



## Sexism issues in the Tears of the Giraffe by Alexander McCall Smith

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### Abstract

The findings of this study are likely to add to the growing body of literature-related research, particularly on the topic of liberal sexism in literary works. Using liberal feminist literary studies, this work employs a literary strategy based on literary criticism. The book *Tears of the Giraffe* by Alexander McCall Smith, published by Abascus, is the subject of this study. The book *Tears of the Giraffe* serves as the major data source for this investigation. In 2006, this book was released with 398 pages of content. Reading, listening, and taking notes were the primary methods of gathering data for this investigation. A qualitative descriptive method was used to analyze the data. The novel's characters, locations, and themes were used to identify sexism issues in the novel's content. It may be seen in the novel's characters that women degrade other female characters in terms of sexism. Male characters don't denigrate the female character as much as they might. It may discern the shape of the sexism dilemma by looking for statements or quotations that suggest it. According to Alexander McCall Smith's book *Tears of the Giraffe*, women have sexism issues. For both family and business, Alexander McCall Smith portrayed in *Tears of the Giraffe*.

## Introduction

Sexism is bias towards women. Because sexism is often directed towards women, what is meant here is an unfavorable opinion of someone only on the basis of their gender (Hammond et al., 2018). Gender differences in the world of literature are very clear, men are more prominent than women. As a consequence, women are solely shown as objects in art and literature, leaving a void in the field.

It is claimed in the novel referred in this paper that women should not work in their circle or area. They can only attend to domestic requirements without actively seeking a higher employment. Not incorporating women in occupations that are deemed exclusively male-owned must be explored in feminist studies. This story is dense with feminist studies that are liberal in tone. For instance, when a woman works as a detective, she is not alone in working as a housewife or maid in the neighboring town (Smith, 2003).

This detective tale is set in Africa, which sets it apart from its peers. Her client, an American citizen, has requested that Mma Ramotswe, a well-known investigator in Botswana, help discover her missing kid, either alive or dead. It was necessary for him to have a personal life while doing his study. He started making plans with a local mechanic named John L B Matekoni for this purpose. From the account of their engagement plan, we learn that the two of them encountered a few roadblocks along the way, including the issue of the engagement ring and Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni's adoption of a kid without Mma Ramotswe's agreement (Smith, 2003).

In today's world, in many conservative settings, people believed that males were always the solution to all of life's difficulties. Both in terms of power, education, and culture, to name a

few. One method to accomplish this aim is to equalize women's rights and opportunities with men. The objective of the present study is feminist literary critique that elevate women's position and degree to the point where they are equal to or greater than men's position and degree in the literary work itself (Geary, 2010; Fukuyama, 1998).

The literature that has been chosen for this assignment makes the notion that women should not work in their circle or in their immediate surroundings. Can only take care of his family's necessities, and will not participate in the quest for a better employment. Sexism, especially, feminist studies must take into account the exclusion of women from occupations that are traditionally regarded to be exclusively male-dominated. Feminist studies of a liberal bent are abundant in this work, which is written in a narrative style. Consider the following scenario: A female investigator is hired, and all other females in the nearby neighbourhood work as housewives or maids in order to support her family.

This novel is the second instalment in the detective fiction series, No.1 Women's Detective Agency, and it is set in London. There are now 13 series of the novel in its original form, and it has even been made into a television series. Generally speaking, this novel is characterized as a detective narrative that is light, uncomplicated, and adds a little flavor to the challenges that people face on a daily basis.

Due to the fact that this narrative takes place in Africa, this detective book is significantly different from its rivals. The story revolves on Mma Ramotswe, a well-known detective in Botswana who is tasked with solving the case of the disappearance of an American citizen. Her client requests that Mma Ramotswe locate her kid, whether he or she is alive or dead. In the middle of his research, he also needed to maintain his personal life, which he started to organize with Mr. J.L.B Matekoni, a mechanic, in the early stages of his investigation. Based on their engagement plan, the two of them found themselves in the center of a few roadblocks, ranging from the issue with the engagement ring to Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni's adoption of a kid without Mma Ramotswe's knowledge or permission. Given the setting and the description of the novel, it is interesting to investigate sexism issue in this novel.

## **Methods**

This research is based on a literature review and activities that were carried out by gathering and evaluating research data from the novel *Tears of the Giraffe* by Alexander McCall Smith, which is the subject of this research. The themes of sexism in the novel *Tears of the Giraffe* by Alexander McCall Smith are examined in this research, which use a descriptive technique of the text to do so. In order to evaluate the novel, the research instrument employs the documentation technique in conjunction with observation instructions. The next stage is to explain or take notes on the characters, settings, and themes that are in agreement with the feminist approach, as well as to highlight those elements of the characters, settings, and themes that are not. Researchers analyze data by (1) selecting the data that is relevant to the problem to be discussed as a top priority in their data selection, and (2) examining, discussing, and incorporating all of the data that has been selected into their discussion and application of it to the problem they are investigating..

## **Results and Discussion**

The book *The Mystery of Giraffe Tears* by Alexander McCall Smith prompted Mma Ramotswe to create a fictional female detective in Botswana, situated in a place where women are regarded inferior to males. The liberal feminist study of the author is confined to the characters, locations, and Background and theme of the novel.

## Characters

Women, according to liberal feminists who trace their roots to Mary Wollstonecraft, are capable of developing their intellectual and moral powers in the same way that men are. In terms of intellectual ability, women have the right to do the same kind of job as their male counterparts. It's not only about being a housewife or a housemaid. Alexander McCall Smith's book *Mystery of Giraffe Tears*, on the other hand, makes the assumption that women who do not have a college degree will not be able to hold more employment than males in the future.

Alexander McCall Smith's book *Mystery of Giraffe Tears* reveals that women are mostly deemed poor and ignorant by the majority of the story's protagonists. The author, on the other hand, believes that the female characters in this story are also demeaning to other female characters.

*"Those women are useless in every way. They wouldn't make good mothers, neither of them looked like they had a high school diploma, or even an elementary school degree. They're useless, playful girls who can only make men's knees go weak and seduce, and that's no good thing for anyone."*

Specifically, it is directed at the primary female character, Mma Ramotswe, in the preceding phrase. According to the researcher's interpretation, this is affected by the widely held popular opinion that uneducated women will be of little help in any circumstance.

The overall approach to sexism concerns in many literary works implies that women are disadvantaged in a variety of situations, including social, work, and opportunity, as compared to men (for example, Jones, 2008; Cohen, 2010; Skrla et al., 2000; Dahal et al., 2015; Brewer & Dundes, 2018; Ghodsee, K. (2019). However, this work, like many others about sexism in conservative contexts, depicts how a woman may be sexist against her own gender. As if the female character, based on the context, had the right to declare that other females are useless unless they have a specific status.

This contributes to the discussion of themes in sexist literature, such as women becoming contemptuous when they encounter women who are solely doing home duties. Housework is still an option for women, even in conservative societies (Basit, 1996), and it should not be seen as a negative alternative for women to have (Hwang, 2016).

Further, a statement was found that positions a woman in a fixed role.

*"In traditional Botswana society, keeping the yard clean is a woman's responsibility..."*

This line could be interpreted that the line suggests to describe works has its gender issues. This portrayal is a form of gender stereotypes (Morash & Haarr, 1995; Heilman, 2012) that positions woman in to only work for certain cases, which is in this case considered as a low-grade work (Fuller & Unwin, 2017).

Other characters, such as Florence, who believes that every woman can be discovered solely in bars, are also problematic.

*"...Please just return her to the bar where you found her."*

The fact that Florence, a female character, feels that ladies can only be found in bars may be deduced from the situation. Because Florence's experience includes working as a maid at the home of Mr, J. L. B. Matekoni, scholars can understand why Florence has such negative feelings about all women. Basically, if an intelligent woman did not believe that women could only be found in bars, she would be correct. There is a plethora of alternative, more respectable sites to meet ladies.

While on the other hand, when it comes to judging women's positions, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni, the primary male character who is the proprietor of a well-known workshop in Botswana, had an exceptionally sharp intellect. Mr. J. L. B. Matekoni believes that women should be able to perform anything they choose, even labor that should be carried out by males, according to the law.

*“Mma Ramotswe has taught her that there is no reason why women shouldn't do what they want. There was no doubt that Mma Ramotswe was right. People think private detectives are supposed to be men, but look how Mma Ramotswe has managed...”*

Aside from the phrase above, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni does, in fact, portray a guy who respects women, both in terms of their thoughts and in terms of the labor that the female character chooses to do throughout the story.

In addition to Mma Matkusi, who works as Mma Ramotswe's secretary in her detective agency, other characters, such as Mma Ramotswe, have their own experiences with liberal feminists in terms of gender discrimination. Mma Matkusi is defined as a girl who is not very attractive but who has a sharp intellect. According to the exam results, she received a perfect score of 97. Mma Matkusi, on the other hand, had previously encountered rejection at work as a result of her looks prior to working with Mma Ramotswe. When compared to their more attractive colleagues, they have an easier time finding positions in huge corporations. The recruitment agencies believed that a woman with a lovely face would be more likely to be recruited as a secretary than a woman who was average but intelligent.

It may be argued that many of the people described in Alexander McCall Smith's book *Mystery of Tears of Giraffes* believe that women should not be seen as inferior to males in terms of sexuality. Although it is not stated explicitly in every phrase, the predicament of the female characters in the story serves as a powerful illustration of the point.

## **Background**

The location for Alexander McCall Smith's book *Tears of the Giraffe* is a nation named Botswana, which is located in the continent of Africa, and the narrative is set there. Many women in Botswana work exclusively as housewives if they are married, or as maids if they are unmarried. It is not just middle-aged women who work as maids in Botswana; young women in their 20s are also employed as maids in the country.

According to the book, women in Botswana are not too ambitious when it comes to developing their talents in the workplace. Women have just a limited amount of authority in the home. Even though there are some women who are more ambitious than others, there aren't generally too many of them. Men should have their own business, whilst women should be content with being spouses or servants.

## **Theme**

Throughout the novel *Tears of Giraffes* by Alexander McCall Smith, the topic portrays the life of a female private detective, as well as her day-to-day interactions with other people. In this book, the topic at least depicts a little bit about liberal feminists in the plot, although it is not explicitly shown in the phrases of the novel. Liberal feminists are represented in the image of every female character, with the majority of female characters shown as housewives or maids, as is the case in the majority of films. Female characters who are not housewives or maids are presented as having occupations other than that of housewife or maid.

However, in that subject, there is a male character who has alternative opinions and who can respect women both in terms of making choices and in terms of working with female characters who have other thoughts.

This research statement may be addressed based on the findings of the data analysis, which were discussed in the preceding section. To be explicit, the research question is: what are the challenges that liberal feminists face in Alexander McCall Smith's novel *Tears of Giraffe*, and how do they relate to the novel? For women who want to be acknowledged in society or in their area of employment, the liberal feminist movement provides a framework for doing so. Historically, the figure of Mma Ramotswe, who hails from the African nation of Botswana, exemplifies the traditional role of women in society. In Botswana, it is not advised for a woman to work in a male-dominated environment.

Affirming that liberal feminist difficulties exist in Alexander McCall Smith's book *Tears of Giraffe* based on the findings of the research described above, the authors contend that the findings of this study demonstrate the presence of such problems in the novel. The film tells the tale of Mma Ramotswe's life in the Botswana region of Africa, as it happens in her daily life.

The whole tale detailed by Alexander McCall Smith is a portrait of the inhabitants of Botswana, Africa, as they go about their everyday lives, in which women are treated no differently than males. However, according to the study, not only do males insult women in the book, but women also belittle other women, which is exactly what the female characters in the novel do.

The connection between all of the characters in Alexander McCall Smith's book *Tears of the Giraffe* is visibly affected by the events that take place in the novel. The event depicts the life of a female investigator who goes about her everyday business in a culture that believes that women should not be considered superior to men.

### **Limitation of the Study**

In the course of this investigation, the researcher discovered that there were several constraints in evaluating liberal feminist themes in Alexander McCall Smith's novel *Tears of the Giraffe*, including a lack of relevant information, a lack of relevant literature, and a lack of insight. Despite the fact that it is still far from ideal, the researchers involved in this study believe that, with their awareness and hard effort, they will be able to finish this thesis correctly in the end.

### **Conclusion**

According to the findings of the study and discussion, it can be determined that the women in Alexander McCall Smith's novel *Tears of the Giraffe* are truly experiencing sexism issues. The people of Botswana, Africa, who really believe that women are no more than males. This may be seen in the female character, who is a female investigator who is generally seen as weird by society. However, not only do males degrade women, but women also degrade other women, which is exactly what the female characters in the story do. There are insulting remarks in the conversation and tale material that are based on the physical appearance of women who do not have a fat body and who are believed to be unfit and uncaring.

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