Book Section:
van Klinken, A. orcid.org/0000-0003-2011-5537 (2024) The Problem of 'Redemptive Masculinity' in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. In: Chitando, E., Mlambo, O.B., Mfecane, S. and Ratele, K., (eds.) The Palgrave Handbook of African Men and Masculinities. Palgrave Macmillan , pp. 373-384. ISBN 978-3-031-49166-5

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-49167-2_19

This is the author-accepted manuscript of a chapter accepted for publication in *Palgrave Handbook of Men and Masculinities in Africa*, edited by Ezra Chitando, Obert Mlambo, Sakhumzi Mfecane and Kopano Ratele (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

The Problem of 'Redemptive Masculinity' in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Adriaan van Klinken, University of Leeds

ORCID 0000-0003-2011-5537

Abstract

African literary texts serve an important purpose in representing and reimagining men and masculinities. The novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has been acclaimed for its critical take on religious and cultural patriarchy and for its progressive approach to gender. In the character of Papa Eugene, the novel problematises a patriarchal embodiment of male identity shaped by Nigerian ideals of the 'Big Man' as well as by conservative Catholic notions of masculinity. Alternatively, Eugene's son, Jaja, can be seen as a character embodying what has been described as 'redemptive masculinity', illustrating the religious, indeed messianic, undertones of this concept. Yet the novel also demonstrates the problem that redemptive masculinity can pose to female agency. Through a close reading of *Purple Hibiscus*, this chapter reconstructs the novel's complex account of masculinities, culture and religion, and critically evaluates the concept of redemptive masculinity that the novel appears to put forward.

Introduction

What insights can a literary text provide in men and masculinities in contemporary Africa? This question is particularly relevant in the light of an emerging body of scholarship, as well as activism, that is concerned with problematising hegemonic forms of masculinity in African cultures and societies, and with imagining and engendering alternative notions of male

identity and agency. The present chapter takes up this question with reference to the novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2004) by the popular Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (b. 1977). A widely acclaimed debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* received several international awards, such as the Commonwealth Writers Prize 2005 (in the categories Best First Book: Africa, and Best First Book: Overall). In the novel, Adichie explicitly engages with questions of gender – a topic she has also addressed in non-fictional form, such as in her 2012 TEDxEuston talk titled 'We Should All be Feminists', which was later published as an essay (Adichie 2014). Although several scholarly critics have explored the representation and politics of gender in the novel (e.g. Dube 2018; Fwangyil 2011; Ndula 2017; Stobie 2010), few have read the text with a specific interest in masculinity. In this chapter, I address this lacuna by drawing critical attention to the character of Jaja, the brother of the novel's protagonist, Kambili. Although often side-lined in scholarly work about *Purple Hibiscus*, I argue that the character of Jaja is of critical importance to the novel's gendered politics, and is particularly crucial to the question of a reimagining of masculinity. Taking up the concept of 'redemptive masculinity' (Chitando & Chirongoma 2012), I suggest that the narrative depiction of Jaja explicitly illustrates the religious, indeed messianic, undertones of this concept and critically reveals both its potential and the problem that it poses to female agency. In what follows, I will first provide a general overview of scholarship about masculinities in African literature. I will then review academic studies of gender and religion in *Purple Hibiscus*, followed by two sections that specifically focus on 'redemptive masculinity', reconstructing its narrative depiction and critically evaluating its effects in the novel. The chapter then ends with a brief conclusion.

Masculinities in African Literature

As part of a broader field of research into African masculinities, there is a growing body of scholarship concerned with the ways in which men and masculinities are narratively constructed, critically represented, and creatively reimagined in African literary and cultural texts. Expanding the debate about gender in African literature, this scholarship acknowledges that such debates 'can only be complete and meaningful when masculinity is brought under close scrutiny as it abuts discussions of other genders' (Muchemwa and Muponde 2007b, xv). Inspired by feminist (and more recently, queer) gender criticism, and building on social constructivist theories that highlight the multiplicity, complexity and instability of

masculinity, and its intricate connection to power, scholars engage in 'a critical strategy that opens up the literary-cultural terrain to scrutinize the nuanced and complex inscriptions of masculinity from a variety of African social contexts' (Mugambi and Allan 2010b, 3). The emergence of this field is an important development because although 'the question of masculinity lies at the centre of the key texts of African literature', as Simon Gikandi (2010, 295) has pointed out, 'it has rarely been recognised as a theoretical or ethical problem, one worthy of reflection as a condition of possibility of textuality or performance.'

Although the theme of religion and its impact on men and masculinities in African societies has been addressed in the field of African masculinity studies in general (e.g. Chitando and Chirongoma 2012; van Klinken 2013), little attention has been paid so far to the intersections of religion and masculinity in African literary and cultural texts. This is surprising, because the central questions of 'how understandings and practices of masculinity have been molded and transformed through religious reform in Africa; and how changing notions, norms, and social practices of masculinity shape and are shaped by religious discourse, innovation, and contestation' (Schulz and Janson 2016, 123), can also be applied to literary and cultural texts. Religious language, symbols and beliefs are important themes in African literary and cultural texts, with religion being engaged critically and imaginatively (van Klinken 2020). This representation of religion intersects with the representation of gender, with both themes being put in a dialogical relationship with each other (Salami-Boukari 2012). In the classic texts of African literature, by writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the relationship between missionary Christianity and traditional religion and culture is a central theme, as these novels narrate how religious change in colonial times affected change in gender and family relations, as well as in notions of masculinity (e.g. see Salomone 2006; van Klinken 2015). But how are these themes depicted in a more recent novel, such as Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*?

Gender and Religion in *Purple Hibiscus*

The story of *Purple Hibiscus* is set in postcolonial Nigeria, probably in the 1980s when the country went through a military coup that installed a regime notoriously known for its human rights abuses. The story is told from the perspective of the young female protagonist, Kambili, who is fifteen years old for most of the time covered in the book. Together with her older brother, Jaja, she grows up in the city of Enugu, in a household that is dominated by

their father, Eugene. A successful 'self-made' businessman and a devout Catholic, Eugene is known in the community as a benefactor of the less privileged. As the publisher of a newspaper critical of the military government, Eugene receives an international human rights award. However, at home he tyrannises his wife, Beatrice, and his children, not refraining from using physical violence in addition to mental abuse. As Safoura Salami-Boukari (2012, 51) captures him: 'A fake goodwill benefactor, devout Christian, and respected Igbo native, Eugene combines all the paradoxical and contradictory characteristics of the lovable public figure he projects to his community and society, and the abusive father and brutal husband he is to his close family.'

Educated at a mission school and a convert to Catholicism, Eugene has broken any relationship with his father in the village, who continued to practice indigenous religion, and who is consistently referred to by his son as 'heathen' and 'pagan'. Eugene's sister, the critical-minded university lecturer Ifeoma, is also a Catholic, but of a different kind: she is close to her father and believes that his Igbo rituals and prayers are equally worthwhile as those of the church. When Kambili and Jaja are finally allowed by their father to stay with their single-parent aunt and her family in the town of Nsukka, they discover another world, with new possibilities of family life, of experiencing Christian faith, and of being Igbo and Nigerian. Although they process this experience in different ways, for both of them it is a critical turn in their coming of age. When they return home from a second stay at their aunt's, it appears that their battered mother has finally stood up to her violently abusive husband, but in a rather dramatic way: she has poisoned him to death. When the police arrive to arrest her, Jaja takes the blame and is arrested and jailed in his mother's place. In the novel's tragic final pages, Ijeoma and her broken, guilt-ridden mother bring him groceries in jail while trying to use their political connections to get him free.

Adichie's first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, received considerable international acclaim and has been widely discussed by literary critics. In the light of the focus of this chapter, scholarly discussions of the themes of gender and religion in the novel are particularly relevant. With regard to the former, Janet Ndula (2017, 31) refers to *Purple Hibiscus* as an 'illuminating example of how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie prolifically blends art and ideology with great social significance to contemporary gender representation.' In her reading, the novel interrogates the silencing of women in society due to patriarchal cultural and religious ideology. Along similar lines, Cheryl Stobie (2010, 421, 427) offers a gendered reading of *Purple Hibiscus*, according to which Adichie in this novel is concerned with 'dethroning the

infallible father' by telling a story that 'highlights the devastating effects of patriarchal control and intolerance within the family', and in which the 'patriarchal reign of terror' is brought dramatically to an end. Other critics have foregrounded the theme of religion. For instance, Susan VanZanten discusses *Purple Hibiscus* as a literary representation of the shift in Christianity worldwide, from Europe to Africa. Drawing attention to the different ways in which Papa Eugene and Aunty Ifeoma embody the Catholic faith, she argues that the novel seeks 'to interrogate different expressions of Christianity and to affirm a vigorously local African Christianity' (Van Zanten 2016, 271). Musa Dube presents what she calls a postcolonial feminist reading of the novel, which engages with both the themes of gender and religion. Focusing on Aunty Ifeoma's expression of her Christian faith in a way that integrates Igbo and African identity and that recognises female agency, and contrasting this to Eugene's character, Dube (2018, 232) suggests that Ifeoma is a 'depatriarchalizing figure' whose household is a 'decolonizing feminist space of liberation'.

All these critics praise *Purple Hibiscus* for its critical and creative engagement with themes of religion and gender. With this novel, Adichie demonstrates that African literary writers, including those of a younger generation, continue to be social thinkers (Adebanwi 2014). But what, exactly, is the social vision that Adichie presents us with in the pages of this novel, in relation to religion and gender, specifically masculinity? Dube's postcolonial feminist reading of the novel is tempered by Stobie (2010, 423) who argues that Adichie's stance, although progressive, is not a radical but a 'reformist' one. My own reading of the novel, with a focus on masculinity and religion, draws attention to the ambiguous nature of the text. Clearly, as all critics agree, Papa Eugene is an embodiment of patriarchal domination, and in the depiction of his character Adichie presents a social critique of cultural and religious patriarchy. But what to make of the alternative vision of masculinity, represented in the character of Jaja?

'Redemptive Masculinity' in *Purple Hibiscus*

The male character that Jaja presents can be described with the term 'redemptive masculinity'. Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma (2012, 1) coined this concept in order to 'characterize and identify masculinities that are life-giving in a world reeling from the effects of violence and the AIDS pandemic', and that are liberating, harmonious and peaceful. Reviewing some other emergent terms in the project of reconstructing masculinities in the

quest for gender justice, such as progressive and transformative masculinities, Chitando and Chirongoma argue to prefer the language of 'redemptive masculinities' because it highlights the 'importance of religio-cultural resources' (ibid. 2). Although Adichie's quest for alternative masculinities in *Purple Hibiscus* is not directly informed by the HIV epidemic, domestic violence and violence against women are major themes in the text. Through her novel she not only unmasks the hegemonic masculinity embodied by Papa Eugene as the root cause of such violence, but she also narratively constructs an alternative masculinity. What, then, are the religio-cultural resources that she mobilises for this, and how does this masculinity, as embodied by Jaja, take a 'redemptive' quality?

First, there are evident biblical tropes in the narrative depiction of Jaja. This becomes clear from a closer look at the structure of *Purple Hibiscus*, which centres around the theme of Palm Sunday. The three main parts of the novel are titled 'Palm Sunday', 'Before Palm Sunday', and 'After Palm Sunday', which creates what Dube (2018, 224) calls a 'religious timeframe'. As a biblical scholar, she obviously relates this to the story from the Gospel of Matthew that in the Christian calendar is associated with the Sunday before Easter, known as Palm Sunday. In this story, Jesus enters Jerusalem while riding a donkey, and is enthusiastically hailed by the crowds waiving with palm leaves and welcoming him as the long-awaited Son of David, the messianic king. Putting this Gospel story in the historical-political context of the time – Jerusalem being subjugated by the Roman Empire – Dube (2018, 225) suggests that 'the tradition of Palm Sunday thus reeks with liberation undertones—suggesting freedom from enslavement and colonizing structural powers and insisting on liberation.' According to Dube, Adichie directly evokes this biblical, messianic theme by structuring her novel around Palm Sunday, 'utilizing it as the opening setting of the narrative is to underline the arrival of another king, who will challenge the colonial and oppressive powers and religious leaders' (Dube 2018, 225). This other 'king' is Jaja, as the novel opens with a story about his first act of defiance of his father, the embodiment of oppressive power and a symbol of a colonised Christian mind. This defiance consists of Jaja refusing to take Holy Communion in church, and thus effectively betraying all his father holds sacred. That is when 'things began to fall apart at home', as the opening words of the novel put it with a clear intertextual reference to the classic text *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe – the writer whose work Adichie (2007) has stated to be deeply influenced by.

In addition to Jaja being framed in a biblical narrative of the messianic saviour, Adichie also invokes a local historical narrative to a similar effect. The reader learns half-through the

novel that Jaja's name is actually a nickname inspired by the story of Jaja, the legendary king of the Opobo people in southern Nigeria, known for his resistance to British colonial domination. 'When the British came, he refused to let them control all the trade. He did not sell his soul for a bit of gunpowder like the other kings did' (Adichie 2004, 144). Jaja was given this nickname so that he would take after this defiant king. Thus, both the biblical and the historical narratives serve to associate Jaja with courage, defiance, resistance, strength, and the promise of liberation. His rebellion against Papa Eugene is of great political significance, especially because his father is depicted in the novel as a symbol of oppressive religious patriarchy and as 'too much of a colonial product' (Adichie 2004, 13). These two aspects are closely related, because the type of patriarchy that Eugene embodies is the result of the 'epistemic violence' of colonialism and missionary Christianity, expressed for instance in his denouncing of Igbo culture and religion (Dube 2018, 227). The narrative depiction of Jaja sharply contrasts that of Eugene. By framing Jaja in an alternative narrative that weaves together sacred traditions from the Bible and indigenous history, Adichie appears to suggest that these two traditions are not necessarily trapped in a relationship of violent conflict but can co-exist and together shape a depatriarchalising and decolonising character.

For Kambili, her brother's rebellion does, indeed, present the promise of liberation: 'Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus; fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom. … A freedom to be, to do' (Adichie 2004, 16). This is where the title of the novel becomes relevant. While hibiscuses typically have red flowers, Aunty Ifeoma grows a variety with purple petals. Jaja is intrigued by them, during the first stay at their aunt's, and takes some stalks with him back home to plant in their garden. Although planted in the wrong season, the stalks do take root. Later in the story, when Jaja and Kambili return with their mother back home from the second stay at their aunt's, 'the purple hibiscuses are about to bloom', with the narrator adding that 'the next day was Palm Sunday, the day Jaja did not go to communion' (Adichie 2004, 253). Clearly, the purple hibiscus symbolises Jaja's defiance of his father's authority and the promise of freedom this act is supposed to bring about.

In between Jaja and Kambili's two stays with their aunt in Nsukka, tragedy back home had unfolded. Kambili had been severely beaten by her father for bringing a painting of their recently deceased 'heathen' grandfather back home, made by their cousin Amaka. Her father's kicking, with his metal slippers and then with his belt, had been so heavy that she ended up in hospital with a broken rib and internal bleeding. When discharged from hospital

after several weeks, she and Jaja go back to their aunt for further recuperation. During this second stay, one day their mother, Beatrice, arrives in Nsukka, looking shattered as she has escaped from her husband whose beating had terminated her pregnancy (for the second time) and made her end up in hospital. Although this is the first time that Beatrice gathered the courage to run away from her husband, already the next day she agrees for Eugene to come and pick her and her children up. When they arrive back home, Jaja notices that the purple hibiscuses are almost flowering – with purple being the liturgical colour for Palm Sunday, which was to be celebrated the next day.

By refusing to receive Communion from the white British priest who is close friends with his father, and who knows but stays silent about Eugene's vicious behaviour at home, Jaja refuses to be associated with a colonial and patriarchal institution complicit with the violence his mother, his sister, and he himself have suffered from for too long. For Kambili, as mentioned earlier, this act was 'fragrant with the undertones of freedom'. However, this freedom for her and her mother is brought about by a male figure, Jaja. What does this mean for the place of female agency in the novel?

The problem of 'redemptive masculinity'

Jaja embodies a redemptive masculinity, in the sense that he stands up against the 'toxic masculinity' (Flood 2018) embodied by his father and seeks to protect his mother and sister against the violent impact this has on their bodies and personhood. Twice in the story, Jaja seeks to take the blame in order to protect the women in his life. First, when Papa Eugene discovers the painting of their grandfather that Kambili had been hiding for him, Jaja claims that the painting is his and that he had brought it into the house. However, because Kambili also claims the same, Eugene sees through Jaja's intention and punishes Kambili instead, beating her into hospital. Second, at the end of the novel, when his father has been poisoned to death by his mother and police arrive at their house. 'Jaja did not wait for their questions; he told them he had used rat poison, that he put it in Papa's tea. They allowed him to change his shirt before they took him away' (Adichie 2004, 291).

As Chitando and Chirongoma (2012, 1) acknowledge, 'the notion of redemptive masculinities might conjure an image of supermen who intervene swiftly and decisively to save women and children: male saviours! The notion of redemptive masculinities can thus be problematic in a world dominated by men.' To be fair, the character of Jaja is not really the

kind of superman referred to in this quotation. Rather than intervening swiftly, Jaja gradually grows into his role. Nevertheless, the agency that the narrative ascribes to him does appear to curtail and negate female agency, especially of his mother and sister.

Jaja's sense of redemptive masculinity is awakened during their stay at Aunty Ifeoma. Different from the timid Kambili, who remains quiet and struggles to adapt to the very different atmosphere at her aunt's and to relate to her extrovert and critical-thinking cousin, Amaka, Jaja adjusts relatively easily and comes to thrive. Already a week into the first stay, the protagonist, Kambili, observes her brother: 'His shoulders seemed broader, and I wondered if it was possible for a teenager's shoulders to broaden in a week.' (154) The broadening shoulders, like the blossoming purple hibiscus, symbolise his growth towards maturity and his emerging sense of responsibility.

If his aunt's house is a 'decolonizIng feminist space of liberation', as Dube (2018, 232) argues, its effect on Jaja appears to be more immediate and profound than on his sister. Where Jaja gradually realises that something needs to be done against the severe impact that his father's toxic masculinity has on their family and becomes more and more defiant towards his father, Kambili remains emotionally close to her father, begging for his attention and affirmation; she screams at her mother – out of disbelief, or anger? – when learning that her father had been poisoned, and after his death she quietly keeps offering Masses for him every Sunday and she dreams about him reaching out and hugging her. Kambili appears to be caught in a dilemma of conflicting loyalties, because at the same time she recognises the profound sacrifice that Jaja has made and is grateful for it. She speaks about him fondly, as 'my hero, the brother who tried always to protect me the best he could. He will never think that he did enough, and he will never understand that I do not think he should have done more' (Adichie 2004, 305).

Although Dube suggests that Kambili performs feminist agency as narrator of the book – 'She has found her voice and names the oppression that occurred in her family and how they found their way to freedom' (Dube 2018, 233) –, in the story itself her agency appears to be violated by her father and overshadowed by her brother. Likewise, Mama Beatrice's agency is systematically violated by her husband, as much as she tries to provide motherly love and care to her children. One might argue that her poisoning of her husband is an ultimate act of agency, driven by the desperate desire to protect her children. However, with Jaja taking the responsibility for this action and being arrested and jailed in her place, her agency is negated

again by that of a man, this time her son. And even when she later seeks to reclaim it, by telling people that it was her who poisoned Eugene, 'nobody listened to her; they still don't' (Adichie 2004, 296).

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, the leading literary scholar, Simon Gikandi (2010, 295) was quoted for his observation that masculinity in African literary texts 'has rarely been recognised as a theoretical or ethical problem, one worthy of reflection as a condition of possibility of textuality or performance.' By drawing attention to the narrative construction of masculinity in *Purple Hibiscus*, I have addressed this observation, demonstrating that masculinity is, indeed, a central problem in this text – one that raises profound theoretical and ethical questions. In as far as the novel does draw attention to the 'intricate and mutually informative relation between feminism and masculinity' (Gikandi 2010, 296), it also problematises this relationship by raising the question what kind of masculinity can be useful in feminist politics.

As mentioned earlier, *Purple Hibiscus* has been argued to be a reformist feminist novel. As Gloria Ada Fwangyil points out, 'reformist feminism uses positive male characters to challenge men with oppressive tendencies towards women to change and regard women as complementary partners in progress.' The character of Jaja is clearly modelled to serve this purpose. Carefully contrasted to his anti-role model father, he is not only narratively constructed as the antonym of Eugene's toxic masculinity, but also as its redeemer. Not only does he demonstrate an unfolding commitment to protecting his sister and mother from the abuse and violence they have suffered for too long, but he also takes ultimate responsibility for his mother's murder of her husband which was informed by a complete desperation on her side. By refusing 'to take after his father in molesting and abusing women emotionally, physically and psychologically' (Fwangyil 2011, 269), the character of Jaja reminds the reader that men do have an alternative to toxic masculinity, and that they cannot just blame the example set by their fathers for their own behaviour. In this way, the novel encourages men to engage on a journey of transforming masculinities and overcoming the oppressive and violent behaviours associated with hegemonic masculinity. In a narrative form, the novel underlines the argument that Adichie (2014, 48) more recently has put forward in her essay, 'We Should All Be Feminists', where she argues that '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.”’ However, the reading of Adichie’s novel as presented here also reveals the limitations of this reformist approach. In particular, it highlights that there is a serious risk of female agency being restricted and overshadowed by the agency of the male redeemer who intervenes on behalf of, and out of concern for, the women he seeks to protect. Admittedly, with Aunty Ifeoma the novel does have a strong character embodying a clear case of feminist agency, and it is thanks to his aunt’s influence that Jaja’s sense of redemptive masculinity is awakened and flourishes. But in the end, it is not Ifeoma but Jaja who takes on the patriarch, Eugene, most decisively, with an act of defiance that made things start to fall apart at home, and with an act of substitution for his mother’s role in his father’s tragic death. Intentionally or not, *Purple Hibiscus* presents a warning that women might be complementary partners in bringing about gender reform, but that men – however noble their character and ‘redemptive’ their masculinity – continue to dominate the storyline.

References

Adebanwi, Wale. 2014. ‘The Writer as Social Thinker’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 32, no. 4, 4-5–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2014.978556

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2007. ‘The Writing Life’, *The Washington Post*, 17 June 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/14/AR2007061401730.html?noredirect=on (accessed 26 July 2021).

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozie. 2010. *Purple Hibiscus*. London: Fourth Estate.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozie. 2014. *We Should All Be Feminists*. London: Fourth Estate.

Chitando, Ezra, and Sophie Chirongoma, eds. 2012. *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*. Geneva: WCC Publications. https://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RedemptiveMasculinities.pdf (accessed 26 July 2021).

Dube, Musa W. 2018. ‘Purple Hibiscus: A Postcolonial Feminist Reading’, *Missionalia* 46, no. 2, 222–235. http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/46-2-311

Flood, Michael. 2018. 'Toxic Masculinity: A Primer and a Commentary', XY Online. https://xyonline.net/content/toxic-masculinity-primer-and-commentary (accessed 26 July 2021).

Fwangyil, Gloria Ada. 2011. 'A Reformist-Feminist Approach to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus', *African Research Review* 5, no. 3, 261-274. https://doi.org/10.4314/afrrev.v5i3.67356

Gikandi, Simon. 2010. 'Afterword.' In *Masculinities in African Literary and Cultural Texts*, edited by Helen Nabasuta Mugambi and Tuzyline Jita Allan. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 295-297.

Muchemwa, Kizito, and Robert Muponde, eds. 2007a. *Manning the Nation. Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Muchemwa, Kizito, and Robert Muponde. 2007b. 'Introduction.' In *Manning the Nation. Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*, edited by Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde. Harare: Weaver Press, xv–xxiii.

Mugambi, Helen Nabasuta, and Tuzyline Jita Allan, eds. 2010a. *Masculinities in African Literary and Cultural Texts*. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing.

Mugambi, Helen Nabasuta, and Tuzyline Jita Allan. 2010b. 'Introduction.' In *Masculinities in African Literary and Cultural Texts*, edited by Helen Nabasuta Mugambi and Tuzyline Jita Allan. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 3-9.

Ndula, Janet. 2017. 'Deconstructing Binary Oppositions of Gender in *Purple Hibiscus*: A Review of Religious/Traditional Superiority & Silence.' In *A Companion to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, edited by Ernest Emenyonu, 31-44. Suffolk: James Currey.

Salami-Boukari, Safoura. 2012. *African Literature: Gender Discourse, Religious Values, and the African Worldview*. Lagos: African Heritage Press.

Salomone, Frank. 2006. 'The Depiction of Masculinity in Classic Nigerian Literature', *Journal of the African Literature Association*, 1:1, 202-213, https://doi.org/10.1080/21674736.2006.11690036.

Schulz, Dorothea, and Marloes Janson. 2016. 'Introduction: Religion and Masculinities in Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 46, no. 2-3, 121–128. https://doi.org/10.1163/15700666-12340078

Stobie, Cheryl. 2010. 'Dethroning the Infallible Father: Religion, Patriarchy and Politics in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*', *Literature and Theology* 24, no. 4, 421–435. https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/frq051

Van Klinken, Adriaan. 2015. 'The Black Messiah, or Christianity and Masculinity in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*.' In *Reading the Abrahamic Faiths: Rethinking Religion and Literature*, edited by Emma Mason. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 131-142.

Van Klinken, Adriaan. 2020. 'Religion in African Literature: Representation, Critique and Imagination', *Religion Compass* 14, no. 12, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12381

VanZanten, Susan. 2016. 'World Christianity.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Religion*, edited by Susan M. Felch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 262–77.