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**Post-Colonial Practice in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus***

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**Abstract**

The fact that colonialism has come and gone in Africa, does not mean that it has taken along with it all the draconian effects it has on the continent of Africa. Therefore, African writers in order for them to get out of a gridlock situation that colonialism has placed on the continent of Africa, have decided to look for means and ways towards a recuperation and re-affirmation of a past that was distorted by such effects. One of such ways is using the lens of post-colonialism to look inwards and make possible use of the things that identify them as Africans especially, in their literary productions. Thus, post-colonialism is a positive means of communicating to the West, and letting them understand that no culture should be undermined on the basis of racial divide. The textual analysis of this study is based on the post-colonial discourse parameters of appropriation, abrogation, untranslated words, hybridity and affiliation. The paper concludes therefore, that it is only when African people's culture and identity are respected by especially those who are non-Africans, that there can be true termination of the colonial process in African continent, as this is the main gamut of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's writing in *Purple Hibiscus*.

### Introduction

The encounter that Africa has had with the West through the process of colonisation, has brought about a co-existence that is hinged on a master-servant relationship. The African people and their cultures are permanently considered during and after colonisation as being comparatively inferior before western classics and ideologies. This has given rise to a situation where everything about the West is superior, and that about Africa, is inferior, and thus, reducing everything about Africa, including her technology to what is termed in the western parlance as ‘uncivilised’. In effect, being that anything that comes out of Africa is inferior, barbaric and uncivilized, there has been over the years a total over dependence of African nations on the West for their survival.

In order to curtail this dependency posture of African nations, African writers have in their various literary works taken their time to produce works that would bring out the true image of Africa, and that would at the same time, make Africans to begin to appreciate the things that make them Africans, thereby, reducing the dependency ratio on the West. Again, such works help in projecting to the West that Africans, before the process of colonisation had their cultures and identity in vogue, and that they did not hear of civilisation for the first time, from the colonialists.

Thus, as a way of resurrecting their culture and identity, African post-colonial writers have been having and are still having the herculean task of incorporating into their literary works discourse elements that are hinged on language and the cultural traditions of the African people in order that they can really be seen as projecting true African spirit and environment, which in effect, make such works to be complete by devoid of western characteristics. It is in the light of this that Jonathan Culler writes that:

The impetus and ideology of postcolonial theory develop through the conscious attempt by the colonies to first of all understand the tangled Eurocentric misconceptions, misrepresentation and the misappropriation of the colonies resulting in questioning and re-writing historical wrongs (207).

In view of the above, Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, in which the true traditional African society is portrayed through a firm representation and presentation by the author, as having a level of its civilisation with all the systems; of economy, governance, judiciary, and so on, well established, is always deemed a quintessence of post-colonial literature, since it is an attempt at representation, re-appropriation, and reconception of the colonised. Noting the level of negative effects of colonialism on the colonised and the mandate of post-colonial writers, Culler states, “[i]t is in essence, empire writing back to refute the historic and multi-layered contemporary effacement

of Europe capitalist tendencies, disguising and regulating not only the economy but culture indigenous to the colonies” (207-8). Thus, it is in being able to carry out this mission of self-recovery that post-colonial African writers in general and Nigerian writers in particular have hinged their writings on the theory of post-colonialism.

### **Post-Colonialism Conceptualised**

Post-colonialism is the main gamut of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s writing. Quite a number of the exponents of post-colonial theory have upheld it, such as Christie Fox, who states, thus:

The discourses of post-colonial era also recorded the negative impact of global spread of cultural disinformation, inter-cultural conflict, mass dislocation through migration, and the degradation of living conditions on this planet. Post-colonialism represents both triumph and despair, a new voice and some new silencing (336).

This paper admits that Fox, in the instance above, advocates a rejection of global tendencies that possibly has brought along with it, capitalistic characteristics that are quite repressive and oppressive on the part of the colonised people. Thus, globalisation is totally rejected in preference for indigenous solutions for indigenous problems.

On his part, Christopher O’Reilly sees post-colonialism in the light below:

Internal conflict has been one legacy of colonialism, particularly in countries such as India or Nigeria where traditionally isolated or conflicting groups were brought within national boundaries created by colonialists. This is another context which informs the writing of post-colonial authors: the problems faced by independent countries and the lack of security and certainty in such a world. On one level, post-colonial literature is an expression of these crises as well as a testimony to those who resist them (6).

From O’Reilly’s perspective of what the theory connotes, this paper cannot help but agree that post-colonialism seeks to redress the colonised on the effects of colonialism on the one hand. Thus, post-colonialism takes on the misconceptions and misrepresentations of the colonised terrain, as if to compensate for them. O’Reilly’s viewpoint below directly counters the notion that post-colonialism is a regional tenet championed by western academics, and migrant indigenes of formerly colonised nation:

First and foremost, post-colonial writing is an international genre. It would be a mistake to imply that all authors can be neatly tied, either culturally or personally, to their countries of origin. Indeed, a sense of

origin or belonging is often conspicuously absent. Furthermore, the setting and scope of much post-colonial writing is international rather than local in focus (10).

Thus, a writer is free to dwell on a people and their problems in the contemporary post-colonial world without necessarily being part and parcel of the community. Again, post-colonial literature is referred to as an “international genre” because it is a medium with which the West can easily be reached and applied to. A classic example of this sort of phenomenon is Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* as a response to Joyce Cary’s *Mister Johnson* (1939) and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Post –colonial writers of African descent feel that Africa has been the victim of denial and contempt, and as such the affirmation of its culture and its self-definition has been particularly uppermost in their works. This is the rationale for the works of Ayi Kwei Armah of Ghana; Ngugi wa Thiong’o of Kenya; and Aisa Djébar of Algeria.

Another exponent who takes the discussion on post-colonialism a step further is Robert Young. In his seminal and lucid expression of the theory of post-colonialism, Young posits that:

[p]ost-colonialism, therefore, begins from its own counter knowledge, and from the diversity of its cultural experiences, and starts from the premise that those in the West, particularly, both within and outside the academy, should relinquish their monopoly on knowledge, and take other knowledge, other perspectives, as seriously as those of the West (15).

This paper registers that Young in the above, asserts the fact that knowledge is an all-encompassing phenomenon, and as such, no knowledge should be seen as being inferior especially when such is considered on the basis of its geographical and political affiliation. The big divide or the binary between the West and the rest of the world, or the coloniser and the colonised should not be there. It further demonstrates the fact that all knowledge must be respected and treated as such irrespective of whether they are emanating from the West or the other. It is in this same vein that Young concludes that “it is about learning to challenge and think outside the norms of western assumptions” (15). In this wise, post-colonialism becomes a voice that helps in the vindication of the voiceless who are better categorised as the once colonised people of the world.

In a discussion that also centres on post-colonialism Rafey Habib observes that the history of post-colonialism is the history of colonialism (imperialism). Habib holds that post-colonialism is “concerned with the economic, cultural and psychological effect of imperialism and emancipation from colonial rule” (270). This, therefore,

means that post-colonialism as a literary theory is tied to imperialism, and its history is the history of the latter. Habib writes that:

[b]etween 1492 and the mid eighteenth century, Spain and Portugal, England, France, and the Netherlands established colonies and empires in the Americas, the East Indies, and India --- By the end of nineteenth century, more than one-fifth of the land area and a quarter of its population had been brought under the British empire --- The next largest colonial power was France, whose possessions included Algeria, French West Africa, Equatorial Africa, and Indochina --- In 1885 Belgium established the Belgian Congo in the heart of Africa, a colonization whose horrors were expressed in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) --- (270).

Habib excerpt above is a brief account of the massive colonialism that ensued in eighteenth century and which subsequently led to the perceptions of the colonised as a people without culture but as savages living without social rules and orders. And as Habib further captures that “after World War II --- [there] was a struggle involving both the countries [which have been under colonial power] --- as well as a conflict between America and the communist Soviet Union which led to the independence of many of the colonized people” (271). A point to note here is that Habib's assertion seems to position post-colonialism as only concerned with former western colonies. This contradicts his further declaration that post-colonialism expands further than the colonised world to even include the colonising world, thus:

Postcolonial discourse potentially embraces and is intimately linked with a broad range of dialogue within the colonizing powers, addressing various forms of “internal colonization” as treated by minority studies of various kinds, such as African –American, Native American, Latin American and Women's Studies (272).

By this, post-colonialism does not only centre on the mainstream colonialism and its effects but also on modern forms of colonialism like “internal colonialism” and “neo-colonialism”. By implication, post-colonialism may be said to begin with reference to mainstream colonialism but extends beyond it.

### **Post-Colonial Discourse Parameters Discussed**

For a clear focus, this paper has selected the following discourse elements or parameters of post-colonialism for the analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

### **Appropriation**

From the days of colonialism to the present, the imperialist critics have enshrined the English Language as the legitimate tool for writing literature. Equally, the canons of western literary criticism were recognised as standard for assessing literature. This thinking has given rise to a strong hegemonic influence of English over other languages, especially the indigenous African languages. In view of the above scenario, writers who are of African descent deem it necessary to be out of this cultural gridlock as they resort to the idea of appropriation in their literary productions. Appropriation according to Ashcroft et al, is “the process by which the English Language is taken and made to bear the burden of one’s own cultural experiences; or “--- to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own” (38). Chinua Achebe in subscribing to this view, asserts that: “I feel the English Language will be able to carry the weight of the African experiences, it had to be new English, still in communion with ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings” (23).

In a discussion that is centered on the context of appropriation, W. D. Ashcroft writes that:

--- such uses of language are metonymic. They are put for a certain cultural experience which they cannot hope to reproduce but whose difference is at least validated in the new situation. To be precise the language bears a synecdoche relationship with the original culture which stands for the whole (6).

Thus, the texture, the syntactic arrangement of words, the rhythm, the mode of the English variant are determined by the cultural experience of the writer’s own milieu, and as such, they bring the culture into the adopted language without overwhelming the experience of a people the text constructs and produces.

### **Abrogation**

The technique of abrogation is totally different from that of appropriation. Abrogation is therefore, the total denial of the supremacy of English as a language for the expression of any form of communication (Ashcroft 38). Ashcroft Griffiths and Tiffin state that abrogation “refers to the rejection by post-colonial writers of a narrative concept of ‘correct’ or ‘standard’ English used by certain classes or groups, and of the corresponding concepts of inferior ‘dialects’ or marginal variants” (5).

This view suggests a total avoidance of Standard English in preference for a variety of English that is different from that of the coloniser. Thus, the use of English based pidgin, for instance, by Nigerian writers in general and post-colonial Nigerian writers in particular, is indeed a form of language abrogation. To Ashcroft et al, it “is

an important political stance, whether articulated or not, and even whether conscious or not, from which the actual appropriation of language can take place” (5).

### **Untranslated Words: Cultural Nationalism**

In most texts, especially African texts, some indigenous words are used without any possible translation of them. This is quite a deliberate act that helps in the injection of African cultural trappings from the various indigenous languages into such works, and thereby, downplaying the relevance of English Language. This technique can be said to mean that African writers who engage in this sort of practice, do it as a way of proclaiming their cultural independence. It is in the light of this that Bill Ashcroft states that “the technique of the selection of lexical fidelity which leaves some words untranslated in the text is a more widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness” (64). It is characteristic of all post-colonial writers not to gloss over words in their literary productions. In conforming to this praxis, Adichie uses words without having to translate them. Her refusal to gloss over the use of certain words reflects a true sense of cultural distinctiveness and nationalism. This situation therefore, compels the reader to engage himself/herself, even if sub-consciously, with the cultural milieu in which the words have meaning.

W. D. Ashcroft, in the context of the use of untranslated words/phrases or even a complete expression, explains why post-colonial literary writers use such to effect communicative potency in their literary works. He feels strongly that this sort of attitude by post-colonial writers makes their works to have a distinctive feature that truly gives them authenticity as African texts. Thus, he corroborates this reasoning in the following expression in these words:

One of the most interesting features of post-colonial literature is that kind of writing which is informed by the linguistic principles of a first language or an English moulding itself out of a peculiar (post-colonial) relationship to place. This is an ‘overlap’ of language which many writers propose as the distinguishing feature of post-colonial literature. This use of language is something for which the writer usually takes as evidence of both his ingenuity and his ethnographic function of an insertion of the ‘truth’ of culture into the text by a process of metaphoric embodiment (4)

From the above, it is correct to say that the use of untranslated words or lexical items in literary texts creates a strong cultural political undertone. This is so because the first language from which the untranslated words or expression are inserted into the English language embodies a people’s socio-cultural and political image; as such, whatever is transferred into the second language becomes the signifier of the identity of the people. This accounts for why W. D. Ashcroft concludes on the use of

untranslated words that “this unbridged and redolent gulf of silence remains the energizing centre of post-colonial writing. It is undiluted and perfect because it exists beyond language, the ultimate signifier of difference” (5). The infusion of untranslated expressions permanently creates a cultural gulf in the text that lends credence to the uniqueness of a people whose culture is expressed through the use of the lexical items from the mother tongue.

### **Hybridity**

According to John McLeod, “[r]ethinking conventional modes of reading is fundamental to post-colonialism” (34). This calls for a situation that is known as hybridity. According to Ashcroft et al,

[h]ybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural ‘exchange’ --- By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the colonised and the colonizer, it has been regarded as a replicating assimilationist policies by masking or ‘whitewashing’ cultural differences (119).

The study is in agreement with the above as hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture – the blending of identities and cultures. Contextually therefore, it involves the flow and interaction of characters, cultures and mores.

### **Affiliation**

Affiliation is one technique that allows room for the post-colonial writers to have an identification with the indigenous socio-political value system and the social realities of their time and space, in their literary works. This allows the independent reading of texts, that is, without having to fish out parallel trends with for instance, western ‘classics’ with little or no respect for their cultural milieu.

In a discussion that dwells on affiliation, Chinua Achebe states that:

--- we have sometimes been informed by the West and its local zealots that the African novels we write are not novels at all because they do not quite fit the specifications of that literary form which came into being at a particular time in response to the individual freedom set off by the decay of feudal Europe and rise of capitalism. This form, we are told, was designed to explore individual rather than social predicaments (34).

The above excerpt is one good example of an (old, filiative) attitude to the African novel, which has necessitated the need for affiliation in African novels. In line with Achebe’s reasoning for the need of affiliation in African novels, Robert Fraser, on his part goes to the extent of questioning whether “novel”, (from the French *nouvel*),



is still a valid name for a wide panorama of full – length fiction. “The now understanding of what fiction is and might become has shifted the meaning of the novel as a product of a particular parochial history, towards recognition of that which its name etymologically implies: a form that is endlessly novel, continually inventing itself a new” (6-7).

### **Synopsis of the Novel**

The text centres mainly on the family of Mr. Achike, Kambili’s father. The life of Kambili and her sibling under their father’s high-handedness is portrayed in detail. Mr. Achike, an extremely conservative Catholic, business man and newspapers publisher, permits both children only the pastimes of studying, bible reading, and prayer. His wife too, has no freedom. In such a gridlock Mrs Achike poisons her husband’s tea and he dies. A sense of euphoria sweeps through the household, despite that Jaja is arrested and detained, having declared that he commits the crime, in order to exonerate his mother. Peace returns to the house after the death of Mr. Achike.

Before the death of Mr. Achike, a military coup occurs and Kambili and her brother, Jaja, get the chance to live with Auntie Ifeoma in Nsukka in a house filled with the hustle and bustle of life. Kambili falls in love with a young priest, Father Amadi. These experiences lift her out of the bondage into the world of love and sense of self, where she questions her father’s strict principles.

### **Polemic Analysis**

As stated earlier in the abstract of this study, the analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* will be based on the post-colonial discourse parameters.

### **Appropriation**

In order to maintain a cultural stance, the very first instance of Adichie’s use of appropriation, is when she captures the feeling of a village woman or a community wife about Jaja during Christmas trip to the village: “if we did not have the same blood in our veins, I would sell you my daughter” (71). Here, the selling of daughter appears as though “daughter” is a commodity that can be sold and bought literally. It is simply an African way of saying that one wishes to give his or her daughter out in marriage. Again, Adichie uses language to express her African experience as the expression below captures this sort of scenario:

The Mmuo making its way down the road was surrounded by a few elderly men who rang a shrill bell as the Mmuo walked. Its mask was a real, grimacing human skull with sunken eye sockets. A squirming tortoise was tied to its forehead. A snake and three dead chickens hung from its grass-covered body, swinging as the Mmuo walked. The

crowds near the road moved back quickly. Fearfully. A woman turned and dashed into nearby compounds (86).

Considering the foregoing as it concerns the appearance of the Mmuo spirit, there is of course a feeling that its appearance does not have anything to do with the western culture, though expressed through the medium of English. The appearance simply gives a clue in a more subtle manner, on the practice of Igbo cultural tradition, hence, its being devoid of Europeanised structural narration. Again, the whole of the scenario above suggests that it is only within the Igbo cosmology that this sort of experience can be felt, hence, its being devoid of western characteristics.

There is also the use of appropriation in Papa Nnukwu's language that, "that is our agwonatumbe. It is the most powerful Mmuo in our parts, and all the neighbouring villages fear Abba because of it. At last year Aro Festival, agwonatumbe raised a staff and all the other Mmuo spirit, turned and ran!" (86). Here, Adichie gives a clue on how Mmuo spirits are categorised according to hierarchy among the Igbo people. Agwonatumbe gains reverence among the people and in the world of spirits as its presence gives the people the symbol of power and authority, thus, making the people and other Mmuo stand awe of its sacredness.

### **Abrogation**

The first instance where Adichie uses abrogation is when Auntie Ifeoma announces, "Eugene, our father has fallen asleep" (186). In yet another instance Kambili wakes up in the morning in Abba where the family has gone for Christmas and she finds people greeting one another in this manner, "Gudu morni. Have you woken up, eh? Did you rise well?" (58). This mode of greeting is characteristic of non-literate Igbo folks. On the arrival of Mr. Achike and family in Abba, they are welcomed by little children who have been trailing their cars all along, and who greet Mr. Achike, thus: "Omelara! Good afun, Sah" (55). He returns their greeting and then gives them ten naira each and in appreciation, the children say, "Tank Sah" (55). Abrogation is further seen in the response of some supposed university security men, in response to a question as to who they are. They answer, "look at this yeye woman oh! I said we are from special security unit!" (225). Obiora, Auntie Ifeoma's son, retorts, "how you go just come enter like this? Wetin be dis? (225).

The inscriptions on two of the sign boards in Ogige market in Nsukka where Kambili goes to plait her hair, which read; "MAMA CHINEDU SPECIALIST HAIR STYLIST and MAMA BOMBOY INTERNATIONAL HAIR", is yet another instance of Adichie's use of abrogation. In a discussion between Kambili and Mama Joe, the hair stylist, Mama Joe is surprised that father Amadi is a priest: she says, "Did you say he is fada?" (232).

### Untranslated Words: Cultural Nationalism

In the use of untranslated words, Adichie takes the readers to a scenario where she depicts how Mrs Eugene takes delight in preparing the family's preferred soup of "Ofensala" (14) prepared from vegetable leaves. Also, when Kambili coughs much during meal time, her parents sympathise with her by saying "Ozugo" (14) (It is alright). In Mrs. Achike Eugene's complaint of not having sons in her marriage, she submits, "They even said somebody had tied my womb with 'ogwu' (20) (Talisman). The use of words "Ofensala", "Ozugo" and "Ogwu" in the above explanations helps to register a sense of Africanness in the narration. This constitutes a cultural point: that the indigenous language is rich in its own right. Usages of untranslated words by Adichie include the following: "Akamu" (41) (pap) usually made from maize or corn, "Ngwongwo" (32) (Innard), such as liver, lungs, intestine used to prepare a Nigerian appetizer delicacy known as "pepper soup". "Ikuku" (47) (Beeze), "Agidi" (54) (corn bread) eaten with stew. "Okwia?" (73) (Is that it?), "Igbakrismas" (77) (celebrating Christmas), "Ojoka" (95) (Toobad), "Ube" (131) (Igbo pear), "Amarom" (132) (I don't know), "Eziokwu" (14) (True talk), "Fufu" (160) (An Igbo delicacy prepared from yam or cassava), "Igasikwa" (161) (Do not go), "Ndo" (183) (Sorry), "Oburia" (217) (Not it), "Gwakenem" (217) (Tell me), "Abada" (218) (Loin cloth) and "Ugu" (258) (A particular specie of leave that is edible).

### Hybridity

Adichie demonstrates hybridisation regarding the conflicting working of traditional religion in the manner she presents the traditional African religion as having an edge over Christianity in the mind of Mrs. Achike, thus:

She was used to his gentle jibes about her social-services faith and she would have responded to say that she was not even sure she believed in a Christian God that could not be seen. But now, with a helpless human being lying in the cot, one so dependent on others that her very existence had to be proof of a higher goodness, things have changed. (253).

Linda Yohannes discusses hybridity in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* in the following words:

In the book, we see an admission of Christianity as having come as part of the colonization mission but its overarching depiction in the novel is not as a foreign and alien religion as it is in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. In Adichie's generation of writing, Christianity (Catholicism) has obviously evolved and changed into a less foreign culture and because its indigenization has lapsed history, it is therefore nearing the

stage of seeming and being depicted as ‘organic’ in the Nigerian society (48).

Adichie introduces a new mode of Christian religion in her presentation which makes hers different from Achebe’s, especially in his *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo is not able to blend with the new religion. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie not only makes a case for the new religion but also creates a character in person of Mr. Achike, who indulges in the Christianity religion. The essence of this type of depiction is to present a situation where Christianity though foreign has become part and parcel of the lives of Nigerians. Religion is thus presented symbolically as a culture and a way of life of a people. It is no longer seen as a phenomenon that has come to put a knife on the things that have kept Africans together, thereby making them fall apart as Achebe presents. The impetus of the story is seen in Kambili’s character as she negotiates between traditionalism and modernism in the text. She is truly a hybrid personality in the narration.

Again, even the daily wears of characters in the text, signal an element of hybridity, as shown in the following excerpt from the Aro festival:

[w]hen we got to Eze Icheke cars lined the road almost bumper to bumper. The crowd that pressed around the cars were so densed that there was no space between people and they blended into one another, wrappers blended into T-shirts, trousers into skirts, dresses into shirts. Auntie Ifeoma finally found a spot and eased the station wagon in (85).

People, wrappers, T-shirts, and skirts blending into one another as Adichie puts it, shows the blending of two cultures, the white and the indigenous. In blending these items in one locus, Adichie achieves hybridisation. A car for instance, represents western culture. An Mmuo is a deity that occupies a central position in Igbo cosmology and culture. For Adichie to state that “often a long line of cars waited for an Mmuo to walk past so they could drive on” (85), shows a defence for Igbo culture. Brenda Cooper expresses the efficacy of the catholic figurines as guardians and shows how Adichie presents this in a hybridised manner in the text:

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. The figurines, in other words, are mamas protecting spirits, albeit hybridised in African catholic home. The étagéré was her shrine, the spirits of old have resurged. Papa has desecrated the sacred space and he will be punished (5).

Undoubtedly, Cooper here gives us a sound view of hybridity in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, as the above clearly signifies Adichie’s intention of showing the

importance of African culture in the face of the European. This possibly is the more reason why Papa is depicted in the novel as a caricature of Christian faith, and particularly, Catholicism. The novel rejects in totality the ideas of Father Benedict, a white catholic priest. This rejection translates into a rejection of foreign cultural incursion into the African cultural terrain. His brand of Catholicism brainwashes Papa and makes him dress in borrowed clothes.

Yet another instance of Adichie upholding the virtue of hybridisation is where she presents Auntie Ifeoma as a hybrid persona. Despite that Ifeoma is schooled in the West, she does not forget her tradition and culture as a true Igbo woman. Her cuisine affords Kambili the opportunity to learn more of her culture during her visit to Auntie Ifeoma. Most of the local recipes are learnt during her stay at Nsukka. Adichie shows Auntie Ifeoma's cooking ability by describing how she "sat on a low stool, pulling the brown skin off hot cocoyams, throwing the sticky, rounded tubers in the wooden mortar and stopping to cool her hands in a bowl of cold water" (163).

Kambili herself is a hybrid character in the text as pointed out by Isabella Akinseye, "Kambili gives the reader an insight into the postcolonial hybrid. In the beginning, she accepts everything her father teaches her but after Nsukka where she is exposed to a different culture and way of thinking, she begins to question her father's conviction and methods" (3).

Kambili's visit to Nsukka creates an opening for her to demonstrate a consciousness for the culture that gives her people their own identity. She becomes acquainted with the way of life of her people, especially in terms of her having first time experience in the preparation of local food recipe such orah soup in Auntie Ifeoma's home. Being that she is a hybrid character, Kambili is seen coping with the ideals of the church and cultural tradition alike while at Nsukka.

### **Affiliation**

Through the process of affiliation, Adichie depicts African indigenous cultural meal, especially as it is characteristic of the Igbo people of the Eastern part of Nigeria. In this sort of presentation she writes:

Lunch was fufu and onugbu soup. The fufu was smooth and fluffy. Sisi made it well; she pounded the yam energetically, adding drops of water into the mortar, her cheeks contracting with the thump-thump-thump of the pestle. The soup was thick with Chunks of boiled beef and dried fish and dark green onugbu leaves. We ate silently. I molded my fufu into small balls with my fingers, dipped it in the soup, making sure to scoop up fish Chunks, and then brought it into my mouth (11).

Again, through affiliation, Adichie makes bold to comment on Nigeria's socio-political system, especially as it concerns stealing of public fund by politicians, and lodging of such money into foreign bank accounts to the detriment of the generality of the masses. This she does in the following expression:

Of course, Papa told us, the politicians were corrupt, and the standard had written many stories about the cabinet ministers who stashed money into foreign bank accounts, money for paying teachers' salaries and building roads. But what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was a renewed democracy. Renewed Democracy (24-25).

Adichie also systematically presents before her readers, the African way of communal living especially during the period of Christmas as against what obtains in the western world. In doing this, she shows how good it is to share with one another, and possibly let the downtrodden of the society take the remnants of food items, back to their various homes. This she does in the following words:

They wanted Mama to rest, they said, after the stress of the city. And every year they took the leftovers – the fat pieces of meat, the rice and beans, the bottles of soft drinks and maltina and beer – home with them afterwards. We were always prepared to feed the whole village at Christmas, always prepared so that none of the people who came in would leave without eating and drinking to what Papa called reasonable level of satisfaction (56).

At the point Kambili and Jaja visit their grandfather in his compound, and as he is eating, one witnesses a situation where Papa Nnukwu pays reverence to Ani the god of the land, as Adichie writes, "I watched him, the smile on his face, the easy way he threw the molded morsel out towards the garden, where parched herbs swayed in the light breeze, asking Ani, the god of the land to eat with him" this scenario is characteristic of Africans as a way to appease the gods and ancestors of the land, for them to mediate for the members of the community so that development and goodness of such a community can be experienced.

Aside Christianity religion, Africans have their own way of offering prayers and giving reverence to their creator. This is more of an African tradition than the West. During Kambili's visit to grandfather's house, Papa Nnukwu, Adichie through the process of affiliation takes the reader through this highly valued African tradition as Papa Nnukwu conducts a prayer meant to appease the gods of the land. In this wise, Adichie writes:

Chineke! I thank you for this new morning! I thank you for the sun that rises. Chineke! I have killed no one, I have taken no one's land, I have

not committed adultery. Chineke! I have wished others well, I have helped those who have nothing with the little that my hands can spare. Chineke! Bless me. Let me find enough to fill my stomach. Bless my daughter Ifeoma. Chineke! Bless my son, Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him. Chineke! Bless the children of my children. Let your eyes follow them away from evil and towards good. Chineke! Those who wish others well, keep them well. Those who wish others ill, keep them ill. (167)

### Conclusion

The paper succeeds in depicting the fact that no amount of western cultural influence would make a Nigerian in general and an Igbo person in particular, forget their origin and values. This point is unequivocally made through the portrayal of Auntie Ifeoma and Kambili in the text, who are unchangeable despite their western cultural influence and schooling. Adichie's use of these two characters underscores the fact that cultures across the globe can be interchangeable in the globalised world, which in effect can bring about a world that would be devoid of discrimination and sentiment of whatever form. On the aspect of language, the paper registers a situation that though narrated through the medium of English, language is a veritable means through which a people's socio-economic and cultural life can properly be expressed, thus, identifying that which forms the gamut of their experiences, culture and tradition.

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