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Subalternity and Resistance: Examining Women's Experiences in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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Abstract

The portrayal of women in formerly colonized nations is a topic covered by postcolonial feminist theory. In this respect, this study examines how colonialism influenced the lives of women in the third world who endure "double colonization" based on both race and gender. This study uses a postcolonial feminist framework to uncover the themes of female voice and subalternity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. This study aims to explore how Adichie portrays female subalternity and resistance in Purple Hibiscus. Employing the concept of subaltern, this study also examines how societal and familial structures marginalize women's experiences and inhibit their self-expression. Through a close reading of the text, this study highlights the characters' struggles and journeys toward empowerment, which illustrates the complexities of female identity in a patriarchal society within the contexts of postcolonial Nigeria. Focusing on the experiences of Kambili, Beatrice (Kambili's mother), and Aunty Ifeoma, this study reveals the multifaceted nature of female resistance within the oppressive system.

Keywords: Feminism; Postcolonialism; Postcolonial Feminism; Subaltern; Resistance

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INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of women in formerly colonized nations is emphasized by postcolonial theory (Tyagi, 2014, p. 45). It focuses on how colonial discourse constructs gender inequality and how women are portrayed in postcolonial and anticolonial discourses (Al-wazedi, 2020, p. 155). Postcolonial feminism deals with the social, political, and economic marginalization of third-world women, which has been overlooked and silenced by mainstream feminism. Postcolonial feminist theory serves as an important framework for understanding the relationship between colonial history and the construction of gender identities. The controversial figure of the 'third-world woman' is where postcolonial and feminist theory most significantly collide and collaborate (Gandhi, 2019, p. 83). This theoretical lens focuses on the experience of women who navigate the dual legacies of both colonial oppression and patriarchal domination.

This study explores how colonial power and patriarchal society impact the women's voice as portrayed in *Purple Hibiscus*. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili Achike, a 15-year-old girl, lives under her father Eugene Achike's harsh control. During Nigeria's unstable political climate, the novel examines issues of family, religion, and the pursuit of individual freedom. Kambili's family is successful and devoutly Catholic. Eugene Achike is a wealthy businessman and a faithful Catholic who runs a local business. However, behind this wealthy family lies a family marked by fear and abuse. Eugene's strict beliefs in his interpretation of Catholicism lead him to discipline Beatrice and their kids, Kambili and Jaja. They often worry about Eugene's erratic anger, which stems from his conviction that he is protecting their family from immorality (sin) (Dube, 2018, p. 223).

One time, Kambili and Jaja are sent to Nsukka to live with Ifeoma, another part of Nigeria. In Nsukka, they encounter an alternative lifestyle that is full of autonomy and emotional freedom. Aunty Ifeoma's household is different from their own, which allows Kambili and Jaja to explore their identities and express themselves freely. As Kambili begins to understand the importance of individuality, she struggles with her

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feelings about her father. Jaja initially follows Kambili's lead, which makes him more rebellious. He challenges their father's authority, which leads to a rift in Achike's family. The tension between them escalates when Eugene discovers his children's growing independence, leading to a tragic confrontation with transformative consequences. The issue of women's voices is depicted powerfully in *Purple Hibiscus*, highlighting the intricate connection between gender and colonial legacies and showing how the experiences of women are connected to colonial power.

Postcolonial African novels often portray gender roles and identities through complex and multifaceted lenses. It reflects the traditional norms and evolving societal dynamics. The common portrayal is women as central characters in the struggle for societal justice and equality by challenging patriarchal structures. This portrayal aligns with reader perceptions that increasing narratives of female empowerment and resilience, like the popularity of feminist literature in countries like Nigeria and Kenya (Bizimungu, 2024, p. 15). The way women are portrayed is often careless and discriminatory. According to Chukukere, male authors who study women also help to maintain a skewed and institutionalized perception of female heroism in African fiction (Fonchingong, 2006, p. 136; Gloria, 1995).

The critical discourses of feminism and postcolonialism have enhanced our comprehension and capacity for explanation of international relations. According to Parashar, these two theoretical stances have become far more prevalent over the last 20 years in acknowledging the difference and unpredictable nature of global politics and social life (Parashar, 2016, p. 371). To elevate knowledge from the edges, both advocate for subversion and transformation in the social, cultural, and political spheres. As Leela Gandhi notes, postcolonialism's engagement with feminism is what drives it to generate a more critical and introspective explanation of cultural nationalism. Additionally, postcolonialism gives feminism the conceptual instruments it needs to identify different oppressive contexts and disprove universalisms about the gendered realities of men and women (Gandhi, 2019, p. 88).

Among the first theorists to link feminism and postcolonial theory was Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak challenges the idea that the postcolonial subject is male as a continuation of imperial patriarchal dominance (Spivak, 1994, p. 32). Historically, postcolonial discourse has ignored modes of resistance in which women tried to subvert imperial authority, and it has been presumed that the colonial subject is male. A lot of postcolonial writing that questions colonialism is written from a male point of view. As colonial or postcolonial subjects, women were excluded (Jones, 2011, p. 35).

According to Spivak, 'subaltern' is a group of people that has been marginalized by the Western power system domination, caused by physical occupation of colonialism, economic, and cultural imperialism (Spivak, 1994; Jones, 2011, p. 33). Spivak pushed women's experiences into the postcolonial spotlight by concentrating on the subaltern woman as the topic of her work. Her recognition of oppressed women as historical subjects marks a significant shift in the colonial legacy and postcolonial theory literature, which was formerly dominated by men. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is seen as both a call for the acknowledgement of subaltern (women) agency and an acknowledgement of its suppression (Ambesange, 2021, p. 341).

The subject of feminist theory is the white woman, whereas postcolonial theory posits a universal male subject. There was an idea of universal womanhood in Western liberal feminism. This movement asserted that it was speaking for all women and that patriarchal structures of privilege and power were universally unacceptable (Jones, 2011, p. 34). It shows a lack of awareness of one's context and place in the colonial hierarchy of humankind to make the case for a shared gendered or racial identity as the basis for a universal experience. The lives of the majority of women worldwide are still influenced by colonial history and exploitation. The colonial imprint on education still influences gender construction and representation.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* has garnered scholarly attention, particularly within postcolonial frameworks. Mule and Morve (2020) used an ecocritical and postcolonial lens to analyze *Purple Hibiscus*. They highlight how the text reflects the environmental degradation and socio-political instability in Nigeria. They argue that Adichie brings these themes into her narrative to demonstrate the connections between the environment and the characters' experiences (Mule & Morve, 2020). Similarly, Dick (2018) investigates the environment and characters. The analysis reveals how the natural world serves as a backdrop to the individual and political struggles depicted in the novel (Dick, 2018).

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In the same line, Gogo (2023) draws a line between *Purple Hibiscus* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The analysis utilizes first-wave ecocriticism to analyze the environmental implications of both texts (Gogo, 2023). Furthermore, Gebreyohannes and David (2022) provide an ecofeminist reading of *Purple Hibiscus*, exploring the relationship between women and nature. They argued that Adichie's portrayal of female characters is deeply connected with the environment, which suggests that ecological and feminist concerns are linked in her work (Gebreyohannes & David, 2022). Davis (2020) also contributes to this discourse by narrating human ecology in *Purple Hibiscus*. They emphasize in which way characters interact with their environment as well as how these interactions reflect broader socio-political realities (Davis, 2020).

Another study has been done by Seoda and Sharma (2020), who examine the "Poetics of Self" in *Purple Hibiscus* and posit the novel as a postcolonial Bildungsroman. The analysis focuses on Kambili's character development as a reflection of societal changes (Seoda & Sharma, 2023). Rather (2023) further contributes to the discourse by conducting a postcolonial inquiry in *Purple Hibiscus*. The analysis explores how colonial legacies affect familial dynamics and gender roles. The analysis highlights the difficulties of women oppressed by both patriarchal and colonial powers (Rather, 2023). Dube (2018) offers a focused postcolonial feminist reading of the novel. It emphasizes how Adichie portrays the struggles and resilience of women in a patriarchal society (Dube, 2018). Conversely, Yedidiah and Antony (2022) show insight into the philosophical themes of postcolonialism in the novel. It discusses how Adichie engages with themes of identity, power, and resistance (Yedidiah & Antony, 2022).

Previous studies that have been done give insights into how rich the interpretation of *Purple Hibiscus* is. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, there are still few studies discussing *Purple Hibiscus* through Postcolonial Feminism theory, which focuses on the subaltern and resistance. Because of that, this study aims to uncover women's subalternity and resistance from a postcolonial feminism perspective. This study aims to uncover women's subalternity and resistance from a postcolonial feminism lens. Two questions will lead the discussion in this research. The first research question is: In what way do societal and familial structures contribute to the marginalization of women in the novel? Second, how do the experiences of Kambili, Beatrice, and Ifeoma illustrate forms of resistance against patriarchal oppression?

By revealing these questions, this study makes several important contributions to the fields of postcolonial and feminist literary analysis. By focusing on Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), the study reveals how women characters navigate and resist patriarchal structures, which contributes to a deeper understanding of female agency in postcolonial contexts. This analysis reveals the complexities of women's experiences and the ways they assert their identities in systemic oppression. The study also emphasizes the importance of subaltern perspectives, which show how Adichie's work challenges the notion that marginalized women lack a voice. By emphasizing the significance of recognizing and valuing the experiences of historically marginalized women, this approach strengthens discussions about representation in literature.

The analysis also provides insights into the cultural and societal dynamics of Nigeria at that specific time. This contextual understanding can inform a discussion of gender in postcolonial societies that allows for a broader view of the connection between colonialism and gender. To the extent of academic contributions, social change is impacted by this study by understanding the struggles of female characters. Hopefully, readers can be inspired to engage in discussions about gender equality and women's rights by underlining the relevance of literary studies in advocating for social justice.

METHOD

This study is a textual, descriptive-qualitative study. In the process, the author described, analyzed, and studied texts in depth. This study will conduct a close reading of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, published in 2003. The interpretation of this study on *Purple Hibiscus* focuses on women in the postcolonial context.

The study utilized several steps to analyze and discuss the data presented. First, the researcher examined the idea of postcolonial feminism, focusing on the subaltern, which will create the theoretical framework for the analysis. Second, it investigates a close, detailed reading of *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) to identify and extract the key moments related to women's voices. This would involve a critical reading of the text with the view of highlighting all hidden and complex relationships between the novel's characters' depictions of women's struggles and the sociopolitical environment. Third, the paper connects the women's resistance and

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subalternity with the colonial influence in *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). This involves an analysis of how Adichie's literary work explores women's roles and their relationship with colonial power.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Colonialism and Patriarchal Society: Fractured Eugene Achike

In *Purple Hibiscus,* Eugene Achike (Papa Eugene) represents the effects of colonialism on the psyche, which embodies a mind influenced by colonial ideologies. Eugene is portrayed through his interactions with language, culture, and family, which reveal the internalized violence of colonialism. His uneasiness with his son Jaja's usage of Igbo is demonstrated in the opening scene, suggesting that this is a 'bad sign'. He rejects his roots and the cultural imposition of English as a sign of civilization, which is shown in his dislike of Igbo.

> *"It is the body of our Lord." Papa's voice was low, very low. His face looked swollen already, with pus-tipped rashes spread across every inch, but it seemed to be swelling even more. "You cannot stop receiving the body of our Lord. It is death, you know death."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 4)

Eugene is linked to someone suffering from malaria, a metaphor for how colonial ideologies corrupt his mind and body. Just as malaria parasites multiply and threaten life, colonial ideologies corrupt Eugene's identity, which leads him to reject his father (Papa-Nnukwu) for believing in traditional beliefs.

> *"Kevin said you stayed up to twenty-five minutes with your grandfather. Is that what I told you?" Papa's voice was low. "I wasted time, it was my fault," Jaja said. "What did you do there? Did you eat food sacrificed to idols? Did you desecrate your Christian tongue?"* (Adichie, 2003, p. 48)

This rejection is evident in his family's cultural customs, as he insists on adopting English names and favors English for religious worship, implying that he identifies the supernatural with colonial values and whiteness. Eugene's rigid adherence to colonial standards is evident in his disdain for Igbo culture, which he associates with paganism. He enforces English as a sign of decency and decorum, forbidding his children from using their mother language at home. Additionally, he declares their grandfather's traditional way of life sinful and prohibits them from going to see him or eating anything he has prepared. Eugene internalizes colonial dichotomies that associate African customs with moral and spiritual inferiority by making a clear distinction between what he considers to be 'Christian' and 'Heathen'. As he suppresses his background in favor of the colonizer's ideals, his dedication to Western values turns into a kind of self-denial.

> *"What is Anikwenwa doing in my house? What is a worshipper of idols doing in my house? Leave my house!"* (Adichie, 2003, p. 48)

His interactions with Anikwenwa, a traditionalist, exemplify this conflict. He orders Anikwenwa to get out of his house. This action demonstrates his alignment with colonial ideologies that don't like indigenous practices. The rejection of his father, whom he also neglects and refuses to support due to his traditional beliefs, highlights the tragic consequences of colonial indoctrination. The conflict between Eugene and Aunty Ifeoma further illustrates this division. Because Aunty Ifeoma still embraces traditional practices, Eugene labels them as evil. This familial rift results in punishments inflicted on Jaja and Kambili for associating with their grandfather, revealing that the violent behavior is not limited to ideological repression; it extends to physical abuse, illustrating a disturbing cycle of violence that impacts his family.

> *"Ifeoma, did you call a priest?" Papa asked. "Is that all you can say, eh, Eugene? Have you nothing else to say, gbo? Our father has died! Has your head turned upside down? Will you not help me bury our father?" "I cannot participate in a pagan funeral, but we can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral." Aunty Ifeoma got up and started to shout. Her voice was unsteady. "I will put my dead husband's grave up for sale, Eugene, before I give our father a Catholic funeral. Do you hear me? I said I will sell Ifediora's grave first! Was our father a Catholic? I ask you, Eugene, was he a Catholic? Uchu gba gi!"* (Adichie, 2003, p. 134)

Eugene's oppressive control over his family is a reflection of patriarchal ideals (Dube, 2018, p. 228). To keep his power, he resorts to violence against Kambili and Jaja. Furthermore, his rejection of Beatrice's autonomy and agency shows how patriarchal systems silence the voices of women. It keeps persecution within families alive. When Kambili brings home a portrait of Papa-Nnukwu, the violence reaches its peak. This conduct causes Eugene to become furious, which ultimately results in Kambili being severely beaten and

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admitted to the hospital. These scenes reveal the hypocrisy of his devout religious convictions, which do not stop him from harming his family. His acts of violence reveal the inner turmoil of a man whose identity has been shattered by colonialism, making him estranged from both humanity and his culture.

As Dube said in the previous study, Eugene represents a colonized mind that has been fatally severed from its origins (Dube, 2018, p. 234). All things considered, Eugene represents the terrible results of colonialism and patriarchy, showing how deeply ingrained beliefs can warp individual identities and family connections. Eugene Achike serves as a potent reminder of the brutality and self-alienation that result from rejecting one's cultural heritage while illuminating the complex interrelationships between colonialism, patriarchy, identity, and familial dynamics.

Kambili, Beatrice, and Ifeoma as the Subaltern

In *Purple Hibiscus*, female characters are viewed as inferior. According to Spivak, those who are marginalized by dominant Western power as a result of colonialism or economic and cultural imperialism—that is, those who are disenfranchised and voiceless within their social structure—are known as subalterns (Spivak, 1994). At the intersection of social and familial structures, they are marginalized. Subalterns are groups that are socially, politically, and geographically oppressed by hegemonic power structures. Typically unseen, subalterns often lack a say in the narrative that shapes their lives. Through the experiences of Aunty Ifeoma, Beatrice, and Kambili, *Purple Hibiscus* emphasizes subalternity.

The struggle of the subaltern in a home that is directly oppressive is personified by Kambili. She battles with her identity while living under her father's strict supervision in their home, making her path to self-discovery difficult. Kambili's voice is silenced because she experiences continuous fear of her father. Eugene Achike's violent temper keeps her from expressing her true feelings. Kambili's silence is both a defense mechanism and a reflection of her internalized oppression. She observes the world around her, especially the contrasting environment in her aunt's home, where freedom of expression and individuality are encouraged. This contrast catalyzes Kambili's slow awakening.

> *"How many heads do you have, gbo?" Papa asked, speaking Igbo for the first time. "One." "The girl has one head, too, she does not have two. So why did you let her come first?" "It will not happen again, Papa." A light dust Ikuku was blowing, in brown spirals like uncoiling springs, and I could taste the sand that settled on my lips.* (Adichie, 2003, p. 32)

Her internal conflict—desiring her father's favor while longing for her own identity and autonomy—combines with this lack of agency. Kambili's personality is characterized by her eventual thirst for empowerment and her increasing awareness of her servitude. Her experiences of trauma illustrate the struggles faced by women in patriarchal contexts. In one part of the novel, Eugene warns Kambili and Jaja that they must devoutly follow every rule of their religion (for example, they are prohibited from meeting their Papa-Nnukwu for more than 15 minutes).

> *Papa closed the Bible. "Kambili and Jaja, you will go this afternoon to your grandfather's house and greet him. Kevin will take you. Remember, don't touch any food, don't drink anything. And, as usual, you will stay not longer than fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 42)

This is similar to Spivak's assertion in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that "white men are saving the brown women from brown men" as one way to understand the relationship between colonizers and colonized (Spivak, 1994, p. 92). Kambili's sense of invisibility and the oppressive terror that permeates her home are captured in the story, which also illustrates how patriarchal power may impede personal development.

Language plays a significant part in Kambili's struggle. In addition to reflecting his colonial mentality, Papa Eugene's fixation on speaking English rather than Igbo also serves to marginalize his family's cultural identity. Speaking Igbo turns into an act of defiance for Kambili against her father's repressive control. Her fragility is highlighted by her inadequate capacity to express herself in the Igbo language.

> *"What are you doing, Kambili?" I swallowed hard. "I...I..." "You are eating ten minutes before Mass? Ten minutes before Mass?" "Her period started and she has cramps–" Mama said. Jaja cut her short. "I told her to eat corn flakes before she took Panadol, Papa. I made it for her." "Has the devil asked you all to go on errands for him?" The Igbo*

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> *words burst out of Papa's mouth. "Has the devil built a tent in my house?" He turned to Mama. "You sit there and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, maka mindi?"* (Adichie, 2003, p. 72)

The intricacies of subaltern life are also personified by Beatrice Achike. She suffers from emotional and physical mistreatment by her husband, being entangled in a web of patriarchal oppression. The predicament of many women in comparable circumstances, where social norms dictate their roles as wives and mothers, is reflected in Beatrice's struggle. Often to the expense of their health. Beatrice appears to be a submissive person, yet she is incredibly strong. She defends her kids from their father's oppression because she loves them. Her experience highlights the complexities of motherhood in a patriarchal system.

> *"Are you sure you want to stay in the car?" Papa asked. Mama was looking down; her hands were placed on her belly, to hold the wrapper from untying itself or to keep her bread and tea breakfast down. "My body does not feel right," she mumbled. "I asked if you were sure you wanted to stay in the car." Mama looked up. "I'll come with you. It's really not that bad."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 19)

Her character reflects the struggles of women who, despite their suffering, often remain unseen and unheard. Although Beatrice's needs and wants are constantly put aside in favor of her husband's, her quiet fortitude shows the sacrifices she makes for her kids. This interaction highlights how patriarchy not only restricts women to roles that constrain them but also oppresses them. Beatrice's relationship with Kambili also reveals the generational trauma that often accompanies the subaltern experience. She tries to shield her kids from their father, but she is caught in a cycle of abuse that she has internalized.

> *"Eugene will not let the children go to a heathen festival," Mama said. "Heathen festival, kwa? Everybody goes to Aro to look at the mmuo." "I know, but you know Eugene."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 52)

Ifeoma is an example of a more vocal subalternity that is nevertheless bound by social norms because she is a loud supporter of her children's education and independence. Her efforts to empower her children, niece, and nephew reflect her understanding of the limitations of women, even those who are educated and assertive.

> *"If you do not tell Eugene, eh, then how will he know that you did not follow the schedule, gbo? You are on holiday here and it is my house, so you will follow my own rules."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 88)

Ifeoma struggles with social conventions despite her might. Being a single mother puts her in a vulnerable situation where she frequently faces discrimination and condemnation. This facet of her personality emphasizes the intersectionality of subalternity, where women are still subject to patriarchal oppressive systems while having an education and gaining independence. Ifeoma's persona serves as a warning that social influences aimed at undermining women's authority and autonomy can affect even those who seem powerful.

In the novel, Kambili, Beatrice, and Ifeoma's representations highlight their experiences as subalterns. According to Dube's perspective, these women represent decolonial possibilities (Dube, 2018, p. 235), the themes of marginalization and injustice in a patriarchal culture bind all of the characters together, even as they handle their challenges. Their experiences highlight how being subaltern is complicated and influenced by a number of variables, including family relationships, education, and class. Aunty Ifeoma's strong presence and Kambili's mother's experiences have shaped her path. Kambili's conception of womanhood is shaped by Beatrice's hardship and tenacity, while Ifeoma's strength acts as a ray of hope and opportunity. Different facets of the subaltern condition are represented by each character, demonstrating the various ways in which women deal with and negotiate their oppressed position.

Kambili, Beatrice, and Ifeoma's Resistance against Patriarchal Oppression

The female characters in *Purple Hibiscus* exhibit modes of resistance that counteract their oppression, even when they are subaltern. Adichie illustrates a variety of resistance strategies against the repressive power systems through the lives of Kambili, Beatrice, and Ifeoma. The challenges, development, and eventual resistance of each character are reflected in their journey, demonstrating how women fight against patriarchal oppression.

A journey of self-discovery and empowerment is portrayed by Kambili Achike. Due in large part to her strict father, Kambili is initially an obedient daughter. Kambili is conditioned to live up to her father's expectations while her voice is silenced. But Kambili's enlightenment started with her experience at her aunt's

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place. At her aunt's house, Kambili finds an environment that encourages innovation, free expression, and defying authority. This exposure is transformative in that she begins to explore her own identity, desires, and beliefs. The juxtaposition between her life at home and with Ifeoma influences Kambili's growth.

Kambili changes during the story from being a passive object of her father's will to a person who starts to have her autonomy and ambitions. Because it embodies a larger theme of struggle against patriarchal tyranny, this shift is noteworthy. Kambili's eventual defiance of her father's authority to speak and declare her independence serves as an example of the significance of reclaiming one's voice and advocating for oneself.

> *"What has gotten into you?" Papa asked. "What is wrong with you?" I lay on the floor, curled tight like the picture of a child in the uterus in my Integrated Science for Junior Secondary Schools. "Get up! Get away from that painting!" I lay there, did nothing. "Get up!" Papa said again. I still did not move. He started to kick me. The metal buckles on his slippers stung like bites from giant mosquitoes. He talked nonstop, out of control, in a mix of Igbo and English, like soft meat and thorny bones. Godlessness. Heathen worship. Hellfire.* (Adichie, 2003, p. 148)

Beatrice Achike illustrates a different form of resistance. Throughout the novel, Beatrice has to bear the harsh brutalities of her husband's tyranny. Eugene's abuse is both physical and emotional, and Beatrice's role in the household is largely that of a submissive housewife. She is strong and resilient, nevertheless, despite her seeming passivity. Beatrice's protective tendencies for Kambili and Jaja are an example of her resistance. She is aware of the risks posed by Eugene's severe regulations and takes discreet precautions to keep her kids safe. For instance, Beatrice subtly encourages Kambili and Jaja's yearning for affection and normalcy while they are compelled to adhere to their father's rigid religious rituals. This maternal instinct brings out the complexity of her character, while she does not overtly rebel against Eugene. She acts to protect her family.

> *She stared at the figurine pieces on the floor and then knelt and started to pick them up with her bare hands.* (Adichie, 2003, p. 5)

> *"My whole body is on fire," I said. "Shhh," she said. "Just rest. Thank God you are awake."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 149)

Poisoning her husband is Beatrice's final act of defiance. It is a radical, yet deeply personal assertion of agency within a coercive marriage.

> *When she spoke, her voice was just as calm and slow. "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 203)

By taking control over his husband's fate, Beatrice rises against the patriarchal structure that has tried to silence her. Her pain serves as a commentary on the price of living under structural oppression and the extent to which women will go to regain their independence. Beatrice's persona poses significant queries regarding the nature of resistance within the framework of feminist discourse. Her actions demonstrate that resistance can take numerous forms, including silent disobedience and putting the needs of the family before those of the patriarchy, even though they may not match the conventional definition of resistance.

An example of more active resistance is Ifeoma Achike. Ifeoma defies social expectations that determine women's duties as an educated lady and single mother. She is the epitome of self-reliance, bravery, and dedication to learning and development. For Kambili and Jaja, Ifeoma's house is a haven where they may explore who they are without being constrained by their father. Openness and encouragement are hallmarks of Ifeoma's parenting style. She creates an atmosphere in which her kids can voice their opinions without worrying about consequences. Eugene's parenting approach is not the same as this. Ifeoma encourages her niece to think about her goals and aspirations and to challenge the status quo.

> *"Eugene will not let the children go to a heathen festival," Mama said. "Heathen festival, kwa? Everybody goes to Aro to look at the mmuo." "I know, but you know Eugene."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 52)

Moreover, Ifeoma's resistance is also considered political. She promotes social justice and education as a university lecturer. She questions the social norms that restrict the opportunities available to women. For Kambili and Jaja, her advocacy serves as an example of how important it is to speak up against injustice and push for change.

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> *"What is it? Who are you?" Aunty Ifeoma asked. "We are here to search your house. We're looking for documents designed to sabotage the peace of the university. We have information that you have been in collaboration with the radical student groups that staged the riots..."* (Adichie, 2003, p. 162)

Ifeoma's character shows that empowerment not only comes from personal growth but also from engaging in relations with social and political issues. Through Ifeoma, Adichie points out the importance of female solidarity and support. Ifeoma represents the possibility of women uplifting each other in their struggles against patriarchal oppression. Her house becomes a space for Kambili and Jaja to grow as individuals, reaffirming the idea that fighting structural injustice requires group resistance.

The stories of Ifeoma, Beatrice, and Kambili are interwoven, creating a sense of interdependence among the fights against patriarchal oppression. Through silent obedience, maternity protection, or vocal advocacy, each character's resistance adds to a broader conversation on women's empowerment. Kambili's interactions with Beatrice and Ifeoma serve as catalysts for her development. Their narratives show how resistance may be both individual and group-based, reflecting the complex nature of females in a patriarchal culture. Adichie's portrayal of these individuals serves as a reminder that the fight against patriarchy is a multifaceted undertaking. Women might resist in various ways, and their experiences are influenced by their particular relationships and situations. The novel highlights how other women's support and solidarity that is crucial in the fight against structural oppression, and how empowerment frequently results from this support.

CONCLUSION

The authoritarian control Eugene Achike exercises over his family in Purple Hibiscus exemplifies the coercive nature of patriarchal norms influenced by colonial ideas. It demonstrates how toxic masculinity affects family relationships. Eugene keeps a firm hold on his home and imposes rigid regulations that allow little opportunity for personal expression or independence by controlling the actions of his wife, Kambili, and Jaja. His use of violence, especially against Kambili and Jaja, is a cruel way for him to keep control and authority, and it reflects larger social standards that associate masculinity with aggression and power. Eugene appears to be a devoted Catholic, but his behavior betrays a lack of sincerity; his religious act cannot excuse the brutality he inflicts on his family. He is alienated from both his cultural roots and his humanity, and also embodies the consequences of a man torn between expectations of patriarchal authority and his insecurities.

The connections between Aunty Ifeoma, Beatrice, and Kambili's experiences highlight the complexity of subalternity in a patriarchal culture. Although each character fights tyranny, their stories are connected, illuminating the complexity of subaltern identity. Kambili's path to self-discovery is impacted by her aunt's strong presence and her mother's tenacity. Ifeoma is the embodiment, whereas Beatrice is the embodiment of subdued disobedience, shielding her children from Eugene's anger.

The intricacy of the fight against patriarchy is powerfully brought to light by Adichie's portrayal of these characters. Women resist in a variety of ways, and other women's solidarity and support impact their paths. The novel demonstrated how women's relationships may create safe and empowering spaces and emphasized the need for community in the struggle against systemic oppression. Kambili's relationships with Beatrice and Ifeoma foster her developing sense of self, demonstrating how mutual support and shared experiences frequently lead to empowerment.

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