

**“To Whom Much is Given Much is Expected:” Adimora-Ezeigbo’s Portraiture of
Contemporary African Woman in *Children of the Eagle***

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ABSTRACT

The fictional production of the African woman creative writer seems to be undergoing a recognisable shift adjacent to progressive adjustments in gender relations. The contemporary woman author tends to pay less attention to issues that primarily bothered her ancestor as she explores responses of the woman to her 21st century multiple roles intensified by a redefined personality in its fragmented identity. This paper therefore attempts a comprehensive discussion of the identified development, from economic and religious perspectives by employing Adimora-Ezeigbo’s *Children of Eagle* as an entry point. It draws essentially from Cornel West’s concept of the new cultural politics of difference which central thesis is the agency, competence and capability of the hitherto culturally, politically and economically oppressed. Exploiting this, the discourse initially argues that the woman’s magnified responsibility is a function of her recent elevated status which she manipulates in navigating around her more sophisticated society. It further demonstrates that the condition is previously anticipated in Adimora-Ezeigbo’s earlier novels. The essay however posits that the Nigerian woman’s fictional construction still bears trademarks of gender and identity politics which now emanates in an advanced form. It submits that the intense improvement in gender relations induced by social change is effectively redirecting the trend of women writing from protest to problem-solving practice and the shift further works to improve the corpus of contemporary African literature.

Key Words: advancement, empowerment, contemporary, responsibility, problem-solving.

Introduction and Background

One of the major markers of the past few decades is the proliferation of women voices in all spheres of artistic production, especially literature. The development sets the foundation for the self-inauguration of the woman as an active participant rather than a passive observer of events. The quintessential African female writer takes up the responsibility of re-creating the woman out of timidity and impotence into assertiveness and power. The acquisition of additional rights and privileges has a revisionary and amplifying impact on her prior underdog status and limited scope of responsibilities. Therefore, the 21st century fictionalised African woman is infused with assertiveness that is observable within her family, work place and the society. Okunrobo (117-118) observes that female writers employ writing as “a tool for ... self-expression, self-assertion and for presenting their feminist’s/womanist’s ideologies.” This portraiture of women still functions within the parametre of gender politics and is observed in the works of female writers like Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo.

Adimiora-Ezeigbo is one creative writer that has paid her dues in the literary representation of the woman. Her creative impulse is perceptible in her womanist arguments, especially in relation “to holding or exercising of power in politics, in religion, in the economy” (Ezeigbo 108). Indubitably, this underscores her progressive enthronement of the woman into mainstream politics, religion, economy and sociality in her trilogy *The Last of the Strong Ones* (1996), *House of Symbols* (2001) and *Children of Eagle* (2002), in that order. *Children of the Eagle*, perhaps more than any of her novels, encapsulates her vision of the contemporary Nigerian woman.

Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s portraiture of the contemporary African woman in *Children of the Eagle*, (henceforth *Eagle*) displays significant advancement which dramatises the biblical dictum “to whom much is given much is expected” (Luke 12:48). This it does by adroitly mobilising education as a primary mediator of socio-economic advancement, which in turn expands the scope of her obligations. Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s creativity intensifies the advancement discourse by situating the woman’s recent empowerment and additional responsibilities in a juxtapositional relationship. Besides, the imaginative text tacitly argues that the woman employs her enhanced position to contend with the demands of her more complex contemporary society. A vigilant reader will perceive that this line of literary depiction is previously anticipated in the first two members of Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s trilogy, *The Last of the Strong Ones* (*Strong Ones*) and *House of Symbols* (*Symbols*). Based on these observations, one can conclude that the substantial improvement in gender relations induced by social change is substituting the complaint tendency of African woman’s writing with a pragmatic orientation.

Critics agree that Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s fiction has indubitably elicited a lot of “commendable critical attention,” including from “major critics” and this is due to her prolificacy (Emezue viii, Tayo, Ogunlewe 217 and Osofisan 23). Chizoba (3) notes that the writer’s consistency and dexterity underscore her incontestable dominant status and insists that in the feminist discourse, “one cannot dismiss (her place) in the scheme of things.” However, many examinations of Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s fictional opuses available to this research tend to concentrate on the proliferation of female characters in her texts as well as her artistic attempt at re-writing women out of obscurity by empowering them socio-economically. For instance, Fonchingong (143) and Nweke (202) respectively observe Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s employment of female champions and icons in redressing past harms through attempts at restoring women to their “rightful position” by encouraging them to discard established restrictions and be “bold and assertive” in demanding happiness and satisfaction within their marriages. Her constant representation of education as a means of advancement for the disenfranchised women in patriarchal cultures and rural settings is also noted by studies exemplified by Agbogidi (26). He submits that in *Eagle* Adimiora-Ezeigbo suggests that education is valuable tool for “self-emancipation ... economic independence, self-awareness and self-consciousness and the point of interaction with other women to help build others who are yet to be educationally liberated”. Chukwuma (9) also notes her representation of education as a critical developmental factor in his view that for her it “imparts knowledge, discernment, exposure and self-esteem.” Olufemi (24) holds that Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s novels express her belief that women can carve a niche for themselves in the socio-political structure of her African society.

Many of these studies tend to be concerned, primarily or tangentially, with Adimiora-Ezeigbo’s artistic rebuttal of gender disparity and reconstruction of the status of women in her African society, which constitutes an aspect of this research. However, those studies tend to ignore or pay

inadequate attention to her portrayal of the privileged African woman's supplementary responsibilities arising from her relatively recently acquired liberty and independence, especially as worked out in *Eagle* and from religious and economic perspectives. This study, thus, represents a remedial attempt, as it explores the gender politics of the primary text which also includes copious accounts of the contemporary African woman's enlarged scope of responsibilities, without ignoring its direct relationship to her reviewed position and identity within her patriarchal African culture. To achieve its aim, the study draws its theoretical insights from Cornel West's concept of the New Cultural Politics of Difference.

Conceptual Compass

West's New Cultural Politics of Difference (1990) is interested in the agency, competence and capability of the hitherto culturally, politically and economically oppressed. In West's own words the concept refers to:

Distinct articulations of talented (and usually privileged) contributors to culture who desire to align themselves with demoralized, demobilized, depoliticized, and disorganized people in order to empower and enable social action ... for the expansion of freedom, democracy, and individuality. (94)

West concludes that the new cultural politics of difference should function to interrogate oppression and de-establish structures of exclusion from privileges, liberties, control, profits and pleasure available to the hegemonic category. Throwing more light on the concept, Hayes (1) holds that West's postulation observes that "in any given historical moment, creative intellectuals are confronted with the profound crisis of their time." He adds that such crisis, in the contemporary period, is the distortion and relegation of "the Other by powerful social institutions." Put differently, West's idea assumes that creative writers, by the reason of their calling, must deal with societal anomalies present in a given society at a given time. For him, the anomaly of the modern period includes the misrepresentation and marginalisation of the other here represented by the woman within the African patriarchal cultures represented in *Eagle*. West hypothesises that cultural production like literature, through their utterances, should stand on the side of the oppressed for the purpose of stimulating freedom towards establishing democratic societies and self-determining individuals.

By its conjectural statements on the role of fiction writers in relation to the underprivileged, West provides the analytical insight for a comprehensive examination of Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Eagle* as an imaginative attempt at empowering the African woman disenfranchised by her patriarchal cultures. The concept can also cater for the author's attendant interrogation of gender disparity in her contemporary society and expansion of boundaries to construct a more egalitarian society where each individual, irrespective of sex, is empowered to contribute to the overall development of the society. In addition, West's suppositions facilitates the submission that the author's donation to this cultural exigency finds accomplishment through the agency of the novel *Eagle*, which as a cultural production, engages in a disclosure and disestablishment of patriarchy, as an exclusionary hegemonic framework. Moreover, West's attention to social action enables this research to maintain that the empowerment narrative of *Eagle* expands the scope of the woman's responsibilities in conformity with her enhanced status. After all, to whom much is given much is expected.

To Whom Much is Given Much Is Expected: Privileges and Responsibilities

The contemporary African literature, exemplified by *Eagle*, depicts female characters who, more than their predecessors, are empowered to play major roles in the family and society especially from economic, religious and political stand points. Such privileged contemporary African women are observed in the heterodiegetic narrative *Eagle*, published in 2002. The text displays the “children of the eagle” (191) who are five daughters of Ossai and Eaglewoman Okwara. Eaglewoman is the protagonist of *House of Symbols*. The daughters are Ogonna, who is a secondary school teacher, Nnenna a writer, lecturer and family historian, as well as Obioma, a pastor and evangelist. The other two are the journalist, Amara and medical doctor, Chiaku. While the first three live in Lagoon City, the remaining two reside in Coal City and London, respectively. Lagoon City and Coal City are sobriquets for Lagos and Enugu, which are major cities in south western and south eastern Nigeria, the writer’s country of origin.

Notably, these women, in one way or the other, serve as extensions of characters in *Strong Ones* and *Symbols*. For instance, in Nnenna and Amara are observed the two female narrators of Umuga described as “recorders and interpreters of our communal history (and) gifted in the art of remembering” (*Strong Ones* 37). Again, the prolific writer Nnenna, employing the scribal tradition, continues from where Chieme, the renowned oral artist, stopped. Besides Obioma’s spiritual facility pulls directly from Ezenwanyi’s (*Symbols*) while Ogonna’s business accomplishment is reminiscent of Eaglewoman’s (*Symbols*) and Chibuka’s (*Strong Ones*).

Eagle’s portraiture of the contemporary African women reveals domesticated career women. Thus, apart from the divorcee Chiaku and unmarried Amara, Ogonna, Nnenna and Obioma are all married with children (16). The subsidiary attention paid to Amara’s elected childlessness and Chiaku’s divorce could be regarded as an evidence that Adimora-Ezeigbo, as a contemporary Nigerian woman writer, is less interested in issues like marriage and childlessness which primarily pushed her predecessors, including Flora Nwapa (*One is Enough*) and Ifeoma Okoye’s (*Behind the Clouds*), to eloquence. The sisters’ matrimonial standings imply that they are saddled with domestic responsibilities of wifhood and motherhood, just like their ancestresses in literary works epitomised by Achebe’s *Arrow of God* and Emecheta’s *Joys of Motherhood*. To prove that the women, like their mothers, have excellent proficiencies for home management, Adimora-Ezeigbo assembles them and sent them “to work in the kitchen” in their Umuga natal home (*Eagle* 99). The delightfulness and dexterousness worked into the team cooking scene suggests the ladies’ commitment and satisfaction with their domestic obligations as well as reluctance to abdicate their traditional roles. The representation is solidified in the authorial interpolation that “cooking is their hobby” (99).

The value of the ladies’ culinary skills as well as the irresistibility of its product is encapsulated in Umuuga women’s description of the food as delicious and their unabashed request for more. Thus, they are cast in the mold of *Oliver Twist*, but unlike *Oliver Twist* are not driven by hunger but by pleasure. The array of nourishing food functions as a bridge-building device in closing the social-economic gap between the privileged urban women, personified by Okwara daughters, and their relatively disadvantaged rural guests. The episode, like many others, demonstrates the feminist concept of female bonding without ignoring its substantial beneficiality. This bridge-building role of food is also decipherable in the friendship between the clannish Lebanon Christian women and Sister Mary-Alice in Marie-Elena John’s novel, *Unburnable*. By tracing the culinary

expertise of Eaglewoman's daughters directly to their mother's maternal lessons and tacitly to the ladies' educational exposure, the writer attributes the domestic success of the contemporary African woman to her female progenitors and, to a lesser degree, formal education and this invigorates the feminist undertone of *Eagle*. It also employs the scene and Nnenna to advocate healthy living in a manner that pushes the women's responsibility a notch higher by making her a dietician, in addition to being a cook. Thus, even the domestic site expects more from a privileged African woman. The advocacy is necessary in this age when several diseases are attributed to life style.

Eaglewoman's daughters, in addition to their domestic obligations, serve in the educational, religious, media, health and business sectors of African and American economies in ways their forebears never did. This is best observed from the religious and economic perspectives of the text, which recruits Obioma, the pastor and Ogonna, the teacher and business woman to construct both the spiritual and secular discourses in a way that displays inclusiveness. Obioma's self-definition as "a leader in my church – The New Age Church (where) both men and woman priests" are accommodated (138), reveals her vocation and leadership role within an ecclesiastical community with a leadership structure configured to reflect the principles and practices of equitability. The nomenclature of the church defines its contemporaneity which underlies its seeming radicalised leadership structure. It is a reflection of famous female pastors like the South Africa Christiana Nku, the "black female founder" and General President of Saint John's Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), in Johannesburg, described as one of the "few women who founded her own AIC" (African Independent Church) (Kgatle 7) and Nigerian Archbishop Margaret Benson-Idahosa of the Church of God Mission, Benin City. Moreover, it challenges the present African women to step up into leadership positions in spiritual, and even secular, institutions in order to make necessary contributions to individual and societal development.

Again, Obioma's husband is made "a part-time pastor" in the same church thus giving Obioma a spiritual authority over her husband. This symbolises an intellectual reversal of what obtains in the typical African society. The writer has to situate the church in a more liberal multicultural urban centre in order to plant the woman's ascension on a more authentic foundation that could bear the burden of the literary reversal. This imbues Obioma's ministerial individuality with credibility which is one of the main qualities demanded by effective characterisation. Such reversals inform Ekemezie's observation that Adimora-Ezeigbo's "women are more spiritually empowered than the men ..." (158). The condition demonstrates democracy and dethronement of gender insensitive patriarchal hegemony in African religious institutions. The characterisation of Obioma displays an apparent attempt at elevating the spiritual status of the woman as it creates additional responsibilities for her.

Through Obioma, *Eagle* sanctions the admission of the woman into the central aisle of religious leadership and accessorises her with extraordinary powers without forgetting to allocate commensurate duties to her. Obioma's premarital pregnancy, childbirth and University education function as preparatory grounds for her expanded role. Then despite her flawed maidenhood, Adimora-Ezeigbo assigns her a model husband, uproots her out of Umuga rural community and sows her in Lagoon City where she has the support and space to express her spirituality. Furthermore, Obioma is decorated with spiritual "gifts of prophecy and healing" and visions (136) that validate and facilitate her clerical calling and functions. For instance, by Obioma's "extra-spiritual endowments" (137), she delivered her family and community from exploitative activities

of false prophets who feed on the general insecurity and fear during the Nigerian Civil War. The historical allusion draws attention to African countries, like Nigeria, defaced by insecurity engendered by religious intolerance, kidnapping, banditry and other maladies. By telling that Obioma's family heavily relies on her "priestly opinion" in crucial issues (40), the text casts her in the mode of solution to existential problems. Deepening this narrative, *Eagle* employs Obioma's tongue, to insist that "women have a spiritual role to play in salvaging humankind" and they need to "occupy their rightful place ... beside man, not behind or before him" (116). By roping God into her thesis of gender egalitarianism, Obioma finds a divine backing for her views and so removes it from the realm of human interrogation. Her priesthood, therefore, suggests that without the woman, Africa's spiritual landscape can hardly be complete and healthy. The position demonstrates the writer's attempt at identifying with the marginalised that she elevates and burdens with added tasks.

Though her ministry attracts reverence, it also makes Obioma an official burden bearer cast in the image of Jesus Christ. The weightiness of her ministerial assignment is metaphorically expressed in the statement that Obioma carries her ministry anywhere she goes "like a snail logging its shell on its back" (137), and this is in addition to her domestic commitments. The image is intensified in her compulsive determination to deconstruct the frameworks of evil in the society by "spreading the good news ... not just from the pulpit, but on the streets, at revival meetings and crusades" (195). Consequently, her spiritual endowment is closely attended by solution-oriented additional tasks targeted at diminishing the demonic temperament of her society towards enhancing human development and fulfillment. Olufemi (24) posits that Adimora-Ezeigbo's objective is to prove that the marginalised African women "contribute immensely to the growth of the society." In the character of Obioma, a renovated Ezenwanyi (*Symbols*) is imaged and both are anticipated in Achebe's Chielo, the priestess of Agbala (*Things Fall Apart*). One episode that, perhaps more than any other, dramatises the demanding character of the elevated position of Obioma, and by extension, today's African woman, is the sisters' night chase against a tyrannical animal at Umuga Okwara's home. In that scene, Obioma leads from behind the wheels of "a sturdy vehicle", a Range Rover, which "powers its way undaunted" by the bad roads of Umuga (22). This demonstrates the woman's ability to navigate through the difficulties of the present to achieve a better future. The car becomes a means of mobilising the demobilised woman in order to make her more functional within her environment in a society where her additional tasks include driving change and development.

The writer extends her egalitarian argument using Ogonna, this time from the economic perspective. Ogonna is a teacher and a business woman (131) and so she represents the contemporary career woman with multiple sources of income. Unlike Obioma, she is saddled with an irresponsible husband, Uzoma, who earns better than his wife but abdicates his financial responsibilities and manly functions to his immediate family. In his characterisation, Adimora-Ezeigbo extends patriarchal oppression to the urban space and contemporary period. Uzoma parallels IHEME whose wife describes as "a miser (who) had a huge yam barn" but did not give his wife Chibuka "yams to cook" (*Strong Ones* 98). After several financially-based marital squabbles, Ogonna vowed to "go out there and make the money that was necessary to take proper care of the family" (278). Her husband's recalcitrance pushed her into the textile business world through which she experiences significant financial empowerment and prosperity demanded by her family's several needs. Thus, Obioma's entrepreneurial skills and success, unlike her mother's,

are engendered by patriarchal suppression and provides practical solutions to her domestic problems. Nevertheless, that solution entails adding the bread-winning and provider roles to her job description and this is when her husband is still alive, healthy and earning a significant income. Symbolically, Obioma becomes the husband and wife as well as father and mother in her family. Her economic accomplishment therefore comes with a prize. Obioma's combined responsibilities reflect the trend in many African families of the present era. The contemporary African woman writing therefore theoretically empowers the woman to additionally participate in the bread winning responsibility without relinquishing her domestic obligations.

Ogonna's characterisation takes *Eagle* beyond the realm of protest into problem-solving category. Through Ogonna's logical and pragmatic response, Adimora-Ezeigbo deploys literature in providing an ingenious possibility of emancipation and empowerment to the oppressed but cautions that such advancement has attached burdens. Thus, the novelist engages Ogonna to interrogate and dismantle the economic dependence and oppression of the African woman, observed in characters like Beatrice in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, terminating her total dependence on patriarchal profits and pleasures. Her sympathetic and inclusionary portraiture summons the woman into her society's 'rat race' submitting its profits and powers at her feet for the betterment of the family and society. That is why Osofisan (28) insists that "always Akachi foregrounds the heroism of women in their encounters with and patriarchal traditions", and makes them legendary characters by their resistance. This is in tandem with the womanist ethos initially conceived by Alice Walker. Obioma's economic prowess depicts her entrepreneurial and organisational capabilities embossed in her ability to juggle her teaching profession, budding business and family without much help from her husband. The many hats she wears simultaneously are telling of the colossal responsibilities awaiting the contemporary privileged woman living in different plural societies of Africa.

In Obioma, Adimora-Ezeigbo tends to jettison her usual womanist complementarity catechism by defining men, through Uzoma, as "opinionated and miserly in addition to being selfish ... also obtuse" (131). A similar leaning is found in Amara's rejection of procreation as part of her lot as a woman and Chiaku's divorce which signifies a refusal of the shelter of marriage, initiated by Nora in Ibsen's drama, *A Doll's House* and rented by *Adah* in Emecheta's novel *Second Class Citizen*. The significance of the departure maintained by *Eagle* is underscored by the fact that the traditional African woman mostly achieves relevance through marriage and procreation. The representation appears to belong to radical feminism which according to Zaynab Alkali "advocates single motherhood, women without men and same sex marriage" and as such is "outside the context of African social values" (Balogun 30). This literary tendency interrogates Ezeigbo's insistence that Africa do not host "radical feminists" (Makwemoisa 500). However, the author's reluctance at tearing Ogonna's family apart despite her pains and disillusionment departs from the radical feminist approach as it legalises Adimora-Ezeigbo's belief in "marriage ... (and) family" (Makwemoisa, "Conversation" 500). The observable ambiguity follows the steps of Mariama Ba in *So Long a Letter*.

One dimension of *Eagle*'s argument that cannot be ignored by any comprehensive reading of the work is its unmasked acknowledgement of education and urbanisation as critical factors in the socio-cultural and economic redefinition and advancement of the African woman. This is because education "imparts knowledge, discernment, exposure and self-esteem" (Chukwuma 9) and liberates the woman from traditionalism which supports patriarchy. Thus, Nnenne, observes that

their privileged position is “what education had done for us ...what today’s society” bequeaths woman and an advantage the past generation, symbolised by poor aunty Rachel, “did not have” (129). Aunty Rachel represents the deprived, devalued, demoralised, demobilised women in a patriarchal culture which presents a woman with very restricted sets of options.

Adimora-Ezeigbo, compelled by her teaching background, and in a display of female bonding and solidarity, employs the Okwara sisters’ educational and experiential advantages to progressively break barriers and raise the disenfranchised rural woman from her state of demobilisation and timidity. Notably, education is becoming a permanent member of Adimora-Ezeigbo’s art. This they do through an annual empowerment seminar covering career, nutrition, health, relationship, sex and others, all towards “reorienting the Umuga wives” (Nweke 202) as it dramatises social action. That episode reveals Adimora-Ezeigbo’s extension of her advancement strategy to the rural African woman to whom she says: “believe in yourself and allow no one to erode your self-confidence (and) find something to do to generate income for yourselves so that you can take care of yourself and your children ...” (112 and 118). By that feminist counsel, the writer prompts the African woman infuses herself with confidence, practice assertiveness and become economically active for a better personal, familial and societal life. These make *Eagle* a quintessential feminist text. To a large extent, the women’s semi-formal class in its vivacity adds drama and musicality to Adimora-Ezeigbo’s art through the inclusion of uninhibited laughter, clapping, exclamation and expressions like “*Hangam-hangam, ijejeje! Ikwajam, ikwajam, ikwajam! Ayakata, ayakata, ayakata!*” (113). The episode depicts the therapeutic impact of freedom of expression. Again, the employment of the typical Igbo dialogue format further animates that episode and by extension the text. In all, armed with formal education, rescued by urbanisation and motivated by new self-awareness, the sisters, like their creator, take up additional challenges of training the rural woman.

In addition, *Eagle* demonstrates that through the resources of education, the contemporary woman navigates the hurdles of patriarchy in her rural community. Thus, Eaglewoman’s daughters explore letter-writing as a medium of communicating their position on a land dispute as women are “not permitted to approach ... the highest decision making body” of their community (74 and 73). The scribal complaint enables them “demand for justice (and) have a record of their petition” (74). The implication is that the Okwara daughters appropriate the task hitherto reserved for the male gender by stepping out of the boundaries of domesticity into the political arena where serious issues like land matters are trashed. The episode tends to derive from the biblical account of five daughters of Zelophehad who went to leaders of Israel to demand for landed properties within their community in Numbers 27. It is an affirmative action symbolising the woman writer’s demand for justice through the manipulation of modern provisions and advantages absent in the traditional Igbo society. In that depiction Adimora-Ezeigbo deploys the epistolary method and her snail-sense feminism in literary creativity to solve the problems of women in rural societies of Africa. Such exclusionary practices display asymmetrical gender-relationship and declare Africa “a male” (Okonjo-Ogunyemi’s 60). They also provide a justification for Ezeigbo’s attempt at demasculinising her society through the mediation of arts.

Remarkably, Adimora-Ezeigbo trilogy together exhibit an extension of physical, spiritual, social, political, economic and psychological boundaries of her characters as they move from the rural Umuga (*Strong Ones*), to the semi-urban Atagu county (*Symbols*), then to urban Lagoon city and to London (*Eagle*). The enlargement corresponds with the expansion of the woman’s sphere of

influence and liberty as well as responsibilities. Adimora-Ezeigbo therefore engages in the politics of the oppressed and that reveals her vexation at the miniaturised and irrelevant personality accorded the woman in African patriarchal societies. As a contemporary woman writer, Adimora-Ezeigbo articulates her vision of the woman in the present African society through the agency of *Eagle* and by Eaglewoman's internalised observation that "the future is theirs (women) to mould, to shape and to enlarge" (18). The writer therefore authenticates Ladele's submission that "Postcolonial women writers from Africa ... keenly textualize women's identities through their fictional narratives ..." (70). What needs to be added is that such retextualisations also reveal the weightier burden that makes its appearance alongside her advancement.

Conclusion

Adimora-Ezeigbo's fictionalisation in *Children of the Eagle* depicts the contemporary African woman whose advantages enhance her choices and actions as she strives to survive within the very demanding twenty-first century society. This portrayal extends beyond the traditional feminist interrogation of gender oppression which seeks to disassemble the structures that exclude the woman from certain socio-cultural and economic advantages, liberty, power and profits. The author's scope covers the multiple tasks the woman has to contend with as a result of her reconditioned status and this portraiture could be traced back to *Strong Ones* and *Symbols*. Adimora-Ezeigbo's creativity also suggests workable possibilities that validate Achebe's argument that Third World writers must go beyond "documenting social problems but must move to the higher responsibility of proffering prescriptions" (*Anthills* 161). By these, *Eagle* represents a rerouting of the Nigerian woman writing from protest to problem-solving practice. Consequently, Adimora-Ezeigbo's offering improves the body of Nigerian literature by using the elevated woman to demonstrate the Biblical concept that to whom much is given much is also expected.

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