



Interrogating Gender Injustices in Selected Nigerian Fictions

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Abstract

This Paper explores gender dichotomies in fiction and real life through gender politics, patriarchy, and irony, focusing on Abi Dare's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* (2020) and Chimamanda Adichie's *Dear Ijeawele, Or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017). The study examines how male hegemony perpetuates cultural discrimination against women in the above named texts, using qualitative content analysis. Findings indicate that women are crucial to the family and society, and their empowerment through education is essential for personal autonomy, free from adult interference. The study highlights that patriarchy enforces social injustices against women through forced marriage and childbearing. Both authors call for institutional integrity to support women's rights and promote a healthy society. Additionally, the study reveals that some influential women contribute to the oppression of other women, causing unnecessary sufferings. It concludes with recommendations for addressing these issues: female children should not be coerced into marriage without economic empowerment; Nigerian culture should eliminate gender-based inequalities; and effective mentorship should be provided to guide and liberate young women from exploitation and servitude.

Keywords: Gender injustices, *Dear Ijeawele*, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, female child, irony

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I. Introduction

The male and female beings found globally are biologically structured. They have the tendency to reason, perform and engage in all practices which are human by nature. The Nigerian cultures are distinguished into the locations of family, community, village, in particular, and the universe at large. They have the capacity to behave superficially, assuming that the “other” (de Beauvoir 1949, p. 40) group (female) does not exist; or even if she does, she is very insignificant. The Nigerian cultures which the male and female were born into, however, strategize on their own, a sort of imbalance bloc to reject the other, female gender. This, therefore, introduces gender treatise in view as Ciarunji Chesaina (2013, p. 213) states: “...African women have used the pen to have their voices heard...to examine the status of women in society and the challenges with which they are confronted in their relation with their male counterparts.”

The term “Gender” connotes the features of men, women, boys and girls which are socially built. Gender is culturally constructed, while sex is biologically created. Whatever is called gender is often always defined by patriarchy. It solicits that the female human is too inferior to live in the same culture with the male. Diala-Ogamba (2013, p. 241) expatiates this when she ascertains that: “most early African writers were males who presented the patriarchal world of male heroism in their works with (without due) consideration to the fact that several decades ago, women were respected in some parts of Africa; especially in matrilineal societies....” This implies that, several of the renowned African women were momentous in their fields, and were very active in political, economic, and social capacities in the pre-colonial and during the colonial eras in Africa. The activities of the leading African/Nigerian women are effectively captured by Mary Kolawole:

Incidentally, the females/women in the patriarchal cultures constitute the largest percentage of its population – most especially in the area of economic – agricultural, social and moral upheavals. The female group that patriarchal cultures reject, abuse, oppose, subjugate, and maliciously deny certain privileges/rights [accorded to men], are complete co-contributors/partners in homes, at schools, at the market areas, streams, etc.

(Kolawole, 1997, pp. 44-45)

The objective of this study is to project the disparity that exists in the structures of the society which makes it look like that the female is doomed to a dead end, of either accepting to live according to the dictates of culture and society, or she ceases to be what Chesaina claims: “women have been compelled to live a life of subordinations in most societies. For the women to cross such hurdles of servitude, they take to the song genre as an avenue for voicing their frustrations, and for protesting against the status quo” (2013, p. 215).

This study is categorized into two sections: the first part focuses on the patriarchal imposition of itself in the universal culture, while the second aspect concentrates on the feminist approach in the analysis of the obnoxious patriarchal ills put forth by Chimamanda Adichie’s *Dear Ijeawele, Or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), and Abi Dare in *The Girl with The Louding Voice* (2020). The intention of this study is to equally give space to the up-coming Nigerian female writers to expose the inhuman treatments given to women, in spite of women’s resistance to patriarchal discrimination. Adichie and Dare use Nigeria as a microcosm, to examine what happens in most patriarchal societies. They continue from where their predecessors like: Flora Nwapa (1931- 1993), Mariama Ba (1929-1981), Efua T. Sutherland (1924- 1996), Nawal El Saadawi (1931- 2021), Ama Ata Aidoo (1942- 2023), Buchi Emecheta (1944- 2017), Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo (1947--) and others had stopped, to create public enlightenment about continuous suppression of women in the so-called patriarchal society where they are co-actors.

Chinyelu Ojukwu (2013, p. 9) ascertains that, the initial female writers – Flora Nwapa (1931- 1993) and Bessie Head (1937-1986) – were concerned with commitments of women in both traditional and contemporary African societies. These women’s previous works in African literature inspired not only the generality of the women, but also men, to the knowledge that, women are according to Ojukwu’s claims: “...equal partners not only in marriages, but also in the total work of reconstruction of the continent for the complete development” (Ojukwu, 2013, p. 9). The insensitive treatments which patriarchy apportions to the female folk are not limited to the image representation, physical brutality, and deprivation of some sort, but the people’s literatures also reinforce such.

II. Defining the Concepts of “Gender Oppression”

A. The Politics of Gender.

The concept of patriarchy is connected to what some feminists (Woolf 1929, de Beauvoir 1949, Mugo 1976, Spivak 1990, Millet 2000, Wollstonecraft 2006, etc.) refer to as “gender oppression.” The discernment of this oppression is an important factor of the activist’s or innovative theory in modern societies. The upper-class elites, according to Selden (1988, p. 319), are those who would relieve themselves from social and economic structures, and encourage the teaching of literature, as a knowledgeable field. Hoggart (1957, p.15) observes that, most of the subjugation of women can be explored only with an indebt knowledge of social marginalization. By “class oppression”, Hoggart illuminates that it denotes to: “the privileged (educated) literate or new elites who came out from the grammar-school education which was opened to brighter working class children/pupil.” But Selden (1988, p. 519) objects to Hoggart’s position by defining “class oppressions” to mean the discriminating disparity which exists between the upper-class elites (men), and the lower-class background (women) who “rose up in the Eighteenth Century.” This, he claims, occurs when the social, moral, economic, and political powers are expressed in the development of the novel. The class oppressions also recognize the enormous growth in the book production and distribution, reading public, which originate as a result of the enlightenment in education.

By “class-oppression,” other feminists (Showalters, 1979, Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2002, etc.), establish that the oppression of women should be investigated with a deeper understanding that patriarchal societies are quite older than the class societies, and that socialists, as Selden (1988, p. 320) states are: “no less patriarchal than capitalist societies”. In fact, Millet (2000, p. 39) rejects the repressive stereotyping of women, by questioning the differences between biological (sexes) and cultural (gender) identities. She uses the notion of patriarchy to buttress the root of women’s relegation in her classic – *Sexual Politics* (2000). Millet insists that power in both domestics and public life is dominated by males, and that literature is a record of the collective consciousness of patriarchy. This implies that much literature is the elevation of men talking to other men, not directly to women. In the post-modern literate era, Nigerian women, even the much younger generations among them – Adiechie 2017, Dare 2020, etc., – have asserted themselves to have their voices

heard. They have allowed their intellect and ink to run as the probing point, through which they continue to project the status of women in society – and the challenges with which they are confronted in their relations with their patriarchal counterparts.

It should be noted that, the assumed women's subordination dates back to the history of western patriarchal thought (Tyson, 2006, p. 101). Helene Cixious (1997, p. 91) further expounds that it is through the language that the male hegemony may project the world as tropical opposites, the type that can be considered as greater than others. She proceeds to differentiate the existing structures such as the family, culture, in particular, and the nation at large, as the practical systems of humanity. The hindrances as shown above suggest the way humans think, and also for each obstruction, Cixious proceeds to ask: "Where is [the woman]?" (1997, p. 91). The implication of Cixious questioning the side of the opposition organize to define the woman, is another way of still looking at the oppression of women – the class oppression.

A close look at patriarchal rational pattern in Nigeria and some other global societies portrays that the female human should permanently remain on the negative side of creation, as well as that of society, so that the male hegemony can forever subjugate her. The implication of what Cixious is advocating is that human culture, in fact, Nigeria in question, should abandon gender differences to give everyone a healthy opportunity to progress independently, physically and psychologically without demarcation (Cixious, 1997, p. 92). The summary of the above analysis projects that the Nigerian patriarchal culture from time immemorial has accentuated that the female beings are naturally resilience, when patriarchy operates as the master and lord who should remain permanently above. This implies that culture determines the gender (Macionis, 2005, p. 20), while nature forms the sexes in all human societies. Further scrutiny of this position is that it is only when a woman functions in the substandard position, that is when she can be totally accepted according to patriarchal approximation. It connotes that women by the above premise, are naturally born to be submissive to men, that the menfolk are natural leaders.

The questions that readily come to mind at this point are: Who made men "natural leaders?" Cannot women also be permitted by the same natural structure which has raised men to the position of leadership? The above questions get answered by portraying that, it is impossible for women to do away with patriarchal

discerning, by claiming to associate with what Cixious refers to as “patriarchal power structure” (1997, p. 96). This relates to a situation whereby Nigerian women struggle to attain equality in all ramifications in the contemporary male dominated society. The meaning of the foregoing is that women’s attainment of power within the existing socio-political institution might not completely change the position. Furthermore, the result could be that women may learn the male-controlled ways by so doing, thinking and behaving like patriarchy have been trained to conduct themselves since ancient times.

Having engaged so far on the politics involving women assessment of male domination, or looking at opinion about them, or examining patriarchy as weapon which Julia Kristeva (1980, p. 133) observes: “marginalized, besieged femininity, just as the working class is discriminated.” It is significant to single out the concept “Patriarchy” for examination.

B. What is Patriarchy?

The term ‘Patriarchy’ as examined by Nash (2020) is a system of relationship, values, customs, beliefs, closely knitted into the political, economic and social practices that organize gender inequality between men and women. The meaning of the above premise is that issues clarified as feminine or concerning women (female) are often undervalued. In the same vein, all cases seen as masculine or pertaining to men/males are privileged. The patriarchal culture manipulates authority over both private and public fields and establishes that men exploit both. The concept of ‘patriarchal hegemony’ evolved in the Twentieth century as a theoretical approach to categorize the unsatisfactory authority existing between men and women as a set (Sanday, 2009, p. 9143). The classification approach to masculinity/femininity paradigm has a very long history of assumption concerning the political relations of gender which started in the ancient Greeks (Aristotle, 1920, pp. 23-27). A corresponding support of the notion resides elaborately on the deliberate segregation of western women from circular field on social, economic occupations, and political areas compared with the male hegemony associates as Gideon, et al (2022, p. 78) succinctly capture: “many man laws and similar masculinist manifestos...as a way for men to re-affirm their masculinity” over those described as feminine.

The notion of ‘Patriarchy’ according to Andrew Milner (1994, p. 15) is: “...the systematic oppression of women by men.” This implies that ‘patriarchy’ epitomizes the inadequate distribution of societal power between males and females as it affects the entire global cultures. Milner further depicts that the ideas of male dominance are agreed upon with the notion of belief, service, tenet and meaning which demand of each, essential reformation in conjunction with several types of gender modification and imbalance. In consonance with Milner’s position, Strid, et al (2022, p. 320) explain “Patriarchy” as composition of two elements: First structurally, patriarchy is an ordered formation of social relationships and social institutions which accord men to maintain position of leadership, authority, and privilege in society. Patriarchy as a belief justifies itself. The implication of this is that patriarchy supplies avenue for generating acceptance of judgement not only by the recipients from such practices, but also by some set of women who are situated in the relegated positions by society. Women are intentionally exempted from participating in the traditional elders’ hearings as can be watched by their patriarchal culture. In fact, radical feminism recognizes the oppression of women as ultimate political domination in which women are categorized as substandard class based upon their sex. Judith Hole et al (1973, p. 8) affirm that, ‘Radical Feminism’ is political, since it recognizes that men have composed for themselves power over women. And they have equally erected institutions to maintain this power throughout societies, with Nigeria inclusive.

In response to those who claim that the political subjugation of women is a thing of the past, Millet (1973), de Beaviour (1949), Tyson (2006), El Saadawi (2007) and so on, – both radical and moderate ones, point to an existing general cultural process of biased treatment based on sex. In conjunction with patriarchal continued sexual discrimination on women even in the twenty-first century, there are identifiable evidences presented at the Congregational Hearings on Equal rights in Education and Employment declared since in 1848 Seneca Falls Women’s Convention. Mappes et al (1977, pp. 115-116) ascertain that in vocational counseling girls are directed into marriage, child-nurturing and husband-nursing education, while boys are trained into engineering, space sciences and computer technology. Mezu (1994, p.24) sanctions Mappes et al (1977) earlier stated position when she advocates that the imperialist rule in Nigeria merely worsens the condition by introducing imbalance system in which, African/Nigerian Chauvinists were exposed to

multitalented education. And the African/Nigerian women, unlike their western counterparts before the mid-Nineteenth century, received what she describes as, “cosmetic helpmates of educated, utilitarian premier naturalists and professionals” (Mezu, 1994, p.24).

Further assessment of patriarchy and the Nigerian cultures indicate that, women as a group, are not given the opportunity to function in governance as they should, because patriarchy and its establishments discriminate against them. For instance, in Nigerian governance, important or sensitive positions/offices such as Presidents, Senators, Governors, some Ministers are always often assigned to men. The challenges of social and economic inequality between women and men, are imperative discourse as Gideon, et al (2022 p. 78) rightly put, “...remain the holistic mastery...to promote the masculine gender.”

III. Introducing the Authors and their Works

Abi Dare and Chimamanda Adichie are new generation female writers, that take excursions into the male dominated Nigerian society to highlight in the realistic terms the extent to which the father, uncle, brother, husband, son cultures have failed the female child even in the twenty-first century. Dare was born in Lagos in Nigeria. She had obtained different degrees ranging from Law awarded by the University of Wolverhampton; MSc degree in International Project Management, obtained at Glasgow Caledonian University. Dare equally has a Master of Arts degree in Creative Writing at Birbeck University, London. Her pioneer work is *The Girl with the Louding Voice* published in 2020. And she has received outstanding awards since its publication – Bath Novel Award for emerging authors, Literary Consultancy Pen Factor in 2018, with an early version of the novel. And she was shortlisted in 2020 for Desmond Eliot Prize, with the publication of *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. She was instantly selected for New York Times best seller. Dare also won the Guardian’s Not the Book Prize. She is presently living in Essex with her family.

Chimamanda Adichie on the other hand, grew up in Nigeria. She has written and published various works to her credit. Her maiden novel, *Purple Hibiscus* was first published in 2003 and had won the Commonwealth Writers’ Award and the Hurston Wright Legacy Award. *Half of a Yellow Sun* was published 2006, and was selected for the Orange Prize, as well as a National Book Critics Circle Award

Finalist. *Americanah*, equally won the Award of National Book Critics Circle, which was identified as one of The New York Times Top Ten Best Books of 2013. Adichie is equally the writer of the short stories; *The Things Around Your Neck* was published in 2009. Adichie's works have been interpreted into more than thirty languages. Adichie latest work, *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*, published in 2017, is an epistolary novel. And it is one of the of texts selected for the present study

It is pertinent to spot out here that Dare employs ironic reflections on the obnoxious representation of female folks by the patriarchal culture and governance, which abhor the female as a second infidel. The male cultures right from time immemorial are of the belief that the female human should be sacrificed on the altar of patriarchy's needs. The subjugation of female gender is demonstrated in specific institutions created and preserved to retain women in humiliation and "in painful sisterhood" (Nnemeka, 2007, p. 573). Among the male created organizations in Nigeria that are undermining women's position and contributions are: the institution of sexual intercourse, marriage, motherhood and love. Such types of marginalization persist, despite the gain in the rights of women in areas that were totally men dominated before, because the status of women as perceived by radical feminists, is that of segregated group. To ascertain the truth of this, Kate Millet (1973, p. 385) succinctly expresses:

Oppressed groups are denied education, economic independence, the power of office representative, and image of dignity and self-respect, equality of status, and recognition as human beings. Throughout history, women have been consistently denied all these, and their denial today, while attenuated and partial is nevertheless consistent.

The implication of Millet's position is seen in the light that the oppression of women is purposively planned. A close examination of the sterling progress of women development over the years is enough for no institutions, whatsoever, to still relegate them to servitude.

Dare's fiction continues the castigation of the unwholesome practices of chauvinistic society in Nigeria. When one casts one's mind back to the age long psychological trauma, deprivation, and discrimination (Sigmund, 1970) that the female folks are still suffering in the twenty-first century, one comes to the

understanding that, all the robust intellectual productions, which have caused much ink to flow from the womanist/feminist practitioners, have not had effect on the male hegemony. Put simply, it is not healthy to acknowledge that women's victimization has been forgotten over time. It continues to be a thought provoking debate each time the concept of oppression, subjugation, marginalization and stereotypes come up in academic circle.

Adichie's advocacy on her own part is that a woman- female- should start on the feminist premise that she is more important than any other class of humans. (Adichie, 2017, p. 2). Why is this novelist so radical in her views against women bemoaning the patriarchal persecution of the female gender? Adichie believes that Nigerian women over the centuries have suffered long enough in the hands of men. She posits that the time is now for women to take up radical steps to say no to whatever setbacks have kept them in one position for too long. She claims that the new female should not wail herself into pity, seeking for the universal sympathy from patriarchy, since the Nigerian male kingdom may not have such to give her. Adichie in *Dear Ijeawele, Or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017) portrays that the female child should be raised to have her own solid unbending feminist contextual beliefs. This implies that when the male- husband- chooses to settle for infidelity as an occupation, if his wife chooses to give him amnesty, it can be regarded as a feminist decision. However, that forgiveness for infidelity which the erring man may get from his wife is not master minded by what the novelist symbolizes as "gender inequality" (Adichie, 2017, p 2). Adichie does not succumb to the popular opinion of what she refers to as an erroneous absurdist belief of the Nigerian male dominated cultural views of seeing themselves superior to the female counterpart.

Dare's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* (2020) presents new feelings and waves moving across the rural and urban communities in Nigeria. Though this novel is written in the heart of the twenty-first century, it captures in details the emotional effect of a woman's continuous sacrifices to her home, husband and children in order to make things work out. Adunni states:

...Thirty thousand naira is very plenty money, I know Papa cannot find that money even if he is searching the whole of Nigeria because even my school fees money of seven thousand, Papa didn't have. It was Mama who was paying

for school fees and rent money and feeding money and everything money before she was dead. (Dare, 2020, p. 5)

The act of women being the major contributors in real life and fiction is not an issue that can be dismissed with levity. By Dare portraying this aspect of the woman's life through the eyes of an innocent uneducated girl – Adunni, invariably ridicules the ills of Nigerian men's total dependence on the women to be the harbinger of their families' economic resources. Abi Dare does so by making the society to realize that the time has come for men to wake up from their slumber and put things together for economic empowerment of their homes and societies. Chesaina affirms this aspect of women always standing in as the economic work force for their families when she succinctly depicts: "Women form the majority of the work force on land and in rearing of animals, but they are marginalized when decisions on the utilization of the produce are made. During droughts and famines, they are the ones who travel to work for neighbouring ethnic groups to bring back food for family. Culture demands that women serve food to the men first, then the children and themselves last" (2013, p. 214).

However, in Adichie's *Dear Ijeawele, Or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), she strengthens her protagonist, Ijeawele, to dwell with the profound knowledge that Nigerian women have always, from the beginning of time, contributed to the workforce of every home. And that possibly explains and solicits for the females that celebrate what Milner (1994) refers to as: "Women's consciousness/culture" (Milner, 1994, p.113). In conjunction with supporting Milner's "Women's consciousness/culture," Moers (1987, p.67) earlier, had signified that to mean "Female Realism". By "female realism," Moers clearly elucidates that, the money making processes originally have always been the endearing qualities associated with the female subjects. This, therefore, means that it is wrong for Nigerian patriarchal culture to erroneously claim that wealth originates from them, because women are resources avenue, as far as human cultures are concerned. Adichie encourages Ijeawele to rebuff her sister-in-law's unpopular counsel to be a traditional wife/mother who should always stay at home. A close look at Ijeawele's sister-in-law viewpoint that Chudi is contented with the little he brings home, since it is not right for him to have a family with multiple income (Adichie, 2017, p. 3), reveals how

Adichie dismisses such illogical reasoning as being invalid where a typical Nigerian woman is concerned. Why?

Adichie explains explicitly that the use of the word “tradition” is just a general opinion to justify anything bias. She admonishes Ijeawele to enlighten her arrogant husband’s sister that:

a double-income family is actually the true Igbo tradition because not only did mothers farm and trade before British colonialism, trading was exclusively done by women in some Igboland...Our mothers worked full-time while we were growing up, and we turned out well- at least you did; the jury is still out on me. (2017, p. 4)

Dare frowns so much at the crafty devices of the Nigerian cultural setting where patriarchy believes that it is a thing of pride for women to constantly bear men at all points in time. The climax of such shameful act of men’s laziness and heartless dependence on the women’s economic and resourcefulness is portrayed when Adunni is taken to Big Madam’s house because she elopes from her forced marriage to Morufu (Dare, 2020, p.105). There in the city, she discovers that even among the educated that Big Daddy is, as Kofi, the chef whispers to Adunni:

Unrepentant alcoholic. Chronic gambler. He keeps getting into debt and making his wife bail him out. Shame of a man, if you ask me. Real shame. He is away on business, should be back later today. And when I say business, I mean woman business...He is a womanizer. He has girlfriends. Plenty of them. (Dare, 2020, p. 130)

A critical examination of the patriarchal structure in the traditional Nigerian communities indicates that African Feminism would not be considered radical. Unlike the Western and American women, feminism to them is accepted as the total subjugation of the female folks in the areas of vocational/ and job opportunities, and so on. But when we look at the African-American and African women, feminism to them is a theory that highlights peculiarities of race, class, and culture. It is based on such requirements that the American and Western Feminism failed to provide a predictable appeal to the African women. The reason for this is on the basis that African women practice and believe in heterosexual relationships. They trust so much in marriage and motherhood for the continuity of their posterity. A little wonder why Big Mummy and Adunni’s late mother could manage with their

dependent spouses because they do not want to estrange their marriages. In fact, to confirm the fore-goings, Andrienne Rich (1976) buttresses that: "...the African womenfolk are not interested in estranging themselves from the bulk of the African formulated tradition-sisterhood; since many of the African traditional belief systems – customs and values are worth preservation" (Rich, 1976, p. 56). Further assessment of the issue confirms Alice Walker's (1983) position on "Womanism" as: "...a philosophy that celebrates black roots, the ideals of black life, while giving a balanced presentation of black womanhood," its aim is "the dynamism of wholeness and self-healing..." (p. 231).

By still deconstructing the patriarchal dependence on the Nigerian women, the study equally employs "irony" as a literary tool. The word "irony" according to Frye, Baker and Perkins (1985, p. 250) originates from the Greek word *eironia*. It represents the arrangement of speech and behavior of a group of persons in the initial Greek comedy. The *eiron* was originally, an individual who by communicating, fabricated to be someone who was less intelligent, humble, simple, and of course, overcame the self-deceiving, bullying- *alazon*- stupid who made an attempt to accomplish his ends through exaggeration and deception. In literary field, the term 'irony' is merged in literature to postulate the difference existing between that which is avowed and what is finally accepted, or a kind of dissembling. The Greek stock character, the *eiron* was viewed as the natural and antagonist of the other stock figure – the *alazon*.

Having specified the origin of the word "irony", Douglas Muecke (1969, p. 53) depicts 'irony' as the type available in every field and claiming to be a way of: Speaking or writing, acting, behaving, painting, etc. in which the real or intended meaning presented or evoked is intentionally quite other than, and incompatible with the ostensible or pretended meaning. (The 'real meaning' may be the contrary of the pretended meaning or it may be no more than a hinting at a mental reservation...). From the reader's point of view, the irony depends upon felt incongruity of both meanings. It is too subtle, occulted, or impenetrable (for him) if the real meaning never appears, and it falls short of irony if the pretended meaning has no force.

But Holman and Harmon (1986, p. 264) succinctly describe irony as: "a broad term referring to the recognition of reality different from appearance." It is important to note that ironic situations can reveal the outlook of meanings in literary works, up

to the extent of portraying connotations which the novelists did not originally intend. However, by examining *The Girl with the Louding Voice* (2020) and *Dear Ijeawele, Or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), there is a clear deployment of irony for its corrective, critical and perhaps, educative purposes, to align with what Charles Nnolim (2005, p. 131) calls “deflation”. Dare and Adichie reveal the two sides of the ironic nature by accepting such as the evaluative weapon to expose the double antithetical figures/ characters – *Eiron* and *Alazon* –in their fiction. Frye, Baker and Perkins earlier mentioned state a contrast in favour of *Eiron* due to his noble disposition. Furthermore, it is the other *Alazonian*, which is vice, that is the critical weapon, purposing attacking negative characters in novels, while the *Eiroman* applauds characters with virtue.

This said contrast is projected in the novels through the interface of what may be described as the weak and the ideal types of characters, families and marriages. For example, the under listed characters in Dare’s (2020) novel – Adunni’s father (Dare, 2020, pp. 3-9, 90); Morufu (Dare, 2020, pp. 31-45); Bamidele (Dare 2020, pp. 74-81); Khadija’s father (Dare 2020, pp. 39, 50, 56); Baba Ogun, Kike’s husband (Dare, 2020, p. 64); Big Daddy (Dare, 2020, pp. 130, 140, 150-152, 191-193); Labake (Dare, 2020, pp. 34, 38-39, 42, 49, 52-53, 59-62, 69); Big Madam, Chief Mrs. Florence Adeoti (Dare, 2020, pp. 137-141, 143, 160-169, 170-173; 253-254); Ms Tia’s mother-in-law (Dare, 2020, pp. 255-266); Mother Tinu (Dare, 2020, pp. 260-265); Mr. Kola (Dare, 2020, p.275); as well as some of the female characters delineated by Adichie’s (2017) novel – Chudi’s sister (Adichie, 2017, p.3); Nwabu’s wife (Adichie, 2017, p.7); all belong to the weak, negative, crafty, and dubious set of characters who work assiduously to flaw the characters with positive virtues. These characters in the first group are categorized as evil and deadly because each of them is an embodiment of marital vices. They are epitomes of backwardness in that they sell out their female children to early marriages at the expense of satisfying their indolent desires. Kike, Morufu’s daughter, confirms this assertion when she bitterly complains to Adunni, her father’s third wife, that their culture prefers to send all the male children to school, as well as train them on vocations, which might allow them to live independent lives. But that is not the case with female children, whom their fathers are marry them off at tender ages – from fourteen years old (Dare, 2020, p. 64).

A close look at Kike’s statement projects the reality of chauvinist practices of bias and discrimination against the female children in Nigerian society. Adunni argues on why it should be she (Adunni), that must be auction to old Morufu, the taxi driver, to enable her father to pay the “community rent of thirty thousand naira” (Dare, 2020, p.5). Of course, Adunni is wiser in her reasoning to realize that men are not that generous in their dealings with women, most especially, where it bothers on finances; except as Adunni rightly observes: “... unless he is wanting something...” (Dare, p. 5). To douse Adunni’s sharp thinking, her father immediately put it up to her that the money for rent which he, (Adunni’s father) had collected from Morufu, is Adunni’s dowry (Dare, p. 5). This implies that, her father chooses to collect “owo-ori” from Morufu rather than keeping the dying wife’s promise. Adunni reminiscences:

My throat tight itself as I hear her voice in my head now, the faint and weak of it, as she was begging Papa to don’t give me to any man for marriage if she die of this sickness. I hear Papa’s voice too, shaking with fear... ‘stop this nonsense dying talk. Nobody is dying anything, Adunni will not marry any man, you hear me? She will go to school and do what you want, I swear to you’.... (Dare, 2020, p. 9)

On the other hand, the characters with good virtues or positive attributes include: Mama-Adunni’s mother (Dare, 2020, pp. 5, 6, 9, 17, 64-65); Ms Tia (Dare, 2020, pp. 165-235; 255; 270-273) and Iya (Dare, 2020, pp. 77-87; 106-109; 113).

From the perspective of Adichie’s “Seventh Suggestion,” she cautions her friend, Ijeawele, to be weary of raising Chizalum Adaora with the popular Nigerian traditional belief of accepting marriage as an accomplishment. Adichie warns her friend to ensure that the girl- child does not grow up with the mentality that she cannot survive outside marriage (Adichie, 2017, pp. 20-21). The novelist vehemently disagrees with man-made-tradition which conditions girls to always aspire to marriage and fails at conditioning boys to also aspire to marriage. She solicits that such cultural practices create a terrible gender imbalance at the start. She argues further that, girls always grow up “to be women preoccupied with marriage. The boys will grow up to be men who are not preoccupied with marriage” (Adichie, 2017, p. 21). The overall implication of what the novelist is advocating is that women end up marrying men, who right from the beginning, do not have any sense of marital

responsibilities groomed in them. The uneven relationship bonding the women in the so-called marriages, placed them under untold agonies and responsibilities of carrying forward the burden of men, by sacrificing themselves out to make this imbalance institution-marriage- to work at all costs. Adichie strictly analyses: "...Is it any wonder that, in so many marriages, women sacrifice more, at a loss to themselves, because they have to constantly maintain an uneven exchange?" (Adichie, 2017, p. 21).

The ironic examinations of the unwholesome behavioral patterns of men are generally represented by Dare when she uses Adunni's father to expose the irresponsibility of most Nigerian men. He swore on the bed side of his dying wife- Adunni's mother- some years past that, he would not give out his daughter's hand to any man in marriage at the expense of her education (Dare, pp. 9, 23). But immediately his late wife was buried, he callously handed Adunni over in a forced marriage to the old polygamist, Morufu (Dare, pp. 12, 30-33). Another case in point which further explains the ironic nature of patriarchal falsehood and inconsistency is when Adunni runs to confide in her father, after Khadijah's death in Kere village, that Bamidele refused to bring a ritual soap as Adunni puts it:

...She have a man-friend, a lover. Bamidele is his name. He is a welder from Kere village. He give her pregnant and now he is leaving her to die because he didn't come back with soap to baff away evil curse (Dare, 2020, p. 89).

Here, Adunni expresses fear and doubt about her father's credibility to shield and perhaps, to defend her from being prosecuted, by what he (Adunni's father) describes as – "Khadija have her peoples, they must know that she is dead. The village chief must know that Khadija is dead. Morufu must know." (Dare, 2020, p. 90). A good sense of the power of reminiscence makes Adunni to recall a similar incident in the past in which her father failed. She states: "...Papa say nothing will happen to me, but Papa make a promise to Mama and he didn't keep the promise. How will he keep his promise now to save me from this troubles?" (Dare, 2020, p. 90). There is a kind of falsehood, in fact, a bridge of covenant in the negative set of characters.

Dare's character, Adunni's mother, and Adichie, the novelist, have the same mind towards the issue of marriage. These women, in life and in fiction, believe that the girl child should be allowed to mature first, be educated, learn the ways of life, before she is exposed to complex tasks, like marriage. In fact, Adichie frowns at the

society which always condition “girls to aspire to marriage and ...do not condition boys to aspire to marriage, and so there is already a terrible imbalance at the start” (Adichie, 2017, p. 21). These novelists are calling for a re-examination of the social strata of the Nigerian cultural values. This is the major reason Dare uses illiterate girl children- Adunni and Kike to castigate the patriarchal injustices done to the female folks. Adichie on her part, chooses the Epistolary genre to highly inform the upcoming mothers to ensure that they do not preach, and or force their girl children into accepting marriage by whatever standard, as a virtue.

Another character who acts negatively is Bamidele in Dare’s *The Girl with The Louding Voice* (2020). He craftily lures Khadija into an act of infidelity with him to accomplish his lust, infatuation and carnality. He confesses to Adunni in the dying state of Khadijah:

Khadija is my first love...Five years back, me and Khadija was doing love. Real love. We suppose marry yourselves...but her father fall sick, so he sell Khadija to Morufu to help them. Me, I didn’t have money that time. It pained me that they carry my love and give her to old Morufu, but I take it like a man...After four years of marrying Morufu, khadija come and find me. She say she love me. Me and her, we begin our love again...that baby in her stomach is for me. It is a boy inside. I know it (Dare, 2020, P.76).

The question Dare seems to be asking the present generation of Nigerian men is: Why are they (men) still engaging in pride and falsehood when they know it would be to the detriment of the progressing female folks? How could the man, Bamidele, destroy Khadija’s life by the stupid false claim: “My first love”? Dare, Khadija’s creator, gives space for her to die prematurely because of her moral depravity. The essence of her creator - Dare- eliminating her from the scene early by death, is to avoid contaminating those with noble virtues. Why should it be a woman signing the demise of the character of Khadija? It is to serve as a deterrent to the younger female folks that nature, culture, and humanity do not support adultery in Nigerian culture. Moreover, Dare posits that Morufu, Khadija’s real husband, is detrimental towards pushing her–Khadija- into striving out for what she could not get from him. He (Morufu) displays his ignorance:

...I marry the second wife, Khadija. Big mistake! Big mess! Why? Because Khadija is having three girls: Alafia, Kofo and I forget the name of the last

born now. No boy. Adunni your eyes are not blind, you can see very well that Khadija is carrying a new baby. I have warned her that if it is not a boy-child inside that stomach, her family will not collect food from me again. I swear I will kick her back to her hungry father's house. (Dare, 2020, P.37)

Reasoning should at this point inform Morufu that XY chromosome genes determinant for male and female children are only produced by the man (Llewellyn-Jones, 1998, p. 5). If Morufu, the man and husband, fails to produce the 'Y' chromosome responsible for a male child, should he then cause a poor and innocent woman to pay for his shortage? Again, a close look at Khadija's response to quickly succumb to the male – Morufu's, her husband and her lover, Bamidele's – intimidations, explains that female oppression and subjugation are issues which are prevalent with humanity. It means also that unless a human being is male, it connotes that such a being does not have the right to live. Morufu cautions Adunni on her wedding night when she newly arrives her husband – Morufu's home – stead:

Adunni, this is your new house...And in this house, I am having rule. There is respect of me. I am the king in this house. Nobody must talk back to me. Not you, not the children, not anybody, When I am speaking, you keep your mouth quiet. Adunni, that means you don't ask question in my front, you hear me? (Dare, 2020, p. 36)

It is rather disheartening that even in the twenty-first century, Nigerian men are still living in darkness of coercing the female beings. Why should the phase of humanity called men, be thinking towards intimidating women this much, without giving them the opportunity to be themselves and to live their lives freely? A close observation of this reveals that Morufu wants his new wife to live in total reference of him as a demi-god. He does not ever want Adunni to obtain her freedom, or to have a say in his home in particular, and in the culture at large.

Dare equally projects another pathetic state where a woman-Ms Tia's mother-in-law, (the likes of Big Madam), betrays her son's wife who by virtue of the female bonding, is good to be her own daughter. Dr. Ken's mother has been of the belief that Ms Tia, her daughter-in-law, is the cause of barrenness over the years. And that is why she is not raising children for her son, Ken (Dare, 2020, pp. 254-265). She takes it upon herself to scout for solution to the supposed problem which is not Ms Tia's own. She introduces Ms Tia to an archaic psychiatry- The Miracle

Centre at Ikeja in Lagos, Nigeria. It is at the so-called church, that Ms Tia receives the beatings of her life, in the pretense: “THE EVIL OF CHILDLESSNESS HAS BEEN CHASED OUT. PRAISE BE TO THE LIVING HIM” (Dare, 2020, p. 265). A close look at the irony employs here reveals what Ms Tia explains to Adunni directly after the ordeal of being beaten in that church: “...He cannot get me pregnant... His mother didn’t know. He didn’t tell anyone. Ken is infertile, unable to - He said because we’d briefly discussed not having kids, he didn’t think he needed to tell me ...” (Dare, 2020, p. 271).

If Ms Tia has already known that Ken, her husband, has low sperm count, and that he is not fertile enough to raise children, why did not she shout out? Why should she allow a problem that is not originally hers to make patriarchy and his cohort to bring so much traumatizing conditions- psychologically and physically and otherwise upon her? After all, if she were the one, Ken, the man cum husband, would not have taken it with levity. The agony, trauma and pains of such unjust beatings, which Ms Tia suffered through the wicked things those women are doing in the name of church (which Ken’s mother forcefully introduced Ms Tia to) provokes Adunni so much that she reasons beyond the ordinary illiterate girl, serving as a house-help to Big Mummy. She thinks aloud:

But there are words in my head, many things I want to say. I want to tell Ms Tia I am sorry I made her come here. I want to ask why the doctor didn’t come too? Why didn’t he come and get a beating like his wife? If it takes two people to make a baby, why only one person, the woman, is suffering when the baby is not coming? Is it because she is the one with breast and the stomach for being pregnant? Or because of what? I want to ask, to scream, why are the women in Nigeria seem to be suffering for everything more than the men? (Dare, 2020, p. 266)

Adunni avows to revenge the injustices committed against Ms Tia. And that is the main reason she reminds the reader that Mama had beautiful prospect of training her through Western education, to make Adunni, as she rightly puts: “I don’t just want to be having any kind voice ...I want a louding voice...” (Dare, 2020, p. 21). Adunni reflects upon her mother’s dying statement thus:

That day, Mama say, ‘Adunni, because I didn’t go to school, I didn’t marry my love. I was wanting to go outside this village, to count plenty money, to be reading many books, but all of that didn’t possible’...’Adunni, God knows I will use my last sweat to be sending you to school because I am wanting you to have chance at life. I am wanting you to speak good English, because in Nigeria, everybody is understanding English and the more better your speaking English, the more better for you to be getting good job...Your schooling is your voice, child. It will be speaking for you even if you didn’t open mouth to talk. It will be speaking till the day God is calling you home... (Dare, 2020, p. 21)

A close assessment of Adunni’s late mother’s position on female education, might be equated with Cixious belief, that women are the foundation of life, they are the spring of energy and power. Cixious (1997, p. 96) also claims that women are always in endless bonds with their mothers, who are innovative inventors of energy, strength and power. However, women have been given privileged connection to Feminine writing as a way of naturally relating to the unconstrained, blissful, liveliness of the female body that emphasizes the origin of life. Women writing might be regarded as representation of liberation. Women in their writings are clamoring for the rejection of patriarchal intelligent, which to others is typically perfect. According to Toril Mois’ (1985, p. 121) observation, it is pertinent to arbitrate that the ideal postulation is often always accepted as dependable motivation for feminist ideals.

By still considering the position of Cixious “écriture Feminine”, Luce Irigaray (1985) argues that in a patriarchal society, much of women’s coercion and subjugation occur in the nature of psychological cruelty endorsed through the medium of language. This means that women operate in a global universe in which virtually all meaning is completely defined by patriarchal language. This also culminates in situations whereby women do not communicate as active inventors of their own thoughts. Instead, they passively tend to duplicate already articulated ideas about them. Irigaray earlier mentioned, posits that for western philosophers, the woman is just a mirror of their own masculinity (1985, p. 54). This means that patriarchy has defined femaleness in terms of its multifarious needs, fears, and desires. It also explains that, when women are restricted to certain decisions- first, to remain silent on the grounds that, everything they say which do not have the approval

of or fit into the judgement of patriarchy might be regarded as meaningless and incomprehensible.

Secondly, women become compliant by imitating patriarchy's depiction of themselves, as it wants to see them – that is to act in the lesser roles which patriarchy clearly defines sexual difference to affirm male's dominance. Luce Irigaray (1985, p. 28), while buttressing on how women should sum up courage to overcome patriarchy, suggests that women should use the language which brings about common unity among gender. She advocates that the female being, should endeavor to ascertain the “woman speak” (p.2) medium to locate the female body, most importantly, when distinguishing between male and women sexual pleasures. Irigaray admits that the woman's sexual desire is enormously varied, complex, numerous, and elusive in variance, and is commonly functional (1985, p. 28). This means that when a woman sums up courage to speak in her own style, the male hegemony finds it difficult to discriminate the shrewdness of connotation. The “woman speak” has lexical complexity, opposing words and phrases which are made from the viewpoint of purpose, unfathomable for anyone who listens to them, with what Irigaray succinctly captures as “ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand” (1985, p. 29).

Lois Tyson (2006, p. 102) objects to Irigaray's (1985, p. 29) definition of “woman speak” as controversial in the sense that it appears to strengthen masculine stereotypes or even unscientific. The implication of Tyson's position is that one construction of women as illogical to view “woman speak” may be to consider the option that the former does not advocate that women do speak illogically; rather, that might be the way patriarchy views them. Patriarchal culture is spontaneously relating meanings solely to language that behaves in accordance to “patriarchal rules of logic than to linear thesis-oriented language” (Tyson 2006, p. 102). Further position of the language issue in women's writing (“*écriture féminine*”, Cixious, 1997, p. 96); (“woman speak” Irigaray, 1985, p.2), can be examined by what Julia Kristeva (1980, p. 133) rightly positions as stratified woman language because she believes that global culture misrepresents the female endless diversity and abandons them defenseless to the chauvinist's condemnation of women as naturally submissive, obviously expressive and psychologically unstable.

Josephine Donovan (1975, p. 77) by continuing the discourse on the essence of women's centered- language as a tool of talking back to patriarchy, ascertains that, the primary standards by which feminist scholars are adjudicating forms of literature is by what might be regarded as the total degree which validate possibilities of the women experiences. However, that is determined to process a condition which evaluates the genuineness of a literary declaration about women. In conjunction to the 'women's centered- language', Adichie (2017, pp. 22-25) solicits that every female should make it a choice to keep her maiden name even after marriage, because it will serve as her mark of identity throughout life. She claims:

I have kept my name because I like my name...There are people who say, 'Well, your name is also about patriarchy because it is your father's name.' Indeed. But the point is simply this: whether it came from my father or from the moon, it is the name I have had since I was born, the name with which I travelled my life's milestones, the name I have answered to since that first day I went to Kindergarten in Nsukka on a hazy morning and my teacher said, 'Answer "present" if you hear your name. Number one: Adichie"

In Adunni's case, what her late mother started and could not complete for her in terms of her education, is to make her have "a louding Voice" (Dare, 2020, pp. 21; 224); Ms Tia accomplishes it for Adunni. She takes it upon herself to train Adunni so that she could participate in the "SECONDARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR FEMALE DOMESTIC WORKERS" (Dare, 2020, p. 155), which Kofi, the Chef- introduced her to Ms Tia works on Adunni's spoken and written English. And she, Adunni, learns so fast that when the case of injustice executed on Ms Tia came up, a day after the incident she states: "...I wish I could get those women arrested...That barbaric act must stop. It's bullshit" (Dare, p. 272). Ms Tia, at the end of it all, establishes a cordial relationship of myth of sisterhood with Adunni, and takes it upon herself to ensure that she, Adunni, gets the so much desired 'louding voice'. She promises Adunni that she would stand by her to ensure that she gets the much desired scholarship. Again, she determines to get Madam Florence arrested if she should resist Adunni's freedom from serving her as a house maid (Dare, 2020, p. 273).

Adunni's journey, from the remote village of Ikati to the city of Lagos in Nigeria, is symbolic of that transformation, which is part of her desire for the 'louding voice' which she and her late mother represent. Ms Tia is Dare's answer to the yearning

expectation of the female education and comfort of liberation in all sense of the word. Rather than joining forces with Big Madam to frustrate and truncate Adunni's dream of freedom and emancipation, Ms Tia works contrary to the expectations of her father, Morofu, her husband in Ikati, Mr. Kola who sold her to Big Madam, without returning to give her all the monies she has worked for in the latter's house. We witness an intellectual progression from the state of despair to that of glory. Adunni advancements from rejection, shame, suffering and agony of forced marriage to acceptance; from the state of hopelessness and unconsciousness resulting from fear and heartbreak caused by Khadija's sudden and mysterious demise in Kere village to a woman's care (Ms Tia); from illiteracy to sound formal education; and above all, from maid slavery to independence (Dare, 2020, p. 278).

Adichie, in the "Ninth Suggestion" of *Dear Ijeawele, Or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), solicits for the proper training of the girl-child, Chizalum. She informs her friend, Ijeawele, to inculcate the virtue of self-confidence into the girl child so that she can grow up to think of herself importantly, above every other thing as: "a proud Igbo woman. And you must be selective – teach her to embrace the parts of Igbo culture that are beautiful and teach her to reject the parts that are not...say to her in different contexts and different ways, 'Igbo culture is lovely because it values community and consensus and hard work', and the language and proverbs are beautiful of great wisdom. But Igbo culture also teaches that a woman cannot do certain things just because she's a woman and that is wrong..." (Adichie, 2017, p. 28). The essence of admonishing Ijeawele to train up the girl child to be conversant with her cultural values is to empower Chizalum to take pride in the history of Nigeria. More so, the girl child should understand that Nigerian culture, represented in Igbo culture, victimizes the females. When she is imbued with such deep knowledge, she will live above patriarchal limitations by all standard.

While advocating for women to be given their full respect, Mugo Micere at the University of Nairobi in 2012, uses her poetry to enumerate the several roles which women play in the society. She divulges the extent to which patriarchal cultures flourish on subjugation and discrimination of women. She ascertains that women by all standards are the custodians of culture. This is clearly buttressed in Dare (2020, p. 109), where Iya, the old woman who is Adunni's late mother's friend, risks her life and comfort to ensure that Adunni is protected from destruction by her father and

other forces of tradition. This happens on the day Adunni ran to her after Bamidele wickedly allowed Khadija to die by the river in Kere village. She professes to her son Mr. Kola that Adunni "... must go today. This morning. Her papa will come back to find her here... I cannot let anything bad happen to Adunni. I make a promise to her mother years back, I will keep that promise till I die" (Dare, 2020, p. 109).

Speaking to confirm a deep sense of affiliation existing between women (mothers) and their children, an important question could be asked. Why? This question gets answered when one considers the fact that men (fathers) do not keep their own side of an agreement. Adunni's father, in *The Girl with The Louding Voice*, entered into a covenant with his dying wife not to force his daughter to get married early without giving her proper Western education (Dare, 2020, p. 9). But two days after the mother's demise, the irresponsible father married Adunni off to old Morufu. The inconsistencies of Nigerian men /husbands/fathers abridging the agreements are also displayed by Bamidele, who deliberately refused to carry out a certain ritual in Ikere river which could have preserved Khadija's life and her pregnancy (Dare, 2020, pp. 76-86). Further-more, Big Daddy, Adunni's master in Lagos, Nigeria, engages in pre-marital sexual intercourse with Rebecca (Dare, 2020, pp. 250; 277-279). The same Big Daddy makes sexual advances to little Adunni, the new housemaid (Dare, 2020, pp. 151; 191-192; 280-282). Moreso, he struggles to rape Adunni during the period Big Madam traveled to see her children at United Kingdom (Dare, 2020, p. 174). And above all, the big ingrate – Big Daddy – is equally known to have been keeping extra marital affairs with girls outside his marriage (Dare, 2020, pp. 203-204; 212-213).

The most pathetic of it all is documented when Kemi, Big Madam's sister, had an accident, and she (Big Madam) stays with Kemi at the hospital, the only thing that irresponsible fool of a husband could do, as Kofi the Chef states, has been to ignore his sister's-in-law critical condition in the hospital, and rather focuses on himself alone (Dare, 2020, p. 267). Little wonder Adunni becomes so infuriated with the attitude of these men that she desires to know how do Morufu, her forced-husband in Ikati, (Dare, 2020, p.6), and Big Daddy differ from one another? It is at that material time when Adunni discovers that Big Daddy is educated, while Morufu is not. However, Adunni comprehends that the two men are suffering from the appalling sickness of mind (Dare, 2020, p. 213). This singular realization of the state

of most Nigerian men and their dreadful practices is captured by Kofi, the chef. The novelist projects this to affirm that the time is now for the male kingdom to stop the game of irresponsible living since it profits a little.

In conclusion, the study posits that most men in Nigerian cultures are not generous in their dealings with women, most especially, where it bothers on marriages, child up-bringing, and so on. Adichie and Dare project men in their Nigerian cultures as being self-centered, uncertain, unreliable, callous, wicked-hearted, and lots more. It is also indicated that Nigerian men (fathers, husbands, uncles, brothers, and so on), find it difficult to keep their own side of agreement or testament. Cases in point have been projected in Dare (2020), where Adunni's father failed to keep the vow he made to Adunni's mother on her dying bed that he was not going to give out Adunni's hand in marriage at the expense of her education. More so, Bamidele lured Khadija to an untimely death because he could not stand by to help her after having impregnated her. Big Daddy in Lagos, Nigeria, laid such a thoughtless and useless lifestyle which made him squander his wife's resources on promiscuous living. Besides, Kola, Iya's son, is not left out in the category of falsehood. It is buttressed that after Kola collected what was supposed to be Adunni's wages from Big Madam, he never showed up again to check on the welfare of the servant girl he took to live with Madam Florence in Lagos.

The novelists use the negatives attributes of some characters (both male and female) to educate the Nigerian populace, on cases bothering on several injustices perpetrated by both males and females to their societies. Captivatingly, the novelists employ critical tools such as gender discourse and irony for the purpose of analyzing that both males and females have their own excesses of afflicting social injustices on people who are less than them in the social and economic status. The novelists have infused into their critical modes the sense of justices, whereby Ms Tia takes it upon herself to liberate Adunni from the shackles of patriarchy and matriarchy, by supporting her training towards having "a louding voice..." (Dare, 2020, p. 21).

Adichie on her part has put it up to the female-folks that they should learn to assert themselves to become significant in the Nigerian cultures where they matter. And secondly, their meticulous approaches have conscientiously awakened in the females, young and old, illiterate and educated, that sense of freedom from the restraints of injustices, which have since characterized their lives of servitude right

from time immemorial. The study concluded and recommended that female children should not be bullied into marriages when they are not economically empowered to compete with their contemporaries universally. The novelists posit that all sectors of the Nigerian society should recognize that the girl child is human, and as such should be given the opportunity to choose her life of independence.

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