



The Faculty of Arts and Education

MASTERS THESIS

Study programme: LITERARY STUDIES (MLIMAS)	...First term, 2020... Open
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Title of thesis: PATRIARCHY AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN THE AFRICAN NOVEL: OBSERVING THE POSITION OF RELIGION IN MAINTAINING THESE STRUCTURES	
Keywords: PATRIARCHY, HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY, AFRICAN NARRATIVE, RELIGION, RESISTANCE, EMANCIPATION	Pages:89..... + attachment / other: Stavanger, <u>16/11/2020</u> date/year

Dedication

This thesis is wholeheartedly dedicated to my family, there really is no better support system than you guys. I love you.

Abstract

*Pertinent discussions and arguments have surfaced on the topic of hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy as themes in most African novels. Focus has been thrown on the representation of biased power structures between gender typical of patriarchies. The consistent marginalisation of female characters by male characters and society at large in works by male authors has spearheaded a feminist movement where contemporary female authors have tried to redeem the image of the female character. This study seeks to review the strategies that male dominance is manifested and preserved in the African novel, using Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) as a yardstick.*

*Religion has been overlooked and undermined in these discussions compared to the scholarly works have named culture and tradition as social institutions that have been used to construct these masculinities. Others have blamed femininity calling it the fuel that enables and enhances patriarchy. A few other works have linked patriarchy to religious beliefs and practices in the African society, suggesting that religion plays a vital role in creating gender inequality in different regions of Africa. Religion has received little attention. This thesis seeks to argue that religion has indeed had an influence on gender inequalities and hegemonic masculinity portrayed in African literary texts. This paper to adds to the growing investigation on patriarchy portrayed in the African novel adding yet another aspect of religion's position in upholding and justifying the conjectures of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity and their symbolic representation in the literary text. Using *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) by Nigerian novelist and playwright, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, I will investigate how religion, and in this case Christianity, is used to fuel and maintain the survival of behaviour in male characters, illuminating nuances where religion has assisted the successes of patriarchy.*

Acknowledgement

Many thanks to my supervisor Peter Ferry for the guidance and transfer of knowledge during this thesis. You provided progressive insights and contributed immensely to the substance of this thesis. Your patience and confidence kept me going. I really could not have done this without you.

Equally important are my amazing friends. Thank you for the support.

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1.0 CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 History and background patriarchy, religion and the African novel

The rippling effect of colonialism and contact with different cultures is still vividly re-echoed in the African society. This has had an impact on the literary culture. There is a lot of concern on colonialism and its effects on the African people, a lot of works of literature put up themes highlighting the arrival of the Europeans and the effects, both negative and positive on Sub-Saharan African cultures. On this premise hangs the consciousness and interactions of race, gender, religion and religious tension, friction between the Western and African cultures, adaption of Western cultures and the significance of these interactions. This thesis is going to add to the generation of analytical work that project how gender inequality, religion, violence and resistance are portrayed in the African novel. Then, bring to light one of the crucial societal pillars that has been used to enforce gender inequality as paraded in the plot of African narratives. The novel chosen for this analysis, *Purple Hibiscus*, is crucial for this work because through its complex and yet meticulously narrated events, it judiciously culminates these various motifs.

1.2 Gender Inequality in the African novel

A simple calculation of predominance will reveal that the most urgent and/or prevalent complexity that is illuminated along with colonialism in the African literary narrative is the issue of gender relations. The positions of men and women are portrayed in literary texts in this order: men occupy a status of superiority and dominance while women function as subjects to a higher power and occupy a position of inferiority in their respective communities. Charles Fonchingong, an academic and lecturer at the Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Buea, Cameroon, postulates that the status of men and women in the African novel revolves around the premise that females are sloppy, unreliable and weak.

It is imperative to understand a background of representation of gender biases in the African literary tradition. They are often portrayed, particularly by male African playwrights as living in the confines of tradition and culture, acting within the framework of the expected roles as wife and mother (135). The African woman appears as unstable and dependent on their male counterparts who are imbued with characteristics of stability, physical prowess and domination.

There are several representations of gender stereotypes and limitations on both the male and female genders. Gender dynamics are most illuminated through gender stereotypical roles, gender limitations and expectations. These stereotypes in the African novel have existed since time immemorial and are represented as part of traditions making up culture. Certain proverbial sayings, myths and upbringing are seen as gender biased (Fonchingong 140). In most African cultures a woman's universe is centred around getting married and procreation. These seem to be the biggest achievements in a girl's life as she comes of age. (Oduyoye 17). The terms of being a good woman is prescribed by men who feel that a woman has a certain place and role in society and should probably not exceed those expectations. Men are supposed to be the protectors, the leaders, disciplinarians and the providers of the family and society. Paramount decisions are made by men or a group of men in the society. In other giving birth to a boy brings pride to a father and peace to a woman, because a married woman without children can be exasperating but a married woman with only girl children is almost a taboo (Fonchingong 135-141).

Fonchingong further posits gender roles are bestowed on the male and female gender at an early age. In *Unoma* (1972) Teresa Meniru states how girls are taught how to cook, clean and wash at an early age. In the novel, traditionally, girls are not put through school (139). Women generally have to live by a status quo and their behaviours and interests have to be checked or managed. The only glorification of a woman is being wedded and giving birth, particularly, giving birth to a male child. In a good number of African prose, it is realised that these status quos are established traditionally. Wise sayings and myths are all tools used to promote gender biases and are highlighted in a lot of literary narratives. Certain ethics are upheld traditionally that does not tolerate a woman being of her own and making her own choices. In *Anoma*, the main character, even though she fights this, is traditionally denied the opportunity to choose the man she marries.

The representation of gender relations in African literature differ from author to author and historical periods the literary narratives are set. For instance, female authors portray their female character in a quite different light – female authors first place female characters as main act or protagonists of their stories and they usually fight for emancipation from the confines of a gender biased culture. Male playwrights are often seen side-lining their female characters, making them unimportant to the plot of their stories and portraying them as problematic and sloppy. For variations between historical periods, Charles Fonchingong argues that hitherto, before colonialism, the woman's role and position in literary representation was portrayed as

complimenting to their males counterparts. After colonialism, the woman's position from equal supremacy to males in African literary tradition was stripped in literary representation (135).

1.3 Theories of Gender Inequality

In documenting and analysing the intricacies of gender relations in African literature, it is worthwhile to understand the underlying theories of gender inequality. Gender inequality is believed to be some of the most preponderant of all social injustices around different cultures of the world (Klingorová and Havlíček 1). Ortner believes women's physiology and its functions (procreation or making life) as well as traditional stereotypical roles allocated to females makes them "closer to nature" in a way that to a great extent, cannot be said of males. In the same way, male roles and physique are closer to culture as they are usually expected to get involved with activities that are cultural created like artificial creativity and sometimes involved with the destruction of life, like hunting and going away to war. Since society has a tendency to place culture as superior to nature, the woman, who is by physique and role, an element of nature than culture, is automatically place as inferior to males (14-15). This system of placing women as inferior and subordinate to men, apparent in most of the world's cultures has been termed patriarchy. Patriarchies are characterised mainly with males as dominants and females as subordinates which translates into why men are structurally and interpersonally dominant in spheres of life (Hearn 51).

A structure of inequality on another scale, involves an enormous distinction and imbalance of power within masculinities. There have been a plethora of studies on different patterns of male behaviour and masculine-oriented thought processes and interests. Constructed on the basis of privileges, class, sexuality and race, the structure of *hegemonic masculinity* lies of the marginalisation and subordination of some men, by a controlling group of men, while in the whole time, sustaining the subjugation and subordination of women as well. Even though the main basis of hegemonic masculinity lies in sustaining controlling strings of men over women however, the theory lies as different from patriarchy because it captures the hegemony of a certain group of men over another group of men. Practice that relates to this structure are mostly underlined by homosexual and heterosexual masculinities, black male and white male masculinities (Connell 76), religion-based hegemonic masculinity (Connell 252), government and populace based hegemonic masculinity (Hearn 51-52). In the nutshell, hegemonic masculinity, captures the totality of men's power both within and between genders.

1.4 Gender Segregation and the Strategy of Maintenance

The practice of establishing a group as dominant and superior and the rest of mankind and inferior and subordinate does not happen on a whim. Different scholars in the field of gender have, in their critical essays, projected some of the strings and societal institutions that have been used to create and justify men's power. And for the purposes of this thesis, Fonchingong's terms "agents" and "agencies" (139) in describing these institutions. Amongst these "agents" are culture, tradition, religion, colonial experiences and the media, among others.

To speak of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, there is no escaping biological basis. So, even before discussing the agencies of gender inequality, this section will briefly discuss the basis of biological facts. A familiar thesis for the basis of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity is that first of all men are imbued with certain physical and mental capacities that guarantees them the stakeholders of societal power. Then, the institution of hegemonic masculinity was also founded on the platform that a certain group of men, like white men are naturally characterised with "greater fitness of bodies - more capacious brains and more powerful, energetic physiques" that make them better than other races and genders (Connell 7).

In most world's culture, women are placed at the bottom of the power hierarchy (Ortner 5). There are fractions of culture that enforce patriarchy, like wise sayings, myths, gender roles, gender stereotypes and the like (Togarasei 4). Every individual is born into one culture or another, through which they are socialised. Socialisation has been said to begin at home, so right from birth, a child is taught to master the very essential aspects of everyday traditions that make up the culture of the community they are born into so that they can fit-in in the outside world. Socialisation beginning at home means beginning right from the family level and agreeing with Kate Millet "patriarchy's chief institution is the family" (33) which means infants are immediately introduced to the mechanism of patriarchy right after birth.

One of the dominant issues raised by literary works that focus on gender dynamics in their stories is the agencies that construct these masculinities. The things that is most realised in gender inequality in African literature is how these patriarchal constructions have everything to do with tradition, culture and religion. A number of scholarly works have analysed how patriarchy in literature has been established and reinforced by social structures such as culture, myths and tradition. Others have also projected how religion is used as a tool to maintain and justify patriarchy.

Different traditions make up a culture. Linguistic traditions include oral folklore, myths and wise sayings and proverbs. According to Togarasei, these have been used to construct hegemonic masculinity (4-5). Other traditions like gender roles, gender stereotypes, the institution of marriage enforce and promote the basics and survival of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity.

For somethings as pervasive as gender inequality to thrive, certain strings of religion have to be pulled (Togarasei 5-6). Considering that religion is the one of the most influential societal institutions in the world (Harsh 98-99). Most religions in the world exalt masculine domination both in practice and in doctrine. Practices of most religions place men as more essential to the sustenance and propagation of doctrines. Due to its capacity to invoke different behaviours, thoughts and attitudes, religion is sometimes manipulated to enforce hegemonic masculinity. Religion is imbedded in culture and most of the cultures the world's largest religion were born from are patriarchal and therefore religion is summoned to legitimise masculine control.

1.5 Religion in Africa and Religion in the African Novel

This study is mainly driven by the use of religion in maintaining masculine control in African literary narrative. It is imperative then to briefly understand the mechanisms of religion in the African society. African traditional beliefs have extraordinarily composed of different aspects. Ranging from the artefacts that are used for idolising deities to incantations and rituals to the pouring of libation (mostly popular in Sub-Saharan Africa) – which shows their close relationship with the land. There were or still are aspects of belief in their ancestors or generally dead souls and a peculiar belief in different gods who, have their individual unique powers. Lugira remarks that all these religious beliefs come down to one strong figure or mystical object of veneration, that is, the Supreme Being, who is apparently the same as the Catholic and Orthodox Christian, God (6). Currently, the indigenous African religions cannot be said to be the only religious practices on the continent, but they are definitely the only religions that originated from Africa. These religions do not particularly have written down texts that solidify their beliefs like the Bible for Christians or the Qu 'ran for Islam. Their beliefs live on through oral traditions including myths on creation by the Supreme Being and the beginning of time. Contact with different cultures has stimulated a lot of additions and changes in the history and life of African society as Minasie Gessesse, in his Survey of African Literature, stipulated. For

instance, the adoption of Abrahamic religions in Africa was as a result of exposure with external cultures.

Undoubtedly, Christianity gained a wider acceptance and practice in the African society. Most African societies are Christian oriented. The society itself is essentially patriarchal and the Christianity that was presented to them consolidated the structure of the African society which was masculine oriented and patriarchal. During the period of colonialism, slavery was solidified through religion and the Christian structures that were highlighted and presented to the indigenous African was directly or indirectly patriarchal as well. The adoption of Christianity fed into a societal ego that favoured patriarchy. In the issue of positions of the organised church being prohibited to women, most parts of the bible that directly or indirectly marginalised women have been taken up by the population of Catholics or Christians it favours. This made it easy for men to act as front liners in the society at large. The church has been accused of being complicit in the violence that took place alongside colonialism (Walker 20).

Catherine Dolan in her *Conflict and compliance: Christianity and the Occult in Horticultural Exporting*, mentions excerpts of interviews she had with some Christian Kenyan women. Some of these women confirm that what their husbands say, is final and as a good Christian woman, it is inappropriate not to accept the will of your spouse. A good Christian woman takes care of her husband's home and gives good reception to his guests. Another interviewee claims that a woman deserves any punishment for failing to observe any Christian standards of a good wife. Kenyan Christian girls are groomed to be good Christian women, "obedient, submissive and accommodating to attract a suitable man for marriage" (Dolan 26).

The Ghanaian theologian, Mercy Oduyoye argues that African men cannot stand negative comments about sexism and insists that the culture and the Bible seals their authority and the marginalisation of women. Women who try to question patriarchal structures of the church in regard to the institution of marriage in the Christian setting, are seen as detrimental to the establishment of scared relationships (Dolan 27). Christianity has prescribed codes of behaviour and some practitioners of the religion follow some of these codes with extreme commitment. A number of Africans appraise and live by biblical texts that promise better futures for those living in poverty; others also adopt Christian fundamentalism.

Quite a number of arguments have been raised on the subject of Christianity and patriarchy. Some scholars have argued that Christianity has in fact been used to reduce marginalisation of women in Africa. African women have sought refuge in the church (in some cases witchcraft)

from a seemingly oppressive society (Dolan 26). A number of Christian Non-Governmental Organisations across the continent have fought to eradicate gender biases and improve living standards of African women (Tripp 66). Linda Tripp goes on to report in her *Gender and Development from a Christian Perspective: Experience from World Vision* certain positive transformations Christian movements have had on the issue of women and poverty. Tripp proceeds to preach on the use of the life of Jesus as a surefire means of minimising marginalisation of women by changing the attitudes and thought processes of Christian men.

The Christian values presented to the African during colonialization was presented with formal education. The process of learning to read and write brings about enlightenment and progression in a society. The African society has experienced certain transformations which includes an upgrade in the livelihood of its women. Some scholars and playwrights have hinted that in that sense Christianity has actually assisted in annihilating patriarchal structures.

One of the oldest and largest societal institutions that influences every aspect of life is religion. Religion has always had its place in literatures. Representation of Islam in African novels mostly run along the lines of gender inequality, marginalisation of women and violence against a woman's body like Female Genital Mutilation, for instance in Nawal El Sadaawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (1975). There is also a portrayal of the thin line between traditional beliefs of Islam worshippers and the beliefs imposed on them by the Qur'an. Christianity is almost always portrayed alongside its propagating tool, colonisation. African literary narratives usually portray the friction between Christianity and traditional beliefs during and after colonialism, revealing some of the positive and negative impacts of religion on the African society. Without a doubt, education was introduced with Christianity. The arts of reading and writing were privileges Africa received from colonialization and the introduction of Christianity. Another common theme in African colonial and post-colonial literatures is the impact of Christianity and Western education on the cultures and individuals of the society. Other writers, Like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o have presented Christianity as a tool the Whiteman used to make Africans less rational so that it was easy to steal from them. The same playwright has also used other literary works to portray the similarities in Christianity and African traditional beliefs showing a point of convergence between the religions. Halima Shehu posits that other authors also present the presence of Abrahamic religions in African as a source or avenue for identity crises in their literary narratives (107). Some have represented Christianity alongside Western education which they believe has help eradicate some pillars of patriarchal societies; like in the case of Buchi Emecheta's novels.

A general realisation is that religion has had a footprint in African literature over the years. Most of the African writers have had personal experiences with the missionaries during the propagation of the Western religions. Their representation of Christianity or Islam may differ depending on how their experience was.

There has always existed gendered power structures where a man leads, and a woman automatically follows. Harriet Lee Merrion in her special report on the Origins of Sexism mentions that most of the cultures around the world are patriarchal. Education has in fact brought about enlightenment that has annihilated the patriarchal structures in a lot of societies and Africa has not been left out. Lovemore Togarasei comments on how education has brought about a significant and conspicuous change in power structures in Botswana. In other parts of Africa, women are taking up a lot of leadership positions in politics, like Ellen Johnson Sirleaf -former president of Liberia and other significant women in parliament across nations in Africa and even surprisingly, in the Church. There is still such a vast gap between men in power and women in power.

Of the many intricacies of gender inequality, ranging from gender roles, sexuality and interest, race and ethnicity, class systems, the most intriguing that this study associates with is the system of gender-based power within the confines of the state, family and the church. Patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity theorise masculine domination by recognising first of all that there exist a form of societal power, this power, usually gendered, is contested and won by a part of the populace in a society. How this power is acquired and used by its stakeholders are under scrutiny in this thesis. The symbolic representation of power relations between and within genders in the African literary narrative has principal connection with the various ideologies under the underlying forces of masculine control. The first aim of this thesis is to illuminate power dynamics in the African novel through the scrutiny of critical and philosophical thought on masculine domination through the lens of Adichie's debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003).

Again, this study has its main concern centred around the main strings and institutions that assist in the construction and enforcement of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, recognising the antithesis of religion being portrayed as a force behind the subordination and oppression of women. Religion's impact on the literary tradition in African literature is partly due to colonialism and as such, literatures that portray religion revolve around Christianity.

Purple Hibiscus (2003) will be as a yardstick in examining the portrayal of Christian faith, patriarchy and oppression in the African literary text.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO

Literature review

2.1 Understanding the concept of Patriarchy

This thesis provides a descriptive analysis of the manifestation of patriarchy in African literary texts. To do this, it is imperative to understand the concept of patriarchy itself. The concept of patriarchy has been featured prominently in sociology, psychoanalysis, social analysis and anthropology. The term has directly been tied to the status of women in the society (Ortner 5). Acker suggests that in the 1970s, patriarchy became pivotal in identifying and conceptualising the issue of female subordination (235). In her “Theorising Patriarchy”, Walby stipulates that patriarchy has been an imperative tool in examining the theory of gender analysis (213). The term has been associated with a plethora of definitions. Walby (213) acknowledges this has fetched a lot of criticisms to the conceptualising of the term, however, this is but a typical feature of every developing theory.

In attempting to understand patriarchy, it is imperative to look into some of these expositions the concept has been subjected to. For instance, Walby posits that the term has been used throughout history by social scientist like Max Weber who presents patriarchy as a power structural system where men ruled society by virtue of the fact that they were head of their households (214). In her own opinion, however, Walby states that patriarchy is a system of social practices and structures that facilitate masculine domination over women (214). In addressing patriarchy as social practices and structures, Walby categorically rejects biological basis as justification for patriarchy and presents the idea that not all men are dominants, neither are all women in peripheral positions. Hearn (51) also clarified that a situation where men are ‘structurally’ and ‘interpersonally’ dominant in ‘most spheres of life’ is called patriarchy. From being developed gradually, the concept has also been explained as an aspect of culture (Hickey 34; Bakuuro 30) that upholds the idea of inferiority of women to men, usually in terms of fundamental human rights and general social statuses (Bakuuro 28; Ortner 7). Paraphrasing Donaldson (655), patriarchy reinforces an attitude in men that they are better than the other “half of mankind”.

The radical feminist, Kate Millet also describes patriarchy as societal power relations where men are granted superiority over women (26). In her opinion, patriarchy is first a social order, a circumstance where males have the “birthright priority” to dominate females (25). Millet, like Weber, links patriarchy to the family system. She believes the family is patriarchy’s “chief

institution” (33). Millet calls the institution of family a patriarchal “unit within a patriarchal whole”, so that where society falls short in instilling fear and control, the family takes over (33). Patriarchy has, again, been viewed as a situation where males adopt hyper-masculine attitudes and repress feminine ones and females are subjected to peripheral stereotypical roles (Becker 22). Patriarchy capitalises on oppression of women to secure a “male-dominated, male-centred, male-identified” society (Becker 24-25). Acker’s take on patriarchy looks at the concept as a first step of constructing a conjecture on the subordination of women and the domination of men, where women attempt to cause changes to the situation of oppression and dismantle masculine dominion with the goal of establishing liberation for women (235). Ortnor believes patriarchy is the institution of making women inferior to men, devaluing the women and issues of femininity; building the woman up as part of or a component of a main element, and not a complete product in herself (7-8). Also, Beechey is of the view that patriarchy has been used in the capacity to conceptualise the underlying principles of female subordination (66). Quoting Beechey, she expounds further that:

Patriarchy has been used to address the question of the real basis of the subordination of women and to analyse the particular forms which it assumes. Thus the theory of patriarchy attempts to penetrate beneath the particular experiences and manifestations of women’s oppression and to formulate some coherent theory of the basis of subordination which underlies them (66).

Based on Beechey’s understanding, patriarchy seeks to transcend mere claim of subjugation of women to unearth and highlight actual events and scenarios that culminate into said subjugation. In other words, the theory of patriarchy does not settle for ‘alleged’ oppression of women but to address the questions of ‘what’ and ‘how’ women are being oppressed. Such real life patterns and scenarios will be used to form a logically and consistent theoretical basis of patriarchy.

Klingorová and Havlíček’s identification of gender inequality as imbalance of power structures between genders (2) is in line with what Demetriou classified as external hegemonic masculinity; which is the domination of men over women (340-341). Klingorová and Havlíček assert that gender inequality is one of the most prevailing forms of global social injustices (2).

Justine Bakuuro adds his voice to the ongoing discussion of the conjecture, saying patriarchy is an aspect of culture, where women are inferior to men in terms of place and fundamental human rights and privileges (28). In a social system as this, men occupy positions of power and as such men are the determinants of women's rights and freedoms. Women face suppression and oppression, and all kinds of physical and verbal violence and patriarchal men seem to act with impunity (28).

Practicalities of Patriarchal Societies

The oppression and subordination of women are identified through certain patterns or general lifestyles. Some of such patterns of practices that have been regarded as underlying experiences and manifestations of female subordination have been discussed by Mary Becker extensively through her engagement of certain facets of a patriarchal culture (27-30). Patriarchies are first of all seen to exist alongside other forms of social inequalities (26). Becker espouses that where there is gender inequality, there is the tendency for the existence of racism, classism, homophobia religion phobia and the like (25). Again, patriarchal systems treat women as less human, untrustworthy and unstable people (26). Patriarchies define masculinities on the basis of femininity, in her words, Becker suggests; "men are men as long as they are not women" (27). This highlights the existence of a strict normative way of living in patriarchies. Where males are accepted as true dominants or superior as so long as you do not act and think the way females are expected to. The "real woman" here is "dependent, vulnerable, pliant, weak, supportive, nurturing, intuitive, emotional, and empathic" whereas the real man is "masculine, independent, invulnerable, tough, strong, aggressive, powerful, commanding, in control, rational, and non-emotional" (27). Men bond through extreme and subtle joint participation of devaluation of women. In extreme cases, Becker mentions an example as "gang rape" (28). Subtle group devaluation of women that help the menfolk to bond includes sexist jokes and catcalling. Not all men do that, but even those who do not, are complicit in the act. Patriarchal systems also hold different views of men and women's sexuality. "Men are sexual subjects and women are sexual objects" (28). The sexuality of women exists as long as it is to secure and please that of men. This is because patriarchal dominance is almost always dominance of heterosexual males. Patriarchal cultures always strive to deny the existence of inequalities. Clarifying the issue of conflict of interests cause distortions in the otherwise 'harmonious' life the man lives with the woman (Becker 29). Patriarchy finds a way to justify subordination and domination, as well as violence, making the existence of inequalities and social injustices against women feel almost natural (Becker 29). Becker goes on to suggest that women in

patriarchal societies are sometimes seen as trophies; woman are seen as prices that men win in order to accentuate their successes (27). A man may have a woman as “consolation price” or some sort of winning bonus especially for possessing hypermasculine traits that other men may not have (27). And these females exist to assuage their pain and defeat, to typically be the man’s helper. Women are used to massage males egos, uplifting men in ways that make them feel extra manly and extra powerful (Becker 27).

The subordination of women by men in society has been made easy though certain social elements like higher income and educational levels, adding to the typical features of patriarchies (Demetriou 341). In patriarchal systems, females are usually the less privileged in society and therefore lack adequate capacity and resources to make them eligible in decision-making in society (Bakuuro 28). “Female subordination takes various forms: discrimination, insult, verbal abuse, control, disregard, oppression, violence, exploitation, and misuse at various levels, e.g.: marriage, workplace and educational levels” (Bakuuro 31). Justine Bakuuro has the view that female subordination is takes place on different platforms - marital grounds, the job market and educational institutions. It is executed through different ways, through verbal and physical violence, general control and limitations placed on women, their actions, interests and the like, indifference of the male towards the female, her desires and needs, and finally, disposable treatment of women in society (31). Even though it is established that men generally enjoy privileges of masculine dominance and create more avenue to exploit and marginalise women, Togarasei propose that women also assist in the construction of patriarchy, women do not only normalise and accept hegemonic masculinities, but they help to produce it and are committed to promoting it and idolising masculinities (2).

Kate Millet also investigates some of the practicalities of patriarchies. Millet believes patriarchies have men in charge of all pivotal aspects of daily life - like finance, economics and commerce, education, politics, industry and technology, and security, that is the police and military (39-41) Men and women are socialised in this same patriarchy in line with temperament, role and status. Males and females are born into stereotyped temperament and personalities of femininity and masculinity (26). Masculine traits like, intelligence, strength, virility and confidence lies in contrast with traits of femininity which include but not limited to “docility, virtue, ineffectuality” (26). Also, masculine traits are exalted over feminine ones. Then, there is the issuing of the sex role theory from infancy. Millet asserts that the sex role decrees or dictates the normative roles and responsibilities, mode of conduct and attitude towards the opposite sex. The sex role system dictates the role of the female as the domestic

caterer and attending to infants (Millet 26). Men are the providers, ambitious and goal oriented individuals. Males seize and dispense power and rules, whilst women are given charge of charity and infant care. This explains the issue of status. Men are the acclaimed dominants and women the docile subordinates which cuts clear the status of women and men in society (Millet 26).

Gender dynamics are also most illuminated through gender stereotypical roles, gender limitations and expectations. In most cultures a woman's universe is centred around getting married and procreation (Ortner 10). These seem to be the biggest achievements in a girl's life as she comes of age (Oduyoye 17). The terms of being a good woman is prescribed by men, who are seen as custodians of traditional culture and who feel that a woman has a certain place and role in society and should probably not exceed those expectations (Togarasei 4). Gender roles are predefined positions and responsibilities to society or the community that are bestowed on the female and male characters right from birth (Fonchingong 137). These gender biased roles have been used to reproduce patriarchy generations after generations (Togarasei 2). Women are always adored and respected for the role they play in the institution of family, yet they are still placed in peripheral roles and are not involved in major decision making in state and nation building (Klingorová and Havlíček 3).

Symbolic Patterns of Patriarchy

Patriarchy does not exist in a vacuum, it exists as pillars and institutions that consist of symbolic patterns and conditions that are wired together through fear and persuasion to produce a gendered hierarchical pole of social power and its usage. Pierre Bourdieu (24) proposes that masculine domination is enacted through "symbolic channels of communications, cognition, recognition or even feelings" (2). The exertion of this control through symbolic patterns are recognised and acknowledged by both the dominants and the dominated. Brown, agreeing with Connell and Bourdieu, mentions how this dominion of men over women happens to be established through symbolic practices and conditions of actions and inactions of the patriarchal culture (165). Brown states; "masculine domination remains both a symbolic feature and practical product of everyday life" (165). This language of symbolic conditions exist in the lifestyle, the way of thinking, speaking and acting (Bourdieu 2). These symbolic patterns have been extensively explored by a number of scholars and critical essayists both explicitly and implicitly. This is worthy of attention here because as Beechey's definition of patriarchy captures, the concept seeks to investigate and illuminate the "principles underlying

women's subordination". Therefore, to understand the totality of the concept of patriarchy in addressing the theme of the primary text, it serves a great purpose to pursue an understanding in the principles and patterns that characterise patriarchies. What then, are the symbolic or implied practices one can base on to separate a patriarchal society from a 'non-patriarchal' society?

Ortner work, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" elaborates this symbolic feature of patriarchy further. She argues that women, throughout history and in most world cultures have been made inferior to men (5), then, provides what she terms "evidence" to this acclamation in three postulations. She puts succinctly;

...a) elements of cultural ideology and informants' statements that explicitly devalue women, according them, their roles, their tasks, their products, and their social milieu less prestige than men and the male correlates; b) symbolic devices, such as the attribution of defilement, which may be interpreted as making a statement of inferior valuation; and c) social rules that prohibit women from participating in or having contact with some realm in which the highest powers of the society are felt to reside (7-8).

Ortner asserts that there are components of culture that create the premise that women are lesser than men. For instance, Togarasei asserts that some myths and wise sayings in most African cultures provoke the tradition of devaluing women (4) which invoke the exclusion of women from making important societal decisions. This is the same as locker room conversations that involve devaluing women and limiting them into objects of men's sexual desire (Becker 27-28). Millet proposes that the normative role dictated to females in domestic service and infant care confines them at home, limiting women to the care of infants and house chores. In Millet's view, the human exclusive actions and practices are left for the male gender, in which case the woman's basic role is equal to the basic life activities of animals, since animals also give birth and care for their young (26). These female exclusive and limited activities including giving birth, are seen as inferior to men's activities of destroying life, like wars, hunting and fighting (Ortner 11-12).

The second "evidence" Ortner engages with is in line with Bakuuro's claim of men's violence, suppression and oppression of women against women. The violent control of women are done

with impunity – in this case to be able to claim woman’s body sexually, anytime, and anyhow a man may want. Violence against women have also been used as one of the symbolic patterns to maintain patriarchal power. Men use violence to acquire mental stability in power and physical security (Connell 16). Violence is symbolic in the way that it is used to sustain control over women (Connell 17). In her view, Connell believes violence against women has nothing to do with biological determinants like aggression, virility or strength. Males can in fact physically violate women because of the social system that grants them access and control in most spheres of finance and politics, ensuring “massive inequalities of income, wealth, and access to authority and power” (17). Males, in Millet’s words are given “birthright priority” (25) to control women and this is done symbolically, like defilement or sex by coercion.

The exclusion of women from certain spaces, are exhibited both literally and figuratively. During menstruation, women are not allowed to enter ‘sacred’ rooms of go near men of war or wounded at war (Ortner 8) women are forbidden from entering or occupying certain spaces reserved for patriarchs and custodians of societal power in the same light, females are not allowed to occupy high positions reserved for males. Bourdieu also argues under this thought that one of the symbolic patterns of male dominion is the exclusion of women from certain rituals and prohibitions from male spaces (24). Further, Bourdieu posits that the sexual division of labour which consist the strict distribution of activities assigned to each sex signifies domination of men because it does places men at vantage points where women have no choice but to be dependent on men.

Identifying the Basis of Patriarchy

Ortner proposes that all cultures all over the world seem to exhibit to an extent, patriarchal values (5). How has this devaluation of women existed universally? What are the basis, or on what grounds has patriarchy been created? The domination of men over women has been seen as a harbinger of doom. Many critiques have investigated how patriarchy came to exist in the first place. The initial and most popular analysis has circled around the “body”, particularly bodily differences between males and females.

Connell explains that during the time of Charles Darwin, emphasis was placed on the difference between men and women’s bodies by the social sciences of North American and Europe. Power rested on the shoulders of bodies that are pertained to be physically fit, having a wide mental capacity, and possessing strength and virility. This system of placing much emphasis on bodily and mental differences legitimated colonialism, genocide, and patriarchy – white males

claimed to possess larger brain capacities and so all other races were seen as less human and had to be dominated. Eventually, the view of basing gender, race and ethnic power on bodily difference went missing in mainstream and radical sociology (Connell 7).

By the Twentieth Century people started to view humanity only based on individual cognition, taking away their bodies, totally. This was due to the complications of sexism and racism. Connell termed this the “disembodied mind”. This assertion however began to fall short because human experience does not always appear so. It has been argued that there are biological reasons for decisions, personality traits and actions. Psychology started to link the human body to the mind, investigating how the body affects certain actions. Psychoanalysis then developed the Sex Role Theory, basing gendered roles and personalities on biological differences.

The Second Wave of Feminism circled their arguments around this biological differences and the Sex Role Theory and intensely propagated the idea that there is apparent distinction between sex and gender. Sex is the natural phenomenon of being male or female. Gender on the hand is a social cluster of ideas that surround the two distinctive sexes and pressed focus on gender studies. This contention was taken up further to oppose the basis of bodily differences. This contention trashes the blend of patriarchy with bodily differences. These discussions resurrected the then docile propaganda of “bodies” into debates on gender and social inequalities (Connell 8). This conjecture of bodily differences has been termed generally as “biological determinism” (Ortner 9; Millet 26-27; Connell 15; Connell 8). Recent debates on biological determinism, Connell believes, revolve around two fashions; first, “the body as a natural machine that produces gender difference” secondly, “the body is a more or less neutral surface or landscape on which a social symbolism is imprinted” (Connell 10).

Connell continues to posit that biology has been summoned to fill the gap in legitimising and justifying patriarchy. In sociobiology, much attention has been paid to bodily differences in constructing the gendered concepts of masculinity and femininity. This is usually exhibited and exemplified on the mass media. Connell explains: “The need may be gauged from the enormous appetite of the mass media for stories of scientific discoveries about supposed sex differences. Notions of biological sex difference are rampant in the computer world, where they justify massive employment discrimination and a startlingly misogynist culture (computer games, for instance)” (9).

Sociobiology believes that the bodies of men and women, inhibit certain traits that have being developed through the process of evolution that causes distinct behaviourism. Men possess the Y chromosome, distinct from the X chromosome inherit in women. The Y chromosome is what causes aggressiveness, assertiveness, strength and competitiveness (Connell 9). Connell acknowledges the “doyen of sociobiology” (9), William Julius Wilson, who proposes that the temperamental and physical differences of males and females have been expanded by culture to create certain social structures like patriarchy (Connell 9). Men have appropriated societal power based in the upper hand they have as possessing the hormones that propel aggression. This assertion presupposes that men and women have inherit behaviours that vary widely. Homosexual behaviour, racism, rape and queer theories cannot be conceptualised under this structure.

The second fashion of the debate on biological determinism has been argued broadly by a plethora of social and critical analysts. Biological determinism has been rejected on the basis that the body is “neutral” with regards with gendered biases. These gendered traits are imprinted on the body by cultural practices and thoughts. Ortner goes on to detail this devaluation of women in cultures and shares her opinion on biological determinism. She posits explicitly;

If the devaluation of women relative to men is a cultural universal, how are we to explain this fact? We could of course rest the case on biological determinism: There is something genetically inherent in the males of the species that makes them the naturally dominant sex; that "something" is lacking in females, and, as a result, women are not only naturally subordinate but, in general, quite satisfied with their position, since it affords them protection and the opportunity to maximize the maternal pleasures that to them are the most satisfying experiences of life (9).

Should biological traits, which are supposedly inherit in males and females causes and differences in behaviours and thought processes in the two sexes, serve as the main basis for this gender inequality, then it is right to assume, first of all, that it is unnatural for women to assume any status of power in the society and that women are actually ‘quite satisfied’ with their position as the subordinated in society because this guarantees safety and provision for them. Ortner acknowledges the rejection of this notion by some scholars in the field of gender

and human behaviour criticism. However, this does not necessarily mean biological differences are not crucial in the discussion of gender inequality, but biology holds a stand because it is an idea imbedded in the same culture that propels and legitimises patriarchy (Ortner 9)

Pierre Bourdieu acknowledges that biological differences in female and male physique have been the underlying support for the imbalance of power structures, however, Bourdieu opposes this view. In his opinion, the paradox lies in that fact that, it is not the obvious physical or tangible biological differences that has created an androcentric world. Rather, it is the androcentric world view that has constructed these differences and given it meanings that fit the patriarchal culture, making it legitimate and justifying it (22). Moreover, Bourdieu asserts that the relationship between biological sex differences and socially constructed gender differences is not linear and one-sided (where socially constructed differences are influenced and caused by biological sex differences). Rather, this relationship is more interdependent where biological sex differences are also influenced and justified by social constructions and perceptions of how these biological differences should be viewed and understood, resulting in an iterative causal relationship (22).

While it had been a common notion that men were physically, mentally and emotional stronger than women and as such should be heads of the community and society (Fonchingong 136), patriarchy is not a biological construct, but rather a socially and culturally constructed ideal that is propagated and reconstructed continuously through the media, politics, religion, and cultural practices (Togarasei 3; Demetriou 353-354). Walby rejects the concept of biological determinism as well when she presents patriarchy as a social construct.

As the expositions have suggested, the concept of patriarchy is also the concept of gender inequality – a social injustice that pertains to the devaluation and subjugation of women. Patriarchy strikes the thoughts of segregation between sexes, where one sex is considered superior to the other. The concept captures gender dynamics, gender stereotypes and gender biases. Patriarchy also looks to conceptualise the symbolic patterns and conditions that underline feminine control. It would seem that there is no one correct way to conceptualise patriarchy, however, different views on the concept provides a great understanding of patriarchy.

2.2 Introducing Hegemonic Masculinity and its various forms

Arguably, patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities are not mutually exclusive in the primary text of this thesis. Along with understanding patriarchy, it is necessary to look into what hegemonic masculinity is and get a comprehension of its dynamics. The concept, hegemonic masculinity, is a coinage by Raewyn Connell that observes varieties in masculinities in the sense of attitudes, behaviours looks and roles that are affiliated to the male gender in society and theorise that practice where masculine control in society is almost legitimised (“Hegemonic Masculinities”). The concept was birthed mainly after the ‘Sex Role Theory’ received criticism and backlash for not being able to capture power relations within genders and resistance to this power as well as the social change that come with it (Connell and Messerschmidt 832; Demetriou 337). What Connell tries to do in coining this concept is illuminate all the basic fashions that constitute the issue of masculine dominance (Demetriou 337-338). Hegemonic masculinity has been used to generate studies on men and used to understand aspects of gendered power. It has been used in studies on gay studies, criminology and sexuality (“Hegemonic Masculinity”). The totality of hegemonic masculinity boils down to the two main words in this construct – *masculinity* and *hegemony*. Understanding hegemonic masculinity requires an understanding of the basic facets of the concept.

Masculinity

Feminist studies throughout the years have made “monolithic representations” of what masculinity and men are. this has not been able to capture the whole essence of the male sex and the social construct of masculinities, neither does it help in transforming masculinities. In a bid to change this, the studies on masculinities was birthed (Togarasei 1). Connell proposes four strategies that have been used to define masculinity – semiotic, essentialist, positivist and normative strategies. These approaches can be differentiated theoretically, but practically they mingle with one another (68-70).

Semiotic category approach the definition of masculinity through the system of structural linguistics where elements are defined based on their difference from another element. In line with this, masculinity is defined as non-femininity. Semiotics find that point of contrasting features of masculinity and femininity and base their definitions on these symbolic differences. *The Essentialist approach* consider the core of what is masculine and base their definitions of masculinity on it. Essence like aggression, competitiveness, responsibility and irresponsibility and the like that have been viewed as the true core of maleness have been used in this respect.

Definitions that fall under the *positivist approach* try to find the facts to what men actually are and define masculinities in that respect. The *normative approach* is as its name is. These definitions present a worldview and propose masculinity as “what men ought to be” (Connell 68 -70).

Connell believes however that believes that all these definitions fall short in one way or the other, and the best way to define masculinity is by seeing it as a sector of gender relations where men and women engage in this sector and the pros and cons of this engagement. Masculinity is a configuration of social practices. This Configuration of practice has been termed ‘personality’ or ‘character’ of a person (72). This series of practices takes place among people of different cultures, backgrounds, race, religion, and generations and in this sense gender and its affiliations should not be viewed as singular, hence the idea, “masculinities and femininities” in lieu of “masculinity and femininity” (75). In understanding the diversities in genders, it is imperative to recognize the power mechanisms that are involved in it. Ignoring the intricacies of hierarchy in terms of control and domination vis-à-vis marginalisation and subordination, will mislead one to assume gender in a compilation of “alternative lifestyles” The concept’s identification of different types of masculinities, to develop this further, Connell stipulates a fascinating view on gender. Gender, in Connell’s view is supposed to viewed and judged by daily actions and practices of individuals rather than placing prominence on what is expected of people to do. Gender then, is not prescriptive but a natural complexity of actions and inactions (76).

Hegemony

The other aspect of the coinage is ‘hegemony’. As said earlier, in understanding hegemonic masculinity, we need to understand what hegemony is. Hegemony is a pivotal aspect of Antonio Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* (Donaldson 645). According to Connell, hegemony refers to the “cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life” (77). Donaldson also explains hegemony as “the winning and holding of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in that process” (645). Hegemony then signifies a power relation and the process through which the ruling bloc attains this power and dispenses it. Hearn provides details of the term ‘hegemony’ in itself. According to him, hegemony encompasses control of one group of people over another ‘with consent’ and ‘without coercion’ (53). Hearn throws light on Gramsci’s idea of hegemony being a ‘historical situation’ where power is contested, ‘won and held’ by a certain group of people (53). Hegemony Hearn goes

on to propose that the concept of hegemony in relation to men, covers the critical discussion of men that circles around gendered power and how certain masculinities treat such power. He further posits that hegemony is useful in studying men as it illuminates the domination of a certain group of men with the consent of other group of men and consent of some women to ensure the continuous establishment and reproduction of patriarchy. Hearn considers hegemony as a situation where a dominant social class controls society (54). Hegemony basically captures the whole idea of power and control. Power is a crucial part of social relations (Hearn 51), and hegemonic masculinities appears to have been coined to encompass how this power is produced, acquired, manipulated and distributed particularly between and with genders. Hearn's "From Hegemonic Masculinities to the Hegemony of Men" gives details another term, 'Critical Studies of Men' which is the totality of studies that highlight the power relations in gender generated issues in terms of men's domination in society and in this critical studies, we find the need to consider 'hegemony' in relation to men and also the problems of this hegemony (52). He puts in a concise way;

What is at issue here is the persistent presence of accumulations of power and powerful resources by certain men, the doing of power and dominance in many men's practices, and the pervasive association of the social category of men with power. Men's power and dominance can be structural and interpersonal, public and/or private, accepted and taken-for-granted and/or recognized and resisted, obvious or subtle. It also includes violations and violences of all the various kinds (51).

Firstly, we recognise that not all men are powerful or that men are not all powerful. However, there is intriguingly a part of social relations and structures that has everything to do with a certain power, and this power is cultivated through 'powerful resources' by 'certain men' to attain domination over other groups in society. Then, there is the recognition of some of the vices that come with how this group of men manipulate this power in their favour. Hearn sheds light on the violence in power imbalance between gender and oppression that come with the totality of the hegemony of men. Hearn mentions the violence involved in marriages and the same violence and oppression suffered by civilizations under rule of military men.

Hegemonic Masculinity

The attempt to capture the power mechanisms involved in gender relations has also been a fuel behind the theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Demetriou 2), where this concept of hegemonic masculinity prominently and critically examines and interrogates power in a gendered social structure (Hearn 51-52). Hegemonic masculinity is, then, an attempt to conceptualise power imbalance within and between genders. So, there is a dominating bloc and a marginalised or subordinating arm of genders (Demetriou 338-340). The backbone of hegemonic masculinity is the dominion of men over women and one of its main fuels is subordinating other masculinities in the process (Demetriou 340-341). Hence, hegemonic masculinity involves control of a hegemonic bloc of masculinities over women and over a subordinating bloc of masculinities (Demetriou 340). Demetriou termed these varying but "arguably inseparable" parts of hegemony internal hegemonic masculinity; referring to control of hegemonic men over subordinating men, and external hegemonic masculinity; referring to control of men over women.

Hickey in reacting to R. W Connell's "Understanding Men: Gender Sociology and the New International Research on Masculinities" puts it this way, that the controlling bloc of masculinities pervades the "culture and social structures" and promote masculine control over women and men "who are on the lower end of 'masculinity' hierarchy" and so, hegemonic masculinity has directly been tied to gender inequality (Hickey 34).

In Togarasei's understanding, the dominant bloc of masculinities has certain societal standards and biological affiliations that any male that does not live up to falls beneath the pillar hierarchy and as such is marginalised (2), in so that, there is a dominant group of men that cultivates an ability to influence and persuade a less dominant group of men and women in a populace based on a status co and try to build a certain standard view of how society should be, pushing normative ideas for subordinating groups to conform to (Togarasei 2; Demetriou 341), as Togarasei terms the less dominant male group as 'weaker' men in society (2). It is a usual trait of the controlling bloc of masculinities to pressurise the marginalised group of masculinities to try and conform to certain attitudes and behaviours that will make them eligible to be dominants too (Togarasei 2). Hegemonic masculinity is, not just gender biased roles and expectations society places on males and females, but continuous practices, actions and inactions of men generally observed by society that has in more ways than one, legitimised men's control (Connell and Messerschmidt, 832). It is culturally crafted, a social ideal that is constantly reproduced and propagated through the media, oral traditions, politics, and religion (Togarasei 2).

Dominating masculinity are practically believed to be imbued with such qualities as physical features like strength, virility, tough and authoritative, heterosexuality and high sexual drive and others. In this case, any male who does not appear to possess some or all of these qualities is not considered masculine and therefore put on the same scale as women and marginalised (Togarasei 2). Other associations of controlling masculinities with physical traits as well as attitudes are included in Connell's works to elaborate hegemonic masculinities. Connell calls out the use of sporting activities and its imperativeness in studying men and boys which influences activities and behaviours of big personalities, being able to maintain certain bodily stiffness and posture, having some skill set, physical strength power and being forceful (208-216). English also includes the 'hypercompetitive' attitude that comes with sports and how this attitude transcends into men's behaviour (183). On this given, we come to understand why Connell proposed in her "Bodies and Gender" that biology has been used to justify gender inequalities (7, 9-11). Then, Demetriou (340), Hickey (34) and Connell (7) also introduce another aspect of biological difference that is used to legitimise hegemonic masculinity and that is difference in skin colour – white male supremacy over black and brown males and females. Hickey mentions a South African research that acknowledges the superiority of white males over black males especially in the labour force (35). Also, in the United States of America, Hickey accounts for how black men have been created to have stereotypes like "sexually charged" and violent individuals creating limitations in how far black men can progress and take part in societal development and decision-making -no form of achievements of black men have been able to annihilate these stereotypes (Hickey 34-35). Difference in sexual orientation, race, strength, virility, toughness, intelligence, aggression, and the like are therefore the main biological criterion of being on the paramount side of the hegemonic ladder (Connell 7).

Demetriou elaborated that hegemonic masculinity consists external masculinities, that is dominion of men over women and internal masculinities which encompasses the control of a dominant group of men over a less dominant group of men for instance heterosexual men over homosexual males and white male supremacy over black males (341). The domination of the hegemonic bloc of the human male species over gay men has been termed as subordination, whereas in the case of gender, race, and ethnicity, Connell has regarded as marginalisation due to the difference between the 'gender order', in the case of heterosexuality and homosexuality, and 'masculine relationships', in the case of racial differences (78, 80). According to Connell,

internal masculinities is in fact another tool to further hold or lay foundation to external masculinities as internal masculinities is a means to an end and not an end in itself (80).

There is also another form of subordination of women and men that is usually overlooked; the dominion of righteous males over less holy women and men – in religious practices (the control of the Pope over the Roman Catholic Church as well as Parish Priests and Bishops:

Various systems that reinforce patriarchal power work in concert in this portrayal of the sovereign male individual who attains a quasi-divine status: Catholicism that (like many other religions) privileges masculine authority...“As the pope, although human and therefore not impeccable, may in certain circumstances pronounce doctrine as infallible from his throne, so too may the entire body of bishops in unity with the pope make infallible pronouncements by virtue of his gender, his fanatical piety and his social and economic capital...” (Stobie 424).

This statement clearly places the system of hegemonic masculinity in religion. As it perpetrates culture and other societal institutions, hegemonic masculinity is also very much practised in the Church.

Complicit Hegemonic Masculinity

This bit of the coinage of hegemonic masculinity is essential for theorising certain parts of the representation of male dominance in the primary text. Hence, it is useful to have a good understanding of complicit hegemonic masculinity. Connell posits that there is a few men rigorously practising hegemony. However, there is a larger group of men who enjoy hegemonic masculinity without particularly practising it, this type of masculinity is termed ‘complicity’ (79). These masculinities are constructed in ways that, they are not front liners in the production of hegemony, but they enjoy what Connell terms the patriarchal dividend – which is “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (79).

Togarasei has considered hegemonic masculinity that are toxic are dangerous masculinities and this goes without saying that Togarasei does not believe all hegemonic masculinities are dangerous. Some of the dangers women and children suffer from dangerous masculine control include physical violence and mental oppression to women, children, and other forms of masculinity (2). This ideal of dangerous masculinities Togarasei mentions is what this essay

will be relating to Eugene's treatment of his wife, his two children and two unborn children as marriages have facilitated violence and a plethora of unfair treatment of women.

2.3 A Call for Change, Emancipation and Resistance to Gender Inequality

The phrase gender inequality has been used to frame a series of institutions and practices that limit both the male and female sexes from participating equally or uniformly in the various social, political, and economic activities of everyday human life (Kwatsha 128). Deducing from previous readings of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, it can be said that in most of the various world's cultures, if not all, there is an imbalance of power between genders. Men have constantly been called the dominators and oppressors both amongst themselves and intersexually. One of the things that this section of the thesis will assist in illuminating are the dangers inherently involved in gender inequality, patriarchy and/or hegemonic masculinities for both sexes. This section will also discuss resistance movements, human rights activists works and literary and critical essays on gender inequality.

Eric Blanchard acknowledged that National security discourses, like International Diplomacy, military power base, statesmanship, national business of commerce, and others in that line have always been "devoid" of women and interests of women (1289). An International relations program to necessitate the inclusion of women in academic discipline analysis has done that quite reluctantly (Blanchard 1289). In a Ted Talk, Cassie Jaye mentions how there are about two thousand shelters for women suffering under domestic violence and there is only one for men in the United States of America (04:46 – 04:56), even though Jaye's concern in her talk was not centred specifically around domestic violence, this statement only serves as evidence that there are indeed a lot of women going through domestic violence. Ortner observes how women, throughout time have been viewed and treated of subcomponents of a main material or element, that is men (5, 7). Millet also accounts for the social limitation that are placed on women to basically be wives and mothers, prisoning them at home (25). All these accounts and many more projects the devaluation and subordination of women in society, showing that patriarchy is obviously not a cooked-up fallacy.

Then, there is hegemonic masculinity- where there is an understanding that men do not only dominate women but also other groups of men (Connell 78-79; Hearn 52; Togarasei 2; Demetriou 341; Hickey 34; Donaldson 645). Hence, the illumination that not only women suffer under patriarchy but men as well. Becker suggests in her discussion of substantive

feminism that, absolutely no one benefits when hypermasculinity is “glorified” and female related issues are made inferior (22).

Women have suffered under patriarchy through suppression, violence, rape and devaluation (Ortner 5; Millet 26-27; Becker 28; Togarasei 4). Togarasei analyses how the institution of male dominance has facilitated the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana and the constant female brutality and deaths in most parts of southern Africa (2). He has considered hegemonic masculinities that are toxic as dangerous masculinities, and this goes without saying that Togarasei does not believe all hegemonic masculinities are dangerous. However, that does not undermine the fact that male dominance poses threats and dangers to women, children, and men. The inferior and vulnerable groups in the society suffer from patriarchy through demeaning crimes including physical violence and mental oppression of women, children and other forms of masculinity. Botswana men believe they have the power over the woman’s body, which usually leads to rape, and have any sexual romance outside marriage, no questions asked, Togarasei believes that attitude has promoted the spread of HIV/AIDS in Botswana. He then mentions the fluency of passion killings or intimate femicides that has been happening in Botswana. He believes these crimes happen when a man feels his manliness has been threatened by his female lover (2).

A seemingly implausible but in actual fact, real, aspect of the dangers of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities that is often ignored is the dangers it poses to men. Both men in the hegemonic bloc and marginalised masculinities. This assertion will be explored with two Ted Talks from Stephanie Payne and Cassie Jaye in 2014 and 2017, respectively. Payne mentions, that “no section of society escapes the abuses of patriarchy” and calls patriarchy “an ill-thought-out and fear-based system” (13:48 – 13:45). Cassie Jaye also implies that the torment of men under patriarchy tend to fall behind the dehumanising nature of the abuses of patriarchy on women. A patriarchal system, for lack of a better word, forbids men from showing emotional weakness or pain. The system spurs the behaviour of bottling up pain or sorrow in men so that men “within the strictures of patriarchy” have issues with “releasing” their sorrow (Payne, 10:04 -10:30). Jaye goes to account for the dangers men suffer under gender inequality. Men are almost as likely to be physically abused yet there are few resources available for male victims of domestic abuse. Several men have had their lives turned upside down because of false rape accusations. The woman has been on the deprived and oppressed side for far too long, and men are more likely to commit suicide from the pressures from the same society that have overlooked their individual needs because of the presumption that all men are all powerful

and have everything they need because they exploit women. Jaye continues to mention a plethora of men rights infringement issues that are overlooked because of the existence of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy that has facilitated the prejudice that men are tough and cannot be dehumanised in any form (08:14 – 09:30). Payne believes in patriarchies; men are under some form of pressure and women are undervalued. Regardless the form of oppression, men (even men who are on the hegemonic bloc) almost as likely to be abused by the same system that grants them hegemony and also through some of the social structures combating hegemonic masculinities like men often losing their children in custody battles, misandry and the like (Jaye 2017).

Giving the dehumanisation, depression and oppression that comes with it, it is then no surprise that a series of liberation movements have surfaced throughout history to fight for emancipation and voice their resistance to masculine domination in its different forms, be it patriarchy or hegemonic masculinities. The recognition of imbalance of power relations between and within genders has birthed various demonstration and literary essays. Women, black people, gay men, and men in general have used their voices through literature, petitions and demonstration to challenge patriarchy, white male supremacy, heterosexual men and homophobia, and the glorification of hypermasculinity, respectfully. A resistance that typically characterises a screaming need for change. The constant marginalisation of women and “other” men have spearheaded a feminist and gay rights movement that has been on the defensive trying to call for a change in gender-based inequalities and violence. The gay rights liberation movement is the core of the resistance to the marginalization of non-hegemonic masculinities and an effect of recognising the power imbalance within genders. Demetriou also acknowledges that there are countless accounts of resistance to masculine domination and goes on to say that patriarchy is under attack, the system is not stable due to numerous challenges posed to it (349). This resistance takes different forms. Patriarchal resistance can come off through a radical and intense movement of the various fashions of minority rights liberations, which will be discussed further. Other times, challenge to patriarchy may come across as singular acts of rebellion against patriarchal practices. Becker provides some examples like, a man refusing to take part in verbal and physical activities that promote devaluation of women, in, for instance, the locker room conversations or flirtatious acts that make women uncomfortable and feel helpless at the workplace and other social platforms (26). Even a male deciding to take part of household chores like cleaning and childcare can be a symbol of resistance to the strict structures of patriarchy concerning gender roles (26).

Nonetheless, resistance to male domination primarily involves a challenge to patriarchal structures, a call for change in societal institutions and decisions concerning the inclusion of women. Millet implicitly puts it; a good revolution will involve the annihilation of male supremacy and the promotion gender equality (62). These movements themselves helped in coining the concept of masculine domination, patriarchy (Beechey 66). Within the framework of radical resistance remain three main groups that will be explored: women liberation movement, also known as the feminist movement, gay rights liberation, and men's rights activists.

Amongst the radical movements with cause for emancipation of marginalised groups are the feminist movements. Throughout history, patriarchy has undergone a series of protests and challenges to its power. The most predominant has been by different waves of feminist movements. Beechey proposes that the feminist discourse has a variety of causes but together, they have sought to find explanation to the feelings that come from being subordinated and marginalised. They also had a desire to “transform feelings of rebellion into a political practice and theory” (66): she is of the view that feminists have sought to change the feeling of rebelliousness against patriarchy into a political thought by theorising patriarchal rebellion. Beechey believes feminists seized the term “patriarchy” in order to conceptualise these abstract issues under male dominance (66).

In the view of Kate Millet, the exact beginning of female resistance movement cannot quite be placed. Millet argues that the first phase of “Sexual Revolution” has been ignored by historians either intentionally or by a mere oversight (61-63). Notwithstanding, political revolutions like democracy and the extension of right to franchise to include women and several other minority groups happened around the Eighteenth Century. The emergence of technology and industrial revolution have all had positive impacts on the lives of women. Patriarchy has failed to acknowledge these radical shifts. And as they happened in the “consciousness”, it is difficult to place the exact date(s). Millet further argues that feminism could in fact be traced as far back as the 1300s, during the time of Renaissance, when “liberal education” was permitted to women. However, Millet proceeds, the 19th Century saw the actual beginnings to “political organisations” of the disruption to the strict sexual discourse of patriarchy. The period also saw the enactment of major structural changes in societal institutions (64-65).

One of the major gender revolutions in history is the “Sexual Revolution,” which, in relation to gender politics, encompasses a stage in history when there was a reactionary movement to

the institution of change in the political relationship of sexuality and traditional sexual relations between the sexes. Its main impetus was to attain sexual liberation for women for eradicate traditionally imposed and accepted structures of sexual behaviour like heterosexuality, monogamy, prostitution and the double standards of men giving the freedom to explore variety of sexual expeditions with different women whilst women could not (Millet 65). It was a phase when strict and gender biased sexual relations structure under patriarchal power was exposed and questioned, surfaced as a topic of discussion, and became subject to change. Even though, the first wave of sexual resolution did not particularly achieve all the courses it set out for, it succeeded in disputing patriarchy and forcing it to come to a verge of collapse. Patriarchy was so infused in characters of individuals that it was close to impossible to alter. The first phase, however, actually made it easier for subsequent fight for changes to ferment (Millet 61-65).

This brings us to the second phase of sexual revolution, also termed sexual liberation or the period of sexual permissiveness (Smith 418). This phase of political rebellion is not isolated to the women's liberation movement. However, most of the major changes that span out in the world due to this revolt were in favour of women. So, it is only right that it is briefly discussed as part of an exploration of the history of feminist movement. It was the period of "changes in sexual attitudes" (Hekma and Giami 1). A period that started in the 1960s, saw a series of happenings in the Western bloc that caused changes to the sexual practices and promoted the publishing of nudity in the public sphere (Hekma and Giami 1). Early that decade, Hekma and Giami acknowledge:

Sweden saw debates on abortion, the Netherlands witnessed *Provo's* that advocated general amoral promiscuity in 1965, England was host to a *summer of love* in 1967, Paris provided the setting for the May 1968 uprising and demonstrations that produced a pivotal image of the 1960s and in 1969 New York's Stonewall Inn became the symbol for gay liberation. The decade saw the ascendancy of the pill, pop music and festivals like Woodstock, feminism, homosexual emancipation and gay liberation, student revolts, sex shops and shows, girls without bra's and with miniskirts, sexualized media and the TV that broadcasted it all (1)

This series of political revolt forced the hands of an ever-powerful patriarchal system to eradicate some of its cultural institutions to incorporate such major changes. The institution of

marriage and the nuclear family system were challenged and replaced with group sex and communal living. Hekma and Giami also state that this revolution was done through demonstrations and social movements including “Black Power and protests against Vietnam, colonial wars, and nuclear technology” (1). Women got the opportunity to make their own choices with regards to their sexuality and procreation. Gay and lesbian rights were also liberated. There were so many successes that were attained through this series of demonstrations for sexual emancipation and in the long run, many scholars have suggested, this revolution most certainly stirred up the strict, fear based moral strictures of patriarchy (Smith 416-418). Sexuality became politicised and society saw new levels of eroticism as that decade marked the dawn of sexual emancipation in Western countries (Hekma and Giami 1). This phase was also characterised by protests against the Miss America pageant claiming beauty pageants only made women beautiful objects for men to claim (Rampton 2008). Rampton emphasizes; “The radical New York group called the Redstockings staged a counter pageant in which they crowned a sheep as Miss America and threw "oppressive" feminine artifacts such as bras, girdles, high-heels, makeup and false eyelashes into the trashcan” (3). This wave of feminism found itself in a period of various other movements, so it did not seem to get the attention it wanted (Rampton 3), the women’s movement decided to be as radical as possible as they did not want to get a ‘no’ for their requests, because they were not ready to take a ‘no’ for an answer.

Preceding the second phase of sexual revolution was the Women’s Suffrage Movement in the Nineteenth Century. One of the greatest rights movements of all time in the history of democracy was the Women’s Suffrage Movement (Dubois 20). Rampton has also referred to this movement as the First Wave of Feminism (1). It first panned out in America and gradually became a transnational political movement across the world. The movement’s goal was to fight for the right of franchise for women and begun originally in the 1848 (Rampton 1-2). Dubois explains that the main underlying argument for the movement was the claim that women’s individuality was as fundamental as men’s. After this movement started in 1848, it went dormant for a couple of decades after, during a time where socialism was antagonistic towards feminine rights (Dubois 22). Rampton accounts that the movement began at the Seneca Falls Convention; when three hundred men and women marched in protests against discriminate rights to vote and be voted for in a political election. After almost one hundred years of protesting, the 19th Amendment to the United States of America’s constitution was changed to grant women the right to vote. Irish women were also given rights to equal franchise as their

male counterparts in 1922 (Dubois 41). The protest panned out differently in different parts of the world, but eventually, the political right to vote was entitled to women. Millet accounts for a daring women's liberation movement that commenced United States of America and spread through Europe (62-64). In Millet's view, the women's movement was started hitherto to bring an end to slavery in America which in turn provided the momentum for a fight for "emancipation of women" (62).

Patriarchy has disproportionately affected all women around the world than men, and women of colour have not been left out. Even though usually overlooked, black women and other women of colour have taken up the mantel to confront this situation. Barbara Smith talks about black feminism and generally feminism amongst other women of colour and Third World countries. Smith posits that black women and women of third world countries have not been able to relate well and participate in large numbers in feminist liberation movements because of some white women's racism and the issue of coloured men and third world men's undying desire to maintain fear in their women and control them (4). Black men and Third World men, in an attempt to scare black women off feminist movements, have used myths like; "the black woman is already liberated", "racism is the only oppression the black woman ought to confront", "feminism is nothing but men hating", "women's issues are narrow and apolitical, people of colour should learn to deal with a much larger struggle", lastly, "those feminist are nothing but lesbians" (Smith 5-7). Black women have been assumed to be liberated because of their ability to withstand the various the struggles and the "worst" of living conditions in the world, but the ability to cope, should not and cannot be confused with liberation in any way (Smith 5). Smith lucidly writes:

There is not a Black woman in this country who has not, at some time, internalized and been deeply scarred by the hateful propaganda about us. There is not a Black woman in America who has not felt, at least once, like "the mule of the world," to use Zora Neale Hurston's still apt phrase.¹² Until Black feminism, very few people besides Black women actually cared about or took seriously the demoralization of being female *and* coloured *and* poor *and* hated. When I was growing up, despite my family's efforts to explain, or at least describe, attitudes prevalent in the outside world, I often thought that there was something fundamentally wrong with me because it was obvious that I and

everybody like me was held in such contempt. The cold eyes of certain white teachers in school, the Black men who yelled from cars as my sister and I stood waiting for the bus, convinced me that I must have done something horrible (9).

However, being aware of all the “isms” that suppress and oppress them, like racism, sexism, classism and homophobia, women of colour including indigenous African women chose to beat all odds and confront the black-hating, women-hating system they live under (Smith 9-11). Smith acknowledges the existence of a vibrant feminist movement of women of colour, in spite of persistent resistance to them, since the 1970s. In Africa, specifically Nigeria, women’s movements started around the 1950s with the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) founded in 1958 (Madunagu 666) Black feminism has helped black women to stop internalising racism and sexism (Smith 10). The movement has also contributed to bringing about a lot of changes in the political system like “reproductive rights, access to abortion pills, health care, child care, the rights of the disabled, violence against women, rape, battering, sexual harassment, welfare rights, Lesbian and gay rights, educational reform, housing, legal reform, women in prison, aging, police brutality, labour organizing, anti-imperialist struggles, anti-racist organizing, nuclear disarmament, and preserving the environment”. feminist women of colour have also appeared in movements against social schemes like apartheid in Southern Africa by black and Indian women, and many more (Smith 9-10).

During and after the season of demonstrations and protest rallies, this feminist movement has been a strong pillar in the up rise of scholarly works, literary criticisms and literary narratives and poetry on the matter of female subordination (Fonchingong 135). Bakuuro observed that in the immediate past to present day, women have used ‘authorship’ as an attempt to annihilate and bring an end to gender inequality (29). A wide range of critical essays and articles that emerged on the topic of masculinities and patriarchy were well-stocked with central ideas that illuminated the presence of gender role imbalances and showcase some fragilities of masculinities and challenge the ideals and “notions” of patriarchal cultures (Ouzgane 1). Rampton explains that when the women’s movement during the era of the second phase of Sexual Revolution were pushed to the side lines because of the other liberation movements going on at the time, they published critical essays to support their protests (3).

Over the years women have discussed patriarchy and shared their views and contempt on it through critical and scholarly works. There are six typologies to this type of feminist essays

namely, liberal, Marxist, socialist, radical, psychoanalytic, and post-structural (Hawthorne 540-541). These will be briefly explained below:

Liberal feminists share the notion and desire for equal share of the gender cake between men and women and they believe this can be achieved through legislation and social reform. Feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan are believed to be pioneers of liberal feminism (Hawthorn 541)

Marxist feminists believe the capitalist system is class system and that a few men being able to achieve and own property only ensures women economic inequality. These feminists call for the overthrow of the capitalist system for the socialist system of government (Hawthorne 541). Juliet Mitchell and Heidi Hartman have been associated with Marxist feminist (Beechey 66).

Socialist feminists combines the beliefs of Marxist and radical feminists' ideas, synthesising them to argue that it is better to interrelate the various forms of female marginalisation to create a world of freedom for women. They believe the subordination of women cannot be blamed only on economic oppression but rather, patriarchy, gender biased economic system, capitalism and race all come together to affect the status of women, to fight for emancipation means to understand all these social forms and fight them all (Hawthorne 541).

Radical feminists attempt to theorise the concept of women's oppression and its various facets (Beechey 68). They advocate for the simple riddance of patriarchal system itself. They disagree with both liberal and Marxist feminists with the view that both capitalism and liberalism are characterised by patriarchy (Hawthorne 541). Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* has been named by Beechy (68) as the best example of radical feminism.

Psychoanalytic feminists analyse female oppression under the school of thought of Sigmund Freud's Oedipus Complex. They believe humans are gendered beings right from birth through socialisation. Patriarchy is then a product of a child's "induction" into a male dominated world. Some feminists believe this can be changed by realigning the nature of the workforce and placing more women at vantage positions of power in the workforce so that females do not always appear as weak, meek and feeble (Hawthorne 541).

Post-structuralist feminists are not as metanarrative of omen's oppression as the other feminists writers. Their critical works oppose the idea that female oppression is caused by a single social system. They argue that liberal feminists have it wrong for presenting "unified accounts of

women's oppression". The subordination of women come in different forms and so cannot be tackled with a single weapon (Hawthorne 541).

Apart from critical essays, feminist movement has strongly been characterised with literary works – poetry, fiction and non-fictional narratives. Feminist literature is literature that has underpinnings of feminists ideas and these underpinnings are associated to it through literary criticism (Pasia 11). Feminist authors engage with patriarchal patterns and challenge the literary culture that is disproportionately dominated by men. Their literature mimic the experiences and lives of women under a certain form of social or culture that has created glass ceilings that the female protagonist strive to break. Male dominance and the subjugation of women is portrayed through characters, their thoughts, speech, actions and inactions.

Pioneers of the feminist literary world include Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Perkins, and others like them (Plain and Sellers 6). Woolf first completed her *Melymbrosia* in 1912, which was well versed with themes of feminist movements and the British social issues including homosexuality and colonialism, however, Woolf was warned by colleagues to take some of these issues out so as not to face rejected and malice against her career. *Melymbrosia* was then revised and became *The Voyage Out* ("The Voyage Out). Woolf went on to write other bildungsroman and novels like *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *The Waves* (1931) and others. Zora Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1939), and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), symbolically represent issues of black women under male dominance and oppression, abuse and racism.

Talking about challenging the literary culture dominated by men, Fonchingong explores how African feminist playwrights, through contemporary literary texts and critical essays, have sought to save and reform the image of the African woman (142-143). This has been facilitated by the influx of women writers and critiques in African literary tradition in present times has sufficed in causing a change in the character sketch presented to readers of African women in literary texts (135). They attempt to bridge a gender gap in the society that has been heightened by a male dominated literary society. Most of the female characters in novels by these contemporary female writers like Ama Atta Aidoo, Teresa Meniru and others like them, place the female protagonists in a position where they fight for and win their self-worth and freedom from norms and myths that engulf them and limit their decision making and confidence. This goes to show that even when women are presented differently, with interesting complexities and attributes which call the bluff of the attributes that are associated to them by some male

authors, there is still the presence of one common enemy- societal institutions that establishes gender stereotypes and gender inequality (143). Fonchingong explores texts by Buchi Emecheta whose central themes dispute the primitive assumption that being a wife and a mother is all the success every female hopes to achieve in life. Fonchingong examines the image of women protagonists portrayed in *Anowa*, *Unoma*, *Joys of Motherhood*, *So Long a Letter*, *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Efuru* (1995) are presented by their authors (143). One common characteristic of these female protagonists is resilience - the ideal to resist control of the society and in particularly marriages. These female protagonists are almost always up against a controlling husband living with the confines a tradition that places them in a position to feel they have every right to regulate the lives of their wives (143). There is an apparent reinvention of the image of the African woman who is by far associated and equipped with different complexities and attributes that make them crucial to the establishment and development of society at large. For instance, as Fonchingong illuminates, in *Unoma* (1976), Meniru creates a heroine, Unoma, who strives to get an education even though it went against the ethics of her clan and saves a boy from drowning (143).

Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement

Donaldson suggests that homosexuality and homophobia are the bedrock of antagonism of hegemonic masculinity (645). Connell believes homosexual men have also been marginalised by heterosexual men because hegemonic masculinity consist of control of heterosexual men and complicit masculinities (79). The fear and intolerance against homosexual men and lesbians has caused protest movements and riots seeking emancipation and equal rights with regards to freedom to choose same sex partners and marriage. Gay liberation demonstrations have sought for sexual liberation since the 1960s in the form of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) (Ashley 28). Ashley explains that the LGBT fought for far more than marital and sexual emancipation for themselves but for total sexual freedom for all people, they cause was and is also against racism and sexism, associating with movements like Black Lives Matter (Ashley 28-29). By November 2012, some American states began to vote for approval of gay marriage (Hall 1121).

The Men's Liberation and Men's Rights Movement started in the 1970s with the objective to annihilate the sex role theory that had come into existence three decades prior, according to Messner (255). Messner then argues that these activists believe the sex role is rigid and does not allow breathing space for men to be themselves. The standards set for men were "high cost"

because the expectations placed on men by the sex role was becoming almost lethal (Messner 256)

2.4 “Agencies” of hegemonic masculinities

Patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity have been viewed as a fear based, dehumanising and devaluing systems (Ortner 5-7; Payne 12:14-12:59). One may ask then; how has a system that has not received almost no positive criticism thrived since time immemorial? Many critics like Togarasei, like Fonchingong, Klingorová and Havlíček and others, have traced the establishment and reproduction of patriarchy on facets of daily life that incorporates male dominance as the ideal way of society (2). And, for something that is not a biological instinct but a product of social manipulations and systems to survive, it would have to be fuelled by myths, religious beliefs and practices and cultural support (Togarasei 2-4). For instance, Fonchingong in analysing African literary texts, was convinced that there are certain societal institutions that have been used to establish, maintain, and justify patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities: “agencies of gender inequality” (139).

Some critics have mentioned that the principal agencies of female subordination are tradition and culture (Togarasei 2; Fonchingong 139; Bakuuro 28; Klingorová and Havlíček 2). This is not to say that all cultures around the world have promoted patriarchy or still contribute to the justification of masculine dominion. However, most of the world’s cultures are (or were) patriarchal (Ortner 5). Hegemonic masculinities is as a result of a principal tradition that inherently stipulate that men, specifically those who are the stewards of the culture, should be the dominant gender in the community (Togarasei 2). Such traditions like gender stereotypical roles have contributed to creating a masculine dominated culture. Togarasei also associates myths and legends that are told and retold either orally or in writing with the creation of a gender biased culture (4-5). Some of these myths are popularly seen in literary narratives and are discussed by Charles Fonchingong suggests that through socialisation which has norms and ethics entrenched by beliefs and cultural practices women are marginalised and are made to take peripheral roles in society. Fonchingong acknowledges the “Adam myth” which proposes that a woman was created to be a man’s helper as in the case of Adam and Eve (137). The traditional belief is men are relatively rational beings whereas women are something of too emotional and cannot be trusted or relied on in making and executing decisions in the family, marriage and society (Togarasei 5; Fonchingong 138).

Almost all of the world's cultures arrest a woman's life achievements at the end of being a mother and a wife (Millet 25; Fonchingong 136-138). This is done through conscious and subconscious practices of certain traditions that make up a whole culture. Infants are socialised through this same culture; the media continues to exalt this part of cultures and these ensure the continuous reconstruction of hegemonic men.

2.5 The religion rationale

This thesis is driven by the preponderant concern of the representation of the link religion has with female subjugating or marginalisation in African literary narratives. This essay will then, contribute to the increasing discussion on gender relations and religion through the lenses of African literature. Religion is imbedded in culture and has great impact on livelihood of its practitioners and the interpretations and in some cases misinterpretations of certain religious texts has direct link to the status of women in society (Klingorová and Havlíček 2). Connell states, "since religion's capacity to justify gender inequality collapsed..." (9). This statement implies that religion has been a justifying force for patriarchy and also ignores the fact that religion has been said to still produce hegemonic masculinity. However, a research by Klingorová and Havlíček in 2015 suggests that religion has and still continues to exist as a means of creating, justifying and/or reinforcing gender inequality (2-4). Hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy have been the bases for the existence certain social injustices and religion has been named as one of the top social institutions that have assisted in sustaining them (Togarasei 2; Klingorová and Havlíček 2; Sweetman 2; Walker 15; Dolan 23; Harsh 99; Stobie 424).

The Critic, Rohini Harsh has presented religion as the veneration of something or someone believed to be supernatural which comes with certain regulations, sentiments, and foundations. Some of the things religion has been associated with is shaping the lives of individuals, their relationship with others, and offers deep comprehension of things seen on earth. Religion has served as medium for fellowship which establishes a 'sense of belonging' and a purpose driven life (Harsh 99). Shifting from the bright side, Harsh observes some of the negative aspects of religion – "Though religion exerts a sense of purpose and belonging, it also divides mankind and becomes a source of conflict between a group of people and community" (99). Religion, Harsh believes, has been the reason for some social segregation that has provoked isolation,

discrimination and squabbles, and more often than not, had been the cause for certain human rights infringement.

Klingorová and Havlíček have also claimed that the status of women in the church is directly the status of women in the society (2). Sweetman also suggested the same idea, stating that women's position in society is directly controlled by religious institutions in the family and the community levels (2). Most world religions exalt masculine domination in both worship and societal relations (Klingorová and Havlíček 3). The common acceptance of religious leaders as men, like the Pope in the Catholic Church, have had influence on gender equality in society (Klingorová and Havlíček 3; Stobie 424). In states with high levels of religiosity, Klingorová and Havlíček discovered that the authority of male religious leaders have 'advocated' patriarchy (4). Some biblical texts have also been interpreted to represent an idea that men are spiritually and holistically ordained to be the head of the family and such the society (Togarasei 5). Togarasei refers to biblical texts that support the dominion of a man over a woman for instance, women being asked by the Apostle Paul to submit to their husbands as they would the Almighty God (6). The male gender was named the head of the family in the bible. He also refers to the creation story in Genesis: which has said a man was the first to be created by God and in the likeness of God. Even though there is more to these texts, Togarasei parts of it have been used to glorify patriarchy (6-7). In all totality, Togarasei's claim is the church and traditional culture and belief have tended to influence patriarchy (6-7). In their opening paragraphs, Klingorová and Havlíček suggest two things: that religion has deep roots in every aspect our daily lives and gender structure is also predestined in the society has been predefined by a set of religious facets that have been interpreted to establish gender inequality (2). Religion is imbedded in culture as culture is imbedded in religion, and the status of women in the church in directly or indirectly the status of women in the society as a whole. There are patterns of social behaviour that are largely influenced by religion. Klingorová and Havlíček use their research to statistically reveal and establish gender inequality in religion-dense communities. The role of religion in facilitating gender inequality is intricate and differs depending on the time and place. And, in their opinion, gender inequality favours every party involved, one way or the other, but if women are 'emancipated' and given equal rights there would enhance economies, politics and general development of a society (2).

Drawing from scholarly works from quite a number of scholars on gender and religion, Klingorová and Havlíček reflect on high rates of religious arguments relating to gender inequality. Using theories from feminist geographies in conjunction with geography of world

religion which has had a seemingly increased number of appearances in the academic research spheres. This has skyrocketed the debate that issues of traditional gender roles and stereotypes are initiated by religion, culture and upbringing. There have been an up rise of scholarly works and research regarding gender relations in religious states. Most world religions exalt masculine domination in both worship and societal relations. Women are always adored and respected for the role they play in the institution of family, yet they are still placed in peripheral roles and are not involved in major decision making in state and nation building (2-5).

Looking back in the histories of individual religions, “the voices of women are rarely heard” (Klingorová and Havlíček 3). The societies from which most of these religions emerged from were patriarchal and that influenced gender inequality in religion (Klingorová and Havlíček 3). The levels of inequality between and within genders may lie different between one gender to another based on a simple fact of differences in geographical locations and traditional culture of the followers of a particular religion - the level of gender inequality can have ties with the socioeconomic development of the state (Klingorová and Havlíček 3). Going into details of their research, Klingorová and Havlíček’s findings show that the higher the level of religiosity of a state, the higher the level of gender inequality. Analytically, religious studies have shown over time that women are mostly classified as the minority (Klingorová and Havlíček 3). In typical Hindu and Islam communities it is unlikely to see women in legislative power. The common acceptance of religious leaders as men have had influence on gender equality in society. In states with high levels of religiosity, Klingorová and Havlíček discovered that the authority of male religious leaders have advocated patriarchy and women are automatically inclined to feel peripheral to men. In most world religions, a strong spiritual mindedness means sustaining gender stereotypical roles which undermines the mental and physical capacities of women (3).

Klingorová and Havlíček’s research was provoked by the ‘diverse status of women in society’. Through quantitative collection of data from around certain world states, the authors draw certain solid conclusions which include the status of women in society has been largely influenced by certain interpretations of scriptural texts in the four broadest religions around the world. These religions are imbedded in cultures and traditions of societies they emerged from and the societies they were introduced to. Also, societies with a high number of individuals who are secular have low or no levels of gender inequality.

Sweetman continues to mention the concept of religious extremists or fundamentalist faith driven men (2). Hawley and Proudfoot suggest that fundamentalists are exaggerated faith-based people that feel an extreme need to defend religion against the secular practices and modern system (21). Fundamentalism has been normally regarded in respect with the Muslim faith with regard to terrorism and the concept of haram. However, religious extremism has roots in American protestant Christianity (Sweetman 3). It is then comprehensible to assume that extremist faith is not a trait of just one religion. There is a clear link between gender inequality, culture and religion and this is properly heightened with religious fundamentalism. Sweetman goes on about fundamentalism and posits that women's lives and sexuality are always subject to scrutiny because the paternity of their offspring is central to the cultivation of patriarchy. Fundamentalists always ensure the infringement of human rights especially women's rights and this includes violence against women (3).

Religion has offered a sort of temporary liberation for women living under oppression and violence especially violent marriages, but, to what end? The same teachings of such religions have helped women stay in abusive relationships (Walker 16). Bridget Walker presents different aspects of religious subordination of women, stating that religion helps to create a safe haven where woman going through oppression in especially marriages and families go to find solace in good company. Ironically, women are confined and expected to stay in abusive marriages because of this same religion (15). She states:

For this woman, trapped in a violent relationship, the Christian church provided the only chance to associate with others and to escape temporarily from the prison of her home - yet it did not offer her liberation. On the other hand, religion has been a resource in struggles for equality and emancipation for many women. Gender and development workers must be aware of these two options - domestication and liberation - because on the one hand, religious teaching preaches women's subordination through imposing social codes regarding women's roles, behaviour, and relationships with men (15).

Walker's idea agrees with Sweetman's as the former also suggests that patriarchy seems to draw strength from controlling women's bodies and as such their sexuality. For instance, the church's restriction against contraception and abortion (17). As in the case of the Pope advising that women who are victims of rape do well to keep the conception from their abuse and bear

the children from their rapists (Walker 17). Walker stipulates that religion has also backed the violence of colonialism and genocide (16).

Dolan shares experiences of some women in Meru, Kenya; “Young girls are socialised from a very early age to be good Christian girls - obedient, submissive, and accommodating - to attract a suitable man for marriage” (26). Dolan explains how women she interviews in Kenya show that Christian values and social cannot be separated and society and the church teaches them submission, compromise and tolerance (26). Women cannot question the actions of their husbands as actions like being rude to and speaking ill of their husbands are unchristianly (26). Macey also gives account of how the religion and ethnicity have been used by some of the Pakistani religious men in the Bradford area, United Kingdom to justify their violence against women and of girls willing to commit suicide because of forced arranged early marriages. Macey also narrates stories of women living in constraints because of violence and fear of violence itself. A girl gives up on pursuing her degree because of male harassment. Obviously pursuing higher education is not in the moral rights of a woman as her parents are looked down upon and called “bad parents”. Religious leaders in these parts tell victims of domestic violence who come to them to seek refuge to “go home and be dutiful wives”. Extremist religious men take it upon themselves to rid the land of lesbians and gays, laying life threats on them on the grounds of religion. Macey goes on to present the plight of Muslim women in this community who share their distaste of the fact that these men taint religion by using it to justify their maltreatment of others (50). Macey explains that this is a result of patriarchy as men decide to instil fear and ensure female subordination by using the oldest tool in the book, religion. The same can be said of the Hausa group of Northern Nigeria, who, according to Adamu, are bound to their husbands control after marriage because he provides her material and sexual satisfaction, as their religion decrees (57).

Religious texts are interpreted by a male-dominated and oppressive religious institutions to ensure both hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy (Sweetman 2; Walker 16; Macey 48). Walker asserts that religion is a powerful tool that can be used for a great good and an even greater evil in the wrong hands. On the bright side, religion has offered a sanctuary for women going through oppression to meet (16). The same religious texts that have been used to create hegemonic men can be used to reclaim the status of women in the society. Tripp also believes that texts on Jesus Christ and his life can be used to transform patriarchal attitudes (62). As Togarasei believe, the history of “Jesus of Luke” can help build a society without dangerous masculinities (9). Walker posits that there are texts on liberation, of love and tolerance, and of

equality of all persons in the bible. And if religion has the capacity to motivate thoughts and actions of individuals, it can also be used to transform bad behaviour (18). Hashim also describes the advantage Islam has of bringing an end to the same segregation and anti-woman nature the religion has become. Islam women need both education and texts of liberation and equality in the Qur'an to challenge the oppressive system they are subjected to (60-61).

2.6 Religion, Patriarchy and the African Novel

Literary imagination is one of the key attempts of constructing ideals and ideas, economic, social and political dynamics, as well as building identities (Martins 35). And, African literature has been used in this respect. African literature has assisted in preserving histories of different African cultures throughout the 18th Century to present. One of the major prospects of African Literature is the revamping the past and presenting a progressive and diverse future for the African society. and this cannot be undermined (Martins 35). Most African literature engage with the colonial experience and the slave trade, illuminating the impact of colonialism and some also depicting neo-colonialism, and several others. Ibid.

In the period of an upsurge in feminist motivated writings, African literature was not spared. Nonetheless, one of the predominant themes in African literature is the projection of the gender relations in its society (Fonchingong 135). The topic on hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy in Africa has been a central theme or one of the split themes in a number of African literary narratives. Charles Che Fonchingong makes a critical assessment of the issue of gender inequality in African novels from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. Using works from authors like Chinua Achebe, Ama Atta Aidoo, Teresa Meniru and other, Fonchingong demonstrates the claim that early African literature were sated, often, with plots that marginalised women characters and made them not so necessary for the central themes of the narrative (135). They were also put in a position to be realised as unstable characters who could not be counted on (136).

The imbalance of power between the male and female gender is much represented in African literature. The female character is usually portrayed as sloppy and unreliable. There is a biased representation of the African woman (Fonchingong 141). The male character on the other hand is placed in a position of power, wealth, strength and sagacious. The man is portrayed as the protector and provider. A woman is basically presented as a man's helper. A man should be ambitious and become successful in order to take care of the 'fragile' female who cannot stand

on her own - “The female is not regarded as a “whole” being; she is viewed as unfinished, physically mutilated and emotionally dependent. On the other hand, men are designed to be dominant” (Kwatsha 129) this is illuminated when female characters are expected and forced into marriage because culture assumes they need men to take care of them. A woman who has come of age and is unmarried is usually ridiculed in most literary narratives.

The projection of gender stereotypical roles is one of the peculiar ways African authors have projected gender inequality in their texts. The traditional role of the woman is to be a mother, a wife, and the cook of the home. Exploring this through the lenses of a number of literary narratives like *Anowa* (1970), *Unoma* (1976) *Things Fall Apart* (1956), and *The Joys of Motherhood* (1994), *Ewa and Other Plays* (2000), and others, Fonchingong illuminates how the gender stereotypes, gender roles and in fact female subordination that seem to play. In *Anowa*, the author uses characters’ actions and words to showcase what a man’s role is in society and marriage is, and the expectations the culture places on women as a character proclaims getting spouses for his daughters is not a responsibility of his. In *Unoma* (1972), Teresa Meniru reinforces this claim. Girls were taught right from childhood how to keep a cook and keep a home. Females are wired to be the traditional good wife which requires learning how to cook and whatnot. Which brings the reader to understanding why girls are not put through formal education in *Unoma* because they clearly do not need it. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *The Joys of Motherhood* are no different from *Anowa* and *Unoma*. They also solidify the point about these gender roles. Fonchingong uses the example of a female character who is dehumanised in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1956) because only one child, a girl, had survived through all her ten births. Bearing many male children for her husband appears to be the apex of a woman’s life achievement. These roles, as Millet (1969) projected, arrest the female at home, making her bound close chapters on any other aspirations she has outside the home and the family (137).

Bakuuro explores the issue of patriarchy in three renowned novels; *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) by Egyptian playwright and psychiatrist Nawal El Sawaawi, *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) by Nigerian sociologist and author Buchi Emechata and *Beyond the Horizon* (1991) by Ghanaian novelist Amma Darko. These three novels portray the very essence of what females being seen as objects owned by their patriarchal owner, who uses them as they see fit. The protagonists in these novels are literally sold off to marriage at incredibly young ages by their fathers and uncle who choose their spouse for them (29). In *The Joys of Motherhood* the father figures chooses and gives his daughters off to the highest bidder. When Kehinde defiles this

system and decides to choose her own spouse, her father, Nniafe throws tantrums and violently attacks the father of his daughter's husband with the claim that his daughter was not old enough to know what she wants. This begs the question; if this girl is too young to know what she wants, why is she being sent off to marriage? The marriage of their daughters and female wards fetches these men fortunes in the form of bride price and that seems to be the most important thing for these men. As per usual, the daughters sent off to these early and arranged marriages find themselves in abusive and oppressive marital homes. Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* is sent off to marriage at a young age to a man who is about fifty years her senior. her husband, Sheikh Mahmoud, maltreats Firdaus and even decides the exact portion of food she eats daily. Firdaus confides in her uncle about this and her uncle encourages her to continue to be a good wife and endure this. Mara of *Beyond the Horizon* is subjected to a similar treatment (Bakuuro 30).

These girls are also exempt from formal education and higher education in their respective novels. Especially for Firdaus who could not attend the university because they only accepted male students at the time. The treatment of male children and the advices the parents of these girls give them suggest that male children and in totality, males, are far more valuable than females. It is a girls role to attain good home skills and endurance, as well as a sort of good social standing in order to support her husband's education and his reputation (Bakuuro 29-34).

Fleeing this oppressive and devaluing situations, these protagonists find themselves in worse situations. Firdaus and Mara become prostitutes in Egypt and Germany, respectively. Firdaus, ends up killing a man and goes to prison for this. She was then asked to deny the crime so she would be set free. Firdaus refuses as she would rather die to the crime of taking a *man's* life than live any other way (29-34)

Fonchingong elaborates his view that the female character is portrayed as sloppy, unreliable and incredible (138). He quotes a few lines from the narrative that explicitly annihilates the image of the female gender. "Two women are two pots of poison" "Women cannot keep secrets". A woman's word is believed only after the event" (138). Besides, Fonchingong explores another peculiar issue of ridiculous superstition and outdated myths that authors like Elechi Amadi, Wole Soyinka and James Ngugi have tied women characters to. Fonchingong describes a situation in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* which weaves an entangling web of myths around Ihuoma, accusing her of being married to a marine deity, thus being responsible

for the seemingly coincidental deaths of her spouses” (138). James Ngugi presents a mythical explanation as to why the female gender is always put in peripheral positions and giving biased and sloppy judgement. He believes that women were paramount to men but because of their harsh nature (again associating females to evil or corrupt attitudes), men went ahead and took all the power from them, hence their subordination to them.

A major key that is illuminated in this article is how gender biases and women subordination is something that is initiated right from birth in the African society. In *The Concubine*, Fonchingong reacts to how Adag, a female character in the novel gets adulated and celebrated for giving birth to a male child while Madume is looked down upon because he and his wife only have female children. Bakuuro explores how female and male children are treated differently. The sisters are taught to respect their brothers and serve them (34). Right from infancy, these characters are portrayed to get synchronised with the patriarchal system and adapt to it accordingly.

Contemporary African female authors also portray gender inequality but in the spirit of redeeming the position and image of female characters. Women have tried to make their voices heard on their distaste of patriarchal power through writing with the main aim to cause alteration in power relations (Bakuuro 28). Some male playwrights have also taken it up upon themselves to salvage the image of the female character. Ngugi in *I Will Marry When I Want* and Desmond Phiri in the *Chief's Bride* (1968) project their female characters as having the zeal to defy the traditions of their society and claim for themselves the lives they really want.

One of the issues Fonchingong raises in his article is assess how representations of gender power structures in African literature differs from three historical periods: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. He shares the view that colonialism might have annihilated the powerful position of women in society and stripped them off any sense of self-entitlement and reduced them as peripheral to men in the family and marriage (135).

These compelling arguments from Charles Fonchingong and Justine Bakuuro illuminate dynamics on the topic of masculinity and patriarchy and cast an even brighter light on its manipulation in African literature. Fonchingong has used his research to generally illuminate the biased and sloppy imagery given to the African female in literary narratives that were authored by male novelists and playwrights. Fonchingong again reinvestigates gender roles and gender stereotypes in Africa and how they are depicted in African literature. Further, studies the new character sketch of the African woman in contemporary literary texts by female authors

and some male authors as well and finally Bakuuro uses her article to highlight the portrayal of gender biases in African novels. Fonchingong and Bakuuro's investigations of gender inequality through the lenses of literary narratives helps to establish the underlining idea in this essay on patriarchy and how gender inequality can be identified in African literature from pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial narratives.

Religion in the African Novel

VanZanten argues that African was a "fertile ground" for the spread of religion (369). VanZanten goes on to stipulate that early African texts included some of the earliest Christian texts from Egypt, Namibia, North African and Ethiopia from before the Seventh Century (369). Religion has had a clear cut position in African literary narratives, as Martins posits that religion has also been a preponderant concern in most African literatures - the return of Christianity to Africa during the period of colonialism inspired a lot of African literature (370). Most of the early post-colonial African writers were tutored by colonial masters under the Christian law. They were particularly influenced by the bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and *Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress* (VanZanten 370). The African novel and religion has interacted for over a hundred years.

The relationship between religion and the African literature usually goes in the way of the interaction between the Caucasian missionaries and the African people. Most of the novels do not represent just one of idea of the colonial missionaries. VenZanten states, agreeing with Purcell, that the three missionaries in *The Tongue of the Dumb* (1971) appear to represent different ideals (374). The novel also creates a platform where Christian values and the indigenous African culture are infused so Christianity can be practiced in solidarity with the values of the society (374). Religion has been used as a sign of eurocentrism and believing in the Christian God seems to come with a Europeanised lifestyle as in the case of Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). There are clear depictions of the Christian values being assimilated into the African culture. Martins makes the claim that one of the most assimilated feature of Christianity represented in the African culture is the patriarchal system; as the male dominated and sexist society use certain Christian texts and values to "reinforce its power, (36). While some characters accept the Christian religion by infusing with their African identities, others rid themselves off any African trait and mentality in accepting Christianity.

Religion has also been represented as in conflict with the African traditional culture and religion. Martins posits that religion is sometimes shown to create distortions in the African

society and identity (37). Several African novels have focused Christianity and the things the religion has proclaimed blasphemous amongst the traditions of the African culture and then go on to portray the Abrahamic religion as having absurd values and contradicting traditional practices of most African peoples (Martins 37). Characters are used to represent the total rejection of Christianity and show a distaste of the religion because it assumes a position of being more refined than their African tradition. the monolithic nature of Christianity also stands in contrast with most African beliefs.

2.7 Purple Hibiscus – Theoretical and Critical Overview

The primary text chosen for this thesis analysis has been named The Best First Book in the world under the Commonwealth Writers' Prize award in 2005 ("Purple Hibiscus"). It was Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's debut novel, written in 2003. Ann has termed the text a feminist work that "challenges the dehumanizing tendencies of the menfolk" (426). Ann believes characters like Beatrice Achike have been used to expose this issue. In her words; Achike belongs to the category of liberal feminism" that not only is her first novel a feminist work, is exhibits radical feminism, in the case murder is used as resolution to violence, humiliation and dehumanisation (426). Stobie has also called it a bildungsroman that reflects the journey of Kambili into individualism and religious freedom (421). The story of *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) is a story of religion, patriarchy, intolerance, the state and education (Stobie 427; Wallace 470; Harsh 98). Sandwith contributes to the continuous discussion of the novel adding the assertion of reading the novel through the lens of the body (51).

First, *Purple Hibiscus* has been understood as a feminist novel (Ann 426). Ann presents feminism as: "...feminism is women-oriented and concentrates on issues that concerns women" (427). It is a literary movement that tends to bring about a change in the society especially on how women are treated; it tries to discourage discrimination and humiliation on women; it focuses its attention on emancipation of women" (427).

Ann believes feminists writings are equipped with the capacity to expose the inhumane treatment of women by men and the society at large and also cause changes in this dehumanising system (426). *Purple Hibiscus* was not only written by a novelist who has acclaimed herself a "happy feminist", but also exposes the abuses and victimisation most women and children go through in marriage (426). Adichie does this by presenting two types of African women; the real woman and the good woman. Ann proposes that Beatrice Achike

(Mama) is the good woman. Mama's silence and tolerance of the whole brutal treatment of Eugene is exactly what has been termed, a good Christian wife (427). Mama stood quiet through the abuse of her children and the deaths of her unborn children. This is the representation of Adichie linking violence with silence responses Wallace mentions in her reading of the novel (467). Beatrice makes excuses for Eugene's actions, depicting a kind of passive acceptance of patriarchy and the oppression/violence that comes with it (Hewett 84). Beatrice did not for once disobey Eugene even when he was not looking. Aunt Ifeoma on the other hand, who Ann calls the "real woman" does not tolerate the controlling and sexist nature of her brother and father. Ifeoma constantly stood by what she believed in and did not succumb to the mind control of her father and brother (426).

Harsh argues that the novel represents a chauvinistic model of religion (98). Her argument focuses on some of the 'impacts of religion' portrayed in the novel. Just like Stobie, Harsh believes religion and patriarchy have been represented as sometimes having devastating repercussions (99), arguing that 'religious dogmatism' is one of the main themes of the novel (99). Religious fundamentalism has been said to have originated in Protestant Christianity (Sweetman 3). Caroline Sweetman also suggests in her editorial that religion, culture and the marginalisation of woman have always had strong connection throughout history and religious extremist have always found a way to use faith to control women and especially their bodies (2-3). Stobie suggests that Eugene feels entitled to the control over his family because:

As the pope, although human and therefore not impeccable, may in certain circumstances pronounce doctrine as infallible from his throne, so too may the entire body of bishops in unity with the pope make infallible pronouncements. By virtue of his gender, his fanatical piety and his social and economic capital, Eugene assumes a similar authority (423).

The abuse and victimisation the family faces in the hands of their husband and father has been an effect of patriarchy practised repeatedly and justified with religious texts and beliefs in the Church. Eugene has accepted what he was taught as a little boy by a Catholic Priest as the one and only true way to follow and walk in the will of God. Stobie uses some background information of the author to trace the representation of religion in *Purple Hibiscus*. Eugene, the father of the protagonist, Kambili and the first Catholic priest who is introduced in the narrative the main culprits (Harsh 99) of what Stobie terms absolutism, fundamentalism and religious

extremist (421). Their faith in God and the Catholic Church and its institutions is rigid and as such has no room for hybridity- that is a mixture of religion and the Nigerian culture, for instance using the Igbo language and Igbo songs for Mass, it also has no room for forgiveness- this lack of forgiveness becomes one of the couple of reasons for Eugene's violence against his family and unborn children, their faith is also too rigid to give any room for tolerance (421). This also doubles as the representation of the conflict between African and the Christian religion. Eugene despises his own father and refuses to have any relations with him in any way because his father believes in the lesser gods of the Igbo culture. Eugene calls his father a heathen who will definitely burn in hell and even throws him out of his house because he refuses to convert to the Roman Catholic faith (Stobie 423; Harsh 100).

Harsh presents another idea in her article, 'the individualistic nature of religion' portrayed in *Purple Hibiscus*. Harsh explains that this idea is exhibited throughout the time Kambili and Jaja spent with their Aunt Ifeoma. Due to living in such a liberated environment with free-spirited and happy individuals, Kambili and Jaja gained a new insight on life and their Catholic faith. Their new environment shapes their life and faith and reveals to, especially Kambili, how fallible her father's beliefs and actions were. Jaja and Kambili get the opportunity to find and define their own individuality and find their voices whereas living in their father's house they were not given the opportunity to make utterances Eugene did not approve of and the more Kambili realizes Eugene's intolerable and oppressive attitude is reflected in the society and government, according to Harsh (98-100). This has caused many divisions amongst people who claim to share the same faith in the supernatural. Different people hold different views on what religion is and in the African society, religion is highly Eurocentric and being mixed with traditional indigenous beliefs and this is clearly exhibited in *Purple Hibiscus* (Harsh 104). This has been a paramount issue in *Purple Hibiscus*. Violence against women and children's bodies can be tied to religion in the novel (Harsh 107). Harsh believes this is one of the effects of religion. Eugene's despotic attitude is also as a result of a socially structured religious belief. Eugene is disrespectful, discriminates, violent and intolerable (98-100).

Stobie discusses *Purple Hibiscus* in using the facets espoused in Hanif Kureishi's *The Word and the Bomb*, a critical book that portrays the gap between fundamentalist Islam and liberal Western values. These include 1. How literature battles "rigidity" and present possible positive ideals of how society could be, 2. The relevance of investigating how race and religion affects our daily lives and political issues, 3. The dreadful effects of fundamentalism (421). Stobie argues that Adichie exposes the shortcomings of the father figures in the novel. As the plot

unravels from the beginning, the protagonist's narration may make it seem like the three main father figures, Eugene, Father Amadi and the protagonist's paternal grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu are infallible. Eugene's character is portrayed as a devout Christian, responsible father and citizen, a philanthropist and hardworking man. The book opens with Father Benedict singing the praises of Brother Eugene in the church for all the charity he does. Eugene is basically used to enrich the sermons of Father Benedict. Eugene is also admired by others outside the church because of the critical articles he writes as backlash to the then corrupt and autocratic government of Nigeria.

Meanwhile, Stobie argues that Eugene himself is a tyrant (427). He is also an autocratic and even worse a dangerous patriarch who finds fulfilment in enacting severe physical punishments to his wife and children when they disobey his laws. Stobie has described him as a conceited character who is headstrong in believing that he is always right about everything; "The key attribute linking all of these harmful practices is an arrogant conviction of being right, a refusal to accept difference or engage in the give-and-take of reasoned discussion" (423). Stobie then throws light on Father Amadi, a young, open-minded and handsome Catholic Priest who replaces Father Benedict. Father Amadi brings fresh hope to the church yet Amadi's shortcoming was leading Kambili on to fall in love with him even though he was perfectly aware that he is sworn to celibacy. Papa-Nnukwu, rejected by his own son because he does not share the same faith, is seen as a symbol of pre-colonial religion which is characterised by forgiveness, generosity and tolerance of other beliefs is later revealed to be sexist.

Stobie further illuminates an apparent dimension of Eugene's control in the society, church and his family. Bourdieu suggests that male dominations are sometimes manifested through implied order; "Inscribed in the things of the world, the masculine order also inscribes itself in bodies through tacit injunctions that are implied in the routines of division of labour or of collective or private rituals...". (Bourdieu 24). According to Stobie, Eugene owns many factories and one of them produces the wafers and wine his church uses for communion during Mass gathering and manufactures biscuits that are sold for private or individual consumption. Stobie believes in the case of Eugene, he exercises 'tacit' dominium through the collective and individual consumption of his products. Eugene's dominium cuts across his family and home, his church and the entire society (424).

Literature can and is used to combat the rigidity of social systems and offer a more progressive and transformed view of society (Stobie 241). Adichie uses her novel to portray a more

“reformist and progressive view” on religion. Adichie incorporating the Igbo language and practices in Christianity and showing the respect, tolerance and admiration Aunt Ifeoma had respect for her father’s pagan religion offers a better attitude toward the indigenous religion and gives a warm reconciliation between the two values and provide a resolution for the conflict between Christianity and the Igbo tradition “I argue that from within the church Adichie implicitly criticises dogmas such as the infallibility of the pope and the celibacy of the priesthood, and offers an alternative to patriarchal and religious absolutism, shame and body-hatred” (Stobie 422).

Indeed, this study agrees with Cheryl Stobie who stipulated in her article that literature plays a role in battling the stiffness of society and religion and presenting possible positive ideals of how society could be. Chimamanda Adichie has been said to have depicted a troubling side of religion but she also represents a progressive and transformable prospect of religion and the African society (421)

Wallace proposes that *Purple Hibiscus* offers a critique of both the Igbo tradition and religion and Christianity (479). The Christian religion is represented as being problematic and destructive nature. Although, Wallace takes into account the importance of location is this criticism of the religion (475). A post-colonial location, where colonialist thought they were saving “the brown/black woman from her backward culture”. Christianity is confused with the Western way of living. What was “Christian” was living like Europeans do. The patriarchy of the West African culture reconciled with the patriarchy of Christianity. Christianity ensured the continues submission of the woman to the man. Both Christianity and the Igbo culture are represented as sexist. Wallace evaluates that Adichie offers a paradoxical mix of a critique and an embrace or celebration of both cultures (475). She goes on to acknowledge the premise that novel is structured by some Christian practices (469). The chapter titles and opening lines give this away. This emphasises the importance of religion in the novel. The book is wired with Christianity and portrays different shades of it. The opening sentence; “Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère” (1), alludes to Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958). This allusion to a novel that circles around male dominance in the traditional setting of Nigeria foreshadows the patriarchies of the Igbo and Christian cultures in *Purple Hibiscus* (Wallace 473).

Kambili narrates the Sunday ritual after Mass where Eugene asks them to sip a bit of his tea, a ceremony he terms the “love sip” (5). As the tea burns her tongue so painfully that she continues to feel this burning on her tongue even during lunch. Wallace proposes that not only is this image disturbing, but it also symbolises the issue of silence and taking away of the voice of victims (477). Throughout the novel Kambili finds herself constantly lost for words, not out of surprise but she always had problems speaking to others. Kambili’s tongue-tied problem adds her to a number of protagonists whose abuse causes temporary dumbness until they are ready to break free from their oppressors (Wallace 477). Eugene’s attitude is authoritative, his mechanism is using love to manipulate and create fear and fear to ensure obedience and create pain (Wallace 475).

Eugene’s manipulations mixes fear and faith - his exaggerated faith in his religion and his fear of the body and sexuality. His abusive actions are usually provoked when his family decides to succumb to the weakness of the flesh. Like Mama’s decision to stay back in the car when the family was going to say greet Father Benedict after Mass because of her morning sickness. Eugene gets angry enough to beat Mama till she loses her pregnancy. Young Kambili going through menstrual cramps was covered by Mama to hurriedly take some food to hold the painkiller before Mass. Eugene catches her and beats her severely because they were fasting before Mass and no one was supposed to consume anything. Eugene’s fear of the body and intolerant nature was in Aunty Ifeoma’s words because he was “too much of a colonial product” (13). He physically punished by a missionary priest for masturbating as a teenage boy. This haunted Eugene and caused him to despise bodily desires and weakness making seek an absurd level of perfection where all bodily needs are ignored to in the order to give honour to God (Wallace 471). Wallace goes on to insist that Eugene’s violence is “marked by his own brokenness” (472)

Sandwith also presents further bodily reading of the narrative (96). Sandwith states that her appreciation of the narrative through the lens of the body has been done under the principles of philosophers on the subject like Michael Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin and Achille Mbembe’s works critiquing the body as a powerful tool in symbolising politics and cultural dynamics. Including but not limited to Frantz Fanon and Achille Mbembe’s idea of a racialised and colonialised body. Also paying respect to Elizabeth Grosz’s feminist ideology of a “gendered body” (99).

Sandwith analyses the theme of body through the scope of political representation in post-colonial Nigeria. First, she evaluates the representation of the nation-state. Sandwith believes the narrative represents a historical trajectory of a failed state due to the account of the random coup d'états and unstable and corrupt governance (97). Since the story of the state is told through the eyes of the limited perspective of the first person narrator, not much is painted of the military government, however, Sandwith asserts that the image given to the reader about the state is a historical and symbolic representation of an “entrenched totalitarianism” (97).

In Sandwith's view, most of the bodily representations happen in the private sector of the novel, that is the family, the Achike family dynamics (96). She looks at the body dynamics in the narrative. Kambili appears fascinated by the bodies of her father, mother, Father Amadi and the tensions that happen in the human body due to tense emotions. In several parts of the book, Kambili gives detailed descriptions and of body structure and postures of other characters. Kambili describes Papa as a tall man and comments on his body language as and when he is angry, tensed or sad. Her peculiar fascination with bodies causes Kambili to access the physical behaviours of her mother and her aunt, Ifeoma. Aunt Ifeoma happens to be as tall as her brother, Eugene. Ifeoma walks fast and with a well-proportioned posture. She walks confidently and with purpose, knowing exactly what she wants and how to get it. Ifeoma talks as fast as she walks, and these bodily traits gives her off as “warrior-like”. Aunt Ifeoma's maternal instincts are described as protective, loving and liberal. Beatrice Achike on the other hand, is symbolises powerless, inferior, fearful, timid and hopelessness as Sandwith describes her bodily attitudes “who walks with a limp, speaks in whispers, and echoes her husband's views” (98).

Sandwith's article circles back to the somatophobia Wallace talks about. The core of bodily mechanism and dynamics Adichie portrays in her narrative is Eugene's constant fear and loathing of the body. His childhood trauma of a missionary priest pouring boiling hot water on his feet and hands for masturbating has created the Judeo-Christian practice of viewing the body as an impediment to spiritual growth as it is the incarnation of sin itself and the devils workshop (Sandwith 98). Sandwith exhibits how Adichie demonstrates this in the novel;

In the world of the novel, these prohibitions are suggested in the importance of head coverings, restrictions on physical movement, prohibitions on nakedness, and the elimination of affect. In the most extreme case, evident in the spiritual habits of the

character Eugene, the disciplined body of strict religious observance is contorted into the postures of the self-abnegating grotesque—the tongue extended as far as it can go as it becomes the recipient of the host, the eyes shut tight in a grimace of prayer, and the body made to occupy painful postures (knees bearing down on marble in the conspicuous performance of piety. In these gestures, self-inflicted pain is confirmed as the sign of religious conviction (98-99).

Sandwith believes the gestures and practices of Christianity, the kneeling, closing of eyes, women covering their hair during prayer sessions (98). The missionary priest punishing Eugene symbolises prohibition of affect and nakedness. Eugene burns the tongue of his children with his hot tea as a sign of imprinting his love on them (99).

The Christian image represented in the novel, according to Sandwith, symbolises the rejection of the “black body” (100). Agreeing with Achille Mbembe’s idea of the colonised body. Sandwith believes that establishment of the image of God and Jesus as a Caucasian long nose man. The whiteness of God negates the black body and present a colonial type of Christianity, where God lives and manifests in Europe. Sandwith affirms that not only is the black body negated, the abolishment of Igbo songs in celebrating Mass by Eugene and Father Benedict also serve as evidence of the rejection of the Igbo culture in the colonial Christianity the narrative presents. Ibid.

The readings of the various articles assists in the comprehension of the complexities the narrative *Purple Hibiscus* engages with. Adichie’s debut novel has been read as a feminist novel, as a paradox that criticises and embraces both Christianity and the Igbo culture. The novel has been analysed as a portrayal of Christian dogmatism and the dangers that are associated to it and also, *Purple Hibiscus* has also been critically assessed through the lens of the body logic.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE

Masculine Control, Religion and Economics of Resistance in *Purple Hibiscus*

3.1 Introduction

As the previous chapter spelt out the framework forming the basis under which the thinking of patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity under the scrutiny of religion will take place, this chapter will put this framework together to uncover the dynamics of religion and patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in the African novel through an in depth analysis of *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). The philosophical arguments of Chapter Two will be utilised to dissect the various elements of the main argument of this thesis. That is; patriarchy – how male domination is expressed over women in the novel, the sexism of the tradition, then hegemonic masculinity – to explore the issue of hegemony and men relations to this hegemony in the church and the state, discussing this mainly through symbolic representation of the character Eugene, the military government and the church and engage with the interplay of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. This chapter also dissects the totality of the representation of religion in the novel, examining the position this representation has in maintaining the strings of patriarchal domination and oppression. These will be done by providing evidence from the patterns of actions and inactions of characters and the events as they unfold. First, there is a discussion of how patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities are portrayed in the novel. Then, we will look into a general overview of the total representation of religion in the narrative. Thirdly, the chapter will situate the main argument of the thesis, and merge masculine control in the text with religion, to argue that religion has been utilised to maintain hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy in the text.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) follows a paradigm of post-colonial writings as the story is set around the period of post-colonial Nigeria. One of the pleasures of reading Adichie is how meticulous she is in her narration and she illuminates the effects of religion and colonialism, corruption, and authoritarianism in her novel. The story is a representation of oppression, absolutism and dictatorship in the state, family, and the Christian religion. Adichie illuminates issues of radical femininity and rejection of toxic masculinities in different ways. In showcasing the dangers in rigid religious faith and hegemonic masculinities, the novel also proposes or suggests a more reformed and progressive form of religion and livelihood. There may be, arguably, numerous plots of the story, however, this study will draw its main ideas from the manifestation of Christianity and the issue of

monolithic power structures, particularly the control of males in society and argue that, in one way or the other, religion and hegemonic masculinities are intertwined in the novel.

The captivating sense of literature existing as mimetic, mirroring real life, allows it to live through time and Adichie through literature explores the situation of the Nigerian state after colonialism through exposing failed government system and dark side of religion that was brought by the colonial masters through the family system. Nigerian literature in particular has been well stocked with themes that portray colonialism, post-colonialism and neo-colonialism capturing the ordeals of the Nigerian people during and after colonialism. One of the effects of colonialism that is usually portrayed in African literary texts in the introduction of the Abrahamic religion, Christianity and how this has caused friction amongst individuals in society due to variations in supernatural beliefs. Putting into perspective the dynamics of religious life of the indigenous people, Adichie represents different processes of relations, relations of the citizens and the state, the people and Christianity, the people and traditional religion and then, the people and the outside world. Adichie's depiction of these ideals shows the intersections between individualism, like in the case of Kambili, and nationhood -the Nigerian state. The story of *Purple Hibiscus* is then, the story of Nigeria and the Achike family.

Kambili Achike, the fifteen-year-old second child of the patriarch, Eugene Achike, narrates the story of a family living under strict regulations of patriarchy and religion. Eugene is a rich industry man, a kind, religious and discipline man, who uses his newspaper to reveal truths and criticize the unstable governance of their country. He is a personification of virtue and intelligence, blind followership and fanaticism in the novel. This is portrayed in his public and private life. Violence is his hallmark which he chalks to the idea of perfection, and punishment for wrongdoing. Jaja's rebellion, shown from the onset – on the first page, later portrays important ideals. Kambili narrates how she and Jaja share a secret language they speak with their eyes, a language that comes to replace talking with their voices because of fear. The members of his family live in fear of his violent anger as he controls basically every aspect of their lives with his stringent beliefs on how they should lead their individual lives without them being able to express their own opinions.

Kambili also narrates the occasion when a military government takes over the Nigerian state. This military group, through a coup d'état takes the position as incumbent government from another military troop. Through the unraveling of events, Adichie portrays the unstable nature of the Nigerian state. *Purple Hibiscus* is indeed a post-colonial novel that portrays the military

coups during post Biafran War in Nigeria. The story captures the period of political upheaval and tyranny and in doing this reveals similarities of abuse of power in the state and a Christian marriage; Adichie's portrayal of power dynamics and dictatorship in the 80s and 90s government is also recognized in the family system she presents. The narrative is then the story of the Achikes as a patriarchal subject of a hegemonic whole which is the post-colonial Nigerian state. This provoked the thought of the ideal of hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy that this study engages with.

3.2 Representation of Patriarchy and Hegemonic masculinities in the text

Within its own sphere, African literature has projected a view of men ruling in culture and within and between genders with a potent force. Reading *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) under the scrutiny of the concept of masculine control over women and other groups of men in the society requires the examination of gender-based power relations and dynamics in the state, marriage, family, and the church represented in the novel.

First and foremost, it is imperative to recognise the symbolism of patriarchal control in the narrative. The exercise of control of a certain group of men over women and other men in society has been termed hegemonic masculinity and this form of masculinities establishes a chain of relationship - where there is an oppressor and the oppressed – the dominant and the subordinate or marginalised. Hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy and oppression seem to go hand-in-hand in the story – through the violence and dehumanization the state inflicts on civilians and Eugene Achike's brutal treatment of his family.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie presents a rigid and toxic form of hegemonic masculinity that is intolerant and not open to the possibility of being wrong – represented by the character, Eugene Achike. Patriarchal structures in the family, the state and culture are reflected in the idiosyncratic actions of Eugene, the military governance, and Papa-Nnukwu, respectively. Adichie uses her characters to illuminate a rigid and absolutist Christianity and illuminate entrenched power usage in patriarchal structures that exist in the family and religion.

The story opens with an in medias res of a glance in the home of the Achike family's Sunday lunchtime. The reader is immediately exposed to Eugene's hypocrisy and violence from the onset. Jaja's refusal to conform to the authority of his father by refusing to take communion at church and adamantly defending his reason is also a telling on the presence of resistance to a tyrannical rule. This brings attention to a theme of power structures in the novel, where there

is recognition of intolerance and abuse of power, and where there is constructive challenge to this power.

Eugene is consistently acknowledged for his intolerance of the government of Nigeria during Mass. “Brother Eugene’s” increasing use of his newspaper business to voice out a cry for ‘freedom’, something that Father Benedict constantly mentioned in his sermon to “illustrate the gospel” (6). Father Benedict proclaims: “Look at Brother Eugene. He could have chosen to be like other Big Men in the country, he could have decided to sit at home and do nothing after the coup, make sure the government did not threaten his businesses. But no, he used the *Standard* to speak the truth even though it mean the paper lost advertising” (6). This evident adulation of Eugene also foreshadows the political situation of the Nigerian state at the time. Adichie uses the first chapter of her novel to succinctly depict the failed structures of democracy and a tyrannical political system that usually follows a failed post-colonial democratic nation-state. There are two main representations here: the trauma in the family on one side and the disturbing state of politics in the nation on the other.

Hegemonic masculinity in the public sphere – the state

Political riots are the backbone of military coups – what happens when men engage with political power through their socially constructed gender behaviour of competition, aggressiveness and virility. Kambili narrates how this corrupt totalitarian rule seems to exercise power through force and fear by subjecting citizens to disorientation and trauma. Hearn uses his article, “From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men” (2004) to postulate the usefulness in using hegemonic masculinity to theorise men (50). Power is a very essential part of men’s “social relations, actions and experiences” and the dynamics of this power include first of all, gendered power, how men accumulate this power and their engagement with this power (Hearn 51). The issues circulating how gendered power is attained politically is explored in varying ways in the novel.

The political unrest caused by this men-led military coups severed any form of resistance to its rule, and challenging or ranting about the tyrannical government resulted in some sort of death, like in the case of Ade Coker, or alienation from society, like in the case of Aunty Ifeoma and her family being forced to move to the United States of America. The residue of forceful acquisition of government power are corruption, deaths, and abject poverty which is fuelled by unemployment and unpaid civil workers. In the process, breaking families apart – Ade Coker being severed from his family through death, Kambili and Jaja losing Aunty Ifeoma and their

cousins because of distance. In the same process and play who is stronger with political seats, the military government also destroys human rights – particularly the right to franchise, freedom of speech and the right to education by destroying the public tertiary institutions. Mike Donaldson's view of hegemony is apposite here then, that hegemony involves the "winning and holding of power, and the formation and destruction of social groups in the process" (645). In this case, the destruction the basic social group, the family, and social institution, education. The process of power acquisition, the issue of gender, and the engagement with this power exhibits in of the process of removal the incumbent government through violence. An incumbent government that overthrew its predecessor through the same process. Unconstitutional seizure of political power is typically done by a male dictator, the military or a political fraction dominated by men. The issue with men's power in the narrative is the continues and violent streak and accumulating and maintaining dominance in society. After violently taking power, the military government continues to exercise violence to maintain its control. A clear case is the case of Ade Coker in the novel. Taking the life of Ade Coker did not only stop the publishing of *The Standard* newspaper, but Ade Coker's death is also a plot to reinforce the domination of the military government through fear from civilians.

Masculine Hegemony in the church

As said earlier, the representation of men's power in the novel exceeds the boundaries of political power into the church and the family system. As Jeff Hearn said: "Men's power and dominance can be structural and interpersonal, public and/or private, accepted and taken-for-granted and/or recognized and resisted, obvious or subtle. It also includes violations and violences of all the various kinds" (51). Hearn believes men's power can be a system of organised that are wired into a whole and within human relations. Masculine domination can exist and function in both the public sector and the private sector. The church, as portrayed in the novel, being a component of society bears the characteristic of preaching freedom from the and yet some of its structures and practices continue to enforce hegemonic masculinity. The system of leadership and consistent acknowledgement of male adulation played out in the narrative stabilises men's leadership, hence men's domination in the church which translates into society as a whole. The church council meeting in Abba that consisted of men, with the women engaged in house chores, goes to support this claim. Bourdieu espoused that one of the routines or tactics in female subjugation is "the exclusion of women from male spaces" (24). Kambili's description of the church council meeting that takes place in Abba shows that the

council was made up of only men and the women or wives of these men are tasked with washing dishes outside the building. However, the church as an institution is also portrayed as preaching freedom like chastising the authoritarian government and bringing the enlightenment that came with formal education to the Nigerian people. In that light it is easy for the male hegemony that comes with it to be overlooked, or in Hearn's words, "taken-for-granted".

Patriarchy Exhibited in the Family

Masculine domination in the private sector is portrayed in the family. Power relations in the family is also gendered. Eugene acts as head of his family because of his gender. As the breadwinner of the Achike family and in view of patriarchal positions that place the man as head of the home. Living in a culture that supports sexism and masculine hegemony also certifies Eugene's position in his family. The story exposes Eugene as a violent patriarch whose modus operandi is to instil fear and promote a culture of silence, mirrors the totalitarian rule system Adichie portrays of military government in Nigeria during the Biafran experience. Eugene's hypocrisy is established in his distaste of the overthrow of the Rule of Law in the government, considering the fact that he puts his entire family through the same oppression the Nigerian people are facing. He uses his newspaper industry and a brilliant editor, Ade Coker, to vent and criticise, very justly, the authoritarian rule the country experiences, whilst, at the same time, he is the micro version of this tyrannical government in his home. Eugene's unreasonably violent treatment of his family depicts the oppression and suffering that comes with patriarchal innuendos. This domination in the family or in marriage, violent and oppressing treatment emanating from the home reflects the toxic nature of the government.

Violence is an integral part of male oppression. "Men's power and dominance...also includes violations and violences of all the various kinds" (Hearn 51). Eugene distinguishes himself as the disciplinarian and the corrector of bad behaviour. Eugene's kind of control is produced through fear, pain, love and faith using all kinds of severe violence against the bodies of his wife and children. His manipulative way of making his children and wife believe his actions are to make them better individuals and perfect for the Kingdom of God has ties with Christian fundamentalism. Eugene's system is dehumanising and tormenting as a means of suppressing his children and his wife, interestingly, not for his selfish reasons but for his twisted understanding of gospel.

The estrangement from society is experienced in the Achike Family exhibited through these events: Kambili and Jaja are always too tongue-tied with fear and shyness to speak in a group

because of their lack of association with the outside world. The two are not even allowed to mingle with peers after school. This sets them apart from society as Kambili's classmates assumed her quietness was because she felt she was better than them. After spending time with Kambili and Jaja, Amaka, their cousin thought for some time that the two were abnormal because of certain peculiarities in their actions. Throughout the tale Kambili narrates how she always found herself tongue-tied and afraid to speak what was on her mind freely. Once a while when she utters a word or phrase, it was only because she knew her father expected her to say, what Eugene saw fit to say. For instance, when Mama told Kambili about her first pregnancy after Mama's miscarriage six years ago, Kambili responded; "Thanks be to God"., she explains 'It was what Jaja and I said, what Papa expected us to say when good things happen' (17).

There is a place between domination and subordination that is characterised by consent. "Hegemony involves both the consent of some men, and, in a very different way, the consent of some women to maintain patriarchal relations of power" (Hearn 52). The consent can be attained through various means, for Beatrice Achike, it is through marriage and the influence of a culture that makes her believe a woman with children, but no husband is more or less an abomination. Mama is what Adichie described in a TED Talk as women that "turn pretence into an art form" (18:31-18:37). Beatrice Achike lives in constant fear of the safety of herself and her children from her husband. However, she considered herself lucky to be married to Eugene. She idolises him for not leaving her for giving him only two children. Mama's whole life seem to revolve around Eugene, she had no other identity apart from being Eugene's lucky wife. Even though Beatrice does not always agree with the actions and sanctions of her husband, she pretends to be fine with it. When she tried to oppose anything, Eugene wanted her to do, it resulted in a sort of death, in this case the death of two unborn children. Eugene's exercise of power over her is established through this place of consent.

There is a significant point of egoism involved in masculinity. When men are socialised to think they have to live and act according to a normative standard set for them, sometimes this can be problematic when they are unable to reach these exaggerated standards. This can cause ego crises. The same way, a situation where a male's attitude and lifestyle fits this normative structure, it feeds into an overbearing egoistic character. Women, in Mary Becker's opinion, are expected to "assuage" the egos of men (21). Society socialises women to cater for the egos of men, so it appears men sometimes use women to stroke their egos in varying ways hence Eugene's ridiculous expectation of his children and wife included giving him praise and approval of the products he made from his factory. It was a family norm that whenever he

releases a new product, they taste it and compliment it accordingly. This is what Bourdieu described as “the masculine order also inscribes itself in bodies through tacit injunctions that are implied in... collective or private rituals” (24). One of such collective rituals was the ritual of ‘love sips’ that Kambili and Jaja took from - Eugene’s jar of hot tea on Sundays. Bourdieu believes that such acts imposed on women and other subordinate groups in society solidify the power hegemonic males exert on the marginalised.

In the same light, we can judge Jaja’s attitude and actions towards the dénouement of the novel. Jaja seems to carry a burden of self-blame – a feelings he explains is brought because he feels he did not do enough to protect his mother and sister. Society’s expected role on the male gender as the protector in the family bears down Jaja’s shoulders making him feel inadequate in protecting Mama and Kambili. When Papa dies, Kambili tries to speak to Jaja through his eyes but they were blank – in that sense, devoid of emotion. Jaja proclaims: “I should have taken care of Mama. Look how Obiora balances Auntie Ifeoma’s family on his head, and I am older than he is. I should have taken care of Mama” (200). This traumatic self-blame causes Jaja to take the fall for Mama, accepting the blame as the culprit who poisoned Papa. This goes as evidence that women are oppressed and devalued in patriarchy and men feel under pressure (Payne 12:49 – 12:59).

Gender Biases in Traditional Culture

Adichie illuminates the problematic Igbo cultural gender biases depicting patriarchal structures. The portrayal of patriarchal structures in the novel puts light on the patriarchy of the traditional culture. Women are literally not expected to be independent. The catch of being a real or good woman is to allow a man to “take care of you” (89). Auntie Ifeoma’s situation, as a single mother and widow, does not appear as normal or natural in the novel. For instance, Beatrice Achike utters: “So you say. A woman with children and no husband, what is that?” and continues to say: “... How can a woman live like that?” (53). It appears as strange or impossible for a woman to stand on her own to raise her own children without the help of a man. In the same light Adichie uses this incidence with Papa-Nnukwu to further illustrate this idea – When Papa-Nnukwu utters his pain on how his son, Eugene has neglected him because Nnukwu did not share Eugene’s Catholic faith. Papa-Nnukwu states that he feels he is a childless man. Aunt Ifeoma asks him if she is not his child too, and she was still there for him even though she is Catholic too. Nnukwu utters blatantly “but you are a woman. You do not count” (89) Ifeoma in taking slight offense in that jokingly remarks that if she does not count

then she was withdrawing all the care she shows him. Nnukwu then shows his gratitude and tells her how lucky he is to have been blessed with a daughter. Nnukwu still insists to pray God blesses Aunt Ifeoma with a good 'man' who would take care of her and her children as though Aunt Ifeoma is incapable of surviving without a man.

Gender related cultural biases are illuminated by Adichie through certain gender role expectations portrayed. A number of incidences illustrate sexism and gender inequality in the novel, for instance, when Mama recounts how the people of Eugene's *Umunna* tried to compel Eugene to marry someone else to give him more children as Beatrice could only give him two. This is a clear indication of gender role structures that exist in a patriarchal society – a woman's whole value is placed on being a wife and bearing as many children as possible to promote her husband's societal status and respect. Charles Fonchingong acknowledges how culture portrayed in African literature places the value of a woman on her ability to bear many children to establish a good social standing for her husband. Fonchingong goes on to relate with the word of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o with regards to literature being an imitation or a reflection of reality, literary works are influenced by politics, culture, economic and social ideologies of an area. Adichie uses her work to illuminate the cultural patriarchal structures of the Igbo people. Another event that tell the existence of patriarchy is when a woman from Kambili's kin tells Jaja that if they had not been family, she would have sold her daughter to Jaja for marriage. This applies to the logic of females being viewed as objects, not only by men but their families as well.

One of the symbolic recognitions of patriarchal power systems or the complexities of power relations in genders and hegemonic masculinity in the novel is the presence of resistance. One of the key prospects of gender relations is the existence of control or power structures that favour a group of people at the detriment of other groups, the presence of resistance to this power, and the possibility of change (Demetriou 338). Power structures in the novel are seen to be resisted or challenged. From Papa and Ade Coker challenging the authoritarian control of the military government to Jaja and Aunt Ifeoma represented as symbols of resistance to Eugene's equally tyrannical rule over his family illustrates the presence of resistance to power in the novel. Father Amadi, Aunt Ifeoma and Amaka are symbols of feminism and liberalism in the church - as Amaka shows irritation toward the entrenched rule of adopting a European name in order to be baptised by the church. Aunt Ifeoma challenges Eugene's fundamentalist faith-based strict rules over his family.

The themes of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity are represented in the Achike home and reflected in the corrupted and autocratic government system in the country at the time. Eugene's immense rejection and objection of the military rule makes him come across as a hypocrite because he continually exhibits this same tyrannical rule in his home. Mama, Jaja and Kambili live in constant fear of Eugene as he inflicts physical pain on them when they so much as disobey a supposed religious principle. Eugene is seen to extend his dictatorship outside his nuclear family. Eugene's intolerance and disobedience towards his father's beliefs causes him to restrict his compassion towards Papa-Nnukwu, treating him with disgust and disrespect. Masculine control also exceeds the home and the state to the church, and this portrayal goes to establish the primary concern of this thesis - religion's role in reinforcing patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in the African novel, which is discussed at length below.

3.3 Religion in the Narrative

At the heart of *Purple Hibiscus*, is religion. It would appear that the motivation for the text is exploring different fashions of religious beliefs in some of the basic sectors that make up society - the family, culture and community. In her profile of Adichie, Clare Garner acknowledges that Adichie was obsessed with her Catholic faith and had been a devout Christian throughout her early teenage years - Adichie confesses that her almost irritating obsession with theology at the early stages of her teenage years in her interview with Garner, it is no surprise then that her debut novel revolve mainly, amongst other things, around religion (Adichie 241). Adichie engages with colonialism because it is the vehicle that drove Christianity to Nigeria and caused the very core of the diverse religions Chimamanda explores. The status of religion in *Purple Hibiscus* is predominantly represented in the narrative. There are almost excessive references made to religion in the narrative. The structure of the novel fit into ideals that suggest certain religious or supernatural values (basically centred around the Christian celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ), which foreshadows the position of religion in the narrative. Chapter one is headlined "Breaking Gods (Palm Sunday), and chapter two - Speaking With our Spirits (Before Palm Sunday), to The Pieces of Gods (After Palm Sunday). This has brought the narrative under a number of religious hermeneutical scrutiny. To understand religion with regards to masculine domination, it is imperative to first understand the mechanism and dynamics of religious representation in the novel. In order to understand the position of religion in the enforcement of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in the novel, there is a need to be familiar and comprehend the exhibition of religion

First and foremost, how is the theme of religion represented? How do we see religion come to play from the beginning of the novel? The story commences with an account of the Achike family's afternoon meal after Mass on Palm Sunday. The first event that is presented from the start of the narrative is this troubling scene - where Eugene in his anger of his son, Jaja for skipping on the ritual of taking the Holy Communion during Mass, throws a "heavy missal" at Jaja - when Jaja's answer after being questioned by his father was that the wafer gives him bad breath and the entire ritual makes him nauseas. The mention of Mass - the Catholic weekly celebration of a holy sacrament in honour of the Lord's Last Supper and the missal - a Catholic liturgical book containing biblical readings, which according to Kambili's narration, was voluminous enough to contain "the readings for all three cycles of the church year" (8), make provocative allusion to the Christian religious beliefs. The flinging of the missal - the Catholic liturgical book - at lunch as a form of punishment symbolises the power religious decrees have over the Achike family. Subsequently, there is a representation, a vague one, of another form of Christianity which happens to be in conflict with the Catholic faith we are first introduced to. That is the Pentecostal church. The first mention of this is when Kambili narrates the usual Mass service proceedings that go on in the Achike family's parish. Father Benedict encourages that the celebration of Mass is done in solemn quietness - service where there is less and silent clapping of hands as well as low voices of "amen", "yes" and "God bless him" to avoid sounding like the "mushroom Pentecostal Churches" (7). This is mentioned about two times in the text.

Also at play in the narrative, is the practice of Igbo traditional religion. Adichie showcases two religions in the novel, first Christianity and Igbo Religion and Papa Nnukwu is used as the symbolic representation of the latter. The story portrays the Igbo traditional religion with Papa-Nnukwu as catalyst. He worships the local deities and said morning prayers to the gods, one he called "*Chukwu*" for guidance and protection for himself and his children and grandchildren. Papa-Nnukwu, Eugene's biological father and as such Kambili and Jaja's grandfather, is introduced when Kambili narrates her father's usual rantings when she and Jaja do not come first in class. Papa would throw tantrums about no one spending money on his education when he was young, and then say, "especially not his Godless father, our Papa-Nnukwu" (31). From this point, awareness is made on a grandfather character Eugene detests so much because he worshiped pagan gods. Eugene later confronts Kambili for coming in second place in the terminal exams and tells her, he did not get the opportunity she has. And that his father, Papa-Nnukwu wasted time worshipping "gods of wood and stone" so took no trouble to send Eugene

to school (38). One of the hallmarks of colonialism and propagation of the Jesus Christ gospel in Africa was the tensions and riots between Christianity and the traditional religions and Chimamanda uses the friction between Eugene and Papa-Nnukwu.

Fundamentalism

The relationship between religion and fundamentalism can be set out as such; fundamentalism or extremist faith or religious dogmatism has been defined as an attitude with “a militant desire” to safeguard religion and its structures from destructive nature of modernism, “secular culture” (Sweetman 3) and the antagonism of nihilism and science. Fundamentalists uphold strict and literal interpretations of scripture, both from the Qu-ran and the Holy Bible. Fundamentalists defend their strict and entrenched beliefs with scriptural backing. The novel’s depiction of religious dogmatism is done mainly through characters and comparison between different characters. For instance, Eugene and Father Benedict are the characters that Adichie uses to portray fundamentalism. The dogmatism of these two characters is more obvious when they are juxtaposed against other characters, like father Amadi and Auntie Ifeoma.

Right from the beginning, an understanding of Eugene’s devout attitude towards his Christian faith is established when Kambili describes how the ash is distributed to parishioners during their Ash Wednesday morning Mass. Kambili reports: “Papa, wearing a long, gray robe like the rest of the oblates, helped distribute ash every year. His line moved the slowest because he pressed hard on each forehead to make a perfect cross with his ash-covered thumb and slowly, meaningfully enunciated every word of “dust and unto dust you shall return.” (1).

Eugene is described as an oblate, the only thing standing between him and priesthood is the monastic vows. The word “perfect” also suggests and foreshadows that Eugene has a tendency to strive for perfection, and only perfection hence being meticulous in drawing the cross with the ash. Kambili goes on to state that most people in the church do not kneel down during communion service but Eugene did and he would “hold his eyes shut so hard that his face tightened into a grimace, and then he would stick his tongue out as far as it could go” (1). Papa’s religious dogmatism is in tune with his idolising the Europeans and their culture – enjoying the speaking and singing in English rather than Igbo and obeying the words of the white priest hook, line and sinker. Eugene portrays a loathe for anything that goes against the will of God, forcefully protecting all the facets of Christianity while fully following the principles of the church which includes adopting a western lifestyle in the process. A lifestyle that made Eugene a total fanatic of his father-in-law while, the whole time, hating his own

father for not being Christian. Beatrice's father was known for being a staunch believer of The Word and held an admiration and imitation of the Western lifestyle to the extent of insisting Kambili and Jaja call him "Grandfather" instead of the Igbo equivalent "Papa-Nnukwu". He was loved by the white men amongst other things, for being light-skinned and speaking English all the time. Eugene's entrenched rules over his family is justified by what he believes the church approves. So when Aunty Ifeoma wanted to take Kambili and Jaja along to witness the Marian Apparition at Aokpe, Eugene seemed sceptical about the apparition because it was not approved by the church. After Amadi writes in her letter to Kambili how the newspapers in the United States of America had described the apparitions at Aokpe as nearly impossible because Nigeria was too corrupt for the Virgin Mary, it becomes clear that Eugene's scepticism is in place with his idolising the white man.

Eugene's fundamentalism goes as far as immense disrespect for his own father. Eugene cut any ties of conversation between himself and his father because Papa-Nnukwu worshiped the native gods of their land. It appears fundamentalists seek to control all aspects of society in a bid to ensure complete protection of religion. In this light, Eugene's fury towards beliefs outside the Christian sphere is understood. Eugene is perceived as a kind, intelligent, hardworking, modest and disciplined man. These qualities are born out of his deep respect and obedience to the word of God and the principles underlying the Roman Catholic faith. On the other hand, Eugene is portrayed as violent and intolerant, the kind of man go as far as hit his wife with a chair until she losses two foetuses. These other negative qualities, as the novel portrays, is also very much also born out of his respect and obedience of the word of God and the principles that underline his Catholic faith. Papa leaves no room for anything unchristian into his heart, or allow actions that go contrary to the will of God in his house.

Father Benedict is also depicted as a fundamentalist through a number of changes and prohibitions he placed on the celebration of Mass in the parish. Like, his decision to stop the use of the Igbo in prayer recitations because the native tongue was not sacred enough. He also restricts hand clapping in church, this should be done at a minimum because too much of that distorts the "solemnity" of the Mass. We see from the unravelling of events in the novel that Father Benedict and Papa share the same views of things related to Godliness. They both thought it was a sin to be in close contact with people who did not share the Roman Catholic faith or watch and enjoy pagan rituals. He pronounces judgement on young girls who do not cover their hair wholly for Mass. According to Father Benedict, this is ungodly.

Eugene and Father Benedict's fundamentalism is also more illuminated through the characters that are presented as contrary to them. Father Amadi, the priest at Auntie Ifeoma's church is everything but nothing like Father Benedict. First he allows the use of Igbo songs and the Igbo language during the celebration of Mass, even though Father Benedict allows a few Igbo songs during offertory, Benedict however does not allow Igbo language in reciting liturgical prayers. Father Amadi encourages Kambili to tolerate and respect her grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu. Amadi. Father Amadi's tolerance and open arms for all and sundry is in contrast with Father Benedict's rigid church sanctions and intolerance against traditional culture and worship, this highlights Father Benedict's extremism. Eugene's extremism is also best illuminated through the character of Auntie Ifeoma, who contrary to her brother, Eugene, tolerates their father and shows him so much respect even though Papa-Nnukwu is sexist and does not share her faith. Eugene's fundamentalism leads to him nurturing his children with strict rules that takes away their happiness and individualism. Jaja and Kambili do not have opinions about a lot of things, they are not even allowed to watch too much television. Ifeoma's house on the hand, though she does not have so much financial freedom, Auntie Ifeoma manages to create a home with laughter and respect for one another's opinion.

The friction between and within religion

Arguing on the case of religion in masculinities and patriarchy in *Purple Hibiscus*, as mentioned earlier, requires a thorough analysis into the representation of religion in the novel. How Adichie depicts the various factors of the most popular social institution, religion, includes the frictions between and within churches. There are various representations of religion. First the Christian religion; that is the Roman Catholic Faith and the Pentecostal Faith then the Igbo religious faith, a faith that believed and worshiped their ancestors and lesser gods.

The conflict between Catholic and Protestant faith has existed since before the 1600s ("European Wars of Religion"). Protestant-Catholic conflict had been long standing before the period the novel was set. It was capitalised with wars and confrontations, including events such as the "Marian persecutions in England and the Massacre of St Bartholomew in France in August 1572" (Bell 2). It is a familiar thesis that underlying practices and interests between different fractions in the same religion come into conflict and in the novel, the contention between Catholicism and Pentecostalism, appears to be as a result of different practices and principles as well as mistrust. Kambili narrates how Father Benedict teaches the congregation to refrain from reciting or clapping too loudly to avoid sounding like the Pentecostal churches.

The Pentecost Church is particularly known for loud and enthusiastic services that are accompanied with singing and dancing in excitement.

It would appear that Papa does not believe or support the “speaking of tongues”. Kambili shares a knowledge of Papa not approving of tongues speaking “because it was what the fake pastors at those mushroom Pentecostal churches did” (208). This is essential in showcasing Eugene’s mistrust of the faith of the Protestant church, almost suggesting that his Catholic faith is the true Christian faith. Father Benedict and Eugene’s disgust towards the Pentecostal Church as they refer to as “mushroom” Pentecostal Churches depict a symbolic representation of this. The conflict is to ensure their Catholic practices are not in tune with the practices of the Pentecostal churches. Even though it is not expressed at length, it would appear both Father Benedict and Papa (Eugene) disregard actions that would make their parishioners and family seem Pentecostal.

Another religious friction Adichie portrays is the conflict between religions. African traditional religions still exist and are practised with a “potent force,” however, Christianity has become one of the largest world religions that has great influence on individuals in the continent (Agbiji and Swart 3). The contact of Christianity with African traditional religions have caused several tensions but has also been integrated into different aspects of a number of African cultures. African literature “often mirrors the clash of indigenous religion with Christianity” (Bedana et al 1). A clash that generates tensions between families and communities and a theme often portrayed in most of the canonical works of Chinua Achebe and equally a distinguishing feature of *Purple Hibiscus*.

The followers of the Igbo traditional religion worship gods and goddesses in the form of idols and pay reverence to ancient spirits of dead relatives and a religion that apparently believes in reincarnation – Papa-Nnukwu believed his grandson Jaja was Nnukwu’s own father come back to life because Jaja seems as wise as his great grandfather, Ogbuefi Oliofoke was. Papa-Nnukwu mainly represents the traditional Igbo religion, as his son, Eugene, symbolises the Christian faith. The commitments, sanctions, beliefs and ways of worship lie varying between these two religions. Eugene consistently refers to the traditional worship of the Igbo as paganism. He is seen resentful towards this worship. This is made evident through his disregard and hate towards his eighty-year-old father and any other character who does not convert to the Catholic faith. We are introduced to this hatred when the Achike family visit Abba for Christmas. There, Eugene gives strict rules about how long Jaja and Kambili can stay back when they visit their

grandfather. Jaja and Kambili are warned to eat or drink nothing in their grandfather's house because he is a heathen, and that Papa-Nnukwu offers his food to lesser gods. Eugene is portrayed as a staunch Christian, yet, even though one of the basic commandments in his faith is obedience to the elderly, Eugene disregards anyone who does not believe in God. And as shown through his treatment of his father, the chief (Igwe) of the land of Abba and his insolence and anger towards Anikwenwa, an old man who visits Eugene's house in Abba, we see that Eugene would disregard scripture just to make sure that he has absolutely no ties with sympathizers of the traditional faith. Eugene did not tolerate any form of traditional worship, and when he spoke about the traditional festivals and rituals to his children, he described them as ridiculous and senseless. Kambili narrates some of his comments about the Festival of Spirits;

Papa had driven us past the crowds at Ezi Icheke once, some years ago, and he muttered about ignorant people participating in the ritual of pagan masquerades. He said that the stories about *mmuo*, that they were spirits who had climbed out of ant holes, that they could make chairs run and baskets hold water, were all devilish folklore. *Devilish Folklore*. It sounded dangerous the way Papa said it (68).

Father Benedict also tells Kambili that it is a sin to watch and enjoy the rituals of the traditional Igbo worshippers because they are pagans.

Eugene's hatred of the indigenous religion is quite requited. Papa-Nnukwu, who is pivotal in the symbolism of the Igbo religion, shares almost the same distaste for the Christian religion. Papa-Nnukwu holds the idea that the missionaries misled his son. Nnukwu believes much of the beliefs of the Christian religion are equally as senseless. In his words, Papa-Nnukwu accounts;

I remember the first one that came to Abba, the one they called Fada John. His face was red like palm oil; they say our type of sun does not shine in the white man's land. He had a helper, a man from Nimo called Jude. In the afternoon they gathered the children under the ukwa tree in the mission and taught them their religion. I did not join them, kpa, but I went sometimes to see what they were doing. One day I said to them, where is this god you worship? They said he was like Chukwu, that he was in the sky. I asked

then, who is the person that was killed, the person that hangs on the wood outside the mission? They said he was the son, but that the son and the father are equal. It was then that I knew that the white man was mad. The father and the son are equal? Tufia! (67).

It is evident that Papa-Nnukwu did not have a good understanding of the Christian faith in the novel but with the little he knew and from the way Eugene treats him, Nnukwu concludes that the religion is practised by senseless men.

A good overview of how religion is presented in the narrative helps in understanding the main argument of this thesis; religion is instrumental in sustaining masculine control and justifying oppression of women and children.

3.4 Religion, Patriarchy and Hegemonic masculinities in the novel

The topics of religion and patriarchy, as well as, religion and oppression are sensitive discussions. Harsh asserts that religion has brought a lot of good in humanity. It has invoked a sense of belonging and purpose in individuals and groups. The same religion, underlying a plethora of human activities and thought process, has caused division and conflict between individuals and groups. Religion has been named one of the major causes of human rights infringement, social injustices and gender based inequality in the world (Harsh 99). In the second edition of her *Masculinities* Connell posits: “men control most cultural institutions (churches, universities, media). Religion generally, and sometimes specifically, defines men as superordinate to women.” (247).

As said earlier, religion and gender inequality have been known to walk together. In African literature, particularly in the works of Buchi Emetcheta, religion is sometimes projected with positive or semi-positive characteristics (Bedana et al 7-13). Purple Hibiscus projects two different phases of religion – a progressive form of religious life and a dark aspect of religious faith. The dark aspect of religion projected in the novel has a lot to do with gender inequality. The gender inequality as seen in the narrative is not only between genders but within genders as well. Patriarchal control in the novel is just as much depicted through culture, the church and mainly through Eugene Achike. Colonialism and Christianity may have altered a number of things in the Nigerian state presented in the narrative, however, certain strictures of traditional culture reconciled with the strictures of the Christianity presented to the local people. Most African societies are Christian oriented. The Igbo culture itself is essentially

patriarchal and sexist, as discussed previously. The Christianity that was presented to them consolidated with the structure of the African society which was inherently masculine oriented and as such systematically patriarchal. The presentation of Christianity fed into a societal ego that favoured patriarchy. It was easy then for the men to continue to act as front liners in society as it deepened the gender biases that was already prevalent in the African society. And the reason why this unparalleled domination finds a hold in the Nigerian society and as such the Igbo culture is because this structure of male supremacy in the church mirrors the misogynistic and patriarchal structures of the Igbo tradition in the novel.

In doctrine, biblical texts explicitly suggest and enforce the subordination of women and has influenced the patriarchal practice Christianity is characterised with, as seen depicted in the novel. Feminism did not only attack the society, capitalism and governmental systems but advanced on to the church as well who advanced to propagate the logic that women are as equally pivotal in the spread and sustenance of the Christian religion (“Christian Feminism”). Vander explains in her analysis of an evangelist home-school that fundamentalists grew anxious over the changes in the strict gender roles in the church due to the rise of feminism in the church. Some begun to enforce ideas about God speaking only through masculine headship whilst proposing that the hierarchy of power in the family should start from the man as head, women as subservience and children in the last place (59). This hierarchy of power expressed in the novel, but in which case, the father is the head of the home and everyone else within the family is subject to him.

Hegemonic masculinity in the church, as discussed earlier is often overlooked, however, the church as an institution continuously establish a kind of hegemonic masculinity that is formed the basis of holiness or righteousness. As Connell posits: “The Catholic church, with a strong impulse from the centre, has become more conservative on gender issues. This church totally excludes women from authority and remains the most spectacular patriarchy in the world today” (252). It is undeniable that the church is in the forefronts in maintaining the strings of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. The Catholic Church, as founded on and under the jurisdiction of a papacy, the authority and tenure of a Pope, who by his sovereign status makes pronouncements that cannot be contested or challenged. The same sovereignty translates to the fellow patriarchs under the same line of leadership as the Pope, like bishops and parish priests. For instance, Father Benedict who makes changes and sanctions in his parish without any input or assessment from any discerning body of the church. This established order of hierarchy that upholds this uncontested control transcends from the church as a whole and into the family

system. This feeds into the common acceptance of religious leaders as men in most world religions (Klingorová and Havlíček 3).

In his sermons, Father Benedict refers to the Pope, Eugene Achike and Jesus Christ “in that order...using Papa to illustrate the gospel” (6). This order of acknowledging the patriarchs of the religion constantly, without any mention of a feminine character with reverence reinforces patriarchy. This also provokes the idea of viewing these men divinities, not only to be respected but to be venerated as quasi-divine. This idea continues to enhance Connell’s idea of hegemonic masculinities. As these quasi-divinities presented in the novel do not only control women but men as well. We see this same dynamic when Eugene gets angry at his wife for bowing to the chief of Abba when the Igwe comes to visit Eugene at home during Christmas. Kambili narrates:

Mama had greeted him the traditional way that women were supposed to, bending low and offering him her back so that he would pat it with his fan made of the soft, straw-colored tail of an animal. Back home that night, Papa told Mama that it was sinful. You did not bow to another human being. It was an ungodly tradition, bowing to an Igwe. So, a few days later, when we went to see the bishop at Awka, I did not kneel to kiss his ring. I wanted to make Papa proud. But Papa yanked my ear in the car and said I did not have the spirit of discernment: the bishop was a man of God; the Igwe was merely a traditional ruler (67).

Eugene believes a mere human being should not be bowed to. He strongly tells Mama that it is sinful to do that. So, for the same Eugene to yank Kambili’s ear for not bowing to the bishop, only goes as evidence that the bishop, being a man of God, should be treated as divine or something close to it. If the King of Abba, being a mere human and a traditional ruler does not guarantee him a bow, then the Bishop of Awka, being a man of God is something higher or greater than a mere human, hence should be bowed to. It is fathomable to conclude that the basis of hegemonic masculinities in religion as presented in the novel, is a product of the belief that ordained men of God from the Pope, bishops and reverend fathers, as well as oblates, by virtue of their gender and holy calling can exercise control in the church and over their families or communities.

In her editorial for *Gender, Religion and Spirituality*, Caroline Sweetman explains that women's pivotal role in culture as wives and mothers makes it necessary for their behaviours to be checked. Women's bodies have always been subject to control (2-3). In Sweetman's view women's behaviours, attitudes, body language and way of dressing is brought to scrutiny in patriarchies and because of their role in procreation, their sexuality is always under check because the paternity of their children is crucial to a sustenance of patriarchy. Prescribing dress codes in the church is always for and restricted to women in which case Father Benedict applauds Kambili for covering her hair fully for Mass. In comparison, the other female teenagers in the parish stylishly leave out part of their hair hanging out of their scarfs. According to Father Benedict, females need to cover their hair entirely for the celebration of Mass because that is the Godly thing to do. It also appears Eugene does not support the wearing of makeup. An essential event in the narrative that can be understood in relation to the church's prohibitions on legal abortions (Walker 17) and contraception (Barrett et al 161), exhibiting as a significant feature of patriarchy

The system of reinforcing patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities in the novel transcends from the state and the church to Eugene's attitude towards his family. Papa exercises control over his family through a decentralised system of control. Millet's words are apposite here:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. As the fundamental instrument and foundation unit of patriarchal society the family and its roles are prototypical. Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules through its family heads (33).

The Achike family symbolises the patriarchal unit here, and the patriarchal whole is the Church and generally the state. The church's functioning has established male dominance and so the patriarch of the family assumes the position of leader and disciplinarian, hence Eugene's unspoken burden of feeling the need to punish physically or sternly scold when any member of his family does not conform to the sanctions of the church. The church obviously cannot

exercise direct control over its members in their homes, that is where the family head comes in. With this insight it can then be understood why Eugene's decisions are final in the Achike family. For instance, Aunty Ifeoma when invites Jaja and Kambili over to her home for the rest of their Christmas vacation. Jaja politely says to Aunty Ifeoma that they can only go with her if Papa says it is alright. Again, Millet suggests patriarchies have another standard structure where male controls the females as well as older males dominate younger males (25) and the totality of the church practice of hegemonic masculinity reinstates the father total ownership of his family. As the "begetter" of the family, the father exercises power over his children and wife. When Jaja and Kambili overstayed their visit to their Papa-Nnukwu about twenty extra minutes, Kelvin their driver felt the need to report to Eugene because he is not only their father but their disciplinarian and family head.

Religious hegemony in the novel is practiced using coercion and incentives. Using coercion as a means of control includes compulsion or force. Eugene uses a form of compulsion that is backed by violence. He insists on his family conforming to the principles of the church, including fasting, prayers, and paying reverence to men of God. Any form of disobedience earnings a lashing, a kicking, an ear pull or a scolding from Eugene. This establishes the fear that is justified by the Word of God and doing right with God. Eugene is also seen exerting control over his children through force by constantly reminding them about how lucky they are because he provides all the best things in the world for them. Eugene's idea of placing heavy expectations on his children to be perfect comes from his belief that they have everything. When Kambili and Jaja do not come first in their terminal exams, Eugene scolds them and tells his children that they are very lucky because he pays so much money to put them in a good school. He constantly tells Kambili that no one paid any attention to his education and he does not pay so much money just to take her to the best schools. In Papa's view, God expects total perfection from humans, he tells Kambili that she is precious and so should continue to strive for nothing but perfection in life. This coercion sets an arduous goal for Kambili and Jaja, especially in their education. It is exceptionally strenuous for Kambili who could not read her school notes and text books because her subconsciousness kept creeping up the image of Mama drowned in blood when Papa beat her to miscarriage.

Hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy in the church is realised as a give and take system because for masculine control to thrive in the narrative, there has to be some sort of reward that comes with obedience of the subordinated. For Eugene, it is the joy of going to heaven. Eugene believes if he does his part as a staunch child of God and kill off any sin within himself and his

family, then he is guaranteed to go to heaven. The whole rationale of religion then, is believing in a supernatural form and keep to a certain degree of holiness in order to attain eternal life. This is why in ecstasy, Kambili narrates, after a session of Confession with Father Benedict, Papa screams in the car on their way home that; “I am spotless now, we are all spotless. If God calls us right now, we are going straight to heaven. Straight to heaven. We will not require the cleansing of Purgatory” (85-86). After the family goes of confession with Father Benedict, Eugene’s ecstasy was ringing in his voice when he proclaims that for confessing their sins and going through with their penance, the family is perfect and without any form of sin so if they died that moment, they would all go to heaven. The reference to heaven and hell in the narrative is used by Eugene to threaten others that depending on your life on earth, one could end up in eternal damnation of eternal life.

Eugene also uses material things to get his bidding done by Aunty Ifeoma. Ifeoma whispers to Mama:

Have you forgotten that Eugene offered to buy me a car, even before Ifediora died? But first he wanted us to join the Knights of St. John. He wanted us to send Amaka to convent school. He even wanted me to stop wearing makeup! I want a new car, *nwunye m*, and I want to use my gas cooker again and I want a new freezer and I want money so that I will not have to unravel the seams of Chima’s trousers when he outgrows them. But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things.” (68).

Throughout the narrative Kambili describes the terrible state of Aunty Ifeoma’s car and her finances. Ifeoma is a widow and a single mother of three children. She is a university professor who does not get salaries because of the terrible state of the Nigerian tyrannical governance. Living in a teacher’s bungalow with her family, Ifeoma struggles for a few things, even purchasing a gas stove, a good car and fuelling her car. Mama asks Ifeoma to ask for help from her brother, Eugene. Aunty Ifeoma refuses this because, for the liberal she is, Ifeoma cannot place herself under restrictions and toe the demands of her brother just to make ends meet.

Also, it is evident that Eugene does not seem to enjoy the company of people who do not agree with him. Ifeoma claims Eugene did not like her late husband because Ifediora did not agree with Eugene’s ideas. It is therefore not a surprise that the people Eugene feeds try to tolerant

him and be as agreeable as possible with Eugene. Ifeoma continues to proclaim: “You know that the members of our *umunna*, in fact everybody in Abba, will tell Eugene only what he wants to hear. Do our people not have sense? Will you pinch the finger of the hand that feeds you?” (68). The calculated effort to capture people under a control that is backed by religion is a two way street where Eugene provides the material, and the dominated provide their submission.

Eugene’s exercise of masculine control amounts to oppression because of his fundamentalist faith. In the name of religion, Eugene exerts his patriarchal power through violence and suppression of the humanity of his family. It is strenuous to separate religion from oppression in the narrative. Adichie makes this plain in the conversation Father Amadi has with Aunty Ifeoma’s family when he tells them he will be sent on a mission to preach the word in Germany. The conversation that transpired in this event is worth noting:

“You know, Father, it’s like making *okpa*,” Obiora said. “You mix the cowpea flour and palm oil, then you steam-cook for hours. You think you can ever get just the cowpea flour? Or just the palm oil?”

“What are you talking about?” Father Amadi asked”

“Religion and oppression,” Obiora said.

“You know there is a saying that it is not just the naked men in the market who are mad?” Father Amadi asked. “That streak of madness has returned and is disturbing you again, *okwia*?” Obiora laughed, and so did Amaka, in that loud way it seemed only Father Amadi could get out of her. “Spoken like the true missionary priest, Father,” Amaka said. “When people challenge you, label them mad.” (122)

Obiora, the fourteen-year-old son of Aunty Ifeoma, who, from the projection of the novel, seems wiser beyond his years, metaphorically compares religion and oppression to the making a Nigerian cuisine, *Okpa Wawa*, which involves the mixing of red oil with cowpea flour. Once this mixture is done, it is impossible to separate these two components. To view religion and oppression in this regard will suggest that Obiora believes religion and oppression are two components that have been thoroughly intertwined. And just like *Okpa Wawa*, religion and

oppression cannot be separated. And as Father Amadi questions Obiora's sanity for making such an assertion, Amaka, Ifeoma's fifteen-year-old firstborn child, jokingly proclaims that it is a typical trait of missionaries to pronounce the people that challenge their faith as mad.

Papa's complex character is used to illuminate the oppression that underlines religion and masculine control. Adichie in her interview with Clare Garner, said: "I wanted Papa to be a man who did horrible things but who, ultimately, wasn't a monster. Unless he was complex it would be easy to dismiss him. There are lots of people who are kind and generous and thoughtful but, in the name of religion, do all sorts of awful things" (Adichie 241).

Adichie's objective to project religion in line with the oppression it sometimes justifies lies in the complex character of Eugene Achike. Eugene Achike is the main patriarch of the novel and he is presented as kind, modest, discipline, and hardworking. At the same time, we see him as a violent, insolent, and manipulating father, husband, son and brother. Through this complex form, it is evident that Eugene does not particularly set out to be any of his negative traits, however, his strict and literal translation or understanding of scripture fanaticism of the white people has made him an intolerant, somatophobic, violent and a nauseating smug and holier-than-thou character. In the same light we see that Eugene has created a channel of rigid and palpable tension around his family, creating timidity, physical and verbal pain, fear and deaths and based all these actions as the will of God. This is what Adichie termed as "doing all sorts of awful things" all in "the name of religion".

First and foremost, it is realised as his childhood is recounted that Eugene's dark side was not born out of a whim. As a teenage boy, the missionary priest Eugene grows up under catches Eugene in his room masturbating. The "good father" asks young Eugene to boil water for some tea. The priest soaked Eugene's hands in hot water for masturbating – for committing a sin against his body. It would appear that this trauma from his childhood had built Eugene up to hate anything deemed immoral against God, the Catholic priesthood and against his own body. When he punishes Kambili for living under the same roof as their heathen grandfather by pouring steaming hot water on her feet, Eugene say "Kambili you are precious. You should strive for perfection. You should not see sin and walk right into it" (155). Eugene's adamant and hypocritic strive for perfection would not have been so terrible if he did not subject everyone in his family to that horrible fate. This weight is also evident whenever Papa finds any of the Achike's 'sinning' against God. After a belt lash on Kambili and Jaja when Papa finds Kambili eating before Mass, Kambili narrates Eugene's body language as exasperation

and despair combined with fatigue from carrying a figurative load. After the lashes, Papa asks his children passionately if they are okay. Kambili narrates: “Papa crushed Jaja and me to his body. “Did the belt hurt you? Did it break your skin? he asked, examining our faces. I felt a throbbing on my back, but I said no, that I was not hurt. It was the way Papa shook his head when he talked about liking sin, as if something weighed him down, something he could not throw off” (82).

Religious oppression is also illustrated in the event when Mama’s pregnancy makes her nauseated and decides to stay back in the car during their weekly visits to Father Benedict after Mass. Beatrice tells Eugene she would like to stay back in the car and wait because she does not feel so well. With a stern look and a rhetorical question, Eugene makes her go in to say hello to the priest with them anyway. Back at home, tragedy falls as Papa beats Mama and hits her stomach with a chair so that she loses her pregnancy. After this, he cautions his children to pray for their mother’s forgiveness for trying to disobey the will of God in going into the mission house to greet Father Benedict. We continue to see evidence of this inherent oppression that has been fuelled by religion. Beatrice Achike is subjected to more cruelty every time Eugene decides to punish his children for wrongdoing. Mama watches as Papa pours hot water on Kambili’s feet. She is also forced to watch as her husband subjects his daughter to more beatings at the slightest bit of what he saw as ungodliness. It is not unusual that something of such great power would cause such great havoc, so as Papa’s entrenched views of Christianity and perfection cause him to beat Kambili till she almost loses her life and goes into a coma for having a painting of their Papa-Nnukwu in his house, it is almost comprehensible that religion could cause someone to do that. It is this same religion related oppression we see when Papa beats Kambili with a belt for eating before Mass. Apparently they are fasting at this point, no one is expected to eat before Mass because it is the season of lent. Kambili however, going through the pangs of premenstrual syndrome, was encouraged by Mama to take some food before she takes the painkiller to hold the drug. Unfortunately, Eugene catches Kambili and without listening to reason, beats her up for taking food before Mass.

Connell posits that not all men explicitly practice the patterns of masculine hegemony. A majority of men are neither marginalised nor front line “troops” of hegemonic masculinity, but they enjoy a certain comfort and privileges that come with hegemonic masculinity – what Connell terms, ‘the patriarchal dividend. Such masculinities fall under *Complicity*. (79). This idea of complicity is used here to describe the position of Father Benedict in the dehumanising events that unravel in the Achike family in this analysis. Father Benedict’s role as priest in the

Achike family's church has guaranteed him total respect and reverence from the family, particularly, Eugene Achike. The family visits Father Benedict as home after Mass every Sunday and go for Confessions of Sins in his house. It is implied then that due to how close the family is, the father would be aware of some of the monstrosities that continue to go on in the Achike house. Father Benedict sustains Eugene's position by regularly making him out as almost divine and when he praises Kambili and Jaja's behaviours to Eugene, it drives the attitude of disciplinarian in Eugene. Father Benedict is constantly praising Eugene for his numerous and heavy contributions to the church and his patriotism. It is evident then, that just like the people of Abba, who agree with Eugene on everything because he is literally the hand that feeds them, Father Benedict turns a blind eye to Eugene's compromising actions because of his indirect share of the patriarchal dividend.

The novel also illustrates complicit masculinity in the character of the driver Kevin, whose attitude from the children's visit to their grandfather Abba, tells that he facilitates the actions of Eugene by reporting the seemingly wrongdoings of Kambili and Jaja to their father. It is not a wonder then, that after the death of Papa, Beatrice Achike fires him from his position as the family driver.

The fear that engulfs everyone in the Achike family is born out of religious beliefs. The consistent fear of stepping on the toes of God, doing something that goes contrary to God's will for them to be perfect and without sin, to be able to enter the Kingdom of God, has caused not only the physical and mental torments, but deaths and loss of self, loss of a voice, a huge pressure for children to go through. Beatrice faces a traumatic life as the wife Eugene Achike puts her in a little mental and physical prison. Eugene himself is in his own mental prison. He begins to break down under the weight he carried on himself after Ade Coker was bombed to death by the military government. Kambili and Jaja being the children of a man who heavy-laden with the self-imposed role as disciplinarian and judge of character of humanity, who operates through manipulation and violence and being children of a mother who appears as weak and cannot stand up for herself and her children, are the most traumatised by the strictures of religion in the novel.

Nonetheless, a familiar theme in the discussion of religion and gender is the position men sustain as the dominants in almost all world religions and religious institutions (Klingorová and Havlíček 1-4). Their positions as leaders in the church translates into the family and community levels. *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) sustains a theme that projects the issue of the status

of women in religion while, at the same time, uses events to illustrate some of the intricacies of religious dogmatism and illuminating the negative effects that accompany this system of belief. There is a preponderant use of religion as a justification for feminine subordination and control of infants in the narrative.

3.5 The Employment of Speech and a Culture of Silence

The church's gender order seems to favour men over women, with regards to power hierarchy and leadership positions. Equally important in this analysis is how this power is used to manipulate and abuse others by the stakeholders of this power. Oppression in the novel places women and children at the bottom of the gender hierarchy, being the recipients of trauma and loss. *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) presents violence as being used to enforce the patterns of gender politics that places women at the bottom. The structure of inequality presented in the primary texts has a side that captures the resistance to masculine control. This section explores a culture of silence, a total abolishment and refusal to use the voice to show desire for or demand change in the Achike family and also set out the use of speech in protesting masculine domination.

Firstly, there is a need for recognising the employment of speech in establishing resistance and challenge to patriarchy. It is arguable that the most familiar form of challenging masculine control portrayed in African literary texts is through force, defying orders and being a feisty female. Such characteristics are portrayed in the protagonists of novels like Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (1975), Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes* (1999), and others like them - novels that exhibit the utilisation of verbal protests, among other things, in challenging patriarchy and fleeing from its control.

This common dynamic of defiance is also represented in *Purple Hibiscus* mainly through Aunty Ifeoma. She is a symbol of a progressive form of Christianity and the Igbo culture. A representation of verbal protestations to Eugene's control over the people around him. Ifeoma rejects a chance at a more comfortable life for herself and her children just so that she does not have to succumb to Eugene's control. The power dynamic here is still within the confines of religion because Eugene is key in Adichie's showcasing the power of religion. The situation Kambili narrates when she eavesdrop on Mama and Aunty Ifeoma's conversation tells a lot more about how religion and wealth are used as tools in ensuring the continuous control of women. When Eugene offers Ifeoma a brand new car, he does not ask Ifeoma to change anything about her sons or husband. Eugene's conditions, which are that Ifeoma stops wearing

makeup and take her only daughter, Amadi to a convent. His conditions only affect the two females in Ifeoma's home.

Why would Eugene want Amaka in a convent? Amaka and Kambili are peers so ideally if Eugene wanted a nun in his family so bad, he could have easily taken Kambili to a nunnery. However, from the first encounter with the character Amaka, a character sketch can be drawn that she is an assertive and sharp-tongued teenager. She freely speaks her mind even criticises Eugene's factory products. From Kambili's narration, it is clear that Amaka and her sharp comments are not easy to dismiss because she spoke the same way Aunty Ifeoma did, quite confidently and loudly. The connection here is Amaka and a convent to which Mary Kenny's description of her convent school is taken into consideration. According to Kenny, the nuns in her school were not allowed to go as far as even the dentist clinic on their own. They had to seek permission for everything from the local bishop (176). A logic can be drawn then, that Eugene wants Amaka under a kind of absolute control and that is why he tries to manipulate Ifeoma to take her to a nunnery. Ifeoma does not only reject this offer, from her conversation with Beatrice, it is obvious that she has no regrets and would reject any form of help from her brother to resist his control.

Purple Hibiscus exemplifies the use of speech in opposing masculine domination and somehow suggests a questioning of the rigidity of marriage for the African woman. Ifeoma is portrayed as strategic and insightful. Ifeoma proclaims to Mama: "Nwunye m, sometimes life begins when marriage ends." (51). This brisk statement exposes the liberal and open-mindedness of Ifeoma. Adichie uses her character, as contrasting to Beatrice to eradicate the notion of passive and weak feminine nature. A widow, life appears difficult with the corruption in the country leading to lack of salaries for civil servants, however, Aunty Ifeoma believes sometimes a good life begins when marriage comes to an end and the contagious happiness and laughter that surrounds her home lies as evident to this claim.

Aunty Ifeoma's rejection of masculine controlling actions and decisions is manifested through her speech and intonation. She is seen to go as far as scream at Eugene when he restricts the movements of his children. Directly the opposite of Beatrice, Aunty Ifeoma's first form of resistance is rejecting her father's argument that she needs a man to take care of her and her three children. Ifeoma uses speech to oppose the influx of masculine control over her life and through this she is able to resist the intimidation of the family of her late husband. The entirety of her description from her stature to her bodily movements and the way she talks makes Ifeoma

a strong character. She walks with purpose, spoke so many things at a time and loudly too. Ifeoma is seen as fearless and almost feisty.

It is obvious that Amaka takes after her mother. They speak their minds freely and even though they are Christians; they are seen as respecting and tolerating the Igbo traditional culture. Amaka was not afraid to call out Eugene on his new fruit drink, on how sugary it is, and then suggesting to Uncle Eugene to ask his factory people to reduce the sugar. Something that shocked Kambili because the Achike family always praises their father on his products, they always tell Eugene what he wanted to hear.

The employment of speech in challenging masculine domination is also exhibited in the complexity of Eugen Achike's character. Eugene and Ade Coker's use of their news graphic, *The Standard* to report and issue uncensored criticism of the Nigerian government. They do not give up on this even when the paper lost advertisement. After Ade Coker was returned to his home after being kidnapped and abused by the military government, he still continues to write about the corruption and hardship the military government subject the citizens of Nigerian to. This political right is not seen to be utilised by a lot of people, as Father Benedict claims the other "Big Men" in the country choose to keep quiet about the ugly situation of the state's governance to protect their businesses. Chastising and revealing the idiosyncrasies of the military rule also showcases the use of speech to attempt to overthrow hegemonic masculinity in the state.

The effects of Ifeoma's employment of speech, and Amaka's confident use of words favours a pattern of identifying and exposing the intricacies of patriarchal control in culture and in religion. Also effectively, the exercise of speech overthrows this domination as, even though he tries, Eugene's control does not seem to infiltrate the home of Ifeoma. Due to this longstanding relationship of control and resistance between Eugene and his sister Ifeoma, even Amaka, Adichie reveals different forms of religion through speech and proposes a brighter form of Catholicism for the Nigerian society. Recognising that *Purple Hibiscus* is a resistance novel (Ibeku, 2015), exhibits the premise of existence of arbitrary masculine control in the plot of the story as from the previous chapter, it is discussed that Ijeoma that *Purple Hibiscus* has been called a feminist novel that challenges and overthrows the very existence of controlling male figure (Ibeku 426).

The Culture of Silence

What can be generalised as a characteristic in the Achike family is the attitude of silence. The principle of connection between silence and violence or abuse lies in a figurative loss of voice of victims during the period of abuse. The obvious victims here are Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice. In several, if not all, areas of their lives, Eugene establishes a straightforward rule that regulates the lives and even the interests of his children and wife. Rationality is limited, even dismissed. The only capacity Eugene allows them to think is when they compliment him on any new products from his factories. The Silence in the Achike house causes a palpable tension that is sustained by fear of the patriarch. The portrayal of silence in the family signifies some sort of acquiescence for Papa's treatment.

Ironically, the silence that is constantly present in the family is also represented in the church. Kambili describes the dead silence that falls on the congregation during the entirety of Father Benedict's sermons, so silence that even crying babies stop crying as though they too are listening in on the gospel. Father Benedict's new rules for the parish includes making the celebration of Mass a quiet one. "yes" and "amens" as well as hand clapping are supposed to be pronounced as silently as possible. This mirrors the silence in the family, significantly symbolising the power structures existing in the church and translating into the family.

Beatrice's silence births the continuation of physical and mental oppression and loss of two unborn children. From the first scene of the narrative, Beatrice is introduced as the mother and wife, whose only potency is to clean up after her husband's mess – both cleaning up broken figurines on the etagere and soothing the pain of her children's wounds after every wave of physical violence their father subjects them to. Mama cannot speak her mind, any attempt to save herself from something uncomfortable leads to violence. She only adheres to what Eugene wants, to be on his good side and every time Mama says something to Papa, it was only to agree with him or lie to feed his ego, for instance when the family tastes samples of new products from Eugene's factories, Mama would lie that it tastes like white wine when it clearly did not.

The rationality of Beatrice Achike's silence is, to her, a surefire way to escape punishment. However, in the course of reading the narrative, it may come across as selfish since her silence and lack of action does not buy protection for herself but also does nothing to provide security for her children, Jaja and Kambili. This explains to why Kambili on her sick bed, after waking up from unconsciousness, describes how she was not sure if she wanted Mama around her, she wanted to push Mama away from her. Mama refrains from speaking about the violence, when

Kambili almost dies with Papa's beating, Mama continues to say Kambili is sick. Eugene's sister Ifeoma encourages Beatrice to flee the lifestyle she lives under. Aunty Ifeoma asks Beatrice Achike to spend some time away from Eugene and get out of the marriage. But Mama constantly rejects, insisting that a woman with two children but no husband is pathetic.

The same silence and acquiescence is portrayed in Kambili. It almost seems irritating how passive Kambili appears to be about Papa's treatment. Kambili finds herself always tongue-tied and shy to speak in front of people. Even with her brother Jaja and her mother Beatrice, the only characters she is seen to speak freely with, Kambili always speaks in whispers. The phrase "I opened my mouth, but the words would not come out" (48, 97, 139, 141) is repeated throughout the novel, when Kambili is asked to begin the recitation of the national pledge at morning assembly or when she is asked a question by her cousin Amaka or Aunty Ifeoma. When she did try to talk, there was stuttering and heavy breathing. Kambili is fear-stricken to say anything that Papa is not proud of. Every time someone says something Eugene seems appeased with, Kambili narrates she wishes she had said that because it will make Papa proud of her, for instance when Papa is morose about the abuse Ade Coker had to go throw in the hands of the military government: "They will receive their due, but not on this earth, *mba*," Mama said. Although Papa did not smile at her—he looked too sad to smile—I wished I had thought to say that before Mama did. I knew Papa liked her having said that (30).

The silence in the Achike family and normalised palpable tension issues a series of passive acceptance of the toxic nature of the patriarch. Silence is employed by Eugene to make reinforce continues adherence to his control. Eugene always expects complete compliance, and it is almost as if he hope his family only speaks when he speaks to them. He takes capacity as the leader of every familial event, so that when he has to have his siesta after Sunday Mass, the family has to wait for him to wake up to have lunch.

3.6 Traumatic Escapism and Emancipation

Within the relationship between power and resistance to it, lies a strategic escape plan. A way the oppressed creates or finds a window or a loop through which they can exit their subordination, violence and oppression. Discussing diverse forms of resistance illuminates the necessity of reading the narrative through a gender lens. In which case, it can be justified that the text does not only highlight the experiences of women living in patriarchal structures, but showcases patterns of patriarchal resistance.

The theory of hegemonic masculinity has been used to theorise the patterns of resistance to masculine domination (Connell and Messerschmidt 833). *Purple Hibiscus* is structured under the conjecture of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, capturing and legitimising the patterns of resistance or challenge to patriarchal oppression. Beechey observes that patriarchy tries to find the underlying principles that justify the subordination of women or the presence of it in a particular culture. Also, suggesting that “politically, feminists of a variety of different persuasions have seized upon the concept of patriarchy in the search for an explanation of feelings of oppression and subordination and in the desire to transform feelings of rebellion into a political practice and theory” (Beechey 66). So, feminist ideology or thought also use the theory of patriarchy to capture the intricacies of “feelings of rebellion” thereby making such overlooked feelings into a system of legal practices. It is therefore useful, in discussing the fashions of the communication of patriarchy and religion in the primary text, to understand the relationship between dominance, resistance and the follow up of change.

One of the basic divisions of gender practice the Sex Role Theory was accused of not theorising was the division of change that occurs with gender relations (Demetriou 338). Change is integral to the ongoing practices of gender in society and this change can be interpreted as the revolutions that occur when the very basis and source of male supremacy and female inferiority and oppression is forced to its demise. In the narrative, attacking the very life of the patriarch was the greatest and most radical act of annihilating male dominance. Eugene’s death marked an end of an era, a typical eradication of the source of oppression and maltreatment of the Achike family. From the initial stages of the unravelling of events in the novel, there seems to be an unusual acquiescence from the females living under oppression – Kambili and Mama. With most of her actions and thoughts, we see that Kambili regards Eugene as immortal. When the call comes through from Mama announcing the death of Papa, Kambili’s shock was that “He had seemed immortal” (224).

Bakuuro suggested that most feminists utilise the activity of “authorship” to attack the strictures of patriarchy (29). Adichie being a feminist, maximises on *Purple Hibiscus* to highlight the interactions of hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy and religion in the Church, family and state, while doing this, also showcasing how radical femininity perpetuates the system of patriarchy. Throughout the story, the reader’s is informed of the silence employed as a means of escapism. It becomes almost acceptable as the best way to escape Papa’s wrath. Eventually, another plan is devised to escape the torment of living with Eugene Achike by taking Kambili and Jaja to

boarding school. As Auntie Ifeoma and Father Amadi take this into consideration, Mama has a whole strategy of her own.

When the call comes through telling Jaja and Kambili about the death of their father, Mama is found repeating her words as if she were a recording on the radio - "It's your father. They called me from the factory, they found him lying dead on his desk." (224).

At this point, there is an introduction of a new form of silent resistance. This form of resistance is less dramatic, comparing Auntie Ifeoma to Mama, however, exceedingly serious. The symbolism of the practice of violence against women if to secure men's position as dominants, while ensuring a stability in the line of hierarchy. Eugene's actions of violence against his wife and children are retaliated with a one strike of subtle violence as well, poisoning. Mama reveals that Sisi acquired the poison she puts in Eugene's tea for her. The revelation that the house help, Sisi, is an accomplice to this traumatic act of emancipation, establishes a pattern of provocative thought on the alliance between females in identifying mutual feelings of rebellion and coming together to ensure change.

When hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy are uncontested, they are easily overlooked. The complex character make up of Eugene Achike tells the power -biased, fear-based, dehumanising and life-threatening features that sometimes characterise patriarchy and Mama's action of poisoning Eugene to his death is not new in the tradition of literary protagonist killing off the very mechanism that produces their oppression, like Firdaus in *A Woman at Point Zero* (1975), and this is what this section terms, traumatic emancipation. Life after the death of Eugene takes a gloomy turn. Jaja goes to prison to protect Mama, who does not take so much now. Kambili's maturity seen in the way she runs the Achike home now, and her different views especially on religion, which lies contrary to what Eugene preached in his home, capitalises on one of the basic tenets of literature having a role of combating rigidity and offering a more progressing view of life. Kambili mentions the long letters of Father Amadi she carries around. "they remind me of my worthiness" (234). She no longer second-guesses her actions she happily just does them. These significant changes in Kambili and her free laughter and firms decision making at the end is the kind of closure the text offers to reconcile resistance to change. Mama and Jaja are not described sharing this same happiness as Kambili, however, the promise of Jaja's release from prison and the little smiles that begin to peak at Mama's lips suggest a promising future. Even though the act of rebellion was a traumatic murder of her husband, Mama's peace after this can be guaranteed.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to investigate the interrogation between patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity and religion in the African literary narrative to establish the existence of a vibrant utilisation of religion as a gateway to ensure the continuation of gender inequality in the African novel. This has been done by bringing to the table, the ideas of various scholars. These contributions on hegemony, masculinities, patriarchy, feminism, African literature and the issue of patriarchy as well as genius understandings of the primary text, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) has guaranteed an understanding of the philosophical nature of the argument of this thesis, also presenting a deeper enlightenment of the complex representations of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy in light of religion in the novel.

The primary text has been used as a yardstick in questioning how religion affects male and female statuses in society. It is rather meticulous to say, religion, as a world renowned social institution for provoking thought, interests and instilling moral behaviour, has had footprints in African literature where it has been portrayed as a means of justifying female subordination, oppression and violence. This is not to say that religion's grasp on humanity is to ensure the continuous and multiplication of male dominance in society. However, religion's capacity to influence the masses has been used as a great tool in the manipulation of the subordinated masses, in this case subordinated individuals; Kambili, Jaja and Mama.

The depiction of religion and the well-narrated events that unfold in *Purple Hibiscus* has deemed it appropriate for this discussion and a good analysis of first of all, patriarchy then, hegemonic masculinity, thirdly, religion, and finally resistance and challenge to male dominance in the novel has presented this conclusion.

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