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The Pragmatic Elements of Stance and Engagement in "Dear Ijeawele" by Chimamanda Adichie

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Abstract: This work examines the notions of stance and engagement in Chimamanda Adichie's celebrated work, *Dear Ijeawele*. Adichie's letter, serving as a guide for raising a feminist daughter, presents an opportune lens through which to analyze her stance and engagement with feminist themes. Drawing upon a comprehensive literature review, this study analyzes selected passages from *Dear Ijeawele* to identify Adichie's position, beliefs, and attitudes towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. The paper also investigates the rhetorical strategies employed by Adichie to engage her readers, such as personal anecdotes and persuasive language. By situating the analyzed passages within the broader context of the book, the study evaluates the relationship between Adichie's stance and engagement and the overall objectives of *Dear Ijeawele*. Comparative analysis with other feminist texts and Adichie's previous works further enriches the exploration of her approach. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Adichie's literary contributions and shed light on the impact of her writing in promoting feminist ideals and challenging societal norms.

Keywords: engagement; feminists; pragmatic; stance

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1. Introduction

Stance and engagement are crucial elements in literature as they shape the author's perspective, influence reader interpretation, and foster meaningful connections between the writer and the audience. Stance refers to an author's position or viewpoint on a particular subject or theme within their work. It reflects their beliefs, values, and perspectives, providing a lens through which readers can understand and engage with the text. According to Barry (2017) in his book *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, an author's stance helps shape the themes, narrative structure, and character development, offering insight into their intentions and shaping the overall meaning of the work. The significance of an author's stance lies in its ability to provoke thought, challenge established norms, and offer alternative viewpoints, leading to deeper literary analysis and critical thinking among readers. Engagement refers to the active involvement and interaction between the author and the reader, creating a dynamic relationship that enhances literary experience. It involves various strategies and techniques employed by the author to captivate, provoke, and connect with the audience.

According to Sheridan Blau (2003) in his book *The Literature Workshop: Teaching Texts and Their Readers*, engagement fosters a sense of shared meaning, empathy, and emotional resonance between the author and the reader, making the reading experience more immersive and impactful. Engaging literature encourages readers to become active participants, critically analyzing the text, and forming their interpretations, leading to a more profound understanding and appreciation of the work. Effective engagement strategies, such as vivid storytelling, relatable characters, rhetorical devices, and thought-provoking questions, create a dialogue between the author and the reader, stimulating intellectual and emotional responses. The combination of a distinct stance and engaging techniques in literature contributes to its impact, relevance, and enduring significance. It allows authors to convey their messages effectively, prompts readers to reflect and connect with the text on a deeper level, and fosters dialogue and exploration of diverse perspectives. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a renowned Nigerian author and feminist. Born on September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria, she has gained international recognition for her literary works, which explore *themes of gender, identity, race, and culture.* Adichie's writing often reflects her experiences growing up in Nigeria and her observations of societal norms and inequalities.

Adichie's notable works include novels such as *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Americanah* (2013), which have received critical acclaim and numerous awards. Her writing style is known for its vivid storytelling, complex characters, and insightful social commentary. *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* is a nonfiction work by Chimamanda Adichie, published in 2017. The book originated as a letter Adichie wrote to a friend who had asked for advice on raising her daughter as a feminist. It offers practical suggestions and thought-provoking insights on how to raise empowered girls in a patriarchal society. Addressing all facets of feminism and gender equality, Adichie's prose in *Dear Ijeawele* is distinctively direct and eloquent.

2. Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to carry out the use of stance and engagement in *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* by Chimamanda Adichie. The specific objectives are to:

1. to identify linguistic features signifying stance and engagement in the text;

2. to analyze the linguistic features identified in the text; and

3. to discuss the stance and engagement strategies in conveying the message in the text.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data and Data Collection

This research mostly draws from Chimamanda Adichie's *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* as its main source. The text was read thoroughly, and the researcher obtained the instances that signifying stance and engagement from the text. The text was chosen because not much has been done on it from the field of linguistics, especially using stance and engagement framework.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study is stance and engagement theory proposed by Hyland (2005). The theory is considered appropriate because it has set of tools that captured the data for the study. According to Hyland (2005), *stance* means the way in which researchers present their voice or personality and convey their judgements, opinions and commitments, while *engagement* means how researchers acknowledge the presence of their audience and relate to them in the text.

5. Literature Review

This section reviews the relevant literature on the subject. The review not only summarizes the concepts related to the investigation, but it also examines the literature that is pertinent to the research and the previous works in the fields.

5.1. Feminism as a Concept

In the fields of politics, culture, or the economy, feminism can mean any movement that seeks to guarantee women's equality and safety. Feminism has been around for a long time and is a global phenomenon. Feminism can be defined in many ways, but ultimately, it is about eradicating discrimination based on gender and achieving gender equality. Scholars and feminists (Adichie, 2017; Davis, 2004; Gerhard, 2001; Humm, 1992; Lorber, 2001) have identified three distinct "waves" in the movement's evolution. When people talk about the first wave, they usually mean the fight for women's suffrage in the 1800s and 1900s. The second wave includes the movements and ideologies that emerged in response to the women's liberation movement, which sought to secure equal social and legal rights for women, starting in the 1960s. Beginning in the 1990s, a new movement emerged in response to the perceived shortcomings of the previous two waves of feminism; this movement is known as the third wave (Snyder, 2008).

Feminism is a political and social movement that promotes women's rights and equality, as well as a body of thought and theory that addresses gender inequality. In the 1942 film *Woman of the Year*, Katherine Hepburn refers to the "feminist movement," yet the terms "feminism" and "feminist" did not acquire common use until the 1970s. Walker (2001) and Humm (2021) argue that there have been three distinct periods in feminism's development. There was a feminist uprising in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, another in the 1960s and 1970s, and the current wave began in the '90s. These feminist movements paved the way for feminist philosophy. Several fields have seen its effects, including feminist history, literary criticism, and geography (Gerhard, 2001).

Feminism has changed the way people think in many parts of Western society, from the legal system to popular culture. In their fight against sexism, misogyny, and other types of gender-based discrimination, feminists have fought for women's rights in the following areas: the ability to own property, vote, and enter legally binding contracts; the right to bodily autonomy and integrity; the right to abortion; and reproductive rights (including access to contraception and quality prenatal care). White, middle-class women from the West have spearheaded feminist beliefs and movements for much of their existence. Nevertheless, women of all racial backgrounds have put forth alternate forms of feminism ever since Sojourner Truth addressed American feminists in 1851. Along with the American Civil Rights Movement and the end of European colonization in Southeast Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and parts of Latin America, this tendency gained momentum in the 1960s. Since then, women from Africa, Asia, and other formerly colonized regions by Europe have presented "post-colonial" and "third world" feminisms. Chandra Talpade Mohanty is one of the postcolonial feminists who argue that Western feminism is ethnocentric (Davis, 2004; Walker, 2001).

5.2. Feminist Theory in Communication

Feminist theories in communication cover a wide range of topics, but they all center on the representation of gender and gendered power in texts meant for communication. These theories can illuminate power dynamics, elucidate the display of gendered power, or establish a connection between discourse patterns and power relations overall. They can also provide ways for reducing gendered power. Many scholars (e.g., Dow & Condit, 2005) believe that theories and other forms of scholarship must strive to promote gender justice holistically to qualify as feminist. For feminist theory in communication to be effective, it must take into consideration not just the power dynamics between genders and other textual factors, but also the significance of race, sexuality, and class. Other forms of power, such as those based on race, class, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity, interact with gender power inequalities. Complex feminist theories of communication ought to try to incorporate all these factors (Buzzanell, 2000).

Since its inception in the 1970s, feminist philosophy has undergone several decades of evolution. Gaye Tuchman's *The Symbolic Annihilation of Women in the Mass Media* (1978) is a seminal work in this field. From the very beginning, media portrayals and theories surrounding women underwent substantial development, building upon the foundation of their tremendous under-representation in mass media due to their powerlessness and influence within media culture. Feminist theory in rhetorical studies requires the grounding of research on women's political rhetoric in historical settings (Campbell, 1973). There was a lot of effort in the 1970s and 1980s to document patterns of representation and gaps, as well as to establish and examine the limited range of representations of women and to rediscover the rhetorical contributions of early women in the political realm. In the late 1980s, scholars in the discipline of media studies began to analyze texts from the mass media through the lens of a more expansive feminist theory that extended beyond the realm of communication. Political arguments in support of suffrage and women's rights during the abolitionist and feminist movements were the primary focus of feminist rhetorical theories. During that period, feminist theory in the field of media studies aimed to highlight the under representation of women in the media and pinpoint the patterns of inequality in media usage. Some early feminist scholars argued that gender, race, class, and sexuality were not sufficiently considered in feminist theory and practice (Steeves, 1987).

The abundance of sexualize and gendered violence depicted in popular culture, as well as how it mirrored prevailing ideologies, was the subject of significant research in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Moorti, 2002). In addition to developing theories that extended beyond conventional political speech as text, feminist rhetorical theorists homed in on gendered aspects within canonical rhetorical texts and expanded their scope to encompass a variety of artifacts, such as artwork, conversations, and quilts (Foss, Foss & Griffin, 1999). Theories analyzing the rise of post feminism in popular culture's media also emerged throughout this decade. Feminist theory in communication has recently tried to analyze and

critique various textual creations based on how well they account for many subjectivities intersectionality. Also, some contemporary works have tried to explain or criticize how pornographic aesthetic and rhetorical components have become more embedded in mainstream media culture, which is becoming more sexualized (Bastalich et al., 2007). Feminist theory has analyzed the media's reception of third-wave feminism and provided an explanation for the pervasiveness of post-feminist ideas and concepts in popular culture (Shugart, 2001). The area has also seen the rise of global feminism as a school of thought, with scholars evaluating power dynamics in multicultural and transnational contexts (Parameswaran, 2002).

Feminist theory in communication has three main schools of thought, all of which started in the 1970s and continue to this day. The first and most prevalent one concerns the incorporation and endorsement of prevailing ideology into popular media texts. Any number of media, from news pieces and political campaigns to reality TV shows and music videos, can be considered texts. Second, psychoanalytic thought examines the function of sexuality, desire, and visual pleasure in media texts. The third and most recent theory examines the representation of gender and feminism in texts since the emergence of post-feminist media culture. Theories differ not only in the aspects of communication practices they address, but also in the level of criticism they level at the power relations that define the current situation (Alvesson, 1996).

5.3. Gendered Content and Dominant Ideologies

There is a great deal of variation in message content depending on the gender of the sender, the receiver, or the subject of any given instance or text of communication, according to research in several branches of communication. Finding gendered representational patterns and explaining the underlying power relations are typically the goals of feminist theory, which examines gendered content in news coverage and other forms of popular media. Many gender differences, according to feminist thinkers, stem from the cultural devaluation of women. Because of this focus, scholars in the field of rhetorical studies have begun to comprehend how female rhetors have been able to achieve political success through rhetorical methods that differ from those accessible to male rhetors on occasion. For example, to assert their rightful place in the public arena of political speech-making, early female rhetors mostly used arguments grounded in religion and ethics. Further, many of the first female rhetors sought out non-traditional platforms for their political discourse, such as women's organizations and periodicals. As far as media theorists are concerned, the most glaring fact is the chronic lack of female characters in popular culture and news articles.

In 1978, Gaye Tuchman explored this lack of female representation in her chapter, *The Symbolic Annihilation of Women in the Mass Media*. Through her analysis of various media texts, including mainstream news coverage, Tuchman found that women were largely absent. Many studies have shown that about 80% of news subjects and expert sources are men. This

is despite improvements in what Tuchman called "symbolic annihilation," such as the percentage of female characters on prime-time television programs. Gender representational gaps and gendered rhetorical agency have been around for a long time. According to feminist theory, the persistent gender gap in media representation is mostly attributable to women's limited agency in determining and shaping media themes and content. Feminist communication theorists also believe that prevailing gender beliefs underpin the specific forms of female representation that do exist (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2003).

Scholars in the field of news analysis have demonstrated persistent patterns in news coverage that exhibit aspects of "gendered mediation." This refers to situations where the subject's gender influences the news coverage, or where gender is introduced in places where it is superfluous or unnecessary. In other words, the coverage of women in news stories varies from that of men in the same type of stories. There are many well-established patterns of gendered mediation in the news. There are established streams of scholarship in several journalism sub fields. Some of the most advanced studies have looked at how the media portrays politicians and candidates in relation to gender. This line of research has proven time and time again that female politicians and political candidates face discrimination, which follows predictable patterns that cast doubt on their legitimacy. More stories on female candidates focus on their private lives, such as their families, relationships, fashion choices, and interests. When compared to male candidates, they get less attention for their pertinent experiences and less coverage for their political opinions. Because the substance of their views routinely receives less weight than men's, female politicians have had to master the art of rhetorical narrowing to achieve political success. If they come across as too emotional or timid, they aren't strong enough for a political position, but if they come across as too aggressive, they're not feminine enough.

There is a bias towards covering male athletes and sporting events in mainstream press coverage, which perpetuates the gendered mediation problem. Additionally, when featuring women, sexualize imagery predominates, while their personal experiences and lifestyles receive less visual attention than their athleticism.

Gender differences in the reasons behind wins and losses are more nuanced; for instance, when discussing athletic performance, it is more common to describe male bodies as being an ideal fit. Sports coverage tends to portray masculine bodies in a more mechanical light than female ones. Feminist theorists posit that our societal prejudice against women in public life explains why we cover major news stories like politics and sports differently (Duncan, 2009). Even when it doesn't seem pertinent, media coverage often returns to women's traditional home roles. Similarly, the sexism and sexualization of female athletes are responsible for the frequent mentions of female politicians' hairstyles and clothing, as well as the disproportionate representation of female athletes in comparison to male athletes (McKay, Messner & Sabo, 2000).

According to these patterns, media portrayals of women in sports limit their roles and contributions, perpetuating the perception that their bodies are more important than their ideas and the value they bring to the sport. Feminist theories that attempt to explain these differences fall short because they focus on finding gendered patterns in coverage rather than arguing that the news can never fairly and adequately cover women's contributions the way it is. There has also been little progress in this field's academic knowledge of how gender interacts with other subjective factors like race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and national origin to shape news coverage of politics and athletic events. Scholars of gendered mediation in news coverage will greatly benefit from additional investigations into these relationships, such as studies comparing the media's coverage of gay and straight candidates for public office. The underlying idea of this work is to examine patterns of slight differences in coverage, with the aim of promoting fair representation of women in politics and athletics, enabling them to participate on an equal footing with men. A more sophisticated and refined understanding of how these components integrate into ideological patterns within coverage can enhance our understanding of the possibilities and constraints of news in various domains (Manning, 2000).

Beyond studies of mainstream news coverage that center on gendered mediation, much of the feminist theory and research in communication has concentrated on explaining how the mass media supports dominant ideas. Men essentially show off their dominance by incorporating hegemonic ideology, while downplaying or ignoring women's power. Many popular media portrayals of women place them in subordinate or service roles, relegate them to the home instead of the public arena, or even make them victims of crime. Even though these roles are not inherently bad or undesirable, their presence signals gendered power disparities. For example, when comparing Hollywood films with male protagonists to those with female protagonists, it becomes clear that the former has more significant roles to play, earn more money, and have a much more distinct path to stardom, especially as they progress through their careers.

Feminist theorists have attempted to account for gender power disparities with respect to other variables such as race, class, and sexuality through ideological analysis of texts from mainstream media. For example, there's a lot of research on how detrimental and reinforcing gender stereotypes are when it comes to racial and ethnic groupings. While these do mark progress in the examination of inter-sectional subjectivity in popular culture, the research typically highlights significant gaps in our understanding of these topics. For instance, the identification of individuals with multiple identifiers in news coverage is extremely rare. An Asian, gay, or poor person, acting as a parent, likely wouldn't receive all these descriptions. Instead, the person's function in the news narrative would dictate the more flattened depiction they would receive. Since most people of color are men and most women are white, African American women rarely make appearances in fictional works published by major media outlets. Over time, these fundamental patterns have changed slightly. Representations of violent attack, in communication texts and especially in the mass media, portray power more

clearly than in any other area. These depictions nonetheless maintain a few blatantly sexist tropes (DeMarchi, 2014).

In most depictions of sexual assault and other forms of criminal assault, female characters play the role of victims. Some examples of problematic portrayals of female characters with violent abilities include Lara Croft's extreme sexualization, the villainous Maleficent, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer's dissatisfaction with her superhero position. Heroism and femininity do not go hand in hand as easily as bravery and masculinity do. The cultural concepts we have about masculinity, rather than femininity, mesh better with our conceptions of power and authority. Thus, rather than portraying it in a positive light, depictions of women's power typically link it to negative aspects like sexuality and harm. Female superheroes have emerged thanks to shifts in gender roles; in the past, such figures were nearly always villains. But scholars (Jiwani, 2011; Wood & Thomas, 2017) have pointed out that, due to our cultural ideological bias against women using force and violence, it is usually impossible for a popular text to advocate aggressive female action. Consequently, literature has underrepresented female heroes and often portrays them in a different light than their male counterparts (Höberth, 2012).

Ideological theories explain patterns of victimization, particularly violent sexual assault. Many stories revolve around male protagonists saving women from sexualize or long-term victims. It is unusual to find narratives in which the male protagonist is the aggressor. Many media depictions of violence emphasize the disproportionate brutality that men of color endure. The culprits' perceived ethnic or foreign background might account for their antiquated or traditionalist worldview, which in turn explains their behavior. Other portrayals of men of color, including heroes, police officers, victims, and wrongfully accused, reflect societal power imbalances and cultural ideas about race and gender (Fearon & Laitin, 2000).

Texts portraying sexual assault have often followed specific patterns of representation; however, there have been notable shifts over multiple decades. The depictions of sexualize violence are among the most extreme forms of violent art. In tales of sexual assault, male protagonists often rescue and aid the victim more prominently than any female figure, including the victim herself, due to the typical male or masculine perspective on these stories. Plot twists such as the victim's severe trauma reaction or the victim's death frequently marginalize or remove the voices and experiences of victims and survivors from these books. Even rarer are those in which survivors really discuss what happened to them. Women often attribute victimization, whether to their own or another child. Sexual assault often cites the victim's actions, or lack thereof, as the cause. Despite their under-representation in heroic roles, gay men often portray themselves as victims of sexualize or gender-based violence. Historically, they have been disproportionately victims of brutal sexual assault, and they have had limited agency in the narratives surrounding such crimes (Bumiller, 2008). Typically, narratives portray characters from lower-status or less powerful groups as helpless bystanders rather than heroes (Jasper et al., 2020).

Certain theorists describe hyper victimization as the occurrence of more severe, graphic, and/or ongoing physical abuse or assault on characters of color compared to white victims. However, popular media portrayals of sexual violence have done a terrible job of incorporating inter-sectional themes, in addition to this inclination toward hyper-victimization. For example, the media almost never discusses the issue of racial disparities in sentencing, or the disproportionately low penalties handed down to males who assault women of color compared to white women. Story lines centered on sexual assault in various forms of media consistently fail to address these issues. Theorists believe they have their roots in power dynamics and contribute to the normalization of existing imbalances by failing to highlight cultural injustices and portray the unfair or uneven treatment of people of color in the media (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020).

Numerous scholars have provided concrete evidence demonstrating how the prevailing ideology in mainstream media texts evolves over time in response to different content components. For feminist theorists, these changes show how the prevailing ideology may change to fit activist arguments and new ideas while keeping its essential features the same. One aspect of masculinity that has changed throughout the years is the use of violence to resolve conflicts; nonetheless, this aspect of noble masculinity has persisted in media portrayals. "Hegemonic masculinity" is the theoretical framework that theorists employ to clarify this occurrence. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant model of masculinity that popular culture portrays. The idea of using violence as a solution to issues remains important, even as it adapts to new ideas and changes over time. Characters exhibiting hegemonic masculinity have grown in their capacity to communicate with women, express themselves, and engage in deep discourse as the story progresses. However, even when they use their power for good, they are likely to portray themselves as heroic and resort to violence (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020).

The media's portrayal of gender has changed throughout the years in reaction to feminist movements' calls for political and social reform (McRobbie, 2008). While noteworthy, its evolution is far from finished. Scholars from various fields have studied this development and the boundaries of change in media portrayal. Some examples of this trend include feminist definitions of rape, domestic abuse, and marital rape appearing in mainstream news reports, the rise of strong female heroes in contemporary media, and the spread of feminist concepts into prime-time television. All these changes credit the media's capacity to both reflect and incorporate societal change. Academics, on the other hand, are eager to note that these changes in theory never precede or initiate changes in the actual social and political atmosphere, but rather invariably follow them. New research reveals that Neo-liberal ideology influences many media texts, shaping narratives about individuals without scrutinizing power structures. Such modifications, according to some theorists, are exceedingly narrow and cover only changes that defy exclusion or neglect. Mainstream media texts primarily function to restrict and control ideological changes at the cultural level, according to their thesis, and ideological alterations are small (Van Dijk, 1995).

6. Data Analysis

6.1. Analysis of Stance

6.1.1. Hedges as an Example of Stance in the Text

"*Be a full person.*"

The phrase "Be a full person" can be seen as a hedge because it presents a general statement without specifying what it means to be a "full person." It allows for individual interpretation and flexibility. "I find this to be so wise and moving." The phrase "I find this to be so wise and moving" contains hedges in the form of subjective language ("I find," "so wise," "moving"). These expressions indicate that the writer's opinion may not be universally shared and that there is room for differing perspectives. "It doesn't surprise me that your sister-in-law says you should be a 'traditional' mother." The use of the phrase "It doesn't surprise me" suggests that the writer is expressing a lack of surprise based on their own expectations or assumptions.

This hedge allows for the possibility that the sister-in-law's opinion may differ from the writer's own beliefs. "Everybody will have an opinion about what you should do." The phrase "Everybody will have an opinion" is a hedge that acknowledges the existence of multiple viewpoints without specifically endorsing or dismissing any opinion. It implies that there are a range of perspectives on the subject. "Parenting is about practice and love." The phrase "Parenting is about" can be considered a hedge, as it presents a general statement without specifying all the complexities and nuances of parenting. It allows for the acknowledgment that there are various aspects and approaches to parenting.

This text uses hedges to express subjective opinions, acknowledge different perspectives, and present general statements without providing specific details or absolutes. They allow for flexibility and recognition of the variability in individual experiences and beliefs.

6.1.2. Boosters Serve as an Example of Style in the Text

"*Do it together.*"

The phrase "do it together" serves as a booster by emphasizing the importance of shared responsibility and collaborative parenting. It encourages both parents to actively participate in child-rearing. "Seriously. He loves her. It's good for her to be cared for by her father." The phrases "seriously," "he loves her," and "it's good for her" function as boosters by expressing certainty and emphasizing the positive impact of the father's involvement in care giving. They reinforce the idea that fathers have an important role in parenting.

"*Look away.*"

"So look away, arrest your perfectionism, and still your socially conditioned sense of duty." The phrases "look away," "arrest your perfectionism," and "still your socially conditioned

sense of duty" act as boosters by urging the reader to let go of societal expectations and rigid gender roles. They emphasize the importance of embracing a more equal and flexible approach to parenting. "Because when there is true equality, resentment does not exist." - The phrase "true equality" serves as a booster by highlighting the positive outcome of equitable parenting. It suggests that a balanced distribution of childcare responsibilities leads to a harmonious relationship without feelings of resentment.

"And never say that Chudi is 'babysitting.'" The phrase "never say" acts as a booster by emphasizing the writer's strong stance on the issue. The text rejects the notion that labeling fathers caring for their own children as "babysitting" reinforces the inherent responsibility of fathers in parenting. This text uses boosters to underscore the significance of shared parenting, question conventional gender roles, and advocate for equal responsibility in childcare. They aim to empower both parents and highlight the positive outcomes of actively engaging in caregiving duties.

6.1.3. Self-Mention as an Example of Stance in the Text

In the given text, there are several examples of self-mention as a stance. Self-mention occurs when the author includes personal experiences or perspectives to support their argument or position. Let's analyze some instances: "I remember being told as a child to 'bend down properly while sweeping, like a girl'." The author recalls a personal experience of being given instructions based on gender roles. "I wish I had been told simply, 'Bend down and sweep properly because you'll clean the floor better'. And I wish my brothers had been told the same thing." The author expresses their personal opinion and reflects on how gender-neutral instructions would have been more beneficial.

"Yesterday I went to a children's shop to buy Chizalum an outfit." The author introduces a specific personal event to highlight the issue of gendered clothing options for children. "Did I ever tell you about going to a US mall with a seven-year-old Nigerian girl and her mother?" The author initiates a personal anecdote to emphasize the impact of gender roles on children's toy preferences. "A young Nigerian woman once told me that she had for years behaved 'like a boy'..." The author shares a personal account of a conversation with a woman who felt pressured to conform to traditional gender roles. "Another acquaintance, an American living in the Pacific Northwest, once told me..." The author presents another individual's experience to illustrate how gender roles are enforced from an early age. By incorporating personal stories and observations, the author strengthens their argument against gender roles and advocates for individuality and self-reliance. These instances of self-mention provide a personal and relatable perspective, adding emotional weight to the author's stance.

6.2. Analysis of Engagement

6.2.1. Readers Pronoun as an Example of Engagement in the Text

In the given text, there are instances of reader pronouns that align with feminism and highlight gender inequalities. "Being a feminist is like being pregnant. You either are or you

are not. You either believe in the full equality of men and women or you do not." The use of "you" here addresses the reader directly and emphasizes the binary nature of feminism, promoting the idea of wholeheartedly embracing gender equality. "Feminism Lite uses analogies like 'He is the head and you are the neck'. Or 'He is driving, but you are in the front seat'. More troubling is the idea, in Feminism Lite, that men are naturally superior but should be expected to 'treat women well'. No. No. No." The repeated use of "you" expresses a strong stance against the ideas of conditional equality and male superiority perpetuated in Feminism Lite.

"Now let us reverse it. Theresa May has allowed her husband to shine. Does it make sense? If Philip May were prime minister, perhaps we might hear that his wife had 'supported' him from the background, or that she was 'behind' him or that she'd 'stood by his side', but we would never hear that she had 'allowed' him to shine." - By using "us" and "you," the author engages the reader in challenging the language and power dynamics that reinforce gender roles and hierarchical relationships. "You will often hear members of the Nigerian chapter of the Society of Feminism Lite say, 'Leave the woman alone to do what she wants as long as her husband allows.'" - The use of "you" highlights the problematic nature of using permission and being allowed within the context of a supposed equal marriage, emphasizing the unequal power dynamics and submissive expectations.

"I cannot tell you how often people I care about—men and women—have expected me to make a case for sexism, to 'prove' it, as it were, while never having the same expectation for racism." - The inclusion of "you" implies the reader's awareness and invites them to recognize the differential treatment of sexism and racism, highlighting the need for equal recognition and validation of gender injustice. "But here is a sad truth: our world is full of men and women who do not like powerful women. We have been so conditioned to think of power as male that a powerful woman is an aberration." - The use of "we" implicates the reader and acknowledges the societal conditioning that contributes to the marginalization and scrutiny faced by powerful women, urging a collective recognition and challenge of these biases. By incorporating reader pronouns, the author involves the audience and encourages introspection, inviting them to critically analyze gender inequalities and engage in feminist discourse. The use of "you" fosters a personal connection, challenging readers to question their own beliefs and biases while promoting a more inclusive and equal society.

6.2.2. Personal Asides as an Example of Engagement in the Text

Instances of "personal aside" in the text are moments when the author directly addresses the reader and shares personal thoughts or experiences. "A friend of mine says she will never call her daughter 'princess'. People mean well when they say this, but 'princess' is loaded with assumptions, of a girl's delicacy, of the prince who will come to save her, etc. This friend prefers 'angel' and 'star'." - Here, the author shares a personal anecdote about a friend's decision regarding the language used to address her daughter. It serves as a reflection

on societal gender expectations and encourages the reader to reconsider the terms they use for their own children.

"You know that Igbo joke used to tease girls who were being childish: 'What are you doing? Don't you know you are old enough to find a husband?' I used to say that often. But now I choose not to. I say, 'You are old enough to find a job.' Because I do not believe that marriage is something we should teach young girls to aspire to." - In this passage, the author shares a personal change in perspective, reflecting on their own language choices and the shift in their belief system regarding the aspirations of young girls. It prompts the reader to reconsider the messages they convey to children and challenges traditional gender roles.

"Try not to use words like 'misogyny' and 'patriarchy' too often with Chizalum. We feminists can sometimes be too jargony, and jargon can sometimes feel too abstract. Don't just label something misogynistic; tell her why it is and tell her what would make it not be." Here, the author offers a personal recommendation based on their own experience as a feminist. They share insights on effective communication and suggest explaining the meaning and implications behind terms like "misogyny" and "patriarchy" to foster a better understanding. "Remember that television commercial we watched in Lagos, where a man cooks and his wife claps for him? True progress is when she doesn't clap for him but just reacts to the food itself." - The author recalls a shared experience, addressing the reader's memory of a specific television commercial. By highlighting the gender dynamics depicted in the commercial, the author underscores the need for a shift in societal expectations and challenges traditional gender roles.

"Instead of merely telling her, show her with examples that misogyny can be overt and misogyny can be subtle, and that both are abhorrent." - In this statement, the author advises the reader on the importance of providing concrete examples to illustrate the presence and effects of misogyny. The use of "you" directly involves the reader in the process of educating and shaping perspectives. These personal asides allow the author to share their own experiences, perspectives, and insights, engaging the reader on a more personal level. By incorporating these personal anecdotes, the author encourages the reader to reflect on their own beliefs, actions, and language choices regarding gender equality.

6.2.3. Appeal to Shared Knowledge as an Example of Engagement in the Text

Instances of "appeal to shared knowledge" in the text are moments when the author refers to common societal norms, experiences, or expectations that readers can relate to. "We condition girls to aspire to marriage, and we do not condition boys to aspire to marriage, and so there is already a terrible imbalance at the start." The author appeals to shared knowledge by highlighting a widely recognized societal norm that places emphasis on girls aspiring to marriage while neglecting to instill the same expectations in boys. This statement invites readers to reflect on the gender disparities and imbalances that exist in societal conditioning.

"Reading of this made me think not only of how American voters apparently place retrograde marital expectations on women, but also of my own experience with my name." - By

mentioning the American voters' expectations placed on women in relation to marital roles, the author appeals to shared knowledge of cultural norms and expectations. They connect it to their personal experience with societal pressures regarding the use of their name, encouraging readers to consider similar pressures they may have encountered.

"Even some friends made statements like, 'You are successful, and so it is OK to keep your name.' Which made me wonder: Why does a woman have to be successful at work in order to justify keeping her name?" The author appeals to shared knowledge by addressing the common assumption that a woman's success should determine whether she can keep her name after marriage. This statement challenges the underlying societal expectations and prompts readers to question why success should be a prerequisite for maintaining one's identity.

"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 that I have had since I was born." Here, the author acknowledges a counterargument related to patriarchal naming traditions. By appealing to shared knowledge, they recognize that the concept of a father's name being passed down is a widely understood practice. However, they emphasize the personal significance and familiarity of their own name, highlighting the importance of individual choice and attachment to one's identity.

"'Mrs' is a title I dislike because Nigerian society gives it too much value. I have observed too many cases of men and women who proudly speak of the title of Mrs. as though those who are not Mrs. have somehow failed at something." - In this statement, the author appeals to shared knowledge by pointing out the cultural significance and societal value attached to the title "Mrs." They highlight the pressure placed on women to adopt the title and challenge the assumption that those who do not possess it are somehow lacking or inferior.

By referencing shared societal norms and experiences, the author encourages readers to critically examine these norms and consider their own beliefs and expectations regarding marriage, naming conventions, and gender roles. These appeals to shared knowledge help to foster a deeper understanding of the issues discussed and prompt readers to question and challenge existing societal norms and expectations.

7. Conclusion

Chimamanda Adichie's *Dear Ijeawele* is a powerful manifesto that highlights the significance of stance and engagement in writing. Adichie's ability to address readers directly through personal asides creates a sense of intimacy and involvement. By appealing to shared knowledge, she establishes a connection with readers and encourages them to critically analyze societal norms and biases. Adichie's clear stance as a feminist is evident throughout the text, as she advocates for gender equality and challenges traditional gender roles. *Dear*

Ijeawele serves as a call to action, urging readers to question and reshape the language, beliefs, and assumptions that perpetuate inequality. Adichie's thought-provoking insights and engaging style make the text a valuable resource for anyone seeking to understand and promote gender equality today.

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