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Am I a Feminist? Narrative fidelity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'We Should All be Feminists'

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

In this paper I analyze Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and her TED Talk based off her book, "We Should All be Feminists." Adichie is a Nigerian woman who has firsthand experience with feminist issues of inequality and she serves as a speaker and activist for issues of feminism and beyond. She is a renowned author, activist, academic, and a feminist. In hearing of her personal experiences regarding inequality, I realized I am able to identify parallels between her experiences and the inequalities which I have faced despite our vastly different origin stories. The importance of her work as a feminist is emphasized in her rhetorical techniques, such as using personal narratives and public vocabulary to bring connection and a sense of equality to her audience. Adichie urges society to modify their actions in order to promote and normalize feminism in a positive light.

Keywords

Feminist, Rhetoric, Narrative, Narrative Fidelity, Feminism

Cover Page Footnote

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Am I a Feminist? Narrative Fidelity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "We Should All be Feminists"

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In this paper I analyze Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and her TED Talk based off her book, "We Should All be Feminists." Adichie is a Nigerian woman who has firsthand experience with feminist issues of inequality and she serves as a speaker and activist for issues of feminism and beyond. She is a renowned author, activist, academic, and a feminist. In hearing of her personal experiences regarding inequality, I realized I am able to identify parallels between her experiences and the inequalities which I have faced despite our vastly different origin stories. The importance of her work as a feminist is emphasized in her rhetorical techniques, such as using personal narratives and public vocabulary to bring connection and a sense of equality to her audience. Adichie urges society to modify their actions in order to promote and normalize feminism in a positive light.

Keywords: feminist, rhetoric, narrative, narrative fidelity, feminism

How we represent ourselves in society is a question that involves structure and hegemonic norms. Social reality calls for labels that categorize us even if we don't necessarily wish to be categorized. The labels which are stuck to us with pins, super glue and perhaps even cemented to our foreheads, take a pivotal role in the directions that society guides its members towards, or even places us. Feminism has a variety of tones and descriptions and can commonly be defined as "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes" (Webster Dictionary, 2019). My role as a white, middle class citizen placed me among a group of culturally accepted citizens who live in something I call a 'safety-net' in society's acceptance of us. I have the ability, based on the color of my skin, to not be discriminated against, to afford my college education, or to simply buy food without worrying if I'll be judged for what I buy. I, as a woman, however, commonly caution myself for defense, in all aspects of life. I, as a woman, prepared myself for sexism. I, as a woman, cautioned my outfit choices. I, as a woman, purposely took up as little space in public as possible, never wished to be a professional athlete, wore a bra, spent half my paycheck on make-up; only to realize it condemned the socially accepted version of being female, not the version I wanted to be.

Feminism is considered by some to be a bad word, because everyone can design their personal definition of the word and enact their definition into society. If I were to ask someone to describe the sun, the definition they

give will most likely be similar or identical to mine: a bright circle in the sky. Yet if I were to ask someone to describe a feminist, their definition most likely will encounter a multitude of different words or phrases which can strongly impact how they think or make judgement of what a feminist is. Equality is not just feminism; equality is acts of justice in all aspects of life and the acts of feminism can strengthen the acts of justice. One individual who has guided my passion for pursuing feminism is renowned author and speaker, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the TED Talk based off her literature, "We should all be feminists." In this paper I analyze the speaker and activist of more than just feminist topics. Adichie is a Nigerian woman who has experience with feminist issues of inequality, has written renowned and nationally celebrated books, all of which have won a plethora of awards and is active in the issue of feminism in not only the United States, but the world. The importance of her work will be emphasized through the deconstruction of her background prior to becoming an author, her experiences throughout her life which promoted her response to studying communication regarding equality and the connections of which I have learned through my courses in connection to Adichie's success as a rhetor. We will begin with her biography and a look into her childhood, her experiences in America, her educational background, and continue into her success as an author and speaker. To follow, an assessment of the rhetorical situation which Adichie identifies as challenges will be clarified thorough understanding her main arguments and a debrief of her

call to action for a feminist society. To conclude this essay, I will discuss the importance of her claims as well as what Adichie has meant to me as a rhetor and role model of feminism.

Born in Nigeria, September 15th, 1977, Adichie entered life as one of six children in an upper-middle class family with educators and scholars for parents. Living on a University campus, her mother, one of the university's first female administrators and her father, a professor, helped inspire her activities in academia as a young child (Eastern Connecticut University Alumni Profiles, 2019). Chimamanda lived in a household with educated guidance from her parents and humor and mischief from her five older siblings. Also, in the household were the in-home help who provided daily support and were primarily local community members employed by her parents to tend to the needs of the children and the homes. At the age of four, she spoke two languages and was proficient in her ability to write by the age of seven. In another TED Talk given by Adichie in 2016 called "The Danger of a Single Story," she describes her connection to literature through the absence of seeing her identity in the books she read as a child. As English is classified as one of the official languages of Nigeria, Adichie was given English American story tale books consisting of blonde haired, blue-eyed princes and princesses who "played in the snow and ate apples." Through the TED Talk, she speaks of her unawareness of exclusivity of the stories she read as they were all she had ever been exposed to. Later in life, she questioned the authority of these books as she and everyone around her had never seen snow, did not have blue eyes or blonde hair, and ate mangos. She says, "I did not know people like me could be real in literature." Through the examination of her unrealistic childhood story books, Adichie began to write her own books which began with short stories with matching crayon pictures, and they later in her life developed into several nationally renowned, bestselling short literatures.

Several experiences throughout her young adulthood caused Adichie to dig deep into her thoughts on inequality. After graduating from secondary school, Adichie enrolled in medical school at the University of Nigeria to study medicine and pharmacy. With a love for writing, she volunteered as the editor for the university's magazine called 'Compass' and dropped out after less than a year to pursue her enthusiasm for writing. At the age of 19, Adichie came to America to attend Eastern Connecticut State University to study communication

and political science. While growing up in Nigeria, she was not aware nor used to being identified by the color of her skin, yet when she came to America that changed as she was suddenly confronted with what it meant to be a person of color. She speaks of one example in her TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," about her college roommate being shocked of her ability to speak English so well. When the roommate asked to listen to Adichie's "tribal music," Chimamanda played Mariah Carey. Her college roommate assumed Adichie did not know how to use a stove or turn on the shower and automatically assumed pity and felt sorry for her because since Adichie looked African, then he must fall under the stereotypes which many Americans have of Africans.

The inequality Adichie faced did not stop at the preconceived ideas her roommate insisted upon, but instead sparked her platform for several of her best-selling books. After graduating from Eastern Connecticut University, Adichie moved on to earn her master's degree in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University in 2003. Later, she completed her second master's degree in African Studies from Yale in 2008 and was awarded the MacArthur Foundation "Genius" grant which functioned as the financial foundation for her future publications. Her knowledge did not stop there; in 2011, she continued with a yearlong fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University to dig deeper and further her thesis regarding African Studies and communication in society. Throughout her years of educational success, she produced several short collections of literature. In 2003, her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, was published by Algonquin Books in association with Workman Press, a highly qualified publication company; the book also won The Commonwealth Writers Prize and the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award. The London Times deemed her first novel "a monumental literary achievement and a prayer for Nigeria" (Eastern Connecticut University Student Alumni Profiles, 2019). Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, published in 2006, became popular by several publications with internationally acclaimed companies along with being awarded the Orange Prize, one of the United Kingdom's most prestigious literary prizes awarded to female authors. This was the year her literature began an international movement, as her stories were translated into 32 different languages. Her literature and other pieces of work have been published in *Zoetrope All-Story*, *Prism International*, *Wasafiri*, *Calyx Journal*, the *Iowa Review*, *Other Voices*, as well as the

Anthology Proverbs for the People and of course, New York Times Top 10 Best Books.

Adichie's life-long academic success is partial to her emphasis on the issue. In August of 2016, Adichie became the co-founder of a Nigerian nonprofit, the Farafina Trust, established to promote reading, writing, and a culture of social introspection and engagement with society through literary arts (Farafina Trust, 2019). Their promotion of literary arts and social engagement was driven by the work of Adichie's literature. In several of her TED Talks, and at the foundation of all her books, is a story of an experience in which she connects to current problems of injustice; injustice of race, sex, gender, and class, among others. Adichie splits her time evenly between Nigeria, America and her travels for publications of her work or lectures such as TED Talks or commencement speeches. Her most current publication, "Dear Ljeawele, A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Parts" arrived in the spring of 2017.

The power that Adichie has as a woman, an author, a rhetor and activist makes her very compelling. Through a lifetime of inequality and passed judgment, she continues to pursue grace and composure through her work, her communication style and her ability to persuade. One of the many reasons I admire Adichie is her story-telling technique and personal narratives. In the books she has written and the talks she has given, she is admirable in her ability to tell a story and allow the reader to feel as though they were there living it with her. As I listen to her speak in the TED Talk, "We should all be Feminists" which I deconstruct next, I cannot help but appreciate her ability to connect with the audience as the rhetor; an ability I believe is the highest quality a rhetor can achieve.

Adichie's literary success is a large part of her rhetorical power. Her ability to advise her audience using narrative is one of her strongest moves in order to persuade the audience to agree or think deeper on what she is communicating. One of Adichie's literary move is guiding the audience through captivating personal or general stories which have taken place in her life. Several of her novels are altered life-experiences connected to some of society's greatest problems as a way to explain the need for change from the author's perspective. A generalized conception about this speech is to promote the idea and acceptance of feminism and how it should take place in society regularly. She emphasizes the importance of feminism and how the audience can utilize techniques of feminism to combat society's hegemonic norms.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave the TED Talk, "We should all be Feminists" on April 12, 2012 in a series of presentations regarding diversity. The speech issues a call for equality and an approach to the topic of feminism through real life examples, clear-cut facts and lastly, a call to action for society to reconfigure the idea of feminism. Feminism provokes just one of the many strengths in which Adichie has. Most of her essays and short literatures are presented via TED Talks or presentation as a verbal expression for the reasoning of her books. Several of her literary pieces condemn topics of social inequality and injustice, particularly on the basis of race and gender. Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, regards matters of family discord and verbal mistreatment. Another novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, discusses the topic of moral responsibility under colonialism, war torn countries and ethnic allegiances about class and race. Other novels of hers include *Americanah*, a rich spin-off of her own experience coming to America when, despite her academic success, she is deemed incapable due to America's societal views of Blacks and other minorities. Lastly, her book, *We Should all be Feminists*, offers readers a definition of feminism in 21st century lingo in order to root awareness and inclusion in the word. Drawing from her own experiences, she gives deep understanding of the commonly misunderstood realities of sexual politics, discrimination, and inequality.

Adichie's TED talk offers remarkable exploration of what it means to be a woman in the twenty-first century through a clear, deep connection with her audience and ends in a call for why we should all be feminists. Her academic credentials contribute to her ethos as a speaker. Here, she shows the audience she is clearly a renowned author and highly qualified academic, but also a person, just like them. Not once in her speech does Adichie reference her credentials, but instead uses a plethora of personal narratives to lay a commonality with the audience as a means of trust as an equal rather than a superior. Her personal narratives and examples provide evidence of the inequality that occurs to women all over the world, but most importantly, ones that happened to her. Though from Nigeria, she expresses through her books and speeches, how inequality is spread throughout the world, not just Africa and the United States. Through the language and examples, she uses her ability to relate the matters of foreign countries and America and brings attention to the call for everyone to take part in being a feminist.

Palczewski, Ice and Fritch, define the term Persona as the “ethos, roles, identity, authority and image a rhetor constructs and performs during a rhetorical act” (p. 165). The persona of Adichie is what establishes who she is and how the audience can connect to her. It helps in reference to what she talks about, who she is speaking to and how she performs as a rhetor. Ethos is defined as “the character of a rhetor performed in the rhetorical act and known by the audience because of prior interactions” (p. 167). Adichie’s ethos is important as a rhetor because it is what helps establish a commonality with the audience. She purposefully emphasizes elements about her to which the audience can relate. She emphasizes being a woman, someone of color, someone who has experienced inequality both as a woman and as a person of color the inequality and discrimination she has faced from a stranger or by a friend.

Palczewski, Ice and Fritch, quote “the exigence calls for or demands a rhetorical response. If rhetoric cannot create a change in the exigence, then it is not a rhetorical situation” (p. 227). In the United States, issues of feminism have lasted beyond their prime years. In Adichie’s speech, “We should all be feminists,” the exigence, the imperfection marked by urgency, is the unjust and unfair treatment of women around the world. She defines feminism and continues to state personal narratives which provide examples of what feminism does not look like and what it should be. Adichie uses the power of herself as rhetoric by using the technique of enactment which is when the “person engaging in symbolic action functions as proof of the argument s/he advances” (pg. 77).

Feminism has come in several waves throughout history, all of which have taken different societal challenges and acceptance along the way. An online source, Feminist.com states in their article, “Is there a fourth wave of feminism? Does it Matter?,” the first wave of feminism, approximately 1840-1920, grew into a movement from abolishing slavery to ensuring dedicated women’s rights with the main goal for rights of citizenship such as voting and ownership. The second wave of Feminism, approximately 1960-1988 grew in the subject similar to the first wave as a social-justice movement. Like the first wave, the second wave was a work of ensuring rights for black Americans as well as females, though most association and protection was geared toward white women’s liberation. Topics of women in the workplace, peace, free speech and gay rights took place in the movements well. The third wave of feminism,

approximately 1988-2010, was an enormous cultural shift for the acceptance of feminism and if it was an overall accepted idea or not. Marked by a critique of the classes of race and politics of the first and second wave of feminism, the third wave emphasized the need for learning to accept all races in feminism. As a sexist dominant culture, feminist-influenced celebrities and women of power began to speak out and embrace a feminist-influenced civilization. The current wave of feminism which approximately began in 2008, but peaked in 2012, the time of Adichie’s speech, “We Should all be Feminist,” was categorized as a media-influenced wave. Social media and technology were pivotal in the lives of citizens which perhaps became the most significant experience of the movement of women. Feminists created blogs, twitter campaigns, #Hashtags, Instagram accounts and other social media outlets which helped influence the #MeToo movement, and the ability for feminists to comment on media outlets to continue their empowerment and rebuttal. The online source, Feminist.com, promotes the fourth wave of Feminism as “the communication wave”- due to the uptick in open communication on the matters of feminism such as: sexual harassment, rape culture, transgenderism, male feminists, unequal pay and discrimination. The fourth wave of feminism is associated with the belief that all humans are equal, alongside a heavy focus on intersectionality, greater empowerment of marginalized groups in society and advocating for the greater representations of such groups through politics and business. Adichie’s TED Talk occurred in the middle of this 2012 movement as a call for action for civilization to change the means of how they perceive equality. The term Kairos is defined as “a time when conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action: the opportune and decisive moment” Palczewski, Ice and Fritch (p 223). Adichie’s speech occurred at an opportune time during this decade’s feminist movement which helped express the call for civic engagement of individuals to take control of making equality the new social norm. She uses a range of empowering rhetorical techniques to captivate her audience into being a part of the change for equality.

She begins her speech with a short story of her close friend passing in a famous plane crash in Nigeria in 2005. She expresses how her friend, Okoloma, was the first person to call her a feminist and did so in a way that was clearly not a compliment. Even though Adichie at the time did not know what a feminist was, she clarifies this experience as the turning point for what sparked her

interest in the subject. Throughout her speech, the personal narratives Adichie uses are the data to help support her claim of why we should all pursue feminism. Narratives are “the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the others” Palczewski, Ice and Fritch (pg. 131). Throughout the speech, several examples of personal narratives are used as data to support her claim. Adichie’s claim is that current cultures have inequality between men and woman and we as a society have a duty to change that. She states “Gender matters. Men and women experience the world differently. Gender colors the way we experience the world. But we can change that” TED Talk 2019 (min 25:27). Adichie’s personal narratives and her ability to share personal memory are claims of fact as they happened to her, her claim of value can be seen in the quote “I am angry. Gender as it functions today is a grave injustice. We should be angry. Anger has a long history of bringing about positive change; but, in addition to being angry, I’m also hopeful. Because I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to make and remake themselves for the better” (min 9:36). Her claim of policy can be seen in her quote “so if it is in fact true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we must make it our culture” (TED Talk, 2019, min 27:18). A second claim of policy is her call for society to raise their boys and girls better as they are the ones to impact differences on future generations and empower great change. She quotes “And I would like today to ask that we begin to dream about and plan for a different world, a fairer world, a world of hipper men and happier women who are truer to themselves. And this is how to start: we must raise our daughters differently. We must also raise our sons differently” (TED Talk, 2019, min 9:56).

The courage it takes to connect with a wide range of audience members is a skill many strive to perfect. The common phrase most of us heard as a child “words are stronger than actions” is exemplified in Adichie’s phrasing. Her choice to use structured vocabulary to adapt her audience to her subject is one of many features I admire about her. Adichie uses a public vocabulary which is defined by Palczewski, Ice and Fritch (2015) as “the culturally established and sanctioned terms that compose people’s taken-for-granted understanding of the world” (p. 49). One example is the story she tells regarding her friend, Louie, and his realization of inequality. When in Lagos, Louie and Adichie experienced extravagant gestures by members of the community whom rushed to help them joyfully

pack their car in hopes for earning money. Adichie decided to use some of her own money to pay the group of men for their kind gestures. The citizen took Adichie’s money, leaned past her and thanked her male friend Louie for the money because the citizen ultimately assumed that whatever money she had, came from a male. Before this situation, Louie did not know what it meant for women and men to be different in terms of equality, until this realization in differences men and women face, his perception of feminism was incomplete. A 2016 survey from the Washington Post took a poll of men and woman and asked what they thought of feminism. 50% of men declared themselves as not a feminist nor did they know what it was (Washington Post, 2016). Adichie describe feminism as “the theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes,” yet it is clear through the poll by the Washington Post that feminism is defined and understood differently by individuals in society.

As a female, Adichie experienced inequality firsthand on a daily basis. She explains her experiences and constraints through personal narratives and shared experiences with her audience to prove the constraints she faces as a woman are current in the accepted social norms. Constraints are described by Palczewski, Ice and Fritch as “persons, events, objects and relations which are part of the situation because they have the power to constrain decisions and actions needed to modify the exigence” (p.231). The biggest constraint at the time of her speech in 2012, was the government. Unfair treatment in political, economic and sexual forms take place towards women across the country and certain circumstances such as rape-culture, unfair pay or social discrimination between genders are among the many. These culturally accepted social norms have the ability to be made illegal, yet the U.S government has created constraints from providing easy access to feminism across the nation. Another constraint Adichie and women across the world face is the constraint of societal sexism which is forced upon us based on societal norms and gender configuration. Though she speaks and writes for audiences globally, US citizens may view her as an outsider trying to change a system that she is not even a part of. She references culture in her speech through the quote “so if it is in fact true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we must make it our culture” (TED Talk, 2019). Referencing through personal narratives, she discusses her difficulty with feminism in the US, Nigeria and around the world, indicating that different cultures view women differently and have

different ideas of what is appropriately “equal” thus, another constraint. Through her literary success, her identity as a female, her experiences in the inequalities which society has placed upon her, Adichie exemplifies her desire to be a feminist and to call others to follow as well.

Today, the label of a feminist can have positive and negative connotations. Washington Post’s 2016 article states 43% of respondents believe the word “angry” and 30% of respondents believe the word “outdated” describe the word feminism in the United States (Washington Post, 2016). Common misconceptions for the world ‘feminist’ make it difficult for it to be widely accepted by society. Adichie uses resignification of the word to turn it’s meaning into positive altercations. If society connects additional words such as “angry” or as the article also states the words “outraged,” “useless,” or “outdated,” then the proper meaning is lost. In 2012, the fourth wave of feminism began, and only two years later, did nearly half of the individuals express alternative descriptions of the word. An example from her speech, “I was once talking to a black man about gender and he said to me, “Why do you have to say, ‘my experience as a woman’? Why can’t it be ‘your experience as a human being’?” Adichie’s goal is to translate the words and perceptions of feminism into a culturally accepted topic of equality for society to understand. Audience members have a linear segment of the timeline of feminism which she challenges by coordinating and addressing all waves of feminism. The connections of elements of the four waves of feminism are expressed by Adichie through who she is, where she was born, and the accomplishments she has made which help alter the odds against her. As an educated, woman of color, she mixed the challenges of women in color throughout history as they were commonly excluded in the waves. Even in 2019, the limitations of each of the waves of feminism continue.

Near the end of her speech, she expresses a call for civic engagement with the audience she faces. Adichie is speaking at a TED Talk convention to an audience who willingly signed up to listen to speakers talk about diversity. Adichie uses several concepts as a rhetor to help engage her audience into better understanding her call for feminist action in the world of feminism. The rhetorical audience in Adichie’s speech is certainly the feminist who listen to her speech at any point. Bitzer defines rhetorical audience as “any audience that consists only of those persons who are capable of being

influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change” Palczewski, Ice and Fritch (p.229). Arguably, the rhetorical audience can be anyone who might hear the speech, but Adichie is specifically speaking to those who will continue to be active in the change needed for feminism to be accepted. I believe she is also trying to persuade audience members who are ‘on the fence’ about participating in feminism. Several quotes from her speech represent who she is talking to such as “Gender matters. Men and women experience the world differently. Gender colors the way we experience the world. But we can change that” (TED Talk, 2019). She is speaking to anyone of a gender who is willing to partake in the actions to change the world’s view of feminism and encourage them to continue changing the social norms and minds of others. A great quote from her speech is “A feminist is a man or a woman who says, “Yes, there’s a problem with gender as it is today, and we must fix it. We must do better” (TED Talk, 2019). In the beginning of the TED Talk, the visual element of her speech pans to the audience where you can see men and women of all races and presumably social classes. I saw one male audience member had his arms crossed during her speech, while his female companion was laughing at what Adichie said, he remained still and emotionless, indicating he was unamused and did not relate to what Adichie said. I believe the audience was one she knew she could persuade to understand the meaning of feminism and spark engagement to begin action. Adichie used excellent skills of knowing and catering to her audience to establish her goal of inviting others to partake in feminism. She had to break barriers as not only a woman herself, but an African woman. At the end of her speech, the camera panned to the same couple from before; now the male audience member was laughing and communicating in an enjoyable manner, the same as his female companion. Over the course of her speech, Adichie was able to reach different audience members and connect with them, reaching a sense of unity. A concern may be the irrelevance of her understanding of American inequality due to her majority experiences occurring in Nigeria. Several times throughout her speech she explains occurrences of inequality that have happened to her as a young child in Nigeria, to a student at the American University, to her travels around the world. By utilizing her extensive list of personal narratives, she allows the audience to connect with her through similar life experiences in order to better understand why she is asking them to partake in feminist activism. She helps paint a lifespan of inequality to the audience by stating her experiences of inequality in a

chronological order. Beginning with personal narratives of inequality in her youth, to college years, to years of adulthood during her travels and to end, a narrative of her feminist grandmother. She exemplifies the idea of the length of time inequality has lasted by creating the redirecting the element of time. The order in which her narratives are told provide an illusion of a lifetime of inequality; beginning with youth not knowing what a feminist is, to ending with an elderly woman being a feminist and not even knowing it but being proud to be one.

The social truth of inequality in the world, but particularly America, deals largely between genders. The difference between what is socially accepted for a woman versus a man is apparent in every culture. Adichie uses a prime example of not being allowed to be the class monitor in grade school due to being female, even though the requirements of having the highest test score belonged to her. She quotes “I very much wanted to be the class monitor. And I got the highest score on the test. Then, to my surprise, my teacher said the monitor had to be a boy. She had forgotten to make that clear earlier because she assumed it was... obvious” (min 3:31) What is culturally and socially accepted as “obvious” in terms of what boys/girls, men/women are allowed or not allowed to do, confines our us greatly. Adichie quotes “The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing who we are” (min 18:20).

There are a number of reasons why Adichie is an idol to me. I admire her ability and passion to strive for being better. I admire her ability to include the audience through personal stories and letting them in on her life. She becomes vulnerable and tells her audience the truth of inequality rather than pretending she is perfect but claiming it is there. She speaks in a powerful yet whimsical manner that hypnotizes you to relax and release your heart-felt emotions. She incorporates the deepest corners of everyone’s heart not by artificial persuasion, but through the pain of truth and victory of overcoming it. As a fan of several of her books, I enjoyed digging deeper into her life in order to have a better understanding of the reasons for why she does what she does. The day I knew I was a feminist, came when an unfair action hindered my ability to pursue my passion to its full potential. I was applying to receive my certification to become a specialty coffee roaster, and unlike my male coworker who walked through the process with me, my application was \$50 more than his even though our work and requirements were identical. To this day, my ability

to roast coffee has been restricted by the number of days I can roast compared to my male coworker due to unfair insurance rates. My biological gender and chosen identity of female has created an appalling roadblock in my access to pursue my career. Due to the acts of inequality from this day, my passion and choice to live a feminist life is one I strongly believe in. Adichie’s speech, “We should all be Feminists” was already a beautiful speech to me before I learned to deconstruct its rhetorical value. Now, with the knowledge I have gained, I have a deeper understanding of her as an author, rhetor, woman and most importantly, a feminist. We should all be feminists.

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