

## **Role Reversal & the Emergence of Househusband in Adichie's *The Visit***

**Onyekachi Peter Onuoha<sup>1</sup>, Lilian Onyinye Ohanyere<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Calaba, Cross River State, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Modern Languages and Translation Studies, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Email: [onyekachidara@unical.edu.ng](mailto:onyekachidara@unical.edu.ng)<sup>1</sup>, [liliangift2ik@yahoo.com](mailto:liliangift2ik@yahoo.com)<sup>2</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

*Creative literature is a site for possibilities and imagining of society through the portrayal of realities. This study through the application of feminism examines role reversal in Adichie's The Visit. It further accounts for the emergence of the househusband which many creative writers and scholars have failed to account for. This study observes that sex and its function in African literature are related to gender and it is performative. This study claims that patriarchy is as oppressive as patriarchy and that economic privileges and social mobility are tools for the subjugation of sexes in marriage. This study concludes that for the first time, there is a deliberate depiction of the power of the woman.*

**Keywords:** *Feminism; Househusband; Role Reversal; Creative Literature.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The feminist writer is mostly concerned with the redefinitions of women and their gendered roles. Onyinye Ohanyere (2022), is of the view that; "...equality between both sexes has come under serious interrogation on the need to challenge and overcome oppression, suppression and marginalization associated with women in the past" (p. 203). Oppression of most women seems to be in the past and as *The Visit* illustrates, women have acquired oppressive powers as a result of their economic mobility. Creative literature imagines society and attempts to entrench certain ideological positions through character depictions. Adichie in *The Visit* attempts to portray a society where the dominant personality is the woman. Adichie, through various role reversals, attempts to imagine the female-dominated world. A world where the full capacity of the woman is achieved including her subjugation of the man. Onyekachi Onuoha in theorizing about gender submits that; "Identity which is self in Nigeria is constructed through the framework of gender and culture. Gender in Nigeria is functional within the estimate of culture and there are clear roles between males and females in the society. Sociologically, the societal prescription has been inscribed in the memory of participants in the society..." (p. 36). It is this inscribed role and perception that Adichie attempts to reverse. The narrative at first shocks readers of the "cultural" narrative of gender.

Adichie, through *the visit*, attempts to reconstruct gender and its function in society. Michael Foucault in the *history of sexuality* affirms the changing nature of gender; through his insight, he submits that gender is socially constructed. In this construction of gender in feminist African literature and feminist literary scholarship, most if not all of the female characters are presented as victims without the full capacity of a woman oppressing the man. Adichie's *The Visit* reverses the

oppressive roles imposed on the women by reconstructing the woman in the frame of female privileges and dominance in a society like the reign of patriarchy. Adichie's *The Visit* bypasses the urgency of the universal status of patriarchy as oppressive. Judith Butler submits that:

The urgency of feminism to establish a universal status for patriarchy in order to strengthen the appearance of feminism's claims to be representative has occasionally motivated the...to a categorial or fixative universality of the structure of domination held to produce women's common subjugated experience (p. 5).

Adichie's *the visit* moves away from the site of "universal patriarchy" and its subjugation to the reconstruction of the identity of the woman as one capable of leading the world and committing all good and evil associated with patriarchy but in the matriarchal frame. Butler in theorizing on gender submits that; "...gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex" (p. 8). Adichie's ideological position in *The Visit* sees gender as fixed and performative based on economic privileges and social mobility. For feminist scholars, marriage is a site for the oppression of the woman, and Adichie's *The Visit* reverses this concept of oppression of the woman in marriage. Through ideological imaging of the women in *The Visit*, Adichie illustrates the capacity of women to oppress men in marriage. Adichie affirms that irrespective of sexuality, every human is capable of oppression based on such individual's economic and social privileges. This study examines the "other", the liberated woman who weaponizes her economic, and socio-political liberation in the oppression and victimization of the man in a marital union. Onuoha writes; "Given the power of women as a result of squaring in education, economics, and political power, it does become necessary that the power of women should be examined within the structure of their subjugation in the society..." (p. 40). At this point, the power of the woman needs to be examined within the structure of her liberation and how she uses such power in her new role as the past has been reversed and placed the man in an economically subjugated role in the family.

The woman comes to her full capacity as a human in Adichie's *The Visit* as one capable of good and evil. The foregoing is implicated in Onuoha and Opere Humuani Oyindamola's submission that; "Giving the power of women as a result of squaring in education, economic and political power, it does become necessary that the power of women should be examined within the structures of their subjugation in the society and of what Okereke 2009 refers to as "women's growth from naivety to experience within gender politics" (p. 27). Adichie through the portraiture of Amara in *The Visit* affirms the place of the woman as liberated in African literature. This is a result of the woman coming to the full state of power as a result of the collapse of patriarchy which is symbolically represented in the death of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*. Scholars over the years have focused on patriarchy as the sole source of domination and victimization of the woman without the possibility of the woman being capable of evil.

Chinweizu's Masculinist theory is of the view that the woman controls the world including the man and gender description. Chinweizu affirming the power of the woman submits that:

Every day of a man's life, he is subject to the dictates of womb, kitchen and cradle. The first set to rule him belongs to his mother;

the second belongs to his wife. The first rules him in his vulnerable infancy, the second in his ambitious adulthood. His bride exploits his nostalgia for his mother's set and manipulates his craving for his future wife. Thus it is that mother, bride, and wife control a man every day of his life playing on his changing needs for womb, kitchen and cradle (p. 17).

Adichie's *The Visit* affirms Chinweizue's postulation about the power of the woman. However, the method by which the woman rules the man has excluded the kitchen. The women in *The Visit* rule the men in various dimensions excluding the benefits of the kitchen. Adichie through her character depictions affirms her belief in marriage and childbearing as a site for the subjugation of the man. Peter Fritz Walter in theorizing about the "tag" categorization of gendered rulership submits that:

...while there have been matriarchal cultures first and patriarchal societies later, this is not how the soup has experienced those matters. Recent research has corroborated that things are not as clear-cut as historians thought they were. (...) when we are using the dichotomy matriarchal-patriarchal, we are arguing not from a real-life perspective, but rather from our ideological understanding of patriarchy or matriarchy (pp. 10-15).

Walter is of the view that there are no clear-cut definitions of gender rulership in society. Gendered oppression and leadership in marital union are classified based on the dominance of a particular system of oppression and in Adichie's *The Visit*, matriarchal oppression is more visible in the narrative. This illustrates the capacity of the woman to commit evil and not the single narrative of sainthood imposed on the woman as a result of feminist propaganda. Adichie through *The Visit* arrives at a literary truth that feminism has achieved certain gains in the liberation of the woman from patriarchy and it seems Adichie is saying that it is time to hold matriarchy and female power accountable. *The Visit* is a "disruptive" narrative and it deliberately accounts for the power of the woman which has long been ignored in creative feminist literature and which most times is induced as a product of victim victimizing the victim. Onuoha and Opere Humuani Oyindamola affirm that; "...the power of the woman as a result of squaring in education, economic and political power... the power of women should be examined..." (p. 163). Although Adichie "exaggerated" through her narrative of Nigerian matriarchal society at present, she subtly examines the matriarchal power. The visit is examined from the premise of privilege and economic power. Onuoha affirms that:

...feminist scholars have begun to acknowledge a woman's power to inflict pain....(...) the age of a single story of patriarchy being a total system of oppression and subjugation needs to be questioned in the light of new realities in the literary texts.... The engagement of social realities within the structure of art. Seems to suggest that women are acquiring the capacity for evil as a result of the symbolic collapse of Umuofia and the death of Okonkwo which symbolize new power structures and ideology (p. 71).

Adichie's *The Visit* corroborates Onuoha's submission. *The Visit* deconstructs the single story of the woman as a victim in a patriarchal society. Adichie through creating exaggerated fictive reality illustrates the power of the woman and achieve's

Aristotle's submission that he representant man as worst or better than he is and this is the nature of Adichie's *The Visit* (Kaplan & Anderson, 2000).

## **ROLE REVERSAL AND THE EMERGENCE OF HOUSEHUSBAND ADICHIE'S *THE VISIT***

Role reversal is the reconstruction of gendered expectations within the framework of art and society. Onuoha implicates the preceding, thus; "The dominant hierarchy upon which the order of existence is predetermined has placed the man at the center of creation which is also substantiated by cultural norms that prioritized generic divide" (p. 163). *The Visit* resolved this "dominant hierarchy" and instituted matriarchy as dominant above patriarchy. Adichie's *The Visit* placed the woman at the center of creation and is culturally substantiated by social norms within the world of *The Visit*. Adichie uses her work to expose the ills of matriarchy as oppressive as patriarchy and Adichie's characters did not pretend about this power of oppression. David Uru Iyam affirms the foregoing:

The myth of the submissive position of African women are too often accepted as a factual and general description of the condition of women in African societies. Their perception seems to subvert and outlast the robust literature that affirms the position of African women in pre-colonial Africa as independent, assertive, resourceful, authoritative and sovereign in diverse contexts (p. 1).

*The Visit* illustrates that assertive, resourceful, authoritative, and independent women are constant features of African society. The ideological position of feminism weaponizes "victimhood" without accounting for the total capacity of women in African society. Aisha M. Umar notes that; "Women arguably have been participants in the concept of modern African nation whether actively or passively" (1). However, the passive contribution of women to good and evil seems to be emphasized by feminism while active parts are ignored. Adichie's *The Visit* opens with a literary foreshadowing of the future where a female is the president of America and Nigeria. Adichie imagines them in their femininities as female presidents. The omniscient narrator describes them thus:

The American president's face was in close-up as she said, "I applaud the court for this just and moral decision. We must never lose sight of what this is about—a waste of a potential child." She sounded too dramatic, but better than the Nigerian president, with her ill-fitting wigs and gaudy jewelry, who always read haltingly from speeches in a flat monotone as though she were seeing the sentences for the first time on camera. In the background on the TV screen was groups of men, Black and white and Asian and Hispanic, in suits, hoodies, in T-shirts, holding placards (p. 6).

Adichie seems to suggest that the same incompetent leaders Nigerians have as male presidents will be the same as they will have as female presidents. She seems to suggest that society chose the worst of them to lead them unlike her imagining of the American female president. This narrative provides a framework for the introduction of Eze and Obinna's close friendship into the narrative of *The visit*. Through the family of Eze, we could see the depiction of the "househusband" which is occasioned by certain female privileges in society, specifically in marriage. Helen

Chukwuma submits that; "...subjugation is never so apparent as in marriage. The true test of female assertion is in the marriage institution and motherhood" (44). The subjugation of the man is seen in marriage. In describing Eze's family, Adichie portrays the nature of a matriarchal family where the woman is the head of the family. Adichie's narrator notes that:

Eze, bold, interesting Eze. Even his the family was bold and interesting. His mother was a doctor working somewhere in the Middle East and came home once every few months, a short, round woman who seemed mismatched next to her tall, slender husband. Eze's father normally spoke like Eze, in bursts of words, full of proclamations, but whenever Eze's mother was home, his exuberance was quelled. He became almost meek, asking Eze to please not play loud music so as not to disturb her, making different juice mixes and health concoctions with ginger and lemon and carrying tall glasses to her in her study. His mother emerged once in... (p. 9).

Eze's father is imaged in a reserved character trait and given a form of gendered personality that is not known to be exhibited by "patriarchal" men. Eze's father unlike Okonkwo is a man of many words who becomes silent in the presence of his wife. He even advises his son not to play loud music so as not to disturb his wife. Eze's father serves his wife and performs his husbandly role in a reversed method unknown to men of Okonkwo's generation and what this does is to illustrate the performative nature of gender and the emergence of "new" men in the society known as househusbands. Househusbands are men who constantly perform wifely roles at home while their wives are the breadwinners. Househusbands depend on their wives economically and they perform domestic activities at home and take care of the children as their contribution to the marital union. They are beta men, deeply emotional and chatty husbands. Eze's father demonstrates this excellent illustration of a house-husband and Obinna by association inherited this house-husband characteristic from him. Eze's father's part of performing his house-husband duties mixes different juice and health concoctions for his wife as part of his husbandly role. Eze's father is married to a working-class wife who works abroad and comes home once in a while. Eze is left in the care of his father who nurtures him in his fatherly love, reversing the stereotype perception that it is only the woman who has the power to nature a child. Eze's father has the characteristics of Nwoye's mother in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. He tells stories and even plays with Eze and his friend Obinna. He performs the role of educating Eze and his friend and even jokes with them. For instance:

Don't be so uncivilized, Obinna!" It was Eze's father. Obinna didn't know when he had appeared at the back door to stand watching them. "Don't lick your fingers like a bush boy. How will you find a wife with this kind of behavior?" Obinna, taken aback, said, "Sorry, Uncle." He didn't know what else to say (p. 11).

The House-husband in the person of Eze's father provides the education his children need to be a man in African society. Eze's father's House-husband role is used as a medium to give identity to his sexuality. This is affirmed by Mathoni Gachari that; "...women and men have been consistently socialized into the spaces that they occupy and the stereotypes that have been assigned to them" (p. 675).

Eze's father has the sole responsibility of raising his son as the House-husband because his wife is the breadwinner and the head of the family. Eze's father, in fatherly love, train and takes care of his son and his son's friend. The House-husband makes his children the center of his world and makes out time to joke and play with them. The foregoing is illustrated below as a House-husband performs his "husbandly" duties:

He was used to Eze's father's harangues about finding a wife, but they were always directed at Eze and never at him, until now. "Daddy, leave Obinna alone. Wife.. wife.. wife.. all the time. We're in secondary school for goodness' sake. You would think we were in our thirties and still single." "Thirties? You must be joking. A man still without a wife at the age of twenty-eight is like that deflated piece of rubber—useless," Eze's father said, pointing at the bicycle tube. "I'm fixing it, it's not useless," Eze replied. His father laughed. How easily emotions were heightened between Eze and his father, and how quickly they returned to normal. "You have to learn to talk about emotions, Eze!" his father would blurt out" (p. 11).

Eze's father through jokes would emphasize the need why his son should find a wife. Eze's father sees marriage as an achievement for the man. The narrator did not pretend about the political intention of the narrative thus; "Obinna stared at Eze. His father might not talk about it as often as Eze's did, but it was understood, of course, that marriage was the ultimate prize for a man. Everyone knew that. So how could a man just choose not to marry? It felt to him sacrilegious, but in the weeks after, he thought of Eze's words often" (p. 12). The narrator reverses gender expectations of ladies on men. Like his fellow oppressed women in marriage, Eze's father is without a name and his son's name becomes an extension of his identity. This illustrates the deliberateness of the feminist gendered narrative of trying to stereotype the man through rewriting the oppression of the woman in the patriarchal marital union in a structured matriarchy. Eze highlighting privileges and the nature of the House-husband indicate that most Househusbands are led by oppressed their wives. Eze's father is subtly oppressed by his wife, he is not allowed any identity different from that of managing the home and taking care of his son. Eze chronicling the plight of his father a House-husband, note that:

When his father went back inside, Eze said, "Do you know my father used to be a theater actor when he was in university in Ibadan? Then he married my mother, and she told him he had to quit acting because married men who were actors considered promiscuous? That's why he now spends all his time juicing ginger and oiling his beard and watering the flowers in the garden. He doesn't have a life." Eze paused. "I'm never going to get married" (p. 11).

Eze attests to the oppression of his father in the marital union to the extent that he vowed not to get married. In a matriarchal society marriage is a site for the oppression of the House-husband. The House-husband is profiled and defined as an infidel as a result of his profession and is not allowed to work by his wife. Eze's mother stopped his father from working because she felt that her husband would run after other women. Eze's father has no identity aside from his domestic work and oiling his beard. Eze's father illustrates the nature of the House-husband which is, they are docile, lack aspirations, and their lives are centered around their kids.

Adichie's *The Visit* suggests that oppression in marriage is a product of economic privileges. She seems to suggest that patriarchy is capable of oppression just like patriarchy. Adichie introduces Obinna's family as a prelude to his emergence as a House-husband in the tradition of Eze's father. A man whose life is centered around his family and his domestic work at home. The omniscient narrator in describing Obinna's family note that:

Obinna's family was ordinary, his mother a headmistress, his father a barber, both of them unremarkable and dutiful. It thrilled him to be close to a family whose shelves were full of dead butterflies. He spent so much time at their house that their houseboy began to set a place for him at lunch and dinner, when Eze and his parents ate together, the father solicitous, asking if everyone was fine if the food was okay, and the mother chewed slowly, reading a newspaper or a magazine and saying very little (p. 10).

This image of Obinna is a subtle statement of his self-esteem and a prelude to the kind of home he will build as a married man. There is a reverse of gender expectation for men within the narrative in the sense that; "...it had not occurred to Obinna that he, too, could choose a life different from what was expected of him: graduate from university, get married, have children" (p. 13). There seems to be a new expectation for men in *The Visit*, which is the achievement of marriage and childbearing. Obinna's marriage is a union of unequals, through marriage Obinna achieve's a form of economic mobility. For instance:

Things would be different, his nervousness less, if Eze were coming back from England. England was familiar. Ever since Obinna's wife, Amara, was promoted to managing director years ago, she had taken them to London every summer and was considering buying a flat in Maida Vale. If Eze lived in England, Obinna would not worry that the glass table with gold accents in the living the room looked too dated, that Eze would glance at the TV and say something about the" (p. 14).

Obinna's wife is the head of the family and provides for her househusband. Adichie in *The visit* seems to suggest that men through the depiction of Obinna are capable of emotion. As a househusband, Obinna is worried about the looks of his house because his friend Eze would come to visit. This illustrates the domestication of man as a human within the framework of social realities to care about his surroundings as a human. There is "masculinity" that is associated with the househusband which is having the capacity for fear. Obinna expecting his friend is ruled by fear. For instance; "On the morning of Eze's arrival, Obinna woke up early, too early, panicked that he had forgotten the arrival time of the flight, and got up to go look at the piece of paper he had scribbled it on" (p. 15). This fear is motivated by joblessness and overseeing things in the house and supervising the made. Obinna told Made; "Put on the light. Why are you working in the dark?" (p. 15).

Obinna has no identity except that of a househusband. While Obinna's wife Amara has a life aside from her being married. For instance; "Amara stirred in bed. She had come home late last night. Again. She had many more responsibilities now that she was managing director, but he still did not see why she had to personally entertain her new clients from Europe day after day. He opened the bedroom door quietly so as not to wake her. The living room was bathed in the gray of early dawn;

the houseboy, Emmanuel, dusting the furniture, said, “Good morning, say,” before Obinna realized that he was there” (p. 15). Amara is a busy woman, aside from being a mother, she has an identity of her own beyond marriage. Obinna as a househusband oversees the house and he is even worried that the houseboy might be seducing his wife. Obinna seems insulted by the houseboy:

Emmanuel turned the switch on and looked sourly at Obinna before going back to his cleaning. There was something slothful about him, something mean-spirited. He had been with them only a month and already Obinna wished he could fire him, but it was so difficult to find good houseboys these days. The last two had been particularly bad: one confessed, after the children began having nightmares every night, that he was a witch and wanted to eat the children; the other stole half of Obinna’s wardrobe but was stopped by the gateman on his way out with a suitcase of crisply ironed shirts. This one was disturbingly suggestive toward Amara—even if Amara said she didn’t notice that everything the boy wore clearly displayed the mound between his legs. He came too close when he greeted Amara walked too slowly whenever Amara was in the room, as though to give her time to check him out. “Make sure your madam’s breakfast is not late today,” Obinna said to Emmanuel, who, again, said nothing and walked away with his lachrymose demeanor and his cleaning rag. Obinna surveyed the living room, trying to see it through Eze’s Americanized eyes. He had” (p. 17).

Obinna is worried that the houseboy will take his wife away from him because of the way he dressed. He cannot help it because of his experiences with houseboys. Obinna seems to be married to a woman who has a social right to have extramarital affairs with the house boys to whom she is attracted. Although Obinna has reservations about his houseboy Emmanuel, he still asked him to prepare breakfast for his wife. Obinna performs his husbandly duties, he is a househusband who does nothing but takes care of the children and the home:

Obinna got the children dressed for school and sat at the table while they had breakfast, toast and fried eggs, the boy eating with his prompt good manners, the girl deliberately crumbling her bread and kicking her brother under the table. “Stop it! Eat your food!” Obinna said to her. Amara came out, dressed, earlier than usual. Her breakfast was not ready. Obinna hurried to the kitchen, mumbling, “Sorry, sorry” to Amara and then in the kitchen hissing, “Simple boiled yam and stew, why is it hard for you to do it quickly?” “Finally, Emmanuel served the food. A layer of oil floated on the surface of the stew, as Amara liked it (p. 18).

The foregoing provides a graphic description of the definition of a househusband. A househusband is a man who performs all the functions of a “traditional” housewife. He takes care of the kids and complains about the houseboy to his wife the head of the family. The househusband express his concerns; “Honestly I am tired of this houseboy,” Obinna said. “You shouldn’t let that boy stress you,” Amara said, genial, offhand, as though Obinna chose the stress. She settled down at the table, tugging at the frill collar of her purple blouse, her clear skin the gorgeous color of baked clay” (p. 18). The househusband complains a lot, he stays at home



while the wife works and takes care of the family. The househusband makes sure that things are done properly at home for the benefit of the wife who is the head of the family and himself, the househusband. Obinna says; "If I don't stress, then nothing will get done in this house,".... "We should use one of those new employment agencies and find a real steward." "Mba. Those agencies that are for oil company people that pay crazy money to get chefs from Togo? No way." Amara laughed" (p.18). The househusband is a considerate husband and manages the financier of the house, he is frugal in spending the Wife's money. In the marriage between the house-husband and the working class wife, the wife is the head of the family. She makes the final decision and always finds solutions to the problems in the family. Even at that, the househusband is scared to accept such solutions because of the economic implications, and the wife replies to him, thus:

"I keep telling you, darling, you don't seem to realize that we have arrived! Ife ago! We can more than afford it." She spoke with the new expansiveness that came after she was made managing director, as though everything was possible, everything could be handled, and as though, too, every appetite should be sated. She urged Obinna to spend more, buy more things for himself, for the house, and the children. Arrived. They had indeed arrived, with this new house in Parkview," (p. 18).

This illustrates the nature of the Male wife. The Male wife provides for her family and takes care of her househusband. Obinna fulfills his family responsibility as househusband thus:

The children had finished eating and Obinna went outside, deposited them in the car, and told the driver, Mary, to come back right after she dropped them off. "Yes, sir," she said, with a sheepish smile. He suspected that the woman ran her private errands after dropping off the children, and then came back hours late to say, "Terrible traffic, sir" (p. 19).

The househusband makes sure that the children are ready for school and orders the driver to drop them off. The househusband gives instructions to the driver who is a female to keep the driver, and this illustrates the reversal of roles in the narrative. The househusband makes sure that his wife is dressed for work. Obinna: Back inside, he smoothed the collar of Amara's blouse—stuck out at a slightly awkward angle, perhaps from the dry-cleaning. "You look very nice." Amara was distracted, scanning the news on her iPad. "You know the new oil minister will be announced today. The Guardian is saying that it will likely be a man. Mr. Akpan." "I hope you'll be home before Eze arrives," Obinna said, but Amara didn't hear him. "Progress is good, we all want progress, but a man should not be in charge of such a sensitive post, it's too important," she said."

*The Visit* depicts a world where the high-achieving figure is the woman. *The Visit* highlights a society where the dominant figure is the woman and the woman sees men's achievement as sleeping their way through such an achievement which is a reversal of the perception of women's achievement in a patriarchal society. Adichie in *The Visit* highlights a matriarchal society where most men cannot achieve real success except they offer their bodies. Obinna affirms his Wife's view when he concurs; "I agree," Obinna said. "And how will it look when we go to OPEC meetings and it turns out that only Nigeria has a male minister? They won't take us

seriously.” “Yes!” Amara said and looked at him with a flash of approval. “Especially now that we have an opportunity to place Nigeria in a major position of influence, with all the problems in the Middle East.” Amara went back to the screen, eyes narrowed.” (pp. 19-20). The man in a matriarchal society is seen as the insignificant other in a matriarchal world.

The househusband is suspicious of the men who work for his wife. The househusband feels that his wife sleeps with the handsome man that works as a secretary to his wife. Obinna often read, in men’s magazines, that men knew about other men in their wives’ lives but chose not to know, as if knowing and not knowing were real choices. He had not wanted to know, for example, about Amara’s secretary, but he knew, he just knew, from the new insouciance in that secretary’s manner: “You are welcome to our office, Mr. Ofoegbu,” he had said the last time Obinna dropped by Amara’s office, as if Obinna were somehow intruding on his territory, as if the secretary no longer felt he had to be deferential, that bush the boy who had hardly passed through a polytechnic and had been hired only because he was from Amara’s hometown” (p. 21).

The house husband reads gossip magazines and makes certain deductions based on such magazines and even judged those working for his wife from that premise. Obinna has some level of hatred for his Wife’s secretary because of his perception which has not been yet verified. The househusband is always preoccupied with what the wife does in the office. Obinna poured himself a glass of orange juice and watched Amara eating and reading with pursed lips. He did not believe that the new clients from Europe had kept Amara out late the past week. He wanted to believe it, but he just could not, and it had nothing to do with “choice.” Was it a choice when your spirit awakened to something? If he had made a choice, then it was to do nothing and ask nothing, of his knowledge.

Obinna doubts his wife because the wife has cheated on him before and this makes him constantly suspect his wife. The omniscient narrator:

The first time Amara had an affair, or rather the first affair that Obinna knew of, was with a man who owned a shop in the Palms mall. Obinna sensed something, at first, in Amara’s new eagerness, her brightness, but it was not until he saw the bite mark on Amara’s neck, like whorls drawn in faded red ink, that he asked. Amara said it was an insect sting. Obinna gave her an ointment for it and the nextday, he asked Amara’s driver,” (p. 22).

The matriarchal wife in some cases is also an infidel wife. She sleeps with men she is attracted to and the househusband has no right to question her. The househusband gives favor to those working with his wife to keep an eye on his wife. The narrator informs:

Catherine, whose loyalty he had constantly courted with food and money to always have information about Amara, where she took madam after work. Catherine told him. He had been stunned, both surprised and unsurprised. He hated now to think of how dramatic he had been, calling Amara’s cousin, the one who had paid her school fees after her parents died, and her brother, the one who was

closest to her, to ask that they speak to Amara. He must have been hysterical; it was laughable to think of that now. Talk to your sister o! She wants to destroy this marriage! But both of them told him to not make a fuss, important thing was that Amara came home to him, every day and Amara was a very good wife and he had to consider how difficult it was for Amara in her position, with all those young boys throwing themselves at her (p. 23).

The househusband is abused emotionally by his cheating wife and his wife people see nothing wrong since the wife still returns to him. Adichie through her work attempts to satirize patriarchy and reverses the practices of patriarchy as a possible practice of matriarchy in modern African society. Obinna is a househusband who constantly fights his wife gigolos. The omniscient narrator captures the plight of a househusband with a cheating working-class wife thus:

It was truly believing this, Amara as a wonderful wife besieged by young boys, helpless in the face of their rapacious pursuit, that made Obinna get dressed and ask his driver to take him to the Palms mall, where he walked into the shop and screamed at the man, a mere boy, no more than twenty, and threatened to hit him, and even raised a hand in the air. Afterward, he felt small. The boy's voice rang in his ears: Go and put your marriage in order! Leave me alone! The memory still made Obinna cringed, at how easily, cheaply, he had become a Lagos cliché: the husband fighting the boyfriend in public. He had never discussed it with Amara, one of the many things they carefully left unsaid. Amara glanced at her watch. "I have a meeting in thirty minutes. What time does Eze arrive? I'll try and leave the office early today." "I feel nervous about seeing him." "Ten years is not ten days," Amara said as she got up. "But it will be okay. You'll see, it will be just like university days again" (p. 24).

Obinna is a househusband who exchanges words with his Wife's gigolos. He is humiliated by his Wife's lovers, and the wife sees nothing wrong with her actions. The man is abused physically and psychologically as a result of the fact that he is married to an unfaithful wife. *The Visit* indicates that matriarchal women have the same capacity to cheat as their patriarchal counterparts. In the marriage between a househusband and the working class wife, the woman acts as a beacon of hope and comfort to the man irrespective of her marital infidelity. For instance; "Amara's tone soothed him. It was Amara who drove Obinna and Eze to the airport that humid evening eleven years ago, and she stood aside and watched as he and Eze hugged goodbye and later, in the car, told him in this same soothing"(p. 24).

The househusband is an emotional one in a marital union, and the wife is more realistic and firm in making decisions and choices. The househusband, as a result of overfeeding, acquires more weight and is even sometimes body shamed by his wife:

I'll go to the gym. Then supervise that stupid boy so the food we serve Eze will at least be edible. Amara came over and kissed his lips and pinched his arm. "It's good you've started going to the gym. This was getting a bit flabby, just a little bit." Her tone was light and teasing, as usual, and her kiss, her touch, was still filled with the possibility (p. 25).

Obinna, as a result of overfeeding and docility, enrolls in the gym so that he can burn belly fat for his working-class wife. In a matriarchal society, the woman takes the lead in showing affection for his househusband, as indicated by Amara's relationship with her husband. Obinna is constantly worried that boys who are more fit for him would take his wife away from him. Obinna lives in constant fear that he would lose his wife to another man. The narrator observed:

It was the thought of what they used to be and what they still could be that made Obinna so afraid when he looked at her, made him so paranoid about those young boys with their chiseled arms and bellies flat as hardcover books, who paraded the banks these days, hoping that a big the woman would say, "How are you?" to them, because it was so easy for the recipient of a "How are "you?" to then become a lover and even, God forbid, a second husband. "I love you," Amara said as she left"(p. 25).

The househusband is in constant competition with other young men for the attention of his wife. Obinna the house husband is genuinely afraid of losing his wife because she is the breadwinner.

## CONCLUSION

Through *The Visit*, Adichie suggests that in a matriarchal society, the man is abused and subjugated. In a matriarchal society marriage is a site for the exploitation and subjugation of the man in marital union. Feminism is a political tool for the emergence of gender equality and the reversal of gender roles (Osonwa & Duke, 2018; Yta 2017; Yta 2020; Yta et al. 2020). Feminism is a social, political, and economic discursive one in creative literature which appropriates character depictions in an attempt to highlight the changing nature of the woman as a result of social realities. Feminist writers are at the forefront of the continuous definition of gender in African literature through the reimaging of reality as a medium of inclusion as illustrated in *The Visit*.

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