woman. This is clearly but subtly another feminine ideological dimensional trope which Adichie intricately drives into her piece. This is a portrayal of what is derived from the sample on page 196 of *Purple Hibiscus* as it is obtained in when Kambili and Jaja were going back to Enugu from Nsukka and Kambili felt like staying permanently with her Aunty, her cousins and Father Amadi in Nsukka, she projects that:

‘Tell Father Amadi that I have left, that we have left, say good-bye for us,’  
I said, turning. She (Aunty Ifeoma) had wiped the tears from her face, and she looked the same again, fearless.

The women in *Purple Hibiscus* are always mending the fences torn by men, which presupposes the fact that there is superiority in feminine gender over that of the opposite one. Papa, Eugene pours boiling water on the feet of his children, Kambili and Jaja, for allegedly “walking into sin”; an act which neither Aunty Ifeoma nor Mama could never have done or even dreamt of; Mama comes in to placate the extra-ordinary and excruciating pains created to the children’s legs by Eugene’s bizarre misdemeanour and pathological idiosyncrasy. Such is the sociologically premised ideological pre-occupation in the sample italicised and adapted from pages 201 and 202 of the work below.

Papa put his hands under my arms to carry me out, but I heard Mama say, “let me, please” I did not realize that Mama had come into the bathroom. Tears were running down her face. Her nose was running, too, and I wondered if she would wipe it, before it got to her mouth, before she would have to taste it. She mixed salt with cold water and gently plastered the gritty mixture onto my feet. She helped me out of the tub, made to carry me on her back to my room, but I shook my head. She was so small. We might both fall. Mama did not speak until we were in my room. “You should take Panadol,” she said.

And ironically, the pathological behaviour displayed by Eugene on his children was inherited from a Man and not a Woman. Adichie portrays a unique, calm and subtle feminine ideological sublimation of the female characters in the novel. Papa “committed a sin against his own body once” and this warranted a grave punishment, such as; his two hands being soaked in hot water boiled for tea, from a “good father” Hence, in the subtle word choice by Adichie in the below italicised sample from page 203, such as: “good father,” “He asked me to boil water for tea” “He poured the water ... and soaked my hands in it” are silent ironies to portray a “good father” This is as expressed by Achike Eugene himself.

He sat on my bed and held my hand. “I committed a sin against my own body once,” he said “And the good father, the one I lived with while I went to St .Gregory’s came in and saw me. He asked me to boil water for tea. He poured the water in a bowl and soaked my hands in it” Papa was looking right into my eyes. I did not know he had committed any sins, that he could commit any sins, “I never sinned against my own body again. The good father did that for my own good”, he said.

In the last-but-one page of Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, page 309, the author intricately makes Kambili recognise Jaja as her hero; this she makes evident in that it takes a hero to recognize a hero. Here the feminine ideological crust is foregrounded as Kambili, herself, projects about Jaja in the italicised sample below thus:

“I want to hold his hand, but I know he will shake it free. His eyes are too full of guilt to really see my eyes, the reflection of my hero, the brother who tried always to protect me the best he could. He will never think that he did enough, and he will never understand that I do not think he should have done more.”

This is a sociological feminine ideological dimension that Adichie has subtly expressed and displayed here.

Conversely, Chinua Achebe deployed a lot of sociological cum socio-cultural phallogocentric ideological disposition in *Anthills*. For instance, but for some few digressions, however, Achebe

makes his male characters think less of the female characters in terms of brain and brawn. In plain terms, the author downplays the feminine sex in relation to mental capability and character strength. Ikem Osodi, for example, does not value or think great of his retinue of girl friends in terms of cerebral and mental disposition. This is made succinct and plain on page 65 of *Anthills* in the italicised sample below as Chris Oriko and Beatrice project.

“How long has Ikem known that Joy girl?” I asked.  
‘I can’t tell you. I had only seen her a couple of times before this afternoon’  
‘She seems so young. And so illiterate. What can he possibly be saying to her?’ I asked. ‘Ikem doesn’t say much to any girl. He doesn’t think they have enough brains’.  
‘Good for him, the great revolutionary’ ‘Well, you know, I am exaggerating a little. But really women don’t feature too much in his schemes except as, well, comforters. I think that’s about the only chink in the revolutionary armour.... Do you notice how much he resents you now?’ She asked in a sudden change of tack. ‘I don’t think you are even aware of it. It bothers me because it wasn’t there before. I can see plenty of trouble ahead for the two of you’.

In another phallogocentric predilection by Achebe in *Anthills*, Beatrice, the female ingenious scholar, is made to seem second classed by Sam, His Excellency, by ordering her to come and sit beside him with another American lady, Lou, claiming that after all ‘African chiefs are always polygamists’. The women, however, cannot marry more than one husband. And to add more to this mild taunting of the women folks, Beatrice was left alone, practically abandoned by Sam to be picked and dumped at her residence, after the evening cocktail party, by one of Sam’s drivers. This experience is made evident on pages 79 and 81 of *Anthills* as it is expressed below in the italicised samples.

His Excellency and Lou were ensconced in deep and intense conversation on a sofa.  
Then suddenly I heard my name. ‘Beatrice come and sit here by me’ he ordered patting the sofa on the other side of him. ‘African Chiefs are always polygamists.’ Naturally this was greeted with an explosion of laughter. He seemed a little tipsy to me. ‘Polygamy is for Africa what monotony is for Europe,’ he pronounced into the still raging flames of laughter stroking them recklessly to the peril of the rafters. I think the girl beside him had chipped in ‘And America!’ but I can’t bet on it, such was the uproar. p 79  
And he stormed away and left me standing alone on the balcony. I stood there staring at the dark lake and my tears flowed in torrents. I was aware of people from the room coming stealthily to the door of the balcony to have a peep. I did not see them; I was merely aware of their coming and retreating again into their dimmed lights and music. Then I heard bold

footsteps on the terrazzo floor of the balcony and Major Ossais's voice behind me: 'There is a car waiting downstairs to take you home'

In the Igbo world Achebe reports and he himself is born into, there as every inkling, fervour and thought of both the female and male characters wanting and liking a male child in the family so much so that parents can name their female child Nwanyibuife, - a female is also something - if they had expected a male child but a female one is born into the family in lieu. This portrays the masculine gender predilection of the African world which the Igbo socio-cultural nation represents. Hence, Beatrice, the fifth female child in a row born to her family was given the name, 'A female is also something' by her parents which is a resume of the Achebe's male ruled African Igbo nation; as it is expressed in the sample below from pages 86 and 87 of *Anthills* as thus:

I didn't realize until much later that my mother bore me a huge grudge because I was a girl- her fifth in a row though one had died- and that when I was born she had so desperately prayed for a boy to give my father. This knowledge came to me by slow stages which I won't go into now. But I must mention that in addition to Beatrice they had given me another name at my baptism, Nwanyibuife- A female is also something. Can you beat that? Even as a child I disliked the name most intensely without being aware of its meaning. It merely struck me at that point that I knew of nobody else with the name; it seemed fudged! Somehow I disliked it considerably less in its abridged form, Buife. Perhaps it was nwanyi, the female half of it that I particularly resented. My father was so insistent on it. 'Sit like a female!' or 'Female soldier' (the character, she liked acting and behaving like a male) which he called me as he lifted me off the grounds with his left hand and gave me three stinging smacks on the bottom with his right the day I fell off the cashew tree.

There are several other instances of the Achebe – men ruled – world in *Anthills* some of the examples as referenced by Bamiro (2006:315-328); a lot of the instances bother among others, around men chauvinism, subjecting women to elements to be discarded; men being placed at the top hierarchical stage on the ladder rung in men and women relationships such as marriage, and other social associations and the likes. And there are so many androcentric locutions that permeate the fiction which present male – coloured experience and orientation such as the sample instances from pages 88 – 91 of *Anthills* in italics form below.

Better to marry a rascal than grow a moustache in your father's compound;  
better an unhappy marriage than unhappy spinsterhood; better marry Mr.  
Wrong in this world than wait for Mr. Right in heaven; all marriage is how  
– for – do; all men are the same;.....p88

That every women wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinist bullshit. p88’.

There was enough male chauvinism in my father’s house to last me seven reincarnations! p88.

Unreasonable? Perhaps yes. But I can’t be blamed for the state of the world.

Haven’t our people said that a totally reasonable wife is always pregnant?

Scepticism is a girl’s number six. You can’t blame her, she didn’t make her world so tough p 88.

And in an attempt to somewhat taunt the women folk, a young woman, who “committed the crime to be twenty – six and still unmarried and was taken by her fiancé to meet his people...” was taunted by the fiancé’s aunt with a provoking proverb that:

“if ogili was such a valuable condiment no one would leave it lying around for rats to stumble upon and dig into”! pp88 – 89.

In some other tropes that follow, it is visible that the masculine sex did not give much political roles for woman to participate in and women are put off the stage immediately they miss their periods and conceive a baby. Hence such lexeme like “pack their wife conveniently away” and “no clear role for women in his political thinking” in the following samples put in italics from pages 90 and 91 are clear indications of the andocentric word – choice noticed in *Anthills*.

“... where Chris’s wife was anyway, or was he one of those who pack their wife conveniently away to her mother and the village mid-wife as soon as she misses her period? p 90.

Again,

I tell him he has no clear roles for women in his political thinking and he doesn’t seem to be able to understand it. Or didn’t until near the end. p 91.

There are, however, occasions in the fiction where the author identifies with women who are said to be, in Achebe language, “the oppressed people of the world” In some other areas in the novel the issue of women libration is positively alluded to and how the yolk of oppression on them could be mitigated or even completely neutralised is examined and well expressed. This is evident in the sample on page 98, put in italics below:

The women are, of course, the biggest single group of oppressed people in the world and, if we are to believe the Book of Genesis, the very oldest. But they are not the only ones. There are others – rural peasants in every land, the urban poor in industrialized countries, Black people everywhere including their own continent, ethnic and religious minorities and castes in all countries.

The male gender superiority in Achebe's African world is felt and experienced more succinctly in the scene on page 109 italicized below, as it is evident that only men (my father told me) could tell

stories of valour and war while women (her poor mother said) can only tell weakling stories such as bird song and stories of ants and mouse. This is adumbrated by the author as below:

Even her poor mother terrorized as she was by her woman's lot could fabricate from immemorial bird-song this tale of an African bird waking up his new world in words of English ...  
Alas, her mother had only told, not invented it.

Indeed, the andocentric gender preference is appallingly more expressed by the author of *Anthills* in the hot chase of a male lizard after a female one. The male lizard in all his bright, alluring and flamboyant appearance gives a vigorous sexy chase to the female lizard that uses her drab and unattractive body to hide herself from the mating "ferocious sexuality of her man". Achebe's linguistic phallogocentric strategies is the more foregrounded by his conscious choice of lexical items such as "red in head and tail, blue in trunk" for the male lizard and "drab-grey" for the female lizard. And again, some other masculine biased expressions such as the male lizard staying at the "high visibility at the centre of the compound" while the female lizard was hiding in the shrubbery'', are visible indications of the author's predilection of the male to the suppressed preference of the female, as it is expressed in the sample from page 110 of *Anthills*, put in italics below, exhibits the sexist ideological concession of the writer.

A lizard red in head and tail, blue in trunk chased a drab-grey female furiously, as male lizards always seem to do, across the paved driveway. She darted through the hedges as though her life depended on it. Unruffled he took a position of high visibility at the centre of the compound and began to do his endless press-ups no doubt to impress upon the coy female, wherever she might be hiding in the shrubbery, the fact of his physical stamina... We can safely leave grey drabness in female attire to the family of lizards... The case of the lizard is probably quite understandable. With the ferocious sexuality of her man she must need all the drabness she can muster for a shield.

In another trope in *Anthills*, one notices that the generic pronouns and nouns are instances of sexist linguistic expressions for they offer masculine experience as generic or as the norm; for instance, in the most vivid form, when referring to humanity holistically, the term "men" and mankind" are often employed. In another word, these types of generic terms enable Achebe's characters and he himself to subsume the female sex and experience under the male ones. In his attempt, aside from Beatrice, who is given a voice in the fiction, other female characters like her operated in an aura of "muteness" which signifies the alienation of women from a recurrent and dominant articulation system in the Nigerian social context. A notable linguist, Ardener, has maintained that being mute

is a structural affair in which a group may be muted "simply because it does not form part of the dominant system of the society" (1975:22). Furthermore, the authoritarian posture involved in performance of proverbs is the more emphasized by the fact that in the fiction those who employ proverbs are elders, that all constitute the male members of the society. This comes out of the fact that a major number of the proverbs in the fiction are introduced by such phallogocentric locutions such as "Our wise men have said" " As my father used to say" My people have a saying which my father used often" p. 177 "Our people say" (p. 121) The aim of these kinds of locution is to banish or alienate the feminine gender. Therefore the andocentric locution samples from page 121 in which we have lexical items like 'Our people" (men) and "titled men" are clear indications of the feminine banishment; as put by the author as thus:

‘Our people say’ that when a titled man comes into a meeting the talking must have to stop until he has taken his seat" again  
"Our people say" that an animal whose name is famous does not always fill a hunter's basket"

The immediate samples above are examples of culturally inclined ideological tropes. The characters' sociocultural ethics and beliefs are, as well, evidently expressed here.

### **Conclusion**

It has been established in the foregoing that Adichie, to a remarkable extent, can be said to be Achebe's literary progeny as a result of their identical expressions in their free flow of words and simple linguistic and stylistic orientations. However, despite the said influences that Achebe's works have on Adichie's novel, there are palpable parallels in their sexist ideological preoccupations that mark a departure in the selected novels.

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