

Adichie



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Regena Ramprasad Commentary on Adichie Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian writer who typically compares America to her home land, Nigeria. In the three short stories we are focused on; " My Mother, the Crazy African", " Ghost", and " Cell One" Adichie's unique culture was brought out in her writing. The author's intentions including Igbo in her stories, her native language had an effect on the readers. English versus Igbo; pride and embarrassment was shown through her writing. " When mother makes me come out to greet them, I speak English to their Igbo, thinking that they should not be here. " In " My Mother, the Crazy African' at the beginning when the young narrator Ralindu was speaking to her readers she would translate in English what was said to her by her company when spoken to in Igbo. For instance " isn't it time for your guest to leave? She asks in Igbo. " Ralindu, a native Nigerian did not like the fact that she was a Nigerian; being an American was most important to her because she wanted to be like her friend Cathy and wanted romance with Matt for her school, but as time progresses she finally spoke in Igbo to her readers " Yipe efe gi, she says. " Showing how much she grew after hiding who she was on the inside; respecting her mother more, although still wanting to have an American lifestyle. However in " Ghost" the narrator James was proud of being a Nigerian, speaking in Igbo. Having a conversation with his friend Ikenna about his daughter who died during the Biafra war, he was not comfortable speaking in English. " The war took Zik, I said in Igbo. Speaking of death in English has always had for me a disquieting finality. Ikenna breathed deeply, but all he said was " Ndo, nothing more than sorry. " James is always comparing American and Nigeria, although losing everything he had; losing his wife Ebere, his daughter Zik and his fellow country man; the land that

was once at peace he still prefers Nigeria, even though his daughter who is a doctor; an educated women living in America. " A life littered with what we call " opportunities, " a life that is not for me. I wonder what would have happened if we has won the war. Perhaps we would not be looking overseas for those opportunities, and I would not need to worry about our grandson who does not speak Igbo. " In theses two stories it is obvious that Adichie intentions was to portray how others might feel and how she felt about her native language weaving her traditional words in. In " Cell One" and " My Mother, the Crazy African" mothers were also a big part in Adichie's stories. As an African mother being oblivious to the life of their children was shown in both pieces. In " Cell One" the narrator's mother is clueless in her son, Nnamabia's life. Being a boy who stole his mother's jewelry starting out at the beginning of the story, I felt as if it was the mother's obvious mind that caused Nnamabia's actions. As the narrator, Nnamabia's sister illustrates the looks of their mother compared to her brother might have been an intention to show how " perfect" her mother thought of Nnambia, he couldn't be like the other university boys who stole in their community in his mothers eyes because everyone saw an image of their mother though the looks of Nnambia. " Hey! Madam, why did you waste your fair skin on a boy and leave the girl so dark? What is a boy doing with all this beauty? And my mother would chuckle, as though she took a mischievous and joyful responsibility for Nnamabia's looks. When, at eleven, Nnamabia broke the window of his classroom with a stone, my mother gave him money to replace it and didn't tell my father. When, a few years later, he took the key to my father's car and pressed it into a bar of soap that my father found before Nnamabia could take it to a locksmith, she made vague sounds about how

he was just experimenting and it didn't mean anything. " Although Nnamabia isn't a horrid child because he did not have the heart to actually commit a crime, he had to steal from his mother instead but because his mother covered for him throughout his life he was caught up in a crime he did not commit; being a victim of harsh punishment in cell one. However in " My Mother, the Crazy African" this clueless mother intentions was to be a proud African and a woman how stick to her traditions. Figurative language was used to show how clueless her mother was through Ralindu eyes. When Ralindu and her mother went to a family cookout from her school Ralindu was embarrassed to be seen with her. " I wondered if mother used the dark saucers on her face she calls eyes, couldn't she see that Americans wore shorts and T-shirts in the summer? She wore a stiff dress, blue with white wide lapels. She stood with the other mothers, all chic in shorts and T-shirts, and looked like a clueless women who overdressed for the barbecue. I avoided her most of the time. There were a number of black mothers there, so any of them could have been my mother. " The narrator calling her mother's eyes a dark saucer was a way to show the reader's how clueless her mother was compared to the other mother's; blind to the fact that she is in American and doesn't have the sense to be like the other mothers; she couldn't see how embarrassing it was to be a Nigerian in Ralindu's eyes. However once again she used figurative language to show how her mother progresses at the end. After Relindu degraded herself, her actions with Matt, her traditional mother was beyond disappointed. " She is shouting in Igbo. I watch her, the way her charcoal eyes gleam with tears and I wish I was Cathy. " The love and tenderness of her mother was illustrated by her " charcoal eyes" the blind sight of being an American was shedding tears of

sorrow because her daughter's American lifestyle was degrading but once again all Ralindu could feel is how much she wants to be like Cathy, not being punish for what she thinks American teenagers are like. Having short thoughts but long paragraphs imitates how the narrators spoke in the structure Adichie created. The word used depending on the narrators were brought out is the three stories. In " Ghost" the words spoken by the seventy-one year old professor was much elaborate and the paragraphs was much longer compared to the narrators in " Cell One" and " My Mother, the crazy African. " Who were two girls in their teen years, having less vocabulary and shorter paragraphs bring out the writing to fit the situation and ideas Adichie wanted to speak about.