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Amplifying the Silenced: A Post-Colonial Exploration of Trauma, Resistance, and Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Select Works

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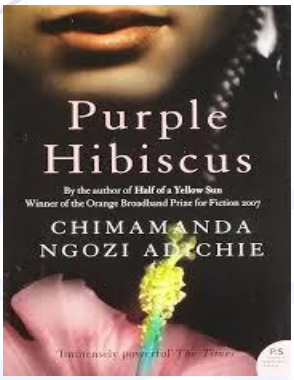
Abstract

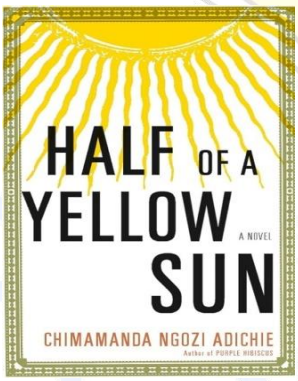
This study explores post-colonial trauma and identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun, using post-colonial theory and trauma studies. Drawing on Frantz Fanon's critique of colonialism and Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, the paper examines how Adichie critiques colonial legacies, ethnic conflict, and neo-colonialism through her narratives. In Purple Hibiscus, Adichie highlights the clash between traditional African values and authoritarian religious beliefs, focusing on familial control and personal liberation. Half of a Yellow Sun portrays the Nigerian Civil War's psychological and cultural impact, using fragmented narrative structures to reflect communal trauma and ethnic violence. The findings emphasize Adichie's role in reclaiming marginalized voices and addressing the lingering effects of colonialism. Through themes of trauma, resilience, and identity, her works contribute to post-colonial literature by deconstructing imperial histories and amplifying the voices of the oppressed.

Keywords: Post-colonial trauma, Identity, Nigerian Civil War, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Marginalized voices

1. Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's literary works stand as pivotal texts in the post-colonial discourse, examining themes of trauma, identity, and resistance against the backdrop of Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial history. Her novels, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), explore the psychological, cultural, and political effects of colonialism, particularly in familial and national contexts. Adichie's narratives provide a lens through which the lingering impacts of colonial domination, ethnic conflict, and the challenges of self-determination are critically analyzed.





***Purple Hibiscus* (2003) Novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006):** In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie delves into the personal and domestic repercussions of authoritarian control intertwined with religious dogma, portraying the psychological scars left by colonial legacies. As Kambili reflects on her father's rigid adherence to Catholicism, she notes, "Papa would never forgive Jaja. And I knew that there were still spaces, the smallest spaces, where things could sink into the silence" (*Purple Hibiscus*, p. 288). This silence, as Adichie suggests, symbolizes the suppressed voices within families and societies under post-colonial trauma.

Half of a Yellow Sun, on the other hand, situates the reader in the heart of the Nigerian Civil War, highlighting the cultural disintegration and communal trauma of the Igbo people. Adichie writes, "The world was silent when we died" (*Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 374), encapsulating the collective grief and marginalization experienced during the Biafran conflict. The fragmented structure of the narrative reflects the fractured identities and sociopolitical realities of post-colonial Nigeria.

Drawing on Frantz Fanon's critique of colonialism, which asserts that "colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 169), this study explores how Adichie's novels

articulate resistance to colonial domination and reclaim cultural identities. Similarly, Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, which posits that trauma is "the response to an event that is not fully assimilated as it occurs" (*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, p. 4), informs the analysis of Adichie's portrayal of intergenerational and communal trauma.

The narratives of Adichie's protagonists—Kambili, Jaja, Ugwu, and Olanna—serve as vehicles to examine the intersections of personal suffering and broader sociopolitical struggles. By foregrounding these narratives, Adichie challenges Eurocentric perspectives and offers a nuanced exploration of identity formation in post-colonial contexts. Her works underscore the resilience and agency of individuals navigating the legacies of colonialism while amplifying the silenced voices of the oppressed.

This study situates Adichie's novels within the broader framework of post-colonial literature, contributing to the ongoing dialogue on trauma, resistance, and identity in societies grappling with the aftermath of colonial rule. Through a critical analysis of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, this research aims to highlight Adichie's role in redefining the post-colonial narrative and her contribution to the deconstruction of imperial histories.

2. Post-Colonial Theory

The phrase "post-colonial" is sometimes thought of as deceptive since it pertains to the time when the former colonies of European empires gained their independence. Nonetheless, on this interpretation, colonial rule ended immediately. As colonialism persists in various guises, ostensibly leading to political independence, it is in fact an illusion for these once colonised nations. In these nations, new kinds of dominance emerged after they gained political independence, rather than the emancipation that had been anticipated. As neo-colonialism took root in these newly independent nations, new elites arose and maintained rule based on the exploitation of specific classes. Put another way, decolonisation is merely a facade in the present international order.

Post-colonial theory emerges as a critical framework that interrogates the cultural, political, and psychological legacies of colonialism, emphasizing the ongoing influence of colonial power structures in ostensibly independent nations. This theory seeks to deconstruct the narratives and ideologies perpetuated by colonial powers, offering a counter-narrative that reclaims the voices, identities, and histories of colonized peoples. Post-colonial theory operates within a dynamic intersection of disciplines, encompassing history, literature, philosophy, and political science, and challenges the binary oppositions of colonizer/colonized, center/periphery, and self/other that underpin colonial discourse. At its core, post-colonial theory is concerned with the ways in which colonial domination disrupts the cultural and social fabric of the colonized. Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, underscores the psychological violence inflicted by colonialism, describing it as a force that "dehumanizes" the colonized while embedding inferiority complexes. Fanon argues that colonialism seeks to "empty the native's brain of all form and content" (p. 169), replacing indigenous traditions and knowledge with those of the colonizer. Post-colonial theory thus calls for a reclaiming of indigenous identity, culture, and agency.

Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* further illuminates the mechanisms of colonial discourse, critiquing the West's construction of the East as the "Other"—exotic, backward, and inherently inferior. According to Said, "Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; it is, rather, a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts" (*Orientalism*, p. 12). This constructed dichotomy served as a justification for colonial domination and shaped Western attitudes toward the colonized, perpetuating stereotypes that continue to resonate in contemporary global relations. Post-colonial theory also examines the concept of hybridity, as articulated by Homi K. Bhabha. Hybridity refers to the cultural intersections that emerge in colonial and post-colonial contexts, where colonized peoples navigate multiple identities shaped by both indigenous and colonial influences. Bhabha's

concept of the "Third Space" provides a lens through which to understand the complex, often contradictory, identities that arise in post-colonial societies. This "in-between" space, as Bhabha posits, “displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom” (*The Location of Culture*, p. 37).

Post-colonial theory also critiques the neocolonial structures that persist after political independence, wherein former colonies remain economically and culturally subordinate to the West. This critique aligns with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o’s call for decolonizing the mind, emphasizing the importance of reclaiming indigenous languages, literatures, and epistemologies. Ngũgĩ argues that the colonial imposition of language was “part and parcel of the larger project of pacifying the colonized” (*Decolonising the Mind*, p. 16). In literature, post-colonial theory examines how texts produced in formerly colonized regions resist and subvert colonial ideologies. Writers like Chinua Achebe, with works such as *Things Fall Apart*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*, reconstruct indigenous histories, cultures, and identities that colonial narratives sought to erase. Through these narratives, post-colonial literature foregrounds the resilience, resistance, and agency of the colonized, challenging Eurocentric worldviews.

The goal of postcolonial theory is to help people from former colonies make sense of their current circumstances and, hopefully, forge their own cultural identity by challenging dominant narratives about their past. Many believe that the 1978 literary work Orientalism by Edward Said is the one that should have been the starting point for postcolonial critique. Said alludes to a particular method of situating the East in Western European experience in his work. This method portrays the East as both bordering Europe and one of the most pervasive and fundamental conceptions of the other that Europe has. Orientalism is a cultural and intellectual movement that opposes European colonial styles, terminology, scholarship, imagery, ideologies, bureaucracy, and institutions through a particular mode of speech. Certainly, a more all-encompassing style of writing was required of Western literature. Writers from outside the Western tradition began to use Western vocabulary and ideas as they created fictional discourses to counter the centuries-long defamation in classic literature. But the ethnic stereotypes of the East, created and enforced by ostentatiously knowledgeable and well-meaning European authors, have their roots in bigotry and contribute to its perpetuation. Thus, post-colonial literature has the potential to counter imperialism by offering new perspectives and reimagining historical metaphors. In addition, postcolonial societies adapt the traditional literary genres of the West to their own needs. As a result, they are able to give a more respectable retelling of cultural narratives that were previously disregarded by academia due to a lack of institutional or intellectual validity.

The goal of postcolonial critique is to reveal the prejudice in the European perspective on postcolonial nations by dismantling it. It also aids the colonised masses in reclaiming their stories and taking centre stage in them. That is why postcolonial literature can be a tool for changing the past. The intricate conversation between tradition and modernity is shown through first-person and third-person narratives from many tribes and cultures. Additionally, postcolonial people's identities are impacted by the altered sociopolitical circumstances of ex-colonies, which are prompted by varied literary perspectives. Writers and explorers used stories to portray unfamiliar cultures, people, and locations. The same is true for postcolonial cultures; they can use them to claim their heritage and identity. These fresh narratives have the potential to undermine established canons by amplifying under-represented voices. Narrative themes of liberation and social consciousness, as pointed out by Said, not only influenced readers in the United States and Europe to demand more equal stories, but they also empowered postcolonial societies to break free from the colonizer's tyranny.

Books written in the West often depict Africa as an anti-civilizational wasteland because of its glaring differences from Europe. Fictional portrayals of African characters in works like Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad contribute significantly to the West's negative perception of the

continent. As a critique of the canon established by western authors like Conrad, Chinua Achebe released Things Fall Apart in 1958. Interrogating the logic and actuality of his home culture, Achebe deconstructs the internal inconsistencies and responsibilities of Africans in the fate of their own communities while simultaneously questioning the colonialist discourses and actions of the British. Heart of Darkness depicts a wild native, but Achebe's characters are light years away from it.

When asked about Conrad's popularity, Achebe says that racism towards Africa is so commonplace that when it shows up, no one notices. By telling the narrative of Okwonko and the Igbo people prior to and during the advent of the missionaries, Things Fall Apart attempts to reawaken myths, symbols, and perceptions of Nigeria. Inspiring a sense of identity while recounting the past as a narrative of resistance is crucial, as shown by its success. While writing another essay, he says, "I would be quite satisfied if my novels... did no more than teach my readers that their past with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on

God's behalf delivered them" (Achebe Morning Yet on Creation Day).Embedded within the Western establishment is postcolonial ideology, which rejects historical specificity in favour of socialist change and national popular freedom. In their covert strategies, postcolonial critics further the interests of the global status quo, especially the north-south divide, by disregarding or downplaying the real struggles of Third World communities to endure the damage of global imperialism. There is a suspicion of collusion with interests that span national borders and cultures. There is no pre-colonial indigenous language or the imaginative possibilities offered by print capitalism that may help decolonised tribes navigate their postcolonial desires for identity. The formation of otherness in material practices and institutions is negotiated through multiple counter hegemonic conflicts, which include wars of position and manoeuvre (to borrow Gramsci's phrase 1971). The world system of actual global capitalism necessitates the inventory and configuration of such historically particular struggles, each of which has its own infinitely diversified threads of residual dominant and emergent formations. Simply describing these conflicts as totalising or totalitarian proves that the enemy's not-so-invisible hand is at work.

The politically determinative inflections of the term "postcolonial" and its semantic historicity provide one possible arena for this fight. To begin tracking the origins of sedimentations, scholars are interested in documenting the term's change in meaning from its original use in the postcolonial state discussion of the 1970s. According to Hamza Alavi and others, the bureaucratic military oligarchy plays a relatively independent role in postcolonial states due to the fact that no one class has monopoly control over them once the metropolitan bourgeoisie's influence is lifted at independence. The military and civil service bureaucracy are two institutions that the petite bourgeoisie of newly independent countries are said to have advanced. Therefore, the progressive branch of the petit bourgeoisie views the Arusha Declaration in Tanzania as a first triumph. After the radical experiments of Nkrumah in Ghana, Lumumba in the Congo, and Sakarno in Indonesia all failed, the notion that the postcolonial state is free from outside influences (including the previous coloniser) and can be used for nationalist purposes was fully disproved. Postcolonial states, according to historical materialists, can do little more than recreate the overall conditions that ensure the persistence of unequal property power relations and their consequences. Most countries in what is commonly referred to as the "Third World" rely on a ruling junta or Bonapartism as their political structure because the native elite's capitalist segment is either too weak or too reliant on the military to run the state machinery. As a result, the postcolonial state is a structural remnant of colonialism, serving as a vehicle to subjugate ideologies and economies indirectly rather than directly.

The United governments, following in the footsteps of weak European governments after the imperial system collapsed in 1945, adopted a neocolonialism (Woddis 1972) or neoimperialism (Parenti 1945) approach. In this model, the indigenous elite, the civil service, and the military

maintain ties with Western governments from the Cold War and beyond, allowing the former coloniser and other foreign interests to dictate economic and political policies to the postcolonial state, despite its outward appearance of independence and sovereignty. Political independence is reduced to a formality due to the West's intellectual and cultural dominance, in addition to economic control. According to Hadjor (1993, 216), the West has the ability to influence several aspects of Third World society via controlling educational institutions, media outlets, and communication networks. There is a clear demarcation between the actual democratic right of the people to exercise self-determination—which is effectively undermined by built-in mechanisms—and the formal or nominally procedural right, and neocolonialism denotes the persistence of economic and cultural hegemony behind the facade of political independence.

To create the impression that we have progressed beyond the neocolonial stage, the term "postcolonial state" has resurfaced, replacing the more accurate "neocolonial" to characterise the paradoxical intertwining of official independence and actual subservience. Truthfully, there are many who contend that we have stepped into a post-imperialist age, where multinational firms are merging sovereign economies into a single supranational global marketplace. The increasing influence of multinational businesses could not be explained by the dependency thesis put forth in the 1960s. The modern tendency of capital's globalisation is something that world systems theory is trying to make sense of through the cosmological motif of centre and periphery. Therefore, postcolonial is proposed by Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra because it highlights a politics of struggle and opposition and problemsatizes the central relationship between the core and the periphery. On the other hand, they qualify this by proposing a postcolonial framework for The Empire Writes Back (EWB) that conflates the misguided belief in one's own ability to master diversity with the idea of citizen empowerment. Everything is reduced to a metanarrative of contingency and indeterminacy because postcolonial critics are deeply involved in the complicit critique supplied by postmodernism through irony, allegory, and self-reflexive motifs of double-ness. In attributing the same errors to themselves as they do to everyone else—with the exception of their own followers—they reify phrases like country people and so on. To defend themselves, the EWB author from Australia says that their stance is distinct from the postmodernist consensus. Postcolonial critics, they argue, validate the political agency of colonised people by rejecting the connection between deconstructing Eurocentric master narratives, ideas of progress, logocentric subjectivity, essentialism, and teleology and the aims of dismantling the Centre Margin binaries of imperial discouragement. This agency, however, is only postulated, rather than theoretically or concretely, as a historical process that will disrupt global commodification in the near future.

Homi Bhabha becomes the most dogmatic proponent of postcolonial philosophy. According to Bhabha, a new overarching story of uncertainty and chance is legitimised by the poststructuralist paradigm of language or textual diversity. In her book Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies, Bhabha exemplifies the triumphalist note in the celebration of the coming of age of postcolonial theory, which is exemplified by Hutcheon and Gugelberger.

The paper on Postcolonial Criticism is part of this book. Here we discover a reduction of Bhabha's postcolonial critic-representing axioms regarding cultural translation, meaning deferred or postponed, and the incommensurability of cultural values and priorities. The basic idea is that the marginalisation and displacement experienced by colonised people can be seen as similar to the signifier's arbitrary placement in a system of difference; according to Lacan, the signifier is caught in a perpetual state of slippage due to differences in space and time, which prevent a thorough systematic explanation. Cultural difference speech in postcolonial contexts is inherently liminal, hybrid, disjunctive, full of ironies, and aporias; it rejects representational logic and all norms of intelligibility, making it inherently unpresentable. The most divisive example of a postcolonial author—Salman Rushdie—takes up residence at the site of enunciation and stays there indefinitely due to his experiences with oppression, diaspora,

migration, exile, and so on. Bhabha sees postcolonial culture as a continuous performance of enunciation, in which the enonce (or phrase) is never fully closed. Postcolonial discourse challenges the representational logic that supports liberal society's consensus and collusion on holistic and organic ideas of cultural values by refusing to be tied to fixed referents or meanings. As a liberatory discursive approach, postcolonial cultural identification gives the enunciator present its due. In postcolonial criticism, where the cultural difference dialectic is neither sublatory nor binary, the liminal and contingent spaces and times become the sites and contexts for the historical representation of the subjects' cultural differences. By rejecting structuralism and dialectics, Bhabha gives the language metaphor apriori validity on a transcendental level. Here we go to Barthes' agonistic and playful semiotics for guidance. At last, we reach Derrida, whose work "opens up disjunctive incommensurable relations of spacing and temporality within the sign," leading us into a borderland brimming with time-lags, alterity, mimicry, and cunning civility, via the performative textualism of the signifier and the hybrid moment outside the sentence. In an anticlimactic orgy of archival legerdemain, Bhabha references Guha, Bakthin, Arendt, Rorty, and Foucault, Its assertion of plausibility is indicative of this iteration of postcolonial ratiocination. With the exception of the references to Guha and Fanon, none of the named authority actually fits into any plausible geopolitical milieu—that is, unless the imperial metro poles are already part of the "postcolonial" signifier's slipping. The appropriation of Bakhtin's concept of dialogism in stark contrast to Bakhtin's political and ethical commitment is another defining feature of this eclectic citatology and paraphrase exercise.

For example, Bhabha tries to cast Bakhtin in a deconstructive light. As the question of the connection brings up the indefinite aspect of contingency, Bakhrin's use of the metaphor of the chain of communication captures the idea of contingency as contiguity (1992:454). In fact, the triangulation of the speech act into the speaker, theme, and addressee is why Bakhtin so vehemently opposes the parole or utterance contingency. As Bhabha put it, "each word spoken to an individual in a particular context is concretely determined, not contingent." What's more, speech that is seen as "a link in the chain of communication" (Voloshinov/Bakhtin 1986, 23) is based on a complex web of social groups divided along ideological and political lines. A vital domain of class is, therefore, utterances or actions of communication warfare. Bakhtin places speakers and language in a "uninterrupted process of historical becoming" (271) where official and oppositional discourses compete for dominance, in contrast to Bhabha's rejection of historical and class themes.

3. Imprints of Post-Colonial in *Purple Hibiscus*

It took the Europeans a long time to discover Africa, and even longer to colonise the continent. Africa has a lengthy history of colonisation that began in the 1800s and continued well into the 1900s. The era of colonisation commenced around the tail end of the 1950s and concluded in full force in the 1970s. In the early era of human history, the Phoenicians and Greeks conquered North Africa. This continued until the early 1800s, when the settlers began expanding their dominion across all of Africa.

Africa is home to the massive nation of Nigeria. The British colonised it. A fresh perspective, distinct from their own culture and tradition, was introduced to the indigenous people. The original Africans' traditional rituals, which were vital to their identity, were cut off by the spread of Christianity in the West. The literary works written by Africans throughout their time under colonisation depict the hardships that their people endured. While many began to embrace Western faith and culture as time went on, a small number stuck closely to their roots. Even in prehistoric times, the coloured continent of Africa strove to document. The Egyptian Hieroglyphics, which were discovered between 3200 BC and 400 AD, are a good illustration of their writing style. The oral tradition of passing down ideas and culture from one generation to the next through the narration of tales, myths, dramas, songs, and proverbs is largely responsible for the development of African literature. Situated in West Africa lies the country of Nigeria. Countless great authors hail from this land. Nigerian literature, like literature from

any other culture, has its roots in the art of storytelling. The foundation of African literature was oral tradition. In the years leading up to the colonial era, native communities relied on oral traditions to pass on knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next.

Many literary works emerged from Nigeria as a result of the country's exposure to the English language during colonisation. Writing in both English and their local tongue became the norm for writers from colonial nations, including Nigeria. Fangunwa penned the first novel in a native African language, Yoruba, in 1938 with the title Ogboju ode ninu igbo irunmale. Wole Soyinka later translated this book into English in 1968. It incorporates supernatural aspects and motifs from African traditional traditions. Pita Nwana is credited with penning the first epic written in the Igbo language, Omenuka. All of the earliest writings in Nigeria reflected the profound influence of the oral tradition.

Enugu, a city in post-colonial Nigeria experiencing political turmoil, is the setting of Purple Hibiscus. Teenage heroine Kambili Achike narrates the story from her home with her older brother Jaja, who is just as academically gifted as her sister but much more reserved and gloomy. Kambili's papa is a charming dictator whose affection for his children is overshadowed by his zealous Catholic faith. When his children and his obedient wife, Beatrice, fall short of his impossible expectations, he frequently punishes them. Although he was well-liked and respected by neighbours, he exercised strict control over his family.

While staying at their aunt Ifeoma's house in Nsukka, Kambili and her brother Jaja learn the proper way to live after being expelled from Enugu as a result of a military takeover. A new world brimming with love, joy, and laughter is shown to Kambili. They experience independence and begin to define who they are. Unlike her brother Eigene, Ifeoma is a whole opposite. She bravely challenges the colonial power's authority and culture while being compassionate and loving. Similar to Ifeoma, her daughter is a defiant adolescent who opposes the colonisers' religious practices among the indigenous population. Living with Ifeoma affects Kambili's perspective on life because she is introduced to a different way of living. When Jaja grows up, he learns to differentiate between right and wrong and goes through a radical metamorphosis. When Jaja's insistence on being an individual triumphs over Papa's physical control, the narrative comes to a close. In order to appease his mother, who had murdered her father due to her incapacity to endure his domestic tortures, he assumes the guilt of his father's death and serves his sentence in prison.

Families in a postcolonial context were the primary subject of Adichie's narrative. She has brought attention to the fact that citizens of commonwealth nations do not have a strong sense of history or identity. She has written this work to bring attention to the plight of Africans and the pain they have endured. The idea that countries are made up groups of people who don't really know each other is false. Pain, anguish, and postcolonial effects—including hegemony, hybridity, and the other—are examined in the work. Topics such as feminism and identity crises are also examined in the book.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's work primarily focusses on post-colonialism. Postcolonial discourse criteria will form the basis of the analysis of Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Mr. Achike's (Kambili's dad) family is the main focus of the narrative. The story vividly depicts Kambili and her sister's life as they endure their father's authoritarian rule. As a businessman and newspaper publisher, Mr. Achike is a deeply orthodox Catholic who allows his children no other activities than reading the Bible, praying, and studying. Even his wife is confined. Mrs. Achike poisons her husband's tea, causing him to die, at this time of gridlock. Despite Jaja's arrest and detention, the home is filled with joy as he declares he committed the crime to exonerate his mother. With Mr. Achike's passing, calm has returned to the home.

After a military coup happens just before Mr. Achike dies, Aunty Ifeoma offers Kambili and Jaja the opportunity to reside in her busy Nsukka mansion. A young priest named Father Amadi captures Kambili's heart. As a result of these events, she is able to break out of her enslavement and enter a new realm of love and identity, challenging her father's rigid values.

"If we did not have the same blood in our veins, I would sell you my daughter" (Adichie 71), which Adichie uses to portray the sentiment of a village woman or community wife regarding Jaja on a Christmas trip to the village, is the first example of appropriation that Adichie uses to uphold a cultural stance. At first glance, it seems like daughter is being sold here as if it were a real commodity. It is only a simple way for an African to express their desire to marry off their daughter. The term below exemplifies this type of event, and it is another example of how Adichie uses language to convey her African experience:

As the Mmuo made its way down the road, a group of old men gathered around it, ringing an ear-piercing bell. It wore a genuine human skull on its face, complete with sunken eye sockets and a grimace. Its forehead was bound with a wriggling tortoise. As the Mmuo moved, a grass-covered torso dangled a snake and three lifeless hens from its jaws. People along the roadside retreated swiftly. With dread. Someone whirled around and sprinted into the adjacent compounds. This is what Adichie says.

Taking everything into account, when it comes to how the Mmuo's spirit appears, one cannot help but feel that it is completely alien to western civilisation, even though it is communicated in English. The absence of Europeanized structural storytelling is due to the fact that the appearance just provides a hint, albeit a subtle one, on the practice of Igbo cultural tradition. It is clear from the preceding events that this type of experience is unique to the Igbo cosmology; hence, it lacks the hallmarks of Western thought.

By showing how traditional African religion is superior to Christianity in Mrs. Achike's opinion, Adichie exemplifies hybridisation with respect to the competing functions of traditional religion.

His subtle jabs at her faith in social services were nothing new to her, and she would have said something along the lines of how she was still unsure whether she believed in an invisible Christian God. Things have changed, though, since there is a defenceless human being in the cot, whose existence is evidence of a greater goodness, because she is so reliant on others. (253).

In contrast to Achebe's claims, particularly in Things Fall Apart, where Okonkwo struggles to assimilate, Adichie presents a new form of Christianity in her presentation. The new religion isn't the only thing Adichie does in Purple Hibiscus; she also constructs a man named Mr. Achike who practices Christianity. The main point of this kind of portrayal is to show how Christianity, albeit being foreign, has integrated with Nigerian culture. As a people's culture and way of life, religion is therefore shown symbolically. It is no longer portrayed as an event that has come to sever the bonds that have united Africans, leading to their disintegration, as Achebe depicts it. The story's driving force is Kambili, whose internal conflict between modernism and traditionalism serves as the text's thrust. In the story, she really embodies a combination of personalities. As the following Aro festival excerpt shows, even the characters' everyday clothing suggest a degree of hybridity:

Vehicles were parked practically side by side as we approached Eze Icheke. With no room to move, the throng jammed up against the cars became one. People wore everything from wrappers to T-shirts, pants to skirts and dresses to shirts. Once Aunty Ifeoma located a suitable site, she carefully lowered the station waggon into it (85).

Adichie argues that the merging of white and indigenous peoples' clothing—wrappers, T-shirts, and skirts—is symbolic of this mingling of cultures. By combining these elements in a single locus, Adichie forms a hybrid. For example, in Igbo mythology and culture, the automobile stands for both Western society and the god Mmuo. That "often a long queue of cars waited for a Mmuo to walk past so they could drive on" (85) is an argument in favour of Igbo culture, according to Adichie. In her analysis of Adichie's mixed presentation of the catholic figurines' guardian efficacy, Brenda Cooper notes:

Objects associated with pre-colonial rites are re-fetishized in the book, but they are also syncretised with the church and European culture, and they are assimilated into a global modernity. To rephrase, the figures are guardian spirits of African Catholic mothers, albeit

hybridised. She believed that the étagère housed resurrected spectres. Papa will face consequences for disrespecting the holy place (5).

Given that the aforementioned sentences plainly indicate Adichie's goal to emphasise the importance of African culture in front of the European, Cooper unquestionably gives us a sound understanding of hybridity in Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. The novel's portrayal of Papa as a satire of Christianity, and more specifically Catholicism, may be based on this idea. A white Catholic priest named Father Benedict has his theories completely disproven in the book. When Africans reject, it's a way of saying that they don't want other cultures influencing their own. He dresses Papa in borrowed clothing and brainwashes him with his brand of Catholicism.

Having Aunty Ifeoma be a hybrid character is just one more way Adichie promotes the value of hybridisation. Ifeoma remains committed to her identity as an Igbo woman despite her Western education. During her time as a cursine, Kambili visits Aunty Ifeoma, who teaches her about her culture. While in Nsukka, she manages to pick up most of the regional dishes. Adichie highlights Aunty Ifeoma's culinary skills by narrating her actions as she "sat on a low stool, pulling the brown skin off hot cocoyams, throwing the sticky, rounded tubers in the wooden mortar and stopping to cool,her hands in a bowl of cold water" (163).

Identified by Isabella Akinseye as a hybrid character in the narrative, Kambili sheds light on the postcolonial hybrid. At first, she blindly follows her father's instructions, but after experiencing a new culture and way of thinking in Nsukka, she starts to doubt his beliefs and tactics.

When Kambili travels to Nsukka, she has a chance to show that she cares about the culture that is unique to her people. While staying at Aunty Ifeoma's house, she gets to know her people's culture and learns how to make traditional dishes like orah soup for the first time. While at Nsukka, Kambili, being a hybrid character, struggles with both Christian principles and cultural norms. Adichie portrays the indigenous African cuisine, particularly that of the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria, via the lens of attachment. As before, Adichie uses her association to boldly comment on the socio-political system in Nigeria, this time focussing on the issue of politicians embezzling public funds and hiding them in offshore accounts, much to the dismay of the common people. In contrast to what happens in the West during the Christmas season, Adichie methodically shows her readers the African social norms. Thus, she exemplifies the virtue of sharing by allowing the less fortunate members of society to return home with food scraps. Here are the phrases she uses to describe it:

After the stress of city life, they wanted Mama to rest, they stated. The annual tradition continued with them taking the scraps home with them: lard, beef, beans, rice, soda, maltina, and beer. No matter how many people came to celebrate Christmas with us, we would always have enough food and drink to satisfy everyone to what Papa called an acceptable degree of contentment (56).

Right now, Kambili and Jaja are visiting their grandpa in his compound. While he's eating, one observes Papa Nnukwu showing respect to Ani, the land deity. Adichie describes it this way: "I watched him, the smile on his face, the easy way he threw the moulded morsel out towards the garden, where parched herbs swayed in the light breeze, asking Ani, the god of the land to eat with him." This is a common practice among Africans as a way to appease the land's deities and ancestors, who can then medi

Africans have their own unique ways of praying and honouring their creator, in addition to the Christian faith. Rather than being a Western custom, this has its roots in Africa. During Kambili's visit to her grandfather's house, Papa Nnukwu Adichie guides the reader through this esteemed African practice as he prays to satisfy the land's gods. "Chineke!" Adichie writes with wisdom in this piece. This new dawn, I am grateful. To you, I give thanks for the rising sun. Hi Chineke! I have not committed adultery, stolen land, or murdered anyone. Hi Chineke! I have sent well wishes to others and done all I could to assist the downtrodden with the limited resources at my disposal. Hi Chineke! Oh, please. Please, just give me what I need to eat. Ifeoma, my daughter, is my prayer. Hi Chineke! Bestow blessings upon my kid, Eugene. May

his wealth endure forever. Release him from the curse they imposed upon him. Hi Chineke! May the next generation be blessed. They will lead you away from evil and into good, so follow them. Hi Chineke! Good things come to those who wish good things for others. Pessimists ensure that other people remain pessimistic. (167)

4. Colonialism's impact on *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The fear that permeates Half of a Yellow Sun, written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is derived from the Nigerian Civil War. The narrative vividly depicts the post-colonial Nigerian experience of traumatic disorder brought on by the cumulative effects of racism and colonialism. Disorganised narrative points and characters symbolise the chaos in Nigeria after independence. The work honours kindness, humour, and beauty while deciphering the terrible chemistry that has all too frequently transformed postcolonial Africa's hopes into misery. At the same time, the book vividly portrays the effects of the Civil War's brutality on two groups: Odenigbo, an intellectual, and peasant Ugwu.

This paper primarily aims to demonstrate the prevalence of post-independence Nigerian traumatised disorder.

The plot's metaphorical fragmentation, which shifts from the early to the late sixties and back again, represents the situation's disarray and disorganisation. A book within a book, The World Was Silent When We Died, addresses the tragic plight of the Nigerian people as a result of the three-year Civil War that ensued after the country gained independence. Similarly, the subject matter is disordered by the variety of content, which includes the horrific effects of the civil war that broke out as a result of an ethnic tussle between the Hausa and the Igbo, as well as the transitional phase to modernity, which avoids tradition and blind faith. While depicting class struggle in Nigeria during the postcolonial era, the book also paints a tragic image of the country's integration of Kwashiorkor, the silent murderer of children. The narrative also primarily focusses on the contrast in character from the white guy Richard, who converted himself into an Igbo, to the revolutionary lover Odenigbo. To sum up, Adichie uses the disillusioned variety in form, subject, and characters to delve under the weight of colonialism, revealing the brutality within it and how it led to traumatic expression, in order to illustrate the post-independence instability in Nigeria.

There are many ways to look at Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, but one researcher thinks it best shows how post-independence Nigerians deal with historico-cultural traumatic disorder. The central theme of the book is the breakdown of cultural identity and the associated dysfunction. Thoroughly analysing the novel reveals its depiction of psychological anguish through its fractured and cynical characters and plot. Nobody has addressed the main problem, which is the cultural collective identity and the devastation it causes in the shape of conflict. Therefore, the historico-cultural trauma that the Nigerian Civil War that followed independence wrought will be the primary focus of this investigation.

Adichie explores the role of ethnicity and ethnic politics that inspires and fuels violence in the scenario of post-independent Nigerian politics. Both inter-ethnic and situational religious conflicts are a part of the ethnic complexity at work here. Extreme rivalry and racial strife are the results of a scarcity of resources. The Igbos and Yorubas were disappointed because Hausa came to power in the first election because ethnicity became a political issue. Igbo premiers ousted the Hausa government and killed the prime minister in the first coup, which was fuelled by ethnic intolerance or a superiority complex. The second revolution was sparked by the intense desire for retribution on the part of the Hausa. The practically inevitable civil war in the post-independence scenario is fostered by the renegotiation of power status between key ethnic groups and the changing ethnic balance. Because of this, ethnicity becomes a spectre in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, turning Nigeria into a historical cultural traumatic disorder. Unfortunately, communal violence stemming from ethno-religious intolerance serves as a post-independence disorder's hypnotic colonial legacy.

War is at the novel's core. By following the lives of the main people in the war, we gain a better understanding of Nigeria's colonial past, its roots, and the national politics that drove it. After

gaining education and money in London, Olanna returned to her hometown of Kano, Nigeria. Igbo military man Major Madu was in love with Kanene, Odenigbo, who was her intellectual revolutionary lover, Ugwu, who was their houseboy or servant, Olanna, who was Richard Kenene's insecure British lover, and Kanene, who was Olanna's tough as nails sister. They and others like them shed light on the horrors of ethnic cleansing as experienced by the Igbo people in Nigeria. Throughout the story, every single character experiences some kind of psychological or bodily trauma. Members of many ethnic groups built their own unique villages. Similarly, Adichie's characters grapple with the tension between the past and the present. Odenigbo believes Olanna is a witch, despite his revolutionary and academic self-perception, which he inherited from his mother. As a result, Half of a Yellow Sun primarily focusses on the atrocities and traumatizations of the 1967–1970 Nigerian Civil War, which began in 1966 with the genocide of the Igbo people in an effort to establish the Republic of Biafra and their subsequent three-year, fruitless secessionist struggle.

Through the eyes of Biafran protagonists, *Half of a Yellow Sun* narrates the Nigerian Civil War. The story is told from the perspective of four people: Odenigbo, who was a professor at Nsukka University before the war; Olanna, who is an educated and attractive Igbo woman; Ugwu, who is the houseboy of Olanna's husbanda; and Richard, who is the British lover of Kainene, who is Olanna's twin sister. Focussing on the Igbo massacre, the subsequent civil war, and the death and starvation of a million or more Nigerians, as well as exploring the difficulty of recounting and voicing that trauma, the book belongs to the genre of postcolonial trauma fiction.

The tragic events in Nigeria both before and after independence are the central focus of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. From 1960 until 1970, the book accurately portrays nearly every real-life event and character. Although the novel begins in a post-colonial setting, its primary focus is on the pain of the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970). A number of elements, such as the book-within-a-book, several poems, and radio broadcasts, contribute to the novel's disorganised structure, which jumps around from the early to the late 1960s and back again. As a metaphor of the anarchy that persists in Nigeria as a result of the country's colonial past and its civil war, this edifice is a complete mess. In a nutshell, this book provides a multi-witness account of Nigerian history beginning with the country's early years of independence and continuing through the conclusion of the Civil War.

Adichie subtly portrays the continued colonial fascination in Nigeria after independence as a catalyst for violence in Half of a Yellow Sun. In the story, Britain poses as a villain because of its role as a colonial power. Adichie delves into the intricate web of interethnic conflicts fuelled by neocolonial missions, examining how violence and traumatization emerged during the war. Nigeria was home to three main ethnic groups: the Hausa in the north, the Igbo in the south, and the Yoruba in the southwest. The moral dilemma grew in importance following independence. Ethnicity and regionalism became politicised in Nigeria.

Colonialism is directly cited in the book as a cause of the new nation's political and ethnic tensions. It is still in its early stages whether this is hate. The British colonial exercise's informal strategy of "divide and rule" is the sole cause. A lack of unity among the tribes was guaranteed by these political manoeuvres, which played on the tribes' inherent divides. The narrative, which recounts the events of the Biafran Republic and the Nigerian Civil War, poses a challenge to the term "postcolonial" by drawing parallels between the bloodshed in Nigeria following independence and the country's long history of colonial control. Even when new governments take office, colonialism's economic, political, and cultural dominance will be felt in many forms. Rather from being apparent in the big historical events, the painful legacy of colonialism shows up in the little things that people do every day. Serious characters, such as Odenigbo and his beloved Olanna, are involved in psychological abuse because of their jealously of one another. While Odenigbo presents himself as a "revolutionary lover" who is outspoken in his criticism of British colonialism and its legacy, he actually exhibits many colonial traits in his personal relationships, sexual practices, and the way he speaks to his indigenous people. This unacknowledged history stemming from the traumatised residue of

colonialism is the basis for the foundation of Biafra in the novel. Historical accounts of the Anglo-European civilising mission and stories of benevolence and advancement omit the painful role of colonialism. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, argues that, in order to find a way out of the colonial past and the community violence that it engendered, we must deconstruct the binary system that colonialism had built and value the ethics of coexistence. The protagonist Ugwu and the novel itself carry out this kind of translation by drawing attention to the Western subject and challenging its privileged role as an objective spectator. By highlighting the part played by the Western audience in making and making sense of these events, *Half of a Yellow Sun* debunks the idea that trauma is unrepresentable and that survivors of trauma are invisible. The historical and culturally traumatising Biafran War in Nigeria reveals the people's refusal to live together and realise their full potential. Adichie explores the role of ethnicity and ethnic politics that inspires and fuels violence in the scenario of post-independent Nigerian politics. The situational religious conflict and interethnic conflict are both components of ethnicity's complexity in this context. Extreme rivalry and racial strife are the results of a scarcity of resources. The Igbos and Yorubas were disappointed because Hausa came to power in the first election because ethnicity became a political issue. In the first coup, the prime minister was assassinated by Igbo premiers who overthrew the Hausa government out of racial intolerance or a sense of superiority; in the second, the Hausa were driven by a fierce desire for revenge. The practically inevitable civil war in the post-independence scenario is fostered by the renegotiation of power status between key ethnic groups and the changing ethnic balance. Here we see how ethnicity becomes a haunting feature in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, transforming Nigeria into a historico-cultural traumatic disorder. Unfortunately, communal violence stemming from ethno-religious intolerance serves as a post-independence disorder's hypnotic colonial legacy.

5. Conclusion

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* illuminate the enduring impacts of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and ethnic conflict on post-colonial identities. Through a lens of trauma theory and post-colonial critique, Adichie interrogates the cultural, psychological, and social upheavals left in colonialism's wake. *Purple Hibiscus* explores the tension between traditional African values and oppressive religious authoritarianism, highlighting the struggle for self-liberation within the familial sphere. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie vividly portrays the Nigerian Civil War's psychological and cultural fragmentation, using a disjointed narrative to reflect collective trauma. Both novels exemplify Adichie's role in reclaiming marginalized voices and deconstructing imperial histories. Her work bridges personal and political narratives, fostering a nuanced understanding of resilience, identity, and resistance in post-colonial contexts. Adichie's contribution to post-colonial literature lies in her ability to amplify silenced histories, critique hegemonic structures, and provide a platform for healing and transformation. These novels not only serve as cultural interventions but also reaffirm the power of storytelling to challenge oppression and reimagine identities in a fractured world.

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