

Intra-Racial Microaggressions Experienced by the Wife in “The Arrangers of Marriage” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**Ratna Asmarani¹** ✉¹Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia**Article Info**

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Abstract

Racism is a slippery practice having many subtle facets and layers. The purpose of this paper is to study the intra-racial microaggressions experienced by the wife in the short story entitled “The Arrangers of Marriage” written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. To support the analysis, several concepts are borrowed. Within the broader concept of racism, the focus is on the meaning of racial microaggressions which have several levels. The common concept of inter-racial microaggressions is adapted into intra-racial microaggressions to conform to the topic of discussion. The academic analysis is also supported by a combination of sound methods. Within the frame of feminist criticism, data are gathered and analyzed using the library research method and the qualitative research method. For the literary research method, contextual research method is applied which covers the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The results indicate that due to the feeling of superiority of the New York African husband, intra-racial microaggressions hegemonize the Lagos African wife in the forms of microattacks, microinsults and microinvalidations. The intention of the Lagos African wife to escape from the intra-racial microaggressions must be postponed due to her helpless situation at the time being although now she has a female friend who is willing to help her get out of this situation.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of racism is never obsolete. It is full of complexities, subtle or not, that has spread in every layer of life for so long, consciously or unconsciously. A specific type of racism is contained in the short story entitled “The Arrangers of Marriage” in the short story collection entitled *The Thing Around Your Neck* written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Adichie, 2009).

“The Arrangers of Marriage” starts with the arranged marriage between a young African woman from Lagos, Nigeria, with an African man from New York America. Following the new husband to America, the new wife faced an unexpected racial behaviors and instructions from her new husband that made her feel hopelessly uncomfortable since she had no friends in New York and no relatives in Lagos. Based on the content of the short story, this paper will analyze

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the intra-racial microaggressions done by the husband to the wife.

There are several papers discussing the short story entitled "The Arrangers of Marriage". Theresa Stitz (Stitz, 2014) wrote a term paper comparing two short stories from the short story collection. Fouad Mami (Mami, 2014) wrote a book chapter comparing three short stories of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Mohammed Mostafa Hassoun (Hassouna, 2016), Itang Egbung and Winnie Zana Akpagu (Egbung & Akpagu, 2019), Alireza Sardari (Sardari, 2021), Hassan Bin Zubair, Safia Parveen, and Uzma Imtiaz (Zubair et al., 2021), wrote articles on various topics. Himanshu Kunwar (Kunwar, 2021) wrote a web article, Boubaker Mohrem and Samira El-Khawaldeh (Mohrem & El-Khawaldeh, 2022) wrote a comparative journal article. The topic "Intra-Racial Microaggressions Experienced by the Wife in "The Arrangers of Marriage" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie" has not been analyzed yet, thus it is open for academic analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An academic analysis needs the support of relevant concepts or theories. In line with the main topic, intra-racial microaggressions, the theoretical concepts will focus on the notion of intra-racial, racism, and microaggressions.

The dictionary meaning of "intra-racial" from Wiktionary ("Intra-racial," n.d.) is "Within race (group of people); of or by members of the same race" while racism according to Cambridge dictionary ("Racism," n.d.) means "harmful or unfair things that people say, do, or think based on the belief that their own race makes them more intelligent, good, moral, etc. than people of other races". Further, Partida stated that intra-racial racism "not necessarily rooted in ethnic differences, but rather on cultural and demographic differences, as well as location and economic status" (Partida, 2003). Thus, it can be concluded that intra-racial racism is unpleasant treatment from one person to another within the same race or ethnicity due to some disparities, culturally, economically, or spatially.

There are several levels of racism, however only two are borrowed to support the main topic of discussion. The first level of racism is "Personal/Internalized Racism" which refers to "a pattern that encompasses a person's private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas" including Microaggressions. The second level of racism is "Interpersonal Racism" which takes place "between individuals ... including bullying, verbal harassment, and negative personal thoughts around race" which consequently is also related to Microaggressions ("*The Four Types of Racism*," 2022). In short it can be said that Microaggressions contained in "Personal/Internalized Racism" will be reflected in "Interpersonal Racism" in everyday life and interaction.

The term Microaggressions was invented by Dr. Chester M. Pierce, psychiatrist, in 1970 to refer to "subtle insults and put-downs that African Americans experience regularly" ("*What to Know about Microaggressions*," n.d.). Later, Peirce's ideas is further developed by psychologists, the notable one is "Derald Wing Sue, PhD, a professor of counseling psychology at Columbia University" ("*What Are Microaggressions?*," 2022).

Sue et al. stated, "microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group" (Sue et al., 2007). In another writing in the later years, Torino, Rivera, Capodilupo, and Sue defined Microaggressions as follows: "microaggressions are derogatory slights or insults directed at a target person or persons who are members of an oppressed group" (Torino et al., 2019). Thus, it can be said that microaggressions are belittling remarks directed towards others considered lower in race, class, or gender. There are three types of Microaggressions; namely, "microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation" (Torino et al., 2019). Microassaults "refers to a blatant verbal, nonverbal, or environmental attack intended to convey discriminatory and biased sentiments ... microassaults are most similar to old-fashioned racism" (Torino et al., 2019). Microinsults "are unintentional behaviors or verbal comments that convey rudeness or insensitivity or demean a

person's racial heritage/identity, gender identity, religion, ability, or sexual orientation identity" (Torino et al., 2019). Microinvalidations "are verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or dismiss the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of the target group" (Torino et al., 2019). From these three types of microaggressions, microinsults are the type mostly found in the short story being analyzed entitled "The Arrangers of Marriage" written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Sue argued that "racial microaggressions are different from "everyday rudeness" in the following ways. They are (a) constant and continual in the lives of people of color, (b) cumulative in nature and represent a lifelong burden of stress, (c) continuous reminders of the target group's second-class status in society, and (d) symbolic of past governmental injustices directed toward people of color" (Sue et al., 2019). Thus, racial microaggressions are not the same as daily bad manners due to the comprehensive and layered attack to the target group. The effects of microaggressions attract various discussions among experts. Compiled by Sue *et al.* (Sue et al., 2019), Microaggressions "increase stress in the lives of people of color" ("Stress in America: The Impact of Discrimination," 2016), "deny or negate their racialized experiences" (Neville et al., 2013), "lower emotional well-being" (Ong et al., 2013), "increase depression and negative feelings" (Nadal et al., 2014), and others. There are several suggestions on how to face microaggressions, one that is relevant to the discussion on "The Arrangers of Marriage" is "to seek external support from others or from institutional authorities" [(Brondolo et al., 2009); (Mellor, 2004) quoted by Sue *et al.* (Sue et al., 2019)]. Although microaggressions can be in the forms of Verbal, Behavioral, and Environmental ("*What to Know about Microaggressions*," n.d.), only verbal form of microaggressions is reflected in "The Arrangers of Marriage" being analyzed.

The microaggressions discussed above, mostly led by professor Derald Wing Sue, is racial microaggressions which refer to condescending perspective with its various manifestations of those

considered the superior race to those considered the inferior race. In other words, there are different hierarchical races involved. However, these racial microaggressions can also happen within one race which can be called intra-racial microaggressions. It is these intra-racial microaggressions that is contained in the relationship of the new couple, a Lagos Nigerian wife and a New York African husband in the short story entitled "The Arrangers of Marriage" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

A sound methodology is needed to support the application of theoretical concepts on the analysis. Considering that the focus of discussion is on the female character, the wife, in its relationship to the husband in "The Arrangers of Marriage", then the whole analysis is done through the frame of Feminist Criticism. According to Humm, Feminist Criticism "reads writing and examines its ideology and culture with a woman centred perspective" (Humm, 1995). In line with Humm, Cuddon stated that Feminist Criticism "questions the long-standing, dominant, male, phallogocentric ideologies (which add up to a kind of male conspiracy), patriarchal attitudes and male interpretations in literature (and critical evaluation of literature)" (Cuddon, 2013). Thus, using the Feminist Criticism means focusing on the female character while at the same time criticizing the hidden patriarchal ideologies surrounding the female character.

METHODS

Within the frame of Feminist Criticism, several relevant research methods are applied. The first one is library research method which is used to sort out useful data among countless data to build strong theoretical concepts and to pick relevant quotations from the literary work being analyzed. The basic concept of library research "the logic of the library research process is the movement from what exists to what is worth using" (George, 2008) is then combined with close reading technique which is "close analysis and forming an overall interpretation" (Phelan, 2021). Meanwhile, the general analysis is done through qualitative research method which is

“interpretative research” (Creswell, 2009) to analyze the relevant quotation already gathered to support the critical analysis. As a comprehensive literary analysis, then the contextual research method is applied, in which “Context refers to what goes with a text, rather than what is in it” (Beard, 2004). Beard’s statement emphasized more the extrinsic aspects of the literary work than the intrinsic aspects, while Behrendt combined both the intrinsic and extrinsic analysis to get the whole meaning (Behrendt, 2008) in his idea of contextual research method. Using the combination of those research methods within the frame of feminist criticism, a comprehensive and critical analysis of the short story entitled “The Arrangers of Marriage” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie will be able to be achieved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intra-racial microaggressions or underestimating remarks, gestures, or expressions done by one superior person to the one considered inferior within the same race are not too apparent but they hurt the targeted person. It is reflected in the relationship of the newly-wed couple. The wife decides to endure the husband’s intra-racial microaggressions while preparing her way, with the help of a female friend, to leave her husband one day to live independently on her own effort.

Triggers of Microaggressions Experienced by the Wife

The relationship in the arranged marriage that just happens between a young African woman from Lagos, Nigeria, with an African man from New York America, can be said unequal or imbalance. This is the basis of the intra-racial microaggressions to the new wife. The imbalance is reflected in their different background. The young African woman, Chinaza Agatha Okafor, is an orphan taken care by a couple she called uncle and aunt in Lagos, Nigeria (Adichie, 2009). She helps her aunt with her bakery store. The African man from New York America, Ofodile Emeka Udenwa, is known as a doctor in America.

The marriage is arranged by the aunt and uncle and the mother of the doctor. The aunt and uncle think that Chinaza, the young African woman, is very lucky to be the wife of a doctor in America as can be seen in her aunt’s words “A doctor in America! It is like we won a lottery for

you!” (Adichie, 2009). It is decided that the new couple will live in New York, America. The new wife is a modest woman who is not familiar at all with American life. On the other side, the husband feels that he knows more about modern American life and underestimates the traditional African life. He also adores anything about America and tries very hard to follow it. In other words, the husband unconsciously suffers from internalized racism. However, since he thinks that he is superior to his wife in every point, the imbalance relationship between them is colored with individual intra racism in the forms of microaggressions to the wife.

Forms of Microaggressions Experienced by the Wife

There are three forms of microaggressions as already mentioned; namely, microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidation. Most microaggressions suffered by the Lagos wife are in the form of microinsults as will be discussed in details in the following sections.

Forms of Microassaults Experienced by the Wife

The first form of microaggressions being analyzed are microassaults. It can be seen when her husband wants to show her how to use the public bus. It is a good intention, actually; however, the way the husband performs his tutorial is condescending:

“This is not like Nigeria, where you shout out to the conductor,” he said, sneering, as though he was the one who had invented the superior American system (Adichie, 2009).

By mentioning Nigeria, the husband intends to show the backwardness of the African country compared to America. His “sneering” expression indicates his directly mocking his wife that he considers dumb because she is fresh from Lagos, Nigeria. The husband does not realize that his action is silently criticized by the underestimated wife. This indicates that his wife is not as dumb as he thinks.

The second form of microassaults is not directly addressed to the Lagos wife; however, his discriminative remark is an obvious lesson to the wife:

“Look at the people who shop here; they are the ones who immigrate and continue to act as if they are back in their countries.” He gestured, dismissively, toward a woman and her two children, who were speaking Spanish. (Adichie, 2009).

The husband, although he is originally also from Lagos Nigeria, his long staying in America and his existence as a doctor make him feel superior to

other immigrants. His blatant criticism to the Spanish immigrants in the American mall who still speak Spanish indicates his feeling of superiority and his underestimating judgment.

Another form of microassaults directed to the Lagos wife is when the husband considers it is trivial not to tell the Lagos wife that he has married before:

“The American woman I married to get a green card is making trouble,” he said,

“You were married before?” I laced my fingers together because they had started to shake (Adichie, 2009).

It happens one day when the Lagos wife asks about her work permit whose issue is delayed. It turns out that the husband has not yet properly divorced from his American wife. The fact that he does not tell her about that and his action of trivializing the shocking fact for the wife signify that for the husband his wife’s feeling and emotion is not important at all.

The form of microassaults does not stop there. When the Lagos wife protests that she should get the information about the husband’s marital status before their marriage in Lagos, the husband lightly says the information will not change anything. Furthermore, the husband insensitively strikes the powerless position of the wife. According to the husband, the Lagos wife has no words to decide anything since her life depends on the kind aunt and uncle so far. This form of microassaults leaves the Lagos wife powerlessly speechless. Her resistance is represented by her tearing the discount coupons that she has cut before. (Adichie, 2009).

The husband who feels superior further assails his Lagos wife by coldly and blatantly showing that she has no other good choice except thankfully agreeing to marry him:

“Why did you marry me?” I asked.

“I wanted a Nigerian wife and my mother said you were a good girl, quiet. She said you might even be a virgin.” He smiled. He looked even more tired when he smiled. “I probably should tell her how wrong she was” (Adichie, 2009).

To the helplessly underestimated wife’s question, the new husband answers lightly and selfishly that he desires an African wife and is tempted by his mother’s promotion about her. However, he strikes her with the fact that she is not virgin anymore that makes him feel cheated. He mocks her non virginity without thinking that he has cheated the wife by not informing his still married status.

The husband is also an intra-racist. He categorizes African females based on the lightness

of their skin. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“I was happy when I saw your picture,” he said, smacking his lips. “You were light-skinned. I had to think about my children’s looks. Light-skinned blacks fare better in America” (Adichie, 2009).

The husband opinion follows racist stereotype. He chooses her for her light skin which is an asset for their offspring. The husband wants to erase the thick resemblance with the African origin. For that purpose, he never thinks what the Lagos wife thinks, feels, or wants.

Forms of Microinsults Experienced by the Wife

The African husband known as a doctor in New York basically has a patronizing character towards his Lagos wife due to his blind worship to anything American. The most striking form of microinsults directed to the wife is the prohibition to speak *Igbo* (the Nigerian language) in America. It is shown when they go to the modern mall for the first time:

“*Biko*, don’t they have a lift instead?” I asked. At least I had once ridden in the creaky one in the local government office,

“Speak English. There are people behind you,” he whispered, pulling me away, toward a glass counter full of twinkling jewelry. “It’s an elevator, not a lift. Americans say elevator.”

“Okay” (Adichie, 2009).

The Igbo word “*Biko*” meaning “please” in English (“*Biko*,” n.d.) uttered by the Lagos wife is abruptly stopped by the husband because he is afraid people around them will further notice their locality as Africans. The husband desires so much not to be noticed to be too different. That is why he does not only assertively order the Lagos wife to speak English but especially American English by showing the American English word for “lift”.

Another representation of the form of microinsults can also be seen in the following quotation when the husband comes home after work:

“*Nno*,” I said. “Did you work well?”

“You have to speak English at home, too, baby. So you can get used to it” (Adichie, 2009).

The Lagos wife greets her husband in Nigerian language “*Nno*” meaning “Welcome” in English (“*Nno*,” n.d.). However, the husband decisively states that even at home she has to speak American English. It signifies his effort to erase the

connection with their origin to be accepted in America.

Since the first time coming to New York, the husband urges the Lagos wife to speak correct American English. When the Lagos wife cannot contact the uncle and aunt in Lagos and uses the expression “engaged”, the husband corrects it with the American English word “busy.” His insistence can be seen in his saying it twice (Adichie, 2009). Another example of the husband’s insistence on his Lagos wife using American English is when the wife tries to greet the much older woman living in the same apartment. He stresses that she should say “Hi” instead of “You’re welcome” (Adichie, 2009). For the husband, the wife must use American English. No reasons no excuses.

The husband who has tried very hard to adopt the American culture also insists that the Lagos wife also follows his example. She should not drink tea with milk and sugar (Adichie, 2009). This insistence is a form of microinsults since it tries to negate the wife’s preference of drinking tea. The husband’s worshipping everything America can also be seen from his changing his Nigerian name into American name: “I’m not called Ofodile here, by the way. I go by Dave,” he said (Adichie, 2009: 131).

His total worshipping does not stop on changing his given name, but also his surname:

“Dave?” I knew he didn’t have an English name. The invitation cards to our wedding had read *Ofodile Emeka Udenwa* and *Chinaza Agatha Okafor*.

“The last name I use here is different, too. Americans have a hard time with Udenwa, so I changed it.”

....

“It’s Bell” (Adichie, 2009).

The husband changes his surname from “Udenwa” into “Bell” under the reason that it is easier for Americans to remember the new surname.

His not telling the wife before about the name changing is a form of microinsults because later it affects the Lagos wife:

When he filled out a Social Security number application for me the next day, the name he entered in bold letters was AGATHA BELL (Adichie, 2009).

He patronizes his wife to follow the American way in whatever sides to survive and without further consultation he changes the Lagos wife name from Chinaza Agatha Okafor into Agatha Bell. His changing the wife’s name without consultation indicates the form of microinsults since impliedly

he erases the Lagos identity of the wife into American identity.

Another form of microinsults is reflected through the husband’s patronizing attitude in teaching the wife to do daily shopping and bus riding. His teaching of how to act is so bossy that makes the wife feel uncomfortable. To stop the embarrassing teaching, the wife exaggerates her moving her head as instructed (Adichie, 2009).

The husband’s dominating attitude can also be seen in his personal decision when they go to the mall for the first time:

“Two pepperoni and sausage. Is your combo deal better?” my new husband asked. He sounded different when he spoke to Americans: his *r* was overpronounced and his *t* was underpronounced. And he smiled, the eager smile of a person who wanted to be liked (Adichie, 2009).

Without asking the wife’s opinion, he decides to order pizza. According to him it is important for the wife to eat and like pizza as part of liking the American culture. His action is a form of microinsults since it underestimates the wife’s existence by ignoring her opinion. Silently, the Lagos wife who is not dumb at all critically evaluates her husband’s way of speaking and attitude when ordering pizza because his way of speaking and attitude changes drastically when speaking with American man. He tries to show his best American accent and he poses as a timid, friendly, and harmless person so that the American pizza seller can accept him well like other customers.

The husband’s microinsults also reflect his financial limitation. As usual he superiorly corrects his wife when she uses the word “biscuits” instead of “cookies” when the wife wants to have the brand she is familiar with to erase her feeling of being stranded in a foreign area. Insensitive of what his wife feels, the husband orders her to take the other cheaper brand. This incident shows that the husband is reluctant to please the first simple request of her wife. It also shows that he is parsimonious or broke or his earning is not as much as rumored at Lagos before the marriage (Adichie, 2009).

It turns out that the husband is not as rich as the rumor. Also, not like the rumors that the husband is a doctor in America, he does not completely finish his study as a doctor.

“When I become an Attending, we will stop buying store brands, but for now we have to; these things may seem cheap but they add up,” he said.

“When you become a Consultant?”

“Yes, but it’s called an Attending here, an Attending Physician” (Adichie, 2009).

However, his financial limitation does not prevent him from being a patronizing person towards his wife. Again, he corrects his wife to use the word “Attending” not “Consultant”. However, actually it is not just for the wife’s sake, it is more for his sake who wants to adapt totally to the American way.

The husband who always thinks that he is the one who knows everything about America, gives a short lecture to the Lagos wife:

“Always best to shop when there is a sale. Sometimes you get the same thing for less than half the price. It’s one of the wonders of America.”

“*Ezi okwu?*” I said, then hastily added, “Really?” (Adichie, 2009).

The wife, who does not want to quarrel with the superior husband, immediately changes her Nigerian verbal expression with English verbal expression. His ignoring the wife’s effort to follow his instruction of always speaking English is a form of microinsults.

Another form of microinsults done by the husband toward the wife is reflected in their first sexual intercourse after arriving in his poor apartment in New York.

He raised himself to pull my nightdress up above my waist.

....

When he finally stopped thrusting, he rested his entire weight on me, even the weight of his legs. I did not move until he climbed off me to go into the bathroom. (Adichie, 2009).

Without any dialogue or sexual preparation, the husband directly does sexual activity for his own sake. He even ignores his smelly mouth when abruptly kissing his wife. This indicates that the husband negates the wife’s sexual readiness or willingness.

Forms of Microinvalidations Experienced by the Wife

The microinvalidations happen when the husband disregards the abilities of the Lagos wife who actually has excellent skills in cooking. While still in Lagos living with the older couple she calls aunt and uncle, she “had sold more bread in Aunt Ada’s bakery than all the other bakeries in Enugu sold, that the furniture and floors in the house shone because of me” (Adichie, 2009). She is an expert in making bread and cookies and she is very good at household keeping. That is why she has no

appetite eating the defrosted pancake served by the husband on her first breakfast in the apartment in New York (Adichie, 2009). In Lagos she always ate fresh thick warm bread. Chinaza, the Lagos wife, is also an expert in choosing fresh meat in the traditional market (Adichie, 2009). Not used to buying meat that is not fresh, the wife feels unconvinced with the freshness of packaged meat sold in the mall.

Not considering the wife has many useful skills and not even bothering to ask, the husband commits microinvalidations. Without asking the wife whether she wants to eat pizza, the husband orders pizza and does not accept his wife’s opinion about the still raw tomatoes. Acting like a nutritional expert, he criticizes the Nigerian way of cooking while praising the American way of cooking. He completely forgets that the traditional cooking makes him grow well and smart. He also blindly ignores the fact that not all types of American foods are healthy as represented by the fat African-American woman sitting near them (Adichie, 2009).

Another form of microinvalidations done by the husband is when the husband does not give a chance to his wife to show her ability in cooking. He underestimates her cooking ability because he worships American foods such as hamburger in his effort to be not to look so foreign (Adichie, 2009: 136). One day, the Lagos wife painstakingly cooks a traditional food called coconut rice. Because there is no grater, she with great difficulty finally gets coconut milk from whole coconuts as the main ingredient for coconut rice:

My new husband came back half an hour later and ate the fragrant meal I placed before him, even smacking his lips But the next day, he came back with a *Good Housekeeping All-American Cookbook*, thick as a Bible (136-137)

The husband enjoys so much the traditional food because actually he misses so much the taste of that food. However, he resists giving verbal compliments to his wife’s expertise in cooking implying microinvalidations. In his effort not to be recognized as foreigner, he urges his wife to cook only American foods by buying her American cookbook and asks her not to cook traditional food anymore.

The Wife’s Reactions Concerning the Microaggressions Directed to Her

The Lagos wife is not dumb or insensitive. It is represented by her silently criticizing her husband. The Lagos wife is very reasonable. However, she is alone and friendless in New York. If she wants to

react against her husband's microaggressions, she has to have some form of personal assets or support in whatever form.

The wife who is alone without friends finally has a female acquaintance, a friendly, young, African American woman living in the same apartment. Her name is Nia and she is interested in the Lagos wife and her Nigerian name. This fact surprises the Lagos wife: "'Oh,' I said and shook my head; she, a black American, had chosen an African name, while my husband made me change mine to an English one" (Adichie, 2009). When the wife tells her husband about Nia, his comment is ambiguous: "She's okay, but be careful because she can be a bad influence" (Adichie, 2009). With Nia, the Lagos wife starts her silent resistance to her husband: "..., he did not know that I spoke Igbo to myself while I cooked, that I had taught Nia how to say 'I'm hungry' and 'See you tomorrow' in Igbo" (Adichie, 2009). Not allowed to speak Igbo with her husband inside and outside the house, the Lagos wife does not lose her mind to get around the husband's prohibition. She never lets herself forget the Igbo, moreover now she has a friend that is interested in Igbo.

The fact that the husband's divorce is not yet final makes the Lagos wife have not got the work permit yet (Adichie, 2009). This situation is not favorable for the wife. She has no chance to work in order to be not too dependent financially to her husband. In an emotional moment, the Lagos wife leaves the husband's apartment to stay the night at Nia's apartment to discuss her cornered situation. The Lagos wife is completely alone. In Lagos she has nobody that has sympathy for her. The old couple she calls aunt and uncle will be very angry and will never want to see her again if she tells them she wants to leave her husband. She will be labelled as an ungrateful woman. Actually, she has a boyfriend in Lagos but she cannot depend on him since he himself is poor. Thus, there is no way out for the Lagos wife in facing the various forms of microaggressions from her husband (Adichie, 2009: 141).

Nia who has more experience living in New York wants to help the Lagos wife finding a

job. However, considering the current situation of the Lagos wife, she gives a realistic advice: "You can wait until you get your papers and then leave," Nia said ..." (Adichie, 2009). The Lagos wife, also a realistic woman, has to agree with Nia's advice to be patient waiting for the work permit before planning the next step of freeing herself from her husband. Although it is hard, the Lagos wife sees no other way except to stay with the husband. Powerlessly, the Lagos wife returns to the husband's apartment. The husband's calm reaction when letting the Lagos wife come in indicates that he already knows that the Lagos wife is powerless and dependent to him. It also indicates that various forms of microaggression will be continued or maybe worse because the husband feels as a winner in a moment of resistance from the Lagos wife's side.

CONCLUSION

Forms of intra-racial microaggressions; namely microassaults, microinsults, and microvalidations, are very subtle and elusive. They can be felt and understood by a sensitive and perceptive person only. These forms of intra-racial microaggressions done by the New York African husband to his Lagos African wife are represented skillfully in the short story entitled "The Arrangers of Marriage" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The triggers of these forms of intra-racial microaggressions are the superior feeling of the New York African husband to his Lagos African wife that he considers inferior in the sense of lacking of knowledge and still having traditional mind. The many forms of intra-racial microaggressions are clearly felt by the Lagos wife who is actually not a dumb person and has useful skills to survive which are ignored by the New York African husband blindly worshipping all American ways of life. However, since the Lagos wife still totally financially depends on her New York African husband, she has to restraint the urge to leave the husband immediately. The total financial dependence is caused by her not having work permit yet so that she cannot earn money by making bread as her expertise. Her work permit cannot be issued because it turns out, unbeknownst to her, the husband is already married and the divorce process is not smooth. Thus, the Lagos wife is forced to be dependent to the New York

African husband, at least financially. Fortunately, she has a young female African American friend who supports her emotionally to face her present difficult situation and who will help her to get work once her work permit is issued.

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