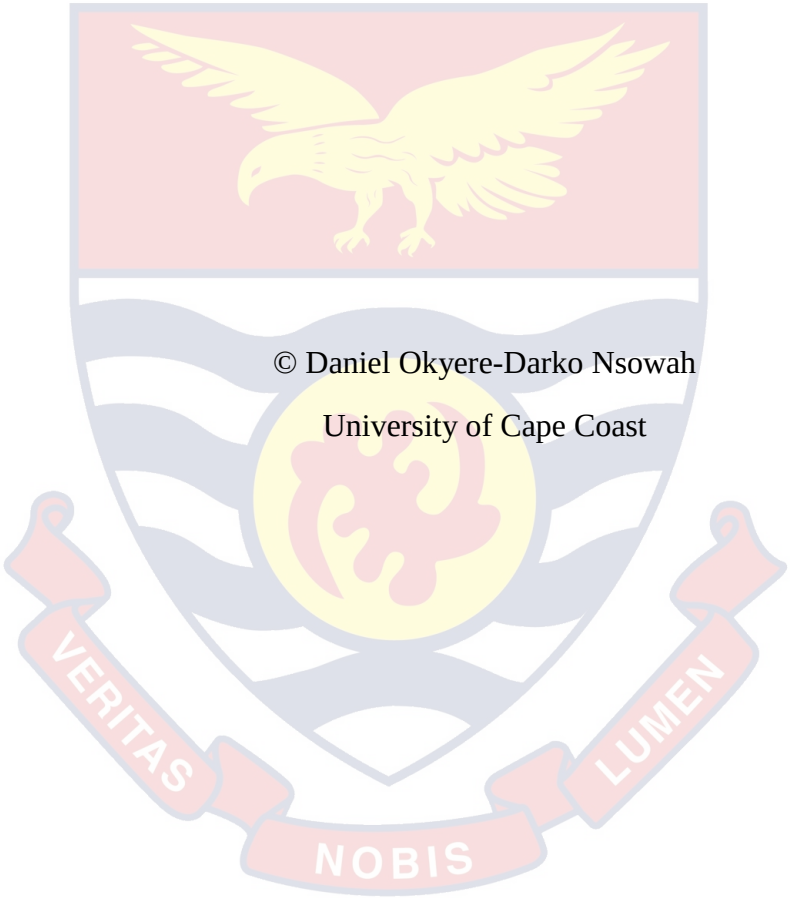
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

NARRATIVE MOOD IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S NOVELS

DANIEL OKYERE-DARKO NSOWAH

2021



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

NARRATIVE MOOD IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S NOVELS

BY

DANIEL OKYERE-DARKO NSOWAH

Thesis submitted to the Department of English of the Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in Literature in English

OCTOBER 2021

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:……..…….…. Date: ……..

Name: Daniel Okyere-Darko Nsowah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ……..... Date: ……

Name: Prof. Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang

Co-Supervisor's Signature: …….. Date: ..…….

Name: Nana Kwame Ofosu Addo-Danquah

ABSTRACT

Despite the growing attention being given to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works, there is also a growing concern of the focus of this attention. Criticisms about the structure and narrative techniques she adopts are still marginal to the amount of critical reception she has received over the years. For a number of reasons, the bulk of criticism on her works has focused on thematic and ideological issues to the neglect of other equally significant concerns like narrative technique. This study, therefore, explores Adichie's adroit use of narrative mood in her novels, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013) to highlight and intensify the diegesis of these narratives. By employing one of Genette's narrative categories, mood (perspective and distance) as a methodology, the study explores the narratives' particular use of methods of focalisation and how their several voices are merged to realise cohesion and coherence. By examining the characteristics and particulars of narrative mood, we can clarify the mechanisms used in the narrative act and identify exactly what methodological choices the author made in order to render her story. The study is also significant in that it has pedagogical implications. It will, among other things, serve as a material to facilitate the teaching of narrative analysis. In addition, the study will be a contribution to theory by demonstrating the extent to which Genette's methodology is useful to the analysis of the African novel.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisors, Prof. Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang and Nana Kwame Addo-Danquah, for their patience and invaluable recommendations and contributions to the completion of this thesis.

I also express my gratitude to the following special personalities for their enormous contributions, in varied ways, to the realisation of this thesis: Professors Lawrence K. Owusu-Ansah, Albert A. Sackey and J. B. A. Afful.

I am most grateful to my colleagues at the Department of English, who through their incessant show of concern in the advancement of the research, urged me on to the final completion of this thesis. They include: Prof. K. S. Sarfo-Kantanka, Dr. Arko, Dr. Addai-Mununkum, Dr. Mwinlaaru, Dr. Oppong Adjei (an ideal friend), Dr Nkansah, Dr. Asempasah, Dr. Ngula, Dr. Aba Sam, Dr. Traore, Dr. Aziaku (a special sister) and Dr. Amissah-Arthur.

Also, to my friends at the Department of French: Prof D. D. Kuupole, Prof. Edem K. Bakah, Prof. M. K. Kodah, Dr. Baba Haruna, Dr. Michael Kudi and Mr. Mawuyra Gli, I thank you for the various roles you played in seeing me through this research journey.

Special thanks also go to friends like Dr. Wincharles Coker, Rex (who handled some of my classes for me so I could complete this thesis), Edward & Dan, Eric Beechem, Eric Edukor (Ziggy One), Dr Windie Ansah (another special friend) and Mr Justice Boateng (IAO, UCC) for what you have all done and keep doing for me. Finally, I wish to thank my family for their support through it all.

DEDICATION

To my family, for everything.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Discussions on mood usually denote a number of ideas, ranging from its language use to its relation to literature. In relation to language, the Oxford Fowler's Modern English Usage (2004) explains that mood refers to a term in grammar that "identifies utterances as being statements, expressions of wish, commands, questions, etc. It is a variant of the word *mode*, and has nothing to do with the more familiar word *mood*" (p. 408). It further explains that in English, "moods are expressed by means of an auxiliary verb 'can, may', etc. called MODAL VERBS, or by the SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD" (p. 408). There are basically three moods in English: the indicative, used for facts, opinions and questions: the imperative, used for orders or advice and the subjunctive, used in certain contexts to express wishes, requests or conditions contrary to facts, as has already been stated. In literature, on the other hand, mood is used synonymously with "atmosphere", to refer to a literary element that induces certain feelings or sensations in a reader through words and imagery. Generally, it helps in creating an atmosphere in a literary work by means of setting, theme, diction and tone. It also evokes various emotional responses in readers and thus ensures their emotional attachment to the literary work they read.

Aside these ascriptions to mood, there is also another narratological (related to narrative) sense attached to it, which has a metaphoric linguistic implication. According to Genette (1980),

> If the grammatical category of tense clearly applies to the stance of narrative discourse, that of mood might seem a priori to be irrelevant here. Since the function of narrative is not to give an order, express a wish, state a condition, etc., but simply to tell a story and therefore to "report" facts (real or fictive), its one mood, or at least its characteristic mood, strictly speaking can be only the indicative – and at that point we have said everything there is to say on this subject, unless we stretch the linguistic metaphor a little more than is fitting. (p. 161)

Genette (1980) further reiterates, without denying the metaphoric extension, that we can meet the distortion in the term "mood" by saying that:

> There are not only differences between affirming, commanding, wishing, etc., but there are also differences between degrees of affirmation; and that these differences are ordinarily expressed by modal variations, be they the infinitive and subjunctive of indirect discourse in Latin, or, in French, the conditional that indicates information not confirmed. (p. 161)

Consequently, according to Genette, narratives can only tell because all narrative is essentially diegesis (telling), in that it can attain no more than an illusion of mimesis (showing) by making the story real or alive. Hence, a narrative does not represent a factual or fictive story but only recounts it; that is, it signifies it by means of language and a narrator can only "tell more or tell less" what he or she tells and "can tell it according to one point of view or another" (p. 161).

Narrative mood, therefore, has to do with the modalities and capacity of a narrator to relate narrative information to the reader, in relation to how he or she tells more or less and according to one point of view or another. It also has to do with the stylistic choices that are made when a text is written in order to produce specific results in a story's verbal representation. Thus, Genette emphasises that narrative "representation" or narrative information has its degrees; that is, the narrative can "furnish the reader with more or fewer details, and in a more or less direct way, and can thus seem …to keep at a greater or lesser distance from what it

tells" (p. 162), thereby establishing the significant role narrative mood plays in storytelling.

The telling of stories is such an important aspect of the African culture that sometimes, how stories provide the initial and continuing means for shaping the experiences of the African is overlooked. Stories are the repositories of the combined wisdom about the world's socio-cultural behaviour; they are the key mediating structures for the encounters with reality. Consequently, a great deal of scholarly enquiry has focused on both the nature of stories and their essential function in human affairs. Transversely, several disciplines, including linguistics, literary criticism, anthropology, psychology and sociology have begun to see how the analysis of story structure is elementary to the understanding of the objective and potential of the individual.

Storytelling has always been a part of the African culture and has, in many indigenous cultures too, been an integral part of their cultures, such that it plays a major role in shaping people's lives. In many ancient traditions, storytelling is synonymous with chant, music or epic poetry, especially in the "bardic" traditions. According to Sheppard (2003-4), the bardic disciplines draw directly on the conscious creative power of the Divine and transmit it orally. In these traditions, storytelling involves the chanting of songs, along with musical accompaniment. Some titles assigned to these storytellers include bards, ashiks, jyrans and griots, some of whom are women. Their major roles in the society mainly involves being spiritual leaders and exemplars or healers, as well as tradition bearers, for which the stories and music are vehicles for their transmission. To this end, the available

literature reveals that women played significant roles in the oral traditions of the people, including the aspect of storytelling.

According to Taiwo (1987), "pre-literate African women contributed a great deal to education and literature. Their art was verbal and their purpose didactic. Through the appropriate use of stories, speeches, songs, satires, praises and abuses, they not only helped the young members of the society with the process of enculturation but also made a notable contribution to oral literature, which has largely provided the material for modern African literature" (p. 1). He goes on to say that for a number of social and economic reasons, it has not been possible to transfer this distinguished role of African women in traditional literature to the art of novel writing. Taiwo reiterates this position by quoting Emecheta, who asserts that:

> To be a good novelist, the writer must operate within a conducive atmosphere. She must have time and space to reflect and indulge in introspective thinking. For many potential writers in this country neither the time nor the space is available. In addition to family drawbacks, the government seems not to appreciate the value of home-produced works. It seems to be doing very little to encourage writers, financially. (as cited in Taiwo, 1987, p. 1)

Taiwo argues that these difficulties relate to all novelists, men and women. However, they appear to have completely overwhelmed the women and sapped their creative energy, initially. The result is that the men, as in many other facets of African life, have dominated the field and successfully pushed the women to the background. Furthermore, some earlier male novelists, for example, Amadi in *The Concubine* (1966), created in their fiction an image of the African woman which needs to be closely re-examined against the background of her traditional role and the social and economic realities of the present. It was, therefore, not quite

surprising that later novels started reflecting some of the arguments made in favour of the need to project positive images of African women.

This position resonates with Virginia Woolf's when in her 1929 work, *A Room of One's Own*, she discusses the status of women, especially women artist and their need to be provided with equal opportunities as granted their male counterparts. She argues in this work that "Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom" (p. 116). According to Woolf,

> …women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time. Women have had less intellectual freedom than the sons of Athenian slaves. Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own. (pp. 116-117)

Thus, Woolf advocates that since women do not have a dog's chance of being "emancipated into that intellectual freedom of which great writings are born" (p. 116), she "must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction…" (p. 7).

To this end, although there is a great amount of scholarship on the growth of African imaginative literature, a majority of the critical excitement surrounding it mainly focus on some male writers like Achebe, Soyinka, Sembene, Amadi and Armah. As it has already been stated, there was little or no attention to women writers, until the 1960s when such writers as Ogot, Nwapa, Emecheta, Aidoo "burst" onto the literary scene. This partial neglect of the female writer, as it is variously argued, does not correspond with the historical reality of the experience of the African woman. Although the traditional society was generally regarded as "a man's world", the African woman in her tribal past had, in addition to her revered

roles of wife and mother, well-defined social and political functions within the society. This may be why she has not reached out for emancipation in the militant or aggressive manner of her European counterpart.

Thus, the African woman has had a multiplicity of responsibilities which has made it virtually impossible to focus on just one of them. This idea is summed up by Guy Hunters (1965) when he argues that:

> Perhaps in almost all African societies, the woman has a "kingdom" of her own with both its obligations and its recognition. She frequently has responsibility for the cultivation of land; for the preparation of food, with all its customary significance; for rituals concerned with fertility; and in settling a host of questions concerned with the marriage of young people and the obligations connected with it. (p. 321)

In spite of these significant contributions, the status of the African woman remains significantly lower than that of her male counterpart and this is reflected in the marginal roles accorded her in earlier works of art, as seen in wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not Child* (1964) and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1963).

Contemporary African literature has seen some transformation, with more women writers exploring their literary dexterity. These writers, who are on best-seller lists, garner high profile reviews and win major awards in America and in Britain, include such writers as Helen Oyeyemi, Dinaw Mengestu, NoViolet Bulawayo, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Teju Cole, Taiye Selasi, Ama Ata Aidoo, Véronique Tadjo, Amma Darko, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Bessie Head, Lilia Momplé, Neshani Andreas and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, among others.

There are justifications for the critical accumulation of this acknowledgment accorded African writers. After several years of partisan and societal disorder, constructive changes in numerous African nations are aiding to

deeply enlarge the number of writers and readers of the continent. Fresher awards such as the Caine Prize for African Writing have also helped, as have social media (the internet) and top graduate and undergraduate programmes. In addition to this recognition given African women, Indian, Latino and Asian-American writers have also been "discovered" and had their moment in the sun – as have African-Americans.

There have been quite a number of debates about this new wave of African writers. For example, according to Forna (2013), "People used to ask where the African writers were…They were cleaning offices and working as clerks." Other writers and critics also scoff at the idea of lumping together diverse writers with ties to a diverse continent. Yet others say that this wave embodies something new in its complete volume, after an extensive fallow phase, even though there were some extraordinary exemptions such as Ben Okri's 1991 Booker Prize and Wole Soyinka's 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature. Moreover, the wave also varies from the postcolonial wave, approximately commencing in the 1960s, which also brought international recognition to writers like Achebe and Farah, amongst others. In addition, there appears to be more women now, for sure and more prominently, the stories being narrated, while sometimes set in Africa, frequently imitate the writers' experiences of living, studying or working somewhere else and are speckled with cultural references and settings conversant with Western audiences.

The blossoming of new African writers is "an amazing phenomenon", according to Manthia Diawara (2014). He further argues, "It is a literature more about being a citizen of the world – going to Europe, going back to Lagos…. "Now

we are talking about how the West relates to Africa and it frees writers to create their own worlds. They have several identities and they speak several languages" (as cited in Lee, 2014). One writer in the midst of this new wave of African writers who does this very well is Adichie, who is also the author of focus of this thesis. She apportions her time between Nigeria and the United States and operates a summer writing workshop in Lagos, and has also written three well-received novels and a book of stories. She has amassed awards and has movie adaptations of her novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), which is about the Biafran war and *Americanah*. With her immense readership, it is therefore, not surprising that Beyoncé has composed a song, "Flawless", released in December, 2013, which samples several lines about feminism from a public lecture Adichie delivered.

Biography and works of Adichie

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born to Igbo parents on the 15th of September, 1977, in Nigeria. She was the fifth of six children. Even though her family's ancestral hometown is Abba, in Anambra State, Adichie grew up in Nsukka, in the house formerly occupied by Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe. Her father, James Nwoye Adichie, who is now retired, was the first professor of statistics and later became Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, located in Nsukka, while her mother, Grace Ifeoma Adichie, was the first female registrar at the same Institution.

Adichie completed her secondary education at the University's school, receiving several academic prizes. She went on to study medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria for a year and a half. During this period, she edited *The*

Compass, a magazine run by the University's Catholic medical students. When Adichie was nineteen, she left Nigeria and moved to the United States to further her education. After pursuing a programme in communications and political science at Drexel University in Philadelphia, she transferred to Eastern Connecticut State University in order to be closer to her sister, Ijeoma, who was a medical practitioner in Coventry. She received her bachelor's degree from Eastern, where she graduated *summa cum laude* in 2001. In 2003, she finished her master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University and later received a Master of Arts degree in African studies from Yale University in 2008.

Concerning her beginning as a writer, Adichie asserts, in an interview with Anya (2005) that: "I didn't ever consciously decide to pursue writing. I've been writing since I was old enough to spell, and just sitting down and writing made me feel incredibly fulfilled" (Anya, 2005). However, by the time Adichie was 21 years old, she had a number of publications to her name: a collection of poems, *Decisions* (1997), and a play, *For Love of Biafra* (1998). In the latter work, she dramatises the painful experiences of a young Igbo woman, Adaobi, and her family, at the time of the Nigerian civil war of the late 1960s. This early work testifies to her continuing preoccupation with the Nigerian civil war, a theme which she also explored in several short stories, including "That Harmattan Morning" (2002), "Half of a Yellow Sun" (2002) and "Ghosts" (2004), and which she was to tackle again in later years.

Even though Adichie was born some years after the Biafran war ended, she mentions in an interview that she "has always felt a deep horror for all the

bestialities that took place and great pity for the injustices that occurred" (Adichie, 1998, p. viii). Her ingenuity at the recreation of the events of the war seems to suggest that the war has completely and perhaps permanently, affected the identity of generations of Igbo people. This indelible mark is strongly felt by the heroine Adaobi, even after the Biafrans surrender.

From the beginning of Adichie's career, she has not only displayed a keen awareness of the importance of ethnicity in Nigeria, but she has also paid much attention to the destitution often stomached by Nigerian immigrants in the United States and England. In several of her short stories, for example, "You in America" (2001), revised and published in 2004 as "The Thing around Your Neck", "My Mother, the Crazy African" (n.d.), "New Husband" (2003) and "The Grief of Strangers" (2004), she has explored issues faced by first-generation immigrants in the West, ranging from abuse and financial difficulties to problems relating to language and identity.

It must be acknowledged that it was during her senior year at Eastern that she started working on her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, which was released in October 2003. The novel has received extensive critical approval: it was shortlisted for the Orange Fiction Prize (2004) and was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (2005). *Purple Hibiscus* is set in Enugu, a city in Nigeria and is presented by Kambili, the main character, who lives with her family made up of her older brother, Jaja; her father, Papa Eugene Achike and her mother, Mama Beatrice Achike. The narrative opens on Palm Sunday, when Jaja refuses to take communion at church. This defiance infuriates Papa and he throws his missal at

Jaja but the book hits a shelf containing mama's beloved figurines, breaking them into pieces. This incident results in the falling apart of the Achike family. Kambili then recounts the proceedings culminating in the chaos on the Palm Sunday.

The story then rotates from Abba, Papa Eugene's ancestral town, where he is celebrated for his kindness every time he goes there. Nevertheless, he refuses to allow his children to visit his own father, Papa-Nnukwu, for more than fifteen minutes every Christmas. Papa regards his father a "heathen" since the father still follows the religious traditions of the Igbo (his people). This treatment of Papa Nnukwu brings Aunty Ifeoma into constant conflict with Papa Eugene but he remains nonchalant and will only acknowledge and support his father if he converts.

When Aunty Ifeoma invites Kambili and Jaja to Nsukka, they experience a different kind of life than what they have been exposed to. Even though the University is plagued by challenges such as fuel shortages, strikes at medical clinics, pay stoppages, blackouts and increasing food prices, the widowed Aunty Ifeoma effectively nurtures her three children, Amaka, Obiora and Chima with the little she has but still manages to make her family happy. Unlike Papa Eugene, Aunty Ifeoma emboldens her children to question authority, educating them with faith, as well as intellectual curiosity. Amaka and Kambili emerge as very dissimilar girls. Amaka, like Kambili's colleagues, assumes that her cousin is an advantaged snob because she is ignorant about how to contribute to household chores. Jaja, on the other hand, adjusts into Aunty Ifeoma's family and follows the instance of his younger cousin, Obiora, devising his own means of helping his family out by tending a garden and killing a chicken. Kambili eventually begins to

open up when she encounters Father Amadi, a Nigerian-born priest who appears to be gentle and supportive and also inspires Kambili to speak her mind. Through Father Amadi, Kambili learns that it is possible to think for oneself and yet still be sincere.

Kambili and Jaja become more compliant in Nsukka. When Papa-Nnukwu falls sick and Aunty Ifeoma brings him to her flat, Kambili and Jaja resolve not to tell Papa that they are sharing a home with a "heathen". When Kambili witnesses her grandfather's morning ritual of innocence, where he offers thanks to his gods and proclaims his good deeds, she appreciates the beauty in this ritual and begins to understand that the difference between herself and Papa-Nnukwu is minimal. When eventually Papa Eugene finds out that Kambili and Jaja have spent time with their grandfather, he sends them back home. Amaka gives Kambili a painting of Papa-Nnukwu to take back to Enugu. Consequently, Papa punishes them by pouring hot water on their feet for "walking into sin."

The story takes a different twist when Mama returns to Nsukka, hobbling out of a taxi because Papa has beaten her again, causing her another miscarriage. Even though Aunty Ifeoma urges her not to return to Enugu, Mama ignores her counsel and takes her children back with her. The following week happens to be the Palm Sunday, when Jaja refuses to go to church. In the period between Palm Sunday and Easter, Jaja becomes progressively rebellious. He finally demands that he and Kambili spend Easter with their cousins. Destabilised by what his children consider to be stress, Papa Eugene finally allows them to go to Nsukka. Some days later, Mama informs them of the death of Papa. Apparently, when Mama left

Nsukka, she began poisoning Papa's tea. Jaja subsequently takes the blame for the crime and goes to prison.

The final part of the narrative takes place just about three years later, when Kambili and Mama pay Jaja an unsentimental visit in prison, where he has served his term of punishments in miserable conditions. However, with the governance in Nigeria shifting again, their lawyers are optimistic that Jaja will be freed. Though Jaja has learned not to expect a favourable outcome, Kambili is delighted and dreams that she will take Jaja to America to visit Aunty Ifeoma and together, they will plant orange trees in Abba and purple hibiscuses will bloom again.

Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* was published in August, 2006, in the United Kingdom and in September, 2006, in the United States. Like *Purple Hibiscus*, it has also been released in Nigeria and has won several awards, including being listed as one of *New York Times* Most Notable Books of 2006. Some critics commended the novel and anticipated that Adichie would be hailed as a noteworthy writer of the twenty-first century. The narrative is an amalgamation of personal relationships and politics, charged by the ruthless struggles that surround the main characters.

The novel is set in Nigeria, in the 1960s during the Nigerian-Biafran War, with the principal characters being Igbos and on the Biafran side of the conflict. The story is also presented from the perspectives of three different characters: Ugwu, Olanna and Richard and it begins in a somewhat peaceful setting, where Olanna is described as being in love with a radical Nigerian professor, Odenigbo, who rallies his colleagues, students and friends about the idea that the predominantly southern part of Nigeria needs to declare its independence. This

leads to the formation of a new country, Biafra. Most of the characters are, therefore, encouraged and enthusiastic about this new country. However, the realities of the war become a major factor as the novel progresses. This does not turn out to be strictly a north/south rebellion but rather the conflict bothers on mostly tribal differences. The Igbos in the south do not trust the more northern people called the Hausas. Although their hearts are in favour of the revolution and ultimate independence, the Igbos are not as well prepared, equipped or financed as the Hausas. In the end, the Igbos suffer tremendously.

In this story, the reader is taken through these fights, losses and sufferings of the Igbo people. In the process, the reader learns of, at least, one side of this particular period in Nigerian history. This novel, in effect, is more than a history lesson. It also encompasses family relationships, love affairs, community involvements and the conflicts between the traditional tribal ways of life versus the more modern, often more corrupt manner of life in the cities, which are all fully explored.

Adichie's third novel, which is *Americanah*, was published in 2013 and like the previous two novels, has also won her several awards, including Winner of the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, Winner of the "The Chicago Tribune 2013 Heartland Prize" for Fiction, among others. *Americanah* is Adichie's most aspiring love story, which chronicles the tale of childhood sweethearts at school in Nigeria, whose lives take different paths when they seek fortune in America and England. Thus, the novel is presented from the perspectives of two different characters, Ifemelu and Obinze, through whose focalisation the various

sections of the narrative are presented. The novel is also a brilliant dissection of modern attitudes to race, spanning three continents and touching on issues of identity, loss and loneliness. The novel follows Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman who leaves her country and childhood sweetheart, Obinze, to study in America.

The novel tells the story of Ifemelu, a spirited young girl with strong opinions, and her teenage boyfriend, Obinze, who grow up with romanticised notions of the West, wrought by the literature of Graham Greene, Mark Twain and James Baldwin. When Ifemelu is offered an opportunity to continue her postgraduate studies in Philadelphia, she takes it. As an immigrant African, she is never really a part of America although she is the author of a blog popular with a certain group. Some years later, Obinze also goes rummaging around for a better life, but to Britain. It is at this point that Adichie really begins to flex her muscles as a novelist: the sense of displacement felt by both characters in two countries with completely different histories and class structures is skilfully rendered.

In England, Obinze struggles to get hold of the ever-elusive social security number that will enable him to work legally and therefore, resorts to taking illegal menial jobs. The newspapers are full of stories about schools "swamped" by immigrant children and politicians' attempts to clamp down on asylum seekers. Against this backdrop, Emenike, a former classmate in Nigeria, who has married a high-flying solicitor, invites him to a smug Islington lunch party. The food is served on self-consciously "ethnic" plates brought back from a holiday in India and Obinze is left wondering whether Emenike has become a person "who believed that

something was beautiful because it was handmade by poor people in a foreign country or whether he had simply learned to pretend so".

In America, Ifemelu also finds it difficult to get part-time work. She is turned away from menial jobs as a waitress, bartender or cashier. Her fellow students speak to her with painful slowness, as if she cannot comprehend fundamental English. In class, she is singled out as someone who will intuitively understand the plight of African-Americans because of some half-formed belief in a nebulous, shared "black" consciousness. Ifemelu finally gets a job babysitting the spoiled children of a wealthy couple for $250 a month. She and the insecure mother of these children, Kimberly, become good friends, while Kimberly's other sister, Laura, is decidedly unfriendly. Nevertheless, Ifemelu can now pay her tuition and some bills, and can also move into a very small studio of her own. Eventually, Ifemelu starts blogging about her experiences of near destitution before graduating from college and the blog posts add an extra dimension to the plot, allowing the reader to see how Ifemelu sees herself and how she wishes to present herself to the outside world.

The final section of the narrative tracks Ifemelu's return and reunion with Obinze, who is married to Kosi. Back in Lagos, Obinze has found wealth as a property developer. Though the narrative appears to transform into an uncomplicated story of their reunion, it extends into a sweltering assessment of Nigeria, a country too proud to have patience for "Americanahs" – big shots who return from abroad to belittle their countrymen – and yet one that, occasionally inadvertently, endorses foreign values.

It can be established from the foregoing that the major thematic concerns of Adichie border on the recent history of Nigeria – Biafra, gender issues, politics and discrimination against Africans or Blacks in the West – racism. Especially, Adichie is concerned with contemporary attitudes towards race, as experienced on three continents and touching on issues of identity, loss and loneliness. Thus, about her mission or reason as a writer, Adichie intimates, in the interview with Anya (2005):

> I don't think I have a MISSION for writing. I write because it is a need, a compulsion almost. But then I do have issues I love to explore – Nigeria, of course, as well as Nigerians in Diaspora. The subtleties of race, especially in America. The place and role and choices of Nigerian Women. 'Modern' Igbo culture, or what Igbo culture has evolved into. (Anya, 2005)

She makes her tribe, the Igbo tribe, the focus of her works and she states further that she is more interested in the Igbo nation itself and in how cultural priorities, responsibilities and unity can be achieved within it. She reiterates this position by arguing that:

> I find it curious, though, that Biafra is nearly always a tribally divided issue. I wonder, too, why Biafra still seems to be taboo and to carry a stigma. I think it says something about the place of the Igbo in Nigeria today that BIAFRA has become an 'Igbo issue.' If one claims to believe in Nigeria, and in the unity in diversity idea, then one must embrace the study and investigation of Biafra because Nigeria would not be today as it is if Biafra had not been. (Anya, 2005)

Adichie's other works such as her articles, including her interviews, have equally received significant recognition among critics and other followers.

In effect, it is not so much about what Adichie writes about that is of great concern or interest to the researcher. That is, even though she touches on issues that are of great interest to the African continent, it is, however, how she presents and explores these issues that concern her, her narrative style, that is of interest to the

researcher in this study. Consequently, the researcher perceives that it is the type of narrative style adopted by Adichie, especially her employment of narrative mood in her novels, notwithstanding her treatment of theme and character, that has placed her on the pedestal akin to her forebears like Emecheta, Head, Nwapa, Aidoo, among others and therefore, needs to be given much attention.

Statement of the Thesis

Although there is a mounting interest in the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, studies relating to issues of structure and narrative technique are still inadequate. Available literature on her works reveal that the majority of the criticisms have focused on ideological and thematic analysis, leaving a lot unsaid about how these are explored; that is, how the narrative itself is presented. Consequently, the attention on her works has focused on content or story more than on the narrative itself. However, it is important that analyses of literary texts should focus more on the narrative. That is, the actual words on the page, the discourse, the text itself, from which the reader constructs both story and narration. This aspect of analyses appears to be neglected in the available critical receptions on Adichie and it needs to be addressed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the narrative technique adopted by Adichie in her novels. The study seeks to analyse the selected novels by exploring the adroit use of narrative mood in Adichie's novels, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013) to bring out and

intensify the diegesis of these narratives. By employing one of Genette's narrative categories, Mood (distance and perspective), the study explores the narratives' particular use of methods of focalisation and how the several focalisers are merged to realise cohesive and coherent narratives.

Justification

The selection of the texts for the study is justified by the consideration that even though Adichie has a number of works, particularly other narratives, to her credit, not all of them can conveniently be considered in a study of this nature. Consequently, the selection is only with her novels, even though there is the acknowledgement of her compilation of short stories, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2003). These selected texts provide sufficient material for the quality and nature of the research, and also because they seem to reflect the author's own progression and maturity as a writer. In addition, a closer reading of these selected texts reveals that the amount of critical attention Adichie has received is not only attributed to her treatment of content issues such as theme and character but particularly about how she treats or presents such issues to the reader. Thus, her dexterity at writing has also placed her in the category of such eminent writers as Achebe, Nwapa, Emecheta, among others and this accolade serves as a stimulus for the selection of these texts for the research.

Furthermore, Adichie's novels can be interpreted in a sense along her implicit concern about ethnic nationalism, as explored by the pioneer novelist, Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). This can be comprehended in relation to how she continues to revisit earlier themes and

issues such as on Biafra and race, during a time of changing socio-political contexts. As noted by Vendler (2003), the new writer:

> …may make certain implicit "meanings" explicit; he may extrapolate certain possibilities to greater lengths; he may choose a detail, centre on it, and turn it into an entire composition; he may alter the perspective from which the form is viewed; or he may view the phenomenon at a different moment in time. (as cited in Akpome, 2017, p. 11)

Thus, Adichie, though a new writer, is occasionally compared with Achebe (sometimes contentiously), owing to her skilful presentation of issues of concern to her.

Significance of the Study

By examining the characteristics and peculiarities of narrative mood, the researcher can clarify the mechanisms used in the narrative act and identify exactly what methodological choices the author made in order to render her story. In addition, available literature reveals that the bulk of narratological analyses have focused on the Western novel at the neglect of the African novel, leaving a lot to be desired in this field. The study, therefore, will be a contribution to theory by demonstrating the extent to which Genette's methodology is useful to the analysis of the African novel.The study is also significant in that it has pedagogical implications. Hence, it will serve as a material to facilitate the teaching of narrative analysis.

Organisation of the Study

The thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which comprises synopsis of the novels, explication of the gap that this study seeks

to fill, purpose of the study and significance of the study. Chapter Two focuses on the conceptual framework, which also comprises the theoretical review, as well as related literature on Adichie's novels. Chapter Three begins the discussion or analysis of the texts selected for the study. The discussion or analysis will be in two chapters – that is, Chapters Three and Four.

Thus, Chapter Three will focus on the Narrative Distance in the three novels selected for the study, while Chapter Four concentrates on the Narrative Perspective in the novels. The analysis will be done in a chronological order of a reading of Adichie's novels. This procedure is guided by the observation that the researcher perceives some development in Adichie's style of writing, as well as her treatment of theme. The final part, Chapter Five, will be an appraisal of the extent to which Genette's theory of narratology has been applied in the analysis of the novels selected for the study and then finally make appropriate recommendations for further studies.

This chapter, Chapter One, has provided the Introduction, which serves as the background to the research. It comprises synopsis of the novels, explication of the gap that this study seeks to fill, purpose of the study, as well as significance of the study. The next chapter will focus on the conceptual framework, which also will encompass the theoretical review, as well as related literature on Adichie's novels.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON THE NOVELS

Introduction

> I didn't ever consciously decide to pursue writing. I've been writing since I was old enough to spell, and just sitting down and writing made me feel incredibly fulfilled. I may have considered other careers to make a living since I wasn't sure I could do it from writing, but I have never thought actively about my choice to write. I just write. I have to write. I like to say that I didn't choose writing, writing chose me. This may sound slightly mythical, but I sometimes feel as if my writing is something bigger than I am. There are days when I sit at my laptop and will myself to write and nothing happens. There are other days when I have things to do but feel compelled to write. And the writing just flows out. I am never sure what triggers these 'inspirations,' if that is what they are. More mundanely, the rituals and geography of specific places inspire me – the chaotic energy of Lagos, the sereneness of Nsukka, the insular calm of Mansfield, Connecticut. And I love observing people and tiny details about them. I often get the urge to write from imagining or inventing lives for people I don't know... (Adichie, 2005, in an interview with Anya, 2005)

This is a statement Adichie made about her writing, in an interview with Anya in 2005. Significantly, her writings have touched on various issues that affect the African, both in Africa and in the Diaspora. In recent years, she has attracted the interest of critics and the general public more than any other African writer of her generation. Regardless of her relatively recent emergence on the international literary scene, quite a lot of scholarly essays examining her works have been published. Available literature, therefore, reveals that there is credible critical attention on Adichie's works.

This section reviews some of the perceptions that her works have received. The review is divided into two sections. The first part concerns itself with the

theoretical and conceptual framework, while the second part focusses on critical reception on the three novels selected for the study.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for the analysis is narratology and it is rooted in structuralism. Though structuralism developed out of Saussure's pioneering work on language, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that it found its most widespread influence and application with such advocates as Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Tzvetan Todorov, A. J. Greimas and Gerard Genette. Saussure had proposed, in a couple of programmatic statements, a "general science of signs" based on his theory of language. He called this putative science "semiology" and suggested that the method it inaugurates could be applied to more than just the language system. His suggestions make significant contributions to structuralism, where his theory of language is used as the basis for a critical model which investigates a diverse range of cultural phenomena.

Current narrative theory tends to be complicated and interdisciplinary in nature. Seymour Chatman (1978) acknowledges the dualistic nature of narrative that appears to be equally the essential supposition and assumption of several narratological theories; that it has a "what" and a "how". The "what" of narrative can be viewed in terms of narrative content, which consists, as far as the main elements are concerned, of "events", "actors", "time" and "location". The "how", on the other hand, represents the narrating process itself, the way the narrative is presented or told.

The "what" is also called the "story" or what is also known as the "histoire" by the French Structuralists, or "fabula" by the Russian Formalists. The "how" is the "discourse", what the French Structuralists called "discours" or the Russian Formalists called "sjužet". This dualism persists in several sets of double terms such as "deep structure" and "surface manifestations", "content plane" and "expression plane", "histoire and recit", etc. and each of them can be isolated and studied in depth.

Narratology

Narratology may be defined as "a theory of narrative" (Groden and Kreiswirth {n.d.}). It is a theory of narrative and not the theory of narrative. This implies that there are theories of narrative that are not narratological. However, there are other definitions that see narratology as the poetics of narrative (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; Pavel, 1985), rhetorics of narrative (Booth, 1961), logics of narrative (Hamburger, 1957; Bremond, 1973), models of narrative (Ryan, 1979), grammars of narrative (Prince, 1973), narratological methods (Genette, 1980) and narratological criticism (Bal, 1985; Lanser, 1986).

In so far as narratology is a theory of narrative, and in so far as these scholars are narratologists, the word "theory" is understood in various very different ways. A theory of narrative can be a speculative or conjectural view on narrative as such. A poetics of narrative will look for universal principles of narrative - it is concerned with the differentia specifica of narrative, it understands narrative as something in itself, and it gets its concepts from this object. A rhetoric of narrative can be either a study of the techniques of using language effectively (in which case literary

narrative is seen as a kind of rhetoric) or it can be a study of tropes and figures. A logic of narrative will be concerned with establishing a formal logical system of axioms and rules of inference that apply for narrative in general. A model of narrative will use a different language to create more or less simplified representations of narrative structures. A grammar of narrative can use a metalanguage (linguistics) as a means of explaining the elementary principles of narrative. A narratological method can be seen as a systematic way of doing something, a how-to-read-a-narrative manual. Narratological criticism will analyse or evaluate specific narratives.

These tentative descriptions of what narratology may be considered to be show differences not only in focus but also in the understanding of what narratology can be used for. To see narratology as a theoretical discipline is obviously quite different from seeing it as a branch of poetics, which is again different from seeing it as a method - which can perhaps be used for criticism. Herman (1999) argues that narratology is a study of narrative, but then again not all studies of narrative are narratological. As a study of narrative, narratology is more correctly a study of narrative qua narrative which, as Prince puts it in the above mentioned entry (though he still holds on to narratology being a "theory"), "…examines what all narratives, and only narratives, have in common as well as what enables them to differ from one another qua narratives, and it aims to describe the narrative-specific system of rules presiding over narrative production and processing".

The term, narratology, was coined in French (Narratologie) by the narratologist, Tzvetan Todorov, in his monumental book *Grammaire du*

Décaméron (1969). It seeks to isolate the components of a narrative to facilitate individual study of each element that makes up the narrative. In other words, narratology is a study of factors that operate in a narrative. The theory makes assumptions that narratives can be found in a variety of media: oral/written language in prose/verse, sign language, still pictures, as in picture stories, music and gestures, as opposed to drama, etc. A narrative may be told in a combination of two or more of these media. To some narratologists, this assumption presupposes that the narrative components of a narrative text can be studied in isolation and independent of its medium of narration.

The theory is also one of the major achievements of what was called "structuralism". The structuralist study of literature, associated with the names of Barthes, Todorov, Genette and others, sought not to interpret literature but to investigate its structures and devices. The project, as defined in Barthes's *Critique et verité* and Todorov's *Poétique* (1980) (in *Qu'est-ce que Ie strucluralisme?*), is to develop a poetics which will stand to literature as linguistics stands to language and which, therefore, will not seek to explain what individual works mean but will attempt to make explicit the system of figures and conventions that enables works to have the forms and meanings they do.

Structuralists devote considerable attention to plot structure or the "grammar" of plot, as Todorov calls it in his *Grammaire du Décaméron* (1969). It is also to explain the ways in which details of various kinds in a novel are organised to produce effects of suspense, characters, plot sequences, thematic and symbolic patterns. Though *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980) does not directly

assimilate either of these investigations, it is the centrepiece of the study of narrative, for in attempting to define the forms and figures of narrative discourse, Genette deals with all the complex relations between the narrative and the story it tells.

In contrast to the "grammarians of the story", who were mainly the pioneers of narratology, are those who perceive narrative as verbal/linguistic information, the recounting of events by a narrator. Their study focuses on the narrative discourse, with Genette (1980) as the chief proponent. This group defines the narrative by its mode of presentation and assigns a role for the narrator. Genette's is a very essential piece of literary criticism that satisfies the urgent need for a systematic theory of narrative. It offers the basic constituents and techniques of narrative.

A third group of narratologists are those who integrate both sciences. They integrate the "what" and the "how"; that is, the "story" and its "discourse". Both Barthes (*S/Z*, 1970) and Prince (1971) practise this mixed narratology. Prince recommends the notion of the narrator/narratee and equally suggests that the narrator speaks the narrative to someone who he calls the narratee. He indicates that the narratee is as important as the narrator is. It is noteworthy to state that Prince's narratee can be dramatised inside the story as character-narratee. Thus, there can be several narratees in a single narrative as can be several narrators.

From the foregoing discussion, therefore, it can be argued that there are varied perspectives to the theory of narratology. However, all these views are geared towards providing a systematic, thorough and impartial approach to the

mechanics of narrative. Thus, the theory does not only encourage the study of narrative in general, as opposed to the unadulterated study of the novel or film but also the analysis could take place with reference to some fundamental notions that could be translated across media and forms and that all narratives would have shared features, in addition to concepts developed to describe the specificities of particular forms within given media. To this end, the theory of narratology enables a researcher to identify and isolate the various components of a narrative for scrutiny.

Owing to the multiplicity of the views and strands of narratology, as discussed above, Genette's (1980) approach, is employed as the theoretical framework for the study. This is because Genette's typology of narratology provides a poetics that may be used to address the entire inventory of narrative processes in order to understand exactly how the narrative is organised. His approach also addresses a level that lies below the threshold of interpretation and as such, it establishes a solid foundation, supplementing other research being carried out in the fields of social sciences, literary history, sociology, psychoanalysis and ethnology. His typology is also regarded by many specialists in the field as a reading and analytical methodology that marks a significant milestone in the development of literary theory and discourse analysis.

Genette's Narratological Approach

Genette's version of narratology is derived from *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980). The examples he draws from the book are mainly from Proust's epic, *In Search of Lost Time* (1922). One criticism that had been levelled

against previous forms of narratology was that they could deal only with simple stories, such as Vladimir Propp's work in *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1968), as well as other short stories. However, if narratology could cope with Proust's epic, this could no longer be said. Genette, thus, advocates various categories of narrative that cover Order, Frequency, Duration, Voice and Mood. His narrative structure posits that the various categories and subcategories emphasise that the narrative is a complex structure in which a narratee is largely present in the various strata of the structure.

It must be emphasised that Genette is concerned with the macro-text of the récit; that is, the representation or ordering of events in a narrative. In addition, Genette argues that each of these categories, as mentioned above, could be isolated and studied to warrant a valid interpretation of any narrative. The research, therefore, employs one of these categories, mood, in analysing Adichie's novels. The choice of this category is guided by the fact that the novelist employs the multiperspectival approach in narrating the stories in the novels and the "mood" category addresses that appropriately, especially as it enhances a clearer comprehension of Adichie's narratives.

Mood

In explaining mood, Genette makes reference to the *Littré* dictionary and defines it as the "name given to the different forms of the verb that are used to affirm more or less the thing in question, and to express… the different points of view from which the life or the action is looked at" (p. 161). Thus, according to Genette, all narrative is essentially diegesis (telling), that is, it can attain no more

than an illusion of mimesis (showing) by making the story real. For Genette, then, a narrative cannot imitate reality, no matter how realistic. It is intended to be a fictional act of language arising from a narrative instance and that "one can tell more or tell less what one tells, and can tell it according to one point of view or another; and this capacity, and the modalities of its use are precisely what our category of narrative mood aims at" (p. 161-162). He further explains that:

> Narrative "representation," or, more exactly, narrative information, has its degrees: the narrative can furnish the reader with more or fewer details, and in a more or less direct way, and can thus seem (to adopt a common and convenient spatial metaphor, which is not to be taken literally) to keep at a greater or lesser distance from what it tells. The narrative can also choose to regulate the information it delivers, not with a sort of even screening but according to the capacities of knowledge of one or another participant in the story (a character or group of characters), with the narrative adopting or seeming to adopt what we ordinarily call the participant's "vision" or "point of view"; the narrative seems in that case (continuing the spatial metaphor) to take on with regard to the story, one or another perspective. (p. 162)

Mood, therefore, concerns itself with the distance created between the narrator and the narrative information available at his or her disposal. That is, the relationship between the narrator and the narrative information, vis-a-vis the reader.

Genette additionally expatiates on mood by drawing on an aspect of mood (Perspective) for illustration. According to him, to understand Perspective, which is a sub-category of mood, the reader must distinguish between Voice and Mood as narrative categories. Voice has to do with the one who speaks, that is, the narrator. Mood is the one who sees, that is, the one from whose point of view what is spoken is seen. In other words, Voice represents the narrative voice, the speaker, whilst Mood is the point of view from which the narrative is presented. Although in theory

Voice and Mood are distinct and separate, they may merge in one person in a narrative, but often, they are not. Hence, Voice represents Narrator (N), whether present or absent and Mood represents Point of View (P) of the narrative. Genette further categorises mood into two: Distance and Perspective.

Distance

Distance, which is the first sub-category of Mood, refers to how much or how little is told or how directly or indirectly what is told is told. It is the distance between the Narrator and the Information. To understand Distance, we must understand the distinction between Mimesis and Diegesis. Mimesis may be defined as *what is shown*, and Diegesis as *what is told*. Drama can show or imitate the story but narrative cannot; hence, drama is characterised by pure mimesis. In contrast, narrative can only tell, hence diegesis; at best, it may achieve partial mimesis through an illusion of showing. This means while there is only mimesis in drama, there is a combination of diegesis and mimesis in narrative. Two things are narrated in a narrative: events and speech. In other words, in narrative, there are narration of events and narration of speech.

Narration of Events

A narrative is primarily about events being narrated; hence, narration of events is the first analytical focus of the narratologist in his discourse on the macro-textual récit. Genette defines narration of events as a "transcription of the non-verbal into the verbal" (p. 165). According to him, two elements are involved in the narration of events and these elements are in inverse ratio to each other. The elements are:

i. the quantity of information

ii. the presence of the narrator

Quantity of information is mimesis and presence of narrator is diegesis. In a narrative, the two (mimesis and diegesis) are in inverse relationship to each other. Mimesis, in terms of narration of events, is to show or give as much information as possible with the least attention to the narrator. In Genettean metalanguage, mimesis is a maximum of information and minimum of narrator. Diegesis, in terms of narration of events, is to tell, to reveal the act of telling more than what is told. In metalanguage, diegesis is a minimum of information and a maximum of narrator. Diegesis puts emphasis on narrative presence while mimesis puts emphasis on the information presented. In Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742, qtd. in Genette, 1972), for example, the narrative is mainly about events and throughout the telling, there is tension between mimesis and diegesis in the narrator's frequent intrusion in the narration. The same tension is in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902, qtd. in Genette, 1980).

Narration of Speech

Narration of speech, as opposed to direct narration of events, is indirect narrative. That is, an imitation of speech. As opposed to the diegesis of narration of events, narration of speech is actually an imitation of speech and is, therefore, an absolute mimesis. It is a mimesis of speech in terms of Reported or Indirect Speech. Genette identifies three main types of indirect speech in relation to narration of speech: Narratised speech, Transposed speech and Reported speech. In narration of speech, the more indirect the speech, the less character presence and the more

narrator presence while the more direct the speech, the less narrator presence and the more character presence.

To explain the three forms of indirect speech, Genette presents a direct statement quoted from Proust's (1913) book, which he then presents in three indirect statements:

Marcel: *I must marry*
Mother: *who?*
Marcel: *Albertine*

Of the three types of indirect speech, narratised or narrated discourse, according to Genette, "is obviously the most distant and generally...the most reduced" (p. 171) in terms of the degree of its indirectness. In narratised discourse, Genette renders the above statement as follows; "I informed my mother of my decision to marry Albertine."

Transposed discourse is the second type of indirect speech. Here, the speech is transposed rather than indirectly narrated. It is slightly altered while keeping its essential features. Genette identifies two types. The first is Indirect Transposed Discourse. This type is "a little more mimetic than narrated speech" in the sense that it is more imitative of the actual speech uttered. Genette renders the indirect transposed discourse of Marcel's statement as follows; I told my mother that I absolutely had to marry Albertine – (Uttered speech) and "I thought that I absolutely had to marry Albertine" – (Inner speech). Genette is not too comfortable with the degree of indirectness of indirect transposed discourse. He observes, "although...in principle capable of exhaustiveness, this form never gives the reader any guarantee – or above all any feeling – of literal fidelity to the words 'really'

uttered: the narrator's presence is still too perceptible in the very syntax of the sentence for the speech to impose itself with the documentary autonomy of a quotation" (Genette, 1980, p. 171).

The second type of Transposed Discourse is what Genette calls the Free Indirect Discourse or FID or Free Indirect Style (FIS) "where economising on subordination allows a greater extension of the speech, and thus a beginning of emancipation, despite temporal transpositions" (p. 172). An FID or FIS of Marcel's statement reads as follows; "I went to find my mother: it was absolutely necessary that I marry Albertine". According to Genette, the difference between the two types of Transposed Speech is the absence of a declarative verb (I told/I thought) in the FID or FIS, which, unless the context provides indicators, can create a double ambiguity: first between uttered speech and inner speech, and next, between the speech of the character and that of the narrator. Nevertheless, the absence of the declarative verb helps to reduce the presence of the narrator and thereby brings the speech as close to the original utterance as possible; hence a mimesis. In most texts, the presence of indicators helps avoid the confusion of uttered/inner speech and of narrator/character. However, sometimes, the author deliberately creates the confusion, especially between narrator and character to serve a particular artistic purpose.

The third type of indirect speech is Reported Discourse, what Genette calls Direct Discourse and James Joyce calls Immediate Discourse. Genette describes this type of indirect speech as the most "mimetic…where the narrator pretends literally to give the floor to his character" (p. 172). Genette gives a direct discourse

of Marcel's statement as follows; "I said to my mother (or I thought): 'it is absolutely necessary that I marry Albertine'" or "I said: 'It is absolutely necessary that I marry Albertine'". Genette comments on the above: "This *reported* speech, dramatic in type, has been adopted since Homer as the basic form of dialogue (and of monologue) in the 'mixed' narrative first of the epic and then of the novel" (p. 172). "Mixed" here refers to a mixture of narrative (diegesis) and scene (mimesis).

A close look at narratives in general, in the light of Genette's category of Distance (Mood) will clearly indicate that the modernist novel tries to emphasise narration of speech rather than narration of events, the aim being to show the speech rather than show events. Hence, the modernist novel is a form of return to drama, where there is imitation of speech. The modernist novel, particularly, explores transposed discourse in its imitation of speech. Here, the character, in a kind of interior monologue, takes over the narration. In both forms of transposed speech (Indirect Discourse and FID or FIS), the character fuses into the narrator. The narrator is hardly visibly. Sometimes, in the Free Indirect Discourse, the narrator is hardly seen, though he is still present.

In disparity, reported discourse is used by the more modernist novel (the nouveau roman), where the whole narration is put in direct discourse (Immediate Discourse). Here, the narration is freed of all narrative presence and the character actually takes over from the narrator in a kind of Free Direct Discourse, where the narrative voice of the character is unhindered by space or time. The Immediate Discourse, though often spoken through a character, can sometimes be a mere disembodied voice representing no one. Here, it represents neither the author nor

narrator, nor character, but the discourse itself and the entire narrative becomes a pseudo-philosophical treatise emanating from the creative process itself. In describing reported discourse, Genette (1980) remarks:

> Curiously, one of the main paths of emancipation of the modern novel has consisted of pushing this mimesis of speech to its extreme, or rather to its limit, obliterating the last traces of the narrating instance and giving the floor to the character right away. (p. 173)

As an example of this type of reported discourse, Genette presents Marcel's statement as coming at the very beginning of a narrative but within no quotation marks: "It is absolutely necessary that I marry Albertine" "and continuing thus up to the last page, according to the order of the hero's thoughts, perceptions, and actions performed or undergone". Genette quotes Joyce's description of immediate discourse to illustrate his point:

> The reader [would be] in-stalled in the thought of the main character from the first lines on, and it is the uninterrupted unfolding of that thought which, substituting completely for the customary form of narrative, [would] apprise us of what the character does and what happens to him (p. 173)

In sum, in the modernist novel, the aim is to shift from events to discourse; hence, the novel consists more of discourse than events and therefore, the focus is on narration of speech. In the modernist novel, too, the FID or FIS and indirect discourse, more than the reported discourse are the most common uses of the narration of speech, while reported discourse more than the FID or indirect discourse, is most common in the nouveau roman. Indeed, in the more modernist novel, where the notion of events is downgraded, the emphasis is on the direct speech of reported discourse. In such cases, the discourse sometimes represents

neither author nor narrator, nor character but pure mood and the present tense is used as in philosophical discourse.

On the contrary, traditional novels narrate events and are, therefore, mainly focused on the narration of events, in terms of distance (Mood). Here, emphasis is on the amount of information given and therefore, the narrator tries to remove himself as much as possible from the picture and to give as much information about events as possible. Paradoxically, in either case, removal of the narrator is equivalent to success. In narration of events, mimesis is maximum of information and minimum of narrator whereas in narration of speech, mimesis is the obliteration of narrator and assertion of character. The next section also expounds on what "Perspective" is.

Perspective

In classifying Mood in terms of Perspective, three designations are used: Point of view (P), Narrator (N) and Character (C). There are three further classifications of Point of View in terms of Narrator and Character. In other words, Mood as Point of View has three subcategories in terms of Narrator and Character: Non-Focalisation, Internal Focalisation and External Focalisation. The term *focalisation* suggests either the act of focalising or the state of being focalised. To focalise is to bring into the spotlight, centre of attention or to bring into view. Hence, focalisation is mood in terms of seeing, that is, the point of view. The three classifications of focalisation identified by Genette are the points of view from which the narration can be presented.

Non-focalisation, sometimes referred to as focalisation zero, is where the point of view is from behind; hence, the narrator knows more than the character. At non-focalisation, the formula or symbol (as proposed by Todorov) of narration is

$$\mathbf{P \longrightarrow N > C}$$

The omniscient narrator in the traditional novel, to achieve 'realism', uses this type of focalisation, where the narrator knows almost everything. An example of this is Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1902, as cited in Genette, 1980).

Genette identifies internal focalisation as where the point of view focuses on the viewer – the one who sees, that is, the focaliser. Here, the narrator views or sees from the point of view of the character; hence, the narrator knows as much as the character. At internal focalisation,

$$\mathbf{P \longrightarrow N = C}$$

There are three types of internal focalisation. The first is the "fixed" type, where "fixed" refers to one character, one narrator (like a single narrator, either an I-narrator, for example, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, where the narrator knows just as much as the focal character, Kambili and is restricted to the thoughts of the other characters. It can also refer to a third person non-omniscient narrator.

There is also the "variable" type, where "variable" refers to one narrator but several shifts in point of view (like the omniscient narrator whose narrative is a mixture of several points of view, for example, the whole of James', *The Turn of the Screw* (1991) and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (2007). Finally, there is the "multiple" type of internal focalisation. Here, the "multiple" type refers to more than one character-narrator. Several characters tell different stories, as in

Boccaccio's *Decameron* (2007) and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1977) or several characters tell the same story from different perspectives, as in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) or Armah's *Why are we so Blest* (1972). However, all the three types of internal focalisation are hardly used rigorously in both traditional and modernist novels. This is because in internal focalisation, the focaliser can never objectively describe his appearance, behaviour or thoughts. This is especially true where the "fixed" type of focalisation – one character-narrator – is used. Sometimes, the author solves this problem of objectivity by using dialogue and mirror scenes.

The third type of focalisation that Genette identifies is external focalisation. This is where the point of view focuses on the one who is seen – the focalised. Here, the point of view is from the outside and the narrator knows less than the character.

$$\mathbf{P \longrightarrow N < C}$$

This type of perspective is more difficult to rigorously apply than internal or zero focalisation. Being external and knowing very little about the character, the focaliser cannot know and therefore, cannot report any information about the character, especially about his past; hence, when using external focalisation, there is the need for other forms of focalisation to fill the gaps. For this reason, Genette calls for variety in a narrator's use of focalisation, what he calls *polymodality*, that is, the multiple use of focalisation. Genette defines *polymodality* as a combination of internal, external and zero focalisations. Here, there is both restriction (focalisation) and omniscience (non-focalisation) in the use of point of view. Essentially, Adichie employs polymodality in both *Half of a Yellow Sun* and

Americanah in the combination of an omniscient narrator and several shifts in points of view.

I find Genette's model appropriate for the analysis of Adichie's novels because the theory provides a taxonomic procedure in analysing narratives, just as Genette does with the analysis of Proust's narrative. Adichie artistically weaves the stories around some of her characters (who sometimes, also happen to be narrators in the narratives) who try to remove themselves as much as possible from the picture to pave way for as much information as possible, while others remain close to the picture and allow as much narration as possible. The researcher considers this framework appropriate for the analysis of Adichie's novels owing to the consideration that the framework highlights the concepts embedded in the term *mood*, as a narrative category and this also aids in providing a clearer understanding of her novels.

This is by no means suggesting that the theory supersedes earlier structuralist theories. However, it reiterates the ones advocated by such theorists like Todorov (1969), Prince (1980) and Barthes (1981), among others. In effect, the research seeks to employ Genette's category of mood to analyse Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. Besides, in the *Foreword* to the translated edition, Culler (1980) admits that:

> Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* is invaluable because it fills this need for a systematic theory of narrative. As the most thorough attempt we have to identify, name, and illustrate the basic constituents and techniques of narrative, it will prove indispensable to students of fiction, who not only will find in it terms to describe what they have perceived in novels but will also be alerted to the existence of fictional devices which they had previously failed to notice and whose implications they had never been able to consider. Every reader of Genette will find that he becomes a more acute and perceptive analyst of fiction than before. (p. 7)

Furthermore, given the focus on Proust, Culler urges that "our ordinary notions of criticism ask us to choose between two ways of viewing Genette's project: either his real goal is the development of a theory of narrative and Proust's great novel is simply being used as a source of illustrations, or else the theoretical matter is simply a methodological discussion which is justified insofar as it leads to a better understanding of *A la Recherche du temps perdu*" (Genette, 1980, p. 9). Even though Genette quite "rightly refuses to choose between these alternatives", this does not mean that his work is to be viewed as something of a compromise, neither one nor the other.

On the contrary, according to Culler, it is an extreme and unusual example of each genre. On the one hand, the fact that it uses Proust so voraciously gives it great theoretical power, for it is forced to take account of all the complexities of Proustian narrative. Not only is this a severe test of categories, which undoubtedly leads to the discovery of new distinctions, but the theory is constantly confronted with anomalies and must show how they are anomalous. On the other hand, the fact that Genette is trying to elaborate a theory of narrative while studying Proust gives him a signal advantage over other interpreters of the *Recherche.* This notwithstanding, the researcher employs his category of mood as both a methodological tool and a theory in analysing Adichie's novels; for it provides a taxonomic procedure in analysing these narratives.

Empirical Studies on the Novels

There is no gainsaying that Adichie's novels have received a lot of critical attention. Undoubtedly, Adichie is valued among the elite African writers who have

touched on issues that affect the African. This section of the Chapter reviews some of the critical attention her works have received.

Purple Hibiscus

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* has received a lot of international acclaim. Some reviewers, like the "San Antonio Express-News", have described it as

> [A] wonderful debut…Adichie skillfully blends the traditional story-as-parable approach with the more…introspective Western approach to novel writing…*Purple Hibiscus* is more than entertainment. It is political satire and a call for change for a nation smothering under a lack of free speech (as cited in *Purple Hibiscus*, 2006).

"The Washington Post Book World" also described the book as "A breathtaking debut…[Adichie] is very much the 21st Century daughter of that other great Igbo novelist, Chinua Achebe" (as cited in *Purple Hibiscus*, 2006).

Oha (2007), in "Beyond the odds of the red hibiscus: A critical reading of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*", discusses Adichie's novel and examines how she exposes the problems of politics, freedom, gender and development at the threshold of governance in Africa and identifies four paradigms which he categorises as follows:

> Politics: Greed, anarchy, violence, brutality, injustice, murder.
> Religion: Hatred, violence, culture clash, dogma imposition.
> Gender: Discrimination, hatred, cultural laws, brutality.
> Ethics: Harsh upbringing, Wife battery, conflicts, moral development. (p. 208)

He argues, "...each of the issues examined in the novel and each of the effects results in a dangerous phenomenon" (p. 209). Thus, in his findings, he states that each "odd situation or revelation results in hard traumas" (p. 209). The coups and killings are the outcomes of bad governance while attacks and killings also result

from religion and gender, with murder resulting from ethical misappropriation. According to Oha, these are all embedded with complex webs of odds and each odd unfolds with painful realism. In effect, with Adichie, the style of innocence is a new voice that captures reality completely and less distortedly. He concludes that Adichie tries in this voice of a growing and silent child technique as a proper model for a serious exposition of the traumatic experiences of Nigerian and/or African nations.

Tunca (2009) also examines how religious prejudice is encoded in the account of the novel's autodiegetic narrator, a fifteen-year-old girl whose father is a violent, extremist Igbo Catholic. Tunca argues that an analysis of some of the novel's use of speech and thought presentation may contribute to the deeper assessment of the main character's evolving ideological stance. In her discussion, she suggests that stylistically speaking, the author represents Kambili's intense devotion to her father – an admiration that leads to her unwitting "internalisation" of his moral standards – by using mechanisms of speech and thought presentation skilfully (Leech & Short, 2007, pp. 255-281).

In addition, since Kambili matures as the story develops, several scholars have described Adichie's book as a *Bildungsroman*. Some of these scholars include Bryce (2008, p. 58) and Hron, (2008, p. 30). Although not all critics have overtly categorised the narrative as such, few have denied that the heroine develops from a reclusive, compliant girl into a more self-confident young woman. For example, she primarily endures her father's physical mistreatment shrouded in silence, but later acknowledges to the extent of his mistreatment in a discussion with her cousin,

Amaka. Many of these critics have noted the changes in Kambili's attitude and these changes are indeed highly relevant to the analysis of the character's evolution, which is portrayed in the narrative.

Tunca further argues that "the manipulation of speech presentation, illustrated in garden path effects and the blending of spheres of free indirect thought and free indirect speech, blurs the boundaries between Kambili's and her father's words." Thus, assuming that the vague passages in the novel are all in free indirect speech (unquestionably the most probable interpretation), this stylistic technique makes "the narrator appear as though she has interiorised Papa Eugene's views to such an extent that they come across as being hers" (Tunca, 2009). She forgets herself and has no significant detachment vis-a-vis her father's teachings and weaves his speech into hers. In other words, she has, what Tunca describes as, "literally internalised his values and authority, for his ideas cannot be distinguished from hers on the formal level of text" (Tunca, 2009).

Tunca concludes that Kambili's initial adherence to and subsequent rejection of her father's narrow-minded religious principles are subtly encoded in her narrative account. However, despite the character's newly found ideological independence, her desire to please and be loved by Papa Eugene never completely disappears. Therefore, despite the close relationship between her intellectual development and her affection for her father, these two aspects of her personality which should be theoretically distinguished. While the novel exposes the irrationality of the narrator's love for her father, it also suggests that her emotional attachment does not prevent a restructuring of her moral convictions. It must be

noted that Tunca does present interesting and relevant arguments here; however, like most critics of Adichie's works, the focus here again, is on character and ideological development, with little attention to the narrative itself and how the story is rendered in revealing the issues of character and ideology.

Again, Akpome (2017b) explores cultural criticism and feminist literary criticism in the first three novels of Adichie's. As a feminist, Adichie represents the obstacles that postcolonial Nigerian women encounter and the role of masculinist figures in the subordination of the African woman. Situated in a narrative and social-literary framework, the study establishes that Adichie's novels offer a cultural critique and subverts the 'hegemony of masculinist perspectives on postcolonial cultural and national expression' (p. 985). According to Akpome, the parallels between Adichie's and Achebe's first novels, *Purple Hibiscus* and *Things Fall Apart* respectively, show how Adichie offers a gendered critique of Achebe's novel. The study observes that even though both authors represent authoritative and hegemonic fathers (Eugene and Okonkwo), Adichie provides a voice for the female victims in her novels, whereas Okonkwo's wives are shrouded in silence.

In "Inculturated Catholicism in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*", Chennels (2009) discusses inculturated Catholicism as broadcast in the African fiction. In demonstrating the validity of this assertion, he draws instances from Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1956) in which the protagonist desires to separate religion from socio-political machinations and intentions immediately he recognises that his missionary zeal is tinted in colonial shades. The protagonist wishes to propagate a religion which is without cultural idiosyncrasies and political

ingenuities. Eventually, he realises that spiritual transformation provides the needs of the subordinated, ostracised, oppressed and silenced by providing them with a sanctuary from the realities of human existence. Similarly, Chennels adopts illustrations from wa Thiong'o (1967), where the protagonist (in the novel) who is hanged on the tree, appears as a representative corresponding to Christ. Nonetheless, with *Purple Hibiscus*, one realises that the new religion is an essential part of her fictional corpus, with a slight endurance of her inherent culture.

Kabore's (2013) article, "The Symbolic Use of Palms, Figurines and Hibiscus in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*", also focuses on the symbolic representation of palms, figurines and hibiscus as used in *Purple Hibiscus.* The paper posits that these elements – palms, figurines and hibiscus – are used to represent some characters in the novel or, at least, are used in connection to these characters, with the literary form of pathetic fallacy. Tracing his analysis of the palm to the role it played in ancient Roman culture and Christianity, Kabore suggests that palm in *Purple Hibiscus* represents victory. As a symbol of victory, he believes it represents the victory of Jaja, Kambili and Mama Beatrice over Papa Eugene.

In the opening of the novel, the reader is exposed to palms in relation to Mama Beatrice. While Mama Beatrice "placed the fresh palm fronds", Papa Eugene is rather seen with ashes. This, Kabore believes, foreshadows the victory of Mama Beatrice (who is regularly abused by him) over Papa Eugene. Using the biblical narrative in Genesis as the foundation, Kabore believes ashes represent the death of Papa Eugene, which is orchestrated by Mama Beatrice. Again, in the eyes of

Papa Nnukwu, Kabore believes the palm represents some sort of a paradise or a place of rest for Papa Nnukwu: "since palms reach their greatest proliferation in the tropics and are widely distributed in warmer zones of the world, the palm is then a symbol of a tropical island paradise" (P. 34).

Juxtaposing the figurines with Mama Beatrice, Kabore believes the figurines personify Mama Beatrice. Her attachment to the figurines is highlighted right from the beginning of the novel. Kabore further assumes that immediately Papa Eugene breaks the figurines, Mama gets ready for revenge and later poisons her husband. Thus, according to Kabore, hibiscus in *Purple Hibiscus* stands for freedom. Citing numerous examples from the text, Kabore proves that the exposure Jaja has at Nsukka, where he is first exposed to the hibiscuses, has enormous impact on him and shapes his life, giving him the thirst for freedom, just as the hibiscuses. By copiously citing examples from the text, Kabore provides enormous resources for the reader to understand his arguments.

Unlike Kabore (2013), Diwakar's (2014) article seeks to trace the significance and symbolism of the colour purple used by Walker and Adichie in their novels, *The Colour Purple* and *Purple Hibiscus*, respectively, to represent and portray a new awakening and rebirth of their characters. The article carefully scrutinises the various themes explored in these novels, such as, gender and freedom, among others. With respect to *Purple Hibiscus*, Diwakar focuses on the multifarious components of the colour purple: red, blue and purple and how these multifarious components are used as symbolic figures in the novel. The colour red, in many cultures, is used to represent pain, anxiety, blood, death, danger, etc.

Extending these concepts of red or representations of red to *Purple Hibiscus*, Diwakar posits that red in the novel represents "pain, anger, and oppression in the Eugene family" (Diwakar, 2014).

He further gives examples such as Kambili's unforgettable memory of her mother's blood owing to miscarriage and Papa Eugene's red pyjamas to support this assertion. Indeed, these attributes are not far-fetched from what red symbolises in many cultures. Through the constant appearing of red, be it in the form of blood, flower or cloth, one is able to trace issues of tyranny and oppression in the novel. Blue, which in many cases is symbolic of the repression of nature, like the sky and sea, sparks freedom, trust and stability. Diwakar juxtaposes this colour with the colour red, using Father Amadi as focus. "Contrary to this, blue colour indicates calmness and solitude represented by Father Amadi who is like the blue wind, elusive and his car which also smelled like him... makes Kambili think of a clear Azure sky". As a result of this sense of peace and tranquillity around Father Amadi, Kambili becomes attracted to him and opens up to him.

Again, Diwakar argues that the purple hibiscus flower in Aunty Ifeoma's home represents a sort of awareness, self-consciousness and an exposure to something different in the lives of Jaja and Kambili. The purple colour represents freedom, royalty, courage and stability. By having that encounter with the purple hibiscus flower: "rare, fragrant with the undertone of freedom, a different kind of freedom...", Jaja was bound to have that courage to also experience such attributes of the colour. By highlighting the meanings of the various components of the colours purple, red and blue, the reader gets a sense of the purpose in the choice of

these colours. What this suggests is that Adichie is very conscious in using certain colours in the novel. For instance, Papa Eugene's red pyjamas is not just a mere coincidence. This also gives credit to the artistic prowess of the author. Again, Diwakar does well by exploring the symbolic nature of the colour purple, thus providing another perspective to Adichie's novels, though a lot of available literature on *Purple Hibiscus* usually focuses on themes, characterisation and setting.

Half of a Yellow Sun

In a response to Adichie's second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Achebe (2006) remarks in an interview that:

> …We do not usually associate wisdom with beginners, but here is a new writer endowed with the gift of ancient storytellers. Adichie knows what is at stake, and what to do about it. She is fearless or she would not have taken on the intimidating horror of Nigeria's civil war. Adichie came almost fully made. (Achebe, 2006)

Achebe, in effect, acknowledges Adichie's writing prowess and this leaves no doubt in the minds of critics, therefore, that her works have come under a lot of scrutiny. This acknowledgement also corroborates with what other critics have said regarding Adichie's dexterity at writing, which is akin to that of Achebe's.

Mabura (2008) traces the historiography and manifestations of Gothic features in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* and describes the former novel as "encompassing a larger palette of these Gothic stock features than is found in many preceding texts" (p. 205-206). According to Mabura, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is "a more faithful rendition of the genre" (p. 206). She further argues, "Adichie teases out the peculiarities of the 'Postcolonial Gothic' in continental

Africa as she dissects fraught African psyches and engages in Gothic-like reclamation of her Igbo heritage, including Igbo-Ukwu art, language and religion" (p. 206). What Mabura does is to flesh out this thought in detail by closely examining Gothic topography and elements in *Purple Hibiscus* and their historical roots, which she traces to Adichie's second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Mabura observes that "these two novels have been published to wide international acclaim but have so far generated hardly any significant criticism" (p. 206) and thus, sets out to show Adichie as participating in an ongoing reinvention and complication of the "African Postcolonial Gothic" topography.

Furthermore, Mabura strikes a similarity between the siblings in both novels: *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of Yellow Sun*. She argues that as "siblings united under Papa Eugene's monstrosity and excesses, Kambili and Jaja are somewhat reminiscent of Olanna and Kainene who, in turn, are united by the monstrosity of the Biafra War" (p. 19). Thus, while Jaja's incarceration is excruciating for Kambili, so is Kainene's disappearance excruciating for Olanna. While the reader perceives much of Olanna embodied in Kambili, he or she also perceives much of the boyish, androgynous Kainene embodied in Jaja.

In effect, Adichie's two narratives pay reverence to the silent children of Biafra. In addition, they replicate the "persistence of a cluster of cultural anxieties to which Gothic writing continues to respond" (Riquelme, as cited in Davison, 2003, p. 136, as cited in Mabura, 2008, p. 221). Their survival, however, goes beyond that of mere Gothic texts: they exemplify that "curious new life" which materialises "from the need to assert continuity where the lessons of conventional

history and geography would claim all continuity has been broken by the imperial trauma" (Punter and Byron, 2004, p. 57-58, as cited in Mabura, 2008, p. 221). Again, according to Mabura (2008), "one might even conclude that they are proof of Afigbo's argument that colonial rule and the Biafra War transformed Igbo society, but "did not destroy Igbo identity or cultural soul" (Afigbo, 2002, p. 283, as cited in Mabura, 2008, p. 221). This may be valid because the reader, here, departs from Adichie's gothic writing in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus* with a heightened sense of cultural identity" (p. 221).

Aboh and Uduk (2016) explore the pragmatic use of Nigerian English in Adichie's aforementioned three novels and according to them, language remains an important component of a society's cultural make-up. It reveals the identity of a group and depending on whether or not the language used is standard, it can indicate the social class of characters in a literary work. Using pragmatic context as the theoretical framework, Aboh and Uduk's study observe that the use of Nigerian English in *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* is evident of the sociocultural 'milieu' of Nigeria. Thus, Adichie uses English expressions which convey Igbo thoughts and sentiments, which demonstrates her Igbo linguistic background.

Ouma (2011), Da Silva (2012) and Norridge (2012) also examine the discourse of violence in Adichie's novel(s), with Ouma (2011) tracing the consciousness of Ugwu as he seeks to analyse the novel as a memory of war. According to Ouma, Ugwu represents African historiography and embodies the memory and the true history of Africans. Ouma also traces the transformation of

Ugwu from naivety to an intellectual, as events unfold. As one of the main characters and primary focalisers, Ugwu enables the reader to perceive the story as it unfolds through his actions and consciousness. These studies are in consonance with the present study; however, unlike the two, which focus on only *Half of a Yellow Sun*, this study is an examination of Adichie's three novels: *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. Thus, the present study covers more evaluative space and establishes a wider perspective to the appreciation of Adichie's novels than do Akpome and Ouma.

Da Silva (2012) also analysis the discourses of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun.* In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie hints about the violence in the first chapter as she uses the catchphrase "Things started to fall apart". Thus, the narrator, Kambili, foreshadows the abuse and violence in the Achike household. Papa Eugene is presented as an agent of oppression, as his strict adherence to Catholicism makes him abandon his father, Papa-Nnukwu, and his (Papa Nnukwu's) way of life. In *Half of a Yellow Sun,* Adichie also foregrounds the traumatic experience of the Biafran war and its consequences on her characters. As highlighted by Jegede (2010), the violence and abuse are manifested in the lexical choices employed by the author.

Again, Norridge (2012) argues that sex and violence are interwoven in the novel. Sexual violence is one horrible threat of conflict: an experience that females go through during war. Norridge stresses the pervasiveness of sexual violence in the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean Civil wars, as portrayed in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Forna's *The Memory of Love* respectively. Adichie highlights

instances of rape and objectification of women in the text: Eberechi is forced into sexual relations with a soldier and Ugwu engages in a gang rape of a bar girl.

Several other literary analysts have examined Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, some of which have focussed on the perspective of narration, with Akpome (2013), for example, examining the methods of focalisation and polyvocality in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. He indicates that the third person narrator presents the events of the story through multiple voices of several focalising characters. Akpome argues that of the three types of narrative techniques (first person, authorial and figural), Adichie employs figural – inner perception of characters – in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, as the story unfolds through multiple focalisers who serve as delegates of the narrator. The study identifies five focalising characters in the novel: Ugwu, Olanna, Richard (primary), Kainene and Odenigbo (secondary). The narrator presents the first three chapters through the consciousness of Ugwu, Olanna and Richard respectively. Adichie, thus, introduces each of the first three chapters of the novel with the name of the primary quasi-narrators. The difference between the primary and secondary focalisers, he further advances, is that while the former serves as quasi-narrators, the latter influences the psychology and ideology of the primary focalisers.

Akpome (2017a), in his study 'Intertextuality and influence: Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savanah* (1987) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006)', further explores Adichie's second novel as a rewriting of Achebe's novel. These two historical novels discuss the Nigerian Civil War/Biafran war and the impact of political instability on post-independent Nigeria. Even

though the two novels were written three decades apart, there are similarities in the treatment of themes such as the re-historicisation of the Biafran war. With regard to style, *Half of a Yellow Sun* shares similarity with *Anthills of the Savanah* since both employ multiple focalised characters, as the narrative voice is dispersed among multiple characters in the two literary texts. Also, Akpome contends that both authors employ two categories of focalised characters – direct and indirect focalised. The former is conceptualised as quasi-narrators whose narrated perceptions are rendered, whereas the former refers to characters who influence, psychologically and ideologically, the primary focalised.

Akpome (2017a) also contends that Adichie has been highly influenced by Achebe as Adichie's writings appear to be a rewriting of Achebe's works and that she has taken after his style of writing, a notion that Adichie partly admits in her stance as a follower of Achebe. Thus, just as Achebe's novels, particularly *Things Fall Apart*, is embellished with Igbo expressions, Adichie also blends the use of English Language with Igbo, as some of her characters occasionally switch codes between English and Igbo (Aboh & Uduk, 2016). Adichie does this to give a true representation of the setting of her novels and to inform readers about the social status of the discourse participants.

In "Biafra and the Aesthetics of Closure in the Third Generation Nigerian Novel", Krishnan (2010) examines the role of closure or the lack thereof, in four contemporary Nigerian novels: Abani's *Graceland* (2004), Iweala's *Beasts of no Nation* (2006), Habila's *Measuring Time* (2007) and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Krishnan's concentration in this paper is on the thematic issues these

four narratives deal with. Krishnan argues that the "narratives each deals with themes of trauma, identity and community affiliation in postcolonial Africa, highlighting the fractured and displaced nation-state as the site of a radical aporia between individual fulfilment and communal harmony".

Thus, while Adichie and Iweala's novels explicitly tackle the Civil War, Abani and Habila use it as a silhouette or background to their novels. According to Krishnan, these writers, in dealing with their thematic contents, all consider the daily lives of individuals in post-independence Nigeria over the broader machinations of politicians and armies. In effect, the four novels represent a turn in contemporary Nigerian fiction, as the current generation of writers and artists seek to make sense of the present tensions and ethnic strife in their country through an interrogation of the past, putting special significance on the human scale of trauma and the individually negotiated state of belonging and community engagement. These narratives enact the task of literature set by Biyi Bandele Thomas, "to kind of open those wounds [from the Civil War] and look at things, study them very carefully" (as cited in Bryce, 2008, p. 58). The novels considered in this article all contribute to this kind of critical investigation and open study of the past.

Ojinmah's (2012) article provides insight into the heinous crimes committed during the Biafran war and how the human sense of relationship, sympathy and empathy is immediately suspended in times of war. In his article, he raises certain thematic issues such as human brutality, bestiality, child soldering and betrayal of love, trust and friendship, and cites instances to weave his discussion around them. Ojinmah argues that Adichie, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*,

creates instances of gory scenes such as how Abdulmalik (a Hausa) killed his friend Mbaezi and family (Igbo's) during the war, despite their harmonious relationship, as friends and the instance of a woman caressing a calabash containing her daughter's head, among other bloody scenes.

Using these examples and many others as his foci, Ojinmah shows the ravaging influence of war on the human psyche. In the usual interactions of humans, it is unthinkable for the above examples to happen, but within the context of war, an environment is created for these to happen. Ojinmah's article provides insights by citing concrete examples from the text to paint mental pictures in the reader's mind to enhance comprehension. Again, Ojinmah discusses the author's employment of multiple voices in the narrative and stresses the different perspectives, which provide more details and insight into the narrative.

In addition, Jegede (2010) focuses on exploring how Adichie's style of writing employed in *Half of a Yellow Sun* allows for certain kinds of interpretations of the novel. Thus, Jegede seeks to show how meaning can be accessed in the narrative through the aid of collocation, good and deliberate use of nouns, sentence types, adverb and active voice. His focus in this paper is to give prominence not just to the story itself but how the story is told, by paying attention to the lexico-semantic structure of the text. He identifies lexical choices related to three dominant themes: bloodshed, horror and devastation. Considering the setting and the gloomy atmosphere of the novel, it is quite usual that the most frequent words relate to these war-related themes. The study also reveals the frequent repetition of nouns like 'Ugwu' instead of personal pronouns. This foregrounds and emphasises the

prominence of some of the primary focalisers. This circuitously helps in orchestrating the thematic issues revolving around them and helps in explicating the semantic implication of the issues addressed in the novel.

Another significant finding of Jegede's study is the grammatical feature that makes for easy understanding of the novel, as exemplified in the author's dexterous combination of types of sentences for semantic purposes. The author blends sentences; simple, compound and complex together to achieve exciting communicative purposes. "Her skill at providing information in crisp, fresh and unambiguous manner through simple, compound and complex sentences makes easy accessibility of meanings in the novel" (p. 6). He adds that "in addition to the insight that could be gained into the thematic kennel of *Half of a Yellow Sun* through its sentences, the use of active, rather than passive voice, adds vivacity, authority and freshness to the information they are meant to serve" (p. 8). Jegede, finally, concludes that it is not just the story but also its way of telling that makes good prose, not only interesting but equally memorable and enduring. Consequently, *Half of a Yellow Sun* achieves uniqueness by the style in which its story is rendered, making it the more pertinent to also devote equal attention to diegesis of narratives, which is the focus of this study.

Adichie's treatment of the Biafran war has aroused a lot of interest from critics that in "Post-traumatic Responses in the War Narratives of Hanna al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*", Atieh and Mohammad (2013) discuss wartime trauma as the response to deeply distressing or disturbing events that overwhelm an individual's ability to

cope with a situation. It also causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes the sense of self and the ability to feel the full range of emotions and experiences. The writers attempt to present the significant contributions of al-Shaykh and Adichie on the post-traumatic responses of female non-combatants in the war narratives of the aforementioned authors by comparing and contrasting victimised characters in their narratives. Atieh and Mohammad employ the interdisciplinary approach that engages cultural studies, psychoanalysis and narratology, as well as trauma theories by Van der Kolk, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub and Cathy Caruth in addressing trauma in their argument.

They look at two main content areas in their argument. First, they look at traumatic symptoms, where victimised female non-combatants in both war narratives are discussed. Here, they highlight that both narratives feature some traumatic memories that develop as intrusive recollections, haunting flashbacks, somatic sensation, among others. Both narratives also feature the development of these traumatic symptoms into a form of verbal inability of communicating trauma. Second, they also look at defining agency in both *The Story of Zahra* and *Half of a Yellow Sun.* A critical examination of this article reveals that their paper contributes to the existing knowledge on war trauma scholarship even though they seemed to have partly failed to overtly show the relationship and difference between the selected narratives on war trauma, in their argument.

In addition, Krishnan's (2011) paper focuses on a rereading of the postcolonial concept of exoticism on one of the principal characters of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Richard. Krishnan argues that although initial concepts of exoticism

seek to highlight the superior-subordinate relationship between the colonial master and the colonised, in other cases, as in the case of Richard, it becomes a recipe of confusion for the personhood, selfhood and identity of the colonial master. Krishnan's paper reveals that Richard finds a connection with the rope pots and out of this connection, breeds a similar connection with the Nigerian people. Hence, Richard's inner self wants to be identified as a Biafran. This form of identity is supposed to put Richard, a white Englishman, on the same pedestal with the natives. However, the coloniser (here, Richard), through certain ideologies, propagates a sense of superiority over the colonised.

Furthermore, Richard's journey to Nigeria is grounded on the British media's discussions and reports of Nigeria. These reports appear to glorify the superior nature of the coloniser. Krishnan bases his conclusion on the assumption that because of the above, no matter how Richard tries to assert himself as part of the natives, there will still be tendencies of this superior-subordinate relationship: "Thus, the colonizer, through the production and proliferation of stereotype, asserts his superiority to the black man who becomes the site of negation…however, it is not merely in cases of assumed difference that the stereotype circulates; equally, it becomes a mode of asserting a forced sense of sameness".

Marx (2008), on the other hand, describes *Half of a Yellow Sun* as a failed-State fiction which portrays events in a war-torn Biafra. In his article, he states how Adichie highlights the role of child soldiers and refugees in the novel. While emphasising the violence and hostilities in the failed-State of Biafra, the author also reveals that life still goes on as the narrator reveals the livelihood and survival of

characters, an indication that even in war-torn States, there is some level of normalcy. Marx further reiterates that *Half of a Yellow Sun*, as a failed-State novel, is evident in two phases: the failure of Nigeria, leading to the civil war and the collapse of the Biafran State as a result of attacks from Nigeria and its allies. Marx, again, notes the depiction of Olanna and Odenigbo's saloon as an intellectual space where characters like the poet and the professor, among others, held intellectual discussions. He also highlights how Olanna and Odenigbo continue to create an environment to facilitate scholarly political discussions even as the war intensifies. Thus, they confirm the supposition that a failed-State does not imply that political life ceases to exist.

In Hawley's (2008) analysis of the accounts of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Mbachu's *War Games* and Iweala's *Beast of No Nation* on the Biafran war and its impact on Nigerian culture, he advances that Adichie's focus is less on the politics surrounding the war, unlike her other compatriots and more on the (lack of) choices of her characters. He argues that some characters have their choices curtailed by the context in which they find themselves. Ugwu's abduction and forced enlistment into the army and the sexual abuse of Anulika by the Nigerian soldiers are some instances cited by Hawley in the novel. Unlike Mbachu and Iweala, Adichie does not dwell mainly on the war but its implications for livelihood. In this regard, Hawley notes:

> Adichie's is certainly one of the most accomplished literary works that takes the war as its setting, and fulfils Eddie Iroh's contention that only a novelist with some distance from the conflict would be able to produce "an unbiased, total assessment of the whole tragedy". Adichie's account is not the "total" reckoning that Iroh envisions, and is not completely without some positioning in the conflict's politics, but its literary finesse is extraordinary. (p. 23)

Americanah

Omotayo (2013) also argues about *Americanah*, that:

> This book is slightly of poverty climbing to richness, but majorly of a complex-traumatised-classy-privileged-middle class and of love lost and rekindled...Everything is made confused, every issue and every story...*Americanah* would have failed as just another immigrant story. But it didn't because other than telling the triteness of the over flogged immigrant theme, it prickles us with our stories and we are somewhat purged. Adichie does a rich commentary on both the Nigerian and American socio-economic problems...

In another review, Smiley (2013) blogged that from a reading of the blurb of the novel, one would be told that:

> ...*Americanah* is about a pair of star-crossed lovers from Nigeria, Ifemelu and Obinze, following their adventures as immigrants in the US and UK respectively. Technically that's in the book, but *Americanah* is really a series of vignettes in which an endless parade of minor characters talk about race, nationality, and various other issues, with Ifemelu in the background. (Obinze is here more as her love interest than a protagonist in his own right, and we only get a few chapters from his perspective.)

In "Writing, So Raw and True: Blogging in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*", Guarracino (2014) discusses the importance of the style Adichie employs in *Americanah*. She states that in *Americanah*, the issues of concern are mostly discussed through the blogging prowess of the principal character, Ifemelu. Guarracino believes this style employed by the author allows her to critically talk about a variety of issues at a time. Guarracino highlights the fact that blogging provides an "interactive landscape in which power – cultural and otherwise – is elaborated on shared platforms", which requires collective engagement to be effective. Deviating from the usual narrative structures and incorporating the idea of blogging, Guarracino stresses the point that Adichie invites a whole new variety

of people to the table of discussion, not focusing on the author but issues raised, since blogging sometimes hides the identity of the author.

Also, according to Guarracino, blogging in *Americanah* provides some sort of interface between what is fiction and reality. She relates the main character, Ifemelu's idea of starting the blogging and explains "blogging as a hybrid form that brings together storytelling, reportage and emotional value" (p. 14); hence, within the story, some sort of reality is created through blogging. Stressing Adichie's comments about the dangers of a single story, Guarracino's article suggests that Adichie incorporated blogging in *Americanah* to also express the awareness of Africans that "stories travel then, not only via the more traditional medium of novels and creative fiction, but also through a more disseminated network" (p. 7). Guarracino further highlights a plethora of thematic issues of concerns in the novel.

Pardiñas (2014), in "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*: (Re)Opening a Conversation about Race and Beauty", provides a close reading of some of the topics dealt with in Adichie's *Americanah*, such as the notions of race, beauty and the relationship that exists between the two. Her study analyses how physical features such as hair texture and skin colour are loaded with meaning owing to the racial history of the US and how the media also contribute to either the reinforcement or the demystification of these meanings. Consequently, she sets out to examine how the voice of an outsider can signal race to be a sociocultural construction in the US. She also analysed how race is still a reality that impacts notions of beauty and self-esteem and how the media also contribute to the conversation on race and beauty. Her findings reveal that *Americanah* opens a

possibility for Adichie's reader to engage in a cross-cultural conversation and to finally have that:

> …honest talk about America's racial reality. It refers to many significant events from African-American history and to the reality of black people in the US, and of black women in particular; it sheds a new light on history books and theoretical texts dealing with race. *Americanah*, thus becomes a perfect text in order to explore issues of gendered and racial identity and beauty, and how the intersection of these concepts may create issues of self-esteem among both men and women. (p. 51).

Yerima (2017) also investigates the idea of Western beauty practice by post-colonial Black women as the result of hybridity and argues that the relationship that a person will have with her own body is described in specific terms by the standards of beauty. They prescribe her mobility, spontaneity, posture, gait and the range of activities she can engage in with her body. They accurately delineate the boundaries of her physical freedom. Of course, there is a symbiotic relationship between physical liberty and psychological development, intellectual potential and creative potential. Yerima's idea of beauty presupposes the crucial role beauty plays with respect to what a woman can do and achieve. The challenge here is the ability of the African woman to choose beauty in her own terms. On this, Yerima (2017) notes that:

> This conflict, or ambiguity, is handled by the post-colonial woman in two ways. First, in oscillation as she contemplates the imperial and her own indigenous aesthetics and develops fluctuating loyalties where she is swayed toward one and, after some time, favors the other. A second option is the supremacy of one aesthetic over the other where the woman is seen to acknowledge the presence of both but, at the same time, demonstrates preference for one of these aesthetic more than the other.

The hybridized African, thus, is constantly finding new ways to express the sort of hybrids that they have become.

One of the ways, as discussed by Pucherova (2018) is the issue of Afropolitanism. Pucherova argues that Afropolitan narratives embrace the idea of mix cultures or mixed identities and that because these Afropolitan narratives are often centered on the experiences shared by Africans with deep rooted relationship with their Western background, such narratives are "remarkable for their focus on modernity, success, sophistication and worldliness – as if set out to destroy all negative images of Africa". Pucherova further argues that these narratives do not reflect or represent the true picture of Africa in its entirety. Thus, the narratives reflect the lives of the few privileged Africans who are able to travel outside of Africa to other parts of the world.

In addition, according to Abuku and Nietlong (2017), *Americanah* is a novel which represents the experiences of Africans in the diaspora and the racial tension associated with globalisation they further discuss migration and globalisation in *Americanah,* from the realist viewpoint. Their study holds that the novel is a reflection of the migratory experiences of the main character, Ifemelu. While in America, Ifemelu experiences American racial formation and inclination and then moves back to Africa as she seeks the comfort of home. Unlike other returnees, Ifemelu returns not because she is under duress but rather as a personal and conscious decision to escape the effects of racism. She alludes that: "I came from a country where race was not an issue. I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America" (p. 290). Akingbe and Adeniyi (2017) also explore identity negotiation in *Americanah*. Closely linked to racism and othering is identity formation. The study observes that the novel is characterised by racial

tendencies which result in othering and acrimony. Akingbe and Adeniyi conclude that transculturalism is hindered by the ethnocentrism and racism and it can only manifest if these inhibiting forces are collapsed.

This section has focused on the theoretical review for the study, as well as the review of related literature on Adichie's novels. The review on Adichie's works reveals quite a substantial amount of literature on the three novels selected for the study. However, like many other works of hers, the focus has been on thematic as well as character exploration of her novels, with little attention to her narrative style, especially narrative mood: distance and perspective of her narratives. To this end, there is a conceivable lacuna of a dearth of literature on Adichie's narrative style that needs to be addressed, especially against the backdrop that her works have received worldwide acclaim, which makes her comparable to such writers as Achebe, among others. Consequently, the next two chapters will discuss narrative mood, distance and perspective in the three novels selected for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

NARRATIVE DISTANCE IN ADICHIE'S NOVELS

Introduction

Distance, the first of the sub-categories of Genette's category of mood, has been the worry of theoreticians since prehistoric times, with both Plato and Aristotle being preoccupied with mimesis and diegesis. Even though Genette does not believe in mimesis, while discussing diegesis, he comes to an understanding with Plato and Aristotle, emphasising that the employment of a teller unavoidably requires the existence of distance between the reader and the narrative. The effect of the degree of distance, however, is affected by whether this teller is homodiegetic or extradiegetic, embodied or disembodied. Thus, distance has to do with how much or how little, or how directly or indirectly what is told is told. It is the distance between the narrator and the story being narrated. Distance, in its narratological sense, plays an important role in Adichie's novels.

Distance, as employed by narratologists, has implications on different facets of narrative discourse. Phelan (2005), for example, defines it as:

> …the similarities and differences between any two agents involved in narrative communication along one or more axes of measurement. The agents are author, narrator, character, and audience, including narratee, narrative audience, authorial audience (or implied reader), and actual audience. The most common axes are spatial, temporal, intellectual, emotional, physical, psychological and ethical. (p. 119)

Genette and his followers, on the other hand, are mostly concerned with the relationship between the narrator and narratee and sometimes, the implied reader and implied author even though postclassical narratologists have argued about

reintroducing the author and the reader to the discussion of distance as agents involved in narrative discourse. Genette (1980) subsequently distinguishes between mimesis (showing) and diegesis (telling) in his quest to explain distance further. According to him, narratives can furnish the reader with more or less details and in a more or less direct or indirect way, to keep greater or less distance from what it tells.

Genette, additionally, explains the duality in a narrative. He states that two things are narrated in a narrative: events and speech. Thus, there are narration of events and narration of speech. Regarding the narration of events, Genette explains it as whatever its mode, "is always narrative, that is, a transcription of the non-verbal into the verbal" (p. 165). Two elements that are involved in the narration of events are the quantity of information (mimesis) and the presence of the narrator (diegesis) and this is signified by a formula which marks the contrast between mimetic and diegetic: *information* + *informer* = C. This formula has implication, by the fact that the "quantity of information and the presence of the informer are in inverse ratio; mimesis being defined by a maximum of information and a minimum of the informer, diegesis by the opposite relationship" (p. 166). In effect, diegesis puts emphasis on narrator presence while mimesis puts emphasis on the information presented.

With narrative of speech or words, on the other hand, it is absolute mimesis or imitation of speech or words in terms of reported or indirect speech. Here, "the narrator does not narrate the hero's sentence; one can scarcely say he imitates it: he *recopies* it, and in this sense one cannot speak here of narrative" (p. 169) but purely

mimesis. Under narrative of speech or words, several possibilities of transcribing an event are accessible to the author, particularly when the event denotes a spoken exchange amongst several characters. Genette identifies three main types of indirect speech in relation to narration of speech or words and these are Narratised speech, Transposed speech and Reported speech. In narration of speech, the more indirect the speech, the less character presence and the more narrator presence, while the more direct the speech, the less narrator presence and the more character presence. This Chapter, therefore, seeks to discuss Genette's sub-category of distance in Adichie's novels: *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013). The discussion of the chapter will be twofold: it will look at narration of events and narration of speech in all three novels under study to ascertain how such an approach of analysis enables a clearer and deeper understanding of Adichie's novels.

Analyses of Texts

Purple Hibiscus

Narration of Events

In *Purple Hibiscus*, the first of Adichie's novels under study, the narrative is told by the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, who also functions as the focaliser of the narrative information. Following Genette, there can be an instance where the focaliser and narrator are one and the same, especially in a retrospective homodiegetic narration like *Purple Hibiscus*, even though they are usually different in the case of a heterodiegetic narration, as it shall be observed in *Half of a Yellow*

Sun and *Americanah*. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the novel begins in medias res and the autodiegetic narrator-focaliser, through analepsis, brings the reader up to date on narrative information.

The beginning of the narrative sets the pace for the illustration of events, as the reader meets Kambili for the first time and is presented with the situational state in the Achike household. Kambili is 15 years old, with the enormous responsibility of presenting the narrative of her family. Her position as an autodiegetic narrator, inadvertently, places some limitation on her depth of narrative information and therefore, immediately creating some anticipated distance between herself and the narrative. Consequently, what she does is to present whatever information accessible, within her purview, to the reader. In this novel, therefore, the dominant style of narration adopted by Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* is a maximum of narrator presence and a minimum of narrative information:

> 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. We had just returned from church. Mama placed the fresh palm fronds, which were wet with holy water, on the dining table and then went upstairs to change. Later, she would knot the palm fronds into sagging cross shapes and hang them on the wall beside our gold-framed family photo. They would stay there until next Ash Wednesday, when we would take the fronds to church, to have them burned for ash. 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 ashcovered thumb and slowly, meaningfully enunciated every word of "dust and unto dust you shall return." (p. 11)

The above quotation is a presentation of the situation in the Achike family, "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".

The autodiegetic narrator-focaliser, Kambili, through whose focalisation the narrative information is presented to the reader reveals this chaos to the reader and right from the onset, the reader's mind is tuned to anticipate the dominance of this narrator in presenting the narrative information, with a lot of description of scenery. It is, thus, through her purview that the reader has access to the narrative. The narrator deliberately sheds light on this chaos in the Achike household to prepare the mind of the reader for the later escalation of it (chaos). The presentation above is so fitting that it enables the reader to perceive and have a visual representation of the throwing of the missal and its missing Jaja, while breaking the figurines on the étagère. This picturesque scene also appeals to the reader's senses of hearing and touch and this scenery brings the reader closer to the narrative, to have a first-hand experience. Thus, there is, therefore, the anticipation of more revelation of information in the narrative, as the narrator is keen to describe and show more.

In the presentation of characters in the novel, the description is similarly done in detail. For example, Papa is presented in this light:

> Papa always sat in the front pew for Mass, at the end beside the middle aisle, with Mama, Jaja, and me sitting next to him. He was first to receive communion. Most people did not kneel to receive communion at the marble altar, with the blond life-size Virgin Mary mounted nearby, but Papa did. 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. Afterward, he sat back on his seat and watched the rest of the congregation troop to the altar, palms pressed together and extended, like a saucer held sideways, just as Father Benedict had taught them to do. (p. 12)

There is vivid description of Papa here, in his initial presentation and this sets the tone for an impression of him as a perfectionist. It is also clear from the presentation how Papa is revealed with every detail of his demeanour whenever he receives the communion. The narrative also includes details of what Papa does while he is sitting and watching the rest of the congregation troop to the alter. The revelation of Papa Eugene by the autodiegetic narrator is heightened in the narrative as he is presented as one who hardly speaks Igbo, and that anytime he speaks it, it is a bad sign. According to the narrator, "he hardly spoke Igbo, and although Jaja and I spoke it with Mama at home, he did not like us to speak it in public. We had to sound civilised in public…we had to speak English" (p. 21).

Papa is also revealed by the autodiegetic narrator as being a man who likes order. She makes this known in the following quote when she wonders what Papa would do for the new baby Mama Beatrice is expecting to have:

> I wondered when Papa would draw up a schedule for the baby, my new brother, if he would do it right after the baby was born or wait until he was a toddler. Papa liked order. It showed even in the schedules themselves, the way his meticulously drawn lines, in black ink, cut across each day, separating study from siesta, siesta from family time, family time from eating, eating from prayer, prayer from sleep. He revised them often. When we were in school, we had less siesta time and more study time, even on weekends. When we were on vacation, we had a little more family time, a little more time to read newspapers, play chess or monopoly, and listen to the radio. (pp. 31-32)

From the two extracts above, the reader is able to form the impression about Papa Eugene that he is a "perfectionist" and also likes "order". Consequently, he does not take it lightly with the academic performance of his children, as demonstrated in his reaction to Kambili coming second in her class' exams:

> "Why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges. Because God has given you much, he expects much from you. He expects perfection. I didn't have a father who sent me to the best schools. My father spent his time worshiping gods of wood and stone. I would be nothing today but for the priests and sisters at the mission. I was a houseboy for the parish priest for two years. Yes, a houseboy. Nobody dropped me off at school. I walked eight miles every day to Nimo until I finished elementary school. I was a gardener for the priests while I attended St. Gregory's Secondary School." (p. 55)

From the foregoing, it is evident that the information being made available to the reader is all revealed through the perspective of Papa Eugene who is given the opportunity to do self-revelation. This is as a result of the fact that the narrator, Kambili, has a restricted vision of and distant from the narrative information and therefore, can only know and reveal information that is made available to her. In this extract, there is virtually no narrator presence. It is pure scene, pure mimesis in direct quoted speech, as the narrator has handed over the narration to the character, Papa Eugene; hence, a maximum of information and an obliteration of the narrator.

Distance, as presented in the novel can be examined in a number of ways, which includes spatial, temporal, emotional and conceptual or ideological. Regarding spatial distance in the novel, Adichie employs three different settings: Enugu, Nsukka and Abba to set the scene for the analysis of character and theme. Enugu is where Kambili and her family stay and it is presented as a place of oppression because of Papa Eugene's abusive nature, as opposed to Nsukka, which is portrayed as an uncluttered and affectionate atmosphere. Kambili and Jaja's first meal at their Aunt's house in Nsukka provides an unambiguous dissimilarity to the oppressive atmosphere in Enugu because of her father's abusive nature. The

freedom and enthusiasm of Aunty Ifeoma's household, notwithstanding their financial restrictions, impresses Kambili, while lifting the restrictions on her life and revealing her to fundamentally diverse values and beliefs. Adichie foreshadows the development of Kambili's character through the colossal distinction between her own home and the Nsukka household's open and loving environment, as symbolised in the University's motto: "To restore the dignity of man". However, all of this is not made possible until Kambili goes to Nsukka, as her restrictions to narrative information also imply that she needs to be at Nsukka to enable the reader perceive how personal development is affected.

Abba, on the other hand, serves as the traditional hub of the novel, where issues relating to tradition are explored further. The employment of these places creates an initial spatial distance between Kambili and the narrative, as she is placed in a restrictive position regarding narrative information since it is virtually impossible for her to have complete knowledge of happenings in all three settings. Consequently, there is distance between the autodiegetic narrator and the narrative that is presented to the reader. She is only able to bridge this gab when she moves from one setting to the other. For example, it is when she moves from Enugu to Nsukka that she realises that there is a different kind of life other than what she has been exposed to at Enugu, by her father, Papa Eugene.

The description of Abba and Papa Nnukwu's home is also done with precision, to the extent that the reader is able to visualise it:

> Jaja swung open Papa-Nnukwu's creaking wooden gate, which was so narrow that Papa might have to enter sideways if he ever were to visit. The compound was barely a quarter of the size of our backyard in Enugu. Two goats and a few chickens sauntered around, nibbling and pecking at drying stems of grass. The house that stood in the middle of the compound was small, compact like dice, and it was hard to imagine Papa and Aunty Ifeoma growing up here. It looked just like the pictures of houses I used to draw in kindergarten: a square house with a square door at the centre and two square windows on each side. The only difference was that Papa-Nnukwu's house had a verandah, which was bounded by rusty metal bars. (p. 71)

The above quotation is a presentation of setting and the narrator consciously throws light on several features of Papa Nnukwu's compound. This vivid description is done in such detail that it affords a panoramic assessment of Papa Nnukwu's home. Here too, the focus of the focalisation begins on the creaking wooden gate and then moves to the compound, which "was barely a quarter of the size of our backyard in Enugu". The focalisation then shifts again to Papa Nnukwu's house, which "stood in the middle", small and "compact like dice". This movement of shifts in focalisation enables the reader to have a visual representation of Papa Nnukwu's compound. Again, the details portrayed in the extract also depict the deprivation in Papa Nnukwu's living condition to the extent that it has a rippling effect on the domestic animals found in the compound, as "two goats and a few chickens sauntered around, nibbling and pecking at *drying stems of grass*" (emphasis mine). In effect, Papa Nnukwu's destitute life, in the abundance of the plenty his son has, also has domino effects on the livestock in his compound.

The narration of events and the presentation of scenery are heightened in the narrative in the episodes where Papa Eugene assaults Kambili. Prior to this incident, there had been a number of assaults on the Achike family by Papa Eugene,

both psychologically and emotionally. However, the assault turns more physical when he beats his wife and children because he feels they are desecrating the Eucharist by allowing Kambili to eat ten minutes earlier in order to take Panadol for her menstrual cramps. The incident of Papa's assault is captured in the following extract:

> He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back. Sometimes I watched the Fulani nomads, white jellabas flapping against their legs in the wind, making clucking sounds as they herded their cows across the roads in Enugu with a switch, each smack of the switch swift and precise. Papa was like a Fulani nomad – although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung his belt at Mama, Jaja, and me, muttering that the devil would not win. We did not move more than two steps away from the leather belt that switched through the air. (pp. 109-110)

The above is a vivid description of one of Papa's brutalities on his own family, as presented by the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili. The information above in this narration of events is not limited to Papa's callousness but also includes details of the belt he uses to beat them, as well as details of the manner how Papa applies the belt on them.

The focalisation begins from the belt, with Kambili providing the reader with details of the belt. The focalisation then shifts from the belt to how Papa uses it on his family, as it "landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back". In effect, the extract assumes a mimetic tone, including the comparison of

Papa to a Fulani nomad – because of his use of the belt, which is akin to the Fulani's use of the switch, that it produces a synaesthesia of the senses and accordingly, the reader is able to perceive with the senses, the scene depicted in this narration of events and also appreciate the extent of how the author explores the subject of domestic violence in the novel.

Another instance of the narration of events that presents a scenic view to the reader is the episode of Papa's pouring of hot water on Kambili's feet for staying in the same room with Papa Nnukwu (her grandfather and Papa's father), who is considered a heathen by Papa Eugene. The incident is presented by the autodiegetic narrator in the following extract, as Papa Eugene orders her to step into the tub:

> I stepped into the tub and stood looking at him. It didn't seem that he was going to get a stick, and I felt fear, stinging and raw, fill my bladder and my ears. I did not know what he was going to do to me. It was easier when I saw a stick, because I could rub my palms together and tighten the muscles of my calves in preparation. He had never asked me to stand inside a tub. Then I noticed the kettle on the floor, close to Papa's feet, the green kettle Sisi used to boil hot water for tea and garri, the one that whistled when the water started to boil. Papa picked it up…His voice quavered now, like someone speaking at a funeral, choked with emotion. "You should strive for perfection. You should not see sin and walk right into it." He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face. I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. (pp. 200-201)

The careful effort of the autodiegetic narrator in detailing the scene of the event enables the narrative to assume a mimetic tone; hence presenting a maximum of information to the reader, information that is additionally, visually sensible. As the

evidence saturates the narration, the reader is taken closer to the narrative to perceive every element from his or her individual perception. Here too, the narrator presence permeates the entire extract to the point of narrator saturation – and for good reason, the autodiegesis is fully explored for narrative effect. The narrator, thus, provides the reader with adequate information that is also veritable to saturate the narrative to produce the quality of verisimilitude, as a constituent of realism. This incident also reveals more about the character of Papa Eugene as well as the theme of domestic violence, as has already been stated in the study.

The narration of events in *Purple Hibiscus* is presented with such detail that the narrative assumes a mimetic tone, with the autodiegetic narrator enabling the reader to perceive the particulars of the narrative to which the reader is predisposed in the delivery of events. Consequently, in the narrative, there is a maximum of information and a minimum of the informer in the narration. That is, there is "more detailed narrative", with minimal presence of the informer – in other words, of the narrator (Genette, 1980).

Narration of Speech

Narration of speech affords the narrator the opportunity of showing more information in the narrative. As a model of the modernist novel, which is geared towards discourse, the speeches of the characters are appreciated through both their uttered and unuttered thoughts. This technique is also the medium by which the autodiegetic narrator enables the reader to have maximum of information through the type of narrative style adopted by the author in presenting issues in the narrative. The bulk of the information revealed to the reader concerning the characters,

themes and setting, in this novel, is all presented from the focalisation of Kambili, the autodiegetic narrator.

The novel begins in media res and through introspection, the autodiegetic narrator presents to the reader how the Achike family started to "fall apart", as indicated in the extract below:

> 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. We had just returned from church...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 ashcovered thumb and slowly, meaningfully enunciated every word of "dust and unto dust you shall return." (p. 11)

Here, there is the presence of the narrator, as all information is mediated through her focalisation. Consequently, it is through her reports or recount of the narrative that the reader gets access to the narrative information.

The narrator reports the condition of the Achike home and Papa's demeanour when he helps distribute ash every year, in Indirect Speech; however, she switches to Direct Speech when she quotes the words Papa enunciates (from the Bible) while distributing the ash, "dust and unto dust you shall return" (p. 11). The reader perceives Papa, from Kambili's perspective, to be a religious person, who cherishes perfection, as it has already been mentioned in the discussion, from the very first report from her. This opening quote, therefore, prepares the minds of the reader to anticipate that the narrator, through her reports, will reveal the bulk of narrative information, with some opportunity for the characters to also reveal themselves.

The narrator also provides the reader an opportunity of first-hand information regarding the status of Papa Eugene in his church, especially from how Father Benedict presents him before the congregation. In the narrator's words:

> During his sermons, Father Benedict usually referred to the pope, Papa, and Jesus—in that order. He used Papa to illustrate the gospels. "When we let our light shine before men, we are reflecting Christ's Triumphant Entry," he said that Palm Sunday. "Look at Brother Eugene. He could have chosen to be like other Big Men in this country, he could have decided to sit at home and do nothing after the coup, to make sure the government did not threaten his businesses. But no, he used the *Standard* to speak the truth even though it meant the paper lost advertising. Brother Eugene spoke out for freedom. How many of us have stood up for the truth? How many of us have reflected the Triumphant Entry?"
>
> The congregation said "Yes" or "God bless him" or "Amen," (pp. 12-13)

The extract above begins with the narrator revealing to the reader how high Papa is held in his church, to the extent that he is placed second to the Pope, before Jesus, in that order. The narrative, here, begins in Indirect Speech (IS) and it immediately switches to Direct Speech (DS) when the direct words of Father Benedict are quoted. This seeming disappearance of the narrator, briefly, affords Father Benedict the opportunity to present Papa to the congregation himself. Hence, the character here reveals another character instead of the narrator. In this way, there is a mimesis of what is told because it becomes the voice of the character himself and the narrator's distance from the narration is thus guaranteed. The same can be said for the responses of the congregation, which are reported verbatim, to produce the effect of verisimilitude in the narration.

The novel, as has already been stated, is presented from the perspective of Kambili, a 15-year old girl at the beginning of the novel. It is a reflection of her

intelligence and sensitivity and as such, the language at the start is crammed with detailed observations. However, her presentation of the narrative information lacks some level of maturity and adequacy, as she is restricted from an omniscience knowledge of narrative information, which is characteristic of first person or "I" narrations. The frequent use of pronouns such as "I", "me", "mine" and "ours" unequivocally reinforce the influence that proceedings in the narrative have on the narrator, especially because of her limited access to anyone else's interiority, thereby ensuring greater distance created between the narrator and the narrative.

In addition, after Kevin has handed Papa-Nnukwu a slim wad of cash Papa has requested to be sent him (Papa-Nnukwu), Kambili wonders how Papa-Nnukwu will be feeling about the small amount of money given him, considering the fact that he is aware that his son, Papa Eugene, has been and is always generous with other people. However, Kambili does not and cannot know Papa-Nnukwu's reaction because she has a restricted view of the narrative information available to her. She, therefore, tells the reader "If Papa-Nnukwu minded that his son sent him impersonal, paltry amounts of money through a driver, *he didn't show it. He hadn't shown it last Christmas, or the Christmas before. He had never shown*" (p. 75). Here, Kambili's presentation is in Indirect Speech and she acknowledges the fact that she does not know about Papa-Nnukwu's reactions about this because he had not shown it.

Thus, according to Genette, this type of internal focalisation has a restricted view of narrative information because the narrator can only know as much as can be made known or available to her. Kambili, therefore, does not know because

Papa-Nnukwu does not reveal that information to her; hence, creating some narratological distance between her and the narrative. This lapse in her knowledge of narrative information is manifest in the highlighted part of the extract. The extract is also a reflection of the mental state of the narrator, as she is in retrospection of Papa Nnukwu's reaction to his being given an "impersonal paltry amounts of money". The reader is, therefore, taken into the consciousness of the narrator, who also doubles as a character in the novel, to also wonder the effect this is having on her.

The narratological distance created between Kambili and the narrative is also apparent in the absence of direct insight into the mental processes of other characters. This includes assertions about the unspoken thoughts, feelings or intentions of the characters other than Kambili herself, which are rendered only in her subjective interpretations of them, a situation which also indicates the limitations of Genette's theory, for which Cohn's *Transparent Minds* (1978), provides adequate alternative for the thought processes of the characters. For illustration, when Kambili comes second in her class and Papa takes her to school instead of Kevin, as Kevin always does, she wonders why papa has gone to her school. In her words, she states that:

> Papa came out of the car with me and *I wondered what he was doing, why he was here, why he had driven me to school and asked Kevin to take Jaja…* I looked around, feeling a weight around my temples. What would Papa do? (pp. 53-54)

The whole extract above is an example of Free Indirect Speech (FID) through the series of rhetorical questions asked, as they reflect the stream of consciousness of the focaliser-narrator, Kambili, as she wonders why Papa has gone

to her school. The distance created in the narrative between the narrator and the information available to her, by this technique, enables the reader to get into the thought processes of the narrator to experience what she is going through, as her father goes to her school. The use of the cognitive verb, "wondered", which introduces the highlighted part of the sentence (a feature of Indirect Thought, IT) immediately creates some distance between the narrator and the narrative and subsequently the reader too, as the reader becomes conscious of the ignorance of the narrator and therefore, his or her own ignorance as well.

When they finally get to her class and she realises why Papa has gone there, she is also further kept in the dark as to what he will do to Chinwe Jideze, the girl who has come first. She wonders again, what Papa is going to do to her (Chinwe): "Was Papa going to talk to her? Yank at her ears for coming first? I wanted the ground to open up and swallow the whole compound" (p. 54). The narrator's fears, which are presented in FID, in the series of questions, enable the reader to get into her thoughts to experience her anxiety regarding what Papa Eugene can do to Chinwe. Her lack of knowledge regarding Papa's possible actions places some distance in the narrative and this technique creates suspense as the reader also wonders and anticipates what can happen.

From these two extracts, the reader is able to form some impressions about the narrator's limited access to narrative information regarding what Papa is going to do at her school. In the first extract, the use of the word "wondered", places a restriction on what Kambili knows. Here, she does not have full control of the narrative information and so can only speculate as to what Papa will do. The reader,

just as the narrator, Kambili, only gets a full grasp of what Papa does when his actions are revealed in the narrative. Thus, she only gets to know as and when the characters reveal narrative information to her.

In addition, owing to the perceived restrictions in the narrator's distance to narrative information, there is the predominant employment of dialogue, which allows the characters to do self-presentation and also reveal a lot of the narrative information themselves to the reader. For example, the presence of Aunty Ifeoma in her brother, Papa Eugene's home enables the reader to comprehend the character traits of both Mama Beatrice and Aunty Ifeoma herself, as they both act as foils to each other. In one of the ensuing interactions between these two characters in the novel, the reader is given first-hand information regarding how this is played out, when Aunty Ifeoma explains to Mama the need to be an independent woman:

> "*Umunna* will always say hurtful things," Mama said. "Did our own *umunna* not tell Eugene to take another wife because a man of his stature cannot have just two children? If people like you had not been on my side then…"
> "Stop it, stop being grateful. If Eugene had done that, he would have been the loser, not you."
> "So you say. A woman with children and no husband, what is that?"
> "Me."
> Mama shook her head. "You have come again, Ifeoma. You know what I mean. How can a woman live like that?" Mama's eyes had grown round, taking up more space on her face.
> "*Nwunye m*, sometimes life begins when marriage ends."
> "You and your university talk. Is this what you tell your students?" Mama was smiling.
> "Seriously, yes. But they marry earlier and earlier these days. What is the use of a degree, they ask me, when we cannot find a job after graduation?" (p. 83)

> "At least somebody will take care of them when they marry."
> "I don't know who will take care of whom. Six girls in my first-year seminar class are married, their husbands visit in Mercedes and Lexus cars every weekend, their husbands buy them stereos and textbooks and refrigerators, and when they graduate, the husbands own them and their degrees. Don't you see?"
> Mama shook her head. "University talk again. A husband crowns a woman's life, Ifeoma. It is what they want."
> "It is what they think they want. (p. 83)

The extract above is presented in such a manner that the characters involved in the interaction are given the floor to present how significant the issue of marriage is to their community, especially the fact that the woman is made to believe that "A husband crowns a woman's life". The bulk of the extract is presented in Direct Speech (DS), with the words of the characters themselves narrated, making the whole narrative mimetic in nature. Hence, in this quotation, the narrator is virtually relegated to the background and distanced from the narrative, with her minimal interference when she provides some interlocutory comments on their speeches.

Furthermore, Kambili's distance from the narrative information, even though she functions as the focaliser-narrator, is so significant that her ignorance is in consonance with the reader's. From the narrative, when Aunty Ifeoma commends Papa-Nnukwu for being able to sit for so long to enable Amaka to paint a portrait of him, she attributes it to the faithfulness of "Our Lady". This attribution gets Kambili confused and she wonders and asks her Aunty, "How can Our Lady intercede on behalf of a heathen, Aunty?" In response to this, Aunty Ifeoma takes time to educate both Kambili and the reader:

> Aunty Ifeoma was silent as she ladled the thick cocoyam paste into the soup pot; then she looked up and said Papa-Nnukwu was not a heathen but a traditionalist, that sometimes what was different was just as good as what was familiar, that when Papa-Nnukwu did his itu-nzu, his declaration of innocence, in the morning, it was the same as our saying the rosary. She said a few other things, but I was not really listening, because I heard Amaka laughing in the living room with Papa-Nnukwu, and I *wondered* what they were laughing about, and whether they would stop laughing if I went in there. (p. 173)

The extract above is also reported in IS and then shifts into FID: it begins in IS, with the narrator presenting Aunty Ifeoma's explanation, then it switches to FID, where the narrator presents her own consciousness of the situation. Here, too, the use of FID enables the reader to get into the mind of Kambili to understand the impact that the narrative information has on her, as she is distanced from it. Consequently, the reader can also only "wonder" (as Kambili does) "what they were laughing about, and whether they would stop laughing if I went in there". In effect, even though there is narrator presence in the extract above, she is still distanced from the narrative information, as illustrated in the use of FID, which enables the reader to have access to the cognitive processes of the narrator and her defeciencies at presententing the narrative information.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, therefore, there is more narrator presence and as a result, the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, reveals virtually all the information in the narrative, with the characters having little opportunity for self-revelation. The narrative is predominantly presented by the employment of the first person narrative perspective, with some instances of dialogues when the characters reveal themselves and other issues in the narrative. There are also some instances of the use of Free Indirect Discourse (FID) in the narration of the thought processes or

cognitive processes of the autodiegetic narrator, especially in exhibiting her level of ignorance of or restriction to narrative information, thereby exposing the narratological distance created between herself and the narrative and by extension, the reader, as well.

The next section discusses Narration of Events in the second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Half of a Yellow Sun

Narration of Events

Unlike in *Purple Hibiscus* where the narrative is presented from the focalisation of the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is narrated from a heterodiegetic narrator. The author employs the technique of presenting the narrative from the perspectives of three different characters who share the narrative space, alternatively: from Ugwu, Olanna and Richard. The narrative is presented by a narrator who is outside the narrative but takes on the point of view of any one of these focalised characters alternatively. The narrative begins with the point of view of Ugwu (thirteen years old) who is being brought from the village to the city, Nsukka, by his aunt, to live with Odenigbo. When Ugwu arrives in the city, he is awed by the city's spectacle and his perception about life therein set the tone for the presentation of narration of events in the narrative:

> He had never seen anything like the streets that appeared after they went past the university gates, streets so smooth and tarred that he itched to lay his cheek down on them. He would never be able to describe to his sister Anulika how the bungalows here were painted the colour of the sky and sat side by side like polite well-dressed men, how the hedges separating them were trimmed so flat on top that they looked like tables wrapped with leaves… (p. 1)

> He smelled something sweet, heady, as they walked into a compound, and was sure it came from the white flowers clustered on the bushes at the entrance. The bushes were shaped like slender hills. The lawn glistened. Butterflies hovered above. (p. 2)

The quotation above is a presentation by the narrator but perceived through the focalised character, Ugwu, as has already been stated, and it is a description of the setting at Nsukka, when Ugwu arrives at the university compound, with his aunt. Here, the narrator consciously sheds light on the various facets of the environment: from the smoothness of the tarred streets, the colour and arrangement of the bungalows, the trimming of the hedges, the lawns, to the smell of the flowers. The lucid description of the compound provides a picturesque view of the components therein presented.

When Ugwu finally gets to Odenigbo's house, the description given by the narrator is equally done with precision, as the reader is able to perceive and share in Ugwu's experience of the effect the setting has on him:

> They took off their slippers before walking in. Ugwu had never seen a room so wide. Despite the brown sofas arranged in a semicircle, the side tables between them, the shelves crammed with books, and the center table with a vase of red and white plastic flowers, the room still seemed to have too much space... He looked up at the ceiling, so high up, so piercingly white. He closed his eyes and tried to reimagine this spacious room with the alien furniture, but he couldn't…Ugwu entered the kitchen cautiously, placing one foot slowly after the other. When he saw the white thing, almost as tall as he was, he knew it was the fridge. His aunty had told him about it. A cold barn, she had said, that kept food from going bad. He opened it and gasped as the cool air rushed into his face. Oranges, bread, beer, soft drinks: many things in packets and cans were arranged on different levels and, and on the topmost, a roasted shimmering chicken, whole but for a leg. Ugwu reached out and touched the chicken. The fridge breathed heavily in his ears. He touched the chicken again and licked his finger before he yanked the other leg off, eating it until he had only the cracked, sucked pieces of bones left in his hand. (pp. 4-6)

The information above, on Ugwu's experience in Odenigbo's house is not restricted to the physical description of the environment but embraces how it reveals the character of Ugwu as well. These two extracts, coming at the very beginning of the narrative, enable the narrator to set the tone for the presentation of pictures. The choice of words here, especially the use of descriptive words like adjectives, nouns, adverbs, etc. produce a synaesthetic effect on the reader, who at this point, can experience, with the senses, the concrete elements portrayed in the narration.

The employment of colours like "brown, red, white" and such descriptions like, "wide, semicircle, crammed, plastic flowers, too much space, so high up, so piercingly white, spacious room, alien furniture, cautiously, slowly, white thing, cold barn, bad, cool air, soft drinks, roasted shimmering chicken, heavily cracked, sucked and pieces", among others like a simile, such as "as tall as" and personification, such as "the fridge breathed heavily in his ears", to describe Ugwu's new environment, give the impression of a portrait with outstanding features. These, inevitably, all add up to the outstanding descriptive powers of the narrator. Even though it is only the setting in Odenigbo's home that is shown in this narration of events, the specifics presented here are one of panorama, appealing to the sense of sight. This effect does not appear surprising since it is the narrator's intention to show more of the scenes. Consequently, in this narration of events, the narration is mimetic due to the picturesque presentation of the scenes and the considerable amount of information presented in the narrative.

The descriptions about Olanna, for the first time, are equally done in great details, as the reader is able to visualise her beauty through Ugwu's eyes. Master's

(Odenigbo) initial introduction of Olanna to Ugwu is that "a special woman is coming for the weekend. Very special" and as a result, he wants the house to be clean. This information revealed about Olanna makes the reader anticipate further details to establish how "special" the woman coming is. Ugwu's initial reaction to the reception of Olanna creates a lot of suspense in the narrative, as the reader wonders if Olanna will satisfy the hype that Odenigbo has given her. The narrator captures Ugwu's uttered emotions in the following extract: "When the doorbell rang, he muttered a curse under his breath about her stomach swelling from eating faeces" (p. 22). However, when Ugwu hears Master's "raised voice, excited and childlike, followed by a long silence", he begins to imagine them sharing some intimacy: even this imagination is tainted with disgust, as he imagines "her ugly body pressed to Master's" (p. 22).

There is an anti-climax of Ugwu's emotions and expectations when he finally hears her voice:

> Then he heard her voice. He stood still. He had always thought that Master's English could not be compared to anybody's, not Professor Ezeka, whose English one could hardly hear, or Okeoma, who spoke English as if he were speaking Igbo, with the same cadences and pauses, or Patel, whose English was a faded lilt. Not even the white man Professor Lehman, with his words forced out through his nose, sounded as dignified as Master. Master's English was music, but what Ugwu was hearing now, from this woman, was magic. Here was a superior tongue, a luminous language, the kind of English he heard on Master's radio, rolling out with clipped precision. It reminded him of slicing a yam with a newly sharpened knife, the easy perfection in every slice. (p. 22)

This picturesque description suppresses any doubt in Ugwu's and the reader's mind about the quality of this "special woman". The presentation of Olanna's voice alone is done with such detail that Ugwu is instantly drawn to her, which is in

contradiction to his initial repulsion at her coming to spend the weekend. His anxiety is assuaged when he finally looks at her, to confirm if the looks are as appealing as her voice sounds:

> He finally looked at her as she and Master sat down at the table. Her oval face was smooth like an egg, the lush colour of rain-drenched earth, and her eyes were large and slanted and she looked like she was not supposed to be walking and talking like everyone else; she should be in a glass case like the one in Master's study, where people could admire her curvy, fleshy body, where she would be preserved untainted. Her hair was long; each of the braids that hung down to her neck ended in a soft fuzz. She smiled easily; her teeth were the same bright white of her eyes. He did not know how long he stood staring at her until Master said, "Ugwu usually does a lot better than this. He makes a fantastic stew." (p. 23)

The details in the description of Olanna are done with great precision that Ugwu is mesmerised by her beauty. In these extracts about Olanna, the narrator is much more interested in showing more about the beauty of Olanna than in telling about events in the narrative; hence, there is a maximum of information, with the narrator completely forgotten and therefore, the narration becomes mimetic since the reader's attention is focused on the information being revealed to him or her.

It must be noted that Ugwu's negative reaction to the idea of another person coming to share in the space occupied by himself and Master is premised on some of the questionable types of different relationships in Adichie's novels. For example, Ugwu feels insecure about the intimacy between Miss Adebayo (one of Odenigbo's friends) and Odenigbo and demonstrates his dislike for her, when she places her finger on Odenigbo's mouth:

> …she did what startled Ugwu: she got up laughing and went over to Master and pressed his lips close together. She stood there for what seemed a long time, her hand to his mouth. Ugwu imagined Master's brandy-diluted saliva touching her fingers. He stiffened as he picked up the shattered glass. He wished that Master would not sit there shaking his head as if the whole thing were very funny. (p. 21)

This show of affection by her for Odenigbo makes Ugwu begin to dislike her, as she "became a threat after that". The narrator presents Ugwu's perception of her after that incident:

> She began to look more and more like a fruit bat, with her pinched face and cloudy complexion and print dresses that billowed around her body like wings. Ugwu served her drink last and wasted long minutes drying his hands on a dishcloth before he opened the door to let her in. He worried that she would marry Master and bring her Yoruba-speaking housegirl into the house and destroy his herb garden and tell him what he could and could not cook. (p. 21)

He is, however, relieved when he hears Okeoma's comments regarding the fact that he (Odenigbo) was not interested in her.

It is apparent that Ugwu is jealous and over-protective of Odenigbo's affection and attention and does not want to share that space with anyone: "He did not want Miss Adebayo - or any woman - coming in to intrude and disrupt their lives" (p. 21). "He did not want to share the job of caring for Master with anyone, did not want to disrupt the balance of his life with Master…" (p. 25). This is because Ugwu, perhaps, harbours some affection for Odenigbo, right from their initial meeting, when he describes Odenigbo as "His complexion was very dark, like old bark, and the hair that covered his chest and legs was a lustrous, darker shade" (p. 4):

> Some evenings, when the visitors left early, he would sit on the floor of the living room and listen to Master talk. Master mostly talked about things Ugwu did not understand, as if the brandy made him forget that Ugwu was not one of his visitors. But it didn't matter. All Ugwu needed was the deep voice, the melody of the English-inflected Igbo, the glint of the thick eyeglasses. (p. 21)

The narrator, here, presents Ugwu's impressions of Odenigbo, from their first meeting and the dexterity in the detailed description presents Odenigbo as an appealing character. It is, therefore, not surprising that he feels threatened by the presence of Miss Adebayo and Olanna.

Consequently, this affection of a forbidden intimacy between Ugwu and Odenigbo dies prematurely due to a number of reasons, notably among them is the fact that Ugwu realises that it will be an abomination to pursue this homosexual intimacy with his master, Odenigbo; hence, he becomes castrated from this feeling and channels his attention to Olanna, with whom he identifies a newfound affection, which may be acceptable but also constrained because she is his Master's woman. Secondly, the desire subsides also because Odenigbo is oblivious of Ugwu's special attention and interest in him; making the affection one-sided. Subsequently, even though Ugwu does not want to share him with anyone else, not even with Olanna, as it was:

> …suddenly unbearable to think of not seeing her again. Later, after dinner, he tiptoed to Master's bedroom and rested his ear on the door. She was moaning loudly, sounds that seemed so unlike her, so uncontrolled and stirring and throaty. He stood there for a long time, until the moans stopped, and then he went back to his room. (p. 25)

The imagery: visual and auditory displayed in the extract above presents the extent to which Ugwu is willing to go in order to compensate for his inability to have either Odenigbo or Olanna to himself.

In addition, there is also a lot of sexual imagery in the novel which are shrouded in food and this also marks a significant development in Adichie's treatment of theme; thus, the eating of food is synonymous with the act of consummation, of having sex or having sexual connotations, as demonstrated in the following extracts:

> *She smelt of coconut*…That evening, he was washing Master's linen in the backyard, near the lemon tree, when he looked up from the basin of soapy water and saw her standing by the back door, watching him. At first, he was sure it was his imagination, because the people he thought the most about often appeared to him in visions…Olanna was really at the door. She was walking across the yard toward him. She had only a wrapper tied around her chest, and as she walked, *he imagined that she was a yellow cashew, shapely and ripe*… He knew that if he reached out and touched her face, *it would feel like butter, the kind Master unwrapped from a paper packet and spread on his bread.* (pp. 22-24)

Also,

> In the kitchen, Ugwu kept Olanna's plate aside on the Formica counter and emptied the rest, watching rice, stew, greens, and bones slide into the dustbin. Some of the bones were so well cracked they looked like wood shavings. Olanna's did not, though, because she had only lightly chewed the ends and all three still had their shape. Ugwu sat down and selected one *and closed his eyes as he sucked it, imagining Olanna's mouth enclosing the same bone.* (p. 83)

The highlighted parts of the extracts, which present the imagery of food and its eating, succinctly connote sexual desires to consume, as if one was consuming food and these are presented in much detail that there is the quantity of information, as they are mimetic in nature. Here, the narrator's quest is to show more of the information and this aids the reader in comprehending the text by forming mental pictures in his or her mind.

From the foregoing discussion, therefore, the author does not shy away from tackling the issue of sex and sexuality boldly. Unlike in *Purple Hibiscus* where such issues relating to sex are shrouded in secrecy and silence, this novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, explores them to an appreciable length in a more picturesque manner. For example, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Ugwu is infatuated with Olanna, as has already been discussed above, to the point that he goes to the extent of eavesdropping on her lovemaking with Odenigbo. This theme of sex and sexual affairs is further developed when Olanna has an affair with Richard, Kainene's (her twin sister's) boyfriend, in order to appease herself for Odenigbo's infidelity with Amala (the girl his mother brings to have a baby with - baby).

The boldness with which the author addresses the issues relating to sex in this novel, to the degree of twins sharing a man, for various reasons, and with some justifiable cause, coupled with Ugwu's fantasies about Nnesinachi and her breasts, as well as her treatment of Ugwu's escapades with Chinyere, show her maturity and development or growth as an astute writer. The extract below presents an event of the lovemaking between Olanna and Odenigbo, as focalised through Olanna. The description is vivid enough to warrant a scenic view in the minds of the reader, of two lovers sharing some intimacy:

> She closed her eyes because he was straddling her now and as he moved, languorously at first and then forcefully, he whispered, "We will have a brilliant child, *nkem*, a brilliant child," and she said, Yes, yes. Afterward, she felt happy knowing that some of the sweat on her body was his and some of the sweat on his body was hers. Each time, after he slipped out of her, she pressed her legs together, crossed them at her ankles, and took deep breaths, as if the movement of her lungs would urge conception on. (p. 107)

In addition, the narrator presents the sexual encounter between Olanna and Richard in equally bold and graphic manner to enable the reader have a visual effect of the event, as there is the quantity of information, rendering the extract mimetic in nature:

> They sat side by side, their backs resting on the sofa seat. Richard said, in a mumble, "I should leave," or something that sounded like it. But she knew he would not leave and that when she stretched out on the bristly carpet he would lie next to her. She kissed his lips. He pulled her forcefully close, and then, just as quickly, he let go and moved his face away. She could hear his rapid breathing. She unbuckled his trousers and moved back to pull them down and laughed because they got stuck at his shoes. She took her dress off. He was on top of her and the carpet pricked her naked back and she felt his mouth limply enclose her nipple. It was nothing like Odenigbo's bites and sucks, nothing like those shocks of pleasure. Richard did not run his tongue over her in that flicking way that made her forget everything; rather, when he kissed her belly, she was aware that he was kissing her belly. Everything changed when he was inside her. She raised her hips, moving with him, matching his thrusts, and it was as if she was throwing shackles off her wrists, extracting pins from her skin, freeing herself with the loud, loud cries that burst out of her mouth. Afterward, she felt filled with a sense of well-being, with something close to grace. (p. 234)

Another example of the scenic depiction of the author's bold treatment of sex and lovemaking is one of Ugwu's sexual encounters with Chinyere, which was never planned: "she just appeared on some days and didn't on others". The narrator, here, presents Ugwu's focalisation of one of his escapades with her:

> She smelt of stale onions. The light was off, and in the thin stream that came from the security bulb outside he saw the cone-shaped rise of her breasts as she pulled her blouse off, untied the wrapper around her waist, and lay on her back. There was something moist about the darkness, about their bodies close together, and he imagined that she was Nnesinachi and that the taut legs encircling him were Nnesinachi's. (p 127)

> She was silent at first and then, hips thrashing, her hands tight around his back, she called out the same thing she said every time. It sounded like a name - Abonyi, Abonyi - but he wasn't sure. Perhaps she imagined that he was someone else too, someone back in her village. (p 127)

These episodes above are revealing enough to present to the reader a cinematographic representation of the lovemaking of these characters to produce the effect of plausibility. In all of these, the interest of the narrator is in showing as much information to the reader as possible, in a series of narration of events, making the whole narration mimetic.

Furthermore, there are other instances in the narrative where the narrator shows his or her prowess at revealing more information to the reader. The episode recounting Olanna's witnessing of the gruelling killings of her uncle, Mbaezi and his family at Sabon Gari is lucid enough to present a panoramic view of the effects of the massacres that occurred during the Biafran war:

> In Sabon Gari, the first street was empty. Olanna saw the smoke rising like tall grey shadows before she smelled the scent of burning. "Stay here," Mohammed said, as he stopped the car outside Uncle Mbaezi's compound. She watched him run out. The street looked strange, unfamiliar; the compound gate was broken, the metal flattened on the ground. Then she noticed Aunty Ifeka's kiosk, or what remained of it: splinters of wood, packets of groundnuts lying in the dust. She opened the car door and climbed out. She paused for a moment because of how glaringly bright and hot it was, with flames billowing from the roof, with grit and ash floating in the air, before she began to run toward the house. She stopped when she saw the bodies. Uncle Mbaezi lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips. Olanna felt a watery queasiness in her bowels before the numbness spread over her and stopped at her feet. Mohammed was dragging her, pulling her, his grasp hurting her arm. But she could not leave without Arize. Arize was due at anytime. Arize needed to be close to a doctor. (p. 147)

In the narrator's conscious choice of detailing the gruelling scene of the events surrounding the killings of Uncle Mbaezi and his family, the narrative assumes a mimetic tone, presenting maximum information, information that is more visually perceptible to the reader. Consequently, as the information condenses the narrative, the reader is drawn closer to the narrative to experience every aspect of the killing from his or her own perspective, while the narrator is consigned to the background. This distance created enables the events to reveal themselves and also enhance the technique employed by the author to enrich the narrative with information that is authentic. The significance of this narratological style of rendering the narrative mimetic is that it produces the effect of authenticity in the narrative. It is, therefore, the purpose of Adichie, in this novel, to employ this flair of narration of events to generate narrative distance as a means of providing more information to the reader.

Narration of Speech

Half of a Yellow Sun is a novel presented by an anonymous heterodiegetic narrator, what Genette refers to as the external focaliser, whose detachment from the narrative reveals glaring restrictions in the amount of narrative information available to him, hence creating some distance between himself and the narrative. Narration of speech, as employed in this text, therefore, enables the narrator to show more information to the reader. The narrator, here, employs varied narrations to present both the focalised's (Ugwu, Olanna and Richard) uttered and unuttered or inner speeches. The beginning of the narrative paves the way for the anticipation of the presentation of dialogue in the narrative. The novel begins with the narrator presenting Ugwu's aunty's impressions about Master (Odenigbo):

> Master was a little crazy; he had spent too many years reading books overseas, talked to himself in his office, did not always return greetings, and had too much hair. Ugwu's aunty said this in a low voice as they walked on the path. "But he is a good man," she added. "And as long as you work well, you will eat well. You will even eat meat every day." She stopped to spit; the saliva left her mouth with a sucking sound and landed on the grass. (p. 3)

The extract above is a mixture of Direct Speech (DS), which captures the uttered speech of Ugwu's aunty and the narrator's commentary on the direct words of his aunty.

Here, even though there is clear involvement of the narrator, hence the evidence of diegesis in the narrative, the revelation of Odenigbo is, however, done by Ugwu's aunty, when she is allowed to take centre stage of the presentation of narrative information. It is through her direct words that the reader forms his or her first impressions about Odenigbo; that "he is a good man" and has also read books overseas and "talked to himself", descriptions which are later corroborated from information revealed in the narrative. There is a swift and smooth blend of these two acts, DS and the narrator's presence in the extract and this makes for a good reading, while also providing an understanding of the adroitness of Adichie's style of writing. This swift change from DS to narration, which Leech and Short (2007) refer to as "slipping", is symbolic of the fluidity in the narrative and also of the fact that the characters will have the opportunity to reveal themselves, as the narrative is mimetic in nature. Leech and Short (2007) define "slipping" as a technique which

> … allows an author to slip from narrative statement to interior portrayal without the reader noticing what has occurred, and as the reader has little choice but to take on trust the views of the narrator, when character and narrator are merged in this way he tends to take over the view of the character too. *The unobtrusive change from one mode to another*, sometimes called 'slipping', can occur more than once inside one sentence. (Leech & Short: p. 272) {emphasis mine}

When Ugwu and his aunty finally get to Nsukka, he is awed by the spectacle of the city, to the extent that he does not even mind "the afternoon sun" that "burned the back of his neck". He is excited and "choked with expectation, too busy imagining his new life away from the village" (p. 3) that "he was prepared to walk hours more in even hotter sun". In the ensuing extract, the narrator captures Ugwu's unuttered or inner speech and reveals to the reader the effect the city has on him:

> They had been walking for a while now, since they got off the lorry at the motor park, and the afternoon sun burned the back of his neck. But he did not mind. He was prepared to walk hours more in even hotter sun. He had never seen anything like the streets that appeared after they went past the university gates, streets so smooth and tarred that he itched to lay his cheek down on them. He would never be able to describe to his sister Anulika how the bungalows here were painted the colour of the sky and sat side by side like polite well-dressed men, how the hedges separating them were trimmed so flat on top that they looked like tables wrapped with leaves. (p. 3)

The extract above is in Free Indirect Discourse (FID) and it forms the foundation of the predominant consciousness of the primary focalised characters throughout the narrative. As a result, the FID is employed more than the Indirect Transposed Discoure in revealing the character's consciousness.

The speech above is a reflection of Ugwu's consciousness regarding the effect the city has on him. The employment of verbs and expressions of cognition such as "he did not mind, was prepared, never seen, he itched" and the use of tense; that is the future-in-past, "*would never be able to describe to* his sister…" all show

the consciousness of Ugwu and his expectations for coming to the city, which are all unuttered yet made available to the reader. The narrator also employs these expressions of mental attribution to reflect the power of descriptiveness in the novel, to enable the reader to share in Ugwu's personal experience, especially of his ignorance and sensibilities.

Unlike in *Purple Hibiscus* where there is minimal employment of FID because of the narrative technique adopted (the I-narrator), in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, there is a maximum use of FID to enable the reader to get direct access to the thought processes of the characters, thereby creating distance between the narrator and the narrative information. The employment of this technique in this novel also marks a development in Adichie's style of writing. For example, when there is shortage of food supply during the war, Ugwu presents to the reader the living condition they have been reduced to, being forced to eat powdered milk and dried egg yolk, among others, as illustrated in the following quotation:

> Ugwu hated the relief food. The rice was puffy, nothing like the slender grains in Nsukka, and the cornmeal never emerged smooth after being stirred in hot water, and the powdered milk ended up as stubborn clumps at the bottom of teacups. He squirmed now as he scooped up some egg yolk. It was difficult to think of the flat powder coming from the egg of a real chicken. He poured it into the dough mix and stirred. Outside, a pot half filled with white sand sat on the fire; he would give it a little more time to heat up before he placed the dough inside. He had been sceptical when Mrs Muokelu first taught Olanna this baking method; he knew enough about Mrs Muokelu's ideas – Olanna's homemade soap, that blackish-brown mash that reminded him of a child's diarrhoea, had come from her, after all. But the first pastry Olanna baked had turned out well; she laughed and said it was ambitious to call it a cake, this mix of flour and palm oil and dried egg yolk, but at least they had put their flour to good use. (p. 283)

The quotation above is in FID mainly by virtue of the omission of the subordinating conjunction, "that". The quote also reflects the difficulty Ugwu's new family is going through because of the raging war. The information provided here also reveals a lot about Ugwu as a character, especially regarding his perception about other characters. He appears to be suspicious about other characters like Odenigbo's mother, Miss Adebayo and here, Mrs Muokelu. The employment of the FID, here, enables the reader to get into his thought processes to access his perception about Mrs Muokelu.

Another significant effect of the employment of the external type of focalisation in the narrative is the author's attempt at giving authenticity to the narrative information. The author employs a detached zero focaliser, the anonymous third person narrator, whose detachement creates limitations and restrictions and therefore, allows for several shifts in perspectives, as demonstrated in the different focalised characters through whom different portions of the narrative are presented. Here, the narrator is limited because he does not have absolute knowledge of the information available to these focalised characters, thereby creating distance, and can only present what is revealed to him. It is because of this limitation or restriction in the narrative that the author employs the use of these different focalised characters to bridge the gap in narrative information since in reality, no one person experiences an event: and the Biafran war, for that matter, was not experienced by one person. This technique, therefore, affords the narrative some degree of credibility.

The limitation and its subsequent distances created between the narrator and the narrative are manifest in the instances when the focalised characters themselves have limited or no knowledge about the narrative information, which also culminates in the narrator's deficiency. For example, when Olanna and Odenigbo reconcile after she gets angry over Odenigbo's infidelity with Amala, Ugwu is restricted to some of the narrative information relating to their reconciliation, as illustrated in the following extract:

> He followed. In the kitchen, he heard her voice from the study, shouting a long string of words that he could not make out and did not want to. Then silence. Then the opening and closing of the bedroom door. He waited for a while before he tiptoed across the corridor and pressed his ear against the wood. She sounded different. He was used to her throaty moans but what he heard now was an outward, gasping *ah-ah-ah*, as if she was gearing up to erupt, as if Master was pleasing and angering her at the same time and she was waiting to see how much pleasure she could take before she let out the rage. Still, hope surged inside Ugwu. He would cook a perfect *jollof* rice for their reconciliation meal. (p. 241)

The whole narration is in FID and the narrator presents Ugwu's perception of the encounter of their reconciliation. The employment of such expressions as "could not make out", "did not want to", "pressed his ear against the wood", all indicate Ugwu's inability to get absolute knowledge of what is happening and therefore, is straining for more information. His lack of accessibility to what is happening between Odenigbo and Olanna can only be imagined from the gasping sound of "*ah-ah-ah*" that she is making, "as if she was gearing up to erupt, as if Master was pleasing and angering her at the same time and she was waiting to see how much pleasure she could take before she let out the rage." The simile and antithesis employed in describing Ugwu's perception of what is transpiring is the closest the

narrator can come to the reality of what is actually happening. Thus, the distance created here is only bridged through speculation of what the reader's imagination can suffice.

Furthermore, the employment of such words as "wonder, wondered, perhaps, probably" etc. and expressions as "did not see, had never seen, he was not sure, did not know, could not comprehend, difficult…to visualise, must have, he wished he knew, he did not hear, she imagined, never have imagined" etc. all create some distance between the narrator and the narrative, as they clearly indicate the lack of absolute knowledge, which should be characteristic of an omniscient narrator. For example,

> …Olanna *wondered* if *perhaps* he had recently lost a person he loved. (p. 264)…she *wondered* how baby could stand the awful plastic taste of the dried egg yolk. (p. 270)…*I didn't hear.* (p. 278)…*I don't know*. (p. 281)… *Ugwu was not sure* how America was to blame for other countries not recognising Biafra…(p. 295)…*But he could not visualise her*. (p. 299)…*Olanna kept saying something that Ugwu could not hear while Master silently bent over the open bonnet*…(p. 300)

These highlighted words and expressions, though significant of mental processes of the focalised characters, place some distance between the narrator and the narrative, as these linguistic items clearly portray a barrier to full knowledge of the narrative information, thereby also placing a distance on the reader's access to the narrative information. Consequently, the focalised characters' restriction is the narrator's restriction and subsequently, the reader's; and their full knowledge is also the reader's.

There are also instances where the narrator employs the use of narrative dialogue to allow the characters present narrative information from their

perspectives, with the narrator relegated and distanced from the narrative. When the government soldiers begin bombing the villages occupied by the Igbos, they (Igbos) have to seek refuge in bunkers. The extract below is an example of the interaction between Olanna and Ugwu regarding their method of survival during the Biafran war:

> "We are going to stay in the bunker today," she told Ugwu.
> "The bunker, mah?"
> "Yes, the bunker. You heard me."
> "But we cannot just stay in the bunker, mah."
> "Did I speak with water in my mouth? I said we will stay in the bunker."
> Ugwu shrugged. "Yes, mah. Should I bring Baby's food?" (p. 276)
> …
> "Get Baby ready," she said, and turned the radio on.
> "Yes, mah," Ugwu said. "*O nwere igwu.* I found lice eggs in her hair this morning."
> "What?"
> "Lice eggs. But there were only two and I did not find any others."
> "Lice? What are you saying? How can Baby have lice? I keep her clean. Baby! Baby!"
> …
> "We are not staying in the bunker again?"
> "Just take her outside to the veranda."
> "Yes, mah." (p. 277)

In the extract above, the narrator is obliterated, allowing the characters themselves to present the narrative information; hence rendering the narrative mimetic. The narrative slips from DS to FID. However, the slipping is done in such a way that the reader hardly notices the change in the presentation of narrative information. Again, the omission of the declarative clause in some of the instances creates ambiguity and irony, thereby creating some kind of distancing, as one wonders who is speaking at a particular time: whether it is Olanna or Ugwu even though the context provides clues.

This type of dramatic presentation of narrative information, the one that presents the speech of the characters through dialogues and FID, is the kind of narrative positioning commended by theorists of art fiction. The form of this dramatic narration in the 19th century was the epistolary technique and by the 20th century, the term transformed into the interior monologue. Equally, Booth (1961) emphasises the dramatic presentation of information. According to him, the technique is used "to show characters dramatically engaged with each other...To give the impression that the story is taking place by itself, with the characters existing in a dramatic relationship vis-à-vis the spectator, unmediated by a narrator".

In addition, in the episode when Olanna and Odenigbo reconcile, after Odenigbo's infidelity with Amala, the incident is presented in DS, IS and FID:

> *They sat on the sofa in the living room. He had no right to harass Richard, to direct his anger at Richard, and yet she understood why he had*. "I never blamed Amala," she said. "It was to you that I had given my trust and the only way a stranger could tamper with that trust was with your permission. I blamed only you."
> Odenigbo placed his hand on her thigh.
> "You should be angry with me, not with Richard," she said.
> *He was silent for so long that she thought he was not going to respond and then he said, "I want to be angry with you."*
> *His defenselessness moved her. She knelt down before him and unbuttoned his shirt to suck the soft-firm flesh of his belly. She felt his intake of breath when she touched his trousers zipper. In her mouth, he was swollen stiff. The faint ache in her lower jaw, the pressure of his widespread hands on her head, excited her, and afterward she said*, "Goodness, Ugwu must have seen us." *He led her to the bedroom. They undressed silently and showered together, pressing against each other in the narrow bathroom and then clinging together in bed, their bodies still wet and their movements slow. She marvelled at the comforting compactness of his weight on top of her.* (p. 246)

> *His breath smelled of brandy and she wanted to tell him how it was almost like old times again, but she didn't because she was sure he felt the same way and she did not want to ruin the silence that united them*. (p. 246)

This incident vividly depicts what transpires between Olanna and Odenigbo and also shows both their uttered and unuttered thoughts. It is also evident from the extract that the narrator employs DS and IS in conveying the thoughts and feelings of both Odenigbo and Olanna. For portions when they take the centre stage, the narrator allows them to speak for themselves, with their speeches presented in quotation marks. The narrator also adopts the style of FID (the italicised portion) in this extract to speed the flow of the narration here to reflect the emotions projected in the description. This division of modes of speech presentation, according to Leech and Short (2007), "becomes an important vehicle which" writers "use to control our sympathies over a relatively sustained period" (p. 286). In effect, the employment of this technique allows a greater distance to be created in the narrative, as the narrator is constantly obliterated and the characters given more space to reveal themselves.

The next section also discusses Narration of Events in the third novel, *Americanah*.

Americanah

Narration of Events

The third novel for the analysis is *Americana* (2013). According to *The Washington Post*, "Adichie is uniquely positioned to compare racial hierarchies in the United States to social striving in her native Nigeria. She does so in this new

work with a ruthless honesty about the ugly and beautiful sides of both nations" (2013). In this novel, the narrator begins with the presentation of events when Ifemelu, one of the two focalised characters, presents the scene of the salon where she gets her braids done, which is located in a shabby block, and this description is done in detail that it presents a scenic view to the reader:

> The salon was in the middle, between a Chinese restaurant called Happy Joy and a convenience store that sold lottery tickets. Inside, the room was thick with disregard, the paint peeling, the walls plastered with large posters of braided hairstyles and smaller posters that said QUICK TAX REFUND. Three women, all in T-shirts and knee-length shorts, were working on the hair of seated customers. A small TV mounted on a corner of the wall, the volume a little too loud, was showing a Nigerian film: a man beating his wife, the wife cowering and shouting, the poor audio quality jarring…the fan on the chipped table was turned on high but did little for the stuffiness in the room. Next to the fan were combs, packets of hair attachments, magazines bulky with loose pages, piles of colourful DVDs. A broom was propped in one corner, near the candy dispenser and the rusty hair dryer that had not been used in a hundred years. On the TV screen, a father was beating two children, wooden punches that hit the air above their heads. (pp. 11-12)

The narrator, in this extract, presents a detailed description of the salon to the extent that it provides a panoramic view of the elements shown in the description. The narrator includes details of the peeling paints on the wall; the large posters of braided hairstyles, etc.; the T-shirt and knee-length shorts worn by the workers in the salon; the small TV mounted on the wall, with the volume too loud and showing a Nigerian movie. The description of the scene also extends from the arrangements of combs and magazines bulky with loose pages on a table to the broom propped in one corner. The information provided above is mimetic to the extent that it portrays a clear picture to the reader who can visualise the salon, as presented by the narrator.

The employment of descriptive words such as the nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs add colour and texture to the scene created to produce the effect of plausibility on the reader. Considering the fact that this description comes at the beginning of the narrative, the narrator sets the tone for the depiction of pictures.

The picturesque portrayal of events in the extract also brings to the fore one of the pertinent issues confronting African women writers: gender and domestic violence. The film being shown on the "small TV mounted on (*sic*) a corner of the wall" has "the volume a little too loud" to project the violence being meted out to the wife, as a man is "beating his wife, the wife cowering and shouting". This portrayal of the violent nature of the male parent, as depicted in the extract, is repeated, as the next scene also shows a father "beating two children". These descriptions are vivid enough to warrant a reaction from one of the braiders: "'No! Bad father! Bad man!' the other braider said, staring at the TV and flinching" (p. 12). The poignancy of the description of the "man" "father", here, at the beginning of the novel, sets the tone for the author's disapproval of violence against women and children, as is later explored in the narrative.

The provision of details in the novel is not without the inclusion of details of certain cultural practices. When Ifemelu's aunty, Aunty Uju, loses her fiancé, The General, Dike's father, his relatives confront Aunty Uju over the possession of his properties and the scene is captured in lucid description to create a realistic representation of the event:

> There was banging on the gate. Two men and three women, relatives of The General, had bullied Adamu to open the gate, and now stood at the front door, shouting. "Uju! Pack your things and get out now! Give us the car keys!" One of the women was skeletal, agitated and red-eyed, and as she shouted—"Common harlot! God forbid that you will touch our brother's property! Prostitute! You will never live in peace in this Lagos!"—she pulled her headscarf from her head and tied it tightly around her waist, in preparation for a fight. At first, Aunty Uju said nothing, staring at them, standing still at the door. Then she asked them to leave in a voice hoarse from tears, but the relatives' shouting intensified, and so Aunty Uju turned to go back indoors. "Okay, don't go," she said. "Just stay there. Stay there while I go and call my boys from the army barracks." Only then did they leave, telling her, "We are coming back with our own boys." Only then did Aunty Uju begin to sob again. "I have nothing. Everything is in his name. Where will I take my son to now?" (p. 105)

The information above on the two men and three women relatives of The General presents a striking view of the scene described. The narrator, here, depicts an archetypal African scene where relatives of the deceased (especially if a man) invade his home to claim his property before anyone else decides to hijack any. This scenario is very common in a lot of African communities and the author employs it to portray the helpless situation of the Africa woman who loses a spouse (in this instance, a fiancé). The details of verbal abuse: "common harlot" and "prostitute", coupled with one of the women's readiness for a fight, as "she pulled her headscarf from her head and tied it tightly around her waist, in preparation for a fight", present to the reader a movielike view, especially as one would experience in watching a Nigerian movie, for example.

In addition, the provision of details in this narration of events is not without the discussion of Adichie's development of the treatment of the issue of sex and sexuality in *Americanah*. As it has already been stated in the study, there is a marked progression of her treatment of sex in her novels: from *Purple Hibiscus*,

where the issue of sex is shrouded in the many silences identified in the novel, to the overt exhibition of it in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, where the characters are able to express themselves sexually, to the extent of Olanna having an affair with her twin sister, Kainene's fiancé, Richard. The author is also able to describe the sexual acts between these characters in detail to such an extent that the reader is able to visualise every aspect of the depiction, to warrant the tag of "an adult scene" or "an X-rated scene". This development enriches a chronological reading of Adichie's novels, as the reader is able to follow her progression as a writer who is maturing with age and experience. The significant and bold treatment of the subject of sex and sexuality, among other themes, which she equally treats with adroit skill, has placed her on the pedestal that is akin to those of her earlier compatriots: Achebe, Nwapa, Emecheta, etc.

In *Americanah*, Adichie develops the theme of sex and sexuality further by providing another twist to it – sex education. In this novel, Ifemelu's journey through learning about herself as a sexual being appears to be unhealthy. In Nigeria, she is given no formal education on sex, just as it is never done for Kambili and any other character in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. What she learns, however, from the women in her community regarding sex ranges from a religious asceticism to a rather sexist one that favours male dominance. When she goes to America, she is confronted with a similarly flawed sex education system that is infiltrated with racism on a regular basis. Nonetheless, in spite of the tumultuous route she takes to get to America, she eventually emerges out of her adolescence a much more mature woman. The bulk of the information revealed concerning the author's treatment of

the subject of sex and its education occurs in the medium of narration of events, as the author does the presentation in picturesque scenes.

The first time Ifemelu and Obinze (the second focalised) share intimacy is described in such a quick fashion that it depicts the speed with which they have the intercourse. They rush into Obinze's room the moment his mother leaves home for the pharmacy to buy her allergy medicine:

> As soon as her car engine started, a dull revving, Ifemelu and Obinze hurried to his bedroom and sank onto his bed, kissing and touching, their clothing rolled up, shifted aside, pulled halfway. Their skin warm against each other. They left the door and the window louvers open, both of them alert to the sound of his mother's car. In a sluice of seconds, they were dressed, back in the living room, Play pressed on the video recorder. (p. 86)

The presentation of the events in the narrative above is done in a quick succession to corroborate the actual action that occurs between Ifemelu and Obinze. The briefness of the act is akin to what is referred to in local parlance as "a quickie". Here, even though the narrator does not spend a lot of time in describing the event, the scene depicted is mimetic such that the reader is provided with enough information to visualise their sexual act. The provision of details about their act is not only for the reader but even for Obinze's mother, as she is able to infer from the scene in the movie Obinze and Ifemelu were watching when she left, that they have paused the movie and subsequently suspects them of doing something dubious and decides to advise Ifemelu:

> Obinze's mother walked in and glanced at the TV. "You were watching this scene when I left," she said quietly. A frozen silence fell, even from the film…"If anything happens between you and Obinze, you are both responsible. But Nature is unfair to women. An act is done by two people, but if there are any consequences, one person carries it alone. Do you understand me?" (p. 87)

When they finally have sex, the presentation of it is captured in a graphic scene to aid the reader in having a visual representation of it:

> OBINZE'S MUSCLES WERE ACHING. He lay on his belly, and Ifemelu straddled him, massaging his back and neck and thighs with her fingers, her knuckles, her elbows. He was painfully taut. She stood on him, placed one foot gingerly on the back of a thigh, and then the other. He groaned in pleasure-pain. She pressed down slowly, his skin warm under the soles of her feet, his tense muscles unknotting. She steadied herself with a hand on the wall, and dug her heels deeper, moving inch by inch while he grunted, "Ah! Ifem, yes, just there. Ah!"
> "You should stretch after playing ball, mister man," she said, and then she was lying on his back, tickling his underarms and kissing his neck. "I have a suggestion for a better kind of massage," he said. When he undressed her, he did not stop, as usual, at her underwear. He pulled it down and she raised her legs to aid him.
> "Ceiling," she said, half-certain. She did not want him to stop, but she had imagined this differently, assumed they would make a carefully planned ceremony of it.
> "I'll come out," he said.
> "You know it doesn't always work."
> "If it doesn't work, then we'll welcome Junior."
> "Stop it."
> He looked up. "But, Ifem, we're going to get married anyway."
> "Look at you. I might meet a rich handsome man and leave you."
> "Impossible. We'll go to America when we graduate and raise our fine children."
> "You'll say anything now because your brain is between your legs."
> "But my brain is always there!" (pp. 113-114)

In the narrator's careful detailing of the scene of events, the narrative assumes a mimetic quality, which is, presenting maximum information, information that is more visually sensible to the reader. As the information provided saturates the narration, the reader is brought closer to the text to experience every detail from his own perspective, while the narrator is obliterated. This technique of narrator obliteration is further enhanced by the inclusion of direct quotations from the characters themselves to express their deeper and personal emotions, which cannot

be expressed by the narrator because he is restricted to narrative information. The details of the narrative also includes the gradual foreplay Obinze and Ifemelu engage in before the actual sex act. The scene depicted is vivid enough to produce the effect of verisimilitude on the reader.

In addition, when Ifemelu's economic situation in America does not improve, she is forced to accept an offer to "keep the tennis coach warm" for hundred dollars. Similarly, the scene involving the incident with this tennis coach from Ardmore is presented with utmost detail to aid the reader's comprehension:

> When she arrived at his house, his manner was brusque. "Come on up," he said, and led the way to his bedroom, bare but for a bed and a large painting of a tomato soup can on the wall. He offered her something to drink, in a perfunctory way that suggested he expected her to say no, and then he took off his shirt and lay on the bed… "Come over here," he said. "I need to be warm."
> She should leave now. The power balance was tilted in his favour, had been tilted in his favour since she walked into his house. She should leave. She stood up.
> "I can't have sex," she said. Her voice felt squeaky, unsure of itself. "I can't have sex with you," she repeated.
> "Oh no, I don't expect you to," he said, too quickly.
> She moved slowly toward the door, wondering if it was locked, if he had locked it, and then she wondered if he had a gun. "Just come here and lie down," he said. "Keep me warm. I'll touch you a little bit, nothing you'll be uncomfortable with. I just need some human contact to relax." She took off her shoes and climbed into his bed. She did not want to be here, did not want his active finger between her legs, did not want his sigh-moans in her ear, and yet she felt her body rousing to a sickening wetness. Afterwards, she lay still, coiled and deadened. He had not forced her. She had come here on her own. She had lain on his bed, and when he placed her hand between his legs, she had curled and moved her fingers. Now, even after she had washed her hands, holding the crisp, slender hundred-dollar bill he had given her, her fingers still felt sticky; they no longer belonged to her. (pp. 189-190)

The details in the descriptive prowess of the narrator is a feather in the cup of the author's technique to saturate the narrative with information that is veritable. The narratorial significance of the style adopted by Adichie, here, is to produce the quality of credibility, as a manner of creating realism. The description of Ifemelu's experience resonates with similar experiences shared by numerous expatriates who are forced by circumstances to sacrifice their dignity in order to survive in America. The narrator deliberately provides, in this narration of event, details of every incident that happens when she gets there, in a panoramic sequence, by appealing to the senses. This is in consonance with the fact that the author's intention, here, is to show. Consequently, in this narration of events, the narration is mimetic because of the striking presentation of the scenes and the amount of narrative information provided.

Narration of Speech

As it has already been stated in this Chapter, narration of speech or words is the narrator's paramount opportunity of demonstrating his prowess at showing information in a narrative, and in this narrative, as well. It is also the medium through which the narrator reveals the portraits of both Ifemelu and Obinze, as well as other characters and issues in the novel. Ifemelu's impressions of some cities in America all stem from her perspective, as presented by the heterodiegetic narrator.

> Princeton, in the summer, smelled of nothing, and although Ifemelu liked the tranquil greenness of the many trees, the clean streets and stately homes, the delicately overpriced shops, and the quiet, abiding air of earned grace, it was this, the lack of a smell, that most appealed to her, perhaps because the other American cities she knew well had all smelled distinctly. Philadelphia had the musty scent of history. New Haven smelled of neglect. Baltimore smelled of brine, and Brooklyn of sun-warmed garbage. But Princeton had no smell. She liked taking deep breaths here. …She liked watching the locals who drove with pointed courtesy and parked their latest-model cars outside the organic grocery store on Nassau Street or outside the sushi restaurants or outside the ice cream shop that had fifty different flavours including red pepper or outside the post office where effusive staff bounded out to greet them at the entrance. She liked the campus, grave with knowledge, the Gothic buildings with their vine-laced walls, and the way everything transformed, in the half-light of night, into a ghostly scene. She liked, most of all, that in this place of affluent ease, she could pretend to be someone else, someone specially admitted into a hallowed American club, someone adorned with certainty. (p. 3)

The extract above is a judgemental presentation of Ifemelu's opinion regarding particular cities in America. The narrator, here, sheds light on various aspects of the setting and their significant or defining features. The detailed description of the setting is an indication to the reader to anticipate the presentation of scenic events in the narrative. This deliberate vivid depiction of the different towns is an indication of the uncertainties that confront Ifemelu, so "she could pretend to be someone else, someone adorned with certainty" in America.

This type of presentation forms the foundation of the dominant consciousness of the heroine throughout the narrative. The whole passage is in free indirect discourse (FID) showing Ifemelu's thoughts, with the narrator almost completely absent from the narrative, rendering the narrative mimetic in nature. From this initial observation in the narrative, it becomes apparent that the reader should expect a lot of slipping in the narrative, in presenting issues of character,

theme, setting, etc., as the narrator will enable the reader to get access into the consciousness of the focalised characters.

The first time the reader gets a glimpse of Obinze's home, the narration is presented through the introspection of Obinze himself, as the narrator indicates that:

> …soon Gabriel was pressing the horn in front of the high black gates of his home. Mohammed, the gateman, wiry in his dirty white caftan, flung open the gates, and raised a hand in greeting. Obinze looked at the tan colonnaded house. Inside was his furniture imported from Italy, his wife, his two-year-old daughter, Buchi, the nanny Christiana, his wife's sister Chioma, who was on a forced holiday because university lecturers were on strike yet again, and the new housegirl, Marie, who had been brought from Benin Republic after his wife decided that Nigerian housegirls were unsuitable. The rooms would all be cool, air-conditioner vents swaying quietly, and the kitchen would be fragrant with curry and thyme, and CNN would be on downstairs, while the television upstairs would be turned to Cartoon Network, and pervading it all would be the undisturbed air of wellbeing… *He had begun, in the past months, to feel bloated from all he had acquired – the family, the houses, the cars, the bank accounts – and would, from time to time, be overcome by the urge to prick everything with a pin, to deflate it all, to be free. He was no longer sure, he had in fact never been sure, whether he liked his life because he really did or whether he liked it because he was supposed to*. (p. 26)

Here, the entire narration is in two parts: the first part is all Narration of Events, while the italicised part is also Narration of Speech and in FID and the narrator presents Obinze's self-reflection of his living condition. From this passage, the reader learns a lot about his style of living, with its sophisticated touch. Thus, it is from his psychosis and introspection that the reader gets access into his life, to ascertain whether he actually likes his lifestyle or whether he is "supposed to" like it, even though the narrator also gives part of this information to the reader. This revelation of his lifestyle is in stark contrast to his initial struggles in England,

where he even goes through the trauma of a failed arranged marriage in order to secure a permanent resident status, and also be able to work.

Other instances in the narrative where there is the employment of narration of speech are when the narrator cedes the narration to allow the characters reveal issues themselves; for instance, when Obinze's mother decides to caution Ifemelu against getting too intimate with Obinze before they get to "own" themselves. In the ensuing interaction between her and Ifemelu, the reader gets first-hand experience of what Obinze's mother says to her, without it being mediated by the narrator and her speech is presented as a piece of advice to Ifemelu:

> "If anything happens between you and Obinze, you are both responsible. But Nature is unfair to women. An act is done by two people, but if there are any consequences, one person carries it alone. Do you understand me?"
> "Yes." *Ifemelu kept her eyes averted from Obinze's mother, firmly fixed on the black-and-white linoleum on the floor.*
> "Have you done anything serious with Obinze?"
> "No."
> "I was once young. I know what it is like to love while young. I want to advise you. I am aware that, in the end, you will do what you want. My advice is that you wait. You can love without making love. It is a beautiful way of showing your feelings but it brings responsibility, great responsibility, and there is no rush. I will advise you to wait until you are at least in the university, wait until you own yourself a little more. Do you understand?"
> "Yes," *Ifemelu said. She did not know what "own yourself a little more" meant.*
> "I know you are a clever girl. Women are more sensible than men, and you will have to be the sensible one. Convince him. Both of you should agree to wait so that there is no pressure."
> *Obinze's mother paused and Ifemelu wondered if she had finished. The silence rang in her head.*
> "Thank you, ma," *Ifemelu said.* …"And when you want to start, I want you to come and see me. I want to know that you are being responsible." (pp. 87-88)

> *Ifemelu nodded. She was sitting on Obinze's mother's bed, in the woman's bedroom, nodding and agreeing to tell her when she started having sex with her son. Yet she felt the absence of shame. Perhaps it was Obinze's mother's tone, the evenness of it, the normalness of it.* "Thank you, ma," *Ifemelu said again, now looking at Obinze's mother's face, which was open, no different from what it usually was*. "I will." (p. 88)

The extract above is a combination of direct speech (quotation), narration (presence of the narrator) and free indirect discourse (FID). In the extract, there is a preponderance of DS or quotation, which is emblematic of the modernist novel, where the narrator tends to cede most of the narration to allow the characters to take centre stage in relating the story, in a dialogic sequence, thereby making the narrative mimetic. In this instance, there is a blend of both narrator presence and narrator obliteration (even though the presence of the quotation marks still indicates the narrator's involvement). When reporting Obinze's mother's speeches, the narrator deliberately omits the locutionary or reporting clauses to "portray the quick to-and-fro of the conversation" (Simpson, 2005, p. 275) between her and Ifemelu.

It has already been stated in the discussion that the author, in this novel, develops further her theme of sex and sexuality. However, what she does more, here, is to spend more narrative space in providing some education on sex and sexuality, as represented in Obinze's mother's advice to Ifemelu. With regard to the extract above, it begins with the narrator quoting the direct words of Obinze's mother, appropriate for the speech of a woman very confident of herself with the role she is playing here, as an adviser. Her advice gives Ifemelu the freedom to wait before she eventually becomes sexually active. Even though she does not give Ifemelu the option to have sex in the present moment if she wants to, she encourages

waiting and fears that Ifemelu is too young to handle the "great responsibility" that comes with it. Ifemelu is used in the novel as a symbol of the youth, and ideally, contrary to the author's message of "waiting", individuals of Ifemelu's age should rather be educated early about having safe and responsible sex, so that they can be prepared to have safe sex when the sexual desires finally come.

Here, too, the narrator cedes the narration to allow Obinze's mother to take centre stage in order to educate Ifemelu on the need to be prepared for the responsibilities that come with having sex. This way, the narrator is obliterated, creating some distance between himself and the narrative, as the narration assumes a mimetic status and the reader visualises a conversation between Ifemelu and Obinze's mother. However, because Ifemelu is naïve and under tutelage, the narrator is kept in an intervening position between character and reader to provide commentary on the effect of Obinze's mother's words on her, as indicated in the italicised portions of the extract, which are captured in FID. Consequently, in the extract above, there is mimesis of the speech of the characters and therefore, minimal narration.

Furthermore, when the desperation in Ifemelu's living situation worsens, she is pushed to accept a job offer from the tennis coach from Ardmore, to "help him relax", for a-hundred dollars. The effect of what Ifemelu does with the tennis coach is captured in the revelation through her introspection, as illustrated in the extract below:

> She walked to the train, feeling heavy and slow, her mind choked with mud, and, seated by the window, she began to cry. She felt like a small ball, adrift and alone. The world was a big, big place and she was so tiny, so insignificant, rattling around emptily. Back in her apartment, she washed her hands with water so hot that it scalded her fingers, and a small soft welt flowered on her thumb. She took off all her clothes, and squashed them into a rumpled ball that she threw at a corner, staring at it for a while. She would never again wear those clothes, never even touch them. She sat naked on her bed and looked at her life, in this tiny room with the moldy carpet, the hundred-dollar bill on the table, her body rising with loathing. She should never have gone there. She should have walked away. She wanted to shower, to scrub herself, but she could not bear the thought of touching her own body, and so she put on her nightdress, gingerly, to touch as little of herself as possible. She imagined packing her things, somehow buying a ticket, and going back to Lagos. She curled on her bed and cried, wishing she could reach into herself and yank out the memory of what had just happened. Her voice mail light was blinking. It was probably Obinze. She could not bear to think of him now. She thought of calling Ginika. Finally, she called Aunty Uju. (p. 190)

The entire narration is a reflection of Ifemelu's experience with the tennis coach and the bulk of it is in FID. The narrator presents Ifemelu's reflections over her encounter with the tennis coach, in which the latter offers her a job offer to help him "relax", to keep him "warm".

The narrative begins with the narrator presenting Ifemelu's experience of disgust at herself and then it slips into FID: "…she would never again wear those clothes, never even touch them…" The employment of FID, here, vividly discloses Ifemelu's thought processes as she reflects on her actions at the tennis coach's house. The reflection on this action by Ifemelu allows the narrator to present a recapitulation of the events surrounding her encounter with the tennis coach from her own vision, while the narrator zooms in and out of her consciousness. Although the narrator's voice fuses into Ifemelu's, there is still an unimpeded flow of the

latter's voice in the way her thought is narrated, such that the reader perceives Ifemelu's thoughts and not the narrator's voice. It is, therefore, the summary of Ifemelu's encounter with the tennis coach that is captured in the extract above. Consequently, it is the narrator's strategy in this narrative to achieve narrative distance by revealing the condition of the heroine from her own consciousness in the narrative.

Finally, another technique employed by the narrator to create narrative distance in the narration is the exploration of the uttered thought processes of both Ifemelu and Obinze through the use of certain linguistic choices of words and expressions of cognition. As it has already been indicated in the Chapter, the author presents the narrative from an external focaliser; that is the third person detached zero focaliser, as is found in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and with similar limited view from the perspectives of both focalised characters, Ifemelu and Obinze. Consequently, the reader anticipates instances of the employment of techniques that portray the limitations of the heterodiegetic narrator. Expressions like "she/he wondered, how was it possible, she was not sure, I don't know, Ifemelu still could not picture, he was no longer sure, what does that even mean?, she was no longer sure what 'herself' was, he did not seem to understand what she was saying, Ifemelu did not understand, what would happen with the tennis coach?" etc. and words like "perhaps, imagined", among others, all portray the uttered and unuttered thought processes of both Obinze and Ifemelu. In effect, this technique becomes more effective and credible in revealing the characters' thoughts rather than narrating them to the reader. The employment of these linguistic items, inadvertently, places

limitations on the narrator's knowledge of narrative information, thereby creating distance in the narrative, since the narrator's ignorance is also the reader's ignorance and his knowledge, the reader's too.

It must be noted that modern fiction practitioners, in their quest to present life as it really is, adopt the style of narration of events and speech to produce narrative distance in providing additional information to the reader. This way, the narration of events in the narrative is made manifest with the presentation of more details, which the reader is inclined to anticipate in the depiction of events. The elements of character, setting and theme are creatively woven into the narrative to give a vivid impression of the set elements presented. This calculated blend of these elements, aside providing extra information to the reader, also appeals to the senses, particularly of the pictorial perspicacity, since the scenes portrayed reveal realistically the several physiognomies of the elements: shape, size, texture, colour, temperature, sound etc. described in the narrative, in a panoramic sequence, as if these are actually being shown in motion pictures, revealing a maximum of information. This technique, consequently, shifts the focus of the overall prominence of the narration from the narrator to the events being narrated themselves. Hence, even though there is narrator presence, the events present themselves and the narrator becomes a distant figure from what he presents in the narrative. "The narrator is present, therefore, as source, guarantor, as stylist… and particularly – as… producer of metaphors" (Genette, 1980). The next chapter will discuss the other aspect of mood: perspective, in the selected novels for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN ADICHIE'S NOVELS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chapter Three, I began the discussion on the analysis of the texts selected for the study by focussing on one aspect of mood, that is Distance, and the techniques (narration of events and narration of speech) employed by the narrator in achieving narrative distance in the novels. The concentration of this Chapter will also be to analyse the other aspect of mood, that is Perspective, in the novels under study: *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013), by first establishing the relationship between point of view and perspective.

Point of View and Perspective

Point of View

There appears to be a certain misconception or confused difference between the terms "perspective" and "point of view". This is as a result of the fact that these terms are often used synonymously. However, they are quite different and therefore, need to be distinguished and used appropriately. There are a myriad of definitions and opinions regarding what point of view is. According to Simpson (1993), stylisticians are incessantly re-evaluating their approaches of analysis in the light of current advancements in linguistic studies. To him, one subject of enquiry in stylistics which has been the focus to this progressive modification is the conception of *point of view*. He explains point of view, in the context of narrative fiction, as the

> Psychological perspective through which a story is told. It encompasses the narrative framework which a writer employs, whether this be first person or third person, restricted perspective or omniscient perspective, and accounts for the basic viewing position which is adopted in a story. Narrative point of view is arguably the very essence of a story's style, what gives it its 'feel' and 'colour'. (p. 4)

Diasamidze (2014) defines point of view as one of the basic elements of a story that determines the perspective from which a reader experiences the narrative. He goes on to say that point of view establishes the relationship between a reader and a literary text, including all the other crucial elements. Thus, the choice of point of view is the choice of who is responsible for telling the story, who talks to the reader. It may be a narrator outside the work (omniscient point of view); a narrator inside the work, telling the story from a limited or first-person point of view; or apparently, no one (dramatic point of view). In effect, these types of commonly used points of view and their variations, indicate an author's choice that defines to what extent she/he wants her/his reader to be involved in the interpretation of the text.

Point of view is also generally employed to refer to the physical or psychological angle from which the events and actions in a story are perceived and/or narrated. Prince (1987, p. 73) also defines point of view as the "perceptual or conceptual position in terms of which the narrated situation and events are presented". Thus, a story may be told either in the first person or in the third person. Additionally, one may differentiate between "external" and "internal" point of view. In the former case, only a person's observable behaviour is described, while in the latter, thoughts, beliefs, intentions or emotions are presented to the reader.

However, combinations of these categories are likely to be found in stories: internal first person, internal third person and external third person.

Point of view (POV) is also defined by Rabatel (2009) in an enunciative approach, in terms of the linguistic means with which a subject envisages an object and it encompasses all the meanings of the term "envisage", that is whether the subject be singular or collective and the object concrete or linguistic. He explains further that the subject, who is responsible for the referential values of the object, expresses his POV either directly, in explicit commentaries or indirectly, through the construction of referential values. In other words, this is done through choices concerning the selection, combination and realisation of the linguistic material, and also in all circumstances, ranging from the most subjective choices to those which appear to be the most objectivising, and from the most explicit markers to the most implicit clues.

According to Murfin and Ray (1998), point of view is the vantage point from which a narrative is told. Thus, to them, a narrative is typically told from a first-person or third-person point of view, with the second-person point of view being rare. However, sometimes, novels but infrequently, mix points of view. They further go on to say that in a narrative told from a first-person perspective, as seen in *Purple Hibiscus*, the author tells the story through a character who refers to himself or herself as "I". Such a narrator is usually (but not always) a major participant in the action. This first-person narrator, as it shall be observed in Kambili, recounts events as she experiences, remembers or hears about them. Sometimes, first-person narrators are unreliable or inexperienced, colouring or

distorting matters in ways that the reader eventually detects. Occasionally, narratives written from this point of view contain multiple narrators, each of whom personally recounts his or her story.

Third person narratives come in two types: omniscient and limited. An author taking an omniscient point of view assumes the vantage point of an all-knowing narrator able not only to recount the action thoroughly and reliably but also to enter the mind of any character in the work at any time in order to reveal his or her thoughts, feelings and beliefs directly to the reader. It must be noted that such a narrator can conceal as well as reveal at will. With the omniscient point of view, sometimes also referred to as panoramic, shifting or multiple point of view, an "all-knowing" narrator firmly imposes himself or herself between the reader and the story and retains full and complete control over the narrative. The omniscient narrator is not a character in the story and is not at all involved in the plot. The narrator is free to tell much or little, to dramatise or summarise, to interpret, speculate, philosophise, moralise or judge. He or she can tell the reader directly what the characters are like and why they behave as they do; record their words and conversations and dramatise their actions; or enter their minds to explore directly their innermost thoughts and feelings.

When the omniscient narrator speaks to the reader in his or her own voice, there is a natural temptation to identify that voice with the author's, although it may seem to reflect the author's beliefs and values. It is as much the author's creation as any of the characters in the story, (Japaridze, 2005). In effect, the great adventure of the omniscient point of view, then, is the flexibility it gives its "all-knowing"

narrator, who can direct the reader's attention and control the sources of information. Nevertheless, as the reader retreats from omniscient telling in the direction of dramatic showing, the narrator progressively surrenders these adventures and restricts the channels through which information can be transmitted to the reader. Consequently, the reader is involved, to a greater extent, directly in the task of interpretation.

However, with regards to the limited omniscient, which is also referred to as third-person or selective omniscient point of view, the narrator is limited to or restricted from entering the minds of characters by selecting a single character to act as the centre of disclosure. Thus, what the reader knows and sees of events is always restricted to what this focal character can know and see. At times, the reader may be given direct access to this focal character's own "voice" and thoughts, through dialogue or presented dramatically through monologue, represented speech or stream of consciousness. On all occasions, the reader's access is indirect; it is the narrator's voice, somewhere on the side-lines, that tells the story and transmits the action, characterisation, description, analysis and other informing details upon which the reader's understanding and interpretation depend. The character chosen as narrative centre and often referred to using a third person pronoun as he or she, may be the protagonist or may be some other major character. Often, however, the assignment is given to a minor character that functions in the role of an onlooker, watching and speculating from the periphery of the story and only minimally involved, if at all, in its action.

Also, in a narrative told from the second-person point of view, the narrator addresses a "you". Thus, a narrative that reads "if you really want to know New Orleans, you need to walk Bourbon Street at midnight…" would be an example of second-person narrative, as would a story a parent told to and about a child ("Early in the morning, you set out alone for Grandma's house…"), (Murfin and Ray, 1998, p. 292).

Narratives may also be told or narrated from alternating points of view. That is narratives told by switching between different characters as in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Why Are We So Blest* (1972), Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2009) and *Americanah* (2013) or even between different modes of storytelling. Several novels shift between different third person points of view. For example, the chapters of George R. R. Martin's *The Song of Ice and Fire* (1998) books are all titled after characters and each chapter is told from the limited third person point of view of the titled character. Another example is William Faulkner's novel, *As I Lay Dying* (1930), which is structurally similar to the *Song of Ice and Fire* books in the sense that each chapter is titled after a character. However, each chapter is told in the first person by the titled character. Darl tells the Darl chapters in the first person, the Cash chapters are narrated by Cash, the Vardamon chapters by Vardamon, etc.

In addition, stories can even switch between modes of storytelling; hence, though the technique is less common than other forms of alternating points of view, some stories can shift not only between different characters' points of view, but between actual modes of storytelling. For example, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) has four parts. The first three parts are all narrated in the first person,

with the first part narrated by Benjy, the second part by Quentin and the third part by Jason. However, the fourth part is told in the third person omniscient and it follows a cluster of different characters at different times.

Thus, every work of literature has a point of view and there are, therefore, fundamentally interminable examples of points of view in literature. The subtle shift in the nature of a narrator's point of view also shows how an author can play with point of view to suit the themes and concepts of a story. Each point of view adopted by a narrator creates a different experience for the reader, because in each point of view, different forms and volumes of information are available to the reader about the story's events and characters. Furthermore, each different point of view has its own explicit qualities that affect the narrative. The author, therefore, chooses which point of view is best for narrating the story he or she is writing.

Perspective

Narrative perspective, as has already been stated, is quite different from point of view and needs to be distinguished from it. Narrative Perspective, thus, refers to a set of features defining the techniques adopted in telling a story, as well as what is told. It includes the person who is telling the story or the narrator, as well as the character from whose point of view the story is told, the focaliser. These factors, combined with a narrator's limited or omniscient perspective, his reliability and emotional involvement, constitute the narrative perspective. Thus, whereas point of view focuses on the type of narrator used to tell the story, perspective focuses on how this narrator perceives what is happening within the story. Perspective can be used in all points of view to help define a narrator's attitude and

personality, which in turn affect how she or he feels about certain experiences or other characters.

Perspective is a ubiquitous structural feature of all kinds of narrative texts. According to Peer & Chatman (2001) and Prince (1987), the term refers to the phenomenon that the content of a narrative, the ostensible narrative elements such as events, characters and circumstances, are presented from some position or point of view. Sometimes, it is traditional in some societies, for example, the English-speaking world to use point of view to correspond to narrative perspective. The aim is to make a distinction between narratives in which the story is filtered through the consciousness of a character (reflector figure) and those in which there is a view from 'outside' (defined in different ways). Stanzel's dichotomy between internal and external perspective, in combination with the notion of narrator vs. reflector mode, is an attempt to reconcile this distinction within the scope of one model. In the domain of mode (oppositional pair: narrator vs. reflector) the emphasis is on who or what mediates the story (the narrator's language or the mind of the reflector figure). As far as perspective is concerned, an outside (and unrestricted) view of the fictional world (external perspective) stands in contrast to a view from within, which is limited to the knowledge and the perceptions of the reflector figure (internal perspective).

Owing to the multiplicity of the concepts and apparent overlapping of the usage of point of view and perspective (especially after an analysis of the theories of Stanzel, Brooks and Warren, Friedman and Booth), Genette (1980) and after him Bal (1985), radically restructured the concept of point of view and introduced the

narratological term *focalisation*. A basic premise of their model is a distinction between perspective or mood ("Who sees?") and voice ("Who speaks?"). Hence, according to them, there appears to be a confusion of some sort. Genette, for instance, argues that:

> Most of the theoretical works on this subject (which are mainly classifications) suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion between the questions *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?*—or, more simply, the question *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?* (p. 186).

Therefore, according to Genette, there is the need to clarify the apparent distortion about the source of narration at the level of discourse with those about the centre of perception or orientation that determines the "what" and "how" of a story.

Genette, consequently, proposes a three-term typology based on focalisation to address the problems of point of view. The first is the narrative in which the narrator "knows more than the character, or more exactly *says* more than any of the characters knows" (p. 189), which he christened "nonfocalised narrative" or narrative with "zero focalisation". The second type of typology is when "the narrator says only what a given character knows" (p. 189). This is the narrative with "internal focalisation", whether that focalisation is fixed, variable or multiple. Using focalised narrative, according to Genette, "… this is the narrative with 'point of view' after Lubbock, or with 'restricted field' after Blin (1954); Pouillon (1946) calls it 'vision with'" (p. 189). The third type is the narrative with "external focalisation", in which "the narrator says less than the character knows" (p. 189). This type is the "objective or "behaviourist narrative, what Pouillon refers to as "vision from without".

Bal (1985) also expounds on Genette's model and argues that "focalisation is the relationship between the 'vision', the agent that sees, and that which is seen." Thus, for Bal, "…this relationship is a component of the story part, of the content of the narrative text: A says that B sees what C is doing". According to Bal, "… sometimes that difference is void…", as captured in the following quotation:

> When the reader is presented with a vision as directly as possible, the different agents then cannot be isolated, they coincide. That is a form of 'stream of consciousness.' But the speech act of narrating is still different from the vision, the memories, the sense perceptions, thoughts, that are being told. Nor can that vision be conflated with the events they focus, orient, interpret. Consequently, focalization belongs in the story, the layer between the linguistic text and the fabula. (p. 146)

She further goes on to say that:

> Because the definition of focalisation refers to a relationship, each pole of that relationship, the subject and the object of focalisation, must be studied separately. The subject of focalization, the focaliser, is the point from which the elements are viewed. That point can lie with a character (i.e. an element of the fabula), or outside it. If the focaliser coincides with the character, that character will have an advantage over the other characters. The reader watches with the character's eyes and will, in principle, be inclined to accept the vision presented by that character. (p. 146)

Thus, Bal corroborates Genette's position that narrator and focaliser are not to be conflated even though they may, sometimes, be merged as one, in some narratives, as observed in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

In addition, by drawing a distinction between the focalising instance and the focalised, and between visible and invisible focalised objects, Bal manages to improve on the terminology. In a figural narrative such as James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), (as cited in Fludernik, 2009), Stephen Dedalus, the reflector figure, is the focaliser or the focalising instance. For him, his own self

is an invisible focalised object (he can see and discuss his own thoughts and feelings).

By contrast, in the world, such as the people around him, Stephen can only contemplate visible focalised objects (invisible objects and other people's minds, cannot be focalised, as it shall later be observed in the discussion of the novels under study.) In an authorial narrative like Fielding's *Tom Jones*, the focalising instance is actually the narrator, who sees visible and invisible focalised objects in the fictional world; the type of narrator Bal calls a *narrator-focaliser*. In a first-person narrative, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), for instance (as it shall be seen in the discussion later), the narrator is the focalising instance. However, she is just as limited in her perspective as the reflector figure Stephen Dedalus, with the exception of her own self; she can only perceive visible focalised objects. As a result, Bal explains limited perspective as a restriction of perspective to an external view of invisible focalised objects. (Seeing oneself is always possible; hence, the authorial narrator has access to her/his own thoughts.

Despite the shortfalls or the apparent criticisms that are levelled against the Genettean model, this study still considers it as appropriate for the analysis of Adichie's novels, as it is the pioneering theory in the field with a clearly distinctive classification of the various categories of narrative analysis. The theory also provides a plausible methodology for the analysis of the selected texts. Furthermore, "the distinction between 'who sees' and 'who speaks' is essential, and it very decidedly advances the theory of narratology as well as the practice of textual analysis" (Bal & Lewin, 1983, p. 238). They further reiterate that "never

before has the confusion between the two agents been explicitly exposed, and never has the remedy for it been presented so lucidly" (Bal & Lewin, 1983, p. 238).

It is, therefore, appropriate to examine, closely, how the Genettean categorical aspect of mood, perspective (which shall henceforth be referred to with the variant focalisation), is employed in aiding a clearer understanding of Adichie's novels, by bringing to bear the various strands of focalisation and style of presentation of the narratives adopted by Adichie in the novels, *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. Consequently, the focus of this chapter will be to examine the method or methods of focalisation and how the voice or multiple voices in the novels under study are combined to achieve unified and coherent narratives. To this end, the discussion will exhibit the techniques through which the novels' model of speckled narrative focalisations and narrative structural sections reveal Adichie's writing style. The analysis will also aid how issues of characterisation, theme, setting, among others, are revealed through the narrative perspective adopted by the author.

Purple Hibiscus

This novel tells the story of Papa Eugene Achike, a prosperous and powerful entrepreneur who is also an enthusiastic Catholic and an Anglophile, and his family, comprising his wife, Mama Beatrice; daughter, Kambili and son, Jaja. The novel is about the growth and maturation of Kambili, the principal character, from self-ignorance to self-discovery and self-awareness, under the regime of her dictatorial father, Papa Eugene. Kambili, a fifteen-year old girl, who is endowed with such an enormous responsibility, narrates the story in the novel.

She is a character in the novel and also doubles as the focaliser through whose eyes or perspective the narrative is seen and experienced: the type Bal (1985) refers to us "narrator-focaliser" and Genette (1980), as a "homodiegetic" narrator (narrator present as a character in the story she/he tells). Genette goes further to provide a secondary distinction within the homodiegetic type; that is between "…the homodiegetic with a protagonist-narrator ("hero or heroine") and the homodiegetic with a witness-narrator…" (p. 102). For the former, he labels as ""autodiegetic" because to some extent, according to Genette, "represents the strong degree of the homodiegetic" (p. 245). A close reading of *Purple Hibiscus* reveals that the narrative is presented from the perspective of the autodiegetic character, Kambili, who also doubles as the focaliser of the narrative information. The discussion will, thus, examine how the author reveals and develops such issues as character, theme, setting, etc. in the novel, through Kambili's focalisation.

Kambili's Focalisation of Papa Eugene

The novel opens with a description of the state of affairs in the Achike home, when the narrator tells the reader what has become of their home. Thus, "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" (p. 11). This reveals to the reader that perhaps, the Achike home was a peaceful one but has started to "fall apart". Incidentally, this revelation is made manifest on Palm Sunday, when they have just returned from church. Palm Sunday is a Christian moveable feast that falls on the Sunday before Easter. The feast commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in

each of the four canonical Gospels. Christ's, entering the city while sitting on a donkey, is symbolic of an arrival in peace rather than as war-waging king arriving on a horse. However, as religious as Papa Eugene is described in the novel, it becomes surprising that immediately after such a peaceful ceremony, his home turns violent and begins to crumble.

Kambili, the autodiegetic narrator, reveals more about the character of Papa Eugene to the reader by intimating that:

> Papa, wearing a long, grey 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 the ash-covered thumb and slowly, meaningfully enunciated every word of "dust and unto dust you shall return." (p. 11)

There is more on the revelation of the character of Papa Eugene, which is seen through the perspective of the focalising narrator, Kambili. Here, Papa's attributes as a perfectionist are made manifest when the narrator intimates that:

> Papa always sat in the front pew for Mass, at the end beside the middle aisle, with Mama, Jaja, and me sitting next to him. He was first to receive communion. Most people did not kneel to receive communion at the marble alter, with the blond life-size Virgin Mary mounted nearby, but Papa did. 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. Afterward, he sat back on his seat and watched the rest of the congregation troop to the alter… (p. 12)

Papa is held so much in high esteem in his community and in the church, to the extent that during the sermons, his status is ranked even higher than that of Christ: "Father Benedict usually referred to the pope, Papa, and Jesus-in that order. He used Papa to illustrate the gospels. 'When we let our light shine before men, we are reflecting Christ's Triumphant Entry'…" (p. 12). This shows the kind of reverence

they accord Papa, to the extent that he is even held in a higher esteem than Jesus, in terms of the comparison made, "pope, Papa, and Jesus".

Despite the high admiration accorded Papa, his innate dominant character, which also portrays him as a violent character, becomes manifest, as revealed by the narrator in the quote below:

> When Papa did not see Jaja go to the alter that Palm Sunday when everything changed, he banged his leather-bound missal, with the red and green ribbons peeking out, down on the dining table when we got home. The table was glass, heavy glass. It shook, as did the palm fronds on it. (p. 14)

This disclosure of Papa's character by the focaliser goes contrary to the fact that he serves as a role model for the church. His brutalities against his family and his unsympathetic attitude to some members in his hometown, Abba, all develop to a crescendo as the novel progresses. Instances of these incidents are all perceived and revealed through the perspective of Kambili, the focalising narrator.

Papa's despotic nature is additionally manifested in how he treats the people around him, and his immediate family receives the bulk of his brutalities. For instance, when Kambili is questioned by Ezinne regarding why she does not spend time with the other girls after school, which has earned her the nickname, "backyard snob", she makes the reader know that: "Once, Kevin told Papa I took a few minutes longer, and Papa slapped my left and right cheeks at the same time, so his huge palms left parallel marks on my face and ringing in my ears for days" (p. 59).

Also, Papa beats his wife and children when Kambili is allowed to eat some cornflakes, "ten minutes before Mass", before she takes Panadol for her menstrual cramps. The evidence here reveals that the assault on Papa's family transcends the

psychological or emotional to the physical, as he beats Mama, Kambili and Jaja with his leather belt; his reason being that they are desecrating the Eucharist, by allowing Kambili to eat so she can take some painkiller for her menstrual cramps. The autodiegetic narrator makes the reader appreciate this in the following narrative:

> "What are you doing, Kambili?"... "You are eating ten minutes before Mass? Ten minutes before Mass?"… "Has the devil asked you all to go on errands for him?"... "Has the devil built a tent in my house?" He turned to Mama. "You sit there and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, *maka nnidi*?" He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back. Sometimes I watched the Fulani nomads, white jellabas flapping against their legs in the wind, making clucking sounds as they herded their cows across the roads in Enugu with a switch, each smack of the switch swift and precise. Papa was like a Fulani nomad – although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung his belt at Mama, Jaja, and me, muttering that the devil would not win. We did not move more than two steps away from the leather belt that switched through the air. (pp. 109-110)

Here, the focalisation is on Papa, and the narrator details to the reader a vivid description of what he does to his family. Her focalisation shifts from Papa to the belt, then to what Papa does with it. Kambili's focalisation of the whole incident enables the reader to perceive how Papa beats his family members in turn, by shifting the object of the focus of her focalisation from Jaja to Mama, then to herself, as the belt lands on various parts of their bodies. The description is so violent and repulsive that it has effect on the visual imagery of the reader. It creates, in the mind of the reader, the inhumane treatment that Papa subjects his own family to.

There are other instances of the revelation of the character of Papa Eugene by the focalising narrator, Kambili. The climax of his brutalities on his family is narrated in a series of events, culminating in the final hospitalisation of Kambili and the miscarriage Mama suffers. The narrator informs the reader of Jaja's "deformed finger", when she relates that she "…took the painting out of the bag and unwrapped it. Jaja stared at it, running his deformed finger over the paint, the finger that had very little feeling" (p. 214). Apparently, this is Jaja's "share" of the punishment he receives from Papa when he (Jaja) and Kambili happen to stay in the same house, at their aunt's (Ifeoma's) place at Nsukka, with Papa-Nnukwu, Papa's father and their grandfather. Papa considers this act a sin because he sees his father as a heathen. For Kambili's punishment, Papa pours hot water on her feet. This incident is recounted in a astounding scene where one wonders why a father who loves his family so dearly will commit such an atrocity on a daughter:

> Climb into the tub," Papa said again.
>
> *I stepped into the tub and stood looking at him. It didn't seem that he was going to get a stick, and I felt fear, stinging and raw, fill my bladder and my ears. I did not know what he was going to do to me. It was easier when I saw a stick, because I could rub my palms together and tighten the muscles of my calves in preparation. He had never asked me to stand inside a tub.* Then I noticed the kettle on the floor, close to Papa's feet, the green kettle Sisi used to boil hot water for tea and garri, the one that whistled when the water started to boil. Papa picked it up. "You knew your grandfather was coming to Nsukka, did you not?" he asked in Igbo.
>
> "Yes Papa."…
>
> "You knew you would be sleeping in the same house as a heathen?"
>
> "Yes Papa."
>
> "So you saw the sin clearly and you walked right into it?"
>
> I nodded. "Yes Papa." (p. 200)

> "Kambili, you are precious." His voice quavered now, like someone speaking at a funeral, choked with emotion. "You should strive for perfection. You should not see sin and walk right into it." He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face. I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed.
> "That is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin. You burn your feet," he said……I wanted to say "Yes, Papa," because he was right, but the burning on my feet was climbing up, in swift courses of excruciating pain, to my head and lips and eyes. Papa was holding me with one wide hand, pouring the water carefully with the other. I did not know that the sobbing voice – "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!"- was mine until the water stopped and I realised my mouth was moving and the words were still coming out. Papa put the kettle down, wiped at his eyes. I stood in the scalding tub; I was too scared to move – the skin of my feet would peel off if I tried to step out of the tub. (p. 201)

Evidently, this lengthy narrative is immersed with many descriptive words that appeal to the senses so much so that the reader is able to visualise and experience the kind of pain Kambili undergoes.

Here, Kambili's focalisation of Papa enables her to vividly describe his movements, actions and inactions in obscurity, highlighting the oddity and newness of the situation. From the italicised part of the extract, it is realised that the focus of the narration is on Kambili herself and how she is awed by the newness of Papa's instructions and what he is going to do to her. She is, therefore, kept in oblivion and this fills her bladder with fear, "stinging and raw" as she is ordered to step into the tub, unsure of what Papa is going to do to her. The focus of the narration then shifts to the kettle, "…the green kettle Sisi used to boil hot water for tea and garri, the one that whistled when the water started to boil". The one that was used to boil water for the tea they sipped that burned Papa's love into them. The kettle, here, is

symbolic and reminisce of the pain the Achike family knows: only that this time, Kambili is not sure what Papa is going to do with it (kettle).

Kambili then shifts her focus from the kettle to what Papa does with it: he picks it up and lowers it into the tub, "tilted it towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face." (p. 201). The slowness with which Papa performs this action slows the infliction of the pain, which also deepens the extent of the damage being caused to Kambili. The focalisation then shifts from Papa and his demeanour, to the hot water in the kettle, to prepare the minds of the audience in anticipation of the imminent danger and pain to be caused to Kambili. "I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet" (p. 201).

The sight of the steam before the water suggests the intensity of the imminent danger and pain she endures and this is manifested in her description. "…The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed" (p. 201). This initial scream of pain and anguish does not make Papa stop pouring the water, as he "… was holding me with one wide hand, pouring the water carefully with the other." The pain meted out to Kambili is so excruciating that she loses consciousness and becomes hysterical, as she tells the reader that "I did not know that the sobbing voice – 'I'm sorry! I'm sorry!'- was mine until the water stopped and I realised my mouth was moving and the words were still coming out. Papa put the kettle down, wiped at his eyes. I stood in the scalding tub; I was

too scared to move – the skin of my feet would peel off if I tried to step out of the tub" (p. 201).

It must be noted that the back and forth shifts of the object of focalisation shows the dexterity of the power of description of the narrator. Thus, in the narrative, the reader gets the impression of Papa as a symbol of danger, which is also associated with the kettle. In addition, the narrative, which is entirely told from the perspective of the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, enables the reader to observe a corresponding progression in the objects of focalisation as the narrative shifts from Kambili – kettle – Papa and then back to Kambili. There is, therefore, a swift movement from her role as the focalising narrator of spatial viewpoint, faultlessly into her cognitive and physical domain, sanctioning her function as a conscious, feeling and thinking character. Hence, the reader sees and feels what Kambili sees and feels and this is done in the gradual and accumulative unfolding of the focal points that are reflected in her purview. All this aid in heightening the tension surrounding the awareness that is being created in Kambili and Jaja about the need to have a "voice" of their own.

From the foregoing character revelation about Papa Eugene, it appears that he is all-evil or that he does not care about his family, raising concern regarding the theme of parenting. In effect, one can make the argument that this presentation appears to be skewed towards an unfavourable presentation of Papa mainly because the entire perspective is from the fixed internal focaliser's point of view, who being the focalising character is perceiving things only from her perspective. As a result, Papa is bound to be seen in a negative light as she focalises. The converse can be

different, for example, if the focaliser is zero or Papa is the focaliser here, in a multiple internal focalisation. Thus, Papa makes the reader know that he seeks the best for his family and always believes in perfection. Perhaps, his methods of achieving perfection are what become questionable, as seen in the interaction with Kambili below:

> "Why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges. Because God has given you much, he expects much from you. He expects perfection. I didn't have a father who sent me to the best schools. My father spent his time worshipping gods of wood and stone. I would be nothing today but for the priests and sisters at the mission. I was a houseboy for the parish priest for two years. Yes, a houseboy. Nobody dropped me off at school. I walked eight miles every day to Nimo until I finished elementary school. I was a gardener for the priests while I attended St. Gregory's Secondary School." (p. 55)

Papa feels that despite the difficulties he went through while growing up, he has managed to succeed. He, therefore, does not see why his children (and family) should not strive at perfection, considering the fact that they seem to have everything at their disposal.

It must be noted, again, that the nature of the violence portrayed in the novel, from the very first page, is in twofold: physically and emotionally. Physically, Papa continually and virtually, ritualistically, assaults his wife and children, usually to within the edge or limits of their lives. However, emotionally, he is equally perpetrator and victim of an inexorable wave of violence he alone unleashes. The variance between the two is that while the family tolerates his mistreatment in the present, the flickers of a colonial upbringing and education haunt him. His sister, Ifeoma, at a point, describes him as "… too much of a colonial product" (p. 21),

while his father, Papa-Nnukwu, regrets having sent him to a Catholic missionary school, when he says, "I should not have let him follow those missionaries… Still, I say it was the missionaries that misled my son" (p. 91).

In effect, the violence Papa unleashes is symbolic of the "self-hatred of the colonised mimic, a weak and essentially hollow self" (da Silva, 2012). Hewett (2005) also adds that Papa's "character acquires a political meaning that is at once absolutely central to his familial function and overwrites it. That tension between speaking up to and against a culture of violence and destruction that often are partly self-inflicted is in some ways reflective of the way *Purple Hibiscus* balances national, ethnic and gender themes".

Furthermore, Kambili's focalisation of Papa Eugene also reveals a lot about the relationship between father and daughter that transcends just the familial relationship. Most of these descriptions of their relationship seem to suggest a feeling that is abhorrent yet nurtured in Kambili since her infancy. For instance, when Papa offers them (Kambili and Jaja) some of his tea, which "was always too hot", she recounts how she always takes it with joy:

> I would hold the cup with both hands and raise it to my lips. One sip. The tea was always too hot, always burned my tongue, and if lunch was something peppery, my raw tongue suffered. But it didn't matter, because I knew that when the tea burned my tongue, it burned Papa's love into me. (p. 16)

This show of endurance of pain for love is buttressed in the cliché, "love endures all pain". Here, Kambili endures the pain caused her by the tea offered by Papa but does not complain because of the "love" she has for him.

Quite a significant number of these descriptions abound in the text. When Jaja leaves the dining table before Papa has said the prayer after meals, Kambili becomes apprehensive by the feud mounting between Papa and Jaja and develops a cough. Later in the evening, when Papa goes to Kambili's room, she recounts the apparent intimacy that ensues between herself and Papa:

> Papa came into my room, my mattress sank in when he sat and smoothed my cheeks and asked if I wanted anything else. Mama was already making me ofe nsala. I said no, and we sat silently, our hands clasped for a long time. Papa's breathing was always noisy, but now he panted as if he were out of breath, and *I wondered what he was thinking, if perhaps he was running in his mind, running away from something*. I did not look at his face because I did not want to see the rashes that spread across every inch of it, so many, so evenly spread that they made his skin look bloated. (pp. 22-23: *my emphasis added*)

The revelation Kambili makes about the intimacy between herself and Papa is significant. However, the reader is restricted in terms of the amount of information made available. The autodiegetic narrator admits that she does not know, she "wondered" what Papa is thinking while their hands are clasped for a long time, or what is making him pant as if he is out of breath. Perhaps, it is the fear of the unknown, of feeling something he should not be feeling while holding his daughter's hand "for a long time", and all this information is unavailable to the reader due to the restrictions of the internal focalising narrator.

In consequence of Genette's methodology, Kambili's view or perception of the narrative information is restricted to a "field", as an internal focaliser. That is, she only has access to "a selection of narrative information with respect to what was traditionally called *omniscience*" (Genette, 1988, p. 74). In effect, the "fear of the unknown" makes Kambili refuse to look at Papa's face to see the effect of their

intimacy on him. The autodiegetic narrator, therefore, has a limited view of the narrative information and as such, can only narrate the amount of information available to her. Thus, since the focalising character, Kambili, doubles as the narrator, she is only able to tell the reader what she perceives and understands, or what she feels the reader should know.

Also, in a discussion between Papa and his family about the need for Nigerians to have a renewed democracy, Kambili remarks about Papa's statement that:

> It sounded important, the way he said it, but then most of what Papa said sounded important. He liked to lean back and look upwards when he talked, as though he was searching for something in the air. I would focus on his lips, the movement, and sometimes I forgot myself, sometimes I wanted to stay like that forever, listening to his voice, to the important things he said. It was the same way I felt when he smile, his face breaking open like a coconut with the brilliant white meat inside. (p. 33)

And when Papa finally compliments ("Yes, yes") to her response, after she has said the right response he is expecting her to say, "God will deliver us", she becomes so elated that when Papa reaches out and holds her hand, she "felt as though my mouth was full of melting sugar" (p. 34). Ordinarily, such a compliment would not warrant such a reaction. However, exaggerated as this may appear, it shows the gradual growing of a forbidden intimacy between Papa and Kambili, which is revealed to the reader through her focalisation.

Another instance of the revelation of the growing intimacy between Papa and Kambili is seen when Mama suffers the miscarriage and is hospitalised. That evening, when Papa comes back from the hospital and needs some comforting, he

resorts to Kambili. In her rendition, she makes the reader know what transpires between them:

> "Your mother will be back tomorrow, about the time you get back from school. She will be fine," he said.
> "Yes, Papa," I looked away from his face, back at my books. He held my shoulders, rubbing them in gentle circular motions.
>
> "Stand up," he said. I stood up and he hugged me, pressed me close so that I felt the beat of his heart under his soft chest. (p. 42)

The intimacy exhibited between Papa and Kambili, as perceived through the autodiegetic narrator, is so significant that it leaves the reader with many questions unanswered. From the extract above, it becomes evident that perhaps, what Papa wants from Kambili is not just a "hug" but "something more" which will make him want to press her "close so that I felt the beat of his heart under his soft chest". Here, the use of the expression, "pressed me close" heightens the expectation of the closeness to yield a sexual effect.

When Kambili comes second in her school exam, she becomes sad because she knows Papa will not be proud of her. He has always instilled in them the need to be perfect in all they do. She is, therefore, worried that she will lose Papa's affection. She makes her feelings known to the reader in the following quotation: she

> Needed him to touch the back of my neck and tell me that I was fulfilling God's purpose. I needed him to hug me close and say that from whom much is given, much is expected. I needed him to smile at me, in that way that lit up his face, *that warmed something inside me*. But I had come second. I was stained by failure. (p. 47) (*my emphasis added*)

Later that evening, Papa calls Kambili upstairs so they can discuss her results, and the vivid description she gives about the incident serves a significant purpose to the

argument being made about the possible forbidden incestuous relationship perceptible between Papa and Kambili. In Kambili's narration,

> Papa said, "Kambili, come upstairs." I followed him. As he climbed the stairs in his red silk pyjamas, his buttocks quivered and shook like akamu, properly made akamu, jellylike. The cream décor in Papa's bedroom was changed every year but always to a slightly different shade of cream. The plush rug that sank in when you stepped on it was plain cream; the curtains had only a little brown embroidery at the edges; the cream leather armchairs were placed close together as if two people were sitting in an intimate conversation. All that cream blended and made the room seem wider, as if it never ended, as if you could not run even if you wanted to, because there was nowhere to run to. When I had thought of heaven as a child, I visualised Papa's room, the softness, the creaminess, the endlessness. I would snuggle into Papa's arms when harmattan thunderstorm raged outside, flinging mangoes against the window netting and making the electric wires hit each other and spark bright orange flames. Papa would lodge me between his knees or wrap me in the cream blanket that smelled of safety. (p. 49)

Papa then speaks and makes his reactions to Kambili's performance in the exam known to her:

> "Kambili," Papa said, breathing deeply. "You didn't put in your best this term. You came second because you chose to." His eyes were sad. Deep and sad. I wanted to touch his face, to run my hand over his rubbery cheeks. There were stories in his eyes that I would never know. (p. 49)

Subsequently, when Kambili comes first the following term, she becomes so elated and indicates that "that night, I fell asleep hugging close the image of Papa's face lit up, the sound of Papa's voice telling me how proud of me he was, how I had fulfilled God's purpose for me" (p. 61). These poignant descriptions of the intimacy between Papa and Kambili reveal a lot to suggest a possible perceptible incestuous relationship between father and daughter and this closeness

can best be explained with reference to psychoanalytic criticism (Sigmund Freud's Electra Complex).

According to Freud, the Electra complex is an exclusive experience of the girl-child, which is contrasted with the Oedipus complex, where the male-child experience is such that the male begins to transfer his sexual attentions from the breast to the mother. This is the infantile stage within the phallic stage, between ages three and six. According to Freud, again, all male infants develop this sexual attachment to the mother and see the father as a sexual rival, as seen in the relationship between Papa and Jaja, where Jaja is usually in conflict with Papa. The male-child realises he has a penis like his father, whilst his mother and sister(s) have a different sexual tool but fear of castration by the father prevents the male-child from continuing with his incestuous feelings towards his mother. He represses his feelings in the hope that one day, he will have a woman as his father now has his (male-child's) mother. Unconsciously, this awareness marks a transition from the Oedipus complex to a Castration complex and a successful progression into manhood. With this move, the child grows up free of all the complexities of the Oedipus complex.

With the Electra complex, the initial experience is similar to the Oedipus complex, where the sexual desires are for the mother during the oral phase. However, when the girl-child realises that she has the same sexual organs as the mother, she realises that she is already castrated and turns her desires on her father, who possesses a penis. Here, too, she usually fails to seduce the father and turns her attention back to her mother with whom she now identifies in a non-erotic

relationship. This marks her conversion to womanhood, with the awareness that she will, like her mother, one day, possess a man.

According to Freud, most women, however, suffer from "penis envy" (desire for a penis) as they grow up and this is only assuaged when they finally enter into a relationship with a man when they (women) are in their teens or adult life. This is the situation Kambili and Papa find themselves in. However, and as the theory stipulates, she becomes castrated when she finally meets Father Amadi, a young priest with whom she identifies with in another amorous relationship. Eventually, when Papa dies by Mama's poisoning, Kambili is able to accommodate the pain of the loss, to the amazement of the reader. This is because she is not able to seduce Papa, she turns her attention back to Mama in a non-erotic relationship. Thus, in the end, the reader sees Mama and Kambili together in their quest to welcome Jaja back home from prison.

Consequently, through Kambili's focalisation of Papa Eugene, his character traits, as well as issues relating to parenting, domestic violence, among others are revealed to the reader. Equally significant is the author's treatment of sex and sexuality in *Purple Hibiscus*, as Adichie is very subtle in her treatment of sex and its consummation in the novel. She is surreptitious in her treatment of the subject of sex and its consummation that she shrouds it in secrecy and silences, as evidenced in the relationship and interactions between Papa and Kambili, which is in stark contrast to her handling of the same issues in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*.

Kambili's Focalisation of Mama Beatrice

The first time the reader is introduced to Mama is through the eyes of Kambili, the autodiegetic narrator. From the reader's very first encounter with Mama, the impression of a home-manager is created about her regarding how she preserves the palm fronds:

> Mama placed the fresh palm fronds, which were wet with holy water, on the dining table and then went upstairs to change. Later, she would knot the palm fronds into sagging cross shapes and hang them on the wall beside our gold-framed family photo. They would stay there until next Ash Wednesday, when we would take the fronds to church, to have them burned for ash. (p. 1)

When the narrator first describes Mama to the reader, it is in a somewhat unfavourable manner, as compared to descriptions about Papa Eugene. In her description of Mama, she tells the reader that:

> Then Mama came in, her rubber slippers making *slap-slap* sounds on the marble floor. She had changed from her sequined Sunday wrapper and the blouse with puffy sleeves. Now she had a plain tie-dye wrapper tied loosely around her waist and that white T-shirt she wore every other day. It was a souvenir from a spiritual retreat she and Papa had attended; the words GOD IS LOVE crawled over her sagging breast. She stared at the figurine pieces on the floor and then knelt and started to pick them up with her bare hands. (p. 16)

This initial description of Mama's appearance is so vivid that it pits her against Kambili. This revelation raises questions surrounding the relationship between mother and daughter, and one wonders why a daughter would describe the breast that fed her during her infancy as "sagging" and the inscription "GOD IS LOVE" as "crawling over her sagging breast". Again, the description is devoid of the closeness of bond that a mother is supposed to share with a daughter. In addition, it reveals the monotonous way of Mama's dressing. Thus, in the mist of abundance,

she still clings to "that white T-shirt she wore every other day". Not that she bought it but it was even a "souvenir from a spiritual retreat she and Papa had attended". On the contrary, it is Jaja who shares a close bond with Mama, while he is usually in conflict with Papa.

When at the beginning of the novel "things started to fall apart at home", it is because Jaja has refused to go to communion and Papa throws "his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère". It is Jaja who cautions Mama about her safety when she is cleaning up the mess. The narrator informs the reader that "Jaja knelt beside Mama, flattened the church bulletin he held into a dustpan, and placed a jagged ceramic piece on it. 'Careful, Mama, or those pieces will cut your fingers', he said" (p. 16). The autodiegetic narrator is marvelled at the fact that despite the growing tension in the Achike home, Mama and Jaja do not appear to be bothered and act as if everything is still normal. In the narrator's words, the reader is made aware of this development: "I pulled at one of the cornrows underneath my black church scarf to make sure I was not dreaming. Why were they acting so normal, Jaja and Mama, as if they did not know what had just happened?" (p. 16). What had just happened was that Jaja had talked back at Papa, something that has never happened. Subsequently, many of the tensed moments in the Achike home are because of the conflicts between Jaja and Papa.

It must be noted that the Achike home is divided along the lines of female-male closeness, with the male-male or female-female relationships at polar ends. Thus, from Kambili's narration, it becomes evident that her relationship with Papa, as has already been discussed, goes beyond the familial relationship between father

and daughter (a situation which the Electra complex of Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic criticism explains well). As the Electra complex stipulates, Kambili perceives Mama as a rival and it is, therefore, not surprising that most of the initial descriptions she presents about her are not favourable; sometimes even to the point of competing with her for Papa's attention and affection.

It is evident from the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili's perspective that even though she cherishes the idea of having a sibling, she still cannot fathom her parents sharing a bed together. Thus, when Mama informs her and Jaja, "*Nne*, you're going to have a brother or a sister", Kambili reveals to the reader her thoughts concerning the situation:

> "God works in mysterious ways." I did not know she had been trying to have a baby since the last miscarriage almost six years ago. I could not even think of her and Papa together, on the bed they shared, custom-made and wider than the conventional king-size. (p. 29)

This feeling of Kambili's seems legitimate because there appears to be little or no visible or even imagined intimacy shared between Papa and Mama. It is, therefore, not surprising that Kambili shares these sentiments with the reader.

However, it is also conceivable that her feeling of seeing Mama as a possible rival for Papa's affection leads her towards these sentiments. Here, too, Kambili is restricted in her knowledge of information relating to all the characters because of the kind of focalising function she is assigned in the narrative: internal or restricted focaliser. She is, therefore, not able to tell the reader what is not revealed to her, both as a character and narrator, demonstrating one of the weaknesses of Genette's typology of focalisation. This notwithstanding, there is ample evidence in the text to show that this perceived ignorance of knowledge of

certain or selected knowledge of narrative information is deliberate to achieve the purpose of the various types of relationships in the novel.

When Mama returns from the hospital after the miscarriage, her children are happy to see her and she, likewise. She hugs them and the narrator makes the reader know that:

> She wore the same white T-shirt with GOD IS LOVE written on the front. Her green wrapper hung lower than usual on her waist; it had been knotted with a lazy effort at the side. Her eyes were vacant, like the eyes of those mad people who wandered around the roadside garbage dumps in town, pulling grimy, torn canvas bags with their life fragments inside. (pp. 42-43)

One wonders the extent of the comparison made by the simile here, in this extract. The narrator compares the look in her mother's eyes to those of "mad people who wandered around the roadside garbage dumps in town". Even though the description here illustrates the state Mama is in after her loss, the comparison appears to be extreme. It demonstrates the distance between mother and daughter, unlike the already discussed close relationship between father and daughter. There is, here again, another type of relationship perceptible in the close relationship between Mama and Jaja, while that between Kambili and Mama appears to be distant; situations which the Electra and Oedipus complexes of Freud's Psychoanalytic criticism best aid in explaining.

Mama Beatrice is also revealed to the reader as a quiet and unassuming woman whose belief in the status quo has become a convention, in the way that Papa Eugene is a tool of oppression. She is not left out of Papa's brutalities on the family. In fact, she, like Kambili and Jaja, are at the raw end of Papa's violence.

Mama, as docile and accommodating as the narrator presents her, can only endure as much as she can, because she eventually succumbs under the pressure of the violence meted out to her and the family, to such an extent that she reacts. She finally breaks her silence and that culminates in Papa's death.

Her reaction is not precipitous; however, she reacts at a point that she feels "enough is enough". At one point in the novel, when Jaja and Kambili return home from aunt Ifeoma's place at Nsukka, the narrator makes the reader know that "Mama was at the door when we drove into our compound. Her face was swollen and the area around her right eye was the black-purple shade of an overripe avocado" (p. 197). It becomes apparent that the swelling on Mama's face is not as a result of missing her children who have been away for "…so long, so much longer than ten days" but from Papa's brutalities. The next day, Kambili stares at Mama's eyes and observes that "it appeared to be opening now; it must have been swollen completely shut yesterday" (p. 199). This shows the magnitude of the injury caused and also the level of Papa's viciousness on his family, here, Mama.

Papa's brutalities on his family seem to have no limit as he assaults Kambili to the extent that she falls into a coma and is hospitalised. Kambili is assaulted because she is found in the possession of a painting of Papa-Nnukwu, Papa's father, whom he considers a heathen. This makes Aunty Ifeoma (Papa's sister) advise Mama that "this cannot go on, *nwunye m*…When a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head" (p. 219). It is very ironical that Papa's own sister will advise her sister-in-law to abandon her matrimonial home. However, Papa's actions (brutalities) leave her no other option than that. As kind-hearted and

tolerant as Mama is, she tries to put in some form of defence for Papa when she tells her (Aunty Ifeoma) that "It has never happened like this before. He has never punished her like this before…it has never happened like this before" (p. 219-220). This rather resonates with the fact that Papa is a perpetual molester and that the family is used to his brutalities. However, it is the extent of his beating of his daughter into coma that is to the extreme and "has never happened like this before".

For Mama, her final resolve in dealing with Papa's brutalities is to kill him, by slowly poisoning him. This act by Mama appears to be extremist or radical of the decisions she can take. Nonetheless, it is still one of the options available to her. This is by no means an easy decision for her to take but she takes it after she has another miscarriage. The autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, recounts Mama's ordeal in the following extract:

> Mama looked around the room. She stared at the wall clock for a while, the one with the broken second hand, before she turned to me. "You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, *nne*? Your father broke it on my belly." She sounded as if she were talking about someone else, as if the table were not made of sturdy wood. "My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it… I was six weeks gone…it is true. Eugene did not know, I had not yet told him, but it is true."(p. 253)

This loss, the final of a number of miscarriages, acts like the "last straw that broke the camel's back". Mama is so much affected by it that she becomes irrepressible with emotions as shown in the following quotation:

> Mama slid down to the floor. She sat with her legs stretched out in front of her. It was so undignified, but I lowered myself and sat next to her our shoulders touching. She cried for a long time. She cried until my hand, clasped in hers, felt stiff. She cried until Aunty Ifeoma finished cooking the rotting meat in a spicy stew. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair. (pp. 253-254)

It is after this loss that Mama begins to poison Papa's tea. Thus, Mama's act becomes a reactionary one, after years of silence, while suffering violence and abuse on herself and her family by Papa.

It is in Kambili's focalisation on Mama that the subject of domestic violence, especially on the wife, becomes manifest. As it has already been established in the discussion, it is through Kambili's focalisation, also, that a lot of other issues are revealed to the reader, thereby establishing the significance of conducting a narrative analysis focussing on narrative perspective - focalisation. Subsequently, Papa's demise becomes a catalyst to the liberation of members in his family, especially for Mama and Kambili. Thus, they gain a newfound voice and begin to "speak". The narrator makes the reader know of her amazement at Mama's courage to take control of her home:

> The compound gates were locked. Mama had told Adamu not to open the gates to all the people who wanted to throng in for mgbalu, to commiserate with us. Even members of our umunna who had come from Abba were turned away. Adamu said it was unheard of, to turn sympathisers away. But Mama told him we wished to mourn privately, that they could go to offer Masses for the repose of Papa's soul. I had never heard Mama talk to Adamu that way; I had never even heard Mama talk to Adamu at all. (pp. 292-293)

Papa's death, thus, opens up a new beginning for the Achike family. However, it must be noted that this change does not begin after Papa's death. It begins from Nsukka, as:

> Nsukka started it all; Aunty Ifeoma's little garden next to the verandah of her flat in Nsukka began to lift the silence. Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do. (p. 24)

Consequently, his death marks the completion of the puzzle. His family begins to take more responsibility for things that affect them, with Mama at the helm of affairs.

Kambili's Focalisation of Papa-Nnukwu and Aunty Ifeoma

Papa-Nnukwu and Aunty Ifeoma are discussed together because of their significance in unravelling many of the intricacies in the novel. For instance, Papa's relationship with his own father, Papa-Nnukwu, is an important thematic concern, contrasting very different ways of dealing with colonial identities, colonial knowledge and history. Unlike Papa Eugene, Papa-Nnukwu has held firm to his African roots, favouring a position of nonconformity to the compromised empowerment of neo-colonial relations. The first time the reader hears of Papa-Nnukwu is when the narrator informs the reader of her and Jaja's visit to him at Abba. Papa's caution of how long his children are to stay at his father's place reveals a lot about their relationship. He tells them: "Kambili and Jaja, you will go this afternoon to your grandfather's house and greet him. Kevin will take you. Remember, don't touch any food, don't drink anything. And, as usual, you will stay not longer than fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes" (p. 69)

The extract reveals a lot about the unstrained relationship between father and son – Papa-Nnukwu and Papa Eugene. It also establishes a fact about their relationship that Papa does not consider his father worthy of any visit because he considers him (his father) a heathen. Thus, the only recognition Papa can offer his father is for Kambili and Jaja to go and "greet him" because he (Papa) is advised by his umunna family that "every man who was old enough to be called grandfather

deserved to be greeted by his grandchildren" (p. 69). The children, apparently, are accustomed to Papa's caution since, according to the narrator, "we had heard this every Christmas for the past few years, ever since we had started to visit Papa-Nnukwu" (p. 69).

For Papa himself, he never greets his father, never even visits him, "but he sent slim wads of naira through Kevin (his driver) or through one of our umunna members, slimmer wads than he gave Kevin as a Christmas bonus" (p. 70). Papa justifies his lack of affection towards his father by making the reader know that he does not like to send his children to the home of a heathen. Even though Papa's house at Abba is close by Papa-Nnukwu's, Papa never allows his father into it. The narrator, Kambili, reveals to the reader that "when Papa had decreed that heathens were not allowed in his compound, he had not made an exception for his father" (p. 70-71).

Kambili also draws a stark distinction between Papa's house at Abba and that of Papa-Nnukwu's. She makes the reader know that "as Kevin drove us out of the compound later that morning, I turned to allow my eyes to stroke, once again, the gleaming white walls and pillars of our house, the perfect silver-coloured water arch the fountain made" (p. 70). This description of the elegance of Papa's home in Abba is contrasted sharply with Papa-Nnukwu's in just a couple of paragraphs apart, in the narrative. According to the autodiegetic narrator,

> Jaja swung open Papa-Nnukwu's creaking wooden gate, which was so narrow that Papa might have to enter sideways if he ever were to visit. The compound was barely a quarter of the size of our backyard in Enugu. Two goats and a few chickens sauntered around, nibbling and pecking at drying stems of grass. The house that stood in the middle of the compound was small, compact like dice, and it was hard to imagine Papa and Aunty Ifeoma growing up here. It looked just like the pictures of houses I used to draw in kindergarten: a square house with a square door at the centre and two square windows on each side. The only difference was that Papa-Nnukwu's house had a verandah, which was bounded by rusty metal bars. The first time Jaja and I visited, I had walked in looking for the bathroom, and Papa-Nnukwu had laughed and pointed at the outhouse, a closet-size building of unpainted cement blocks with a mat of entwined palm fronds pulled across the gaping entrance. (p. 71)

This vivid narrative of Papa-Nnukwu's home presents a picturesque atmosphere of a destitute environment and also demonstrates the level of deficiency he is living in, in the midst of the abundance or affluence Papa is enjoying. Here, the focalisation begins from the swinging open of Papa Nnukwu's "creaking gate, which was so narrow", to the compound, which is also described in detail to reveal the goats and chickens "nibbling and pecking at drying stems of grass". It then shifts to the "house that stood in the middle of the compound", which is also portrayed in much detail to make one "imagine Papa and Aunty Ifeoma growing up here". The details of the description of Papa-Nnukwu's condition is so pathetic that the narrator tells the reader that when she and Jaja get to his home,

> Papa-Nnukwu was sitting on a low stool on the verandah, bowls of food on a raffia mat before him. He rose as we came in, a wrapper was slung across his body and tied behind his neck, over a once white singlet now browned by age and yellowed at the armpits. (pp. 71-72)

When he invites his grandchildren, Jaja and Kambili, to come and eat with him, they are to share the "flaky fufu and watery soup bereft of chunks of fish or meat" (p. 72) with him. Meanwhile, at the same time, Papa is distributing Christmas

packages to the scores of people who have thronged his compound to greet and wish him well. It is this treatment of Papa-Nnukwu by Papa that brings him (Papa) into conflict with his sister, Aunty Ifeoma. They have quarrelled and she has stopped speaking to Papa because he has barred Papa-Nnukwu from coming to his house. When Kambili and Jaja overstay their visit to Papa-Nnukwu's by ten more minutes, Papa questions them as to whether they ate any "food sacrificed to idols" or whether they "desecrated their Christian tongues". He, later, asks them to go to their "rooms and pray for forgiveness", for he considers the extra ten minutes they spend a sin that needs to be forgiven.

It is worthy of note to mention the contrast between how Papa treats his own father to how he treats his father in-law. Kambili reveals to the reader that she always wonders how Papa-Nnukwu feels by the treatment meted out to him by his own son, Papa Eugene. However, she cannot know because she has a restricted perspective to the narrative information available to her regarding Papa-Nnukwu's emotions. What Kambili knows, though, is the fact that:

> It was so different from the way Papa had treated my maternal grandfather until he died five years ago. When we arrived at Abba every Christmas, Papa would stop by Grandfather's house at our ikwu nne, Mother's maiden home, before we even drove to our own compound…Papa still talked about him often, his eyes proud, as if Grandfather were his own father. He opened his eyes before many of our people did, Papa would say; he was one of the few who welcomed the missionaries. Do you know how quickly he learned English? When he became an interpreter, do you know how many converts he helped to win? Why, he converted most of Abba himself! He did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now? Papa had a photo of Grandfather, in the full regalia of the Knights of St. john, framed in deep mahogany and hung on our wall back in Enugu. (pp. 75-76)

In effect, Papa prefers to treat his father in-law better than his own father because he feels his father is a heathen while his in-law is a member of the "new-found faith", Christianity. In Papa's conception, his father is "lost" and, therefore, does not deserve any care or attention from him.

From the foregoing discussion on the narrative perspective, and the type of focalisation adopted by Adichie in the narrative, a number of techniques of narrative analysis emerge. Notable among them are themes on parenting, relationships between siblings and other members of the family, both nuclear and extended, among others, as well as other elements such as characterisation, and setting. The point being established in the discussion so far is the usefulness of conducting a narrative analysis while focussing on the narrative mood to arrive at a valid interpretation, without necessarily depending on the traditional method of beginning with the identification of what themes or type of characters, etc. are presented in a narrative (a method which has been and is being practised for quite some time now). The study, therefore, provides a more detailed yet simplified means or alternative to arriving at comprehension of narratives by focussing on how the narrative itself is presented to warrant the identification of such elements as themes, characterisation, setting, etc.

In addition, it is in the focalisation of and on Papa-Nnukwu and Aunty Ifeoma that the autodiegetic narrator, who has a limited or restricted view of narrative information, gets to understand some of the intricacies of the African Traditional Religion (ATR). For instance, she gets to know through Aunty Ifeoma that "Papa-Nnukwu is not a pagan…he is a traditionalist". This gets Kambili

confused because she has been indoctrinated to believe that anyone who is not of the faith is a pagan. She admits that:

> I starred at her. Pagan, traditionalist, what did it matter? He was not Catholic, that was all; he was not of the faith. He was one of the people whose conversion we prayed for so that they did not end in the everlasting torment of hellfire. (p. 89)

Kambili's focalisation on Papa-Nnukwu also affords both her and the reader insight into some of the sources of the religious conflicts in the novel. Especially for Kambili, it provides her the opportunity to grasp most of the things she is ignorant about; hence, her knowledge of such information also becomes that of the reader's.

Papa-Nnukwu provides further details regarding the encounter between the Africans and the colonial masters. In his words, he recalls that:

> 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*! Do you not see? That is why Eugene can disregard me, because he thinks we are equal. (p. 92)

It has been established in the discussion that there are restrictions in the internal focalising narrator's knowledge of narrative information and this limitation affords the other characters the opportunity to present the narrative information themselves, through direct speeches, unmediated by the narrator, as is done in the extract above. In this extraxt, Papa-Nnukwu resigns himself to fate and subsequently claims responsibility for how Papa has turned out to be. He reflects on some of the

traditional expectations of people in the society. He makes the reader know this in the extract below. According to the narrative,

> "This is what our people say to the High God, the Chukwu," Papa-Nnukwu said. "Give me both wealth and a child, but if I must choose one, give me a child because when my child grows, so will my wealth." Papa-Nnukwu stopped, turned to look back towards our house. "*Nekenem, look at me. My son owns that house that can fit in every man in Abba, and yet many times I have nothing to put on my plate. I should not have let him follow those missionaries*." (p. 91: *my emphasis added*)

Here again, Papa Nnukwu is literally given the floor to self-reveal the narrative information, as the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, is restricted to all narrative information associated with religion in the narrative. Thus, Papa Nnukwu provides information to fill this gap. literally, to do so. Also, the tone of this extract expresses Papa-Nnukwu's disappointment and pain at how his son, Papa Eugene, is treating him, after believing in the tradition of having both children and wealth in order to be a prosperous person. In effect, while Papa-Nnukwu wallops in abject poverty and gets some medicine for his aches and pains from Aunty Ifeoma, "when she can put the money together", Papa makes huge donations, especially and ironically for the renovation of the priest's new house at Abba.

This belief in the Igbo culture resonates with a similar one, also in Igbo and other West African communities that states that when you take care of your children, they will also take care of you in your old age. It is this belief that makes Nnu Ego in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) sacrifice her all with the aim of having an enjoyable future (old age). However, as with Papa Nnukwu, Nnu Ego's children abandon her to her misery and she dies a pauper, by the roadside. Here, again, even though Papa-Nnukwu dies with sadness in his heart, about not

being close to his son (the blame which he levels at the doorstep of the missionaries, when he says, "Still, I say it was the missionaries that misled my son" p. 91), Papa Eugene, he is not bitter and even continues to say prayers for him (to the amazement of Kambili, considering how her father treated Papa-Nnukwu).

This situation is contrary to what happens to Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), where she becomes bitter to the extent that even in death, she refuses to grant wishes of all who go to her grave to supplicate for children. A number of reasons have been assigned to her refusal to grant these wishes, notable among them is, perhaps, the view of not granting them children who will abandon their mothers or parents in old age. Thus, it is better not to have children at all than to have children who will be ungrateful to a parent in her or his old age.

Furthermore, Kambili's focalisation of Aunty Ifeoma is very significant as it sheds more light on the intricacies and apparent conflict between Papa Eugene and Papa-Nnukwu. It is she who makes Kambili understand that Papa-Nnukwu is a "traditionalist" and not a "pagan", as she has been made to believe by her father. She also makes the reader know that "it was not the missionaries" that have made Papa the way he is, since she also went to the missionary school. This is to debunk the blame-game some Africans are noted for in blaming the colonial masters for Africa's problems. The point, here, also, is to establish the fact that Papa has the option of becoming someone different from what he eventually has became.

The autodiegetic narrator also reveals, through the interaction between Papa-Nnukwu and Aunty Ifeoma, the subject of how the female child is perceived among Igbos. When Aunty Ifeoma tries to justify why Papa should be blamed for

the way he is and not the missionaries, she reminds Papa Nnukwu that she too went to the missionary school: "did I not go to the missionary school too?", substantiating the point that one can dare to be different if one really wants to: perhaps, Papa does not want to be different, yet he is really different in a different kind of way. In the ensuing interaction between Papa-Nnukwu and Aunty Ifeoma, a lot more is revealed about gender roles and significance of the genders to the Igbo community:

> "But you are a woman. You do not count."
> "Eh? So I don't count? Has Eugene ever asked about your aching leg? If I do not count, then I will stop asking if you rose well in the morning."
> Papa-Nnukwu chuckled. "Then my spirit will haunt you when I join the ancestors."
> "It will haunt Eugene first."
> "I joke with you, *nwa m*. Where would I be today if my *chi* had not given me a daughter?" (p. 91)

From the extract above, it becomes obvious that Papa-Nnukwu's reaction is an impulsive one, which actually represents the societal expectation or perception of the woman. It is only upon a closer reflection that he acknowledges the significance of Aunty Ifeoma in his life. It is, however, ironical that the one (Papa) from whom a lot is expected, sheds his responsibility in the name of Christianity, while Aunty Ifeoma bares all the burden of catering for their father; therefore, shifting the expected gender goalposts.

Moreover, Kambili's focalisation of Aunty Ifeoma and subsequent revelation of her (Aunty Ifeoma) traits serve as a foil for the revelation of the character of Mama. In one breath, they both act as foils to each other by revealing the strengths and weaknesses in their personalities. As a result, as Mama helps the

reader see how strong Aunty Ifeoma is, Aunty Ifeoma also enables the reader to perceive how weak Mama is, at least, until she begins to poison Papa's tea. When Mama recounts how their *umunna* has told "Eugene to take another wife because a man of his stature cannot have just two children", and that it is people like Aunty Ifeoma who have been on her side, Aunty Ifeoma tries to shed taking any credit for that. In the ensuing interaction between them, the reader forms more impressions about their character traits:

> "Stop it, stop being grateful. If Eugene had done that, he would have been the loser, not you."
> "So you say. A woman with children and no husband, what is that?"
> "Me"
> Mama shook her head. "You have come again, Ifeoma. You know what I mean. How can a woman live like that?"…
> "*Nwunye m*, sometimes life begins when marriage ends."
> "You and your university talk. Is this what you tell your students?"
> Mama was smiling… Mama shook her head. "University talk again. A husband crowns a woman's life, Ifeoma. It is what they want". (p. 83)

In this extract, it is purely direct speech (mimesis) and it reduces the restrictions of the internal focaliser who does not have complete knowledge of narrative information. Here, while Mama plays the role of a wife trying to fulfil the traditionally expected roles of the African (Nigerian) woman by being subservient, Aunty Ifeoma also tries to make her see the need to be strong and independent of her husband. This is because, just like the archetypal African woman, Mama has built her world around Papa and feels she cannot survive without him. She laments to Aunty Ifeoma about her inability to cope without Papa when Aunty advises her to leave Papa for his abuse on her. Mama says to Aunty Ifeoma:

> "Where would I go if I leave Eugene's house? Tell me, where would I go?" she did not wait for Aunty Ifeoma to respond. "Do you know how many mothers pushed their daughters at him? Do you know how many asked him to impregnate them, even, and not to bother paying a bride price?" (p. 255)

Aunty Ifeoma continues to nurture Mama until she is able to assert herself by freeing herself from Papa's brutalities. Even though she does it through a radical means, she still makes a point that the "subaltern can really talk".

It is also significant to note that it is not just Aunty Ifeoma who is used as a foil for Mama's character but her home is used as well. Her home has everything that is lacking in Papa's home and the autodiegetic narrator makes this known to the reader when she reflects that there is laughter and the freedom to do and to be. That is what Nsukka (the setting of her home) stands for and this is captured succinctly in the university's motto "To restore the dignity of man". Thus, the conditions of the Achike home at Enugu deprive Kambili and Jaja of their humanity and Nsukka, and Aunty Ifeoma's home, provide them with a better opportunity at restoring their dignity to them. The narrator reflects on how the change at the restoration all start:

> I lay in bed after Mama left and let my mind rake through the past, through the years when Jaja and Mama and I spoke more with our spirits than with our lips. Until Nsukka. Nsukka started it all; Aunty Ifeoma's little garden next to the verandah of her flat in Nsukka began to lift the silence. Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do. (p. 24)

The children's movement from Enugu to Nsukka marks a great turn in their lives, as they begin to discover their true selves. This change is possible, also, because

Aunty Ifeoma's children, especially Amaka and Obiora serve as foils for both Kambili and Jaja. Even though these children are peers, there is a wide difference between Aunty Ifeoma's children and those of Papa's. Consequently, their time spent together becomes very catalytic in rediscovering their (Kambili's and Jaja's) full humanity.

As it has already been discussed in the study, the events in *Purple Hibiscus* are narrated from primarily the perspective of the protagonist and autodiegetic narrator, Kambili. This is apparent from the onset in the strong limitations placed on the field of vision presented to the reader through the narrated accounts of the narrative events. Thus, according to Genette's typology of narratology, and as employed in this study, Adichie's adoption of the technique of internal focaliser also means a restriction in the regulation of information vis-à-vis the narrator and the reader. From the narrative, therefore, there are a number of instances that portray Kambili's ignorance of narrative information, as depicted in the narrator's employment of certain cognitive words like "perhaps, wondered" and expressions such as "hadn't shown it, did not know, would never know", as well as the use of direct speech, among others, all of which are adequately discussed in the study. The next segment provides a discussion on *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Half of a Yellow Sun

The novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, has received and continues to receive a lot of attention from readers and critics for a number of reasons, notable among them is its fascination on the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. The novel has received this much attention, not just for its focus on the Nigerian civil war but also because

it attracts a lot of critical investigation for a number of narratological reasons. These include Adichie's use of innovative time-based organisation as well as her nifty deployment of the decentred narrative technique.

Employing an anonymous third-person narrator who perceives the narrative information through numerous focalised characters, the "… novel represents rich analogous personal accounts of historical events through which a number of socio-political concerns are thematised" (Akpome, 2013, p. 25). Adichie, in this novel, demonstrates how she is able to assemble the complex structure of the varied multi-perspectival narrative approach, with historiography, to foreground the importance "… of a narrative technique that has marked a paradigm shift in literary praxis in recent years, and which has become an important feature of modern and postmodern fiction" (Akpome, 2013, p. 25).

The narrative develops further the accounts of love and pain, family and aspiration that the novelist first explored in her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, reproducing, here, a novel of continuous artistic brilliance and emotional intricacy. It also highlights post-independence ethnic dissention in Nigeria, which is the historical precedent of *Purple Hibiscus*. What *Purple Hibiscus* addresses diffidently, *Half a Yellow Sun* explores as its dominant themes, as has already been stated in the discussion. The novel unambiguously focusses on one of Nigeria's most perceptible and disturbing political catastrophes, which is the Civil War of 1967–1970, which bordered the momentary survival of the Republic of Biafra and its heirloom in the current existing state.

Adichie, in this novel adopts a technique which can be categorised under Genette's typology of external focalisation, with the novel focusing on three focalised characters, comprising Olanna, Richard and Ugwu, Odenigbo's houseboy, through whose consciousness (cognitive, psychological, emotional and ideological) the devastating majority of the narrative material on the Biafra war is presented. These characters are considered here as direct or primary focalised, while Odenigbo and Kainene are also classified as indirect or secondary focalised. The focus of the analysis in this thesis is on the primary focalised characters, Olanna, Ugwu and Richard because the narratives of both Kainene and Odenigbo are subsumed in their narratives when they are being focalised.

From the beginning of the narrative, one gets the impression that the novelist tells the story through what at first appears to be the traditional third-person omniscient narrator, what Genette calls the zero focaliser. However, it becomes clear, upon closer consideration, that this ostensibly distinct narrating mediator functions as a recorder of the consciousness, primarily mental, of any one of the three main focalised characters through whose perspective a specific segment or chapter of the narrative is presented. In this manner, the limitations in this external focaliser allows for several shifts in point of view resulting in the chapters between Olanna, Ugwu and Richard being alternated in the narrative.

It must be reiterated that the whole narrative is focalised through the perspective of the external focaliser, whose detachement from the narrative paves way for the alterations in points of view. Thus, the first chapter is presented through the point of view of the focalised character, Ugwu, while the second, third and

subsequent ones are also presented through the focalised Olanna and Richard respectively but alternated between them. Adichie adopts a thought-provoking approach through which the primary focalised characters of particular sections of the novel are identified. She begins each of these chapters with the focalised character's name, with the exception of the first chapter where Ugwu's name appears in the second sentence of the narrative. Consequently, each of these primary focalised characters "thus functions as a quasi-narrator and the entire narrative material is largely a rendition of their narrated perceptions" (Akpome, 2013, p. 28).

Focalisation on Ugwu

Regarding his role as a focalised character through whom a lot is revealed about other characters and incidents in the novel, it can be contended that Ugwu is the most significant character in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This is based on the fact that his portion of narrative space, though comes second to that of Olanna's, the location of his narrative portions is vital to the entire narrative. The first chapter, as well as the opening part of the four parts of the novel, is presented by the narrator when is being focalised. This way, his consciousness and sensitivity afford the reader the preliminary background to the entire story. He is strategically positioned in the story to provide more insight into the characters of Odenigbo and Olanna specifically, as well as other characters like Okeoma (the poet), Miss Adebayo, Dr. Patel and Professors Ezeaka and Lehman who constitute Odenigbo's group of social and intellectual friends.

The first time the reader is introduced to Ugwu, he appears as one who will easily be referred to, in local phraseology, as a "villager". This is due to the fact that he seems to be ignorant or naïve about the sophistication in the city. For example, when Ugwu first gets to the city, to Odenigbo's house, and is asked to get something from the kitchen to eat, he is marvelled at the spectacle of the refrigerator, and his reaction is a reflection of his ignorance of what the city holds in stock for him:

> Ugwu entered the kitchen cautiously, placing one foot slowly after the other. When he saw the white thing, almost as tall as he was, he knew it was the fridge. His aunty had told him about it. A cold barn, she had said, that kept food from going bad. He opened it and gasped as the cool air rushed into his face. Oranges, bread, beer, soft drinks: many things in packets and cans were arranged on different levels and, and on the topmost, a roasted shimmering chicken, whole but for a leg. Ugwu reached out and touched the chicken. The fridge breathed heavily in his ears. He touched the chicken again and licked his finger before he yanked the other leg off, eating it until he had only the cracked, sucked pieces of bones left in his hand. Next, he broke off some bread, a chunk that he would have been excited to share with his siblings if a relative had visited and brought it as a gift. He ate quickly, before Master could come in and change his mind. (pp. 5-6)

In the above quotation, the heterodiegetic narrator reveals to the reader Ugwu's conception of this newfound sophistication he encounters and the reader is able to form the impression of his dearth of knowledge about city life. In this instance, the focalisation is from the outside. That is, Ugwu is focalised by an external focaliser who enables the reader to see how the city affects him.

Again, when Master (Odenigbo) demonstrates to him how the tap works, Ugwu is enthused by this and he begins to play with it. The heterodiegetic narrator presents Ugwu's actions in a humorous manner to portray him as a naïve person:

"Ugwu turned off the tap, turned it on again, then off. On and off and on and off until he was laughing at the magic of the running water and the chicken and bread that lay balmy in his stomach" (p. 6). Ugwu's status as a village boy is reiterated in the novel when two men from the Works Department go to Odenigbo's house to install shelves in the corridor and he is not able to sign the white paper with typewritten words, one of them said dismissively to the other that "he's one of these village houseboys". It is, therefore, not surprising that Odenigbo finds chicken pieces of the roasted chicken in his pocket one morning (a practice that, perhaps, was common in his village). In the ensuing interaction between Ugwu and Odenigbo, the reader appreciates the humour employed by the author, here, while also acknowledging the amount of information revealed about Ugwu:

> "Good morning, sah!"
> "There is a strong roasted-chicken smell here."
> "Sorry, sah."
> "Where is the chicken?"
> Ugwu fumbled in his shorts pockets and brought out the chicken pieces.
> "Do your people eat while they sleep?" Master asked. He was wearing something that looked like a woman's coat and was absently twirling the rope tied round his waist.
> "Sah?"
> "Did you want to eat the chicken while in bed?"
> "No, sah."
> "Food will stay in the dining room and the kitchen."
> "Yes, sah." (p. 10)

As these passages make apparent, the external focaliser reveals to the reader the dichotomy between the city and the rural or village setting and its intricacies, as experienced by the focalised character, Ugwu. For example, unlike in Odenigbo's house (city) where there is a lot to eat (chicken and bread, as on Ugwu's first day in the house), he thinks about the plight of his younger siblings (Anulika

and the rest) back home in the village. In the passage below, the herterodiegetic narrator reveals succinctly Ugwu's conception of these two places and their significance to his personal growth:

> After Ugwu watched Master drive out of the compound, he went and stood beside the radiogram and looked at it carefully, without touching it. Then he walked around the house, up and down, touching books and curtains and furniture and plates, and when it got dark he turned the light on and marvelled at how bright the bulb that dangled from the ceiling was, how it did not cast long shadows on the wall like the palm oil lamps back home. His mother would be preparing the evening meal now, pounding *akpu* in the mortar, the pestle grasped tight with both hands. Chioke, the junior wife, would be tending the pot of watery soup balanced on three stones over the fire. The children would have come back from the stream and would be taunting and chasing one another under the breadfruit tree. Perhaps Anulika would be watching them. She was the oldest child in the household now, and as they all sat around the fire to eat, she would break up the fights when the younger ones struggled over the strips of dried fish in the soup. She would wait until all the *akpu* was eaten and then divide the fish so that each child had a piece, and she would keep the biggest for herself, as he had always done. (p. 7)

Here, the reader is given a rare advantage of getting into the thought processes of Ugwu. The reader gets the opportunity to share in his experience of the difficult life in the village, with scarce resources, compared to the apparently "affluent" condition he finds himself in in the city, which compels him to want to reserve some of the plenteousness for his siblings, hence keeping some chicken in his pocket:

> Ugwu opened the fridge and ate some more bread and chicken, quickly stuffing the food in his mouth while his heart beat as if he were running; then he dug out extra chunks of meat and pulled out the wings. He slipped the pieces into his shorts pockets before going to the bedroom. He would keep them until his aunty visited and he would ask her to give them to Anulika. Perhaps he could ask her to give some to Nnesinachi too. (p. 8)

It must be noted that it is from the focalised character, Ugwu, that the external focaliser is able to reveal a lot about the contrast between the city-village setting in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Coupled with the fact that Ugwu is "a villager" is also his low level of formal or Western education. He has only been to Standard two. This he attributes to the fact that "his father's crops failed". Thus, if his father's crops had yielded good harvest, he could have gone further with his education and would understand a lot of what Master was saying. However, he is conscious of his own deficiency and is, therefore, willing and eager to "learn everything fast, osiso-osiso" so that he will be ready for the later responsibility of writing the book about the war and also helping Olanna teach the children during and after the war.

Furthermore, through Ugwu's focalised position, he enables the reader to get access to information relating to some of the atrocities meted out to the civilians during the Biafran war, especially when he gets conscripted and therefore, gets closer to the war. Some of these incidents are illustrated in the episode of the family that is going to look for their son who has gone missing because of the war. When the man (head of the family) refuses to hand over the keys to their car,

> One of the soldiers slapped him. The man staggered and the soldier slapped him again and again and again and he crashed to the ground and the key slipped out of his hand…Another soldier touched the man's neck and wrist to make sure he was breathing. The wife was bent over her husband as the soldiers squashed into the car and drove to the bar. (p. 363)

In another instance, he enables the reader to observe the violence inflicted on the bar girl by the Biafran soldiers. In the ensuing extract, the external focaliser presents a vivid description of what transpired, while focalising on Ugwu:

> When he finally went back inside, he stopped at the door. The bar girl was lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulders held down by a soldier, her legs wide, wide ajar. She was sobbing, "Please, please, *biko.*" Her blouse was still on. Between her legs, High-Tech was moving. His thrusts were jerky, his small buttocks darker-coloured than his legs. The soldiers were cheering.
> "High-Tech, enough! Discharge and retire!"
> High-Tech groaned before he collapsed on top of her. A soldier pulled him off and was fumbling at his own trousers when somebody said, "No! Target Destroyer is next!"
> Ugwu backed away from the door.
> "*Ujo abiala o!* Target Destroyer is afraid!"
> Ugwu shrugged and moved forward. "Who is afraid?" he said disdainfully. "I just like to eat before others, that is all."
> "The food is still fresh!" "Target Destroyer, aren't you a man? *I bukwa nwoke?*"
> On the floor, the girl was still. Ugwu pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection. She was dry and tense when he entered her. He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down, or at anything at all as he moved quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release. He zipped up his trousers while some soldiers clapped. Finally he looked at the girl. She stared back at him with a calm hate. (p. 365)

The picturesque description, which is one of the many that the heterodiegetic narrator employs in the narrative, enables him to present a panoramic view of the violence perpetrated on the innocent bar girl, which is also one of the many incidents of violence on women and the vulnerable that happen during the three-year war. In this episode, the heterodiegetic narrator presents a maximum of information, which aids in the portrayal of pictures to enhance the reader's comprehension of the situation. Hence, from Ugwu's role, here, there is more showing of events. Because of the detachment of the the external focaliser from the narrative, it is only when Ugwu goes back inside the bar that he enables the focaliser to present the incident of the bar girl's rape.

The focus of the narration begins on the bar girl who is "lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulders held down by a soldier, her legs wide, wide ajar", her blouse still on and sobbing, "Please, please, *biko*". The focalisation then shifts to between her legs, where "High-Tech was moving. His thrusts were jerky, his small buttocks darker-coloured than his legs", with the soldiers cheering him on. The focalisation moves from the bar to Ugwu to perceive the effect of the incident on him, as he backs away from the door. He is then coerced into taking his turn with the girl. The external focaliser then focuses on how he takes his turn, as the girl is still on the floor. The details of the focalisation include how he pulls his "trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection" to her being tense and dry as he "enters her", "as he moved quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release."

The focalisation of this excruciating injustice on the bar girl is completed when Ugwu finally looks at the girl, who stares back "at him with calm hate", which is indicative of the fact that she, perhaps, appreciates the reluctance of Ugwu in committing that act of injustice on her. It can also be that she appreccciates the fact that he does not have much of a choice and also for the fear of being labelled as not "being a man". It can be concluded, therefore, that Ugwu's role as a focalised character enables the external focaliser to get knowledge of some narrative information, which is restricted to the Heterodiegetic narrator because of his detachment to the narrative.

Focalisation on Odenigbo through Ugwu

The reader gets to hear of Odenigbo when Ugwu's aunty makes the revelation of him that:

> Master was a little crazy; he had spent too many years reading books overseas, talked to himself in his office, did not always return greetings, and had too much hair… "But he is a good man," she added. "And as long as you work well, you will eat well. You will even eat meat every day". (p. 1)

However, it is through the focalisation of the external focaliser on Ugwu that a lot is revealed about him, especially when Ugwu comes face-to-face with him. Ugwu's first impression of Master and his home is one with awe and admiration, as captured by the herterodiegetic narrator in the following extract:

> Ugwu had never seen a room so wide… *Master* sat in an armchair, wearing a singlet and a pair of shorts. He was not sitting upright but slanted, a book covering his face, as though oblivious that he had just asked people in... Master looked up. His complexion was very dark, like old bark, and the hair that covered his chest and legs was a lustrous, darker shade. He pulled off his glasses. The child?... Master's Igbo felt feathery in Ugwu's ears. It was Igbo coloured by the sliding sounds of English, the Igbo of one who spoke English often. (p. 4)

This first description of the relationship between Ugwu and Odenigbo places them in a master-servant or superior-subordinate relationship, thereby making Ugwu identify Odenigbo in terms of position of power, *Master*; hence foregrounding the latter's influence on him. It must also be noted that regardless of Ugwu's fare knowledge of literacy, he exhibits exceptional and skilful qualities of description and provenance and makes apparent his awareness of the social distinction between him and his master. As regards his perspicacity and conception of other characters like Richard, Olanna and Kainene, and narrative objects in the novel, he also exhibits critical cognisance of the dualities stimulated by this

consciousness of variance. Consequently, the novel visibly projects different class levels: the Upper and Lower classes, as in any normal human environment.

Subsequently, Ugwu establishes himself as the focalised character through whose internal perspective orients the narrative information. The reader is restricted to virtually only what he perceives and feels what he feels. In effect, the reader is restricted to direct access to the "reality" of Odenigbo's personality but rather to the version of that reality that is focalised through Ugwu. Because the revelation of Odenigbo is focalised through Ugwu, his (Ugwu's) thoughts and ideological views reflect those of his Master's, which also constitute essential elements of the novel since Odenigbo doubles as the novel's philosophical and or ideological "nerve-centre".

It is, therefore, not surprising that it is Odenigbo who provides Ugwu with some knowledge about the intricacies of Western education. First, the kind of education he provides for Ugwu is an insurrection of some Western epistemological conventions, which appear to blur conception of general knowledge, yet favouring a bias to Western ideologies. In the extract below, the herterodiegetic narrator captures Odenigbo's attempt at trying to explain to Ugwu the perversion in Western epistemology:

> "There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers. I will give you books, excellent books." Master stopped to sip his tea. "They will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. That is rubbish. Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born. But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park." (p. 11)

To Odenigbo, Westerners are to take responsibility for the consequences of their own actions instead of playing the "blame game". He illustrates his argument by explaining to Ugwu the demarcation of the African continent, with reference to the following narrative:

> Master came back with a wide piece of paper that he unfolded and laid out on the dining table, pushing aside books and magazines. He pointed with his pen. "This is our world, although the people who drew this map decided to put their own land on top of ours. There is no top or bottom, you see." Master picked up the paper and folded it, so that one edge touched the other, leaving a hollow between. "Our world is round, it never ends. *Nee anya*, this is all water, the seas and oceans, and here's Europe and here's our own continent, Africa, and the Congo is in the middle. Farther up here is Nigeria, and Nsukka is here, in the southeast; this is where we are." He tapped with his pen. (p. 10)

He tries demystifying the idea that places the Westerner in a much more privileged position to the African. The preponderance of these discourses at the initial stages of the novel signifies to the reader, who also doubles as the focalised charcters' "indirect co-witness" of the events, that the narrative "will be steeped in politics and ideology" (Akpome, 2013, p. 30).

As the novel progresses and as the war also progresses, it becomes obvious to Ugwu and to the reader that his Master, Odenigbo's status, also deteriorates progressively, as Odenigbo resigns himself to the looming defeat of Biafra, when he tells Olanna the news he has heard on the radio: "'Our troops have lost all the captured territory in the midwest and the march to Lagos is over. Nigeria now says this is war, no longer a police action.' He shook his head. 'We were sabotaged'" (p. 204). He is reduced to a sorry state as the novel progresses and he resorts to drinking. Unlike his drinking sessions at the beginning of the novel, with his circle

of friends, at Nsukka, where the sessions also provide an avenue for them to discuss issues of Biafran and national interests, this new drinking habit at Umuahia has a negative effect on him. The narrator captures Olanna's focalisation of him when:

> She walked past him and outside. The moon was behind a cloud and, sitting out in the blackness of the yard, she could still smell that cheap vapour-heavy scent of local gin. It trailed him, it clouded the paths that he walked. His drinking in Nsukka – his auburn, finely refined brandy – had sharpened his mind, distilled his ideas and his confidence so that he sat in the living room and talked and talked and everybody listened. This drinking here silenced him. It made him retreat into himself and look out at the world with bleary weary eyes. And it made her furious. (p. 380)

This gradual deterioration of Odenigbo's material situation and demeanour becomes complete by the external focaliser's conception of him through Ugwu, at the fall of Biafra, when they eventually return to Nsukka, and to their deserted flat:

> Master squatted beside him and began to search through the charred paper, muttering…After a while, he sat down on the bare earth, his legs stretched in front of him, and Ugwu wished he had not; there was something so undignified, so unmasterly about it. (p. 418)

From Ugwu's stream of consciousness, as he is focalised in the extract above, Odenigbo is presented to the reader as a person at his nadir and can, therefore, be placed on the same level of status as Ugwu, who by this same period, has also acquired some improved level of perception and can now perceive him from a perspective beyond the context of superior-subordinate or master-servant relationship. According to Akpome (2013), "this shift of perceptual paradigm accompanies the change in Ugwu's focus, from Odenigbo, Olanna and their intellectual circle, to an inward preoccupation with his own increasingly autonomous responses to the swirl of activity and emotion going on around and

within him. It is inevitable, however, that these responses which herald his coming-of-age are strongly conditioned by the tutelage provided in large part by Odenigbo, and also by Olanna" (p. 30). Thus, Ugwu enables the reader to perceive Odenigbo and what he represents when he (Ugwu) is being focalised.

Focalisation on Olanna through Ugwu

Furthermore, the focalisation on Ugwu and how he enables the herterodiegetic narrator reveal charcters to the reader is not restricted to only Odenigbo; it also covers such characters in the novel as Olanna. The external focaliser's perception of Olanna when she is focalised through Ugwu enables the reader to get some insight into her, as she also serves as the one who is at the centre of relations amongst characters and the predominant emotional "consciousness" of the novel. It must be reiterated, here, that it is in the restrictions of the external focaliser's absolute knowledge of narrative information that different focalised characters are employed in the narrative. Consequently, the focalisation on Ugwu affords him the ability to reveal other characters (including other focalised characters), a position which places him in the position as the predominant focalised character of the entire story. He is able to provide insight into every other character, with the exception of Richard. He, therefore, affords the reader the primary "perspectival filter" (Jahn, 2007) through which the reader may evaluate other focalised characters and the narrative material presented through their sensitivities.

The first time the reader gets to know about Olanna is when Ugwu is being focalised in Chapter One, when Odenigbo mentions her to him. Since Odenigbo and Olanna's relationship predates Ugwu's coming into his home, Odenigbo takes

the time to introduce her to him. Ugwu's initial impression of the "special woman" coming is one of disdain because he feels she is coming to compete and share in Master's affection. This makes him conceive of her as an ugly person, especially also because he feels Master is making him do more work than his usual routine, because of this "special woman". The herterodiegetic narrator captures Ugwu's lamentations in the following extract:

> …he cleaned the rooms and scrubbed the toilet carefully, as he always did, but Master looked at them and said they were not clean enough and went out and bought another jar of Vim powder and asked, sharply, why Ugwu didn't clean the spaces between the tiles. Ugwu cleaned them again. He scrubbed until sweat crawled down the sides of his face, until his arm ached. And on Saturday, he bristled as he cooked. Master had never complained about his work before. It was this woman's fault, this woman that Master considered too special even for him to cook for. Just come back from London, indeed. When the doorbell rang, he muttered a curse under his breath about her stomach swelling from eating faeces. He heard Master's raised voice, excited and childlike, followed by a long silence and he imagined their hug, and her ugly body pressed to Master's (p. 22)

Here, Ugwu can be described as having a single prejudiced view about the "special woman", even before meeting her: thus, he has a "single story" about Olanna. Invariably, Ugwu's admiration of Odenigbo predetermines his first guarded but subsequent adoration of Olanna even though her own distinguishing features constitute enough self-recommendation.

Odenigbo's introduction and description of Olanna to Ugwu and therefore, the reader, is vital to the eventual understanding of how Ugwu perceives her. The narrator makes the reader aware of how Olanna is introduced to Ugwu: "He had been with Master for four months when Master told him, "A special woman is coming for the weekend. Very special" (p. 21). The first impressions Ugwu forms

about this description of Olanna are largely sensorial, which are reminisce of his earlier descriptions of Odenigbo. The contrast here, though, is that more of his senses are stimulated, resulting in what Nelles (1997) would call "tactivilization", which is focalisation through the sense of touch or the longing to touch (Nelles, 1997, p. 95, as cited in Jahn, 2007, p. 99, as cited in Akpome, 2013, p. 31).

Ugwu's idealisation of Odenigbo reaches a crescendo when Olanna finally arrives. He makes the reader know how Master's voice always affected him:

> Some evenings, when the visitors left early, he would sit on the floor of the living room and listen to Master talk. Master mostly talked about things Ugwu did not understand, as if the brandy made him forget that Ugwu was not one of his visitors. But it didn't matter. All Ugwu needed was the deep voice, the melody of the English-inflected Igbo, the glint of the thick eyeglasses. (p. 21)

However, this all changes with the arrival of Olanna. In the extract below, a number of the other forms of sensory imagery – auricularisation, gustativisation and occularisation – are also involved to exhibit how Olanna is presented to the reader through the focalisation on Ugwu:

> Then he heard her voice. He stood still. He had always thought that Master's English could not be compared to anybody's, not Professor Ezeka, whose English one could hardly hear, or Okeoma, who spoke English as if he were speaking Igbo, with the same cadences and pauses, or Patel, whose English was a faded lilt. Not even the white man Professor Lehman, with his words forced out through his nose, sounded as dignified as Master. Master's English was music, but what Ugwu was hearing now, from this woman, was magic. Here was a superior tongue, a luminous language, the kind of English he heard on Master's radio, rolling out with clipped precision. It reminded him of slicing a yam with a newly sharpened knife, the easy perfection in every slice.
> …She smelt of coconuts… He greeted her, his "Good afternoon" a mumble, his eyes on the floor.
> … Ugwu was about to pour the cold Coke into her glass when she touched his hand and said, "*Rapuba*, don't worry about that." Her hand was lightly moist. "Yes, mah." (pp. 22-23)

> …Her Igbo words were softer than her English, and he was disappointed at how easily they came out. He wished she would stumble in her Igbo; he had not expected English that perfect to sit beside equally perfect Igbo. (p. 23)

In the extract above, the external focaliser and herterodiegetic narrator presents the details of the striking features of Olanna by shifting the focus of the focalisation. The details of the focalisation include how magical her voice is, as compared to Master's, her sweet smell of "coconuts" and how perfect her English "sit beside equally perfect Igbo". All this while, Ugwu has not been able to take a look at Olanna and when he finally does, what he presents to the reader, through the external focalisation on him, is equally significant:

> He finally looked at her as she and Master sat down at the table. Her oval face was smooth like an egg, the lush colour of rain-drenched earth, and her eyes were large and slanted and she looked like she was not supposed to be walking and talking like everyone else; she should be in a glass case like the one in Master's study, where people could admire her curvy, fleshy body, where she would be preserved untainted. Her hair was long; each of the braids that hung down to her neck ended in a soft fuzz. She smiled easily; her teeth were the same bright white of her eyes. He did not know how long he stood staring at her until Master said, "Ugwu usually does a lot better than this. He makes a fantastic stew." (p. 23)

The detailed description of Olanna, here, is so vivid that the reader is able to visualise her to be a very captivating woman, as seen through the focalised character, Ugwu, who is both mesmerised by her beauty and voice. The effect Olanna has on Ugwu from the beginning of the narrative, therefore, comes as no surprise when she subsequently exerts a lot of influence on him and his Master, Odenigbo. Similarly, her tender-heartedness and good-naturedness are not

restricted to only these two but extended to Ugwu's family as well when she assists in caring for Ugwu's sick mother and reassures him of his mother's recovery.

As the narrative progresses and switches to the late 1960s, when the pressures of the Biafran war begin to permeate Odenigbo's rendezvous with his circle of friends, it is Olanna's gentleness that aids in calming and controlling the nerves of Odenigbo, as well as sharpening his fiery intellectualism and lessen the horridness of his obdurate philosophical affectation. Ugwu also has his share of Olanna's gentleness when, in the cumulative domestic pressures brought about by the Biafran war, he needs some solace, it is in her presence that he gets some tranquillity, as indicated in the following extract:

> Ugwu was in the kitchen with Olanna, peeling onions, watching the movement of Olanna's shoulder as she stirred the soup on the stove. Onions made him feel cleaned up, as if the tears they drew from him took away impurities… He did not want either of them to come into the kitchen now. They would destroy the magic he felt, the sweet sting of onions in his eyes, the glow of Olanna's skin. (p. 177)

Olanna's role, here, as indicated in the extract above, is akin to what Ojuola, in Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not Blame* (1968), does to relieve Odewale of the pressure from his suspicion that he is being secretly set-up by Aderopo, his half-brother, for the murder of the former king, Adetusa. Odewale, in distress, calls for a bit of the coolness of Ojuola's blood to calm or cool his spirit. He, therefore, supplicates to the gods to give him some of the coolness of her blood in order to tame his own temper, which is hot:

> Gods! What a woman!…Give me some of her patience, I pray you. Some…some of her cool heart…let her cool spirit enter my body, and cool the hot, hot, hotness in my blood – the hot blood of a gorilla!...Cool me. Ogun, cool me. The touch of palmoil is cool to the body. Cool me. The blood is hot. The blood is hot because fear now grips the heart of Odewale, son of Ogundele, a stranger in this land. Fear now grips my heart… (p. 39)

Olanna's influence on the emotional situation in the narrative is also manifest when her home is disrupted by Odenigbo's mother's bringing of Amala, a young village girl, to seduce Odenigbo. This deed of betrayal against Olanna generates a fit of hopelessness in Odenigbo and it has a rippling effect on Ugwu as well. Thus, the external focaliser's presentation of Olanna, as perceived from the focalisation on Ugwu, is very significant in the sense that it illustrates one of the ways in which she is the key determinant of the emotional mood of the narrative.

Furthermore, it is in this focalised relationship between Ugwu and Olanna that many of the sexual or amorous relationships are revealed to the reader by the herterodiegetic narrator. To begin with, Ugwu's idealisation of Olanna emboldens him to start having fantasies about her. When Ugwu is clearing the dining table after meals, for example, he fantasises about how Olanna has chewed her chicken bones:

> Some of the bones were so well cracked they looked like wood shavings. Olanna's did not, though, because she had only lightly chewed the ends and all three still had their shape. Ugwu sat down and selected one and closed his eyes as he sucked it, imagining Olanna's mouth enclosing the same bone. (p. 83)

The image depicted in the extract above is one that presents Ugwu's and Olanna's mouths encircling the same bone and possibly touching (kissing), which will be unacceptable in this context because she is his Master's fiancée; hence, he can only imagine it, indicating his infatuation about her.

The herterodietgetic narrator continues to reveal to the reader Ugwu's sexual imaginations with the bones and how he associates it with Ugwu's fantasies about Olanna. It can be understood that because the focalisation on these characters

is from the outside, the narrator can only present to the reader what is made available to him and cannot tell any more than that. Thus, the narrator can only tell what Ugwu imagines about Olanna and nothing beyond his imagination:

> He had sucked all the bones, and he imagined that the taste of Olanna's mouth was in his as he started to wash the dishes. The first time he sucked her bones, weeks ago, it was after he saw her and Master kissing in the living room on a Saturday morning, their open mouths pressed together. The thought of her saliva in Master's mouth had both repelled and excited him. It still did. It was the same way he felt about her moaning at night; he did not like to hear her and yet he often went to their door to press his ear against the cold wood and listen. Just as he examined the underwear she hung in the bathroom – black slips, slippery bras, white pants. (p. 85)

In the extract above, the narrator presents Ugwu's romanticisation of Olanna and his desire to possibly have her. However, his desire for her becomes a forbidden one because he cannot satiate the harboured feeling he is having for her. Here, too, the sucking of the bone is equated to the gratification he will get from consuming the emotions he has for Olanna. Like the bone, which has lost its chicken (flesh), his feelings for her remain a mirage and cannot be consummated. The closest he can come to that is to keep eavesdropping to hear her moans from her lovemaking with Odenigbo. It is, therefore, not surprising that when he eventually gets his own (girl) in the form of Chinyere, Dr Okeke's house girl, he takes advantage of the situation and "makes good of it", "when Chinyere, Dr. Okeke's housegirl, first started to sneak across the hedge to his Boys' Quarters for hasty thrusts in the dark" (p. 121).

Through the focalisation on Ugwu and narration of these sexual episodes by the herterodiegetic narrator, Adichie exhibits her maturity in her presentation of the issue of sex. Unlike in *Purple Hibiscus* where she shrouds sexual intimacies in

metaphors of unattained pleasures or displacement of sexual attachment, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, she is bold to present sexual relations in more descriptive and elaborate manner that also indicate her growth as a writer, regarding her treatment of the subject of sex and sexuality. The following extract, presented by the external focaliser and focused on Ugwu, illustrates the author's boldness in presenting the subject of sex and lovemaking in the novel:

> That night, he lay in his room in the Boys Quarters and tried to concentrate on *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, but it was difficult. He hoped Chinyere would slip under the hedge and come over; they never planned it, she just appeared on some days and didn't on others. He ached for her to come on this exciting night of the coup that had changed the order of things and throbbed with possibility, with newness. When he heard her tap on the window, he offered up a bashful thanks to the gods. "Chinyere," he said.
> "Ugwu," she said. She smelled of stale onions. The light was off, and in the thin stream that came from the security bulb outside he saw the cone-shaped rise of her breasts as she pulled her blouse off, untied the wrapper around her waist, and lay on her back. There was something moist about the darkness, about their bodies close together, and he imagined that she was Nnesinachi and that the taut legs encircling him were Nnesinachi's. She was silent at first and then, hips thrashing, her hands tight around his back, she called out the same thing she said every time. It sounded like a name - Abonyi, Abonyi - but he wasn't sure. (p. 127)

Adichie, as demonstrated in the extracts above, is bold in her treatment of the theme of sex in this novel to such an extent that her characters do not shy away from satiating their sexual pleasures. She is able to provide a lot of details about their sexual encounters to enhance the reader's understanding of the scenes being depicted. Such details include but not limited to the metaphors of "the cone-shaped rise of her breast" to how "she smelled of stale onions", which all appeal to the reader's sensibility in appreciating the dexterity of Adichie's narrative prowess in

presenting the sexual scenes. In this description, the focus of the narration shifts from point to point, all in the effort of enriching the reader's comprehension.

In addition, there are other instances in the narrative that portray the characters' freedom at expressing themselves sexually. For instances, Odenigbo is not able to resist Amala: sleeps with her and impregnates her, Ugwu has some sexual escapades with Nnesinachi and Olanna also has sex with Richard, as a form of registering her protest or anger at Odenigbo's infidelity with Amala. From the focalisation on Olanna, the herterodiegetic narrator presents the sexual scene that ensues between her and Richard in a picturesque manner that affects the senses of the reader greatly:

> "Come, sit on the floor with me," she said finally. They sat side by side, their backs resting on the sofa seat. Richard said, in a mumble, "I should leave," or something that sounded like it. But she knew he would not leave and that when she stretched out on the bristly carpet he would lie next to her. She kissed his lips. He pulled her forcefully close, and then, just as quickly, he let go and moved his face away. She could hear his rapid breathing. She unbuckled his trousers and moved back to pull them down and laughed because they got stuck at his shoes. She took her dress off. He was on top of her and the carpet pricked her naked back and she felt his mouth limply enclose her nipple. It was nothing like Odenigbo's bites and sucks, nothing like those shocks of pleasure. Richard did not run his tongue over her in that flicking way that made her forget everything; rather, when he kissed her belly, she was aware that he was kissing her belly. Everything changed when he was inside her. She raised her hips, moving with him, matching his thrusts, and it was as if she was throwing shackles off her wrists, extracting pins from her skin, freeing herself with the loud, loud cries that burst out of her mouth. Afterward, she felt filled with a sense of well-being, with something close to grace. (p. 233)

In the extract above, the herterodiegetic narrator deliberately details the gradual seduction that occurs between them and Richard's state of inertia regarding his will to leave, resulting in the final sexual act. This scene is very sensual and presents a

vivid image of their lovemaking. This situation will not be and is not permissible in *Purple Hibiscus.* However, in this novel, the author does not hesitate in presenting such scenes with all the descriptiveness it exudes, all indicative of Adichie's development in the treatment of theme.

Focalisation on Olanna

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that Olanna plays a very significant role in relaying the emotional atmosphere of the narrative. Regarding her role as a pivotal focalised character through whom most of the sexual instances of the narrative are made manifest, as in her relationship with her lover and eventual husband, Odenigbo, and her adventure with Richard, she also serves as a symbol for the revelation of the trauma that the victims of the Biafran war experienced. It is through her focalised experience that some of the gruelling atrocities of the war are witnessed by the reader.

Firstly, focalisation on Olanna enables the reader to conceive of many issues pertaining to the plight of the African, especially the deprived. When Olanna visits her Uncle Mbaezi's home, she makes a number of discoveries. She discovers the poor living conditions they are living in:

> That night, as Olanna lay on her uncle and aunt's bed, she watched Arize through the thin curtain that hung on a rope attached to nails on the wall. The rope was not taut, and the curtain sagged in the middle. She followed the up-down movement of Arize's breathing and imagined what growing up had been like for Arize and her brothers, Odinchezo and Ekene, seeing their parents through the curtain, hearing the sounds that might suggest an eerie pain to a child as their father's hips moved and their mother's arms clutched him. She had never heard her own parents making love, never even seen any indication that they did. (p. 43)

> But she had always been separated from them by hallways that got longer and more thickly carpeted as they moved from house to house. When they moved to their present home, with its ten rooms, her parents chose different bedrooms for the first time…The window above her was open, the still night air thick with the odours from the gutters behind the house, where people emptied their toilet buckets. Soon, she heard the muted chatter of the night-soil men as they collected the sewage; she fell asleep listening to the scraping sounds of their shovels as they worked, shielded by the dark. (p. 43)

In the above extract, the narrator reveals the plight of Arize's family, as the focalisation is on Olanna. The family share a single room and Olanna imagines how the family manages with certain situations that require privacy; for instance, the lovemaking of Arize's parents. She also reflects on the lack of the visible intimacy between her parents and wonders if she has ever heard her own parents making love or ever even seen any indication that they do. This situation is similar to Kambili's perception of the relationship (lack of intimacy) between her parents, Papa Eugene and Mama Beatrice, in *Purple Hibiscus*.

Secondly, it is when Olanna is focalised that the plight of the African woman regarding childbearing is revealed to the reader. The African culture places so much premium on children that a woman who does not have any, preferably male children, is considered a failed woman. In the following interaction between Olanna and Arize, the reader gets to know how significant a child is to the African:

> "I don't know about marriage yet. I just want to be closer to him, and I want to teach." Arize's round eyes were admiring and bewildered. "It is only women that know too much Book like you who can say that, Sister. If people like me who don't know Book wait too long, we will expire." Arize paused as she removed a translucently pale egg from inside the chicken. "I want a husband today and tomorrow, oh! My mates have all left me and gone to husbands' houses."
> "You are young," Olanna said. "You should focus on your sewing for now." (p. 41)

> "Is it sewing that will give me a child? Even if I had managed to pass to go to school, I would still want a child now." (p. 41)

Consequently, when Arize becomes pregnant, she is overjoyed and tells Olanna what dress her goddaughter, the unborn baby, would wear for her christening:

> "She will wear that white dress for her christening, Sister," Arize said. Arize pointed at her belly. "Your goddaughter will wear that white dress for her christening. Thank you so much, Sister."
> The light in Arize's eyes made Olanna smile… (p. 133)

In the above extracts, the herterodiegetic narrator is distant from the narrative and because the focalised character is also restricted to narrative information, there is the use of dialogue to bridge this gap, by allowing the characters to reveal narrative information themselves.

As the novel progresses and as the war intensifies, Olanna serves as the hub through whose focalised experience the devastating effects of the Biafran war are narrated. When the riot starts in the North and Olanna visits her uncle's house in Sabon Gari, again, she witnesses one of the most frightening scenes of the war and the herterodiegetic narrator presents what she experiences to the reader:

> In Sabon Gari, the first street was empty. Olanna saw the smoke rising like tall gray shadows before she smelled the scent of burning. "Stay here," Mohammed said, as he stopped the car outside Uncle Mbaezi's compound. She watched him run out. The street looked strange, unfamiliar; the compound gate was broken, the metal flattened on the ground. Then she noticed Aunty Ifeka's kiosk, or what remained of it: splinters of wood, packets of groundnuts lying in the dust. She opened the car door and climbed out. She paused for a moment because of how glaringly bright and hot it was, with flames billowing from the roof, with grit and ash floating in the air, before she began to run toward the house. She stopped when she saw the bodies. Uncle Mbaezi lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips. (p. 147)

In this extract, the heterodiegetic narrator consciously presents Olanna's perception of the horrific incident to the reader by shifting the focus as she is being focalised, in aiding the reader to conceive the full impact of the massacre. Here, the narrative is presented as if the camera is moving with her and revealing what she makes available to the narrator. She first sees the smoke, which alerts her of the imminent danger, then she smells the scent of burning.

Her focus then shifts to the compound, where she notices her aunt's kiosk "or what remained of it: splinters of wood, packets of groundnuts lying in the dust". As if what she is perceiving is not bad enough, she opens the door of the car and climbs out but pauses, before she begins to run this time, towards their house and stops again, when she sees their bodies and their final dying positions, as described in the extract above. The shifts in focalisation by the external focaliser on Olanna also portrays the progression and the anticipation of the imminent horror that awaits Olanna and by extension, the reader, as the reader moves and runs with her to finally see the dead bodies of Uncle Mbaezi and Aunty Ifeka.

Furthermore, the herterodiegetic narrator relays the immediate effect of this incident on Olanna through the detailed description in the extract above. She is so much affected that she "felt a watery queasiness in her bowels before the numbness spread over her and stopped at her feet" (p. 147). When she manages to escape the wrath of the rioters by the help of Mohammed, her former lover and friend, she encounters another horrendous incident of a woman carrying the head of her dead daughter in a calabash. The effect of this description is heightened when the woman makes Olanna know about how long it has taken her to get the hair of the daughter

plaited, only for the head to be cut off because of the war. The woman is so devastated that she cannot let go of her dead daughter's head. She keeps it in a calabash and invites Olanna to look at it:

> She opened the calabash.
> "Take a look," she said again.
> Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy-gray skin and the braided hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth. She stared at it for a while before she looked away.
> Somebody screamed.
> The woman closed the calabash. "Do you know," she said, "it took me so long to plait this hair? She had such thick hair." (p. 149)

The external focaliser presents Olanna's perception of the dead girl's head, as the focalisation is on her. The reader is guided by her focus of perception as it moves "into bowl", where she sees "the little girl's head with the ashy-gray skin and the braided hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth". The external focaliser then shifts attention from the calabash back to Olanna and to reality.

When Olanna returns from the North (Kano) the effects of what she witnesses from the killings of her relatives and other victims become visible on and in her. She is so devastated and becomes crippled by this traumatic experience. Her revelation of the ordeal to her family - father, mother and sister, Kainene, has an effect on them as well, and for the "first time, Olanna saw Kainene cry since they were children". Olanna's condition, as a result of what she experiences in the North, is described by Dr Patel as being psychological. Thus, she is so much affected by the incident she witnesses that she loses a part of her being. She suffers a psychological breakdown. In the extract below, the narrator recounts how Olanna is affected by the killings she witnesses in the North:

> Olanna's Dark Swoops began the day she came back from Kano, the day her legs failed. Her legs were fine when she climbed down from the train and she did not need to hold on to the bloodsmeared railings; they were fine as she stood for the three-hour drive to Nsukka in a bus so crowded she could not reach out to scratch her itching back. But at the front door of Odenigbo's house, they failed. So did her bladder. There was the melting of her legs, and there was also the wetness of hot liquid running between her thighs. Baby discovered her. Baby had walked to the front door to look out, asking Ugwu when Mummy Ola would come back, and then cried out at the crumpled form on the steps. Odenigbo carried her in, bathed her, and held Baby back from hugging her too tightly. After Baby fell asleep, Olanna told Odenigbo what she had seen. She described the vaguely familiar clothes on the headless bodies in the yard, the still-twitchy fingers on Uncle Mbaezi's hand, the rolled-back eyes of the child's head in the calabash and the odd skin tone - a flat, sallow gray, like a poorly wiped blackboard - of all the corpses that lay in the yard. (p. 156)

The imagery employed in the description of the episode above is so repugnant and horrific that the reader is not surprised about the effect it has on Olanna, especially to the extent of her being crippled by it. The worse of it all is her inability to control her bladder and therefore, there is "the wetness of hot liquid running between her thighs" – urinating on herself. Here too, the external focaliser presents the details of the beginning of Olanna's "Dark Swoops" and the subsequent effects on her. The focalisation on her moves from her leaving Kano, her condition in the train, when she finally gets to Odenigbo's house, where Baby discovers her to when she finally tells Odenigbo about her experience in the North.

Furthermore, when the war reaches its devastating limit, where the casualties are more than the refugee camps created are inadequate to cater for them, it is through the focalisation on Olanna that the herterodiegetic narrator is able to reveal this to the reader. When she visits Kainene at the refugee camp, which

formerly was a primary school before the war, she is taken on a tour of the camp. Her discovery and revelation of what is left of the camp is horrific. In the following extract, the narrator relates what Olanna perceives about the conditions of both the state of the camp and the victims of the war, when she is taken to the part labelled as "the Point of No Return". Kainene tries preventing Olanna from entering the place but she insists on going inside because she feels she should: "I want to" and also because the reader has to know as well, since she is the focus of the narration and has to reveal narrative information to the focaliser who is external and, therefore, has a restricted access to narrative information. As she enters the room, she is hit by a repulsive smell:

> The smell hit her at the first door. It went straight from her nose to her stomach, turning it, churning the boiled yam she'd had for breakfast… She didn't know what the smell was but it was enlarging and she could almost see it, a foul brown cloud. She felt faint. They went into the first classroom. About twelve people were lying on bamboo beds, on mats, on the floor. Not one of them reached out to slap away the fat flies. The only movement Olanna saw was that of a child sitting by the door: he unfolded and refolded his arms. His bones were clearly outlined and the wrap of his arms was flat, in a way that would be impossible if he had some flesh underneath the skin. Kainene scanned the room quickly and then turned to the door. Outside, Olanna gulped in air. In the second classroom, she felt that even the air inside her was becoming soiled and she wanted to press her nostrils shut to stop the mingling of the air outside and that inside her. A mother was sitting on the floor with two children lying next to her. Olanna could not tell how old they were. They were naked; the taut globes that were their bellies would not fit in a shirt anyway. Their buttocks and chests were collapsed into folds of rumpled skin. On their head, spurts of reddish hair. Olanna's eyes met their mother's steady stare and Olanna looked away quickly. She slapped a fly away from her face and thought how healthy all the flies looked, how alive, how vibrant. (p. 347-348)

This description sums up the horrifying condition that the victims of the Biafran war find themselves in. Olanna, seeing this for the first time, wonders about how long these victims are able to survive under such conditions, especially when she witnesses the death of a mother at the camp. She, therefore, asks Kainene about the number of deaths that are recorded at the camp in a day: "How many die a day?" (p. 348). However, Kainene is not able to answer Olanna's question about how many of them die a day because the number of deaths may be uncountable and also, perhaps, the rate of deaths is too devastating to keep count of. Her refusal to answer Olanna's question can also be out of pain from knowing that she is working in vain, sacrificing a lot only for them to die in the end. This feeling of hopelessness and futility of her sacrifices is expressed in her statement: "sometimes…I hate them for dying" (p. 349).

Consequently, from the focalisation on Olanna, the herterodiegetic narrator reveals the emotional and psychological trauma that the victims of the Biafran war experience. She also enables the reader to understand and appreciate the plight of the African, when she reveals the living conditions in her uncle's home, as an embodiment of the deprived majority, as well as her role in setting up a school to educate the children who are affected by the war, as indicated in the text below:

> "We will teach mathematics, English, and civics every day," Olanna said to Ugwu and Mrs. Muokelu a day before the classes began. "We have to make sure that when the war is over, they will all fit back easily into regular school. We will teach them to speak perfect English and perfect Igbo, like His Excellency. We will teach them pride in our great nation." (p. 291)

Accordingly, and as reiterated by Jegede (2010), "Olanna, the woman on which the numerous unfolding events in the novel revolve around, is the centre of the nerves

that power the thematic vitality of the novel. Whatever she does, or happens around her dictates the mood of events in the novel" (p. 5).

Focalisation on Richard

The author's use of the external focaliser whose restrictions allow for the shifts in poits of view is so significant in this novel that it enables the reader to experience the events narrated in the novel from different perspectives, from the different focalised characters used. The third and final focalised charcter adopted by the author, as part of the varied focalised characters is Richard Churchill. He is a British expatriate who has come to Nigeria to write a book about Igbo-Ukwu art and later becomes Kainene's boyfriend. He is first introduced to the reader when Olanna is being focalised, when Kainene brings him to dinner. It is though Olanna's portion of the narrative, when she is being focalised, therefore, that the reader is able to form some initial impressions about Richard:

> She had never liked any of Kainene's boyfriends and never liked that Kainene dated so many white men in England. Their thinly veiled condescension, their false validations irritated her. Yet she had not reacted in the same way to Richard Churchill when Kainene brought him to dinner. Perhaps it was because he did not have that familiar superiority of English people who thought they understood Africans better than Africans understood themselves and, instead, had an endearing uncertainty about him - almost a shyness. Or perhaps because her parents had ignored him, unimpressed because he didn't know anyone who was worth knowing. (p. 36)

It is this initial endearment Olanna feels towards Richard that also draws him closer to the Igbos. Thus, he is presented as one who identifies easily with them and is eager to learn from and about them. He does not assume that "familiar superiority of English people who thought they understood Africans better than Africans

understood themselves", as exhibited by Susan, his friend from the British Council, and other British expatriates.

The focalisation on Richard in this novel is quite significant to the conception and understanding of issues discussed by the author in the novel, in a number of ways. Firstly, he provides information for the sections that are restricted to the focalised characters Ugwu and Olanna. He also serves as a link to the revelation and understanding of some of the atrocities of the war, and how, especially, the Western world also perceives it. Thus, through the focalisation on him, the reader gets to know more about how a third-party to the Biafran war is also affected by it. When Richard first gets to Nigeria and makes his interest in Igbo-Ukwu art known to other expatriates Susan introduces him to, the herterodiegetic narrator reveals to the reader, their perception of Nigerians:

> When Richard mentioned his interest in Igbo-Ukwu art, they said it didn't have much of a market yet, so he did not bother to explain that he wasn't at all interested in the money, it was the aesthetics that drew him. And when he said he had just arrived in Lagos and wanted to write a book about Nigeria, they gave him brief smiles and advice: The people were bloody beggars, be prepared for their body odours and the way they will stand and stare at you on the roads, never believe a hard-luck story, never show weakness to domestic staff. (p. 53-54)

This description, presented by the herterodiegetic narrator when focalising on Richard, portrays the African in an inauspicious light to the reader. This perception of the Westerner, about the African, appears to be biased or single-storied, as the African is more complex and conscientious than a "bloody beggar"; hence, Richard's expatriate counterparts present the African in a prejudiced light to the reader.

Richard is further schooled about the perceived nature of the different types of Africans he is likely to meet in Nigeria. Susan makes this perceived nature of the African known to him by intimating that:

> "They have a marvellous energy, really, but very little sense of hygiene, I'm afraid." She told him the Hausa in the North were a dignified lot, the Igbo were surly and money-loving, and the Yoruba were rather jolly even if they were first-rate lickspittles...The Yoruba get into huge debt just to throw these parties." (p. 55)

The herterodiegetic narrator further reveals more of Susan's perception about the Igbos to Richard in the following narrative:

> There are lots and lots of Igbo people here – well, they are everywhere really, aren't they? Not that they didn't have it coming to them, when you think about it, with their being so clannish and uppity and controlling the markets. Very Jewish, really. And to think they are relatively uncivilized; one couldn't compare them to the Yoruba, for example, who have had contact with Europeans on the coast for years. I remember somebody telling me when I first came to be careful about hiring an Igbo houseboy because, before I knew it, he would own my house and the land it was built on. (p. 154)

Another significance of the author's use of Richard as a focalised character is that it is through the focalisaion on him that one of the most gruesome incidents of the war is presented to the reader. When Richard makes a transit at Kano airport, to Lagos, on his return from London, he witnesses the killing of Nnaemeka (a custom's officer in training) and other Igbo natives. The presentation of the incident, to Richard, initially, appeares to be dramatic since he least expects the conflict between the Southerners and Northerners to escalate to mass killings. In the following extract, the herterodiegetic narrator captures his observation of the entry the army makes into the waiting room:

> The side entrance burst open and three men ran in holding up long rifles. They were wearing green army uniforms, and Richard wondered why soldiers would make such a spectacle of themselves, dashing in like that, until he saw how red and wildly glassy their eyes were. (p. 153)

His initial reaction to the entry of the army into the lounge is that of bewilderment, as he wonders why "soldiers would make such a spectacle of themselves, dashing in like that". However, upon their countenance, "how red and wildly glassy their eyes were", he knows there is danger.

In the ensuing extract, the herterodiegetic narrator presents Richard's experience of the killings of Igbos that take place at the airport lounge:

> The first soldier waved his gun around. "*Ina nyamiri!* Where are the Igbo people? Who is Igbo here? Where are the infidels?"
> A woman screamed.
> "You are Igbo," the second soldier said to Nnaemeka.
> "No, I come from Katsina! Katsina!"
> The soldier walked over to him. "Say Allahu Akbar!"
> The lounge was silent. Richard felt cold sweat weighing on his eyelashes.
> "Say Allahu Akbar!" the soldier repeated.
> Nnaemeka knelt down. Richard saw fear etched so deeply onto his face that it collapsed his cheeks and transfigured him into a mask that looked nothing like him. He would not say Allahu Akbar because his accent would give him away. Richard willed him to say the words, anyway, to try; he willed something, anything, to happen in the stifling silence and as if in answer to his thoughts,… the rifle went off and Nnaemeka's chest blew open, a splattering red mass, and Richard dropped the note in his hand.
> Passengers were crouched behind the chairs. Men got on their knees to lower their heads to the floor. Somebody was shouting in Igbo, "My mother, oh! My mother, oh! God has said no!" It was the bartender. One of the soldiers walked up close and shot him and then aimed at the bottles of liquor lined up behind and shot those. The room smelled of whisky and Campari and gin.
> There were more soldiers now, more shots, more shouts of "*Nyamiri!*" and "*Araba, araba!*" The bartender was writhing on the floor and the gurgle that came from his mouth was guttural. (pp. 152-153)

> The soldiers ran out to the tarmac and into the airplane and pulled out Igbo people who had already boarded and lined them up and shot them and left them lying there, their bright clothes splashes of colour on the dusty black stretch. The security guards folded their arms across their uniforms and watched. Richard felt himself wet his trousers. There was a painful ringing in his ears. He almost missed his flight because, as the other passengers walked shakily to the plane, he stood aside, vomiting. (p. 153)

Here, the herterodiegetic narrator presents to the reader a detailed and picturesque description of what Richard experiences at the airport in Kano. Through the focalisation on him, the shocking details of these killings are made manifest to the reader, especially the extent and magnitude of them. The herterodiegetic narrator reveals the strategy the soldiers use in identifying the Igbos from the lot, by making them repeat the phrase, "Allahu Akbar", which is Arabic for "Allah is Great". The narration then shifts to focus on how these Igbos are shot, and how they finally die.

Thus, when Nnaemeka is not able to say "Allahu Akbar" because his accent will betray him, he is shot in the chest. The image created in his killing is so visual and affective that it sends shivers down the spine of other victims around, to the extent that there are shouts of "My mother, oh! My mother, oh! God has said no!" when "Nnaemeka's chest blew open, a splattering red mass, and Richard dropped the note in his hand", the note he has kept in his hand throughout the journey. The focus of the narration shifts again from the killings in the lounge to the tarmac and into the plane, where more Igbos who have already boarded are pulled out and lined up and shot, with "their bright clothes splashes of colour on the dusty black stretch." The focus then shifts back to Richard, to reveal the effect of these killings on him, as he "felt himself wet his trousers. There was a painful ringing in his ears" and almost misses his flight, too, since he stands aside vomiting as the other passengers

walk shakily to the plane. Consequently, it is not only Richard who is affected by this incident at the airport but other passengers as well. These events, which are presented to the reader in the back and forth shifts in focalisation are done in series that present a panoramic viewing of the actions therein depicted.

In addition, the employment of this external focaliser and the several shifts in points of view in presenting the narrative is very significant to the appreciation of Adichie's novel. As has already been established in the discussion, this technique enables the reader to get access to the varied and multiple perspectives to the Biafran war, as presented by these different focalised characters. Thus, through the focalisation on Richard, another horrendous incident of the war (the death of Ikejide) is presented to the reader. When the vandals eventually attack Port Harcourt and begin "shelling close by", Richard, Kainene and Harrison witness one of the horrific incidents of the war. According to Richard, they have always believed that Port Harcourt will not fall; however, he is taken aback when he hears sounds of the shelling close by:

> Richard heard the roar of planes above. It couldn't possibly be. There had never been an air raid in Port Harcourt and it made no sense that there would be one now, when Port Harcourt was about to fall and the vandals were shelling close by. But the sound was unmistakable, and when Harrison shouted, "Enemy plane, sah!" his words felt redundant. Richard ran toward Kainene, but she was already running out of the room, and he followed. She said, "Come out to the orchard!" when she ran past Harrison and Ikejide crouched under the kitchen table.
>
> Outside, the air was humid. Richard looked up and saw them, two planes flying low, with an ominously streamlined efficiency to their shape, trailing silver-white lines in the sky. Fear spread helplessness throughout his body. (p. 316)

> They lay under the orange trees, he and Kainene, side by side, silent. Harrison and Ikejide had run out of the house; Harrison threw himself flat on the ground while Ikejide kept running, his body arched slightly forward, his arms flying around, his head bobbing. *Then came the cold whistle of a mortar in the air and the crash as it landed and the boom as it exploded. Richard pressed Kainene to him. A piece of shrapnel, the size of a fist, wheezed past. Ikejide was still running and, in the moment that Richard glanced away and back, Ikejide's head was gone. The body was running, arched slightly forward, arms flying around, but there was no head. There was only a bloodied neck.* Kainene screamed. The body crashed down near her long American car, the planes receded and disappeared into the distance, and they all lay still for long minutes, until Harrison got up and said, "I am getting bag."
>
> He came back with a raffia bag. Richard did not look as Harrison went over to pick up Ikejide's head and put it in the bag. Later, as he grasped the still-warm ankles and walked, with Harrison holding the wrists, to the shallow grave at the bottom of the orchard, he did not once look directly at it. Kainene sat on the ground and watched them. (pp. 316-317)

In this detailed extract, the herterodiegetic narrator captures Richard's experience of the "shelling" that leads to Ikejide's death. The narrator begins by focussing on how Richard, Kainene, Harrison and Ikejide are all affected by the imminent realisation that Port Harcourt is about to fall and how they run helter-skelter, seeking refuge. It is the fear of this realisation that makes them run outside for protection. The focus of the narration then shifts from them to Ikejide. In the italicised portion of the extract, the narrator presents a sensual description of how Richard perceives the incident leading to Ikejide's death: how the "shrapnel, the size of a fist, wheezed past … in the moment that Richard glanced away and back, Ikejide's head was gone. The body was running, arched slightly forward, arms flying around, but there was no head. There was only a bloody neck" (p. 317). Then the narration shifts to his burial, where they "grasped the still-warm ankles and

walked, with Harrison holding the wrists, to the shallow grave at the bottom of the orchard" (p. 317).

This description is so vivid that it presents an image of a horrendous one that affects the senses of sight, touch or feel, kinaesthetic, auditory, etc. of the reader. The reader is able to have a mental representation of what is revealed by the narrator through Richard. The imagery presented here enables the reader to appreciate and understand the trauma that some of the survivors of the Biafran war experience. Here, too, both Richard and Kainene are affected to such an extent that Kainene becomes unresponsive for a while: "there was an eerie blankness in her eyes. Richard was not sure what to do. He shook her gently but the blank look remained…" For Richard, he simply "did not once look directly at it". The effects of this incident on the focalised characters are similar to how Olanna is affected by Arize's death, at Kano.

Another advantage the employment of Richard as a focalised character adds to the narrative is the perception of the Western world about the war between the Igbos and the Northerners. From his focalised position, the reader gets some insight into how the British, through their reportage, present their conception of the conflict between these two. When Richard starts receiving frantic letters from his aunt, Aunt Elizabeth, about the Nigerian massacres, he becomes agitated and annoyed, and writes calm replies to tell her to "please stop sending flimsy airmail editions of newspapers with articles about the Nigerian pogroms circled in pencil":

> The articles annoyed him. "Ancient tribal hatreds," the *Herald* wrote, was the reason for the massacres. *Time* magazine titled its piece MAN MUST WHACK, an expression printed on a Nigerian lorry, but the writer had taken *whack* literally and gone on to explain that Nigerians were so naturally prone to violence that they even wrote about the necessity of it on their passenger lorries. Richard sent a terse letter off to *Time.* In Nigerian Pidgin English, he wrote, *whack* meant *eat.* At least the *Observer* was a little more adroit, in writing that if Nigeria survived the massacres of the Igbo it would survive anything. But there was a hollowness to all the accounts, an echo of unreality. (p. 166)

The herterodiegetic narrator presents, in the extract above, the insensitive nature of the reportage, by the choice of words adopted in the headlines. Infuriated by these reports in the British newspapers about the Nigerian situation, Richard writes extensive accounts about the massacres:

> It is imperative to remember that the first time the Igbo people were massacred, albeit on a much smaller scale than what has recently occurred, was in 1945. That carnage was precipitated by the British colonial government when it blamed the Igbo people for the national strike, banned Igbo-published newspapers, and generally encouraged anti-Igbo sentiment. The notion of the recent killings being the product of "age-old" hatred is therefore misleading. The tribes of the North and the South have long had contact, at least as far back as the ninth century, as some of the magnificent beads discovered at the historic Igbo-Ukwu site attest. No doubt these groups also fought wars and slave-raided each other, but they did not massacre in this manner. If this is hatred, then it is very young. It has been caused, simply, by the informal divide-and-rule policies of the British colonial exercise. These policies manipulated the differences between the tribes and ensured that unity would not exist, thereby making the easy governance of such a large country practicable. (pp. 166-167)

Consequently, in Richard's long articles (as sampled above), he tries to rationalise the war and puts some of the blame on the British for their divide-and-rule policies. He also makes the argument to debunk the perception that projects the Nigerian as rather an irrational being, who harbours hatred for his neighbour in his heart.

Furthermore, this prejudiced perception about the Nigerian conflict is heightened by the response Richard receives from the *Herald* newspaper, which he rips apart after reading (the response):

> The international press was simply saturated with stories of violence from Africa, and this one was particularly bland and pedantic, the deputy editor wrote, but perhaps Richard could do a piece on the human angle? Did they mutter any tribal incantations while they did the killings, for example? Did they eat body parts like they did in the Congo? Was there a way of trying truly to understand the minds of these people? (p. 167)

In the extract above, the external focaliser makes it possible for the reader to get the perspective of the Western world, the British, about the war in Nigeria by focalising on Richard. From this external position to the narrative information and from the response the *Herald* sends, the impression of nonchalance is created about the British concerning the war. They simply do not care about what is happening but rather more interested in their prejudiced conception about the Africans.

In addition, when the war intensifies and Nsukka is evacuated, Susan reveals her perception about the raging war and Nigerians. Through the external focaliser's focus on Richard, the reader gets to know the parochial mind-set of the British about the Nigerian, as this information is made available because Susan falls within the focal space of the focalised character, Richard. In the following interaction between Richard and Susan, this idea becomes apparent:

> "It's not safe, Richard. I'm not staying here longer than another week. These people never fight civilized wars, do they? So much for calling it a civil war." Susan paused. "I rang the British Council in Enugu and I can't believe our people there are still going off to play water polo and have cocktails at the Hotel Presidential! There's a bloody war going on." "It will be cleared up soon." "Cleared up, ha! Nigel is leaving in two days. Nothing is going to clear up; this war will drag on for years. Look what happened in the Congo. These people have no sense of peace. They'd sooner fight until the last man is down-" (p. 182)

In the quotation above, Susan enables the reader to see how "low" or less human the Western world perceives Nigerians. This single-minded view Susan expresses about the Nigerian rather infuriates Richard than impress him, as the narrator captures his reaction in the following quote:

> Richard hung up while Susan was still speaking, surprising himself by the rudeness. There was a part of him that wished he could help her, throw away the bottles of liquor in her cabinet and wipe away the paranoia that scarred her life. Perhaps it was a good thing she was leaving. He hoped she would find happiness, with Nigel or otherwise. He was still occupied with thoughts of Susan, half hoping she would not call again and half hoping she would, when Kainene came home. (p. 182)

From the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that the deployment of the external focaliser enables the author present the war of Biafra from varied or multiple perspectives to ascertain the argument that different individuals experienced the war and, therefore, will present the incidents from varied perspectives. It is in this regard that Ugwu, Olanna and Richard, who are employed as varied focalised characters whose shifts in points of view, enable the reader to get the varied dimensions to the narrative.

In effect, in this novel, the author adopts a detached, heterodiegetic narrator, who is external to the action of the story and comes across as reluctant to delve, at will, into the thoughts and feelings of characters. Unlike in *Purple Hibiscus* where the character-narrator, Kambili, a homodiegetic narrator who is internal to the narrative and also on "the 'same' plane of exegesis" (Sampson), presents the narrative, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is presented by a narrator who is external, detached and situated outside the story. Consequently, the narrator is different from the exegesis that comprises the story, making it herterodiegetic. Again, because the

focalisation is from the outside, restricting the amount of knowledge of the herterodiegetic narrator, this detatchment allows for shifts in points of view by the author's employment of different focalised characters who also enable the reader to perceive different aspects of the narrative.

Americanah

This is a novel that recounts the experiences of two people, Ifemelu and Obinze, who fall in love in Nigeria and later get separated when they both travel outside Nigeria, after college, to pursue further studies. It also relates the two cultures of Nigeria and America and the different permutations of love that exist or can exist between them. Adichie, in this novel, adopts the technique which is akin to what she employs in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. She employs what can be categorised under Genette's typology as external focalisation. In this narrative too, the detachment of the focaliser from the narrative allows for shifts in points of view, with the novel focusing on two focalised characters, Ifemelu and Obinze through whom the specific sections of the narrative are presented.

From the beginning of the novel, the reader gets the impression of the employment of an omniscient narrator, what Genette refers to as Zero Focaliser, as observed in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Nonetheless, things become clearer, as the narrative progresses, that this narrator only functions as a mediator for recording the perceptions of the two focalised characters through whom a particular section of the narrative is presented. This way, because the focaliser is external to the narrative, this detachment makes it possible for the herterodiegetic narrator to employ shifts in points of view between Ifemelu and Obinze who serve as the

focalised characters through whom the sections relating to America and England, and then Nigeria are presented through the technique of flashback. Thus, the narrative is presented from the external focaliser (Genette, 1980), from a herterodiegetic narrator who is focusing on two focalised characters, Ifemelu and Obinze whose consciousness (psychological, emotional, cognitive and ideological) the issues of race, colour and migration are presented.

The next segment will begin the discussion of the text by focussing on each of the focalised characters through whose point of view the sections of the narrative are presented.

Focalisation on Ifemelu

The narrative begins with the herterodiegetic narrator presenting to the reader Ifemelu's judgemental opinion regarding certain cities of the United States of America. The descriptions of the various cities also present to the reader that America is not as rosy a place as may be presented through reports. Through the focalisation on Ifemelu, the reader is presented with pertinent issues of concern to expatriates, especially those in America, while the focalisation on Obinze also enables the reader to perceive the condition of those expatriates who find themselves in the United Kingdom. When she picks a taxi to take her to Mariama's salon, she presents to the reader the image some Nigerians have built for themselves in America. Thus, the herterodiegetic narrator reveals Ifemelu's experience with some Nigerian taxi drivers who will show off or totally ignore her, on knowing that she too is a Nigerian. According to the herterodiegetic narrator,

> Ifemelu joined the taxi line outside the station. She hoped her driver would not be a Nigerian, because he, once he heard her accent, would either be aggressively eager to tell her that he had a master's degree, the taxi was a second job, and his daughter was on the dean's list at Rutgers; or he would drive in sullen silence, giving her change and ignoring her "thank you," all the time nursing humiliation, that this fellow Nigerian, a small girl at that, who perhaps was a nurse or an accountant or even a doctor, was looking down on him. Nigerian taxi drivers in America were all convinced that they really were not taxi drivers… She opened the door and glanced at the back of the driver's seat. *Mervin Smith*. Not Nigerian, but you could never be too sure. Nigerians took on all sorts of names here. Even she had once been somebody else. (p. 10)

In the extract above, it becomes evident that because of the mistrust some Nigerians have built for themselves in America, when Ifemelu enters the taxi, her attention first shifts to "the back back of the driver's seat" to ascertain if he is a Nigerian or not. Even though the name, *Mervin Smith*, is not Nigerian, she is still unsure about the identity of him. Hence, the external focaliser focuses on Ifemelu in order to reveal a lot about theme and character in the narrative.

The herterodiegetic narrator continues to reveal more about Nigerian men, when through Ifemelu's focalised condition, the reader gets to know the projection of some Nigerian men in Nigerian movies, as it has already been mentioned. When Ifemelu gets to Mariama's salon, a Nigerian movie is being shown on the TV mounted on a corner of the wall: "a man beating his wife, the wife cowering and shouting, the poor audio quality jarring" (p. 11). In another instance, on the TV screen, "a father was beating two children, wooden punches that hit the air above their heads" (p. 12) and this provokes an unpleasant response from one of the braiders at the salon: "No! Bad father! Bad man!" (p. 12).

The above episodes present to the reader an unfair presentation of maleness in the text. This perception is heightened with Blaine's prescription of what Ifemelu should and should not read. She, however, ends up reading most of the books he recommends for her even though they do not fascinate her: "She had read many of them, because he recommended them, but they were like cotton candy that so easily evaporated from her tongue's memory" (p. 14). It must be noted that the description of the Nigerian man, the Igbo man, especially, transcends that depicted in the Nigerian movie that is being shown on the TV in Mariama's salon, for Aisha reveals to the reader that "Igbo men take care of women real good" (p. 18). This episode, inadvertently sets the grounds for the author's feministic agenda in the text.

Another significant technique Adichie employs in the novel is the employment of Ifemelu as a focalised character through whom the feministic agenda is advanced. According to Jha (2016), "Adichie portrays a feminist character who has been the beloved of Obinze, Blaine, Curt and Fred but she refuses to wipe away her identity as a woman for the sake of procuring a husband. For, her identity lies in the kinky Afro hair and not the straight ones treated with chemicals and relaxers" (p. 113). Here, and from Ifemelu's focalised position, the reader appreciates the author's employment of her as a character who is able to move from one relationship to the other without compromising her personality as a Black woman in America. Even though Ifemelu has affairs with these men, she never loses sight of her identity as a woman in the quest of securing herself a husband.

Ifemelu appears to the reader as a female who is full of rebelliousness against the society and men, and relies on living her life on her own terms. In this

vane, it is evident from the narrative that her love happenstances with men lack commitment, mostly on her part. It is only with Obinze, her high school sweetheart, that she maintains some form of continuous attraction, repeatedly. Their flame of love still keeps burning even after Ifemelu cuts ties with him for about fifteen years, after her self-abhorrence experience with the tennis coach from Ardmore, for an amount of 100 dollars. This act, which devastates her to blame and immorality, establishes the point that she is not a person of frolicsome personality but is subsumed by the unfriendly and difficult conditions of a foreign country. Moreover, it is the problem of her shrinking accounts that makes her susceptible to the loss of her self-worth in the act.

Ifemelu's experiment with her preference of sexual partners is the author's way of making her assertive in a world that is male-dominated and also racially discriminatory. Ifemelu's escapades with men while in America extents from dating the rich white domineering Curt to when she later commits an unruly sexual encounter with her shabbily dressed neighbour, Rob. It can be argued that her relationship with Curt is entirely founded on physical desirability since she is unable to resist being attracted to Rob for similar reasons. Her behaviour in this instance is akin to that of a real feminist who refuses to be controlled by a man, especially one from another race and this propels her to disentangle herself from his holds by cossetting in spontaneous sex with Rob.

When later she confesses to Curt and she is questioned about her affair and the fact that she presents herself to Curt as a mere object of sex, she defends her

position and places herself in a state of wielding the power to control what she does with Rob, as illustrated in the following interaction between Ifemelu and Curt:

> "*You gave him what he wanted*," (emphasis added). Curt said. The planes of his face were hardening. It was an odd thing for Curt to say, the sort of thing Aunty Uju, who thought of sex as something a woman gave a man at a loss to herself, would say.
> In a sudden giddy fit of recklessness, she corrected Curt. *"I took what I wanted. If I gave him anything, then it was incidental."* (p. 357) (emphasis added)

In the extract above, it is evident that Ifemelu tries to assert her individuality by claiming her fair share of sexual pleasure from Rob. Her unexpected unfaithfulness with Rob is an effort of her black integrity to free herself from the unique enclave of the white man. It should, however, not be misconstrued that she loses cognizance of herself while dating Curt but that she cannot tolerate the affliction of being a puppet to a white American. Here, Ifemelu's "blackness confirms the white self, but whiteness empties the black subject" (Loomba, 2005) and she declines from emptying her distinctiveness any more to a Curt, therefore culminating in her committing a fraught act of infidelity with Rob. This way, she protects herself from being particularly colonised by her white boyfriend. Consequently, in this narrative, Ifemelu makes and disrupts the rules, even if it coerces her to experiment with her own sexuality. This kind of groundbreaking experimentation with her sexual predilections, which are unswervingly related to her commitment to her black origin, is certainly a feminist stance Ifemelu undertakes.

There is another reason for which Ifemelu senses "there was something wrong with her, a hunger, a restlessness, an incomplete knowledge of herself. The sense of something farther away, beyond her reach" (p. 358) after her confession to

Curt, can be associated to what Fanon terms, "a realisation of the Manichean concept of the world" in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967). In this book, Fanon remarks that the relationship between a white man and a woman of colour is doomed because of the inherent racial inferiority. Black and white are two polarities that are in constant strife with each other. He reiterates additionally that:

> I am black: I am the incarnation of a complete fusion with the world, an intuitive understanding of the earth, an abandonment of my ego in the heart of the cosmos, and no white man, no matter how intelligent he may be, can ever understand Louis Armstrong and the music of the Congo. (p. 31)

Since Ifemelu is continuously beneath the burden of "a crushing objecthood" (Loomba, 2005) of being named the unusual black sweetheart of a gorgeous and leading American proprietor, she indulges in infidelity simply to free herself from "being objectified". The solitary skirmish with Rob (a white man) stimulates the integrity of the Negro (Ifemelu) and Curt feels the immensity of being black. Fanon highlights the émigré experience on the colonised and the manner in which colonisation has reduced these underprivileged individuals into being phobic and emotionally vile:

> The Negro is unaware of it as long as his existence is limited to his own environment; but the first encounter with a white man oppresses him with the whole weight of his blackness. Then there is the unconscious. Since the racial drama is played out in the open, the black man has no time to "make it unconscious." The white man, on the other hand, succeeds in doing so to a certain extent, because a new element appears: guilt. The Negro's inferiority or superiority complex or his feeling of equality is conscious. These feelings forever chill him. (p. 116)

Consequently, Ifemelu's unexpected adultery is a challenge of her black principles to free herself from the exclusive tentacles of the Whiteman. It must be emphasised that all of this thematic information is revealed to the reader more forcefully, not

so much by the knowledge of narrative information of the external focaliser but by the focalised character, Ifemelu, who through her focalised position, enables the reader to appreciate such thematic issues.

Furthermore, when Ifemelu and Obinze meet again, upon her return to Nigeria, after a break in communication for about ten years, they rekindle their love relationship. This time, however, Obinze is already married to Kosi yet he engages in numerous incidents of extra-conjugal affair, deceitfulness and cheating with Ifemelu. Even though Ifemelu is conscious of Obinze's marital status, she is neither able to prevent herself from loving him nor can he also stop himself from rationalising that his marriage to Kosi is on the rebound and that he has ceased loving her. He makes this revelation to Ifemelu when he says that "'there's a lot of pretending in my marriage, Ifem.' He paused. 'I married her when I was feeling vulnerable; I had a lot of upheaval in my life at the time'" (p. 555).

Despite the fact that Ifemelu is conscious of what the ramifications of dating a married man are, she is unable to help herself out of the situation. She recognises that Obinze is incapable of shedding his responsibilities to his family, especially to his daughter, Buchi. She, therefore, makes Obinze mindful of her cognisance of his situation when she states that "I'm never going to ask you for anything. I'm a grown woman and I knew your situation when I got into this" (p. 556). Here, Ifemelu demonstrates her level of independence and her willingness to extract as much as she can from her relationship with Obinze. She is the one who is in charge and determines when and where they have to be intimate. Their relationship is one that

may not be acceptable for conservatives but Ifemelu employs it as an avenue to assert her individuality.

Subsequently, in their relationship, she declines becoming "the other woman" or "the side chick" and thus alters conditions for the fear that she may be labelled a malevolent woman. Ifemelu is, therefore, empowered and liberated enough to claim her share of love with Obinze. Consequently, it must be noted that the narrative does not only examine the life of Ifemelu and Obinze, over three continents but also explores the diverse manifestations of varied ethnic ideals. Adichie, in *Americanah*, depicts the modern-day Nigerian woman who has eschewed the conventional concepts concerning love and marriage whereby woman is the hunter and man, the benefactor and trusts in resourcefulness of relationships.

Analogous instances of the liberation of the woman from the clutches of love and marriage can be found in Emecheta's narratives, especially *Destination Biafra* (1986), where Debbie refuses to marry or get married in order to enable her contribute to the Biafran course. In all of this, it is the female who wields power and she also decides the pace of events in the narrative. In effect, it must be stressed that the author nowhere ventures or attempts to venture into presenting belligerent feminists in her female characters; however, they do not also dislodge from repudiating a grander platform to their male colleagues.

Another significant disclosure that is made in the narrative, through the focalisation on Ifemelu is that made regarding the plight of émigré Nigerians (which is symbolic of Africans) who first go to America. When Ifemelu first gets

to America, she is disappointed at what she experiences. She has heard pleasant stories about the place but she turns out to be disappointed when her expectations are not met, when she finally gets there, as captured in the extract below:

> It was summer in America, she knew this, but all her life she had thought of "overseas" as a cold place of wool coats and snow, and because America was "overseas," and her illusions so strong they could not be fended off by reason, she bought the thickest sweater she could find in Tejuosho market for her trip. She wore it for the journey, zipping it all the way up in the humming interior of the airplane and then unzipping it as she left the airport building with Aunty Uju. The sweltering heat alarmed her, as did Aunty Uju's old Toyota hatchback, with a patch of rust on its side and peeling fabric on the seats. She stared at buildings and cars and signboards, all of them matte, disappointingly matte; in the landscape of her imagination, the mundane things in America were covered in a highshine gloss. She was startled, most of all, by the teenage boy in a baseball cap standing near a brick wall, face down, body leaning forward, hands between his legs. She turned to look again. (p. 127)

The extract above is presented from the focalisation of the external focaliser who is focalising the character, Ifemelu, through whose point of view the reader gets a picture of the America that she has dreamt of. However, her presentation is that of a disappointing and disillusioned one, as she is awed by despairing difference between the America she reads about and the one she finds herself in. This is not the only challenge she encounters in America: she later encounters much more daunting ones comprising race, class and colour.

Through Ifemelu's focalised perspective, the reader gets to comprehend how significant the issues of race, class and colour are in America. She has been having some experiences with discrimination indirectly; however, she finally comes into direct contact with the issues of race, class and colour when the carpet cleaner gets to Mrs Turner's home, where Ifemelu works. The initial reaction of the

carpet cleaner, on seeing Ifemelu at the door is that of surprise: "He stiffened when he saw her. First surprise flittered over his features, then ossified to hostility" (p. 204) because he is disappointed at thinking that she is a "homeowner, and she was not what he had expected to see in this grand stone house with the white pillars" (p. 204).

In this extract, the external focaliser makes it possible for the reader to perceive how the carpet cleaner reacts on seeing Ifemelu at the door, by focussing on him and his movement, that is, as he "stiffened when he saw her". The focalisation then shifts from the physical features of the carpet cleaner to how he reacts; first, from surpreise then to hostility towards Ifemelu. Consequently, according to the carpet cleaner, it is not possible, per the established class stratification in America, to have Ifemelu as a homeowner and therefore, finds it strange and unthinkable to see her at the door. However, his fears are finally assuaged when he realises that "she, too, was help" and that "the universe was once again arranged as it should be" (p. 205). This encounter with the carpet cleaner later informs Ifemelu's blog post when she states that:

> "Sometimes in America, Race Is Class" with the story of his dramatic change, and end with: *It didn't matter to him how much money I had. As far as he was concerned I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked. In America's public discourse, "Blacks" as a whole are often lumped with "Poor Whites." Not Poor Blacks and Poor Whites. But Blacks and Poor Whites. A curious thing indeed*. (p. 205) (Emphasis in original text)

Ifemelu further goes on to explain, in her blog, how Americans see tribalism, which is also at the core of the narrative. According to her, there are four kinds of it: class, ideology, region and race. For class, it has to do with "rich folk

and poor folk". Race, on the other hand, is explained as having a hierarchical ladder in America:

> White is always on top, specifically White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WASP, and American Black is always on the bottom, and what's in the middle depends on time and place. (Or as that marvellous rhyme goes: if you're white, you're all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black, get back!) Americans assume that everyone will get their tribalism…You see, in America's ladder of races, Jewish is white but also some rungs below white. (pp. 227-228)

All of this information is made available to the reader when Ifemelu is being focalised by the external focaliser who is detached from the narrative and therefore, depends on the focalised characters for narrative information. That is, it is through the focalisation on Ifemelu that the narrator gives the reader an explication of race in the novel. She does it explicitly in a blog entitled, "Is Obama Anything but Black?", in which she uses Obama as a reference point to explain what race is and what it is not:

> So lots of folk – mostly non-black – say Obama's not black, he's biracial, multiracial, black-and-white, anything but just black. Because his mother was white. But race is not biology; race is sociology. Race is not genotype; race is phenotype. Race matters because of racism. And racism is absurd because it's about how you look. Not about the blood you have. It's about the shade of your skin and the shape of your nose and the kink of your hair. Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglass had white fathers. Imagine them saying they were not black. Imagine Obama, skin the color of a toasted almond, hair kinky, saying to a census worker - I'm kind of white. Sure you are, she'll say. Many American Blacks have a white person in their ancestry, because white slave owners liked to go a-raping in the slave quarters at night. But if you come out looking dark, that's it. (So if you are that blond, blueeyed woman who says "My grandfather was Native American and I get discrimination too" when black folk are talking about shit, please stop it already.) In America, you don't get to decide what race you are. (p. 419)

> It is decided for you. Barack Obama, looking as he does, would have had to sit in the back of the bus fifty years ago. If a random black guy commits a crime today, Barack Obama could be stopped and questioned for fitting the profile. And what would that profile be? "Black Man." (p. 419)

In this quotation, it becomes apparent that in America, race is about colour and it is decided for one, notwithstanding his or her biological inclinations. Thus, Obama is not expected to be president because of his colour, because he is Black. In one of such posts about Obama, regarding the American presidential elections, Ifemelu, through her focalised position, enables the reader to perceive how one poster captures the racial abuse of Obama: "How can a monkey be president? Somebody do us a favour and put a bullet in this guy. Send him back to the African jungle. A black man will never be in the white house, dude, it's called the white house for a reason" (p. 439).

In this extract, the level of the Blackman (Obama) is downgraded to that of "a monkey", as illustrated in the metaphor, showing all the hatred generated towards him because of his colour and not what he can do for the nation. However, the narrative also makes it clear how status: power and wealth can change or make others accept the race of other people. That is, make someone be accepted even in circles where he or she will ordinarily have been rejected and abused. Hence, "… if he (Obama) wins, he will no longer be black, just as Oprah is no longer black, she's Oprah… So she can go where black people are loathed and be fine. He'll no longer be black, he'll just be Obama" (p. 442).

In furtherance of this argument, the narrator reiterates the gravity of the issue of race in America, when in Ifemelu's later blog post to her fellow Non-

American Blacks regarding their status in America, in the title: "To My Fellow Non-American Blacks: In America, You Are Black, Baby", she reminds them of their condition:

> Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now. We all have our moments of initiation into the Society of Former Negroes. Mine was in a class in undergrad when I was asked to give the black perspective, only I had no idea what that was. So I just made something up. And admit it—you say "I'm not black" only because you know black is at the bottom of America's race ladder…What if being black had all the privileges of being white? Would you still say "Don't call me black, I'm from Trinidad"? I didn't think so. So you're black, baby…And here's the deal with becoming black: You must show that you are offended when such words as "watermelon" or "tar baby" are used in jokes, even if you don't know what the hell is being talked about – and since you are a Non-American Black, the chances are that you won't know…You must nod back when a black person nods at you in a heavily white area. …It is called the black nod. It is a way for black people to say "You are not alone, I am here too." In describing black women you admire, always use the word "STRONG" because that is what black women are supposed to be in America. If you are a woman, please do not speak your mind as you are used to doing in your country. Because in America, strong-minded black women are SCARY. And if you are a man, be hyper-mellow, never get too excited, or somebody will worry that you're about to pull a gun. When you watch television and hear that a "racist slur" was used, you must immediately become offended. Even though you are thinking "But why won't they tell me exactly what was said?" Even though you would like to be able to decide for yourself how offended to be, or whether to be offended at all, you must nevertheless be very offended.When a crime is reported, pray that it was not committed by a black person, and if it turns out to have been committed by a black person, stay well away from the crime area for weeks, or you might be stopped for fitting the profile. If a black cashier gives poor service to the non-black person in front of you, compliment that person's shoes or something, to make up for the bad service, because you're just as guilty for the cashier's crimes. (pp. 273-274)

> If you are in an Ivy League college and a Young Republican tells you that you got in only because of Affirmative Action, do not whip out your perfect grades from high school. Instead, gently point out that the biggest beneficiaries of Affirmative Action are white women. If you go to eat in a restaurant, please tip generously. Otherwise the next black person who comes in will get awful service, because waiters groan when they get a black table. You see, black people have a gene that makes them not tip, so please overpower that gene. If you're telling a non-black person about something racist that happened to you, make sure you are not bitter. Don't complain. Be forgiving. If possible, make it funny. Most of all, do not be angry. Black people are not supposed to be angry about racism. Otherwise you get no sympathy. This applies only for white liberals, by the way. Don't even bother telling a white conservative about anything racist that happened to you. Because the conservative will tell you that YOU are the real racist and your mouth will hang open in confusion. (pp. 274-275)

In this ostensibly long extract, the herterodiegetic narrator presents Ifemelu's advice to her fellow Non-American Blacks regarding how to survive in a predominantly racial community like America. Because the narrator is restricted to how much information he can present to the reader, he focalises on Ifemelu who is able to reveal enough information to enrich the reader's understanding. The narrative focuses on specific instances that may be oblivious to the Blacks but have strong racial undertones.

The extract also presents to the reader the helpless state of Blacks in America. This helpless state is aggravated by the recent killing of George Floyd on 25th May, 2020, by some police officers. The incident, which is captured on camera, appears to give voice to thousands of oppressed Black victims of police brutalities in America and has sparked numerous protests and demonstrations around the world, with the protestors seeking equal rights for all, under the caption: Black Lives Matter (BLM). Consequently, through the focalisation on Ifemelu, the

subject of racism, which Adichie addresses in her novel, is treated as a core issue of the American culture, if there is any agenda of making the country great again.

Through the focalisation on Ifemelu too, the author presents another significant perspective regarding the plight of expatriates trying to survive in America and their struggles in seeking jobs. Ifemelu's initial years in America are so difficult for her that she almost crumbles under the economic hardship she finds herself in, to the extent of even acquiring a fake name of Ngozi Okonkwo, just to unable her to secure a job, pay her rent because it is due and besides, "writing a check would leave her account empty". As if the emotional and psychological toll her financial condition takes on her is not enough, her neighbour's dog also eats her sliced bacon, as presented by the external focaliser who, focusing on Ifemelu, reveals the effect this incident has on her:

> AND THEN Elena's dog ate her bacon. She had heated up a slice of bacon on a paper towel, put it on the table, and turned to open the fridge. The dog swallowed the bacon and the paper towel. She stared at the empty space where her bacon had been, and then she stared at the dog, its expression smug, and all the frustrations of her life boiled up in her head. A dog eating her bacon, a dog eating her bacon while she was jobless. (p. 187)

This act by the dog generates anger and frustration in Ifemelu to the extent that she wants to slap her dissolute roommate (Elena, who also owns the dog) "not because a slobbering dog had eaten her bacon but because she was at war with the world, and woke up each day feeling bruised, imagining a horde of faceless people who were all against her. It terrified her, to be unable to visualise tomorrow" (p. 187).

In addition, Ifemelu's state of joblessness and helplessness continues to worsen, as she is also under pressure from her flatmates to pay her rent, which all

culminate in her falling into depression, even though she refuses to admit to her condition. She becomes desperate to the point that she finally accepts the job offer from the tennis coach in Ardmore, who has offered her the opportunity to work for him for a hundred dollars a day; to help him "relax", with the possibility of a raise. She does not know what exactly he means by "help to relax" until she finally gets to his house. He tells her of his demands: "come over here… I need to be warm… Just come here and lie down… Keep me warm. I'll touch you a little bit, nothing you'll be uncomfortable with. I just need some human contact to relax" (p. 189). Even though she is reluctant to go through with this act, her present economic circumstance renders her vulnerable and overshadows her will to resist the ease the hundred-dollar money will bring her. She, therefore, goes through the ordeal of helping the tennis coach to "relax", albeit her own misgivings:

> How sordid it all was, that she was here with a stranger who already knew she would stay. He knew she would stay because she had come. She was already here, already tainted. She took off her shoes and climbed into his bed. She did not want to be here, did not want his active finger between her legs, did not want his sigh-moans in her ear, and yet she felt her body rousing to a sickening wetness. Afterwards, she lay still, coiled and deadened. He had not forced her. She had come here on her own. She had lain on his bed, and when he placed her hand between his legs, she had curled and moved her fingers. Now, even after she had washed her hands, holding the crisp, slender hundred-dollar bill he had given her, her fingers still felt sticky; they no longer belonged to her. (pp. 189-190)

The extract above captures explicitly what Ifemelu has to do to earn some money, hundred dollars, to enable her to pay her rent. Even though she harbours fears about carrying out such a job, the desperation in her living condition is so strong that it weakens her will to overcome the temptation of what the hundred dollar will do for her. the external focaliser presents to the reader how Ifemelu manages to help the

tennis coach "relax". The details of the focus of narration moves from her taking off her shoes, climbing into his bed, having his "active finger between her legs", his "sigh-moans in her ears" to her own body responding ironically by "rousing to a sickening wetness" until the coach relaxed.

Eventually, the gravity of what she does hits her hard when, in retrospection, she reflects on it, on her way back home. The herterodiegetic narrator enables the reader to see the effect of the Ardmore episode on her by aptly describing her psychological state in the following quote:

> She walked to the train, feeling heavy and slow, her mind choked with mud, and, seated by the window, she began to cry. She felt like a small ball, adrift and alone. The world was a big, big place and she was so tiny, so insignificant, rattling around emptily. Back in her apartment, she washed her hands with water so hot that it scalded her fingers, and a small soft welt flowered on her thumb. She took off all her clothes, and squashed them into a rumpled ball that she threw at a corner, staring at it for a while. She would never again wear those clothes, never even touch them. She sat naked on her bed and looked at her life, in this tiny room with the moldy carpet, the hundred-dollar bill on the table, her body rising with loathing. She should never have gone there. She should have walked away. She wanted to shower, to scrub herself, but she could not bear the thought of touching her own body, and so she put on her nightdress, gingerly, to touch as little of herself as possible. She imagined packing her things, somehow buying a ticket, and going back to Lagos. She curled on her bed and cried, wishing she could reach into herself and yank out the memory of what had just happened. (p. 190)

The excerpt above captures the gradual psychological trauma that engulfs her being. Through the focalisation on her, the reader perceives the effect this incident has on her from the macro level to the micro level. That is, the reader gets a sense of how insignificant she is in the bigger world, "big place and she was so tiny, so insignificant, rattling around emptily" (p. 190). Her experience, here, is symbolic of how situations can make one lose his or her dignity, as she does. The focalisation

on her then shifts from the world, her apartment, to be on her body, the micro level, to explore her devastation. The description is poignant that the reader is able to visualise Ifemelu's predicament and therefore, sympathise with her. It must, however, be reiterated that Adichie employs Ifemelu's narrative to expose some of the tormenting situations some expatriates go through in order to make their daily meals.

Finally, the harrowing effect of what Ifemelu does to earn the money has dire consequences on her for the rest of her stay in America. It also has serious repercussions on her relationship with Obinze, as she ends all forms of communication with him because she is not able to bring herself to tell him. When later, after about thirteen years, she finally decides to tell him about the ordeal with the tennis coach in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, she is still able to do that with precision:

> She told him small details about the man's office that were still fresh in her mind, the stacks of sports magazines, the smell of damp, but when she got to the part where he took her to his room, she said, simply, "I took off my clothes and did what he asked me to do. I couldn't believe that I got wet. I hated him. I hated myself. I really hated myself. I felt like I had, I don't know, betrayed myself." She paused. "And you…I don't really think about it much," she added. "I remember it, but I don't dwell on it, I don't let myself dwell on it. It's so strange now to actually talk about it. It seems a stupid reason to throw away what we had, but that's why, and as more time passed, I just didn't know how to go about fixing it." (p. 542-543)

Even though the herterodiegetic narrator tries to be as brief as possible with her description of the incident, the shifts in focalisation are still done with precision that the reader is able to understand what she does and thus, sympathise with her. The movement of the focus of narration from "the stacks of sports magazines, the

smell of damp" to "where he took her to his room" and she takes off her dress "and did what he asked me to do. I couldn't believe that I got wet" all aid in revealing the plight of Ifemelu in America. From the foregoing, therefore, it is apparent that even though a lot of time has elapsed, Ifemelu is not able to forget that horrendous encounter with the tennis coach in Ardmore. It has become a fossil in her life and this experience of hers, here, resonates with similar narratives reported from other expatriates.

The next segment will also focus on Obinze and how through the foclisation on him, certain aspects of the narrative are revealed to the reader.

Focalisation on Obinze

Through the focalisation on Obinze, the reader gets another perspective regarding the relationship between the Whites and Blacks in both the UK and America, which is captured in an interaction between Obinze, Emenike, Alexa, Mark and Georgina:

> It seemed…that in America blacks and whites work together but don't play together, and here blacks and whites play together but don't work together… class in this country (UK) is in the air that people breathe. Everyone knows their place. Even the people who are angry about class have somehow accepted their place… A white boy and a black girl who grow up in the same working-class town in this country can get together and race will be secondary, but in America, even if the white boy and black girl grow up in the same neighbourhood, race would be primary. (p. 340)

The extract above, focalised by the external focaliser, also enables the reader to get some understanding of the premium each of these countries places on race and class, especially as to whether they perceive them to be of primary or secondary importance to them.

Another significant revelation that is made manifest through the focalisation on both Ifemelu and Obinze is the audios situation of expatriates regarding their search for job in both America and England. Through the focalisation on Obinze, for instance, the reader gets to know of the sort and nature of arranged marriages that are contracted for these expatriates to enable them to acquire their papers and be legalised in England. Exactly two years and three days after Obinze arrives in England, he contracts some Angolans who arrange his marriage to Cleotilde, to enable him to acquire his needed documents to validate his residency in England. The herterodiegetic narrator makes the reader aware of the nature of their marriage (for convenience), "a marriage for papers", as captured in the following extract:

> "I just want to know that you're sure about doing this," he told her, and then, worried that he might frighten her away, he added, "I'm very grateful, and it won't take too much from you – in a year I'll have my papers and we'll do the divorce. But I just wanted to meet you first and make sure you are okay to do this. (p. 283)

The narrative subsequently makes it clear how these expatriates can survive in England, without a visa that allows them to work. In the words of Nicholas, Obinze's cousin, "the first thing to look for is not food or water, it is an NI number so you can work. Take all the jobs you can. Spend nothing. Marry an EU citizen and get your papers. Then your life can begin" (p. 295). It is, therefore, not surprising that Obinze and other expatriates of his kind engage in "a marriage for papers" in order to acquire their papers so that their lives can begin.

It must be noted that some of these arranged marriages do not end in "a happily ever after" union, as some of them are stopped just on the verge of the performance, as witnessed in Obinze's situation. From his focalised position, the

reader is presented with the devastating condition of being arrested on the threshold of finalising an arranged marriage ceremony that will guarantee his permanent stay in the UK, after his visa has expired. The extract below succinctly captures the episode of his arrest and subsequent imprisonment before his removal from the UK:

> A policeman clamped handcuffs around his wrists. He felt himself watching the scene from far away, watching himself walk to the police car outside, and sink into the too-soft seat in the back. There had been so many times in the past when he had feared that this would happen, so many moments that had become one single blur of panic, and now it felt like the dull echo of an aftermath…It was he who felt the heaviness of the handcuffs during the drive to the police station, who silently handed over his watch and his belt and his wallet, and watched the policeman take his phone and switch it off. Nicholas's large trousers were slipping down his hips…He took off his shoes. He was led to a cell. It was small, with brown walls, and the metal bars, so thick his hand could not go around one, reminded him of the chimpanzee's cage at Nsukka's dismal, forgotten zoo. From the very high ceilings, a single bulb burned. There was an emptying, echoing vastness in that tiny cell. (p. 344)

In the above quotation, the heterodiegetic narrator enables the reader to perceive Obinze's arrest and his incarceration. The details of this extract are done such that the external focaliser shifts the focus of the narration from the clamping of the handcuffs around Obinze's wrists to his being let to the police car outside, where he "sinks" into the "too-soft seat in the back". The focalisation on him continues, as he is driven to the police station, where he "silently handed over his watch and his belt and his wallet, and watched the policeman take his phone and switch it off", with Nicholas' large trousers "slipping down his hips".

The focaliser then shifts attention to Obinze taking off his shoes and being led to a cell which "was small, with brown walls, and the metal bars, so thick his hand could not go around one, reminded him of the chimpanzee's cage at Nsukka's dismal, forgotten zoo. From the very high ceilings, a single bulb burned. There was

an emptying, echoing vastness in that tiny cell". These shifts in focalisation enrich the reader's visualisation of the details being presented to aid comprehension of the narrative. The narrative also reveals the effect on him as his clothes even begin to slip off his body. Thus, he begins to lose weight from the shock of his arrest.

In addition, the trauma he experiences, which is symbolic of the shared experiences of all deportees, is compounded by the public ridicule of what his crime might have been. The narrator captures Obinze's feelings in the following quote:

> HE HATED the cold heaviness of the handcuffs, the mark he imagined they left on his wrists, the glint of the interlinking circles of metal that robbed him of movement. There he was, in handcuffs, being led through the hall of Manchester Airport, and in the coolness and din of that airport, men and women and children, travellers and cleaners and security guards, watched him, wondering what evil he had done…IN DETENTION, he felt raw, skinned, the outer layers of himself stripped off. His mother's voice on the phone was almost unfamiliar, a woman speaking a crisp Nigerian English, telling him, calmly, to be strong, that she would be in Lagos to receive him…telling him she would come and pick him up, as though she had always nursed the possibility of this, her son in detention, waiting to be removed from a country overseas. (pp. 345-347)

The extract above vividly depicts the plight of both Obinze and his mother, who both are used as symbols or representatives of expatriates who fall prey to such circumstances. Here, too, the reader appreciates the psychological, physical and emotional trauma that they both experience, from the shackles of the handcuffs on his wrists to the cells in detention and the state of the distraught mother at the thought of her son being held in detention and "waiting to be removed from a country overseas". Consequently, the focalisation is on the effect of the handcuffs on his wrists, then it shifts to people's perception of what his crime might have

been, thence to his state of helplessness and hopelessness while in detention, all of which build up and heighten the plot of the narrative.

In this Chapter, a discussion has been done on the employment of Genette's theory of narrative mood, with specific focus on perspective (focalisation) in Adichie's novels: *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. The analysis reveals that the author adopts a multifarious narrative techniques in presenting her concerns to the reader. One of such techniques is her employment of diverse forms of focalisation in the novels under study. In *Purple Hibiscus*, it is realised that the author employs the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, who also functions as the focaliser of narrative information, to narrate the story, with restrictions in her level of accessibility to narrative information. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, she adopts the external focalisation, where the detachment of the focaliser allows for shifts in points of view of three different characters: Ugwu, Olanna and then Richard. In *Americanah*, Adichie employs a similar technique as employed in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, where the focalisation is external, permitting the narrative to be presented from the perspectives of the focalised characters, Ifemelu and Obinze but also narrated from the heterodiegetic narrator, who is detached from the narrative, and whose detachement allows for these shifts in pperspective.

Thus, these narrators (autodiegetic and heterodiegetic) are only able to provide as much information as is made available to them by the focalised characters. It is also apparent from the discussion that such issues of characterisation, theme and setting are revealed to the reader, more forcefully, through the effective employment of the types of focalisation adopted by Adichie

in the novels. The next Chapter, which is the concluding chapter, discusses the findings of the study and concludes same, while making some recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter, the Concluding Chapter, provides a conclusion to the discussion in the study by presenting a summary of the focus of the study, a summary of the research findings and provision of some recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Focus of the Research

The focus of this study has been on narrative mood in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels: *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2009) and *Americanah* (2013). The researcher observes that the bulk of criticism and research on Adichie's works has focused on a content analysis, such as ideological and thematic, leaving a lot unsaid about how the narrative itself is realised, which is equally important. Thus, available information on her works has focused on the fabula aspect, with little regard for the sjuzhet. Accordingly, the researcher set out to explore the novels of Adichie by employing the theory of narratology to draw attention to the other aspect of her works that has not been accorded similar consideration; that is the sjuzhet.

The purpose of the study, therefore, is to fill that niche by providing an alternative to the interpretation of Adichie's novels; hence, the purpose was to explore the narrative mood (Genette's) employed by Adichie in her novels, especially her adroit use of the technique of mood in the selected novels to bring out and intensify the diegesis of these narratives. The selection of the texts for the

study is justified by the consideration that these narratives provide adequate space to conduct a narratological study of this nature. Another justification is the fact that there is a perceived development in her style of writing and treatment of theme.

The study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One covers the introduction to the study, comprising the biography of Adichie and a summary of the selected works for the study, exposition of the niche the research seeks to fill, purpose and significance of the study. Chapter Two focuses on the conceptual framework, which also encompasses the theoretical review and related literature on Adichie's novels. At the end of the Chapter, it is observed that even though much research has been conducted on Adichie's novels, the bulk of it has focused on content analysis, such as on themes, characterisation, setting, among others, with little attention to how the narrative itself is structured to reveal these issues of content. The researcher subsequently devotes two chapters to the analysis of the texts selected for the study by drawing attention to the narratives and their presentation.

Thus, Chapter Three begins the analyses of the texts by exploring Genette's category of mood, as both the underpinning theory for the study, as well as the methodology, with concentration on narrative distance in the selected novels. Here, the analysis explores the methods through which the author establishes distance between the narrator and the narrative. Consequently, the researcher analyses the texts by focusing on narration of events and narration of speech or words as essential narrative tools employed by the narrator in the narratives. Chapter Four, on the other hand, focuses on the other aspect of mood, perspective, in the novels.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, provides a conclusion to the discussion in this study, by drawing on the findings and providing recommendations for further research.

Summary of Research Findings

One major finding of the research is the author's effective employment of varied narrative perspectives in the three novels. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the narrative is presented from the first person perspective of Kambili, a fifteen-year old girl who is accorded the responsibility of relating the story, including those of the adults in the narrative. This unconsciously places a huge burden on her sensibility, as the narrative emanates from the reflections of her intelligence and sensitivity. Consequently, her use of language at the beginning of the novel is packed with thorough observations and descriptions, though lacking in maturity. Her presentation of narrative information is inadequate, as she is restricted to an omniscience knowledge of the narrative information, which is significant of her role as an autodiegetic narrator. The narrator's frequent employment of certain pronouns such as "I", "me", "mine" and "ours", among others, unambiguously highlights the effect that proceedings in the narrative have on the narrator, thereby generating maximum distance created between the narrator and the narrative.

Since it is through the perspective of the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, that the narrative is presented, she reveals such information relating to character, theme and setting to the reader. It is from her perspective that the reader forms impressions about Papa Eugene's hostilities on his family, with his own father, Papa Nnukwu inclusive. From her perspective, it becomes apparent that she develops an extensive

understanding of what is trending in her family and society. On several occasions, the focalising narrator reveals instances of Papa beating his children and wife, especially when he perceives an action as immoral. For instance, when Mama Beatrice is unable to visit Father Benedict with him because of ill health, he beats her up until she miscarries. Papa also pours boiling water on the feet of both Kambili and Jaja for sharing a home with a heathen and eventually beats Kambili until she is hospitalised for owning a painting of her estranged grandfather and Papa's father, Papa Nnukwu. Papa's rationalisation for his brutalities on his family is premised on his conviction that it is for their own good. Consequently, in the narrator's focalisation of Papa, the theme of domestic violence is introduced and developed at length in the novel, especially regarding Papa's treatment of his family. The violence has implications on his family, as it renders his children silent and hinders their growth to maturity, as perceived in their peers and cousins, Obiora and Amaka.

In addition, it must be noted that the author is cautious in her portrayal of Papa Eugene, as he appears to be a paradoxical character. Thus, the narrator reveals that in spite of Papa's cruelty on his family and his staunch devotion to Western religion and ideology, he also doubles as a strong leader of the resident church and his community, which all laud him for his charity and generosity. Contradictorily, he strives to uphold the privileges of those denied a voice by the military dictatorship, through his position as the proprietor of "The Standard", while he keeps his household in perpetual silence and fear.

Also, it is from Kambili's perspective that other characters like Mama Beatrice, Aunty Ifeoma, Papa Nnukwu, Obiora, Amaka, among others are introduced and developed. For example, the reader gets to appreciate the significance of Papa Nnukwu and Aunty Ifeoma to the explication of the religious maze that confronts Kambili. As a lecturer at the University of Nsukka, Aunty Ifeoma nurtures her children to speak freely and adopts intellectual curiosity and religious tolerance in her household. Her faith accommodates Catholic rites with a reverence to Nigerian traditions and unlike Papa Eugene, she remains close to Papa Nnukwu and tolerates his traditional ceremonies under her roof. It is she who explains to Kambili and the reader that Papa Nnukwu is a traditionalist and not a heathen, as Papa Eugene makes her (Kambili) believe. She is ingenious, as she has had to nurture her family without a husband, following his death. Even though Aunty Ifeoma and her children face economic privations, theirs is a more loving and happier home than Papa Eugene's. Notwithstanding Papa Eugene's assertions that Aunty Ifeoma is too liberal, she appears as a character of ethical integrity and strength.

The presentation of details of these incidents that reflect these descriptions is all presented from the perspective of the autodiegetic focalising narrator, Kambili, in a picturesque manner that it affects the senses of the reader to such an extent that it produces the effect of verisimilitude in the narrative. As the description saturates the narration, the reader is brought closer to the events to experience them for himself or herself. The narrative also reveals that Kambili's transformation into a complete being is premised on the change in setting that she

experiences. At the beginning of the narrative, she is presented as an obedient, shy, religious and a rather withdrawn girl who adores her father, while also struggling to find her own voice and identity. Albeit her qualities as an intelligent girl, she has limited awareness of Nigerian culture and politics. However, after her time spent with her aunt and cousins, she learns that there are alternative ways of living in faith and showing love, which is in contrast with the sometimes life-threatening and castigatory version of Catholicism practised by her father. Despite the fact that she does not demonstrate the outright defiance akin to her brother's, she, nonetheless, learns to silently rebel against her father's regime.

Half of a Yellow Sun, on the other hand, is presented from the perspective of an external focaliser (Genette, 1980) whose detachment from the narrative allows for several shifts in points of view, with the narration alternating from Ugwu, Olanna and Richard, through whose focalised consciousness the overwhelming bulk of the narrative is recounted. The author, in this novel, espouses a stimulating style through which primary focalised characters of specific units of the novel are identified. She begins each of these chapters with the focalised character's name, with the exception of the first chapter where Ugwu's name appears in the second sentence of the narrative. Thus, each of these focalised characters functions as a quasi-narrator and the entire narrative material largely becomes a rendition of their focalised perceptions. Accordingly, the author deliberately apportions the narration of the novel to the perspectives of these three focalised characters for an artistic effect.

From the analyses, it is apparent that Ugwu is the most significant character, considering the fact that his portion of narrative space is crucial to the entire narrative, though it comes second to that of Olanna's. As a principal focalised character, Ugwu's preference of narrative information, from a variety of prevailing conceivable materials, is that which regulates what the anonymous extradiegetic narrator presents to the reader. It is from his focalised position that insight into Odenigbo and Olanna, as well as other characters like Okeoma (the poet), Miss Adebayo, Dr. Patel and Professors Ezeaka and Lehman who form Odenigbo's group of social and intellectual friends in the novel are revealed to the reader. He also serves as the medium through which the complexities of the dichotomy between the city (urban) and village (rural) settings are revealed when he is being focalised. For instance, he reveals to the reader about the abundance of food in Odenigbo's house (chicken and bread), as against the scarcity of food back home in his village, to the extent that he even reserves some of the plenteousness (keeping some chicken in his pocket) for his siblings so that his aunty will "give them to Anulika. Perhaps he could ask her to give some to Nnesinachi too" (p. 8).

From the beginning of the narrative and the inception of the Biafran war, Ugwu is kept at a distance from active involvement in the heat of events until his conscription into the Biafran army. Here, he becomes not just an observer but also a participant and, therefore, enables the reader to also get first-hand information about the experiences of some of the victims, as well as some of the atrocities of the war. He enables the reader to see how child soldiers are conscripted into the Biafran army, as evidenced with High-Tech (who earned his name because his first

commander said he was "better than any high-technology spying gadget"), who is only thirteen. Ugwu's role as a focalised charcter, here, is also significant because he enables the reader to perceive some of the devastating violence the Biafran soldiers unleash unto some of the civilians.

The narrative also reveals Olanna's role as a focalised character as equally significant to the narrative, as she provides the psychological and emotional effects of the chaos in the novel. As the novel develops, she functions as the pivot from which some of the overwhelming incidents of the war are narrated. She provides the perspective to the gruesome killings in the North, especially of Kano and Sabon Gari, including those of her Uncle, Mbaezi, Aunty Ifeka and her cousin, Arize when she is being focalised. She also enables the reader to perceive the role that women play in helping to rebuild society after a disaster such as demonstrated in her role, together with Ugwu's, to teach the children affected by the war, in their effort to teach them pride in their "great nation".

Richard, on the other hand, through his focalised position, presents the Western perspective to their perception of the Nigerians and the Biafran war. For instance, it is through his focalised perspective that the Nigerian is perceived by the Westerners as "bloody beggars" with bad body odours and also "have a marvellous energy, really, but very little sense of hygiene" (p. 55). He also enables the reader to get to appreciate the hypocrisy of the British in the Biafran war, as captured in the feedback he receives from the *Herald* in response to his article.

The war, thus, has devastating effects on Richard that he "couldn't let himself be", after witnessing some of the gruelling incidents of the war, such as the deaths of Nnaemeka and Ikejide, which all are captured in vivid descriptions in the narrative. He subsequently empathises with the Biafran, as revealed in his unuttered and mental expressions, "He didn't believe that life was the same for all the other people who had witnessed the massacres." (p. 167)

Significantly, the author's employment of the external focaliser who is detached from the narrative enables the reader to have access to different shifts in perspectives to the Biafran war. Consequently, these three focalised characters provide different angles from which the Biafran war is experienced. This technique adopted by the author lends credence to her adroitness in experimenting with a style that is rarely used by writers, with some examples of astute ones like Achebe, Faulkner, Conrad, Armah, among others.

In *Americanah*, it is also observed that the narrative is presented from an external focaliser whose detachment from the narrative permits shifts in points of view from Ifemelu and Obinze, with the narrator functioning as a mediator for recording their perceptions and experiences of America and the UK respectively. In America, Ifemelu enables the reader to get insight into some of the cities, like Princeton, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Haven, Brooklyn, among others and their striking characteristics that endear them to her. Although the novel is not biographical, some instances reflect the author's stay in America, such as her experience of the differences in higher education between the two countries and a

consciousness of the importance and pervasiveness of the concept of "race" in America. According to the author,

> "It didn't take me very long to realise that in America black was not necessarily a good thing, and that black came with many negative assumptions. And so I didn't want to be black. I'm not black. I'm Nigerian. I'm Igbo. I'm not black. Race was not an identity I was willing to take." ("Conversation with Damian Woetzel", 2014).

Consequently, through Ifemelu's focalised position, the narrator chronicles the challenges that expatriates go through in America.

The study also reveals that the process of Ifemelu's acculturation takes a considerable toll on her as she trudges through racial discrimination, dislodgment and estrangement, leading to her loss of self-worth after the encounter with the tennis coach at Ardmore. The author, thus, portrays a different portrait of what America is to a Nigerian émigré from a distance and how it diminishes into something else after her actual movement there. Despite the fact that the narrative deals with Ifemelu's encounter with America, it also has undercurrents of her love relationships and instances of dishonesty in fake identities, race and colour, uprootedness and extreme anxiety to return to her homeland.

Again, the analysis reveals that the author uses Ifemelu as a focalised character to project her feminist agenda in the novel. According to Jha (2016), "Adichie portrays a feminist character who has been the beloved of Obinze, Blaine, Curt and Fred but she refuses to wipe away her identity as a woman for the sake of procuring a husband: for, her identity lies in the kinky Afro hair and not the straight ones treated with chemicals and relaxers" (p. 113). She appears to the reader as a

rebellious female who relies on living her life on her own terms, as evident in the type of love relationships she has with men, which lack commitment – generally on her part. Ifemelu's experimentation with her choice of sexual partners is Adichie's way of making her assertive in a world dominated by men and also racially discriminatory.

Obinze, the other focalised character, also provides the other part of the jigsaw of the plight of the expatriate in the UK. He provides the reader with some insight into the existing relationship between the Blacks and the whites in the UK, as opposed to that in America: hence:

> …in America blacks and whites work together but don't play together, and here blacks and whites play together but don't work together… class in this country (UK) is in the air that people breathe. Everyone knows their place. Even the people who are angry about class have somehow accepted their place… (p. 340)

Moreover, Obinze suffers from depression and identity crisis, as he has to take up lowly jobs such as a toilet cleaner, under a phoney identity, as well as being engaged in a failed arranged marriage; all demonstrating that an immigrant becomes a nameless, faceless individual, which only breathes and does not feel anything in either America or the UK.

Another significant observation from the analysis is the author's treatment of the theme of sex and sexuality in the three novels. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the subject of sex and sexuality is shrouded in the many silences that abound. The study reveals that the author, in this novel, is unable to succinctly present the issue of sex and its consummation but cloaks it in metaphors and instances of forbidden or unfulfilled pleasures, especially in the relationship between Kambili and Papa Eugene.

Because Kambili is restricted by the conditions in her home and does not have the opportunity of interacting with other people and especially males, all her attention is diverted towards her father, with whom she shares a special bond (suggestive of a forbidden sexual relationship), which is presented covertly in the narrative.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, on the other hand, the novelist boldly addresses the subject of sex and sexuality more than she does in the previous novel. The author, here, presents sexual relations in more evocative and intricate style that indicates her maturity as a writer at treating themes. The description of these sexual scenes are not restricted to adult characters alone but extended to Ugwu, the thirteen-year old houseboy of Odenigbo's through whose focalised position some of these scenes are also presented. These sexual scenes in the narrative are very picturesque that they present the events in a cinematic view to the reader who is able to comprehend the author's agenda of presenting a maximum of information, rendering the narrative mimetic. The sexual descriptions depicted in this novel are so sensual that they present to the reader movielike images of the actions of the characters involved in the description, a situation which will not be and is not permissible in *Purple Hibiscus*. Thus, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the novelist demonstrates her maturity in her development of the theme of sex and its consummation in vivid and succinct descriptiveness it emanates.

Another noteworthy revelation of the author's treatment of sex and its consummation in the narratives is the issue of unfulfilled sexual intercourse. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the affection between Kambili and her father, Papa Eugene, is so strong to the extent that it suggests a forbidden incestuous relationship. However,

she is later castrated from this feeling when she is exposed to Father Amadi, with whom she identifies a newfound bond of intimacy. Similarly, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, there is the situation of the unfulfilled desire to have sex or the feeling of satiating a "forbidden person", especially between Ugwu and Olanna. Because this interaction is impossible between them, Ugwu also becomes castrated from this desire and resorts to eavesdropping on the lovemaking of Olanna and his Master, Odenigbo. Additionally, there is a possible indication of a forbidden intimacy between Ugwu and Odenigbo. However, this feeling dies prematurely because it does not appear to be reciprocal, with Odenigbo seeming to be oblivious of Ugwu's special attention towards him. These amorous feelings are all made manifest in the uttered and thought processes of the focalised character, Ugwu, mainly.

Again, in *Americanah*, the author's development of the theme of sex and its consummation reaches a crescendo, as Ifemelu is able to experiment with her sexual preferences: from dating Curt and Blaine, having a fling with her neighbour, Rob and eventually reuniting with Obinze, her first love, in her bid to take as much as she wants from these relationships. In this novel, Adichie devotes enough space to provide some education on sexuality, especially to Ifemelu. Adichie employs the use of two significant female mentors in Ifemelu's life, Aunty Uju and Obinze's mother, who provide Ifemelu with the information she needs regarding sexuality.

To begin with, Obinze's mother takes it upon herself to direct Ifemelu's sex life when she advises her to wait until she is, at least, in the university, until "she owned herself a little more". It must be noted that Obinze's mother is not completely in the wrong here. Her advice affords Ifemelu the freedom to wait and

also supports her in finally becoming sexually active. She does not, however, provide Ifemelu with the option of having sex whenever she wants to. She encourages waiting and worries that Ifemelu is too young to handle the "responsibility" that comes with having sex. The author's motive in this instance is, perhaps, the creation of the awareness in people Ifemelu's age that they should be educated about having safe, responsible sex early so that when these sexual desires finally come, they will be prepared.

Unlike Obinze's mother who preaches that Ifemelu and Obinze wait until they own themselves before they have sex, as indicated in the extract below:

> "…I want to advise you. I am aware that, in the end, you will do what you want. My advice is that you wait. You can love without making love. It is a beautiful way of showing your feelings but it brings responsibility, great responsibility, and there is no rush. I will advise you to wait until you are at least in the university, wait until you own yourself a little more. Do you understand?" (p. 87),

Aunty Uju also admonishes Ifemelu to "let him kiss and touch but not to let him put it inside" (p. 65). In these extracts, the mentors' words are presented directly, with the narrator obliterated, to allow for a forceful transmission of the advice into Ifemelu. This is to create the reality of a youth receiving advice from adults who may have seen and experienced it all; thereby producing an atmosphere of plausibility in the narrative.

In addition, the advice Obinze's mother gives Ifemelu on sex and her sexuality appear to be positive for her (Ifemelu) because prior to that, her only conversations with adults about sex are rather brief and vague ones. Even though Ifemelu gets further exposed to the realities of her sexuality than "her mother's

lecture that was full of biblical quotes about virtue but lacked useful details", what Aunty Uju provides is equally inadequate, as she also ends up teaching her to be ashamed of her identity as a sexual being, as demonstrated in her wrapping the James Hadley Chase novels in a "newspaper to hide the near-naked women on the cover", instead of allowing her to celebrate the fullness of her female body. Aunty Uju is not in the wrong in concealing these nude pictures from Ifemelu, as she feels the need to do so from a household as religious as that of Ifemelu's mother's. As progressive as Aunty Uju appears to be, in comparison to Ifemelu's mother, she still approaches talking to Ifemelu about sex in an abstinence oriented manner, insisting on "let him kiss and touch but not to let him put it inside".

Another significant observation made in the analysis is Adichie's employment of Igbo words and expressions in the three narratives understudy. In *Purple Hibiscus*, for example, aside Papa Eugene who refuses to use the Igbo language, except when he loses control of his temper, most of the characters in the novel: Aunty Ifeoma, Kambili, Jaja, Mama Beatrice Obiora and Amaka are bilingual, signifying their acculturation with the Western culture. Papa Nnukwu, on the hand, is the only character who remains monolingual throughout the narrative, buttressing his staunch adherence to and faith in his customs and traditions. However, for the reader who is non-Igbo, the employment of these words and expressions in the narrative create some linguistic distance between him or her and the narrative, as these words immediately stop him or her in wonder to reflect on their possible meanings before proceeding to a comprehension of the narrative, thereby taking more narrative space and time than, perhaps, would have required.

The employment of these words also indicates the author's faithful devotion to her roots, as a Nigerian.

The study also reveals that it is in the employment of FID that the bulk of the restrictions or limitations in the amount of narrative information available to the narrators is made manifest. FID enables the author to relay the voice of her characters with the narrators' simultaneously. The author's employment of this technique in the narratives enable her to depict the cognitive processes of her characters effectively, as FID aids in building a closer relationship with the characters by allowing a deeper, more penetrating insight into how these focalising and focalised characters think. Consequently, Adichie's employment of FID in the narration of speech goes a long way in character and theme development, as the reader learns a lot about the psychosis of characters therein presented. This is made possible by reading a passage through their focalised perspectives – more than if the narrator simply tells the reader how the characters typically behave or even if the reader perceives the scene unfold in dialogue between him or her and the other characters in the narrative. Thus, it becomes obvious that it is in the narrative, the actual text on paper, that the reader is able to construct such issues as theme and character.

The general conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis is that Adichie is speedily becoming a force to reckon with regarding successful authors in the English language. Within her short period of writing career, she has already received several awards, as has already been stated in the study, for the quality of her narratives, with her novels *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* attaining

growing acceptance for their movie adaptations. She can be described as a daring author who does not vacillate in tackling issues that are considered by many as uncomfortable zones or delicate, such as the Biafran war in Nigeria and race, colour and status in America and England. She also does not hesitate in employing historical records or events as the background for her narratives, as depicted in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*; neither does she make an apology for the themes she addresses in her works.

Her narratives open up the possibilities for her audiences to engage in a cross-cultural or regional dialogue regarding race and colour in diasporan contexts, and consequently offer candid discussions on them in her works. Her narratives, therefore, contribute to the growing literature on the diaspora, particularly on African-American history and the realities of Blacks in America, exclusively Black women. Again, her narratives open up debates surrounding the issues relating to some of the consequences of the Biafran war, as well as history documents and theoretical works dealing with race and colour. Hence, *Americanah*, for example, becomes a good example of a text that examines the problems of gendered and racial identity and beauty, and how the connection of these notions may generate matters of self-worth among both males and females.

In addition, the novelist, in her narratives, enables her reader to understand and appreciate the disadvantages of being Black and female, as contrasted with being White and female. Consequently, *Americanah*, serves as an important text for appreciating why race and "the colour line" (as cited in Pardiñas, 2014, p. 51) still matter in 2021, especially after the recent killings of Black people in America,

notably among them is the George Floyd case. In effect, what Adichie does in her narratives is to add her voice to the many discussions on race, colour and beauty as essential sensitive zones within African-American and Black communities, which is also an indication of the fact that the age-old descriptions of what is classified beautiful and tolerable have not altered, regardless of the fact that globalisation has established relationships among diverse races.

Finally, Adichie's role in contemporary African literature has become significant because she also contributes to the representation of the Biafran civil war, which has already been aptly epitomised variously in the works of other Nigerian authors such as Achebe, Nwapa, Emecheta, among other literary colossi. However, despite the shared similarities between her treatment of the Biafran war and that of her predecessors, it can be established that while they confined their works to the depiction of the aristocratic class, she takes up the cause of the marginalised or deprived.

Her reworking of the Nigerian civil war elevates the Nigerian literary tradition a step further. Through her novels, also, for example, she accomplishes her role as a socio-political pundit by representing the ways and means in which war affects the masses of Nigeria. Additionally, since it is observed that literature is an exemplification of real life situations, it is impossible to ignore the role that history also plays in the creation of narratives. Consequently, both *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus* serve a hybrid of both fiction and history, as Adichie reaches out to her readers, not only as a socio-political chronicler but also as a

woman writer who comprehends and identifies with the sufferings of women and children.

Recommendations

From the discussion made in this study, the following recommendations can be made: further research can be carried out on Adichie's portrayal of sex and sexual relations in her novels to establish how and why, through the perspectives of the focalising and focalised characters, there exist these various types of relationships, some of which suggest forbidden sexual interactions. Also, notwithstanding Krishnan (2010), work can still be done on the many distances created in Adichie's novels, between the reader and the narrative as a result of the types of closure or the lack of it, especially regarding the seeming limitations placed on the focalisers as they are not able to present on non-perceptible objects.

This study has examined Adichie's novels: *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013) by employing the theory of narratology, especially Genette's category of narrative mood: distance and perspective to bring out the diegesis of these narratives. The study was organised into five chapters, with Chapter One being the Introduction, Chapter Two, the Literature and Conceptual review. Chapters Three and Four focused on the analyses of the texts under study, by examining narrative distance and perspective respectively. The study reveals that Adichie's novels serve as examples of the modernist novel, where there is maximum of information, in the author's bid to show more of the narrative, in the narration of events, rendering the narratives mimetic. Moreover, the author also employs methods of establishing distance

between the narrator and the narrative, especially in the use of FID, where the uttered and unuttered mental processes of the characters are revealed to the reader. This, she is also able to do by employing techniques of narration of speech, where the narrator becomes annihilated in the narrative, allowing the characters to present themselves and other issues of concern to the author.

Finally, the study reveals that plot, theme and character development, and unquestionably the whole narratives, are continuously and simultaneously characterised from several shifts in points of view due to the detachment of the external focaliser, with the exception of *Purple Hibiscus*, which is presented from the autodiegetic focalising narrator, Kambili. Two of the narratives, thus, are narrated in the anonymous third-person narrative perspective, where a change from one chapter to another parallels a shift in perspective in an incessant, recurring and essentially balanced order, especially in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. These variations in perspective represent an unequivocal view of the spaces employed in the narrative action, which shifts between the rural and urban, the North and the South of the country, between Enugu, Lagos and Nsukka, Kano and Ugwu's village, the early and late 1960s, between Biafra and Nigeria, as well as between America, England and Nigeria.

REFERENCES

Abani, C. (2004). *Graceland*. New York: Picador.

Abbott, H. P. (2002). *The Cambridge introduction to narrative*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Aboh, R. & Uduk, H. (2016). *The Pragmatics of Nigerian English in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels*. *National Research University Higher School of Economics Journal of Language & Education*. 2(3), 6-13

Abuku, M. & Nietlong, J. (2017). *Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies (JHUCS)*. 2, 308-322

Achebe, C. (1963). *Things fall apart*. London: Heinemann.

Adichie, C. N. (2003). *Purple hibiscus*. Lagos: Farafina.

Adichie, C. N. (2006). *Half of a yellow sun*. Lagos: Farafina.

Adichie, C. N. (2009). *The thing around your neck*. Lagos: Farafina.

Adichie, C. N. (2009, October 7). *The danger of a single story*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg, (August 7, 2016).

Adichie, C. N. (2013). *Americanah*. New York: Anchor Books.

Adichie, C. N. (2013, April 12). *We should all be feminists*. TEDxEuston lecture. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc, (August 7, 2016).

Adichie, C. N (2013). *Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on love, race and hair*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n8LtRi2i8c, (August 28, 2016).

Akingbe, N. & Adeniyi E. (2017). "Reconfiguring *Other*": negotiating identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*. 10(4), 37-55.

Akpome, A. (2013). Focalisation and polyvocality in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. *English Studies in Africa*. London: Routledge. *56*(2), 25-35.

Akpome, A. (2017a). Intertextuality and influence: Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. *53*(5), 530-542.

Akpome, A. (2017b). *Cultural criticism and feminist literary activism in the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. *Gender and* Behaviour. 15(4), 9847-9871

Anya, I. (2005, October, 15). *In the footsteps of Achebe: Enter Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. *African Writer Magazine*. Retrieved from https://www.africanwriter.com/in-the-footsteps-of-achebe-enter-chimamanda-ngozi-adichie/

Apprey, M. & Stein, F. H. (1993). *Intersubjectivity, projective identification and otherness.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP.

Atieh, M. R. & Mohammad, G. (n.d.). Post-traumatic responses in the war narratives of Hanan al-Shaykh's *The story of Zahra* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a yellow sun*. Retrieved June 17, 2017, from https://hcommons.org/deposits/ item/mla:275/

Bal, M. (1985). *Narratology. Introduction to the theory of narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bal, M. (1990). The point of narratology. *Poetics Today*. 11(4), 27-53.

Bal, M. (2004). *Narrative theory: Critical concepts in literary and cultural studies*. London: Routledge.

Bampoh-Addo, R., & Mokani, J. (2017). Narrative distance in Henry James' *The portrait of a lady*. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, *23*(4), 35-45.

Barthes, R. (1970), (1974). *S/Z*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Barthes, R. (1981). Theory of the text. In Robert Y (Ed.), *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader*, 31-47. London: Routledge.

Beti, M. (1971). *The poor Christ of bomba*. (G. Moore, Trans.). *African Writers Series*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Blin, G. (1954). *Stendhal et les problèms du roman*. Paris: Corti.

Bloomfield, M.W. (1976). Stylistics and the theory of literature. *New Literary History*. *Poetics: Some methodological problems. 7*(2), 271-311.

Boccaccio G. (2007). *The Decameron*. (J. Payne Trans.). New York: Walter J. Black, Inc.

Booth, W. C. (1961). Distance and point-of-view: An essay in classification. *Essays in Criticism*, *11*(1), 60-79. Oxford: University Press.

Bremond, C. (1973). *Logique du récit*. Paris: Éd. Du Seuil.

Brooks, P. (1984). *Reading for the plot: design and intention in narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bryce, J. (2008). Half and half children: Third-generation women writers and the new Nigerian novel. *Research in African Literatures 39*(2), 49-67.

Chatman, S. (1978). *Story and discourse: narrative structure in fiction and film*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Chatman, S. (1990). *Coming to terms*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Chaucer, G. (1977). *The Canterbury tales*. (N. Coghill, Trans.). Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Chennels, A. (2009). Inculturated Catholicism in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*. *English Academy Review: Southern African Journal of English Studies*, *26*(1), 15-26.

Cohn, D. (1978). *Transparent minds: Narrative modes for presenting consciousness in fiction*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Conrad, J. (2007). *Heart of darkness*. R. Hmpson & O. Knowles, Eds). London: Penguin Classics.

Culler, J. (1997). *Literary theory – a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical research methods: A user-friendly guide to mastering research.* Oxford: How to Books Ltd.

de Beauvoir, S. (1997). *The second sex*. London: Vintage.

Diasamidze, I. (2014). Point of view in narrative discourse. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *158*, 160-165

Dunton, C. (2007). Wheyting be dat?: The treatment of homosexuality in African literature. In Tejumola O. & Quayson, A. (Eds.), *Anthology of African literature: essays and criticism*, 727-733. Hoboken, NJ: Wiely-Blackwell.

Emeyonu, E. (1991). *Studies on the Nigerian Novel.* Ibadan: Heinemann.

Emecheta, B. (1994). *Destination biafra.* Oxford: Heinemann.

Emenyonu, E. N. (Ed.) (2004). *New women's writing in African literature*. Trenton, N.J.: African World Press, Inc.

Eze, E. C. (2008). Language and time in postcolonial experience. *Research in African Literatures* 39(1), 24-47.

Faulkner, W. (1929). *As I lay dying*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Fludernik, M. (2009). *An introduction to narratology*. London: Routledge.

Flynn, A. E. & Schweickart, P. P. (Eds.) (1986). *Gender and reading.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Forna, A. (2013). *The hired man*. New York: Grove Press.

Forster, E. M. (2000). *Aspects of the novel*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Frank, K. (1984). Feminist criticism and the African novel. *African Literature Today, 14*, 34-48. London: Heinemann.

Frank, K. (1987). Women without men: The feminist novel in Africa. *Women in African literature, 15*, 14-34.

Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative discourse: An essay in method*. (J. E. Lewin, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Genette, G. (1988). *Narrative discourse revisited*. (J. E. Lewin, Trans.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gholami, V. (2013). *Conrad and narrative theory: A narratological reading of selected novels of Joseph Conrad*. University of London: Royal Holloway.

Greenstreet, M. (1972). Mende and sherbro women in high office. *Canadian Journal of African studies*.

Groden, M. & Kreiswirth, M. (n.d.). (Eds.) The Johns Hopkins guide to literary theory and criticism. https://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_ guide_to_ literary_ theory/entries/narratology/htm.

Guarracino, S. (2014). Writing so raw and true: blogging in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. *Between*, *4*(8).

Hamon, P. (1992). Narratology: Status and outlook. *Style*, *26*(3).

Habila, H. (2007). *Measuring time.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Country.

Hamburger, K. (1957). *Die Logik der Dichtung*. Stuttgart: Klett.

Hawley, J. C. (2008). Biafra as heritage and symbol: Adichie, Mbachu, and Iweala. *Research in African Literatures, 39*(2), 15-26.

Herman, D. (Ed). (1999). *Narratologies: New perspectives on narrative analysis*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Hewett, H. (2005). *Coming of age: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the voice of the third generation*. *English in Africa, 1*(32), 73-97.

Hron, M. (2008). Ora Na-azu Nwa: The figure of the child in third-generation Nigerian novels. *Research in African Literatures, 39*(2), 27-48.

Hunter, G. (1965). From the old culture to the new. *The study of Africa*. London: Methuen and Co.

Iweala, U. (2006). *Beasts of no nation*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Jahn, M. (2005). Narratology: a guide to the theory of narrative. English Department, University of Cologne.

Jahn, M. (2007). Focalisation. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. In David Herman (Ed.), 94-108. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

James, H. (1991). *The turn of the screw*. New York, NY: Dover Publications.

Japaridze, T. (2005). *The elements of fiction (book one).* Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University.

Jegede, R. (2010). The issues of accessibility: A lexico-semantic reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a yellow sun*. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society, 2*.

Jha, K. (2016). Fictional world of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: A thematic study of selected works. (Doctoral thesis, Mohanlal Sukhadia University).

Kabore, A. (2013). The symbolic use of palm, figurines and hibiscus in Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*. *Linguistics and Literature Studies 1*(1), 32-36.

Krishnan, M. (2010). Biafra and the aesthetics of closure in the third generation Nigerian novel. *Rupkatha: Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities 2*(2). 185-195.

Krishnan, M. (2011). Abjection and the fetish: Reconsidering the construction of the postcolonial exotic in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun. Journal of Postcolonial Writing. 48*(1).

Lanser, S. S. (1986). Toward a feminist narratology. *Style*, 20, 341 – 63.

Lee, F. R. (2014). https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/30/arts/new-wave-of-african-writers-with-an- internationalist- bent.html, first archived on June 29, 2014, 9:28 p.m.

Leech, G. & M. Short. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose.* (2nd ed). Harlow: Pearson.

Little, K. (1973). *African women in towns: An aspect of Africa's social revolution.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mabura, L. G. N. (2008). Breaking gods: An African post-colonial gothic reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple hibiscus* and *Half of a yellow sun*. *Research in African Literature*, *39*(1).

Marx, J. (2008). *Failed-state fiction. Contemporary Literature*, *49*(4) 597-633.

Mezei, K. (1996). *Ambiguous discourse: Feminist narratology & British women writers*. London: North Carolina UP.

Murfin, R. & Ray, S. M. (1998). *The Bedford glossary of critical and literary terms*. Boston: Bedford books.

Nelles, W. (1997). *Frameworks: Narrative levels and embedded narrative*. Frankfurt: Lang.

Ngugi, J. (1964). *Weep Not Child*. London: Heinemann.

Ngugi, J. (1967). *A grain of wheat*. London: Heinemann.

Nnolim, C. (2007). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a yellow sun*. *African Literature Today*, *27*, 145-151.

Nwapa, F. (1981). *One is enough*. Enugu: Tana Press.

Ofori, N. (2015). *Challenges of post-independence Africa: A study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple hibiscus and Half of a yellow sun.* (Master's thesis, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology). Retrieved from https://ir.knust.edu.gh/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/8104/THESIS%20FINAL%202EDITED%20FINALmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.pdf?sequence=1

Ojinmah, U. (2012). No humanity in war: Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a yellow sun*. *Journal of Nigerian Studies*. *1*(2).

Omotayo, J. (2013). *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah.* Retrieved December, 13, 2018, from https://www.criticalliteraturereview

Pardiñas, V. B. (2014). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*: (Re)opening a conversation about race and beauty. (Master's Thesis, Universidad da Coruña). Retrieved from https://ruc.udc.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/2183/17885/Baldomir_Pardinas_Veronica_2014_%20Chimamanda_Ngozi_Adichie_Americanah.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

Phelan, J. (2005). Distance. In D. Herman, Manfred J. & M. - L. Ryan. (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory*. London: Routledge.

Pouillon, J. (1946). *Temps et roman*. Paris: Gallimard.

Prince, G. (1971). Notes towards a preliminary categorization of fictional 'narratees.' *Genre* 4, 100-106.

Prince, G. (1973), (1980). Introduction to the study of the narratee. In J. P. Tompkins (Ed.), *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, 7-25. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Prince, G. (1987). *A dictionary of narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the folktale*. (L. Scott, Trans.). Austin: Texas University Press.

Pucherova, D. (2018). Afropolitan narratives and empathy: migrant identities in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference*. *Human Affairs*, *28*(4), 406-416.

Rimmon-Kenan, S. (1983). *Narrative fiction: contemporary poetics*. London: Methuen.

Ryan, M. – L. (1979). Linguistic models in narratology: From structuralism to generative semantics. *Semiotica, 28*.

Sheppard, T. (2003-4).https://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/dir/traditions/africa.html Last updated 13/1/04. Retrieved on June 1, 2015, 12:30 pm.

Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students*. London: Longman Ltd.

Stanzel, F. (1984). *A theory of narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tadjo, V. (2002). *The shadow of imana: Travels in the heart of Rwanda*. Essex: Heinemann.

Todorov, T. (1969). *Grammaire du Décaméron*. The Hague: Mouton.

Todorov, T. (1969). *Poétique*. (*Introduction to poetics*, [1980]. R. Howard, Trans.)

Toolan, M. J. (1988). *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. London: Routledge.

Tunca, D. (2009). Ideology in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*. *English Text Construction*, *2*(1), 121-131.

Umeh, M. (Ed.) (1996). *Emerging perspectives on Buchi Emecheta*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc.

Woolf, V. (1929). *A room of one's own*. Hammersmith, London: Grafton

Yerima, D. (2017). Regimentation or hybridity? western beauty practices by black women in Adichie's *Americanah*. *Journal of Black Studies*, *48*(7), 639-650.

https://www.l3.ulg.ac.be/adichie/cnaintro.html

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/30/arts/new-wave-of-african-writers-with-an-internationalist-bent.html

https://imagejournal.org/article/conversation-chimamanda-ngozi-adichie/

https://www.africanwriter.com/in-the-footsteps-of-achebe-enter-chimamanda-ngozi-adichie/

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/30/arts/new-wave-of-african-writers-with-an-internationalist-bent.html

https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-african-writer-art-citizenship-essay

https://ruc.udc.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/2183/17885/Baldomir_Pardinas_Veronica_2014_%20Chimamanda_Ngozi_Adichie_Americanah.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/06/04/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-comes-to-terms-with-global-fame