

**THE DISPOSSESSED IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S
*PURPLE HIBISCUS AND HALF OF A YELLOW SUN***

BY

FLORENCE ONYEBUCHI ORABUEZE

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his mercy and love for all his faithful

And

To Professor Bartho Okolo and Rev. Fr. Professor A.N. AKwanya whose inspiration and encouragement made the production of this thesis possible.

APPROVAL PAGE

This research topic has been approved for the Department of English and Literary Studies for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) Degree in English, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

By

Rev. Fr. Prof. A.N. Akwanya

.....

Thesis Supervisor

Rev Fr. Prof. A.N Akwanya

.....

Head of Department

Prof. Rems Umeasiegbu

.....

External Examiner

Prof. Edwin E. Okafor

.....

Dean, Faculty of Arts

.....

Date

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ABSTRACT

African creative artists have repeatedly noted the contact of European civilization with the African peoples in their literary works. But critics of these texts, who depend heavily on traditional criticism, misread them as dealing primarily with indictment of colonization which generates culture conflict. In their critical investigations into the texts, they also suggest that these creative works are an extension of the nationalist struggle or as a tool for the articulation of a particular social, political, historical, or feminist view. Likewise when they analyse the psychodynamic forces operating in the characters and groups in these works, they either focus their discussion on “phallic symbols” or psychoanalyse the libido of their authors. This study, however, takes a different approach from the inclination and presupposition of traditional criticism to analyse descriptively Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, finding that these works are peopled with dispossessed characters and groups as in the texts which already exist in the tradition. There is not much literature on Adichie’s texts because of their recentness; however, the few in them follow the path of traditional criticism. In this study, we undertake a critical investigation into the existence of dispossessed characters and groups, adopting Adichie’s fiction as a model to reexamine the traditional critical approach to the dispossessed in literary works. We use a systematic critical approach to unravel the different causes, forms and consequences of dispossession. Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic approach is used to account for the intra-psychic forces which operate within dispossessed characters and groups in these two novels. Marxist critical model is used to explain economic and political dispossession, which are forces that operate outside the dispossessed. Julia Kristeva’s semiotic approach is used to account for characters and groups whose abandonment of their cultural values leaves them with traumatic consequences. It is also used to explain the appearance of characters with double destination, whose dyadic figurations and concatenation of the narratives, ultimately resolves the opposition between two values in the texts. The study reveals the existence of dispossessed characters and groups, whose dispossession is as a result of the complementary roles of nature and nurture. These dispossessed are subjected to psychopathological disorders because of the psychic, economic/political and cultural dispossessions. The study further reveals that the

production of the rough beasts is possible under certain conditions: through the various forms of dispossession. It is recommended that other critics may in future turn away from traditional criticism to analyse characters and groups in other literary texts, using the concept of dispossession. It is discovered that there are also lacunas in the study of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Subsequent critics, therefore, may examine the defence mechanisms of characters, the treatment of psychopathological disorders and the criminality or otherwise of the actions and omissions of characters and groups in the two texts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In the history of Africa and Africans, two significant events – slavery and colonization – have left traumatic and indelible impact on the continent and its peoples. These two catastrophic situations, therefore, have been reflected in Diasporic and African literatures. The earliest form of writing in English by the black race is the slave narratives of Ignatius Sancho, Phillip Quaque, Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugano and Phillis Wheatley, to mention only but these five. To these enslaved Africans in their new worlds, the meaning of literature is “quite remote from the pages of the Sunday newspapers” (Eagleton 187). And since there is no injustice like slavery which traumatizes one and “leads one to a change of identity” (Opata 2005: 84), their narratives mirror the reality of their situation. They may be rightly described as a way of escape for the disillusioned and brutalized, who “often shared the same role and the same iconography as domestic pets such as dogs and parrots” (Griffiths 7).

It is not only slavery, which has classed the black man and the ox together. It is believed that the contact of the “European civilization with the world’s underdeveloped people... forms a chapter in human action not pleasant to look back upon” (Dubois 76). Colonization, therefore, which is the second contact of Europe and Africa, leaves devastating consequences for the colonized. This new social order, which “demands and obtains from the people immediate compliance” (Akwanya 2005: 221), to borrow Eugene Ionesco’s term, is the “tragedy of tragedies” (1964: 33). The self-appointed civilizers of the backward peoples institute “enduring hierarchies of subjects and knowledges, the

colonizers and the colonized” (Prakash 3). It is a mission which must produce a master-servant relationship in which the weak-willed slave, preferring life to liberty, accepts his subjugation to the victorious master (Hegel 1910). No stone is left unturned, therefore, to ensure that colonization “works to decivilize the colonized” (Césaire 13) as they are psychologically, materially and culturally ruined.

Colonization, which is assiduously premised on “textual takeover of non-Western World” (Boehmer 19), is also countered by Colonial and Post-colonial textuality. In Nicholas A. Akwanya and Virgy A. Anohu’s opinion, colonial experience is so profound a shock, and the only way to come to terms with it is for the colonized to talk about it and to write about it (2001). Chinua Achebe, therefore, writes back at the Empire with his publication of his debut novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in 1958. His masterpiece is described as the first novel with unquestionable literary merit from English-speaking West-Africa (Lindfors 1970). According to Ernest Emenyonu, it is the “fictional explorations of the colonial encounters with non-European races” (2004: xii). And in the novel, it is believed that he is particularly critical of colonial Christianity with its zealous converts (Eko 2004).

Chinua Achebe’s creative and intellectual output has profound impact on world literature and human learning. He has been compared to his tragic hero, Okonkwo, but unlike the latter who is only “known throughout the nine villages of Umuofia and their neighborhood, Chinua Achebe’s fame as a writer has spread all over the world” (Obiechina 1990: 23). In his onerous task to recapture the pillaged culture of his people owing to colonial encounter, Michael Thelwell compares him to the Afro-American prolific writer, James Baldwin. In his opinion, despite the differences in their style, the two men form a warm and powerful affinity, because:

Out of the idiom of our experience, the vocabulary of our cultures, the styles of our sensibilities, these two brothers fashioned prose instruments of an uncommon precision and compelling poetry. Deployed always in the service of enlightenment and struggle, both commended, grudgingly the respected attention of an indifferent world (1990: 2).

Chinua Achebe's undeniable and tremendous influence on African writers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is obvious. According to Charles Nnolim, though "there is no organized academy of letters" known as sons and daughters of Achebe, the term has been employed by literary critics to describe those writers who adopted Achebe's subject matters and techniques. While John Munonye, Ayi Kwei Armah, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Elechi Amadi may be described as the twentieth century sons of Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is seen as his twenty-first century daughter. She subscribes to her literary predecessor's vision to reconfigure the African past into a meaningful cultural environment in order to rescue the "modern generation from the wholesale discarding of their past with the consequent sense of inferiority complex" (Nwoga 163). She recreates African history in the fictional worlds of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* as she revisits, like Chinua Achebe, the bequest of colonization in the lives of her fictional characters in the two novels. However, there is a slight treatment of colonization in the imaginary worlds of the literary texts. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, colonization with its appendages is being planted by the white administrators, missionaries and their black collaborators. However, Adichie's two novels start from where Achebe's cultural works stop. In other words, colonization and colonial infrastructures have been uprooted, and the new "civilized" black man has emerged to rule his family and the nation. It

becomes obvious to a discerning reader of her fictive works that “Colonialism is a fate with lasting, indeed, grotesque unfair results” (Said 1989: 207). Adichie’s fictive characters show that the day colonization ceases, the ‘colonized’ live for a long time before they see that really new man” (Memmi 88) emerge. There is still in them the active “mystified amnesia of colonial aftermath” (Ghandi 4). And if a reader wants actually to make sense of the casual factors in the debilitating actions of the characters in her works, he must of necessity put together their “dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present” (Bhabha 63). For example, if the reader wants to find out the reason for Eugene Achike being a religious fanatic and home tyrant in *Purple Hibiscus* or the cause of the Nigerian Civil War in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, he has to go back to British colonization with its horrible vestiges on the psyche of the once colonized characters and groups in these works.

Adichie, like Achebe, examines the leader, who fails his people in her portrayal of characters: Eugene Achike, Sole Administrator and Head of State in *Purple Hibiscus*. These are exactly like Achebe’s Okonkwo and Ezeulu where the reader observes a “gradual evolution of the image of the father/protector figure from a homestead, through an autocratic clan/father-figure, to a national tyrant” (Inyama 217). Besides, she integrates gender politics in her two works as she cannot avoid the complex, diffused and intractable “feminist spirit that pervades the African continent” (Nnaemeka 1995: 5). However, feminist theory and discourse is not confined to Africa. In fact, black women’s literatures and criticism in a variety of post-colonial locations focus on motherhood. This is because of the centrality of motherhood as a “privileged site of authority and strength for black women in Africa and in the Diaspora” (Lopez 83). Also Oyeronke Oyewumi sees the mother-figure as the “pivot around which familial relationships are delineated and

organized” (2003:13). In her semiotic reading of Achebe’s first three novels, Victoria Alabi suggests that ‘womanhood’ and ‘motherhood’ are a metaphorical focus of supremacy. She further insists that women are collectively the movers and shakers of men and society (2004). This symbolic role of the mother is the reason why the diminutive and self-effacing Beatrice Achike poisons her husband, whom she sees as being tyrannical, in order to free her family from his brutal attacks. It is also the reason why the beautiful but fragile Olanna Ozobia has to work hard to ensure that her family survives the brutish war in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Though it is not my intention to question otherwise the myth of motherhood in Adichie’s works under discussion, I must shift perspective as her novels transcend such notion of African novels written for African people about the African experience. They should not be viewed simply as ‘African’ books in the narrow or parochial sense, but they belong “in the mainstream of humanitarian world literature” (Green 2006), and “metaphors for a global world” (Cooper 1).

Moreover, the thesis must go beyond sociological criticism, even though the novels explore her fictive characters and their fictive worlds within colonial legacies and their devastating consequences. It must, therefore, not succumb to the entrapment of showing that “the changing cultural and social situation in West Africa both gave rise to the novels’ content, themes and texture” (Obiechina 1975: 3). It must strive to avoid the inevitability of sterility ascribed to sociological criticism because:

By thus becoming transitory, literature was ceasing to know itself as poetry - that which is made up, whose value is in its being made up, not in the wisdom it utters or in their effectiveness in bringing about a change in the socio-cultural

environment. Literature as a poetic art could little hope to make recovery, except by recreating itself, phoenix-like out of the ashes of social commentary and criticism (Akwanya and Anohu 8).

In order to present the dispossessed in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, we shall adopt multifaceted critical approaches: psychoanalytic, Marxist and cultural, particularly Julia Kristeva's semiotic study of the text as a message-bearing utterance. It is believed that "each narrative can be explored from a number of perspectives" (Feal xv), and that it shall be shown that the "different methods are not all that different in the end" (Eagleton 172). In this critical discourse also there must be a genuine attempt to avoid the pitfall of being thrilled by the "beauty of the imagery" (ibid 90) or try "to produce another interpretation of *King Lear*" (Culler 5). In other words, to "save the tale from the artist" (Lawrence 13) in the examination of the dispossessed in Adichie's novels, the following principle must guide the work as:

One of the perspectives inherent within the new paradigm is a shift from a singularity of an absolute truth, vision of a theory to a plurality or a complementarity of differences, a multiple set of possibilities, and an inability to hold onto one, single thing, and say, 'This is how it is'. It is within the many, the all that the one whole can be found and is made from, and yet this one is not singular (Ferguson 27-28).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For a research of this nature, there is little to fall back on as not much has been written on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, except

reviews and commentaries, some of which are only about a sentence or two. But in order to do justice to the works, a combination of critical approaches will be used while avoiding the debacle of the Nigerian critic, whom Emeka Nwabueze says, “Is still a slave to traditional criticism” (2004: 13). It will be equally wrong to deal with texts as an extension of the nationalist struggle or tools for criticizing political and social practices (Akwanya 2004) because they keep in focus the impact of colonization on the fictive characters and their fictional worlds. It also amounts to reductionism to treat them simply as a feminist discourse because the “oppression of women is indeed a material reality, a matter of motherhood, domestic labour” (Eagleton 128-129), or that they deal with the “predicament of the African women in what mostly remain highly patriarchal societies” (Jowitt 361). To borrow the words of Francisco J. Varela, “I do not intend to build some grand theory” (1991: xviii), but I simply want to open a space of possibilities in which Adiche’s novels – *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* – are analysed based on the implication of colonization in the dispossession of the characters, as in those of her literary mentor, Chinua Achebe.

If colonization, then, may be seen as Adichie’s obsessive preoccupation in the two literary texts, it is striking at once how that obsession should show in repeated depictions of the dispossessed in the two novels. The ways in which characters may be dispossessed are varied, there being, I believe, three main variations in Adichie’s texts. First, there is the manifestation of psychic or psychological dispossession because of unconscious processes in the mind of the characters and/or the inhibition or repression of the Oedipus or Electra complex at any stage of their psychosexual development. Second, there is economic and political dispossession when the characters’ means of livelihood and leadership or initiative

are taken from them. Third, cultural dispossession occurs when either there is destruction of cultural symbols and values, which have permeated a character's or group's consciousness, or when a text has the semiotic function of a culture-bearing utterance. Adichie also shows that as palm fruits, which have been pounded in the mortar come out with bruises, dispossessed characters develop psychopathological or psychological disorders.

1.3 Research Questions

We summarize our preliminary incursion into the discursive field of the dispossessed in Adichie's texts into the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between colonization and the three forms of dispossession seen in the novels?
2. Do traumatic childhood experiences repressed in the unconscious exert influence on the actions or behaviour of a character or group?
3. What are the consequences for none or inadequate resolution of the Oedipus or Electra complex in any of the psychosexual stages of characters' development?
4. Does the feminization of a character or group have some adverse consequences on the character or group?
5. What are the implications of the material or economic dispossession of a character or group?
6. What happens when a character or group is deprived of political or leadership right?
7. Are there any implications for the destruction of cultural symbols, which have permeated a character's or group's consciousness?

8. What happens when a character with a double destination appears in a novel as a meaning-bearing utterance and even as a valuable object?
9. Can there be catastrophic consequences attached to the psychic, economic/political and cultural dispossession of a character or group?

1.4 **Purpose of the Study**

This study will be pursued vigorously with the following purposes in mind:

1. To establish, if there is indeed, dispossessed in the two literary works.
2. To discover, if and to what extent, there is relationship between colonization and the three forms of dispossession in the texts.
3. To reveal, if any, the forms of dispossession that are involved.
4. To establish, if and to what extent, nature and nurture are implicated in the behaviour of the dispossessed.
5. To ascertain, if possible, the link between the three forms of dispossession and the psychopathological disorders in the characters.
6. To determine the implications of dispossession on the subsequent actions and behaviour of the dispossessed either as rough beasts or agents or victims of dispossession.
7. To determine whether dispossession engenders in the dispossessed life/productive or death/ destructive impulse.

1.5 **Significance of the Study**

Since there have not been any detailed critical analyses on the dispossessed in African literary texts, this research is intellectually rewarding to me, as it is a form of exploration that leads to discoveries that are new. It will prove to be truthful the *Modern Language Association's* claim that “the main purpose of doing research is not to summarize the works of others but to assimilate and build on it and to arrive at your own understanding of the subject” (2009: 4).

This study, it is hoped, will contribute to a re-evaluation and re-examination of the traditional psychoanalytical critical model, which seeks to locate “phallic symbols” (Eagleton 155) or the libidinal symptoms of the authors of literary texts. This is biographical criticism, which no matter how profound it is, “seems to encourage a wrong sort of psychoanalysis of art” (Ricoeur 170). It is also believed that it may “illuminate the creative process but the goings-on in the psyche itself are not central as such to literature since they are only preparatory to the act of creation” (Nwahunanya 36).

It is also hoped that this research will open up a new vista for looking at known phenomena such as colonization. It goes beyond the themes of cultural conflict, opposition to colonial rule, disillusionment and protest to post-colonial governments and African women's predicament, and it will open up probes into the causes, forms and consequences of dispossession of characters and group. This is because the only way to indict colonization in the dispossession of character is to prove that:

human behaviour was analysed to spring from a few simple archaic forces lying at a certain depth from the observed surface, where they seem to have no shared properties with actual phenomena. The particular ways in which these forces manifest in each case may be accounted for in part by analysis of the nature and

functioning of the forces themselves, and in part by the analysis of the individual's psychological history (Akwanya 2004: 156- 157).

The important reason for this research into the dispossessed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* is to equip young and new researchers with the skill and knowledge for looking at dispossession as a recurrent and literary universal, which has often been totally ignored by literary critics. In Christopher Kuiper's opinion, "there are empirically significant patterns that recur in literatures widely separated by time and space. A proof of such patterns is that they appear even in traditions that have no direct cultural influence on each other. Another proof is that literary universals reappear both among and within traditions across time" (2005: n.p).

Finally, and hopefully, it is assumed that this research will usher in reactions that will point out its limitations as well as proffer new methods of critical discourse in the examination of the dispossessed in literary texts; for the essence of this research is "not necessarily to recognize a known, to find an answer, but also, and perhaps more challengingly, to locate an unknown, to find a question" (Felman 188).

1.6 **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

1.6.1 **Scope**

Our focus is on the dispossessed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This study attempts to show that dispossession does not occur in a vacuum and its effects are not vacuous, but tangible and real, which manifests in the lived lives of the characters and their fictional worlds. Thus, it takes within its ambit the various forms of dispossession – psychic, economic or political and cultural – and their

consequences on the dispossessed. The evidence gleaned from these will prove the correctness of the claim that creative writers have always “known for a long time that there is a powerful unconscious component in human experience” (Easthope 63). The narrator “exposes, dissects and appraises the mind of the fictional characters” (Fowler 1978: 152) to show that dispossessed characters are at the mercy of impulses and consciousness (Majzels 2008), which they invariably unleash on others.

It will be complicated to study all the characters and groups in the two texts. Therefore, only the important ones whose dispossession enhances this study will be used. Such characters include Eugene Achike, Beatrice Achike, Jaja, Kambili and Ade Coker’s daughter in *Purple Hibiscus* and Ugwu, Olanna, Kainene, Richard, Odenigbo and Biafra in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This is because Adichie creates characters whose “conscious or semi-conscious feeling, thoughts or attitudes” (Fowler 1978: 152) places her above the unskilled study of the area of the mind: an area which is not an exclusive reserve of psychologists and psychiatrists. It is through these characters that we learn about true and false, integrity and dishonor, motives and obsessions (Dryden 1962) in human nature. They ought to be seen as imaginary beings created by the authors of literary texts, which Milan Kundera insists that all “novels of every age are concerned with the enigma of the self” (1986:23). When these characters are depicted in certain circumstances, they elicit certain emotions from us as we draw from our working memory of what experience the given emotion feels like and then associate the feeling with a mental picture of the character. The contradiction, for instance, in the depiction of Eugene Achike as a man who has immense wealth and gives generous donations to individuals and charitable organizations, but his own father and sister live in abject poverty. He is also a renowned defender of democratic values; yet

his nuclear family lives in the shadow of his violence. The reader, therefore, has the overall picture of the character as a man with dual or split personality and an unequalled rough beast. He is a man who strives to protect his public image, and to him, “his image is not only everything, it is the *only* thing” (Okoro et al in Okoro 38).

There is no doubt, whatsoever, that each character’s goal relates to his pursuit of his happiness, that is, his own personal flourishing, and that of his group or ideas with which the reader may identify. This is the basis of empathetic identification with the characters. Patrick Colm Hogan observes that romantic union and social or political power are the goals sought by protagonists in prototypical narratives. He goes on further to explain that:

While the romantic union prototype associates happiness with personal flourishing or fulfilled desire, the social or political power prototype encourages empathetic identification with “in group domination” and would seem to naturalize an entire society aspiring to deserved or rightful domination over other societies (2003: 94).

One may not agree completely with Hogan’s view, because it is not only the protagonists of prototypical narratives that strive for romantic union and social and political power as their goals. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which is not a prototypical narrative, the protagonists have the goals of romantic union amidst the ravages of war. Also in *Purple Hibiscus*, despite Eugene Achike’s pious mien, he tenaciously strives for power or recognition within his family, his church and his society. Both forms of happiness, therefore, may be seen as reflecting the origins of emotional-cognitive interconnectivity (Wehrs 2005). Antonio Damasio identifies the narrative structure of pursuing happiness with the “relentless endeavour... of each being to preserve, or the quest of organisms for what we as thinking

and affluent creatures identify as wellness and well-being” (2003: 35). There is no doubt, then, that each character has his own unique way of reinterpreting the meaning of the object of his desire as profoundly symbolic of his own needs, desires and conflicts (Malone 2007). A character’s determinant or unconscious motives for his behaviour, therefore, can be relentless pursuit of his own needs and desires. Most of the time, he develops conflict with the others in his fictional environment. Then if the defence mechanisms of his ego are not strong enough to withstand the pressures from the impulsive id and severe super-ego, he breaks down into a pathological state.

1.6.2 **Limitations**

Because this thesis is not entirely based on psychiatry or psychology, it refrains from inquiring into the defence mechanisms, the treatment or cure of the psychopathological disorders of the characters as seen in the literary texts. Similarly, it will not inquire into the criminality or otherwise of the omissions and actions of the characters or the legal defences available to them as this is not a legal discourse.

Likewise, the benefit of a functional library within the country is also a limitation to this research. It is a trite statement that the library typically houses a vast number of books as well as publications such as pamphlets and perhaps dissertations. However, this view is unfortunately and glaringly inapplicable to the Nigerian universities and public libraries.

It is often claimed that “research is increasingly conducted in a digital environment” (Feal xv). This, however, is not our experience during the course of this research. Forages into internet sources do not yield the desired results. This is because there is an absence of authoritative, meaningful and current peer reviewed works on Adichie’s texts. Those

available are either very short, or they lack depth which is required for a research of this nature.

Finally, this research has appropriated the theories and technical terms from writers and other researchers in and outside the field of literary studies. These may be employed deliberately or unintentionally in ways not envisaged by their owners. We, therefore, have recourse in Paul Brithiaux's view that "any given terminology must mirror the values of its parent culture" (1996: 165). It is our sincere intention to keep to this opinion; however, we crave the indulgence of the writers and researchers whose works or viewpoints have been misrepresented, if any, in the course of this research. This may be due to our earnestness to advance the field of critical discourse through the development of a vigorous methodology that may be applied to the study of literary texts. We, therefore, take refuge in Edwina Battistella's statement that "every discipline develops certain problematic terms that have been expanded beyond their original definitions" (1996: 7). To minimize the effects of misrepresentation, we undertake the explanation of some of the concepts to be used in the thesis.

1.7 Explanation of Concepts

We shall explain the following concepts, which are pivotal to the thesis, namely:

- (1) Dispossession
- (2) Consciousness and Psychoanalysis
- (3) Marxism and Class Struggle
- (4) Culture and Symbolism.

1.7.1 Dispossession

'Possession' is "the acquisition of either considerable control over a physical thing, such as land or chattel, or the legal right to control intangible property" (*The*

Encyclopaedia Britannica 637). On the contrary, dispossession is an “ouster; a wrong that carries with it a motion of possession; an act whereby the wrong-doer gets the actual occupation of the land or hereditament” (*Black’s Law Dictionary* 423). Dispossession, therefore, is to be explained as depriving someone of the possession of something, especially property. As *Online Thesaurus* further puts it, it is “the condition of being deprived of what one once had or ought to have: deprivation, divestiture, loss, privation”. It also sees it as the “expulsion of someone (such as a tenant) from the possession of land by process of law”. The dispossessed, therefore, is someone, whose rights to a tangible or intangible property, has been taken away.

In the application of the legal doctrine of eminent domain to the concept of dispossession to the indigenous Ameri-Indians, Dudley C. Gould argues that the whites live off the dispossession of other people. He is of the opinion that racism, gender and sexism are deployed as ideological weapons of colonization in the new world. The idea to dislodge from their native culture the Indigenous Indians, whom the white dispossessors believe are “as simple as so-called lower animals” (2008: 2) reveals blatant racism and genocidal intent.

When the term is used in connection with the wealth of Africa, it is believed that dispossession is the structural factor behind the continent’s ongoing underdevelopment. It is suggested that the looting of Africa “revealed global-elite hypocrisy and power relations” (Bond 2006). Bond further suggests that the flow of wealth out of Africa to the North occurs:

...primarily through exploitative debt and finance, phantom aid, capital flight, unfair trade, and distorted investment, although the resource drain from Africa

dates back many centuries. It begins with unfair terms of trade, amplified through slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism. Today free market policies are the most regional causes of inequality and poverty (2007: N.p).

When the theme of dispossession is used in literature, it articulates a collective traumatic experience and exile. And in the opinion of the late Palestinian critic, “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between a self and its true home” (Said 2000: 173). In another Palestinian poet’s speech of the Red Indian, Mahmud Darwish focuses on the theme of dispossession as he categorizes Native Indians with Palestinians. This is because the two groups’ – Native Indians and Palestinians – literatures stand apart from post-colonial canons of identity and exile. Never having enjoyed the process of decolonization, they turn to literature as something that can be possessed by the dispossessed. It offers them also a chance to explore the issues of identity and self-regeneration, and the exploration of a collective and individual crisis in literature.

In his *London Dispossessed: Literature and Social Space in the Early Modern City*, John Twynning describes London as a “dissolute hellish dystopia,” which is socially contentious, psychologically confusing and transmogrified. He uses ‘dispossession’ not only to “denote urban poverty but also, sometimes, to indicate the effects of commercial exploitation or official persecution” (1998: 105).

There are conditions which follow dispossession. As Akwanya and Anohu posit, “He who has never really won anything in his own name and by main effort, or held it by right, could never be dispossessed” (2001: 146). Daleski asserts that “in order to be dispossessed, a man must be ready to let go” of what he cherishes. And letting go of that

which he cherishes must lead him to one or more of these conditions: self-effacement, state of nullity, panic and obsession and even to suicide (1977: 24).

1.7.2 Consciousness and Psychoanalysis

Psychology has been called the “scientific study of behaviour and its causes” (Smith 4). For Carlson and Buskist, it is the study of behaviour and the application of findings of psychological research to the solution of problems (1997). It is also described as the science of behaviour and mental life (Myers 1989). Gillian Butler and Freda McManus observe that psychology is the way in which “organisms, usually people, use their mental abilities, or minds, to operate in the world around them” (2008: 2). All these definitions emphasize one thing: behaviour. And Ozioko suggests that behaviour is “the observable or measurable response or activity of a person or animal” (2003: 2). It is further described as the way an individual acts towards people, society and objects, and this may be good or bad, normal or abnormal, depending on the individual’s societal norms (UNESCO *Behaviour Modification* 2000). There is no gainsaying that behaviour reflects an individual’s consciousness. Mary Whiton Calkins in distinguishing psychology from biological science states that while the first is the science of consciousness; the second studies the nature, the relations and development of the whole animal (1906). According to her, consciousness is the basal unit of psychology. Etymologically, it is of Latin origin and John Locke defines it as “the perception of what passes in a man’s own mind” (quoted in *Wikipedia* 2011). Dodge Fernald maintains that consciousness is “Awareness of one’s own existence and surroundings at any given moment” (1997: 160). He further claims that it is because of consciousness that we search for food, shelter, and information with which to

master our environment (ibid 87). It is also believed that “knowledge begins with reflection Consciousness was there before it was known” (Sartre, 1989:239).

The term ‘consciousness’ is an object of inquiry to different areas of knowledge: philosophy, theology, psychology and neuroscience. It implies four characteristics – subjectivity, change, continuity and selectivity – in philosophy while in psychology, its essential properties include self-identity, individuality and it is basal to its experience and related to its social and physical environment (Calkins 1906). It has been argued that special anatomical and physical properties of the mammalian cerebral cortex give rise to consciousness (Eccles 1992). Stephen Budiansky limits it to humans and states it is an adaptive technique evolved for anticipating and countering other people’s social stratagems (1998). A German biologist posits that an individual’s self-awareness or consciousness involves thoughts, sensations, perceptions, moods, emotions and dreams. He insists that every living organism is an ‘observer’ of the broader environment through its ‘mechanical viewing’, or the organs through which it views the world. In other words, each human or certain type of self – conscious animal perceives their environment through their experiences, the particular way their organs perceive their environment and the way in which their consciousness processes this information (Jakob von Uexküll quoted in *Wikipedia* 2011). However Frederick Nietzsche warns of the dangers of over-dependence on the cult of consciousness because, “If the preservative combination of instincts were not incomparably stronger, if it did not in general act as a regulator, mankind must have perished through its perverse judgments and waking phantasies, its superficiality, and credulity, in short, its consciousness” (1977: 158).

In literature, a character's way of viewing the world can be defined as their particular consciousness (*Wikipedia* 2011). Their behaviour, therefore, reflects their state of consciousness since they have problems because of their consciousness. Carl Jung divides consciousness into three stages. The first stage is that of a child where there is a mere connection between two or more psychic contents. At this stage, it is sporadic and its content is not remembered later as the child is dependent on his parents and his circle of interaction is very narrow. The second stage is the adolescent one, where there is a continuous memory but it is largely like a lighted lamp in a far-flung darkness. The ego-complex is monarchic and the adolescent has the feeling of subjectivity. As Jung insists, "the external limitations oppose his subjective impulses, these restraints do not put the individual at variance with himself. He submits to them or circumvents them, remaining quite at one with himself. He does not yet know the state of inner tension induced by a problem" (Jung 7-8). The third stage of consciousness is the problematic one and it occurs after puberty and middle life, that is, between thirty-five and forty years. It is a period when an external limitation becomes an inner one, and series of ego-contents oppose one another. He claims that there is a division with oneself which produces a divided or dualistic state because of a contradiction between subjective assumptions and external facts that give rise to problems. It may also be as a result of inner, psychic difficulties, which exist "even when things run smoothly in the outside world. Very often, it is the disturbance of psychic equilibrium caused by the sexual instinct; equally often it is the feeling of inferiority which springs from an unbearable sensitivity" (*ibid* 9). Indeed, the only proof of the three forms of dispossession and their consequences on characters should be through the behaviour of characters.

Closely-related to psychology is psychoanalysis. It is a method of psychotherapy which originated with Sigmund Freud, whom Frank Kermode describes as doing for psychology what William Wordsworth has done for Romantic poetry (1975: 125). Psychoanalysis is based on the exploration of unconscious mental processes as manifested in dreams and disturbed relationships with others. It aims to unearth repressed anxieties and overcome the effects of bad experiences in early childhood, typically using the technique of free association. It is also a technique of research into human behaviour and mental processes, using the methods and theories of psychoanalysis. This is why A. N. Akwanya suggests that increasingly novels, plays and even lyric poems use psychoanalysis as a model in their “application of the scientific evolutionary methods on human phenomena” (2004: 156). It is also a theory of human psychology based on the findings of psychoanalysis, concerning the structure of the mind and the effect of the unconscious mental processes on behaviour.

1.7.3 Marxism and Class Struggle

These are the political and economic ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, particularly a system of thought, in which the concept of class struggle plays a primary role. Both philosophers argue forcefully that:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journey man – in a word oppressor and oppressed – stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes (171: 81).

Class struggle, according to them, is a principal feature of Western society in general, and in understanding their alleged inevitable development from bourgeois oppression under capitalism, and a shift in the focus of struggle from the developed to the underdeveloped countries. The twin pillars of Marxist philosophy are historical and dialectical materialism. Marxian philosophers believe that while historical materialism “solves such important general problems of historical development” (Afanasyev 184), dialectical materialism postulates that “nothing is absolute..., it reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything” (Engels 1976:33).

1.7.4 Culture and Symbolism

Culture has been understood simply as “a total way of life” (William 10). Clyde Kluckhohn has earlier gone further to describe culture as “the total way of life of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires” (1949: 20). Tylor itemizes this ‘social legacy’ to include, “knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1958: 10). In James Curtis’s more elaborate opinion:

Culture is the shared sets of symbols and their definitions. As such culture is entirely the creation of humans. Culture is a ‘total way of life’ but in the limited sense of shared definitions of life and of the environment (including, but not only, the social environment). Culture as a shared definition may influence behaviour, patterning it or even contributing to change it. Culture is both effect and cause of social interaction. People in interaction develop culture, they alter it, they preserve it, they transmit it, and they are guided by it (1981: 34).

Furthermore, a symbol is seen as “any object, sound (including words) gestures or any other form of communication which may be taken arbitrarily to refer to something; symbols may be literally anything perceptible in society” (Curtis 34). Symbols are further organized into sets or complexes, and their definitions are related to each other, often in very complicated ways. The individuals who share the sets of symbols understand them, but not definitely outsiders to the symbols. Their definitions only mean what they communicate to the people who share them. Some of them with their definitions are shared by everybody in a culture, but some by only adults. For example, in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Odenigbo and his group merely see the Saruana of Sokoto as the premier of the Northern region, who has pocketed the prime minister of the country. His killing by the coup plotters means nothing to them, but to the Muslim North, it is more than simply killing a corrupt politician like Chief Okonji. Therefore, his death must be avenged as he is a symbol of their Islamic religion. And that is why it is claimed that the “symbol assumes the symbolized (universals) as irreducible to the symbolizer (its markings)” (Kristeva 38).

1.8 Methodology

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* are the twenty-first century literary texts on colonization. Though colonization has featured extensively in several literary works, Adichie’s have not received serious attention from scholars. This oversight may either be because of the recentness of the works or the interest in old and established writers and their works. Because of the scantiness of scholarly research on these two novels, this study will include their overview with the evaluation of the few existing literature on them. This is done either to confirm or rebut such views, and

also to point out when they have followed the past tradition and when they have made important new contributions to the existing tradition. It is an unforgettable tenet of research that nearly all research builds on previous ones.

However, it does appear that there is no expansion of knowledge or a shift, where the researcher merely rehashes the works of his predecessors. It is in the interest of breaking new grounds that dispossession – a universal literary concept, which is a source of conflict, but which has been largely ignored in literary criticism – is undertaken here. Besides, it is in the interest of this shift that there is the adoption of plurality of critical approaches for the study of only one phenomenon: the dispossessed in the two novels. This stance has the advantage of lending a bird's eye-view to the research. Its feasibility is also borne out in this opinion:

In the Aristotelian system, we see the working of traditional metaphysics attempting to comprehend poetry by means of thought....This criticism, when it focuses on the efficient cause, leads to biographical criticism and psychologism, but it may follow several other directions when it focuses on form, such as generic and mythic criticism, structuralism, and so on. The final cause is the basis of the various reception theories, ethical criticism, aestheticism, and affective criticism. The analysis of the material cause equally produces a range of approaches, depending on what the 'matter' is determined as: in Marxist and sociological practices. We are concerned either with the reflection on the means and relations of production and on the social structure, or with the cultural traits and human behaviour patterns based on culture-specific codes. If the matter be

determined as language itself, formalism or linguistic criticism may result (Akwanya 2005: 157).

Since this research is on the dispossessed in Adichie's literary texts, it will be devoid of field work and experimentation which would have characterized it if it were purely a study in psychiatry or psychology. However, it will have recourse to the collection and analysis of data from the library which ought to be seen as the humanities students' own laboratory. Therefore, the pivot of this research is the library and the internet. This is not done merely for the purpose of documentation, but for the research to keep abreast with other scholarly views in this area.

Various critical theories will be employed. When there is psychic dispossession involving the unconscious and any stage of the psychosexual development, Freud's psychoanalysis will be used. For example, the naïve narrator traces Eugene Achike's brutality to his family in *Purple Hibiscus* to his severe punishment for masturbation, where the priest "...asked me to boil water for tea. He poured the water in a bowl and soaked my hands in it" (2003: 196).

Of course, where it is obvious that there is economic and political deprivation of the characters and groups, Marxist theory will be used. But if the dispossession involves the destruction of cultural symbols and values, which have permeated a character's consciousness or the novel is a "meaningful utterance, even a valuable object" (Akwanya 2007: 213), then the theory to be used is Julia Kristeva's semiotics. For example, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the massacre of the Igbo in the North should not be read as an ethnic-driven act. It is purely a religious war or jihad, because of the killing of the Sarduana of Sokoto and the premier of the Northern region during the Igbo-led coup. The Sarduana's

death is symbolic of the religious and cultural life of the North which must be retaliated. Also in *Purple Hibiscus*, Jaja is a character with a double destination who serves as a bridge between two divergent positions on colonization and its legacies. He is a bridge between Eugene Achike's fanatical Catholicism and total annihilation of traditional culture and institutions and Papa-Nnukwu's stance on the preservation of Traditional religion and values.

The consequences of dispossession is the production of the rough beast, because dispossession invariably awakens "buried instincts" (Césaire 13) of the dispossessed. This is seen in the behaviour of the dispossessed that in their quest not to destroy themselves, destroy others. For the unleashing of unimaginable acts of violence on others, their victims may eventually destroy them (Weiss 159). In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, the naïve narrator, Kambili, describes her mother as "She was too small" (195). She is again and again described as a submissive and self-effacing woman who has endured several miscarriages because of her husband's acts of violence on her and her children. Is it not an act of defiance and the return of violence for violence that she reveals to her children, "They have found the poison in your father's body". She further states remorselessly, "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor" (290).

The second consequence of dispossession is a psychopathological symptom of the mind. The physical acts of violence of the dispossessed characters, therefore, are outward manifestations of a sick and troubled mind. For instance, Kambili describes how his father beats her, Jaja and her mother "like a Fulani nomad". But after the beating she describes him thus, "It was the way Papa shook his head when he talked about liking sin, as if

something weighed him down, something he could not throw off ” (102). Again, the narrator describes Olanna’s psychopathological condition after her first-hand experience of the massacre of Uncle Mbaezi’s family and the child’s head in the calabash thus:

That night, she had the first Dark Swoop. A thick blanket descended above and pressed itself over her face firmly while she struggled to breathe. Then, when it let go, freeing her to take in gulp after gulp of air, she saw burning owls at the window grinning and beckoning to her with carved feathers. She tried to describe these Dark Swoops to Odenigbo. She tried to tell him, also how the pills tasted, the ones Dr. Patel brought, clammy like her tongue in the morning (2006: 156).

That ‘something’ which weighs Eugene down and that he cannot throw off and Olanna’s dark swoops are linked: they are both manifestations of a disturbed mind. Therefore, the acts of violence of the dispossessed and symptoms of abnormal behaviour are two great consequences of dispossession. And these are inquired into with Freud’s theory of psychopathological disorder of psychoanalysis, which result in what Akwanya and Anohu call the production of the rough beast.

It is hoped that the novelty of the thesis and its critical approach will ground the research as a landmark study in the examination of the dispossessed in Adichie’s novels, and some other literary texts. But even if it fails to achieve this status because its methodology is devoid of simplicity, consistency, adequacy and coherence (Akwanya 2004), it can, at least, enter the archives as part of the history of criticism (Akwanya 2007) or open a space for a new way of looking at an old phenomenon.

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW AND LITERATURE REVIEW

These two texts have won international acclaim and attention from the world media, but surprisingly, when we venture into the research, not much has been said about them within the country and in the internet. The absence of critical discourse on them may be due to the “tendency of African literary criticism to continue to concentrate on the works of the most established writers, thus ignoring some quite respectable productions” (Palmer 11). Despite the scantiness of critical works on them, their relevant and related literature will be examined, after the overview of the texts.

2.1 Overview of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Purple Hibiscus is a marked departure from other Nigerian novels like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, Echewa's *The Land's Lord*, Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, and Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*. It is divided into four parts; each section containing chapters, which are neither titled nor numbered, but each deals with important events in Kambili's story. The story starts with the past event in the lives of the fictional characters in part one on a “Palm Sunday with the Breaking of Gods”. The narrator, Kambili, recalls that it is the day things start falling apart in her family because of her brother's rebellion against what they perceive as the dictatorial leadership of their religiously fanatical father. His refusal to go to communion unleashes her disturbed father's violence on him. He flings the missal at him:

It missed Jaja completely, but it hit the glass étagère, which Mama polished often. It cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers

in various contorted postures to the hard floor and then landed after them. Or rather it landed on their many pieces. It lay there, a huge leather-bound missal that contained the readings for all three cycles of the year (7).

The novel, which is structured like a movie, is not a straight-forward narrative. With the use of flashback technique in its second part, the narrator tells the story of the events which lead to Jaja's rebellion and the breaking of the family Gods. In this section, which is titled "Speaking with our Spirit before the Palm Sunday", Kambili narrates the family's history of violence and repression under the father's dictatorship. It is in this section that Jaja and Kambili travel to Nsukka to stay with Auntie Ifeoma and her family. Under the combined efforts of Auntie Ifeoma, her children and Father Amadi, it dawns on the two that there is something definitely wrong with their family. Despite the contrast between the huge wealth in her family and Auntie Ifeoma's poverty, according to Kambili:

I wanted to tell Mama that it did feel different to be back, that our living room had too much empty space, too much wasted marble floor that gleamed from Sisi's polishing and housed nothing. Our ceilings were too high. Our furniture was lifeless: the glass tables did not shed twisted skin in the harmattan, the leather sofa's greeting was a clammy coldness, the Persian rugs were too lush to have any feeling (192).

But the greatest change is seen in the spirit of freedom which the Nsukka visit has made in the once docile children. Jaja dares to demand the key to his room from Papa. This is the first sign of Jaja's rebellion against the father. Kambili is also determined to join in the rebellion, because "As we went upstairs, Jaja walked in front of me and I tried to place my feet on the exact spots where he placed his" (191).

The third part of the novel, which is titled “The Pieces of Gods after Palm Sunday”, Kambili again uses flashback to narrate the climax of the story: the events which lead to their father’s death by poisoning. There is oppressive silence in the air in the house as if something is about to snap. Kambili describes the situation thus, “There was something hanging over all of us. Sometimes I wanted it all to be a dream – a missal flung at the étagère, the shattered figurines, the brittle air. It was too new, too foreign, and I did not know what to be or how to be” (288). The calm in the house which will break into violence that will lead to the father’s poisoning by the mother is reflected in the violence of nature and man-made objects. As Kambili foreshadows his death:

Everything came tumbling down after Palm Sunday. Howling wind came with an angry rain, uprooting frangipani trees in the front yard. They lay on the lawn, their pink and white flowers grazing the grass, their roots waving lumpy soil in the air. The satellite dish on top of the garage came crashing down, and lounged on the driveway like a visiting alien spaceship. The door of my wardrobe dislodged completely. Sisi broke a full set of Mama’s china (257).

The fourth and final section brings the reader to the present, to a “Different Silence”. Jaja who assumes responsibility for his mother’s crime is in detention for almost three years without trial. By his detention, he is used as a scapegoat to cleanse the guilt of the family, resulting from the murder of the family head, Eugene Achike. His imprisonment has psychologically ruined his mother; yet, there is hope for his release after the death of the Head of State by poisoning, too. Even though there is still silence hanging over the house after the father’s murder, “it is a different kind of silence, one that lets me

breathe” (305). It is a silence mixed with hope in which Kambili and Jaja can “talk more often... to clothe things in words, things that have long been naked” (306).

These four sections of the novel are joined together by a thread of violence. There is also woven in its structure the violence in the public sphere by the dictatorial military government and the university’s Sole Administrator.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, like some of her literary elders within the tradition, uses the first person point of view. The advantage of this narrative technique is that the narrator is both an observer and a participant in the events which unfold. Kambili is a fifteen-year-old girl in the cusp of womanhood. She takes the reader in a child’s pace as she narrates the events in her life. She starts as a naïve narrator who is unaware of the implications of the events, actions, and things she describes. However, as she matures and mingles with others, there is a growth in her consciousness as she becomes aware of her own sexuality and the family and public dictatorship. But there is some ambivalence in her because:

Throughout the novel, we see Kambili’s inability to cope emotionally with the mixed feelings of love and terror for her father, and adoration and disdain for her passive, abused mother, all of which she is unable either to acknowledge or understand. Kambili stutters, chokes on her words, stammers and whispers (Cooper 3).

Purple Hibiscus is a reproduction of the tradition already seen in Achebe’s cultural works and Obimkaram Echewa’s *The Land’s Lord*. It explores the theme of religious intolerance and loss of freedom as a result of Christian converts’ fanaticism. Though it is a continuation of Achebe’s tradition in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, there is a

marked departure from them. This is because while Achebe's and Echeba's novels already mentioned present fictive worlds where Christianity is still struggling to get rooted among the fictive characters, Adichie's Christianity has already been rooted among the characters and is a strong weapon for division. Eugene Achike and his father, Papa-Nnukwu, are at both ends of the pole. Adichie in an interview with Ike Anya says she has an unalloyed "interest in colonized religion, how people like me can profess and preach a respect of their indigenous culture and yet cling so tenaciously to a religion that considers most of indigenous culture evil" (2003:11). Unlike Achebe's and Echeba's cultural works, Adichie offers in the novel a syncretization of Christianity and African traditional religion through her fictive character, Kambili. Father Amadi integrates Igbo songs and language into the Catholic rituals. Eugene Achike finds it distasteful and says, "That young priest, singing in the sermon like a Godless leader of one of these Pentecostal churches that spring up everywhere like mushrooms. People like him bring trouble to the church" (29). Again Auntie Ifeoma is not "too much of a colonial product" (13) like her brother, Eugene. Therefore, she accommodates the other Christian denominations as she allows "the altar girls from our church or Protestant church" (129) to pluck many of her unusual flowers from her garden. She also accommodates her father, who is a devout member of the Traditional religion. She insists he will be buried according to the dictates of his faith.

There is the theme of violence throughout the novel as can be seen in Eugene's family, the nation and the university. Adichie shows the dictatorial leadership at these three levels, which bring untold hardship to the characters and groups. Beatrice Achike is a self-effacing woman, whose husband has battered incessantly and left her with several miscarriages, a limp and a scar on her face. He unleashes the same violence on his children

that even when they are at Auntie Ifeoma's house at Nsukka, they still live under the shadows of his violence. Kambili sympathizes with her, and at the same time, despises her mother because, the "mother's constriction of her possibilities of self-definition and autonomy, her subjection to the law of the Father, her subsumption under the name of the husband, and her giving up her identity as a woman" (Grosz 181) has some consequences for her children. The children are not also exonerated in the complicity of silence in their father's brutalities, and his eventual death by poisoning. The same measure of violence is also reflected in the nation and it eventually leads to the Head of State's violent death by poisoning too. For the university, the strong and the vocal are pushed out and the weak remain. Kambili's visit after Auntie Ifeoma and her family have left for the United States of America reveals, "Most of the lawns on the university grounds are overgrown now; the long grasses stick up like green arrows. The statute of the preening lion no longer gleams" (278). The family which takes Auntie Ifeoma's flat tells her there is no power for a long time. However, it is obvious as "The blades of the ceiling fan were encrusted with wooly dust, so I knew there had been no power in a while or the dust would have flown away as the fan turned" (298).

Adichie, like Achebe, uses the Igbo language and songs as she presents the Catholic rituals. It is only Eugene, among the natives, who abhors speaking Igbo, and bans his children from using Igbo in public. Ironically, when his demonic passion of violence takes hold of him, he speaks Igbo. Again Papa-Nnukwu's trickster story not only presents the Igbo world-view, but it is a counter to Eugene's extreme and misguided fanatical belief that the dogma of the church teaches that a son and his father are equal.

Besides, the title of the poem is symbolic, which is derived from Jaja's purple hibiscus. It represents Jaja's quest for freedom and initiative against his father's emasculating hold. There is a time, as Kambili recalls, when the whole front yard of their house is occupied by the startling red hibiscuses. Despite the fact that "Mama cut them to decorate the church altar and how often visitors plucked them as they walked past to their parked cars" (9), they still grow luxuriantly. These red hibiscuses represent the old order, Eugene's unchallenged tyrannical and emasculating hold on the family. As Jaja returns from Nsukka, he takes some stalks of purple hibiscus which is a symbol of his defiance. These stalks have been planted and nurtured and they are pushing out sleepy buds. In Kambili's narration, there is a nexus between Jaja's defiance or rebellion against their father and the purple hibiscus. As she says:

Aunty Ifeoma's little garden next to the verandah of the flat at Nsukka began to lift the silence. 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 (16).

Jaja's kind of freedom is the one which accommodates everybody and self-sacrificing. It is not that of the crowd, which replaces a tyrannical and corrupt government with a more brutal and deadly one. It is a freedom where the "vibrant bushes of hibiscus reached out and touched one another as if they were exchanging their petals" (9).

In *Purple Hibiscus*, as in Chinua Achebe's and Echeverría's works, there is the emergence of rough beasts as a result of dispossession. In *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, the rough beast before the white men penetrated Umuofia is the **Evil Forest** who claims to

kill a person when his life is sweetest to him (Achebe 1958). With the arrival of the White District Commissioner with other institutions of colonization, he divests **Evil Forest** and the other ancestral masks of Umuofia their power and becomes the new masked spirit of the day. He has the power to detain one without trial, try one according to his own legal system without recourse to Umuofia customs. He also has the power to fine any of the individuals and to appoint any of the natives as a warrant chief. His coercive power is so enormous that when Okonkwo kills his head messenger, he decides to commit suicide instead of being subjected to his authority. However, in Adichie's text, which is a continuation of the tradition in Achebe and Echeba, the rough beast is no longer the white man because the time axis of her text is not under a colonial but post-colonial administration. The rough beasts of the work are Eugene Achike, the Head of State and the Sole Administrator. The actions of the Sole Administrator reflecting a rough beast within the university can be seen in his denial of promotion to Auntie Ifeoma, his coercive power in sending security agents to search her house, arbitrary termination of her appointment, and giving her only one month to vacate her premises within the university.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie, who is regarded as the twenty-first century daughter of Achebe, revisits the nightmarish chapter in the history of her country in the four-hundred-and-thirty-five-page novel with thirty-seven chapters divided into four sections. She again examines the bequests of British colonization in Nigeria, a country which ought to be seen as a "zone of tragedy" (Jaspers 19) barely six years after independence. Its setting is between 1966 and 1970 and it gives us a panoramic view of Biafran towns and cities as its borders shrink before the mighty power of the Nigerian army, which has the support of several conniving foreign powers. Lagos and Kano are also

part of the setting of the novel shown prior to the war. The filmic structure of the novel takes the reader to witness a kaleidoscope of humanity dispossessed by the war, a war staged and managed by outsiders, and is seen as “cruel and unforgiving” (Griffiths 152).

The first section of the novel is set at the University of Nsukka, which is the intellectual hub of the South-eastern region of the country. The Ozobias and the their friends, who are the new upper class that replaced the British, are also shown as they interact with one another and squander the country’s wealth. In this section, too, Olanna visits her maternal uncle, Mbaezi, and his family in Kano. It affords the opportunity for the reader to know that the North is quite different in religion, landscape and culture from the Southern region of the country; yet, these ethnic groups with their different cultures, Britain strings together in 1914 as a country (Griffiths 2000). Within this first section, there is a hint that in early 1960, the country is obviously fragmented along ethnic and religious fault-lines. The loyalty of Odenigbo is unquestionably for his tribe. He tells his group of academics, “Of course, of course, but my point is that the only authentic identity for the African is the tribe.... I am a Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me the identity But I was Igbo before the white man came” (20). They believe that the Prime Minister, Balewa, is a stooge of the British. In their opinion, “They are controlling us from behind the drawn curtains. It is very dangerous” (111). As the section ends, there is an indication that the political landscape is mined and a crisis is brewing in the whole country.

In the second section, the reader is told that the crisis which is already foreshadowed in the first section has snowballed into a coup in which the prime minister, and the Sarduana of Sokoto, the premier of the Northern region, are slaughtered by the coup-

plotters. Britain and other foreign countries with their hidden agenda dub it an Igbo coup because the first coup is dominated by Igbo army officers. There is a counter-coup some months later led by Northern officers in which several Igbo army officers are slaughtered in the North. As if this is not enough reprisal, the Igbo civilians are also massacred in Kano, Kaduna, Zaria and a host of other Northern cities. Obiozo recounts the experience of the refugees who manage to escape, "They are killing us like ants. Did you hear what I said? Ants" (144). Another refugee corroborates Obiozo's statement to Odenigbo, "Those mad men are chasing us like runaway goats, but once we entered into the gates of barracks we are safe" (145). The military governor of the South-eastern region, with the support of the people, declares independence for Biafra. The Nigerian government uses police action, starvation, change of currency, and blockade to force the rebels back into the fold. When this attempt fails, on the day of Olanna and Odenigbo's wedding, the federal government unleashes a full-scale war on the Biafran territory. As the day is recalled, "Ugwu looked up and saw the planes, gliding low beneath the blue sky like two birds of prey. They spurt hundreds of scattered bullets before dark balls rolled out from underneath, as if the planes were laying large eggs" (201). The events narrated here happened in the late sixties.

With the dexterous use of flashback, the narrators recall the events of the early sixties. The prewar period is fraught with sexual and political infidelities between the characters and the different ethnic groups in the country. For example, Odenigbo has sex with Amala, his mother's housemaid, and she has a daughter for him. Olanna also sleeps with Kainene's boyfriend, Richard Churchill. At the same time, the people from other tribes are not happy that the prime minister is not in charge. According to Odenigbo, "It is the Sarduana who's really in charge. The man is ruling this country like his personal

Muslim Fiefdom” (245). Again there is the full blown crisis in the Western region which has been hinted at in section one.

In the fourth section, which is the longest part of the novel, the narrators recount the war situation in Biafra. There is death by disease, starvation and by air raids, which target both military and civilian infrastructures – schools, markets, hospitals, relief centres, refugee camps, and so on. There is also a breakdown of moral values, and several actions of the beast of war, who Funso Aiyejina suggests, “typifies the many who capitalized on the disruption of society during the war” (1979: 103). The utopian state of Biafra is also riddled with nepotism, bribery and corruption, and most glaringly, the domination of the minority tribes within its territory.

Such themes like the ravages of war, the concept of masculinity and heroism, betrayal and friendship, love and hatred, and most importantly, complicity run through the whole novel. Complicity is one of the themes that have been dealt with consistently in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*. There is also the complicity of the world, particularly Britain, and the complicity of other tribes in Nigeria, which leads to what may be called ethnic cleansing or genocide on the Igbo and other minority tribes in Biafra. Hence the book within a book, the haunting mantra of Richard Churchill’s work entitled *The World Was Silent When We Died* is an innovative technique absent in the novels of the same tradition. It leaves a haunting memory of a recall of the Jewish and the Rwandan genocide. This is a war Madu tells Richard, “The foreigners say that one million died,” and Madu tells him that from his own experience as a Biafran soldier, who has taken active part in the war, “It can’t be just one million” (429). This is a war Toyin Falola estimates that by 1968, it has claimed up to two million lives of both civilians and soldiers (1991). In the war

fiction of Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*, the novel ends with the rehabilitation of Fatima instead of the defeat of Biafra as in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Adichie departs from that tradition to end the novel with the defeat of Biafra to show that the declaration of Biafra is an utopian concept as all the things which started the war also play out in the Biafran enclave, and also the people are not ready for war, militarily.

Besides, Adichie makes use of the multi-vocal technique used by Isidore Okpewho in *The Last Duty*. Three narrators – Ugwu, Olanna and Richard – narrate the prewar, wartime and postwar events in the novel. Ugwu is a thirteen-year-old peasant boy from Opi, who is privileged to be a houseboy to Odenigbo, a university lecturer. He represents the lower and uneducated dispossessed class, who live in rural villages in the country. Olanna is the educated, privileged young lover of Odenigbo, whose father is said to own half of Lagos. She is therefore from the upper class, and Richard Churchill is a Briton who falls in love with the Igbo-Ukwu roped pots and Kainene. He is both an expatriate and a naturalized Biafran, who witnesses the gruesome massacre and the subsequent war. The different points of view give the reader multi-dimensional views of the war, and he can then make up his mind. Like Okpewho's war novel, *The Last Duty*, the war is seen from a child's and a woman's view. The actual battle is not shown unlike in Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, where the narrator tells the story of actual battles in several warfronts.

There is also a realistic presentation of the characters as some of them represent aspects of the human nature and psyche. Ugwu is an adolescent in the cusp of manhood when he is brought to Odenigbo. The reader follows him in his naïve narration and sexual fantasy as he matures to manhood during the war. Ugwu's sexual fantasy and sexual experience represent some aspects of the relationship which exist between the various

tribes in Nigeria. All the characters, in fact, are realistically drawn. For instance, the cat and dog relationship between the twin daughters of Chief Ozobia, Kainene and Olanna, is an allegory of the relationship between the Hausa and the Igbo. However, it ought to be remembered that the tragic or central characters are not really Olanna or Ugwu or Odenigbo or Kainene or Richard. The central characters are Nigeria and Biafra, the two groups that tower over and above the other characters, whose “existence are threatened by the forces of civilization” (Ker 127) unleashed by the British colonization. Besides, there are echoes of other characters in the novel of the same tradition. Mama, Odenigbo’s mother, recalls Chief Ofo in Chukwuemeka Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn*, who prefers dying in his house rather than being a refugee in some other people’s town. Again Anozie recalls Nwaka of Achebe’s *Arrow of God* when he tells Richard, “The Igbo were, after all, a people who deposed gods that had outlived their usefulness” (72).

Adichie, like Achebe, dignifies her people by capturing the flavour of their life, speech, and worldview in her novel. The rural setting of Abba still untouched by the ravages of war, Olanna recounts, “In the morning, she heard the town crier walking past the house, beating a loud **ogene**. There will be a meeting of all Abba people at four p.m. in Amaeze Square. **Gom-gom-gom**.... Abba said every man and every woman must attend” (187). This recalls Umuofia clan in *Things Fall Apart*, where the clan summons all men to a meeting to decide, whether to declare war on Mbaino or send an emissary. However, the public space in Adichie’s novel transcends Achebe’s as it is not only for men; women are also included in decision-making in Abba. Also in “Umannachi summons you” (191), her community invites her to tell it what she sees in Kano, whether Uncle Mbaezi and his family are dead or not. Odenigbo’s cousin burying Mama instead of leaving her corpse at

the mercy of vultures shows a community which still clings to its ideological system, lives together and emerges with its own time and space.

Adichie's language is not merely a means of communication as seen in most novels in the same tradition. To her characters, language is not only a means of communication, but also of identity and survival. For instance, Olanna's use of Yoruba language saves her, Arize and Baby from the mob in Lagos. Nnesinachi's use of Hausa language is one of the reasons she survives the war without trauma. It is also Richard's use of Igbo that he gains acceptability within the Biafran territory. However, despite Uncle Mbaezi and her family's fluent Hausa and also that of Major Udodi, they are slaughtered in the North during the 1966 massacres. Nnaemeka is also slaughtered before passengers at the Kano Airport because he cannot speak Hausa.

The novel is filled with symbols as in *Purple Hibiscus*. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is also a symbolic title. Through the narrators, and their lives in the war-torn territory, the reader learns that Biafra is an utopian dream as all the things, which cause its secession, are also replicated within the newly independent territory. There are also symbolic characters like Baby, whose conception is desired by her biological mother and grandmother, Amala and Mama, respectively, but at birth, she is rejected by the two because of their preference for a male child. Baby can be said to be synonymous with Nigeria with its multiethnic groups, which desire its independence, but hate co-existing with the others. Saruana of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, is also a symbolic character. His murder leads to a jihad, which Francis Fayam says, "is a holy war against opposite religious adherents" (2005: 72). Furthermore, Major Udodi being nailed to a cross and left to die is a symbolic action which means to the Hausa Northerners, the war is not ethnic-oriented as British Broadcasting

Corporation says, but it has a religious undertone. There are also symbolic objects, which foreshadow the brutal death of the Biafrans. For example, the “dead spider squashed on the wall; its body fluid had stained the mud a deeper red” (119) in Ugwu’s mother’s hut foreshadows the violent death of thousands of Igbo people during the massacres in the North and during the war. Also the kite which Olanna observes “swooped down and carried one of them off, a brown-and-white chick” (224) is symbolic of the same massacres of the Igbo in the North and the actual war to be fought within the enclave of Biafra. We shall then examine the related and relevant literature on the two novels.

2.2 Literature Review of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

In Marta Sofia Lopez’s “Creating Daughterlands: Dangarmbga, Adichie and Vera”, she examines *Nervous Conditions*, *Purple Hibiscus* and *Under the Tongue* written by a new generation of African female writers. In her discussion of the works of the three creative artists, she shifts perspective from the myth of motherhood and mothering, which have occupied for a long time African female writers and critics. According to Obioma Nnaemeka, “The arguments that are made for motherhood in African texts are based not only on motherhood as a patriarchal institution but motherhood as an experience” (1997:5). However, Lopez rejects Nnaemeka’s and other similar views and examines the three texts not from the point of view of mothers but of daughters. According to her, this is relevant when one considers the significant number of relatively recent novels in which a female child or a young woman occupies the authoritative position of the main narrator and protagonist. She argues that what these three novels have in common is that they are narrated from the perspective of a daughter, a female teenager growing up into adulthood,

mirroring herself in a diversity of mother-figures. In her opinion, “Given the specificity of African family structures, it would be a crass mistake to ignore the role of women who are not biological mothers to the main characters in the novels, but whose maternal authority on them is unquestionable” (85). In *Purple Hibiscus*, Aunty Ifeoma signifies for the narrator, Kambili Achike, something similar to what Lucia signifies for Tambu in *Nervous Conditions*. Though she is presented as an impoverished university lecturer, she is an epitome of freedom. This is reflected in her not subjecting herself to the intimidation by the university Sole Administrator. Again, during Kambili’s first visit to her house, she observes, “Mostly, my cousins did the talking and Aunty Ifeoma sat back and watched them, eating slowly. She looked like a football coach who had done a good job with her team and was satisfied to stand next to the eighteen-yard box and watch” (120-121). It is to her aunt that she flees to after recovering from the violent beating she gets from her father. She refuses to go home from the hospital, because from experience, she knows that her own mother is powerless before her father’s murderous passion and rage. This is because in “her mother’s passive acceptance of her father’s tyranny, Kambili recognizes her own impotence, her inability to rebel or articulate her rage” (Lopez 90). Adrienne Rich offers explanation for this attitude between mother and daughter. She suggests that “her mother’s victimization doesn’t merely humiliate her; it mutilates the daughter who watches for clues as to what it means being a woman” (1995:243).

Aunty Ifeoma is the only female character in the novel, which provides an appropriate role model for Kambili and Jaja. This may be because she manages effectively to evade the traps of patriarchal motherhood, and has effectively de-linked motherhood from merely wifely victim-hood. Lopez concludes that through their “texts, Dangarembga,

Adichie and Vera are inviting their mother's generation to rebel if oppression becomes intolerable" (95). However, in his critique of Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* as feminist reinvention of Fanon, Charles Sugnet suggests that she allegorizes the "women's struggle in terms of national struggle" (1987:46). However, Lopez rejects this claim and holds that the writers underline the "inescapable link between the private and public, between gender issues and national politics" (95).

In Brenda Cooper's "Resurgent Spirit, Catholic Echoes of Igbo and Petals of Purple: the Syncretised World of Chiamamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*", she examines Adichie's holistic vision in her novel, a vision which integrates Igbo customs and language with Catholic ritual. She incorporates men into her gender politics and embraces the literary traditions of her elders - Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alice Walker. In her opinion, Adichie attempts to represent the syncretised world through the material culture and everyday realities of life in modern Nigeria. In doing that, solid objects such as tables, chairs, grains of rice and ceramic ornaments are syncretised. They create a world where the boundaries between the living and the dead, the animate and the inanimate, the big and the small, the literal and the symbolic worlds and things are breached. She argues that what "we witness in the novel is the attempt to re-fetishise objects linked to pre-colonial rituals, but syncretised with the church and with European culture and integrated into a global modernity" (5). She posits that as Adichie juggles the pieces that make up the kaleidoscope of her vision, the pieces sometimes slip away from her reach. According to her, Adichie contradicts herself in the presentation of Eugene Achike as a man who brutalizes his family at home; yet, a champion of democracy who wins an international award. She believes that this contradiction may be as a result of Adichie's 'womanism' as

opposed to feminism, and the influence of Alice Walker. As she posits, ‘womanism’ is “committed to survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female” (Walker xi).

In my earlier critical essay entitled “Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*: an Allegorical Story of Man’s Struggle for Freedom”, I reflect on the violations of the rights of the members of Eugene Achike’s family by their father and head of the family. I compare Eugene to Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, and suggest that Achike is worse than Okonkwo, even though both have similar attitudes to life. However, it seems that his problem arises from the indelible traumatic memory of his earlier experience of his hands being scalded by a white priest for masturbating. In fact, Adichie shows a family, a university community, a nation whose rights are being circumscribed by the dictators who hold sway over them. And it is believed that Adichie advocates stiff resistance to irrational abridgement of individual and people’s rights. I further posit, “Adichie encapsulates this allegorical struggle for freedom in highly symbolic and thought-provoking images that haunt the reader for a very long time after he must have put back the novel on the bookshelf” (2004: 242).

Critical response to *Half of a Yellow Sun* has been very low despite the eulogies it receives as a good novel on the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970. The almost non-availability of critical responses to it may be as a result of its bulk, which may be scary to readers, and the problem of critics concentrating on other works in the same tradition. However, it may also be rightly argued that critics are known to read thousands of pages of literary texts. Furthermore, it is hoped that this war fiction may not fall into the same situation Chukwuemeka Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn* has fallen. According to Eustace Palmer, Ike’s novel has been blacklisted by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It has given

directives that it cannot be included in the list of novels for the West African School Certificate Examinations. In its misreading of the novel and its exclusion from the syllabus is “because it will perpetuate the hatred between the Igbo and other parts of Nigeria” (2008: 40). Because of the paucity of critical essays on it, relevant and related literature will be reviewed.

In the “Experience of War and Cultural Imagery in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi’s *Heroes*”, Smart Malife argues that the two narratives have undeniable role of promoting culture and tourism in the country. In his opinion, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, particularly, provides the reader with a panoramic view of the nooks and crannies of Eastern Nigeria as the Biafran refugees flee from one location –Nsukka, Enugu, Abba, Umuahia, Port Harcourt, Orlu – to another in the fierce battle for the realization of the sovereign state of Biafra. He suggests that Iyayi, on the other hand, gives a picturesque account of the war-front experiences to underline the senselessness and the inanity of the war. To Iyayi, it is a war devoid of any ideal.

Malife further argues that there is a thread linking the two war novels. The stories of the “the fall of Onitsha, fall of Nsukka, fall of Asaba, fall of Oganza, and fall of Umuahia and many other falls” (105) show that the imagery painted by these falls represent the fall of humanity, sincerity, justice and the enthronement of individualism above communal aspirations. It is a war, which in his opinion, lacks principles or rules of engagement and characterized by brutalities and rape. In fact, he suggests that the aftermaths of this war still reverberate today in the character of the average Nigerian.

Also in her very brief critical appraisal of Adichie’s war epic, Chinyere Egbuta claims that she has taken on the horrendous Nigerian Civil War like other novelists – Iyayi,

Ike, Okpewho – before her, and she combines Igbo oral repertoire and a nativized English language as Chinua Achebe. She also uses a consistent narrative perspective through a handful of characters and elaborates on their psychological process, which sends obvious messages to her readers. She finally compares her accomplishment with the “1996 epic movie, *Titanic*, where the plot of a romantic adventure fits into the general overview of the death of one thousand five hundred people in a 1912 shipwreck” (94). She submits that *Half of a Yellow Sun* has concretely established Adichie as one of the most intellectual and research-minded novelists of the twenty-first century.

In Charles Ekwusiaga Nnolim’s critical examination of the same text, he suggests that *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the twenty-first century novel which continues the tradition of African literature in the twentieth century: a literature of lamentation. He calls it a historic novel which is comparable to those of Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy, Peter Abraham and Thomas Mofolo. He claims that it is the responsibility of the historic novelist to give a “truthful picture of the age he or she describes and to establish a historic context. To him, Adichie fulfils this responsibility as, “most of us are still living witnesses to events that preceded the massacres” (146). Besides, she recreates the betrayal, loss, death and the conflict which the Igbo suffer as a result of the British shenanigans and scheming as its imperial policy in Nigeria. She departs from the preoccupation of the African female writers in the twentieth century: feminism. Her characters – Olanna, Kainene and Lara Adebayo – are not subjugated and voiceless women as they “shared equality with their male counterparts” (146). But most importantly, in her portrayal of Richard Churchill, Kainene’s British lover, she points to a new direction in the characterization of white men in African literature. In Nnolim’s opinion:

We are used to seeing white men as haughty, snobbish, above board and among the ruling class, either as district officers, commanders in the military elite, governors who are oppressors that belong to the ruling class. But Richard is ordinary or even less than ordinary. He is unsure of himself. Susan chaperones him at parties organized by fellow white men where he is nervous and uncomfortable. He is an appendage and even in his relationship with Kainene he is worse than an appendage as she dominates every part of his life, refusing his proposal of marriage. In bed he can hardly perform, being forced to seek Igbo houseboys to find him local herbs for sexual enhancement (150).

Furthermore, in their seminal works on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's literary texts – *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *The Things Around Your Neck* – Allwell A. Onukaogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu highlight the manner and reason Adichie has entered into the African and world literary canon. They argue that Adichie can be ranked among such literary writers as Achebe, Soyinka and Ngugi. Her literary stature is not in doubt as she has successfully scaled through Bernth Lindfors's rating methods for new entrants into the canon. Such tests include the famous authors' Reputation Test which "recorded the frequency with which Anglophone African authors and their works were discussed in print by literary scholars and critics..." (Lindfors quoted in Onukaogu and Onyerionwu 32). The second test is the Better Ultimate Rating Plan which "sought hard data on pedagogical practices in literature and drama courses in Anglophone African Universities" (ibid 32). They argue that Adichie's achievement in gathering global acclaim is laudable when one considers the fact that the older generations of Nigerian writers and critics have dismissed

the works of the younger generation because they lack intellectual merit and thematic focus. However, they point out that she is able to escape the stifling situation in the country and achieve such a feat because of her sojourn in Diaspora. This gives her the advantage of reputable international publishers and editors. Also her status as a world-class writer, who is referred to as the twenty-first century daughter of Achebe and a future noble laureate, has won her so many awards and prizes. According to them, *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* have been translated into more than thirty foreign languages. There is an ongoing project to adapt *Half of a Yellow Sun* into a film as it has “redefined the concept of war fiction, thus, proposing refreshing frontiers in the intellectual and artistic conversation on not just the Nigerian Civil War, but as a global literary engagement” (56).

They also argue Adichie’s international recognition is also reflected in her country where she is seen and treated as a heroine. According to the same critics, her face appears on several “billboards and posters in Nigeria, makes television appearances in adverts and jingles, and is generally considered a superstar, as the resonance of her name permeates the consciousness of millions of even non-literary people” (60). Companies and corporate organizations are not left out in the exploitation of her fame in the promotion of their businesses. Like a child who washes his hands will eat with kings and elders, Adichie’s talent has been recognized by other literary giants – Achebe, Nnolim, Ofeimun, Ojaide, Osundare, Obumsele – as a prodigy who is a new entrant into the literary canon.

One can, therefore, see that none of these studies available on Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* deals with the dispossessed in any of the novels. We shall, however, examine critical essays on the related literature of *Half of a Yellow Sun* for more illumination.

In Eustace Palmer's "Chukwuemeka Ike: *Sunset at Dawn*," the accomplished critic draws attention to the apparent reasons for the neglect of the novel. In his opinion, *Sunset at Dawn*, a war fiction which is of the same tradition as *Half of a Yellow Sun* "scarcely features in published criticism, dissertation, or conference papers" (2008:11). He blames this exclusion on Nigerian government's intrusion on educational matters. He argues further that the exclusion of the works stems from a misreading of the work, which is neither ideological nor pornographic. The critics of the work fail to recognize the irony, the change in tone, sarcasm, point of view, imagery and characterization which are used to criticize Biafra. He concludes that the fact that the novel does not end with the defeat of Biafra, but the rehabilitation of Fatima, the Hausa-born wife of late Dr Amilo Kanu, shows that Ike's interest really lies with the people and the impact of the war on them. As he puts it, "Ike does not flinch at the end on emphasizing the utter stupidity and futility of the war. This he does through the venerable Mazi Kanu's words of wisdom" (40).

Again the same critic beams his critical camera on Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, which he says is a remarkable war novel, which has not received the attention it deserves. This is a work, in his considered opinion, which ought to be given a place in the front rank with Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreter*, Ngugi wa Thiongo's *A Grain of Wheat* and Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*. He further examines Okpewho's artistry in his deft manipulation of language and point of view. He suggests that Okpewho is the first African novelist to use the shifting narrative technique, which has become common in the African novel. This technique has been employed in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Benjamin Kwakye's *The Sun by Night*. He also draws attention to the themes of the novel which are physical devastation caused

by war, particularly its emphasis on havoc caused on human relationships, and the mental, physical and emotional torture which women undergo in war situations. And Virginia Ola has earlier stated this view when she claims that war entails “the human and emotional dimensions of war-broken homes, the fate of widows and widowers, marital infidelity, the suffering of the orphans, even insanity and general moral decadence” (1983:64).

In *Literary Criticism, Critical Theory and Post-Colonial African Literature*, Chinyere Nwahunanya examines the aesthetics of the Nigerian war fiction. He takes a closer look at the way novelists adopt and adapt materials of prewar, wartime and postwar history in their fictive works and evaluates the aesthetics of Nigerian war fiction from two perspectives: the historicism of the words and the imaginative creation that is carried on alongside historical recreation. In his comparative study of Isidore Okpewho’s *The Last Duty* and Chukwuemeka Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn*, he concludes that while the latter’s attempt at a fictional chronological account of events during war gives the novel a simple linear plot; however, it submerges art by heavy-handed chronological documentation of history. In his opinion, there is more artistic accomplishment in *The Last Duty*, and this is Okpewho’s notable contribution to psychological fiction.

It is clear that none of these critical essays on the war fiction deals with the dispossessed in any of the earlier works which are of the same tradition as Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*. In the course of this research, only two works have been found to analyse literary texts from the point of view of the dispossession of fictive characters. They are Daleski’s *Way of Dispossession* (1977) and Akwanya and Anohu’s “The Defeated, the Dispossessed, and the Story” in *50 Years of the Nigeria Novel (1951 – 2001)*.

In Daleski's seminal work on Joseph Conrad's major creative works – *The Nigger of Narcissus*, *Under the Western Eyes*, *Nostramo*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, and *An Outcast of the Islands* among others – he argues that Conrad has a positive horror of losing self-possession. And given the artistic, moral and psychological ramifications of the issue of self-possession in Conrad's life, it constitutes “a steady nuclear complex in his works” (1977:19). He argues that self-possession is Conrad's thematic preoccupation in all his works and he consistently depicts four ways in which one can lose self-possession. The four ways include by abandonment, which is the letting go or the surrender of one's self in passion; by panic, which is the losing of one's head in a situation which demands physical self-possession; by nullity or vacancy, which is the loss of self that is concomitant of spiritual disintegration, and finally by suicide, that is, the deliberate destruction of self. He further argues that for a character to be dispossessed, he must surely give up what he treasures most, but selfish characters cannot do that. To Daleski, “Men possessed, it would seem to follow, may be saved only by dispossession” (15).

In Akwanya and Anohu's essay, they draw a subtle distinction between the 'defeat' and 'dispossession' of characters in the Nigerian novel. They examine the issue of 'defeat' in tragedy, and they argue that the characters experience defeat because of the choices they make, which choices must be made. They also have been destined by fate to experience what they experience. Their defeat, therefore, does not change their stature as tragic heroes, because they are more than a match to their ordeals. Again they have the greatness of soul, and if they go down, their ruin does not take anything from them because of the courage they show in the face of their adversity. Such characters as Okonkwo and Ezeulu in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, respectively, are associated with historical

and cultural revolutions. Therefore, their experience cannot be really seen as their being “defeated”, but rather as “tragic reversal”.

They further made the fine distinction, which has not been made before in the Nigerian critical landscape, that characters like Obi Okonkwo in Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, Alade Moses in Aluko’s *Chief the Honourable Minister* and Sani Salako in Oyegoke’s *Cowrie Tears*, among the plethora of other Nigerian novels they examined, are characters who are “defeated”. In their distinction of “tragic reversal” and “defeat”, they suggest that the characters in the first are crushed by something more than man, in this case, a “historical movement” (2001: 129), but in the second, the characters “who are defeated are usually in no position to maintain the greatness of soul they create the impression of having” (129).

For the characters who suffer dispossession, they argue that whoever has not won anything, really in his own name, and by main effort, or held it by right, can never be dispossessed. They also used two works – Oyekoge’s *Cowrie Tears* and Zaynab Alkali’s *The Stillborn* – to draw a thin line between irreversible and reversible dispossession of characters in literary works. According to them, a character like Sani Salako cannot be seen as being dispossessed, because he is a character who is incapable of willing resistance. This is a man who has never been able to “take a stand, but has kept to the shadows, so to speak, by impulse” (147). His defeat should be seen as psychological and not physical. It is his wife, Toyin, who is irreversibly dispossessed, but she is unaware of her dispossession, until after his death.

On the other hand, according to their argument, Zaynab Alkali’s three female characters – Li, Faku and Awa – show that dispossession can be reversed. As their dreams

of living well, which centre on three young men crumble, they are miserable. However, they believe they can change their destinies instead of reeling in the quagmire where the three men have left them. They work hard to change their situations. For instance, Faku has to work as a prostitute in the cities when she leaves her husband. As the novel ends, she is on her way to becoming a social worker. On her own part, Li is an “endless fount of courage, resourcefulness and imaginative thinking, which means endless energy to bounce back” (149). The critics believe that to Zaynab’s three characters, every situation is alterable. And this is the fundamental attitude in comedy, which makes *The Stillborn* a comedy, “despite the extraordinary sufferings the characters undergo” (149). They conclude that the Nigerian novels largely follow the movements of tragedy, where the characters realize that their unpleasant situation can never give way to well-being but is unchangeable and inescapable. Their fortunes also dip for the worse, unlike in comedy, where there is the comic vision of tragedy as a phase in the character’s life, which will eventually be surpassed.

From the foregoing critical essays that deal with the issue of dispossession in literary works, Daleski’s examines the ways of dispossession of characters in foreign novels: the works of Joseph Conrad. Also Akwanya and Anohu’s work deals with the differentiation of three concepts – tragic reversal, the defeated and the dispossessed – in some selected Nigerian novels. However, the examination of the dispossessed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the first on these novels and seeks to unravel not only the forms of dispossession but also its causes and consequences on the dispossessed characters and groups in their fictive environments.

The next chapter, therefore, is the theoretical framework which will serve as a scaffold to the thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is a well-known experiential fact that the sudden “political carve-up of the continent” (Jowitt 229) by European adventurers in the nineteenth century brought with it the physical occupation of Africa. Colonization, aided by racist epistemology that the “native is to be treated as a child and denied franchise” (Rhodes quoted in Nandy 58), becomes undeniably a powerful instrument for the dispossession of the colonized. Though colonization has ended in Africa, it simply “does not end with the end of colonial occupation” (Ghandi 17). It still rages on as the “mental and physical enslavement of our people” (Ezeigbo 1996: 2), because its “power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization” (Foucault 8) of already enslaved Africans. This catastrophic event on the continent has produced a plethora of literary and critical works in Colonial and Post-colonial Africa. This study which undertakes the examination of the dispossessed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* will have recourse to a systematic theoretical framework for the categorization of the causes, forms and consequences of dispossession as presented by Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Julia Kristeva.

3.1 Unconscious and Human Behaviour

Sigmund Freud’s elaborate framework will be used for the psychic dispossession of characters in the two novels. In the argument on “How much does environment and how much does heredity contribute in determining human behaviour” (Mowbray and Rodger 276), that is, the nature-nurture debate in psychology, Freud suggests that the causes of behaviour are within the personality structure of the individual, and he emphasizes the role

of the unconscious processes and unresolved conflicts in the past. In his psychosexual theory, he combines a description of personality with sexual development of the individual. Personality is an abstract construct, which is drawn from observable behaviour as a result of human individuality. It is as different as our faces, and in fact, it is “the distinctive and relatively consistent ways of thinking, feeling and behaving” (Smith 429). In Freud’s personality theory, he emphasizes the role of the unconscious factors and the importance of childhood experiences in the formation of an individual’s personality and behaviour. He suggests that the human mind is inhabited by psychic energy, which is generated by instinctual drives. This energy he describes in mechanical term must maintain its level of equilibrium by the discharge of impulses. For instance, a discharge of sexual impulses may be through direct sexual intercourse or by engaging in sexual fantasy, such as farming or painting of a naked woman, and so on. If we apply this theory to two psychically dispossessed characters – Eugene Achike and Ugwu – in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, respectively – we can say that Eugene’s perfectionism and obsessive preoccupation with the doctrines and dogmas of the Catholic church are a consequence of his diversion of his repressed sexual desire into a more acceptable channel. There is also the operation of the psychic energy in the sexual relationship between Ugwu and Chinyere. The narrator describes it thus:

There was something moist about the darkness, about their bodies close together, and he imagined that she was Nnesinachi and that the taut legs encircling him were Nnesinachi’s. She was silent at first and then, hips thrashing, her hands tight around his back, she called out the same thing she said every time. It

sounded like a name – Abonyi, Abonyi – but he wasn't sure. Perhaps she imagined that he was someone else too, someone back in her village (p. 126).

Apart from the psychic energy in the mind, other content of the mind is the conscious mind, which includes the conscious events that we are aware of; the preconscious is a step away from consciousness. It contains memories, thoughts, feelings, which we are not aware of presently, but can easily be retrieved. There is, however, a relationship between these two areas of the mind: conscious and preconscious. In Kaja Silverman's opinion, "The preconscious is the repository of cultural norms and prohibitions. It contains data which are capable of becoming conscious – memories, which can be voluntarily recalled" (1983: 56).

According to Freud, the third and the vastest area of the mind is the unconscious. There is also a relationship between it and the preconscious. Freud calls the unconscious, which is very deep in the individual's mind, and we are unaware of its existence, "a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitations" (1964: 73). For David Petersen, it is a kind of stochastic engine, a churning producer of spontaneity (2000). It is also described as being structured like a language (Lacan 1977). It manifests itself through parapraxes, jokes, dreams and neurotic symptoms.

3.1.1 Unconscious and Human Personality

Freud divides the individual's personality into three parts – id, ego and superego – and they interact with each other even though they all maintain their unique characteristics.

The **id** is situated within the unconscious and is said to be the core of personality and is present at birth. It is also perceived to be the source of psychic energy of the unconscious. It has no contact with reality and operates in an irrational manner. It operates

within the **pleasure-principle**. It consists of both life instincts like hunger, sex, thirst, and also death instinct, which is associated with man's aggressiveness and destructiveness. It seeks immediate gratification irrespective of the environmental realities. It is believed that the id has no contact with the outside world and cannot satisfy itself directly. Therefore, another part which is called the ego develops to check the excesses of the id.

The **ego** is described as that part of the human personality that takes care of consciousness within the individual; therefore, it is in direct contact with reality and it works assiduously to satisfy the overwhelming and irrational demands of the id without jeopardizing the individual's survival. The ego is described by Freud as controlling "The approaches to motility It is the mental agency which supervises all its own processes, and which goes to sleep at night, though even then it exercises the censorship in dreams. From this ego proceeds repression" (quoted in Easthope 54). Explaining further Sigmund Freud's view on the functions of the ego, Ronald Smith states:

Because the ego is the outgrowth of the id, it receives all its energy and power from the id and never becomes totally independent of it. The ego functions primarily at a conscious level, and it operates according to the **reality principle**. It tests reality to decide when and under what conditions the id can safely discharge its impulses and satisfy its needs. For example, the ego would seek sexual gratification within a consenting relationship rather than allow the pleasure principle to dictate an impulsive sexual assault on the first person who happened to come by (1993: 445).

The third and the last portion of the human personality, according to Freud, is the **super-ego**. This is the moral arm of personality, which the individual imbibes from childhood through his parents and other adults around him. The communication of social values and norms is carried out through the processes of reward and punishment. The child takes on these values as his own through the process of internalization. In the view of Anwana on the superego, it is a system of unconscious control within the individual and a child develops his morality dependent on the opinions of his parents and society (1989).

It is believed that like the ego, the superego strives to control the impulses of the id. But unlike the ego, the superego is also as irrational as the id in its demands on the ego. As the ego which originates from the perceptual system represents the demands of the external world, and also wishes to be a loyal servant of the id, it recommends itself as an object of the id's libido, and then it breaks. However, the superego jealously watches every movement of the ego as it holds up certain norms of behaviour, without regard to any difficulty coming from the id and the external world. If the ego disregards the superego's norms, it mercilessly punishes it with the feeling of anxiety. And Freud insists that anxiety is the pillar of abnormal behaviour. The anxiety or tension which the superego imposes on the ego manifests in the form of inferiority complex or guilt. In this way, goaded by the id, hemmed in by the superego, and rebuffed by reality, the ego struggles to cope and harmonize these three difficult masters. And when it cannot cope and acknowledges its weakness, it breaks out into anxiety. This may be reality anxiety in the face of the external world, moral anxiety in the face of the superego, and neurotic anxiety in the face of the strength of the passions of the id (Freud 1933).

The dynamics of the human personality are so complex that the built-up psychic energy of the id struggles to be let out, while the ego, which Freud describes as the “executive of personality,” suppresses its release. It is believed that observable behaviour is the product of this struggle (Nye 1992). Freud posits that the basic form of defence mechanism which the ego employs to check the reckless and relentless impulses of id is through **repression**. Repression is seen as motivated forgetting in which the ego uses some of its energy to prevent anxiety-arousing memories, feelings and impulses from entering consciousness (Smith 1993).

3.1.2 Unconscious and Oedipus or Electra Complex

Psychic dispossession of characters in Adichie’s two texts also involves the absence or inadequate resolution of the Oedipus or Electra Complex in one or two stages of the characters’ psychosexual development. And according to Freud, a child’s sexual development involves five stages – oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital – and each of them is very important in the individual’s adult personality. However, only phallic and genital stages will be discussed, as being relevant to the dispossession of Adichie’s characters.

Freud claims that at the phallic stage, which is between four or five years, the child derives sexual pleasure from touching his own genital organ. At this stage, Oedipus complex or castration anxiety sets in on the boy as he harbours an incestuous wish or Oedipus complex for his mother, while he secretly nurses a murderous instinct for his father. What stops him from carrying out his fantasy is the fear of castration by his father. At this stage, too, the little girl is envious of his brother’s penis, and she blames her mother

for its absence in her. She also suffers from Electra complex as she envies her mother and desires to have sex with her father. What also stops her fantasy is the fear of castration. Freud argues that the girl's complex is not as intense as the boy's. The boy represses his desire for the mother in anxious resignation, submits to his father and adjusts to the reality principle that he cannot be a lover to his mother. He consoles himself with the fact that, one day in the future, he will be a patriarch like his father. It is through the process of identification that he makes peace with himself, identifies with his father and is then introduced into the symbolic role of manhood. This is also the case with the girl. It is through the resolution of the Oedipus or Electra complex at the phallic stage that a child develops gender identity with the parent of the same -sex.

The fifth and last stage in Freud's psycho-sexual theory, which is relevant to this thesis, as it manifests in Ugwu in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Eugene Achike and Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, is the genital stage. According to him, it occurs between the ages of thirteen and twenty years. At this stage, Freud claims that the young person's erotic feeling returns, but there is no longer the childish and incestuous attachment to either of his parents. His sexual attachment is principally to people who are outside his family as he has overcome the Oedipus or Electra complex. As an adolescent, the libido or sexual desire is concentrated at the genitals, and the individual wants to find out if he is sexually normal or not. If he is a well socialized individual, his sexual object is the people of opposite sex outside his family; if he is not, he may seek to assuage his libido on people of the same sex in or outside his family; he may also use animals as sex-objects. In his view, the choice of sexual partner is not thrust on the individual by nature but by nurture. And one way can the individual meet the Oedipus complex: either by being heterogeneous or homosexual. As

Freud suggests, “Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex and anyone who fails to do so falls a victim of neurosis” (quoted in Easthope 29).

There is no doubt that Oedipus complex is the pillar of Freud’s psychoanalysis; however, it has received so much criticism. Freud is seen as promoting a strange and sensational method which emphasizes the unconscious. To Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Freud’s Oedipus complex, incest, castration and repression are not only mechanical, but are also reductionist (1988). Also an anthropologist, Malinowski, is not bothered about the imputation of sexual desire in children, but he argues that Freud’s Oedipus complex does not have a general or universal application but differs from culture to culture. He suggests that in the Polynesian family structure that the boy inherits from his maternal uncle as they are matrilineal. A son is the head of the family and the authority in the family resides in him and not the father. There is no sexual conflict between the father and his son, but sexual conflict is usually between a brother and the sister and not between a child and his or her parents. He further argues persuasively that “The building of the sentiments, the conflicts which this implies, depend largely upon the sociological mechanism which works in a given society” (1937: 55). Besides, David Bakan points out that in the original Oedipus myth by Sophocles, it is the father who first attempts to kill his son until the latter overpowers and murders him. He argues that the theme of paternal infanticide is a central theme in the Old Testament too. He suggests that there may be reasons why fathers may harbour hostile feelings for their sons (quoted in Chodorow 51). Nancy Chodorow agrees entirely with Bakan’s view because, according to her, anthropological and psychological data convince her that we must take serious the notion

that members of both generations may have conflicts over the veritable replacement of the older generation by the younger one, and that children probably feel both guilt and helplessness in the situation (1974).

However, Anthony Easthope argues that Freud's castration has been greatly misunderstood because no society can actually exist if fathers castrate their sons. In reality, castration is not the worst thing to happen to an individual, but in fantasy, it is because I am here to experience the death of others but not mine because I am not. Therefore, the fear of death is a development of castration which in Christendom, castration is an equivalent of Hell or the eternal deprivation of the love of God" (1999: 30-31). Juliet Mitchell has earlier observed that in the Oedipus system, the incestuous wish and threat of castration which the father oversees is very important to produce the human society. As she puts it, "To date, the father stands in the position of the third term that must break the asocial dyadic unit of mother and child. We can see that this third term will always need to be represented by something or someone" (1982:23). Easthope agrees partly with her that the child's dyadic relationship with the mother is asocial and leads us back to nature, but it can be broken by someone else and not necessarily the father (1995). In Claude Levi-Strauss's opinion, what matters about the threat of castration is that it forbids incest, and it thus introduces a general opposition between nature and culture, transgression and law, desire and renunciation of desire (1969). It, therefore, may be rightly argued that not all the facets of the theory have universal application; yet, there are some aspects that are undeniably universal. In Anthony Easthope's opinion:

The prohibition on incest is universal and specific to the specie, although the particular persons forbidden as incestuous objects vary across different societies

This universality is one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the existence of the unconscious. This law against incest is an external social institution corresponding to the Oedipus complex in the unconscious (1993: 30).

3.1.3 A Critique of Freud's Psychoanalysis

Freud's account of the unconscious is principally an analysis of meaning; he sees the unconscious as a "seething tumultuous cauldron" inside the individual. However, the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, rewrites Freud's unconscious in terms of the human subject's place and his relation to his society and most importantly his relationship with his language. To Lacan, "the unconscious is a particular effect of language, a process of desire set in motion by difference" (Eagleton 150). In other words, the unconscious is not the hell inside us where the repressed desires and wishes are hidden; "the unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual" (Lacan 1977: 170). The unconscious is outside the individual, in fact, it is something that happens when coherent language becomes dislocated (Easthope 1999). To Lacan, the unconscious is structured like language, which comprises less of signs than signifiers. To sum Lacan's view of the unconscious, it is "just a continual movement and activity of the signifiers, whose signified are often inaccessible to us, because they are repressed" (Eagleton 146).

Again, Freud offers two disjunctive views of the ego. In the first he suggests that the ego's main function is to deal with reality through perception and consciousness; in the second the ego offers itself as a love-object of the id's impulsive and overwhelming desire. Lacan, on his part, takes Freud's second view of the ego. He believes that we perceive the real world though it is rendered through desire and fantasy. He says that the theoretical difficulty encountered by Freud is attributable to the "mirage of objectification inherited

from classical psychology, constituted by the **perception/consciousness** system, in which Freud seems suddenly to fail to recognize the existence of everything that the ego neglects, scotomizes, misconstrues in the sensations that make it react to reality, everything that ignores, exhausts, and binds in the significations that it receives from language ...” (Lacan 1972: 22).

Lacan further marks off the ideal ego from the ego ideal, a distinction which is as a result of two contrasted modes of identification. He sees the ideal ego as arising from the way the subject projects itself onto the object, and it moves out onto identification with them. The ego ideal, by contrast, develops when external objects are taken in or introjected. In other words, the subject’s ideal ego appears at that point, which he desires to gratify himself, unto himself while the ego ideal appears at the point from which the subject wants others to see him. Lacan further suggests that both transformations of the ego, that is, the way I would like to see myself and the way I would like others to see me are idealized. They are sources of delusion, leading the individual to believe in his fantasies, his own importance and his imagined control of the world around him (Easthope 63).

He also reinterprets Freud’s account of a child’s sexual development, particularly the Oedipus complex. The pre-Oedipal stage of a child’s development is what Lacan calls the ‘imaginary’ state. Within this period, there is no defined centre of self as the child cannot actually distinguish between itself and other external objects. He calls this ‘imaginary state’ the mirror stage, and he has a symbolic unity with the mother and as he contemplates his reflected self in the mirror, there is a lack of the centre of unity as he misrecognizes himself. And it is at this mirror stage that the ego begins to emerge. This ego Lacan describes as the narcissist ego and it bolsters up a fictive sense of unitary

selfhood by finding something we can identify with. In the mirror stage or the imaginary, the child who contemplates himself in the mirror is the 'signifier', that which bestows meaning. And the image he sees in the mirror is the 'signified'. Both the 'signifier' and the 'signified' are united harmoniously and this is the oedipal stage. Lacan, therefore, rewrites Freud's account of the Oedipus complex in terms of language.

According to Lacan, the child's father signifies the law and is symbolic of the social taboo which is imposed by society as the child cannot be his mother's lover. At this oedipal stage, both the unconscious sexual desire and the appearance of the father occur simultaneously. Though the mother nurtures him, the libidinal relationship with him is shattered by the appearance of the father who represents both family and social networks and he has a predestined role to play in this network. He therefore represses the guilty desire and that "desire is what is called the unconscious" (Eagleton 143). However, his awareness of social difference occurs at the same time he discovers language. Yanyan and Quan put this shocking awareness thus:

In the maternal world of the imaginary, the gendered roles played in the symbolic are reversed. In the infant's imaginary world, his mother, no longer weak and submissive, becomes a powerful and dominant "Phallic Mother". However, when he enters the symbolic stage, the infant gradually perceives his mother's powerlessness in terms of her subordinate relation to the father and thus the mother is slowly losing her power signaled by phallus (2007: n.p).

Also the presence of his father, who symbolizes "phallus," throws him into anxiety. And this teaches him that he must take-up his role in the family and society which is

defined by difference and exclusion, and he must “relinquish his earlier bond to the mother`s body” (Eagleton 145). If he successfully wades through the Oedipus stage, he identifies with the other subjects and leaves the imaginary to the ‘symbolic order’ in which he accepts his role in society. In other words, with the acquisition of language, the child has been introduced into the symbolic order where he or she has learnt the different gender roles. “The difference between male and female entry into the Symbolic”, according to Cora Kaplan, “has to do with the stage of development which overlaps the full acquisition of language, and through which the child accepts his or her gender identity – the Oedipal phase” (2001: 233).

Lacan explains that this transition from imaginary state to the symbolic order is not a smooth one. As Freud earlier puts it, the individual who emerges from the Oedipus complex is split because of the chasm between conscious ego and the unconscious or our repressed desire (Eagleton 2009). There is no doubt, therefore, that the life of every human being is “inscribed by the tension between signifier and signified, the symbolic and the imaginary” (Boyko-Head 2002). In short, the Lacanian subject is split because of the primary repression of desire which makes us what we are. Efrat Biberman’s account of the reason for the split is that “The split is the embodiment of this inward-outward relationship, in which the ‘inside’ of the subject comes from the other, determining the subject as such, while the ‘outside’ is embodied through repression” (2005: n.p).

Lacan further states that the child who has been introduced into the symbolic order is flung into the imaginary possession of language as the reality of the situation that he cannot possess his mother dawns on him. The language which he possesses is unstable and comprises difference and absence; his movement from one desire to the other is what he

calls “desire”. And according to him, “all desire springs from a lack, which it strives continually to fill. Human language works by such lack: the absence of the real object which signs designate.... To enter language, then, is to become a prey to desire” (quoted in Eagleton 145). And for Frederic Jameson, desire must “always have a repressive norm or law through which to burst and against which to defend itself” (1981: 68). Also desire has been called the “reality of the unconscious” (Grosz 67). In his assessment of Freud’s psychoanalysis, which Jacques Lacan attempts to rethink, Ricoeur recognizes the relationship between language and desire: “Thus analysis moves from one meaning to another meaning; it is not desire as such that is placed at the center of the analysis, but rather their language” (5-6).

Lacan claims that the oedipalized child is cut off from the ‘real’, which is the possession of his mother’s body when he enters language. He yearns or desires it, but he cannot completely possess it again; then, he substitutes it with what he calls “object little” as he will never recover the complete self-identity of the mirror stage. Terry Eagleton sums up Lacan’s position thus, he “sees the parents, the unconscious and language as the ‘symbolic order’. He speaks of them as the ‘other’ and unconscious desire is usually directed towards the other. And desire can only happen because we are caught up in linguistic, sexual, and social relations – the whole field of the other – which generates it” (2009:151).

Despite Jacques Lacan’s elaborate and articulate reinterpretation of Freud’s work, there are some criticisms leveled against him. Anthony Easthope, for instance, suggests that Lacan “seems to have found it difficult to maintain a consistent position across one lecture, let alone each year’s syllabus of twenty. The material is uneven – some is easy to

agree with it, while other parts make people skeptical” (1999: xv). Also a biographer of Lacan remarks that he is merciless on others, but not on himself. According to her, he often “described to his patients and pupils the dangers of believing in the omnipotence of the ego, but it never occurred to him to apply this wisdom to himself ” (Roudinesco 247-248). Despite the criticism of Lacan’s critique of Freud, what is relevant to the thesis is that his claim is applicable to one of the most divided characters in literature: Eugene Achike. His claim that transformations of the ego, that is, the contradiction between the ideal ego and the ego ideal is a source of delusion, which leads the individual to believe in his fantasies, his own importance and his imagined control of the world around him is applicable to all the rough beasts in the two novels, particularly Eugene Achike.

3.2 Economic/Political Exploitation as the Basis for Class Antagonisms

Freud’s identification of the sources of psychic dispossession, which he says are buried within the individual’s unconscious mind in the preceding pages, shows there is no doubt that these can lead to pathological disorders. Marx, on the other hand, believes that the source of human dispossession lies solely in the economic/political exploitative tendencies of one class over another, or the economic/political domination of one race over the others. Some critics and philosophers have recognized that the views of these two renowned theorists – Freud and Marx – complement each other. According to John Strachey, “psychoanalysis has unintentionally provided the overwhelming evidence for the validity of dialectical materialism” (quoted in Osborn ix). Reuben Osborn in his *Marxism and Psychoanalysis* suggests to Marxists to integrate psychoanalysis as part of their outlook because the “two constitute opposite but not conflicting approaches to the study of human nature” (1965: xvii-xviii). Also Fredric Jameson argues that the “psychic

fragmentation occasioned by capitalism provides the conditions of possibility for psychoanalysis” (1965:62). David Jowitt in his latest work provides the specificity for the psychic fragmentation which agrees with Jameson’s view:

Industrialization had the following general effects. Land became less important than capital as the principal basis of a nation’s wealth. Personal wealth came to be derived less from land (i.e. rents) than from investments. The middle class or bourgeoisie replaced the landowning aristocracy as the most powerful social class. Wage-earning urban-dwellers rather than peasants came to constitute a significant proportion of the lower class and social tensions increased between them and the middle class (2009:161).

The ego, therefore, in Marxist ideology, is that part of the id which has been modified by external reality, and external reality which is largely, for man, economic and social. The ego, in other words, mirrors social reality and the ego is compelled to limit and restrain the demands of the id in conformity with the exigencies of social reality (Osborn 97). Marx has argued that bourgeois philosophers have deliberately over the centuries misinterpreted the immutable law of social development. He sees it as being unscientific and biased as it blames the disorder in the workers’ mentality instead of capitalism. He, therefore, sees revolution as a necessary tool for social change since the haves will not voluntarily give up their power. This is because in capitalist societies, the haves are the bourgeoisie, who are the owners of the means of production, and therefore the employers of wage labour (Bottomore 1964).

Again, Karl Marx faults the imperialist ideologists who believe that the economic, political and cultural position of a people depends on their race. He condemns the

domination of the white race over the other races as being assigned by nature. He believes that presupposition and assumption as fallacious because no scientific data and historical experience have assigned dominance of white race over the 'coloured' races. In fact, "people of all races have equal abilities" (Afanasyer 266). Afanasyer further states that the colonial system of imperialism constitutes one of the grimmest chapters in human history. It accounts for the death of almost one hundred million Africans, inhuman exploitation, poverty, hunger and disease while hiding under the subterfuge of the imperialists' humanness and civilizing mission. On his own part, Vladimir Lenin sees the world as being split into dominating and dominated nations. He further calls imperialism the higher stage of capitalism where the unbridled quest for super-profit propels the capitalists to divide the world into their spheres of influence for the maximum exploitation of the working people in their own countries (quoted in Afanasyer 132). Tzvetan Todorov, on his own part, sees imperialism as an offshoot of European nationalism (1993).

3.2.1 Mode of Production: The Ultimate Determinant of Social Development

Marx also argues that labour which is the production of material value is the decisive factor in man's development and the emergence of his consciousness. To him, it is labour which transforms man from his ape-like ancestors to **homo-sapiens**, that is, a thinking man. It is man's labour which provides him with things like food, shelter, clothing and the implements or power with which he subjugates his environment, and suppresses the other animals. To Lenin, man's consciousness is not only a "reflection of the objective world, but it also creates it" (1975:212).

Marx sees social being as comprising the material life which includes the people's productive activities, the economic relations between the people in the process of production and the social consciousness as the spiritual life of a people, which includes their views, ideas and theories which guide them. Social life is primary while social consciousness is secondary. Marx and Engels further posit that the social, economic and productive relations of the people constitute the pillars of socio-economic formation which is a very important concept in Marxist ideology. To the two philosophers, socio-economic formation is an aggregation of all the social phenomena and the processes relating to the economy, family, art, ideology, and culture which have their basis on a historically determined way of production. They further argue that it is through the process of **natural replacement** that a society develops. This is the process of replacement of an obsolete means of production with new and improved ones. Depending on this process, he recognizes five socio-economic formations in the entire history of the human race. Marx argues tenaciously that the human race has historically progressed from primitive-communal system to slave-owning system, to feudalism, to capitalism and now communism. Therefore, it is suggested that "the labour of millions of ordinary men and women constitutes the indispensable foundation of mankind's life and progress" (Afanasyer 183).

Karl Marx insists that the result of the disharmonious relationship between the different classes – the bourgeois and the working class – is as a result of the former's merciless exploitation of the latter. He recognizes, like Lenin, that no society is ever homogeneous. But he postulates that the workers who are the producers of labour are denied the fruits of their labour. This is because the bourgeoisie are the owners of capital

with which they purchase the labourer. He calls capital a vampire-like dead labour which sucks living labour.

There is no doubt that there exists in each society those two distinct classes, which are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically-determined system of social production. Their relationship to the means of production determines the “dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it” (Lenin 1976:421). In other words, this relation of a class to the means of production determines its position in society. The owners of the means of production, that is, the bourgeoisie in the capitalist system, according to Marx, exploit the labourers who work for them. This exploitation, injustice and inequality set up an antagonistic relationship between the exploiters and the exploited. According to Marx, who sees society as being governed by laws, every society has its own economic structure, which plays a crucial role in its life as it enables the production and distribution of material wealth. He calls its base the foundation upon which the **superstructure** arises because it is the totality of all the production relations, which constitute the economic structure of society. The economic basis of a society is the **substructure** or foundation upon which the super-structures of religious, political, legal, artistic, philosophical and moral views arise with their corresponding relations, institutions and organizations (Afanasyer 1980).

Nevertheless, Marx insists that though the basis gives birth to the superstructure, both are inseparably bound together. He claims that in the primitive communal system where there is common ownership of property, there are no antagonistic classes as everybody is equal, and antagonism and class distinctions are the two markers of private ownership of property. The capitalist system is notorious for antagonism and conflicts between the

bourgeois and the proletariat, and each of them wants to maintain its own position with its ideology. But Marx and Engels maintain that despite the conflicts and oppositions between these two antagonistic classes, “the class, which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (*Collected Works* 59).

3.2.2 **Revolution as the Means of Liberation of the Dispossessed**

In the capitalist social system, the bourgeoisie dominates economically and works assiduously to cling to its position with bourgeois ideology and institutions. As it dawns on the working class that the indolent bourgeois is exploiting and keeping it perpetually down with its institutions and ideology, it sets up its own institutions, unions, political parties, cooperatives to fight the exploiters. In the course of this revolutionary struggle, the workers create their own moral, aesthetic, legal and political structures. In the words of Afanasyer, “In the course of a revolution the political rule of the old class is replaced by the rule of the new class. New state machinery (the system of political and legal institutions) is created in place of the old one. Social consciousness changes: the ideology is ousted by the new corresponding to the new basis” (1980: 204). Also Vladimir Lenin sees it thus, “the old superstructure falls apart ... a new one is created by an independent action of the most diverse social forces” (1976: 146). But Nicos Poulantzas argues strongly that every social formation has an overlay of structural co-existence of several modes of production all at once, including vestiges and survivals of older modes of production. These are relegated to dependent positions within the new order together with anticipatory tendencies which are potentially inconsistent with the new, but they have not created autonomous space of their own (see Jameson 1981). In other words, after the tension between the old and the new, the

obsolete and the emergent, the new and the emergent overwhelm the old and obsolete to establish a new social, economic and political order. But there are leftovers of the old and obsolete vanquished system and also tendencies which exist within the new order. And this is seen in *Half of a Yellow Sun* after the secession of Biafra from the other parts of the country.

Karl Marx believes that the revolution, which he envisages, must be led by the oppressed working class or proletariat and it should employ whatever methods at its disposal to ensure its victory. This is the reason why Adler-Karlsson abhors Marxism because within their value system, it condones physical and psychological violence as a weapon in socialist revolution. And that the social democrat is far more reluctant to resort to such violence (1970). However, the Marxist philosophers have always insisted that for any social development to take place, there must be a transition from the old to the new way, which may take the form of rapid, or violent changes or gradual ones. According to Marx, revolutions are the “locomotives of history,” and the causal factors of every revolution are the conflicts between the new productive forces and the old relations of production. He sees the objective of every revolution as the control of state power and lists the conditions necessary for revolution to include the existence of a crises situation where it is impossible for the ruling class to rule as before, a restive oppressed class which rejects further exploitation and a heightened or increased activity of the people. He identifies the driving force of every revolution which, according to him, depends on the class which comes to power. The driving force of the capitalist revolution against the feudal system is the peasant class, while the proletariat ought to be the driving force of socialist revolution against the capitalists. He further enunciates the attributes of leaders. He argues that the

role of individuals in the making of human history cannot be underestimated. These are people who believe in a cause and they organize and lead others to achieve it. For them to enjoy the support of the people, they must be brave, resolute and intelligent. They must also possess inexhaustible energy and unshakeable conviction to dislodge the bourgeois within their society or the imperialist rule in their country.

The proletariat, peasants and workers who are led by outstanding leaders armed with Marxist ideology can dismantle the capitalist or neocolonial system and establish a socialist system which will be free of class conflict, antagonism and oppression. They should establish a system where all are equal, work and live happily. The socialist system will naturally be upgraded to the higher system of communism.

However, critics have disagreed with Marx's view because of its utopian nature. For example, Andreski maintains that the inequality in any given society may not only be explained by the economic basis but also the nature of military activity within that society (1968). Ralf Dahrendorf argues that Karl Marx simply misunderstands the nature of property and its ownership. He further posits that property is merely a special case of the more general phenomenon of authority. Therefore, the major class conflict is between those in different positions of authority and not between owners and workers as Marx erroneously suggests. Also Geiger disagrees with Marx's claim that the economy dominates the political superstructure. He says that this happens only in a very few cases where it is allowed to develop according to its own internal dynamics (1969). And Milovan Djilas, a Yugoslavian Marxist, argues that the collectivization of the rights of property does not give power to the people, but rather to a new privileged stratum. For a man who lives in the former Soviet Union, where Marxist doctrine is practiced for almost a century before it

is dismantled, his statement reveals the fundamental crack in putting the theory into practice. In his own words:

Ownership is nothing other than the right of profit and control. If one defines class benefits by this right, the communist states have seen, in the final analysis, the origin of a new form of ownership or of a new ruling and exploiting class (1965:35).

What is deductible from Marxist philosophy, however, which is applicable to this thesis is that the dispossessed characters and groups show symptoms of psychopathological disorders not just because of intrapsychic factors but as a result of political and economic dispossession. Their dispossession may be due to the new economic order, the resultant effect of colonialism or imperialism. It can also be because of their economic exploitation by the dominant, exploiting, ruling class within their social system. For example, in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the cause of the Nigerian Civil War is that the Biafrans perceive political domination by the Northerners. This is not only obtainable at the national level in Adichie's novels, but also at the family level. Eugene Achike is able to unleash so much terror and brutality on his family without anybody challenging his actions because of his vast wealth. It is also with this wealth that he squeezes his wife to a position of silence: merely a piece of wood, whose position is worse than that of the nanny in his household. Besides, the war in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Jaja and Beatrice Achike's rebellion against Eugene Achike's tyrannical authority in *Purple Hibiscus* are to be interpreted as forms of revolution. However, as this research does not explore only the psychic and economic/political dispossession of characters and the consequent abnormal behaviour, the

social culture they live in is one of the environmental factors which can lead inexorably to their dispossession and pathological disorders.

3.3 **Culture: A Factor in Dispossession**

According to Emile Durkheim, culture is a “social fact, which is said to be external to an individual and coercive upon him” (1895: 2). In other words, the culture within which an individual is born is an external factor that can lead to his dispossession and even to pathological states. And that is why Jung suggests that apart from sexuality, on which Freud heavily depends for his account of neurosis and psychosis, other factors are also included. He argues that when the “manner and thought of an individual depart markedly from the norms of the species, a pathological state of imbalance ensues, of neurosis and psychosis, dreams and fantasies analogous to fragmented myths will appear” (1971: xxiii). From Jung’s statement above, other factors than the unconscious and Oedipus or Electra complex, economic and political factors, may be involved in the dispossession of characters in Adichie’s texts. The culture of the fictive worlds of the characters is also implicated in their dispossession, and psychopathological disorder.

Julia Kristeva, using one of the linguistic approaches to the study of literature, makes a distinction between what is literary and non-literary. According to her, instead of “analyzing entities (sememes in themselves), I shall study the function that incorporates them within the text It is therefore what I am proposing is an analysis that while dealing with linguistic units (words, sentences, paragraphs), is of a translinguistic order” (1982: 37). It is suggested, therefore, that hers is a “return to an approach to literature that is much

older than formalism in which the language of text corresponds to something outside language” (Akwanya 2007: 207).

She suggests that two forms of representation – by the symbol and by the sign – are seen in literary works. At the vertical dimension, the various symbolic units are distinguished, while at the horizontal, the symbol’s function as an ideologeme is “one of escaping paradox” (Kristeva in Akwanya 2007: 208). In his elaboration of Kristeva’s view, “The age of symbolic representation was naturally the age of mythic thought, with such literary forms as the epic and the folk tale. But discourse was not concerned with action as such, it was rather concerned with evoking such ‘universal transcendences’ as heroism, courage, nobility, virtue, fear, treason, and so on, which are themselves ‘unrepresentable’ and ‘unkownable’ (Akwanya 2007: 208). In Michael Ezugwu’s opinion, literature is one of the mediums “through which myth is expressed, re-enacted, or re-created” (1990: 1). As Kristeva further says, the “discourse progresses by articulating one against the opposite value, and terminates by resolving the conflict between them” (quoted in Akwanya 2007: 208). Akwanya again explains Kristeva’s view:

In the semiotic practice of the ideologeme of the symbol, the status of the art object was public in nature. For representation was of objects and themes already given in the culture, especially in religious ideology...(211).

Besides, she says that in the ideologeme of the sign the novel is a “discursive circuit” (*Desire in Language* 1980) In other words, it is a meaningful utterance and a valuable object, whose supra-segmental and intertextual analyses of the work must be carried out. In the thematic loop of the discourse of the novel as a sign, there is interplay of such opposing values as darkness and light, life and death, liberty and bondage. And as

Akwanya suggests, they oscillate between the two poles, and continue as long as the disjunction is sustained. And this is the source:

...of what is frequently referred to in the criticism of modern novels as the open structure, and it is this that ensures that the ending is quite arbitrary. This ending is achieved by the choice of one of the terms against the other, and is sometimes triggered off by the appearance of a figure capable of being seen in one light and equally in the other, figures “that have a double destination”But closure may be deferred beyond the appearance of this figure through a series of deviations (2007: 212).

Intertextually, according to Kristeva, a literary text is connected to others before it. In other words, a literary text is permeated by other texts before it (Derrida quoted in Akwanya 2007: 212). This may be what Harold Bloom means that “Poets live anxiously in the shadow of ‘strong’ poets who precede them as sons are oppressed by their fathers” (quoted in Eagleton 159). Roland Barthes agrees with him when he maintains that there is nothing like literary originality (quoted in Eagleton 159). Gerda van de Windt echoes this view when he states that the artist does not work in a vacuum but builds on the accomplishment of the past. As he puts it, “Artists are often inspired by arts of their predecessors as art is always to some extent, culturally determined” (2005: n.p). Pierre Macherey considers this relationship as a parodying one (quoted in Akwanya 2007: 212). However, Ransome argues that the analysis of a literary text as a parody and an influence is neither criticism nor discourse analysis (quoted in Akwanya 2007: 212). In Kristeva’s explanation, the relationship between that particular text and other general texts of culture is grounded in culture. In other words, its being a ‘discursive circuit’ is because it is speech

act in its cultural production. It also intersects with other texts of culture as a means for the dissemination of cultural ideology. As Akwanya explains it further, the literary text is an ideologeme. It is not necessarily conscious of itself as “projecting a socially sanctioned world view, in the way that *Things Fall Apart*, for example, seems to be. But it cannot help assimilating into its own spaces utterances and sequences from the general text, or in some way making reference to them” (2007: 214).

In the application of Julia Kristeva’s view that a symbol evokes a universal transcendence to Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, we can then say that “the flower, coloured a deep shade of purple that was almost blue” (*Purple Hibiscus* 128) is a symbolic object, which represents liberty. The blooming of the purple hibiscuses, “the sleepy, oval-shape buds in the front yard” (253) is the symbol of the readiness of Jaja to rebel against his father’s iron-fist authority, after experiencing what it means to be free at Auntie Ifeoma’s house. Other symbols in the text also include Eugene’s heavy missal, which he flings at Jaja for not going to receive Holy Communion, Papa-Nnukwu’s shrine which Kambili says resembles the grotto at Saint Agnes Church and Mama’s dancing figurines, which the missal breaks into pieces as it lands on the *étagère*.

Adichie’s texts espouse the theme of cultural dispossession or dislocation of the colonized. And this is one of the essential themes already articulated in the general texts of the same culture reflected in such works as Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* and Obimkaram Echewa’s *The Land’s Lord*. There are two extreme positions: extreme Catholicism and the total annihilation of Igbo culture and maintaining Igbo Traditional religion and other cultural values. These two extreme positions of religious intolerance and tolerance are symbolized in two characters: Eugene Achike and his own father, Papa-

Nnukwu. Between these two extreme views is the appearance of the figure with a double destination, Jaja. This is also the case with *Half of a Yellow Sun* which articulates the theme of cultural dispossession of the characters' in a brutal civil war, which is ignited and stoked by colonialism, a theme that has been explored in other Nigerian Civil War novels like Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*, Iyayi's *Heroes* and Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*.

The economic and political dispossession of the characters in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the cause of the civil war in that novel. Colonialism, which is primarily based on the maximal economic and political exploitation of the colonized, is implicated as the cause of the three-year-long war. Despite the glaring disparities between the Northern and Southern protectorates, Britain decides to merge them as a country in 1914. As Olanna observes, "When she got to Kano, it struck her once again how different it was from Lagos, from Nsukka, from her hometown Umuunnachi, how different the North as a whole was from the South" (37). It is suggested that there are about three hundred tribes which constitute Nigeria before British occupation. And "they exist as independent countries, separated by differences in culture, language, social and political institutions" (Nwabueze 1982: 79). These diverse entities are merged by the colonial state, an "authoritarian, a benignly brutal dictatorship designed to benefit Britain" (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 204 - 205). As Britain hands over power to the natives, it ensures that no stone is left unturned for the political domination of the North over the South, particularly the Southeastern region of the country, which before colonization is a republican entity. This is achieved through the rigging of elections in favour of the Northern politicians, the tampering with census figures to favour the North, and handing over the army to Northern army officers. At her

withdrawal, according to Okeoma, it sets the stage for the political crisis and civil war, which in Karl Marx's dialectical and historical materialism is a revolution. It is a revolution where the providers of the wealth of the nation, Biafrans, are dispossessed by the North that holds the political leadership of the country. The Biafrans, therefore, declare independence after being massacred in the North, because the head of state, "Gowon pledged a miserable amount for more than two million refugees. Did he think it was chickens that have died and it is the surviving relatives of those chickens who have returned home" (173-174)?

3.4 **The Rough Beast**

Having seen the theoretical framework for psychological, economic/political and cultural dispossession of the individual, we can now look at the consequential actions and omissions of the dispossessed characters as a result of their dispossession and psychopathological disorders. In other words, any form of dispossession, by whatever causal factor, ends in the likelihood of the production of a rough beast. Nicholas Amechi Akwanya and Virgy Anohu in *50 Years of the Nigerian Novel* trace the origin of this figure of anarchy and violence, the rough beast, to William Butler Yeats's poem, *The Second Coming*. The personal markings of this ironical and central symbol, which "slouches towards Bethlehem to be born" (Yeats quoted in Jowitt 284), are its lion's body with the head of a man and its gaze as pitiless as the sun. Chinua Achebe, the first novelist of note from Africa, adopts the title of his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, from Yeats' work. According to Akwanya and Anohu, there are also characters in the work like **Evil Forest** and the other ancestral masks of Umuofia who have the power to deal destruction and death to anybody

and at any time. Also the new social order, symbolized by the white District Commissioner and Mr. Smith, may also be seen as the masked spirit of the day after he has fettered and weakened the old order in Umuofia by condoning the unmasking of one of the **egwugwu**, the spirit of the clan. In Achebe's *Arrow of God*, the *Ogbazuluobodo* like *egwugwu* is a masked spirit and is described thus:

As a divine form, the original rough beast in *Arrow of God* is not Obi Ikedi, but the ancestral mask. We see this, for instance, in *Ogbazuluobodo* sequence, where the night mask Ayaka is constituted. At this moment of constitution, an exchange occurs. Once the regalia are put on Obika and the ritual words pronounced on him, the human substance gives way, as it were. In its place a divine form has appeared... (Akwanya and Anohu 161).

Akwanya and Anohu further argue that the transformation in which a divinity comes has taken a historical dimension in *Arrow of God*, in the appearance of the white man as the "masked spirit of the day which Obika must treat with the respect and circumstance it claims for itself" (ibid 162). From the white man, the masked spirit in the Nigerian novel changes after independence to educated Africans and military rulers with regard to the spatial settings of the literary texts. They further stress that the appearance of this 'lone wolf' can be seen in every society where there are two categories of individuals. The first are those who escape the power of the normalizing social discourse. These cannot unbalance the system. On the contrary, the second group consists of individuals, who originate social crises and convolutions. These, they designated as **Rough Beasts**, whom they differentiated from such historic figures as Okonkwo and Ezeulu (153).

Both critics also emphasize the essential characteristics of the rough beasts in the Nigerian novel, which may or may not originate the crisis or social convolutions, but simply are beneficiaries from the upheavals. One, they are priests of violence who serve only their own interests and to realize these, people are expendable. The coming of the rough beast is marked at the socio-political level with war and violence, and it has some implications at the cultural level because there will be a drowning of all ceremonies of innocence as the best lack conviction and the worst are full of passionate intensity (Akwanya and Anohu 2001). They further suggest that “Anarchy in this vast scale of social and psychological convulsion is how the Nigerian Civil War is textualized in many of these novels” (153). Two, the rough beast is comparable to the Machiavellian prince who does not subscribe to the social contract and the common interest. His only goal is to acquire power and to dispense it unrestrained. He unleashes it on those who question his power or disobey him. For example, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, the rough beasts are Eugene Achike, the Head of State and the Sole Administrator who deal with other characters and groups brutally. Three, these rough beasts do not operate alone. They have agents whom they use to perpetuate their power and carry out very extensive violence on the consciousness of the community. The rough beasts and their agents are described thus:

This silent revolution will equally unveil a figure of violence, the ‘lone wolf’, Demakin, ‘that self-effacing priest of violence’ who Ofeyi begins from the moment of their first meeting refers to mentally as ‘The Dentist’ (22). This element of violence he concedes to the Aiyero is necessary for the Cartel had killers and used

them; the Dentist would redress the imbalance, at least to some extent (23) (Akwanya and Anohu 151).

From the foregoing statement from Akwanya and Anohu's elaboration of the career of the rough beast in Wole Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*, it is clear that the beasts will not act alone without agents and contacts. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Kevin and the soldiers are Eugene Achike's and the Head of State's agents respectively. Besides, they suggest that the people see the rough beast as a divine form. And this is possible because of the symbolism of power associated with him. According to them, power is "one of the intuitions of mythic thought conditioned by either of two emotions: fear or hope" (ibid 161). The presumption of the divinity of the rough beast by the people because of his power can be seen in *Purple Hibiscus*, where naïve Kambili sees her father as an epitome of divinity, and holiness until she goes to Auntie Ifeoma's house, and interacts with others; it then dawns on her that he is a brute. Also in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Ugwu sees Professor Ezeka as a divine form because of his position in the Biafran civil service. Moreover, because of this perception of the people of the rough beast as a divine form, they concede him whatever he wants and allow his power to run unchecked. However, at times, there are those who do not recognize his divinity and these return his violence with violence. This is seen in *Purple Hibiscus*, where Eugene Achike's family, whom he has tyrannized for a very long time, poisons him and he dies like a fowl. The same treatment is also given to the Sarduana of Sokoto in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, who is slaughtered like a ram during the first coup. The powers of the rough beasts cannot be denied as their actions leave their victims in terrible states of pathological disorder as can be seen, for examples, in Eugene Achike's family members when he is alive and after his death and also in Olanna and Odenigbo during the Biafran war.

CHAPTER FOUR

CAUSAL FACTORS OF DISPOSSESSION IN ADICHIE'S FICTION

Nature or heredity and nurture or environment are implicated in psychic, economic/political and cultural dispossession of characters in Adichie's two literary texts. It is a character's behaviour – action, speech and thought – that reflects his state of dispossession. Different schools of thought in psychology have different views on the causes of human behaviour. According to the biological perspective, physiological or genetic factors influence human behaviour. Scarr agrees with this view when he states that the environment cannot change genotype, that is, our specific genetic structure, but it does interact with it to produce changes in behaviour (1992). To psychodynamic perspective championed by Sigmund Freud, the causes of human behaviour are to be sought in intrapsychic factors, which include traumatic childhood experiences that are repressed and unconscious processes and motivations. In this theory, it is also suggested that all ego strivings are mixed with libidinal component. In the cognitive school of psychology, human behaviour is said to be rooted in dysfunctional and irrational thought pattern. It is claimed that the content of the mental structures of the mind and the way information is processed and retrieved show that humans are rational information-processors and problem-solvers, whose higher mental processes allow them to think, judge, imagine and plan. The radical behaviourists also claim that inner or biological factors do not shape human behaviour, but environmental factors and past experiences. In B.F Skinner's view, "A person does not act upon the world, the world acts upon him" (1977: 211). According to another radical behaviourist:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specialized world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee you that you take anyone of them at random and train to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations and race of his ancestors (Watson 82).

The humanistic perspective, on the other hand, de-emphasizes the determinate assumptions of psychoanalysis and behaviourism. It stresses the role of unconscious motives and freedom on human nature and behaviour and argues that there is an active force in every human being towards growth and self-actualization, that is, the reaching of one's potentials. According to Ronald Smith, when the "human personality unfolds in a benign and supportive environment which allows these creative forces free reign, the positive inner nature of a person emerges" (1993: 18).

The five perspectives whose views are briefly mentioned above give rise to four classes of casual factors in human behaviour – biological, intrapsychic, cognitive and environmental behavioural factors. Most psychologists recognize that to unravel the causes of human behaviour, the four causal factors complement one another. It is suggested that:

It has been long recognized that an "either-or" approach to heredity and environment is an exercise in futility because most behaviours are an *interaction* between genetic factors and environment. The prevailing view today is that the genetic factors create a range of possibilities within which environmental factors operate to positively or negatively affect characteristics and behaviours (Smith 97).

The importance of briefly looking at the views of the five perspectives with their four causal factors is to appropriate them, where they are necessary, in the unravelling of the causes of dispossession in Adichie's texts as only adopting Freud's psychodynamic approach where characters are at the mercy of sexual and aggressive drives or repressed childhood experiences may not be enough to do justice to the research. This is done because "some of the perspectives have a very wide range of application than others... the psychodynamic and humanistic perspectives have a narrower focus on personality and its development, motivation and disordered behaviour" (Smith 19).

4.3 Nurture as Causal Factor of Dispossession

In *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, nurture or environment is implicated as the cause of psychic, economic/political and cultural dispossession of characters in both novels. For example, Eugene Achike's sources of dispossession will be studied in great detail to show how it is implicated, because he is a character whose dispossession has traumatic consequences on other characters in *Purple Hibiscus*. He is presented as an unparalleled rough beast by Adichie. The causes of his dispossession have been a subject of speculation by other characters in his fictive environment. For Papa-Nnukwu, his dispossession is solely because of an environmental factor: his being nurtured by white missionaries at a tender age. He laments the source of Eugene's rejection of him to his daughter and grandchildren thus, "*Nekenem*, look at me. My son owns that house that can fit in every man in Abba, and yet many times I have nothing to put in my plate. I should not have let him follow those missionaries" (*Purple Hibiscus* 83). When Auntie Ifeoma protests that the source of her brother's psychic and cultural dispossession cannot be

blamed on the missionaries alone, he insists, “Still, I say that it was the missionaries that misled my son” (84). He recounts the history of Christianity in Abba and its bizarre doctrines and dogmas, which misled his son:

In the afternoon, they gathered the children under the ukwa tree in the mission and taught them their religion. I did not join them, *kpa*, but I went sometimes to see what they were doing. One day I said to them, where is this god you worship? They said he was like *Chukwu*, they said he was in the sky. I asked them, Who is the person who was killed, the person that hangs on the wood outside the mission? They said that he was the son but that the father and the son were equal. It was then that I knew that the white man was mad. The father and the son are equal? *Tufia!* Do you not see? That is why Eugene can disregard me, because he thinks we are equal (84).

As a traditionalist, one of his prayer points is this, “Chineke! Bless my son, Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him” (168). Because Papa-Nnukwu believes that Eugene is brainwashed by the white missionaries, when he hears that Father Amadi is going on a missionary work to Europe, he implores the young priest, “It is good my son. But you must never lie to them. Never teach them to disregard their fathers” (172). Also in his folk story to his grandchildren for the reason why the tortoise has cracked shell, he underscores the virtue of respect for one’s parents that Chima remarks, “I could never eat Mommy” (158).

Anikwenwa, who is as old as Papa-Nnukwu, but Eugene dramatically sends him out from his compound because he is a heathen, also believes that nurture is the cause of his dispossession. As he is ushered out of his compound, he warns him, “*I fukwa gi!* You are

like a fly blindly following the corpse to the grave” (70). In the old man’s assessment of Eugene’s religious fanaticism and bizarre way, his sheepish following of Western values is the problem. This attitude is seen in his unalloyed admiration of his father-in-law.

According to the narrator:

Papa still talked about him often, his eyes proud, as if Grandfather were his own father. He opened his eyes before many of our people did, Papa would say; he was one of the few who welcomed the missionaries. Do you know how quickly he learnt to speak English? When he became an interpreter, do you know how many souls he helped win? Why, he converted most of Abba himself ! He did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now (67-68)!

Aunty Ifeoma is not also left out in the speculation on the causes of his dispossession which reflects in his strange behaviour. She believes that her elder brother’s dispossession is caused by both nature and nurture. However, the second is implicated when she says that he is “too much of a colonial product” (13). This is seen in his quest to appear civilized. According to the naive narrator, “He hardly spoke Igbo, and although Jaja and I spoke it with Mama at home, he did not like us to speak it in public. We had to sound civilized in public, he told us; we had to speak English” (13). She also says, “Papa liked it when the villagers tried to speak English around him. He said it showed they had good sense” (60).

It is not only these three characters who implicate nurture in Eugene’s dispossession; both Beatrice and Amaka do. However, they hold a slightly different view from others. To both, the source of Eugene’s behaviour should be sought in his stressful lifestyle. Beatrice argues with Aunty Ifeoma that he pays the school fees of more than a

hundred people. As she further reveals, “He is carrying more than any man should carry. Do you know what Ade’s death did to him? It is too much for one person” (250). But she counters her argument, “When Ifediora was alive, there were times, *nwunye m*, when the university did not pay salaries for months. Ifediora and I had nothing, eh, yet he never raised a hand to me” (250). Amaka also suggests that stress is his problem. She argues that he is not a bad man, after all, he pays the grandfather’s funeral expenses, but he is one of “those people who cannot deal with stress” (251). Though Obiora wants to object to her line of argument; Kambili’s presence forces him to show decorum, and he keeps quiet. In Amaka’s penetrating analysis of Eugene’s abnormal behaviour, environmental factors of catering for several dependants and Ade’s brutal murder must have triggered off his “biological and intrapsychic predisposition” (Smith 519) to violence. Reuben Osborn explains people’s vulnerability to stressful life events thus, “Our society is replete with circumstances which might well touch off the neurotic and psychotic tendencies in the constitutionally sensitive” (1965:49).

If we have to take the analysis of the causal factors of Eugene’s dispossession as suggested by Papa-Nnukwu, Anikwenwa, Aunty Ifeoma, Beatrice Achike and Amaka, we can also say that nature/heredity and nurture/environment are at the root of his dispossession. This shows the relevance of our earlier opinion that the five perspectives on human nature and behaviour will be appropriated in this study. As it has been suggested, “all lead to different ideas about the causes and treatment of behavioural disorder... all these perspectives have been useful in identifying the multiple causal factors that may be involved in abnormal behaviour” (Smith 449).

Therefore, we may examine the causes of Eugene Achike's dispossession, which is reflected in his behaviour, in the light of Sigmund Freud's claim that the cause of abnormal behaviour is attributable to repressed childhood traumatic experiences, which exert influence on the individual's personality in adult life. As Reuben Osborn explains Freud's view:

Thus a great deal of childhood life said to be forgotten, in the sense of having faded with the passage of time, has in Freud's view, been repressed....What is important in Freudian theory is that, although repressed, these childhood experiences may continue to exert an important influence on every thought and action. Repression, Freud suggested, is the psychological equivalent of the process in the body by which a protective wall of tissue isolates a diseased part from the rest of the body (1965:4).

Eugene's dispossession, therefore, is partly attributable to the method of nurturing he receives from the missionaries. His hands are scalded when he is caught masturbating as a teenager by a priest. This severe punishment leaves an indelible trauma on his psyche, which he has repressed. Kambili never offers any opinion as the cause of her father's abnormal behaviour, but she is aware of his trauma. She says naively that as her father scolds her at school for coming second in her class, "There were stories in his eyes that I would never know" (42). Part of the stories in his eyes is that of the repressed traumatic experience for natural and unconscious sexual desire at the oedipal stage of his psychosexual development. He reveals to her:

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. He asked me to boil

water for tea. He poured the water in a bowl and soaked my hands in it....I never sinned against my own body again. The good father did that for my own good (196).

From this narration, therefore, he is not allowed to master the Oedipus complex at a critical stage in his development. Several consequences flow from this unnatural disruption of a natural desire. According to Freud, "Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex, anyone who fails to do so, falls a victim of neurosis" (quoted in Easthope 129). A research finding by a neurophysiologist confirms Freud's claim:

I have devoted a great deal of study to the relationship between violence and pleasure. I am now convinced that the deprivation of physical sensory pleasure is the principal root cause of violence. Laboratory experiments with animals show that pleasure and violence have a reciprocal relationship, that is, the presence of one inhibits the other.... Among human beings, a pleasure-prone personality rarely displays aggressive behaviour, and a violent personality has little to tolerate, experience or enjoy sensuously pleasing activities. As either violence or pleasure goes up, the other goes down (Prescott 12).

These two views are correct as both are seen in Eugene's almost asexual life, which must be the reason for his violence on the members of his nuclear family. When he is punished for masturbation, his sexual drives are driven underground and he sublimates them with activities which are acceptable to the society: religious fanaticism and his business acumen. Kambili says when he reveals his experience as a teenager, "I did not know he committed

any sins, that he could commit any sins” (196). She does not also associate any sexual life between him and her mother. In her naive imagination:

I could not even think of her and Papa together, on the bed they shared....When I thought of affection between them, I thought of them exchanging the sign of peace at mass, the way Papa would handle her tenderly in his arms after they had clasped hands (*Purple Hibiscus* 21).

His repressed traumatic experience still drives his actions and behaviour. His refusal to give Jaja the key to his room is to ensure he does not masturbate. There is, without doubt, a fundamental connection between his repressed trauma and sexual drives and the violence he unleashes on his family. Prescott further asserts that there is a nexus between the deprivation of body contact and movement and emotional disturbances such as depression, sexual aberration, hyperactivity, autism, drug abuse, violence and aggression (1975). Besides, Steele and Pollock trace an unbroken link between sex and violence. In their study of three generations of abused children, they find out that parents who abuse their children are physically abused as children. Women among them never experience sexual orgasm, and the men who do so have unsatisfactory sex life (quoted in Offordile 43).

When Eugene violently beats any member of his family, he relives the trauma of his own childhood abuse. After beating his wife and taking her to hospital for treatment, the narrator observes that as he walks into her room that night, “His eyes were swollen and red, and somehow that made him look younger, more vulnerable”(34). Again she reveals that after beating her, Mama and Jaja for her eating ten minutes before the Eucharistic fast, “Then the belt stopped and Papa stared at the leather in his hand. His face crumpled; his eyelids sagged” (102). He also relives his childhood trauma as he scalds his children’s feet

for staying in the same house with their grandfather whom he judges as a heathen destined for hellfire. Kambili recollects that as he pours the hot water as if he is conducting an experiment and wants to see what will happen, “He was crying now, tears streaming down his face” (194). Moreover, as he disfigures Jaja’s little finger at ten years for failing to be the best in his First Holy Communion class, according to Kambili, who details his trauma naively:

Papa took him upstairs and locked the door. Jaja in tears, came out supporting his left hand with his right, and Papa drove him to St. Agnes hospital. Papa was crying, too, as he carried Jaja in his arms like a baby all the way to the car (145).

As stated earlier, there are consequences which flow from his admission to Kambili that he once committed the sin of masturbation as a teenager. Not only that he is punished, he sees his punishment as being justified. His own actions as a beast, an agent of victimization to his family, cannot be attributed only to Freud’s repressed childhood experiences. Therefore, it is not only external factor but also inner disposition that plays out in the acceptance of his punishment. According to two cognitive psychologists, Albert Ellis (1962) and Aaron Beck (1976), distress and maladaptive behaviour are caused not by external situations but by what we tell ourselves about those situations. Eugene, therefore, may have been scalded by the priest for masturbation, but since he justifies the action of the priest thus, “The good father did that for my own good” (196). He does not hesitate in carrying out the same “experiment” on his children for walking into sin. Therefore, there is an inner disposition in him to accept unquestionably the priest’s action and to apply it on his children. In Lewiston’s view, “The organism and the environment are inseparably

determined. The environment is not a structure imposed on living beings from outside but is in fact a reaction of the biology of the species” (quoted in Nisker 198-199).

Apart from sexual indulgence which Eugene abhors, he also rejects his culture and its values. He prohibits his children from speaking Igbo language because he presumes it is the language of the uncivilized. He sees the young priest who sings Igbo songs during Mass as “Godless leader of one of these Pentecostal churches that spring up everywhere like mushrooms” (29). He admires Father Benedict’s racist attitude when he insists:

The credo and Kyrie be recited only in Latin; Igbo was not acceptable. Also hand clapping was to be kept at minimum, lest the solemnity of mass be compromised. But he allowed offertory songs in Igbo; he called them native songs, when he said ‘native’ his straight-line lips turned down the corner to form an inverted U (4).

Eugene Achike in order to appear ‘civilized’ does not confess his sins to his parish priest at Abba because he does not want to make his confession in Igbo language. Another reason is that he does not seem to him to be as spiritual as Father Benedict. Ironically and unknown to him, his favourite priest is a pedophile who defiles his son. Jaja flees from the priest and does not want to be alone with him during confession. Kambili says, “Jaja took the shortest time. When he came out, still crossing himself as if he had been in such a hurry to leave the room” (104-105). Also Jaja’s refusal to take Holy Communion is because of his sexual advances towards him. The narrator recollects that Jaja insists he prefers death to taking Holy Communion because, “The wafer gives me bad breath... and the priest keeps touching my mouth and it nauseates me” (6).

Apart from his contempt for Igbo language, he despises Traditional religion and other cultural values as represented by his own father, Papa-Nnukwu. The cause of his dispossession of culture is nurture: a result of the imprint of colonial legacies on his mind. He abandons the tenets of his own religion, “God is Love”, when he turns poor and old Anikwenwa out of his compound because he is a “worshipper of idols” (70). His treatment of Papa-Nnukwu is worse than Anikwenwa’s. Despite his wealth, Papa-Nnukwu lives in a hovel and eats “flaky fufu and watery soup bereft of chunks of fish or meat” (64). He ignores him when he is going blind and when he is sick and brought to Aunty Ifeoma’s house, he hurriedly takes his children away so that they do not share the same house with a pagan. He does not shed tears at his death, but his only interest is whether he is converted to Catholicism before his death. He does not take part in his burial because of the pagan rites that are involved. He simply tells his family, “I sent Ifeoma money for the burial. I gave her all she needed” (198).

Interestingly, he sacrifices so much to acquire his Western education which has left an indelible imprint on him. He does not also accept that his actions and behaviour differ markedly from those of other people in his culture. His source of neurosis or psychosis is also his departure from his cultural norms which Carl Jung’s opinion has been stated earlier in the thesis. Eugene pours encomium on the pious as he does not see the lopsidedness of his training under them. He tells Kambili he is indebted to them because:

I would be nothing today but for the priests and sisters at the mission. I was a houseboy for the parish priest for two years. Yes, a houseboy. Nobody dropped me off at school. I walked eight miles to Nimo until I finished my elementary

education. I was a gardener for the priests while I attended St. Gregory Secondary School (47).

Jaja and Kambili's behaviour reflects only nurture as the causal factor in dispossession. B.F Skinner and John Watson's opinion is that the environment and learning shape human behaviour. They also prove right the claim that punishment and reward affect the behaviour of the individual (Rachlin 1991). In other words, Jaja and Kambili's behaviour reflects the effect of poor parenting and the history of child abuse, which are two environmental factors in human behaviour. Adichie uses them to show that dispossession of the individual is a chain reaction: Jaja and Kambili's dispossession is as a result of their father's earlier dispossession. Their defective foundational upbringing manifests the acts of the beast on its victims. And to do this, Adichie uses the children of Aunty Ifeoma, particularly Amaka and Obiora, as a foil to Kambili and Jaja to locate the sources of disordered behaviour, which is a reflection of dispossession. Eugene is materially well to do and the children lack nothing. They have everything that money can buy and eat lavishly prepared meals. Kambili says, "The soup was thick with chunks of boiled beef and dried fish and dark green onugbu leaves" (11-12). Their food is also served in dainty plates and the floor of their house is marbled. On the contrary, their cousins are materially impoverished as their mother is widowed and her salaries are not paid regularly. The university quarters where they occupy is not as imposing as Eugene's houses at Abba and Enugu. Their mother cooks "rotten meat in a spicy stew" (249); they scarcely eat meat and when they do, they are in tiny pieces unlike Kambili and Jaja's chunks of meat. Their plates are chipped and everything about them is impoverished. However, the difference in their behaviour – Jaja and Kambili's silence and borderline personality disorder and Amaka, Obiora and Chima's

liveliness and freedom – is as a result of the difference in the environment in which the two parents, Eugene and Aunty Ifeoma, bring up the two sets of children.

Eugene's parenting style is authoritarian and he controls and restricts his children highly. This method of upbringing is seen in the type of compound he has at Enugu and at Abba. The impression one gets from Kambili's description of their compound in Enugu is that they are quartered in a beautiful prison. According to her, "Our compound is large enough to hold a hundred people dancing atilogwu, spacious enough for each dancer to do the usual somersaults and land on the next dancer's shoulders. The compound walls, topped by electric wires, were so high I could not see the bus driving by on our street" (9). The same atmosphere is also seen in her description of her school, when she says, "The walls that surrounded Daughters of the Immaculate Heart Secondary School were very high, similar to our compound walls, but instead of coiled electrified wires, they were topped by jagged pieces of green glass jutting out" (45). As if their caging in is not enough with the high walls, they have Kevin to drive them around and to report their every move. In their home, there are gatemen to monitor their exit and entrance and those of others. In Kambili's school, the sisters are there to ensure that "he is happy with my progress at Daughters of Immaculate Heart" (46). Because of his generous donations to the school, the principal, Sister Margaret, walks up to Kambili's class to see Eugene and tells him that he should "let her know if he needs anything" (46).

He also ensures that they live a secluded and routine life. There is time for everything in the house, particularly for Kambili and Jaja. He likes order and ensures that the daily schedules pasted on the walls in their rooms have their names written on them. In the schedules written meticulously by their father "in black ink, cut across each day,

separating study from siesta, siesta from family time, family time from eating, eating from prayer, prayer from sleep. He revised them often” (24). Their daily life is so regimented that Kambili wonders “when Papa would draw up a schedule for the baby, my new brother, if he would do it right after the baby was born or wait until he was a toddler” (23). The problem about the schedule which specifies the routine lives of the children is that it leaves off the most important things that would have helped them. They do not exercise or play with other children; they do not listen to music or watch television; they are not also involved in gender-role activities. For example, Kambili does not know how to cook, how to peel yam, how to wash plates and how to pound cocoyam. When they come to Auntie Ifeoma’s house at Nsukka with their schedules for the short stay, she takes them from them and starts retraining them.

Eugene’s authoritarian control and restriction of his children is also seen in the fact that they do not have friends in Enugu, at Abba and in school. Kambili does not play with her classmates at school. During break periods, instead of going out to play with other girls, she goes to the library to read. After school hours, she cannot go home with other children, but will be in a hurry to go out and be taken home by Kevin. Because of her complete isolation from her school-mates, they nickname her a “backyard snob” (49). Besides, Eugene does not allow them to stay more than fifteen minutes in their grandfather’s house. The fifteen minutes they are allowed to stay in his house, they are warned not to eat or drink there because he is a pagan. They also do not have much interaction with their first cousins – Amaka, Obiora and Chima. Their aunt has to beg their father to allow them to visit her family at Nsukka. The totality of their isolation from their age-mates and other adults is seen in Eugene’s statement when Kevin is about to drive

them to Nsukka. He hands them their schedules, hugs each of them with shaky hands, and says, “I have never been without you two for more than a day” (109).

Eugene ensures that his children are further dispossessed of their culture, when he bans them from speaking Igbo in public. Kambili’s school does not allow the speaking of Igbo language or the singing of the national anthem or the pledge. The white reverend sisters who run the school feel that these are barbaric. He also does not allow folk-stories to be told in his house. They do not listen to music, and Igbo songs are not sung in his house. They cannot go to cultural festivals like the Aro Festival at Abagana because he sees them as pagan rituals. They have to confess whenever they watch such or enjoy the watching of such or eat food or take drinks offered to idols. The highest form of dispossession which Jaja feels is his not being initiated into the masquerade cult. This is the cultural method of a boy’s transition into manhood. Eugene denies his son this cultural initiation because it is pagan. However, Auntie Ifeoma who is also a Christian initiates Obiora, who is about three years younger than Jaja. At the Aro festival, Jaja asks silly questions and his grandfather snaps at him, “Shh! These are *mmuo*, spirits! Don’t speak like a woman” (87)! This rebuke, which has an undertone of feminization of Jaja, because he is not initiated into the cult, dawns on Kambili that Jaja would have been initiated. She says:

I looked at Jaja and wondered if the dimness in his eyes was shame. I suddenly wished, for him, that he had done the *ima mmuo*, the initiation into the spirit world. I knew very little about that; women were not supposed to know anything at all, since it was the first step towards the initiation into manhood (87).

Apart from Eugene's poor parenting style, another twin pillar of causal factors of dispossession in Jaja and Kambili is the history of child abuse. These two children of Eugene Achike grow in the shadows of his violent beatings on them and their mother. Jaja's little finger on his left hand is disfigured not because of an accident as his family always tells people, but because his father beat him for failing two questions at his First Holy Communion test. For their mother's excuse to stay in the car because of nausea she feels on the Pentecost Sunday when they are going to see Father Benedict in his house after Mass, he beats her violently until she collapses. Jaja and Kambili stay in their rooms and hear, "Swift, heavy thuds on my parents' hand-carved bed-room door" (32) as he batters their mother. They are also helpless as:

I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulders like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border (33).

The only thing they do when he takes her to hospital is to mop the trickle of blood on the floor. The following day, their mother comes back from the hospital and tells them that she has a miscarriage. Apart from being witnesses to this type of violence on their mother, Beatrice also tells Auntie Ifeoma and her children in Kambili's presence how Eugene breaks a small sturdy table on her belly while she is pregnant and she miscarries again. There is also the history of the brutal beating of the whole family at Abba because Kambili takes cornflakes ten minutes before Eucharistic fast. As Kambili recounts the gory incident:

He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his

shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back (102).

The family's history of violence and child abuse are endless. Kambili and Jaja's feet are scalded by their father because they sleep in the same house at Aunty Ifeoma's with their grandfather, whom their father calls a pagan. Kambili narrates her experience thus, "The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed" (194). Though she and Jaja do not talk about their padded feet, she says, "Fear. I was familiar with fear, yet each time I felt it, it was never the same as the other times, as though it came in different flavours and colours" (196). And the harshest colours and bitterest flavour of the fear to her is her father beating her into a state of unconsciousness when she tries to save the shredded painting of Papa-Nnukwu. Kambili describes the worst child abuse she has ever experienced from her father thus, "The stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal landed on open skin on my side, my back, my legs....More slaps. A salty wetness warmed my mouth, closed my eyes and slipped away into quiet" (211). In comparing the two violent beatings, she says, "It was like the hot water Papa had poured on my feet, except now it was my entire body that burnt" (211). When she recovers consciousness in the hospital, she recognizes her father for what he is: a brute. And she refuses to go home, because she is not sure of her safety.

The consequence of their father's authoritarian upbringing is the reason for their being withdrawn and silent. In their house, according to Kambili, "Our steps on the stairs were as measured and as silent as our Sundays" (31). Ade Coker also complains to their father that they are too silent and this is not a virtue to be extolled. Father Amadi also

notices the defect in their upbringing and he tells her after observing her for days, “I haven’t seen you laugh or smile today, Kambili” (139). Aunty Ifeoma is also aware that Jaja and Kambili have problems, because as Father Amadi tells her, “She was worried about you, that you could not hold a conversation with even the children upstairs” (280). Amaka tells her mother bluntly which Kambili overhears, “Are you sure they are not abnormal, mom? Kambili just behaved like an *atulu* when my friends came” (141-142). Eugene’s authoritarian method of child-rearing makes them to have low self-esteem and negative response to their peers.

On the contrary, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie uses Aunty Ifeoma’s children to prove a psychologist’s opinion that “Childrearing practices do appear to affect children’s personality and social development” (Smith 130). Her own method of bringing up her children is radically different from that of her brother’s. She is an authoritative parent who exhibits warmth, care, love and control over her children. Though she is a poor widow who cannot afford much for her children, there is an air of freedom in her home. What Kambili witnesses in her house amaze her, and underlines the basic difference between the two families. According to her:

Laughter floated over my head. Words spurted from everywhere often seeking and not getting any response. We always spoke with a purpose back home, especially at the table, but my cousins simply seemed to speak and speak and speak (120).

Not only that her family has a lot of freedom, Aunty Ifeoma always ensures that one of the prayer points is that “We might find peace and laughter today” (127). Besides, unlike Eugene who makes choices and decisions on behalf of his children, she allows her own

children to do so. And that is the reason Amaka refuses to be confirmed with an English name, because it will betray her cultural identity and uphold colonial legacies.

Despite the freedom she allows her children, there is also control. When Obiora rudely interrupts her discussion with her colleague, Chiaku, when she tries to dissuade her not to leave the country with “That is really unrealistic that pep – rally nonsense” (245), she instructs him to go into the room and wait for her. As her friend leaves, she storms into the room and slaps him. The most important thing is that she does not punish the child for punishment’s sake, but she explains the reason for it. In Obiora’s case, she tells him, “I do not quarrel with your disagreeing with my friend, I quarrel with how you have disagreed. I do not raise disrespectful children in this house, do you hear me” (245)? It is while at Aunty Ifeoma’s house that Kambili notices the yawning gap between the parenting styles of the two biological children of Papa-Nnukwu. As she says after observing the encouragement Father Amadi gives to indigent boys he coaches in football:

It was what Aunty Ifeoma did to my cousins, I realized then, setting higher and higher jumps for them in the way she talked to them in what she expects from them. She did it all the time believing they would scale the rod. And they did. It was different for Jaja and me. We did not scale the rod because we believed we could, we scaled it because we were terrified we couldn’t (226).

Through the actions and reactions of these two sets of children who are raised in two different environmental settings, it seems that nurture or environment is the most important casual factor in dispossession and it has devastating consequences on the causation of psychopathological or abnormal behaviour. For example, while fourteen-year-old Obiora can challenge four hefty security men who come to the flat to search it, seventeen-year-old

Jaja cannot stop his father from brutally beating his mother. The only thing he does is to listen to the banging of his mother, probably counting the number of times it happens, watching his father from the safety of the staircase as he slings her over his shoulder to take her to the hospital and helps Kambili clean “up the trickle of blood which trailed as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red water colour” (33). Again while seven-year-old Chima after listening to the grandfather’s folklore about animals that kill their mothers during famine except Dog, which abhors the idea, and says that he will never kill his mother, Jaja does not rebuke the mother for killing the father. Not only that he readily accepts his mother’s crime, his only regret is this, “I should have taken care of Mama” (289). Indeed, he ought not to blame himself but his father for the defective environment which he provides for his personality to unfold. He should have defended his family like Obiora, if not for his father’s systematic feminization of his personality, which we shall see in the next chapter.

As we have hinted several times, Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* is not only the story of a family dictator but also institutional and national ones. Aunty Ifeoma and other lecturers who are critical of the Sole Administrator are harassed and thrown out of the system. Also the military government which the home dictator, Eugene Achike, fights to a standstill is as brutal as him. The violence in Eugene’s family is replicated in public sphere. The narrator tells the story of Mama’s beating on Pentecost Sunday which leads to her miscarriage with that of the public execution of three drug traffickers. Eugene’s brutal beating of his wife and children at Abba for breaking the Eucharistic fast is immediately followed by the road accident, which happens at the checkpoint as “The second car was crushed to half of its size. A bloodied corpse, a man in blue jeans, lay on the road side” (103). The story of Jaja

of Opobo, who is defiant to British imperialists, and “he refused them controlling all the trade” (144) and is exiled and never returns to his kingdom is immediately followed by Eugene’s brutal beating of Jaja that his little finger on his left hand is gnarled and deformed like a stick. Also the story of his feet-scalding comes immediately after the story of the wasting of Nwankiti Ogechi. Ade Coker’s death is followed by Eugene’s beating of Kambili into a state of unconsciousness. Finally, Eugene’s death from the wife’s poisoning also precedes the story of the Head of State’s as “they say he died atop a prostitute foaming in the mouth and jerking” (296-297). Ironically, Adichie unwittingly underlines the fact that women are the causes of death of brutal patriarchs and suggests that women are evil.

There is the government’s dispossession of the people materially, apart from the violence it metes on the citizens. In the market, Jaja, Kambili and their mother witness a soldier demolishing the traders’ stalls and those who resist are whipped. The offices of the *Standard* is shut down because of its insistence on the exposure of the government’s human rights violations; the country under the military government is one peopled with “Hawkers, girls much younger than I” (45), and beggars who swarmed at the roadside beside “children hawking peeled oranges” (45).

The causal factor of the dispossession of a group as being environmental or nurture is seen in Ade Coker himself. He is extremely defiant of the dictatorial government. However, he is a friendly person, a lover of freedom and very close to his family. The wife enjoys a very warm relationship with him that she “slapped Ade Coker’s shoulder playfully and took the baby from him” (57) when they visit Eugene at Abba. He enjoys playing with his children as Kambili observes, “He was throwing his baby, a perfectly round copy of himself, in the air when he came in. His little daughter was standing close to him, asking

him to throw her in the air too” (57). The day Ade Coker is killed with a package from the Head of State, he is blown up before his “daughter in her primary school uniform, was sitting across the table from him” (207). Because of the shock she gets in seeing her father killed before her, because of the closeness she shares with him, she develops a psychological disorder. According to the narrator, “Ade Coker’s daughter has not talked since her father died. Papa had paid to have her see the best doctors and therapists in Nigeria and abroad” (259). For four months after the death of her father, she is in depression. Even though her mother comes to report to Eugene that she has finally spoken that morning, Jaja tells Kambili, “She will never heal.... She may have started talking now, but she will never heal” (259). Her abnormality, which has left a repressed childhood traumatic experience that will influence her behaviour in future, is not caused by either genetic or unconscious processes within her but solely by nurture. There is a marked difference between her emotional response to her father’s death and Kambili and Jaja’s own to their father’s. According to Kamabili, “It was only Sisi who had cried in the household, loud sobs which had quickly quietened in the face of our bewildered silence” (289). Also Eugene’s wife never mourns his death but is devastated at her son’s detention. Kambili says, “Perhaps it is why they forgive her for not wearing all white or all black for a whole year. Perhaps it is why nobody criticized her for not attending the first-and second-year memorial Masses. For not cutting her hair” (296). There is a contrast between her and Ade Coker’s wife who mourns her husband “by wearing a black wrapper, a black blouse, and a black scarf covering all her hair and most of her forehead” (258).

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, nurture is also implicated as the cause of dispossession of characters as in *Purple Hibiscus*. Like we said earlier, Nigeria and Biafra which fought the

civil war tower above every character in this war epic, as the dispossession of the other characters in the novel is as a result of the dispossession of the two groups. According to the narrators, British colonization in Nigeria, like the other parts of Africa, which it nurtures, is rooted in the superiority of the white race over the Negroes, and maximum exploitation of the colonized and the feminization of the territories. In order to maintain the racial epistemology, Africa's geography, history and civilization are distorted, according to radical Odenigbo. Children are taught in school that Mungo Park discovered the mouth of the River Niger, and they are to recite British literary works that are beyond their African experience. The worst of all racist prejudice is the suggestion that Africans have never had any civilization until their contact with Europeans. However, Igbo-Ukwu roped pots and other cultural artifacts which are stolen and in British museums indicate that, indeed, Africans have had a civilization which dates back to several centuries. According to Richard:

I've been utterly fascinated by these pots since I read about them. The details are quite stunning. It's quite incredible that these people have perfected the complicated art of lost-wax casting during the time of the Viking raids. There is such marvelous complexity in the bronze, just marvelous (111).

The denial of African civilization, according to the narrator, is to rationalize colonization. The most important step in its sustenance is the masculinity of the Empire which is articulated through the symbolic feminization of conquered territories (McClintock 1975). Odenigbo argues with Kainene that the white bring racism into the world to conquer a more humane people, not only that these humane people are conquered, they are seen as monkeys. In Africa and overseas, the black man is humiliated and

dehumanized. Ugwu narrates Odenigbo's conversation with his friends, where he "heard that the world had to do more about the black people killed in Sharpeville" (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 17). In the United States, according to the narrator, black men are hanged, and black children are killed in churches. There is the total reduction of the black man's manhood. Olanna requests Richard as a writer that he "really must write about the horrible things the British did in Kenya....Didn't they cut off testicles" (233)? Richard is irked that his black servant, Harrison, discloses his sexual fling with Olanna to Kainene. Despite his liberalism and humanitarian posturing, the narrator says:

Richard wanted to cane Harrison. It had always appalled him, the thought that some colonial white man flogged black elderly servants. Now, though he felt like doing just as they had done. He longed to make Harrison lie down on the floor and flog, flog, flog him until he learnt to keep his mouth shut (255).

Adichie, however, shows that there is a redefinition of masculinity in the novel that is based on sexuality. Kainene's body, for example, is used as a metaphor for the repossession of the black man's sexuality which has been emasculated by colonization. Majors Udodi and Madu strongly oppose Kainene's friendship with Richard Churchill. Though he is in Biafra during its birth, "Madu saw him as a foreigner" (305). Though Miss Adebayo insists that his eating of African food is a "proof that Richard was an African in his past life" (108), Okeoma does not accept him as one of them as "there was a new and quiet disdain in the way Okeoma stared back" (111) at him, when he shows surprise that the Igbo are capable of making bronzes. The superiority of the white race is demystified when Richard cannot respond to Kainene's eroticism. According to the narrator, the images of sexual impotence are seen here in his erectile dysfunction:

They undressed quickly. His naked body was pressed to hers and yet he was limp. He explored the angles of her collar bones and her hips, all the time willing his body and his mind to work better together, willing his desire to bypass his anxiety. But he did not become hard. He could feel the flaccid weight between his legs (63).

Richard's inability to sustain erection with Kainene happens several times that he has to ask his servants about African herbs for male potency. Even when he achieves erection with Olanna, their love-making is not as fulfilling as Olanna's with Odenigbo. Olanna narrates her sexual experience with him:

She took her dress off. He was on top of her and the carpet pricked her naked back and she felt his mouth limply enclose her nipple. It was nothing like Odenigbo's bites and sucks, nothing like those shocks of pleasure. Richard did not run his tongue over her in that flicking way that made her forget everything; rather when he kissed her belly, she was aware that he was kissing her belly (234).

It is not only the black man that is feminized by the white man; white women are condescending of black women's sexuality. Susan, a British woman, who works with the British Council, throws tantrums when Richard converses with other white women at their parties. However, if he chats with black women, she is not bothered, because as he discovers, she simply assumes "that black women were not threatening to her, were not equal rivals" (55). When she notices that Richard has a crush on Kainene, she is not worried; she only advises him to use condom when having sex with her. Surprisingly, it is

Kainene, who takes Richard permanently away from her, and he stays in Biafra throughout the period of the civil war.

As Britain hands over the leadership of the country, the racism which it nurtures in Nigeria has given birth to ethnicity, which is one of the bequests of colonization which Adichie depicts. In Richard's book within a book, the haunting mantra, "The World Was Silent When We Died", shows the "British preferred the North. The heat there was pleasantly dry; the Hausa-Fulani were narrow-featured and so was superior to the Negroid Southerners, Muslim and therefore as civilized as one could get for natives" (115). To the British during the colonial rule, the Igbo are hated because they are animists, republicans, and worryingly ambitious. This is the opinion of the British as seen in Susan's conversation with Richard. According to the narrator, "She told him that the Hausa in the North were a dignified lot, the Igbo were surly and money-loving and the Yoruba were rather jolly even if they were first rate lickspittles" (55). The British who nurture the country see the Igbo as a rebellious son, and in order to deal with the rebellious son, they start the endorsement of the massacre of the Igbo under colonization in 1945. As they withdraw, they leave no stone unturned to ensure that they hand over political and military power to the North, despite the fact that the North is less educated and less qualified to be given such power. The country after independence, therefore, continues with the divisions which the British nurtures. Odenigbo despite his education prefers ethnicity to nationalism; the Igbo children are not allowed into schools in the North. The Hausa- Fulani prefer to give foreigners jobs, instead of qualified Nigerians from the southern part of the country. That is why Okeoma believes that the British are implicated in the civil war because it is the "British who collected the firewood" (158) for the fire that is burning in the country. However, someone says that

Nigerians cannot be absolved completely because, “They may have collected the firewood, but we lit the match” (158).

It is not only ethnicity that survives independence. There is also the economic exploitation of the country. After independence, the British stay back because of what they can get out of the country. Richard notes that Susan’s friends are “mostly English ex-colonial administrators and business people from John Holt and Kingsway....They discussed cricket, plantations they owned or planned to own, the perfect weather in Jos and the business opportunities in Kaduna” (53). It is for the same economic exploitation of the country that they instigate the North to wage war against Biafra because of the oil deposits in the region. Major Udodi wastes no time when he is introduced to Richard to ask him pointedly, “Are you Kainene’s business associate? Are you in oil” (80)? Apart from the British, another group of economic exploiters of the country are the Arabs. Madu discourages the Ozobias from selling their warehouse at Ikeja to Ahmed because, according to him, “These Syrians and Lebanese already own half of Lagos and they are bloody opportunists in this country” (136). The Nigerian ruling class – both political and military – and their friends step into the shoes of the British in the economic exploitation of the country. Chief Okonji is ready to do anything to entice Olanna as a mistress. Her mother who persuades her to be his mistress tells her proudly, “And do you know, they say he never wears any outfit twice. He gives them to his houseboys once he has worn them” (74). The lace material he gives to Olanna through his driver is the latest lace in Europe. The same houseboys, whom Okonji gives his cast-off clothes, “did not get paid much at the end of the month” (340); yet he wants to give Olanna whatever she demands to be his mistress. Chief Ozobia typifies the attitude of the Nigerian business class, which colludes

with the leaders to exploit the country. Kainene tells Richard that her parents leave the country before the first military coup; however, as things calm down, “Daddy hasn’t wasted anytime in ingratiating himself ” (134). At the party he organizes for the military leaders of the country, Richard tells Kainene, “I see many Big Men of the new regime” (134). The same corruption and nepotism which characterize the ousted civilian government also play out in the military regime. Kainene, for example, is able to get the contract to supply military boots because of her closeness to Major Madu, who is one of the leaders of the new regime and whom Richard suspects is Kainene’s lover. As she says, “The man in charge was Igbo, and Madu said he was keen to give the contract to a fellow Igbo. So I was lucky. And he’s asking only for a five percent cut” (81). The reviewer of Sunday Chuka’s *Corruption in Nigeria* says that corruption is a universal phenomenon. However, in Nigeria, he traces its endemic nature and its “chronological sequence from the precolonial, colonial to independence and from the first republic, the military, the second republic under Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the post-Shargari military leadership of Babangida, Abacha to the present day” (Otagburuagu 266).

Another legacy of British colonization which has terrible consequences for the country is class consciousness. Before independence, the natives are used as domestic servants; Nigerians are not allowed into the Polo Club because of racism. After independence, they are allowed into the club and it becomes a status symbol for the natives. Susan’s gossip to Richard is that “Chief Ozobia owns half of Lagos but there is something terribly *nouveau riche* about him. He doesn’t have much of a formal education, you see, and neither has his wife” (59). In order to close the gap between them and the educated class, the Ozobias send their children to an elitist school in Lagos run by the

British. After their secondary education, they are sent to Britain for higher education, and that is why Olanna speaks English with a British accent. Meanwhile, education which is denied the majority of the population under the British continues under Nigeria's self-rule. Odenigbo decides to send Ugwu to school because "Education is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to resist exploitation" (11). Ugwu who leaves in the rural Opi stops his education at standard two, and because of his limited education, he is full of superstitions. However, there is no difference between the marginalized rural dwellers and the urban poor. In Kano, Abdulmalik is surprised and impressed that Olanna has a Masters degree. He gives her a pair of slippers as a gift and has that "experience of the people who marveled at education with the calm certainty that it would never be theirs" (40).

The thieving upper class also snobs the educated middle class. Mrs Ozobia disapproves of Kainene going out with Richard Churchill, even though he is a British, he is not well-connected. She prefers Olanna working in Lagos to working in Nsukka because she believes that she will not be comfortable in Odenigbo's basic university house "with its sturdy rooms and plain furniture and uncarpeted floors" (35). Odenigbo's house which Olanna's mother dislikes because of class consciousness, his village houseboy finds enchanting:

He looked up at the ceiling, so high up, so piercingly white. He closed his eyes and tried to reimagine the spacious room with the alien furniture, but he couldn't. He opened his eyes, overcome by a new wonder, and looked around to make sure it was real. To think that he would seat on these sofas, polish this slippery-smooth floor, wash these gauzy curtains" (5).

The attitude of the upper class to the lower one is dehumanizing. Despite the opulence in the Ozobias' house, Mrs Ozobia punishes and humiliates a servant for stealing just four cups of rice. Chief Ozobia's servant, Maxwell, wears a white uniform which is "starched so stiff his trousers looked as if they had been made out of cardboard" (30). The servants are treated as if they are not human beings, and Olanna wishes the members of her family and their guests will "acknowledge the humanity of those who served them" (30). In Kainene's assessment:

The new Nigerian upper class is a set of illiterates who read nothing and eat food they disliked at overpriced Lebanese restaurants and have social conversations around one subject: 'How's the new car behaving' (64)

Their women are simply interested in fashionable clothes, jewellery and the latest gossip in town. It is pertinent to state that all the things – ethnicity, economic exploitation and class consciousness – which cause the Nigerian Civil War in *Half of a Yellow Sun* also play out in the seceded Biafran territory. The narrator satirizes the yellow sun of the Biafran flag which symbolizes a glorious future for the young state. This is because in Biafra, a new dominating ethnic group emerges. The Igbo, for example, blames the minority ethnic groups in its territory as the cause of its defeat. Inatimi's family is massacred in the North and he is dedicated to the Biafran cause; Alice loses all the members of her family, the Njokanma's, at Asaba; yet a woman spits at Dr Inyang because she is a saboteur. Instead of blaming poor military strategies and lack of ammunition for the fall of Biafra, a male refugee tells the others:

Our town would not have fallen but for the saboteurs in our midst! The man with the braided hair said. I was a Civil Defender. I know how many infiltrators we

discovered and all of them were Rivers people. What I am telling you is that we can no longer trust these minorities who do not speak Igbo (290).

But even among the Igbo group, there is a glaring fragmentation. Mama does not want Odenigbo to marry Olanna because she is highly educated and because of her family background. Of course, there is also a category of women she objects to being her daughters-in-law. She tells Amala and Ugwu her preferences, “But I do not want *Wawa* women and none of those Imo or Aro women, of course; their dialect is so strange, I wonder who told them that we are all the same Igbo people” (98).

The novelist also satirizes the utopian ideal in the secession of Biafra, as its creation also brings up a new privileged class of exploiters in the war-torn territory. People like Special Julius replace contractors like Chief Ozobia in Biafra. Okoromadu is also in a privileged position as a staff at a relief centre because his brother is an important man in the Biafran civil service. The existence of a new set of exploiters or the beasts, which benefit from the war, is seen in the narrator’s exposé of Professor Ezeka as a director in one of the ministries in Biafra. The once-timid Mrs Ezeka informs Olanna proudly that “we should have gone abroad last week. The two older ones have gone. His Excellency gave us permission ages ago” (341). While Baby’s growth is stunted by the war as “she hasn’t grown taller since the war started” (405) and her hair is brownish and falling off, Professor Ezeka’s daughter “had her mother’s fat-cheeked face” (340). Having seen how the whole country is dispossessed by the causal factor of nurture as a result of British colonization, we shall then examine the causes of the dispossession of other characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

The causal factor of Ugwu's dispossession is purely environmental. Ugwu is in the threshold of adulthood when he is brought to Odenigbo. He is used to show how the environment can disrupt the resolution of an individual's Oedipus complex. From the very first day of Ugwu's arrival in Odenigbo's house, the narrator puts his sexual development and fantasy in focus. He wishes to keep meat for Anulika and Nnesinachi. He has a sexual fantasy for Nnesinachi who calls him "Chejina, the name of his cousin who looked nothing at all like him" (8). Apart from his unrequited love for her, he does not like his mother referring to her as his sister. He fantasizes over touching "those pointy breasts, he had wondered if they would feel mushy-soft or hard like the unripe fruit from the *ube* tree" (8). Apart from Nnesinachi as the object of his growing libido, there is also the incestuous wish in him for:

He often wished that Anulika wasn't so flat-chested – he wondered what was taking her so long anyway, since she and Nnesinachi were about the same age – so that he could feel her breasts (8).

He is jealous that his love object is going to the North and a trader may take one look at her and decide to marry her. He focuses on her breasts, which "were the images saved for last on the many nights when he touched himself, slowly at first and then vigorously until a muffled moan escaped him" (9). The same erotic feeling he has for Nnesinachi, he also has for Olanna. He has mixed feelings about sharing Odenigbo's attention with anybody. However, when she comes, he describes her with the images of beauty. To him, her "oval face was smooth like an egg" (23), as she walks towards him, "he imagined that she was a yellow cashew, shapely and ripe" (24). He spies on them as "he tiptoed to the Master's bedroom and rested his ears on the door. She was moaning loudly, sounds that seemed so

unlike her, so uncontrolled and stirring and throaty” (25). His sexual fantasy for Olanna overwhelms him that “Ugwu sat down and selected one and closed his eyes as he sucked it, imagining Olanna’s mouth enclosing the same bone” (83). He also inspects the underwear she hangs on the bathroom – black slips, slippery bras, white pants.

Ugwu, as Odenigbo’s houseboy, is separated from the realization of his sexual fantasy for Nnesinachi and Anulika because of distance: the girls live in their village at Opi while he lives with Odenigbo within the university premises at Nsukka. He cannot also resolve his Oedipus complex with Olanna, who is the master’s lover, and whom he sees later in the image of a mother. Since these three women who are desirable objects of Ugwu’s libido are not available because of prohibition on incest, he has to make-do with Chinyere, their neighbour’s housemaid. His sexual relationship with her is mechanical as each of them has different love-objects. Chinyere calls him “Abonyi” as he thrusts into her, and Ugwu also imagines that she is Nnesinachi. Their relationship is not because of love but because they both want to fulfill the relentless impulse of the id. Ugwu does not mind using tear-gas on Nnesinachi in order to have her sexually. Even at the onset of the war as he is fleeing Nsukka as a refugee to Abba with Odenigbo and Olanna, one thought still occupies his mind, “he would yet taste Nnesinachi’s sweetness, he would yet caress that soft flesh” (179). He also hopes that she will not be as silent as Chinyere, and “he hoped she would make the same sound he heard from Olanna when he pressed his ear to the bedroom door” (177).

In Umuahia, despite Ugwu’s status as a refugee, air raids, disease and starvation around him, he has Eberechi as a new love-object whom he fantasizes over. Eberechi’s buttocks, which he feels like grabbing, are where he concentrates his sexuality. He is

dispossessed of his natural sexual feeling for Eberechi because of the war. She prefers to be the mistress of soldiers, despite the fact she does not get any sexual orgasm from them. Ugwu steals foodstuffs from Olanna to give to Eberechi in order to entice her. He is caught and conscripted into the army as he is returning from seeing her off. In the training camp, in the trenches and when he is lying critically ill, he thinks about her. According to the narrator, “In his delirious moments, he saw Eberechi wearing her tight skirt and making gestures to him that he could not understand. And in his lucid moments, death occupied him” (393). In his delirium, he also remembers the bar girl he and eight other child-soldiers raped. He recalls “the dead hate in the eyes of the girl” (397) and “the tense dryness between her legs, the way he had done what he had not wanted to do” (397).

Ugwu`s sexual fantasies represent some aspects of the relationship between the ethnic groups, which make up the country, and some aspects of the human psyche: the unconscious processes in the individual which can be thwarted by the environment. He rapes the bar girl because of the war. The war, therefore, dispossesses him of a safe way to discharge his built up libidinal impulses, which he may have achieved by fantasizing over Eberechi`s buttocks or actually having sex with her, if she is willing.

Moreover, the relationship between the members of the Ozobia family – the parents and their fraternal twins – is a metaphor on the relationship which exists between the different ethnic groups, which Britain strings together to make up the country. Though each of the groups lives together as a country, yet each wishes to have a more fulfilling relationship with other peoples, and the allegiance lies elsewhere. Olanna is closer to Uncle Mbaezi and Aunt Ifeka who are her care-givers. To her, her parents are strangers. When she quarrels with Odenigbo because he gets Amala pregnant, she neither confides in any of

her parents nor her sister. She goes to Kano and tells her aunt what has happened. The lack of family life of the Ozobias is seen when her mother complains to her about the father's mistress whom he buys a house for in Lagos. When Olanna tells her to talk it over with her husband, she replies, "There is nothing I can say to him. I just wanted to tell you what is happening so that they would not say that I didn't tell anybody" (217). As Olanna goes to talk the matter over with him, she "looked around his room and thought how unfamiliar his large bed was" (219). Not only that her father's room is unfamiliar to her, but also "He even looked like a stranger, a fat man she didn't know" (219). She sees the bizarre relationship thus, "Olanna felt a sudden pity for him, for her mother, herself and Kainene. She wanted to ask him why they were strangers who shared the same last name" (219).

The problem of the Ozobias should be seen to arise from nurture. Odenigbo's mother in her firm rejection of her son marrying Olanna traces the background of Chief and Mrs Ozobia thus:

I heard that her father comes from a family of lazy beggars in Umunnachi until he got a job as a tax collector and stole from hardworking people. Now he has opened so many businesses and is walking around Lagos answering a Big Man. Her mother is no better, what woman brings another person to breastfeed her children when she herself is alive and well? Is that normal, *gbo*, Amala (97)?

Odenigbo's mother, therefore, has given out the reason for the situation in Ozobia's house as being caused by nurture or environment. Chief Ozobia is one of those contractors who collude with political and military leaders to exploit the country. As humane Olanna sees the situation, and confirms Mama's opinion, "My father and his politician-friends steal money with their contracts, but nobody makes them to kneel to beg for forgiveness. And

they build houses with their money and rent them out to people like this man and charge inflated rents that make it impossible to buy food”(Half of a Yellow Sun 221). Her own mother too is preoccupied with the little world of rich women “where they laughed and hailed each other with their nicknames” (217) and indulge in all types of gossip. She is weighed down by expensive necklaces at parties and other social outings and she has different bottles of perfume: “stunted bottles, tapering bottles, rounded bottles. Even wearing them to bed every night, her mother could not use them all in fifty years” (221).

The Ozobias are the *nouveau riche*, who takes over from the British exploiters, and according to Susan’s opinion of the couple, they haven’t much formal education and that makes them obvious. They, therefore, concentrate on making money and making more money that when they have the twins, they are not interested in their upbringing. According to Kainene, who has more insight into people than Olanna, “their mother’s breast did not dry up at all, their mother had given them to a nursing aunt to save her own breasts from drying up” (39). Their not being attached to their parents, therefore, can be traced to their psychic dispossession at the early stage of their lives. In fact, there is the absence of attachment, particularly with their mother, at the formative age of their psychosexual development which has affected their adult personality. Olanna, for example, never confides in her mother. In fact, she examines the “plain face and wished for a brief guilty moment, that Aunty Ifeka were her mother. Aunty Ifeka was as good as her mother, anyway, since it was Aunty Ifeka’s breasts that her and Kainene sucked when their mother’s breasts dried up soon after they were born” (39). Mama finds the attitude of Chief and Mrs Ozobia an abnormality for not taking care of their biological children at birth. The absence of attachment at the crucial stage of the twins’ development because of nurture

impacts on their relationship with their parents. Ronald Smith suggests that “the results obtained so far lend credence to the speculation of Freud... that early and continuing attachment history of the child may have a long term impact on personality and social development” (126). The recent findings which confirm Freud’s opinion on the five stages of psychosexual development includes Harry Harlow’s opinion after a study with monkeys concludes that touch and physical contact are indispensable in the development of attachment (1958). It has also been proved that cuddling is important for the emotional stability of a baby and his bonding with the care-givers (Bee 1989). Besides, Ainsworth and Bowlby argue that the development of an individual’s personality and his level of socialization depend on the level of the relationship between the child and his care-giver (1991). It has further been suggested that the time of care-giving is the time when children develop their cognitive abilities and create a mental picture of their relationship with their parents (Marvin 1997). It necessarily follows, therefore, that this crucial period, when the twins ought to have attachment to their parents, does not exist because they selfishly give them out to Uncle Mbaezi and Aunty Ifeka to nurture for them. The outcome of this is that the children are more attached to the Mbaezis than their own parents. Not only that Kainene, who is always taciturn and acerbic, puts up “the photograph of murdered relatives – Arize laughing in her wedding dress, Uncle Mbaezi ebullient in a tight suit next to a solemn Aunty Ifeka in a print wrapper” (107), she also weeps for the first time in her life when she hears of their murder. Richard observes her reaction after the news of their death, “She often withdrew into silence in the middle of a conversation” (167). For Olanna who is closer to the Mbaezis than her twin sister, their brutal killing has a devastating impact on her. She develops a conversion disorder because of her experience of “the vaguely familiar

clothes on the headless bodies in the yards, the still-twitching fingers on Uncle Mbaezi's hand...of all the corpses that lay in the yard" (156). According to the narrator:

Olanna's Dark Swoop began the day she came back from Kano, the day her legs failed her. Her legs were fine when she climbed down from the train and she did not need to hold on to the blood-smeared railings....But at the front of Odenigbo's house, they failed. So did her bladder. There was the melting of her legs, and there was also the wetness of hot liquid running between her thighs (156).

Another causal factor of dispossession of the twins, which is a result of their not being nurtured by Chief and Mrs Ozobia, is the relationship existing between their parents. Amato and Keith's research finding, using human beings, has shown that a violent change in the family make-up leaves stress on the children. Though what happens between their parents cannot be aptly described as a violent change in the forms of parents' divorce or remarriage, but what happens to them has the same effect. Olanna, presumably with Kainene, is aware of the artificiality of their parents' relationship, which seems shameful to her, particularly when she is visiting the Mbaezis in Kano. Indeed, Olanna believes there is no sexual relationship between them, for the narrator reveals:

She had never heard her own parents making love, never ever seen any indication that they did. But she had always been separated from them by hallways that got longer and more thickly carpeted as they moved from house to house. When they moved to their present home, with its ten rooms, her parents chose different bedrooms for the first time. I need the whole wardrobe, and it

will be nice to have your father visit! Her mother had said. But the girlish laugh had not rung true for Olanna (43).

From the above statement, one can deduce that their parents do not consummate their marriage, which may be a ground for divorce, if they have so wished. However, they still pretend to be married even when they are living like strangers and their children are aware of that. The effect of the existence of this relationship between the couple is that when Olanna and Kainene are not on speaking terms as she says, “They never talked about anything anymore” (31), her parents still pretend that they are not aware of the strained relationship between the twins. Even when each of them visits home when the other is not around, they never bother to reconcile them. To Chief and Mrs Ozobia, what is important is to acquire wealth and send them to a school run by the British in Lagos, the Heathgrove Secondary School, and when they are fairly grown to send them to study in Britain to “be as European as possible” (61). Ironically, despite their father’s vast wealth and the level of their education, there is something missing in them. For example, Olanna lacks self-confidence and the first time she visits Odenigbo at Nsukka, as she prepares to leave for the airport, she dabs his Old Spice impulsively. This is because she believes the superstition that the scent of his perfume is like taking a part of him, “It was as if the scent would, at least for a while, stifle her questions and make her a bit more like him, a little more certain, a little less questioning” (27). Again the effect of her nurture can be seen in her not being sure of herself before the vocal and ideological Miss Adebayo. Despite her beauty and her British accent, there is no originality in her ideas and Miss Adebayo knows this and “it was always when she spoke that Miss Adebayo would pick up a journal or pour another drink or get up to go to the toilet” (51). She suspects ultimately that:

Perhaps Miss Adebayo could tell, from her face, that she was afraid of things, that she was unsure, that she was not one of those people with no patience for self-doubt. People like Odenigbo. People like Miss Adebayo herself, who could look a person in the eye and calmly tell her that she was so illogically pretty, who could even use that phrase, illogically pretty (51).

Apart from the dispossession of the twins, which arises from the immediate environment of their family, there is also dispossession from the larger society. For example, as the public space of Biafra shrinks with the fall of Nsukka, Abba, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Owerri and Umuahia, so also their private spaces shrink considerably. When Olanna evacuates from Nsukka, she has to leave the beautiful environment of the university where “bungalows here were painted the colour of the sky and sat side by side like polite well-dressed men, how the hedges separating them were trimmed so flat on top that they looked like tables wrapped with leaves” (3). Also as she flees with the family, she has to leave behind the fridge with its assorted food stuff and fruits, “oranges, bread, beer, soft drinks: many things in packets and cans” (6). She first goes to Abba with Odenigbo, Ugwu and Baby, but when Abba also falls to the federal troops, they flee to Umuahia where they are able to rent two bedrooms in a house with “thatch roof and cracked unpainted walls” (196). The dilapidated house has a pit toilet which terrifies Baby. In the war-torn Biafra, the family’s menu has shrunken as the assorted foods and drinks are no longer available that they have degenerated to eating “enamel plate of roasted crickets” (402), the type of food that one can never imagine to be eaten by Olanna and Kainene before the war. By the time the war comes to an end, there is a physical deterioration in Olanna. Apart from the fact that she is now bony, “her periods were sparse and no longer

red but muddy brown” (389). Her dispossession does not end with the end of the war; she has to suffer other losses. Her greatest dispossession as a result of the war is this:

Her bank account in Lagos was gone. It no longer existed. Somebody had snatched at all her clothes and had left her shivering in the cold. But she saw a good sign. Since she had lost savings, then she could not possibly lose her sister too, the custodian of fate were not that wicked (432).

Indeed, the custodian of fate is not bothered about justice in times of war. Kainene never comes back when she leaves with Inatimi to trade across enemy lines at Ninth Mile. Her corpse is never found despite the fact Richard visits all hospitals and morgues in the enclave of Biafra. Though Olanna consults a diviner, her twin sister is not found. Finally, she finds solace in the cultural belief of reincarnation as she hopes, “*Uwa m, Uwa ozo*. When I come back in my next life, Kainene will be my sister” (433).

We shall also examine the causal factors in the dispossession of two characters – Odenigbo and Richard Churchill – who are Olanna and Kainene’s lovers before and during the war. Odenigbo’s dispossession is caused solely by nurture, that is, the war in its fictive setting. In the first part of the novel and before the war, Ugwu describes his master’s complexion as being “very dark, like old bark, and the hair that covered his chest and legs was a lustrous, darker shade” (4). Also his toes “which peeked through leather slippers, seemed feminine” (6); presumably, the cleanliness of his toes is that he wears shoes all the time. Ugwu also describes him further as filling the armchair, “with his muscled arms, his broad shoulders” (5). He also compares his brisk and energetic walk “like Ezeagu, the man who held the wrestling record” (6) in his village. The first time Olanna and Odenigbo meet years ago at Ibadan outside the university theatre, what is obvious about him is “the

thickness of his body” (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 29) and his boldness and radicalism as he rebukes a ticket seller from giving preferential treatment to a white man on the queue. Olanna is also aware of “his self-assured eccentricities and his fierce moralities” (29). His sexual prowess is not in doubt as he sends Olanna into ecstasy whenever they make love.

At the onset of the war, his physique is intact and so also his self-confidence and aggressiveness. Even when they evacuate from the university to live at Abba, he contributes to the win-the-war effort by attending a series of meetings from dawn to dusk. According to the narrator, “Sometimes, when she [Olanna] looked at him, she felt gripped by proud possession” (186). When Abba falls and he takes his family into a house which Ugwu finds to be unworthy for his master in Umuahia, Odenigbo is undaunted. According to the narrator, “Even master didn’t seem to mind the house. He returned from the directorate in the evenings and sat outside contentedly listening to Radio Biafra and BBC” (197).

But a terrible change steals over him at the news of his mother’s death in Abba. According to him, “I have to bury what the vultures left behind” (321). He cannot imagine his mother, who refuses to leave Abba as the federal troops invade it, lying there on the ground and rotting where she is killed. He sets out for Abba early in the morning to carry out the most important duty he owes his deceased mother: to bury her. However, he is frustrated from that assignment for as he tells Olanna:

They kept asking me to go back, so I parked the car and hid it and began to walk. Finally one Biafran officer cocked his gun and said that he would shoot me and save the vandals the trouble if I didn’t turn around (322).

This incident alone in which he is not allowed to cross the enemy line and bury his mother shows him that there is a redefinition of masculinity in Biafra; the masculine are the soldiers who carry guns. Olanna is aware that he is a destroyed man because “she knew he would not be the same again” (322). From that day on and throughout the war, Odenigbo is a defeated man who is withdrawn, perpetually drunk, returns late to his house, and at times shirks work. Odenigbo, who is used to drinking auburn and finely refined brandy now drinks local gin, and after, he “retreats into himself and looks out at the world with bleary weary eyes” (380). Not only is he in a psychopathological state as seen in the “flat glassiness in his eyes” (331) and in his physical deterioration with “the slump of his shoulders” (331), his sexual life is also affected. This can be glimpsed from the narration when:

She kissed his neck, his ear, in the way that always made him pull her close like on the night that Ugwu slept out on the veranda. But he shrugged his hand off and said, ‘I’m tired, *nkem*’. She had never heard him say that before (332).

For Kainene’s British lover, Richard, his own dispossession is as a result of nurture. He is born to a couple who is preoccupied with each other that they leave him to be brought up entirely by a nanny. When his parents die when he is nine years old, he is sent to live with his sophisticated aunt and her two children in London. He tries several times to run away from the house as he is always seen as “the cousin from the tiny village in Shropshire” (61). Right from the way he is nurtured, he is a loner. His interest in Igbo-Ukwu roped pots brings him to Nigeria. The first time he sees Kainene at a party, her “silences were brooding, insular and yet he felt a connection to her” (62-63). The first time

he visits Kainene's house, and dines with the family, he notices that Olanna is really beautiful, but he is also aware that "she lacked Kainene's melancholy mystique, which exhilarated and confused him" (65). Several times, he fails to sustain an erection when Kainene seduces him. Perhaps, his problem may be that he "had not expected himself to hope for too much" (63) or he feels guilty that Kainene's "hand clasped in his on the table was an infidelity" (63) to Susan. He promptly leaves his sham of life with Susan and packs into Kainene's house in Port Harcourt. He stays with her throughout the war. Even when he makes love to Olanna, he regrets it and blames himself for that and states, "You had emotional problems, and I should not have" (243) taken advantage of that. As the war is about to end, Kainene gets missing and he searches all the nooks and crannies of Biafra to locate her. He is aware that his dispossession as a result of the war is complete as it dawns on him that "he would never see Kainene again and that his life would always be like a candlelit room; he would see things only in shadow, only in half glimpses" (430).

4.2 Nature as Causal Factor of Dispossession

Aunty Ifeoma's ambivalence on nurture or environment being the only source of Eugene's dispossession is seen when she tells Papa-Nnukwu, who is lamenting that Christianity is the source of Eugene's abnormal behaviour, "It was not the missionaries. Did I not go to the mission school, too" (83)? In other words, both inherited their father's resoluteness and fearlessness as seen in their pursuance of causes they believe in. However, while she has her father's disposition – humane, accommodating, and flexible – Eugene is impulsive and dangerously violent. She explains this difference in attitude by the two

biological children of the same man. To her, the most important source of Eugene's dispossession is to be sought in his nature. She tells Beatrice pointedly:

But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things....You know why Eugene did not get on along with Ifediora...? Because Ifediora told him to his face what he felt. But you know Eugene quarrels with the truths he does not like.... Eugene has to stop doing God's job. God can do His own job. If God will judge our father for choosing to follow the ways of our ancestors, then let God do the judging not Eugene (95-96).

In other words, Aunty Ifeoma locates two important factors – pride and being judgemental – as the inner factors which cause his deviant behaviour. The novel is replete with Eugene's acts of pride and being judgemental. Whenever he makes his donations, he feels that it should be publicized and his humanitarianism acknowledged. Even though Papa's face is blank whenever in his sermon, Father Benedict refers "to the pope, Papa and Jesus in that order. He used Papa to illustrate the gospel" (4). As the priest flaunts at every Mass the acts of his charity, he would have stopped that if he was really a humble man. Again the three little children who are chasing their vehicle when they enter Abba, according to Kambili, Papa gives them each ten naira from a wad of notes he pulls out of his hold-all, and says, "Greet your parents, make sure you show them this money" (55). The motive behind his action and statement is pride. The same is seen in his donations at St Paul's church at Abba. Kambili says, "Papa wrote a cheque and gave it to the usher, telling her he did not want to make a speech. When the M.C announced the donation, the priest got up and started to dance, jerking his behind this way and that, and the crowd rose up and cheered so loudly that it was like the rumblings of thunder at the end of rainy season" (90).

Eugene Achike is not only a proud man, but he is a man who does not like competition. He is a man who wants to be compared with Jesus Christ in his philanthropic gestures and piety. These are reflected in the narration thus:

Let's go, Papa said, when the M.C finally moved to announce a new donation. He led the way out of the hall, smiling and waving at the many hands that reached out to grasp his white tunic as if touching him would heal them of their illness (90-91).

Aunty Ifeoma's statement that he is too judgemental is to be seen by his reporting those who do not take Holy Communion to the priest. Kambili says that the family sits in the front row for Mass at St Agnes and her father is always the first to receive Holy Communion. According to her:

After Papa took communion, he sat back and watched the congregation walk to the altar, after Mass, reported to Father Benedict, with concern, when a person missed communion on two consecutive Sundays. He always encouraged Father Benedict to call and win back that person into the fold; nothing but mortal sin would keep a person away from communion for two Sundays in a row (5-6).

He also adjudges his aged father, who does not share his Catholic faith, as a pagan destined for hellfire. He strives relentlessly to keep his family away from him. These two vices, particularly being judgemental, are the causes of his actions and the eventual disintegration of his family. The story starts with "Breaking of Gods on Palm Sunday" which causes things to fall apart in the family with Eugene displaying his attitude of being judgemental. He suspects it is only "mortal sin" that can keep his son, Jaja, from

receiving Holy Communion. In his usual anger, he flings the family missal at him and it breaks the wife's étagère. From henceforth, things are no longer the same in the family.

Furthermore, if one looks at the portrait of Eugene closely, one must observe that his environment is not the only cause of his aberrant behaviour. In other words, the missionaries cannot be blamed as Aunty Ifeoma tells Papa-Nnukwu, who argues that the racist indoctrination of Eugene, is the reason for his deviance, His dismissal of the difference in their disposition with, "But you are a woman. You do not count" (83) does not hold water. The valid argument which may be adduced to support nurture is that Aunty Ifeoma does not experience the torture of her hands being scalded. There is also no indication that she lives with the missionaries as a housemaid and suffers the indignities and hardship of such a position. Besides, she does not train in Europe to experience first hand the white man's racial prejudice against the black race. Though Eugene never speaks about it, but what he undergoes in Europe, which makes him reject his culture, may be glimpsed from Chiaku's experience. She reveals to Aunty Ifeoma that she prefers to endure the brutality in the university and in the nation to going to work overseas because, "All the years in Cambridge, I was like a monkey who had developed the ability to reason" (244). However, despite her brutal racial experience in Europe, she is not a violent person. In fact, she is critical of Professor Okafor who beats out his son's tooth for stealing his examination papers and selling them to his students. She rationalizes Chidifu's action thus:

We cannot afford to give pocket money to our children. We cannot afford to eat meat. We cannot afford bread. So your child steals and you turn to him in surprise? You must try to heal the cancer because the sores would keep coming back (*Purple Hibiscus* 243).

Therefore, Eugene's environment is not enough to be the only source of his behaviour; his physiological, biological and emotional dispositions are also implicated. In other words, his inner and outer environments are inseparable because "both 'self' and 'world' are made present in each moment by and through the choices, actions and reactions that create our sense of reality" (Daboo 2007). This interdependence of the inner and outer worlds of organisms is what Susan Onyama explains as "extraorganismal environment is made internal by either psychological or biochemical assimilation, so internal state is externalized through product and behaviour that select and organize the surrounding worlds" (quoted in Nisker 199). Therefore, Amaka's insightful observation that Eugene, like "some people can't deal with stress" (251) is true. This suggests that there may be some physiological and genetic factors which underline his violent behaviour as old Anikwenwa suggests in comparing him with a blind fly that follows a corpse to the grave. Though the narrator does not indicate, there may be a genetic blueprint, which he inherits from any of his progenitors, probably from Papa-Nnukwu who is also fixed to his Traditional religion and values, and vehemently refuses to change with the times. He may also have inherited his violent nature or impulsiveness from his mother or grandparents, though the narrator never indicates. These inherited blueprints will naturally unfold or evolve over time in response to his environmental conditions. Gottesman insists that many brain dysfunctions are implicated in human behaviour (1991). If nature or heredity is not implicated in his violence, how can one explain his reactions as he scalds Kambili's feet? As she observes:

Papa swayed slightly, from side to side, like a person who was about to fall at the feet of a charismatic pastor after the laying on of hands. Papa did not sway

often. His swaying was like shaking a bottle of Coke that burst into violent foam when you opened it (209-210).

Besides, the general impression a reader has of Eugene's character through Kambili's narration is that he is a person who is devoid of the following emotions: anxiety, guilt and sympathy. These three emotions would have moderated his actions and behaviour. Though Kambili hallucinates over his beating of Mama which leaves "trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red watercolour all the way downstairs" (33), Eugene, as the perpetrator of such a violent act, is unmoved. As he holds her shoulder and rubs it in gentle circular motions, he simply tells her, "Your mother will be back tomorrow, about the time you get back from school. She will be fine" (34). There is neither guilt nor anxiety nor sympathy as he beats Kambili, Jaja and Mama as a Fulani nomad beats his cattle. There is the absence of these emotions and apology as he asks questions after the violence, "Why do you walk into sin...? Why do you like sin" (102)? Again, after scalding his children's feet with boiled water, he rationalizes his action of brutality, "Everything I do for you, I do for your own good" (196). He never feels guilty or anxiety after beating Kambili unconscious before taking her to the hospital. As she regains consciousness, he only tells her, "My precious daughter" (212). He offers no apology or shows anxiety or guilt for beating his wife so violently that she has a third miscarriage. As she escapes to her sister-in-law's house, and he comes to collect her with the children, Kambili reveals, "Papa hugged Mama, holding her close and she rested her head on his chest" (252).

His lack of these positive emotions, which will have controlled his violence, shows him as a psychopath or a sociopath, which is one of the personality disorders. The

consequence of this lack is that he is destructive and harmful towards others. Sociopaths are predatory towards others and easily gratify their desires (Smith 1993). Because he lacks these emotional checks, his actions are like those of animals. To Sorren Kierkegaard, the concept of dread is not found in animals, because they in their naturalness are not defined as spiritual (quoted in Brask 2003). In his clarification of this statement, Per Brask observes that dread arrives with self-awareness, knowledge of absence, which produces a kind of guilt, a feeling of dread. This is an attribute not available to animals (2003). This detailed study on the causal factors in Eugene Achike's psychic and cultural dispossession, as reflected in his deviant behaviour, are to be found in nature and nurture, or it may be read as a feminist vilification of this patriarchal figure as the portrait of his character shows glaring contradictions that leave him as one of the most divided characters in literature.

Again Beatrice Achike is a character with which Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie illustrates the consequential actions of the dispossessed, which dispossess others of their freedom, cultural roots, wealth and power. She is the self-effacing and submissive wife of Eugene Achike, whom he batters into revenge or a rebellious but systematic action of poisoning him to death. In the discussion of the causal factors of her psychic dispossession, her character is to be examined against the background of two other characters: Ade Coker and Aunty Ifeoma. It seems that Adichie uses these three characters to show two different responses – defiance and submission – to the issue of dictatorial leadership in the family, institutional and national levels.

In looking at her psychic dispossession as a result of her husband's violence on her, nature is implicated. Kambili describes her after her father scalds her feet with boiled water and she comes to carry her thus, "She was too small. We might fall" (*Purple Hibiscus* 195).

Because of her size and her frailty, she declines to be carried by her mother. It seems that because of her diminutive size, she cannot withstand her husband's bulky and bullish one. She also compares her smallish stature with Eugene's when he comes to drive them home from Nsukka, "Papa had lost weight; usually Mama's small hands barely went round his back" (252). One may, therefore, imagine that her stature is the reason for her subjugated position in the house. She constantly takes the impact of her husband's fiery disposition. Kambili says, "Each time I hear the sounds from their room, it's like something being banged against the door" (10). On one occasion, which is her reason for fleeing to Nsukka after she recovers, he breaks a small table made of sturdy wood on her belly. She says, "My blood nearly finished on the floor even before he took me to St. Agnes" (248). Kambili is always aware that "Her swollen eye was still the black-purple colour of an overripe avocado" (10-11) which is a tell-tale of violence on her. He has also inflicted a "recent scar on her forehead" (15) and left her with a permanent injury, and "She limped slightly, as though one leg was shorter than the other, a gait that made her seem even smaller than she was" (11). She has suffered several miscarriages because of several beatings. She is described as a subdued, silent figure in the house, because "Her rubber slippers never made a sound on the stairs, but I knew when she went downstairs when I heard the dining room door open" (10). Her speech is also affected because as the narrator says, "She did not usually say much at a time. She spoke the way a bird eats, in small amounts" (20). In fact, the atmosphere in the house is an awful one as she recollects, "I lay in bed after Mama had left and let my mind rake the past, through the years when Jaja and Mama and I spoke more with our spirits than with our lips" (15-16).

However, Mama's nature of being smallish is not enough for her dispossession in the light of Ade Coker's own small stature. Adichie probably has used him to show that if an individual intends to checkmate tyranny, the size is not material but the quality of the mind. According to Kambili, "Ade Coker was a small, round and laughing man" (56), and she further insists that "He looked like a stuffed doll yet he kept on smiling" (57). His tinted glass "looked dollish" and his little baby is a "perfect round copy of himself" (57). Despite his smallish size, he is a man who does not tolerate intimidation. As the editor of *Standard* newspaper, his critical stance on dictatorial Nigerian government wins its publisher, Eugene Achike, an award from *Amnesty World*. The other editors have been cowed into silence and subdued. *Standard* is "The only newspaper which dares to tell the truth these days" (136). Because of Ade Coker's defiance of soldiers, "The *Standard* too was different; it was more critical, more questioning than it used to be" (27). He is aware of what is at stake: freedom of the populace or their imprisonment by the tyrants. He has been arrested several times, according to Eugene, "They put out cigarettes on his back....They put out so many cigarettes on his back" (42). He is not deterred by this traumatic experience as he defies the soldiers and their offer of bribes to write damning reports on the government's murder of Nwankiti Ogechi. He willingly publishes underground even at the expense of his own life. He is aware that Eugene's upbringing of his children is defective and he does not hesitate to say so. He is aware that total submission and silence cannot deter tyranny. As he tells his boss, "I imagine what the *Standard* would be if we are all quiet" (58). He prefers to die as a freeman than to live as a slave. Even though he is killed by the government with a letter bomb, his publication of Nwankiti Ogechi's death brings international sanctions to the military government. His death, therefore, triggers off

reactions. Mother Nature, for example, reacts to his impending death, because “It rained heavily the day Ade Coker died, a strange, furious rain in the middle of the parched harmattan” (206). The narrator describes the reactions to his death as the loss of a hero, a rare gem among men and women. Eugene who never feels pain and never sheds tears at his father’s death “crumpled on a sofa in the sitting room, sobbing. He seems small” (206). Kambili, who never shows any extreme emotions on her father’s death says, “My nightmares started then, nightmares in which I saw Ade Coker’s charred remains spattered on his dining table” (207). His four-year-old daughter is devastated; she is dazed and speechless for four months after his death.

Ade Coker, therefore, is as small as Beatrice Achike, but until his death, he is able through his extreme defiance to resist a national tyrant. Therefore, her stature or nature cannot be the only thing which causes her dispossession. But one may argue, and rightly too, like Papa-Nnukwu, that she is only a woman and does not count: nobody expects her to confront a family dictator as it seems Adichie simply uses her for a feminist cause.

We can equally look at the character of Aunty Ifeoma, who like Ade Coker, is a foil to Beatrice, as she confronts an institutional tyrant. She is a middle point between Ade Coker’s extreme defiance and Beatrice’s extreme submissiveness. As she retrain Kambili and Jaja in her house at Nsukka, she informs them that “Being defiant can be a good thing sometimes.... Defiance is like marijuana – it is not a bad thing when it is used right” (144). In other words, she believes that extreme defiance as exhibited by Ade Coker can be dangerous to the individual. That is the reason why she is afraid that something terrible may happen to him, for she says that although he is a brilliant editor, “I wonder how much longer before they lock him up for good. Even Eugene’s money will not buy everything”

(137). In her own opposition to the university's Sole Administrator, moderate defiance is her watchword. Her promotion is denied her and her house searched by security agents; she continues to work for the university. However, when her appointment is terminated, she believes that is the time for her to relocate with her family to the United States of America.

Apart from abhorring extreme defiance, she also detests extreme submissiveness. She challenges Eugene as he spends over twenty minutes praying over the meal. Not only that her own 'Amen' is raised above that of others at the table, but she mutters, "Did you want the rice to get cold, Eugene" (96)? This is a question that would have brought a violent reaction if it were asked by any member of his nuclear family. She advises Beatrice to leave Eugene's house after he beats Kambili to a state of unconsciousness. She tells her plainly, "When a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head, *gbo*" (213)? She does not subscribe to Beatrice going back immediately to Enugu with her brother after he beats her violently. But it may further be argued that she does not have the deficiency of stature as Beatrice. There is a sharp contrast between their physique, movement and speech. According to Kambili's description:

Aunty Ifeoma was as tall as Papa, with well proportioned body. She walked fast, like one who knew just where she was going and what she was going there to do. And she spoke the way she walked, as if to get many words out of her mouth as much as she could in the shortest time (71).

She further describes her as an ancient forebear, "fighting wars with machetes sharpened on sun-warmed stone" (80). It is to this forebear who fills a room that she runs to for protection against her tyrannical father. Kambili is sure of her security in the house of this "tall, exuberant, fearless, loud, larger than life" (95) woman. She recognizes the

resemblances between the crouched figure of her mother before her tyrannical father and the woman the soldiers are beating in the market. As she says, “I thought about the woman lying in the dirt as we drove home. I had not seen her face, but I felt that I knew her, that I had always known her” (44). However, the difference between them is that the woman is not as submissive as her mother. Her act of defiance can be seen in her spitting at a soldier. The woman’s defiance against the agents of the national dictator and Aunty Ifeoma’s against an institutional tyrant shows that resistance to dispossession is not a matter of size or gender but an attitude of the mind. Though Aunty Ifeoma is a widow and an impoverished university lecturer, she refuses to prostrate before Eugene in order to fulfill her demands. She tells Beatrice:

I want a new car, nwunye m, and I want to use my new gas cooker again and I want money so that I would not have to unravel the seams of Chima’s trousers when he outgrows them. But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things (95).

Her statement above shows the basic difference between these two female characters in whose depiction Adichie reflects two alternative reactions to dispossession. It seems Beatrice Achike succumbs to the argument that the environment exerts influence on the individual, but not directly as Skinner and Watson suggest, but primarily through the influence of thought. The opinion of a cognitive behaviorist is that thought, planning and anticipated outcome exert influence on an individual’s behaviour (Bandura 1989). It is also believed that our behaviour is affected by not only our immediate environment, but also the memories of the past and anticipation of the future (Smith 1993). The immediate environment for Beatrice and her children is that they all live in a hellish haven. The family

dictator has crushed them to a submissive and silent position in the house. The memories of the past for her are that she has had several miscarriages; she has endured the brutal beating of Jaja that his little finger is disfigured, and Kambili is carried to hospital unconscious. The tell-tale marks of brutal beating are left all over her body. However, she is a shrewd woman who anticipates freedom one day from the family tyrant. She, therefore, freely submits herself and her children to psychic and cultural dispossession. This is because of her fear of Eugene marrying another wife as he is allowed by Igbo custom or bearing children outside from mistresses. She confides in Kambili the politics of their survival thus:

You know after you came and I had the miscarriages the villagers started to whisper. The members of the Umunna even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr. Ezeudu`s second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us (20).

Like a shrewd traditional woman, she is afraid of rivalries in polygynous families, and she does not want that for herself and her children. She is aware she is at a disadvantaged position with one son if Eugene decides to have other sons in or outside his marriage. She insists there is no life outside her marriage. She asks her sister-in-law, “Where would I go if I leave Eugene`s house? Tell me where would I go” (250)? It seems she prefers her imprisonment inside marriage to her freedom outside it. She submits docilely to her husband`s tyranny because she does not want to lose his wealth. She only protests silently with her white T-shirt with the inscription of “*GOD IS LOVE* ” (7). She sheds no tears when she is battered; her only reaction to violence is that she spends at “least a quarter of

an hour on each dancing figurine” (10) as she polishes them with a kitchen towel soaked in water. These dancing figurines in the *étagère* may remind her of a time in the past, probably when she is unmarried, and she enjoys her freedom. It may also be a way she keeps her hope alive that one day in the future she will be free when Jaja is grown up. Therefore, when Jaja defies his father, and he throws the family missal at him, a book of Catholicism with which he holds them in bondage, it breaks the figurines. There is a transformational change in her and the others. She knows that the dawn of freedom for her and her children has arrived. Her footsteps are no longer inaudible in the house. Kambili says, “Then Mama came, her rubber slippers making slap-slap sounds on the marble floor” (7). Immediately, she poisons her husband as a revenge for his violence and he dies; she assumes control of the household. Kambili is surprised at her mother’s newly-found authority:

The compound gates were locked. Mama had told Adamu not to open the gates to all the people who wanted to throng in for *mgbalu*, to commiserate with us. Even members of our *umunna* who had come from Abba were turned away. Adamu said it was unheard of, to turn sympathizers away. But Mama told him we wished to mourn privately, that they could go to offer Masses for the repose of Papa’s soul. I had never heard Mama talk to Adamu that way; I had never even heard Mama talk to Adamu at all (288-289).

Beatrice Achike, whom Ifeoma sees as being extremely submissive, is not as submissive as she thinks. She is simply taking her time when she will destroy the old order with the help of her son and become the family head. Therefore, she does not heed Aunt Ifeoma’s pieces of advice, which she refers to as “university talk”. She knows without Jaja growing into a

man capable of challenging his father's authority, she will not be able to do that alone. When she strikes, it becomes very clear that "the old silence had broken" (257). With Jaja's defiance, she shrewdly knows that she no longer needs to replace the broken figurines.

Kambili further observes:

She did not hide the tiny smile that drew lines at the edge of her mouth. She did not sneak Jaja's food to his room, wrapped in cloth so it would appear that she had simply brought his laundry in. She took him his food on a white tray, with a matching plate (257-258).

Moreover, it seems Beatrice's actions are dictated by the environmental realities around her. Having recognized that Jaja has grown into a man capable of defending his family, she decides to quietly eliminate Eugene. When her children leave home to go to Nsukka to stay with Aunty Ifeoma, she has to make a choice. She has to choose between losing her husband and losing her children because of their father's violence. She, therefore, decides he has to be eliminated; she prefers being a widow with her children and her husband's wealth with her to being a poor divorcee or one of his wives. He is to be sacrificed as she tells her children remorselessly, "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor" (290). Her action of killing the husband instead of packing out as her sister-in-law advises her shows that she is worse than the family dictator Adichie presents.

Of course, Olanna and Kainene's dispossession in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, particularly Kainene's, cannot be blamed solely on nurture or environment. Nature or heredity is also implicated. It has been the tenet of psychology that environment cannot change an individual's genotype, that is, his specific genetic structure, but it does interact with it to

produce the physical and psychological consequences for him and resultant changes in his behaviour (Scarr 1992). How is this applicable to the twins? The narrator describes Kainene's physique as being ugly and androgynous. There is no resemblance, whatsoever, between her and her beautiful mother and twin sister. Susan who is a Lagos socialite observes when she and Kainene are introduced by Richard at a party, "Whatever happened to her? Quite extraordinary; her mother is stunning, absolutely stunning" (59). Richard also makes the same observation when he sees Kainene standing near her family members:

Richard was momentarily startled by how perfectly almond-shaped her eyes were, wide-set in a face that was intimidating to look at. He would never have guessed she was Kainene's mother, nor would he have guessed that Kainene and Olanna were twins. Olanna took after their mother, although hers was a more approachable beauty with the softer face and the smiling graciousness and the fleshy, curvy body that filled out her dark dress. A body Susan would call *African*. Kainene even looked thinner next to Olanna, almost androgynous, her tight maxi outlining the boyishness of her hips (60).

For the description of Kainene's ugly physique which is thrust on her by nature or heredity, the environment now plays on that nature to dispossess her further. Starting with their parents, and the names the twins are given at birth, it is not in doubt that she is regarded as the ugly duckling in the house as she does not measure up to her mother or her sister in beauty. Kainene knows that in her culture there is everything in a name and that her parents dispossess her with the name she is given at birth. As she discloses to Richard, "We are twins....Kainene and Olanna. Her name is the lyrical *God's Gold*, and mine is the more practical *Let's watch and see what next God will bring*" (58). As if the attitude of the

parents towards the fraternal twins who differ markedly is not enough, Kainene asks Richard at the first meeting, “Shall I introduce you? Everybody wants to meet her” (59). Radical Odenigbo loves her and strives to marry her even when his mother objects to their relationship. He is more interested in keeping his relationship with her than keeping her biological daughter, Baby. Also Ugwu and Okeoma fantasize over her. Miss Adebayo grudgingly acknowledges that she is “illogically pretty” (49) and Okeoma calls her “water mermaid” (49) and continues writing poetry about her till his death in the warfront.

Because men are drawn to Olanna, her parents want to use her as a bait to attract government contracts. The finance minister, Chief Okonji, is ready to offer her father contracts; he also offers Olanna a job if she agrees to be his mistress. Her parents encourage her to date the minister; however, Chief Okonji is not interested in Kainene because she is not beautiful enough to attract his attention. Olanna simply wonders “how her parents had promised Chief Okonji an affair with her in exchange for the contract. Had they stated it verbally, plainly, or had it been implied” (32)? Apart from those who show interest in Olanna for their sexual satisfaction, there are also suitors who are coming for marriage. Kainene informs Richard that “My sister and I are meat. We are here that suitable bachelors will make the kill” (59). However, it is Olanna who has “refused to marry Igwe Okagbue’s son, and later Chief Okaro’s son” (35) and not Kainene. Their father feels that Kainene may not be able to attract suitors because of her ugliness; he gives her a house in Port Harcourt as a dowry and an “enticement for the right sort of man to marry an unattractive daughter” (69). And that is why she feels that socialism can very well work in Nigeria, but definitely not for the Igbo where there is economic injustice. As she

riles, “Ogbenyealu is a common name for girls and you know what it means? ‘Not to be married to a poor Man.’ To stamp that on a child at birth is capitalism at best” (69).

Olanna’s dispossession is also caused by nature. Even though she is seen as being extremely beautiful and she is sought after by every man, she has a gynaecological problem which makes it impossible for her to have a baby for Odenigbo. At the initial stage of their relationship, she indicates that she is not interested in having a baby. Probably because of the poor parenting experience she has, she feels that “to bring a child into this unjust world was an act of a blasé bourgeoisie” (104). She is, therefore, comfortable in her love affair with Odenigbo until his mother comes with Amala, and ensnares Odenigbo into sleeping with her and she is pregnant. After their quarrel, she is desperate to have a child for him. According to the narrator:

Just as she had never seriously thought of having a child until now; the longing in the lower part of her belly was sudden and searing and new. She wanted the solid weight of a child, his child, in her body (104).

When the decision to secure her position in Odenigbo’s life is taken, she becomes worried that she has not conceived despite the fact neither of them has used contraceptives to prevent pregnancy. She suspects that the problem may be from her since Amala gets pregnant when she has sexual intercourse only once with Odenigbo. She does not rest on her oars but travels to London to see a gynaecologist, whom she remembers telling her after medical examinations that “There was nothing wrong with her and she had only to – he winked – work harder” (217-218). Unfortunately, she may have a gynaecological problem because, before and after the war, she has had sex once with Richard and several times with the virile Odenigbo, but she never conceives.

We shall also examine the type of relationship which exists between the twins which is also the source of each other's dispossession. There is no doubt that Olanna is more beautiful than Kainene, and their parents and the society pay more attention to her and literally ignore her ugly sister, and this propels Kainene to resent her presence. As they grow older, the chasm between them deepens further. The narrator says, "When they were in primary school, they sometimes looked at each other and laughed, without speaking because they were thinking the same joke" (31). As children, they are friendly, though Kainene has been the withdrawn child, the sullen and often acerbic teenager. However, as they become older and Kainene grows more conscious of people's attitude towards her, the chasm between them widens further. It is revealed that:

Perhaps it was during their secondary-school years at Heathgrove. Perhaps even before. Nothing had happened – no momentous quarrel, no significant incident – rather, they had simply drifted apart, but it was Kainene who now anchored herself in a distant place so that they could not drift back together (37).

Olanna's act of vengeance against Odenigbo's infidelity with Amala by having sex with Richard is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Though the casual fling purges her of pent-up rage, it does almost an irretrievable damage to her relationship with her twin sister, which lasted almost to the end of the civil war. Kainene tells her on the phone that it is unforgivable for her to have slept with Richard because, "You're the good one and the favourite and the beauty and the Africanist revolutionary who doesn't like white men, and you simply did not need to fuck him. So why did you" (254)? Kainene feels that Olanna sleeps with Richard in order to spite her and snatch from her the only person she values and who truly cherishes her, because she is not as beautiful as she. The only time she is

able to forgive her is when Ikejide is beheaded in her presence and the horror of the headless body running until it falls down that she understands the impulse which must have pushed Olanna to sleep with Richard. When they reconcile, they exclude the two men – Richard and Odenigbo – in their relationship so that “Richard saw the similarity in the curve of their lips, in the shape of their slightly larger front teeth” (403). They are not, therefore, as different as people think they have been made by nature.

CHAPTER FIVE

FORMS OF DISPOSSESSION OF CHARACTERS

There are three forms of dispossession which are identified in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. They are psychic or psychological, economic/political and cultural, and these are discussed hereunder.

5.1 **Psychic Dispossession**

The psychic or psychological dispossession of characters and groups seems to have the most brutal consequences on their victims, who live in their fictive worlds. For instance, Eugene Achike's sexual drive or instinct of the id has been repressed by the severe punishment he receives for masturbation at a very crucial period of his psychosexual development. He then sublimates his sexual impulses and channels them to more acceptable activities – charity works and religiosity. There is no sexual life imputed to him in the text, and it is only through her mother's pregnancies and miscarriages that Kambili knows he makes love to her. He competes with Jesus Christ in his charitable works that "During his sermons, Father Benedict usually referred to pope, Papa and Jesus in that order" (4). He also casts himself in the image of Christ after his donations to St. Paul's at Abba. According to the narrator, "He led the way out of the hall, smiling and waving at the many hands that reached out to grasp his white tunic as if touching him would heal them of an illness" (90-91). However, one can see as the events in the novel unfold, that despite his good works and faith, Eugene lacks love, which is fundamental tenet of his religion, and this is indicated in the wife's T-shirt with its inscription, "GOD IS LOVE". Also despite his fanatical Catholicism, Eugene, like Okonkwo in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, has no respect for his God and is iconoclastic. He batters his wife she miscarries on a Pentecost

Sunday; he also violently beats his whole family on the Sunday his church celebrates the Holy Family Day because Kambili eats ten minutes before the Eucharistic fast; it is on a Palm Sunday that he throws the family Missal, a sacred book of his religion, at Jaja.

The unsatisfactory resolution of his Oedipus complex can also be seen in his lack of identification with his own father and the traditional values he stands for. This is because he does not live with him at the most crucial stage of his psychosexual development as he tells Kambili, "I was a houseboy for the parish priest for two years" (47). Because he is brought up by the pious, he owes undiluted allegiance to them for, "He was gracious, in the eager-to-please way he always assumed with the religious, especially with the white religious" (46). His gratitude to them is quite understandable, for as he says, "I would be nothing today but for the priests and sisters at the mission" (47). He, therefore, slavishly identifies with them and their values, liking what they like, and hating what they hate. And what they hate includes sex in all forms and paganism or idolatry. Because he does not live with Papa-Nnukwu at the period of his identification for him to be assigned his gender role in his society, he neither provides material goods for his father nor sees it as his responsibility to bury him. He plainly tells his sister when he is told that Papa-Nnukwu is dead, "I cannot participate in a pagan funeral, but we can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral" (188-189). Therefore, because of the psychic dispossession of his sexual drive at the period of his oedipalization, his violent beating of his family members may be rightly seen as a way of his achieving sexual orgasm. A psychiatrist suggests that there are a number of ways people achieve sexual orgasm apart from homosexuality, sadism, exclusionism and masochism. They also use other objects in amazing ways to achieve sexual purpose such as whips, chains, excrement, shoes, feet,

hair, statues, and even animals such as duck (Kraft-Ebing 1965). Eugene may be seen as a masochist in using whips to inflict pain on his wife and children. His language and body reactions as he beats them may be interpreted as forms of sexual orgasm. Kambili describes his body reaction before he beats them thus, “His swaying was like shaking a bottle of Coke that burst into violent foam when you opened it” (210). As he beats the whole family because Kambili violates the Eucharistic fast, she notes his body reaction “like a Fulani nomad” and his language, “muttering that the devil would not win” (102). Again the day he beats her into an unconscious state, before she loses consciousness, she observes despite her pains that “He talked nonstop, out of control, in a mix of Igbo and English, like soft meat and thorny bones” (210). The consequences of Eugene’s psychic and cultural dispossession may be seen in his being turned into a rough beast, which unleashes violence on those around him – his wife and two children.

Beatrice Achike’s psychic dispossession does not involve any stage of her Electra complex; rather, it reflects the dispossessed as an agent of further dispossession of others. She is a constant victim of Eugene’s violence. She is battered on the Pentecost Sunday for suggesting to stay in the vehicle because of her sickness when the family is going to see Father Benedict. When Kambili breaks the Eucharistic fast, she is beaten with her children despite the fact that Jaja claims responsibility. As Eugene queries her before the beating, her culpability is because, “You sit there and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, *maka nnidi*” (102)? When Jaja and Kambili return to Nsukka with their father, Kambili observes, “Her face was swollen and the area around her right eye was the black-purple shade of an overripe avocado” (190). She is probably beaten because the children are staying under the same roof at Auntie Ifeoma’s house with Papa-Nnukwu who is a pagan.

Their mother has to take the blame for their action. Besides, he unleashes on her his violently bottled up action on the death of Ade Coker, and the military government's decision to ruin his business by the closure of the *Standard* and his factories. She says, "You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, *nne* ? Your father broke it on my belly" (248). She is taken late to the hospital and the doctors cannot prevent the miscarriage.

She also watches helplessly as her husband batters and injures her children. Jaja's little finger is disfigured at ten years. She watches docilely as he pours boiled water on the children's feet for staying with their grandfather. She offers to carry Kambili who says, "I did not realize that Mama had come into the bathroom. Tears were running down her face. Her nose was running, too, and I wondered if she would wipe it before it got to her mouth, before she would have to taste it" (195). She dares not lift up her finger to stop him from beating Kambili, but before she loses consciousness, she hears her, "Please, *biko*, please" (211). With this type of violence unleashed on her and her children, there is no doubt that the psychic dispossession will have a terrible impact on her. Kambili observes when she comes to Nsukka that "Her eyes were glazed over as she looked around. I knew she could not see the picture with the cracked frame or the fresh African lilies in the oriental vase" (248).

The rough beast which destroys its innocent victims is also seen in Adichie's presentation of the psychic dispossession of Jaja and Kambili. Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus* depicts how one's id and ego can be emasculated by the superego of the law-giver. In fact, there is a total destruction of Jaja's Oedipus complex by the father. Though Jaja feels that it is his responsibility to protect his mother against the father's brutality, it is never shown

that there is any incestuous relationship between him and the mother because of the ever-presence of the father. In Jaja's case, Freud's claim that the son harbours an incestuous wish for the mother and a murderous instinct for the father does not hold water, or at least, is partly true. Jaja may have harboured a murderous instinct for his father by his suggestion to Kambili that they ought to protect their unborn baby against his brutality, and the claiming of his mother's heinous crime to the police. Again, his action of killing a fowl, which he has not done before at Auntie Ifeoma's house, which Kambili is surprised that "There was a precision in Jaja, a single-mindedness that was cold, clinical" (235) has a subtle undertone that if Mama had not killed Eugene, Jaja would have done that. Nevertheless, his murderous instinct for the father is not as a result of his incestuous wish for the mother, but because of the violence he unleashes on the family, particularly on his mother. His wish to kill his father, therefore, is not as a result of his incestuous wish for the mother, but his intention to protect her as he says guiltily after his father's death, "I should have taken care of Mama" (289).

Eugene also stifles every aspect of sexual life in Jaja. He systematically ensures he does not masturbate as he denies him the key to his room and his privacy. When Jaja comes back from Nsukka with his sparks of freedom and demands for the key to his room, his father is surprised and demands, "What? What do you want privacy for? To commit a sin against your own body? Is that what you want to do, masturbate" (191)? Jaja also does not have any homosexual intention as he rebuffs Father Benedict's move to do so. He cannot indulge in such with Kevin and Adamu as these two are the father's spies. Kevin, for example, reports every move they make to their father as can be seen in their father's question, "Kevin said you stayed up to twenty-five minutes with your grandfather. Is that

what I told you” (69)? Like Kambili, he is completely isolated from his classmates, and he cannot have any heterogeneous relationship with boys of his own age as he attends school, which is for boys only.

In Kambili’s case, there is also the emasculation of her Electra complex, but hers is not as complete and as successful as Jaja’s. Kambili adores her father, seeks his approval in whatever she does or says. When she says something that pleases his father and he holds her hand, she says, “I felt as though my mouth was full of melting sugar” (26). At their Sunday ritual with him whenever she sips his hot tea, she thanks him as she feels “the love burn my tongue” (31). She absolves him from any wrongdoing for when Jaja suggests they will protect their unborn baby, she says, “I knew that Jaja meant from Papa, but I did not say anything about protecting the baby. Instead, I asked, ‘How do you know it will be a he’” (23)? She also shields him from public criticism whenever he beats them. Not only that the family lies to people that it is an accident that the person has, but when Jaja tells Auntie Ifeoma what happens to his little finger, Kambili thinks, “Had Jaja forgotten that we never told, that there was so much that we never told” (154)? Also when Father Amadi tells her that Jaja reveals a little about her father, she never says anything but bites her lower lip and thinks, “What had Jaja said to him? What was wrong with Jaja, anyway” (175)? And when Papa wants to beat her, even as a victim of the beast, she is enthralled with his image, for she says, “I wanted to touch his face, to run my hand over his rubbery cheeks” (42). In fact, as a naïve narrator who is not conscious of her father’s violent disposition, she says, “When I had thought of heaven as a child, I visualized Papa’s room, the softness, the creaminess, the endlessness” (41). When Auntie Ifeoma and Father Amadi talk about the international award for Eugene, Kambili says, “I felt myself go warm all over, with pride,

with a desire to be associated with PapaI wanted some of the cloudlike warmth in Father Amadi's eyes to rub off on me, settle on me" (137). Even when she has gained consciousness of the father's violence, she shakes her mother until Jaja yanks her away when she reveals to them she is the one who kills him. Her love for him is unmistakable for even in death:

I have not told Jaja that I offer Masses for Papa every Sunday, that I want to see him in dreams, that I want it so much I sometimes make my own dreams, when I am neither asleep or awake: I see Papa, he reaches out to hug me, I reach out, too, but our bodies never touch before something jerks me up and I realize that I cannot control even the dreams that I have made (305-306).

The explanation for her love for him despite the fact that she has become aware of his brutality and her wish to hug him even in death can be found in his love for Father Amadi. Before she goes to Nsukka with Jaja, there is a total absence of sexual consciousness in her. At Nsukka, Aunty Ifeoma remoulds her to have a gender identity and gender role. But most importantly, her visit to Nsukka and her interaction with Father Amadi develop her sexual consciousness. The awakening of her sexual impulses is seen as her hands are shaking, her chest heaving, her lips trembling and she finds Father Amadi's looks disturbing. Her manifestations of erotic feeling for him is glimpsed in her putting on a pair of Amaka's shorts and wearing lipstick, what she has never done in her life, and her father would have found very sinful and scandalous. She tells the priest plainly, "I love you" (276) as her natural impulse overcomes her inhibitory upbringing. Her love for him is not unrequited as Amaka, Obiora and Mama Joe tell her. Mama Joe says, "A man does not bring a young girl to dress her hair unless he loves that young girl, I am telling you. It does

not happen” 238). Presumably, Kambili does not suffer as much as Jaja for their psychic dispossession, because of her love for the priest. When she meets him and both of them fall in love, the symptoms of her dispossession – stammering, stuttering, diffidence and withdrawal – all disappear. Also during Jaja’s imprisonment and the mother’s depression, she is able to withstand the pressure on her and her family. Mama is a depressive maniac as she ties her wrapper “loose around her waist, and she ties and reties it often, giving her the air of the unkempt women at Ogbete Market, who let their wrappers unravel so that everyone sees the hole-riddled slip they have on underneath” (295). She is also able to avoid Jaja’s psychopathological condition as she says that he “stares at me silently with those eyes that have hardened a little every month he has spent here; now they look like the bark of a palm tree, unyielding” (305). The most important antidote she has against the crises in her family, apart from Auntie Ifeoma, Amaka and Obiora’s letters, is Father Amadi’s, which she says, “I always carry his latest letter with me until a new one comes” (303). She believes that the reason for always carrying them is “because they are long and detailed, because they remind me of my worthiness, because they tug at my feelings” (303). However, Amaka believes otherwise. To her, it is because of her “love-dovey with Father Amadi and then drew a smiling face” (203). Despite her disputation of Amaka’s suggestion, she says later, “I no longer wonder if I have a right to love Father Amadi; I simply go ahead and love him” (303).

There is no doubt, whatsoever, that his father’s unsuccessful attempt to destroy her sexual consciousness is the reason for her survival of the trauma. Jaja is not as lucky as she is in the resolution of his Oedipus complex and that is the reason he breaks down in prison. There is no lover to remind him of his worthiness and give him hope. It is Kambili’s love

for the priest, which he reciprocates, that is the reason why Eugene Achike's family survives his violence and the fallouts from it. There is hope for the regeneration of the family as she says:

We'll plant new orange trees in Abba when we come back, and Jaja will plant purple hibiscus, too, and I'll plant ixora so we can suck the juices of the flowers.

I am laughing. I reach out and place my arm around Mama's shoulder and she leans towards me and smiles (306-307).

It is not only Eugene Achike's family that is psychically dispossessed in *Purple Hibiscus*. The narrator also depicts a population – an institution and a nation – that suffers the same fate. This is done through the feminization of the group by the Sole Administrator and the military head of state. For example, the soldiers who are agents of the military government demolish stalls in the market, flog and humiliate the women. The men-folk are also stripped of their masculinity and treated like children. At a roadblock mounted by the soldiers who caress their long guns, Kambili says, "Once, I saw a man kneeling on the road beside his Peugeot 504, with his hands raised high in the air" (27). Because of the antecedents of the soldiers' brutality, when Ade Coker is arrested, she says, "I imagined his hands quivering with fear, a wet patch spreading on his trousers" (38). Again the intimidation and feminization of the whole population is seen in the public execution of three drug peddlers; yet, Ade Coker alleges that the head of state and his wife are drug barons. When Ade Coker is arrested for his extreme defiance of the Big Oga and his agents, Eugene says, "They put out so many cigarettes on his back" (42). He is murdered for his insistence on publishing the true story of Nwankiti Ogechi's disappearance. According to the narrator, "Soldiers shot Nwankiti Ogechi in the bush in Minna. And they

poured acid on his body to melt his flesh off his bones, to kill him even when he was already dead” (200-201). Eugene Achike who defies the military government on its slaughter of his editor is crushed into a depressive mood. Kambili observes him during that trying period, “But he prays a lot more, and some nights when I woke up to pee, I heard him shouting from the balcony overlooking the front yard. Even though I sat on the toilet seat and listened, I never could make sense of what he was saying” (208).

Half of a Yellow Sun ought to be seen as an allegory, in the sense that it tells the story of the growth of sexual consciousness in one of the characters, Ugwu, and the relationship among the Ozobias. But at a deeper level, both underscore the relationship between the different ethnic groups that are yoked together as a nation at the convenience of Britain, and the resultant civil war between the nation’s component parts. Ugwu, the thirteen-year-old houseboy of Odenigbo, is at the genital stage of his psychosexual development when he is brought to serve him. He fantasizes over Nnesinachi, and he concentrates his libidinal impulse on her breasts. He is not happy that his mother refers to her as his “sister”. Nnesinachi, on the other hand, is aware of his lust for her, and she adopts an ambivalent position towards him. She calls him “Chiejina”, the name of his cousin who looks nothing like him. At the same time, she seduces him as she sits outside “looking after her younger siblings, her wrapper hanging low enough for him to see the tops of her breasts” (8). In his imagination, her breasts will “feel mushy-soft or hard like the unripe fruit from the *ube* tree” (8). In Ugwu’s relentless, impulsive sexual desire for Nnesinachi, he determines to touch Anulika’s breasts, though he expects her to slap his face because of its incestuous implication. But the experience will be important because “that way he would at least have an idea and know what to expect when he finally touched

Nnesinachi” (8). One is aware that Ugwu’s psychosexual development is at the genital stage when his love-object is somebody outside his family. Because he cannot have Nnesinachi sexually, he fantasizes over her even before he comes to Odenigbo’s house. Of course, her breasts “were the images saved for last on the many nights when he touched himself, slowly at first and then vigorously until a muffled moan escaped him” (9). Ugwu’s masturbation, therefore, is a safe method in which his relentless psychic energy of the id is released.

Distance has separated him from the object of his libido: Nnesinachi. He has only one fear, which is that one day a pot-bellied trader in the North may take one look at her and “bring palm wine to her father and he would never get to touch her breasts” (9). Therefore, when Richard informs him he will accompany him to his village to watch the *ori-okpa* festival, he is overjoyed as that will offer him the opportunity he needs to see Nnesinachi before she leaves for the North. He is quite sure that his new status will not be lost on her. He imagines:

How impressed she would be when he arrived in a white man’s car, driven by the white man himself! She would certainly notice him this time, he was sure, and he could not wait to impress Anulika and his cousins and relatives with his English, his new shirt, his knowledge of sandwiches and running tap water, his scented powder (86).

However, when he goes home with Odenigbo to bring his sick mother, he is disappointed that Nnesinachi is not there to “take his hand in hers and tell him soothingly that his mother’s illness was not serious at all, and then lead him to the grove by the stream and untie her wrapper and offer him her breasts, lifting them up and forward toward him”

(89). Ugwu's fantasy for her will not be realized when he visits his parents for one week, by then she has travelled to the North. Ugwu still has incestuous wish for his sister, Anulika, and he is annoyed she talks incessantly about her suitor. He notices that there is a "roundness to her body: the breasts that filled the blouse, the buttocks that rolled with each step" (119). He suspects she has slept with Onyeka and that is a challenge to his manhood as he "could not bear to think of the man's ugly body thrusting into his sister's" (119). He riles at Anulika, "I have tired of stories of Onyeka.... He should bathe more often, he smells like rotten oil beans" (120). He does not believe that his own sister can be the object of another man's libidinal drive like his own "hasty thrusts in the dark" (121) with Chinyere. As he is going back, he sees Nnesinachi, who is back from the North, and very bold and who "had pressed herself against him when they hugged" (121). Anulika notices her seductive move and tells him that he can have what she can offer, but he cannot think of marrying her as she is now wayward. Furthermore, in his libidinal impulse for Olanna, he imagines her to be "cashew", "butter" and even a "shapely spirit". He spies on her and Odenigbo as they make love and inspects her inner wears. Despite his sexual fantasies for Nnesinachi, Anulika and Olanna, he is dispossessed psychically as he cannot possess them for different reasons. Nnesinachi is separated from him by distance; Anulika is by prohibition on incest, and Olanna because she is in the position of a mother to him. However, his id energy must find a way of escape because:

According to contemporary research, the human person is so profoundly affected by sexuality, that it must be considered as one of the factors which gives each individual's life the principal traits that distinguish it. In fact, it is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which on biological,

psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into maturity (Dwyer quoted in Ofordile 80).

Ugwu's sexual fantasy, therefore, cannot continue without his actual experience of sex for that is a necessary part of his transition into manhood and maturity. Since those he desires he cannot have, because of one prohibition or the other, the energy of the id is released through impulsive sex with Chinyere. Their sexual relationship defies Alfred Adler's claims that "Love as a task of two equal persons of different sexes calls for bodily and mental attraction, exclusiveness, and total and final surrender" (1964:223). Their relationship is as a result of instinctive drive since there is bodily but neither mental attraction nor total nor final surrender between them. This can be glimpsed from Ugwu's expectation on the day of the coup. He "hoped Chinyere would slip under the hedge and come over, they never planned it, she just appeared on some days and didn't on the others" (126). When they have sex, Ugwu imagines her to be "Nnesinachi" and she also calls him a name that sounds like "Abonyi". In fact, they are strangers who simply copulate in obedience to irresistible sexual impulses. As Ugwu observes:

She got up and left as silently as she came. When he saw her the next day across the hedge, hanging out clothes on the line, she said "Ugwu" and nothing else; she did not smile (127).

It is obvious that their relationship is devoid of love. This is because love is "not understood as a mere side effect of sex but sex is a way of expressing the experience of that ultimate togetherness that is called love" (Frankl 117). In the absence of a consummate sexual relationship, Ugwu is still psychically dispossessed and longs for Nnesinachi's

breasts. As he flees from Nsukka during the war, his only thought is that “he would finally hold Nnesinachi naked and pliant in his arms” (177) and he hopes, too, that “she would not be like Chinyere; he hoped she would make the same sounds he heard from Olanna when he pressed his ear to the bedroom door” (177). If she is recalcitrant, he will use tear gas to subdue her like the police use it on the recalcitrant members of the Western House of Assembly, and “they all passed out, leaving orderlies to carry them, limp, to their cars” (210). However, Jomo discourages him from using tear gas on her. He asks him, “Why do you want to use tear gas on a young girl? Look, go to your village and if time is right and the young girl likes you, she will follow you. You don’t need tear gas” (211). By the time he gets home with Richard, he is told that Nnesinachi has travelled to Kano to learn a trade. He, therefore, “leaned against the tree and mourned the time he had spent thinking of seeing Nnesinachi. Now she was gone and some trader in the North would end up with his prize” (211).

With Chinyere and Nnesinachi being out of his reach and the war raging in the enclave of Biafra, his sexual impulse of the id is unabated. He concentrates his libidinal drive on Eberechi’s buttocks, which he feels like grabbing in his hands. He imagines being in bed with her in different coital positions. He fantasizes that sex with her ought to be a language which expresses tenderness. He will respect her and ensure she gets orgasm with him unlike her experience with her soldier-lover. However, he is disappointed in Eberechi’s excitement at being taken to Major Nwogu and he feels betrayed. As she leaves with the soldier, “The mix of hurt and confusion and embarrassment weakened him” (297). He is consoled when she says she loves him more than the officers. On his way back from seeing her off, he is conscripted into the army. In the war-front, as the federal troops are

shelling them, he thinks of “Eberechi’s finger pushing the skin of his neck, the wetness of her tongue in his mouth” (362). Being dispossessed of a woman in the army, he rapes a bar girl with eight other young soldiers and loathes himself after that as her “calm hate” (365) haunts him during and after the war. The impulsive sexual instinct of the id continues as his life is hanging on the balance, he still fantasizes over Eberechi.

Ugwu’s psychosexual development or his Oedipus complex is to be read as a metaphor for the relationship which exists between the different ethnic groups, which Britain yokes together as a nation. His sexual fantasies for Nnesinachi and Eberechi are to be seen as the different ethnic groups’ desire to be part of other countries, which share the same culture and religion with them. His masturbation may also be read as some of the ethnic groups’ desire to be on their own. His sex with Chinyere is not of choice but a response to the impulsive id like Britain yokes together different and unwilling ethnic groups with different cultures, landscapes, languages and religions as a country. Ugwu’s desire to use tear gas to bring Nnesinachi to sexually submit to him is a metaphor for Nigeria’s desire to “embark on a police action to bring back the rebels of Biafra” (177) after its secession. His desire for Nnesinachi is Nigeria’s desire for the oil deposits in the Biafran enclave, which the federal government cannot overlook.

Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* also highlights the psychic dispossession of the black race by European colonization. Not only that Africa’s history is distorted, its geography is also distorted. According to Sigmund Freud, the unconscious also operates in social groups. This is seen in the systematic dehumanization and feminization of Africa and Africans. In Europe, Africans are seen as apes and, of course, Richard’s aunt tells Susan to show him around because “Africa was nothing like Argentina and India” (55). In

Kenya, according to Olanna, the British cut off the testicles of the men who oppose them. This is castration in the Oedipus myth, and in the novel, it seems that colonization castrates the colonized and their territories.

White women also feel that black women are inferior to them. Susan breaks glasses the two times Richard talks with white women: Clovis Bancroft and Julia March. However, she is smug when he talks with Kainene, because “black women are not threatening to her, were not equal rivals” (55). To Susan, there is no identification with the blacks as “One couldn’t cross certain lines” (67). White men who date black women share the same attitude with Susan. According to the narrator, “Kainene dated so many white men in England” (36), and Olanna is irritated because of their “thinly veiled condescension and their false validations” (36). Kainene’s body, therefore, becomes a metaphor for the repossession of feminized masculinity of the black men and Biafra. The battle for the possession of her body is waged between Major Madu and Richard Churchill from the first time of their meeting in Kainene’s house in Port Harcourt until after her disappearance. Richard slaps Madu because he suspects he is “responsible for her disappearance” (430), Madu also hits him back in a show of masculinity.

However, the narrators satirize the concept of masculinity in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The acquisition of colonial territories is based on the masculinity of the Empire. However, the novel demystifies the masculinity of the white race by Richard’s sexual impotence. His psychic dispossession is seen in his inability to have an erection as he and Kainene undress, and his “naked body was pressed to hers and yet he was limp” (63). His sexual relationship with Susan is unsatisfactory, too. According to the narrator, it was “like an artless flow with little input from them, or at least from him” (67). In Biafra, too, there is the

debunking of masculinity. Before the war, the yardsticks to measure a man's masculinity are his physique and sexual prowess. But during the war, those who have positions in the Biafran civil service or those who carry guns are those who are masculine. Soldiers beat up civilians and confiscate their property. Ugwu is treated disdainfully by the soldier who comes to take Eberechi to Major Nwogu. Parents thrust their daughters on soldiers for their sexual gratification in return for one favour or the other. Those who are not in the army are seen as not helping the Biafran cause. Mama Oji calls her husband a "castrated sheep" for deserting the army.

The concept of masculinity during the war is satirized as in the feminization of territories through colonization. Adichie shows that being a soldier and carrying a gun do not tantamount to sexual prowess and masculinity. Eberechi's pot-bellied soldier does not give her sexual orgasm, because as she tells Ugwu, "He did it quickly and then told me to lie on top of him. He fell asleep and I wanted to move away and he woke up and told me to stay there" (294). Alice also narrates her experience of her soldier-lover's premature ejaculation to Olanna. According to her, "He would jump on top of me, moan *oh-oh-oh* like a goat, and that was it" (336). Also Olanna feminizes Gowon and assigns masculinity to Ojukwu in her drawings of the two warlords. The narrator says, "His Excellency was burly, sketched with double lines, while Gowon's effete body was outlined in single lines" (281). Alice debunks Ojukwu's masculinity when she observes to Olanna, "God always fights for the side that has more arms" (334). Also the reality dawns on Ugwu that there is nothing like masculinity in war as in the rape of a girl. When he joins the army, he is disillusioned because the officers treat their men like sheep, and that there is nothing like greatness in war, despite snobbish Harrison calling him "one of our boys" (399). He is also

haunted by the “dead hate in the eyes of the bar girl. He could not remember her features, but the look in her eyes stayed with him, as did the tense dryness between her legs, the way he had done what he had not wanted to do” (397). Therefore, colonization, rape and war, which are seen as a show of masculinity by the characters, are portrayed as actually being the consequences of psychic dispossession in the novel.

5.2 Economic/Political Dispossession

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili describes a family whose head is materially well-off, and they have everything money can buy at their disposal. They have beautiful and spacious houses at Enugu and Abba, their rooms are tastefully furnished and their meals sumptuous. According to Kambili, “Lunch was jollof rice, fist-sized chunks of azu fried until the bones were crisp, and ngwo-ngwo” (32). Eugene Achike is very wealthy: he builds and furnishes St. Agnes at Enugu, donates generously for charitable causes, pays school fees for more than a hundred people. However, there is a lack in the family and that is freedom, though their house is filled with servants who do everything for them. Beatrice Achike is a full-time housewife; she does nothing except to supervise Sisi’s cooking and housekeeping. Apart from Jaja and Kambili’s scheduled time for reading, siesta and family time, they do not do much except wash their school uniforms; yet, theirs is a family where they and their mother live in fear and bondage.

Eugene Achike systematically ensures that his son and daughter do not develop any initiative. He takes decisions and makes choices for them, and in this way they do not develop any sense of gender identity and gender role. This dispossession of leadership qualities in Jaja has a disastrous consequence for the family. For instance, he is incapable of protecting himself, his mother and sister against his father’s brutal attacks on them.

Though he tells Kambili that they ought to protect their unborn baby, he only stands on the landing and helps Kambili to clean the trickles of their mother's blood after Eugene batters her and the baby aborts. When Kambili breaks the Eucharistic fast, though he claims responsibility for the action, the leather-covered belt "landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder" (102). Although he challenges his father on the freedom of Papa-Nnukwu to die as a traditionalist and demands the key to his room to demonstrate his growing manhood, his feet are also scalded like Kambili's. According to Kambili, when Jaja comes into her room on Saturday, "He wore socks and placed his feet gingerly one after the other as I did. But we did not talk about our padded feet" (197). Also when Eugene discovers Papa-Nnukwu's painting in their possession, though they both claim its ownership, he doesn't prevent the violence on Kambili.

Nevertheless, he believes that it is his responsibility to protect his sister and mother against the physical abuses and this proves Freud's claim that all ego strivings are filled with libidinal components. The initiative in him has been crushed by his father's manner of nurturing him. Unlike Jaja, Obiora, who is three years younger than he, takes decisions for the family. When he asks the mother calmly when they are going to bring Papa-Nnukwu, Kambili says, "I had observed since we came, he seemed much older than Jaja" (149). At fourteen years, he challenges the four hefty security men who come to search their flat thus, "How you go just come enter like dis? Wetin be dis? Obiora said, rising, the fear in his eyes not quite shielded by the brazen manliness in his pidgin English" (231). Obiora's act of manliness in taking decisions for the family and defending it is not lost on Jaja. When his mother kills the father, he claims responsibility for her crime because of a sense of guilt. He tells Kambili, "Look how Obiora balances Auntie Ifeoma's family on his head

and I am older than he is” (289). Even when he is in prison, his inability to protect the family against the father still haunts him. Kambili observes that “His eyes are too full of guilt to really see me, to see his reflection in my eyes, the reflection of my hero, the brother who tried always to protect me the best he could. He never thinks that he did enough...” (305). However, there is the undertone in his action in Aunty Ifeoma’s house that if his mother had not killed the father, he would have done it. This can be glimpsed from his action of killing a fowl, which he has not done before. Kambili is surprised and followed him to the backyard where she notes that in doing that, “There was a precision in Jaja, a single-mindedness that was cold, clinical” (235).

When the father is dead, he does not accept his leadership style. This is reflected in Sisi’s symbolic act of bringing him Bournvita in a “tray that held the same cups Papa had always used to drink his tea” (289). He shakes his head and says, “Not with those cups” (289). From this act, one can see that Jaja is not turned into a beast – an agent of violence – because of the trauma he has undergone under his father, unlike Eugene, whom Adichie presents as inflicting the injury he receives from the priest, who scalds his hand for masturbation, on his nuclear family. Jaja’s behaviour proves right Cervone’s argument that our cognitive abilities allow us to regulate our own behaviour and thereby influence our own environment (1992), instead of succumbing sheepishly to repressed childhood traumatic experiences as motivations for our actions as Eugene seems to do.

Kambili, like Jaja, is not dispossessed materially but she lacks initiative because of her defective upbringing. When she comes to Aunty Ifeoma’s house, she cannot wash plates; she cannot peel yams; she cannot make *garri*. She does not have a choice of the university she will go to or the course she will study; all the decisions and choices are made

by the father. Unlike Amaka who insists on her confirmation name, Eugene chooses “Ruth” for her, and also he “had bought my white lace dress and a soft, layered veil” (203). In fact, her whole life is run by her father’s schedule for her, which makes her come first in the class almost all the time, but the essential things that will help her to lead a normal life are left out in the schedule. And Amaka asks her sarcastically, “Maybe I should enter it in your schedule, how to peel a yam” (134).

Father Amadi and Auntie Ifeoma retrain her to give her a sense of initiative which the father strips off her. Auntie Ifeoma instills in her gender role, which she does not get from her mother as she is self-effacing and the father domineering. Father Amadi also ignites the dormant sexual consciousness in her as well as develops her talents in sports. She says, “Nothing should be the same, was the same any more” (280). The inspiration he gives her helps her to compete in climbing Odim Hill. As she says, “I ran past Auntie Ifeoma, past Jaja and Chima, and I got to the top of the hill at about the same time as Amaka” (284) even though she is the last to join the race. Amaka commends her with, “You should be a sprinter” (284) and Auntie Ifeoma says, “I will find you a trainer, eh, there is big money in athletics” (284). It is because of the initiative she has developed before the time of her family crisis that she is able to look after her depressed mother and ensures the right people are bribed for Jaja to be released from prison.

Adichie uses Auntie Ifeoma’s family to show that economic dispossession of a people is not as disastrous as psychic and cultural dispossession, and that wealth does not give happiness. She is a woman, who lives in a country, where there is hyper-inflation, and the university where she works withholds her promotion, and her salaries are not paid on time. She and her colleagues, except those who are friendly with the Sole Administrator

and the Head of State, cannot afford to buy meat, bread, soft drinks and other essential food items. However, Kambili observes that despite their poverty:

Laughter always rang out in Auntie Ifeoma's house, and no matter where the laughter came from, it bounced around all the walls, all the rooms. Arguments rose quickly and fell just as quickly. Morning and night prayers were always peppered with songs, Igbo praise songs that usually called for hand clapping. Food had little meat, each person's piece the width of two fingers pressed close together and the length of half a finger (140).

Although Auntie Ifeoma is not as rich as her brother who prefers to help outsiders instead of assisting her, Jaja and Kambili's desire is to stay with her. They prefer the warmth, happiness and freedom in her house to theirs where they lack nothing and their father tells them, "Call at once if you need anything, and I will send Kevin" (123). One thing they desire most is their freedom and when he comes to drive them back to Enugu, Kambili momentarily wonders "what it would be like if I tore through the small hole and leaped out" (189). Also when she announces that the American Embassy has given her visa, "Jaja got up and walked into the flat. Finality hung in the air, heavy and hollow" (279). The two teenagers, therefore, are afraid of living under the shadow of their father's violence, despite his huge wealth. Despite Auntie Ifeoma's economic dispossession, she fights for her freedom and is happy. Kambili says, "She laughed so easily, so often. They all did, even little Chima" (85). And she says also, "they all laughed alike: throaty, cackling sounds pushed out with enthusiasm" (78).

Papa-Nnukwu is another character whose son dispossesses economically. Despite Eugene's legendary wealth, he lives in a hovel, eats wishy-washy food without meat, wears

tattered clothes, one of his eyes is going blind, yet his son is not ready to help him. Papa Nnukwu only receives from his son an “impersonal, paltry amounts of money through a driver” (67), or “through one of our *umunna* members, slimmer wads than he gave Kevin as a Christmas bonus” (62). And for the materially dispossessed but resolute Papa Nnukwu, she says after observing his early morning prayers in Aunty Ifeoma’s house, “He was still smiling as I quietly turned and went back to the bedroom. I never smiled after we said the rosary back home. None of us did” (169).

Kambili describes a society that is unabashedly materialistic, and a society that lacks justice. The fictive settings of Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* are places where in the mediation of disputes, “the members of our *umunna*, in fact everybody in Abba, will tell Eugene only what he wants to hear” (96). The church is not left out in the quest for materialism. Father Benedict who hears Eugene Achike’s confession and gives his battered family members the Sacrament of the Sick and has very powerful influence on him is not bothered about his violence on them. His main interest is the money he donates to the church and “half of Papa’s estate went to St. Agnes and to fostering of missions in the church” (297). The church also stands indicted in his not discharging the most important traditional responsibility he owes his father: to bury him.

A judicial system, a police force and a reformatory system that are sordidly corrupt are described also. Indeed, it is a system where the chief of Jaja’s cell, Oladipupo, “has been awaiting trial for eight years” (300), without any hope of his release with the death of the military head of state. Kambili says that for the lawyers to put Jaja’s name as number four on the list of more than two hundred prisoners to be released next week that “We do not talk about the huge checks we have written, for bribes to judges and policemen and

prison guards” (297). Those who cannot afford to bribe their way out of the prison like Olapdipupo can languish within the black walls of the prison with cells that are crowded and the prisoners sleep “with mice and cockroaches” (299) and “they struggle over who will take it [one plastic black bag] out each afternoon, because that person gets to see sunlight for a brief time” (299).

The same shameful state of affairs is also seen in the university where academics betray others to get favours, and those who ought to speak out against social ills keep silent. When the educated ones with the will to correct the system leave, the weak are left behind to suffer and in such an unnatural situation, “The tyrants continue to reign because the weak cannot resist. Do you not see that it is a cycle? Who will break that cycle” (244-245)? It is in this cycle of incompetent, brutal and corrupt leadership – political and military – that Adichie depicts the economic and political dispossession of citizens. At the beginning of the novel, the military government which takes on the leadership of the country through a coup is hailed by the people and they demonstrate in support of it as they envision their freedom under it. But a few weeks after that, it dawns on the populace that the government is a tyrannical one. It dispossesses them their means of livelihood without providing them with alternatives. In the market, Kambili observes, “a soldier was kicking down trays of fruits, squashing papayas with his boots and laughing” (44). However, the soldiers are agents of the rough beast, who “had been ordered to demolish the vegetable stalls because they are illegal structures” (44). The helplessness of the people is exhibited in their “shouting, and many had both hands on their heads, in the way people do to show despair or shock” (44). Those who oppose the government and its agents are whipped like children, and those who are consistently defiant like Ade Coker and Nwankiti Ogechi are

murdered. Eugene Achike, who is the publisher of the *Standard*, after refusing to be bribed with cartons of dollars is punished. After Ade Coker's death, the government hatches a plan to ruin him economically. Kambili says:

Soldiers had gone to one of the factories, carrying dead rats in a carton, and then closed the factory down, saying the rats had been found there and could spread disease through the wafers and biscuits. Papa no longer went to other factories as often as he used to (208).

Nigerians who are dispossessed economically or politically migrate to other parts of the world, where they do menial jobs, are also presented in *Purple Hibiscus*. A situation which prompts a writer in secular American magazine to sound "pessimistic that the Blessed Virgin Mary could be appearing at all, especially in Nigeria: all that corruption and all that heat" (300).

In Karl Marx's view, the economic and political exploitation of labourers or workers is the basis of class struggle. Indeed, there is the economic and political exploitation of dispossessed characters, but it should be examined principally from the dispossession of Nigeria and Biafra as these two groups loom larger than other characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Also the economic and political dispossession of other characters is fallout of the dispossession of these two aforementioned principal groups. Nigeria, for instance, has been raped economically by the British colonial administration. In Richard Churchill's opinion, "The good things that were achieved – the railways, for example – but also how labour was exploited and the lengths the colonial enterprise went to" (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 234). The exploitation continues after independence; most of the British colonial administrators and businessmen stay back to exploit the resources of the country. It is for

the protection of British interests that leads to the preservation of the fragmented parts of the nation. As the narrator observes, “But the British had to preserve Nigeria as it was, their prized creation, their large market, their thorn in France’s eye” (155). Britain also controls the country’s immigration policy through its membership of the commonwealth, and an imposition of a stooge as the prime minister on the newly independent country.

Apart from the British who economically exploit the country, Arabs also do so as they are said to own many properties in the country. This is the reason Major Madu advises the Ozobias not to sell their property in Lagos to a Lebanese businessman. Nigerian leaders – civilian and military – exploit the country with their contractor-friends. In Biafra, the masses are also exploited by their leaders and people like Special Julius replace Chief Ozobia. The utopian nature of Biafra is seen in the contradiction between the lives of the privileged class and the underdogs of Biafra. As the narrator says:

A little boy walking past wearing a pair of shorts with large holes that showed his dry-skinned buttocks greeted them....The laughter had not died on their faces and their hands were still clasped on the bench when Special Julius walked into the compound. His tunic glittered with sequins (273).

Special Julius, who is a contractor in Biafra, because of his brother’s position in the Biafran civil service has “optimistic affluence about him and his flamboyant clothes” (274), and this is despite the fact that Baby’s dress is “frayed, worn too often” (274). Adanna’s only dress is made from a sack used to package relief food the “FLOU was plastered on her back, with the R swallowed into the seam” (327). Adanna’s thin meatless soup is contrasted with the air of sumptuousness and affluence in Professor Ezeka’s house with its “Red rug and the matching red sofas and the television set and the fruity scent of Mrs.

Ezeka's perfume" (342). His eight-year-old daughter is fat-cheeked and she also has the privilege of wearing "pink satin ribbons in her hair" (340), while Baby and Adanna have lice on their hair and are malnourished.

There is the dispossession of the Igbo ethnic group politically and this is the most important factor, which causes the war. The imposition of indirect rule on Igboland is an unwelcome situation because the "people of Igbo land do not know what a king is. We have priests and elders.... It is because the white man gave us warrant chiefs that foolish men are calling themselves kings today" (71). The imposition of Balewa by the British on Nigeria as a prime minister is perceived as political dispossession by the republican group as can be glimpsed from Pa Anozie's conversation with Richard. This is the most important reason why the war is fought because the Igbo see the political system of the society as the substructure and not the economic system as Marx suggests. In Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the control of the political system of the country is the reason for the coup, the countercoup, the massacres and the civil war. The North which fears "domination from the South" (155) as the Empire crumbles is not ready to relinquish its hold on the political power. It falsifies the census figures in order to maintain its leadership of the country, which Britain masterminds by handing it over to the army and rigging the pre-independence election in its favour. The coup which the British Broadcasting Corporation calls an Igbo-led coup is aimed at retrieving political power from the North. Therefore, the cause of the war is not for the control of the economy but the control of the political and military power. In Susan's opinion, which represents that of the British, the Igbo are "so clannish and uppity and controlling the markets" (154). The British anti-Igbo sentiment is seen in the taunting of the Igbo by the Yoruba during the massacre, "Go, Igbo, go, so that *garri* will be

cheaper! Go, stop trying to own every house and every shop” (157-158). A stranger with “the shiniest darkest ebony complexion” (226), who boards the plane with Olanna at Kano enroute to Lagos, also expresses the economic domination of the Igbo over other tribes:

The problem with the Igbo people is that they want to control everything in the country. Everything. Why can't they stay in the East? They own all the shops, they control the civil service, even the police. If you are arrested for any crime, as long as you can say *keda* they will let you go (227).

Of course, the Igbo control the economy but they are not content to submit themselves to political domination by the North. To the North and to the Igbo, control of the political system is more important than the economic one. The counter-coup and the massacre in the North are motivated by the North's quest to reclaim political power. There is the connivance of the Northern politicians who lose political power during the first coup. The narrator says, “A bus drove past, dusty and yellow; it looked like one of those campaign buses that politicians used to tour rural areas and give out rice and cash to the villagers” (147). The politicians under the subterfuge of religion incite the masses with, “The Igbo must go. The infidels must go. The Igbo must go” (147). The nailing of Major Udodi on the cross and the killing of Nnaemeka at Kano airport because he cannot say “Allahu Akbar” (152) suggests that the massacre is a jihad, but it is politically motivated. Also the war takes an economic dimension when Gowon who says “that a basis for unity does not exist” (158) during the massacre declares that he will use police action to bring the rebels back to order. In Kainene's opinion, “It's the oil....They can't let us go easily with all that oil” (180). Gowon, whom Adichie presents as a rough beast, readily uses

every means at his disposal, including the economic strangulation of Biafra, starvation and air raids to conquer it.

There is also the economic and political domination of the minority ethnic groups in Biafran territory by the Igbo. The non-Igbo minorities sabotage Biafra because they fear “the Igbo would dominate them when Biafra was established” (314). Also in the enclave of Biafra, Ojukwu as a rough beast is reluctant to relinquish political power like the North. He accuses his military officers who tell him to release his stockpiles of arms of “plotting to overthrow him” (183). He is portrayed as a dictator and a beast who tags his opponents and the men he sleeps with their wives as saboteurs in order to lock them up.

Though there is evidently the economic and political dispossession of characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, there is no class struggle between the dispossessed and the dispossessors as Karl Marx claims. The struggle cuts across ethnic and religious lines. For instance, Uncle Mbaezi and Abdulmalik are presented as both dispossessed characters; yet, Abdulmalik sees the struggle as religious and not economic and betrays his friend and his family. He insists to the Northern rioters, “We finished the whole family. It was Allah’s will” (148)! Because the dispossessed poor have been denied education by the British and Nigerian leaders, people like Abdulmailk fail to see the struggle as political like Mohammed. Dispossessed characters like Ugwu and High-Tech fight the war for Biafra, while the bourgeois class sends its children abroad. Professor Ezeka’s wife informs Olanna:

You see, we should have gone abroad last week. The two older ones have gone.

His Excellency gave us permission ages ago. We were supposed to leave on a

relief plane, but none of them landed....But hopefully, we'll leave on Sunday.

We fly to Gabon and then to England on our Nigerian passports, of course (341).

The bourgeoisie, therefore, send their children out of Biafra, and conscript the children of the poor, child-soldiers, the elderly and imbeciles into the army.

Apart from the economic and political dispossession of Nigeria and Biafra, other characters like Ugwu, Odenigbo, Kainene and the others suffer the same fate. Ugwu, for example, is a thirteen-year-old rural dweller, who until he comes to Odenigbo's house, has dropped out of school because his father cannot pay his school fees. Odenigbo, who appreciates that exploitation can be stopped, when people are educated, sends him to school. Again if Abdulmalik is educated, he may not have betrayed Uncle Mbaezi and his family to the rampaging rioters to be slaughtered as Mohammed does not betray Olanna. It is, therefore, the absence of educated dispossessed masses, which ensures that the struggle does not cut across class line but religious and ethnic ones. As the war ends with the defeat of Biafra, there is an indication of an impending war with the federal government confiscating the bank accounts of the Igbo people, the indigenization policy immediately after the war, the abandoned properties policy of the government, the hunting down and killing of Igbo academics, the detention of Igbo officers at Alagbon Close, their eventual dismissal and payment of only fifty pounds. Indeed, as the three-year-old war ends, another one looms in the horizon as the factors – psychic, economic and political dispossession of the Igbo – which cause the war continue unabated.

5.3 Cultural Dispossession

As we said earlier in this thesis, cultural dispossession shall be examined from two perspectives – dispossession of cultural symbols which have permeated the consciousness of the characters and the appearance of characters with double destination, which oscillate between opposing values and terminate by resolving the conflict between them. The title of Adichie’s literary work, *Purple Hibiscus*, for example, is symbolic because “purple hibiscus” represents such universal transcendence like bondage, defiance and freedom. Jaja’s defiance and quest for freedom is symbolized by the central symbol of “purple hibiscus”, which symbolizes the freedom that is democratic, accommodating, self-sacrificing and humane. His freedom is very much different from that of “the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government square after the coup” (16). Kambili tells the story of their bondage in their spacious compound in Enugu, which is “topped by coiled electric wires” (9). However, within the prison that is their house, there are the frangipani trees which fill “the yard with the sickly sweet scent of their flowers” (9). Within the compound, too, two types of hibiscuses – red and purple – grow and they both symbolize bondage and freedom respectively. The narrator says in the “Breaking of Gods” that the “purple plants had started to push out sleepy buds, but most of the flowers were still on the red ones. They seemed to bloom fast, those red hibiscuses”... (9). These two different colours of hibiscuses symbolize two characters in the text: Eugene Achike and his son, Jaja. The red hibiscuses still have an edge over the purple ones as they “seemed to bloom so fast...considering how often Mama cut them to decorate the church altar and how often visitors plucked them as they walked past to their parked cars” (9). Kambili remembers particularly that “even the government agents, two men in black jackets who came some time ago, yanked at the hibiscus as they left” (9). Aside from these two types of hibiscuses,

there is also a “row of purple bougainvillea, cut smooth and straight as a buffet table” (9), which symbolizes Beatrice Achike. Even though this plant is also coloured ‘purple’, it cannot match and withstand the choking effect of the red hibiscus; it is only the purple hibiscus that can checkmate the red ones. The government agents who yanked the red hibiscuses cannot stop its growth but only the purple ones will be able to do that too. In other words, the punishment which the Head of State will unleash on Eugene Achike for defying him will not deter him from his violence-prone nature but only the defiance of the members of his family – wife, son and daughter, particularly his son’s defiance.

Other symbols of freedom also exist in the work and they reinforce the central symbol of the purple hibiscus. For instance, there is the symbolism of the *étagère* with its dancing figurines. Kambili says, “The *étagère* had three shelves of delicate glass, and each one held beige ballet-dancing figurines” (35). These “three shelves of delicate glass” possibly represents Beatrice, Jaja and Kambili who are held in bondage by their tyrannical head of family. Mama’s act of polishing them, whenever she is beaten by her husband, symbolizes her hope of freedom in future for herself and her children. This freedom will be kindled by Jaja whose real name in Chukwuka, but as Aunty Ifeoma recollects, “When he was a baby, all he could say was Jaja. So everybody called him Jaja” (144). She tells his mother then, “it was an appropriate nickname, that you would take after Jaja of Opobo” (144), the defiant king who opposes British imperialism in his kingdom and is banished. With this prediction, presumably, she bears the husband’s brutality and nurses the hope of the time when her son will grow up and liberate her from her bondage. Meanwhile, she and her children submit to Eugene’s high-handedness without resistance. However, before Jaja and Kambili’s visit to Nsukka where they get the spark of defiance, there is a growing

resistance in Jaja. He tells Kambili they will protect their unborn brother; he claims responsibility for their staying for twenty-five minutes in Papa-Nnukwu's house against their father's explicit instruction, "Kambili and Jaja, you will go this afternoon to your grandfather's house and greet him....And, as usual, you will stay not longer than fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes" (61). He also owns up to instructing Kambili to eat cornflakes ten minutes before the Eucharistic fast. Unlike Jaja who has been aware of their father's authoritarian leadership and his chains of bondage, Kambili's consciousness of these start with her interaction with Aunty Ifeoma's family in Abba. Realizing that there is a lack in her, she narrates:

That night, I dreamed that I was laughing, but it did not sound like my laughter, although I was not sure what my laughter sounded like. It was cackling and throaty and enthusiastic, like Aunty Ifeoma's (88).

On Aunty Ifeoma's invitation, their father allows them to visit her family at Nsukka. The narrator foreshadows the retraining the children need for the uprooting and removal of the old order, that is, what they presumed to be their father's tyrannical authority. As she puts it:

The gardener was clipping away at the bougainvillea, taming the flowers that defiantly stock out of the leveled top. He had raked underneath the frangipani trees, and dead leaves and pink flowers lay in piles, ready for the wheelbarrow (108).

Jaja is not regretting leaving the house of bondage, for when Kambili tells him that their father is crying, he never comments on that, but simply tells her, "The gardener is waving,

too” (109). In other words, as the gardener cleans the compound of dead leaves and flowers, so will Jaja come back to defy the father’s authoritarian leadership.

Within the university premises, they also see another symbol of defiance and freedom in the “black lion standing on its hind legs, tail curved upward, chest puffed out” (112). As they drive into Aunty Ifeoma’s compound, they observe that “In front was a circular burst of bright colours – a garden – fenced around with barbed wires. Roses and hibiscuses and lilies, ixora and croton grow side by side like a hand-painted wreath” (112). Aunty Ifeoma’s garden, therefore, symbolizes the cordial relationship, the democratic existence and the freedom in her household. It is in this warm and friendly family that Jaja learns from Obiora, who is much younger than himself, what it means to be a man, and what it means to have one’s freedom.

Their training to be defiant of oppressive leadership is symbolized in the garden, particularly the purple hibiscus and the ixora – both are rare and experimental flowers. Jaja is enthralled by the purple hibiscus, which symbolizes his defiance and quest for freedom. He tells her, “I didn’t know there were purple hibiscuses” (128). As Phillipa’s experimental work yields purple hibiscus and white ixora, which do not bloom as much as the red of each, she will also experiment with the retraining of Jaja and Kambili. Within one week in her house, Jaja’s physique blossoms. Kambili says, “His shoulders seemed broader, and I wondered if it was possible for a teenager’s shoulders to blossom in a week” (154) and “For the first time, I noticed the sparse hair on his chest” (183). When their father comes to take them back to Enugu, each of them takes back a gift, which symbolizes each person’s defiance and freedom. Kambili’s gift from Amaka “was the unfinished painting of Papa-

Nnukwu” (190) and Jaja’s are the stalks of purple hibiscus in the garden. As the narrator puts it:

They weren’t just sticks; they were stalks of purple hibiscus. He would give them to the gardener. It was still harmattan and the earth was thirsty, but Auntie Ifeoma said the stalks might take root and grow if they were watered regularly, that hibiscuses didn’t like water, but they didn’t like to be too dry, either (197).

These two gifts are the physical symbols of the training they have received at Nsukka. Armed with them, their defiance starts with Jaja challenging his father, when he complains that Auntie Ifeoma does not get a priest before Papa-Nnukwu dies. He tells him, “Maybe he didn’t want to convert” (191). His father is surprised and asked him, “What did you say? Is that what you have learnt from living in the same house as a heathen” (191)? There is no shadow of doubt that his two children are bracing for a showdown with him. Kambili says, “As we went upstairs, Jaja walked in front of me and I tried to place my feet on the exact spots where he placed his” (191). Another act of defiance follows the first as Jaja asks for the key to his room. Though both submit their feet to be scalded by their father, Jaja’s purple hibiscus stalks have not been planted. They are still in the fridge, wrapped in black cellophane paper; therefore, he is not ready to defy his father. As the hibiscus needs watering when planted, Jaja also needs to go to Nsukka again. However, their defiance achieves a measure of concession from their father, who pays Papa-Nnukwu’s funeral expenditures and for the first time refers to him respectfully. He says, “For *nna anyi*’s funeral” (198) instead of calling him a ‘heathen’, a ‘pagan’ and an ‘idol-worshipper’ as he has often done.

The chance for Jaja to go to Nsukka for further training offers itself, when Kambili refuses to go home after she recovers from her father's beating. As the father tears the painting, she says, "I suddenly and maniacally imagined Papa-Nnukwu's body being cut in pieces that small and stored in a fridge" (210). Unlike her timorous altitude, she defends the painting because of what Papa-Nnukwu stands for her: freedom, peace and love. It is during this visit to Nsukka that another symbol of freedom is seen in Mama Joe's shed where a snail makes a spirited attempt to escape from its confinement. Kambili says, "I wondered if it was the same snail crawling out again. Determined. I wanted to buy the whole basket and set that one snail free" (238). When they come back from Nsukka, there is an indication that the old order must be destroyed. As Adamu opens the gate to the house and Kambili says, "The scent of fruits filled my nose....It was as if the high walls locked in the scent of ripening cashews and mangoes and avocados. It nauseated me" (253). As they drive into the compound, Jaja's symbol of defiance is almost ready, for he says enthusiastically:

See, the purple hibiscuses are about to bloom, Jaja said, as we got out of the car.

He was pointing, although I did not need him to. I could see the sleepy, oval-shape buds in the front yard as they swayed in the evening breeze (253).

The next day, which is Palm Sunday, Jaja defies his father by his refusal to receive Holy Communion. He finds it iconoclastic and flings the heavy Missal at him. It misses Jaja, lands on the *étagère* which falls down and shatters the dancing figurines. With the breaking of the family Gods – the Missal which represents Eugene's fanatical Catholicism and bondage and the mother's dancing figurines, which symbolize her hope for freedom for her and her children – things start falling apart in the family. The violence in the family

is foreshadowed by the violence in Nature and other objects in the house. After Palm Sunday, howling winds come with an angry rain, uprooting the frangipani trees in the front yard; the satellite dish crashes down; the door to Kambili's wardrobe dislodges completely, and Sisi breaks a full set of Mama's china. One thing is sure after Jaja's defiance of his father's authority and the breaking of the dancing figurines: there is freedom in the house.

Kambili says that:

Even the silence that descended on the house was sudden, as though the old silence had broken and left us with the sharp pieces. When Mama asked Sisi to wipe the floor of the living room, to make sure no dangerous pieces of figurines were left lying somewhere, she did not lower her voice to a whisper. She did not hide the tiny smile that drew lines at the edge of her mouth. She did not sneak Jaja's food to his room, wrapped in cloth so it would appear that she had simply brought his laundry in. She took him his food on a white tray, with a matching plate (257-258).

With Jaja's defiance, Mama does not need to replace the figurines because her hope for freedom has been realized. When they visit Aunty Ifeoma's house for the third time, there is another symbol of freedom in the grasshopper. The insect exerts pressure on Obiora's hand as it quests for freedom, and "He spread his palm and watched the grasshopper fly off" (285).

Jaja, as the head of the family after his father's death, vehemently refuses his leadership style. This is seen in his symbolic act of refusing to drink Bournvita with his father's teacups. He believes that leadership should be accommodating and humane. He does not condemn his mother for killing his father; rather, he takes responsibility for her

crime as a scapegoat for the murder of the family head. This is because the guilt of murder must be “displaced ritualistically in traditional societies through the mechanisms of the sacrificial victim, the surrogate victim or the scapegoat (Orr 2007). Michiel Heyns has earlier suggested that scapegoat is the mobilization of the prejudices of society in times of crises. He further suggests that the scapegoat is the “Figure that has to bear the burden of guilt of a particular community, usually by being sacrificed or expelled” (1994:4). Therefore, Beatrice Achike’s murder of her husband is a heinous crime against the land and the gods as seen in Papa-Nnukwu’s early morning prayer, “Chineke! I killed no one” (167). Jaja’s incarceration for almost three years is to cleanse the fouled land and appease the gods, which his grandfather worships. If he is released from prison, Kambili says he will be taken to Nsukka, the birthplace of their defiance. The frangipani, mango and cashew trees and the red hibiscuses which represent the old order of brutality and bondage will no longer be needed; however, the family pays dearly for their destruction. As a replacement, they will plant orange trees at Abba; Jaja will plant his purple hibiscuses and Kambili her ixora. As the story ends, the narrator says, “The new rains will come soon” (307), and this symbolizes regeneration and hope for the family after years of bondage and violence.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the dispossessed characters have symbols which have permeated their consciousness and their losses have some psychopathological effects on them, too. For instance, the two daughters of Chief Ozobia are symbolic characters that represent or symbolize the two ethnic groups, which engage in civil war in Nigeria. As the twins resent the presence of each other in the house, so also the Igbo and Hausa/Fulani resent one another. In Susan’s opinion, “It’s rather silly the Northerners will pay foreigners twice more rather than hire a Southerner” (154). Also the way Chief Ozobia and his wife

are not bothered about the cat and dog relationship of the twins is the way the British are not bothered about the war raging in their former colony. To the British press, the Igbo pogrom in the North is as a result of “Ancient tribal hatreds” (166). When Olanna and Kainene reconcile during the war, excluding their two lovers in their relationship, Richard observes that the fraternal twins are not that different as they share the same similarity in their dentition. This is the same way Olanna observes that the North and South are different in their landscape, culture, religion and vegetation, but, at least, they are both from the Negroid race and share the same colonial experience and belong to the same nation. The loss of Kainene a few days to the end of the war is a loss of a symbol of fearlessness and doggedness to Olanna, just as the Igbo and the North will never reconcile completely after the war.

Apart from these characters, the Igbo-Ukwu roped art is a symbolic object with “such lovely things: calabashes, shells, many ornaments that women used to decorate themselves, snake images, pots” (71). These are symbolic of lost civilization of the Igbo, which Richard sees in *Colonies Magazine* in Britain and is the reason that he comes to Nigeria. He confides in the Swedish pilot, Count von Rosen, that “I fell in love with Igbo-Ukwu art and then I fell in love with her” (310). In other words, without his quest to “touch the delicately cast metal itself” (62), he would not have met Kainene and fulfill his role as a character with double destination. The art works, therefore, demystify the Europeans’ reliance on the superiority of knowledge as a basis for colonization as the bronze castings dates “back to the ninth century” (62).

The gift of a tortoise to Kainene by Madu is a symbolic object, which foreshadows the coming of Richard Churchill in her life. According to the narrator:

I remember once, years ago, when we went to Umuunnachi to spend Christmas, he gave me a tortoise. The strangest and best present I ever got from anybody. Olanna thought it was wrong of Madu to take the poor thing out of its natural habitat and what not....I put it in a bowl, and of course, it died soon after (81).

The tortoise represents Richard who is a British in Biafra and is taken out of his natural habitat. Like the tortoise which Kainene sees as the strangest and best gift to her, she also sees Richard as a rare lover who prefers her over and above her more beautiful sister and over Susan and other British women. Ironically, it is not the naturalized Biafran, Richard, who has been taken out of its natural habitat, that dies but Kainene. The death of Kainene who represents hope, love and acceptance to Richard has some psychopathological consequence on him. He feels after searching every hospital and every mortuary in Biafra for her that "his life would always be like a candlelit room; he would see things only in shadow, only in half glimpses" (430).

However, it is not only Richard who suffers from the conflict between Nigeria and Biafra. There are other objects which symbolize the violent death of Biafrans massacred in the North and in the civil war. The dead spider squashed on the wall of Ugwu's mother's hut, "its body fluids had stained the mud a deeper red" (119) is symbolic of the Igbo and other minority groups in Biafra who will be killed during the pogrom in the North. It is evident that the spider does not die a natural death, because its body fluids "stained the mud a deeper red". This violent death is seen later in Nnaemeka's slaughter at Kano airport, when the rifle goes off and his "chest blew open, a splattering red mass" (153). Richard also witnesses the same violent death at the same airport, when the Igbo people are shot and left lying there, "their bright clothes splashes of colour on the dusty black stretch"

(153). The same images of brutal and violent death are seen in the massacre of the Mbaezis in Sabon Gari, when the narrator says:

She stopped when she saw the bodies. Uncle Mbaezi lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips (147).

In the early sixties, Olanna watches as a “Kite swooped down and carried one of them off, a brown-and-white chick. It was so fast, the descent of the kite and the gliding away with the chick grasped in hooked claws” (224). This symbol foreshadows the violent death of Biafrans from air raids in the seceded territory. It is the day of Olanna and Odenigbo’s wedding that the federal government declares a full-scale war on Biafra. The narrator describes the first air raid thus, “Ugwu looked up and saw the planes gliding low beneath the blue sky like two birds of prey. They spurted hundreds of scattered bullets before dark balls rolled out from underneath, as if the planes were laying large eggs” (202). The same way the kite preys on the chick is the same way the air raids will devastate the civilian population as a “fine haze of silver dust covered their entire bodies so that they looked like limbless ghosts with open eyes” (203) in the two collapsed houses. The same brutal and violent death is reflected in the description of a car which was on fire, “the body of a woman lay next to it, her clothes burnt off, flecks of pink all over her blackened skin” (203). There is the similarity of helplessness in which the “hen was running around in circles, squawking, raising clouds of dust. The other chicks looked bewildered” (224) and the civilians who cannot fire back at the war planes. They only “gathered to help and to

stare, some dug through the rubble too, others stood and looked and still others shrieked and snapped their fingers” (203). The loss of loved ones in the massacre and the war leaves traumatic effects on the survivors.

But the death of Biafrans in the pogrom and in the war would not have happened if not for the death of the Sarduana of Sokoto during the Igbo-led coup. Odenigbo and his elitist group may see the Sarduana as simply a politician, the premier of the Northern region, who pockets the prime minister of the country. Therefore, his death is just like the death of other politicians like Chief Okonji, who are slaughtered in the first coup. However, to the Muslim North, he is more than a politician for he is the symbol of its religious and cultural life. A taxi driver who conveys Olanna and Baby from the airport to Arize’s house hopes he is not killed. He whispers, “He escaped with Allah’s help and is now in Mecca” (128). Therefore, the Northern masses see the pogrom as a jihad on the infidels, who kill their spiritual leader. The pogrom as a religious war is reinforced by another religious symbol, the manner in which the Northern soldiers kill Major Udodi. The narrator says, “Then they beat him senseless and tied him to an iron cross and threw him back in his cell. He died tied to an iron cross. He died on a cross” (138). The death of Sarduana, therefore, means so much to the North more than the death of the prime minister and other Northern politicians that a religious war has to be waged.

For the Igbo, there is the need to secede from the other parts of the country, so Colonel Ojukwu declares independence for the sovereign state of Biafra with its flag of “Swaths of red, black, and green, and at the center, a luminous half of a yellow sun” (163). The colour of the flag is the title of the novel which is a symbolic one. The red symbolizes

the blood of the victims of the massacre; black symbolizes their mourning, green for Biafra's prosperity and half of a yellow sun symbolizes its glorious future.

Another aspect of the cultural dispossession is the appearance of Jaja who is a character with double destination as he oscillates between the two ends of the pole of opposing values. He is in-between his own father, Eugene Achike and his grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu. While Eugene stands for fanatical Catholicism and the upholding of Western values, Papa-Nnukwu stands for Traditional religion and the preservation of Igbo culture. Jaja is between these two characters and their values, and each wants to control him. From the very beginning of the novel, things start falling apart in Eugene Achike's house because Jaja, whom he has indoctrinated with Catholic dogmas, refuses to receive Holy Communion, which his father sees as heretical. He believes the receiving of the host is a physical manifestation of inward piety. As a devout Catholic, Eugene is always the first to receive it in the church and afterwards, he "sat back on his seat and watched the rest of the congregation troop to the altar" (4) to receive theirs. He reports anyone who fails to do so to "Father Benedict, with concern when a person missed communion on two successive Sundays" (6). In his opinion, it is "nothing but mortal sin would keep a person away from communion two Sundays in a row" (6). Therefore, Jaja's abstinence on Palm Sunday is a serious provocation for a devout Catholic. However, he loses his temper when he dares to tell him that "The wafer gives me bad breath" (6). Kambili is scandalized and sees this statement as a sacrilege:

I stared at Jaja. Had something come loose in his head? Papa insisted we call it the host because "host" came close to capturing the essence, the sacredness, of Christ's body. "Wafer" was too secular, wafer was what one of Papa's factories

made – chocolate wafer, banana wafer, what people bought their children to give them a treat better than biscuits (6).

Eugene is enraged to commit a worse sacrilege than his son when he dares “talked back at him” (8) and also tells him boldly that he prefers to die instead of eating the wafers which the church gives as the body of Christ. He flings the missal at him on a Palm Sunday, which is a holy day in the Christendom. His instrument of aggression is the heavy leather-bound missal “that contained all the readings for all three cycles of the church year” (7). It misses Jaja, lands on the *étagère*, which falls and the dancing figurines it contains break into fragments. As if the sacrilege which the father and the son commit is not enough, Jaja “flattened the church bulletin he held into a dustpan and placed a jagged ceramic piece on it” (8).

Kambili, from there, takes the reader through the family’s history of violence, which leads to the impasse between father and son and the breaking of the family Gods. From Kambili’s narration, Jaja stands in the middle of two opposing values: Eugene’s and Papa-Nnukwu’s. Eugene who is trained by the white missionaries believes unquestionably in the dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Church and Western values as opposed to Papa-Nnukwu’s Traditional religion and traditional values. Eugene tries as much as possible to stamp out from his children all the vestiges of traditional culture and religion as represented by Papa-Nnukwu. He neither allows his father into his house nor does he allow his children to visit their grandfather. Papa-Nnukwu, on the other hand, is as fanatical as his son in his rejection of his son’s promises of building him a new house, buying him a new car and getting him a driver if he converts to Catholicism and throws “away the chi in the thatch shrine in his yard” (61). Papa-Nnukwu, who cannot be bought over to forsake

the gods and ancestors and his traditional values, reports him to the “extended family that he did not know his grandchildren and we did not know him” (61). The kindred decide in his favour to allow his grandchildren to see him because “every man who was old enough to be called grandfather deserved to be greeted by his grandchildren” (62). He agrees to send them to see Papa-Nnukwu after brainwashing them with “don’t touch any food, don’t drink anything” (61) and they must stay only fifteen minutes in his house. As if that is not enough, he sends Kevin with them to ensure they comply with his instructions. Despite the fact that he allows Jaja and Kambili to visit their grandfather, the two adults still stay stubbornly at the two ends of the pole. As the narrator says, “Papa himself never greeted Papa-Nnukwu, never visited him” (62), but he prays for his conversion “so that Papa-Nnukwu would be saved from hell” (61). Papa-Nnukwu, on his own part, “hard never set foot in it because when Papa decreed that heathens were not allowed in his house, he had not made an exception for his father” (62-63). He prays to his gods and ancestors to bless his son and “Lift the curse they have put on him” (168).

Between father and son and their opposing values, Jaja becomes the object of contestation. Jaja, who lives with his father, is taught the Catholic doctrines and dogmas; however, he sees his grandfather only once a year at Christmas. The children also keep to their father’s instructions and do not aspire to see him. Papa-Nnukwu is surprised when he sees them with Auntie Ifeoma and her family and he says, “Kambili, Jaja, I see you again before you go back to the city? Ehye, it is a sign that I am going soon to meet the ancestors” (82). Despite Auntie Ifeoma’s correction of Kambili’s erroneous impression about him, she insists:

Pagan, traditionalist, what did it matter? He was not Catholic, that was all; he was not of the faith. He was one of the people whose conversion we prayed for so that they did not end in the everlasting torment of hellfire (81).

Despite Eugene's negative opinions about his father, Jaja does not believe in his demonized image of Papa-Nnukwu as Kambili. At Abba, he shows he has a soft spot for his grand-father unlike Kambili who examines him closely on her first visit to see if she can detect any "signs of difference, of Godlessness" (63). He shows his wisdom and sensitivity to his grandfather's feeling when they reject his offer of drinks. Instead of telling him outright that it is their father's instruction to reject the offer in his house, which will be more hurtful to him, he tactfully says, "Papa-Nnukwu, we just ate before we came here....If we're thirsty, we drink in your house" (66). His grandfather recognizes the wisdom in the teenager and tells him he reincarnates his own father, Ogbuefi Olioike. Besides, Kambili also does not want to leave the house as the fifteen minutes they are given to stay expires, because if the "Fufu clung to Papa-Nnukwu's throat and choked him, I could run and get him water" (66) as Chinyelu is not around. She does not also see the difference between his shrine with its "low open shed, its mud roof and walls covered with dried palm fronds. It looked like the grotto behind St. Agnes, the one dedicated to our Lady of Lourdes" (66-67). When their father asks them whether they desecrate their Christian tongues by eating food offered to the idols, Kambili is scandalized because, "I sat frozen; I did not know that tongues could be Christian, too" (69). Their father does not slap them for staying for more than fifteen minutes at Papa-Nnukwu's house, but tells them to "finish that food and go to your rooms and pray for forgiveness" (69).

However, the friction between the two adults and their opposing values would have ended in Eugene's favour, but a second opportunity offers itself for Jaja and Kambili to stay with Papa-Nnukwu for more than their normal fifteen minutes. Eugene allows them to go on sightseeing on Auntie Ifeoma's invitation; unknown to him, Papa-Nnukwu will also accompany them. As they stop at Ezi Icheke to watch masquerades, Jaja is enthralled by how a masquerade moves down the road "like a floating white cloth, flat, taller than the huge avocado tree in our yard in Enugu" (87). Because he has not been initiated into the masquerade cult at Abba, because his father sees it as a devilish ritual, Jaja naively asks, "How do they do that, Papa-Nnukwu? How do people get inside that one" (87)? In Igbo culture, calling masquerades people is heretical because of their sacredness. Jaja's trivialization of Traditional religion by calling masquerades "people" will also be repeated later when he trivialized the "host" and calls it "wafers". However, Papa-Nnukwu glares at him and snaps, "Shh! These are *mmuo*, spirits! Don't speak like a woman" (87)! Auntie Ifeoma also corrects him and says, "Jaja, you're not supposed to say there are people in there. Didn't you know that" (87)? Of course, Jaja does not know as he is not initiated into the cult, which will mark his transition from boyhood to manhood, like Obiora. This is because his father sees such a traditional practice as heathenish and "Christians who let their sons do it were confused, that they would end up in hellfire" (87). Though Papa-Nnukwu does not punish Jaja for his heresy on his traditional religion and culture as Eugene will do later, Kambili "looked at Jaja and wondered if the dimness in his eyes was shame. I suddenly wished, for him, that he had done the *ima mmuo*, the initiation into the spirit world" (87). Despite his regret at not being initiated into the masquerade cult, when he gets to Enugu, he confesses to Father Benedict about his lie to Papa-Nnukwu that if they

are thirsty, they will drink his soft drinks. With this, it seems again as if Eugene and his values have won as Father Benedict tells Kambili after her confession, “And you must make a conscious effort to convert everyone who enjoys the ways of heathens” (106). One will think with this assignment as part of their penance, the duty on Jaja and Kambili is to convert their grandfather to Catholicism.

The third time they meet their grandfather is at Nsukka when they have gone to Aunty Ifeoma’s house on her invitation. When Kambili’s hears that he is coming, she is worried about where he will sleep and “if I would have to confess that I had shared a room with a heathen” (149). On the contrary, Jaja does not share her fears; his only interest is that “Papa-Nnukwu is so skinny now” (153). When Kambili expresses doubt whether Our Lady can intercede on behalf of a heathen, Aunty Ifeoma explains to her that Papa-Nnukwu is not a heathen as their father makes them to believe, but a traditionalist. She explains further that when “Papa-Nnukwu did his itu-nzu, his declaration of innocence in the morning, it was the same as our saying the rosary” (166). She wakes her up to witness his early morning prayer to see the resemblances between the two religions as she earlier observes the similarity between the grotto and the shrine. Kambili notices that he thanks the gods or ancestors for a new day; he declares his innocence when he says, “Chineke I have not killed no one, I have taken no one’s land, I have not committed adultery” (167-168). He also says he has been generous with others within the limit of what he has, and calls on the Supreme Being to bless his children and grandchildren. Despite her father’s attitude towards him, he does not bear him malice for she says, “I was surprised that he prayed for Papa with the same earnestness that he prayed for himself and Aunty Ifeoma” (168). She particularly observes that after his prayers, he smiles unlike her family after they

have said the rosary. But Kambili is still alienated from the grandfather unlike her cousin, whom she observes:

Amaka and Papa-Nnukwu spoke sometimes, their voices low, twining together. They understood each other, using the sparest words. Watching them, I felt a longing for something I know I would never have. I wanted to get up and leave, but my legs did not belong to me, did not do what I wanted them to. Finally, I pushed my self up and went into the kitchen; neither Papa-Nnukwu nor Amaka noticed when I left (165).

The longing she will never have is the close intimacy between Amaka and their grandfather, which is as a result of her father's indoctrination. Amaka cooks for him, manicures his feet and paints him that when he dies, she mourns her. Kambili cannot share in her grief and hides her tears as she has no right to mourn him, because she has rejected him in life, unlike the others. She keeps aloof and only imagines, "Papa-Nnukwu's body is folded into a home refrigerator, the kind in our kitchen" (186). Though she desists from mourning him openly, there is the longing in her as she "wanted to go over and touch Papa-Nnukwu, touch the white tufts of hair that Amaka oiled, smooth the wrinkled skin of his chest" (184).

Jaja, contrastingly, identifies with him in life, but particularly in death. He covers his corpse with a wrapper, and "sat on the floor, next to Papa-Nnukwu's sheathed frame" (184); he sheds tears openly at his death and consoles Amaka because he feels he has a right to mourn him with Auntie Ifeoma's family. When Eugene comes to take his children who are staying in the same house with his father, Auntie Ifeoma tells him about his death and he does not mourn him. His only interest is whether he converts to Catholicism before

his death. When he hears he does not, he dissociates himself from his burial and funeral rites. As he takes them back to Enugu, Amaka wraps Papa-Nnukwu's unfinished painting and gives it to Kambili. At Enugu, when Eugene tells his wife that his father does not convert before his death, Jaja challenges him with "Maybe he didn't want to convert" (191). In other words, Papa-Nnukwu has a right to practice his own faith. Despite the fact their father scolds their feet for staying in the same house with a pagan, they deliberately do not want to hide his painting in their possession. According to Kambili:

And that was what happened. Perhaps it was what we wanted to happen, Jaja and I, without being aware of it. Perhaps we all changed after Nsukka – even Papa – and things were destined to not be the same, to be in their original order (209).

They both claim ownership of the painting and as he shreds it to pieces, she makes a desperate attempt to save it as she "imagined Papa-Nnukwu's body being cut in pieces that small and stored in the fridge" (210). He beats her into a state of unconsciousness; yet, Papa-Nnukwu's spirit when he is dead is more powerful than when he is alive. As the children take refuge in Aunty Ifeoma's house, because of Mama's helplessness in protecting them, she knows that her period of self-effacement and silence are over; she hatches a plan with Sisi and poisons him as revenge. When he dies, none of them mourns him like their grandfather. Kambili says, "It was only Sisi who cried in the household, loud sobs that had quickly quieted in the face of our bewildered silence" (289). In fact, it is Papa-Nnukwu's Traditional religion and values which triumph over Papa's Catholicism and Western values as Jaja questions the doctrine of Christianity thus:

Of course God does. Look what He did to his faithful servant Job, even to his own son. But have you ever wondered why? Why did He have to murder his own son so we would be saved? Why didn't He just go ahead and save us (289)?

This is the same contradiction in Christianity which Papa-Nnukwu has earlier observed when he asks, "Who is the person that was killed, the person that hangs on the wood outside the mission? They said he was the son, but the son and the father are equal" (84)? Jaja's imprisonment is to cleanse the land and appease the gods and ancestors whom Papa-Nnukwu declares his innocence to. In Traditional religion, therefore, it is an abomination to kill; however, in Eugene's fanatical Catholicism, he does not see the several miscarriages his wife has because of his beating her as murder. Kambili sees it as such because for months after that, "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" (52). As the novel ends, the pendulum swings in favour of Papa-Nnukwu and the values he stands for. Though Kambili still writes checks for the Missionary Fathers of the Blessed Way, offers "Masses for Papa every Sunday" (305) and "make her own dream" (306) of seeing Papa hug her, Jaja as a character with double destination oscillates to Papa-Nnukwu's end of the pole as he favours the preservation of Traditional religion and culture. His final act of not identifying with his father is seen in the symbolic act of vehemently refusing to drink Bournvita with his cups when Sisi brings them.

In *Half or a Yellow Sun*, Richard Churchill is also a character with double destination, which oscillates between two poles of opposing values: freedom and enslavement. These values are represented by Kainene and Biafra on one hand and Susan and Britain on the other. As a British child, he is an unwanted child whose parents "had not

planned to have him and, because of that, they had raised him as an afterthought” (115). He is brought up by his nanny, Molly, and when his parents die when he is nine years old, he stays with Aunt Elizabeth. He is snobbed as a “cousin from the tiny village of Shropshire” (61), and he attempts to escape several times “from a house that had pictures of long-dead people on the walls breathing down on him” (61). He, therefore, grows up to be a loner, and when he sees the picture of Igbo-Ukwu roped art in a magazine, “he ran a finger over the picture and ached to touch the delicately cast metal itself ” (62). From that time onward, he longs to see Africa, to escape from his bondage in Britain to a continent where he feels that he will have his freedom. The south-east of Nigeria becomes his destination and with a generous loan from his aunt, he resigns from his newspaper job to come to Africa.

He escapes from Britain to be enslaved in Nigeria by a charming English woman, who is a “little older than he was, and had been in Nigeria for a while and could show him around” (55). His total enslavement to her is seen in a “pasty-faced drunk woman refer to him as Susan’s *pretty boy*” (53). He feels awkward with other British expatriates who are in Nigeria for the money they can make from the country, while his interest is in the aesthetics of Igbo-Ukwu art. Susan is jealous of his association with other British women and, if he talks to any of them longer than is necessary, when they get back to her house, she picks up a “glass from the cabinet and threw it against the wall” (54). She, however, does not mind his interacting with black women since they do not threaten her position, and his “sex life with Susan was satisfactory, though perfunctory” (65). She dissuades him from learning Efik from her houseboy because of its implication, for as a British, he “couldn’t cross certain lines” (67). He learns from her the anti-Igbo sentiments that the

Igbo are “relatively uncivilized” (154), ambitious and clannish and not that they don’t anticipate their massacre in the North. It is at one of the parties he dislikes, but he accompanies her to, that he meets Kainene and members of her family. She invites him to her parents’ house, where they snob him because he is not rich or well-connected. However, he desires her sexually and dreams “about being inside her, thrusting as deep as he could” (65). But when she wants them to make love, he disappoints her several times as he “could feel the flaccid weight between his legs” (63). He realizes that he cannot keep the two women at the same time as lovers, because of what each means to him. He decides to take “some herbs, potent manhood herbs he remembered reading about somewhere, which African men took” (68). He also decides to jilt Susan, rejects her offer for help and this means a severance from his country and enslavement. It dawns on him that “they had always wanted different things, always valued different things. He should never have moved in with her” (66).

When he tells Kainene that he has left Susan, she is surprised and hugs him, and whenever “he thinks about it, he had the sensation of a wall crumbling” (70). The wall that crumbles is the wall of enslavement, and his movement to Kainene is one of freedom which she and Biafra represent. To Kainene, it is a moment of triumph that he can abandon a fellow British for her. He finds acceptance at Nsukka with Odenigbo’s group even though Okeoma resents him for who he is: a British whose country enslaves Africans. He disdainfully distrusts Richard whom he feels is condescendingly interacting with them, because the two races are irreconcilable and Africans do not have “the benefit of an equal intelligence” (112) with the Europeans.

As a bridge between the two races, he prefers “Ugwu’s pepper soup and *moi-moi* and chicken boiled in bitter herbs” (109) to Harrison’s canapés. He learns and speaks Igbo fluently, which amazes the people; yet, he shows he is a foreigner in his visit to Pa Anozie and Nnaemeka’s family. After his interview with Pa Anozie at “the land of Igbo-Ukwu art, the land of the magnificent roped pot” (56), he does not behave like a typical white tourist or archaeologist, who takes photographs. The old man asks him through an interpreter, “Papa is asking what kind of white man is this? Why did he come here and what is he doing” (72)? Also when he pays a condolence visit to Nnaemeka’s family, he shows that he is still at the cross road of two cultures – British and Igbo – when he goes without yams and drinks to the bereaved family. He has imagined like an English man that “his coming was enough, that he would be the magnanimous angel who brought the last hours of their son to them and, by doing so, could assuage their grief and redeem himself ” (165). But despite his fumbling, he does not flee from Biafra like other foreigners in its enclave before the war. He is there at its birth and sees himself as a naturalized Biafran citizen. He loves Kainene and “for the first time in his life he felt as if he could belong somewhere” (82), and despite her brooding silences, “he felt a connection to her” (63). Her house in Port Harcourt reminds him of his childhood with its “orange trees, the hum of flies overhead, the abundance of green, brought back memories of his parents’ house in Wentnor” (77).

However, Majors Udodi and Madu reject him as being a part of Igbo people. The two soldiers see Kainene’s body as being symbolic of Biafra, a site for contestation, which must be repossessed from the British and its surrogate’s enslavement. Udodi tells her bluntly that her sexual relationship with Richard is a “new slavery, I’m telling you, a new slavery” (81). Major Madu is also her lover and must have had sexual relationship with her.

Madu and Richard are competitors in the possession of Kainene, and Richard “wondered why he could simply not ask if she found Madu attractive and if she had ever been involved with him or worse yet, was still involved with him” (82). Madu persistently treats him as a stranger before and during the war. The narrator says, “Richard’s Igbo had become near-fluent, Madu insistently responded to it in English so that Richard felt forced to revert to English” (136). Though Richard is in Biafra during the war, he still excludes him from its achievement because Richard is a visitor who “could not take the liberties of the house owners” (305). Madu feels the only way he can show that he is a Biafran and prove Miss Adebayo’s statement that “Richard was an African in his past life” (108) truthful is to contribute to the war effort. Because he loves Kainene, because he feels like siding with the moral victor, because he believes that the independence of Biafra holds the possibility of a new hope of freedom for its people, because he does not want the city he has come to love so much to fall, he takes on the job of writing articles for the British press for Biafra. A nun recognizes his effort in the war when she tells him, “Oh, you are the *onye ocha* who speaks Igbo. You are the one who is writing wonderful things about our cause. Well done” (373).

He is devastated more than any other character in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, including Major Madu, Olanna and Chief and Mrs Ozobia, when Kainene does not return from trading across enemy lines at the end of the war. He travels the length and breadth of defeated Biafra, visits hospitals and morgues, in search of Kainene. At the end of the war, Ugwu sees him as part of their family as there is a “new familiarity to his presence” (423) in Odenigbo’s house. Kainene’s parents accept him as a son and her mother hugs him. As the narrator puts it:

She held him tightly leaning on him, when they walked into the sparse living room, and he had the glorious and uncomfortable feeling that she was holding on to Kainene by holding on to him (429).

He does not go back to Britain after the war but joins “the new Institute of African Studies” (429) in former Biafra. He will suffer her death all through his life, but he stays in the land of freedom which she represents instead of going back to Susan and Britain, a woman and a country, that enslave him.

CHAPTER SIX

PLIGHT OF THE DISPOSSESSED

We have argued in the preceding chapters that dispossessed characters and groups exist in Adichie's literary texts. We have examined particularly the causes and forms of dispossession in chapters four and five respectively. The present chapter is concerned with the plight of the dispossessed. It is doubtless that dispossession engenders in the dispossessed abnormal behaviour, and abnormal behaviour has been described as "behaviour which is personally distressful, personally dysfunctional, or so culturally deviant that other people judge it to be inappropriate or maladaptive" (Smith 500). Ronald Smith further describes it as behaviour that is a deviation from the normal level of functioning (1993). Butler and McManus state that indications of abnormal behaviour include irrationality and incomprehensibility, unpredictability, suffering, loss of control, personal and social maladaptiveness, unconventionality, violations of moral and ideal standards and causing distress to others observing the behaviour (2008). Also some psychiatrists have argued that abnormal behaviour is a system of underlying disease. In this chapter, therefore, these underlying diseases of the dispossessed are their physical manifestations through their actions and inactions will be examined, using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. It is also argued that dispossession produces the rough beast, which unleashes violence on his victims.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie creates Eugene Achike's portrait to fit squarely into the mould of the rough beast who unleashes violence on his victims – both the submissive and the defiant ones. Kambili, the naïve narrator, is aware that his behaviour is abnormal for she naively says, "something weighed him down, something he could not throw off "

(102). The “something” which weighs him down and which he cannot throw off is his manifestations of his mental and personality disorders as a result of his dispossession. He is a schizophrenic who suffers from the disorder of thinking, perception and emotion that involves loss of contact with reality and disordered behaviour. He is a character who has the unwarranted tendency to interpret other characters’ behaviour as harmful. Whenever any of the parishioners at St. Agnes does not receive communion two Sundays in a row, he reports the defaulter to Father Benedict because “nothing but mortal sin would keep a person from communion” (6). He is a man whose split personality is also seen in his impulsive actions. For example, he advises Jaja that abstaining from receiving communion is death; yet, he flings the missal, which is a holy book of his faith, at him. He is generous to people and organizations, but miserly to his sick, aged father and widowed sister. He is a staunch defender of people’s human rights; however, his violations of his nuclear family members’ human rights are unprecedented. He draws schedules of routine for the academic excellence of his children, but he leaves off their training on household chores in the schedules. In his tenacity to defend the tenets of his religion, he violates all of them that the reader may wonder whether the numerous contradictions in his character are not Adichie’s feminist propaganda.

He also suffers from obsessive-compulsive personality disorder in his show of extreme perfectionism and inflexibility in whatever he does. His inflexibility is seen in his insistence that Jaja cannot be initiated into the masquerade cult in Abba. In his opinion, those Christians “who let their sons do it are confused” (87). When he makes the rule that pagans cannot come into his compound, he does not exclude his own father. He hands over

his children's schedules to them, with the instruction, "The only day you are excused from that schedule is when you go to Aokpe with your aunt" (109).

He has the disorder of adjustment as he finds it difficult to adjust satisfactorily to stressful life events or development transitions, such as the brutal murder of Ade Coker and paying school fees for numerous people. Beatrice asks Aunty Ifeoma, "Do you know what Ade's death did to him? It is too much for one person" (250). Because he finds it impossible to adjust to the stress, he unleashes his bottled up emotions on his family. Because of his stressful life and psychic dispossession at the oedipal stage of his psychosexual development, he suffers from sexual dysfunction. His violence on his family may be a form of a deviant sexual behaviour since he cannot enjoy sex with women or engage in homosexuality or masturbation. Therefore, he is aroused by an inappropriate object or fetish like whipping his wife and children. Kambili describes severally what may be seen as a sexual arousal, "Papa did not sway often. His swaying was like shaking a bottle of Coke that burst into violent foam when you opened it" (210).

Kambili's description of him also leaves one with the impression of a man who suffers from antisocial personality disorder. As a rough beast, he is harmful, destructive and predatory towards others around him. He neither suffers guilt nor anxiety nor emotion nor apologizes for his behaviour. As an antisocial character, he is intelligent and rationalizes his actions. After scalding Jaja and Kambili's feet with boiled water, he comes into her room and rationalizes his brutality thus, "Everything I do for you, I do for your own good" (196). After beating his wife and children violently with his leather belt, he never apologizes to them but rationalizes his action, "Why do you walk into sin? Why do you like sin" (102)? After beating his wife very brutally that she miscarries, he never feels

guilty but rationalizes his action as Kambili says, “Later, at dinner, Papa said we would recite sixteen different novenas. For Mama’s forgiveness” (35).

Beatrice Achike is a character Adichie uses to portray that the dispossessed is an agent of dispossession to others, and also to show that the victim of the beast may return violence for violence. Her culture and Christian upbringing have left her with a dependent personality disorder. In her culture, a man has a right to polygyny and to have children outside marriage. Being aware of this tradition, she is extremely submissive to her husband because of her mortal fear that he may get other women who “might have born many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr. Ezendu’s second wife did” (20). She also has a Christian background as her father “spent most of his time at St. Paul’s, where he had been the first catechist” (67). One remarkable thing about him, which Kambili recalls, is “the way he seemed to use the word *sinner* in every sentence” (68). She further reinforces the image of her maternal grandfather with this description, “I kept my gaze fixed on the photo of Grandfather, the one where he looked like a squat superhero in the Knights of St. Mulumba cape and hood” (258). The natural impression one gets is that Beatrice’s father is a fanatical Catholic and a domineering person. She, therefore, is brought up in her home to be extremely submissive and dependent. Her dispossession, therefore, cannot solely be attributed to Eugene Achike; he merely seems to exploit it.

With this type of upbringing, she cannot challenge her husband as she never imagines a home outside her marriage. She asks Aunty Ifeoma severally when the latter suggests she leaves Eugene, “Where would I go if I leave Eugene’s house? Tell me where would I go” (250)? Besides, she nurses the fear of her inadequacy as she is not a university graduate. Whenever her sister-in-law suggests radical solutions to her, she replies, “You

have come again with your university talk, Ifeoma” (250-251). She is submissive because of her fear that Eugene may marry another wife, after all, “many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too” (20). Being very submissive and dependent on the husband, she does not attempt to stop him from the violence he subjects them to. She is part of the concealment of his atrocious acts from public glare.

The several miscarriages she has had as a result of his violent beating push her into regression. When she comes back from the hospital, Kambili says, “Mama stood hugging herself in the center of the living room....Mama started at the lowest layer, polishing both the shelf and the figurines” (35). As a smallish woman who is submissive, she cannot fight back her bulky and bullish husband. With constant beating, she finds herself in an anxiety-arousing situation and moves back into an earlier childish behaviour or regression by her act of polishing the figurines whenever he batters her. Psychologists have argued that regression is a defence mechanism, which represents a primitive, infantile and less intellectual way of problem-solving. Eva Metman claims that in regression “consciousness sinks back into an earlier state of its development” (1965:159), and Carl Jung suggests it is a descent into hell (quoted in Scion 2006). However, when this defence mechanism of regression fails to hold back the anxiety-arousing emotions, she breaks into depression. Kambili observes this psychopathological or mental disorder in her after losing the baby at St. Agnes hospital, she says:

Her green wrapper hung lower than usual on her waist; it had been knotted with a lazy effort at the side. Her eyes were vacant, like the eyes of those mad people who wandered around the roadside garbage dumps in town, pulling grimy, torn canvass bags with their life fragments inside (34).

Other symptoms of a mind which is about to snap, apart from her unusual code of dressing, is her inattention. Kambili observes further, “For a moment Mama looked as though she did not know what Sisi had said” (35). She is also withdrawn, when she says, “Mama stood hugging herself in the center of the living room” (35).

She takes a step further into the development of a depressive mania when he beats her violently again and she miscarries for the third time. Mama tells Kambili and Auntie Ifeoma’s family, “My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it” (248). Kambili further observes her unusual dress code on arrival at Nsukka, “Mama was climbing out of a yellow unsteady-looking taxi....Why was she wearing her rubber slippers all the way from Enugu? She walked slowly, holding on to her wrapper that seemed so loose it would slip off her waist any minute. Her blouse did not look ironed” (247). As she hugs her, she observes, “Her hand was cold” (247). On closer examination of her face, she sees that “Her eyes were glazed over as she looked around. I knew she could not see the picture with cracked frame or the fresh African lilies in the oriental vase” (248). She also comments on the details of her inappropriate sitting manner inside the house. She notices that “Mama slid down on the floor. She sat with her legs stretched out in front of her. It was so undignified...” (249). Apart from her unusual dress code and undignified sitting position, she observes the depth of her sorrow. She says, “She cried for a long time....She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair” (249). When her husband calls on the phone, she speaks with him and decides to go back. Auntie Ifeoma tries to dissuade her from doing so, but then, “She must have known the firm voice would not penetrate the fixed smile on Mama’s face. Mama’s eyes were still glazed, but she looked like a different woman from the one

who had come out of the taxi that morning. She looked possessed by a different demon” (250). Her final attempt to stop her comes to nothing for “Mama shook her head. Except for the stiff stretch of her lips, she was expressionless” (250). Kambili further observes the bizarre change in her and says, “I had never seen Mama like that, never seen that look in her eyes, never heard her say so much in such a short time” (251).

She has begun her act of defiance against him before she visits Nsukka, and she is determined to go home and continue to poison his tea until he dies, instead of packing out with the children as Aunty Ifeoma suggests. She rationalizes that the only way the family will have peace and freedom is when he is dead. However, these two elude her as her crime is discovered through an autopsy and Jaja owns up her crime and is detained in prison for almost three years. Her son’s incarceration, rather than a sense of guilt for her husband’s murder, is the reason she finally descends into full blown depressive mania. Kambili again draws attention to her dressing as her mind finally collapses:

Mama shakes her head, and her scarf starts to slip off. She reaches out to knot it again as loosely as before. Her wrapper is just as loose around her waist, and she ties and reties it often, giving her the air of the unkempt women in Ogbete market, who let their wrappers unravel so that everyone sees the hole-riddled slips they have on underneath. She does not seem to mind that she looks this way; she doesn’t even seem to know. She has been different ever since Jaja was locked up (295-296).

Apart from this, she goes about confessing to people she is the one who kills Papa, and she has also written letters to newspapers. Apart from her irregular dressing and confessional statements, her physique has been affected by her depressive mania “into this vision of a

painfully bony body, of skin speckled with blackheads the size of watermelon seeds” (296). She is also inattentive to what is happening around her. On their way to the prison to see Jaja, despite the loud music in the car, she says nothing. The narrator describes her general disposition thus, “Mama usually says nothing, just shakes her head while rocking herself ” (298). Apart from her withdrawal, her gait is affected by her condition. On their way to prison, she says, “Mama trails behind” (301). As they leave it, she observes further, “She is walking slowly; her limp has become more noticeable, her body moving sideways with each step” (306).

Other characters are also aware of her psychopathological disorder. When she makes her confessional statement of being the one who murders Eugene, nobody takes her serious because “they think grief and denial” (296) have put her into that state. Celestine, her new driver, suggests to Kambili “that we take Mama to a dibia in his hometown, a man who is an expert in ‘these things’, if he was suggesting that Mama was mad, but I thanked him...”(296).

However, as the novel ends, there is an indication that she does not need a medicine man to recover from her depressive mania. It is a temporarily-induced condition as a result of her son’s imprisonment for her crime. With the possibility of his release, she shows signs of recovery when she says, “Thank you, *nne*” (306). Kambili says that her mother’s show of gratitude is one of the “few times in the past three years that she has spoken without being first spoken to” (306). Jaja’s observation that she does not tie her scarf well is like a magic wand on her for, “Mama hastily unties and reties her scarf – and this time, she knots it twice and tight at the back of her head” (306).

Jaja also highlights the devastating consequences of dispossession on the dispossessed and others around him. He grows up under the father's bondage and physical abuse. At the age of ten years, he deforms his little finger for not being the best in his "First Holy Communion class" (145). His father's style of parenting divests him of any sexual life, whether heterogeneous or homosexual or sexual arousal by fetishism. This is one of the reasons why he breaks down in prison as there is none to remind him of his humanity and give him hope like Kambili. Living under the shadow of his father's prison and violence has reduced him to a state of disorganized type of schizophrenia. However, his condition is not as pronounced as his sisters; yet, observant Amaka tells the mother bluntly, "She behaves funny. Even Jaja is strange. Something is not right with them" (142). His level of adjustment in Auntie Ifeoma's environmentally-friendly household is higher than Kambili's. He accepts Papa-Nnukwu and reveals to Auntie Ifeoma and Father Amadi some of their family secrets. In his social interactions with outsiders, he does not stutter or stammer or as shy as his sister. Kambili is surprised at his quick transformation from his secluded life because, "He looked as though he had been lying there watching TV his whole life. It was the same way he looked at Auntie Ifeoma's garden the next morning, as though it were something he had been doing for a long time, rather than the few days he had been here" (142).

Despite his adjustment, there are still symptoms of schizophrenia in his behaviour before and after his father's death. His behaviour appears silly and child-like at the age of seventeen years. For example, his silence at Papa's brutal beating of his mother into unconsciousness, and particularly, only helping Kambili to clean up "the trickle of blood" (33) from the mother appears silly and childish. It also appears an inappropriate behavior

on his part that after they have been beaten violently, “Papa crushed Jaja and me to his body” (102). He shows no emotion, whatsoever, when Mama reveals that she is the one who murders Papa. He simply owns up her crime when the police come to the house. However, a close reading of the novel shows that his dispossession has engendered in him a murder instinct. The way he kills a chicken at Auntie Ifeoma’s house surprises Kambili who says, “There was a precision in Jaja, a single-mindedness that was cold, clinical” (235). There is the undertone here that he may have committed the Oedipus crime of killing the father, if the mother has not done the job for him. Ironically, Eugene is blind to Jaja’s growing masculinity as he is blind to his wife’s gradual psychological disorders. He does not recognize that his acts of defiance indicate his quest for freedom, until a situation presents itself for the father and son to show their masculinities and one of them must back down for the other at the end of it. Kambili observes at first that nervousness and fear “darkened Jaja’s eyes to the colour of coal tar, but he looked at Papa in the face now” (6-7). With Jaja’s further acts of defiance, she observes the minutest details, “There was a shadow clouding Papa’s eyes, a shadow that had been in Jaja’s eyes. Fear. It had left Jaja’s eyes and entered Papa’s” (13). When he violates the family’s table manners, she says, “The shadow grew, enveloping the whites of Papa’s eyes. Jaja was walking out of the dining room with his plate. Papa made to get up, and then slumped back on his seat. His cheeks dropped, bulldoglike” (14).

Jaja’s depressive disorder after his father’s death is as a result of his imprisonment and torture. Despite the huge bribes they pay to prison wardens to ensure he is not subjected to indignities, “they stripped him and flogged him with koboko” (299), and welts are left on his back. Again, there is a physical deterioration as she observes, “Those

shoulders that bloomed in Nsukka, that grew wide and capable, have sagged in the thirty-one months he has been here” (300). His dressing does not befit his social status outside the prison. She says, “I bought his T-shirt, new, only two weeks ago, but already it has brown patches like stains from cashew juice, which never come off ” (304). In prison, he lacks table manners, for he “doesn’t cut the meat, he just eats it” (304), and he “always eats right from the flask” (304). He is withdrawn as he does not like them to hug him. The most important tell-tale of his depressive disorder is that he stares at Kambili “silently with those eyes that have hardened like the bark of a palm tree, unyielding” (305).

Despite his environmentally-induced disorder, Adichie foreshadows the hope of his recovery. Kambili stares in amazement as Jaja who never notices what anybody wears tells Mama, “You did not tie your scarf well” (306). She also has an elaborate plan for his reintegration into social life when she reveals to Mama, “We shall take Jaja to Nsukka first, and then we’ll go to America to visit Aunty Ifeoma” (306).

Kambili also manifests the drastic consequences of the actions of the rough beast on his victim. She is as submissive as her mother that when Amaka abuses her, she keeps quiet. Her submissiveness is as a result of the type of life she lives at home. *Purple Hibiscus*, therefore, is the story of the actions of rough beasts – Eugene Achike, Big Oga and Sole Administrator – on their victims. Through her narration, she reveals some forms of disorders, which dispossessed characters may have. Adichie uses her to show that the proper resolution of the Oedipus or Electra complex can alleviate some of these disorders. At the beginning of her story and as a naïve narrator, she is incapable of interpreting events, objects and experiences correctly. She works assiduously to get his approval, despite his brutal attacks on her. She says, “I wanted to make Papa proud, to do as well as

he had done. I needed him to touch the back of my neck and tell me that I was fulfilling God's purpose. I needed him to hug me close and say from whom much is given, much is also expected. I needed him to smile at me, in that way that lit up his face, that warmed something inside me" (39). Whenever Father Benedict praises him for his charitable acts and donations, she is euphoric, but she tries hard to "keep my face blank, to keep pride from showing, because Papa said modesty was very important" (5). She sees him as a role-model and when her mother compares her to Mr. Ezendu who takes a second wife, she feels he is incomparable. She says, "But then, Papa was different. I wish that Mama would not compare him with Mr. Ezendu, with anybody; it lowered him, soiled" (20). She sees him as the epitome of saintliness despite his violence on the family, and this is the reason the consequences of her dispossession are more traumatic than Jaja's. Amaka queries her mother, "Are you sure they're not abnormal, mom? Kambili just behaved like an *atulu* when my friends came" (142). Despite her mother's rebuke, she insists, "She behaves funny. Even Jaja is strange. Something is not right with them" (142).

The effects of Jaja and Kambili's psychic and cultural dispossession point out the fact that these two are the worst forms of dispossession. Aunty Ifeoma and Papa-Nnukwu go through economic dispossession, but none of them develops any abnormal disorder as a result of that. As a timorous teenager, she has ambivalence reactions – love and fear – for her father. She walks a tightrope at home and at school that she breaks into anxiety disorder. One of the symptoms of this condition is phobia. After her feet have been scalded with hot water, she says, "Fear. I was familiar with fear, yet each time I felt it, it was never the same as the other times, as though it came in different flavours and colours" (196). Panic disorder is also associated with this condition. There are signs of panic in her

reaction to her father's visit at Nsukka. She says, "I froze on my seat, felt the skin of my arms melding and becoming one with the cane arms of the chair. Papa-Nnukwu's death had overshadowed everything, pushed Papa's face into a vague place. But that face had come alive now" (187).

Her father's violent beating of the mother, the blood which spills from her as she is being taken to hospital and the subsequent miscarriage of the baby give her fragmented hallucination. Immediately after that experience of the "trickle of blood, which trailed away" (33), she cannot read according to her schedule because, "I was drawing pregnant stick images on the inner flap of my *Introductory Agriculture for Junior Secondary School*" (34). As her first-term examination approaches, she is still hallucinating for "The words in my textbooks kept turning into blood each time I read them" (37). She comes second in her class for once that term. This experience spills into her second-term examinations several months later. She says, "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" (52). Again the violence she witnesses, particularly the show of masculinity between Jaja and Papa leaves her in a delusional state. She describes her experience thus:

The silence was broken only by the whirl 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 was moving towards me (7).

She also develops avoidant personality disorder, whose symptoms include extreme social discomfort and timidity. This is as a result of the absence of socialization and the

violence in the family. At school, she is isolated from other girls and they nickname her “backyard snob because you don’t talk with anybody” (51). When Mother Lucy calls her to begin the pledge, she says, “I opened my mouth, but the words would not come out” (48). She cannot engage in a conversation with her classmates without stuttering. When Ezinne asks her why her father comes to her school this morning, she says, “I stopped to take a breath because I knew I would stutter even more if I didn’t” (49). Her extreme social discomfort and timidity are exhibited when one of Amaka’s friends asks her whether her hair is all hers. She says, “I wanted to talk to them, to laugh with them so much that I would start to jump up and down in one place the way they did, but my lips held stubbornly together. I did not want to stutter, so I started to cough and then ran out into the toilet” (141). She cannot also engage in any meaningful conversation with children very much younger than her. When a child asks her which school she goes to at Enugu, “I stuttered and gripped hard at some fresh croton leaves, pulling them off, watching the viscous liquid drip from the stalks” (143). She cannot sustain conversation with adults, when Father Amadi asks them questions about their school, their best subjects, their sports and the church they attend at Enugu, she is silent. She says, “I knew the questions were meant for both of us because he used the plural ‘you’, *unu*, rather than the singular, *gi*, yet I remained silent, grateful for Jaja’s answers” (136). She can speak without stammering or stuttering when she is alone with “Jaja that the bubbles in my throat let my words come out” (154). She wonders, “How did Jaja do it? How could he speak so easily? Didn’t he have the same bubbles of air in his throat, keeping the words back, letting out only a stutter at best” (145)?

Kambili’s condition is severer than Jaja’s because she is very submissive and sees his father as a divine figure. Jaja is conscious of his brutality, unlike her, and has started a

silent rebellion against him. Her process of recovery, however, will start with the love she shares with Father Amadi and her Aunty's attempt to retrain her with the help of her children and the priest. This new development will help her to gain consciousness about his brutality. Her transformation and estrangement from him start at Nsukka. When he comes to take them back to Enugu, she says, "Those bushy eyebrows were not familiar, neither was that shade of brown.... I would not have known that it was Papa, that the stranger in the well-tailored white tunic was Papa" (187-188). Her rejection of him as she goes into the room to pack her things is seen when she wonders; "what it could be like if I tore through the small hole and leaped out" (189). When she comes to rationalize his action after scalding her feet, she shows disinterest in his narration. She says, "I did not think about his hands soaked in hot water for tea, the skin peeling off, his face set in tight lines of pain. Instead I thought about the painting of Papa-Nnukwu in my bag" (197). She does not glow with pride when Amaka expresses gratitude to him for paying for Papa-Nnukwu's funeral rites. She is cautious when she says, "I felt I were standing on a floor where a child had spilled talcum powder and I would have to walk carefully so as not to slip and fall" (203). Her final act of rejection of the father is seen where he is very close to her, his eyes soft and he is talking and crying. She says, "I was not sure if it was a dream. I closed my eyes" (212). However, she has an ambivalent attitude towards her mother, presumably because of her extreme submissiveness and helplessness in stopping the violence on them. According to her, "I wished I could get up and hug her, and yet I wanted to push her away, to shove her so hard that she would topple over the chair" (213). With this final rejection, when her mother informs her that he is dead, there is no earth-shaking reaction from her. She simply says, "My hand shook so much the earpiece slid away from my ear to my temple" (286).

This is unlike her reaction to Ade's death, where she has nightmares of his "Charred remains spattered on his dining table, on his daughter's school uniform..."(207). His memories fade quickly among the members of his family because of his violent nature. In Father Amadi's letters to her, he "did not mention Papa" (303). Also in Amaka's letters to Jaja, "They do not mention Papa and they hardly mention prison" (300).

In the foregoing pages, we have examined in detail the plight of the dispossessed characters in the private sphere. We shall presently examine the consequences of the actions of the beast and his agents at the public domain, the nation. The military head of state and his agents, the soldiers, blatantly violate the basic rights of the citizens – particularly those who show defiance to his powers. At Ade Coker's imprisonment, soldiers put "out so many cigarettes on his back" (42). This is like Eugene Achike's scalding of his children's feet. The public execution of the three drug peddlers, the murder of Nwankiti Ogechi and Ade Coker are akin to Beatrice Achike's three miscarriages as a result of Eugene's violent beating. The public dictator dies from poisoning from prostitutes just as the private dictator also dies from the wife's poison. Both men, therefore, drive their victims into abnormal behaviour. Kambili observes the victims of the Big Oga's dispossession, "In the outskirts of the market, we let our eyes dwell on the half-naked mad people near the rubbish dumps" (43). Kambili goes further to particularize the disorder of Ade Coker's daughter as a result of the action of the rough beast on her late father. She is present when his letter bomb detonates and kills her father and her mind snaps into severe depression. She has not talked for four months from that day despite the fact she has seen several doctors and therapists at home and abroad. Yewande visits the house to tell Eugene that she has called "mommy" that morning. Everybody is excited at the news except Jaja,

who tells Kambili, “She will never heal.... She may have started talking now, but she will never heal” (259). Jaja is right as the leftovers of the depression still linger during the visit. Kambili observes she is withdrawn as she “sat stiffly on the sofa, tugging at the red ribbon that held her braided hair in a pony-tail. When Mama asked if she would drink Fanta, she shook her head, still tugging at the ribbon” (258 -259).

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the dispossessed characters and groups, who go through the trauma of a pogrom and a full-fledged war as a consequence of British imperialism, come out of the experiences like palm fruits, which have been pounded in the mortar. Adichie shows that the dispossession of the Igbo begins with the British policies before and after independence. It continues under the Northern leadership of the country with “northern schools not admitting Igbo children” (38). This continuing marginalization, particularly the political marginalization, leads to the coup and the killing of the Sarduna of Sokoto. His death let loose the id of the Muslim Northerners – both soldiers and civilians – and they massacre the Igbo in the barracks and on the streets. The consequence of the dispossession of the symbol of Northern unity, the Sarduna of Sokoto, is the pogrom, which the narrator foregrounds with the imagery of brutality and blood-letting thus, “They drove in a frenzied silence, past policemen in blood-splattered uniforms, past vultures perched by the roadside, past boys carrying looted radios, until he parked at the train station and shoved her onto a crowded train” (148).

In Biafra, the experience of the massacre solidifies the Igbo and they become what Sigmund Freud has argued that all kinds of “historical experiences will mobilize particular effects, fairly obvious, for example, is when a country declares war, aggressive feelings are going to be excited” (quoted in Easthope 156). During the declaration of independence at

the Freedom Square, there is the operation of the unconscious forces in the people, who are described as an endless sheet of heads who “Swayed as they sang, and Olanna imagined that the mango and *gmelina* trees swayed too, in agreement, in one fluid arc” (162). The same unconscious force is seen in the market, where traders “were dancing to Congo music and giving away the best of their mangoes and groundnuts” (163). There is the unification of the people at the rally in their feeling of aggression in the symbolic burial of Nigeria.

The narrator says:

Some young men were carrying a coffin with NIGERIA written on it in white chalk; they raised it up, mock solemnity on their faces. Then they placed it down and pulled their shirts off and started to dig a hole, a cheer rose in the crowd and spread, ripplelike, until it was one cheer, until Olanna felt that everybody there had become one (163).

This determination of the people to dissociate themselves from Nigeria and defend the birth of Biafra is seen in Mrs. Muokelu’s decision not to “touch anything sent from Nigeria by a Nigerian” (375). Mrs. Muokelu is a character, who wholly believes in Biafra’s defiance of Nigeria’s power. In her dress, “His Excellency’s face glared from the fabric of the boubou she wore everyday; she often announced that she would wear nothing else until the state of Biafra was fully established” (265). The crumbling of Biafra’s utopic dream before the federal government’s military might is also symbolized in her boubou, which the narrator describes further, “A hole had split up His Excellency’s face on the sleeve of her boubou” (378). The ravages of Biafra are seen in the ravages of her own body. At the beginning of the war, she is described as being squat and muscular, with thick black hair on her arms and legs that Olanna wonders if she “would have been better off being born a man” (204).

She believes so much in the Biafran cause and she is fearless in defending it that Olanna feels she resembles Kainene. However, after almost three years of war and her battle for survival like Biafra, she is described as being “gaunt, her body was built for thickness and now, with so much weight loss, she drooped, as though she could no longer stand straight. Even the hair on her arm drooped” (379).

Like Mrs. Muokelu’s wasted physique, the war brought about the territorial dispossession of the group, which starts with the massacre of the Igbo in the North and in Lagos. There is the terrible shrinking of Biafra’s territories with the fall of Nsukka, Enugu, Abba, Port Harcourt, Abagana, Onitsha, Umuahia and other cities and towns. The emphasis of the Biafran government on self-sufficiency and farming become a mirage as Olanna queries their possibility, “Farming with what? And how are we going to feed millions of people on the tiny territory we hold now” (405)? At the end of the war, the economic dispossession of the Igbo continues also on a personal level for the woman who takes over Kainene’s property in Port Harcourt has slender tribal marks on her face, two lines on each cheek. She remorselessly tells Richard, “This was abandoned property. It is now my house” (426). In Lagos, Chief Ozobia’s Yoruba friend forges “ownership papers and everything and saying we should be happy he was not asking for much; on top of that he took the furniture” (427). After the war, the Igbo regain their territories within the Biafran enclave, but they are desolation. Odenigbo’s house in Abba, for example, is devastated because “Bushes had sprung up everywhere; small huts were completely swallowed in browned grasses. A shrub was growing at the gate of their compound” (415). As Odenigbo drives his family into Nsukka after the war on roads pockmarked with bullets and bomb craters, they notice the “buildings were blackened, roofs blown off, walls half standing.

Here and there were black carcasses of burnt cars. An eerie quiet reigned” (415). The once serene and beautiful environment of the university which thrills Ugwu now tells the story of devastation. The narrator says, “Odim Street itself was shapeless and tangled, with both sides knotted in thick bush” (418). Odenigbo’s compound which Jomo keeps clean before the war is unkempt as the “whistling pine and ixora and lilies, all shapeless and tangled” (418). The imprints of the war have marked the house and its furnishing. The narrator describes the desolation thus:

Milky cobwebs cling in the living room. He looked up and saw a large spider moving slowly in its web, as if uncaring of their presence and still secure that this was its home. The sofas and curtains and carpets and shelves were gone. The louvers, too, had been slipped off and the windows were gaping holes and the dry harmattan winds had blown in so much dust that the walls were now an even brown. Dust motes swam ghostlike in the empty room (418).

Odenigbo’s books, particularly his research papers, are burnt as well as the books in the university’s library.

However, the territorial dispossession of the Igbo as a result of the pogrom and the war is not as traumatic as the human cost of the two events. Children like Adanna die of starvation; Ugwu’s mother dies of cough because of the absence of drugs; “Eberechi had been killed by shelling” (428); Okeoma dies from enemy fire; Kainene does not return from trading across enemy lines. This is a war, whose human toll, Major Madu estimates to be more than a million people lost. The dead are those who are lucky for they are better off than some of the survivors of the war whose psyche has been battered. Igboland has to accommodate the likes of High-Tech, a child-soldier, who has seen the face of violence at a

tender age of thirteen years. Some of the ill-trained and ill-equipped soldiers are shell-shocked; some are maimed and deranged. The territorial dispossession of the Igbo is a child's play when one examines closely the impact of the war on Biafran soldiers. The narrator says of their mental and physical devastation thus:

A soldier in Biafran Army uniform and a helmet walked past them, speaking a mangled Pidgin English that made little sense, his voice too loud. He swayed as he walked, as if he would tip over sideways. He had one full arm, the other was a stump that stopped before his elbow (291).

The Biafran civilian population also feels the consequences of the dispossession. Olanna is one of the dispossessed characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* who suffer terribly as a result of the massacre and the civil war. She narrowly escapes death by the whiskers in Kano, but she cannot escape the trauma of the slain Uncle Mbaezi and his family. The sight of the "little girl's head with ashy-gray skin and the braided hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth" (149) finally triggers off psychopathological disorders in her. Odenigbo says that "the *experience* had changed her and made her so much more *inward*" (186). Her experience of the massacre of the Igbo in the North gives her a somatoform disorder in which there are physical symptoms, such as blindness, paralysis or pains, which have no physical basis and are assumed to be caused by psychological factors. Medical sciences have argued that psychological factors contribute to our bodily or physical diseases. Ronald Smith suggests that conflict, anxiety and other emotional problems involve the functioning of the body. Therefore, people's thoughts and feelings affect their bodies as seen in her conversion disorders (1993). Olanna's dark swoop is a form of somatoform disorder which develops immediately she comes back from Kano. Dr. Patel claims that "Olanna's inability

to walk is psychological” (157). The narrator describes her condition which is devoid of any physical deformity thus, “But at the front door of Odenigbo’s house, they failed. So did her bladder. There was the melting of her legs, and there was also the wetness of hot liquid running down between her thighs Odenigbo carried her in, bathed her...” (156). Apart from the physical symptoms of the disorder – her inability to walk and involuntary action of the bladder in passing urine – hallucination is also part of her disorder. The narrator further describes her experience thus:

That night, she had the first Dark Swoop: thick blanket descended from above and pressed itself over her face, firmly, while she struggled to breathe. Then, when it let go, freeing her to take in gulp after gulp of air, she saw burning owls at the window grinning and beckoning to her with charred feathers (156).

Her disorder affected her speech for “her lips were heavy. Speaking was a labour” (157), and she cannot tell her parents about her experience in Kano. She has sexual dysfunction because when Odenigbo “slid into her, she thought about Arize’s pregnant belly, how easily it must have broken, skin stretched that taut. She started to cry” (160). Her frigidity is as a result of the psychological trauma she suffers at Arize’s death. Though she is lucky that “She did not see Arize’s body” (193), but she is sure of her violent death because the rioters “raped pregnant women before they cut them up” (191).

During the war, they flee from Nsukka to Abba, where Ugwu observes she has become a depressive maniac. Ugwu observes her closely and says, “Olanna had come home in a strange silence. She spoke mechanically. She did not laughOnce he saw her walk over to the guava tree and caress its trunk, and he told himself he would go and pull her away, after a minute, before the neighbors said she was going mad” (194). The first air

raid on Biafra on her wedding day leaves her a paranoid schizophrenic. When she hears the sound of thunder, she imagines it to be an air raid. She jumps up when somebody closes her door loudly that Mrs. Muokelu asks her, “Somebody closed their door in the next house and you say it is a plane”. (278)? Because of the unexpected and incessant strafing and “pellets raining down from above” (274), she has sleep disorder and “lay awake, sweating, imagining the sound of bombing” (276). In fact, her life is ruled by fear of air raids like Fatima in Chukwuemeka Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn* that “She did not take a bath. She was afraid to go outside to the pit latrine. She was afraid to sit down because she might doze off and be unprepared when the siren went off ” (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 276). Because of her fear of the air raid, she becomes delusional that Baby will die. The narrator says, “She worried, instead, about air raids. She had a recurring dream: she forgot about Baby and ran to the bunker and after the bombs had fallen, she tripped on the burnt body of a child with its features so blackened that she could not be certain it was Baby” (262). Because of her delusional state, she tells Ugwu, “We are going to stay in the bunker today” (276) even when there are no air raids.

However, the safety of the bunker she is fleeing to gives her a claustrophobic disorder. It is described as being covered with clay-layered palm trunks with jagged steps. She saw a “snake coiled in a corner. Its black skin glistened with silver markings and tiny crickets hopped about” (261). As the narrator describes her claustrophobic feeling, “the silence of the damp underground that made her think of a grave, she screamed” (261). Though she survives the war, but the trauma of her sister’s disappearance just a few days to the end of the war she has to live with all her life. As the narrator puts it:

But it was not grief that Olanna felt, it was greater than grief. It was stranger than grief. She did not know where her sister was. She did not know. She raged at herself for not waking up early the day that Kainene left for *afia attack* and for not knowing what Kainene wore that morning and for not going with her and for trusting that Inatimi knew where he was leading her. She raged at the world when she boarded buses or climbed in beside Odenigbo or Richard to go to crowded hospitals and dusty buildings to search for Kainene and did not find her (431).

Kainene is another character in the literary text, whose dispossession predates the massacre and the war. From birth, she feels that her parents and her society prefer her beautiful twin sister, Olanna, to her. She grows up into a silent, withdrawn, sardonic but fearless young woman. Prior to the massacre, she is not affected by anything outside her own world. The only time she has cried in her life is when she hears the fate of her foster parents and their children, who have been killed in the mayhem in the North. Though a very strong-willed individual, she is often observed by Richard to “withdraw into silence in the middle of a conversation” (167). Again during the war as they are evacuating from her house in Port Harcourt, the cold whistle of a mortar in an air raid beheads Ikejide whose “body was running, arched slightly forward, arms flying around, but there was no head” (317) devastates her. She becomes depressed as there “was eerie blankness in her eyes. Richard was not sure what to do. He took her gently but the blank look remained, so he went to the tap and splashed a bucket of water on her” (317). She also develops a sleep disorder because of this experience for at night she cries. She tells Richard she wants to dream of Ikejide, but “she woke up every morning and remembered his running headless

body clearly while in the safer blurred territory of her dreams, she saw herself smoking a cigarette in an elegant gold holder” (318). Ikejide’s death forces her to forgive Olanna for sleeping with Richard, and also to run a refugee camp at Orlu. Major Madu and Richard Churchill’s battle for the possession of Kainene is symbolic of the Igbo and Nigeria’s epic battle for the possession of Biafra. Her loss is symbolic of the loss of Biafra: none of her two lovers, Major Madu and Richard Churchill, can ever repossess her and each will live with the trauma of her disappearance like the Igbo and Nigeria will live with the trauma of the three-year-old civil war. None of her lovers can have true reconciliation like the Igbo and the North after the war.

Odenigbo is also a dispossessed character in the novel who suffers the terrible consequences of dispossession as a result of the war. At the beginning of the novel and before the war, Ugwu says in his admiration of his new master that he “filled the armchair, his thick hair that stood high on his head, his muscled arms, his broad shoulders” (5). Olanna describes her lover as “a thickly built man” (26) with an unquestionable “aggressive confidence” (27). His physique deteriorates during the war but the most important impact on him is psychological. Initially, he bears the deprivations associated with the war stoically; however, the violent death of his aged mother at Abba and the insults he receives from the Biafran soldiers as he attempts to cross the enemy line to bury her break him up. Olanna observes the immediate changes in him because “he no longer went into the interior with the Agitator Corps, no longer returned with lit-up eyes” (322). He is already suffering from depressive disorder, and the “miracle of Abagana did not loosen his knots” (332). The other psychopathological symptoms of his disorder is that he is withdrawn, plays truant at his work-place, drinks heavily locally-brewed gin. The

narrator describes his physical and psychological states thus, “The flat glassiness in his eyes, the slump to his shoulders, worried her” (331). His depressive mood also affects his sexual function for when Olanna “kissed his neck, his ear, in the way that always made him pull her close on the nights that Ugwu slept out on the veranda” (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 332), he did not respond to her amorous romance but simply shrugs her hand off and says, “I m tired, *nkem*” (332). However, the triumph of the life instinct of the id over the death one purges him after the news of Okeoma’s death. The narrator describes his love-making experience with Olanna thus:

When he slid into her, she thought how different he felt, lighter and narrower, on top of her. He was still, so still she thrashed around and pulled at his hips. But he did not move. Then he began to thrust and her pleasure multiplied, sharpened on stone so that each tiny spark became a pleasure all its own. She heard herself crying, her sobbing louder and louder until Baby stirred and he placed his palm against his mouth. He was crying too; she felt the tears drop on her body before she saw them on his face (392).

Richard’s dispossession started from birth like Kainene’s, and its consequence starts manifesting before the pogrom and the war. He is not sure of himself and is controlled by the women – Susan and Kainene – in his life. He has sexual dysfunction as the narrator says, “His sex life with Susan was satisfactory, through perfunctory” (64). But his sexual experience with Kainene is a disaster as he wants his body and mind to work together by “willing his desire to bypass his anxiety. But he did not become hard. He could feel the flaccid weight between his legs” (63). This happens often he cannot trust his body and

cannot “bear to disappoint her yet again” (69). He believes that African herbs can cure his sexual disorder and restores his manhood again.

As a result of what he sees at Kano airport, the massacre of the Igbo before passengers, he suffers amnesia and depression. As the narrator says when he gets to Susan’s house at Ikoyi unannounced, “Richard sat on the sofa; he remembered nothing of what had happened in London. Susan didn’t seem to notice that he had not spoken” (153). Despite Susan’s persuasion that the Igbo deserve what they get, and despite the normalcy in Lagos as “it always had, as if nothing was happening in Kano” (153), he “lowered his head to the sink and began to cry” (155). He stays in Biafra during the war because of Kainene and contributes to the war effort. However, Kainene’s loss at the end of the war leaves a permanent traumatic impact on him. He will live out his life as a schizophrenic. The narrator describes his condition thus:

Darkness descended on him, and when it lifted he knew that he would never see Kainene again and that his life would always be like a candlelit room; he would see things only in shadow, only in half glimpses (430).

Furthermore, Ugwu’s rape of the bar girl with the other young soldiers is a consequence of the dispossession of his Oedipus complex as a result of the war. It also typifies the lowering moral standard during the war and women as the silent victims of war crimes. Before the war, the narrator describes the extreme materialistic tendencies of Chief Ozobia and his wife in their shamelessness in giving Olanna to Chief Okonji in order to get some contracts, and also the sexual infidelities of the characters. The difference between the sexual infidelities before the war and rape during the war is the absence of consent of the raped victims. For example, in timorous Amala’s sexual fling which results in the birth

of Baby, she is part of the conspiracy to lure Odenigbo into sleeping with her. Ugwu sees Mama rubbing something on Amala's back, both of them standing in front of the bathroom. He suspects, "There was something wrong about the way Mama's hands were moving in circular motions, slowly, as if in consonance with some ritual, and about the way Amala stood silent ..." (214). Early the next morning as he is cleaning the house, he glances at the corridor, "surprised that Master was up so early. But it was Amala who walked out of the room Amala, common quiet ordinary Amala, had slept in Master's bedroom" (216)! There is, therefore, Amala's consent in her sexual relationship with Odenigbo. If there is anybody who does not give any consent, it is Odenigbo. Not only that his mother rubs love potion on Amala's back to entice him, she "unwrapped a small packet and sprinkled something into the soup bowl" (213) which she serves Odenigbo. As if all these are not enough, her strong "palm wine had got to Master as well" (214).

In the case of the rape victims, there is no consent but force is used. The narrator describes the experience thus, "The bar girl was lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulders held down by a soldier, her legs wide, wide ajar. She was sobbing..." (365). Also there is no consent on the part of Anulika as the five soldiers rape her. Nnesinachi tells Ugwu, "They said the first one that climbed on top of her, she bit him on the arm and drew blood. They nearly beat her to death. One of her eyes had refused to open well since" (421). Apart from rape, women willingly give themselves to men. In Port Harcourt, a woman tells Richard to come to her flat so that they can have sex as she has not done it before with a white man. Though she is laughing when she says it, Richard notices the "delirious desire in her eyes was serious enough" (171) and it is as if the people in the city with tall whistling pines "wanted to grab all they could before the war

robbed them of choices” (172). Women are also given out during the war as gifts in return for some favours. Eberechi tells Ugwu “about her parents’ pushing her into the army officer’s room” (294). In return for that, she says, “He helped us. He put my brother in essential services in the army”(294). Ironically, “Eberechi had been killed by shelling” (428) but her brother survives the war.

The narrators in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* point out glaringly the consequences of rape, which are more devastating than war, through Anulika. When Ugwu gets to his village at Opi, he examines the faces of the survivors of the war. He sees that all of them are thinner, “all with a deep exhaustion etched on their skin, even the children” (420). He, however, observes that Anulika is the one “who looked most changed” (420) among all of them. Apart from her face being covered with blackheads and pimples and she avoids his eyes when she speaks to him, he sees her psychopathological disorder because of her rape. As the narrator describes her depressive disorder, “He was startled to discover that the sister he had remembered as beautiful was not at all. She was an ugly stranger who squinted with one eye” (420). The only person who does not change among the villagers is Nnesinachi as she “arrived with a baby on her hip and a sparkle in her eyes” (421). She is able to meander through the war situation by using sex as a means of survival. Though she has an illegitimate child for an Hausa soldier, but at least, she does not go through Anulika’s psychopathological disorder as a result of rape, or is she as wasted as the others. She adjusts to the reality of the wartime situation in Opi and makes the best out of it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's preoccupation in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the relentless portrayal of characters and groups, who are dispossessed in their fictional settings. This is achieved through the use a systematic framework provided by Freud's psychoanalysis, Karl Marx's economic and political ideology, and Julia Kristeva's semiotic model in which the fact of dispossession produces the rough beast. This elaborate scaffold provides the possibility of the minutest examination of the various causes, forms and consequences of dispossession on the dispossessed and their victims. Despite the scantiness of relevant and related literature on the two texts, the study shows that dispossession goes with the themes of violence, and complicity which produce and sustain it. In the private sphere of Eugene Achike's family in *Purple Hibiscus*, for example, there is so much violence that leads to Beatrice Achike's three miscarriages, Jaja's deformation, Kambili's unconscious state, and the eventual murder of the violent patriarch. The same violence is played out at the public space with the extra judicial killing of three drug peddlars, the murder of Nwankiti Ogechi and Ade Coker and killing by poison of the public tyrant. The narrator, however, shows that violence is unsustainable without the complicity of the victims and the compromising silence of other characters and groups, who have the capacity to stop it. Beatrice, Jaja and Kambili by keeping silent and not exposing the patriarch's acts of violence on the family members are not only abetting his violence but they are also collaborators to it. Beatrice Achike, the wife of Eugene, is ironically portrayed as a big pretender who watches her

daughter beaten into unconsciousness, and when Aunty Ifeoma advises her to take her children and move out of her house, she simply tells her, “It has never happened like this before. He has never punished her like this before” (214). She further absolves him from his violence on Kambili, when she tells her, “Your father has been by your bedside every night these past three days. He has not slept a wink” (214). This is a family that lies to her class mates, “I had survived an accident” (215) as Beatrice lies to her children, “There was an accident, the baby is gone” (34) despite their awareness of the reason for her miscarriage. Her pretences can be seen as Kambili describes her reaction after she has been battered a few days ago that she miscarries for the third time thus, “Papa hugged Mama, holding her close, and she rested her head on his chest” (252). There is also complicity on the part of the pious, particularly Father Benedict, who hears Eugene Achike’s every confession, and has his confidence. The naïve narrator does not exonerate the doctors and nurses at St Agnes Hospital from complicity because they have treated Beatrice severally for miscarriages as a result of violence, treated Jaja’s “gnarled finger, deformed as a dried stick” (145) and Kambili’s broken rib and internal bleeding without reporting the assault, which occasions bodily harm to the police. Kambili recognizes the doctor who treats her and says, “I knew that voice; he was a lector in the church. He was speaking slowly and precisely, the way he did when he read the first and second readings” (*Purple Hibiscus* 212). Like Father Benedict, he conceals Eugene’s violence on the family because of the huge donations he gives to the church. But the same hospital staff reveals to the police the cause of his death, because the narrator says, “Somebody at St Agnes Hospital had contacted them, and they had a copy of the autopsy report with them” (291), and they are on their way to question his wife and children.

The same themes of violence and complicity are also replicated in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, particularly in the public sphere. During the pogrom in which Igbo military officers and civilians are massacred in the North, it is believed that “There was a hollowness to all the accounts, an echo of unreality” (166), but this is only for those who are outside the confines of the mayhem. For those who are witnesses to it, the massacres are not only real but unprecedented. Olanna who is in Kano during the pogrom witnesses “how many bodies were lying there, like dolls made of cloth” (148). She sees the horror of the pogrom in which she looks into a calabash bowl and there is a “little girl’s head with ashy-gray skin and the braided hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth” (149). Richard Churchill experiences the reality of the slaughter of the Igbo workers and passengers at Kano Airport. According to the narrator, “The soldiers ran out to the tarmac and into the airplane and pulled out Igbo people who had already boarded and lined them up and shot them, and left them lying there ...” (153). As the Northern soldiers are killing the Igbo colleagues, Northern civilians are not left out in the orgies of blood-letting against the Igbo civilians as they are chasing them like mad dogs, according to survivors’ reports to Odenigbo. During the war, the violence is widespread that more than a million people are said to have been lost. Surprisingly, Britain, which is in a position to settle the two warring ethnic groups because of her position as their nurturer, is determined to punish the rebellious son, Biafra. It not only engineers the counter-coup in which ENBC Radio Enugu says, “We have unconfirmed reports that up to five hundred Igbo people have been killed in Maiduguri” (142); it further exacerbates the situation when “The BBC is calling it an Igbo coup” (125). Its citizens in the North also instigate their students to riot and slaughter the Igbo people. Not only that Britain ignites the mayhem and the war, but it creates the fault-lines in the

newly independent country by giving political dominance to the North when it rigs elections and inflates census figures in the North's favour. Major Madu who narrowly escapes death during the pogrom indicts the British thus:

The problem was the ethnic balance policy. I was part of the commission that told our GOC that we could scrap it, that it was polarizing the army, that they should stop promoting Northerners who were not qualified. But our GOC said no, our *British* GOC (141).

Like Britain, there is also complicity on the part of United States of America as it dubs the leaders of the coup as communists and, therefore, it denies Biafra its recognition the status of an independent state. The complicity and betrayal of the world, particularly the countries of the Western Hemisphere is seen in the haunting mantra of Richard Churchill's *The World Was Silent When We Died* which implicates seriously the world as it watches the replication of the Jewish holocaust on the Igbo of Southern-eastern Nigeria. In Richard's article he sends to Britain for publication, he recalls that British colonization nurtures the genocide:

It is imperative to remember that the first time the Igbo were massacred, albeit on a much smaller scale than what has recently occurred, was in 1945. That carnage was precipitated by the British colonial government when it blamed the Igbo people for the national strike, banned Igbo-published newspapers, and generally encouraged anti-Igbo sentiment.... It has been caused, simply, by the informal divide-and-rule policies of the British colonial exercise. These policies manipulated the difference between the tribes and ensured that unity would not exist, thereby making the easy governance of such a large country practicable (sic) (167).

Apart from the themes of violence and complicity, which the reader finds, strewn throughout the two novels, Adichie shows that the causal factors of dispossession are the twin-pillars of nature and nurture. These two play a complementary role in human behaviour as “It is generally accepted that human beings are a product of heredity and environment. Out of the product come our individuality and our individual differences” (Gilmer 11). Perowne argues that the development of a trait may be manipulated by environmental changes (1975). To underscore the role of the two factors, a self-psychologist also suggests that “the full description of a given animal must not merely enumerate the different structures of which its body consists, but must indicate its reactions to its environment” (Calkins 61). A study of Adichie’s two works reveals that nature or heredity and nurture or environment work together in the dispossession of characters and groups, therefore, British colonization cannot be blamed solely for their dispossession. In *Purple Hibiscus*, she creates Eugene as the character with the most divided personality in English literature. A casual reader of the novel may believe that Eugene’s dispossession, which turns him into a rough beast, is as a result of nurture – his heavy punishment for masturbation that interrupts his mastering the Oedipus complex. There is also the indictment of his models of identification during the crucial stages of the development of his personality. He identifies completely with the priests and the religious, whom he tells Kambili, “I would be nothing today but for the priests and the sisters at the mission” (47). He seems, therefore, to identify completely with colonization and its vestiges at an early stage of his development. Papa-Nnukwu recalls the event to Aunty Ifeoma and his grandchildren, “In the afternoon they gathered the children under the ukwa tree in the mission and taught them their religion” (84). He sees it as obviously imbibing divisive and

bizarre doctrines and dogmas, as the new faith says “that the son and the father are equal” (84). However, Eugene foresees the possibility of his empowerment – economic and social – under the new order and he embraces it wholeheartedly. He willingly makes self-sacrifices – he is a houseboy to the parish priest for two years, walks eight miles to go to school, and he is a gardener to the priests to be able to go to secondary school. In his effort to improve his future, he suffers cultural dislocation as he abhors Papa-Nnukwu’s “worshipping gods of wood and stone” (47) and insists “I cannot participate in a pagan funeral” (188) of his own father. As he absconds from the religious and cultural rituals and rites of his community, which have permeated his consciousness, he develops a psychopathological disorder. The archetypal psychologist claims that it is not only sexuality, that is, none or inadequate resolution of the Oedipus or Electra complex, which can cause neurosis and psychosis, but also:

Psychology teaches us that, in a certain sense, there is nothing in the psyche that is old; nothing that can really, finally die away.... Whoever protects himself against what is new and strange and egresses to the past falls into the same neurotic condition as the man who identifies himself with the new and runs away from the past. The only difference is that the one has estranged himself from the past and the other from the future. In principle both are doing the same thing: they are reinforcing their narrow consciousness instead of shattering it in the tension of opposites and building up a state of wider and higher consciousness (Jung 10).

It is obvious from Jung’s statement that Eugene Achike’s cultural dislocation is part of the cause of his abnormal behaviour as the study reveals. This is because culture is the source of order, source of morality, and source of the superego. He cannot simply walk away from

his culture, and construct his own independent identity. He must replace it with another political father or Oedipus as its total abandonment has its implications.

Like we said over and over again, Eugene Achike is the most divided character in literature and that is the reason for a detailed study of the causes, forms and consequences of his dispossession. In order to do that we may compare him to two fictive characters – Okonkwo Unoka and Oduche Ezeulu in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, respectively. Eugene Achike is like another patriarch, Okonkwo, who already exists in the text's cultural tradition. Both of them are fighting a cause alone, which they believe strongly in. However, while Okonkwo is fighting the new social order – colonization with its vestiges – which has displaced the masked spirit of the day in Umuofia and its environs, Eugene is doing the opposite. While Okonkwo is a part of the masked spirit of the old order which colonization has uprooted, Eugene Achike is a beneficiary of the new order. While Okonkwo is a tragic hero, who suffers tragic reversal and moves the reader to pity, Eugene Achike is not a tragic hero but a dispossessed character, who is defeated and does not deserve the reader's pity, because he seems not to have the greatness of soul, which he pretends to have. We must trace the sources of their law-givers, that is, who are their models of identification. Both men despise their fathers; for Okonkwo, Unoka is a weakling, and Eugene sees his father as a pagan destined for hellfire. They both do not identify with their fathers, but while Okonkwo develops his superego from the other men like Nwakibie in his culture, Eugene has two models of identification: Papa-Nnukwu and white missionaries. The dualism in these two superegos must be the source of his split personality. Eugene Achike's fanatical Catholicism is to counter his father's paganism as

Okonkwo's uncompromising worship of masculinity, strength and violence is to counter his father's feminine personality, indolence and improvidence.

As Adichie portrays Eugene with so much contradiction, we ought to further explore the character of Papa-Nnukwu as a source of his super-ego in his formative age before he joins the missionaries. There is certain fixedness in their attitude to their different religions: the way Papa-Nnukwu is sold to his Traditional religion is the way Eugene is sold to his Catholicism. Eugene is therefore compared with Oduche and Papa-Nnukwu with Ezeulu, another patriarch of the old order, who holds on tenaciously to his religion as Papa-Nnukwu. Ezeulu's reaction to colonization in the fictive setting of *Arrow of God* is that of a proactive or modern man. From the oracle's prediction, he is aware that the new order is not temporary and he repositions himself and his family. According to the omniscient narrator:

His mind turned from the festival to the new religion. He was not sure what to make of it. At first he had thought that since the white man had come with great power and conquest it was necessary that some people should learn the ways of his deity. That was why he had agreed to send his son, Oduche, to learn the new ritual. He also wanted him to learn the white man's wisdom, for Ezeulu knew from what he saw of Wintabota and the stories he heard about his people that the white man was very wise (42).

He shows himself as a visionary who does not want to lose at the power play, which the new order will create in future; he also wants to immediately cement his relationship with the colonial administrator. He sends Oduche as a spy to report the activities of the foreigners to him so as to ensure that his exalted position and his god in Umuaro are not

routed by the new system. He scolds him when he fails in this duty, “I called you as a father calls his son and told you to go and be my eye and my ear among those people” (200). Despite Oduche’s mother’s protestations, despite the calumnies of his opponents and critics, despite Oduche’s failings, he does not withdraw him from the new order. He insists, “My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying *had we known* tomorrow” (*Arrow of God* 46). However, when Oduche’s duty to him as a father and that of the new order are in conflict, he shows his superego can counteract that of the new order. Ezeulu tells Oduche authoritatively, “I did not send you so that you might leave your duty in my household. Do you hear me? Go and tell the people who chose you to go to Okperi that I said no. Tell them that tomorrow is the day in which my sons and my wives and my son’s wife work for me. You people should know the custom of the land; if they don’t you must tell them. Do you hear me (14)?

On the contrary, Eugene Achike, who is a convert to the new religion like Oduche, does not have a patriarch with a strong superego who pontificates on the custom and insists on its observance. From all indications, Papa-Nnukwu never sends him to join the new religion, unlike Oduche. Like other Abba children, the white man gathers them and teaches them his religion. Surprisingly, Papa-Nnukwu is aware of the strange indoctrination Eugene receives from the missionaries. He ought to have taken him away or at least correct the missionaries’ dogmas, which he believes are contrary to his own traditional values like Ezeulu does for Oduche in order to refocus him. Papa-Nnukwu presumably walks away from the priest and children after hearing that the “father and the son are equal” (84). He knows that the teaching contradicts the fundamental tenet of his own culture, but he dismissively waves it aside with, “It was then that I knew that the white man was mad”

(84). He leaves his son with the mad stranger, who infects him with his own brand of madness that he later complains, “That is why Eugene can disregard me, because he thinks we are equal” (84). Apart from the missionaries, therefore, Papa-Nnukwu stands indicted for providing his son with a defective model of identification. He ought to take part of the blame in his cultural dislocation and the subsequent psychopathological disorder and he cannot be heard to say accusingly, “Still, I say it was the missionaries that misled my son” (84) when he knows the Abba customs better than the white stranger and young Eugene. He would have insisted on his son operating within the precinct of his custom like Ezeulu. His manner of nurturing him, therefore, is as defective as the missionaries’. Understandably, Eugene never identifies with Papa-Nnukwu and his values in life, in sickness, and in death. He identifies completely with the priests, particularly with the white religious, who empower him to meander through the new order, and become one of masked spirits of his generation. It is through this empowerment that he cannot live all his life in Abba like old Anikwenwa who wears “a torn white singlet and a wrapper wound round his waist” (70). It is through the benefit it provides that he builds mansions in Enugu and Abba and not the ones, which resemble Papa-Nnukwu’s which stands in the “middle of the compound was small, compact like dice” (63). Kambili imagines Papa-Nnukwu’s house to look “like the pictures of houses I used to draw in kindergarten: a square house with a square door at the centre and two square windows on each side” (63). After imbibing the new culture, he is able to change “his accent when he spoke, sounding British” (46) and not like his kinsmen at Abba who speak “English with an Igbo accent so strong it decorated even the shortest words with extra vowels” (60). With his conversion to the new religion and the education that goes with it, he is the owner of a chain of factories

and a powerful man with local and international recognitions. In order to achieve this feat, he follows the new religion and its apparatuses of operation without restraint. This is captured in old Anikwenwa's simile with its imagery of underlying malformation, "You are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave" (70)!

From Anikwenwa's description of Eugene's attitude, there is a subtle undertone that nurture cannot be blamed alone for his psychic and cultural dispossession, which turns him into a rough beast. His simile presents the images of unrestraint and impulsiveness as a result of a fundamental physiological malformation. Nature, therefore, is implicated, more than nurture in his dispossession. A fly that is blind may be as a result of a genetic defect which results in a physiological defect in which it cannot sense the limit to which it can follow a corpse to the grave without endangering its life. In other words, there is an inherent genetic or physiological defect in Eugene, an inherited "blueprint", which is latent at birth, but develops as if on a genetic time switch during the process of maturation (Smith 1993). Papa-Nnukwu is partly wrong when he implicates only nurture in Eugene's dispossession; however, Anikwenwa, Aunty Ifeoma, Beatrice and Amaka believe it arises from both nature and nurture. For instance, Eugene's religious extremism in the fictive world of *Purple Hibiscus* is primarily as a result of his nature. He is a man his sister adjudges as being judgmental and Anikwenwa sees as being impulsive. This is because he is the only one among the decolonized world of the novel, apart from the racist Father Benedict, who fights against Traditional religion and culture like Enoch in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Aunty Ifeoma and Chiaku go through the mills of the new order; yet, they detest violence and are not turned into rough beasts. Father Amadi is a Catholic priest, but he sings Igbo songs during masses and accommodates Papa-Nnukwu, and sees no

reason why Kambili and Jaja should confess for sleeping in the same house with their grandfather, because he is a heathen. Other characters meander through the two orders without conflict. According to the narrator, the Igwe of Abba “had converted, he still let his pagan relatives carry out sacrifices in his palace” (93), just as Aunty Ifeoma initiates Obiora into the masquerade cult of his town.

It is pertinent that Adichie ironically shows that Eugene’s nature dispossesses him more than nurture and turns him into a rough beast. This is seen in the ambivalence in his actions and behaviour, which defy both the Catholic faith he embraces and the Traditional religion he abandons. In his refusal to greet, feed, clothe, shelter, provide medical care for his father, and his refusal to participate in his burial and funeral rites, he is casting aspersion on Papa-Nnukwu’s Traditional religion, which states *Chineke! I have wished others well. I have helped those who have nothing with the little my hands can spare*” (168). By his refusal to do these obligatory works of mercy, he also blatantly violates the fundamental doctrines of Catholicism. When he commits acts of violence like throwing the missal at Jaja on a Palm Sunday, or beating his wife on a Pentecost Sunday that she miscarries, or beating the whole family with his belt on a Holy Family Sunday, he violates the tenets of his Catholic faith, which preaches GOD IS LOVE and violates Papa-Nnukwu’s Traditional religion, which prohibits the acts of violence on others as Kambili hears, “Chineke! I have killed no one ...” (167) during his **itu nzu**.

In Eugene’s dispossession, which turns him into an unprecedented violent figure with a split personality, his repressed childhood traumatic experience, his two dualistic models of identification, and a fundamental malformation in his physiology are all implicated. However, how much each of these two causal factors contributes to his

abnormality is a matter of debate to psychologists. It is claimed that both work together to produce a person's behaviour and there is no doubt that one contributes more than the other (Gilmer 1975). Anastasi (quoted in Lerner 1986) argues that both operate in a continuum. The presumption is that if they operate in a continuum, the contributions of each to the making of an individual's behaviour will be indistinguishable. This is not the finding of this study with particular reference to the dispossessed characters in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, where a close reading of the work reveals that systematic psychic, economic/political and cultural dispossession of characters and groups based on nature has more disastrous consequences than that of nurture because of colonization. This is not seen only in the character of Eugene but also his wife, Beatrice. Either Adichie uses her to vilify the patriarchal image of Eugene Achike in her projection of a feminist cause: the African's woman's new resistance to male violence or she is a character whose portrayal runs out of control. Whatever may be the reason for her presentation of Beatrice, she ends up as a bundle of contradictions and a flawed character like her husband. Her action of committing murder, the heinous act of killing the husband, which is against Christianity and Traditional religion shows her as a rough beast, whose dispossession is more by nature than by nurture.

A closer reader of *Purple Hibiscus* reveals a subtle indication that it is not only Eugene's immediate environment, which dispossesses Beatrice, and propels her to murder him. She is presumably from a home of a fanatical father, who is an authoritarian family head. Though not much is told about Kambili's grandfather's family life, but she recalls "he seemed to use the word *sinner* in every sentence" (68) and in his full knightly regalia, he appears like a "superhero". There is the undertone that her father is as overbearing and fanatical like Eugene. Beatrice Achike, therefore, grows up in a family where her father has

crushed her into submissiveness like Kambili, who cannot retort to Amaka's harangue. This must be the cogent reason why she does not challenge Eugene like Ifeoma. When she marries a man who is as intimidating as her father, she goes into regression by keeping dancing figurines both at Abba and Enugu, which she polishes whenever he beats her. And Freud claims that overdependence on any of the various defence mechanisms, in Beatrice's case regression, can lead to a pathological state. When the figurines break, she sweeps off the pieces and feels that there is no need for their replacement since Jaja is old enough to challenge the authority of his father, and she secretly decides to kill him. What she leaves off in her calculation which destroys her more than the husband's violence is Jaja's incarceration for several months because of police investigations.

Besides, Beatrice suffers like her husband what Lacan describes as conflict between the ideal ego and ego ideal, which is also a source of his split personality and abnormal behaviour. This is a woman who is portrayed as a devout Christian, the daughter of the first catechist who converts a lot of pagans in Abba. This is a woman who can never contemplate separation or divorcing her husband; rather, she seems to prefer to murder him and control his wealth. She exhibits some madness in her as Ifeoma suggests, "Has a nut come loose in your head, *gbo* (249)? She also attests to this when she states, "I do not know if my head is correct" (248) and she goes on to press "the back of her hand to her forehead, in the way that one checks the degree of a fever" (248). A casual reading of the work may lend itself that she is turned into a depressive maniac by the husband's violence and her act of killing him is revenge against him. However, there is a fundamental defect in her, apart from her smallish status, which is caused by her nature. This is a woman whose self-construct is weak, and she is diffident and has a systematic pattern of evaluating

herself negatively. There is an error in her thinking as she sees herself as inferior to her husband, who can marry any graduate he fancies. Her low self-esteem because she is not a graduate is, in fact, the fundamental reason why she is extremely submissive to Eugene and is not because of his violence.

Apart from that, she is subtly presented as being greedy as she cannot contemplate leaving Eugene's vast wealth for another woman if she divorces him. She, therefore, contrives to end the conflict as a result of her low self-esteem and control his wealth, which ultimately will give her power. Adichie in attempting to create a woman, who returns her husband's violence, unwittingly spins out a monster, which is worse than the prostitute who poisons the public tyrant. Kambili says the Head of State who has also dispossessed the populace at the public domain dies "foaming at the mouth and jerking" (297). These two women are alike because they are both murderers who cause the downfall of public and private tyrants. But there is a difference in the gravity of their actions as Beatrice murders her husband, who is the father of her children; the prostitute kills her patron who is not related to her. So while the nation experiences reprieve at the removal of a public nuisance, the "interim civilian government announced that it would release all prisoners of conscience" (297), Beatrice and her children do not as they remove the pillar of their family and the Oedipus crime must be punished. Jaja offers himself as a scapegoat to cleanse the guilt of the family, while the actual killer has to descend into the hellish condition of depressive mania. Her being turned into a rough beast, therefore, is not as a result of the disruption of her Electra complex, but a combination of a stressful life event of living with an abusive husband, the tragic circumstances of having three miscarriages, her own model of identification through presumably a submissive mother, but most

importantly, her self-construct of negatively evaluating herself as being worthless and inadequate. This is the way a psychologist sums up the causal factors of schizophrenia, which is Beatrice's psychopathological disorder as a dispossessed character in the novel. He claims, "This may mean that family dynamics are not important, rather, it may mean that a biologically vulnerability factor must be present in order for stressful familial events to cause their damage" (Smith 525).

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* also shows the over-bearing influence of nurture in the psychic, political and cultural dispossession of Jaja and Kambili. A reader may wonder why these two teenagers whose father provides a more brutal environment in which he nurtures them more than the missionaries' are not turned into rough beasts. Their dispossession is cruel and systematic and starts presumably from when they are toddlers. Jaja, for example, never experiences any of the crucial stages of the psychosexual development. He never masturbates, or has any incestuous wish for his mother or sister like Ugwu has for Olanna and Anulika, or does he indulge in any homosexual or heterogeneous sexual relationship with anybody. In fact, he defies Freud's claim that whoever does not master the Oedipus complex falls to neurosis. Jaja neither masters the Oedipus complex nor is any sexual life attributed to him. Neither his father's violence nor the denial of the resolution of his Oedipus complex turns him into a psychopathological state. However, Kambili notices that the squalid condition in the prison and the brutalization from the prison wardens have affected him because his eyes now "Look like the bark of a palm tree, unyielding" (305). Despite his incarceration, he is not turned into a rough beast like his father. The only time he shows an underlying violent intention is when he kills a chicken at Auntie Ifeoma's house, an act which Kambili finds surprising. His action is a way of

exhibiting the type of model, which his father provides for him, a behaviour which Anna Freud claims that identification with an aggressor transforms a person from the object to agent of aggression in order to allay fear (1946). Despite his conditioning, Jaja does not have the genetic predisposition to be violent like Eugene, and therefore, cannot bring himself to kill his own father. He has a very important emotion, guilt, which checkmates any violence he may wish to unleash on his father. Despite his years of incarceration, Kambili observes that his “eyes are too full of guilt” (*Purple Hibiscus* 305). It is the same feeling of guilt which is the reason he accepts his mother’s crime and suffers her punishment. Jaja, with such an inhibitory emotion which his father lacks, can never be turned into a rough beast by his father’s manner of nurturing him and Kambili. He provides them with everything money can buy, but psychologically, politically and culturally he attempts to dispossess them. Kambili, particularly, resists her total disruption of the resolution of her Electra complex as she goes ahead and falls in love with a Catholic priest, an action her father would have seen as iconoclastic and scandalous if he knew about it. Both of them resist being culturally dislocated. They have no regrets going with Papa-Nnukwu and Auntie Ifeoma to watch masquerades at Ezi Icheke. In fact, they regret that Jaja is not initiated into the masquerade cult like Obiora, which culturally heralds his transition into manhood.

Jaja as a character with double destination willingly offers himself to be incarcerated in order to cleanse the land which his mother has fouled by the murder of the family head. By offering himself as a scapegoat to be sacrificed, he reaches the status of Jesus Christ in Papa-Nnukwu’s Traditional religion. His imprisonment is like death and he needs to ‘die’ in order to regenerate after the cleansing of the land fouled with the blood of

his father. The loss of the father, which is symbolized in the uprooting of the unwanted choking red hibiscuses, must be propitiated before Jaja, who is symbolized by the budding purple hibiscuses, can take root and blossom. After the drought of his incarceration, there is the foreshadowing of regenerating rainfall that provides hope for the devastated family. Kambili says, “Above, clouds like dyed cotton wool hang low, so low I feel I can reach out and squeeze the moisture from them. The new rains will come down soon” (307). The cleansed land is that of Papa-Nnukwu’s which Jaja oscillates to end the dyadic figuration, deviations and the concatenation of the narrative (Kristeva *Desire in Language*). Kambili, on the other hand, prefers the syncertization of the two values of Papa-Nnukwu and Eugene Achike as she recognizes the resemblances in the two religions and their values. The same way she clings to Papa-Nnukwu and his values by clinging to the shredded “pieces on the floor as if to save them” (210), the same way she sees “Papa, he reaches out to hug me, I reach out, too” (306).

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie highlights primarily the effect of colonization as a factor of nurture in fostering a systematic psychic, economic or political and the cultural dispossession of characters and groups. In *Purple Hibiscus*, she presents a new social order engendered by colonization which dislocates the individual, but in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, it primarily dislocates the group, and this leads to massacres and a civil war. For instance, as Olanna travels to the North to visit Uncle Mbaezi and Auntie Ifeoma, “it struck her once again how different it was from Lagos, from Nsukka, from her hometown Umuunnachi, how different the North as a whole was from the South” (37). This difference between the North and South, which British colonial policy strings together as a country, is not restricted to their landscape and vegetation. It also reflects in their culture

which is a source of division between them. Mohammed's mother, for instance, who is cold to Olanna warms up to her, when she discovers that she is not interested in marrying her son. In Olanna's opinion, the division cuts across religious and ethnic lines. She says to Mohammed, "I am no longer the Igbo woman you wanted to marry who would taint the lineage with infidel blood" (46). He reminds her that the religious barrier to their marriage is mutual because "Your parents felt the same way as she did" (46). She also feels that the Muslim culture regards women as inferior because, "The beggars outside the gates of Mohammed's family home did not move when they saw Olanna. They remained seated on the ground, leaning against the mud compound walls.... If she were a man, they would have called out to her and extended their begging bowls..." (43). She also finds the Muslim women's religious dress code and harem disgusting. She believes that "Mohammed's mother looked unchanged, too, with the ring in her nose and the silk scarves around her head. She was finespun in the way that used to make Olanna wonder if she wasn't uncomfortable, dressing up every day and simply sitting at home" (45). This difference in culture, particularly religions, makes the pogrom in the North and the subsequent civil war, as a result of the killing of the Sarduana of Sokoto, possible. Though Okeoma and his group of intellectuals who are Southerners and Christians may say that "Those majors are true heroes" (125) for planning and executing the coup, which leads to the death of several politicians who are mainly from the North. They erroneously do not see the death of the Sarduana as a loss of cultural symbol which has permeated the consciousness of the Northern Muslims. It is through playing on the religious sentiments of the Northern masses that the Northern politicians and soldiers are able to rally the people. To carry a holy war against the infidels is a subterfuge for the Northern leaders to regain the political and

military power which they have lost to the Igbo through a coup. It also ensures that the struggle between the two segments of the country is not a class struggle, but ethnic and religious, thereby defying Karl Marx's prediction. This is the reason the dispossessed of the North like Abdulmalik can betray the dispossessed of the South such as Uncle Mbaezi and his family to be slaughtered by the Northern dispossessed group. Abdulmalik says, "We finished the whole family. It was Allah's will" (148)! Mohammed who is an educated Northern Muslim does not see the pogrom as a jihad because he says, "Allah does not allow this.... Allah will not forgive them. Allah will not forgive the people who have made them do this. Allah will *never* forgive this" (148).

Also in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, this study finds that the economic dispossession of characters and groups is a material reality as in *Purple Hibiscus*. The economic exploitation, which is nurtured by British colonization, continues unabated after independence and secession of Biafra. The system produces rough beasts like Chief Okonji, Chief Ozobia, Professor Ezeka and Special Julius who are beneficiaries of the economic dispossession of the groups. Though there is the gruesome economic dispossession of Biafra during the civil war; yet, the economy is not the substructure as predicted by Karl Marx in his economic and political theories. In the two novels, the political and not economic system is the substructure, and the control of political power is the reason for the rebellion and murder of Eugene Achike and the Head of State in *Purple Hibiscus*, and the cause of a coup, countercoup, pogrom and war in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Economic dispossession is not the reason for the murder of Eugene Achike as he provides more than the family needs materially. Beatrice presumably poisons him in order to control the power in the family. Her father's death brings Kambili the awareness of another side of

her mother she has never seen when he is alive. Beatrice does not only shut out sympathizers to their compound, but there is a new found authority in the hitherto silent figure. Kambili says, "I had never heard Mama talk to Adamu that way; I had never even heard Mama talk to Adamu at all" (289). She shows her new status when she fires Kevin at Eugene's death. This is because she does not want to be reminded of the old brutal order under Eugene. She employs Celestine because "His voice is gentle.... That and also that he does not have a dagger-shape scar on his neck" (295). Also Papa-Nnukwu, Aunty Ifeoma and her children who are dispossessed materially do not suffer psychopathological disorders or turned into rough beasts as a result of this. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the Igbo ethnic group controls the economic power, but they are not content with that because they find the political system the substructure like Eugene Achike, who indirectly fights the military government not because of its control of the economy but its control of the political system with which it destroys his businesses and unleashes violence on the populace.

The research also finds that Marx's utopia that a revolution ushers in a socialist system, where everyone is equal and works happily is farfetched and does not materialize in the novels. The rebellion and the killing of Eugene do not bring peace to his family as Jaja is imprisoned and Beatrice suffers some mental and personality disorders. The death of the Head of State does not usher in a socialist system in *Purple Hibiscus* because Oladipupa who has been awaiting trial for eight years is not included "on the list of more than two hundred" (297) prisoners of conscience to be released by the new civilian government. The reason is obvious as he cannot afford the "bribes to judges and policemen and prison guards" (297). The situation is the same in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, because when

British colonization ends, independence does not bring reprieve to the people as other Nigerian leaders – military and civilian with their contractor-friends – replace them as the new exploiters of the country. According to Ashis Nandy, “The temptation is to equal one’s tormentors in violence and to regain one’s self-esteem as a competitor within the same system” (354). This is why the same economic exploitation, the same corruption, the same nepotism and the same class consciousness are carried over into the new order, even in Biafra. It is one of the reasons the Marxist theory has been dismissed because every revolutionary class is induced, after its victory to a new injustice, and there is the existence of a new class rule (Habermas 1968). The new and privileged class that emerges after the coup, sardonic but shrewd Kainene knows the “Big Men of the new regime” (*Half of a Yellow Sun* 134) and is able to get contracts from them. Also in Biafra where the “Igbo were said to have been a republican tribe for thousands of years” (71) the symbolism of half of a luminous sun is used to unite the people, but a privileged class like Ojukwu whom the novelist presents as a rough beast that creates a major crisis emerges. There are also other rough beasts in the war-torn territory like Professor Ezeka, Special Julius and the army officers who are beneficiaries of the social upheaval created by the war. In a sense, Ugwu, High Tech and other young soldiers who rape, beat up and confiscate people’s property and are not tried are also rough beasts who benefit from the social upheaval because of the absence of a judicial system.

This study further reveals that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie consistently shows that nature and nurture work together for the systematic psychic, economic or political and cultural dispossession of characters and groups. She persistently presents the pitiable plight of the dispossessed whose consequences of dispossession are two-fold: they develop

mental and /or personality disorder and their dispossession produces rough beasts. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene Achike and Beatrice Achike suffer both mental and personality disorders and are both presented as rough beasts, and this is traceable principally to their nature as the cause of their forms of dispossession. Jaja and Kambili despite their abnormal behaviour are not rough beasts because their psychic, cultural and political dispossession is primarily by nurture. Adichie ends the novel as she foreshadows hope and regeneration as the character with double destination, Jaja, will soon be released to assume the control of a family which will be devoid of violence.

However, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the primary cause of psychic, economic/political and cultural dispossession of characters like Kainene, Olanna, Odenigbo and Richard is because of their environment, and because by their nature they are not violent-prone, they are not turned into rough beasts. They are also highly educated and their education provides them with the tool to meander through the pogrom and war. This is not the case with Ugwu, High Tech and other young soldiers who gang-rape a bar girl like the Hausa soldiers, who also rape Anulika at Opi. These are presented as rough beasts whose oedipalization processes are interrupted by the war, and the state of anarchy, which exists in a war situation. Their low level of education is also not helpful to them. The dispossessed groups in *Purple Hibiscus* like the undergraduates who riot against the Sole Administrator's high-handedness are not turned into rough beasts who unleash violence on others unlike the Northern mob that slaughter their victims. As the war ends, there is no prospect of hope and regeneration for the country and its people as Adichie foreshadows an impending war as all the forms of dispossession which cause the mayhem still exist. Richard loses Kainene his symbol of fearlessness, freedom and the liberation of Biafra and

its people. Like Biafra, he is integrated into the country but the trauma of Kainene's loss is a permanent scar he has to live with throughout his life.

The scope of this work is limited to the study of the dispossessed in Adichie's two literary texts. The different causes, forms and consequences of their dispossession are also explored. There is the limitation of library and internet materials during the collection and collation of data for this research. However, its scope may be expanded by future researchers, who may wish to examine the existence of dispossessed characters in other literary texts – both African and foreign ones – using the concept of dispossession. They may also undertake a critical investigation into the dispossessed characters' use of Freud's defence mechanisms in their attempt to avoid mental and personality disorders or the treatment of abnormal disorders in Adichie's fiction may also be studied. The thesis may also be expanded into a legal cum literary discourse in which the culpability or otherwise of the actions and omissions of dispossessed characters and groups may be examined. There may also be a comparative study of the rough beasts such as Eugene Achike and Beatrice Achike in *Purple Hibiscus* and some other African or foreign novels.

We finally submit that what we have just done in this research is simply to use a systematic theoretical framework for the study of the dispossessed in Adichie's fiction. We hope it will ultimately open up a debate on another method of looking at the concept of dispossession, which exists in *every* novel and is a source of conflict in characters, and between characters. There are lacunas which may be filled up by other researchers' future works as an alternative way of literary criticism, apart from the model provided by traditional criticism.

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