

## CHAPTER 3

### Chimamanda Adichie: The modern Chinua Achebe

*“We do not associate wisdom with beginners but here is a new writer  
endowed with the gift of ancient storytellers”*

Chinua Achebe

#### 3.1 The third generation author: A brief biographical sketch

Chimamanda Adichie has been hailed as one of the most promising young emerging Nigerian writers who belongs to the group of ‘third generation’. (Adesanmi, Dunton) Nigerian writers with their works falling under the category of “New Nigerian Writing”. Although the authors of the third generation are generally relatively young, the term third generation specifically refers to an array of works focusing on text rather than an author: A trajectory which exemplifies a new body of writing that makes a paradigm shift from the canon in earlier African writing.

Of late the novel has been at the forefront. Writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Seffi Atta, and Chris Abani etc. have made remarkable contribution to the novel writing scenario and have received recognition in Africa and abroad as well. They are the privileged and visible, reside in Europe and America whose literary oeuvre forms a global, borderless, textual location referred to as the ‘transnational book’ by Rebecca Walkowitz. As writers they have to negotiate their multi-layered spaces on one hand and establish the role of literature into a more significant and renewed dialectics of nation and narration. (Dunton ix)

Adichie was born in 1977 in the university town of Nsukka South-eastern Nigeria. Her father was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Her parents

both worked at the University of Nigeria, her father as a Professor in Statistics and her mother as the first female registrar. They raised Chimamanda and her five other siblings in the University campus and went to the school at the University campus as well. After completion of school she studied medicine for a year as it is always expected for 'high achievers' to study medicine. A year later she realized that she lacked the aptitude and she was merely training to be a doctor. Henceforth, she left for America to study Communication in Connecticut University. She loves the American sense of 'can do' and feels grateful for the opportunities she got to get her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* published (2003) in Nigeria which otherwise would have been impossible.

Adichie's career began in the US. She has followed a path which was a little different from the path of her generation of writers from Nigeria. The differences result from her pursuing of her career in the US that strikes a common cord with the Americans. Adichie published her short stories in various journals including prestigious American ones. Her short stories have won laurels like the O'Henry Prize. Her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* was published in 2003 by Algonquin got an overwhelming response internationally. Accolades include winning the Commonwealth Prize and Hurston Wight Foundation Award and was shortlisted for Orange Broad band Prize for fiction ( one of UK most prestigious literary prizes awarded to females of any nationality for the best original full length novel written in English and published in UK) in 2007. In the preceding year 2006, an equally successful novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* was published. Adichie received the MacArthur genius grant for her work. She wrote a play *For love of Biafra* and also a couple short stories *That Harmattan Morning*, *Half of a yellow sun* and *Ghosts*. All these have placed her among the group of Third

Generation writers whose consistent efforts qualified to enrich tremendously the writings in West Africa.

The Nigerian authors have been segmented into three broad divisions. The first generation group are writers who wrote in the colonial times till the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the second include those who wrote after the independence of Nigeria till the late 80's and the third generation are people like Sefi Atta, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who did not have the 'utopian dream' of Chinua Achebe or mythic realism of Wole Soyinka of the first generation, the 'spiritual insights' of Ben Okri of the second generation but negotiate multiple spaces in the contested domain of ever changing socio economic political setup, nationally and globally as well. The novels are realist in nature and deal with contemporary issues. Novels became a dominant form of expression in the nineties vis a vis other genres like poetry or drama. The common chord that bind them is characterized by its own uniqueness, a confounding judgment of post-independence Nigeria. The third generation's 'Transnational novel' is concerned with issues which were earlier considered to be marginal ones, like ethnicity, nativism, nomadism, deracination, female voice, corruption which were considered petite narratives against the larger rhetoric of nationalism, colonialism, and threatened identity both individual and collective which have occupied center stage. A historical recap of 1980's and 1990's shows the oil boom, political imbroglios collapse of economic infrastructure, closure of publishing houses, imprisonment and torture of writers, violation of human rights which intensified political struggles and deepened the sense of isolation of writers enabling them to strike a common cord and express themselves into a collective identity and write even during adversities connoting triumph in difficult times.

The most prominent domains where this new identity is negotiated include muted private spaces, cultural and religious traditions, constructs of gender and nation which are always engendered, as well as in multi-ethnic, cultural and hybrid communities contesting monolithic narratives about Africa created for the western audience. The realistic themes they tackle regarding domesticity, female desire, or everyday lives provides fresh impetus and perspectives challenges a stereotyped version of Africa. It is the stories that they want to write. The narratives neither comfort nor reassure the Western audience but continue to explore the unequal power relationships in the field of literature (Hewett). In fact Adichie has established herself not only as a writer of African literature but also as an Anglophone writer.

Adichie is the youngest member of the group who belongs to the 'third generation' of the writers. As stated by Adichie in an interview that she began reading at the age of four. She was fed on European children's classics : Enid Blyton, so when she started writing at the age of six for her mother all her characters had 'white skin' they played in the snow, had a dog named Socks ate apples and drank ginger beer. She felt that only such an ambience can exist in books. Though she had not seen snow and ate mangoes. She said, "It was Chinua Achebe who opened my eyes to the world" She read Chinua Achebe's "*Things fall apart*" at the age of eight and it was an eye-opener, she realized that she can write about people of her kind who had Igbo names, ate yams for food and lived in a world similar to her: a world of African experience and authenticity. She further stated that Achebe gave her the permission to write stories about her world which she feels worthy of literature and further realized that it validated her history. (Adichie: 42). Achebe has been her role model, her hero. Interestingly, they share a lot in common Achebe taught in the University of Nigeria

where Adichie's parents worked and they also stayed in the same house in the campus where Achebe lived.

The uniqueness that strikes a reader in comprehending an 'African experience' is many fold. Critics and scholars have given their own views regarding the African authenticity and experience. Some of them based on 'content' whereas some on 'form'. These views have been highly debated upon.

'In the new Nigerian novel, therefore, what has come to be referred to as 'the Achebe model' has become standard practice, namely, the deployment of supra-linguistic, para-verbal nuances such as folklore, proverbs, wise sayings, riddles folksongs and other allied forms of language games, stylistic strategies which emboss and semiotize Africanisms or the sense of place in the novel'. (Chinwezu) This premise is not the ultimate truth yet forms a part of Adichie's literary exercise.

In my course of study I have taken up two novels viz. *Purple Hibiscus and Half of a yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Adichie. In this section and have accordingly identified the folk elements that give local color to her novels. The Igbo rhetoric predominates the entire textual landscape with its culture, customs and folklore. *Purple Hibiscus* is an Igbo world, re visioned written in English: A rare breed of hybrid hibiscus.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* belongs to a new generation of novel writing. It is located in a time when the culture of Africa has undergone a metamorphosis The old order has given way to a new form of living with the advent of Christianity; a part of the colonial agenda which led to subsequent changes in the social fabric. Christianity had become the dominant religion unlike in the times of *Things fall Apart*. Adichie tackles the issues of inculturated Christianity, the problems that ensues, the tug of war between the tradition and the 'so called' modern to establish one's own identity. The

changing global scenario take Christianity as part of everyday African life and culture. The novel criticizes the exclusive Eurocentric Catholicism and emphasizes on Igbo spirituality and tradition. It is a critique on Roman Catholicism, African Catholicism and traditional religion.

### **3.2 Synopsis of the novel Purple Hibiscus**

Purple Hibiscus opens with the character of an auto diegetic narrator Kambili. It is the 'coming of age' (Heather Hewett) novel where the family drama unfolds in the posh affluent home of the Achike family living in South eastern Nigeria in the later part twentieth century. The protagonist negotiates her identity and gains a voice as a confident narrator. The narrative opens on 'Palm Sunday' when the young characters have evolved over the period and have lived their own identities. The family drama unfolds when 'things fall apart' as Papa flings the missal across the room which make the figurines collapse and crash from the *étagère*. It was Jaja's refusal to comply with Papa's command. He refused to attend Holy Communion on 'Palm Sunday' a mandatory ritual in Roman Catholic Achike household: a defiance of order in the Achike family.

Prior to the incident they spoke the language of the eye '*asusu anya*' denoting absence of voice. Their lives and work were based on schedules, strictly chalked out by Papa. Life revolved around a strict schedule for Kambili, the fifteen year old narrator and her seventeen year old brother Jaja. Attending school, counting of rosaries several times before retiring to bed, saying long prayers before meals. Fulfilling Papa's wishes in maintaining perfection in academic engagements to be in Papa's good books was a norm strictly followed. Any aberration would amount to earning his wrath in the form of punishment, physical violence and torture, apparently giving the

impression of a cocooned insulated life within the precincts of their home. The reader comes to learn about Papa's austerity and stoicism. Papa is a multifaceted personality which emerge as the story progresses in a series of paradoxes: He is an enterprising businessman, lovingly called '*Omeolera*' one who does for the community, he donates generously for various organizations for charity but surprisingly does very little for his father and calls him a heathen and his ways as 'devilish folklore' as Papa Nukwu practices the traditional religion and not Catholicism. Antipathy towards Empire and church surfaced in the twentieth century and Adichie through the character of Papa (Eugene Achike) evinces emergence of neo elites severed and contemptuous of indigenous culture. Papa runs a newspaper which highlights on the corruption in the society that is under military dictatorship and provides a space for democratic voice. However, at home he is unlike what he projects, he enforces austere religious practices on his children amounting to torture and violence in the name of religion. His wife is subject to domestic violence: regular beatings, several miscarriages due to physical violence inflicted on her reduce her to an abiding, traumatized, voiceless spouse. The two adolescents get a relief from the suffocating environment when they visit their aunt Ifeoma who is an underpaid professor in the University of Nigeria, at Nsukka and her three children Amaka, Obiora, and Chima. The visit was like a fresh breath of air. They see life from a new and different perspective. Their aunt's house despite financial constraints and hardships was full of laughter and accustomed to mirth, music, songs and regular chatter unlike their home in Enugu where silence pervaded. Within a short span they find a new meaning to life and discover like the hybrid, 'purple hibiscus', that life can have many 'rights' and not the only 'right' as they were made to perceive by their father. The instability in the regime and military coup enable them to spend some more time in Nsukka.

Kambili meets father Amadi, an Igbo priest, a Catholic with a difference devoid of stoicism who respects traditional practices and incorporates it into the Christianity that he practices. Father Amadi uses Igbo songs and in the midst of prayers which is heathen in Papa's context. Father Amadi brings about the change in Kambili giving her a voice. Fr. Amadi stands as a metonym for Creolization or Inculturation: a new identity to negotiate spaces. Likewise, Jaja too has evolved faster and finds himself more comfortable in the new circumstances unlike Kambili and within a short span becomes more like a member of his aunt's family. Their mother, Beatrice is also capable of coming out of the oppressive circumstances and succeeds in killing the abusive husband. Jaja takes ownership for the crime to save his mother and lands in the jail. He remains a convict for three years in the jail when the novel ends and is waiting for his release. A different kind of silence pervades: A silence that promises a better future. African literature by virtue of its effort tries to preserve tradition which Adichie has showcased successfully.

The symbolic clash between tradition and modernity forms the crux of the novel. Adichie like her contemporaries shares the rich literary tradition of Nigeria. The clash of the traditional and modern culture has been a topic that have extensively debated upon. The crucial part in Africa was the time when "colonialism had violently disrupted traditional cultural traditions and imposed with varying degrees of success European form of thought and social organizations upon colonized people." (Ciaffa) The European ways of thought had been the ways to construe the semantics of progressive thought and modes of living opposed to African ways of life considered primitive and barbaric. In *Purple Hibiscus* the concept of modernity and tradition are not used as normative concepts to judge tradition and modernity but as tools as to how the characters conform, reject or negotiate their identities in the multiple spaces. The

clash of modernity and tradition is seen in every sphere of living in Africa .The conflict between old and new, native and the alien is mirrored in contemporary situations.

“The modern postcolonial novel is in the sense the product of the dispersal or migration of memory in and it’s reshaping of the meaning of home”. (Bhabha: 29)Adichie like the Purple Hibiscus has explored numerous possibilities and incorporates the tradition and the modern in her novels. Family, politics, religion and mutual tolerance form the central themes in the novel. She extensively experiments with language, culture, issues on ethnicity, tribalism and nativism, as she belongs to the new group who practice intergeneration intertextuality extensively in their works. Besides, they resort to the use of orality and oral traditions in their writing and respond to a wide range of African writers belonging to different generations yet not straight jacketing to create stereotypes. (Adichie)

### **3.1.2 Adichie’s use of language**

Adichie’s narration and creative use of language has placed her on a platform which she shares with the first generation writer i.e. Chinua Achebe, who has used the language of the colonizer to write and resorted to cultural tropes and markers to assert and establish identity. His purpose was to retrieve African history and to tell not to the community that he represents, but also to the world, a much larger one beyond Africa. Achebe had used a new cultural aspect, the written code and superimposed it on an ancient and oral culture resulting into a fine synthesis. The characteristics of oral culture continue to exist in the form of being absorbed, reorganized, adapted and assimilated into a new cultural ethos.

Adichie likewise, has resorted to use in her novel *Purple Hibiscus* vital aspects of written literature to be permeated with vernacular expression, thought, culture, candescence and rhythm of vernacular speech, recurrent use of images, stories, myths, legend, symbols, idiomatic phrases, and proverbs which has enriched the quality of her expression and also demonstrated the mastery over her native language and English. This is referred to as the 'Achebe model' which African writers employ to give the mark of African authenticity. For Adichie the question of national and cultural identity concerns her generation but in a very unique way compared to that of her predecessors, her aesthetics comprise of post-colonial, postmodern and a globalized perspectives *Purple Hibiscus* connects backward in time for a future re-historicized and opens up inter textual promises in African literary imagination

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a repository of a wide range of cultural tropes that give a unique flavour to the novel: A true blend of orality and the written code. The language question has been a subject of many a debate in a multicultural setup like Nigeria. The appropriation to a colonizers language to tell the story was not appreciated by the Kenyan writer Thiongo O Ngugi who after writing in English initially went to write in his native language as he felt that, it killed the native tongue along with the indigenous thought and culture. Bill Ashcroft had also validated Ngugi's statement that power emanates from the kind of language used. Hence, the colonizer used the English language to colonize and create the psyche of the inferior 'other'. However, Ashcroft et al has also stated that the colonized used the language of 'appropriation' i.e. to write in a language which is not one's own yet 'bears the burden' of one's culture and reflect the linguistic behavior of one's own. It should be capable of capturing the cadence of one's own speech rhythm and nuances of communication

thus creating a unique variety: A hybridized one that is replete with ‘polysemic over coding.’ This view was earlier endorsed by Achebe.

In a multilingual society like Nigeria such creativity with language is a natural outcome where in the new variety: A form of ‘indigenization’ is capable of creating the African sensibility and spirit. The creativity encompasses an ever extending horizon of creating and recreating cultural tropes, portmanteau words, neologism or innovative expressions. A very popular variety known as Nigerian English is extensively used along with other regional varieties. The nature of such a diaglossic society creates a wide variety of English dialects. The new African writer looks at the community from which he/she emerges like a traditional bearer of folklore, reinforces and perpetuates culture through literary means rather than oral ones.

Igbo is one of the major linguistic group of Nigeria and widely spoken in South-eastern Nigeria. The imposition of the colonial language has created a variety of languages over the period of time Adichie being an Igbo born speaker follows her role model Achebe or the ‘Achebe school’ in formulating an Igboised English. Achebe has been the role model for Adichie and many Nigerian writers who belong to the ethnic Igbo community. Adichie like her fore runners draws liberally from the Igbo culture and language and heritage to create the hybridized ‘Igboised English.’

The Igbo words immediately catches the eye of the reader that conditions the cultural backdrop in both her novels. However, Adichie’s native Igbo culture, tradition, and profusion of such words predominate *Purple Hibiscus* compared to *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

The following chart will highlight the creation of the hybridized diction, an ‘Igboisation’ of English or ‘Igboised English’ stated by Bernth Lindfors. These words

covey matters relating to phatic communication, endearment, love affection, relationships, and filial bonds, social behavioral codes, customs, food, religion worship, ceremonies. In fact all matters relating to the Igbo way of life

Adichie has italicized some native words. Some she has left without italicization. She has used the stylistic device of 'Bound Cushioning' where she glosses over them by employing the informatory style to explain to the non-Igbo reader and certain undisguised anthropological descriptions which she feels need to be translated for comprehension. The purpose of such an endeavor is to explain certain Igbo lexical items which cannot be translated into English because of their cultural connotations and unique sensibility or for the matter it does not have a cultural equivalent or the unfamiliarity of the concept. This she achieves by employing a few methods. One of them being transliteration, Adichie had realized the difficulties that a reader might encounter, hence to ensure a fair degree of comprehensibility and communication the writer achieves it by using the Igbo syntax and English vocabulary. The writer tries as far as possible to adhere to the Igbo syntax, yet maintains a fair level of congruence between both the languages.

**Phrases like**

(a) *Have you not shared a drink with us?* (PH: 13)

(b) *Have you no words in your mouth?*

(c) *Has the devil built a tent in my house?* (PH: 102)

An Igbo way of speaking is circumlocutory in nature to show disgust and noncompliance. Here the vocabulary used is English yet the behavioral nuance and speech pattern and manner demonstrated is Igbo captured in English.

(d) *When the house is on fire you run out before the house collapses on your head.* (PH: 213)

An Igbo saying

(e) *Oh Maka! It brings out your face* (PH: 239) implies your features stand out

(f) *He does not wear pant oh! (He is shameless)*

(g) *I forced a cough out of my throat* (PH: 79)

Another method used is ‘cushioning’ which is used to explain culturally bound events like rituals, ceremonies, clothes, food in short aspects of material culture Cushioning operates in three distinct ways in the text.

A. *Free cushioning*: The author has resorted to ‘Free Cushioning’ wherein she has not translated a good number words as she feels that they have become familiar lexical items or the reader is capable of deciphering the meaning from the context.

B. *Bound cushioning*: Author takes the effort to explain certain native lexical items for conceptualization. At times a detailed explanation is provided for alien concepts or customs e.g. The *Aro festival*, *Itu nzu* ritual described as the declaration of innocence performed in the early hours of morning. A ritual very much akin to morning prayers of any faith or religion.

#### *Igbo native words*

1.	Nne ngwe	(go and change)	BC	8
2.	Biko	words of endearment	FC	8
3.	Nne	”	”	10
4.	Ke kwanu	(how are you doing?)	BC	10

5.	Igusi soup and utazi curry (ethnic cuisine)	FC	10
6.	Ugbu leaves	”	
7.	Mba (Igbo expression)	”	13
8.	O zugo	”	
9.	Kpa		
	(no) expression of stubbornness	”	15
10.	Oguri (A tree used for witchcraft)		
11.	Moi moi, jollof of rice, anara (ethnic cuisine)	”	21
12.	Ozu, ngwo	“	32
13.	Ochirt (local birds)	”	
14.	Ikuku (typical wind)	BC	47
15.	O di egwu (surprise)	”	49
16.	Abi (endearment)	FC	49
17.	Isi owu (folk hairstyles)	”	50
18.	Shuku	”	50
19.	Okporoko (food)	“	54
20.	Omelora (One who does for the community)		55
21.	Ogbunambala (praise and endearment)	FC	60
22.	Neke! Neke! Neke! (Greeting showing excitement out of love)	FC	64
23.	A ripe agbogho (grown up)	FC	64

24. Ani	(Igbo God)	“	65
25. Ehye	expression	“	65
26. Ezi okwu?	Expression	“	65
27. Ikwu nne	(mother’s maiden home)	BC	67
28. Papa Nnukwu/Nna Ochie	(grandfather)	“	67
29. Ifukwa gi!	A swear word	FC	70
30. Kedu	How are you?	“	71
31. Nwunye m	(who are these for?)	BC	72
32. Okwia	(my wife)	“	72
33. Jmakwa	(my little one)	“	77
34. Ehye	exclamation showing happiness	FC	82
35. Chukwu	(Igbo high god)	“	83
36. Nekem	(look at me)	BC	83
37. Mmuo	(spirits)	“	87
38. Nno nu	(welcome)	“	91
39. Igwe	(traditional ruler)	“	93
40. O Joka	(expression showing displeasure)	FC	95
41. Ngwanu	(we will see)	BC	97
42. Igba Kristmas		FC	99

43. Abia	(cramps)	“	100
44. Maka nnidi	(expression showing disgust)	FC	102
45. O di egwu	(my dear)	“	121
46. Ezi okwu	(to reaffirm)	“	131
47. Ube	(food)	“	132
48. Amaron	(we can try)	BC	132
49. Sha	(fine)	“	141
50. Atulu	(sheep)	“	142

Words relating to

FC refers to Free Cushioning —Author leaves it to the reader to decipher the meaning.

BC refers to Bound Cushioning — Author takes the pain to explain certain native lexical items for conceptualization At times a detailed explanation is provided for alien concepts or customs.

The list of words given above provided above are the lexical items relate to social manners and customs displaying love affection, endearment, honor, family bonds *ummna*, *harmattan*, *magbalu*, have become an integral part of the vocabulary referring to culturally significant concepts and practices, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in an intriguing manner uses Igbo conceptual terms in order to accentuate on the practices and give an authentic local color and rootedness to what might seem to the ignorant outsider ‘airy nothings’.

The author has not made any attempt to describe nor provide any kind of explanation, the reasons attributed to such a practice may be like the postcolonial writer Adichie wants the reader to actively participate in a cultural engagement (Ashcroft). The idea of *ummna* is alien to a society which is not engaged in community living. Interestingly, the concept of *ummna* dots the text of the novel with its multifarious connotations semiotizing collective living which is highlighted in the novel. It is the Adichie's skill in weaving into the textual fabric makes it appear like any other neologism in English and her dexterity in incorporation makes it read like an English word. Strategically, the term has a crucial role to play in the novel as the cultural knot of the Igbo communal setup. *Ummna* has an extensive referential meaning in a society that practices polygamy it refers to many wives, many children and the extended family of niece, nephew's cousin's et al as we find in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Further, when the family goes for Christmas to the ancestral town for Christmas it is the wives of the *ummna* (73) who come to do the cooking for Mama which entails that it is a community affair. Such a custom persists even in the cotemporary times as it is a part and parcel of the African social milieu. In referring to culturally significant concepts and practices, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie intriguingly uses Igbo conceptual terms in order to highlight the practices and give a proper sense of local rootedness to what might appear to the non-native reader 'frills and fancies'. For example, Adichie writes about the concept of "mgbalu" in the novel:

*The compound gates were locked. Mama ....not to open the gates to all the people [........] for mgbalu, to commiserate with us. Even members of our Umunna [...] come from Abba were turned away. [...] unheard of, to turn sympathizers away.*(PH: 288).

In the cases mentioned in the participation of the co-reader whose position is foregrounded. The reader has to understand a free cushioned word, with the flow of the narrative contextual clarification occurs, the reader response is initiated from the active participation or engagement in deciphering the meaning of the text. In the entire textual landscape of the novel. Igbo words are liberally scattered whether in a transliterated form, cushioned or metaphoric sense in syntax, idioms, phrases, clauses or sayings and proverbs.

It is to be noted that these words are utterances made by the common folk engaged in the traditional way of life and living in a rural or urban setting. Standard English is used as a 'norm' whereas in matters of day to day interaction when the situation changes from formal to informal which requires sharing of emotions that can be anger love, sympathy, bonding or sudden outburst of feeling, the language also shifts. The students in Nsukka University speak English but during the times of unrest give vent to their feelings in another variant the Nigerian pidgin.

*He doesn't wear pants oh! Where is running water? Where is petrol?* (PH: 228) which is also used by Chinua Achebe in *Anthills of Savannah*. Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* never speaks Igbo as he considers it below his dignity and even conforms to the clipped British accent in the company of the British missionary father resonating Ngugi, language is a marker of identity and it carries along the entire corpus of a particular culture.

### **3.1.3 Proverbs**

Adichie employs proverbs in *Purple Hibiscus*. They perform a metaphorical function in the text and also highlight the Igbo's way of life and thinking. According to

Onukaogu and Oniyerionwe “Proverbs are replete with allusions to the cosmic world view, oral traditions and philosophical tenants.”

We do not find many proverbs yet they are uttered at certain crucial juncture

*(a) You are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave.(PH: 70)*

This proverb was uttered by Anikwenwa an old accomplice of Papa Nnukwu to Eugene when Eugene’s men tried to drag him out of the compound Eugene calls him a ‘worshipper of idols’ and does not want him to pollute his compound Anikwena metaphorically reminds Eugene of his rootlessness and loss of Eugene’s identity which will actually leads him nowhere. The corpse referred to is his stoicism and austerity which made him wear blinkers oblivious to the ways of the others that will ultimately lead him nowhere. Eugene tries to profess that he practices religion in the best form by being a true Christian yet the contradictions in his character make him a devil incarnate. In fact it is an irony that in reality he resorts to all forms of violence: perpetuated physically, mentally or verbally on his wife, children and father. Besides flings verbal abuses on his own father Papa Nnukwu and Anikwena.

This proverb makes a contrastive analysis of the Igbo world view and a colonized mind. It works as a strategic device for characterization as stated by Austin Shelton. (1969:87)

*(b)Our people say when aku flies it will still fall to the toad.(PH:221)*

This proverb was said by the Igbo priest Father Amadi which implies that everything will take its natural course, only a matter of time. The aku (termites) start flying during the day time and people run for them as it is considered to be a delicacy.

However, by evening they lose their wings and fall to the ground for which even the toad does not have to run for it. This is again a metaphorical representation of reality.

The first person plural possessive determiner 'our' used by Father Amadi is indicative of community wisdom in an urban setting. Father Amadi is a counterfoil to Papa Nnukwu.

#### **3.1.4 Igbo sayings**

*When the house is on fire you run out before it collapses on your head.* (PH:213)

This was said by aunt Ifeoma when Papa had violently abused Kambili for keeping Papa Nnukwu's portrait which was a gift from Amaka or Mama's recurring miscarriage for physical violence inflicted on her by Papa. This was symbolic representation in the form of a saying wherein she wanted them to take some action by articulating resistance.

*Will you pinch the finger of the hand that feeds you?* (PH: 96)

This comment was made by aunt Ifeoma with reference to Eugene who always would want to hear what he liked hence, members of the *ummna* would definitely comply with everything of Eugene.

As one begins to endorse cross culturalism as the culmination point of ceaseless human history of cultural hegemony and subjugation in the postcolonial context, English refuses to be pure nor does the Igbo. An assimilation is bound to occur in such interaction which indicate globalization at work. "The crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that postcolonial writing define itself by seizing the language of the center and replacing it in a discourse fully adopted to the colonized place".(Ashcroft: 38)

Notably, Ashcroft opines Language localizes and attracts value away from a British 'norm' eventually displacing the hegemonic centrality of the idea of norm/canon itself. Finally, the 'double vision' imposed by the historical distinction between metropolis and colony ensures that in all post-colonial cultures, monolithic perceptions are less likely. (37)

Unlike Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which had a pure village setting, proverbs were used by males to reinforce their masculinity. It is largely a male art in Igbo society. However, with the narrator's gender, urban setting and limited exposure to tradition in *Purple Hibiscus* proverbs are very few to come by. It can also be mentioned that with urbanization and changing times writing has replaced oral lore limiting the use of proverbs. All the proverbs mentioned above were uttered by people who are rooted in their tradition. Aunt Ifeoma is the lone female who represents the new African women: confident and empowered, where gendered spaces of utterance started to disintegrate. Adichie within a very limited space articulates resistance. She and her children have an intercultural edification, where they are allowed to develop their own identities critically observing their surroundings: a symbolic representation of modern day Nigeria.

### **3.1.5 Folk Tales**

Another characteristic cultural feature integral to the African aesthetic is the use of Folktale which has a narrator or a performer. This owes its origin to the West African griot who were historians of ancient Africa played a pivotal role as a storyteller, performer, singer, narrator, poet, and historian. The 'griot' is a repository of all kinds of oral traditions and often seen as a societal leader due to his traditional position as an advisor to royal personages. He is a living archive of people's traditions. The main

job was to entertain the villagers with stories. They would tell mythical stories of gods and spirits of the region. Some of the stories had moral messages that were used to teach children about good and bad behavior and how people should behave to make their village stronger. These stories and events had no written records and would be passed on from one generation to the other as they by word of mouth.

Toni Cade Bambara in his book *Tales and Stories of the Black Folk* (out of print) refers to new versions of folk tales. (124) He states that similar fables and parables with animal stories are used by authors with alterations which are made on the basis of the context these folktales. The authors demonstrate universal applications transcending regional boundaries.

The story of how the tortoise cracked its shell narrated by Papa Nukwu (156-159) is a variant of the same story narrated by Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Papa Nnukwu tells the story of how the turtle got a cracked shell. (PH: 157-161). The story tells how during a famine, all of the animals agreed to eat their mothers. Dog lies and says that his mother died from some disease, when she is actually living in the sky a luxurious life. Dog makes regular visits secretly to her for his food and other requirements. The tortoise finds out, and uses his knowledge to force dog into letting him come up into the sky to feed. One day, tortoise decides to try and beat dog to the sky by imitating dog's voice, and eat dog's portion of the food as well, but dog shows up exactly at the moment when tortoise is climbing the ladder. He shouts to his mother to cut the ladder to the sky, consequently Tortoise falls to the ground, cracking his hard shell.

The character of the tortoise in all African stories plays the role of a trickster. The story undoubtedly has a moral overtone. The idea of love and respect for one's parent

is highlighted in the story and Papa Nnukwu reiterates the duty of a child to respect his parent in his advice to Father Amadi when he flies abroad for his missionary work.

At the socio-political level it gives a political commentary on the nature of governance. Dog shares a parallel with the government which misdirects funds and pockets them leading to mass corruption and deprivation of the common man. The greedy tortoise aligns with the authority (dog) and enjoys the benefits of such an alliance proving that one can reap rich harvest provided one is hand in glove with power in a corrupt society.

Oral African storytelling is a collective communal event where every member participates either in the formal or informal setup. It is an interactive session which reiterates the culture through active involvement which gives them a training about their culture, communal life and traditional education to evolve as a complete individual. In short it aims at a holistic approach to life and living.

To get some sense of African storytelling as a participatory communal experience an interactive 'call-and-response' performance of tortoise and dog can be seen when the cousins along with Papa Nukwu chorus *Njemanze*, (a response made by the dog's mother when he called her).

Call and response forms in storytelling is found seemingly everywhere in Africa. The caller or soloist 'raises the song' and the audience who are also performers respond by (Mutere: "African Oral Aesthetic") In the case of the Igbo stories, the storyteller "calls" out the story in lines; the audience or chorus 'responds' at regular intervals to the storyteller's "calls" aesthetic standards of what constitutes 'good art' in a particular society are learned and culturally-determined. (Iyasere: 107)

The single folktale has a pivotal role to play and works as a catalyst for young Kambili as we notice a change in her process of evolving. It gives her to acknowledge her Igbo identity as she also wants to participate in chanting 'Njemanze' with her cousins. We no longer see her viewing tradition to be taken with contempt or to be distanced from which was her prior conditioned response. It possess a rich knowledge system and is very much like the valid Christian form. The impact of the folktale and the act of participation has emancipated her. The experience of the protagonist of the social and cultural environment depends on gender, race, and class, ethnicity that governs or convolutes the individual's position against the social context. The quest for self-development for a woman is psychological and cultural which needs to be negotiated.

Papa Nnukwu plays the modern griot. He is the paragon of a traditionalist who is a repository of traditional wisdom, knowledge systems and is capable of giving commentary on all Igbo cultural aspects. He plays the tour guide for his grandchildren in *Aro Festival* and gives an elaborate commentary on the spirits and masquerades explaining the connection between the world of living and the dead. In spite of being a single folk tale it can perform the role of many proverbs taken together. Kambili's silent participation in the performance of the tale which educates her has an ennobling effect on her personality and development. It opens her eyes to the alternative world that exists beyond the one defined by Papa. It is not to be distanced from which was her prior conditioned response. It possess a rich knowledge system and is very much like the valid Christian form. The impact of the folktale and the act of participation has emancipated her.

The essence of most African novel is built on songs anecdotes, fables, folktales et al. and these have found their manifestation in *Purple Hibiscus*. Adichie has carefully resorted to the interweaving of a folktale into the narrative structure of the plot in the form of Papa Nnukwu who epitomizes the iconic traditionalist, a significant cultural matrix, an upholder of tradition and custodian of culture. The interweaving of a folktale with a story teller deliberated by Papa Nnukwu within the framework of the narrative serves the purpose of the element of orality, an integral element in African novel wherein literacy and orality coalesce. It is through this oral medium that the knowledge and wisdom is passed by word of mouth to the next generation emphasizing the quintessential element of traditional wisdom and importance of collective identity over an individual identity in a traditional society. As Kolawale has rightly pointed out that literature is the best tool for cultural transmission and the values associated to it to the future generation. Papa Nukwu is the traditional storyteller, with a repository of traditional wisdom regarding tales, religious ceremonies, and rituals. The future generation i.e., Jaja, Kambili, always distanced themselves from tradition, in fact had remained alienated from their roots and culture. They are products of cultural imperialism where indigenous customs are despised and one approximated to European norms in order to be considered progressive. Here they find themselves being given a new lease of life. Papa Eugene had always deprived them from such knowledge as he labelled them as 'godlessness' and 'heathen' ways or 'devilish folklore'. Such instances have led them to a rediscovery of their roots and their selves.

In African oral culture folktales are called narrative proverbs as stated by Obiechina they perform the same function as pithy sayings do structurally and organically.

Stories may not actually breathe, but they can animate.

The breath imputed by this book's title is the breath of a god in creation stories, as that god gives life to the lump that will become human. Stories animate human life; that is their work. Stories work with people, for people, and always stories work on people, affecting what people are able to see as real, as possible, and as worth doing or best avoided. Human life depends on the stories we tell: the sense of self that those stories impart, the relationships constructed around shared stories, and the sense of purpose that stories both propose and foreclose. (Frank: 2010)

### **3.1.6 Festival**

*The Aro Festival: Dance of the Masquerades or Masked spirits*

Another element that Adichie includes is the Aro Festival.

This is a festival to which Papa Nnukwu takes Aunt Ifeoma and the grandchildren to be a cultural witness. They watched the dancing masquerades called *Mmuo* or 'spirits'. 'In the Western imagination masques and masked dances are the single most representative symbol of art making and performance in Africa. The masquerade transforms the masked dancer into a powerful animated spirit force. As masquerades suppress human identity, it also transforms the dancer into a new and often a powerful entity that suggests the supernatural realm. Two entities and realms are often evoked in masked performance. The first are ancestral spirits who are supposed to return to the temporal world to aid living members of the community. The other are localized nature spirits, who like ancestral spirits demand respect but also reward the community with good health, a bountiful harvest and many children.(Encyclopedia)

Jaja is unable to comprehend the significance of the masquerades and questions about them. Papa Nnukwu reprimands for such ignorance and bids him to observe reverence.

This is Adichie's attempt to recreate and 'reconfigure Africa's past into a meaningful cultural environment 'and to enable the emerging generations from distancing and discarding their culture and take pride in their heritage. Adichie's way of asserting that tradition can exist way into the present in its original, reinvented, banned or restored manner. Africanism is not synonyms with being primitive as opposed to the binary of whiteness and progress. It is living in hybrid spaces, a way of life that characterizes modern Africa. The tradition and modern, the past and the present, local and global jostle to posit the 'Glocal'. Negotiations at the individual level, which can be religious, social structure, hierarchies, and personal values need to be re visioned to form a new overall identity.

### **3.1.7 Ritual**

A ritual performance marks a meaningful event or transition through various kinds of coordinated and individual actions. As occasions or events, ritual performances are often considered emotionally or aesthetically heightened occasions as well.

Ritual performance in Africa is highly diversified. People practice rituals which may be concerned with religion, healing, and political, individual or social transformations.

*The Itu Nzu Ritual* (PH: 166-169)

A ritual performed by Papa Nukwu during the early hours of dawn with a kerosene lamp in a state of nakedness. Aunt Ifeoma wanted Kambili to watch Papa Nnukwu perform the ritual Kambili remembered Papa Nukwu being called a traditionalist by Ifeoma and not a heathen yet she wondered why she wanted her to watch the performance which was in fact a prayer of innocence. He prayed for every member of the family for their health, wealth and prosperity. The physical state of nakedness was unacceptable for Kambili. According to the tenants of Christianity, being exposed to

nakedness was considered sinful. However, Papa Nnukwu's nakedness did not embarrass her nor did she find anything sinful. His prayer was no different from the Catholic prayers that she said and she discovered a similarity in all forms of prayer and worship, indeed it was another eye-opener for her.

Through this ritual Adichie subscribes to the idea on tradition which is 'any accepted pattern of behavior, way of speaking, or complex of ideas that shape action can be called 'tradition' regardless of the length of the time it has been in existence' (Intro: Encyclopedia). Kambili's unilateral view about religion gets diffused. She is now able to perceive religion from other perspectives circumscribed within their defined spaces, self-contained without condemning and is capable of internalizing it, with an ever extending horizon.

#### *The Mmuo ritual or initiation*

The term Initiation evokes rites of passage from childhood to adulthood, leading to the integration of young individuals into the social group. These rituals still play a very important role in many traditional African societies. They deal with a specific age group and take place at a critical time in the development of the individual who undergoes a process of psychological, intellectual and physical transformation. Adolescents tend to challenge, indeed to reject the models that society tries to impose upon them. They aspire to take the place of elders, while the latter fear of being dispossessed of their privileges. The initiation rites are intended both to promote the transformation of the young into adults and to resolve latent conflicts among generations. (Initiation: Encyclopedia)

In *Purple Hibiscus* Obiora has undergone 'initiation'. In spite of being a Catholic he has been initiated into adulthood though he is younger to Jaja. He participates in

certain traditional rites indicating maturity and acceptance in the social circuit capable of sharing responsibilities. Jaja is ignorant to the ways of this world and his denial of initiation rites has marginalized him as Kambili feels.

### **3.2 Religious enculturation as a marker of identity**

This rite emphasizes on the fact that one can maintain tradition and remain a Christian at the same time. The rite earths him to his roots as an African and at the same time does not interfere with the practice of his religion. Ifeoma's god transcends the religious divisions of different cultures. Obiora's initiation does not prevent him from observing Catholic sacramental rites that includes confirmation: the equivalent Christian rite of passage.

Adichie though a cultural forerunner of Chinua Achebe who took the license from him lived in a time when Christianity had taken over most parts of her country, a much more advanced stage of British colonization compared to Chinua Achebe. *Purple hibiscus* is the modern take of *Things Fall Apart*. It was a time when Christianity and missions were a part and parcel of day to day culture and religion and had its varied manifestations in traditional Igbo culture very much like the indigenous religions. Adichie is preoccupied with issues arising within an inculturated Catholicism which takes into account insertion of Christianity into various human cultures. Inculturation is an ongoing process in need of continual improvement and updating which can only be achieved through syncretism. Pope John Paul II opined (1995: 60) 'Catechism takes flesh in the various cultures' is embodied in Fr. Amadi and Aunt Ifeoma.

Adichie's clash of modernity and tradition and the ways of negotiation into the discovery of the self in the hybridized spaces through the metaphor of the Purple

Hibiscus has been explored with ingenuity. She has explored numerous possibilities like tradition, language, orality, ethnicity to negotiate individual identity.

The new written literature in European language believes in intergenerational intertextuality. They resort to a wide range of literary works and western models. Unlike the tropes that defined national identity earlier ‘the third generation writers’ endeavored to define a new African aesthetics. Adichie celebrated Nigerian intellectual ardor and cultural opulence through her works and style. She like Achebe had also achieved literary enculturation by introducing African storytelling and orature with western form of the novel.

### **3.3 HALF OF A YELLOW SUN**

‘A landmark novel Adichie brings to history a lucid intelligence and compassion and a heartfelt plea for memory’.(*Guardian*)

*Half of a Yellow Sun* made it to the New York Times list for 100 notable novels published in 2006 and went to clinch the Orange Broad band award in 2007.

The backdrop is the Biafran –Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70. Many books have been written on the Biafran conflict that includes fiction and nonfiction Chinua Achebe’s *Girls at war and other stories*, Buchi Emchetta’s *Destination Biafra*’ Elechi Amadi’s *Sunset in Biafra*, Chukwuemeka’s Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn* and a host of other nonfiction. Adichie acknowledges her inspiration to the books mentioned above as well as other sources which inspired her to write on the dialectics of war. It was an event that she did not want to forget nor wanted the others to do so. Adichie stated that ‘I wanted to engage with my history to make sense of the present, because many of the issues that led to the war remains unresolved today in Nigeria’. (The stories of Africa: Q & A with Chimamanda NgoziAdichie) shares the same belief with Chinua

Achebe when she was questioned about her interest in the Biafran war as she was born seven years after the war. In the preface to *Morning Yet on Another day* Achebe states “I believe that if one were to survive as a nation we need to grasp the meaning of our tragedy. One way to remind ourselves constantly of the things that happened and how we feel when they are happening” Stieve Ayorinde quotes Adichie during an interview after her winning the Orange Broad band prize in 2007. “My book is a refusal to forget. “It is indeed a plea for heart felt memory”.

### **3.3.1 Synopsis of the novel**

The novel takes the course of the lives of a pair of female twins born in a wealthy Igbo Nigerian family. After completion of their education in Britain they return to their homeland each chalking out their own course in life following different paths. Olanna the poised, beautiful, sophisticated, goes to pursue her career to teach in the university of Nsukka. Kainene, the confident, authoritative level headed, helps her father chief Ozobia in managing his factories and business. Olanna is attracted to Odenigbo Mathematics professor at the University of Nsukka and a diehard Igbo nationalist. Olanna goes to live with him as a partner. Odenigbo’s domestic help, Ugwu a young boy from a bush village initially finds Nsukka luxurious and marvels at every aspect of modern living, right from a water tap in the kitchen to a refrigerator or meat as a course in every meal. The couple take the pain to educate him and Ugwu equally shows, inclination and every sign to aspire to their hopes. Life goes on with evenings warming up with the arrival of guests, music, laughter, eating, drinking peppery soup, wine and endless discussions on geo political and social issues. High flown rhetoric ensues on Pan-Africanism, debates discussions liberally dot the evenings. The north south dichotomy of Nigeria and, massacre of Igbo’s over the

decades continue to occupy center stage. The meaning of nation and the identity of an Igbo, multi ethnicity were the regular topics discussed. As Ugwu's education and evolving in affirming and recognizing his Igbo identity continues, Ugwu comments on his Master's Odenigbo's definition. 'Of course but my point is that the only authentic identity for an African is the tribe'. Master said "I am a Nigerian because the white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed *black* to be as different as possible from the *white*. But I was an Igbo before the white man came". (HOAYS: 20) Hence the rhetoric of nation, and nationhood gains prominence from the beginning of the novel which is the basic theme.

One of the consequences of post-colonial world is fragmentation and different groups vying with one another to grab power. Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun* deals with this theme. It is about the Nigerian-Biafran war which broke out as a consequence of this internal power struggle *Half of Yellow sun* explores the lives of four characters within the background of the Biafran war and how it affects their lives. There is a mature and in depth exploration of serious existential issues like identity, meaning of existence, nationhood, rootlessness, fear, insecurity and problems like racism, sexism, colonialism, power, politics, betrayal, personal relationships, etc. It is a story of survival and highlights the struggles and nobility of ordinary lives, which need to be told as much as global stories. Amid the crisis and devastating effects of war people also live, love and dream: Engage in the art of living. An interesting experiment in narrative technique used by Adichie is the use of book within a book: A metanarrative in which one of the characters is writing a book and excerpts from it carries the story forward, adding new dimensions in narration.

Mapping a series of political events and upheavals, in the form of several coups, mutinies, and massacres the novel describes the responses of the characters from the onset to the entire duration of the Biafran conflict.

Kainene, Olanna's twin sister on the other hand pursues her career and becomes close to a British expatriate, Richard Churchill who defies all the Eurocentric tropes. He is in love with Igbo land and *Igbo Ikwe art* which makes him travel to Nigeria from England. He assimilates and identifies with Igbo's, speaks Igbo and tries to be an Igbo by falling in love madly with Kainene even after having a flirtatious relationship with Susan: a British who with her myopic vision is a poor cultural guide to Nigeria by misinforming him that Nigeria comprises of only three tribes each characterized by its own idiosyncrasies and also a racially colored image about the sexual disposition of African woman.

Meanwhile, Odenigbo's mother disapproves of her son's relationship with Olanna, uses charm by going to the *Dibia* and brings Amala her housemaid for her son. Taking advantage of Olanna's absence she becomes successful to get Amala closer to Odenigbo and establish a physical relationship. Ugwu becomes a mute spectator. Consequently, Amala gets pregnant. A female baby is born which master's mother immediately disowns and is brought up by Olanna in spite of Odenigbo's betrayal as she was unable to bear a child from him. She names her 'Baby'. Life follows its own course in the midst of turmoil and unrest. Sudden changes in the political scenario with occasional bombing, and regular news feeds from the radio creates a sense of insecurity. Olanna and Ugwu would help people travelling South with food. However, this philanthropy did not continue for long, eventually Nsukka is attacked and people were displaced from their jobs leading to paucity of funds and essential supplies. Food

supplies and medicines were cut off, thousands died due to malnutrition, starvation, and disease. With attacks becoming frequent homes and shelters were shelled and devastated, people had to live in relief camps. Olanna and Ugwu helped children in the camps to study. Eventually, situations come to a state when it becomes a question for survival. Making queues for food became a regular affair, Ugwu was conscripted in the war twice. Many young boys were taken forcibly in the name of liberation who fought without arms and ammunitions. They were ill-dressed and unequipped to face the ravages of war. Odenigbo's high-flown rhetoric became dimmer and it was replaced by his regular evening visits to the Tanzanian bar. He was a disillusioned man. Kainene could not remain aloof from the cause of the war and gets passionately involved. She tries to procure food from different organization to feed the starving. On one such quest she crosses *affia* attack (the borders) disappears and remains untraced for days together. Olanna, Odenigbo, Ugwu waits expectantly for her return. Olanna makes all efforts to trace her but in vain. Towards the end of the novel there is 'hope': Hope for Kainene's return, symbolizing a reversal of the clock: a disdain for war and the futility that it entails. Adichie summarizes by implying that there is 'no humanity in war' and we ought to remember its implications by 'not forgetting' highlighting the need for retelling of a story.

In *Purple Hibiscus* the author has resorted to a profusion of folklore in the tapestry of the novel wherein an entire Igbo culture is brought before us. Innovations in stylistic devices, syntax, words rhythm and cultural nuances. The first lines echo Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where the author like Achebe wanted to recreate a past with a difference. Adichie wanted to adhere to the norms of the 'Achebe school' as the opening lines are a clear indication of an echo of Achebe's debut novel *Things Fall*

*Apart*. *Purple Hibiscus* was her maiden venture, a stupendous success in the genre of novel writing wherein intergenerational intertextuality is evident.

With *Half of a Yellow Sun* published in 2006 we find her maturing as a writer where she delves into complex issues, the dialectics of the Biafran and Nigerian Civil war. Adichie embarks on her mission of storytelling, a painful story indeed, to highlight its futilities and an urge to the future generations that it was an attempt not to forget, a reminder about the dangers involved in its recurrence.

A massive novel which runs into four hundred thirty three pages captures Igbo life and deliberates on the socio political scenario of Nigeria as a nation. The creation of the state of Biafra, a nation chalked out from the South Eastern part of Nigeria by the Igbos. The novel deals with the history and the events that led to the creation of Biafra. A multivocal narrative structure that Adichie adopts from the point of the principal characters is a technique that Chinua Achebe has used in *Anthills of Savannah*. The history of the nation of Biafra is encapsulated in a book that Richard decides to write, 'The World Was Silent When We Died'. It is a narrative within a narrative: a technique used by Achebe in *Things fall Apart* when the District commissioner decides to write on Okonkwo in his book 'the pacification .....'. Adichie's metanarrative deals with the history of Nigeria and the Igbos, the creation of Nigeria by the British, a clubbing of disparate tribes into one nation for their personal benefits oblivious to the multi-ethnic structure of the society which resulted in regular conflicts between different ethnic communities. Such an artificial configuration form the artificial nation of Nigeria, which formed the hotbed of all tribal hostilities. Outbreaks of conflicts, leading to ethnic cleansing of Igbos from the colonial period at regular intervals ultimately leading to secession from Nigeria and

the consequent backlash of such an action. A country torn apart by tribalism, religion, ethnicity and economic imperialism. Adichie drives home the point of the futility of war, evils of sectarianism, the parochial attitude leading to a civil war which does not yield any tangible results. The message that runs clear is all that it requires is to recognize the differences or otherness of every community and negotiate one's space in this wide and disparate spectrum. The state of ambivalence in such a set-up is bound to exist. Yet, in a hybrid space where different cultures collide the idea of a nation becomes illusive.

The idea of a nation to an Igbo will always remain elusive. Biafra has been metaphor for many Igbo writers. The writers of the earlier generation have dreamt of an Igbo nation as they had a first-hand experience of the war. Adichie though not directly involved with war has memories of the losses that her family incurred and the trauma and scars that it had left, ultimately leading to the dialectics of war.

### **3.3.2 Folklore in *Half of a yellow sun***

Adichie has definitely given some local color to the novel in the form of folklore. The Igbo cultural life specifically in the use of language, capturing the rhythm in speech, Igbo syntax and vocabulary. A liberal sprinkling of Igbo words dealing with food, drink, ethno medicines rituals, art, find their place. A list of words given below provides a clue.

### **3.3.3 Adichie's use of language**

The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is known for its sophistry in diction which the writer was able to achieve with her exploration of possible choices of diction, using her bilingual and multilingual acumen.

Moreover, the exploration of language choices gives a human face to this sobering story, considering the war orientation of the novel. The use of code switching from Igbo language to English compels the not too proficient Igbo reader, to go the extra mile to unravel some ‘strange’ words in order to fully appreciate the novel. This is a positive trend towards bilingualism and this is also what the writer aims to achieve in a subtle manner. Adichie employs code switching to create a desired effect in the novel, which encourages the reader to keep in tune with the least proficiency in Igbo language, thereby encouraging bilingualism.

***List of words***

1 Kedu afa gi	what is your name?	5
2 Ngwa	endearment	7
3 Nee Anya	”	8
4 akpu	food	“
5 Ube tree	A fruit bearing tree	8
6 Ummna		9
7 Nkem	My own	15
8 Arigbe	medicinal herb considered to soften a man’s heart	19
9 Afa ma Jomo	I am Jomo	19
10 I Fukwa	Very nice	34
11 Omalicha	Very beautiful	37
12 Ndi be anyi!	My people	38

13	Oga	Swell Igbo musical instrument	38
14	Kuka tree, Kuka soup	food	40
15	Egbukwala	Don't kill it	48
16	Nno	Welcome	71
17	Maguno		
18	Moi moi, Uziza	ethnic food	86
19	Ori Okpa	a festival	86
20	Kunie		89
21	Deje		
22	Kola nuts		91
23	Alligator pepper	condiment	91
24	Atu herb	Traditional mouth cleanser	92
25	Maka Chukwu	by god	
25	Obianuju	one who competes	106
26	Ne anyi Egbe	Yes I totally agree	
27	Iwe din'obi	There is anger in our hearts	171
28	A na emukwa?	How are things?	173
29	Agu A swear word	curse	192
30	Aturu	sheep	211
31	Ummuada	meeting	239

32 Ezima	cold and fever	254
33 Makwa		265
34Nwanyi	beautiful woman	272
35 Akidi	food rich in protein	318
36 Ogbunigwe, ammunitions	locally made bombs	

Arresting speech rhythms in **phrases** like

(a) *Did you eat mushrooms? Ugwu told Anulika Sweep like a woman*(HOAYS: 92)

(b) *Recalling them made salt rush to her mouth* (HOAYS: 193)

### 3.3.4 Folk belief and customs

(a) *She had already told him that he spent too much time around women cooking and he might never grow a beard if he kept doing it.*(HOAYS: 13)

A patriarchal society which has defined gender roles. Overlapping of such roles amounts to manifestations in unusual physical traits. This was a said by Anulika, Ugwu's sister when Ugwu told her that he cooked in Master's kitchen. In Igbo culture it is a myth that if a man entered a woman's domain he would stop to have the physical traits of a man.

(b) *Ugwu looked at the man's face and murmured a curse about acute diarrhea following him and all of his offspring for life.* (HOAYS: 13)

(c) *May chicken pox afflict you if you lie.*(HOAYS: 192)

(d) *Cholera will strike you dead.*

(e) *He muttered a curse under his breath about her stomach swelling from eating faeces.* (HOAYS: 22)

A curse is another form of 'verbal art' that has a purgatory effect. It is uttered in a heightened emotional state, an action to release pent up feelings. When encountered by any unpleasant situation it is customary to utter curses. Using swear words and curses is common amongst the village folk or the common folk.

**Curse and swear words** spelt out to ventilate emotions is a regular feature in Igbo society as is seen in Ugwu's case on several occasions. Minutest displeasure or discomfort amounts to cursing reflecting it to be a part of the cultural milieu.

### **3.3.5 Sorcery and witchcraft**

*(a) Evil spirits that was it. The evil spirits had made him do it. They lurked a curse under his breath everywhere, after all. Whenever he was ill with fever, or once when he fell from a tree his mother would rub his body with oakum, all the while muttering, 'We shall defeat them they will not win'. (HOAYS: 22)*

As in the belief of many African communities personified supernatural agents may cause disease. Some misfortunes described as disease in folk explanatory models are caused by 'malevolent spirits'. When indigenous people attribute illness to spirits. For any kind of ailment the evil spirits are blamed be it a fever or any form of accident. Herbs are used as potions which is rubbed on the body, followed by chanting.

*(b) Grandmother believed that agribe softens a man's heart. (HOAYS: 15)*

Using agribe (an herb that acts as a charm) in food brings a change to a person's emotions, causing a change in feelings. It has been in used since times immemorial in folk medicine, either to pacify or win someone's heart.

*(c) Ugwu knew many stories about the dibia from Nwafor Agbada. The childless first wife had tied the second wife's womb, the woman who had her prosperous neighbor's*

*son go mad the man who killed his brother because of a land quarrel Perhaps master's mother would tie Olanna's womb or cripple her, or most frightening of all, kill her.*(HOAYS:98)

*Mama had indeed gone to the dibia. The medicine would be for Olanna and not Amala. It may be though the medicine worked on woman, and Mama would have to protect herself and Amala to make sure that only Olanna died or became barren or went mad ....and would bury it in the yard to keep it potent.* (HOAYS: 215)

Magic, witchcraft, sorcery is a part of all traditional culture 'Understanding them gives insight into the workings of the cosmological ideas and workings of the society' .They are not uniquely African but a manifestation of universal way of thinking (Encyclopedia:506)

*(d)Anulika had suffered a terrible stomach ache after killing a gecko.* (HOAYS: 48)

A myth associated with killing of gecko. Perhaps it is associated to conservation of wild life and endangered species.

*(e) To consult a dibia for any kind of ailment, trouble.*(HOAYS: 87)

Dibia's play an integral role in Igbo culture and faith as they function as fortune-tellers, soothsayers, and also provide medicines in the form of herbal potions to the ailing. The common folk would always seek a dibia's help in all problems.

*(f) The dibia had asked Ugwu's mother to tell the evil spirits to leave her alone.*  
(HOAYS: 91)

A dibia would always give the cause of any problem to evil spirits lurking in the vicinity. As in African communities personified supernatural agents may cause

disease. Some misfortunes described as disease in the folk explanatory models are caused by malevolent spirits.

‘In many traditional African societies all human beings are potential sources of evil Igbo’s also believe that some human beings can tap the pervasive power of the universe either to harm or augment person’s life force. These human agents are the sorcerers. Sorcerers apply medicine to harm others, and their victims may get ill or even die. They are the people who oscillate between harmful and protective activities by using potent medicine. Their positive role in human wellbeing are realized when they are consulted to provide preventive medicine or medicine for revenge. Diseases and illness are attributed to human agents who practice witchcraft. Witches and wizards are essentially the agents of evil and their activities never have aspects which local people describe as positive in relation to human wellbeing’.

‘The sorcerers are those human agents who have an access to mystical power and can manipulate potent medicines and spells against other people because of jealousy and vengeance’. (Encyclopedia: 507)

*(g) Master found a rain holder on the wedding day .The elderly man arrived early and dug a shallow pit at the back of the house, made a bonfire in it, and then sat in the thick of the bluish smoke, feeding dried leaves to the fire (HOAYS: 200)*

Among certain communities in Africa are rainmakers who can stop or make rain according to the demands of the situation stopping the rain when it is undesirable, using medicines and spells. (Rainmakers: 448)

*(h) One who brings kola nuts brings life..... Let the eagle perch and the dove perch, and if either decrees that the other not perch, it will not be well for him. May God bless this kola in Jesus name. (HOAYS: 164)*

This was said by Nnaemeka's father when Richard came with the tragic news of Nnaemeka's gory death. A common proverb among the Igbo's indicating accommodating of differences. This is an echo of Achebe's proverb from 'Things Fall Apart' but the difference lies in, breaking the nut in the name of Jesus and not ancestors highlighting the fact that tradition is a concept of identity. Tradition is something that may exist way into the present in its original, adapted or even banned and restored kind of a way. It is a process of negotiation.

*(i) They will have Anulika's wine carrying ceremony tomorrow. (HOAYS: 176)*

Before marriage it is mandatory to take palm wine to the bride's home from the groom's house to ask for the girl's hand.

*(j) It surprised her how many men and women in Abba gathered at the square for meeting crowded around the ancient udala tree Odenigbo had told her how, as children he and others, sent to sweep the village square in the mornings would instead spend most of their time fighting over the **udala** fruit They could not climb the tree or pluck the fruit because it was a taboo; udala belonged to the spirits ..... Abba kwenu! The **dibia** Nwafor Agbada said the man whose medicine was said to be the strongest in these parts (HOAYS: 190)*

Here the dibia was consulted to predict the future of the town of Abba during war

*(k) He hardly noticed the **Mmuo** masculine figures covered in grass ....holding them back and what did they mean (HOAYS: 211)*

The Mmuo / masquerades are to be seen in Adichie's as well as Achebe's cultural representations of Igbo life and customs. An essential feature of representation of

other life which symbolically explains the coming and going of spirits of ancestors from other world: a way of living in Igbo cosmology.

The world of black magic, charms, spells are confined to the world of Ugwu, Jomo, mama, Anulika, Harrison, Ugwu's aunt and other characters representative of the bush village immersed in tribal myths and beliefs. Ugwu is grounded in his world of village lore, superstition, magic, and charms. Mama who comes to her son's house shares a similar world with Ugwu as she practices black magic, buries objects /charms which Ugwu interprets that she tries to tie Olanna's womb or cause death. Mama rubbing potions on Amala's body to ward off evil eye is used as another form of narrative line. Ugwu tells Jomo of mama's action to which he gives a logical interpretation yet at times bound to take sides with Ugwu and recounts certain incidents from his personal life like Ozumba's house girl is a witch (HOAYS: 25)and flies above the mango tree to visit her fellow witches. This makes Ugwu justify his thought process on seeing flies or scorpions which eventually ends up into being convinced about mama's sinister contrivances. Ugwu acts as a cultural buffer between modern sensibilities of an urbanite and superstition of his bush village.

Odenigbo's mother calls Olanna, a witch; alluding to her twin birth considered an ominous in Igbo culture who did not suck her mother's breast.

It is also observed that certain communities have a flexible system in naming children they capture certain natural and social phenomena and encode it in their culture through names *Obianuju* (one who completes) is one such example. A traditional name given to Baby

### **3.3.6 Storytelling : Devices of healing**

‘The stuff of storytelling profession has been around since the beginning of recorded time. These materials include the remnants, relics and shards of human experience. These are snatches of lived lives, images that reflect it and the mythic images that shape it. It is only the presence of the storyteller that was required to knit these materials. ‘In spite of the ancientness associated with stories they function in contemporary context constructing around them the images of the present. (Encyclopedia: 332)

The Biafran war is a vestige of history, a bitter truth. The Federation of Nigeria gained its independence on October 1, 1960, and two years later its constitution was adopted and it was admitted to the Common wealth. A myriad of culture with diverse ethnicities characterized the Nigerian nation. The genesis of the Biafra war and the marginalization of the Igbo lay in the Europe’s ‘scramble for Africa’. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, European economic and political rivalries led to appropriation of African territory. The Berlin Conference (1884-85) established ‘spheres of influence’ that legitimized the control of large sections of the continent by European powers and allowed further colonial expansion. This mindless scramble resulted in a redrawing of the map of Africa where imaginary border lines cut across traditional tribal boundaries, leading to traumatic experiences in post independent and recent African history. Great Britain carved an area out of West Africa with different ethnic groups and unified it as Nigeria. Three predominant groups of the area were the Igbo, the Yoruba and the Hausa-Fulani, who had different political and religious systems. While in the north the Hausa-Fulani were governed by conservative Islamic hierarchy, the Yoruba in the south west and the Igbo in the south east became

autonomous, democratically organized communities which encouraged direct participation of individuals in decision making and laid emphasis on social achievement, which in turn helped them to challenge colonial rule. The British ruled them indirectly through Warrant Chiefs. The Igbo dominated region was more unified and therefore more prosperous, which encouraged the literate elites and tradesmen to spread out all over Nigeria. The years following Nigeria's independence in 1960 were marked by regional and ethnic tensions, trial and imprisonment of leading opposition politicians accused of treason and a violence marred election in 1964. Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa, the first prime minister of independent Nigeria was killed in a coup in 1966 after which Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo and the Commander of the army emerged as the country's new leader. Ironsi suspended the constitution and announced that many public services which were controlled by the regions would henceforth be controlled by the federal government. Ironsi was assassinated in a countercoup and replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon. The coup was followed by the massacre of thousands of Igbo in the northern region of Nigeria. In May 1967 Gowon announced the creation of a new twelve-state structure. The Igbo dominated Eastern Region was to be divided into three states of which two were dominated by non-Igbo groups. The division was to sever the vast majority of Igbo from profitable coastal ports and oil rich fields in the Niger Delta. The government policies and the attacks on the Igbo were seen by leaders of the Eastern Region as official attempts to push the Igbo to the margins of Nigerian society and politics. The region's Igbo dominated assembly authorized Lieutenant Colonel Odemegwu Ojukwu to declare independence as the Republic of Biafra.

The Biafra War was precipitated by the attempts of the government to lessen the political powers of the Igbo, and their genocide. As Nigerian forces moved to retake

Biafra, a three year war erased Biafra from the map leaving behind more than a million dead. Nigeria also imposed economic sanctions against Biafra. Nigeria violated the Aburi Accord (1967)

Throughout Africa as pointed by Basil Davidson the "nation" that follows colonialism is usually not much of a gift; in fact, it has been more akin to "the black man's burden," a precarious clustering of people who had nothing in common except proximity. Imre Szeman states that all nations must be seen as essentially arbitrary configurations of culture and power; an artificial construct which is obscured by nationalism to make it appear natural and timeless. (117) And within the notion of nationalism, the harm of contending one ethnic group against another (divide and rule policy) became workings of colonial government, in subsequent years continue to undermine the chances for stability and healing in a newly colonializing world.

In Nigeria no attempts were made by any agency to tackle the damages wrought by war very soon after the nominal Independence. Contemporary fiction has been playing the role of healing which has been used by many writers from Biafra of Igbo heritage.

The truth which the world had to know was never documented in any official records of the Biafra War (1967-70). The world's information and updates of the war remained confined to the BBC news, Radio Kaduna, reports by western journalists and the disturbing photographs of starvation that became synonymous with the war. Official records of the Biafra War also known as the Nigerian Civil war reported one to three million military and civilian casualties. The photographs of children who were victims of severe hunger and malnutrition caused by the Nigerian blockade garnered sympathy for Biafra worldwide. But the efforts of the world community did

not go beyond a few countries recognizing the new nation, and in providing relief aid which did not reach Biafra because Nigeria used starvation as a war strategy. The war ended with Nigerian victory and General Yakubu Gowon of the Federal army declared that there was “no victor or no vanquished” and that the end of war was to be “an opportunity to build a new nation.” (*Nigeria’s War Ends, UPI Online*)

Building a new nation has not been an easy task for Nigeria though the end of the war provided promising avenues for development as the restoration of peace and the reintegration of Biafra into Nigeria was remarkably rapid. Neither the booming oil trade nor any national development plan could bring about peace. Very soon the country faced problems of growing corruption and the government’s failure to address several ethnic issues, problems which continue even today. But the story of the erasure of a nation and its people was never forgotten. It had to be remembered and retold because many today still believe in the Biafra cause, as evident in a recent letter from the Biafra Foundation to the United Nations (*Enekwechi, Biafra’s Open Letter to UN*)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) presents the human experience of this political event which was not only an inhuman legacy of colonialism but also reflected the cruel faces of ethnic violence, oil politics and economic deprivation. The official records of the dead does not provide the true stories of war, the memories continue to haunt the survivors which changes the course of their lives that make returning to the old times difficult. Igbo writers chose to write about the war as it enabled the Igbo spirit to survive. Noted poet Christopher Okigbo died in the war, Chinua Achebe was politically involved and became the

spokesperson of the Biafran cause, and Buchi Emcheta wrote 'Destination Biafra'. All these writers cherished the spirit of Igbo's endurance.

Adichie accommodates innovative techniques in her narration which makes one think of the world as human rather than material, and how in spite of belonging to the same human race, yet history and politics affect us differently. How human stories are more important than political stories. She narrates the Biafra war through radio news, coverage by foreign journalists, the book written by Ugwu, and through stories of the war. The news of the coup, the secession, the progress of the war and its end reach the characters in the novel through news broadcasts on the BBC, Radio.

Kaduna and Biafra Radio. The voice on the radio always commanding control over the information of the war, becomes Adichie's narrative device to present the views of those in power. Adichie also narrates how foreign journalists covered the war. The two American journalists in the novel visited refugee camps in Biafra along with interpreters, and took photographs of starving children. At each refugee camp they asked: Are you hungry? Of course, we are all hungry. Do you understand the cause of the war? Yes, the Hausa vandals wanted to kill all of us, but God was not asleep. Do you want the war to end? Yes, Biafra will win very soon. (HOAYS: 371) These answers made them wonder how, "They can't have eaten a meal in two years. I don't see how they can still talk about the cause and Biafra and Ojukwu". (HOAYS: 370). They arrived at conclusions of the war, "Ojukwu will have to surrender. This is Nigeria's final push, and there's no way Biafra will recover all the lost territory". (HOAYS: 372)

What escaped their myopic views on power narratives, are narrated in the novel encompassing humanitarian postulates how many Biafra soldiers fought without food

and shoes, how they practiced with wooden guns, how planes landed at night without lights carrying relief, how lorries were loaded in the dark, and very often the men unloading the planes walked into the propellers, how the tarmac was covered during the day with palm leaves, how they moved the crude oil to their refineries at night in tankers with no headlights, all done to avoid Nigerian bombers hovering above. Adichie writes that these journalists were like, “President Nixon’s fact finders from Washington or Prime Minister Wilson’s commission members from London who arrived with their firm protein tablets and their firmer conclusions: that Nigeria was not bombing civilians, that the starvation was over flogged, that all was as well as it should be in the war.” (HOAYS: 371) To them it was just another war, for people were dying everywhere. “People are dying in Sudan and Palestine and Vietnam. People are dying everywhere”. (HOAYS: 374) To them covering Africa is was another such war.

### **3.4 Adichie’s negotiating of identity**

Third-generation individuals in modern Nigeria, however, are enabled to negotiate their selves within a modern context, since they possess the transnational magic of hybridized identities that allow them to be both ‘self’ and ‘other’. The texts also elucidate the central issues and anxieties with which the focal texts contend, namely the modern Nigerian individual, as well as the individual’s gender and national identity.

Versatile and open identity is, favored above a singular group identity as authenticity in the post colony is a misnomer. Such individually negotiated identities of the protagonists are, in the focal texts, always contested against a common, organized and dominant identity, which society enforces. The apparent friction between collective

group identity and individually negotiated identities on the other, portray the friction existing between the individual and society. According to the third generation, a modern Nigerian identity, is a conglomeration of contesting cultural expressions, religious and political ideologies and therefore, consists of various, equally genuine, identities of which the individual claims ownership. In such a multicultural hybrid sphere the character's identity is highly politicized within the domain of tradition, home, gender that finds its resonance in national politics and identity. To be precise, identities are always in a state of flux. Thus identities are negotiated which are vibrant though opposing to creates a social web. This may have its origin in the past, or imported from other cultures yet are a part of collective, individual or the national.

Garuba explains that he is \_ affirming "all the multiple identities and histories that have come together in the making of this one person". (65) Such a conglomeration of personalities in one person is one of the hallmarks of the third generation and a consistent theme in the novels concerned. The characters in the novels of the third generation tend to construct and draw their identities from multiple histories and ancestries, preventing them being regarded as representatives of any unitary cultural or ethnic group. They are presented as hybrid individuals, emerging from the postcolony, who are what they are.

Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* speaks of the freedom of the human spirit which refuses to be crushed by any form of repression. Seven years after the country's so called independence, the Nigerian Civil

War broke out which extended from July 6, 1967, to January 13, 1970; the rest of the world were mute spectators. Gabon, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zambia acknowledged Biafra as an independent nation. More than three million people fled to

the east which divided the country on ethnic lines. It was a war known for massive decimation of population, due to starvation and disease as food supplies and medicines were stopped rather than blood bath. Today's Nigeria has a young population, many of them have not gone through the experience of war. The contemporariness lies in lesson that it teaches that there is 'no humanity in war'. One needs to recognize the humanity of the others as all human beings are equal. The essence of true harmony lies in acknowledging differences to grasp the greater cause of peace and mutual understanding. This is the message that Adichie wants to get across to her readers.

Adichie's mode of narration takes the form of a story telling. In her own words she emphasizes on the fact that she does not want the people 'to forget'. This places her on a platform where she recounts the events based on memory. It is one tale of the history of a nation, the story of love and hatred, hopes and disillusionment, promises and betrayal. The success of the narrative lies in the reader's capacity to identify with the narrator. "It is the story that can continues beyond the war and the warrior" (*Anthills of Savannah*) as rightly stated by Achebe. Hence, it needs to be told and retold. Adichie does not want people to forget about the grim realities of war and its tragic consequences; what man can made of man, the futility of such exercise, loss of resources and valuable lives. Here Achebe's novelist as a teacher is underscored. Adichie observes as an insider and outsider. As a kind of neo-historical fiction it aims at answering the needs of the present times, of dealing with modern day concerns and with adroitness bridges the historical gap between the fictional narrative and the reader. Matters of the past are seamlessly fused with present stories. The three different narratives of Olanna, Richard, and Ugwu raises awareness of painful events and leads to a pledge to avoid historical repetition. Within the narrative art of

storytelling Adichie has resorted to using folklore in the form of certain strategic devices. Storytelling is healing for Olanna, likewise it is atonement for Ugwu. Storytelling voices the trauma which gets healed with Olanna who narrates stories and Ugwu writes them in his book. His healing comes with writing. She narrates the story of the head of a child with plaited hair in a calabash as they crossed the Niger in a train which the mother was showing to the occupants (HOAYS: 149). It was a gory picture beyond imagination. 'Plaiting' of hair by woman and a 'calabash' is an integral part in African culture and has symbolic resonance of memory and history. Olanna describes Ikejide's death to her sister with the same words: "they were bombing and shelling us, and a piece of shrapnel cut off his head, completely beheaded him, and his body kept running. His body kept running and it didn't have a head". (344) The barbaric ripping of Arize's pregnant body and the child with a pot like belly affected by Kwashiorkor are telling tales of barbarism and inhumanity. Adichie's narrative dexterity to create sensory perceptions and lingering memories with singularity is applaudable. It is through the story that culture, personhood, selfhood and an Igbo can survive.

In spite of being the history of the creation of the nation of Biafra, Adichie does not give a deliberation on the war. It is through radio broadcast, BBC, the foreign journalist and the metanarratives that comes in the form of eight episodes towards the end of certain chapters that Ugwu writes through which one gets acquainted with the Biafran history. Adichie has tactfully used other forms of narrative discourse to weave a new narrative strategy that becomes a part of the postcolonial national narrative.

The story of Richard and his love for *Igbo Igwe art* has made him take his journey to Nigeria and Igbo land. His desire to write a book about the "complicated art of lost-

wax casting during the time of the Viking raids”; dating back to 850 BCE. This bronze pot, is the most prized object discovered by Isaiah Anozie in Igbo-Ukwu in 1938. These pots were probably musical instruments destined to rituals linked to Nri traditional religion and the Ozo title.

He intends to write a book on Igbo art and name it ‘In the time of Roped Pots’. Initially his sojourn seems to be an aimless one without any focus, when finally he adopts the Biafran cause to give meaning to his work and life. He falls in love with Kainene the ‘authentic African ‘for him to identify with the Igbo, he speaks Igbo goes to Niamache’s funeral and also identifies with the Biafran cause. Adichie has employed certain covert folkloric devices through her narrative art. The character of Richard with its state of liminality ,’an anthropological exotic’ , a self-proclaimed identity that is constructed by his romance with Kainene is captured in the resonance symbolic of the ‘*ogbanjee*’ who moves from one realm to the other and is subject to several rebirths . Richard’s quest for identity, to forge a tie with Igbo land and to make sense of his life through writing and establishes to stabilize an unstable state of being. Richard who shuffles to both the realms with shifting identities finally gets rejected as the author of the book to which Ugwu has the sole authority. It was like the authority to tell stories about Africa lie with an African and not with an outsider howsoever well intended. Richard’s assumed identity is rejected through his denied authorship. In spite of Richard’s attempt to be an Igbo by preferring Igbo language and Igbo cuisine he fails to be one. Richard ignores carrying gifts to Nnaméchi’s family as he thinks that his presence would be sufficient to compensate for the loss as he comes to inform about the death of their son, thus ignoring Igbo customs. He also succumbs to racism which has laid dormant in the incident with Madu. Richard remarked Madu was ‘laying his black filthy hands’ on Kainene conjuring the image of

a native to be a sexual predator: a colonist's idea. This hybrid identity can never be recognized whether individual or communal in the state of Biafran nationhood. This is Adichie's strategy to reintegrate Biafra into the historical narrative of Nigeria.

Adichie's literary recreation of the events suggest that the war has perhaps permanently, afflicted the identity of generations of Igbo people. This irrevocable mark is strongly felt by Olanna, when she rejects her Hausa boyfriend Mohammed in spite of his empathies.

Adichie has also re visioned the role of female characters in the novel and has tackled it from feminist perspective. The female protagonist are Western educated with individual mind sets consequently deconstructing the image of an educated woman as, 'a witch', 'spoilt' and 'barren' as perceived by Odenigbo's mother who prefers the village girl Amala for her son. A woman, in postcolonial Nigeria was not supposed to go to the University. The older women perceived highly schooled girls as spoilt 'too much schooling ruins a woman' Mama, referring to Olanna. It gives a woman a big head and she will start to insult her husband. What kind of wife will that be?"...

"These girls that go to university follow men around until their bodies are useless. Nobody knows if she can have children. Do you know? Does anyone know?" (Adichie). Adichie takes traditional views on gender and reconfigures them to present times. The importance of biological motherhood is also rejected as Olanna is unable to conceive yet shoulders all responsibilities of a mother. Nigerian woman writers offer a complete account of hybrid spaces countering patriarchal repression and feminine suppression. Traumatic events, dominant patriarchy, deceit and absent mother allow them to achieve selfhood by a process of discovery of absent voice.

Stereotypical identities has been contested and the result that emerges is the New Nigerian Woman.

The role of a male child is also undermined as the protagonists are empowered females. Besides, the birth of twins considered to be ominous is given a narrative twist with female twins, diligently performing their roles, Olanna as a faculty in the University and Kainene who manages her father's factories. These characters in the course of events adapt to crisis and as true womanist and humanist take up new roles for egalitarian purposes during war, in addition to fostering healthy relationships within her immediate family. The preference for a male child is also shown when Amala delivers a female child and Mama summarily rejects on its birth to be adopted by Olanna and Odenigbo.

To be precise Adichie's novel is about belonging in all different ways Adichie had stated 'I do not accept the idea of a monolithic authenticity' Odenigbo's belonging as an ethno nationalist 'The authentic identity for an African is a tribe', that loses its significance and proves devastating after the Biafran cause is defeated .Odenigbo rejects Pan Africanism The different communities living under identity struggle that lead to violence do not see themselves as the other was opined by Anthony Appiah (1992).Identification is a construction never complete. (Hall and Gay)The awakening and realization of self-worth and selfhood when aunt Ifeka tells Olanna 'Must never behave as if your life belongs to a man .....your life belongs to you and you alone' (HOAYS)from the female perspective. Olanna's individual reflections and realization after being let down by Odenigbo made her reflect on her relationship. 'She wished more rationally that she could love him without needing him. Need gave him power without his trying need was the choicelessness she often felt around him. The duality

practiced to negotiate spaces when Odenigbo tells Ugwu during his lessons 'There are two answers that they will teach you about the land, the real answer and the answer you give to pass. You must read books and learn both answers'. The sense of loss and the inability of the post-colonial subjects to locate themselves finds its echo in 'The real tragedy of the post-colonial is not that the majority of the people had no say in whether or not they wanted the new world; rather the majority of the people have not been given the tools to negotiate the new world'. Kainene's refusal to belong to anyone is sanctioned by her sudden disappearance and being untraceable like the ogbanjee child. Olanna and Odenigbo wait for Kainene's return. Olanna engages a dibia to consult the oracle, pays in the form of brandy and a goat and throws a photograph of Kainene in the river knowing well that Kainene's return is impossible yet does not lose hope. Richard's 'untiring attempts' to be a Biafran, as self-proclaimed, fragile, fabricated construction reminds one of the 'anthropological exotic'. His preference for Kainene an illusion of pure African identity eventually becomes hollow as he reverts to racism. His jealousy for Colonel Madu resulting in a preconceived notion of calling him a black, filthy sexual predator is a glaring example of the dormant, dominant racism. Adichie finally resonates Pan Africanism, the ultimate sense of belonging typical to all African writers 'This is our world, although the people who drew the map decided to put their own land on top of ours, there is no top or bottom you see'.

Adichie's novels are essentially historical, a conscious attempt to recreate definite moments in Nigeria's recent history. The canonical mode is inadequate to represent the postmodern Africa as such the expansion of narrative space, induction of multiple voices to achieve polyphony, and the use of neologism becomes the new narrative strategy. Adichie is aggressive in questioning established system invalidating

patriarchal authorities. Adichie resonates Achebe in her attempt to reclaim the past but at the same time examine the past forces that have brought about the present distortions be it culture or political truths or religion. Adichie is critical of the misuse of religion which is insular, self-indulgent, self-absorbed.

Discursive matters relating to anti-colonial nationalism takes the backseat that had earlier formed the canonical patriarchal voice. Emerging narratives dealing with culture, politics, marginalization and hybridity are enmeshed to form a coherent third generation voice. Though they may not fall into the category of master narratives yet the trajectory they follow is governed by emerging discourses on multicultural and global frames of reference: 'transnational book' that place their works on a global platform. Due to the absence of a hegemonic thought structure the individuals have the liberty to move freely, negotiating their identities in multiple spaces resulting in multiple voices. Individuals have the right to assert their identity in this state of fluidity and shifting spaces. However, the expansive regime with its organizing oppressive structures in the form of cultural and social organizations that characterize the socio political space of Nigeria tries to foil such opportunities. These writers have to work within this contested space and negotiate their identities. The works that emerge are highly informative as the peripheries occupy centerstage. Adichie belongs to a generation where in Christianity has its manifold manifestations. It is inclusive of African cultures and traditional religions. Adichie remarks 'Still I am although a Catholic, I am a Liberal Catholic' (Anya).