

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Gender Trauma in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

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## Letter of Recommendation

Chandra Kanta Gautam has completed his thesis entitled "Gender Trauma in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from November, 2011 A.D. to July, 2012 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for Viva Voce.

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "Gender Trauma in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Chandra Kanta Gautam, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee

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## **Abstract**

The present research work tries to explore the female specific trauma evoking the tormented state of the protagonist, Kambili and her mother, Beatrice in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Kambili's father Eugene, a charismatic yet violent Catholic patriarch demonstrates his helpfulness and generosity in his community but at home he is repressive and fanatically religious. Because of Eugene's demonic behaviors, they undergo series of physical, mental and emotional torture which haunts them time and again even in his absence. Eugene savagely beats and psychologically humiliates his wife and daughter by imposing his rigid religious doctrine in the name of protecting religious purity, norms and regulations. After visiting Nsukka, hometown of Aunt Ifeoma, Kambili develops her confidence to oppose her father's torture and cruel attitudes. Similarly, when the torture reaches to the breaking point Mama Beatrice poisons her husband, a counter measure to redeeming herself and her children from the marginal border of taciturnity. After the murder of Eugene, they become free from authoritarian, ordered and scheduled life, which always kept them in fear and tension. They are trying to mitigate or soothe their unforgettable dark past memories to get certain relief in their life. Thus, by bringing into fore the physical and psychological tortures and sufferings of female characters, this research explores gender trauma in Kambili and her mother, Beatrice.

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## **I. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and the Concept of Gender Trauma**

This research attempts to examine the issue of gender trauma on the widely discussed novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The novel explains the postcolonial Nigerian patriarchal society where the fifteen years teenage girl, Kambili including her mother, Beatrice have been physically and psychologically tortured. The protagonist, Kambili lives in the fear of her father, a charismatic yet violent catholic patriarch who, although generous and well-respected in the community, is repressive and fanatically religious at home. Regarding the colonial values and patriarchal tone, Kambili and her mother, undergo trauma throughout their life because of their direct personal experience of the corrupting influence and the psychological abuses of patriarchy. To prove the hypothesis, the researcher takes the supports of theorists like Kali Tal, Dominick LaCapra, Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, and Kamla Bhasin and digs out the traumatic experiences of the major female characters of the novel and reasons behind that.

The shadow of colonialism at the time of Nigerian Civil war also forces the females to survive a terrific, fearful, torturous, repressive and panic life. Adichie's narrator/protagonist Kambili cannot bring herself to hate her father. Indeed, her pathology is as consuming and disturbing as that of her father, who brutally beats his wife, tortures his children with demonic acts that are support to make them penitent. Kambili's father Eugene's strong feelings and espousal of capitalism and Catholicism is shown to be at the root of his domestic cruelty. Adichie in this novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) artistically chronicles the hellish life of Achike family in the hand of patriarchy, and some expectations and hopes in the post-independence Nigerian society in the context of 1990s. Moreover, through Kambili's eyes, we come to see how an entire family has adapted their life under a rigid and unpredictable patriarch,

and we understand how unbridled power can cause both physical and psychological destruction. She also provides our perspective on her authoritarian father, and her diminished life dramatizes the psychological effects of a too powerful father on a young girl.

Furthermore, Adichie's first fiction *Purple Hibiscus* vehemently focuses on the strained relationship between the first person narrator, a fifteen years teenage, Kambili, and her despotic father and has a military coup as a backdrop. This novel is about the religious hypocrisy and tyranny in post-independent Nigeria. Adichie draws us inside the Kambili's world through her rich description of physical and domestic environment. Kambili and her mother, Beatrice live harshly confined life ruled by Eugene, a wealthy factory owner and passionately devoted Catholic. In the community, Eugene is known as a pious and generous man that courageously stands against the rebel forces who overthrew the democratic regime but at home, he shows his abusive and tyrannical manners and tries to control his family members severely with the means of religion. They become the victims of his repression, violence, and exploitation based on religious orthodoxy.

Moreover, Eugene opposes military coup in the country, Nigeria but he is submissive to the Bible thereby turning himself as a religious tyrant in domestic level. At the end of the novel, Mama Beatrice poisons Eugene and his death symbolizes the death of tyranny and hypocrisy which is embodied by Eugene. Thus, the novel intertwining the personal and the political hypocrisy, domestic patriarchal violence, and religious colonial mission, opens with the knowledge of freedom and future. This research studies how the female characters like Kambili and her mother Beatrice have terrific, fearful, torturous, repressive and panic life in Nigerian patriarchal society. By analyzing the drawbacks of religion and Nigerian society, J.M. Coetzee argues, "a



sensitive and touching story of a child exposed too early to religious intolerance and the uglier side of the Nigerian state” (cover page). Coetzee while reviewing this novel, highlights the religious conflict between traditional Igbo culture and imposed Catholic religion which germinates numerous problems in the Nigerian society.

This study highlights the emotions, fears, tensions, haunted memories and sorrowful situation of Kambili and her mother who are often terrified, oppressed and driven to psychological disintegration by a powerful tyrannical male figure, father Eugene. Eugene’s imposition of regulation and scheduled life haunts Kambili and Mama even in the absence of him where for Kambili “each movement was too painful to even think about” (211). Eugene brutally beats his wife by showing his animalistic instinct. Kambili is psychologically disturbed and feels humiliation when her father beats her with his belt severely. She has also given psychological pressures by her father not to meet her grandfather Papa-Nnukwu, a heathen in the eyes of her father. Kambili is tortured and given mental threat by her father for spending time with her grandfather. Eugene pours hot boiling water on her feet. The excruciating pain servers Kambili from her words, an experience share by many victims of torture. In the moment of torture, she is barely conscious of her words or of herself; she is fully submissive to her father’s power, a subject in all senses of the word. The effects permeate her sense of herself and the world; she believes that she deserves to be punished, that her father, Eugene, wears the mask of the perfect father; his assigned role is to protect her and her family. She and her mother always live under the threat of masculine violence; and their voices are hardly heard.

Likely, when Kambili came second in her exam, her father psychologically humiliates her in front of her classroom. When she tries to speak, her throat tightens and words will not come; she fears from her father’s retaliation, his unspoken

commands threats and her fear prevents her from speaking the reality. She estranged from her own speech and working of her throat and tongue underscores her mental disturbance. When her father gives her tea, she feels “the love burns my tongue” (31). Similarly, when Kambili’s mother Mama Beatrice suffers the last miscarriage as a result of over bearing and barbarous nature of Eugene, feels extremely tortured that reaches at the breaking point and poisons her husband, a counter measure to redeeming herself and her children from the psychological configuration and phallocentrism. Their inability to speak and haunting memory even in the absence of Eugene shows how they are physically and psychologically tortured by the domestic violence, which further highlights the gradual fragmentation of the organic and psychological wholeness of the family. Through Kambili, the author introduces her readers to a family, blessed with material wealth but cursed by violence. The child psychology of Kambili is dominated by patriarchal Catholic tyranny starts to grow conscious about the protest, and resistance against the subjugation, thereby she can mitigate her traumatic experiences. All of the domestic violence upon Kambili and her mother are caused by the religious and imperial loads in the character, Eugene, who always physically and psychologically assaults them by keeping them indoors.

Furthermore, we can observe the similar kind of victimization and traumatic situation of females all over the world, which is included in the novel. Even in this modern and technological world, most of the females are victimized and tortured from the hand of their father, step-father, husbands, brothers, friends, and also from their relatives. In the novel, Eugene is hegemonies by the Catholic orthodoxy and in the name of religious purity and norms; he brutally misbehaves towards his daughter and wife. Not only in the Christian religion, but also in the Muslim culture and Hindu society, females are living a barbaric and repressive life by enduring several violence

and tortures. The upholders of this patriarchal society implement rules and regulations for their own benefit by neglecting females' existence. In the name of culture and religion, Muslim fundamentalists and male chauvinists impose their godlike order that women are not supposed to step out of their door, and even if they do, they should be draped in a *burqa* from head to toe. Taslima Nasreen in her *No Country for Women* argues, "Men bring in maximum insecurity in the lives of women. None can harm a woman more than men . . . man's pity and mercy are no less cruel than man's torture and injustice" (103). Females are forbidden to exhibit their physical beauty in front of non-husband males. But males can enjoy with more wives and they torture women mentally and physically. To bring in religion within the fold of the state, society, the law and the family is to welcome violence against women, discrimination between man and women, polygamy for men, beating women to death for not wearing the *burqa* or being disobedient to the husband, the horror of triple *talaq* and imprisonment, slavery and suffering for women.

Intoxicated by masochism and religious orthodoxy, females are also becoming the victim of Hindu religious prescriptions. Untouchability, witch system, dowry system, divorce, adultery, rape or mass rape, child marriage, wife killing, trafficking, legal system and also religious laws increase the rate of victimization and violence upon females; and its effects imprints the deep psychological threat and horror in their mind. Men bring in maximum insecurity in the lives of women. Men's pity and mercy are no less cruel than man's torture and injustice. Taslima Nasreen states: "Husbands beat up their wives to pulp, yet women cannot give up the habit of looking up at them as god. Women are incessantly tortured both physically and mentally; yet, these cowards are unwilling to sever relationship with the brutes" (145). Women have to survive tolerating the victims of the lies, tricks, dominance,

conspiracies, wickedness, different standards and injustices being slaved from barbarism of men. Males beat up their wives and children to pulp, yet because of fear being tortured women cannot give up the habit of looking up at them as God. Women are incessantly tortured both physically and mentally, yet these cowards are unwilling to sever relationship with the brutes. Maximum number of women are killed and raped inside their houses, by their husband. All over the world women are exploited and tortured at their home. In this misogynist society, where at every door, a woman is treated as a commodity. Because of threaten, fear and shame, females cannot raise their voice against patriarchy; all of their life simmers on the terrible fire of domesticity, and violence. The things that are supposed to be qualities in a women are considered, so because that's what men need and that's how they keep women in subjugation. Females are in the shock of turmoil and afraid of violence that makes them full of dismantled. Traumatic events are related with the shock that appears in the form of psychological fears. In the post-independence situation of Nigeria, where colonial legacy and patriarchal institutionalized system brings problems to the females, which make them traumatized.

Most of the critics of the novel have hailed the novelist as the emerging voice of African, following the footsteps of great Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Emily Whitechurch, reviewing this novel sees it as deceptively insightful portraying the nostalgic picture of Nigeria. She writes: "Debut novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie makes words work in this deceptively insightful novel. Her descriptive passage coinsure up a sensual, nostalgic portrait of Nigeria in a time of cultural and political change" (6). Whitechurch, addressing Adichie's novel, writes that the events of the novel pushes back to the historical period where so many political and cultural changes took place.

Similarly, the magazine *Evening Standard*, describes the novel as a complex and compelling account of a girl's sexual awakening and religious oppression. In this regard, it argues, "One of the finest debut novels of recent years, a complex and compelling account of a 15-years-old girl's sexual awakening and religious oppression . . . It is a novel as revealing as Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and as paunchy and characterful as Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" (Epigraph). The above quotation tries to reflex how females are suffered by religious suppression in the male-dominated society by comparing Adichie's novel with Arundhati and Monica's most insightful novels. In the same manner, Heather Hewitt takes it as a coming of age novel. She clarifies the complex issue of upbringing within country's political threat. Commenting on the novel, she asserts:

Kambili's father foists upon his children a dogmatic understanding of what is right (Catholicism) and wrong (traditional Igbo belief): what is civilized (speaking English) and uncivilized (speaking Igbo). He shuns his own father, Papa-Nnukwu because of his 'heathen' beliefs and refuses to let his children spend time with their grandfather. When an unnamed dictator stages a coup and the country begins its descent into chaos. (9)

This review projects a horrible picture of binary oppositional sets of English and Igbo culture in the then post-independent Nigeria. Heather Hewitt illustrates how a person like Eugene internalizes his inferiority and shuns his own father is the face value in the then Nigerian world. Although Eugene from the Igbo culture by birth, he totally demonstrates his negative attitudes towards his native culture and tradition but vehemently praises the imported Christian culture. In the same fashion, Obi Nwakanma while showing narrator's erotic awakening comments as:

Goes further and beyond, into the realm of the psychotic of dispossession, of young erotic awakening, of the clash of words, the old African world in final transition, and the new evangelized unconscious linked to its powerful psychological sources, and its forms of alienation present in the pathology of self-hate. (7)

In her view, it is the interstice of the paterfamilias psychosis, his brachial exercise of power and the young girl, the narrator's erotic awakening that we point out the finely nuanced feminist thrust of the narrative.

Likely, Lily G.N. Mabura traces the historical background of the African country before and after the colonialism. According to Mabura this novel begins, "by tracing the historiography and manifestations of gothic attributes in pre-colonial and colonial African" (204). He further says:

It is in the towns like Abba, incidentally the Achike family's hometown Purple Hibiscus as well, that the Igbo regroup and commerce postwar reconstruction. As such, homes are built in inland towns like Abba, refuses from the haunting memory of the war and its hurriedly built dirt bunkers. After the war, some Igbo venture back to larger Igbo towns like Enugu, but the North and Lags, a historically bloody and haunted landscape for the Igbo, is mostly skirted in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. (207)

In the above short comment, he highlights the apparitions, curses, and other evil notions where Igbo culture is facing so much terrific problems. In the similar way, Mabura studies the complex issue of the colonizer's language. He notices the impact of the colonial language (English) that has affected greatly the local tribal culture and their heritage. Mabura further says, "The actual colonists seemingly left the post

independence scene, the languages of colonization have not. These languages have . . . bureaucratic language of the state and robbed many indigenous languages like Igbo, their cultural, religious, commercial, and educational functions” (211-12). In this way, Mabura analyses the colonial language as legitimized bureaucratic language of the state, which efforts to knock down all the local values and indigenous languages and cultures of Nigeria like Igbo.

Likewise, another critic Michele Roberts examines the book emphasizing the post-traumatic stress disorder. He beholds the traumatic experiences amidst political coup and domestic violence. Regarding this issue, he says:

It puts shape on trauma and makes it bearable, mends what has been broken, works with bits and pieces of shattered lives to see what might be made with them. Remembering thus involves remembering, and is a political act, particularly if the official historians of a culture ignore the experience of a certain sections of the people . . . his ardent espousal of capitalism and Catholicism is shown to be at the root of his domestic cruelty. (54-55)

Hence, Robert’s criticism on this novel, rooted on the memory of trauma. He views that the memory is always politicized to learn from the past. Eugene’s emotionless, utilitarian and religious extremism draws him towards the path of cruelty, where he rigidly imposes his patriarchal ideology upon his wife and daughter. Because of Eugene’s demonic behavior, Kambili and her mother Beatrice are forced to live a terrific and torturous life even in his absence. The novel describes the weird normality, about the way tyranny insists that everyone dream the national nightmare and it functions by playing off the gullibility of childhood against the brutal inanities of strong men in a state gone rotten.

In addition to this, Kambili like as the purple hibiscus starts to blossom with her physical and psychological development, who must deal with escalating family tensions even as her country heads for political turmoil. The novel encompasses the most of the problems of Nigeria. Inside the novel, purple hibiscus has been used to denote the experimental flower in Auntie Ifeoma's garden. The very experimental attitude in her can be seen in her home where she experiments with the democracy and freedom when the country is under the tyranny of military rule. She experiments the Nigerian religious and cultural norms and values of Papa-Nnukwu in Catholicism. The traditional Nigerian people who follow the Igbo culture, thinks that Catholicism is like a group of various parasitic plants in the garden which surround and kill the experimental plant purple hibiscus of the Nigerian culture and values. There is a clash of civilization as personified by Papa-Nnukwu and his son Eugene respectively. The tyranny of the rulers continues due to the selfishness of the educated people as they leave their country looking for own better future leaving the future of the nation into darkness.

In this way, regarding Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, many critics and scholars have given their own views. Some of the critics point out the issues of physical violence, influence of colonial language in colonized world, postwar cultural trauma and so on. None of the aforementioned critics sufficiently included the profound evidences to capture the gender traumatic experiences in post-independence Nigeria. Hence, the present researcher prefers to analyze the novel through the lens of gender trauma. If we scrutinize the novel pensively, the treatment of traumatic turmoil through the fragmented and cynical plot and characters can be found in the very novel. The main issue about the gender trauma and the tormented condition of females under the patriarchy and colonialism has not been dealt by any scholar or



critic. So, this research project focuses on the assumptions of gender trauma caused by patriarchal system during the period of post-independence Civil War in Nigeria. Adichie's book will find a new light through this study.

The project is oriented to show how the female characters Kambili and her mother have traumatic experience based on gender. While showing the gendered violence, the research argues that the gendered traumatic memory in the text does not only question the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society but also shows literary expression of trauma helps such victims relieve from the burden of painful memories. The main concern of this dissertation is to show the traumatic disorder and chaos in post-independent Nigeria. The novel centers on the issues of domestic violence, victimization and subjugation of females under the religiously dogmatic patriarchal culture and society. It focuses on the physical and psychological horror out of the patriarchy showing the psychic pressure because of extreme violence. Regarding the burning issue of the present situation, this dissertation focuses on the cultural, religious and political aspects and its traumatic effects upon the females.

This project mainly puts forward the Eugene's repressive tyrannous patriarchy upon his wife and daughter, back-grounding on the colonial and religious faith and values. Not only has that it also vividly presented how the female characters resist against such domestic patriarchal cruelty; by taking silence as a form of resistance. Of course, because of their terrific life and powerlessness condition, they have no any courage to revolt against such violence directly, so through the means of new silence, they begin to resist over the imported colonial Christian values and patriarchal system. After the death of Eugene, the Achike family has certain hopes for their dreams and future, thereby they can be able to mitigate their traumatic experience. By applying narrativization, Kambili expresses her repressive impulses,

dreams, memories, angst and whims working through her past traumatic events to outlet from those unforgettable past and haunting memories.

The symbolic representation of the plot in fragmented order which starts from media res and again return to symbolize the fragmented and disordered situation. In the same manner, the variety in content represented by the post-independent debate between main characters, the horrendous effects of the civil war and the institutionalized patriarchal system also portrays the heart-rending picture and disorder in the subject matter. In short, the researcher tries to employ the basic idea about the post-independence disorder in Nigerian society through the disillusioned variety in form, content and characters to dig-up the burden of colonialism and patriarchy showing violence within it which resulted into traumatic articulation. This study explains about all of the female characters throughout the novel, who are haunted psychologically and wounded physically and culturally. Regarding the burning issue of present situation, this dissertation focuses on the socio-cultural and religious aspects, and its traumatic effects in female characters in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

The present research work explores the tormented state of the protagonist, Kambili and her mother, Beatrice by applying the tool of gender trauma. Their traumatic experience is extremely disgusting that causes to feel them upset and anxious. Fear is internally encroaching in the psychology of Kambili and her mother, which is germinated by Eugene. Memory of traumatic events can be lost over time but then regained in a symptomatic form when females are triggered by some similar events. The novel examines the gender specific trauma of females and attempts to evoke the inner life and psychology mainly through the narration of Kambili. Motifs

of emptiness, hollowness and absence haunt the novel and establish its traumatic sense.

By highlighting the problems like darkness, emptiness, haunting memories and dreams, the novel successfully tries to explore the gender specific trauma of women. Because of the traumatic situation, women are psychologically flustered from their life. Every traumatic event is related with the shock of the females, which interrelates with the torture of silence. Females love to remain silence because of the fears of being victimization and of violence. In most of the society, institutionalized patriarchal system is activated to continue the turmoil in the name of customs, language, religion and war, which create the psychic states of mind. The shock which is created by the fear and violence is difficult to recover.

This study significantly applies the gender specific trauma theory highlighting the problems like hollowness, darkness and haunting memories to excavate the psychology of the female characters in the novel. This project is especially analyzed through the theories of Kali Tal, Urvashi Butalia, Dominick LaCapra, Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin and other related theorist, as the primary tool. This research is a library based research with intensive study of the novel itself in relation to gender traumatic experience of the female characters which is powerfully traumatized post-colonial Nigerian patriarchal society. Internet search and available commentaries search guidance from professors and lectures are taken to complete the thesis and bring it in the research, available time and resources; this research project is limited within the periphery of only the Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus*. The study does not go beyond the personal attitude and background of the writer though some of them are used to verify the entailed issues.

According to Oxford dictionary the word trauma means serious physical injury or emotional shock to the body as a form of violence or an accident. The entomological meaning of trauma is related with the emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage often leading to neurosis. Events such as physical torture, witnessing violence, rape, physical, emotional or sexual child abuse, and even loss or the sudden death or disabling illness of a loved one generally germinates the traumatic feelings upon the people. Cathy Caruth states: "Through the notion of trauma, I will argue, we can understand that a rethinking of reference is not aimed at eliminating history, but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, of precisely permitting history to arise where immediate understanding may not" (182). Traumatic events in particular may lead to a multitude of symptoms, including depression, anxiety, guilt, sleep disturbances, palpitation, and obsessive thoughts about the victim's experience.

For the development of the trauma theory, the credit goes to Sigmund Freud who has initially explained and brings it to the peak in the course of his treatment of the people who were mentally and physically disturbed, wounded and disordered in the World War I. Being the protuberant psychoanalytical approach both in literature and treatment, most of the trauma theorists and critics are more or less impressed and associated with him and define trauma from their own perspective by relating Freud's psychoanalysis even if they speak for or argue against it. About trauma theory, Cathy Caruth states: "Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (81). Further she adds a traumatic event that "is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one

who experienced it” (4). The definition clearly elucidates that trauma is a response to an unexpected violence which is not totally grasped as it occurs, but return in repeated nightmares, flashbacks and other repetitive phenomena.

On the contrary, Kali Tal in *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* takes an approach entirely different from Caruth and Demonick LaCapra. Kali Tal is adverse to psychoanalysis and supports her views of trauma on cognitive psychological and feminist politics that define vigorously with the testimonies of rape and incest survivors. “Literature of Trauma”, Tal argues, “is defined by the identity of its author . . . The work of the critic of the literature of trauma is both to identify and explicate literature by members of survivor groups, and to deconstruct the process by which the dominant culture codifies their traumatic experience” (17-18). The critic of trauma literature must determine the nature and composition of the community of trauma survivors, how they are victimized and the contemporary socio-political and cultural location of the community of survivors.

In the similar fashion, there is not only a single trauma but traumas □ historical trauma, gender trauma, individual trauma, psychic trauma, war trauma, national trauma, and cultural trauma. Gender trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity, prestige and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting the whole communities who have achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need necessarily be felt by everyone in a group or has been directly experienced by any or all. Kali Tal states that gender trauma “acknowledges the existence of an ongoing campaign of sexual violence and oppression waged by many men against the women” (4) where females as a social group experience together some form of violent interruption to their life. It focuses the problems like hollowness, darkness, fragmentation, physical and sexual abuses and haunting memories of females to

depict how they have a terrific, fearful, torturous, repressive and panic life under the deeply rooted male-dominated society.

Moreover, Kali Tal states that “trauma is enacted outside of the bounds of normal human experience, and the subject is radically ungrounded. Accurate representation of trauma can never be achieved without recreating the event since, by its very definition, trauma lies beyond the bounds of normal conception” (15). Traumatic situations overwhelm the ordinary human adaptation to life and involve threats to life or bodily integrity or a close personal encounter with violence and death. The brain is not entirely able to assimilate or process the events and response through several mechanisms such as psychological numbing, or shutting down of normal emotional responses.

Likely, Urvashi Butalia defines trauma as remembering “the memory of violence, the vulnerability of victimhood, elided the many years that had passed in-between . . . having begun to remember, to excavate memory, words would suddenly fail speech as memory encountered something too painful, often too frightening to allow it to enter speech” (18). Traumatic experience continually haunts by dreams, flashbacks, and hallucinations. Trauma is mainly concerned with psychological network extending into the body. Trauma not only makes people panic and anxious but it also turns them towards the recovery or solution of the conflict within. Kambili, through narrativization tries to outlet her repressed traumatic feelings working-through her past, which is also the politics of the novel. As a narrator, Kambili tells her traumatic story from which she can be able to soothe her painful memories and see hopes for future life, thereby being away from hellish or traumatic life.

To prove the hypothesis, this dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter of this research is general introduction which comprises the objectives of

this research, the theoretical modality, hypothesis, limitations, and literature review. The hypothesis is extended with proper reasons and is given evidences in this very section. Thus, it presents the bird's eye view of the entire research. The second chapter analyses the text in considerable length in the light of the concepts developed while setting up the theoretical modality. It primarily consists of discussion on the definition of gender trauma, relation between the characters, resistance of female characters and resolution of the problem. Some extracts from the text and criticisms are taken out as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study. This part serves as the backbone of the present research. Finally, the last chapter wraps up the whole finding of the research.

## II. Gender Trauma in *Purple Hibiscus*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* brilliantly chronicles the problems of gender traumatic experiences in terms of patriarchal and colonial hegemonic ideology in the name of religions, customs, languages and cultures. Adichie sketches a story with something akin to the psychological disinterest of a deeply traumatized person who has cultivated the skill to seem calm as a way of holding back the emotional collapse that appears on the verge of consuming her. She has selected a fifteen years teenage Nigerian girl, Kambili to highlight the traumatic experiences of African women who are taken as mere appendages and survive under the extreme terror which is vehemently imposed by religiously dogmatic patriarchy in the Post-independence scene of the 1990s. The narrator, Kambili is a Nigerian girl, and her father, Eugene, a devout and tyrannical Catholic patriarch, has managed to abuse physically and psychologically his middle-class family in his attempt to wrestle with his own cultural, emotional and ideological demons. Along with the narration of the direct experiences of the characters, different physical aspects, setting and environment is used to make effective the presentation of the traumatic experiences. In symbolic level too, the novel expresses traumatic theme creating parallel structure with the plot.

Standing on Kali Tal's concept, the project enforces the fears, tensions, haunted memories, depression and angst of Kambili including her mother Beatrice that often terrified, oppressed and driven to psychological disintegration by a powerful tyrannical male figure, father Eugene. Kambili's father Eugene creates a fearful family environment to impose his rigid religious faith and to keep up his male prestige in the society. He severely beats his wife, Beatrice and his daughter, and they are forced to become silent in all of his brutal activities. Eugene's Hitler like terrific



and demonic image always haunts them; so in that terrific atmosphere their mind do not function properly even in his absence. *Purple Hibiscus* is a tightly woven narrative about a family abuse where we can observe so many miscarriages and brutalities imposed upon females. Regarding this issue, Kali Tal in her book *Worlds of Hurt* brought Armstrong while talking about violence and frustrations of females and agrees with her that “in a society where violence against women is supported and condoned, excused and rationalized, the testimony of survivors of sexual abuse is silenced, ignored, distorted and drowned out by the thundering voices of patriarch” (197). She further boosts her perspective by saying that an entire system of oppression that keeps women in thrall, “subject to the whims and desires of a privileged masculine class—a system in which maleness and violence are closely linked” (197). By oppressing females, men try to protect their status-quo and superiority in each steps of their life.

Eugene, Kambili’s father in the process of preserving religious doctrines imposes his patriarchal power by putting Kambili and her mother, Beatrice at the margin of borderline. Eugene embodies repressive patriarchy, based on imported western religion, and colonial mindset. His religious fundamentalism and utilitarian posture eventually leads to the crumbling of his family’s psychological configuration thereby subjecting them to mental and physical torture. He only lets Kambili visit her grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu, a heathen in the eyes of her father for fifteen minutes a year. But when staying her grandfather’s home more than fifteen minutes causes physical and mental punishment. He takes Kambili in bathroom and orders her to climb her into the tub. She becomes surprised because father did not have stick at this time but suddenly saw a jar which was used by Sisi to boil water. To illustrate her father inhuman activity, she further narrates:

He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it toward my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face. I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding; I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. (194)

The incident gives rise to the torment of shock inside Kambili. Because of such physical and psychologically strenuous condition in the name of religious purity, she repetitively bears numerous domestic violences. Firstly, Eugene pours hot water on his daughter, Kambili's feet but latter shows his pretentious love towards her. Kambili cannot bear the exteeme pain of her burned feet and begins to scream but her father sympathises her by relating it with religious purity. Eugene wants to protect himself and justify that, "that is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin, you burn your feet" (194). Religion, as a patriarchal weapon of control, the authoritative patriarchal society regularly imposes its power creating a terrific, fearful, torturous, repressive and panic environment to intensify the traumatic feeling of females.

Regarding trauma, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin showing the relation between violence and religious or ethnic communities argue that:

The violence that women were subjected, to both, at the hands of men of the other community and within their own families, and to demonstrate how these diverse, yet linked, kinds of violence formed part of a continuum of violence . . . the dramatic episodes of violence against women during communal riots bring to the surface, savagely and explicitly, familiar forms of sexual violence - now charged with a

symbolic meaning that serves as an indicator of the place that women's sexuality occupies in an all-male, patriarchal arrangement of gender relations, between and within religious or ethnic communities.

(40-41)

The ongoing tussle has boosted up when so-called patriarchal norms and values powerfully attack innocent females in the name of preserving their religious purity and cultural identity. In this regard, Kali Tal states, when an individual is traumatized by a life-threatening event that “displaces his or her preconceived notions about the world. Trauma is enacted in a liminal state, outside of the bounds of ‘normal’ human experience, and the subject is radically ungrounded” (15). People who are haunted by their traumatic past go beyond the normal human experience by memorizing their bitter reality of their painful life. When an individual is victimized by the catastrophic environment of trauma, he or she enters into the chaotic world and lives a terrific, fearful and disastrous life. Kambili memorizes her traumatic experience which is extremely unpleasant and that causes to feel her upset and anxious. She asserts in her narration as:

He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back . . . Papa was like a Fulani nomad –although he did not have their spare, tall body - as he swung his belt at Mama, Jaja, and me, muttering that the devil would not win. We did not move more than two steps away from the leather belt that swished through the air. (102)

The juxtaposition of peaceful rural nomads with Eugene's violent rage startles, but the image does more. By slowing down the moment, it increases the tension, enabling us to see through the eyes of a young narrator who possesses acute powers of observation. Kambili and her mother Beatrice are badly affected by the domestic violence of Eugene, a representative of patriarchy; so that they are psychologically fluster from the life. When Kambili menstruate, Mama gives her Panadol tablets to soothe the extreme pain of her body. However, Eugene thinks that is sinful act to eat anything, even medicine before attending the Mass. Kambili's father is a religious maverick and his bigotry belief is anchored on the theological standards of Catholicism. He leads a life of Rosary and Crossing and carries himself with a donnish air of Catholic superiority. Through his over-zealous attitude and clipped religious tones, he imposes his masculine power to create a fearful and horrific scenario where they internalize psychological illness and insecurity. Because of over-burdened pain of her father she says: "Now the prick of a needle was nothing, I would take injections everyday over the pain in my body" (212).

In a similar manner, Kali Tal quotes child psychiatrist Alice Miller's opinion in her text as: "Most damaging abuse of children occurs in homes where the child is unable to express her anger and where her distress and pain are considered unimportant or intrusive" (215). Really, when small child like Kambili is attacked by the patriarchy, they could not articulate their voice and their traumatic experience puts a severe and long-lasting effect. Their "uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomenon" (Caruth 18) haunt them and make them weak mentally and physically. Regarding that issue, critic, Kali Tal, argues; "violence was perpetrated systematically and regularly by . . . men upon women in a society that supported the oppression and subjugation of women" (156) and that

picture of violence haunted them time and again in front of their eyes. That event gets rooted so deep in their mind that becomes impossible to forget; that haunts them frequently.

By slowing down the moment, it intensifies the tension, enabling us to perceive through the eyes of a young narrator, Kambili has an acute power of observations. Kambili is tortured by her demonic father for spending time with her grandfather. Eugene gives physical and psychological torture in order to teach her that she should not “walk into sin” (194). The following lines of the novel make it further clear:

I wanted to say “Yes, Papa,” because he was right, but the burning on my feet was climbing up, in swift courses of excruciating pain, to my head and lips and eyes. Papa was holding me with one wide hand, pouring the water carefully with the other. I did not know that the sobbing voice - I’m sorry!-was mine until the water stopped and I realized my mouth was moving and the words were still coming out.  
(194-95)

The excruciating pain severs Kambili from her words, an experience shared by many victims of torture and brutality. Torture is world-destroying. In the most literal way that is potential, the created world of feeling, vision and thought. All the mental and psychological content that constitutes both one’s self and one’s world, gives rise to and is in turn made possible by language, ceases to exist. While bearing torture, Kambili is barely conscious of her words which are come from her mouth or of herself. She is totally subordinating to her father’s power, and becomes a mere creature. Because of fear, she always frightens even in the absence of her father’s appearance and says, “I frozen on my seat felt the skin of my arms melding and

becoming one with the cane arms of the chair” (187). She believes that she deserves to be punished because her father tortures her “for [her] own good” (31). The illusion has made upon her brain so she thinks that he cannot be wrong because he is like God and unlike other mortals.

Furthermore, Jane Kilby while talking about sexual and domestic violence of females, puts her view that “rape, battery, and other forms of sexual and domestic violence are so common a part of women’s lives that they can hardly be described as outside the range of ordinary experience”(3). Trauma for Caruth is a voice that speaks through a wound and demands to be heard, and it is in the dialogical dynamics of this speaking/listening that she is particularly interested. The guiding principle within such a theory is that trauma narratives engage in various ways with “a problem of listening, of knowing, and of representing that emerges from the actual experience of the crisis” (5). Another equally enigmatic aspect of trauma for Caruth is the relation between trauma and survival: “For those who undergo trauma,” she says, “it is not only the moment of the event, but the passing out of it that is traumatic . . . survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis” (9). The traumatic experiences of survivors not only haunt at the time of experiencing but continually triggers in the form of memory or nightmares all over their life. When the similar type of incidents occur, that refresh the old past memories into the mind. Similarly, Kali Tal also explores her view as “to close their eyes to the horror of the past and deny their own experience or to attempt to integrate the traumatic experience into banality of everyday life – is always difficult” (114). Trauma is a special form of memory, which produces emotions- terror, fear, shock- but perhaps above all disruption of the normal feeling of comfort. Traumatic experience is continually haunted by it in dreams, flashbacks, and hallucinations which are also found in this novel.

Furthermore, when Kambili came second in her exam, her father psychologically humiliates her in front of her classroom. Eugene shows his phallic and capitalist drive even in the academic enterprise. For Kambili both her home and school become a prison, as she slips down the academic ladder. As a father, he should encourage the girl to put more effort into her academic business. But in contrary, without acknowledging fatherly responsibilities, he demonstrates his male-chauvinism by degrading her and driven to psychological disintegration. He petulantly asks a mechanical question, “How many heads has Chinwe Jideze”? -the girl who beats her to the second position (46). He does not control his aggressive body postures there, then brings out a mirror and gives it to Kambili, in order to ascertain the number of heads she has. Hunting by fear, Kambili devises a new method of studying so that she can get rid of from physical and psychological torture of her father. She assesses:

It was like balancing a sack of gravel on my head everyday at school and not being allowed to steady it with my hand. I still saw the print in my textbooks as a red blurs still saw by baby brother’s spirit strung together by narrow lines of blood. I memorized what the teachers said because I knew my textbooks, would not make sense if I tried to study later. After every test, a tough lump like poorly made *fufu* formed in my throat and stayed there until our exercise books came back. (52)

Eugene’s banal and unproductive educational standards bring stress in her entire academic enterprise and her life is reduced to facts and figures thereby subjecting her to mental torture. Estranged from her own voice and the workings of her throat and tongue, Kambili’s linguistic alienation underscores her personal isolation and suffering. She frequently tries to explain her feelings but all the words blocked inside

her throat, she could not get any words for speech, so she only mutters in the lacking of words. Each and every time she frequently takes test, so that she should not be punished and terrified by her father. She further says, “The words in my textbooks kept turning into blood each time I read them” (37). Because of fear she becomes restless and feels her “stomach was making sounds, hollow rumbling sounds that seemed too loud, that would not stop even when she sucked in her belly (40). When she starts to prepare her test she “remembers her blood on the stairs” (99). The words from her mouth would not come properly, when she starts to speak she only mutters as, “I . . . I . . .” (49) because of fear. She cannot read properly, the past events always haunt her. This panic situation she narrates as: “Inside my head, thousands of monsters played a painful game of catch, but instead of a ball, it was a brown leather bound missal that they threw to each other. Papa came into my room; my mattress sank in when he sat and smoothed my cheeks” (14). Kambali including her mother Beatrice are victimized so many times, their powerlessness enabling Eugene’s violence, so that lead to nervous breakdown.

Adichie artistically tries to reflect the phallogocentric, autocratic and religious zealotry of Eugene, a representative of patriarchal Nigerian society where women are completely marginalized and traumatized within and beyond the domestic sphere. In this context, Kali Tal draws the traumatic condition of females under the institutionalized patriarchal system; she asserts:

Atrocities against women are grounded in a system that supports them, which in fact encourages crimes against women . . . A woman either was sent back home or went to stay with relatives. Whichever she choose, she remained vulnerable, easy to find, and thus a defenseless target for pressure and attack by her aggressor. The result was that she



was forced to withdraw legal charges, resume her role as wife and mother and try to swallow her anger and bury her fear. (126)

In such modal, Kali Tal presents a horrifying picture of a society where violence against women is the rule rather than the exception. The patriarchal society imposes the several systems and regulations which are not justifiable and beneficial for females. Because of their lower status in the society they could not revolt against their victimizer; which also motivates the abusers to do atrocities against the helpless females. To depict the threatening and politically subversive position of women, Kali Tal quotes Anthony Wilden's views, "the ever-present threat of male violence against women is a ruthless assault on women's freedom to think and do and be as they are and run their own lives. The threat of rape makes growing up recognition of subordination and life a state of siege" (155). Thus, the male-dominated society does not want to hear the pains of females and binds them within patriarchal power structure which deprives them of the right to speak and resist.

In addition to this, because of fear and torture Kambili cannot articulate herself, and her father's repressive abuse rends her from her own ability to speak. But at other moments she struggles to speak; and while fear often prevents her from speaking truth, she does not manage to talk. What she utters, however, is often misunderstood by others. When she tries to speak, her throat tightens and words will not come; she fears her father's reprisals, his unspoken commands and her fear pushes her back from uttering the reality. The function of Kambili's tongue is so constricted so that her struggle to express herself usually terminates with a stutter, making her classmates observe her with familiarity laced with contempt. Because of her inability to make her tongue function in school, she is labeled a "backyard snob" (53). Estranged from her own speech and the workings of her throat and tongue,

underscores her mental shock. When her father gives her tea, she feels “the love burns my tongue” (31). Even thinking of his appearance causes her “throat to tighten in fear” (108). Compounding the issue of that being heard, Kambili suffers a lot from an inability to communicate what she truly feels because of terror.

Even though, Kambili and her brother, Jaja are sent to Aunt Ifeoma’s house at Nsukka because of political riot. For the very first time at Nsukka, their life is not dictated by schedule, but the items in the schedule are concretely engraved in Kambili’s heart and constantly triggers in her mind. Relating her father, she argues: “I could not find the words in our eye language to tell him how my throat tightened at the thoughts of five days without Papa’s voice, without his footsteps on the stairs” (108). Her inability to speak freely and haunting memory even in the absence of Eugene depicts how she is physically and psychologically tortured by the domestic violence, which further illustrates the gradual fragmentation of the organic and psychological wholeness of the family. After her grandfather, Papa Nnukwu’s death, Kambili fears to touch the body of a heathen; she shuts her eyes and thinks from this “Papa would be outraged” (184). She further narrates:

I wanted to go over and touch Papa- Nnukwu, touch the white tufts of hair that Amaka oiled, smooth the wrinkled skin of his chest. But I would. Papa would be outraged. I close my eyes then so that if Papa asked if I had seen Jaja touch the body of a heathen-it seemed more grievous, touching Papa –Nnukwu in death – I could truthfully say no, because I had not seen everything that Jaja did. My eyes remained closed for a long time, and it seemed that my ears, too, were closed, because although I could hear the sound of voices, I did not make out

what they said. When I finally opened my eyes, Jaja sat on the floor, next to Papa- Nnukwu's sheathed frame. (184)

That extract artistically co-relates the melancholic scenario at the death of papa-Nnukwu with psychologically disfunctioning mind of Kambili. Although do not see any presence of Eugene, she is always haunted by his past maltreatment and violence. Her repressive desires are deprived of any emotional outlet and she survives under the fearful environment through Eugene's programmed psychic networking. Traumatic experiences in childhood can have a severe and long-lasting effect. Children who have been traumatized see the world as a frightening and dangerous place. When childhood trauma is not resolved, this fundamental sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood, setting the stage for further trauma.

Similarly, while analyzing about trauma and memory, Urvashi Butalia states, "inside homes and families the memory is kept alive through remembrance rituals and stories that mark particular events" (287). Besides this, Jane Kilby vehemently raises her voice in her text, *Introduction: Undoing the Force of Violence*, about women's injustice and violence and asserts that the females are becoming silent because of systematic social censorship imposed upon them. She quotes, "victim silence was figured in terms of social censorship: women remained silent because there was a taboo on speaking about sexual violence, not because they had lost the capacity to talk per se. It was an externally imposed silence" (3). Because of an arbitrarily drawn borderline, females are coped with the both physical and mental experience of dislocation. In that context, Butalia further says that, "it brought untold sufferings, tragedy, pain and violence to communities who had hitherto lived together in some kind of social contract" (7). Our way of remembering things, processing new memories, and accessing old memories is also dramatically changed when we are

under stress. When we are overwhelmed with fear, we forget and lose the capacity for speech.

Moreover, Kambili's words are full of mumbles, whispers and coughs that reveal the symptoms of her physical struggle with her "tongue tiredness" (49). She does not know what she feels or who she is; her subjectivity is too wrapped up in pleasing her father. The scale and intensity of her father's violence she becomes silent or voiceless. Because of her father's repressive silence, Kambili is always haunted by the fearful and terrific image of her father. Kambili shows the contrast between their commodious apartment and its airlessness to indicate her home environment. She asserts as: "The silence was broken only by the whir of the ceiling fan as it sliced through the still air. Although our spacious dining room gave way to an even wider living room. I felt suffocated" (7). Here, Kambili describes her family home in gloomy ambience. She portrays her house as, "spacious" but "suffocating" (7). It is imbued with a sense of entrapment – "the compound wall," are "topped by coiled electric wires" were so high that she could not see cars driving by on their street (9). He considers it is sinful that women wear trousers, or he forbids his family to watch television or listen to radio. Eugene's strong uphold and dogmatic practices lead him to do such mischievous acts which create trauma and fear in Kambili and her mother, Beatrice. The extreme home environment with torturing effects shows the intensity of torture in the mind of Kambili. She internalizes fear as a habitual activity, which happens every day in her life. Regarding this she narrates: "Fear. I was familiar with fear, yet each time I felt it, it was never the same as the other times, as though it came in different flavours and colors"(196). Likely, her disturbed mental functioning also visualizes in the lines where she narrates, "My head was filling up quickly with

blood or water or sweat. Whatever it was I knew I would faint when my head got full” (181).

Similarly, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin illustrate the women’s traumatic psyche when their fetus is mercilessly killed by their male counterparts to restore their own dignity. It is important to quote their line as:

Killing fetuses – is shocking not only for its savagery, but for what it tells us about women as objects in male constructions of their own honor. Women’s sexuality symbolizes “manhood”; its desecration is a matter of such shame and dishonor that it has to be avenged . . . all of them treat women’s bodies as territory to be conquered, claimed or marked by the assailant. (43)

Above criticism clearly portrays the pathetic and insecure status of females where they are victimized by the deeply rooted fascist mentality of males to fulfill the thirst for their pleasure. Kali Tal’s lines are relevant to that issue, she says that when there is unbearable pain, “women jumps into wells to drown themselves so as to avoid rape or forced religious conversion” (5).

In the similar way, Mama Beatrice also faces so many humiliation, miscarriages, torture, mischief, pains and pangs from the hands of her monstrous husband. Eugene savagely beats his wife to the degree by showing his barbarous instinct. To highlight the pathetic condition of her mother, Kambali narrates:

Mama looked around the room. She stared at the wall clock for a while, the one with the broken second hand, before she turned to me. “You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, nne? Your father broke it on my belly? She sounded as if she were talking about someone else, as if the table were not made of sturdy. “My

blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it. Mama shocks her head slowly. A thin line of tears crawled down her cheeks as though it had been a struggle for them to get out of her eyes . . . “I was six weeks gone.” She cried for a long time. She cried until my head, clasped in hers, felt stiff. She cried until Aunty Ifeoma finished cooking the rooting meat in a spicy stew. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair. (248-49)

The passage echoes particularly a potent expression of a relentlessly open and inarticulate grief of Beatrice which is laid in the core of her heart. When she loses her fetus of six weeks her intense grief haunts her time and again. Pregnant woman takes their baby as pearl and cannot tolerate as well as forget that aborted child. Eugene generously, provides biggest donations to support the poor in his town. So the town people invest the title of *Omelora*, “The One who Does for the Community” (56). He also owns the newspaper, which takes great risk to denounce the corruption of Nigerian government. Therefore, “*Amnesty World* gave him a human rights award” (5). It is quiet ironical. His involvement in correcting the fault of Nigerian dictators is praiseworthy but he dooms himself in the same pit of colonialism through religion. However, in the domestic sphere, he is a despotic tyrant, who abuses his family, to the point that his wife miscarries or Kambili is hospitalized. Though he seems humanitarian in public, he represents the terrorist, who controls and governs his family with fear in private life. Kambili does not want to return back to her house because she feels insecure there and says, “but I would not be going home, I would be going to Nsukka for a week” (216). She eventually realizes, “[w]e were terrified” (226).

Urvashi Butalia again reinforces her view about the traumatic feelings of women regarding the issue of married life. In most of the societies, females are obliged to live their suffocating life under the umbrella of patriarchy for different reasons. By mentioning males violence upon females she further indicates; “it ruptures their lives, often at the point of marriage, doing away, usually permanently, with ‘normal’ life practices such as marriage” (89). Again she connects the women’s unbearable tortures as “women have simply been abandoned by their families, or forgotten about, from their account of their life” (89). At this point, Kali Tal prescribes W.D.Ehrart’s notion to indicate the nature of violence as “violation is somehow more real and devastating than any death he has witnessed or caused” (102). The text is filled with similar notion which is very heartrending and traumatic.

Furthermore, ongoing oppression or bearing the risk of traumatic violence, most of the females are being a mere scapegoat, which is quite barbaric and threatening. Kambili now acknowledges about her father’s continuous misbehaviour and maltreatment upon her mother, Beatrice. And it is relevant to quote her lines:

Years ago, before I understood, I used to wonder why she polished them each time. I heard the sounds from their room, like something being banged against the door. Her rubber slippers never made a sound. On the stairs, but I knew she went downstairs when I heard the dining room open. I would go down to see her standing by the étagère with a kitchen towel soaked in soapy water. She spent at least a quarter of an hour on each ballet- dancing figurine. There were never tears on her face. The time, only two weeks ago, when her swollen eye was still the black- purple color of an overripe avocado, she had rearranged them after she polished them. (10-11)

The extract visualizes Eugene's domestic cruelty upon Beatrice by indicating his animalistic instinct. Although she is beaten and victimized by his cannibalistic act, she keeps secret within herself because it "lowered him, soiled him" (20). The banged sound from her room and her swollen eye clarifies how Eugene treated her within his carefully engineered environment, which is really terrible and devastating. The social, political and patriarchal power structure of society deprives females from their right to speak and resist by threatening and they germinates the feelings that being a women was synonymous with being an object to be used and abused; which spring up humiliation, dislocation, grief, wildness ,pain, fear and mental apparatus. Eugene like males does not want to change the system from which they reap the benefits of power. Most of the females are burned and beaten by their husbands by locking them within the four walls of their house by creating terror in their mind. In this similar context, to highlight the father's repressive tyrannous deed, Kambili analogues her mother's fragmented self with mad people who wandered aimlessly on the street without any respect. She pours her feelings about her as, "her eyes were vacant, like the eyes of those mad people who wandered around the roadside garbage dumps in towns, pulling grimy, torn canvas bags with their life fragments inside" (34). In general, Eugene presents the neo- colonial Nigerian tyrant who is accompanied by the impression of colonial religion and English language and circulates bundle of fear in the hearts of his daughter and wife.

In the context of 1990s, Nigeria has been facing transitional period where people are defined themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. Females are doubly marginalized in the hands of dogmatic Catholic patriarchy on the one side and colonial military authority on the



other. Female are become the targeted group of violence and victimization. In this context, Kali Tal excavates the common sufferings of females and further says:

Each of the traumas discussed has its victims a certain group of persons definable by characteristics of race, sex, religion and geographical location. If the members of a persecuted group define themselves as a community, bonded by their common misfortune, and see their individual sufferings as a part of a common plight, then (and only then) will be the urge to bear witness be present. (124)

The extent and nature of violence that women were subjected to when communities conflagrated highlights the turbulent and dehumanizing patriarchal system where females are sexually, mentally and physically assaulted by their counterparts. When the person of a certain group suffers from a certain misfortune, links her or her community by sharing their pains and pangs as a part of a common plight. If there is certain abuse occurs upon a female, other women also acknowledge same experience of plight as a sense of sisterhood. They hope that the community of women will be strong enough to prevent the commission of atrocities in the future. Because of military riot at the time of civil war in Nigeria, most of the females have faced wretched life with terror. Women have to practice barbarism and injustice not only within their domestic sphere by their male counterparts but also from the government. The following extract provides a prominent evidence to justify that:

Soldiers were milling around. Market women were shouting, and many had both hands placed on their heads, in the way that people do to show despair or shock. A woman lay in the dirt, wailing, tearing at her short afro. Her wrapper had come undone and her white underwear showed . . . I saw the soldier raise a whip in the air. The whip was

long. It curled in the air before it landed on the women's shoulder. I thought about the woman lying in the dirt as we drove home. I had not seen her face, but I felt that I knew that I had always known her. I wished I could have gone over and helped her wrapper. (44)

When Kambali return back to her house from her school with her family driver, Kelvin, the woeful position of a market woman concretely engraved in her heart. In the time of military riot, many females become the target of victimization by soldiers, representative of colonialism and patriarchy. Being a female, Kambili shows her sympathy to that unknown woman. She feels nearness and relates it as their common misfortune; she sees the women's individual suffering as a common plight. She also relates her panic life with other women of the country. Political and male authorities are using their power over guileless women to abuse and torture them or to compel them to take part in abhorrent acts, tasks with violate their sense of self-worth and provoke intense shame, dislocation, humiliation and anger.

Likely, when Eugene's editor, Ade Coker is blown up by a letter bomb, that event imprints the psychological disorder and chaos on the mind of his wife and daughter. After the death of Ade Coker, his daughter's psychic mechanism totally disturbs so she "had not spoken since her father died" (259). The main agenda of Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* is to unearth the conformation of male domination in Nigerian society. She explores the gender traumatic experience through the shades of female marginalization stemming from patriarchy and how it relates to the experience of government's subjugation over females by using tyrannical military authority. As Adichie interrogates Eugene's inordinate religious stance and the traditional phallogocentrism that conditions his attitude towards his family, she tactically creates

a vent in the narrative through which she explores the terrific, torturous, dehumanizing and exploitative disposition of the Nigerian government upon women.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's voice in her debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, is a quiet one. She tells her story with something akin to the psychological disinterest of a deeply traumatized person who has cultivated the skill to seem calm as a way of holding back the emotional collapse that appears on the verge of consuming her. Adichie's narrative strategy of choosing the teenage female narrator as Kambili through the technique of memorization and flashback, does not only traces physical and psychological development of the protagonist but also delineates the literary expression of trauma that supports such victims relieve from the burden of painful memories; which is also the politics of Adichie's novel.

Furthermore, Kambili explodes her flood of memories through narrativization and tries to mitigate her traumatic experiences of her life. In this process, Dominick LaCapra proposes two methods: acting out and working-through. The notion of acting out and working-through are key interactive elements of his trauma theory that build on aspect of psychoanalysis. LaCapra defines acting out as it "has a mimetic relation to the past which is represented or relived as if were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription" (81). On the contrary, he further explains working-through "as a work on posttraumatic symptoms in order to mitigate the effects of trauma by generating counterforce to compulsive repetition, thereby enabling a more viable articulation of affect and cognition or representation, as well as ethical and social political agency, in the present and future" (84). Working-through the repressed past memories narrator or author expresses their pain and pangs to get relief from their haunting memories or unforgettable past. LaCapra

adds his view and clarifies, “working-through does not mean the total redemption of the past or healing its traumatic wounds” (85).

After analyzing the novel, *Purple Hibiscus* from bird’s eye view, the female narrator, Kambili recalls her past memories through dreams, flashbacks and nightmares that help her to get little redemption of the past or healing its wounds of herself and her community as a whole. Working through the both flashback and intrusive dreams occurs in her mind, she wants to mitigate or soothe her internally suppressed events and have a journey towards recovery. Even after the death of her father, Eugene, the Adhike family can not totally acting out their fear and hallucinations from their mind. That’s why, by narrating overwhelming and anxiety-producing memories to other, Kambili tries for recovery from the dreadful past. This process always allows her to manipulate imagery and generate metaphors for her sufferings, reframing her problems in a useful and creative manner.

Through the narrativigation, Kambili narrates or verbalizes her innate traumatic self and gets relief by working through the past by showing how females undergo double suppression by ‘colonialism’ and ‘patriarchy’ in the context of postcolonial Nigeria. Although she cannot completely heal the wounds of a traumatic past through the narrative she enables herself to acquire a critical perspective allowing for a measure of control and responsible action, notably including a mode of repetition related to the renewal of life in the present. Kambili remains silent all over the novel and does not slow any power directly resist her demonic father, Eugene. Kambili does not have courage and power to tackle face-to-face appearance with her father, Eugene; that’s why she chooses the narrativigation as a medium to share her inner traumatic experiences with others to decrease the effects of trauma which is caused by so-called patriarchal hegemonies society.

Kambili acting through the narration and tries to get certain psychological relief which is imprinted in her mind. However, through the medium of narration, she pours all the suppressed fear, angst, whims, and felling on the surface level.

Moreover, Kali Tal while talking about narration or storytelling included that “all testimonial literature ought to be read with caution and with the understanding that survivor testimony is first of all a search for relief” (133). Through the narration, the narrator or author tries to get relief from his or her traumatic and unforgettable past. The goal of the narrativization is to share the traumatic experience to other to make it real both to the victim and to the community. By taking narrativization as a tool of expression, Kambili is able to soothe her depression and melancholy; hopes for recovery and peaceful life with her family. Adichie, as author also has expressed her desires where many African women are being traumatized by the colonial and patriarchal rules and regulations.

We glimpse different levels of resistance in *Purple Hibiscus*: physical resistance, psychological resistance, religious resistance, and overall social resistance but most of the times the domestic resistance amalgams with colonial resistance. Amidst country's despair caused by military coup, Kambili and her brother, Jaja are sent to their aunt, Ifeoma's house for safety's sake. With aunt she learns the value of freedom and independence. Unlike her father who denies his roots, Kambili only grows and flourishes like the purple hibiscus. Here, Kambili learns to speak, to engage with others, and even to question her father's warped values. She consumes more power to resist against violence and brutality mainly from two people: her grandfather, whom her father has banished from his house as a dangerous pagan influence, and a young Nigerian Catholic priest, Amadi.

Kambili suffers because she cannot articulate herself- her father's patriarchal rule has subsumed her individual identity almost entirely, and his abuse rends her from her own ability to speak. But at other moments she struggles to speak; and while often prevents her from speaking the truth, she does to manage to talk. Similarly, her, mother, Beatrice also suffers from too much domestic tortures, fear, cruelty and violence because she cannot resist her husband's status quo directly. That's why; they choose silence as a powerful weapon to resist against the Eugene's hegemonic ideology.

Silence plays a key role in the development process of Kambili and Mama Beatrice's life, or perhaps, it could be described as collateral. In this context, Urvashi Butalia in her, *The Other Side of Silence* states that, "if, at one level, we are faced with a kind of historical silence, at another this is compounded by a familial silence, in which families have colluded in hiding their own histories . . . Sometimes the silence was a form of protest" (283-84). After visiting her free-thinking aunt Ifeoma and her spirited cousins in Nsukka, she returns with a precious gift from her cousin Amaka, a portrait of her Papa- Nnukwu. The painting symbolizes the growth of Kambili's world to include not only her forbidden grandfather but also her cousins, and father Amadi; and with the expansion of her world. Her father at home tears up the painting and degenerates into an uncontrollable fit of anger and duffs her up heavily, until she falls unconscious. But this time, she starts to questions her father's omnipotence by clutching at the pieces of the painting and refuses to obey his orders to get up off the floor. Even as his cruel kicks increases in force and momentum, Kambili explains:

Get up! Papa said again. I still did not move. He started to kick me . . .

I curled around myself tighter, around the pieces of the painting; they

were soft, feathery. They still had the metallic smell of Amaka's paint palette. The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the mental landed on open skin on my side, my back, and my legs. Kicking. Kicking. Kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. (210-11)

She retreats to the stage of an infant, wordless and silent, which intensifies her vulnerability. At the same time, however, her retreat becomes a source of strength. Having withdrawn into her mind, she imagines her father's kicks merging with her cousin's culturally conscious Afro beat music, itself a symbol of resistance against the dogmatic religion, colonial mindset, and hierarchies and Manichean dictate of patriarchy, which are the hallmarks of gender traumatic experience. Her silence signals her refusal to forget what she has seen: a different way of living, a family life which she "had never had, would never have" (210).

Initially, Kambili is a confused child, who idolizes her father and only recognizes his fixed point of view. She refuses to compare him to anyone else because "it lowered him, soiled him" (20). Her life is dictated and regulated by a schedule scrolled in her heart. She has a harshly confined lives ruled by her tyrannical father, Eugene. This domestic fierce person is obsessed with order. His strong feelings and espousal of capitalism and Catholicism is shown to be at root of domestic cruelty. Kambili is highly traumatized because of her father's imposed utilitarian and scheduled life. Yet, even in Kambili's initial description, her childlike language ingenuously betrays criticism of her father, such as when she comically describes his piety at communion, "[H]is eyes shut so hard that his face tightened into grimace" (4). By virtue of Kambili's speech, the father's behavior is rendered excessive and comic, which in turn undermines his pious performance. Similarly,

she recognizes enmity in Pope Benedict after her realization or recovery from traumatic feelings. She compares him with snake, “His eyes were the same green shade of a snake” (105). Likely, Eugene admonishes members of his immediate family not to bow before any mortal being, yet when Kambili proudly refuses to bow before Father Benedict during communion, he spans her. In this manner, she does not only narrate about her own silence resistance but also analyzes other’s resistance.

In the similar way, Adichie artistically illustrates the character like Aunt Ifeoma, who directly opposes ethnocentrism, colonialism and patriarchy, which are the root causes of gender trauma, victimization and violence over females. When Kambali’s mother suffers the last miscarriages as a result of the overbearing and barbarous instinct of Eugene, Ifeoma advises her not to return to her husband by saying, “You are not going anywhere” (249). She is so horrified with the everyday’s torture, grief, violence and barbaric instinct of her brother upon his wife. After getting enough inspiration and courage from Ifeoma, Kambali’s mother rises up from her docility and poisons her husband, a counter measure to redeeming herself and her children from the marginal border of taciturnity. In comparison to other female characters, Ifeoma is more rebellious to dig out the women’s mistreatment and abuses during the colonial and cultural turmoil in Nigeria.

By poisoning her husband, Kambali’s mother realizes her voice through a new kind of silence. Though Eugene maintains the love and respect of his community, he savagely beats and tortures his wife and children to a point where his wife Beatrice Achike is driven to an irrevocable act of self- defense. Beatrice’s silence bursts out into an irrevocable action; that is the killing of her husband by poisoning the tea. In such model, Kali Tal states that female may, “resist by appealing to existing legal, moral or ethical structures in the dominant society (i.e.



litigation, religious arguments ) and use tactics such as passive resistance or non-violence” (8-9). After experiencing overburden submission and oppression by her husband, Mama Beatrice’s each heavy step creates turbulence in her head. Kambili narrates about Mama Beatrice as:

Mama tightened her wrapper, and then went to the windows; she pushed the drapes aside, checking that the louvers were shut to keep the rain from splashing into the house. Her movements were calm and slow. When she spoke, her voice was just as calm and slow. “I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor. (290)

Above insightful passage clearly sketches the outline of traumatic environment, which indicates how Beatrice has survived under the colonial Catholic and patriarchal values of Eugene. Her psychological resistance resembles Kambili’s resistance. She bears until it is unbearable. As we know silence grows like cancer, her frustration and stress goes just in the same way. She cannot think about anything. Even though she has not deterministic power to oppose him physically, that’s why, she chooses such passive resistance or non-violence tactic only way out to her problem. She takes silence as a method of protection, protection from domestic violence. That is the killing of her husband, Eugene. By taking help from another female partner, Sisi she makes plan to kill him by giving slow poison in his tea. Until the autopsy of Eugene’s death body, it is secret to all either that is natural or planned death. The so seemed psychological resistance turns out to be physically irrevocable and dangerous. By presenting that, Adichie points to the dangers of submissive silence in Nigerian political and male-dominated society in particular and Africa at large.

Hence, we cannot ignore the defensive role of Jaja, who interrogates his father, Eugene's servile and sycophant nature. Being a male, he never prefers the side of institutionalized patriarchal system but helps his sister and mother to dig out from the traumatic experiences and violence. Jaja rejects his father, Eugene's blind religious faith which is creating so many obstacles in his sister and mother's daily life. He keeps him away from communion two Sundays in a row, which is clarified by Kambili's narration as: "So when Papa did not see Jaja go to the altar that Palm Sunday when everything changed" (6). Similarly, Kambili highly praises her brother, Jaja's contribution for them by saying that "his eyes are too full of guilt to really see me, to see his reflection in my eyes, the reflection of my hero, the brother who tried always to protect me the best he could (305). When he sees the cruelty and torture upon his family members by his demonic father, he becomes more bold and resistant to his father. After visiting aunt Ifeoma's house, he develops more resistant power to dethrone his father's inhuman activities towards his mother and sister. Certainly, the defiance of Jaja gives proper impression to Kambili and gets encourage opposing her father's domestic violence. She even compares Jaja's defiance with symbolical Aunt Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus. Not only that, Jaja takes the accusation of murder of his father in his hands and accepts the punishment. Through his serious love and sacrifice, he wants to ensure that in the future none of the females will be traumatized and victimized within that arena. Mighty resistance made by Beatrice in the murder of Eugene also symbolically represents the downfall of patriarchal domination in the Postcolonial Nigerian society, which helps to mitigate or recovery from their traumatic experiences.

The metaphor Purple Hibiscus suggests the Hibiscus flower, which is a plant with large bright colored flower. The hibiscus, as a symbol of both the memory of

violence and the protagonist's refusal to be determined by that violence both emotionally and physically as she recovers. While talking about Abba and Nsukka, Kambili compares them with the two different sorts of hibiscus: red and purple hibiscus as restriction and freedom respectively. By raising that strong issue she narrates as: "Nsukka started it all; Auntie Ifeoma's little garden next to the verandah of her flat in Nsukka began to lift the silence. Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Auntie Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the . . . Government Squares" (16). The purple hibiscus represents the symbolic value of freedom. The purple hibiscus of the title, which grows in aunt Ifeoma's garden, is counterpoised with the red hibiscus of home. Here, the red hibiscus symbolizes the ordered and scheduled Abba, the home town of Kambili's father's Eugene, which is restrictive and repressive. Like as the authoritarian and harsh background, Kambili and her mother also have a traumatic life and survive there by repressing their innate pains, distress and memories. They are deprived of any outlet for emotional life. Their home becomes a fort for them and the same time a symbol of vitiation. Even the culinary world of Beatrice is equally circumscribed. The doctrinaire attitude of Eugene creates a cyst around them, which makes rays from the outside impenetrable.

But in contrast, as Kambili has experienced different world within Nsukka, the hometown of aunt Ifeoma get chance to germinates her resistance power against her father which further paves the path to outlet her repressed traumatic self for her recovery. There is metonymic of a series of oppositions on which the novel is structured: silence and speech, repression and spontaneity, state violence and family abuse, censorship and freedom, harsh and gentle versions of masculinity.

Adichie artistically divides the novel into following four sections: “Breaking Gods – Palm Sunday,” “Speaking with our Spirits – Before Palm Sunday,” “The Pieces of Gods – After Palm Sunday,” and “A Different Silence-The Present.” The novel’s very structure and plot reflects the issue of gender traumatic experience. First section is the symbolic breaking from rigid systems of colonial mindset, religion and patriarchy. Kambili, the narrator, assesses the crumbling value of complicity through language and religion in relation to her father Eugene’s sycophant and servile nature. The second section highlights extreme violence and torture given by the patriarchal kingdom where Kambili says, we “spoke more with our spirits than with our lips” (16). Because of fear and repressive silence she does not have any ability to speak the truth; that’s why, she communicates through “an asusu anya, a language of the eyes” (305). Likely, Kambili’s mother hardly talks and when she does, it is in monosyllables. In the third part, the rigid complicit religious, cultural and patriarchal values crumble down and the breaking appears into several pieces. Along with the death of Eugene, the gender traumatic experience gets chance to outlet their haunted memories and fears.

The last section is about present which is different than the past which is ultimately the result of past. After the death of husband, Kambili’s mother realizes her voice through a new kind of silence. The word silence, its verb, adjective, and adverb forms appear forty seven times in the novel that inundates the entire narrative. The novel starts with silence and ends in silence. At the initial phase of the novel, Kambili and her mother rely heavily on silence and live on assumptions. The silence is dopey and empty. Eugene’s violent and abusive behavior causes consternation in their psyche and all the time they remain silent. At Nsukka, a different kind of silence descends upon Kambili – this silence is dialectical. After the death of her husband

and incarceration of Jaja, Kambili's mother cracks and retreats into silence. In the initial phase, Kambili lacks the identity; survives through domestic suppression because of fear. She feels, "I did not, could not, look at Papa's face when he spoke. The boiled yam and peppery greens refused to go down my throat; they clung to my mouth like children clinging to their mother's hand at a nursery school entrance" (41). But she takes the silence as a tool of resistance in order to liberate herself from the realities of the predicaments that have stormed her family. She narrates:

Silence hangs over us, but it is a different kind of silence, one that lets me breathe. I have nightmares about of when Papa was alive. In my nightmares it mixes with shame and grief and so many other things that I cannot name, and forms blue tongues of fire that rest above my head, like Pentecost, until I wake up screaming and sweating. (305)

Before Eugene's death Kambili and her mother has lived a traumatic, repressed and restrictive life. Their latent desires and memories do not get way for expression; so they live with a meaningless silence. Now they start to breath freely by healing their inner shame and grief. Of course, silence is the same but the reception of silence is different. On the whole, the last shade of silence that beclouds their sense of imagination could be said to be furtive, because it is a resistive silence characterized by hope and dreams through which they can soothe their heart- rendering traumatic experiences.

In this regard, with the physical and psychological development of Kambili; she learns to transform her father's repressive silence into passive resistance. The trip to Nsukka brought a domino effect on the developmental process in her life. After the death of father Eugene, Kambili and her mother, Beatrice get freedom from the irrational activity and domestic violence and at last get opportunity to mitigate or

recovery from their traumatic life. Yet, they do not get total redemption from horrific past; they have a great hope for future. After experimenting her mother's gestures Kambili sees certain relief in her face as she narrates, "it is one of the few times in the past three years that she has spoken without bearing first spoken to" (306). Really, now Mama Beatrice gets relief after long period throughout her life and smiles leaning towards Kambili. At the end of the novel, the plantation of purple hibiscus symbolizes the upcoming fearless environment, where Kambili and her mother going to bloom as purple hibiscus by mitigating their traumatic life.

To cut the entire matter into short, Kambili and her mother Beatrice being a silent agent claimed their voice; and in bearing witness to their life. Kambili as a narrator tells a story about the nature of patriarchal tyranny in postcolonial Nigeria. They face numerous challenges to articulate the "different silence" of present as a medium of passive resistance (293). Unlike the other writers, Adichie artistically depicts the gender traumatic experience of Achike family in particular and African countries in general.

### **III. Traumatic Experiences and Resistance of Female Characters**

After the detailed analysis and study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, the researcher has clearly sketches the traumatic experiences of females in the postcolonial Nigerian patriarchal society. Adichie portrays the traumatized post-independent Nigeria as represented by the protagonist of the novel. This researcher has come up with the idea that Adichie, by depicting the miserable condition of the protagonist, Kambili and her mother, Beatrice suffering from the unbearable traumatic dread, intends to criticize deeply rooted male-dominated Nigerian society in particular and Africa in general. Motifs of emptiness and absence haunt the novel and establish its traumatic sense. By highlighting the problems like hollowness, darkness, emptiness, haunting memories, this project tries to explore the gender specific trauma of women.

Regarding the novel, the researcher takes out the example of a small middle-class Achike family to excavate the burning issue of female subjugation by raising her voice against exclusive male prerogatives. The protagonist and the narrator of the novel, Kambili and her mother are forced to live a terrific, fearful, torturous, panic and repressive life. Kambili's abusive father, Eugene wears the mask of the perfect father; his assigned role is to protect her and her family. But in the name of protection, he imposes terrific and scheduled life upon them under threat of masculine violence. So, the novel chronicles the breakdown of the family unit under the pressures of politics and religion, weaving the story around the figure of a domineering father. When a military coup takes place Kambili goes to stay in her Aunt Ifeoma's house. Even in the absence of her father, his rigid adherence to order manifests itself in the daily schedules he creates for her; and that haunting image of her demonic father causes consternation in her psyche networking. Of course, for the

very time she live a life not dictates by schedule, though the items in the schedule are concretely engraved in her heart. Although Eugene is highly respected and generous in his community, repress his wife and daughter at home being an agent of violent Catholic patriarchal society. Eugene's imposition of regulation and utilitarian life based on religious faith haunts Kambili including Mama Beatrice even in the absence of him. Kambili is frustrated and feels humiliation when her father beats her with his belt severely; given mental threat and psychological pressures when she spends her time with her grandfather, and her father psychological humiliation in front of her classroom clearly depicts Eugene's physical torture and psychological cruelty. In the similar pattern, Mama Beatrice also bears so many painful and turbulent lives because of her husband, Eugene' dictator like inhuman activities based on religious dogmatism. Similarly, in the context of 1990s Nigeria has facing transitional period where females are doubly marginalized in the hand of dogmatic Catholic patriarchy on the one side and colonial military authority on the other, and became the targeted group of patriarchal violence and victimization.

Furthermore, by means of narrativization, Kambili narrates her inner traumatic self and try to soothe her pains working through the past by indicating how females undergo double oppression by patriarchy and colonialism in the context of post-colonial Nigeria. Although she cannot completely forget her gloomy past and heal the wounds of her life, by the medium of narration, Kambili tries to enable herself to achieve a critical perception allowing for a measure of control and responsible task, notably including a mode of repetition related to the renewal of life in the present. However, through narrative she pours her innate suppressed thoughts, pains and feelings on the surface level and tries to mitigate from her traumatic and hellish life.



To wrap up, Kambili and her mother, Beatrice grasp silence as a tool of resistive power against the Eugene's hegemonic authority. After getting enough inspiration and motivation from Ifeoma, Kambili's mother rises up with her docility to silent revolt against her demonic husband. At last, Mama Beatrice's restrictive and repressive silence transforms into resistive silence which further paves the way to outlet her repressed traumatic self for her recovery. The silent resistance of Kambili and her mother Beatrice, and the murder of Eugene symbolically represent the downfall of patriarchal domination in the post-colonial Nigeria, which helps to mitigate or soothe from their traumatic experience. Kambili and her mother's life are triggered by traumatic experiences of patriarchal violence in African scenario and they still feel the horror of the demonic Eugene's behaviors; they do not get complete recovery their traumatic self.

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