I. *Purple Hibiscus* as a Text of Postcolonial Feminism

Using *Purple Hibiscus* as specific example from Nigeria, this thesis analyzes the philosophical underpinnings of postcolonial African feminism. The line between resistance to the evil of colonization and patriarchy and resentment of the cultural world of the colonizer and patriarchy is largely blurred in *Purple Hibiscus*. There is therefore an overabundance of reactionary impulses. While in agreement with the discourse about the concerns of women's human rights, this suggests that African feminism or rather feminism as articulated by African women thinkers must free itself from resentment in order to focus on creating flourishing communities in Africa. *Purple Hibiscus* seeks the flourishment of communities with the liberation of women in the background. Postcolonial female in *Purple Hibiscus* are not only the passive subject of oppression but they cooperate with each other thereby resisting against patriarchal and colonial domination.

This discourse explores the growth process of the protagonist, Kambili, as she struggles to make her mouth function within the totalitarian temperament of her father's home. The protagonist is involved in crisis with religious and domestic stakes at the beginning of the narrative. She seems to be a mere observer and victim, but as the novel drags towards denouement she realizes her voice and role in the home after her awakening. The paper also equally explores the allegorical slant of the text as the growth and development of Nigeria is calibrated by the growth process of the protagonist. Invariably, Kambili begins as the teller in the tale, and at the end she becomes the tale, which eventually intercepts that of the nation. Thus, to give the discourse its desired theoretical thrust, silence is conceptualized in order to articulate how the dominant group employs it to regulate the existence of the subservient group around the margins and how the subservient group attains power and agency in the

subversion of the of the weapon of domination(silence) to negotiate their existence around the margins.

Regarded as one of Nigeria's most talented young writers, Adichie is acknowledged for her well-crafted stories and novels that explore the political and personal repercussions of recent Nigerian history, particularly the strife of the Nigerian Civil War and the doomed Biafran secession in the late 1960s. Critics praise her thoughtful treatment of history and her sensitive and honest depiction of the effects of war and brutality on the individual. In recent literary works, Adichie addresses the challenges of the immigrant experience, focusing on issues of national identity and language.

Adichie was born in Enugu, Nigeria, on September 15, 1977. She was brought up in the university town of Nsukka, the location of the University of Nigeria, where her father worked as a deputy vice-chancellor and a professor of statistics and her mother was the university registrar. As a child she attended the university's primary and secondary schools. Growing up in a university environment nurtured her innate desire to write, and during these years she wrote a number of plays and poems that were performed at school. In 1995 she enrolled in the university to study medicine and pharmacy but left the following year to enroll at Drexel University in Philadelphia on scholarship. Two years later, she transferred to Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, Connecticut, to study political science and communication. She continued to write during this period, and several of her short stories were published in literary journals, including *Granta, Other Voices, Calyx,* and *Iowa Review.* During her senior year, she began writing her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus,* which was published in 2003. After graduation in 2003, she received a scholarship to pursue her master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins

University. That same year, her short story *Half of a Yellow Sun* won the PEN/David Wong short story award. She expanded the story into a novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun,* which was published in 2006. She has won several important honors and awards for her work, including Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book in 2005 for *Purple Hibiscus* and the Orange Broadband Prize for fiction in 2007 for *Half a Yellow Sun.* In 2005 she was a Hodder Fellow at Princeton University, and in 2006 she began to work toward a graduate degree in African studies from Yale University.

Adichie's work incorporates themes of political and domestic violence, tolerance, loyalty, family, national identity, self-realization, and the effects of colonialism on the society and on individuals. In her play, *For Love of Biafra* (1998), she chronicles the expectations and shattered hopes of a Nigerian family at the time of Nigerian civil war in the late 1960s. Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus,* explores the tension between Igbo and western culture through the story of a fifteen-year-old girl named Kambili. Her industrialist father, Eugene, is known in the community as a pious and generous man that courageously stands against the rebel forces who overthrew the democratic regime; at home, however, he is an abusive tyrant who terrorizes Kambili, her mother, and her older brother, Jaja. Moreover, he forces his family to live by the strictures of a fundamentalist strain of Catholicism and reject the traditional African faith of his own father. As the political situation heats up, Jaja and Kambili are sent to stay with their Aunt Ifeoma, a respected university professor. Under her nurturing eye, Kambili embraces her independence and begins to blossom. Kambili and Jaja return home to find that the abuse has continued unabated; their mother, Mama Jaja, reaches her breaking point and poisons Eugene's tea. In an act of selfsacrifice, Jaja takes responsibility for the crime, hoping to save his mother from a certain death sentence. Critics have found the disintegration of Eugene's family

symbolic of life under a military dictatorship. In *Half of a Yellow Sun,* Adichie explores the effects of the doomed Biafran secession and subsequent civil war on several individuals. Forced to leave their privileged lives at the University of Nigeria, Olanna and her lover Odenigbo flee to the rural villages of Eastern Nigeria, where they must endure the horrors of war. As a result, their relationship as well as their own values and morality are challenged under incredibly check circumstances. In several of her short stories, which have been published in various periodicals, Adichie depicts the difficulties Nigerian immigrants experience in the United States and in England, focusing particularly on issues of identity and language.

Purple Hibiscus has been analyzed and interpreted through various perspectives by different critics since its publications. This novel is about the weird normality, about the way tyranny insists that everyone dream the national nightmare, and it works by playing off the innocence of childhood against the brutal inanities of strong men in a state gone rotten. Joanne Wilkinson says:

> Kambili, who is almost rendered mute in the presence of her boisterous cousins, slowly starts to open up. This impressive first novel is redolent in its depiction of the Nigerian countryside and generates a palpable narrative tension over what's to become of Kambili and Jaja's newfound sense of freedom. (208)

That rare *Purple Hibiscus* in a sea of tamer blossoms, a teenaged Nigerian girl named Kambili must deal with escalating family tensions even as her country heads for political turmoil.

Likewise, Lily G. N. Mabura interprets it in the light of an African postcolonial Gothic. In this regard he rightly says:

> Adichie, i argue, participates in an ongoing reinvention and complication of Gothic topography in African literature. She teases out the peculiarities of the genre on the continent; dissects fraught African psyches; and engages in a Gothic-like reclamation of her igbo heritage, including igbo-ukwu art, language, and religion. (204)

According to Mabura this book begins "by tracing the historiography and manifestations of gothic attributes in precolonial and colonial Africa" (204). He further says:

> It is in towns like Abba, incidentally the Achike family's hometown in *Purple Hibiscus* as well, that the Igbo regroup and commence postwar reconstruction. As such, homes are built in inland towns like Abba, refuges 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 Lagos, a historically bloody and haunted landscape for the Igbo, is mostly skirted in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. (207)

This fiction includes apparitions, curses, and other notions of evil; an atmosphere of overwrought emotions, fear, and doom precipitated by various notions of evil, ancient prophesies, or the sublime and supernatural; and women in distress—female characters that are often terrified, oppressed, and driven to psychological disintegration by a powerful tyrannical male who embodies patriarchal oppression. She has included these elements in her criticism of *Purple Hibiscus*.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* chronicles the complex situation of postcolonial country Nigeria that has suffered because of religious dogmatics in the form of Christian orthodoxy. The character, papa Eugene is careful for basic needs of his

family but he controls his son, daughter, and wife severely with the use of religion. They become the victims of his repression, violence, and exploitation based on religion. He opposes military coup in the country Nigeria but he is submissive to the Bible thereby turning himself as a religious tyrant in domestic level. Being backed up by Christian orthodoxy, papa Eugene in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* functions as an agent of neo-colonial strategy, which the postcolonial Nigeria opposes.

Heather Hewitt takes it as a coming of age novel. She clarifies the complex issue of upbringing within country's political threat. She says:

> Kambili's father foists upon his children a dogmatic understanding of what is right (Catholicism) and wrong (traditional Igbo beliefs): 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)

Her perspective gives a horrible picture of binary oppositional sets of English and Igbo culture in the then post independent Nigeria. How a person like Eugene internalizes his inferiority and shuns his own father is the face value in the then Nigerian world.

The narrator and central character Kambili Achike, a fifteen years old girl and her brother Jaja live a life very much circumscribed by school, Catholic Church, and their father Eugene. Eugene is a successful businessman whose factories and press have earned him the title of *Omelora*, "the one who does for the community" (56). Eugene Achike is a hardcore catholic who lives under the Manichean dictates of an unquestioned and unforgiving faith. His imposition of regulation and scheduled life

haunts the children including the Mama, Beatrice Achike. Kambili explains about papa Eugene's liking of order; but her simplicity of her explanation belies the frenzied obsession with regulating children's lives.

Lily G.N. Mabura, studies the complex issue of the colonizer's language. She sees the influence of the colonial language (English) that has affected great in the local tribal culture and their heritage. She says:

> […] From this we see that while the actual colonialists seemingly left the post independence scene, the language(s) of colonization have not. These languages have, instead, attained vehicular status as bureaucratic languages of the state and robbed many indigenous languages like Igbo, their cultural, religious, commercial, and educational functions. (211-12)

Mabura analyses the colonial language as legitimized bureaucratic language of the state, which tries to demolish all the local values and indigenous languages and cultures of Nigeria like Igbo. Kambili memorizes Aunty Ifeoma's saying: "Papa was too much of a colonial product"(13). Mama Beatrice poisons papa Eugene when she feels extremely tortured in the absence of her children. But the son Jaja confesses as his crime and therefore is sent to jail. After three years, military government collapses and his crime changes as an act of old regime. And he is released from the jail. Adichie makes a poignant critique through Ifeoma when she sends letter to Kambili saying:

> There are people, […], who think that we can not rule ourselves because the few times we tired, we failed, as if all the others who rule themselves today got it right the first time. It is like telling a crawling baby who tries to walk,

> and then falls back on his buttocks, to stay there. As if the adults walking past him did not all crawl once. (301)

Likewise, Michele Roborts reviews the book emphasizing the post-traumatic stress disorder. He sees the traumatic experiences amidst political coup and domestic violence. 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 re-membering, and is a political act, particularly if the official historians of a culture ignore the experience of 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)

Roberts' criticism on *Purple Hibiscus* is based on the memory of trauma. The memory is always politicized to learn from the past. The character Eugene's fusion of capitalism and Catholicism are the roots behind such trauma. Kambili and her brother Jaja speak different languages in the presence of their father. Kambili calls their language "asusu anya, a language of the eyes"(305). She describes father's house as "spacious" and "suffocating" (7). These secrets weigh most heavily on Kambili whose frequent inability to speak suggests how continuously fear traumatizes her. When her classmates and teachers at the Daughter of Immaculate Heart (school) ask her questions, but her throat tightens and she cannot speak in a clearly articulated voice then her words come in fragmented stutters and whispers. Kambili has no voice and she trapped in a cycle of self-negation by her adoration and adulation of godlike father and his acute need for his affirmation.

In this way, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* has been analyzed from different perspectives. Some of the critics point out the issue of coming of age of the protagonist, hence of the nation itself, while others have focused on the issues like physical violence, influence of colonial language in colonized world, postwar trauma and so on. None of the aforementioned critics have explored the issue of postcolonial feminism in the social life of this Nigerian text. This research tries to study postcolonial assertion of feminism interms of resistance and coordination. So the focus of this researcher will be on the postcolonial feminism in the text. His book will find a new light through this study.

As the issue of hypothesis at hand demands, postcolonial feminism is the theoretical tool to analyze the text. It is proved with the supports of different writers and critics from the domain concerned. The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter of this research is general introduction which comprises objective of this research, introduction of Adichi's *Purple Hibiscus,* the theoretical modality, and literature review. The second chapter is methodology as a testimony to research thesis as per the demand of hypothesis. The third chapter is textual analysis that mainly focuses on the issue of postcolonial feminism and analyzes female resistance and cooperation. Finally, chapter four will wrap up the whole explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters and shows postcolonial feminist reading of Adichi's *Purple Hibiscus.*

II. Postcolonial Feminism

Postcolonial Feminism cannot be regarded simply as a subset of Postcolonial studies, or, alternatively, as another variety of feminism. Rather it is an intervention that is changing the configurations of both postcolonial and feminist studies. Postcolonial feminism is an exploration of the intersections of colonialism and neocolonialism with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women's lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality, and rights. Though such an enterprise is necessarily multidisciplinary in scope, like other postcolonial and feminist studies, it primarily inhabits the discursive space of cultural studies. It is identified with the work of feminists of Third World origin located in the metropolitan university, and the agendas set by them to define a recognizable postcolonial feminism.

Sometimes it is taken as a form of feminist philosophy which centers on the idea of racism, colonialism, and the long lasting economic, political, and cultural effects of colonialism in the post-colonial setting. Postcolonial feminist critics like Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Sara Suleri in the 1980s criticize western feminists because they have a history of universalizing women's issues, and their discourses are often misunderstood to represent women globally in which gender overrides cultural differences. Western feminism defined 'women' by their gender and not by social classes and ethnic identities basing on a middle-class 'Eurocentric notion'. Postcolonial feminist critics blamed that western feminists ignored the voices of non-white, non-western women for many years, thus creating resentment from feminists in developing nations.

Postcolonial feminists see the parallels between recently decolonized nations and the state of women within patriarchy: both take the perspective of a socially

marginalized subgroup in their relationship to the dominant culture. Patriarchy and colonialism on the surface seem two different forms of suppression but internally guided by the same ideology of exploitation and domination over their subjects of the weaker race, sex, and culture. The Postcolonial feminism posits its departure from western feminism or the classical feminism as the situations of the women of the different parts of the world differ vastly even after the decolonization of the non-western countries. Postcolonial and feminist criticisms failed to counter the colonial or imperial and patriarchal atrocity and biasness for the recognition and representation of the different variants of national and the social classes. Consequently their attempt remains unproductive and ineffective so as to devoid the prevalent prejudices and injustices over the classes in the Postcolonial countries.

Postcolonial theory and criticism is concerned with several issues and topics, involving textual representation, postmodernism, nationalism, history, education – just to mention a few. These issues are equally important from the point of view of showing the width and the diversity of this field. However, one issue seems to outstand from the topics of postcolonialism with its importance and influence on literary theory and it is the issue of feminism. Feminist theory and postcolonial theory have much in common; women and the colonised races and cultures both share the politics of oppression and repression. Therefore it seems natural that the development of these two fields is parallel and similar in many ways. Earlier feminist and post-colonial theorists did not draw conclusions valid to both discourses and did not try to compare their findings and bring the two theories closer to each other. In the last ten years, however, there has been increasing interest not just in their parallel concerns but in the nature of their actual and potential intersections – whether creatively coincident or interrogative.

Postcolonial Theory:A Critical Introduction by Leela Gandhi points that both feminism and postcolonialism have similar 'theoretical trajectory' but the most significant collision and collusion of postcolonial and feminist theory occurs around the contentious figure of the third world woman. Some feminist postcolonial theorists have cogently argued that a blinkered focus on racial politics inevitably elides the double colonization of women under imperial conditions. Such theory postulates the third world woman as victim par excellence – the forgotten causality of both imperial ideology and native and foreign patriarchies. "While it is now impossible to ignore the feminist challenge to the gender blindness of anti-colonial nationalism," she quotes Sara Suleri, "critics are instructive in their disavowal of the much too eager coalition between postcolonial and feminist theorist, in which each term serves to reify the potential pietism of the other" (Gandhi 83). Therefore, the which is almost too good to be true. Gandhi quotes Spivak, "if there is a buzzword in cultural critique now, it is marginality" (84). She further contends:

> Marginal/ subjugated has helped reform the aggressive canonicity of high western culture. And yet, even as the margins thicken with political significance, there are two problems which must give pause. First, as Spivak insists, the prescription of non-western alterity as a tonic for the ill health of western culture heralds the perpetration of a 'new orientalism'. Second, the metropolitan demand for marginality is also troublingly a command which consolidates and names the non west as interminably marginal. (qtd. in Gandhi 85)

Thus, the third world becomes a stable metaphor for the minor zone of non-culture and underdevelopment and its value inheres only in its capacity to politicize or – predictably – subvert major, that is to say, more developed, cultural formation.

Like feminism and postcolonialism, postcolonial feminism takes issues of representation and language in consideration but vary in their views:

> Crucial factors for identity formation and the construction of the subjectivity at the same time becomes a vehicle for subverting patriarchal and imperial power but postcolonial feminism disagrees with both the former discourses because they have invoked essentialist arguments in positing more authentic forms of language via a pre-colonial language or a primal feminine tongue against those imposed on them. (102)

Like other subordinate groups, postcolonial feminist have used appropriation to subvert and adapt dominant languages and signifying practices. Consequently, in the view of postcolonial feminism the western feminism and the post colonialism remain perennially attached to the patriarchal and colonial idols and forget their ground on which they claim as a force against the grain.

Sara Suleri claims that while current feminist discourse remains vexed by questions of identity formations, the concomitant debates between essentialism and constructivism, or distinctions between situated and universal are best described as the property of ‘Postcolonial Women’. The coupling of the term postcolonial with women, however, almost inevitably leads to the simplicities that underline unthinking celebrations of oppression, elevating the racially female voice into a metaphor for ‘the good’. Sara sees the similar essentialist’s move in overemphasis of postcolonial feminist’s racial aspect of female. “This essentialist metaphoricity impedes to a reading that attempts to look beyond obvious questions of good and evil” (337) and at the same time postcolonial feminism, Suleri says, “cannot escape bewilderment in the act of prioritizing gender/race” (337). This implies that it has been a challenge for

postcolonial feminism to get rid of similar mistake that postcolonialism and feminism committed.

The only idioms deployed for the nurturing of this nascent third world in the cultural field belonged then to positions emerging from resistance within the supposedly 'old' world order -- anti-imperialism, and/or nationalism. Spivak feels unfortunate when feminist criticism reproduces the axiom of imperialism and forwards the following opinion about the 'worlding' of what is now called the third world, in her essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism":

> To consider the Third World as distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation fosters the emergence of Third World as a signifier that allows us to forget that 'worlding', even as it expands the empire of the literary discipline. (269)

This designation of third world has an imperial move. Here we find Western feminism putting on colonial motive of alterity that is to create a marginal group so as to set up itself as center. In this respect, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, criticizes: "The discursively consensual homogeneity of 'women' as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reality of a group of women" (qtd. In Aschroft 103). Mohanty brings a reference of Cutrufelli who cites ritual of the Bemba, one of the African tribes, to show "the privileged positioning and explanatory potential of gender differences as the origin of oppression" (179):

> It is only after she undergoes an initiation ceremony at puberty that intercourse is sanctioned, and the man acquires legal rights over her. This initiation ceremony is the more important act of the consecration of women's reproductive power, so that the abduction of an uninitiated

> girl of no consequence, while heavy penalty is levied for the seduction of an initiated girl. Cutrufelli asserts that the effect of European colonization has changed the whole marriage system. Now the young man is entitled to take his wife away from her people in return for money. (qtd. in Mongia 180)

Mohanty states: “to treat Bemba womn as unified group characterized by the fact of their ‘exchange’ between male kin, is to deny the socio-historical and cultural specificities of their existence, and differentiated value attached to their exchange before and after their initiation” (180). It is also based on a chant of universalism: the greater the number of women who wear the veil, the more universal is the sexual segregation and control of women. She also finds Marx’s aphoristic saying: “they of discarding diverse differences of non-western women. Gayatri Spivak in her essay “Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value” discusses about the differences existing among non-western women to whom the Western feminist tag as homogenous group. She gives an example of an event in Britain in July of 1988:

> A section of underclass ‘Asians’ was vigorously demanding to be recognized as different from underclass ‘Black’, basically because they felt that on account of their cultural attributes of mildness, thrift, domesticity and industriousness, they were, unlike the lazy and violent people of African origin, responsible and potentially upwardly mobile material. (198)

Mohanty in her essay, “Under Western eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” discusses about recent feminist texts and their performance required in the case of third world formation by western feminist:

> The intellectual and political construction of 'Third World feminisms' must address itself to two simultaneous projects - the internal critique of hegemonic 'Western' feminisms, and the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies. The first project is one of deconstructing and dismantling; the second, one of building and constructing. While these projects appear to be contradictory, the one working negatively and the other positively, unless these two tasks are addressed simultaneously, 'Third World' feminisms run the risk of marginalization or ghettoization from both mainstream (right and left) and western feminist discourses. (172)

In the similar fashion, western feminist show middle-class urban African or Asian scholars producing scholarship on or about their rural or working class sisters which assumes their own middle-class cultures as the norm, and codifies working class histories and cultures as other. Clarifying its nature Mohanty says, "This is the effect of the dominant 'representation' of Western feminism which has a conflation with imperialism in the eyes of particular Third World women" (175). Thus, an isolated 'women' category is formed on the assumption of women as an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests, desire, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, or contradiction, and implies a notion of gender or sexual differences of even patriarchy which can be applied universally and cross-culturally.

One of Mohanty's central endeavours has been to put issues of race and racism at the heart of feminist politics. Through detailed analyses of other people's work as well as her own, Mohanty clearly illuminates how race cannot simply be added onto gender as another cumulative dimension of oppression but that ideologies of

masculinity, femininity, and sexuality themselves are racialized. Mohanty also made calls in the 1980s for scholarship which is geographically and historically specific. The most valuable kind of feminist research is that which avoids specious generalizations about "Third World Women" or "Women in Africa" and instead takes the lived experiences of specific women as a basis for understanding and theorizing. In this regard, labels and definitions must never be used unthinkingly because they have the power to produce constructions and understandings of gender and race as well as to reflect them. Another of Mohanty's prime aims has been to make explicit and effective the links between scholarship and activism. To do this, we need to acknowledge differences between women (and avoid universalizing narratives) while building coalitions and solidarities. Mohanty retains hope in the possibility of building feminist solidarities across national, racial, class, and sexual divides and suggests that a way forward here is to understand and theorize how the lives of both privileged and marginalized women are interconnected through global processes. Mohanty's work also demonstrates how and why the politics of location matter. Our personal backgrounds and experiences and the identities we adopt for ourselves or have projected onto us have political and theoretical implications with which we must engage. Throughout this text Mohanty reflexively explores her multiple identities, for example, as a member of the secular elite in India, a foreigner in Nigeria, and a woman of color in the U.S., and shows how these identities have informed and continue to inform her feminist politics and scholarship. This is in keeping with Mohanty's constant efforts to place experience at the heart of her work.

While she is clearly a standpoint feminist who believes in the analytical value of historical materialism and rejects what she sees as the cultural relativism of postmodernist thought, Mohanty is theoretically promiscuous. She draws on

Foucauldian perspectives when necessary and her critique of universalizing positions means that her ideas have had great appeal for postmodernist feminists. She aims in her work to strike a careful balance between the discursive and the material, between experience and theory, and refuses to privilege one term over the other. Instead, she argues forcefully that feminist struggles are fought on both an ideological, representational level and an experiential, everyday level; thus she reminds us that the value of theory resides finally in its political effectiveness.

She claims that this monolithic representation is an effect resulting from assuming that only Western feminism is reliable and its the primary referent in theory and praxis. Mohanty questions this approach and her aim is to “limit the possibility of coalitions among (usually White) Western feminists and working class and feminists of color around the world” (259).

Mohanty’s next argument is that “sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender; it must be formed in concrete, historical and political practice and analysis” (262). Grouping should not be done according to dependency relationships between men and women. Mohanty claims that the origin of oppression lies in “the privileged positioning and explanatory potential of gender difference” and not in the gender difference itself. This leads to the analytical strategy of taking of women as a powerless group prior to the analysis. She argues that analysis of any kind can only take place after realizing this and its effects should be further examined.

The overlap between the patriarchal, economic, and racial oppression has always been difficult to negotiate, and the differences between the political priorities of the first and third world women have persisted to the present. The debates over gender or colonial oppression are heavily taking place in many colonized societies and eventually, there appears a strife between Western feminists and political activists

of impoverished and oppressed countries taking the importance of gender and colonial oppression in consideration. This strife has led to a call for a greater consideration of the construction and employment of gender in the practices of imperialism and colonialism. Spivak's view of 'double colonization' becomes pertinent as "women [were] subject both to general discrimination as colonial subjects and specific discrimination as women needs to take into account in any analysis of colonial oppression" (qtd. in Ashcroft 103-4). Like anti-colonial nationalism, pre-colonial nationalism is also found heavily inflicted by a contemporary masculinist gender differences in constructing a "single category of the colonized" (qtd. in Ashcroft 104)

Sara Suleri in her essay "Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition" inquires, "How will the ethnic voice of womanhood counter act the cultural articulation that Mohanty too easily dubs as the 'exegesis of Western Feminism'?" (337). Suleri sees difficulty in the act of ethnic feminist's claim: "Only a black can speak for a black; only a postcolonial sub-continental feminist can adequately represent the lived experiences of that culture –[for] 'authenticity' of female racial voices" (338).

Suleri brings an example of Trinh Minh-ha's treatise, *Women, Native, Other* which seeks to posit an alternative to the anthropological twist that constituted the archaism through which nativism has been apprehended. It depicts that feminist anthropologists' discourse cannot fuel the criticism of those who police the so-called thought police, nor is it able to address the historically risky compartmentalized of otherness that masquerades under the title of multiculturalism and comments on it:

> It is to relocate [her] gendering of ethnic realities on the inevitable territory of post-feminism which underscores her desire to represent discourse formations always taking place after the fact of discourse [. .

> .] an impassioned need to question the lines of demarcation between race and gender concludes by falling into a predictable biological fallacy in which sexuality is reduced to the literal structure of the racial body, and theoretical interventions within this trajectory become minimized into the naked category of lived experience. (339)

Further she warns: "When feminism turns to lived experience as an alternative mode of radical subjectivity, it only rehearses the objectification of its proper subject" (339). She disagrees with Trinha's racialization of gender issue: "its manipulation of lived experience into a somewhat fallacious allegory, for the reconstitution of gendered race bespeaks transcendence – an attendant evasion – of the crucial cultural issue at hand" (Sulari 339). This act to privilege the racial body in the absence of historical context is indeed to generate an idiom that tends to waver with impressionistic haste between the abstraction of post-coloniality and the anecdote literalism of what it means to the abstraction of post-coloniality and the anecdote literalism of what it means to articulate an 'identity' for a woman writer of color.

Spivak comments on the value of representation practiced by patriarchy and neo-colonialism: "Taking patriarchy [as] traffic in affective value-coding and neo-colonialism [as] traffic in epistemic-cognitive-political-institutional value-coding into account, it is 'the total or Expanded form of Value', where 'the series of [the] representations [of value] never comes to an end'" (216-17). These lines read that the dominant forces never allow counter-subject to come to a different representation rather keep redesigning their structures so as to hold their dominant position. In the similar fashion, an instance of the post-colonial Pakistan where religion and nationalism override female issues as Sara Suleri quotes:

> If a post-colonial nation chooses to embark on an official program of Islamization, the inevitable result in a Muslim state will be legislation that curtails women's rights and institutes [. . .] the law (the Hudood of which the second ordinance – against *Zina* (that is adultery as well as fortification) – is of the greatest import. An additional piece of legislation concerns the law of evidences, which rules that a woman's testimony constitutes half a man's. (343)

Here, Suleri claims that postcolonial and feminist critics failed to use victim's testimony to counter the existing law because of parochialism and professionalism of their claim because they could not "connect [her] lived experience with the overwhelming realism of the law" (345). It reads that how legal system deliberately denies women right as it fails to incorporate real experience of women underwent in Muslim countries.

Katrak examines several trends in recent postcolonial theory which she finds worrying. First of all, theoretical works about postcolonial writers do not get the amount of attention they deserve and the reason why these texts are dismissed is that they are "not theoretical enough by Western standards" (256). Another disquieting trend is that postcolonial texts are used as "raw materials" by western theorists and not as texts valid and viable on their own. Maybe the most disconcerting trend is that new theoretical works are written with the help of and out of already existing theoretical works in a language which is so obscure that it cannot be understood and which only a privileged class uses – those who write these theories. Another characteristics of the contemporary theory is that it freely ignores and excludes certain postcolonial writers' texts at will while it endlessly continues the discussion of concepts like 'Other' or 'difference'. The main lack of these theories is that these are

derived solely from their own (western) world and history and value systems (256). Katrak also finds it alarming that certain theoretical models aims to prove the value of postcolonial literature with the help of European models and by imposing European modes while other models blame the difficulty of Western theory for not being able to interpret postcolonial texts. Katrak lists other traps and threats as well, e. g. the questioning of the canon, the approriation of postcolonial texts, the false interpretations of the texts as 'acts of language'. These all result in asserting unconsciously an intellectual and political domination and in this power structure – though theorists oppose the very idea – the Western culture is the dominant one.

In the article "Under Western Eyes", Mohanty provides a critique of hegemonic "Western" feminisms. In particular she rebukes the universality of the theories of western feminists and the categorization of the "third world woman" as a monolithic subject. Mohanty feels the assumption that third world women are a coherent group, ignoring the social factors, is problematic. Secondly, the model of men as oppressors is not a universal model, she is against the over simplification of the complexities across culture and gender to a binary division. While illustrating the lack of truth in the claims of western feminists Mohanty is also showing the ethnocentrism of these theorists. The attempts of first world women (subjects) attempting to explain third world women(objects) is viewed as a way of creating power hierarchies and cultural domination , the author calls this discursive colonialism. There is an urgent need to examine the political implications of these theories, before they lead to cultural imperialism.

Mohanty gives a less pessimistic approach than most feminists by criticizing texts which claim that women worldwide are oppressed by male violence. Experience helps people gain a cultural insight through which they are better able to understand

the situation rather than relying on a false sense of sisterhood of shared experiences. Universalizations like the assumption of women as sexual-political objects before they enter into a family structure, unitary notion of religion and economic determinism collapse because it is apparent that without due consideration to the context and the situation, it is impossible to group the experiences of women together. Mohanty illustrates this point by the example of using the veil as a form of oppression in one situation whereas in Iran it was used to portray allegiance to other women. Hence, the binary reduction that men oppress and women are oppressed is too simplistic and is not a sufficient model of power. Mohanty suggests a model of power based on Michel Foucault’s theory, which would construct women in "a variety of political contexts that often exist simultaneously and overlaid on top of one another"(65).

In conclusion, essentially Mohanty is against the universalization of theories, without due consideration to experience or adequate research but she herself paradoxically suggests an identity of women based on their own personal experiences as universal. However, this is problematic because there is never a singular identity of a woman; there are always many identities in place at every single point in time, which may transform over time as well e.g. religious, political, social identities. Total disregard for the ability to generalize will lead to the impossibility of formulating theories which could help understand the role of women in societies. It is important to understand the theories of western feminists contextually, the claims of universality may not hold true literally but the fact that often patriarchy hinders the lives of women is enough for feminists to suggest a model of power based on it. Mohanty raises valid points about the importance of experience but total reliance of experience solely is a theoretical impossibility.

Hence, the theoretical terrain of postcolonial feminism applicable for analysis of the text to portray how emerging revolutionary forces like feminism and post colonialism entangle to see conspiracy of traditional patriarchy. Further it depicts how their increasing affinity with colonial aspiration in western feminism and affiliation with ethnic and patriarchal supremacy make them to astray from their mission of advocating women representation in every sphere of live. In such situation, postcolonial feminism becomes viable to undo the suture so as to expose hidden defect and unhealthy social life the recovery of culture layer of Nigeria. This tool portrays how, female identity during the recovery of culture in post-colonial Nigeria, sways from colonial vertex to patriarchal vertex. For that matter, this theoretical tool will be used to analyze the text, *Purple Hibiscus* in the succeeding chapter.

III. Resistance against Colonial-patriarchal Domination in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Using specific example from Nigeria, this thesis analyzes the philosophical underpinnings of African feminism. I argue that African feminism is largely flawed by being couched in the discourse of African anti-colonial movement. By so doing it inevitably inherited parts of the cultural setbacks of the movement. My take on African postcolonial discourse is that the line between resistance to the evil of colonization and resentment of the cultural world of the colonizer was largely blurred. There was therefore an overabundance of reactionary impulses. While in agreement with the discourse about the concerns of women's human rights, I suggest that African feminism or rather feminism as articulated by African women thinkers must free itself of resentment in order to focus on creating flourishing communities in Africa. I analyze one of the most recent Nigerian narratives – *Purple Hibiscus* as example of work that seeks the flourishing of communities with the liberation of women in the background.

Purple Hibiscus is a tightly woven narrative about a family abuse, but that according to Obi Nwakanma:

> Goes further and beyond, into the realm of the psychotic, of dispossession, of young erotic awakening, of the clash of worlds, 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 selfhate. (7)

It is in the interstice of the paterfamilias's psychosis, his brachial exercise of power and the young girl, the narrator's erotic awakening that we locate the finely nuanced feminist thrust of the narrative. The narrative achieves its power largely through what

it does not allow its characters to do. We are brought closer to the family and are allowed to see how Eugene beats his wife to the degree that she has miscarriages; then how he, in the belief that he's keeping his daughter from sin, practically destroys her; beats her, pours hot water on her feet. Kambili 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 an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face. I saw the moist before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an are to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. (194)

We are made to challenge the wife to do something: run away, say no, do anything to free yourself from that man. And in her annoying lethargy, we begin to wish she had heard about the worth of women, or feminism. Her daughter Kambili, falls in love with a man who possesses the exact opposite of her father's qualities: Father Amadi. Kambili says:

> I smiled. He motioned for me to stand up for a hug. His body touching mine was tense and delicious. I backed away. I wished that Chima and Jaja and Obiora and Aunty Ifeoma and Amaka would all disappear for a while. I wished I were alone with him. I wished I could tell him how warm I felt that he was here, how my favorite color was now the same fire-clay shade of his skin. (221)

Father Amadi successfully foils the ugly image of the African man created by Eugene. Eventually Eugene's wife poisons him. Of course the goal of feminism is not to poison men, and we would have wished that she made clear her wish. Nevertheless,

this wish is translated in her daughter's appreciation of another man who had affirmed her the way she was. In falling in love with him, she tells us about everything her mother's generation would have wished for from their husbands. Feminism understood within Kambili's world is perhaps nothing more than the wish to be affirmed as a regular human being.

That is indeed what she saw in Father Amadi's skin color. Fire-clay shade! The mention of clay reminds us of mud, humus from which humanity is derived. In Chimamanda, African women have one specific demand from their men, and this demand is wrapped in their appreciation of men, their bodies and minds, their humanity. Can the men ever give this affirmation back to women? It is not a complicated demand, I think. The flower, purple hibiscus, the narrator tells us, does not need too much care. Just a little quantity of water. Not too much and not too little.

That was the scene set by the first paragraph. That was the event that alerted Kimbili to the realization that something had shifted irrevocably in the way of things. And when at lunch a few hours later, Jaja left the table before their father had said the closing prayer and she saw that the fear had left his eyes and was now in her father's she was so shook up she choked on her juice. Her brother's defiance seemed both shocking and yet inevitable. She reflects that its roots were in the visit the two of them had made to their father's sister's a few months before:

> Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus, rare, fragrant with the untertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do. (16)

Aunt Ifeoma is a University Professor and a widow with three children, the eldest two near the same ages of Jaja and Kambili. The contrast between the two households had been shocking to both siblings. Theirs had been a life secluded in a large house surrounded by a high wall and cushioned by their father's wealth and prestige. Their days had been strictly scheduled; communication among family members had been spare and ritualized. Their father had monitored their every move and doled out consequences for every infraction of his rigid rules. At Aunty Ifeoma's house it was noisy with talk and laughter flung about. The house was small and crowded and full of books and games. In the short time they were they both Jaja and Kambili had begun to bloom like the flowers in the garden outside the veranda that Jaja was learning to tend under Aunty's guidance.

Purple Hibiscus begins with crisis and this crisis runs through the book glowing and hauntingly gripping. This crisis seems to be the artistic cum structural plank on which the entire narrative anchors. The book begins in media res, realizable through flash back. The novel traces the physical and psychological development of the protagonist, Kambili and her brother Jaja. A development which designates their struggle to define themselves, beyond the stiffened, and fun less world their Calvinistic father has fashioned for them. Their fussy mercantile father builds a world stuffed with materialistic wholeness, a world that lacks ventilation, which guarantees a steady relationship with the outside when the inside becomes too suffocating.

The narrative is woven around Palm Sunday, yet the development of the protagonist and her brother has a quadrilateral dimension; their home in Enugu, school, church and Nsukka. The later has the most amazing effect on their developmental process. Eugene, 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. His over-zealous attitude and clipped religious tones reduce members of his family to the size of midgets. He works hard to ensure his family lacks nothing. His houses are capacious yet stifling, and the bedrooms, are very roomy yet stuffy. Kambili's description of the contrast between their commodious apartment and its airlessness is telling.

> 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. The off-white walls with the framed photos of grandfather were narrowing, bearing down on me. Even the glass dining table moving toward me. (7)

The entire narrative is relayed through Kambili's eyes. Though a novel about coming-of-age, it also glaringly captures the socio-political evolution of Nigeria. The novel tells numerous stories that run simultaneously. This discourse shall therefore, focus on the developmental process of Kambili, physically and psychologically vis-à-vis the Nigerian nation. Kambili's father owns a conglomerate of which one is a publishing house reputed for its astuteness and unbiased reportage of the Nigerian political situation and above all its antipathetic posture or stance towards the virulent political temperament of the military regime in Nigeria. He urges his editor, Ade Coker to ensure that the *Standard* speaks out, yet he continues to muzzle his wife and children. Silence in Eugene's home is so magnified to the extent that it could be heard. 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).

To make matter worse, when the closing bell rings, she dashes off to her father's waiting car without exchanging pleasantries with her classmates before she is chauffeur-driven home. Her classmates see this as aristocratic arrogance. They are unaware that her life is dictated and regulated by a schedule scrolled in her heart. Eugene's sense of production enunciates his stance as a capitalist, from time to time, as he brings a new product home from his factories to be assessed by his reticent family who have become so dopey in their pathetic state of taciturnity, created by his phallocentricism. This phallic and capitalist drive is extended to his children's academic enterprise. Coupled with the sickening and choking home characterized by her father's sense of material acquisition, her academic business begins to lack creativity and enchantment. Both her home and school become a prison for her, as she slips down the academic ladder. The kind of educational system Eugene wants for his children is dehumanizing. He is mechanical in all spheres of life, and he condemns and discourages all forms of leisure. When Kambili comes second in her class rather than encourage the girl to put more effort into her academic business, he petulantly asks a mechanical question. "How many heads has Chinwe Jideze?"-The girl who beats her to the second position. (46). He didn't stop there, he brings out a mirror and gives it to Kambili, inorder to ascertain the number of heads she has. For fear of being tortured, Kambili devices a new method of studying:

> 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 blur, still saw my 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 their until our exercise books came back. (52)

Eugene's educational standards are not only placidly faulty, it is banal and unproductive; hence Kambili turns the entire academic enterprise to cramming and calculation.

Eugene's educational standards stress the training of the intellect without any complementary ties with the emotion and imagination. To him only the human reason is important. Kambili and Jaja's lives are reduced to facts and figures thereby subjecting them to mental torture. From Kambili's account, her father though, stands for something repellent, nevertheless respectable. His utilitarian posture is what eventually leads to the crumbling of his family's psychological configuration. Eugene is a symbol of rugged individualism. His entire world is woven around self-assertion, power and material success. The items in his agenda are strict and tight, making him lack interest in ideals or ideas – except the idea of being the perfect definition of a self-made man. This is what he uses to intimidate his family. "I didn't have a father who sent me to the best schools"(49). He is so mechanical to the extent that he regards his house help, Sisi as "that girl". All through the novel, he never addresses her by her name. He runs his home with a zero tolerance in its grossest and most intransigent sense, and this in-turn reduces his family to a resonating silence in almost all their endeavors, outside and inside the home. As the narrative develops, one notices varied forms of silence. Kambili, Jaja and their mother speak with their spirit. Sometimes they converse with their eyes. Kambili's mother hardly talks and when she does, it is in monosyllables. Pauline Ada Uwakweh (1998) observes that "silencing comprises all imposed restrictions on women's social being, thinking and expressions that are

religiously or culturally sanctioned. As a patriarchal weapon of control, it is used by the dominant male structure on the subordinate or muted female structure" (75).

In *Purple Hibiscus* silencing is not only a mechanism or weapon of patriarchal control but of domestic servitude. Kambili, Jaja and their mother device ways of survival within the utilitarian calculus Eugene has created for their minds. One of the strategies is the domineering silence with which they observe situations and the other is a filial bonding. Through bonding, mother and children are able to survive the domestic quagmire and the prescriptions of the religious zealotry of their father.

Purple Hibiscus has a feminist thrust but the brand of feminism is very subtle at the first couple of chapters, so that one may hardly deduce from the text the gender tensions. Adichie artistically tries not to create in the traditional standard where women are not only completely marginalized but the masculine voice triumphing over the female. Sometimes she uses irony to contradict situations, but then, her feminist intension is discernable. For example, Papa Nnukwu gets frustrated by his son's dereliction of his responsibility to him, and blames the missionaries for the gulf created between him and his son. Ifeoma tries to exonerate the missionaries for Eugene's lackadaisical attitude towards Papa Nnukwu by affirming that both of them have the same elementary upbringing, she remarks that, "It was not the missionaries. Did I not go to the missionary school, too"? (83). Papa Nnukwu laments with a passionate fidelity, "but you are a woman. You do not count". The veracity of this statement is incontestable yet the monumentality of the statement is veiled and attenuated when the old man remarks that:

> I joke with you *Nwam*. Where would I be today if my Chi had not given me a daughter? Papa Nnukwu paused. "My spirit will intercede for you, so that *Chukwu* will send send a good man to take care of you

> and the children." "Let your spirit ask *Chukwu* to hasten my promotion to senior lecturer, that is all I ask," Aunty Ifeoma said. (83)

When Kambili narrates the issues of spouse beating, she does so with a sense of ordinariness and opacity that one can hardly describe Eugene's home as a domestic war zone. From her narrative it seems as if spouse beating is a normal phenomenon. The helplessness of the traditional African woman is only articulated very vibrantly when Kambili's mother in complete actuality remarks that:

> "Where would I go if I leave Eugene's house? Tell me, where would I go?" She did not wait for Aunty Ifeoma to respond. "Do you know how many mothers pushed their daughters at him? Do you know how many asked him to impregnate them, even, and not to bother paying a bride price?" (250).

Her conviction of the above assertion makes her silence in the home even more galloping. This strategy is what Rache Duplessis (1985) designates as, "writing beyond the ending":

> Writing beyond the ending means the transgressive invention of narrative strategies, strategies that express critical dissent from dominant narrative. These tactics among them reparenting, woman-to-woman and brother-to-sister bonds, and forms of the communal protagonist, take issue with the mainstays of the social and ideological organization of gender, as these appear in fiction. Writing beyond the ending, "not repeating your words and following your methods but … finding new words and creating new methods", produces a narrative that denies or reconstructs seductive patterns of feeling that are culturally mandated, internally policed hegemonically poised. (5)

The psychology of Kambili's development and her brother, Jaja's is unstable. They are deprived of any outlet for emotional life except for themselves. They live for each other. The constrictions and deprivations of Eugene's religious philosophy strengthen the bond even more, because when confronted with any form of adversity, they look inwards. Their home becomes a fort for them and at the same time a symbol of vitiation. Even the culinary world of their mother is equally circumscribed. The doctrinaire attitude of their father creates a cyst around them, which makes rays from the outside impenetrable.

For Kambili, Nsukka does not only represent a town where her aunt leaves but a symbol of liberty as the concluding chapter evinces. Her teenage development becomes complete in this town because for the very first time her mouth performs almost all the functions associated with it. She smiles, talks, cries, laughs, jokes and sings. Through Ifeoma, Kambili discovers Papa Nnukwu's sense of pantheism, as she watches him from a distance commune with his [G]ods- an occasion which proves the old man a better believer, who understands the intricate arithmetic of religion, most especially, the relationship between God and man, thereby disproving and debunking her father's stony fundamentalism. For the very first time they live a life not dictated by schedule, though the items in the schedule are concretely engraved in her hearts, Ifeoma consigns her nephew and niece's schedules and customizes them to her world – a world characterized by the application of the commonest of senses. In Ifeoma's house everybody has the liberty to say anything, provided elders are not insulted. This enthusiasm with which discourses are introduced and sustained is not only mind boggling to Kambili, but also causes consternation in her psyche.

Through Father Amadi she discovers a new brand of Catholicism, which is not mechanical and dictatorial but lithe, which is a direct contrast to the one her father and

Father Benedict practice one which makes room for dissent. Father Amadi discerns with relative ease that Kambili is gnomic, even though she is conditioned by the ritualized sense of religion her father has created for her. He devices a means with which to wring her from her silent space. Since her sense of Catholicism is ritualistic, and Jesus or God becomes the common denominator, it becomes apparently glaring that, she will be willing to do anything provided it is associated with God or Jesus. Through this device Father Amadi cracks her frozen sense of comportment and broke through her programmed psychic networking. Father Amadi takes advantage of her dogmatic naivety as she falls for the bait and runs for it:

> Do you love Jesus?" Father Amadi asked, standing up. I was startled. "Yes. Yes, I love Jesus". "Then show me. Try and catch me, show me you love Jesus." He had hardly finished speaking before he dashed off and I saw the blue flash of his tank. I did not stop to think; I stood up and ran after him. (176)

As Father Amadi continues to cosset her, she beams her first smile, though icy, it is a process towards voicing. On their way home, Kambili opens her mouth and laughs a mirthless laugh. At the time her grandfather dies she is only beginning to know him. Her aunt's children and Jaja seem to be closer to him, but she was too distant- a fact she hates herself for. Amaka, her cousin, gives her the uncompleted painting of their grandfather she did, while he was alive- a painting, which symbolizes something she earnestly desires but cannot have. She handles the painting sacred as their father takes them home to Enugu, the painting, which becomes the link, between her aunt's world, and Enugu.

The rift in the novel begins when they return home from Nsukka, while they were mid-way in their metamorphosis. Invariably the novel begins in page 255, when

everything begins to change; Adichie recounts every other incident through flashback which she handles with expertise. Jaja asks for the key to his room, which has been in the possession of their father. The request marks the beginning of their quest for emancipatory rights. Their father, who is astounded by this demand, decides to take pragmatic and overt steps to ensure he un-teaches his children that have been removed from the borderline of his doctrinaire standards. As a means of cleansing from the sinful dust of Nsukka and the paganistic temperament of the air of Ifeoma's home, he bathes Kambili's feet in hot water. The cleansing rituals did not produce the elutriating effects Eugene desires. As stated earlier, both kids brought with them different items from their aunt's. Jaja brings seeds of purple hibiscus while Kambili brings the uncompleted painting of their grandfather. Both items represent freedom from the rigid life style of their father's world. With these items, they are to sustain a steady link with their aunt's airy world en route liberation. With these items they hope never to plunge into the border of frustration, disillusionment, alienation, and the existential solitude of the world they know too well. The items will help cram the vacuum created in their lives. Kambili's painting is suddenly, discovered by her father as she and her brother are admiring their grandfather.

Like the extremist that he is, Eugene takes the painting from his children who claim ownership of the painting simultaneously. Stunned by this development, Eugene destroys the painting as if it is Papa Nnukwu himself. Kambili could not hold back anymore. She is not ready to watch her father tear something she holds sacred from her just like that. She is not willing to observe her father truncate the stable transition of her development- which the painting will help her realize even within the circumscribed radius of her father's walls. The painting symbolizes freedom to her and at the same time the remains of her grandfather which she never had while he was

alive. She hurriedly begins to piece the destroyed painting on the floor together solemnly. Her father cannot believe his daughter can degenerate to such low ebb of heathenism. Like Lousa in Dickens' *Hard Times* who collapses before her father, a condemnation and disintegration of the unproductive upbringing that her father, Gradgrind has given her, Kambili remains in her solemn state in order to string the pieces together. The furtiveness with which she handles the painting embarrasses everything her father stands for. He becomes stunned at the confutation of his conservative religious standards- an occasion where he is completely subdued by the first shocking witness of the result of his rigid religious matrix; Kambili's handling of the pieces of the painting symbolizes the collapse of his father's system. Rather than realize and admit that his philosophy is in human and inefficacious, with a doleful expression on his face, he degenerates into an uncontrollable fit of anger and duffs her up heavily, until she falls unconscious. The trip to Nsukka becomes a domino effect on the developmental process of the children.

Through this incident Kambili succeeds in breaking out of the social and religious silence of her earlier life. She disinclines to acquiesce the status quo- escaping from her entrapment, by debunking her father's authority, a definitive statement of rebellion against the phallocentric and autocratic set up.

The most amusing character in the novel is Kambili's father who is a pack of contrast. He is so religious that he is unable to draw the lines between social responsibility and religious commitment. He forbids his family from identifying with traditional tenets yet he takes the traditional title 'Omelora'. He 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 spanks her. He refuses to marry a second wife, when his wife is unable to give birth to more children

even when his relatives heavily pressure him, yet he does not treat his wife as a partner in the matrimonial enterprise. His barbarous act makes his wife suffer chains of miscarriages. His missal, which is supposed to be sacred, judging from his parochial sense of religion, becomes a missile which he throws at Jaja, thereby destroying the figurines on the *etagere*. This scene sums up the entire narrative. As the figurines go down, the foundation of his family begins to crumble and everything about him begins to have a downward trajectory. The shards of the figurines represent the gradual disintegration of his authority in his home and the gradual fragmentation of the organic and psychological wholeness of his family.

Kambili's mother, an embodiment of the traditional African woman, who is unsophisticated and content with the economic security her husband guarantees, decides to liberate her children and herself from her husband's sinking philosophy. She is about the most interesting character in the novel. She steps out of her enervating state, fractures the patriarchal social structure and demystifies the idealized traditional images of the African woman. She puts behind the psychological rift between her body and mind and liberates herself from the marginal status she assumes at the beginning of the novel, as she begins to doctor her husband's meals. It is this aspect of the novel that gives it a very radical feminist outlook.

Just like the term patriarchy continues to defy definition, *Purple Hibiscus* cannot be contracted to just a narrative that boarders on man-woman relationship. One of Adichie's minor agenda in *Purple Hibiscus* is to unearth the conformation of male domination in Nigerian society. She explores the shades of female marginalization stemming from patriarchy and how it relates to the experience of government's exploitation of the masses. The issues of patriarchy and political corruption and subjugation are separate, but Adichie has been able to conflate them. As Adichie

interrogates Eugene's inordinate religious stance and the traditional phallocentricism that conditions his attitude towards his family, she tactically creates a vent in the narrative through which she explores the dehumanizing and exploitative disposition of the Nigerian government. Paulina Palmer gives an encompassing description of patriarchy when she remarks that:

> Inspiring a plethora of inventive strategies and designs they enable writers to convey to the reader an impression of both the ubiquity and the intricacy of systems of male power. It is, in fact, as a vehicle for the depiction of the workings of male power that concepts of patriarchy and patriarchal relations are most effective. There can be few women who at some time or other in their lives have not experienced the frightening sense of being trapped in a conspiracy of male domination either in the work place or the private domain of the home. (69)

Adichie does not only artistically illustrate the presence of patriarchal postures, she also artistically advocates a radical feminism. Her portraiture of male domination of the lives of women and feminine resistance to marginalization is striking. When Papa Nnukwu admonishes and prays for his widowed daughter, Ifeoma to have a fine husband who will take care of her and her children, she wishes her father prays fervently for her to be promoted to a senior lecturership position. She does not seem to want any form of masculine authority over her life. She is strong enough to father and mother her children. When Kambili's mother suffers the last miscarriage as a result of the over bearing and barbarous instinct of Eugene, Ifeoma advises her not to return to her husband. Kambili'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. These are all firm indications of Adichie's feminist intention.

Although, Jaja is the most pathetic character in the novel because he suffers greatly for a crime committed by his mother, he clinically takes responsibility for his father's death. By so doing he identifies and sympathizes with his mother who suffers marginality and alienation the traditional phallocentricism his father's authority engenders.

By poisoning her husband, Kambili's mother realizes her voice through a new kind of silence. Kambili's metamorphosis becomes complete before Ifeoma travels out of the country. She finally falls in love. Her ability to express this emotion justifies the liberational quality of her voicing, which is self-defining and cathartic. It becomes glaring that Kambili has become mature and she is capable of independent thought and action. Silence plays a vital role in the developmental process of Kambili's life,-or perhaps, it could be described as a collateral. It inundates the entire narrative. The word silence, its verb, adjective, and adverb forms appear forty seven times in the novel. The book begins with silence and ends in silence. However, the silence at the concludingphase of the book, which also marks the wholeness of Kambili's metamorphosis, is distinct. At the beginning of the book, the children and their mother rely heavily on silence and live on assumptions. This silence is dopey and empty. At Nsukka, a different kind of silence descends upon Kambili - this silence is dialectical. The two types of silence are different from the one she experiences at school. With Jaja's confinement, another form of silence eclipsed them but this one is only fleeting. After the death of her husband and the incarceration of Jaja, Kambili's mother cracks and retreats into silence. Jaja while in prison cloaks his worries and pains behind an air of insouciance and silently observes his mother and sister. Kambili on the other hand retires into silence in order to liberate herself from the realities of the predicaments that have stormed her family. The death of Eugene no

doubt, further irrigates the silence. On the whole the last shade of silence that beclouds their sense of imagination could be said to be furtive, because it is a silence characterized by hope and dreams

To summerize, Adichie's choice of narrator, a teenager who stutters, is appropriate. In a radio interview, Chimamanda Adichie explains the reason for her choice of narrator, "I think a younger narrator made me more careful not to overburden my fiction with polemics, or with my own politics, it is also more believable to see the complexities and absurdities of religion through the eyes of a younger person who is not cynical or jaded". This preference for teenage protagonist cum narrator finds echoes in numerous African writings. In comparing the portrayal of the child in stories from Africa, India and Australia, S.K. Desai remarks that:

> the concept of the child as manifested in the African stories is, what one might say, modern. The child is no Romantic angel, he is a raw soul, a bundle of impulses, sensations, emotions and\ perceptions, facing life, struggling to comprehend it, trying to piece together his fragmentary experience, he is a complex being with an unformed mind, often more complex than the adult, subjected to an unpredictable process of growth. (45)

Adichie's choice of narrator does not only intensify youthful powers of observation, it also articulates the development of the plot of the novel. This narrative strategy does not only trace Kambili's development in her quest for voice and identity, it is also a strategy for Adichie's attainment of voice in the male dominated literary turf. The epistemic tension in the novel projects the socio-political dimensions of the novel.

Her biggest asset is her strength of description. She has the ability to describe characters and scenes vividly thereby creating a sense of immediacy. She appeals to

the readers' senses in\ her descriptions. However, she unconsciously unearths and animate a time-worn phallic cliché that, "it is only a man's wife that can easily destroy him". This is portrayed in amatter-of- factness which makes her feminist intention bold and uncompromising, though, it is only an invocation of pre-existing stasis, and it is an emphatic statement of resistance to the dominant group.

Socio-political problems are explored as analogous themes to patriarchal dominance, though, both are polar; they are related forms of domination over subservient social categories. Adichie has been able to explore artistically the socio-political tensions in her country in particular and Africa at large. Her vision as a writer emphasizes that exposure; fortitude and audaciousness are the ergonomic designs that can rupture these tensions. For Adichie, literature goes beyond exhuming a socio-political/historical past; it is not a personal expedition; it is a private statement about a collective existential angst, the angst of the Nigerian people and Africa at large.

Purple Hibiscus, explores the tension between Igbo and Western culture through the story of a fifteen-year-old girl named Kambili. Her industrialist father, Eugene, is known in the community as a pious and generous man that courageously stands against the rebel forces who overthrew the democratic regime; at home, however, he is an abusive tyrant who terrorizes Kambili, her mother, and her older brother, Jaja. Moreover, he forces his family to live by the strictures of a fundamentalist strain of Catholicism and reject the traditional African faith of his own father. As the political situation heats up, Jaja and Kambili are sent to stay with their Aunt Ifeoma, a respected university professor. Under her nurturing eye, Kambili embraces her independence and begins to blossom. Kambili and Jaja return home to find that the abuse has continued unabated; their mother, Mama Jaja, reaches her breaking point and poisons Eugene's tea. In an act of selfsacrifice, Jaja takes

responsibility for the crime, hoping to save his mother from a certain death sentence. Critics have found the disintegration of Eugene's family symbolic of life under a military dictatorship.

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. This, of course, is no accident. The narrator, Kambili, is a teenage Nigerian girl whose father, a devout and tyrannical Catholic patriarch, has managed to abuse emotionally and physically his middle-class family in his attempt to wrestle with his own cultural, emotional, and ideological demons. His Catholicism amounts to a devotion to a Western colonial order that he has concluded to be far superior to the traditional belief system of his family. He is determined that his wife and children will adhere to Catholic ideas and teachings, even as he uses his notable wealth and power to repress those in his family who hold onto traditional values. On the surface, the novel could easily read as another salvo against colonialism and attendant patriarchy that has marked much West African fiction. Indeed, Adichie offers a hint that she is beginning, at least, with Achebe's monumental narrative of "a clash of cultures" in the first sentence of the novel: "Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère (53)."

Indeed, things fall apart, but the edifice that falls is the rigid Catholicism of the father, which becomes a metaphor for abuse, hypocrisy, deep pathology, and something imposed and alien to the heart and spirit of the people. The son rebels against his father's tyranny; the father's sister, a beautifully drawn character—

struggling university professor and practical mother figure— abets the rebellion; and Kambili falls in love with a young priest—an act that forces her to recognize her own maturation and need to break from her father's hold. Things fall apart on this personal level even though it is quite clear that what is being eroded is the edifice of colonialism and its attendant horrors. All this could make for a much too easy polemic of anticolonial angst, but Adichie proves too intelligent and honest an author for that. Her narrator/protagonist 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 crude acts that are supposed to make them penitent, and completely alienates himself from his own father.

Kambili wants to please her father and her maturation is a subtle narrative of deeply painful conflicts with loyalty and fear. It is her quiet voice, always teetering on the edge of emotional collapse that haunts this work, allowing us to actually feel pity and some empathy for a monstrous father while drawing from us a certain outrage at the complete vulnerability of the narrator herself. The family will rebel against the father. Eventually, he will die at their hands, and they will embrace this with quiet acceptance—the shell-shocked quality of people who know that their own means of survival is to become as coldly violent as their oppressor. Nevertheless, as dark as the story seems, it is filled with humor, intimations of love, affection, and a sometimes nostalgic sense of modern Nigeria, especially the Nigeria of university campuses, ambitious middle-class people, and folks who live in that liminal space between modern life and traditional life. Adichie's prose is confident and charged with a certain emotional intelligence that draws us so fully into her story that we barely notice the craft: the literary sophistication of her use of symbols and metaphors, of her engagement with deeply political and ideological issues. In other words, we are never

allowed to think that her work is anything but a fascinating story about how a family deals with its own demons. We would be mistaken, however, not to recognize in this work the larger ideological issues that remain central to the best writing from Africa.

Unlike some of her peers, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has made no such assertions of difference about her writing. Yet a close examination of her work suggests that Adichie, like her peers, is directly engaged with the Nigerian literary canon and is furthermore making a case for her inclusion in it. Consider, for example, the following three passages from her work, one from a short story and two from her novel "*Things started to fall apart* at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère (3)." "Everything came tumbling down (257)." The highlighted phrases constitute references to Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart,* which provides the opening line for *Purple Hibiscus*. How better to alert the reader that familiar terrain—both the events and the Nigeria of Achebe's novel—will be rewritten and remapped? Adichie's rewriting pays homage to one of the forefathers of Nigerian literature (indeed, of Anglophone African literature) while it also challenges him. *Things Fall Apart,* after all, is sometimes treated as though it were an originary text. At the same time, Adichie's revisionary gesture emphasizes how pertinent the line "things fall apart" remains. Twenty-five years after the publication of his novel, Achebe's observation resonates with a younger generation who may not have experienced colonialism but has instead lived through the "postcolonial mayhem" of the past two decades. Adichie revises Achebe's novel in several ways. She takes one of his themes, the breakdown of family and community under the pressures of colonialism and religion, and recasts it in post-independent Nigeria, at a time when colonialism's heirs—corruption, political strife, and religious dogmatism—strain

family and community. Like her predecessor, Adichie weaves her story around the figure of a domineering father, and both novels explore how a father's tragic flaw propels him to harm his family

Fifteen-year-old Kambili Achike provides our perspective on her authoritarian father, and her diminished life dramatizes the effects of a too-powerful father on a young girl. Her narration enables us to see what cannot be seen in Achebe's text; as Deirdre Lashgiri observes, "Shifting the vantage point of the subject allows us to see forms of violence that had been invisible, or to see in unfamiliar ways. When the gaze is redefined, what it encompasses changes, deconstructing the master narrative" (3). Through Kambili's eyes, we come to see how an entire family has adapted to life under a rigid and unpredictable patriarch, and we understand how unbridled power can cause both physical and psychological destruction.

Adichie also writes about the embodied experiences of female characters in Nigeria and the Nigerian diaspora. Thus far, Adichie's work has not explored lesbian sexuality; but many of her short stories do examine female sexuality in the context of romantic relationships with men. Similarly, one of the narrative threads of *Purple Hibiscus* touches on the budding romantic feelings of Kambili for Father Amadi, a young Nigerian priest; and while the relationship remains platonic, the possibility lingers for much of the story.

Purple Hibiscus, however, centres around another taboo topic: physical abuse. Through Kambili, the author introduces her readers to a family blessed with material wealth but cursed by violence. As the story unfolds, the daily events of their troubled lives—their mother's multiple miscarriages, Jaja's deformed little finger— remain unspoken secrets. These "unspeakable things unspoken" are shared between Kambili and her brother through stolen glances. At first we are only given hints. We know that

Eugene exhibits a strange obsession with order in his children's lives, that he dominates the dinner table with his religious pronouncements, and that his violent expressions of rage erupt unpredictably. We watch his family's fearful acquiescence to his dictates and his children's watchful veneration of him as they constantly seek his approval and love. We see how highly he is regarded in the community, how he uses his position as a newspaper publisher to advocate democratic change in Nigeria, and how he never mentions the human rights award given to him by *Amnesty World.* At the same time, we hear him beat his wife behind closed doors, and like Kambili, we struggle to reconcile his public persona with his private self.

Adichie represents Kambili's experience of abuse in economical, straightforward prose. There are three episodes in which Eugene punishes his daughter, each one escalating what is at stake and heightening the reader's empathetic response. The first time, as the enraged Eugene raises a belt, Kambili's mind jumps to a scene she has witnessed many times:

> Sometimes I watched the Fulani nomads, white jellabas flapping against their legs in the wind, making clucking sounds as they herded their cows across the roads in Enugu with a switch, each smack of the switch swift and precise. Papa was like a Fulani nomad—although he did not have their spare, tall body—as he swung the belt at Mama, Jaja, and me, muttering that the devil would not win. (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. The second time, Kambili is tortured by her father for spending time with

her grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu. Eugene pours boiling water on her feet in order to teach her that she should not “walk into sin” (194):

> 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! 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. Torture is 'world-destroying' and in the most literal way possible, the created world of thought and feeling, all the psychological and mental content that constitutes both one’s self and one’s world, and that gives rise to and is in turn made possible by language, ceases to exist. In the moment of torture, Kambili is barely conscious of her words or of herself; she is fully subjectified to her father’s power, a subject in all senses of the word. The effects of his abuse permeate her sense of herself and the world: she believes that she deserves to be punished, that her father tortures her “for [her] own good,” and:

> Papa said. "You know that?" "Yes, Papa." I still was not sure if he knew about the painting. He sat on my bed and held my hand. "I committed a sin against my own body once," he said. "And the good father, the one I lived with while I went to St. Gregory's, came in and saw me. (196)

That he cannot be wrong because he is like God and unlike other mortals. By the third time, however, Kambili has begun to change. After visiting her freethinking Aunty

Ifeoma and her spirited cousins in Nsukka, she returns with a gift from her cousin Amaka, a portrait of her Papa- Nnukwu. The picture symbolizes the growth of Kambili's world to include not only her forbidden grandfather but also her aunt, her cousins, and Father Amadi; and with the expansion of her world, she has begun to question her father's omnipotence. Back at home, her father tears up the painting and attacks her. But this time, she will not give in. Her defiance takes the only form it can: she clutches at the pieces of the painting and refuses to obey his orders to get up off the floor. Even as his cruel kicks increase in force and momentum, Kambili says:

> 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 metal landed on open skin on my side, my back, my legs. Kicking. Kicking. Kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. (211)

She retreats to the stage of an infant, wordless and silent, which increases 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" Afrobeat music, itself a symbol of resistance against colonialism and an affirmation of traditional Nigerian culture (211). 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).

Ever since Gayatri Spivak posed the question, critics in postcolonial studies have debated whether the subaltern woman can speak. In contrast to Spivak's assertion that the subaltern woman is mute, Carole Boyce Davies has argued that the problem lies in the "selective hearing or mis-hearing" of her oppressors ("Hearing"

3). Adichie's novel suggests a third alternative: that silence and voicelessness result from a combination of the problems about which Spivak and Davies write. The causes of silence and voicelessness are multiple, their meanings not only complex but also constantly changing. One person can suffer both from being silenced and not being heard, especially as circumstances change and time passes. Kambili is a case in point. She 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 fear often prevents her from speaking the truth, she does manage to talk. What she says, however, is often misunderstood by others. They do not really hear what she means, or they do not listen to her silences, which speak louder than her words. They do not comprehend the "gap" between her "utterance and [her] unconscious intention or feeling" (Elbow, "What Do We Mean . . ." 18). Instead, her classmates call her a "backyard snob" (49), and other adults believe that she is "quiet" and "shy" (57, 139). They do not hear the struggle taking place beneath her words. Kambili's silences, then, are not absolute. They are full of mumbles, whispers, and coughs that reveal the symptoms of her physical struggle with fear, her "tongue-tiedness" (49). When she tries to speak, her throat tightens and words will not come; she fears her father's reprisals, his unspoken command that she not tell others their secrets. After she fails to come at the top of her class at school, she feels:

> It was like balancing a sack of gravel on my head every day at schooland not being allowed to steady it with my hand. I still saw the print in my textbooks as a red blur, still saw my baby brother's spirit strung together by narrow line 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)

Each time she takes another test, lest her father punish her. Estranged from her own speech and the workings of her throat and tongue, Kambili's linguistic alienation underscores her personal isolation. Her brother and mother are also victims, their powerlessness enabling Eugene's violence.

Safely ensconced behind their high compound walls, buffered not only from the political violence taking place outside but also from others who might help them, the Achike family has become trapped by Eugene's wealth and his position in the community. Compounding the issue of not being heard, Kambili suffers from an inability to communicate what she truly feels: "I meant to say I am sorry Papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, 'I'm sorry your figurines broke, Mama,'" she tells her mother, revealing her fear of implicating her father in his acts of violence (10). She does not say what she wants to say when talking with classmates or her cousins. Her father's hold on her is too great, the secrets too dark; there is too much that cannot be said. In this sense, then, Kambili is voiceless. The only person with whom she can truly communicate is her brother Jaja, and the two of them do not need words: they have an "asusu anya, a language of the eyes," which enables them to communicate what cannot be voiced (305). With other people, the narrator often struggles because she does not know what she would say, or how she would say it, if she could say anything. She does not know what she feels or who she is; her subjectivity is too wrapped up in pleasing her father. When she says something that wins his praise, she feels complete, and his approval affects her physically: when he holds her hand, she feels:

> “Ade is easily the best out there," Papa said, with an offhand pride, while scanning another paper"' Change of Guard.' What a headline. They are all afraid. Writing about how corrupt the civilian government was, as if they think the military will not be corrupt. This country is going down, way down."
>
> "God will deliver us," I said, knowing Papa would like my saying that.
>
> "Yes, yes" Papa said, nodding. Then he reached out and held my hand, and I felt as though my mouth were full of melting sugar (26)

When he gives her tea, she feels “the love burn my tongue” (31). Even thinking of his absence causes her throat to tighten in fear (108). Yet when Kambili and her brother visit Aunty Ifeoma’s family, Kambili begins to see another world. What her cousins lack in material wealth, they make up for in opinions. They all “seemed to simply speak and speak and speak,” Kambili observes, wondering how it is that Amaka, also fifteen, “opened her mouth and had words flow easily out” (120, 99). The liberated voices of her cousins’ household, symbolized by the rare purple hibiscus in her aunt’s garden, opens up new possibilities to Kambili; to draw from Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia, their polyvocal speech interrupts and contests the dominance of Eugene’s monologue. Their freewheeling discourse encourages the growth of Kambili’s self-awareness. As a result, the binary structure under which she had grown up begins to unravel and she begins to question her father’s rigid dogmatismI have suggested, then, that *Purple Hibiscus* is part of many literary traditions—African literature, African women’s literature, black women’s literature, American literature—but it is also very much a third-generation novel, a narrative that resounds with the work of other young Nigerian-born writers, male and female. For like many of these writers, Adichie reveals a recurring concern with the postcolonial mayhem

that underlies the domestic world of her characters, and her observations about one family's private struggle extend into the realm of political metaphor. As a domestic tyrant, Eugene becomes a figure for the novel's unnamed political tyrant who stages a coup and takes over the country.

This Abacha-like dictator shuts down the *Standard,* Eugene's newspaper, and has a letter bomb sent to kill its editor; his soldiers intimidate drivers on the roads and attack women in the market; and his iron grasp leads to student demonstrations, an absence of fuel, and the cessation of payment to Kambili's Aunty Ifeoma and the other university instructors in Nsukka. The irony of the story, of course, resides in Eugene's oppression of his own family while he fights for political freedom; but through staging this seemingly paradoxical predicament, *Purple Hibiscus* suggests the pervasiveness of despotism and the way it can ensnare even those who resist it.

As a meditation on the nature of dictatorship, Adichie's story continually suggests parallels between the public world and the private self. The narrator herself recognizes the political allegory manifest in her personal struggle, though she also alludes to differences between the two:

> Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do. But my memories did not start at Nsukka. They started before, when all the hibiscuses in our front yard were a startling red. (16)

Jaja's defiance, Kambili suggests, extends beyond the political struggle for democratic freedoms; it is the cry for the right to exist as a human being. But the differences between these two struggles, as too many people know, are not always so

clear-cut; and this is particularly the case for writers, not just in Nigeria but in many totalitarian states, where words can be classified as political sedition and authors can find themselves in danger because of their work. In *Purple Hibiscus,* Kambili is a silenced agent who must claim her voice; and in bearing witness to her own life, she tells a greater story about the nature of tyranny in postcolonial Nigeria. The challenge, at the end, is for Kambili to articulate the "different silence" of the present (293). Like the other writers of the third generation, and like Nigeria itself, she now must find her way forward— slowly, resolutely, indefatigably—into the future.

IV. Conclusion

This study explores female suppression in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* in the context of Postcolonial Nigeria. This exploration on the one hand depicts the failure of Postcolonial norms and feminist's resistance to colonial principles on the other. Hence the theoretical terrain of Postcolonial feminism is applicable for analysis of the text to portray how emerging revolutionary forces like feminism and postcolonialism entangle in the conspirancy of traditional patriarchy. Resistance and cooperation are the new ways to overcome against patriarchy and colonial domination for the third world feminists. In *Purple Hibiscus* women characters like Kambili, Beatrice and Ifeoma have shown the characterstics of third world feminism. Mighty resistance made by Beatrice in the murder of Eugene symbolically represents the downfall of patriarchal domination in Postcolonial Nigerian society.

Socio-political problems are explored as analogous themes to patriarchal dominance, though, both are polar; they are related forms of domination over subservient social categories. Adichie has been able to explore artistically the socio-political tensions in her country in particular and Africa at large. Her vision as a writer emphasizes that exposure; fortitude and audaciousness are the ergonomic designs that can rupture these tensions. For Adichie, literature goes beyond exhuming a socio-political/historical past; it is not a personal expedition; it is a private statement about a collective existential angst, the angst of the Nigerian people and Africa at large.

This thesis explores the growth process of the protagonist, Kambili as she struggles to make her function within the totalitarian temperament of her father's home. The protagonist falls in crisis with religious and domestic stakes at the beginning of the narrative, she seems to be a mere observer and victim, but as the novel drags towards denouement she realizes her voice and role in the home after her

awakening. The paper also equally explores the allegorical slant of the text as the growth and development of Nigeria is calibrated by the growth process of the protagonist. Invariably, Kambili begins as the teller in the tale, and at the end she becomes the tale, which eventually intercepts that of the nation. Thus, to give the discourse its desired theoretical thrust, silence is conceptualized in order to articulate how the dominant group employs it to regulate the existence of the subservient group around the margins and how the subservient group attains power and agency in the subversion of the of the weapon of domination(silence) to negotiate their existence around the margins.

Postcolonial feminism in Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, thus, depicts two dominant and two dominated subject positions in action: how female undergo double suppression by 'colonialism' and 'patriarchy'. Thereby the confrontation appears in between colonizer and colonized, male and female, and colonialism and feminism; if not in linearity it appears in triangular form because of multiple identities like colonialist, masculine's and feminist.

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