



Perseverance Amidst Barriers in the Works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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Abstract— Challenges bring out the most competitive part in human beings and make a significant improvement in their overall

novel is a semi-autobiography, reiterating the real life struggles of the writer herself.

The Thing Around Your Neck by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a short story collection published in 2009 containing twelve stories regarding the Nigerian society and its households. The last story, *The Headstrong Historian*, tranquilizes the mind as it ends on a very positive note and tries to remove the damages made by the tragic end of *Things Fall Apart*. Grace, the granddaughter of Nwambga is considered to be the reincarnation of Obierika, Nwambga's late husband. Nwambga believed that Grace was born to save her clan from forgetting their ancestors by the Christian missionaries. She narrated stories of their ancestors and the need to stay grounded in one's culture to Grace, making her rebel against her father Anikwenwa's staunch Christian beliefs. Grace breaks the clutches of her father's rules, her husband's hold and her colleague's cultural humiliation to return back to her ancestral village where tradition cradles her soul. Grace changes her name into Afemefuna, to pay respect to her grandmother and take pride in her culture.

Resilience theory is a subcategory of psychological criticism that focuses on the working of the mind and its response towards various circumstances. Resilience theory tries to understand the place or point of distress rather than the immediate method of rectification; the different methods used by the self to show positive development amidst adversity during the worst of situations. It traces the overall development of the individual against extreme situations, providing with the most positive of outcome. It studies the role played by the protective factors in assisting the individual in overcoming the risks and stressful conditions. The psychological crisis represented by each individual and identifying the competence amongst children is dealt in this theory. Michael Rutter, Norman Garmezy, Emmy Werner, Suniya Luthar, Ann Masten and Michael Ungar are the most important critics in the field of resilience. For this study, the work of Norman Garmezy will be used to analyse the texts and the characters mentioned above.

In *Resilience in Children's adaptation to negative life events and stressed environments*, Norman Garmezy explains resilience as, "... not necessarily impervious to stress. Rather, resilience is designed to reflect the capacity for recovery and maintained adaptive behaviour that may follow initial retreat or

Support factors in the form of friends and boyfriends in her life who help in her progress selflessly. Grace on the other hand, has a strong Familial character who teaches her about the rich culture that is being consciously neglected by people like her father who reduce their customs to pagan worshipping and imbecile activities. Furthermore, both of these female characters can be understood using the compensatory and challenge model of Garmezy. In *Stress, Competence and Development* (1987) Garmezy puts forward his three models after his research 'Project Competence' that was based on resilience among children.

The challenge model makes the person highly competitive making them develops coping mechanisms that would help young people to face the real world outside. There is a huge stress level forcing them to enhance their level of accommodation. Ifemelu faces pressure from the society for her looks, her immigrant status and her gender. It breaks her to the point of forcibly pushing people out of her life. The high pressure experienced by her makes her highly competitive making her stand out in the crowd amongst millions of black immigrant women and becoming their voice. Ifemelu took the challenge positively only to become the best version of herself destroying all the barriers that came her way. She became very strong in her personality giving her the courage to throw away all her hard earned fame only to return to her native land. Competence is the biggest gift from this model.

Compensatory model as the name suggest explains the relationship between Grace and her grandmother, Nwambga. As her parents fail to provide a fruitful environment for Grace to argue about her perceptions, she turns to her grandmother; considering her as a parent figure. A byproduct of the model is the accommodating nature the child builds for the betterment of their future. The high-conflict home environment experienced by Grace makes her priorities her grandmother's warmth and this in turn makes the latter's place the home environment. The resilience Grace acquires comes from her grandmother as she is the motherly figure and it compensates for the shortcomings in her parents' house. In this model, there is less stress and high competence because the parent figure is replaced but not forsaken.

The paper analyses Ifemelu and Grace through their unique way of experiencing the