Bridging the gap among social classes in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006)

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Abstract

The Biafra War has been the subject of many historical accounts and literary texts. Among the novels produced about the Biafra War is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) where the author recounts not only the events leading to the war but also those during and just after the conflict. Though the events of the Biafra War constitute the central theme in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie also deals with the relationships among social classes in this novel. One may wonder why the author shows that some upper-class people are keen on their difference, their ‘superiority’, and, on the other hand, people of the upper and middle classes are human and respectful towards lower-class persons. What is the purpose of the writer in drawing this parallel? From a socialist and humanist perspective, this article deals with “bridging the gap among social classes in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*."

Based on sociology, psychology, socialism, and humanism, the paper will first deal with the criticism of the Nigerian upper class and then with Adichie’s advocacy for a socialist and humanist society.

Keywords:

Social; classes; socialism; humanism; bridging; gap.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Biafra War, which lasted two years and a half (from July 6th, 1967, to January 13th, 1970), caused two million people to die from hostilities, disease, and starvation (Heerten & Moses 2014). This dark chapter in Nigeria’s colonial history has been the subject of many historical accounts and literary texts (Offiong 2016; Olufu & Offiong 2017). According to Craig McLuckie (1990), between 1970 and 1990, more than “twenty-nine works have been written about the Civil War. Moreover, ten autobiographies have also been identified” (p. 9). Among the novels produced about the Nigerian Civil War is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) where the author recounts the events leading to the war and those during and after just after the conflict.


Though the events of the Biafra War constitute the central theme in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie also deals with the relationships among social classes in this novel. One may wonder why the author shows, on the one hand, some upper-class people are, in fact, what is the purpose of the writer in drawing this parallel? From a socialist and a humanist perspective, this article deals with “bridging the gap among social classes in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*."

Socialism can be defined as a:

... social and economic doctrine that calls for public rather than private ownership or control of property and natural resources. According to the socialist view, individuals do not live or work in isolation but live in cooperation with one another. Furthermore, everything that people produce is in some sense a social product, and everyone who contributes to the production of a good is entitled to a share in it. Society as a whole, therefore, should own or at least control property for the benefit of all its members (Murphy 2014, p. 1).

So, here, socialism advocates for an economic and political system in which each member of the society gets a share of public resources. Socialism is opposed to capitalism which is characterized by an unfair concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few people who use this wealth and this power to dominate and exploit the masses. As for humanism, it:

... refers to a focus on human well-being and advocates for human freedom, autonomy, and progress. It views humanity as responsible for the promotion and development of individuals, exposes the equal and inherent dignity of all human beings, and emphasizes a concern for humans in relation to the world (Levinas 2003, p. 42).

Therefore, humanism aims at the welfare, freedom, autonomy and the progress of every human being and rejects any claim or feeling of superiority among individuals insofar as it believes in equality in the dignity of all human beings. Based on sociology, psychology, socialism and humanism, the paper will first deal with the criticism of the Nigerian upper class and then with Adichie’s advocacy for a socialist and humanist society.

2 CRITICISM OF THE NIGERIAN UPPER CLASS

Adichie’s criticism of the Nigerian upper class of the 1960s is noticeable through the comment of Kainene, one of the main characters of the novel, makes to her lover, Richard: “The new Nigerian upper class is a collection of illiterates who read nothing and eat food they dislike at overpriced Lebanese restaurants and have social conversations around one subject: ‘How’s the new car behaving?’” (Adichie 2009, p. 54). This criticism of the Nigerian upper class is...
Chief Ozobia is a capitalist who collaborates with the Nigerian corrupt political rulers such as Chief Okonji in order to make as much fortune as he can. He is among the bidders who give ten percent to be attributed a contract and does not hesitate to push his beautiful daughter, Olanna, into a relationship with Chief Okonji to benefit from a building contract. Interested only in money, he and his wife would rather Olanna, who is also Kainene’s twin, choose the: “Chief Ozobia owns half of Lagos but there is something terribly nouveau riche about him. He doesn’t have much of formal education, you see, and neither has his wife. I suppose that’s what makes him so obvious.” (p. 51).

Knowing that a love relationship or better, a marriage between Olanna and the Minister of Finance, means more financial gain for Chief Ozobia, Olanna’s parents tell their daughter that: “Odenigbo was crazy and wrong for her, one of those hotheaded university people who talked and talked until everybody had a headache and nobody understood what had been said” (p. 32). As a university teacher, Odenigbo does not belong to the upper class like the Ozobia family or Chief Okonji, but rather belongs to the middle class. Therefore, he is not wealthy whereas the Ozobia couple wants only rich men for their daughters. To Mrs. Ozobia, Olanna must have lost her head by declining the minister’s proposal. For the mother, money is more important than love. Thus, she tries to make her daughter see reason and say yes to Chief Okonji who, people say, “never wears any outfit twice? He gives them to his houseboys once he has worn them” (p. 33).

Mrs. Ozobia’s materialism is also stressed when she doubts Olanna’s comfort in Odenigbo’s house in Nsukka: “But will you be comfortable there? Her mother said comfortable with a faint shudder, and Olanna almost smiled because her mother had Odenigbo’s basic university house in mind, with its sturdy rooms and plain furniture and uncarpeted floors” (p. 34). The fact that Olanna almost smiled and answered “I’ll be fine” shows that she and her mother do not have the same conception of a woman’s comfort in the marital home. Mrs. Ozobia is frustrated by her daughter’s refusal to accept Chief Okonji’s proposal in the same way as she was after Olanna “refused to marry Igwe Okagbue’s son, and later, Chief Okaro’s son” (p. 34). No doubt she wanted her daughter to marry Igwe Okagbue’s son or Chief Okaro’s son because they are wealthy. Having failed to convince her daughter to accept Igwe Okagbue’s son, Chief Okaro’s son and then Chief Ozobia, Olanna’s mother does not give up. Even while Olanna is living with Odenigbo, Mrs. Ozobia tells her, in vain, about another man who, unsurprisingly, is well-off: “By the way, there is somebody who wants to meet you. You know Igwe Onochie’s family? Their son is an engineer. I think he has seen you somewhere, and he is very interested” (p. 165).

Mr. and Mrs. Ozobia do not approve of Kainene’s lover, Richard, either because he cannot provide them with monetary benefits. In effect, after Kainene introduced Richard to her parents, they “ignored him, unimpressed because he didn’t know anyone who was worth knowing.” (35). Richard may be an Englishman, a white man, he is simply a writer in the eyes of Kainene’s parents. This explains why Chief Ozobia asked him: “Do you have any family doing business in Nigeria?” (p. 55). The Ozobia couple lost interest in Richard as soon as he answered in the negative: “Chief Ozobia smiled and looked away. He didn’t say very much else to Richard for the rest of the evening. Neither did Mrs. Ozobia, ...” (p. 55). When Kainene informed her mother about Richard’s impending travel to London, Mrs. Ozobia thought that his absence would be an opportunity for her to put an end to his relationship with her daughter. She could not hide her disappointment when Richard told her that he would be away for about ten days: “Just ten days?” She half-smiled. Perhaps she had hoped he would be away for longer, so she could finally find a suitable partner for her daughter” (p. 104). Richard is conscious of the materialism of Kainene’s parents, and he knows that because of it, the Ozobia couple would not agree should he ask their daughter to marry him. In effect, at the airport of Kano, on his way back from London, Richard decides to propose to Kainene. He does not doubt that she will accept his proposal, but the reaction he expects from her indicates the kind of parents Kainene has: “A white man and no money to speak of. My parents will be scandalized.” (p. 116).

Also, Adichie criticizes Nigerian upper-class people because of their bad treatment of the lower-class people. For example, during the family dinner to which Chief Ozobia invited Chief Okonji, Olanna noticed that apart from herself, nobody thanked the steward, Maxwell, for serving them, an attitude which she regrets: “Olanna wished they would; it was such a simple thing to do, to acknowledge the humanity of the people who served them” (p. 30). This regrettable behaviour towards Maxwell and the other employees of the Ozobias is no doubt deliberate, for when Olanna had drawn her family’s attention to it, she knew that they simply would not do as she wished: “She had suggested it once; her father said he paid them good salaries, and her mother said thanking them would give them room to be insulted, while Kainene, as usual, said nothing, a bored expression on her face” (pp. 30-31).

Through the incident of the stolen rice, Adichie denounces vehemently the behavior of the rich towards the poor in the Nigeria of the 1960s. The driver of the Ozobia family stole from the rice of Mrs. Ozobia and unfortunately for him, the bag in which he had hidden the rice fell and the woman caught him. Then, Mrs. Ozobia started to call him names: “Good-for-nothing! Stupid man!” “you useless man” (p. 163), “wild animal” (p. 164). She would not calm down even if the driver, who was certainly above sixty, was kneeling in front of her “with his hands raised high, palms
upward in supplication.” (p. 163). Fearing to be sacked, the elderly man mentioned God, hoping this would eventually soften Mrs. Ozobia’s heart and push her to forgive him: “Madam, please; madam, please. I am using God to beg you” (p. 164). But still, Olanna’s mother did not relent. Yet, she shows that she believes in God when she tells Olanna: “He stole my rice and was about to go home. It was only by God’s grace that the bag fell” (p. 164).

Had it not been Olanna who came over to know what all the fuss was about the man’s dismay would have lasted longer. When she saw the quantity of rice which the elderly man had stolen, Olanna could not believe it. The quantity was insignificant: “It could not have been more than four cups of rice” (p. 164). To put an end to the status quo, she pushes her mother to make up her mind: “Mom, if you’re going to sack him, then sack him and have him go right away” (p. 164). Surprised by Olanna’s reaction, Mrs. Ozobia granted forgiveness to the elderly man at last. Here, Adichie points out the lack of humanism on the part of the poor masses. For a woman whose husband ‘owns half of Lagos,’ what do four cups of rice represent anyway? Besides, this theft reveals the poverty of the elderly man. Mrs. Ozobia would have shown humanism by seeking to grasp the meaning of the driver’s actions and then seeing to it that he no longer needs to steal. In other words, if workers are given good salaries, they will not need to steal something to eat.

According to Olanna, inequality should not mean indignity. This explains why she does not approve of the elderly man abasing himself as he did before her mother. He has been caught after stealing; he is normal to ask for forgiveness. However, he has to keep his dignity. Olanna also denounces her mother’s hypocrisy and malicious intention who feigns outrage to take delight in her humiliation of the poor man. When Odenigbo draws Olanna’s attention to the fact that the driver should be blamed for stealing. Olanna makes it clear that the elderly man in particular and the masses, in general, are simply victims of injustice from the rich who have acquired their wealth unjustly:

“My father and his politician friends steal money with their contracts, but nobody makes them kneel to beg for forgiveness. And they build houses with their stolen money and rent them out to people like this man and charge inflated rents that make it impossible to buy food.” (p. 164).

Adegbite O. Tobalase (2018) observes in this regard that: “The poor are stratified in the presence of scarcity of the basic necessities, not because those things are actually scarce but because the capitalists are unjust in their means of acquiring wealth” (p. 28). Tobalase further adds:

Nigerian writers are now portraying the need for total condemnation of social stratification and poverty while advocating for the total overhaul of society as a result of the widening gap between the rich and the poor, particularly the socio-political and economic issues that affect the masses, particularly the proletarians, oppressed, exploited, and marginalized in their labor. Following their exposure to the atrocities perpetrated by capitalists against the poor, these writers’ focus has shifted to regular people, who aim to liberate them from all types of social injustice. Thus, Adichie not only criticizes the way Nigerian business leaders like Chief Ozobia and Chief Okonji profit from corruption while the masses suffer from poverty, exploitation, oppression, and marginalization, but she also advocates for a society free of corruption, one in which socialism and humanism are a reality.

3 ADVOCATING FOR A SOCIALIST AND HUMANIST SOCIETY

To a friend who asked her for advice so as to make her daughter a feminist, Adichie (2017) said: “Teach her to reject likability. Her job is not to make herself likable, her job is to be her full self, a self that is honest and aware of the equal humanity of other people” (p. 43). Adichie’s conviction of the equal humanity of all people is exemplified in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, especially through the humility and kindness of Odenigbo and Olanna. Odenigbo is a socialist, a revolutionary, a freedom fighter and a humanist. His socialism and his humanism manifest themselves right from the beginning of the novel with his behaviour towards his newly arrived houseboy, Ugwu. Ugwu’s aunty, who brought him in Odenigbo’s house, informed her nephew that Odenigbo is a good man, who Ugwu does not delay noticing. First, Odenigbo (Master) asks him to go to the kitchen and find himself something to eat before telling him to get settled and have a rest. When he learns that the thirteen-year-old boy stopped school at standard too many years ago, Master regrets that Ugwu’s father did not borrow money to enable his son to continue his schooling. Thus, he decides to enroll Ugwu in the staff primary school, for he believes that: “Education is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don’t have the tools to understand exploitation?” (Adichie 2009, p. 17). These words of Odenigbo are reminiscent of the socialists’ principle of individual freedom which includes negative liberty, which is to say, freedom from external restraint or exploitation. So, according to Odenigbo, achieving negative liberty requires being educated and he wants Ugwu to be able to resist exploitation. Hence, his decision to enroll the boy in school.

He not only sends him to school, but he also gives him excellent books. Odenigbo is not among those who want their houseboy to call them “Sah.” So, he asks Ugwu to call him Odenigbo because, he argues, “Sir” is arbitrary. He does not call Ugwu by his name, he calls him my good man, reflecting his affection for the young man. While introducing Ugwu to his visiting friends, Master says: “Ugwu helps me around the house. Very clever boy” (p. 22). He could, for example, have said “This is my houseboy, Ugwu.” This would indicate a social-class difference between Odenigbo and Ugwu. The young man is aware of the special way Master treats him:

> Ugwu came to realize other things. He was not a normal houseboy; Dr. Okeke’s houseboy next door did not sleep on a bed in a room, he slept on the kitchen floor. The houseboy at the end of the street with whom Ugwu went to the market did not decide what would be cooked, he cooked whatever he was ordered to. And they did not have masters or madams who gave them books, saying, “This one is excellent, just excellent” (p. 22).
Through this quotation, one can also see that the exploitation and marginalization that the lower-class people are victims of do not come from upper-class people only, but from middle-class people as well. After smelling a flowery scent on Ugwu, Master asked Olanna what the scent was. She told him that she had given the boy a scented powder and she asked Odenigbo if he had not noticed Ugwu’s body odor. But Master played it all down: “That’s the smell of villagers. I used to smell like that until I left Abba to go to secondary school.” (p. 43). So Ugwu’s bad smell does not abase him at all in the eyes of Odenigbo who does not feel embarrassed to say that he had a similar odor. Besides, likely, Ugwu will soon get rid of his bad smell now that he lives in town. When Ugwu’s mother fell ill, Master could have granted Ugwu the permission he was requesting to go and see her. But Odenigbo himself went and fetched the sick woman in his car. As if the suffering woman were his own mother, Odenigbo told Ugwu to move aside and carried her in the car: “Step aside, my good man.” Master helped her into the car, asked her to lie down on the backseat, to stretch out as much as she could (p. 72). He brought the woman in his house and had a doctor treat her. Here, Odenigbo puts into practice the socialist principle of community or solidarity according to which people should support one another, they should have a “sense of responsibility for [their] fellow men” (Adichie 2009 cited in Bradley 2008, p. 301) or, “care about, and, where necessary and possible, care for, one another, and, too, care that they care about one another.” As for Olanna, contrary to her capitalist parents, she is a humanist. If it was only up to Mr. and Mrs. Ozobia, Olanna would have accepted Chief Okonji’s proposal. The minister’s interest in the beautiful young woman is unmistakable: “I just can’t keep you out of my mind... I can appoint you to a board, any board you want, and I will furnish a flat for you wherever you want.” (p. 33). But Olanna tells him clearly that she is not interested. Olanna has chosen a middle-class man, a university lecturer despite her father’s disapproval and her mother’s dissuasion attempts. Olanna shows thus that she does not care about Chief Okonji’s wealth.

Olanna’s father is very popular on account of his wealth. For instance, at Enugu airport on her way to Lagos, Olanna drew the ticket seller’s attention as soon as she wrote her name on a piece of paper and told him she was travelling to Lagos: “Ozobia?” The ticket seller’s pockmarked face brightened in a wide smile. “Chief Ozobia’s daughter?” (P. 28). Olanna answered in the affirmative and the man added: “Oh! Well done, madam. I will ask the porter to take you to the VIP lounge.” (28). She did not accept the man’s offer though. Olanna belongs to the upper class and yet, unlike her mother, she is not bothered by the “plain furniture and uncarnetoped floors of Odenigbo’s house.” (Adichie 2009 cited in Cohen 2009, p. 34). Furthermore, the reasons which the narrator thinks justify Olanna’s liking for Richard reveal her humanism and difference from her capitalist and materialistic parents:

Perhaps it was because he did not have that familiar superiority of English people who thought they understood Africans better than Africans understood themselves and, instead, had an enduring uncertainty about him—almost a shyness. Or perhaps because her parents had ignored him, unimpressed because he didn’t know anyone who was worth knowing (Adichie 2009, p. 35).

Olanna first attracts the reader’s attention the day Odenigbo and Ugwu welcomed her in Nsukka just after she had come back from London. It is not common to see a woman help her houseboy do the washing, let alone an upper-class woman. Nevertheless, that is what Olanna did. This is just the first of a series of good actions which Olanna has carried out towards people in need. Actually, one of the ten commitments of humanists is service and participation. Thus, as a humanist, Olanna serves Ugwu willingly: “She bought him a comb and a shirt. She taught him to cook fried rice with green peppers and diced carrots...” (p. 43). The moment when Olanna gives Ugwu the scented powder is indicative of her empathy for him, empathy being another value which humanists are attached to: “Although she had noticed his body odor the first time she saw him, she let a few days pass before she gave him some scented powder for his armpits and asked him to use two capsfuls of Dettol in his bath water” (p. 43). Had she given him the powder the day she noticed his body odor, Ugwu might have thought that Olanna was indirectly telling him that he smelt bad rather than regard it as a gift.

If it is Odenigbo who brought Ugwu’s mother in his house, Olanna took her in the room and called Dr. Patel. Besides, she reassured Ugwu: “You mustn’t worry about her. Dr. Patel says it’s an infection and she will be fine” (p. 73). The latter’s greatfulness evidences the good treatment which Odenigbo and Olanna have given Ugwu’s mother: “May another person do for them what they have done for me” (p. 74). Though Ugwu is her houseboy, Olanna is humble enough to say please when asking him a service. Thus, wanting Ugwu to make some milk for her child, she addresses him: “And please make her milk” (p. 96). After helping Ugwu with the washing, she again shows that she is not the type of woman to always let her houseboy do the household chores alone. She intends to help the boy clean the room to prepare for the arrival of her cousin, Arize: “We will start cleaning the room in time. I want it to be spotless for her” (p. 96). Also, when they come back to Nsukka after the end of the Biafra War, she has the same humanist attitude towards Ugwu. In effect, conscious of the young man’s urgent need to go and see his family after the ravages of the Civil War, Olanna asks him to leave the cleaning of the bathroom until he came back from seeing his family” (p. 307).

Olanna’s humanism is also illustrated by the fact that she belongs to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP or SVPD or SSVP) which is “an international voluntary organization in the Catholic Church, founded in 1833 for the sanctification of its members by personal service of the poor ( Schönborn 2011, p. 32). Thus, accompanied by Ugwu, Olanna drove through dirt paths in nearby villages to give away yams and rice and old clothes.” (Adichie 2009, p. 86). After Nsukka was evacuated because of the advance of the federal troops, Odenigbo, Olanna, Baby and Ugwu came to settle in Odenigbo’s village, Abba. In this village, Olanna joins the women in the sewing group, making singlets and towels for the Biafran soldiers, still in accordance with the humanists’ value of service and participation:

“We must all recognize that we are members of a group and engaging in service to benefit the group and the other individuals in it makes us all better off” (p. 89). “
When Abba too was about to fall into the hands of the federal soldiers, Odenigbo and his family moved to Umuahia. Here, Olanna keeps her natural self, sharing her insufficient food, and socializing with her new neighbours. After the separatist forces destroyed, in an ambush, many armored vehicles belonging to the Nigerian state, Olanna joined the jubilation of her women neighbours, singing and dancing, contrary to Alice who preferred to keep to herself. This has pushed Mama Oji to appreciate the humanism of Olanna by addressing the latter in these terms: “Alice thinks she is too good for all of us in this yard,” Mama Oji said. “Look at you. Did they not say that you are a Big Man’s daughter? But you treat people like people. Who does she think she is?” (Adichie 2009 p. 245). The point is that Olanna is against any feeling of superiority among people. She believes that people, on account of their better social condition, should not consider themselves superior to others or better than others. Kainene is aware of this conviction of her twin sister, for after calling her houseboy, Harrison, the most pretentious peasant she has ever seen, she tells Olanna: “I know you don’t like the word peasant” (p. 255). Olanna confirms her dislike for the word peasant because according to her: “We are all peasants” (p. 255). Kainene questions Olanna’s assertion but admits that Richard would share Olanna’s opinion. Hence, Olanna’s appreciation of Richard.

4 Conclusion

If Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in Half of a Yellow Sun, recounts the events leading to the Biafra War and those during and just after the conflict, she has also dealt, in this novel, with social classes in Nigeria of 1960s. Adichie has not been soft on the Nigerian upper class. She first criticizes this social class because of its arrogance towards the lower class, as illustrated by the ungratefulness that Maxwell, as a steward, is usually a victim of on the part of those he serves. Then, Adichie denounces the capitalism and the corruption of upper-class people like the Ozobia couple and the Minister of Finance who make more and more fortune, profiting unjustly from the public resources while the masses wallow in poverty. Chief Okonji, for example, demands ten percent for each contract which he attributes whereas he should give the contracts transparently and without any personal gain. As for Mr. and Mrs. Ozobia, wanting to outdo the other bidders for a building contract, they do not hesitate to promise the minister an affair with their daughter, Olanna. To get the young woman, Chief Okonji, for his part, offers her a job and is ready to furnish a flat for her wherever she wants.

The Nigerian novelist also decries the capitalism of the Ozobia couple through their lack of interest in Odenigbo and Richard. Chief Ozobia and his wife (Art) do not approve of the relationship between Olanna and her lover, Odenigbo, because the latter belongs to the middle class and therefore is not wealthy. So, they encourage their daughter into an affair with the minister. Concerning Richard, the lover of Kainene, as soon as Mr. and Mrs. Ozobia knew that he is a writer and does not have any family doing business in Nigeria, they lost interest in him. Richard knows their excessive love of money, who expects them to be scandalized should he propose to Kainene because he does not have much money.

Also, with the driver of the Ozobias who was caught after stealing from the rice of Mrs. Ozobia, Adichie has shown the injustice and exploitation to which the lower-class people are submitted. For having stolen four cups of rice, the above-sixty-year-old driver is called names and humiliated by Mrs. Ozobia who would have fired him after reveling in his dismay but for Olanna. Far from condoning the elderly man’s act, Adichie points out the part of the responsibility of the Ozobias in the driver’s fault. If he was paid a good salary, he would not need to steal such an insignificant quantity of rice. Besides, people like Chief Ozobia and Chief Okonji steal money with their contracts, build houses with the money and rent the houses to people like the driver at prices that do not enable them to buy food.

Owing to this situation, Adichie calls for a socialist and humanist society in which the gap among social classes is bridged. This explains why she also presents upper-class women moving in with middle-class men on the one hand, and upper-class and middle-class people being humanist towards lower-class people on the other hand. Thus, Olanna does not follow her parents in their wish to see her start a love affair with the wealthy Chief Okonji. Neither did she follow her mother who wanted her “to marry Igwe Okagbue’s son, and later, Chief Okaro’s son” (p. 34). Instead, she chooses a middle-class man, Odenigbo. Kainene too moves in with Richard, a white man who is not better off than Olanna’s lover.

Adichie’s call for a socialist and humanist society where class stratification is eradicated is finally stressed through the humanity and the humanism of Odenigbo and Olanna towards the lower-class people. Among these people is Ugwu whom Odenigbo and Olanna treat not as their houseboy but rather as their son. Odenigbo does not want Ugwu to him “Sah.” So, he asks the boy to call him by his name while he calls Ugwu my good man, which reflects his affection. Master sends him to school and enables him later to write a book about the Biafra War. When his mother fell ill, Odenigbo and Olanna took care of her and thus enabled her to regain health. Olanna is very understanding with Ugwu regarding the household chores, she exchanges ideas with him and buys things for him. The woman’s attitude is all more understandable as she is a member of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. She does not underestimate anybody. Hence, Mama Oji’s observation: “Look at you. Did they not say that you are a Big Man’s daughter? But you treat people like people.” (Adichie 2009, p. 245).

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